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## Selection and Ordering as Major Variables Responsible for the Acquisition and Management of Information Resources in United States of America Libraries

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BY

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### ABSTRACT

*This study sought to assess selection and ordering as major variables responsible for the acquisition and management of information resources in United States of America libraries. The study adopted the survey research design. The area of the study covered the libraries in United States of America. The target population for this study was the academic librarians of the study area. Census sampling technique was adopted in selecting 25 libraries and one librarian from each library, giving a total of 25 respondents as the sample size for the study. The researcher used structured questionnaire as instruments of data collection. A self designed questionnaire titled "Selection and Ordering as Major Variables Responsible for the Acquisition and Management of Information Resources Questionnaire" (SOMVRAMIRQ). The questionnaire was validated by the researcher's supervisor. The supervisor critically examined the instrument for clarity, appropriateness and consistency with the study. Corrections were made and the final draft of the questionnaire was developed for the study. The data collected were analysed using appropriate statistical technique such that research questions were answered using percentage analysis while hypotheses were tested using regression analysis. The hypotheses were tested at 0.05 alpha level with 23 degrees of freedom. The study concluded that selection and ordering significantly influences the management of information resources in United States of America libraries. The study therefore recommended that library materials should be carefully selected to avoid waste of funds, also, proper evaluation of library resources should be carried out in the library before purchasing.*

**KEYWORDS: Selection, Ordering, Acquisition, Management, Information Resources, and Libraries**

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### Introduction

Acquisition indices today has to do with the rightful methods and things to consider when acquiring information resources, thereby making it good enough for user's utilization. The acquisition department, also known as collection development department performs the crucial role of bringing into the library information, carrying materials and ensures efficient record keeping (Nkanu, 2007). Information resources according to Adomi (2012) are resources or materials from which people receive ideas, meaningful messages, enlighten and direction that will enable them to accomplish tasks, take decisions and solve problems. When these resources are properly managed one of the objective of the library will be achieved which is to satisfy the needs of the user. According to Osagie (2008), the acquisition department undertakes a function of selection, ordering, evaluating, receiving and claiming items, acquiring books and non-book material for the library through approved methods for

the library such as purchase, gifts, exchange or any other arrangement e.g subscription. Since it is only through this department that all the library materials are acquired, the department is expected to use other means such as inter-library loans, bequeaths and legal deposits to get materials into the library.

Selection is an important aspect of acquisition because it involves a statement about users and needs; subjects, topic or mission to be dealt with and type of information sources to be acquired. Selection aids and tools which will help in selection and formats for a balanced collection that meets the need of user community. Selection involves deciding which materials are to be acquired in the library. This is because the user's satisfaction is based on the amount and type of information acquired in the library. Selection is important due to literature explosion, reduction in library budget, reduction in income of library users and pressure from publishers and the library user. In agreement, Oti, (2000) stated that ascertaining the needs of users is a necessary prelude to the provision of materials relevant to their needs.

Ordering in library management has to do with acquiring information resources for the usability of the community the library is serving. Since the library cannot build its collection purely on the basis of gifts and exchanges, acquisition by purchase becomes inevitable. But no library can purchase all the relevant documents owing to limitation of financial resources. Many libraries have resorted to the practice of directly ordering with publishers or their local representatives/dealers. When proper ordering is done it enhances the student usage of library resources, thereby promoting an effective management of information resources.

The acquisition department is expected to be prudent, performing all its operations economically. They are expected to choose the right agent, right method of purchase, right method of handling returns when items are not found satisfactory according to library standards at the time of delivery. They are also expected to determine the right method of handling sales of discard and acknowledgements. Management of information resources in the library is the capability of the library to provide current, speedy, accurate and relevant information access to its users.

### **Statement of the Problem**

Currently, acquisition department has just been centered only on acquiring information resources to cater for the curriculum of the university without finding out the need of the users, neither checking for the quality of materials acquired, nor constantly evaluating materials in the library in order to know which information resources are outdated and obsolete. The researchers' interaction with some staff reveals their opinion that the library management does not consider all the acquisition indices during acquisition of library materials. Ordering of information resources are not done properly and inadequate funding has hindered the library from acquiring all the information resources needed by the students. This has brought questions like, could adequate selection enable efficient management of information resources? Could proper ordering enable efficient management of information resources? To this end, this research seeks to state the means on how selection and ordering enhances the management of information resources in USA libraries.

