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EFFECTS OF DONATIONS ON THE COLLECTION DEVELOPMENT OF PRIVATE  
ACADEMIC LIBRARIES IN GHANA: A CASE STUDY OF CENTRAL UNIVERSITY

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**Abstract**

This study was conducted to ascertain the trends of donations to private academic libraries in Ghana and how these donations have affected the collection development and service delivery of the library. The population of the study comprised of one (1) librarian and two (2) assistant librarians from the Central University library. A qualitative research design was employed to collect data for the study, and the data were thematically analyzed.

Findings indicated that the majority of private academic libraries hardly received any substantial donations due to lack of partnership with any donor institutions and they also did not take the initiative to look for donors.

**Keywords:** Central University, Collection development, Donations, Private university libraries.

## **INTRODUCTION**

A library is a place for knowledge creation and sharing, and it is a storehouse of knowledge in different forms. Libraries anywhere in the world provide information services and resources. (Omeluzor, Manidele, Ukangwa & Amadi, 2013). Libraries aid to educate people, accelerate development and provide the data required for the solution of increasingly complex economic, social, educational, cultural, political and scientific problems.

In modern times, a library is seen as a repository of information in the sense that it comprises both books and non-book materials, methodically organized for easy flow of information for those who require them. Among the aims of a library is to support the education process in the society and also to accelerate the translation of knowledge into social action (Ehindero, 2012).

In the view of Gessesse (2000), a university library is established to support the university in the quest, promotion and dissemination of knowledge as well as research. It is an essential tool for intellectual development (Yusuf & Iwu, 2010).

Collection development as a library activity is intended to provide the library with information resources that meet the appropriate needs of its clients. In view of this, university libraries focus their collection development activities on literature that support the curricula (Dilani, 2015). Libraries all over the world serve their parent institutions. Notwithstanding the type and where it is located their roles remain the same, to select information resources in both print and electronic formats, organize, disseminate the resources to the immediate users and to educate the users how to use the resources (Omeluzor, Manidele, Ukangwa & Amadi, 2013).

To be able to perform this function, the university has to acquire relevant books, journals and other materials like microfilms, CDs, Tapes and DVDs. The public university libraries in the

country depended and still depend on the university and the government to purchase books from the local bookshops and through foreign book dealers. In the same way, the privately-owned university libraries also have to develop a balanced collection. Unlike the public-owned university libraries, which are funded by the government, the private university libraries have to depend on their mother institutions for funding (Akporhonor, 2005).

To be able to satisfy clients' needs, libraries spend a chunk of their budget to acquire relevant materials both in hard copy and online resources, which is the mission of every library.

However, inadequate library budget forces librarians to look elsewhere and therefore; there is the need to be guided by collection development policy in order to maximize the limited resources. The effectiveness of a library system is dependent on how well its collections are managed to respond to the needs of patrons and the ease with which potential users are able to make use of the services provided (Lamprey, 2011). In the face of dwindling financial resources to libraries to develop a collection to satisfy user needs, soliciting for donations has become the norm.

Soliciting for donations has its origins in the 1970's and 1980's when library budgets for all types of libraries began to shrink, making them keep pace with the fast increasing cost of growing number of publications. This led libraries to seek guidance on how to make responsible use of limited resources to help manage the limited financial resources (Johnson, 2004)

Providing these institutions with adequate information resources is therefore very crucial not only to aid students in achieving excellence in academic work but also to help broaden and enhance their knowledge generally and their chosen fields. The private universities in recent times have seen an upsurge in student numbers as many more people desire to acquire university education (Agyen- Gyasi, Lamprey, & Frempong, 2010).

