Inhibiting Factors of Acquisition of Library Materials and Services Provision to Users in Special Libraries

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Abstract

The study investigated the inhibiting factors of the acquisition of library materials and services provided to users in special libraries. In carrying out this study three research questions were posed. A social survey research design was adopted for the study. The population of the study comprised librarians and para-professional staff working in the special libraries. Descriptive statistics were used to analyze data using frequency counts, tables and percentages. The findings showed that the libraries face diverse problems in the acquisition of library materials. These include lack of acquisition policy, inadequate funds, high cost of foreign materials, poor quality of locally published materials, poor communication services, poor bibliographic control and poor management of funds. It also revealed that several factors were found to be militating against the effective provision of library service delivery to users in the selected special libraries. These include lack of Information and Communication Technology tools and compliance, inadequate funding, poor infrastructure and inadequate human resources.

Keywords: Special libraries; Acquisition of library materials; Service provision

Introduction

Government agencies, commercial organizations, and corporate entities all have access to special libraries, which are important information resources. They're useful for offering subject-specific information to customers. Timely and more thorough information is highly valued in the twenty-first century since it provides a competitive edge. According to Osebequen, Uwaebuka and Ojokuku (2018), special libraries are libraries that are specifically created for research in a specific subject or study, with special library users being specialists and researchers. A special library collects and acquires up-to-date and thorough knowledge on the parent organization's subject, as well as supplying timely information to the organization's workers on demand and in advance (Onwubiko, 2021). As a result, special libraries may be thought of as information centers dedicated to delivering critical information to a specific set of individuals or organizations to secure their survival or long-term viability. Murray (2013) argues that although a special library serves a well-defined clientele, such as the employees of a corporation, members of an association, or students and faculty of a department, they may also allow access to other researchers or provide interlibrary loans. Online Computer Library Center [OCLC] (2020) declares that the collections in a special library are often heavily weighted to one area of interest in support of a specific user's base.

Special libraries are established and structured to provide specialized information resources for specialized needs, and public institutions are well suited in this regard because they are aware of their information needs, and providing the same is simply making knowledge and expertise available, which is a drive toward achieving the institutions' objectives and goals, according to Onwubiko (2021). On the other hand, library services are routines or activities carried out by librarians in various areas or divisions of a library, such as ordering, selection, classification, cataloging, acquisition, charging, and discharging of information requirements and resources. According to Iroeze, et al (2018) libraries and their personnel provide Internet service, reference services, current awareness services,

selective dissemination of information, reprographic service, bindery services, indexing and abstracting service, circulation of library information resources, CD-ROM database search, word processing, and other services.

Acquisition of library materials and other information resources is an important and necessary activity for every library, whether special or not. Uzoagba, et al (2012) defines acquisition as "the process of acquiring library information to satisfy the demands of users and their work." It's a process of adding books and other items to the library's existing collection. According to Muhammad et al. (2020), the acquisition is the process by which libraries get or secure their information resources through purchase, exchange, gift, or charity. In light of the aforementioned, this study is to analyze inhibiting factors of the acquisition of library materials and services provided to users in special libraries, in Kwara State.

Statement of the Problems

Special libraries are information centers designed to deliver important knowledge to a specific group of people or organizations to ensure their survival or sustainability. Despite this, not all special libraries are up to the task, since many are significantly hampered by a variety of factors such as inadequate financing, an inefficient institutional structure, and so on. This is especially true in underdeveloped nations' special libraries (Hensley & Millrer, 2010). Special libraries are essential for offering specialized information items and services to certain persons. They give information items in a variety of media, not only printed versions. CDROMs, E-manuscripts, Databases, CDs/DVDs, E-reports, Multimedia goods, E-journals, and other similar items are examples. They are also useful for offering information services like reference and information services, as well as selective information distribution (SDI). They're also useful for presenting consumers with timely and relevant information. Special libraries do not have a large reach since they provide clients with accurate, targeted, and timely information. Despite their value, special libraries face several problems that limit their efficacy and efficiency.

