

THE ROLE OF EFFECTIVE COLLECTION DEVELOPMENT IN THE ATTAINMENT OF SCHOOL LIBRARY'S GOALS

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INTRODUCTION

Libraries are built and maintained to provide information resources for specific or defined communities. Public libraries serve the residents of a specific geographic region, most often defined by the limits of a given city or community. School libraries are to enrich the school curriculum through the acquisition and dissemination of a variety of carefully selected information resources for enhanced literacy and high learning achievement, promote a reading culture and critical thinking skills in the students.

School libraries serve the teachers and the students of a given school or school districts. In the process of serving its community, it performs three basic functions which are;

- i. Selection of relevant materials for the different courses offered in that school
- ii. Acquisition of selected materials
- iii. Organization of the materials

The first role of the library is to select the materials that would be added to its collection. Beginning with the most ancient libraries, the role of the librarian has been to determine which documents would be added to the library's collection-and therefore, preserved for future generations.

Selection is an act of choosing or picking from among a set of things (Kirk Patrick, 1985). Selection connotes the power of choice and when this occurs, a lot of care need to be exercised. Selection involves choosing from an array of available information materials. Policy is the objective and mandate of the parent body of an organization or the community it is meant to serve.

Since no library can possibly contain all information produced by its society, the librarian must relate each document to the needs of its parent community and select only those that are of greatest interest to that community. The process, which we now call collection development, dates back to antiquity.

Concept of Collection Development

According to Gardner (1981), Collection Development is a dynamic process aimed at managing (selecting, acquiring, processing, storing and

disseminating) the information holding of a library relative to timeliness, accuracy and relevance of a situation.

In a simple language, it simply means building or developing a library's resources. The collection here refers to the resource materials. These include, books, periodicals and non book. They consist of:

- a. Reference books such as encyclopedias, dictionaries, Handbooks, yearbooks, Atlases, Maps etc.
- b. Books include all monographs both fiction and non fiction.
- c. Non-fiction books: with the exception of some literature texts, include books, work books and teachers guides'
- d. Fiction books are story books
- e. Periodical: publication with a distinctive title which appears at stated or regular intervals, generally more often than once a year, without prior decision as to when the last issue shall appear. It contains articles, stories or other writings, by several contributors, examples are newspapers, memoirs, proceedings of seminars/workshop, journals etc. Periodicals include journals, serials, magazines and newspapers.
- f. Non-print materials are popularly referred to as audio-visual materials or teaching aids. They are very important information carriers that are used for education programmes /information dissemination. They are important components of the college library as well as the school library.

Processes of Collection Development consist of five identifiable processes:

1. Community Analysis
2. Selection policies
3. Acquisition
4. Weeding
5. Evaluation

Community Analysis

The term community is used to cover the group of persons that the library has been established to serve, including the active users, and the potential users. The term "community" could be defined to be a nation, city, town, school or a research establishment. The librarian has to survey and enumerate the information needs of that community. The National Library of Nigeria, for example, has to stock materials that would serve all the citizens of Nigeria as a nation.

Public Libraries should be concerned with the members of the community or city they serve while school libraries serve the pupils, teachers and administrative staff of their respective schools. The school librarian should determine the needs of the teachers, students, and staff of that

school in order to be able to build a balanced collection. The librarian should also have some knowledge of the interest and abilities of both the present and the potential users. He should be able to determine these through a study of the users. The information gathered through the survey will form the basis for preparing a selection policy. The school librarian should have an in-depth knowledge of the school curriculum.

Selection Policy

In the case of a school, the initiative to formulate a selection policy should come from the school librarian in collaboration with the Principal/Head teacher and the Library Committee. The policy must adequately reflect the objectives, nature and activities of the school it serves.

What is Selection Policy

A policy can be defined as a statement of mission, designed to put ones thoughts and objectives together. From the point of view of collection development, policy is a statement of mission as to how a library or information centre intends to develop its collection. It is a set of principles and guidelines deliberately put together by the library management so as to enhance the task of building a library's collection. A Collection Development Policy cannot exist in a vacuum but must be put in the larger context of the objectives and mandate of its parent body or community it is meant to serve. Above all, for a policy to be operational, it must have been approved by the appropriate authorities within that particular organizational set up, for example, Library Acquisition Committee. However, the policy must be clearly stated in terms of philosophy, scope, objective and operational modalities.

All libraries have clearly defined objectives that they are established to serve. The major objective of National Libraries in many parts of the world is to serve as a repository of accumulated knowledge. The objective set out for a library organization invariably determines its policies.