### **Objectives of the Study**

The main objective of this study was to assess selection and ordering as major variables responsible for the acquisition and management of information resources in United States of America libraries. Specifically, the study sought:

1. To find out how selection influences the management of information resources in United States of America libraries.
2. To find out how ordering influences the management of information resources in United States of America libraries.

### Research Questions

1. What is the influence of selection of information resources on management of information resources in United States of America libraries?
2. What is the influence of ordering of information resources on management of information resources in United States of America libraries?

### Hypotheses

H<sub>01</sub>: There is no significant influence of selection on management of information resources in United States of America libraries.

H<sub>02</sub>: There is no significant influence of ordering on management of information resources in United States of America libraries.

### Literature Review

#### Acquisition and Management of Information Resources

Acquisition indices cover the selection and acquisition of information resources, the balancing of additions to and the withdrawal from stock, as well as the storage, display and the availability of the collection and their exploitation. It included the systematic exploitation of a library's collection, covering resource allocation, technical processing, preservation and storage. Ididio & Igbinosa (2003) observes acquisition programme "as a plan for carrying out the objectives of the library with respect to the development of collection. It should be a long-range plan, flexible in nature and subject to periodic review and revision". It should start for a period of five years or more with the approval and support of the authority within the budget. For obtaining support and co-operation of the faculties and libraries staff, wide publicity should be given to the programme.

#### Acquisition Methods Followed by Libraries

**Firm orders** – Orders that are determined by name specifically. For example, a specific book, textbook, or journal that the library wants.

**Standing orders** – These are open orders for all titles that fit a particular category or subject. For example, these are usually developed for serials and the library knows that it will want anything published in that particular series. A benefit to this style of ordering is that it is automatic--the acquisitions department does not have to order the next in series.

**Approval plans** – Similar to standing orders except they cover quite a few topic areas, are sent from the vendor, and the library is only charged for the specific titles that they accept into their collection. Under these circumstances the library is free to return anything it does not wish to add to its collections. A benefit to this style of ordering is that the acquisitions

department can sometimes make better decisions with the materials in hand versus an order form.

**Blanket orders** – Largely a combination of both a firm order and an approval plan. Blanket orders are the library making a commitment to purchase all of something. For example, a library makes a contract with a certain publisher or vendor and will purchase everything that this publisher or vendor has available in regards to a topic. A benefit to this style of ordering is an automatic acquisition of materials for a particular field, which can be especially beneficial to specialized or academic libraries.

**Subscriptions** – Generally utilized for journals, newspapers, or other serials that a library will acquire. Like standing and blanket orders, a library only has to develop a contract once with a vendor or publisher and the items are automatically delivered when printed. Often, subscriptions are for a specific length of time and must be renewed at the end of the contract.

**Leases** – Contracts that allow access to particular resources for a period of time. Leases are most commonly utilized with electronic resources such as databases, journals, and web-based materials. The library is paying for access to the material versus paying for ownership of the material.

**Gifts** – In some cases libraries may allow gifts that people give to the library. It is the job of the acquisitions department to determine whether or not the gift will be kept and incorporated into the library's collection. This method is typically used by large academic institutions, and the persons giving the gifts are mostly alumni of that institution. A library's collection development policy usually states whether the library accepts gifts.

**Exchanges** – Exchanges can be broken into two subcategories: exchange of unwanted duplicate/gift materials and the exchange of new materials between libraries. Again, the institutions that usually have a process for this type of acquiring are larger academic or research libraries.

### **Selection and Effective Management of Information Resources**

As selection is the heart of the library acquisition process and it aims at building the library's collection for a particular user community, skill, knowledge and the right tools are required to select appropriate library materials that meet the needs of the community. It is a challenge to build resources and formats for a balanced collection that meets the needs of user community (Evans, 2004). Selection of materials in academic libraries is a continuous process affected by the changing of the Institutional curriculum as well as the availability of the new information materials. Book selection involves the process of choosing book for inclusion in a library's collection with a view to providing a balanced increase to the stock (Harrods librarians' glossary 2000). The first step in selecting materials is to separate them into categories and assign responsibility for their selection and management.