Many special libraries in Nigeria have the declining infrastructure and outdated resources, which is undeniable. Along with this, there are issues with upgrading library stock and providing services to users, a lack of competent employees, insufficient staff and other individuals to efficiently administer the library and a lack of communication and office equipment. Given the foregoing, the researcher became intrigued and decided to look into the impediments to the procurement of library resources and provision of services in special libraries utilizing the Central Bank of Nigeria., Ghalib law library, Nigeria Stored Product Research Institute (NSPRI), Nigeria Navy School of Health Sciences (NNSHS) Library, Eleja Chamber Library, Agricultural and Rural Management Training Institute (ARMTI) Library, Nigeria Centre for Agricultural Mechanization (NCAM) Library, Michael Imodu National Institute for Labour Studies (MINILS) Library and the University of Ilorin teaching hospital library(UITH) as case studies.

Objectives of the study

This research work aims to examine the inhibiting facing the acquisition of library materials and the provision of services in special libraries. However, the following objectives are formulated;

i. Assess the inhibiting factors affecting the acquisition of library materials in the special libraries.

ii. Examine the factors faced in the provision of library services in the libraries.

iii. Suggest sustainable strategies to surmount the factors facing the acquisition of library materials and provision of services in a special library.

Research questions

This study will make use of the following research questions;

i. What are the inhibiting factors affecting the acquisition of library materials in special libraries?

ii. What are the factors faced in the provision of library services in the libraries?

iii. Suggest sustainable strategies to surmount the factors facing the acquisition of library materials and provision of services in a special library.

Review of related literature

A library is special if its collections are restricted to a certain subject or group of subjects, and it is meant for a certain type of user. The role of special libraries is very closely related to their institutional activities and is therefore mainly focused on making knowledge and expertise available to further the set goals of their parent bodies. Mostert (2012) observes that 'within the knowledge society that has recently emerged, special libraries as custodians and disseminators of subject and specific information have a vital role to play. The value of timely, accurate and relevant information has increasingly been acknowledged as

providing a leading edge in the modern competitive world'. Special libraries have thus been equipped to support their parent organizations by providing the information required to ensure the survival and continued survival of their parent bodies. Currently, many libraries in Nigeria hire employees that are either illiterate or inexperienced in the subject of librarianship. In Nigeria, librarianship education and training are inadequate, and it requires dramatic reform to develop librarians capable of serving in a knowledge-based society (Douglas, 2017). According to Abdul Karim (2010), even if a few personnel are available, the state government's incapacity to train them in the field of library profession has an impact on the quality of services they provide. In this context, special libraries are faced with the task of providing services that will aid in the achievement of the Millennium Development Goals for Health (Douglas, 2017). Inadequate ICT skills among library employees are a concern in most Nigerian libraries, preventing the purchase of new technology that would make the library's services easier and more accessible to both library customers and staff. Poor ICT infrastructure development and finance, as well as a lack of ICT skills among workers, have been recognized as issues (Enweremi et al 2020; Onwubiko 2021). The practice of infrastructure maintenance and development is not prevalent in Nigerian libraries.

