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PROBLEMS OF COLLECTION DEVELOPMENT IN ANAMBRA STATE LIBRARY BOARD

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Background to the study

The core of the library is the collection. Its pivotal place is enshrined in the basic mandate of the library to stock information materials to meet the needs of users. Thus, the collection, composed of the information resources, constitutes the basic instrument of service delivery in the library. Lending credence to this view, Ifidon (2007), states thus: “Beautiful buildings, well-trained staff and modern information storage and retrieval systems can only be appreciated if excellent sources and services are given to users. These services cannot be given without live collections”. The significance of the above submission is that effective service in the library is closely related to the availability of an adequate library collection.

Library Collection is the sum total of Library materials, books, manuscripts, serials, government documents, pamphlets, catalogues, reports recordings, microfilm reels, micro cards and microfiche, punched cards, computer tapes etc., that make up the holdings of a particular library (Nwosu, & Udo-Anyanwu, 2015; Eze, & Eze, 2006). Collection development is a process of building up and improving the collection in the library and it is a very important function of a library. Users need, collection development policy, selection, acquisition, management-evaluation, weeding, storage and preservation of collection are the important areas of collection development. Collection development is conceptualized by Ojebode (2009), as comprising a great number of library activities including selection of resources, acquisition of those materials selected, the development of plans for sharing resources between libraries, the maintenance of resources acquired, weeding and evaluation. It is a systematic building of library collection to satisfy the needs of users. The scope of collection development covers acquisition, user assessment, policies, selection, weeding and evaluation (Ezekwe, & Muokebe, 2012; Edoaka,

2000). Library collections are usually acquired through gifts, donation, purchase, loans, consortia building and so on. Hence, library collection is the pool of achievements of the past preserved for the benefit of present and future. For a library to achieve adequate collection, it must abide by the collection development policy.

Collection development policy is a written document that 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 Kumar et al (2008). Collection development is guided in most libraries by the collection development policy.

The first necessary step in the acquisition process is selection. Document selection is a highly professional work. Information materials are selected on the basis of their perceived usefulness to a group of readers. Selection aims at getting into the collection, a maximum number of desirable titles from uncountable number of titles published every year (Sanjay, 2016). Acquisition of documents consists of selection and procurement of documents. Acquisition procedure usually begins with stock checking and ends when the materials ordered for are received and certified by the acquisition staff. It is the process of acquiring the relevant materials into the library for the use of the clientele. Adewuyi (2005), views acquisition as the bedrock upon which stock development is based. Acquisition work involves three sets of people viz., (i) library management and users (ii) librarian and library staff (iii) publishers and suppliers. The information materials acquired into the library collection are periodically evaluated.

Collection evaluation is done periodically to ascertain the collection's validity in relation to the library's objectives. According to Ifidon (2007), collection evaluation is done to determine the scope, depth and usefulness of the collection, test the effectiveness, the utility and practical applicability of the written collection development policy, assess the collection's adequacy and hence highlight its inadequacies and strategize to identify areas where weeding is required. It helps to determine how well the selection policy is working out. Collection evaluation gives room for weeding.

Weeding involves removal of outdated books from the library shelves. It results from stock evaluation. Its benefits to the library have been summarized by Bantai (2002:21), as "creation of space, increase in circulation turnover and greater accessibility of useful materials". Ephraim (2001) agrees that weeding improves access to usable materials as it frees shelving space from unused materials.

The Public library is a purpose-driven organization. It is the major support infrastructure for the provision of the information needs of the community which it serves. In view of this, the need for 'live collections' in public libraries is unquestionable. A live collection is one that is well-groomed, active and hence responsive to the needs of users. It is the functional domain of collection development to achieve a live collection in the library. Collection development is a multi-faceted activity. Similarly, Kumar et al (2008), identify the constituent parts of collection development as assessing user needs, evaluating the present collection, determining selection policies, coordinating selection, re-evaluating and storing parts of the collection, and planning

for resource sharing. None of these aspects of collection development is inconsequential as they all work in synergy to ensure the functional effectiveness of the library collection.

