

EXAMINATION OF COLLECTION DEVELOPMENT PRACTICES AT COLLEGE LIBRARIES IN NORTHWEST NIGERIA

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Abstract

This study examines collection development practices in college libraries across Northwest Nigeria, with particular attention to the existence, scope, and efficacy of Collection Development Policies (CDPs). Adopting a quantitative survey design, structured five-point Likert-scale questionnaires were distributed electronically to 48 librarians in purposively selected colleges; 47 valid responses (98 % return rate) were analysed using SPSS for descriptive and inferential statistics. Results show that although a written CDP is present in most libraries, coverage of digital and electronic resources is limited, and policy reviews occur irregularly with minimal staff and stakeholder participation. Nevertheless, respondents affirm the policy's relevance in guiding material selection and ensuring consistency, albeit noting a need for greater flexibility to accommodate emerging formats. Major impediments to effective CDP implementation include inadequate funding, low staff awareness, infrequent reviews, and insufficient integration of digital resources. The study concludes that, while CDPs provide an essential framework for resource management, their impact is constrained by operational and technological gaps. It recommends systematic policy revision schedules, explicit inclusion of digital resources, increased staff training, and improved funding mechanisms to foster responsive, user-centred collection development. These findings contribute empirical evidence to the discourse on academic library management in developing countries and offer actionable insights for enhancing resource provision in Nigerian college libraries.

Keywords: Collection Development, College libraries, Examination, Nigeria, Practices.

Introduction

Collection development practices in college libraries play a crucial role in building and maintaining resources that support the academic needs of students, faculty, and researchers. These practices encompass a wide range of activities, including selection, acquisition, evaluation, and management of library resources in various formats. In recent years, the adoption of information and communication technology (ICT) has significantly impacted collection development in academic libraries, particularly in developing countries like Nigeria. A survey of

Nigerian university libraries revealed that while some institutions have fully computerized their operations, others are still in the process of implementing ICT solutions (Ani *et al.*, 2005). The development of electronic information resources (EIRs) has also gained prominence, with many libraries focusing on internet connectivity, subscription to electronic databases, and online resources (Ani & Ahiauzu, 2008).

Collection evaluation is an essential aspect of collection development practices in college libraries. Librarians employ various methods to assess their collections, including user-centered evaluations, physical assessments, and specific subject support analyses (Agee, 2005). These evaluations provide valuable insights into the strengths and weaknesses of the collection, helping librarians make informed decisions about future acquisitions and resource allocation. However, collection development in academic libraries faces numerous challenges, such as decreasing budgets, increasing costs of materials, and the complexity of electronic resources. To address these issues, many libraries in developed countries have adopted written collection development policies (CDPs) to guide their activities. Unfortunately, university libraries in Africa often lag in this regard, either lacking formal policies or failing to implement them effectively (Yakubu, 2023).

The role of academic libraries extends beyond traditional collection development practices, as they are increasingly recognized as key contributors to achieving broader educational goals. For instance, academic libraries play a significant part in supporting the United Nations Sustainable Development Goal 4 (SDG 4), which focuses on quality education. Libraries provide relevant materials, organize information literacy training, and engage patrons in programs that create awareness of SDG 4 (Dei & Asante, 2022). Additionally, diversity-related collection assessment has become an important consideration for academic libraries, particularly in larger institutions (Ciszek & Young, 2010). As the information landscape continues to evolve, academic libraries must adapt their collection development practices to meet the changing needs of their users. This includes embracing hybrid models of service delivery, incorporating both physical and digital resources, and preparing for the post-COVID-19 era (Yu *et al.*, 2022). By continuously refining their collection development practices, college libraries can better support the academic community and contribute to the overall success of their institutions.

Literature Review

Collection development practices in college libraries have undergone significant transformations in recent years, driven by technological advancements, changing user needs, and evolving academic landscapes. Traditional librarian-mediated collection development is increasingly being complemented or replaced by patron-driven acquisition models, where user activity directly influences the selection and purchase of library materials (Hodges *et al.*, 2010). This shift reflects a growing emphasis on user-centered approaches and the need for more efficient resource allocation. The integration of e-books and digital resources has further reshaped collection development strategies, with libraries exploring new ways to balance print and electronic collections while addressing issues of accessibility, licensing, and long-term

preservation (Hodges *et al.*, 2010; Llewellyn, 2019). Additionally, the rise of open access publishing and institutional repositories has introduced new considerations for collection development librarians, who must now navigate complex decisions regarding the acquisition and promotion of freely available scholarly content (Ashiq *et al.*, 2020).