Most libraries in Nigeria, particularly those in rural regions, lack adequate funding to purchase and install computers and provide internet access. Due to a lack of foreign currency and a high exchange rate, almost all materials are imported from outside Nigeria, primarily from Europe and America. As a result of the shortage of foreign currency and the high exchange rate, acquisitions have dropped sharply, and in some states have completely ceased (Douglas, 2017). Similarly, Abdulsalami and Arowolo (2019), also studies the method of acquisition of library resources in the Nigeria Institute of transport technology library (NITT Library) shows that 10 (28.57%) of the respondents affirmed that, a problem facing the library is a lack of financial support, while 11 (31.43%) of the respondents agreed that, lack of qualified staffs is the problem of the library, another respondent 8 (22.86%) indicated lack of current materials while 6 (17.14%) shows that lack of space in the library. Similarly, Mommoh and Saka (2016), in their study noted that 20(50%) of respondents have identified the lack of modern training facilities as the most serious problem hindering the acquisition of ICT training and skills by librarians in special libraries in Abuja FCT. There is digital device among academic libraries and other types of libraries in developing nations. Next to this is10(25%) respondent respondents indicated a lack of funds for training, while 8(20%) of the respondents have respectively indicated a lack of training opportunities and parent organisations not willing to send library staff for ICT training. The lowest respondents were 5(12.4%) respondents that indicated a lack of interest in the librarians. Similarly, Enweremi et al, (2020) in their study of the special library as a repository of knowledge: challenges and prospects, identified challenging factors affecting special libraries such as poor funding, epileptic electricity, inadequate manpower, inadequate ICT facilities, availability of outdated collections, poor maintenance culture, negligence or negative attitude on the part of the management of the parent bodies, and lack of a proper standard for operating special libraries. Furthermore, Onwubiko, (2021) opined that the special libraries were far performing below every standard in their functions as transformation agents.

In Nigerian libraries, a lack of proper funding is a serious issue. Libraries' collections are satisfactory in terms of volume and correctness due to insufficient financing (Ayanlola and Uchendu, 2019). Meanwhile, identifying the demands of consumers is an important step in meeting their needs. Libraries are organizations that are dedicated to providing users with timely, accurate, and up-to-date information items as well as high-quality services to fulfill their day-to-day information needs. User expectations and satisfaction have been used to determine service quality, which is viewed as crucial for service firms to maintain a strong competitive position (Jayasundara, 2008). Every library is concerned with the outcome in terms of satisfaction of recipients, users, researchers, or content providers of the information resources and services have in carrying out their several functions (Douglas, 2017) Individual needs varies from one another and their needs change day by day as a result of information exposure.

Therefore, every library should have an acquisition policy. As a result, libraries should develop an acquisition policy that will help them when they need it. For librarians, creating an acquisition policy is a difficult undertaking. The importance of Information and Communication Technology (ICT) in special libraries should be emphasized, and it should be recognized as a top priority to improve services and give internet access. This will improve the

efficiency and efficacy of library services. Meanwhile, Abdulsalami and Arowolo (2019), emphasized the possible strategies for the problems of acquisition in the libraries such as the acquisition of required resources is simply the best strategy (17.14%) whereas, (22.86%) of the respondents agreed on having a defined collection development policy while, (27.%!%) provision of adequate fund whereas, (28.57%) agreed on solicitations of external support from alumni, friend and (31.42%) believed that, the storage for use of free online data resources by the librarian in the library or the subscription of purchase data package will be the best option.

Methodology

Introduction

This section involves discussions on the research methodological approach to use in the study. Sub-topics that will be discussed include Research design, the population of the study, sampling and sample size, methods of data collection, the procedure for data collection, the validity of data collection instruments, as well as techniques of data analysis.

Research design

The topic adopts a social survey research design. The method is aimed at collecting comprehensive and systematic data about the opinion and views of special library staff regarding challenges facing special libraries in acquiring library materials and services in the library.

Population of the study

The population of the study is all special librarians and para-professional personnel in the area of study (Ilorin).

Table. Population of the study

Name of library	Population
University of Ilorin Teaching Hospital Library	10
NNSHS Library, Offa	4
Galib Chamber Law Library	5
Eleja Chamber Library	3
Central Bank of Nigeria (CBN) Library	4
Agricultural and Rural Management Training Institute (ARMTI) Library	5
Nigeria Centre for Agricultural Mechanization (NCAM) Library	4
Michael Imodu National Institute for Labour Studies (MINILS) Library	6
Nigeria Stored Product Research Institute (NSPRIL) Library	6
Total	**47**

Sources Field Survey (2021)

Instrument for data collection

The questionnaire was designed and used for data collection. It was designed based on the objectives of this study The questionnaire was in three parts, the first part was designed to gather personal and demographic information of the respondents while the second part of the questionnaire was designed to collect information on inhibiting factors of acquisition of library materials and services. The researchers employ the use of the 2.0 IB SPSS package to analyze the data. The instrument was given to three experts whose research areas of interest include reference services provision, administration of special libraries and special library collection for scrutiny and expert judgment. This was done to check the appropriateness of the instrument. The test and retest method was used to measure the performance of the instrument and it provided a reliability coefficient of 0.85.