The major problems faced by majority of the libraries in collection development are Information explosion; Literature scatter; Rising price of documents; Widening gap and cost between hard bound and paperback editions; Inelastic budget; Rising cost of binding; Book selection; weeding out; Delay in release of book grants and Technological evolution (Ojebode, 2009: Agosto, 2011: Akinola, 2013: Oyewo, 2015: Ifidon, 2007 & Hareshkumar, 2012). Hareshkumar (2012), highlighted 13 problems of collection development as follows;

1. Document Selection Problems
2. Background or Document Acquisition Transaction
3. Need of Subject Background
4. Multiplicity of Vendors
5. Document Procurement Problems
6. Need for Avoiding Duplication
7. Choice of Vendors and Problem of Local Vs Foreign Suppliers
8. Problems Relating to Terms of Payment
9. Problems of fiscal Management
10. Price Verification
11. Vendor Controlled Order Plans
12. Problems of subscription to journals:
13. Other Problems of Documents Acquisition

However, the researchers being ardent users of a public library in Anambra State, personally observed some faults in the collection of the library. It then became pertinent to examine the process of collection development in Anambra State Library Board and probably proffer solutions to problems.

Statement of Problem

Library Collection is the sum total of Library materials, books, manuscripts, serials, government documents, pamphlets, catalogues, reports recordings, microfilm reels, micro cards and microfiche, punched cards, computer tapes etc., that make up the holdings of a particular library. Collection development is a process of building up and improving the collection in the library and it is a very important function of a library (Akinola, 2013). However, preliminary investigations by the researcher shows that collection development activities are not properly carried out in Anambra State Library Board. This study seeks to examine the process of collection development in Anambra State Library Board. To the best of the researcher's knowledge, studies have been conducted to investigate the problems of collection development in libraries. None has determined the extent of problems of collection development with Anambra State Library Board. This is the gap this study is set to fill.

Research Questions

The following research question guided this study.

1. How is collection evaluation done in Anambra State Library Board?

2. What is the status of collection development policy in Anambra State Library Board?
3. What acquisition method is used by Anambra State Library Board?
4. What are the factors that militate against the effective collection development in Anambra State Library Board?

Method

This study is a case study. Nworgu (2015) states that a case study singles out individuals, groups of individuals, institutions or communities for study. Usually, case studies are motivated by problems emanating from the case or cases being studied. The study was conducted in Awka Local Government Area of Anambra state which is in South East Geopolitical Zone of Nigeria. The population of the study consists of 10 librarians working in Kenneth Dike Library in Awka Anambra State. The entire population was used as such there was no sampling. This is because the population was small and manageable. This is in accordance with the opinion of Akuezilo and Agu (2003) that there should be no sample when the population is small. The instrument for data collection was questionnaire. The questionnaire was designed by the researcher based on the five research questions. The instrument titled ‘Extent of Problems of Collection Development Questionnaire (EPCDQ)’ was validated by two experts in the department of Library Science Ojukwu University, Anambra State. EPCDQ was structured on four-point scale of strongly agreed (SA), agreed (A), disagreed (D) and strongly disagreed (SD). It has four sections A, B, C, and D. Section A elicited information from respondents on the collection evaluation done in Anambra State Library Board. Section B was concerned with the status of collection development policy in Anambra State Library Board, Section C sought information on the acquisition method used in Anambra State Library Board, and Section D elicited information on factors that militate against effective collection development. The researchers administered the

questionnaire personally. Data was collected within one week. All the questionnaire administered were duly filled and returned. The data obtained through the questionnaire was analysed using simple percentages and frequency tables.

Presentation of findings

Research Question 1: What method of collection evaluation does your library use?

Table 1: Percentage responses on the collection evaluation method used in Anambra State Library Board.

S/N	Items	Frequency(N)	Percentage(%)
3	Study book selection lists.	1	10
4	Subject bibliographies	0	0
5	Subject balance	0	0
6	Requests by clients	1	10
7	Books of selected publishers	2	20
8	Authorised lists	0	0
9	Those listed in standard guides to reference materials	0	0
10	Opinions of users	1	10
11	Opinion of librarians	5	50
	TOTAL	10	100

The results in Table 1 shows that item 11, opinion of the librarians is mostly used for collection evaluation in Anambra State Library Board (50%). 20% of the respondents accepted item 7, books of selected publishers. 10% of the respondents accepted items 3,6, and ten, study book selection lists, requests by clients and opinions of users respectively. However, 0% of the respondents accepted items 4,5,8 and 9, subject bibliographies, subject balance, authorised lists, those listed in standard guides to reference materials.

