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Assessment of the Selection and Acquisition Criteria of Information Resources In Federal University of Technology Akure Library

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ARTICLE INFO	ABSTRACT
	The prevalent situation of inadequate funding of University libraries in Nigeria has posed great challenges for library/information resource centers to satisfy the target audience in the area of selection and acquisition of information resources. Selection is the act of deciding what information resources are added to the library collection and in what quantity while acquisition deals with locating and acquiring the information resources identified as appropriate for the collection. This study assessed the selection and acquisition criteria of information resources in Federal University of Technology Akure (FUTA) library. The study employed a quantitative approach conducted in a cross-sectional design. A total of 97 survey questionnaires was distributed out of which 72 questionnaires were returned indicating 74.2% response rate. The data collected was analyzed using descriptive statistics (mean) and the study revealed that contemporary significance or permanent value, format and ease of use as well as popular interest were highly rated methods of selection of information resources while purchases, gifts/donation and exchanges were highly rated methods of acquisition of information resources. Identified challenges include government fiscal policy, high foreign exchange, financial mismanagement by the academic administrators and library managers as well as inarticulate selection and acquisition development policy. The study recommended that contingency plans should be provided to mitigate against price fluctuations as a result of government fiscal measures and exorbitant foreign exchange. Library managers should possess basic financial knowledge and periodic training and development should be organized for library professionals to develop articulate selection and acquisition development policy.

1. Introduction

Libraries have a reputation for being oh-so-boring places you visit only when you absolutely must. On the contrary, libraries provide information for educational, social, personal growth of its users and other services including referral services which involves a personal encounter with the library

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personnel [1]. Adewuyi [2] once described the library as "a collection of information materials such as films, magazines, maps, manuscripts and phonograph records made available for use".

There is no doubt that libraries have had an impressively direct and significant impact on societies all over the world for thousands of years. Evidently, the library is the only agency devoted exclusively to the purpose of selecting, acquiring, preserving, making available, transmitting and securing the widest and most effective use of the records of civilization by the society of which it is a part [3].

Collection development is a multi-faceted activity, with the functional domain of collection development to achieve a live collection in the library [4]. The scope of collection development cut across acquisition, user assessment, policies, selection, weeding and evaluation [1]. Similarly, the constituent parts of collection development include assessing user needs, evaluating the present collection, determining selection policies [5]. It should be noted that none of these aspects of collection development is insignificant as they all work in synergy to guarantee the functional effectiveness of the library collection.

Selection is an important aspect of collection development, which guides the University to select information resources based on the scope of the library. A cursory observation by researchers suggests and presents selection as a necessary first step in the acquisition process. [4] emphasized in their research that Information resources are selected on the basis of their perceived usefulness to a group of readers. Categorically, selection of information resources cannot be effectively done without factoring the present and future needs of library users [6].

Acquisition is one of the aspects of collection development that logically succeeds the selection process of information resources in the library. it is the bedrock upon which stock development of information resources is based upon. Poor funding of library has resulted to the blight of effective acquisition of library materials [7]. Acquisition procedure usually begins with stock checking and ends when the materials ordered for are received and certified by the acquisition staff [4].

Information resources provides access to knowledge, information and works of the imagination through a range of resources and services [8]. The key point here is that a library cannot exist without being equipped with enough information resources. The information resources in the library are sources of acquiring knowledge. They include books, journals, dictionaries, e-books, encyclopaedias etc. However, regardless of the type of library and the type of users the library serve, the primary aim of all libraries and information centres is to assist in the transfer of information and the development of knowledge. This is only achievable through the selection and acquisition of materials that will meet the desired need(s) of the libraries concerned.

The Federal University of Akure (FUTA) library is an academic library. The library has continued to fulfill its mandate of delivering effective service in the areas of supporting teaching, learning, research and scholarship. Endowed with a team of qualified professional, support and technical staff and state-of-the-art facilities. The university library continues to provide excellent, resourceful and user-oriented services to her user community [9].

Over the years, selection and acquisition of information resources in University or academic libraries have been contentious issues for librarians and the library community. However, the prevalent situation of inadequate funding of University libraries in Nigeria has posed great challenges for library/ information resource centres to satisfy the target audience in the area of selection and acquisition of information resources. It has been identified through various research that most academic libraries do not have a well-articulated written collection policy, no up-to-date selection aid, non-existence of acquisition policy statement in some cases and absence of qualified professional librarians. Thus, this research is aimed at assessing the procedures involved in the selection and acquisition criteria and challenges of information resources in FUTA library.

