

Prospects and Challenges of Library Resources Processing in Federal University Gashu'a

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Abstract

This paper reiterates the prospects and challenges of processing information resources in Federal University Gashua (FUGA) Library, Yobe State. Descriptive statistic of frequency counts and percentages were used to analyze the data for research questions. The population comprised of both professional and para-professional staff of the unit which are 14(51.85%) out of 27 staff of the library. Four (4) research questions and objectives were set to guide this study. Questionnaire and interview were the main instruments used for data collection. The prospects comprised the assurance by the funding of the Tertiary Educational Trust Fund (TETFUND) for the procurements of resources, tools and equipment's for the library. Moreover, the findings reveal the available processing tools which are; accession register, book packet, date due slip, ownership stamp, book card, subject heading and classification scheme and use of the appropriate tools to undertake aforementioned functions effectively and efficiently. However, some of the staff stated that books were classified through online catalogue (library of congress electronic resources). The challenges comprise of limited knowledge and experience of library staff that need periodic retooling and obsolescence of working policy. Most of the respondents postulated that training of staff, well equipping of the technical section, periodic supervision by the university librarian and employing of experts (personnel) will resolve the challenges.

Keywords:

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Background to the Study

Library is prosperous when its clients can access, retrieve and store for themselves its services and resources. The prospect therefore hinges on the types of resources collection, variety of formats, organization and caliber of information professionals who provide services that is convenient during physical visits or virtually. Tools that facilitate the description of acquired resources to provide bibliographic or intellectual description necessary during inquiries, access and targeted services and programs cannot be overemphasized, particularly when the mission of educating, informing, or entertaining must be fulfilled. As a veritable partner that facilitates and support teaching, learning, research and community service provider implies that the library is dependable to simulate learning the basic threshold and advancing society generally. Therefore, build up is deliberate so that as such as possible the library resource after selection and acquisition must under go a number of procedures at the technical unit which makes the user interface most exploring – catalogues (manual and/or automated).

The technical unit synergizes contributions, requests and other activities which ensures the inclusion of resources that can add value to the library collection and when acquired are responsible for its inspection, ownership stamp, accessioning of material, organization and arrangement. In the unit appropriate tools such as identification of resource, cataloguing and classification schemes, and subject headings are utilized to process the library resources to make services offered functions effectively and efficiently. In the library of Federal University Gashu'a processing unit is responsible for acquiring processing, cataloguing and classifying, organizing and preparing of all library materials for easy access and retrieval.

Statement of the Problem

The position of the library in academic endeavours has been established by numerous authors particularly for universities where they facilitate and support man power development, research undertaken to resolve societal challenges and synergizes with industries, and makes it dependable (Ekere, 2006, Opoku, 2011, Emokiviovo & Ogunrobi, 2012). Thus, to fulfill these desires in Federal University Gashua the need to support the library cannot be done with the “rule of the thumb” or guess work which is also at infancy as the university is in need of all the necessary equipments and expertise particularly in the library's technical unit whose role is to process all library resources to make it accessible, and those who access becomes knowledgeable to make informed decisions. It suffices to investigate the prospects and challenges of the library to achieve these fits. Therefore, what are the practices of resource processing, to what extent has it influence the library's prospects and what constitute the challenges is the crux of this paper.

Objectives of the Study

The objectives of the study are to:

- 1) Investigate the demographic distribution of library staff in FUGA
- 2) Find out the information resources processing tools utilized by the technical unit for the processing of resources acquired by FUGA library

- 3) Determine the challenges militating effective and efficient processing of library resources in FUGA
- 4) Proffer ways to resolve the challenges militating against the FUGA library from processing its resources.

Research Question

The following research questions guided the study:

1. What are the demographic distributions of library staff in FUGA?
2. What are the information resources processing tools utilized by the technical unit for the processing of resources acquired by FUGA library?
3. What are the challenges militating effective and efficient processing of library resources in FUGA?
4. What ways can help the library to resolve the challenges militating against processing the library acquired resources?

