

QUALITY SERVICES  
*in*  
ACADEMIC  
LIBRARIES



**FELICIA EDU-UWEM ETIM**  
**UNIVERSITY LIBRARIAN**  
**UNIVERSITY OF UYO-UYO**  
**(2005-2015)**

Edited By

Eno J. Ottong  
Princewill I. Egwuasi  
Norma L. Menez

# Acquisition Procedures in Nigerian Academic Libraries: A Comparative Study

Mary J. Iwot & Aniebiet I. Ntui

## Abstract

*This paper examines the basic Acquisition procedures in Nigerian Academic libraries. A process of obtaining books and other materials for library or information centre, in our Nigerian academic libraries, the problems, and the standard. It reveals that some universities has written acquisition policy and that even though there is no written Acquisition policy at some of the universities, there are some alternative guidelines to help in documenting the acquired information resources for further references.*

## Introduction

The university libraries otherwise known as academic libraries are an integrated part of the institution it rendered services, it is a part of the whole body. Ezekwe and Muokebe (2012) define academic libraries as libraries designed to provide and accumulate recorded knowledge (published or unpublished), book and non-book materials relevant to prescribed academic discipline of tertiary educational institutions.

Acquisition procedures in academic libraries can be seen as the method by which additional information materials are made to the library's collection. Acquisition follows selection of information resources in the process of developing library collections. It is the starting point for any type of library planning to stock information resources for researchers use. This comprises the selection, ordering materials, purchase, soliciting for gifts, or exchange of materials, and building process in the library.

The work of an acquisition department touches every other department; this is because acquisition is the beginning of the library processes which ultimately result in the service which gives the material desired to the library's patrons.

Acquisition section, also known as the collection development section performs the crucial role of bringing into the library information carrying materials and ensures efficient record keeping in an acquisition record. Acquisition is the process of locating and acquiring all types of library materials after they have been selected for a library's collection (Wilkinson & Lewis, 2005). Afolabi & Akwang (2006) state that acquisition of information resources involves all procedures employed to bring to the library all needed print and non-print resources to satisfy the broad purpose of the university.

Anyanwu, Zander and Amadi (2006) posit that acquisition is the process of obtaining library materials to satisfy the needs of users. Acquisition work is a means by which book and non-book materials are added to the library. Onwubiko and Uzoigwe (2004) see acquisition process as the key to library user satisfaction and as the bedrock of collection development in any type of library.

In studying library administration today, less similarity is found among acquisition departments of various university libraries than among other departments of the same libraries. This is quite understandable, since acquisition departments usually are more affected by local regulations and restrictions than other library departments. Acquisition departments must function within the

framework of legal restrictions imposed upon them, restrictions in the way moneys may be expended, orders placed, binding, handled, exchanges distributed. These common characteristics usually vary only in their complexity. Large libraries may have elaborated procedures than procedures found in smaller libraries, but the more recent trend is toward simplification whenever and wherever possible. As a result, the organization and procedures of acquisition departments are quite large, well-administered libraries may conceivably be simpler than those of some smaller libraries, not so well administered.

## **Background Information**

The University of Uyo was established in October 1991 as a conventional Federal University. It took over the premises, students and other assets and liabilities of the erstwhile University of Cross Rivers State established in 1983. The University of Uyo is in the heart of Uyo, capital of Akwa Ibom State, Nigeria, the second largest oil producing state in Nigeria. The University of Uyo Library collection has a very broad collection based of 12 faculties; 82 departments and programmes, 103 subject specializations that form the subject/titles selection index. In all, the total book title is up to 189,000. The total number of staff in the library is one hundred and seventy eight (178), comprising of 26 or 14.61% professional staff, 143 or 80.34% Para-professional and 9 or 5.05 % administrative/ technical staff.

