

CHALLENGES OF ACQUISITION AND COLLECTION OF LIBRARY RESOURCES IN SPECIAL LIBRARIES: A CASE STUDY OF NATIONAL INSTITUTE FOR POLICY AND STRATEGIC STUDIES (NIPSS) LIBRARY, KURU, PLATEAU STATE, NIGERIA

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Abstract

This study investigated the challenges of acquisition and collection of library resources in special libraries; a case study of National Institute for Policy and Strategic Studies (NIPSS), Kuru, Plateau State, Nigeria. Four objectives were formulated to guide the study. Descriptive research design was adopted for the study; Purposive sampling technique was used in selecting 35 library staff in the library at NIPSS, Kuru. The instrument for data collection adopted was the Questionnaire. The method used for data analysis was the frequency count and percentage. The finding shows that special library's collection development policy and ordering procurement, receiving and processing are seen as the most important process in acquisition of library resources in the NIPSS library. The study uncovered some of the challenges as financial limitation and the scarcity of specialized resources. Strategies to overcome sure challenges were also presented which include: consensus in seeking alternative funding sources, such as donation and grant and utilizing Integrated Library Systems (ILS) are the most effective strategies to address the challenges faced by NIPSS library, among other findings. The following recommendations were made: providing sufficient finance for procurement of library resources, implementing an Integrated Library System (ILS) and collaborating with other libraries can highly be good strategies of overcoming the challenges.

Keywords: Acquisition, Collection, Library Resources, Special Libraries.

Introduction

A special library is a library that is specifically established to cater for a specialized information need of a particular group of people. They are mainly instituted to serve a particular field of knowledge and are organized along subject disciplines because they are limited in scope as they are inclined to a single subject that comprised a field of study.

Acquisition is the means by which additions are made to the library's collections. As such it comprises of the order, gift, exchanges etc. in a library through the coordination of these processes presents the true character of acquisition. It is at one and the same time basis that the spark plugs for the brake on the building of library collections. A library's collection development efforts cannot be effective unless its acquisition efforts are efficient. This practice is responsible for selecting and acquiring information specialist to perform their myriad function to the users effectively (Aina, 2014). According to Esposito (2018), there are several criteria for selecting and acquiring materials in special Libraries, and they include: Authoritativeness of the publishers or producers, Significance of the subject matter based on collection assessment, importance/reputation of the author, accuracy of the information and data based on reviews, recommendations, evaluations, etc.

One of the primary challenges faced by special libraries is the limited availability of specialized resources. These libraries often seek out rare, niche, or highly specific materials that are not widely published or distributed. As a result, locating and acquiring these materials can be a time-consuming and costly process (Johnson, 2018). Budget constraint, vendor and supplier issues, technological advancements, policy and regulatory issues and many more are some of the basic challenges faced in acquisition and collection of library resources in special libraries.

On the basis of this, the researcher intends to identify some of the peculiar challenges in acquisition and collection of library resources in National Institute of Policy and Strategic Studies Kuru, Plateau State.

Purpose of the Study

This study aims to achieve the following objectives; to:

1. determine the processes of acquiring library resources in the NIPSS library.
2. identify the specific challenges faced by the NIPSS library in the acquisition and collection of materials.
3. examine the strategies and approaches employed by the NIPSS library to overcome these challenges.
4. provide practical recommendations for improving acquisition and collection practices in the NIPSS library.

Literature Review

Concept of Acquisition

Acquisition of information resources is one of the key activities of every library. Libraries all over the world still acquire and maintain massive book collections while managing other formats. Despite the prediction of vanishing print collection because of the emergence of

digital paradigm, print materials still have a central role in library collections and publishing industries. Acquisition however, is the process of locating and acquiring all types of library materials after they have been selected for a library collection. According to Harrods (2017), acquisition is a process of obtaining books and other materials for a library collection. Acquisition embraces all the processes as involved in obtaining resources for the library. However, the concept is increasingly becoming a very complex process as a result of the massive proliferation of printed and non-printed materials and it would also be valuable to note that "acquisition is one of the important functions of any library system (Ali, 2019). For any library to achieve its goals, be it public, academic or special libraries, it must follow a developed and written policy. This policy determines what materials to be acquired, when it should be acquired and for whom it would be acquired. It also contains the rules and regulation guiding the usage of the library. Acquisition of information resources occupies a central place in the activities of libraries as the effectiveness of libraries in serving their users is greatly determined by their acquisition process. It is also an essential activity which is done painstakingly in order to prevent library collections from being filled with outdated and irrelevant resources (Adesanya, 2015). However, acquisition of information resources in special libraries is faced with so many challenges such as insufficient funds, rising cost of resources, difficulty in acquiring Law Materials due to its expensive nature, no qualified personnel that can carry out a smooth operations of acquisition and classification and the rest. All these challenges make it very difficult for the library to satisfy the information needs of its patrons.