Data presentation and analysis

All the questionnaires administered were completed and returned. Data were presented for analysis using descriptive statistics.

As shown in Table 2 below, respondents were drawn from nine (9) libraries. University of Ilorin Teaching Hospital Library; NNSHS Library Offa; Ghalib Chamber Law library; Eleja Chamber Library; Central Bank of Nigeria (CBN) library; ARMTI Library; NCAM Library; MINILS Library; NSPRIL Library. Although the special library's existence has a bright future, it is advised that regulations and standards be established to better the services. Included in the policies and standards is the inclusion of special libraries in the provision of adequate funds to the library by the parent institution, management oversight of funds released to the library, and the government providing a grant to indigenous publishers and making imported information materials tax-free.

Table 2. Demographic Characteristics of Respondents

N=47

Demographic Variables		Freq.	Perc.
Name of Institution	UITH Library	10	(21.2%)
	NNSHS Library, Offa	4	(8.5%)
	Galib Chamber Law Library	5	(10.6%)
	Eleja Chamber Library	3	(6.3%)
	Central Bank of Nigeria (CBN) Library	4	(8.5%)
	ARMTI Library	5	(10.6%)
	NCAM Library	4	(8.5%)
	MINILS Library	6	(12.7%)
	NSPRIL Library	6	(12.7%)
	Total	**47**	**(100%)**
Gender	Male	32	(68.0%)
	Female	15	(31.9%)
	Total	**47**	**(100%)**
Age Bracket	< 25	5	(10.6%)
	26 -30	10	(21.2%)
	31-40	16	(34.0%)
	41-50	6	(12.7%)
	>50	10	(21.2%)
	Total	**47**	**(100%)**
Education	O'Level	7	(14.8%)
	BSc.	24	(51.0%)
	MSc.	9	(19.1%)
	Phd	7	(14.8%)
	Total	**47**	**(100%)**
Job Position	Professional Staff	28	(59.5%)
	Para-Professional Staff	12	(25.5%)
	Supporting Staff	7	(14.8%)
	Total	**47**	**(100%)**
Years of working experience	1-5 Years	10	(21.2%)
	6-10	15	(31.9%)
	11-20	15	(31.9%)
	>20 Years	9	(19.1%)
	Total	**47**	**(100%)**

Sources Field Survey (2021)

Research Questions 1: What are the inhibiting factors affecting the acquisition of library materials in the special libraries?

As indicated by the respondents in Table 3, the libraries face diverse problems in the acquisition of library materials. These include lack of acquisition Policy ($\bar{x}$=2.55); inadequate funds ($\bar{x}$=3.32); high cost of foreign materials ($\bar{x}$=3.70); poor quality of locally published materials ($\bar{x}$=3.83); poor bibliographic control ($\bar{x}$=3.21) and poor management of funds ($\bar{x}$ =3.36).

Research Questions 2: What are the factors faced in the provision of library services in the libraries

As shown in Table 4, several factors were found to be militating against the effective provision of library service delivery to users in the selected

special libraries. These include poor knowledge of ICT skills infrastructure and utilization ($\bar{x}$=3.60); lack of knowledge or skills to exploit the information system ($\bar{x}$=3.40); inadequate human resources ($\bar{x}$=3.19); lack of ICT tools and compliance ($\bar{x}$=3.21); inadequate funding ($\bar{x}$=3.21) and poor infrastructure ($\bar{x}$=2.55)