Review of Related Literature

The Conceptual Issues

Processing of Library Resources: Processing of library resources is a method or act of treating and physically preparing of library resources through the use of tools for easy identification and used. Society of American Archivists (2011) defined processing as the arrangement description and preparation of library materials for storage and use. It also stated collection is “processed” when an individual can make productive use of it for research. Processing a collection provides “control” of the physical artifacts and the intellectual content embodied in them. Similarly, Shoeb (2015) observed that processing is a series of tasks or operations. Heated that library before items can be shelved and then circulated they need to be physically prepared this entails that they go through processing procedures so that can be located, used, and returned to the library from which they originated. Each item in the library must go through physical processing such as labeling, binding, repairing, condensation and otherwise making items among others ready for storage in a manner that allows for easy retrieval and maintenance of what is in a collection. In the library of Federal University Gashu'a processing unit is responsible for acquiring processing, cataloguing and classifying, organizing and preparing of all library materials for easy access and retrieval.

University Library: University library is an academic library. Academic libraries, according to Reitz (2004) is a library that is an integral part of a college, university or other institutions of postsecondary education, administered to meet the information and research needs of its students, faculty and staff. This definition revealed that a university library has a function, and this is to “meet the information, research, and curriculum needs of its students, faculty and staff”. These are the aspiring roles the library of Federal University Gashu'a. This collaborate Halsey (2009) opinion which insisted a library collection reflect a vast range of interests and formats so that students and faculty can use these collection to conduct research within any conceivable academic discipline.

Technical unit: This is specialized section also referred to behind the scheme unit of the library where systematic evaluation of would be resources and those acquired are processed with the aim resolving the challenges of information needs. This unit process, collects and analyze information from publishers catalogue, selection board/committee, request from patrons and keeping statistics about students' perceived use of libraries by using evidence (testing), numerical values to the evidence (measurement), and using the results to make decisions (assessment) for replacement of aged resources as well as purchase of additional stock (Ogunrobi, 2012).

The basic function of any university is to conserve the existing knowledge, to transmit knowledge through teaching, and to create new knowledge through research. The university library is the university's principal instrument in the conservation of knowledge through its rational, systematic and comprehensive acquisition of all type of human communications records, published and unpublished, written or oral in recorded form that embody the ideas of knowledge of the past since each new idea or invention grows out of accumulated and conserved knowledge (Daramola, 2016). According to Omotundes, et al (2014), universities are to generate new knowledge and also encourage transferred and adopted of this new innovation. Since this requires an atmosphere of research, libraries are left with no options or choice than to provide access to relevant information resources by applying this to enable quick access, integrate and repackage information for the end user that will capacitate and enrich higher educational institutions means of conducting research. Basically, library resources are materials that users consult in making decisions and also for problem-solving.

McGurr, (2008) discusses a problem with time it took to locate unprocessed materials within the Technical Services department at Ohio State University Library and the new workflow that was designed and implemented as a result. Shroyer, (2007) assesses serials cataloging from two perspectives: the catalogers who construct the records and public services use of the records. Informally assesses perceived effectiveness of standard OPAC display patterns for periodicals information. Lampzey, R.B. (2010) asserted that the main goal of collection development is to meet the information needs of library users and to make effective use of them based on the vision and mission of the institutions concerned. Traditionally, when information was mostly in print form, libraries were best known for book acquisition, processing, organization, storage and retrieval. In recent times, however, there have been multiplicities of formats, processing method and sources in use.