The University of Calabar in Cross Rivers State was established on October 25, 1975. It grew out of the Calabar campus of the University of Nigeria, Nsukka with 154 students and a small cadre of academic, administrative and technical staff. The vision of the university is the attainment and maintenance of the highest form of excellence in reading, research and services, thereby becoming a leading light in Nigeria, the continent and the world of excellence. It has nine (9) faculties and three (3) institutes. In September 2002, the University began operation with 29 departments in 8 faculties with students' population of 10,694.

It is not possible to cover all academic libraries in Nigeria in this study. However, the acquisition procedures in Nigeria academic libraries are almost identical. Consequently, two federal universities in Nigeria were chosen as resident in this study. These academic libraries are University of Uyo, Akwa Ibom State and University of Calabar, Cross River State. Only the staff in Resources development section completed research questionnaire for this study.

## **Acquisition Policy**

Acquisition policy is a part of the library's functions to meet the purpose of the library, planning for the areas necessary to the institution which the library saves. Setting down in a written or unwritten way, policies set down to be carried on in university libraries, selectors or guide them in what to do, the types of books to select and others.

The number of books and other information materials should correspond to the number of research programmes of the university. This is because according to the given principle acceptable globally especially using such standard as AACR2, MARC21 information sources is to be organised conventionally when it is arranged accordingly to a given principle found in formal institution libraries. Adedibu (2006) put in his write up that there should be consistence in acquisition policy so that when staff 'come and go' the policy stands since it is written down. He added that book selection policy is very important because it helps in knowing the general objectives of acquisition. The university libraries acquisition policy covers wider range than that of a private library, Onwuazo

(1999). There are some vital things to be considered in acquisition policy such as the location of the library, the institution's income, the number of faculties to save, the programmes i.e. courses thought, size of collections acquired for consultation, how often new materials should be added to the existing ones, to reflect and provide currently useful information's to the researchers. There should be constituted acquisition policy on how to acquire and make available some information resources like books. Periodicals and other information resources as demanded by all types of researchers in the university, to solve their research work problems.

History of important people, such as Chief Nyong Essien of Akwa Ibom State and Chief Eburutu of Cross Rivers State are very essential, and as such the university libraries should own materials related to their history.

Acquisition policies act as a guide for the acquisition of library materials to be added to the collection, depending on the aims and objectives of the library, the policy act as a tool to enable libraries to provide a perfect library collection.

### **Methods of Acquiring Information Materials for Nigeria University Libraries**

In the past, acquisition work was only to order for information materials; though it is an important function, there are other important functions of acquisition department. Some of these are follows:-

- Purchase
- Gifts and donations
- Exchange and re-distribution
- Legal deposit
- Photocopying
- Bequeath
- Cooperative Acquisition

### **Purchase**

The most desirable way of acquiring materials for a university library collection is to examine the books or other types of materials before deciding whether to buy and add them to the collection or not to buy. As a result, the university libraries have worked out ways of satisfying this desire to examine materials before making their final decision. First, they will choose library materials to satisfy the need of the users, having decide on what to buy and the approval given; the acquisition librarian will now plan on how to visit the publishers and book dealers for physical and direct examination of those materials being relevant to the university, the librarian will place certain restrictions in advance on the type of materials they will accept, age (year of publication) and reading levels of the materials, subject areas, type of binding, etc., making payment plan for the materials so inspected according to budget and acquiring them. When they arrive, the librarian will check if they are suitable enough for acceptance, but if unsuitable for the collection the only option is to return any item not found suitable for its collection back to the vendor with an explanatory note. An elaborated treatment is given to the acquisition through purchase because it usually represents over 90% of the total stock in the library, except in National libraries where legal materials are highly significant (Nwalo, 2003).

## **Gifts and Donation**

The University libraries, however, have other sources of acquiring information materials; one of these sources is through gifts and donations. It may be in the form of memorials to the deceased person, money, and materials form. These materials may be out-dated, in poor physical condition or duplicates of items already in sufficient quantity in the library. They may come from an individual or organisation, examples are Education Trust Fund (ETF), World Bank, UNESCO, etc. To University of Uyo, University of Ibadan collections were mainly donations as at 1962/1963 from the following groups:

- Frederick Montague Dyke's collection of 15,000 volumes
- British council 7000 volumes
- the cash gifts which include 2.1million pounds from United Kingdom Educational Grant

This was expanded on journals baskets and books. There were also 30, 000 pounds donated by Foundation of the USA which was spent on books (Onwuazo, 1999).