Table 3. Inhibiting factors affecting the acquisition of library materials

Inhibiting factors affecting the acquisition	SD	D	A	SA	Mean
1. Lack of acquisition policy	9	17	12	9	2.55
	(19.1%)	(36.2%)	(25.5%)	(19.1%)	
2. Inadequate fund	4	3	14	26	3.32
	(8.5%)	(6.4%)	(29.8%)	(55.3%)	
3. High cost of foreign materials	0	0	14	33	3.70
	(0.0%)	(0.0%)	(29.8%)	(70.2%)	
4. Poor quality of locally published materials	0	0	8	39	3.83
	(0.0%)	(0.0%)	(17.0%)	(83.0%)	
5. Poor communication services	17	12	5	13	2.30
	(36.2%)	(25.5%)	(10.6%)	(27.7%)	
6. Poor bibliographic control	6	6	7	28	3.21
	(12.8%)	(12.8%)	(14.9%)	(59.6%)	
7. Poor management of funds	3	3	15	26	3.36
	(6.4%)	(6.4%)	(31.9%)	(55.3%)	

SA=Strongly Agree; A=Agree; D=Disagree; SD=Strongly Disagree
Sources Field Survey (2021)

Table 4. Factors faced in the provision of library services

Factors faced in the provision of library services	SD	D	A	SA	Mean
1. Lack of ICT tools and compliance	5	5	12	25	3.21
	(10.6%)	(10.6%)	(25.5%)	(53.2%)	
2. Inadequate funding	5	6	10	26	3.21
	(10.6%)	(12.8%)	(21.3%)	(55.3%)	
3. Poor infrastructure	6	23	4	14	2.55
	(12.8%)	(48.9%)	(8.5%)	(29.8%)	
4. Inadequate human resources	4	3	20	20	3.19
	(8.5%)	(6.4%)	(42.6%)	(42.6%)	
5. Lack of knowledge or skills to exploit the information system	5	5	3	34	3.40
	(10.6%)	(10.6%)	(6.4%)	(72.3%)	
6. Poor knowledge of ICT skills infrastructure and utilization	3	4	2	38	3.60
	(6.4%)	(8.5%)	(4.3%)	(80.9%)	

SA=Strongly Agree; A=Agree; D=Disagree; SD=Strongly Disagree
Sources Field Survey (2021)

Research Questions 3: Suggest sustainable strategies to surmount the factors facing the acquisition of library materials and provision of services in a special library

The respondents made suggestions on the measures of overcoming the challenges of acquisition of library materials and services to library users in the selected special libraries. Seven (7) items were used to evaluate the respondent's suggestions as shown in Table 5. The majority of the respondents ($\bar{x}$=3.19) indicated that there should be the recruitment of qualified personnel. Other recommendations include: Imported information materials should be made tax-free ($\bar{x}$=3.40); Adequate bibliographic control mechanism ($\bar{x}$=3.60); Provision of adequate funds ($\bar{x}$=3.51); Government should provide a grant to indigenous publishers ($\bar{x}$=3.74); Fund released to the library should be monitored by the management ($\bar{x}$ =3.70) and lastly, there should be the formulation of acquisition policy ($\bar{x}$=3.11).

Table 5. Strategies to surmount the factors facing the acquisition of library materials and provision of services in a special library.

N=47

Strategies to overcome inhibiting	SD	D	A	SA	Mean
1. Recruitment of qualified personnel	5 (10.6%)	3 (6.4%)	17 (36.2%)	22 (46.8%)	3.19
2. Imported information materials should be made tax-free	5 (10.6%)	3 (6.4%)	7 (14.9%)	32 (68.1%)	3.40
3. Adequate bibliographic control mechanism	2 (4.3%)	3 (6.4%)	7 (14.9%)	35 (74.5%)	3.60
4. Provision of adequate fund	5 (10.6%)	4 (8.5%)	0 (0.0%)	38 (80.9%)	3.51
5. Government should provide grant to indigenous publishers	0 (0.0%)	0 (0.0%)	12 (25.5%)	35 (74.5%)	3.74
6. Fund released to the library should be monitored by the management	1 (2.1%)	3 (6.4%)	5 (10.6%)	38 (80.9%)	3.70
7. There should be formulation of acquisition policy	5 (10.6%)	6 (12.8%)	15 (31.9%)	21 (44.7%)	3.11