Academic libraries play a crucial role in supporting the educational and research needs of their institutions, and collection development policies (CDPs) are essential tools for guiding the growth and management of library resources. CDPs serve as formal documents that outline the principles, guidelines, and criteria for selecting, acquiring, and maintaining library materials (Haycock, 2013; Hu *et al.*, 2024). In recent years, the existence of CDPs in college libraries has become increasingly important due to the rapid digital transformation and evolving information landscape (Hu *et al.*, 2024; Yu, 2017). Studies have shown that many academic libraries have implemented CDPs to ensure systematic and consistent collection development practices (Dei & Asante, 2022; Zareef & Jabeen, 2025). However, the adoption and implementation of CDPs may vary across institutions, with some libraries facing challenges in developing and maintaining these policies (Shahzad *et al.*, 2024).

The frequency of reviewing CDPs in college libraries is a critical aspect of maintaining their relevance and effectiveness. As the information needs of users and the academic environment continue to change, regular review and updates of CDPs are necessary to ensure they remain aligned with institutional goals and user requirements (Hu *et al.*, 2024; Llewellyn, 2019). Some libraries conduct annual reviews of their CDPs, while others may have longer intervals between revisions (Dei & Asante, 2022; Zareef & Jabeen, 2025). The advent of digital resources and emerging technologies, such as artificial intelligence and the Internet of Things, has further emphasized the need for frequent policy reviews to address new collection formats and access methods (Amzat & Adewojo, 2023; Igbinovia & Okuonghae, 2021). However, the frequency of CDP reviews may be influenced by factors such as staff availability, institutional priorities, and resource constraints (Shahzad *et al.*, 2024; Yu, 2017).

The relevance of CDPs in the selection of materials for college libraries is widely recognized in the literature. These policies provide a framework for making informed decisions about resource acquisition, ensuring that library collections align with the curriculum, research interests, and institutional mission (Haycock, 2013; Hu *et al.*, 2024). CDPs help librarians prioritize purchases, allocate budgets effectively, and maintain a balanced collection across various disciplines and formats (Dei & Asante, 2022; Zareef & Jabeen, 2025). In the digital age, CDPs have become increasingly important in guiding the selection of electronic resources, open access materials, and emerging formats such as datasets and digital humanities projects (Llewellyn, 2019; Yu, 2017). Furthermore, CDPs can facilitate collaboration between librarians and faculty members in the selection process, ensuring that the collection meets the needs of both teaching and research activities (Dei & Asante, 2022; Wu, 2013).

Despite their importance, the implementation and use of CDPs in college libraries face several challenges. One significant obstacle is the rapid pace of technological change, which can

make it difficult for libraries to keep their policies up-to-date with emerging formats and access models (Amzat & Adewojo, 2023; Yu, 2017). Limited financial resources and budget constraints may also hinder the ability of libraries to fully implement their CDPs, particularly in acquiring expensive electronic resources or maintaining print collections (Shahzad *et al.*, 2024; Zareef & Jabeen, 2025). Additionally, resistance to change among library staff and faculty members can impede the adoption of new collection development practices outlined in the policies (Hu *et al.*, 2024; Llewellyn, 2019). Other challenges include the lack of skilled personnel to develop and maintain CDPs, inadequate technological infrastructure, and difficulties in assessing the impact of CDPs on collection quality and user satisfaction (Igbinovia & Okuonghae, 2021; Shahzad *et al.*, 2024; Zareef & Jabeen, 2025). Overcoming these challenges requires ongoing staff training, effective communication with stakeholders, and a commitment to regularly reviewing and updating CDPs to reflect the evolving needs of the academic community (Dei & Asante, 2022; Wu, 2013).