## **Exchange and Re-Distribution**

This method is used by the librarians in exchange programme, libraries may establish a give-and-take relationship, one library will provide another with what the other needs and vice versa. This will help users to meet up with their needs. While in the re-distribution, the library will pool their resources and agree to distribute items to other libraries on a work out plan. This method is applied because no matter the size or financial position of a particular library, it cannot acquire all the items their users require. This is an interdependency of libraries, showing that no man is an island, it is otherwise referred to as interlibrary cooperation or lending, this is to strengthen their collections.

## **Legal deposit**

This is a process by which governmental and non-governmental agencies legally deposit their with publications university libraries, the university library can also build its own collections through legal deposit. Okoro (2005) confirms that legal deposit is the process by which depository status or responsibility is conferred on a library and that it is as old as publishing.

## **Photocopying**

Photocopying of relevant information materials to add to a library's collection represent one of the surest and cheapest ways of acquiring materials, the library, otherwise, could not afford to add to its collection. The university libraries and indeed any other type of library are able to reproduce rare and expensive materials that will be most useful to their host communities through photocopying.

## **Bequeath**

This is the process of legally stating that one's money or property be given out to a specific person or organisation on death, usually included in wills. This also provides sources of university library collection as individuals often bequeath their entire collection to universities. This may be accompanied with certain conditions as in gifts and donations. But if the special collection is offered to a university library as an outright bequeath, the librarian is usually able to accept it, subject to these important considerations such as;

- Whether the library can house the collection without causing serious adjustments and dislocations of its storage and shelving capacities.
- Whether the expense and effort of processing and cataloguing it is justified by its intrinsic value.
- Whether the library funds will stretch to covering the costs of maintaining and adding to it.
- The librarian must be wary of any restrictive conditions attached to particular donation, for example, that the books in it must be kept in locked cases, or their use being limited, if possible.

## **Library Cooperation**

This is an agreement between two or more libraries in respect of acquisition of necessary materials, having in mind what each library will stock, and agree on what each library should stock and how to *access the holdings of the other university libraries*. It enables libraries to share their resources with one another in order to satisfy the researchers.

## **Routines in Acquisition Section of the University Libraries**

### **Book Selection**

Choosing items to be acquired in the lists of many publications is termed as book selection. This is the work of the Acquisition Librarians, who have to work in conjunction with the book selection committee. The researchers and some library users are also given the opportunity to participate in book selection through suggestion slips issued by the Acquisition section of the library. The selection team has certain tools to go through and mark the needed items to be acquired.

### **Selection Tools Used**

- Abstract
- Indexes
- Publisher's catalogues
- Union lists
- Book reviews
- Bibliographies

### **Computerised Acquisition Routines**

Due to new invention of technological age, what was done manually can also be done electronically such as the ability to search, variety of access points, access to status notes on all titles from all major booksellers to see whether a given title is out of print, or not yet published. The capability of retrieving potentially useful titles from an external database, which could be used for selection purposes within the library. Filing by giving the library complete information of all items, Boss (1981) says:

- One university library can know the activities of another computerised library.
- Online order is possible and faster, from an authorised bookseller.
- Assist in retrieving of useful information from within and outside the library.
- Financial information can be obtained easily in many ways without delay.

## **Computerised Acquisition Procedures**

According to Nwalo (2003), no matter the software and hardware used by a particular library, certain processes in acquisition work are necessary. In many Nigerian university libraries, the responsibility for acquisition comes under the control of the library head. The selection, ordering, and management of acquisition's finance, record and receipts of materials are overseen by the library head, these procedures are being able to manage by the use of computer which has many functions to perform, from selection, Bibliographic searching, Receipt of books, checking, payment, suppliers and keeping of acquisition statistics.