## **Statement of the Problem**

Donations have featured prominently in the acquisition practices of countless public-owned university libraries in the country. Due to inadequate budget allocation from their mother institution librarians resort to every means to provide the needed resources to meet user needs, which has made a donation become a crucial source of collection development in many academic libraries. The private universities in recent times have seen an upsurge in student numbers as many more people desire to acquire university education. However, a look at the resources of these libraries shows that there has not been a commensurate expansion of facilities to meet the information needs of these increasing numbers of students. With falling library budgets, there is the need to maximize the available means of collection development in order to provide the needed resources and best services for its clientele. A study carried out by Wiafe (1998) on the impact of donations on public university libraries at the Balme library of the University of Ghana revealed that donations had positively impacted the library's collections .

However, a look at the Central University library resources shows that there has not been a commensurate expansion of facilities to meet the information needs of increasing numbers of students. There is therefore, the need to maximize the available means of collection building in order to provide the needed resources and best services for its clientele.

It is against this background that the researcher decided to carry out this research to find out the importance and effect of donations on the collections of private university libraries in Ghana in meeting the information needs of their clientele if any, considering the dwindling nature of library budget all over the world.

## **Objectives of the Study**

### **The research seeks to:**

1. Find out whether the university library had collection development policies and how these policies informed the donation that came in.
2. Examine the frequency with which donations were received
3. Identify the forms of the donations that came in.

### **Research Questions**

The research seeks to answer the following questions:

1. Does the library have a collection development policy?
2. Does the library have a donation policy as part of the collection development policy?
3. What are the forms of donations that came into the library and the frequency with which they are received?

### **Literature review:**

#### **Collection Development**

According to Gessesse (2000), collection development is carried out with the specific aim of providing information resources to meet user needs. To accomplish this aim, each section of the collection must be developed with an application of resources consistent with the mission of the library and the needs of its patrons. To Johnson (2004), the term comprises a couple of activities related to the development of library collections. These include selection, determination and coordination of selection policy, user needs assessment, potential users, collection use studies, collection analysis, budget management,

identification of collection needs, community and user outreach, liaison and planning for resource sharing. On the part of Arua and Chinaka (2011), the use of a library depends upon the availability of resources, so arbitrary provision of irrelevant resources can turn patrons away from using the library.

In her opinion, collection development is the process that ensures that the right types of materials are acquired for the library in adequate quantity, quality and variety.

### **Collection Development Policy**

In many institutions, collection development policies exist to provide guidance in the selection process. Collection development policy, therefore, has a direct effect on access to library and information resources since it determines whether or not the collection contains the kinds of materials that are required Gessesse (2000). Cassell (2005) also opines that collection development policies are important documents for libraries. In these policies, the library describes its collections, users and discusses its policies for each aspect of the collection.

Kumar, Hussain, and Singh (2008), believe that a collection development policy is necessary for a balanced and robust collection. It specifies the scope of the collection, authority for selection, criteria for allocation of funds and for selection of various types of materials, priorities in selection and criteria for weeding. However, despite its importance, many libraries do not have comprehensive collection policies. Nwosu and Udo-Anyanwu (2015) state that collection development is guided in most libraries by the collection development policy. It is therefore, necessary to have the collection development policy written to make for objectivity in developing the library collection.

Akporhonor (2005) on his part says, for collection development to be effective it must be based on an agreed, regularly reviewed of the collection development policy formulated after an assessment of user needs and an evaluation of the existing collection.

In 2010 a study by Agyen-Gyasi and Frempong (2010 a) revealed that none of the state-owned universities had collection development policy apart from the University for Development Studies. The advent of electronic resources has made the collection development policy more relevant, therefore, every academic library should have a collection development policy to maximize the library's limited resources.

### **Lack of a Written Collection Development Policy Statement**

The lack of a collection development policy statement makes it difficult to distinguish between the long and short-term needs of patrons and to establish priorities for the allocation of resources to meet those needs. Agyen-Gyesi, Lamptey and Frempong (2010 b) on their part believe every academic library should have a collection development policy in order to maximize the library's limited resources. Unfortunately, most academic libraries in Ghana do not have it, a serious omission which must be urgently addressed.

### **Role of Librarian in collection development**

A library is an agency, which engages in the collection processing, preservation and dissemination of recorded information in the various formats most convenient to its target users.