Processes of Acquiring Library Resources: Special libraries serve distinct user communities with specific informational needs, necessitating a unique approach to the acquisition and management of library resources. The processes involved in acquiring resources in these libraries are intricate and multifaceted, reflecting the specialized nature of their collections and user requirements. These may include:

Needs Assessment: is the initial and critical step in the acquisition process. It involves understanding the specific informational needs of the library's user community through surveys, user feedback, and consultations with subject experts (Johnson, 2018; Rowley & Hartley, 2017). This step ensures that the library acquires materials that are relevant and beneficial to its users.

Collection Development Policy: this guides the acquisition process by outlining the scope of the collection, selection criteria, and procedures for acquiring materials. This policy aligns acquisitions with the library's mission and user needs, ensuring consistency and clarity in decision-making (Evans & Saponaro, 2012).

Selection of Resources: the process involves evaluating materials for relevance, quality, and cost. Tools for selection include publisher catalogs, review journals, bibliographies, and online databases (Gregory, 2019). This step ensures that the library acquires high-quality and pertinent resources.

Budgeting: is crucial in the acquisition process, especially given the financial constraints often faced by special libraries. Effective budgeting involves planning and allocating funds for the cost of materials, subscriptions, and associated processing fees (Cassell & Hiremath, 2018;

Johnson, 2018). This ensures that the library can acquire necessary resources without exceeding its financial limits.

Acquisition Methods: There are various methods of acquiring library resources, each with its advantages and limitations. These methods include direct purchase, subscriptions, donations, interlibrary loans, and consortia participation.

Direct Purchase: this from publishers or vendors is a common method, allowing for immediate acquisition but often at a high cost (Gorman & Shep, 2006).

Subscriptions: this to periodicals, journals, and databases provide ongoing access to necessary resources. This method requires careful management to ensure timely renewals and continuous access (Eberhart, 2013).

Donations and Gifts: these can supplement a library's collection, but require thorough evaluation to ensure they meet the library's standards and needs (Jenkins & Morley, 2017).

InterLibrary Loans and Resource Sharing: these agreements allow libraries to borrow materials from other institutions, providing cost-effective access to a broader range of resources (McGrath, 2010).

Consortia and Cooperative Agreements: these provide access to a wider range of resources through shared purchasing and collaborative collection development (Chan & Salaba, 2015).

Challenges of Acquisitions in Special Libraries

Special libraries including those serving policy and strategic research institutions like NIPSS, face unique challenges compared to general libraries. These challenges stem from their specialized focus and the specific needs of their user communities.

Budget constraints are a significant challenge for many special libraries. Financial limitations can restrict the ability to acquire new materials, subscribe to essential databases, and maintain existing collections. Hess and Weller (2018) further emphasize that rising costs of materials and subscriptions exacerbate these financial challenges, leading to difficulties in maintaining comprehensive collections. Furthermore, financial management practices are also crucial for addressing budget constraints in special libraries.

Vendor and supplier issues are another critical challenge in the acquisition process. Special libraries often rely on a limited number of vendors for specialized materials, which can result in delays, higher costs, and difficulties in negotiating terms. Kamau and Kiplang'at (2018) highlighted that managing relationships with multiple suppliers can be complex and resource-intensive.

Technological advancements introduce both opportunities and challenges. While new technologies can enhance access to digital resources and improve library operations, they also require substantial investment and ongoing adaptation. Jones and Murphy (2020) explore the complexities of legal compliance in library settings, noting that special libraries must carefully manage intellectual property issues while acquiring and utilizing materials. These challenges

can affect how materials are acquired, accessed, and shared. Compliance with policy and regulatory frameworks is critical for the acquisition and use of materials in special libraries.

Strategies and Approaches to Solve Acquisition Challenges in Special Libraries

Special libraries face numerous challenges in acquiring and collecting materials due to their unique focus and specific user needs. Below are some strategies and approaches to mitigate these challenges:

Developing a robust collection development policy is an important strategy. A comprehensive collection development policy is essential for guiding acquisition decisions and ensuring that the library's resources align with its mission and the needs of its users. Johnson (2018) suggested **user-centered approach** which entails involving users in the policy development process to ensure their needs are met.

Forming consortia and cooperative agreements with other libraries can significantly enhance resource access and reduce costs. **According to Helgren (2007) suggested collaborative purchasing, he states that** pool resources with other libraries to negotiate better prices and access group discounts for database subscriptions and other resources.