Eze & Eze, (2006) identifies processes involved in book selection by one person, selection meeting/selection committee and specialist. Book selection by one person is a situation whereby one person selects library materials. The selection committee is a situation in which a group of librarian are selected or appointed to serve in the process of book selection. The members of this committee could include head of departments, head of branches or sections of the library faculty members and academic librarians. The selection committee is more preferable in libraries because the decision of many people is better than that of one person and it allows for greater participation of the members of the committee as well as provides an

avenue in which the needs and suggestions of the library patrons are taken into adequate consideration. This also allows for effective management of the information resources since the staffs are also involved in the selection process.

### **Criteria for Selection during Acquisition of Information Materials**

The objective of the library is to provide library materials that will satisfy the need of the users. It is therefore very important that appropriate materials required by the users are selected. The general selection criteria include:

*Authority:* The reputation of the author of a book must be ascertained before its selection. The academic qualification of the author, his position, his ability to sell his ideas to the audience is essential. The knowledge of author's reputation is very important because there are many authors in recent times and some of them do not possess the necessary academic and professional qualifications. *Publishers Reputation:* The reputation of the publisher is also important. In recent times especially as a result of the advent of desktop publishing many people are now involved in publishing. It is very important to ascertain the reputation of the publisher before selecting their books because many of them are not qualified. *Objectivity:* Liberal enough the ideas in a book must be objective. A good book is not subjective. It does not follow any social, religious and political inclination. *Accuracy:* This has to do with the exactness of the information content of the text. Is the information accurate to create the needed awareness to the user? The library material being selected is expected to be accurate. The statistics and other information in the book must be accurate. The selector is therefore expected to be knowledgeable in the particular subject area. He should consult subject specialists if he is not an expert in the area.

*Esthetic Appeal:* It must be beautifully designed. It should exhibit some artistic experience and quality. *Relevance/Usefulness:* The books being selected must be relevant to the needs of the users. Usually, the objective or the mission of the library is considered when selecting books and information resources. The material being selected must be in line with the objectives of the institution. In other words, it must be relevant to the needs of the users of the library. *Up-to-datedness/currency:* The books selected for the library must have current information. The references, statistics and ideas in the book are checked to ensure that they are current. *Scope:* The acquisition librarian is expected to ascertain scope/depth of coverage of the book he wants to acquire for the library. The scope of the book should be in the position to satisfy the need of the users. The treatment of the subject must be thorough.

*Organization:* Does the material systematically and logically present the subject or issues discussed? Example does the material present the reference in the alphabetically order (A-Z) from the known to unknown? Historical materials are presented in chronological order. *Style of Writing/Presentation:* Those involved in selection should look out for logical presentation of facts, creating of suspense and ability of the book to carry the readers along. The language of presentation is also considered. *Special Features:* You consider those factors that make it a unique material with abstract, indexes, appendix, bibliography, notes, illustration, table, glossaries, and guides. *Cost:* The price of the material should be considered as it is an important factor in determining whether the library will be able to purchase or not. The price of the book should be considered in relation to the fund available to the library to find out whether the available resources could accommodate the purchase of the book. *Reviews:* The selector should find out whether the book is reviewed in any book or journal. The assessment of the reviewers should determine whether the book would be selected or not.

## **Ordering and Management of Information Resources**

Egwa (2010) states that ordering is acquiring information materials from the vendors and this is done when the librarian is sure of the material to be ordered after going through /checking to ensure correct identification of all the bibliographic data of each item to be ordered. This includes author, title, edition, publisher's details, publication date, ISBN/ISSN, price and so forth. Evans (2004) opines that very small libraries might be able to handle individual ordering with vendors and publishers but most academic and public libraries do not find it feasible and instead deal with vendors who provide book approval plans in addition to direct ordering for titles not handled by these vendors. Libraries work with approval plan vendors and set the types and categories of materials the library wishes to obtain and as materials are published meeting those criteria the approval vendor automatically ships those materials to the library. Those books are reviewed by the subject specialist of the library for approval and can be returned to the vendor if the librarian does not feel the book is of sufficient quality or subject interest for the library.