### **Steps in Acquisition**

- Selection
- Bibliographic searching
- Vendor selection
- Order preparation
- Processing
- Order sent
- Claiming
- Receiving
- Vouching for payment

### **Who should acquire?**

With the help of the committee members and faculty board members, the acquisition librarian should be a subject specialist knowing suitable materials for each field to satisfy users' needs, while the university librarian will oversee the situation concerning the acquisition of information resources.

### **Objectives of Acquisition Librarian:**

- To study the publisher catalogue, book trade in order to know where and when to buy, and also to establish a good relationship with book dealers (vendors), bookstores to know what to acquire.
- To study authors credibility of the materials and be alert of new library information materials in circulation.
- To participate in the selection of library materials to be acquired, knowing the existing library collections, must try to know the current edition, knowledge of the forth coming new titles, listing of needed materials by different faculties, and wanted materials in dealers catalogue may make it possible to fill the library's needs.
- The acquisition librarian must participate in the formulation of policies regarding purchase of library needs.
- Must keep correct statistical record of receipts and inspect purchases in order to ensure correct filling of orders and examines the quality of the information materials.
- To maintain adequate records on the performance of various dealers being used and information of others who may be used in case of needs.
- Must study library need, check materials received from the vendor whether it corresponds with their demands.

## **Acquisition Duties**

- The acquisition section purchase selected books or information materials from the most advantageous vendors.
- The acquisition librarian must observe the fund allocated to the library for acquisition, the library space, the format, the index, currency of the material title, illustrations, the binding,
- Process procured materials by sorting the acquire information materials, counting them and crosschecking with the ordering form, check physical condition of the materials, stamping, placing of barcodes, book pocket, giving them accession numbers, and inserting numbers inside the secret and other pages.
- Forward the procured materials promptly to the processing unit.

## **Objectives**

- To find out the acquisition procedures mostly carried out in academic library.
- To know how often academic libraries do acquire information resources
- To find out the problems involved in acquisition proceedings.

## **Methodology**

The research instrument used to collect data here are administration of interview, examination of some library records and oral interview. The questionnaires were collected, collated, synthesized and the result was tabulated. The Sectional head of the acquisition (acquisition Librarian), and other staff in acquisition unit took part in completing the structured questionnaires. The questionnaire sought to find out the procedures mostly carried out to acquire information resources in academic libraries, and problems involving in acquisition proceedings of the two Federal universities. The last section of the questionnaire tries to find out staff strength and the volumes of the collection in the academic library.

The questionnaire divided into two sections and containing a total of 20 questions was designed for this study. Section A was meant to obtain background information while Section B contained specific questions on the acquisition procedures in Nigerian academic libraries. The questionnaires were collated, synthesized and the result was tabulated. The Acquisitions librarian and other staff in acquisitions unit took part in completing the structured questionnaires. The questionnaire sought to find out whether there is any written acquisition policy for the University of Calabar and University of Uyo. And in addition to that, it tried to find out the staff strength, the group involved in selection of information resources, who supervised the acquisition procedures, duration of the weeding, duration for acquiring materials, the problems, and who made the arrangement for acquiring the information resources?.

The acquisition section of the library must be prudent to perform all the operations economically. They are expected to choose the right agent, right method of purchase, to handle the returns in a good way when items are not found satisfactory according to library standards at the time of delivery. The right method of handling sales of discard and acknowledgments are expected from the acquisition librarian, as practiced in university of Uyo, and University of Calabar.



## Responsibility for Acquisition Staff

Initially, acquisition work in a library is usually handled by the librarian, or the librarian and his secretary, as is most of the professional work. As a library grows, some of this work must be delegated. Due to the vital part played by the acquisition department concerning the growth and the development of a library, the head "librarian" often is loath to relinquish any part of it. When the librarian does relinquish some of the acquisition work, it is apt to be the nonprofessional part of it that is first delegated, often to assistants in the catalogue or reference departments. As soon as the pressure of work in these departments makes this arrangement impracticable and the head librarian recognises that she must give up supervision of scattered acquisition processes, the creation of an acquisition department becomes imperative.