2. Literature Review

2.1 Collection Development Policy in the University Library

Collection development has recently become a very popular term in library and information centres as a need for an efficient and balance collection [10]. It includes everything that goes into selecting, acquiring materials, ordering and payment. It is a chain of events that includes planning, administration and control. Collection development serves as a foundation, upon which other library services are built. Collection development policy would ensure that all information resources acquired are relevant to the users of the library; thus ensuring that the resources acquired are effectively used [3]. Research has shown that collection development policies in any library should be reviewed after five years, because things and people do change [11].

A collection development policy is a written statement of selection principles and criteria, with guidelines on the depth of subject coverage, and details such as language, geography, and time period [12]. A collection development policy establishes ground rules for planning, budgeting, selecting, and acquiring library materials. These documents provide a framework for coordinated collection development program throughout the university libraries. In addition, these policies help the library serve the academic community. They assist bibliographers in making not only routine selections, but also approval plan profiles and gift acceptance decisions. With common terminology and collecting standards, bibliographers can work with greater consistency towards defined goals. The standard processes to be considered include selection, scope of collecting, and replacement of missing but useful materials and worn-out materials [12].

2.2 Selection Policy in the University Library

Selection is the decision-making aspect of collection development. The decision to order means attempting to build a well-balanced collection covering most subject equally, whereas, during difficult economic times, it will only be possible to attend to a few users' requests [12]. The library management must also ensure that no race, nationality, profession, trade, religion, school of thought, or local customer is overlooked during selection. The collection is built according to the policy, and patron's demands must also be considered [12].

2.3 Acquisition Policy in the University Library

Acquisition policy sets outs the principles which guide the development of a quality Library collection that meets the information needs of a dynamic community. The policy will ensure that the quality of the acquisition of information resources is maintained through consistency in selection and de-selection processes and a process of continuous evaluation [13]. Acquisition is the implementation of selection decisions: ordering, receipt, and payment. These must be done according to a procedure that is guided by the collection development policy. To correctly distinguish ends from means, examine values as well as capabilities, the dimension and importance of Readers Services must be known. This is only determinable through the use of a written collection development policy statement or document [12].

2.4 Challenges of Selection and Acquisition in the University Library

The problem of selection and acquisition include lack of written comprehensive collection development policy, lack of a collection development department, low faculty involvement in

selection, inadequate book votes, irregular weeding and poor staff strength [4]. Furthermore, financial mismanagement by the academic administrators and library administrators pose serious problems in maintaining adequate collection. Consequently, the library is handicapped when it comes to improving both the stock and staff strength [10].

3. Methodology

This study employed a quantitative approach conducted in a cross-sectional design. The population of the study is comprised of the total employee of Federal University of Technology Akure (FUTA) library. There are total of ninety-seven (97) employees working with the Federal University of Technology Akure (FUTA) library which represents the sample frame from which the sample of this study was selected. Since the population was manageable the researcher therefore selected the whole population (97) by using total enumeration. A survey questionnaire was used in this study as the instrument of data collection. This is due to the ability of questionnaire to efficiently manage the time, energy and cost of the researcher and its ability to reach a larger number of respondents [14].

The research questionnaire was self-administered to the respondents. Items of the questionnaire were adapted from previous studies on selection and acquisition of information resources of library and measured on a 5-point Likert scale in which "1" indicates mostly acquired and "5" indicates not acquired. For types of information resources acquired; "1" – very high and "5" – very low for ways of acquiring library information resources while "1" indicates strongly agree and '5' indicates strongly disagree for selection and acquisition process of library resources [15 - 16].

A total of 97 survey questionnaires was distributed out of which 72 questionnaire was returned indicating 74.2% response rate. The collected data in this study was analysed using a statistical package for social science (SPSS) version 24. A descriptive analysis was conducted to assess the selection and acquisition criteria and the challenges facing selection and acquisition of library resources and the result were presented using frequency, charts, mean and relative important index (RII).

