

Selection And Acquisition of Library Materials In The Era of Information and Communication Technology (ICT) In Selected Academic Libraries In Niger State

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ABSTRACT

Academic libraries are libraries that are attached to tertiary institutions and their major obligation is to provide useful materials to the client. This requires careful selection and acquisition of the most recent and best materials. However the selection and acquisition process is usually faced with the problem of insufficient allocation among others. Hence this study takes a look at the ways some academic libraries in Niger State carry out selection and acquisition of their library materials in this era of Information Technology. Questionnaires were administered to the staff of the collection development units of the selected institutions. The method used in the selection and acquisition of library materials is found to be fairly effective while the collections are found not be adequate enough. It was further discovered that the main problem facing the policy is that of long chain of budget process. Also it was found out that two of the academic libraries sampled have not embraced the use Information Technology in their selection and acquisition policy because of cost and lack of experience on the part of library staff.

INTRODUCTION

Ifidon and Okoli (2002) defined academic libraries as “libraries that are attached to tertiary institutions” and which include among others polytechnics, universities and colleges of education. According to them a university library can also be a research library since it has as one of its objectives, the provision of materials in support of postgraduate, faculty, external and collaborative researches.

Umannakwe and Onyebinama (2007) affirm that the academic library is an important agent in the pursuit of academic excellence in higher institutions. Its main goal is to support the objectives of the host institution which has to do with learning, teaching, research and services.

Academic libraries are complex institutions. They occupy a significant place in the life in colleges and universities. They serve as workshops for the entire university or college community.

The successful performance of any library depends on selecting and acquiring of the most recent and best materials for its client. Process involved in building library collections and library acquisition may select vendors, negotiate consortium pricing, arrange for standing orders, and/or select individual titles or resources (depending on the size of library or system). Acquisition work in a library is the means by which additions are made to the library's collection, acquisition then should not be restricted to careful selection of materials out of many but include orders, exchange, gift, and building process, purchase, donation, endowment, locally produced materials.

Academic libraries exist in institutions of higher education such as universities, colleges of education, colleges of technology and polytechnics. These are largely tertiary educational institutions usually available after secondary education. There are variations in the extent and intensity in these institutions of higher education. Some colleges focus almost entirely on curricula needs. Universities in particular usually go beyond this to emphasize research and the interest of the wider population.

Selection and acquisition of materials must be backed up by selection policy, without the policy, there will be unbalanced of materials in various discipline. Selection and acquisition of library materials is not only for present use but for future generations to make use for better research.

In a related study, investigation carried out on selection policy of libraries in Nigeria recommended that book stock should enrich the curriculum and facilitates reading for pleasure. He emphasized that selection of materials should be balanced or equated to the need of users (Ibidapo, 2000)

In Nigeria, there are a large number of academic libraries which perform below expectation as a result of one reason or the other; these may include lack of finance, inadequate materials and facilities and lack of professional staff.

OBJECTIVES OF THE STUDY

The objectives of the study are:

1. To determine how the selected academic libraries in Niger state select and acquire their materials.
2. To determine the problems associated in making a particular selection and acquisition of materials.

3. To know whether the selected academic libraries in Niger state are using Information Technology as a tool in selection and acquisition of materials in this era of information technology and ascertain it's level of effectiveness

The following research questions were asked

1. How do the librarians rate the present ICT facilities in these libraries?
2. What are the policy methods adopted by these libraries in selection and acquisition of Library materials?
3. Are the libraries using ICT facilities to select and acquire library materials and if yes how effective is it?
4. What are the factors hindering them from using ICT in selecting and acquiring their materials if not in use?

APPLICATION OF INFORMATION COMMUNICATION TECHNOLOGY IN NIGERIAN ACADEMIC LIBRARIES

There can be little doubt that the future of library and information services in our society is bound up closely the development of Information Communication Technology (ICT), while the concept of the provision of an adequate level of service should never be confused with the mere existence of technology it is very clear that many of the activities performed by the library and the services they offer can be enhanced and many new services can be developed using suitable information technology in an appropriate way.