Since the type of library under consideration here is the School Library, the information in the selection policy should include the following:

- i. The specific objectives of the collection
- ii. Who should set up and carry out the selection policy
- iii. Selection of materials processes;
- iv. Subjects and levels or courses that should be of priority;
- v. The types of materials that should not be selected on the ground of immorality, inaccuracy of facts, biased and prejudiced treatment of controversial topics, etc.
- vi. Whether hardcover or paperback of any publication would be preferred.

Criteria for Selection

All acquisitions, whether purchased or donated are considered in terms of the following standards:

1. The suitability to intended users;
2. Present and potential relevance to people's needs;
3. Relation to the existing collection and other materials on the subject;
4. Attention of reviewers
5. Comprehensiveness and depth of treatment;
6. Skill and competence of author.

Who Selects

For a meaningful selection exercise to be carried out, a school library selection committee comprising all stakeholders is highly recommended. Such stakeholders are the head teacher/principal; student representative/school library prefect, Parents 'Teachers' Association representatives and the Nigerian (NUT) Union of Teachers' Representative.

The order for selection according to Elaturoti (1990) should include syllabus requirement, background reading, cultural development and out-of school interest, attractive layout, especially for lower classes, large prints, hard cover etc.

Also on the issue of stock in the ratio of collection and quantity, the Federal Ministry of Education (1992) recommended the following ratio for an ideal secondary school library's collection:

Reference Materials	10%
Fiction	25%
Non-Fiction	45%
Journals and Magazines	10%
Audio Visuals	10%
Totals	100%

They also suggested that collection of about 1000 volumes of books is a manageable size for a school of 500 students and a growth rate of one book per student per year. The above is in line with the innovations in education which suggest more reliance on broad and general education for the individual, with emphasis on science, technology and management skills.

Books are purchased in both paperback and hard cover editions. Where a particular edition is available in both paperback and hardcover, it would indeed be ideal to select hard-cover, although cost may become a major consideration in taking decisions as to which to select.

Book Selection Aids

Various sources are available to the librarian or teacher librarian in selecting materials for the Library.

Established titles of selection aids include:

1. Books in Print
2. British Books in Print
3. Cumulative Book Index
4. Subject Guide to Books in Print
5. Publishers Trade List
6. Whitakers Cumulative Book List
7. African Books in Print
8. National Bibliography of Nigeria

Although it is difficult to get the current issues of the above selection aids, many libraries rely more on the National Bibliography of Nigeria which is the current list of literary materials published on annual basis.

It is worthy to note that many publishers, vendors, antiquarian book dealers, bookstores have begun to offer their services and publications through the internet with new companies appearing each day. In addition to the usual descriptions found in publishers' catalogs, such sites often include review of the works listed.

Periodicals' Selection Aids

There are a number of bibliographies that help librarians in the selection of periodicals literature. These include:

1. Ulrich's International Periodical Directory
2. Union List of Serials in the Libraries of United States and Canada
3. New Serials Titles
4. Nigerian File of International Standard for Serials Numbers (ISSN)

Two basic bibliographies used in the selection of reference materials are:

1. Guide to reference books (by Sheehy, E.P.)
2. Walford's guide to reference materials.

In principle, it is the professional librarian who is qualified to make library selections, but in practice, the librarian is assisted by a number of people as mentioned earlier in this paper.

Other sources that should be consulted by the librarian for selection are;

1. Newspapers/Magazine book reviews
2. Publishers Catalogues
3. Scholarly Journals

Concept of Acquisition

Harrod (1987) defined acquisition as the process of obtaining books and other documents for a library". Once materials have been selected by staff or requested by consumers, the acquisition process begins, that is, confirmation of the details of prices and date of publication, locating the items, ordering it, processing the items and the paper works once they arrive.

Acquisitions Procedure

The procedure adopted to practically give effect to the policies of a library recognizes various forms of acquisition. A library acquires materials by purchase (book order, subscription to serials and documents), legal deposit, and gifts and exchanges.

Downloading and binding the hardcopies of information from the internet can serve as another method of developing a library's collection. When we talk of internet we might ask this question; why do students need libraries when they have the internet? The reality is that students need both; and, the challenge is that students learn how to be effective consumers of all kinds of information, regardless of the format.

Effective consumers of information learn how to ask essential questions such as: "Who is the author of this source of information? By whose authority does this person write this information? What is this author's point of view to write this information and why? With instant access (via) through the internet to an ever-increasing information base, there is a tendency for students to seek quick answers to complex problems. "There is an all-too-common faith that the electronic sources are accurate, complete, and up-to-date", (Evans, 2000.) He further states that, even if the brave new world of electronic information comes to pass, there will be a need to locally maintain library collections' paper-based resources to remain a major source for scholarly activity.