According to Akande (2008), a library is a collection of information resources and the place where the materials are kept for consultation. Allard, Thura, and Feltner-Reichert (2005) assert that the tradition of a librarian as selector becomes necessary as the volume of literature increased' and by the 1970s the librarian's role as collection developer and manager was codified. Librarians have kept pace with the dynamic information environment and have adapted collection manager responsibilities to address issues related to the introduction of digital materials which have changed the very character of the collections.

## **Donation/Gifts**

Cassell (2008 a) adds that, to be classed as a donation, a receipt of funds or assets must have been freely given, with no consequent commitment on the University to provide goods or services to the benefit of the donor. University of Cambridge (2015), describes book donation as an aid in the form of information materials and these refer to both book and non-book materials.

Once a gift is accepted, a donor quite often feels as if he or she has a commitment to the libraries. Indeed, the libraries do have an ongoing commitment to the donor which involves acknowledgement and, if the donor wishes, a continuing relationship (University of Florida George A. Smathers Libraries, 2004 – 2016).

One way that libraries can have access to donors is to be part of larger campus-wide development efforts (Casey & Lorenzen, 2010)).

According to Cervone (2005), a good development plan balances the wishes of a donor and the needs of a library.

Kanyengo (2009), on book acquisitions at the University of Zambia Medical Library asserted that book acquisitions in the library have followed similar trends as those of the serials subscriptions.

The author stressed further that library has mainly depended on donations to sustain its book collection. Edem (2010 a) states that gifts and donations to libraries complement acquisitions by purchase and provide the methods by which libraries can develop comprehensive and useful collections for their clientele. This method of acquisition is increasingly emphasised in developing countries, because of the steadily widening gap between academic institutions and the inability of their libraries to meet their needs. Ononogbo (2003) in Owolabi and Akintola (2003) established that 91% of library collections were acquired through donations, gifts, and bequeath.

In a related study by Attama (2005) outlined the method in which university libraries build their collections, as through legal deposits, exchange, direct purchase, donation, and photocopies.

In the view of Cassell (2005b), many libraries' gift book policies are closely linked to the library's collection development policies.

According to Akporhonor (2005), the library should prepare a clearly written and widely understood policy on the soliciting and acceptance of gifts for the library collection. This gift policy should be consistent with the general collection development policy and should be included within that policy statement. Edem (2010 b) also emphasizes that a written donation policy must clarify whether the library accepts only items matching the collection profile or accepts anything with the provision that the library may dispose of unwanted items in any manner considered appropriate. Statement regarding conditional gifts is equally important. Edem (2010 c) enumerated some challenges associated with donations as "deficiency in subject coverage, foreign language materials, and irregular giving patterns as well as an increasing tendency towards electronic resources acquisition where manual procedures are available".

#### **Types / Forms of donations that came to the library**

According to Otike, (1993, cited in Hite (2006) book donations are of two major kinds: solicited and unsolicited. Solicited donations are the ones where the librarian has a say in their procurement. Here the librarian is given the opportunity to select and evaluate the donations.

The author stressed further that unsolicited donations comprise all such aid for which the librarian does not have prior knowledge and that their arrival takes the librarian by surprise. Solicited donations are of two types, these are that which comes in material form and that which comes in cash form. These two types of gifts exist in developing countries although the first type is the more popular among donors, especially foreign governments and agencies.

Potential donors of sizeable collections are normally advised to contact the office of the University Librarian in the first instance, and potential donors of smaller collections are requested to contact the appropriate College Librarian (University of Florida George A. Smathers Libraries, 2004 – 2016).

## **Methodology**

The research employed a case study approach that made use of a qualitative method.

Data was collected by the researcher with an interview guide as a data collection instrument. Interviews were held with all the respondents which included the head librarian, a deputy librarian as well as an acquisitions librarian. Therefore, the population of the study comprised of professional and para-professionals.