## Acquisition Section Challenges

**Financial Problems:** These generate a great challenge to acquisition procedures in Nigerian university libraries ranging from dwindling library allocations to problems of foreign exchange. Since the provision of libraries money is not the responsibility of librarians that know what it takes. Essien (2007) posits that the bulk of money has to be in foreign currency since the bulk of the materials needed by Nigerian libraries are published in Europe and America. The university management also finds it difficult to understand the level of financial involvement in acquisition processing, and as such adequate consideration to library plight not properly given.

**Qualified Subject Librarians:** Some Nigerian universities lack qualified subject librarians, these affect the quality of materials acquired. The subjects librarians have ideas about each field, and must be conversant with books and literature, they are supposed to know authors as well as the best of work in the field (Eguavoen, 2002). Subjects' specialist among acquisition Librarian is an important response to library procedure because it makes for expert approach in solving acquisition problems (Essien, 2007). Lack of personnel resources disrupts the normal activities of the acquisition procedures.

**High cost of Library materials:** The annual increase on price limits the number of information materials to acquire; the estimated fund might not acquire enough materials to satisfy the researchers' needs. The higher the price, the lesser the number of information material acquired. Some of the causes are as a result of depending on the overseas agents for resources subscriptions, sometimes it results in frustration or high cost of the information materials on arrival to the acquisition librarian desk.

## Analysis and Interpretation of the Data

The total number of staff in the University of Uyo library is one hundred and seventy-eight (178), they comprise of 26 or 14.61% academic/ professional staff, 143 or 80.34% para-professionals and 9 or 5.05% administrative/technical staff. The total number of staff in the University of Calabar library is two hundred and thirty-three (233), they comprise of 54 or 2.17% academic/ professional staff, 72 or 30.90%, para-professionals and 107 or 45.92% administrative/technical staff (See Table 1).

**Table 1: Strength of Staff in the Two University Libraries**

Type of Staff	University of Uyo library No of staff	Percentage	University of Calabar Library No of staff	Percentage
Academics/Professional	26	14.61	54	2.17
Para professional	143	80.34	72	30.90
Admin./Technical staff	9	5.05	107	45.92
Total	178	100%	233	100%

## Findings and Discussions

It was discovered that all the acquisition section of the university libraries in Nigeria is guided by the library's acquisition policy, and it may be written or unwritten.

The two academic Universities confirmed that they mostly acquired information materials during the accreditation, though they have other sources like gift and donations and few purchases at times.

Also the two academic universities accepted that their major problems involved in the acquisition proceedings is poor financial support, followed by high cost of information resources.

## The Library Collection

The University of Uyo in Akwa Ibom State library system stocks varieties of materials in all the disciplines including books, journals, magazines, reports, government documents, pamphlets reprints, CD-ROMS, diskettes and videos tapes, and also the University of Calabar, in Cross Rivers State.

## Books and Monographs

The book volume changes with regular acquisition. Table 11 shows the number of titles acquired for five years. The findings show that as at January 2009 – December, 2014, the total collection of the two university libraries. Table 11 shows the number of titles acquired for five years. The findings show that 2009/2010 academic recorded the highest figure comprising of 4382 titles in 5639 volumes or 50.30% of the stock in University of Calabar library. This is followed by 2013/2014 academic session recorded 1364 titles in 1778 volumes, or 15.66%, the 2012/2013 academic session recorded 1103 titles in 1746 volumes or 12.66%, while 2011/2012 had 936 titles in 1474 volumes or 10.74%, and the least collection for the five years in review is 2010/2011 academic session which is 927 titles in 1262 volumes or 10.64%.