Utilizing technology and digital resources, embracing digital resources and technology can help overcome physical and budgetary limitations. Gregory (2019) opines special libraries invest in electronic books, journals, and databases to provide users with easy and immediate access to information.

Seeking alternative funding sources, diversifying funding sources can alleviate budget constraints and support resource acquisition. Jenkins & Morley (2017) opined that special libraries should occasionally organize fundraising events and campaigns to generate additional revenue for the library.

Implementing these strategies will enhance the library's ability to provide timely, relevant, and high-quality resources to its users.

Recommendations for Improving Acquisition and Collection Practices

This review explores practical recommendations for improving acquisition and collection practices in libraries, focusing on strategies that enhance efficiency, cost-effectiveness, and user satisfaction.

A well-defined collection development policy is essential for guiding acquisition decisions and ensuring that the library's resources align with its mission and user needs. Ensure the collection development policy aligns with the library's mission and goals, reflecting the needs and interests of its user community (Johnson, 2018).

Technology can play a significant role in streamlining acquisition processes and improving collection management. Developing and maintaining digital repositories to store and manage electronic resources, ensuring easy access and long-term preservation (Gregory, 2019).

Involving users in the collection development process can help ensure that the library's resources meet their needs and preferences. Conduct regular surveys to gather user feedback on collection needs and preferences, informing acquisition decisions (Johnson, 2018).

By implementing these practical recommendations, libraries can enhance their ability to provide relevant, high-quality resources that meet the evolving needs of their user communities.

Methodology

The study used descriptive survey design. The population of the study consist of thirty-five (35) library staff including librarians, library officers and all other library staff in NIPSS, Kuru Library. Questionnaire were used to collect opinion of the respondents.

Results and Discussion

Response Rate

A response rate of 94% was recorded for the study. Out of the 35 questionnaire distributed, 33 representing 94% was filled, returned and found usable.

Table 1.1 Response Rate

S/n	Response Rate	Figure	Percentage
1	Total number of questionnaire administered	35	100
2	Total number of questionnaires correctly fill and returned	33	94
3	Total number of questionnaires not returned	2	6
TOTAL		35	100

Table 1.2: Processes of acquiring library

S/N	Processes	SA	A	D	SD
1	Collection Development Policy	15(46%)	10(30%)	5(15%)	3(9%)
2	Donation, Gifts and Grants	18(55%)	9(27%)	4(12%)	2(6%)
3	Vendor Selection and Relationship	12(37%)	14(42%)	5(15%)	2(6%)
4	Ordering, Procurement, Receiving and Processing	20(61%)	8(24%)	3(9%)	2(6%)
5	Evaluation, Assessment, Weeding and Deaccessioning	16(49%)	11(33%)	4(12%)	2(6%)

Table 1.2 shows that 15 respondents representing 46% strongly agreed that collection development policy is the method of acquisitions in NIPSS library, 10 respondents represent 30% agreed, 5 respondents representing 15% disagreed while only 3 respondents representing 9% strongly disagreed. On donation, gifts and grants, 18 respondents representing 55% strongly agreed, 9 respondents representing 27% agreed, 4 respondents representing 12% disagreed and 2 respondents representing 6% strongly disagreed. On vendor selection and relationships, 12 respondents representing 37% strongly agreed, 14 respondents representing 42% agreed, 5 respondents representing 15% disagreed and 2 respondents representing 6% strongly disagreed. On ordering, procurement, receiving and processing, 20 respondents representing (61%) strong agreed, 8 respondents representing 24%) agreed, 3 respondents representing 9% disagreed and 2 respondent representing 6% strong disagreed. And finally, 16 respondents representing 49% strongly agreed with evaluation, assessment, weeding and

deaccessioning, while 11 respondents representing 33% agreed, 4 respondents representing 12% disagreed and 2 respondents representing 6% strong disagreed.