Book purchase involves selections which are typed into evaluation slips with full bibliographic details. Books are selected from various lists. The procedure in a nutshell includes the following:

- a. Compilation of the approved lists
- b. Making contacts with the suppliers or book vendors
- c. Advising the finance department to raise an LPO i.e (Local Purchase Order)
- d. Monitoring what is on order
- e. Delivery, receipt and verification of order
- f. Payments; this is done only when the librarian is satisfied with the condition of materials delivered. Thorough checking should be done to

ensure that what the vendor supplied is exactly what was ordered.

Before purchasing a book, important facts to consider include:

- ❖ Reputation of publisher
- ❖ Date of publication
- ❖ The quality of paper material
- ❖ The print
- ❖ Illustrations/photographs
- ❖ Table of content and index

Processing Of Materials

Materials are sorted out into their various categories like monographs, serials and non-book materials. These materials are recorded in various notebooks meant for each type of material noting their authors, and date of publication.

Serials are recorded in the Kalamazoo which is a book keeping system that uses simultaneous recording with different forms placed on top of each other interlaced with carton sheets for recording serial publications.

In the case of monographs, further branding is made with the accessions stamp on the imprint page of the monograph and accession number given on the same page. A register is also made available where the accession number of each volume of book is recorded. Information about each monograph is typed on the evaluation slip. The information includes; place of publication, publisher, year of publication, edition, volumes, series, dealer, price and number of copies.

The original copy of the evaluation slip is filed in the publisher's cabinet under the name of each publisher. This is done to keep a record of the titles purchased from a particular publisher; to avoid duplication of titles; to have an idea of the price of titles, in case they will be purchased again; and, to know the number of titles purchased earlier.

Gifts

The procedure for gift collection, sometimes, involves making selections from lists of titles by donors, while many items sometimes drift into the library without any request on the part of the library. The most important thing is that, gifts must be limited to what the library can use. The National Library of Nigeria has been performing the function of distributing books to school libraries but mostly on request. This is another way school librarians can increase their collections.

Other sources through which school librarians can acquire materials are:

1. the Parent Teachers Association (PTA) can donate books to the schools
2. Old Students Association are also in unique position to help in building the library collections through donation
3. rich philanthropists can bequeath their library to schools
4. Universal Basic Education Commission (UBEC) has it as a mandate to help in building up schools and school libraries
5. Education Trust Fund ETF has been wonderful in the support of schools in various ways including donation of books and library equipment to libraries

Weeding Concept

Weeding (also known as de-selection) is an essential though difficult element of collection development-that ensures that the library's materials are useful and meet the challenges of time. Every library's print collection is limited by the space available to house it, and collections should change over time to reflect changes of resources needed and to remove items that are no longer useful from the collection. The materials in the collection may have such defects as;

- i. Inaccurate, wrong and misleading content
- ii. Irrelevance to user's needs, and
- iii. Physical damage

Innovations in school curricular can make the content of a book inaccurate, wrong, misleading or irrelevant to user's needs. Materials in the library's collection that are often used by so many people (students, teachers) will suffer from wear and tear thus making the materials physically unusable. Stock editing should be done regularly to remove such materials from the shelves.

Evaluation of the Collection

Evaluation is the last exercise in the collection development process. Evaluation is concerned with the assessment of the adequacy of the library's stock to the clientele's needs. Every school librarian would like to be able to answer the question "how good is my collection?" To decide how good any library collection is, information about three important factors are needed.

- i. What kind of materials are in the collection and how valuable each item is in relation to other items which are not in the library;
- ii. The evaluation of the collection's worth with regard to the kind of Community the library is serving; and
- iii. The purpose the collection is supposed to accomplish, with particular reference to the readers. Does the collection satisfy all the interests of the users?

Whatever are the results of the evaluation, the result must be weighed in the light of the purpose of the library, the clientele served, the funds available and the nature of the gaps revealed.

Recommendations:

For proper functioning of the School Library, the following recommendations should be taken into consideration.

The school library personnel should have proper training in Library Science and possess skills such as information skills, selection skills, acquisition skills and be well informed on Audio visual materials. Opeke (1994), mentioned three main areas where the school librarian needs competence. These are: Librarianship, management and evaluation skill to allocate materials in the most efficient and productive way. The librarian therefore, needs managerial skills, and the ability to make reading and book an integral part of lives of the school children. It is necessary for the librarian/staff of the school library to always attend courses/workshops organized by the Nigerian Library Association so that they can be informed adequately about the new trends in the profession.

Secondly, there should be special budgetary allocation for library development in schools. Associations, non-governmental organizations and other financial donations would be highly advantageous for collection development in schools.

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