4. Findings and Discussion

4.1 Demographic Distribution of the Respondents

The result of the demographic distribution of the study in relation to age of the respondents shows that majority of the respondents (61.1%) fall within the age range of 30 – 39 years, followed by 40 – 49 years (25%) and 50 -59 years (8.3%) while 1% of the respondents are above 60 years of age. This indicates that the respondents are within their active age at work. In addition, the descriptive analysis result shows that 76.4% of the respondents are male and the remaining 23.6% are female. The result of the descriptive analysis further shows that majority of the respondents (75%) are acquisition librarians, 20.8% are at the collective development designation, the remaining of the respondents serial librarian and chief librarian have 2.8% and 1.4%. However, no respondent is in the designation of circulation Librarian. Furthermore, the result shows that 34.7% of the respondents have between 10 – 15years work experience, 29.2% of the respondents have between 15 – 20years experience, 27.8% have between 6 – 10years experience while 8% of the respondents have between 0 – 5years experience. The demographic distribution of the respondents is presented in Table 1 below.

Table 1
Demographic characteristics of the respondents

Variable	Items	Frequency	Percentage
Age	Below 30 Years		
	30 - 39 years	3	4.2
	40 - 49 Years	44	61.1
	50 - 59 Years	18	25.0
	Above 60 Years	6	8.3
		1	1.4
Gender	Male		
	Female	55	76.4
		17	23.6
Designation	Collection Development librarian	15	20.8
	Acquisition Librarian		
	Serials Librarian	54	75.0
	Chief Librarian	2	2.8
	Circulations Librarian	1	1.4
		-	-
Experience	0 - 5 Years		
	6 - 10 Years	6	8.3
	10 -15 Years	20	27.8
	15 -20 Years	25	34.7
		21	29.2

4.2 Types of information Resources Acquired in FUTA Library

Further descriptive analysis was conducted on the types of information resources acquired in FUTA library. The result as presented in Table 2 shows that 1 and 4 are the minimum and maximum values for all the items in the types of information resources acquired in FUTA library respectively. The result further shows the highest mean value of 3.34 and the lowest values of 2.89 respectively. Hence, it was revealed that books is the number one ranked type of information resources acquired in FUTA library, followed by journals which is ranked 2nd and materials such dictionaries, encyclopaedia, yearbooks and reports is ranked 3rd while periodicals, government publications, computer resources, tapes, microfilms, references, manuscripts and magazines are ranked 4th, 5th, 6th, 7th, 8th, 9th, 10 and 11th respectively.

Table 2
Types of Information resources acquired in FUTA Library

S/N	Items	Min	Max	Mean	Rank
1	**Books**	1	4	3.34	1
2	**Journals**	1	4	3.31	2
3	**Materials (Dictionaries, Encyclopedias, Yearbooks, reports)**	1	4	3.26	3
4	**Periodicals**	1	4	3.25	4
5	**Government Publications**	1	4	3.22	5
6	**Computer resources**	1	4	3.19	6
7	**Tapes (audio and Videos)**	1	4	3.19	7
8	**Microfilms**	1	4	3.16	8
9	**References**	1	4	3.09	9
10	**Manuscripts**	1	4	3.07	10
11	**Magazines**	1	4	2.89	11

4.3 Selection Criteria in FUTA Library

The findings of the descriptive analysis of this study also found a minimum and maximum value of 1 and 4 respectively for formal and ease of use, local emphasis, readability or ability to sustain interest, treatment of subject to age of intended audience, reputation of author, creative quality and critical assessment in a variety of journals while popular interest, circulation as monitored through the automated system, currency of information and accuracy have a minimum value of 1 and maximum value of 5. Hence, the ranking of the mean value of the selection and acquisition method/process in FUTA Library revealed "Contemporary significance or permanent value" is the number one and format and ease of use is the 2nd ranked, popular interest is ranked 3rd and Circulation as monitored through the automated system is ranked as the 4th method of selection of information resources in FUTA library. Furthermore, the result shows that currency of information, accuracy, local emphasis, readability or ability to sustain interest, treatment of subject to age of intended audience are ranked 6th, 7th, 8th, and 9th position respectively. However, reputation of author, creative or technical quality and critical assessment in a variety of journal is ranked 10th, 11th and 12th respectively. The findings of this study obviously revealed the library collection development policy which identifies that no library can be exhaustive in the collection of materials, so collecting materials that are of significance value becomes the top priority of the library [17]. Table 3 below presents the selection of information resources in FUTA journals.

