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Selective and Effective Strategic Collection Development Approach in Universities Libraries

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Abstract

Purpose: University libraries playing pivotal role in developing and delivering education among university community by providing authentic information resources in terms of books, magazines, academic research journals etc. Collection development policies adopted to select and purchase the library print and electronic resources which worked as a guide for decision making. The purpose of this study is to propose the collection development policy which will help the acquisition librarians in selecting, evaluating and purchasing the materials for academic/universities libraries.

Methodology: The trends of collection development practices were identified through the intensive literature review. Then, the university libraries of Lahore were personally visited to understand their collection development policies and practices. Moreover, the acquisition librarians from outside of Lahore were contacted via phone call to understand and discuss the collection development process in their libraries.

Findings: The study findings revealed that there is no systematic written policy for assessment, selection, evaluation and deselection of library material at the universities libraries of Pakistan. Even, the acquisition process of books in universities libraries vary from university to university and even province to province. However, the proposed collection development policy revealed that the automatic receiving of books and other library materials via gifts, donations, exchanging library materials, resource sharing, and subscribing memberships of other organizations will be helpful to enhance the library collection and also reduce the cost to purchase the library materials. The proposed steps for collection development will act as a segment of complete collection

development policy and may work as a guide line of collection development procedure to the universities libraries.

Originality/Value: The study is first attempt to draw holistic approach of collection development at national level and it will also provide guideline to select user centered resources and also beneficial in terms of saving finances by practicing the proposed steps for developing academic libraries collection.

Keywords: Collection development; Collection management Practices; Collection Development Policies; Academic libraries; Pakistan.

Introduction:

Libraries are services-oriented department with the aim to serve and satisfying the needs of the academic community, students and researchers through analyzing the collection development process. It is compulsory to develop the library collection according to the needs of the library users. Evans and Saponaro (2012) refer to “collection development as the process of identifying the strengths and weaknesses of library’s materials collection in terms of patron needs, community resources, and attempting to correct existing weaknesses if any”. Reitz (2013) also define the collection development as “the process of planning and acquiring a balanced collection of library materials over a period of years, based on an ongoing assessment of the information needs of the library’s clientele, analysis of usage statistics and demographic projection”.

The dramatic changes in the technology have impacted the collection development of the libraries in the last decades. The library professionals have to think broadly and innovatively to integrate proliferating electronic information resources into the traditional policies of collection development in the libraries. The transformation process of collection development gradually combines the appropriate frame of mind to select and evaluate the information product to provide the quality of information to the library patrons (Rowley & Black, 1996). However, Snow (1996) critically evaluated the written collection development policies in the article “Wasted Words: The Written Collection Development Policy and the Academic Library”. The author stated that the bibliographer has to concentrate on the selection and evaluation of collection according to the demand by academic community rather than focus on written policies. The written collection development policies are unnecessary and it becomes outdated rapidly with the passage of time.

The academic libraries have to give consideration for aligning the collection development policies according to the scenario of digital librarianship (Kovacs & Elkordy, 2000).

Roberts (2001) evaluated the library collection development in the historical and contemporary context and highlighted that collection of digital/electronic resources has key influences on the future of collection development. Pandita (2004) and Kumar, Hussain, and Singh (2008) also reported that the collection development policy (CDP) is an integrated parts of libraries to robust the collection and the libraries have to re-design the collection development policy according to the digital era. An investigation conducted by Agyen-Gyasi, Lamptey and Frempong, (2010) and Khan and Bhatti (2016) both disclose the non-existence of collection development policy that is a serious lapse. Unfortunately, the selection of library material has been done without any written collection development policy. Moreover, the studies by (Kavulya, 2004; Ameyaw & Entsua- Mensah, 2016; Jan & Ganiae, 2019; Ameyaw, 2020; Frempong-Kore, 2021) revealed that the libraries have the outdated collection development policy and also inactive due to higher authorities' negligence. They recommended that the collection development policy should be reviewed annually and the university have to involve the library staff/ stakeholder/subject specialist in the selection process of collection.