Research Question 2: What is the status of collection development policy in Anambra State Library Board?

Table 2: Percentage responses on the status of collection development policy in Anambra State Library Board?

S/N	Item	Frequency(N)	Percentages(%)
12	Written collection development policy	1	10
13	Non-written collection development policy	6	60
14	No collection development policy at all.	3	30
	TOTAL	10	100

The results in Table 2 shows that 60% of the respondents agreed that there is non-written collection development policy in Anambra State Library Board as shown in item 13. 30% of the respondents agreed that there is no collection development policy. While only 10% of the respondents agreed that the library has written collection development policy.

Research Question 3: What acquisition methods does your library use?

Table 3: Percentage responses on the acquisition methods used in Anambra State Library Board

S/N	Item	Frequency(N)	Percentage(%)
16	Gift/ donations	5	50
17	Purchase	4	40
18	Exchange	0	0
19	Photocopying	1	10
	TOTAL	10	100

The results in Table 3, 50% of the respondents agreed with item 16 which is gifts and donations. Item 17, purchase gained the agreement of 40% of the respondents. 10% of the respondents accepted photocopy while 0% of the respondents agreed with exchange as shown in items 19 and 18 respectively.

Research Question 4: What are the factors that militate against effective collection development?

Table 4: The percentage responses on the respondent's perception of factors militating against effective collection development.

S/N	Item	Frequency(N)	Percentage(%)
20	No written collection development policy	3	30
21	Staff lack ICT skills	0	0
22	No collection development department	0	0
23	Insufficient fund	5	50

24	Low staff strength	1	10
25	Staff lack interest	1	10
	TOTAL	10	100

From Table 4, the result shows that, 50% of the respondents agreed with item 23, insufficient fund as a problem hindering collection development in Anambra State Library Board. 30% of the respondents agreed with item 20 which says ‘No written collection development policy’. Items 24 (Low staff strength) and 25(Staff lack interest) gained the agreement of 10% of the respondents. None of the respondents accepted items 21 (Staff lack ICT skills) and 22 (No collection development department), as they both had 0% agreement.

Discussion

The result for research question one reveals that collection evaluation is mostly based on the opinion of the librarians. Then books produced by some selected publishers are also adjudged worthy of selection. Other methods of collection evaluation are not used in Anambra State Library Board. This could be because there are reliable publishers around that publish exactly what the users like. Again, the Librarians are versatile enough as to determine what and what collections to get for their patrons. The finding is in line with the findings of Nwosu, & Udo-Anyanwu, (2015) who revealed that improper collection evaluation hinders the relevance of collection development in libraries.

The result of research question two reveals that there exists a non-written collection development policy in Anambra State Library Board. This shows that there is a policy for collection development but that policy is non in a written form. It could be that the library management prefers non- written policy for collection development. The finding of the present study is in

agreement with that of Sanjay, (2016) who reiterated that most libraries do not have a written collection development policy.

Findings for research question three reveals that the acquisition method used for collection development in Anambra State Library Board is gifts and donations. Second to gifts and donation method is purchase. This is in agreement with the finding of Ojebode, (2009) who revealed literature and discovered that most libraries depend on gifts and donations as their major means of collection development.

Insufficient fund is a major problem that hinders collection development in Anambra State Library Board. This was revealed in the findings of research question four in Table 4. This is in line with the findings of Ifidon (2007) who enlisted poor funding as the problem of collection development. Another major problem of collection development is the fact that there is no written policy for collection development.

Recommendation

The librarian should always ensure that collection evaluation is properly done. This would enable the library acquire a viable collection in accordance with information needs of the users.

It should be a matter of general policy in Anambra State Library Board to have a written collection development policy. This written policy would clearly spell out the methods of selection and acquisition.

Anambra State Library Board should adopt all the conventional acquisition methods. Acquisition should not be limited to only one or two method as was revealed from the findings.

The State government should provide special grants to the library. This would enable the library to upgrade and update its collections. Thereafter, there should be a budgetary commitment to sustain and maintain the collections. The assistance of international organisations could be enlisted.

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