

Faculty Staff Involvement in Book Selection Responsibility in Some Selected University Libraries in Nigeria

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ABSTRACT This paper reports a survey of faculty staff involvement in book selection responsibility in six (6) Nigerian University Libraries consisting of three federal and three state in the South-West, Nigeria. Two sets of self-developed, pre-tested and validated questionnaires were used to collect data from the field. The reliability coefficients of the two self-developed questionnaires using cronbach-alpha method are: University Librarians' questionnaire ($\alpha = 0.82$) and Faculty Staff questionnaire ($\alpha = 0.88$). The study revealed that (1) Faculty Staff involvement in the book selection process is high; (2) Library book selection Committee is gradually fading-off from the Nigerian University Libraries; (3) Faculty staff were not making adequate use of their University Libraries for teaching responsibility. The researchers therefore recommend that: (1) Faculty Staff should be left out from taken major active roles in book selection; (2) Library Book Selection committee should be reinstated in University Libraries; (3) Faculty Staff should be encouraged to make more use of their University Libraries.

INTRODUCTION

Libraries can be classified by their ownership or the functions they perform. In general term, libraries are establishments charged with the prerogative responsibility of fostering the goals and objectives of their parent organization body. University library, which otherwise known as academic library is defined by Hunt (1990) as an institution within institutions". And in a statement which Hunt credited to the British University Grants Committee in 1921, gave a classical definition of the academic library as "the central organ of a University, by its treatment of which the entire "character and efficiency of the parent body might be judged". In his own view, Ifidon (1997) has succinctly defined library as "a collection of information sources organized for effective use".

According to Brain et al. (2001) stated that, "libraries are usually thought of as places, collections, and services." Libraries can then be seen as "store-house" of information made possible through the collection of a variety of materials, (most of which are in printed format) capable of enriching cultural development of a nation. Library is defined by Fatuyi (2001) as "a complex place filled with all the information that one would need for a successful research and academic activities". The complexity, one may probe, refers to the technical skill (selection, acquiring, processing, storing) and communica-

tion strategy that involve in a successful operation of library activities with a view of meeting the information needs of its clientele.

Put succinctly, objectives of the University are to a very large extent the objectives of its library through the provision of information-bearing materials capable of meeting the tripartite function (which had been identified as teaching, learning and research) of the University. One can therefore conclude that there is a great nexus between the University and its library.

Faculty Staff otherwise referred to as the teaching staff in this paper forms an essential population of the University community. They constitute what can be referred to as the indispensable stakeholder of the education sector.

The Philosophy of Effective Book Provision

Of course there should not be an argument for laying emphasis on books especially when we recall the fact that a typical acquisition of stock in the modern libraries should incorporate both printed and non-printed materials such as recording, tapes, transparencies, films, filmstrips, slide and microforms, since Afre (1983) rightly pointed out that these non-printed materials only "complement books."

Therefore it becomes very clear that, "the bulk of the available information that might lead to knowledge acquisition is still paper based that is in book form Apeji (1991) stated further that, "the

world without books would not only be a bore but would be completely devoid of any form of development". Thus, Okwilagwe (2001) has been prompted to declare that, "the book medium carries enormous information for development - liberty and democracy".

Above assertions explain why books remain, and would probably remain the largest part of stocks in librarianship trade. And it can be concluded that any academic library that fails to make adequate and effective book provision for its users risk the chance of being relevant in the academic community. Thus, the concept of effective book provision is a phenomenon, which any library must take seriously, and protect it very jealously.

Selection Responsibility

In his study, Nisonger (1997) observed that "the core collection has been an important concept in collection development thought. The core refers to the most basic fundamental and important materials that form the center or heart of the collection." The question that readily comes to our mind is that who makes the selection for collection development?

Basically, there are two schools of thought as to whose responsibility is it to make the selection of materials. One school of thought believes that selection of library materials should be an exclusive duty of professional librarians while another school of thought is of the opinion that the task of selecting library materials should be a combined efforts of both the professional librarians and the faculty staff - teaching staff.

In the opinions of Danton (1967) and Burr (1981) they believe that book selection responsibility is the prerogative of librarians. They observed that "selection responsibilities are organic not to the academic department but to the library." They believe that collection development vis-à-vis selection of materials is a mechanism which can be better handled exclusively by professional librarians through their subject background. Also in the opinion of (Beck, 1979) he stressed that in choosing materials for various types of libraries, the background, education, and professional philosophy of the librarian shall affect the choice he or she makes in building the library collection. He therefore recommended that selection of library materials should be entrusted only to the librarian who is professionally skilled in

developing a viable library collection.

Earlier studies of (Allen, 1970; Dickinson, 1981 and Evans, 1970) argued that selection of books will be better done by the faculty staff than by professionals librarians since the lecturers are actively involved in disciplines and thus, perhaps through invisible college or through direct contact with their colleagues gain more requirement of a particular discipline. To this end, they preferred and recommended selection of library materials be done by the faculty staff.