Table 1.3: Challenges of Acquisition and Collection of Materials

S/N	Challenges of Acquisition	SA	A	D	SD
1	Financial limitations	22(67%)	7(21%)	3(9%)	1(3%)
2	Scarcity of specialized resources	19(58%)	8(24%)	4(12%)	2(6%)
3	No collection policy	10(30%)	12(37%)	7(21%)	4(12%)
4	Vendor-related challenges	15(46%)	10(30%)	5(15%)	3(9%)
5	Not accepting technological developments	18(55%)	7(21%)	6(18%)	2(6%)

Table 1.3 above shows that 22 respondents representing 67% strong agreed that finance is a challenge of acquisition, 7 respondents representing 21% agreed, 3 respondents representing 9% disagreed while only 2 respondent representing 3% strongly disagreed. 19 respondents representing 58% strongly agreed with scarcity of specialized resources as a challenge of acquisition in NIPSS library, 8 respondents representing 24% agreed, 4 respondents representing 12% disagreed and 2 respondents representing 6% strongly disagreed. On no collection policy, 10 respondents representing 30% strongly agreed, 12 respondents representing 37% agreed, 7 respondents representing 21% disagreed while 4 respondents representing 12% strongly disagreed. On vendor related challenges, 15 respondents representing 46% strongly agreed, 10 respondents representing 30% agreed, 5 respondents representing 15% disagreed and 3 respondents representing 9% strongly disagreed. And final item on challenges, not accepting technological development, 18 respondents representing 55% strongly agreed, 7 respondents representing 21% agreed, 6 respondents representing 18% disagreed and 2 respondents representing 6% strongly disagreed.

Table 1.4: Strategies to Solve Acquisitions and Collection of Library Resources

S/N	Strategies of acquisition	SA	A	D	SD
1	Robust collection development policy	21(64%)	8(24%)	3(9%)	1(3%)
2	Resource sharing and interlibrary loan programs	20(61%)	9(27%)	3(9%)	1(3%)
3	Embracing technology and digital resources	19(58%)	10(30%)	3(9%)	1(3%)
4	Developing Strong Vendor Relationships	18(55%)	9(27%)	4(12%)	2(6%)
5	Seeking alternative funding sources (Donations, Grants)	23(70%)	7(21%)	2(6%)	1(3%)
6	Utilizing integrated library systems (ILS)	20(61%)	10(30%)	2(6%)	1(3%)

Table 1.4 shows that 21 respondents representing 64% strongly agreed that robust collection development policy is one important strategy needed to be employed to overcome acquisition challenges, 8 respondents representing 24% agreed, 3 respondents representing 9% disagreed and 1 respondents representing 3% strongly disagreed. 20 respondents representing 61%

strongly agreed with resource sharing and interlibrary loan programs, 9 respondents representing 27% agreed, 3 respondents representing 9% disagreed and 1 respondent representing 3% strongly disagreed. On embracing technology and digital resources, 19 respondents representing 58% strongly agreed, 10 respondents representing 30% agreed, 3 respondents representing 9% disagreed and 1 respondent representing 3% strongly disagreed. On developing strong vendor relationships, 18 respondents representing 55% strong agreed, 9 respondents representing 27% agreed, 4 respondents representing 12% agreed and 2 respondents representing 6% strong disagreed. On seeking alternative funding sources (Donations, Grants), 23 respondents representing 70% strongly agreed, 7 respondents representing 21% agreed, 2 respondents representing 6% disagreed and 1 respondent representing 3% strongly disagreed. And finally, on utilizing integrated library systems (ILS), 20 respondents representing 61% strong agreed, 10 respondents representing 30% agreed, 2 respondents representing 6% disagreed and 1 respondent representing 3% strongly disagreed.

Table 1.5: Recommendations to Improve Acquisition and Collection of Library Materials

S/N	Resources	SA	A	D	SD
1	Providing sufficient finance for the procurement of library resources	23(70%)	8(24%)	1(3%)	1(3%)
2	Implementing an Integrated Library System (ILS)	21(64%)	9(27%)	2(6%)	1(3%)
3	Collaboration with other libraries and institutions	20(61%)	10(30%)	2(6%)	1(3%)
4	Involving users in the collection development	19(58%)	9(27%)	4(12%)	1(3%)
5	Utilizing automation tools for ordering, invoicing, and cataloging	22(67%)	8(24%)	2(6%)	1(3%)

Table 1.5 shows that 23 respondents representing 70% strongly agreed that providing sufficient finance for the procurement of library resources should be recommended to improve acquisition and collection of library resources. 8 respondents representing 24% agreed, 1 respondent representing 3% disagreed and strongly disagreed respectively. On implementing an integrated library system (ILS) 21 respondents representing 64% strongly agreed with the recommendation, 9 respondents representing 27% agreed and 2 respondents representing 6% disagreed while 1 respondent representing 3% strongly disagreed. On collaboration with other libraries and institutions, 20 respondents representing 61% strongly agreed, 10 respondents representing 30% agreed, 2 respondents representing 6% disagreed and 1 respondents representing 3% strongly disagreed. On involving users in the collection development, 19 respondents representing 58% strongly agreed, 9 respondents representing 27% agreed and 4 respondents representing 12% disagreed while 1 respondent representing 3% strongly disagreed. 22 respondents representing 67% strongly agreed with utilizing automation tools for ordering invoicing and cataloging, and 8 respondents representing 24% agreed, 2 respondents representing 6% disagreed and 1 respondent representing 3% strongly disagreed.