The entire population for the study was twenty one (21) as displayed in Table 1 below.

**Table 1: Population of the study**

<b>Institution</b>	<b>Professionals</b>	<b>Para-professionals</b>	<b>Total</b>
Central University	12	9	<b>21</b>

*Source:* Institutional library, 2017

This study adopted the purposive sampling technique. According to Bowling (2002), purposive sampling is a non-random method of selecting participants for research study which allows individuals to be selected, based on their knowledge in the subject under investigation.

## **Sample size**

With regard to resources and time, the researcher used the purposive sampling technique to select two (2) assistant librarians who were directly involved in collection development process

and management. The total population of assistant librarians was eleven (11) out of which two (2) were sampled to add to the head librarian.

**Table 2: Sample size**

<b>Institution</b>	<b>Professionals</b>	<b>Para-professionals</b>	<b>Total</b>
Central University	1	2	3

Source: Institutional library 2017

## **Discussion of Findings**

### **Collection Development Policy and its influence on acquisitions**

The objective one of the study sought to find out whether the library had a collection development policy and if they had how did the policy influenced the acquisitions practices in the library.

According to Head Librarian,

*“...As for the policy we have it but considering the budget allocated to us to develop the collection, if we say we are going to go strictly according to what the policy says we will never be able to acquire enough to give efficient service to our users and their information needs would never be met so we acquire resources through any available means to be able to serve our clients as efficiently as we can.”*

Respondent 1 (Resp) added that *“yes, we have the policy, but its application in the acquisition of materials is a major problem confronting collection building due to inadequate budget allocated to the library as indicated earlier by my colleague and the head librarian.”*

Resp 2, also said that *... yes, our biggest challenge is the budget, how can you build a substantial collection for users without adequate funds? , as for us, we are ready to do good work if we have adequate budget to support”.*

This finding is consistent with Hénard and Roseveare (2012) whose study affirm that collection development must be guided by a written policy to maintain efficiency, consistency and standards in the management of the collection.

### **The frequency with which donations were received in the library**

An attempt was made by the researcher to examine the frequency with which donations came to the library.

Commenting on the frequency of donations received in the library, the head librarian said that;

*“...it is not easy to tell the frequency; they come intermittently, sometimes a whole year would pass without anybody donating and sometimes yearly.”*

Both Resp 1 and 2 also confirmed that, *... “yes, they come in once in a while , so it is difficult to tell you the frequency.”*

This result corroborates with that of Edem (2010) whose study indicated some challenges associated with donations as “deficiency in subject coverage, foreign language materials, and irregular giving patterns”.

### **Forms of donations that came to the library**

This objective sought to find out the forms of donations that came to the library.

The head librarian revealed that the library receives all forms of donations:

*“...we always receive donation in hardcopy form.”*

*Resp. 2 and 3*

*“...it has always been in hardcopy book form.”*

This confirms Otike (1993 cited in Hite's (2006) assertion that solicited donations are of two types. That which comes in material form, that is, it comes only in kind.

## **Conclusions**

The research set out to investigate the effect donations have had on the collection development of Central University library. It was also found out that Central University library, like majority of private academic libraries in Ghana, does not benefit from donations the for not forming partnerships or soliciting, that could allow them to receive as much as the few that have partners enjoy. Notwithstanding the challenges that come with donations, such as materials not being relevant to courses run in the university, unusable materials because they are worn out or out-dated, unplanned financial commitment in the donation process, donations are still beneficial to the receiving institution.

## **Recommendations:**

Based on the research findings and the literature on the phenomenon, the following recommendations have been proposed to help private academic libraries acquire more donations to build up their collections.

- Librarians should prepare comprehensive working collection development policies for proper guidance of the whole collection development process.
- Private university libraries together with management of Central University ought to prepare a clearly documented and widely understood and working policy on the soliciting and acceptance of donations for the library collection, so as to get the best out of donations.
- The donation policy should be consistent with general collection development policy, and should be included within that policy statement.

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