### **Ordering Procedures (For Acquisitions Staff)**

Receive order request, Review request to make sure that it is complete (fund, location, selector name, etc), Check on-line acquisitions system to make sure that this item isn't going to arrive on one of the Library's standing orders, If an unwanted duplicate arrives, return order request to selector with this information and the reason for cancellation. If order is for an added copy, may attach order record to an existing bibliographic record, Decide on the method of acquisition, Check order request in national on-line database to confirm information on order request, to learn if item is part of a series, to add ordering information that may have been omitted from order request, May check Books-In-Print and other sources to make sure that item is available, at what price, and from what source, Select vendor from whom item can be obtained; if vendor is not in on-line acquisitions database, set up new vendor record, Enter order records into Voyager to generate purchase order and create "on order" message in RAMCAT, Upon receipt, the "on order" status is changed to "in process" as the material is passed to Cataloging, lastly, Query vendor if order is not supplied on a timely basis; respond to any questions from vendor about format, edition, cost, etc. Reorder from another vendor if order is refused by first vendor. Receive item and invoice; check to make sure that the correct item was supplied and arranged for return of incorrect shipments. Update on-line acquisitions system with receipt information; forward item for cataloging and note in on-line system where and when Acquisitions sent item, after annotating item with order number and location for which item will be catalogued; make sure that selector's original cataloging treatment instructions travel with item to Cataloging Department. Approve invoice for payment and forward invoice to Fiscal Office. Ordering of information materials from the right vendors, at the right time enhances library management of information resources.

### **Method**

The study adopted the survey research design. The area of the study covered the United States of America. The target population for this study was the academic librarians of the study area. Census sampling technique was adopted in selecting 25 libraries and one librarian from each library, giving a total of 25 respondents as the sample size for the study. The researcher used structured questionnaire as instruments of data collection. A self designed questionnaire titled "Selection and Ordering as Major Variables Responsible for the Acquisition and Management of Information Resources Questionnaire" (SOMVRAMIRQ).

The questionnaire was validated by the researcher’s supervisor. The supervisor critically examined the instrument for clarity, appropriateness and consistency with the study. Corrections were made and the final draft of the questionnaire was developed for the study. The data collected were analysed using appropriate statistical technique such that research questions were answered using percentage analysis while hypotheses were tested using regression analysis. The hypotheses were tested at 0.05 alpha level with 23 degree of freedom.

**Results and Discussion**

**Research Question 1:** What is the influence of selection of information resources on management of information resources in United States of America Libraries?

**Table 1: Summary of Responses on Influence of Selection of Information Resources on the Management of Information Resources**

S/N	SELECTION	AGREED	%	DISAGREED	%
1	Selection of information resources is always carried out in the Library	20	80	5	20
2	Authority is considered during selection of library resources	17	68	8	32
3	A selection committee is established to carry out the selection process	14	56	11	44
4	Book selection policies are well adhered to during selection in the library	15	60	10	40
5	Selection guidelines are been taken into consideration during acquisition	19	76	6	24

Table 1 above shows the summary of the item by item analysis of the influence of selection of library resources on the management of information resources. The analysis revealed that 20 (80%) of the respondents agreed that Selection of information resources is always carried out in the library before acquisition while 5 (20%) of the respondents disagreed. Also, 17 (68%) of the respondents agreed that Authority is considered during selection of library resources while 8 (32%) disagreed. Consequently, 14 (56%) of the respondent also agreed that A selection committee is established to carry out the selection process while 11 (44%) disagreed. 15 (60%) of the respondents agreed that the Book selection policies are well adhered to during selection in the library while 10 (40%) disagreed and 19 (76%) of the respondents agreed that Selection guidelines are been taken into consideration during acquisition while 6 (24%) of the respondents disagreed. The result therefore means that selection of information resources has remarkable influence on the management of information resources in United States of America Libraries in that selection of information resources, among others, is always carried out in the library before acquisition.

**Research Question 2:** What is the influence of ordering of information resources on management of information resources in United States of America libraries?