OBJECTIVES OF STUDY

The study is anchored on the following objectives:

1. To identify the acquisition procedures adopted by the studied libraries.
2. To ascertain factors that guide faculty staff selection of books in the studied libraries.
3. To find out the extent to which faculty staff are involved in the book selection responsibility of their various university libraries.
4. To ascertain Faculty staff utilization of their various university libraries.

RESEARCH QUESTIONS

1. What are the acquisition procedures employed by the studies libraries?
2. What are the factors that guide Faculty staff in book selection responsibility?
3. Are the faculty staff actively involved in the book selection responsibility?
4. Are the Faculty staff adequately making use of their various University libraries?

RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

The population of study consists of six (6) University Librarians and two hundred and ten (210) Faculty Staff. These sums up to two hundred and sixteen (216) staff in the Universities covered for the study.

The two sets of self-developed, pre-tested and validated questionnaires were used to collect data from the field, which was personally administered on the respondents and collected over a period of three and half months, from July – October, 2002. Census/total enumeration technique was used to administer questionnaire on the University Librarian while equal allocation method was employed to obtain desired information through questionnaire on the faculty staff.

A total of forty-one (41) copies of the sets of questionnaires were pre-tested at the Obafemi Awolowo University before the actual field administration. The pre-tested questionnaires were distributed in the ratio of one (1) for the University Librarian, and thirty-five (35) for the Faculty staff out of which thirty-nine (39) were retrieved.

The reliability coefficients of the two self-developed questionnaires using cronbach-alpha method are; University Librarians' questionnaire ($\alpha=0.82$) and faculty staff questionnaire ($\alpha=0.88$).

At the end of the administration process, one hundred and seventy-one (171) were retrieved from the two hundred and sixteen (216) copies of questionnaires administered. This is reflected in the table 1.

Out of the hundred and seventeen copies of questionnaires that were retrieved, only one hundred and fifty-five copies were found useful and analysed (90.64%).

DATA ANALYSIS AND DISCUSSIONS

The study revealed that there were more males than their female counterpart. Out of the 6 University Librarians covered, five (83.3%) were males while there was only 1 (16.7%) female.

From the faculties, 117 (71.8%) were males while only forty-two (28.2%) were females.

The study indicated that all the 6 University

Librarians have had a considerable working experience that ranged between 1 and 35 with the mean score of ($X = 3.094$, $SD = 1.901$) years.

The study revealed that the 6 University Librarians had a subject background from the Humanities, Science and Librarianship respectively with 2 (33.3%) each formed these fields.

Most of the Faculty Staff were from the Sciences with 65 (43.6%) respondents, followed by the Humanities and Social Sciences which recorded 18 (12.1%) each and Agriculture and Medicine also recorded 11 (7.4%) each. The study again showed that the greatest number of the Faculty staff sampled are senior Lecturers 46 (30.9%), followed by Lecturer II 42 (28.2%), 19 (12.8%) are Professors while Readers are 8(5.4%). 17(11.4%) are Lecturer I, 14(9.4%) are Assistant Lecturers and 3(2.0%) are Graduate Assistants.

Expert method is the mostly used method by the studied libraries with the highest mean score of ($X = 1.000$, $SD = .000$), and is closely followed by the Vendor's Initiative Method with the mean score of ($X = .833$, $SD = .408$) (Table 2). The Visitation Method is the next mostly used method with the mean score of ($X = .667$, $SD = .516$) while the committee Method and The individual Method both have the mean score of ($X = .500$, $SD = .548$).

Table 1: Distributed and retrieval of questionnaires

S. No.	Universities	Faculty Staff		Univ. Librarians	
		Given	Retrieved	Given	Retrieved
1.	The Ladoke Akintola University of Technology, Ogbomoso, Nigeria	35	29	1	1
2.	The Lagos State University, Lagos, Nigeria	35	25	1	1
3.	The Olabisi Onabanjo University, Ago-Iwoye, Nigeria	35	2	1	1
4.	The University of Agriculture, Abeokuta, Nigeria	35	28	1	1
5.	The University of Ibadan, Ibadan, Nigeria	35	30	1	1
6.	The University of Lagos, Lagos, Nigeria	35	31	1	1
Total		210	165	6	6

Source:Field Survey, 2002

Table 2: The choice of collection development method in the studied libraries

Variables	Yes	%	No	%	X	SD
Expert Method	6	100.0	-	-	1.000	.000
Vendor's Initiative Method	5	83.3	1	16.7	.833	.408
The Visitation Method	4	66.7	2	33.3	.667	.516
The Committee Method	3	50.0	3	50.0	.500	.548
The Individual Method	3	50.0	3	50.0	.500	.548

N.B.: Scoring: Yes = 1 No = 0

Thus, the committee and the Individual Methods were not very commonly used by the university libraries.

Table 3 shows the mean scores of various acquisition procedures of the studied libraries over a period of four academic sessions, 97/98 - 2000/2001. In 97/98, Purchase has the greatest mean score of ($X = 14422.167$, $SD = 1391.603$), and followed by Exchange with the mean Score of ($X = 614.333$, $SD = 144.432$). The mean score of Gifts is ($X = 300.500$, $SD = 534.582$) while the mean score of Legal Deposit is ($X = 148.500$, $SD = 322.375$).