Griffin, Lewis & Greenberg, (2013) presents the results of a single case study focused on an holistic assessment model, taking into account both public and technical services to explore inter-related question affecting both day-to-day operations as well as long-term, strategic priorities. Zhao, (2004) Explores and discusses the problems in assigning book (Cutter) numbers to printed materials under the LCC system and considers why problems may be occurring. Wu & Mitchell (2010) Describes the challenges, decisions, and priorities around cataloging electronic books at the University of Houston Libraries. It also describes the workflow for batch cataloging, using the MarcEdit utility, ongoing maintenance of

records and record sets and future directions. Furthermore, Baron, (2008) briefly discusses the possibility of acquiring shelf-ready audiovisual and out-of-print monographs. He concludes that the quality of bibliographic records and processing time, combined with high costs, were the impetus for moving to a shelf-ready acquisitions model for these types of library resources. Jacoby expresses doubts regarding the future of shelf-ready services expansion in academic libraries because they eliminate or greatly reduce participation by librarians and faculty in the collection development process (Jacoby, 2008). However, In Swanbeck & Luk. (2012) memorando to Office of the controller in San Francisco titled: "Collection and Technical Services Efficiency Review" indicated that the library has experienced continuous increases in circulation, usage of digital collections, and other service demands over the past few years. The Library is looking for new ways of doing business to maintain high levels of customer service amidst stable staffing levels and increasing public demand for books and materials. Focusing on the service areas of Acquisitions, Receiving, Cataloging, Processing, and Preservation, the Controller's Office team conducted a broad assessment of the Collection and Technical Services Division and identified potential inefficiencies in the department's current workflow, including unnecessary movement of materials throughout the Department, fluctuations in the ordering of materials, a time-consuming system for processing purchase orders and invoices, and the underuse of the Library's data management system.

The acquisition of library materials in shelf-ready form is one of the outsourcing strategies implemented by technical services departments to improve efficiency, reduce costs, and increase patron satisfaction. Shelf-ready materials supplied by vendors include physical items accompanied by full bibliographic records and physical processing such as application of barcodes, spine labels, security strips, etc. As the current library environment is moving toward management of electronic resources, the possibility of streamlining receiving, cataloging, and processing of materials in non-electronic format is potentially a very welcome alternative to the traditional acquisitions to cataloging model. While some libraries gained substantial experience in managing shelf-ready operations during the last decade, others are still contemplating the idea or are unsure of the implications that shelf-ready services could have for their libraries' databases and staffing. Potential concerns linked to the implementation of shelf-ready services can include extra review of vendor-supplied records, presence of less than full bibliographic records, and changes in work assignments for technical services staff. The review of current library literature reveals a need for assessment of academic libraries' practices in shelf-ready materials management (Tomlin, & Kandarasheva, 2014). Thus, the benefits of shelf-ready services include improved materials turnaround time and financial savings. Various studies mention three to seven days as a range of time required to deliver materials to the shelf using this model (Sweetland, 2011). Schroeder and Howland conducted a cost-benefit analysis of in-house and shelf-ready materials processing at the University of Birmingham library (Rebecca & Jared, 2011). The data indicated that the error rate falls into a wide range between 0.5 and 30 percent. However, more recent studies document that records requiring in-house action at about 2 percent. According to Walker and Kulczak (2007) as well as Lam, (2007) reveal that in-house actions may include correcting series headings, call number errors, erroneous location codes, and typographical errors.

Prospects of Processing Library and Information Resources

There is a possibility of hope and bright prospect for the library through proposing to acquire some necessary tools such as Anglo American Cataloguing Rules 2 (AACR2), List of Subject Headings, Library of Congress Classification Schemes, styles pen and the supply of materials through the TETFUND intervention to enhance and promote effective service delivery. However, other materials such as gums, glues, date slips, book pocks and borrower cards that are use for processing of information resources were made available in large quantity at due time and the parent Institution have engage in the process of providing fund for purchase of needed materials when the need arise. The well skills new staff and training of staff the old staff will add value to processing activities. Since the university has purchased and installed a generator which can provide adequate supply of electricity to the entire university as well as the university library, the problem of poor supply of electricity is solve to be a thing of past while processing activities requiring the use of electricity will be enhance through the use of the library university generator. Moreover, the Online Public Access Catalogue (OPAC) and Automated Catalogue system will soon be available as a result of the created library website, full installation of database (KOHA) and internet facilities which were the necessary required facilities for the library to be widely accessible and automated.