Summary of Findings

Below are the summaries of the research findings organized based on the objectives of the study: First and foremost, on the processes of acquiring library resources, the analysis shows that the collection development policy and ordering, procurement, receiving, and processing are seen as the most important processes in the acquisition of library resources in the NIPSS library. This agrees with Evans & Saponaro (2012) who stated that collection development policy guides the acquisition process by outlining the scope of the collection, selection criteria, and procedures for acquiring materials. Additionally, the role of vendor selection and relationship is moderately agreed upon which tallies with Jones, 2008; Munde & Marks (2009) who stated that selecting the right vendors and maintaining good relations with them is crucial for efficient acquisitions. Donation, gifts, and grants and evaluation, assessment, weeding, and deaccessioning are also seen as critical to maintaining a relevant and updated collection.

On the challenges faced by the NIPSS library, the primary challenges identified in the acquisition and collection of materials includes financial limitations and the scarcity of specialized resources which agreed with Hess & Weller (2018) who stated that strategies such as collaborative purchasing and seeking alternative funding sources can help mitigate financial pressures. Other notable challenges are vendor-related issues and the reluctance to accept technological developments. This agreed with Clayton and Gorman (2016) who noted that vendor-related challenges can impact the efficiency and cost-effectiveness of the acquisition process. While the lack of a collection policy is a concern but with minimally, it shows that this is not seen as universally problematic, as few respondents disagreed with this issue.

On the strategies to overcome challenges, a large consensus indicates that seeking alternative funding sources such as donations and grants and utilizing integrated library systems (ILS) are the most effective strategies to address the challenges faced by the NIPSS library. Additionally, developing a robust collection development policy and resource sharing & interlibrary loan programs received strong support too. Embracing technology and digital resources and developing strong vendor relationships were also seen as key strategies by the majority which agrees with Farkas (2007) who stated that **Digital Repositories should be encourage in special libraries**, he stated that it is important to develop and maintain digital repositories for storing and sharing unique and specialized content.

On the practical recommendations, the top recommendation is providing sufficient finance for the procurement of library resources, with majority agreeing that this would significantly improve acquisition processes. Implementing an integrated library system (ILS) and collaborating with other libraries were also highly endorsed strategies. This agreed with Breeding (2007) who stated utilizing integrated library systems (ILS) and other automation tools to manage acquisitions, cataloging, and circulation is an important approach that should be adopted in special libraries. Other suggestions included involving users in collection development and utilizing automation tools for more efficient ordering, invoicing, and cataloging.

Conclusion

It can be deduced from the findings that collection development policy and ordering, procurement, receiving, and processing are seen as the most important processes in the acquisition of library resources in the NIPSS library. So also, the primary challenges identified in the acquisition and collection of materials includes financial limitations and the scarcity of specialized resources, other notable challenges are vendor-related issues and the reluctance to accept technological developments. The findings also finds out that seeking alternative funding sources such as donations and grants and utilizing integrated library systems (ILS) are the most effective strategies to address the challenges faced by the NIPSS library. Embracing technology and digital resources and developing strong vendor relationships were also seen as key strategies. The paper also recommended that providing sufficient finance for the procurement of library resources will further minimize or completely eradicate the challenges faced with the acquisition of materials in NIPSS library. Finally, continuous implementation of the integrated library system (ILS) and collaborating with other libraries were also strategies recommended because NIPSS library's acquisition and collection processes are crucial for maintaining a relevant and up-to-date collection that meets the needs of its users. Hence, by implementing the recommended practices, the NIPSS library can enhance its acquisition and collection processes, ultimately benefiting its users and supporting the institution's mission.

Recommendations

Based on the findings of this study, the following recommendations are proposed to improve the acquisition and collection practices at the NIPSS library:

1. Adequate Financial Support: The library should ensure sufficient budget allocation to meet the financial demands of acquiring essential resources, including specialized materials.
2. Robust Collection Development Policy: A comprehensive collection development policy should be implemented to guide the acquisition of materials, ensuring that the library's collection remains relevant and up-to-date.
3. Technology Integration: The library should continue to adopt and integrate new technologies, such as digital resources and Integrated Library Systems (ILS), to streamline acquisition processes and improve access to materials.
4. Collaboration with Other Libraries: The NIPSS library should explore opportunities for collaboration with other libraries and institutions to share resources and expertise, which can help overcome resource limitations.

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