Information Technology according to Marghalani (1987) is a term which encompasses the notion of the application of technologies to information handling (generation, storage, processing, retrieval, dissemination etc). As defined by American Library Association (1993), Information technologies technology is the application of computers and other technology in the acquisition organization, storage retrieval and dissemination. This definition implies that it is restricted to system dependent upon a micro – electronic – based combination of computing and telecommunication technology.

The information technologies found in libraries today can be divided into three categories; computers, storage media, and telecommunication. A computer performs processing operations on data, and is

used to store and retrieve information, process transactions, sort data, etc. since the central processing Unit of the computer has a definite amount of data capacity, it requires additional storage media, such as magnetic disk and tape, and audio tape. A disk is the most common auxiliary storage device; telecommunication facilitates the transfer of communication of data and information. Elogu (2004) is of the opinion that the application of ICT in modern libraries appears to redefine and shape the way even the simplest routine are being carried out. Hence the adoption of ICT in academic libraries is a welcome development.

SELECTION AND ACQUISITION POLICY AND PRACTICE IN ACADEMIC LIBRARIES.

Selection policies evolve out of long standing practices and in some cases there are definite written policies for selection in libraries. Each library therefore should have standing guidelines or policies which helps it in collection development so that in changing of staff, the policy will not be distorted.

Selection has to be tailored towards the teaching, learning and research needs of the library clients. The responsibility of books selection should however not be left for the librarians alone. It should be the joint responsibility of all. In academic environment, administrators, faculty members, students and other users are involved in book selection.

Book selection policy is very important because it helps book selectors or guides them in what to do, the types of books to select and others. In addition, it equips the library to ensure that there is no bias in collection development so that all areas are catered for.

In building of library collections, policy and practice states that collection development is a term encompassing a variety of activities designed to ensure that a library includes in its holdings the books, periodicals and other materials required to support the instructional and research program of the host.

Acquisition of materials is of primary importance for any type of library and except it is guided by a written policy, some libraries did not have a policy for making selection which makes them to end up buying materials that are not useful to its users. But for those that has a selection policy and follows the policy adequately when making selection end up buying the best materials that are relevant to the users and at relatively cheap prices.

Unguided selection and acquisition, method especially books leads to non-correspondence of books to the course offered. All libraries therefore must have a guiding principle which dictates its selection and acquisition, of materials. It determines which materials to acquire or not. The policy of a particular library should be related to the objective of the parent body in which it is intended to serve. It brings uniformity in the services and objective of the library and the university.

Also, all libraries should have a principle guiding its selection and acquisition methods not only for the general affairs of the library as a system. The system operates under a set of subsystems in which only a written guideline will define the role to be played by each subsystems. A policy in any organization is the steering wheel of that organization which leads the system to the point of success.

Acquisition policy – Is aimed to develop and update the library's collection with books and periodicals. The policies will act as a guide for the acquisition and selection of library materials to be added to the collection. In acquisition of books, there are four stages – selection, ordering, accessioning and payments. Each stage has several operations and recording procedures.

ELECTRONIC ORDERING

After selections comes ordering. Ordering refers to the process of making serials and other materials available in reality. It is a legal instruction given to a publisher or a vendor to supply serials. An order can be placed through a facsimile (fax), e-mail, or telephone depending on the availability of any of these technologies in both the library placing the order and the supplier of the products.

Order is of three types: first order, renewal and back issue. There is a dire need for good records management of in-house procedures in this regard

Today, emerging technologies offer librarians new and efficient methods for performing traditional collection development and management task. in fact, electronic publishing is changing the role of librarians in purchasing and managing collections as well as providing access to patrons and the internet, the world wide web have expanded and made available resources that were unimagined in earlier years.