Challenges served as a catalyst in implementation of collection development policy at libraries. Inadequate support of administrative staff, lack of continuous professional development activities of librarians, shortage of staff, inappropriate collection development policy and finance are significant challenges to the implementation of collection development policy in university libraries (Adekanmbi & Boadi, 2008). In agreement with this study, Akporhonor (2005) has stated that "Every library is supported by three legs – a building, its collections, and the staff. However, the tendons supporting these legs, and what ultimately binds them together, is money. Finance is at the heart of any enterprise, and if the library is to meet its objectives, money is a basic necessity. When funds/finances are lacking, it is difficult to organize library services and the efficiency of services is bound to be adversely affected". Campbell (2006) and Chaputula (2014) also highlighted the inadequate finance has adversely impact the collection development policies of the universities. This challenge has been aggravated due to the global economic crisis which has bounded the academic libraries to adopt only demand-driven acquisitions especially in the perspective of the developing countries (Guarria & Wang, 2011; Chaputula & Kanyando, 2014). Rasul and Singh (2010) supported the above statement and pointed out that it is difficult to fulfill

the expectations of the institution and users due to the university finance constrains and down trends of global economy. Basically, budgeting/finance constrains has positive correlation in the implementation of CDP (Evans & Saponaro, 2012).

Overall, Lack of comprehensive collection development policy is a great threat not only for library profession but also leads to stop the smooth operation of the libraries. Haider (1996) analyzed the “Acquisition and Collection Development in Pakistan” and explored the hindrances regarding collection development policy in the libraries of Pakistan. He asserted that poor management techniques, lack of trained professionals, non-existence of acquisition policy, limited budget, non-serious professional attitude, lack of knowledge assessment, lack of support from higher administrative authorities, poor patron driven acquisition and inflation rate are the significant hindrances to implement the collection development policy (Filson, 2018;;Adekanmbi & Boadi, 2008). Recently, Ameyaw (2020) and Frempong-Kore (2021) concluded that non-participation of faculty in the selection process of collection development, low budget allocation, space constrains and high inflation rates are the biggest challenges to implement the collection development policy. The results of these challenges caused the collapse of book industry. Academic libraries are established as a custodian of information with the aim to satisfy the user’s information needs. For that purpose, libraries need to adopt user centered collection development policy to acquire comprehensive resources. The current study proposed the collection development policy to provide better user centered services in the light of literature and professional discussion.

Study Objectives:

These objectives have been followed to design the selective and effective collection development policy at universities libraries of Pakistan.

1. To identify the trends of Collection Development in university libraries
2. To propose strategies for Collection Development in university libraries.

Methodology

A relevant literature was reviewed to get the insight of collection development process in universities libraries. Additionally, some of the university libraries situated at Lahore were visited physically while the librarians were contacted through phone call belong to outside the Lahore and engaged them in an informal discussion on collection development to gain insights about their process of acquisition of books in libraries. The acquisition librarians of university libraries make

rich discussions about purchasing library materials. But all the discussion concluded by a single word i.e.

“It is our personal practices and we have no written document officially for the purchasing process of library books and other materials”.

The study summarizes on the basis of “personal experiences” of the authors who also performed their duties in different universities acquisition section of the libraries. The relevant literature and informal discussion with professional colleagues serving in other universities libraries contributed in this paper and enable us to write down the collection development policy for other professional colleagues that will be helpful to create user centered collection and also effective utilization of library resources development budget. The study will also act as base line for the future working on the systematic collection development process for universities libraries and other libraries also.

Trends of Collection Development in Pakistani Universities Libraries:

University libraries aim is to provide books, journals and other reading materials to library users’ relevant to their studies as well as general readings. Collection development in universities libraries is a continuous and permanent process to fulfill library users’ needs as per market demand. Also, collection development is a compulsory feature for the survival of libraries. The most important trend of collection development is the purchasing process but university libraries often face problems due to limited budget. But the professional librarians who involved in the process of collection development mostly engaged to select library materials and target those vendors who offered quality material in less price. Reynolds, Pickett, Vanduinkerken, Smith, Harrell and Tucker (2010) stated that the process of “User-Driven Acquisition” fall under the trend of collection development through purchase process. Secondly, there is a trend of collection development in university libraries through gifts/donations. Personal collections’ corners in universities libraries are another trend in developing library’s collection. However, it falls under the gift or donation category. Thirdly, there is a trend of collection development in university libraries through collection exchange program. Fourth trend of collection development in university libraries is subscribing institutional membership. There is a trend of collection development through deposit system but it is mostly followed in national libraries. A pictorial view of the trends in collection development in universities libraries is given in Figure 1:



Figure 1: Collection Development Trends in University Libraries

Proposed strategies for Collection Development for University Libraries:

Types of collections that need to be added continuously in university library collection:

- | | |
|---|-------------------------------------|
| 1. Text Books (TB) | 4. Reference Books/materials (RB) |
| 2. Supporting Text Books (STB) | 5. Ready Reference materials (RRM) |
| 3. General Collection of wide interest (GC) | 6. Creative Reading materials (CRM) |

The following steps should be observed by university libraries during the collection development process to save finances and make a purposeful selection. It is pertinent to mention that all the steps are only applicable for the selection of library materials especially books through purchase process. These steps are:

Step 1: Before the start of an annual session in the university, it is the responsibility of the Head Librarian to ask the whole faculties/departments/Institutes about the courses they offered and list of books that support their academic needs in the shape of text/supporting textbooks, reference and ready reference books.

Step 2: The concern/acquisition librarian check the requested titles first. If already available in the library; just inform the concerned faculty members. If the requested titles are not available then go to step 3.

Step 3: The concern/acquisition librarian put a request of the required titles latest editions to book vendors to provide a quotation.

Step 4: The concern/acquisition librarian makes a comparative statement of the received quotations.

Step 5: Selection of vendors is made based on less prices.

Step 6: Place an order of books to the vendors claiming lower prices as it is not compulsory to order the complete list of books to a single vendor.

Step 7: After receiving the ordered books physically, the concern/acquisition librarian check the quality of books and prices before starting technical processing of the received books. All received books are Ok then go to step 8 for further processing.

Step 8: Start technical processing of the new titles.

Step 9: Prepare a list of the new titles/arrivals in the library.

Step 10: A list of Library New Arrivals is shared through website/email with the whole faculty for information and use.

Step 11: The textbooks, supporting textbooks, and reference books are placed at the Circulation Desk counter as ready reference books for faculty and students. Also, one textbook may be issued to the concerned faculty members for a whole semester.

Step 12: However, a General collection and Creative reading materials may be selected with the help of subject experts, trainers, and the wide interest of library users only.

A proposed strategies working flow chart for collection development in universities libraries is shown in Figure 2 to understand the working flow of the proposed theoretical model.