SA=Strongly Agree; A=Agree; D=Disagree; SD=Strongly Disagree
Sources Field Survey (2021)

Discussion of Findings

The findings of the study discovered that librarians faced diverse challenges in the process of acquisition of library materials in the special libraries. As indicated these problems which were collectively agreed by all the respondents include lack of acquisition policy; inadequate funds; high cost of foreign materials; poor quality of locally published materials; poor bibliographic control and poor management of funds. The outcome of this study conforms with that of Abdulsalami and Arowolo (2019), who in their study identified lack of financial support; lack of qualified staff; lack of current materials; lack of space in the library etc as a major obstacle to the acquisition of libraries materials which hindering the optimal performance of special libraries in Nigeria. In addition, the finding conforms with Douglas, (2017) who revealed in his study that, acquisitions have dropped sharply, and in some states have completely ceased as a result of the shortage of foreign currency and the high exchange rate.

The results of this study revealed that several factors were found to be militating against the effective provision of library service delivery to users in the selected special libraries. These include poor knowledge of ICT skills infrastructure and utilization;

lack of knowledge or skills to exploit the information system; inadequate human resources; lack of ICT tools and compliance; inadequate funding and poor infrastructure. This corresponds with the claim of Enweremi et al (2020) who in their study identified poor funding, epileptic electricity, inadequate manpower, inadequate ICT facilities, availability of outdated collections, poor maintenance culture, negligence or negative attitude toward the part of the management of the parent bodies, and lack of a proper standard for operating special libraries. In addition, the finding is in support of the assertion of Onwubiko (2021) who in his study revealed that the special libraries were far performing below every standard in their functions as transformation agents. The finding also, suggest sustainable strategies to surmount the factors facing the acquisition of library materials and provision of services in a special library such as recruitment of qualified personnel; imported information materials should be made tax-free; adequate bibliographic control mechanism; provision of the adequate fund; government should provide a grant to indigenous publishers; fund released to the library should be monitored by the management and lastly, there should be the formulation of acquisition policy. This finding is in line with that of Abdulsalami and Arowolo (2019), who emphasised the possible strategies for the problems of acquisition in the libraries such as the acquisition of required resources is simply the best strategy; having a defined collection development policy; provision of the adequate fund; solicitations of external support from alumni, friend and the storage for use of free online data resources by the librarian in the library or the subscription of purchase data package will be the best option.

Conclusion

The outcome of this study establishes the fact that special libraries in Nigeria are faced with numerous challenges which have worked against optimal delivery of basic services to the Nigerian populace and that libraries and librarians attached to special institutes are aware of their strategic roles and tasks as custodians and disseminators of information as required of alterations agents but are stuck by numerous of challenges surrounded under inadequate funding and negligence by management and other stakeholders. According to the findings of this study, special libraries in Kwara State (Nigeria) obtain information materials mostly through purchases and gifts, and as a result, they have appropriate information resources in their libraries. Meanwhile, it was discovered that libraries confront various challenges in delivering services to their customers and that these challenges are so severe that they are harming user happiness. The impediment is offering ICT-related services to consumers; it was discovered that the majority of respondents lack the necessary abilities for 21st-century information users. This study however concludes that the acquisition of library materials in special libraries in Kwara State is good although not without some inhibiting, and the provision of services to users will be more improved if they can work on the identified constraining.

Recommendations

Based on the findings, gap identified and conclusion of this study, the following recommendations are proffered:

i. Special libraries as the name implies should work on recruiting more qualified personnel to achieve the purpose of the establishment.

ii. Provision of the adequate fund to the library by the parent institution and funds released to the library should be monitored by the management

iii. Government should provide a grant to indigenous publishers and make imported information materials tax-free.

iv. There should be the formulation of an acquisition policy.

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