Table 3
Selection of information resources Criteria in FUTA Library

S/N	Items	Min	Max	Mean	Rank
1	Contemporary significance or permanent value	2	4	3.28	1
2	Format and ease of use	1	4	3.13	2
3	Popular interest	1	5	3.19	3
4	Circulation as monitored through the automated system	1	5	2.80	4
5	Currency of information	1	5	2.71	5
6	Accuracy	1	5	2.50	6
7	Local emphasis	1	4	2.54	7
8	Readability or ability to sustain interest	1	4	2.68	8
9	Treatment of subject to age of intended audience	1	4	2.74	9
10	Reputation of author, publisher, producer or illustrator	1	4	3.03	10
11	Creative, literary or technical quality	1	4	2.84	11
12	Critical assessments in a variety of journals	1	4	2.62	12

4.4 Ways of Acquiring Library Information Resources in FUTA Library

The descriptive analysis result of the ways of acquiring library information resources in FUTA library shows a minimum value of 1 for all the ways of acquiring information resources except exchanges which has 2 and a maximum value of 5 for all ways of information resources acquisition except for purchases and Legal Deposit Law. Hence, the mean value of the ways of information resources acquisition in FUTA library revealed that the most prevalent ways of information resources acquisition is through Purchase which is ranked as number 1, Gifts/Donations is ranked number 2, while exchanges, In-house self-Generated efforts and Legal Deposit law are the 3rd, 4th and 5th way of acquiring library information resources in FUTA library. Table 3 below presents the descriptive result of the ways of acquiring library information resources in FUTA library.

Table 4
Ways of Acquiring Library Information Resources in FUTA Library

S/N	Items	Min	Max	Mean	Rank
1	Purchase	1	4	3.59	1
2	Gifts/Donations	1	5	3.49	2
3	Exchanges	2	5	3.46	3
4	In-house Self-Generated efforts	1	5	3.36	4
5	Legal Deposit Law	1	4	3.25	5

4.5 Challenges Facing the Selection and Acquisition of Information Resources in FUTA Library

The descriptive result on the challenges of selection and acquisition of information resources in FUTA library shows a minimum value of 1 and a maximum value of 4 for all the challenges highlighted in the study. On assessing the mean value, the findings show that government fiscal measures is the number one ranked challenges facing selection and acquisition of information resources, followed by high foreign exchange ranked as number 2, financial mismanagement by the academic administrators and library managers which is ranked 3rd, inarticulate selection and acquisition development policy, censorship, underdeveloped book industry and poor management of library votes is ranked 4th, 5th, 6th and 7th ranked challenges of selection and acquisition of information resources in FUTA Library. Table 4 presents the challenges of selection and acquisition of information resources in FUTA library.

Table 5
Challenges of Selection and Acquisition of Information Resources in FUTA Library

	Items	Min	Max	Mean	Ranks
1	Government fiscal measures	1	4	3.36	1
2	High foreign exchange	1	4	3.11	2
3	smanagement by the academic administrators and library managers	1	4	3.10	3
4	Inarticulate selection and acquisition development policy	1	4	3.08	4
5	Censorship	1	4	3.00	5
6	Underdeveloped book industry	1	4	2.99	6
7	Poor management of library votes	1	4	2.92	7

5. Conclusions

Since there is no single standard that can be applied to library acquisition decision, collections of merit and significance, items are evaluated according to objective guidelines for each type of material and intended audience in libraries [18]. The findings of this study shows that selection of information resources in library depend on contemporary significance or permanent value, format and ease of use, popular interest and circulation as monitored through the automated system while purchases, gifts/donation and exchanges were highly rated methods of acquisition of information resources. The challenges encountered during the course of the study include government fiscal measures, high foreign exchange, financial mismanagement by the academic administrators and library managers and inarticulate selection and acquisition development policy. It could therefore be concluded that effectiveness and usability of libraries will depend on how articulate the selection and acquisition policy is, government fiscal measures and proper management of library finances.

6. Recommendation

This study recommends that contingency plans should be in place to mitigate the effect of price fluctuations and library administrators in tertiary institutions, and efforts should be intensified towards timely review of library selection and acquisition policy. This study also recommends in-line with the established library standards that at least five percent of total library holdings must be withdrawn every year if a viable public library collection is to be maintained. Culling books from a library collection is done responsibly, decisions being based on authoritative sources, recommended bibliographies, reviews and the expertise of professional and trained staff [18]. This practice has not been evidenced in the FUTA library. The followings are considered for withdrawal every year in-line with the established library standard policy:

- Obsolete, outdated, discredited materials and duplicates of titles in decreased demands;
- Materials that are shabby, soiled or mutilated beyond repair;
- Overdue items not returned after at least a year of staff efforts to retrieve them;
- Items stolen from the library.

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