Methodology

The descriptive survey design was adapted for this study in order to utilized quantitative method to collect data from the librarians that are responsible for technical services in FUGA Library. The population comprises of both professional and para-professionals staff of the library that participate in technical services only, which are 14 out of 27 staff (52%); who were all selected because they are responsible for processing of information resource and not large in number. Therefore, they are guided to provide answers to the questions structured according to the paper objectives. Data were collected through closed structured questionnaire and observation. The table below shows statistical distribution of staff responsible for technical services in FUGA library.

Table 1: Staff Responsible for Technical Services

S/N	Staff	Frequency	Percentages
1	Technical Staff	14	52
2	Non-Technical Staff	13	48
3	Total	27	100

Source: University Library, Federal University Gashua, 2018.

The researchers observed that majority of the staff responsible for technical services in FUGA library were not domiciliary staff of the Technical Service Division, they were called upon from the other Divisions/Units of the FUGA library to participate in processing of newly arrival materials (Books). The domiciliary staff of the Technical Service Division were 4(29%) out of the 14(100%) staff responsible for technical services in FUGA library. Therefore, the response of the 10(71%) staff from other Divisions/Units who usually participated in processing of library materials in Technical Service Division will be of paramount to this study.

Research Findings and Discussion

Table 2: Demographic Distribution of Library Staff

S/N	Age		Qualification		Professional Categories				
	No	%	No	%	No	%			
1	20-25	2	7.4	SSCE	8	29.6	Professional	12	44.4
2	26-30	7	25.9	DLS	2	7.4			
3	31-35	10	37	HND	2	7.4	Para-Professional	11	41
4	36-40	3	11.1	BLS	13	48.1			
5	41-50	3	11.1	MLS	1	3.7	Supporting Staff	4	15
6	51 Above	2	7.4	PhD	1	3.7			
7	Total	27	100		27	100		27	100

Source: University Library, Federal University Gashua, 2018.

Table 2 above reveal the demographic distribution of the library staff in Federal University Gashua, the table reveals that the majority of the library staff 10(37%) are between 20-25 years, 7(25.9%) are between 26-30 years, 3(11.1%) are between 36-40 and 41-50 years, and 2(7.4%) are between 20-25 and 51 above years. However, the table shown that 13(48.1%) of the library staff that are BLS holder constitute the highest rating, 8(29.6%) were SSCE holder, 2(7.4%) were DLS and HND holders and 1(3.7%) were MLS and PhD holders. Most of the staff 12(44%) were professionals, 11(41%) were para-professional and 4(15%) administrative and supporting staff. This implies that the FUGA library have qualified staffs that can perform their work and duties effective and efficiency. The staff are capable to discharge technical services and any others library services.

Table 3: Distribution of FUGA library Resource processing tools

S/N	Tools	Availability
1	Accession register	√
2	Accession Numbering machine	√
3	Ownership stamp	√
4	Book pocket	√
5	Book card	√
6	Date due slip	√
7	Subject Heading	√
8	Classification Scheme	√
9	Style pen	×

Source: University Library, Federal University Gashua, 2018.

Available = √ Not Available = ×

Table 3 shows the available tools for processing of information resources FUGA in library. However, the table 3 above reveals that accession register, accession numbering machine, ownership stamp, book pocket, book card, date due stamp, subject heading, classification scheme were the available tools that were used for processing of information resources. Thus, the table shows that style pen was the only tool that was not available among the

listed option. This implies that all the available tools were used for processing of information resources, the use of these tools facilitate the procedures of processing library resources. Despite the lack of style pen, the librarian used ordinary pen during process. Key issues governing the procedures, functions and roles include are the steps taking for processing library resources. Society of American Archivists (2011) stated some steps involved in processing library materials basic physical preparation includes: Inspection, Ownership stamping, Accession Numbering, Cataloguing, Organization and Classification, Preservation.