SELECTION TOOLS

Selection tool is a guided mechanism toward the selection of materials (Nwafor, 1999)

The use of selection tool in the process of acquisition and organization of material in academic library is very important; there are a lot of book hawkers in Nigeria today as such the library must have channel that will aid in the selection of materials as follows,

- Dailies- these are advance notices in advert columns in most newspaper about in coming publications.
- Book talk- book talk on electronic media also aids the selection of materials.
- Book review- they are published from time to time.
- Circular letters and publisher catalogues. These emanate from the publishers as a routine duty.
- Indexes, abstract, current contents, this are all helpful guide
- Accession list of other libraries
- Citation in theses and other important work or subject
- Bibliographies – a list is a list of publication in a subject area

METHODOLOGY

The researcher use survey method in order to be able to access the situation accurately. A structured questionnaire was designed used as instrument for gathering data. The population of the study consists eight out of the ten staff of collection development units of the selected institution that constituted the respondent. Person-person contact (oral interview) was also used to get relevant feedback from the staff of the academic libraries visited. The three academic libraries used for the study are; The Federal University Of Technology Minna, The Federal Polytechnic Bida and Niger State College of Education Minna libraries

DATA ANALYSIS AND DISCUSSION

Table 1: Rating of Present ICT facilities in thee Library? N=8

Rating of present ICT facilities in the library (Computer, internet	Frequency	Percentage (%)

facilities)					
	FUT	FPB	COE	Total Frequency	
Adequate	-	-	-	-	
Non-Adequate	1	1	-	2	25%
Fairly Adequate	2	2	2	6	75%
Total	3	3	2	8	100%

The Table 1 above reveals that only 25% of the respondents agree that the present rating of the library facilities is not adequate whereas 75% of the respondent agree that the library facilities is fairly adequate

Table 2: What method is adopted by your library in selection and acquisition of library materials? N=8

Method adopted in lib. In selection acquisition	Frequency				Percentage (%)
	FUT	FPB	COE	Total Frequency	
Written Policy	3	-	-	3	37.5%
Purchase	-	2	3	5	62.5%
Exchange and gift	-	-	-	-	-
Total	3	2	3	8	100%

The table above shows that Bida and CEO libraries depends totally on purchase which is represented by 62.5% while FUT depends on written policy which is represented by 37.5%. This therefore does not mean that they don't get materials through other methods such as gift, donation, endowment, etc. The school sampled only identifies with written policy and purchase in their response.

Table 3: How do you rate the policy used in selection and acquisition of library material? N=8

Rating of policy used in selecting and acquisition of lib. Materials	Frequency				Percentage (%)
	FUT	FPB	COE	Total Frequency	
Very effective	1	-	2	3	37.5%
Effective	-	2	-	2	25%
Fairly effective	2	1	-	3	37.5%
Total	3	3	2	8	100%

On the policy used by the respondent's libraries. It was discovered that the relevance of the policy used in selection, acquisition was very effective at time which is represented by 37.5% and other times it is fairly effective which is also represented by 37.5% while effective is represented by 25%. It has been observed that the level of relevance of the policy varies in its effectiveness.

Table 4: Are you using ICT facilities for selection and acquisition and materials. N=8

Do you use IT for selection and acquisition of library material	Frequency				Percentage (%)
	FUT	FBP	COE	Total Frequency	
Yes	2	-	-	2	25%
No	1	3	2	6	75%
Total	3	3	2	8	100%

From the table 4 above, it is seen that 100% of the respondent from Bida poly use Information Technology facility for selection and acquisition of library materials. It is also noticed from the table 4 above that 100% College of Education respondent agree that they do not use Information Technology facilities for selection and acquisition of library materials. Federal University of Technology uses Information Technology in selection and acquisition of library materials which is represented 66.7% respondent, while 33.3% disagreed. So, it is seen that most libraries don't use IT facility for selection and acquisition and of library materials which is represented by 75% while 25% represent use of IT in selection and acquisition off library materials.