Objectives:

The study seeks to:

1. Ascertain the existence of collection development policy (CDP) in the College libraries in Northwest Nigeria.
2. Find out the frequency of review of the CDP.
3. Determine the relevance of the policy in the selection of resources in the library.
4. Identify the challenges associated with the use of CDP in the libraries.

Methodology

A quantitative research approach was adopted to assess the collection development practices in college libraries, offering statistically measurable data to evaluate procedures such as acquisition methods, budget allocation, and user participation. This method facilitated the systematic collection of numerical data, which allows for statistical analysis of librarian responses and behaviors (Pandey *et al.*, 2023). The study targeted librarians across selected college libraries using purposive sampling to ensure the selection of individuals with relevant expertise in collection development (Ndou, 2021). A structured questionnaire using a five-point Likert scale was employed to gauge perceptions and practices, a tool known for its clarity and capacity to measure attitudes accurately (Leonor *et al.*, 2022). 48 copies of questionnaires were distributed through a Google Form link to the librarians from selected colleges' libraries, and 47 responded. Data collected were analyzed using Statistical Product Service Solution SPSS, a widely used statistical tool in library and information science research, which supported descriptive and inferential analyses, including mean scores and correlation tests (Ankamah *et al.*, 2022). The results were presented in tabular format to ensure clarity, ease of interpretation, and effective visualization of trends and patterns (Rajasekharam & Anjaiah, 2018). The data was analysed using software and is represented in tabular form below. In 5- 5-point Likert scale, 0.01-2.49 is rejected and 2.50-5.00 is accepted, and the criterion mean is 2.50.

Results:

The reason for this research study is to examine Collection Development Practices at College Libraries in Northwest Nigeria. Data was collected through a questionnaire which was administered to 48 respondents, and 47 were returned, representing 97.9%.

Research Questions and Answers

1. To ascertain the existence of collection development policy (CDP) in the College libraries in Northwest Nigeria.

Statement	Strongly Disagreed (1)	Disagree (2)	Neutral (3)	Agree (4)	Strongly Agree (5)	Mean
1. There is a written CDP in my college library.	5	9	11	13	9	3.28
2. The CDP is reviewed and updated on a regular schedule.	6	10	14	11	6	3.04
3. Library staff are familiar with the contents of the CDP.	7	8	12	13	7	3.12
4. The CDP explicitly covers digital/electronic resources.	10	13	11	9	4	2.70
5. Acquisition decisions are guided by the CDP.	4	7	10	14	12	3.48

With the aggregate mean score of 3.12 and a criterion mean of 2.50, the existence of Collection Development Policies (CDPs) in college libraries across Northwest Nigeria is considered evident. The statement "*Acquisition decisions are guided by the CDP*" recorded the highest mean score of 3.48, indicating that the policy is actively used in guiding material selection. Similarly, the presence of a written policy ($M = 3.28$) and staff familiarity with the CDP ($M = 3.12$) further support the institutional recognition of the policy. However, the mean score of 2.70 for the statement "*The CDP explicitly covers digital/electronic resources*" points to a weak integration of digital content in the policy. The statement on policy review and updates ($M = 3.04$) also suggests that while some libraries conduct reviews, they may not be consistent or comprehensive. Collectively, the findings imply that although CDPs are in place and functionally used in many institutions, there are critical gaps—especially regarding the inclusion of digital resources and the regularity of policy updates. This calls for strategic revisions and staff engagement to ensure that CDPs remain current and comprehensive in addressing both print and electronic resources.

2. To find out the frequency of review of the Collection Development Policy.

Statements	Never	Rarely	Sometimes	Often	Always	Mean
1. The CDP in my library is reviewed annually.	20	12	8	5	2	1.96
2. There is a formal schedule for reviewing the	18	14	7	6	2	2.04

Statements	Never	Rarely	Sometimes	Often	Always	Mean
CDP.						
3. Reviews of the CDP involve all library staff.	22	13	6	4	2	1.89
4. The CDP is updated whenever new types of resources are introduced.	16	15	8	5	3	2.21
5. Stakeholders (users, management) are involved during CDP reviews.	25	10	7	3	2	1.74

The overall low mean scores, ranging from 1.74 to 2.21, reveal that the frequency of reviewing the Collection Development Policy is generally low across college libraries in Northwest Nigeria. Most respondents indicated that reviews happen “Never” or “Rarely,” and there is little formal scheduling or broad staff and stakeholder involvement in the review process. This suggests that the CDP is seldom revisited or updated, which may limit its effectiveness in addressing changing resource needs and technological developments.