In the University of Uyo library, the records show that the 2013/2014 academic session recorded the highest figure comprising 3528 titles in 5678 volumes, or 23.88%, followed by 2012/2013 academic session which had 3,302 titles in 4692 volumes or 22.35%, the 2011/2012 academic session recorded 3,006 titles in 20.35 volumes or 20.35%, while 2010/2011 session recorded 2,965 titles in 4498 volumes or 20.07%, and the least collection for the five years in review had 2009/2010 recorded 1,971 titles in 3486 volumes or 13.34%.

**Table 2: Books Acquired for Five Years**

Academic Session	University of Uyo	No of Titles	Volume(s)	Percentage	University of Calabar	No of Titles	Volume(s)	Percentage
2009-2010		1,971	3486	13.34		4382	5639	50.30
2010-2011		2,965	4498	20.07		927	1262	10.64
2011-2012		3,006	3997	20.35		936	1474	10.74
2012-2013		3,302	4692	22.35		1103	1746	12.66
2013-2014		3,528	5678	23.88		1364	1778	15.66
<b>TOTAL</b>		<b>14,772</b>	<b>22351</b>	<b>100%</b>		<b>8712</b>	<b>11899</b>	<b>100%</b>

From the responses it was observed that, the two universities adopted a written acquisition policy, though not correctly followed, but the practice over the years has been documented. They acquire information resources in their academic libraries mostly during the accreditation; this is to achieve the aims and objectives for which the university was set up for. The two universities have a problem of poor financial support, followed by high cost of books. As a standard a well acquisition policy should be reviewed from time to time, include criteria to use for selecting, acquisition of paper backs, replacement of books, duplicating of books, condition for accepting gifts, and weeding of materials in the library. The responses from them indicate that the universities acquire collection through purchase, gift and donations.

### **Newspapers**

The University of Uyo library and Calabar University subscribes to daily newspapers and some international magazines. Past issues of newspapers are bound and made available on request.

### **Theses and Dissertations**

Theses and dissertations of the two universities are housed in the reference section of the main library and are also available to users on request. Theses and dissertations may not be borrowed nor photocopied.

### **Conclusion**

As libraries are the centre of academics, so is the acquisition the heart of the library. The calibre of staff that work in acquisition section should be considered. Proper attention should be paid while planning for selection, while formulating policies guiding acquisition there should be proper care and to meet the objectives of the institution, certain policies may be reviewed.

### **Recommendations**

- Academic Libraries need review of their acquisition section of the library, due to the reality of electronic publication technologies and publishing formats.
- The available funds should be utilised judiciously.
- Expertise and subject specialist from different faculties should be involved in selecting information materials to be acquired.
- Education being regarded as a vital thing by the government should be given a great attention. This is because from nursery school to university level the users need good information

materials to acquire for their research work, because a work man without tools to work with is an idle man.

## References

- Akwang, N. E. & Afolabi, M. (2006). Acquisition and Availability of French Language Resources in South South Zone of Nigeria. In *Nigerian Libraries Journal of the Nigerian Library Association, Vol.39*.
- Anyanwu, Zander & Amadi (2006). *Introduction to collection development in libraries*. New Owerri: Springfield.
- Eguavoen, E. O. L. (2002). *Collection Development in Information Science & Technology for Library Schools in Africa*, C. Madu and Marie B. Dirisu (Eds.). Ibadan: Evi-coleman Publications. 181p.
- Essien, O. N. (2007). Acquisition for Maximum Benefits in Libraries: Issues and Challenges in Nigerbiblios, *official Journal of the National Library of Nigeria, vol.18, (1&2)*.
- Okoro, O. (2005). *A Book of Readings in Library and Information Science*. Owerri: Ihem Davis Limited.
- Onwuazo, E. E. (1999). *Developing Library Collection*. Onitsha: Hornbill Publishers.
- Onwubiko, E. C. & Uzoigwe, C. U. (2004). *Library: The Home of Knowledge*. Enugu: HRV Publishers.
- Wilkinson, F. C. & Lewis L. K. (2003). *The complete guide to Acquisitions Management*. Westport: Greenwood Publishing Group Inc.