Table 5: How effective has the use of Information Technology been? N=8

Evaluating thee effectiveness of ICT in selecting and acquiring of library materials	Frequency				Percentage (%)
	FUT	FPB	COE	Total Frequency	
Very effective	1	-	-	1	12.5%
Effective	-	-	-	-	-
Fairly effective	1	-	-	1	12.5%
Others	1	3	2	6	75%
Total	3	3	2	8	100%

From the table 5, it is seen that Information Technology is effective sometime while it is also fairly effective at some other time both represent 12.5% while represent 75% which is no answer because it is not in use they cannot tell whether it is very or fairly effective or just effective because it is not in use in their libraries.

Table 6: Why has ICT not been adopted? N=8

	FUT	FPB	COE	Total Frequency	(%)
Cost	3	-	2	5	62.5%
Difficult to learn	-	-	-	-	-
Inexperience	-	3	-	3	37.5%
Total	3	3	2	8	100%

It is seen from table 6 that cost has been the major reason why Information Technology has not been adopted in academic libraries which is represented by 62.5% while inexperience is represented by 37.5%.

From the table above it is seen that others represent 75% which means no answer because they have not implement IT in their method of selection and acquisition of library materials they can not tell whether it is beneficial, very or fairly beneficial in use of it while 12.5% represents very beneficial and beneficial due to level of use.

DISCUSSION ON FINDINGS

According to the findings of this research, it shows that the librarians were not placed on the priority list of the government and in most cases the staff of these academic libraries has nothing to say in decision making relating to the selection and acquisition of library materials. Library matters are therefore treated as part of the general administration.

The methods of selection and acquisition of materials in academic libraries in Niger State show that 37.5% of the libraries depend on written policy while 62.5% depends on the purchase made by the libraries. In this finding, the academic libraries of FUT, CEO and Bida are only keeping within the budget limit and so used to forget their goals of satisfying the needs of their users.

As a result of this study, it was found that all request concerning the relevance of the policy used in some academic libraries in Niger State was related to management. This reveal that 37.5% of the

policy used was fairly effective, while 37.5% was very effective. This shows that the management of academic libraries in FUT, CEO and Bida need to improve in their policy decision regarding the selection and acquisition of library materials. This it was learnt that the management occasionally delay actions and decisions as a result of bureaucracy.

It was discovered that 75% of the staff in academic libraries are involved in book selection. while 12.5% are not involved. Therefore, there is need to consider the decision of all the staff in making book selection in that they are more close to the users and are in better position to know the needed materials.

The study also shows that most academic libraries do not use Information Technology facilities for selection and acquisition of library materials which is represented by 75%. This is as a result of lack of equipment, qualified trained personnel and cost of IT facilities. The use of IT has been hinder in academic libraries due to cost which is represented by 62.5% while experience is represented by 37.5%. 66.7% of those using it from FUT Minna agreed that it is very beneficial.

At the end all the libraries sampled were found to be operating different techniques of selection and acquisition based on the individual's library preference and policy.

CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATIONS

Based on the findings of this study, it can therefore be concluded that the selection and acquisition of library materials provided by these libraries are grossly inadequate. The inability of the two of the libraries sampled not to make use of Information Technology in the selection and acquisition policy due to poor funding has rendered library service ineffective. However, with the recommendations given by the researcher, it should be able to restructure the entire library system and services to meet the objectives for which the libraries are established as well as reflect the library standard.

It is therefore recommended that

- Adequate fund should be made available to libraries for purchasing their materials.
- The libraries should review its selection policy in order to make necessary changes to meet the challenges of globalization in terms of knowledge.

- The library management should ensure that the libraries were given an annual selection role clearly defined, which would enable it to put a more reputable library collection, so as to improve its advances in this sophistication of Information and Communication Technologies of today.
- To keep the staff informed on the selection and acquisition method through the use of in-house training like seminars, conferences and workshops should be encouraged from time to time.
- The government should grant fund to libraries for purchase of and adopting of ICT in various academic libraries.

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