In the 98/99 academic session, Purchase also has the greatest mean score of ($X = 1350.500$, $SD = 1264.066$). This is followed by the mean score of the gifts materials which recorded ($X = 604.833$, $SD = 379.697$), and followed by the mean score of Legal Deposit ($X = 360.167$, $SD = 688.092$). In the 99/2000 academic session, Purchase also has the greatest mean score of ($X = 906.000$, $SD = 877.569$), and again followed by the mean score of Gifts items ($X = 678.167$, $SD = 475.332$). As against the two previous sessions, Legal Deposit has the highest mean score above exchange and recorded ($X = 268.167$, $SD = 28.136$) and followed by the mean score of Gifts items at the mean score of ($X = 20.500$, $SD = 50.215$) in the 99/2000 session.

In the 200/2001 academic session, purchased items has the mean score of ($X = 1284.667$, $SD = 1017.698$), and slightly followed by the mean score of Gifts items of ($X = 1237.500$, $SD = 688.464$). Legal Deposit has the mean score of ($X = 242.667$,

$SD = 545.026$) and exchange has the mean score of ($X = 43.000$, $SD = 67.926$).

It can therefore be inferred that purchase remains the only viable acquisition procedure employed by the university libraries and usually followed by Gifts items. Exchange is no longer becoming a means of acquiring library materials, thus one can conclude that library co-operation among university libraries in Nigerian as at the time of this research has collapsed.

The study revealed that the faculty staff are often involved in the book selection responsibility with the mean score of ($X = .935$, $SD = .442$), and the rate of acceptance of their recommendation is high with the mean score of ($X = .935$, $SD = .250$). But the rate at which the faculty staff use library facilities is poor with the mean score of ($X = .413$, $SD = .652$), and there was no response from 31 respondents.

Faculty Staff knowledge of involvement in the book selection process is high with the mean score of ($X = 1.060$, $SD = .239$), and a large number of the respondents have been consulted to select books for the library selection committee with the mean score of ($X = 1.926$, $SD = .262$).

From the above analysis, it can be concluded that Faculty staff are not making use of the library effectively for their teaching responsibility, and that it seems there is no library selection committee in the studied libraries.

From the table 5, it can be concluded that the major guiding factors of books recommendation by the Faculty staff are the teaching experience

Table 3: Mean scores of acquisition procedures adopted by the studied libraries

Variable	Purchase		Gifts		Exchange		Legal Deposit	
	X	SD	X	SD	X	SD	X	SD
97/98	1422.167	1391.603	300.500	543.582	614.333	1444.432	148.500	322.375
98/99	1350.500	1264.066	604.833	379.697	28.500	69.810	360.167	688.092
99/2000	906.000	877.569	678.167	475.332	20.500	50.215	268.167	628.136
2000/2001	1284.667	1017.698	1237.500	688.464	43.000	67.926	242.667	545.026

Table 4: Faculty staff involvement in book election responsibility in the studied libraries

Variables	Yes	%	No	%
Involvement	37	80.4	3	6.5
Accepted recommendation	43	93.5	3	6.5
Use of library	11	23.9	4	8.7
Knowledge of involvement in the book selection	140	94.0	9	6.0
Ever been consulted	99	66.4	50	33.6
Member of library selection committee	11	7.4	138	92.6

N.B.: Scoring: Yes = 1; No = 0

which has the highest mean score of ($X = .530$, $SD = 501$) and slightly followed by subject taught with the mean score of ($X = .510$, $SD = .502$).

The faculty staff were also asked to indicate how often does the library purchase books recommended by them and 76 (51.0%) of the respondents indicated occasionally, and when further asked to indicate how often they get feedback from the library 50 (33.6%) indicated occasionally. By inference, there is a selection procedure. Majority of the respondents 62 (41.6%)

Table 5: Factors that guide faculty staff selection in the studied libraries

Variables	Yes	%	No	%	X	SD
Teaching experience	79	53.0	70	47.0	.530	.501
Information from colleague	29	19.5	120	80.5	.195	.397
Subject taught	76	51.0	73	49.0	.510	.502
Book review	41	27.5	108	72.5	.275	.448
Internet browsing	33	22.1	116	77.9	.221	.417

N.B.: Scoring Yes = 1; No = 0

indicated that the stock of the library is inadequate, and this prompted them to rate the overall performance of the library as fairly satisfactorily by 60 (40.3%) of the respondents.

CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATIONS

The researchers are of the opinion that the teaching staff should be left out from taken major active roles in selection of materials and that the librarians should exercise knowledge of their subjects background and professional training in librarianship in making coherent and reliable collection. After all, they are employed to do their library jobs, and should therefore not pass their responsibilities to the teaching staff. The recommendation which was proffered by Dipeolu (1983) is hereby re-emphasized that library management should employ librarians based on varieties of different subjects background that cut across all disciplines to cater for the information needs of the community.

By extension, Faculty Staff are encouraged to go to the library and make adequate use of their University Library materials and through this exercise, their teaching and research activities will be more effective and they will also be able to detect imbalance in the library collections and appropriate suggestions/advice given. Finally, library selection committee should be reinstated in The University libraries.

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