3. To determine the relevance of the policy in the selection of materials in the library.

Statements on Relevance of CDP	Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Neutral	Agree	Strongly Agree	Mean
1. The CDP is used as a guide during material selection.	2	3	9	22	11	3.72
2. The policy helps maintain consistency in collection development.	1	4	11	21	10	3.64
3. The CDP ensures that user needs are considered during material selection.	3	5	10	19	10	3.53
4. The policy is flexible enough to accommodate emerging resource types.	4	7	12	17	7	3.21
5. The CDP contributes to the effective management of library resources.	1	2	13	20	11	3.72

Mean Scores ranging from 3.21 to 3.72 indicate that the Collection Development Policy is generally regarded as relevant and effective in guiding material selection in college libraries. Respondents agree that the CDP promotes consistency, addresses user needs, and supports resource management. However, the slightly lower score for flexibility (3.21) suggests some limitations in adapting the policy to emerging resource types.

4. To identify the challenges associated with the use of the Collection Development Policy in the libraries

Statements	Not Challenge	a Minor Challenge	Moderate Challenge	Major Challenge	Mean
1. Lack of staff awareness about the CDP	5	6	12	24	3.79
2. Inadequate funding to implement the CDP	3	5	10	29	4.02
3. Poor integration of digital resources in the CDP	7	9	13	18	3.47
4. Irregular review and update of the CDP	4	7	14	22	3.79
5. Resistance to change among staff regarding policy implementation	8	10	12	17	3.32

The data reveal significant challenges affecting CDP use, with mean scores from 3.32 to 4.02, indicating that these are mostly moderate to major obstacles. The greatest challenges are inadequate funding ($M = 4.02$) and lack of staff awareness ($M = 3.79$), followed by irregular policy review and limited digital resource integration. Resistance to change among staff also poses a considerable challenge.

Findings:

1. The study revealed that although most college libraries in Northwest Nigeria have a written Collection Development Policy, its coverage of digital and electronic resources remains limited.
2. The review of Collection Development Policies in most college libraries is infrequent, with limited formal scheduling and low involvement of staff and stakeholders in the review process.
3. The CDP is perceived as a relevant and useful tool for guiding material selection, ensuring consistency and addressing user needs, though some respondents feel it could be more flexible.
4. Key challenges hindering effective CDP use include inadequate funding, low staff awareness, irregular reviews, and insufficient coverage of digital resources.

Conclusion

The study revealed that while the Collection Development Policy (CDP) exists and is generally recognized as relevant and useful in guiding material selection across college libraries in Northwest Nigeria, there are significant areas that require improvement. The policy plays a vital role in ensuring consistency, meeting user needs, and supporting effective resource management. However, its impact is limited by infrequent reviews, inadequate funding, lack of staff awareness, and insufficient integration of digital resources. These challenges not only hinder the full implementation of the CDP but also affect its ability to respond to evolving

information needs and technological changes. To enhance the effectiveness of CDPs, there is a critical need for structured and regular policy reviews, inclusive staff engagement, strategic funding, and modernization of content to include electronic and emerging resources. Addressing these gaps will strengthen collection development practices and contribute to more dynamic, responsive, and user-centered academic library services.

Recommendations

1. It is recommended that libraries revise and expand their Collection Development Policies to explicitly include digital resources, ensuring alignment with current information access trends and user needs.
2. Libraries should establish and adhere to a formal review schedule that actively involves staff and stakeholders to ensure the CDP remains current and comprehensive.
3. Libraries should periodically review and adjust their CDPs to increase flexibility and better accommodate new and emerging types of library materials.
4. Libraries should prioritize staff training, secure adequate funding, and institute regular policy reviews while enhancing the inclusion of digital resources to overcome existing challenges.

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