**Table 2: Summary of Responses on Influence of Ordering of Information Resources on the Management of Information Resources**

S/N	SELECTION	AGREED	%	DISAGREED	%
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1	Information material are always ordered from the vendors	17	68	8	22
2	Guidelines for ordering of information materials are always considered	19	76	6	24
3	Information materials are ordered based on the need of the users	15	60	10	40
4	Ordering of information material is done regularly	20	80	15	20
5	Ordering of information material is done specifically by the acquisition department	15	60	10	40

Table 2 above shows the summary of the item by item analysis of the influence of ordering of library materials on management of information resources in United States of America Libraries. The analysis revealed that 17 (68%) of the respondents agreed that Information material are always ordered from the vendors while 8 (22%) of the respondents disagreed. Also, 19 (76%) of the respondents agreed that Guidelines for ordering of information materials are always considered while 6 (24%) disagreed. Consequently, 15 (60%) of the respondent also agreed that Information materials are ordered based on the need of the users while 10 (40%) disagreed. 20 (80%) of the respondents agreed that Ordering of information materials is done regularly while 5 (20%) disagreed and 15 respondents agreed that Ordering of information material is done specifically by the acquisition department while 10 (40%) of the respondents disagreed. The result therefore means that ordering of information resources has remarkable influence on the management of information resources in United States of America Libraries as ordering of information resources, among others is done regularly in the institution.

### Testing of Hypotheses

**Hypothesis 1:** There is no significant influence of selection on management of information resources in United States of America Libraries. In order to test the hypothesis regression analysis was used to analyse the data, (see table 3).



**Table 3: Regression analysis of the influence of selection on the management of information resources in United States of America libraries.**

Model	R	R Square	Adjusted R Square	Std. error of the Estimate	R Square Change
1	0.96	0.91	0.49	0.50	0.91

**\*Significant at 0.05 level; df = 23; N = 25; critical r-value = 0.413**

The table shows that the calculated R-value 0.96 was greater than the critical R-value of 0.413 at 0.05 alpha level with 23 degrees of freedom. The R-square value of 0.91 predicts 91% influence of selection on the management of information resources in United States of America libraries. This rate of percentage is highly positive and therefore means that there is significant influence of selection on the management of information resources in United States of America libraries.

**Hypothesis 2:** There is no significant influence of ordering on management of information resources in United States of America libraries. In order to test the hypothesis regression analysis was used to analyse the data, (see table 4).

**Table 4: Regression analysis of the influence of ordering on the management of information resources in United States of America libraries.**

Model	R	R Square	Adjusted R Square	Std. error of the Estimate	R Square Change
1	0.88	0.77	0.76	0.80	0.77

**\*Significant at 0.05 level; df = 23; N = 25; critical r-value = 0.413**

The table shows that the calculated R-value 0.88 was greater than the critical R-value of 0.413 at 0.05 alpha level with 23 degrees of freedom. The R-square value of 0.77 predicts 77% of the influence of ordering on the management of information resources in United States of America libraries. This rate of percentage is highly positive and therefore means that there is significant influence of ordering on the management of information resources in United States of America libraries.

## Discussion of Findings

### Selection and Management of Information Resources

The result of the data analysis in table 1 is significant based on the fact that a greater percentage of the respondents agreed to the items on the questionnaire. Consequently, the correspondence hypothesis in table 3 revealed that the calculated R-value of 0.96 is greater than the critical R-value of 0.413 at 0.05 level of significance at 23 degrees of freedom. This is an indication that selection significantly influences management of information resources in United States of America libraries. World Encyclopaedia of Library and Information service (1993), which stated that “selectors must identify the range of what is relevant, distil out those that are timely, pertinent, and finally prioritize and makes decision according to collective plans (the practical application of acquisition policy) and within the confines of budget allocation”.

## **Ordering and Management of Information Resources**

The result of the data analysis in table 2 is significant based on the fact that a greater percentage of the respondents agreed to the items on the questionnaire. Consequently, the correspondence hypothesis in table 4 revealed that the calculated R-value of 0.88 is greater than the critical R-value of 0.413 at 0.05 level of significance at 23 degrees of freedom. This is an indication that Ordering significantly influences management of information resources in United States of America libraries. This finding is in tandem with Nelson (2002) who stated that it is very important for libraries to engage in ordering of information materials to enable them build their collection.

## **Conclusion**

Based on the result of analysis and findings of the study, it is concluded that selection, and ordering significantly influences the management of information resources in United States of America libraries.

## **Recommendations**

Based on the findings of this study, the following recommendations were made:

1. Library materials should be carefully selected to avoid waste of funds.
2. Books should be ordered based on the ordering procedures.
3. Proper evaluation of library resources should be carried out in the library before purchasing.

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