Table 4: Challenges of Processing Library and Information Resources

S/N	Challenges	Agreed		Disagreed		Remarks
		F	%	F	%	
1	Fund	14	100	--	--	Agreed
2	Lack of processing policy	5	38	9	62	Disagreed
3	Inconsistent subscription of new resources	5	38	9	62	Disagreed
4	Lack of technical know how	--	--	14	100	Disagreed
5	Obsolescence of working policy	6	43	8	57	Disagreed

Source: Field survey, 2018.

Table 4 reveals challenges facing of processing library and information resources in FUGA library, fund as major challenge 14(100%) constitute the highest rating figure, this was followed by 5(38%) disagreed lack of processing policy and inconsistent subscription of new resources, 8(57%) respondents disagreed with obsolescence of working policy, while 14(100%) respondents disagreed that lack of technical know as among challenges inhibit processing of library and information resources. The finding revealed that lack funding as major challenges militating the processing of information resources. This implies that inadequate funding has been the challenge of processing library and information resources. This finding coincided with Rokmuzzaman & Umemoto (2009) study that reveals the following challenges in library practice

1. Insufficient tools and technologies: This refers to libraries not well-equipped with tools to process the materials.
2. Lack of sufficient budget / funds: Due to budgetary constraints libraries are not well-equipped with essential infrastructure for processing library resources, e.g. new technology training, incentives.
3. Inadequate staff training: The success of processing library resources projects are dependent on adequate training plans in all the activities of processing library resources process, e.g., training in knowledge capture, organization, dissemination, and use of new technology skills.
4. Reluctance of library practitioners: According to them the response of LIS practitioners to processing materials is comparatively slow and they are reluctant to incorporate processing of library resources in library practice because of their traditional mind set. Some librarians do not take any initiative for positive changes in their libraries.

5. Lack of incentives: Incentives are the biggest motivators. In the absence of proper incentives plans, academic librarians observe reluctance towards processing library resources activities.

Table 5: Solution to challenges militating processing of information resources

S/N	Solution	Agreed		Disagreed		Remarks
		F	%	F	%	
1	Staff training	14	100	--	--	Agreed
2	Employing experts	5	43	9	64	Disagreed
3	Well equipping of the technical section	12	86	2	14	Agreed
4	Periodic supervision by the university library	10	71	4	29	Agreed
5	Setting target for the processing of acquired resources	5	36	9	64	Disagreed
6	Providing of fund on regular bases	14	100	--	--	Agreed

Source: Field survey, 2018.

Table 5 shows the distribution on the solution to challenges militating processing of information resources, staff training and provision of fund on regular bases 14(100%) had highest rating, followed by 12(86%) well equipping of the technical section, while periodic supervision by the university library 10(71%). The implication of this finding is that training of staff, periodic supervision and regular funding of the library by the parent institution will redress the challenges militating processing of library and information resources.

Conclusion

The Federal University Gashua Library was established along with the other universities in 2013, the library through TETFUND proposed to procure resources, books, journals, classification schemes, list of subject headings, Anglo American cataloguing rules 2(AACR2), Stand by generator and other tools. Despite the challenges the library staffs were motivated through in house training, self effort and determination to succeed above to carry out their services effectively and hoping that the future of the library will be determined by the available of staff with requisite knowledge, skills and experience.

Recommendations

Based on the findings of this study, the following recommendations are advice to look onto in order to ensured effectiveness and efficiency of processing library and information resources.

1. Restraining of Tertiary Educational Trust Fund (TETFUND) procedure as to result to quick accessibility of TETFUND intervention.
2. Constant maintainer of the available tools and replacing of the tools when faulty or damage, regular funding by parent institution
3. Make provision for training and retraining of staff through attending of conferences, workshop/seminar and further studies

4. Providing of fund on regular bases by the parent organization to ensure procuring of necessary tools and fueling of the university library generator.

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