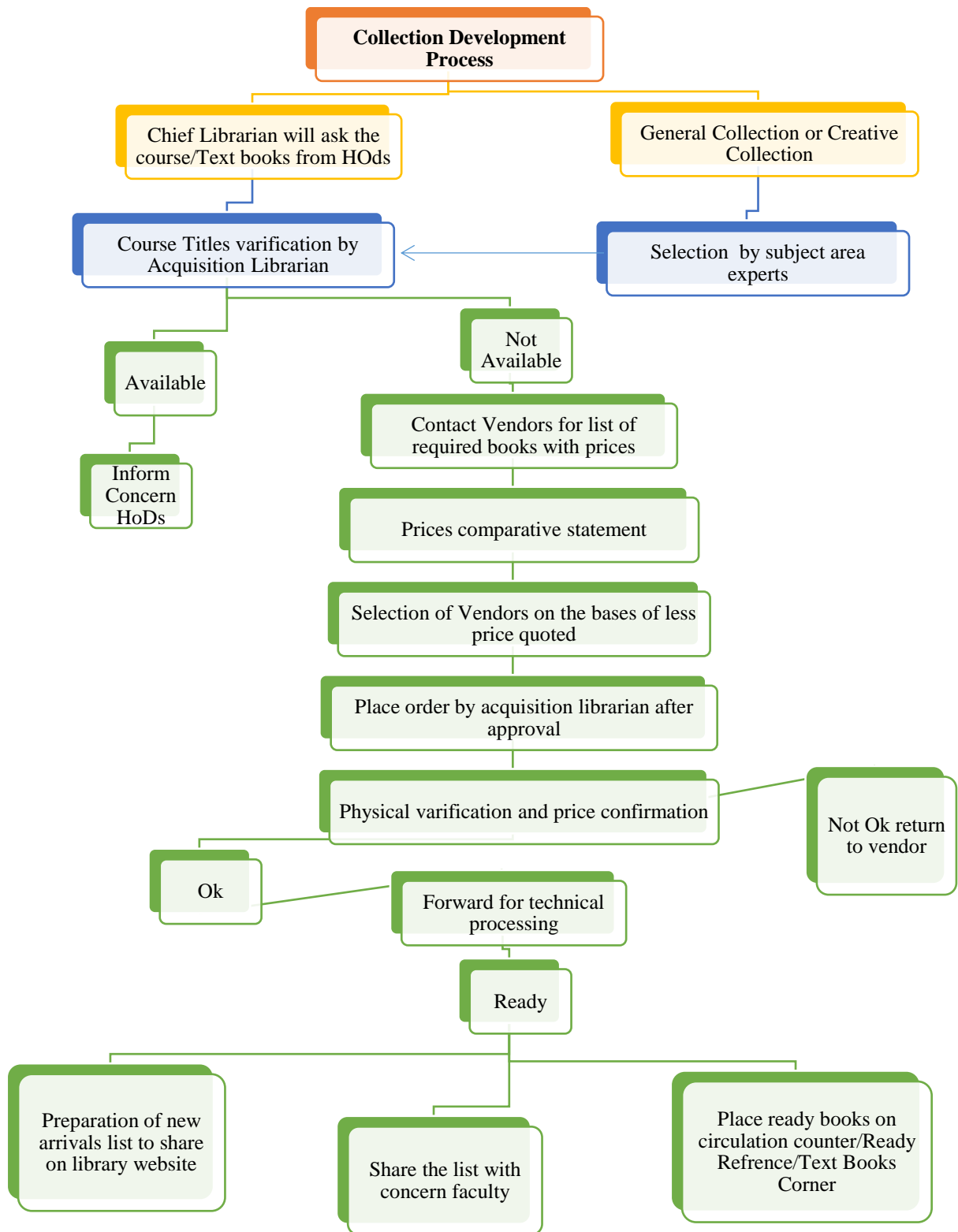


Figure 2: Flow Chart of Step-by-Step Collection Development Process

Conclusion and suggestions

The study concluded that there is no written document on collection development policy is available at universities libraries of Pakistan. The process of books acquisition through purchase in universities libraries vary from university to university. University libraries situated in other provinces have also their own process of acquisition of books and payments. Even not a single university library has their own formal written policy document for the collection development in universities libraries.

The conclusion based on the reviewed literature and the flow chart shown in figure 2 revealed that all the steps mentioned in the figure 2 must be part of the collection development policy to save university libraries budget and building purposeful collection in libraries. Here are some recommendations for the selective and effective collection development for universities libraries. These recommendations are given below:

- Libraries should have to prepare collection development policy (CDP) for smooth working and guidance the process of collection development.
- Libraries should have to prepare collection development policy of electronic resources/IT based resources as well.
- It is compulsory to engage the faculty members in the process of books selection and purchasing.
- Acquisition librarian must have to review all the concern requested titles and ensure the duplication check before placing order to the vendors.
- Library authority should continuously revise the collection development policy as per the need and also create a committee who approved the collection development policy.
- The university authorities need to create and announce a specific post of collection development librarians/acquisition librarian for this purpose.
- The libraries should have to send a list of books to the faculty to review all the courses' contents before starting a semester and ensure all the offered courses latest books within library premises.
- There should be a close coordination between faculty and head/Incharge of the library learner support services.

Overall, the collection development in libraries is continuous process and necessary for the survival of libraries as well as for the preparation of the library users for the market. If outdated and old editions books studied by student may not able to compete in the market and also not fulfill current needs of the market. It is necessary to strengthen university graduates by ensuring delivery of updated courses contents which is only possible in the presence of latest editions of the course titles/contents.

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