

# Quality Collection of Library Resources in Meeting Users' Needs in Academic Institutions: Competitive Intelligence Approach

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## Abstract

This paper explores the quality collection of library resources in meeting user's needs with competitive intelligence approach. The research is approached through an overview of existing literature. Deming's 14 points management plan for libraries was adapted for management that committed to quality performance. The paper reviews that for a library or an information center to offer quality service in the area of collection, current, relevant, adequate print and electronic information resources must be provided. This paper also identifies challenges of providing quality library collection and possible suggestions.

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**Index terms**— Quality Collection, Library Resources, User's Needs, Academic Institutions and Competitive Intelligence.

## 1 Introduction

Library is primarily set up to collect, organize or process, store, preserve and disseminate information resources of any formats to users as quick as possible. Library is not a profit making organization. It is established to support the organization or individual to achieve the stated goals and objectives. The main reason for establishing libraries is to meet both the current and future needs of the users by acquiring relevance, current and quality resources. Library users are satisfied when the library is able to provide quality service. Quality collection of library resources of different formats and services determines the richness of the library together with other facilities such as conducive environment and quality staff. Good collection of textbooks, journals, reference books, online journals, ebooks, internet resources etc is needed in a good library.

Collection development is the process of planning and building a useful and balanced collection of library materials over a period of years, based on an ongoing assessment of the information needs of the library's clientele, analysis of usage statistics, and demographic projections, normally constrained by budgetary limitations. Collection development includes the formulation of selection criteria, planning for resource sharing, and replacement of lost and damaged items, as well as routine selection and deselection decisions. (Online dictionary for library and information science 2004-2010) Adequate balancing of library collection of different formats is a pointer to the quality of library collection. Any library that does not acquire quality information resources cannot satisfy the patrons' needs. It is expected of academic library to have collection development policy that will guide the library towards quality service.

According to Haag (2006), Competitive intelligence is the action of defining, gathering, analyzing, and distributing intelligence about products, customers, competitors and any aspect of the environment needed to support executives and managers in making strategic decisions for an organization. It is very important to note that competitive intelligence is an ethical and legal business practice, as opposed to industrial espionage which is illegal. It focuses on external business environment. Academic libraries need to scan the environment in order to have better understanding of operations from other academic libraries so as to improve in the areas they are lacking behind. Scanning of environment required seeking for appropriate information that will be useful for quality library collation and services. There is a process involved in gathering information, converting it into

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intelligence and then utilizing this in business decision making. CI professionals emphasize that if the intelligence gathered is not usable (or actionable) then it is not intelligence.

A more focused definition of CI regards it as the organizational function responsible for the early identification of risks and opportunities in the market before they become obvious. Experts also call this process the early signal analysis. This definition focuses attention on the difference between dissemination of widely available factual information (such as market statistics, financial reports, newspaper clippings) performed by functions such as libraries and information centers, and competitive intelligence which is a perspective on developments and events aimed at yielding a competitive edge (Gilad, 2008). In every institution of higher learning, there is a need to use competitive intelligence approach in L useful in improving their library collections and services. Though libraries are not profit making oriented but the quality of their collections and services contribute immensely to research and development of the nation.

All over the world, academic libraries play vital roles in education. They are responsible for acquisition of library resources in printed and non-print formats, processing, storing, preserving and disseminating these resources to users at the right time. Society and academic communities expect quality services and collection from libraries for teaching, research and development. It was generally observed in Nigeria that many academic library services and collections were not quality enough to meet users' needs. This was as a result of insufficient funding; shortage of qualified staff and ICTs infrastructure. Based on this observation, this paper tends to explore the quality of library collection in meeting users' needs in the angle of competitive intelligence.

The main tours of this paper cover:

1. The importance of library quality collection in meeting the users' needs;
2. The competitive approach in the academic library for quality services;
3. The impact of information resources development policy in providing quality library collection to users;
- and 4. The possible challenges of quality library services and collection in academic libraries.

A literature survey was undertaken to determine the importance of quality collection in meeting library users' needs and collection development police as a plan of action for quality library services. Deming's 14 points management plan for libraries was adapted for management that committed to quality performance.

## 2 II. The Concept of Library Collection Development

Collection development can be described as the ways of building up and improving upon a library's information resources. Library collection is the peak of a library. It is the barometer for which one can measure the richness of a library or information center. Olajo and Akewukere (2006) cited in Owolabi and Akintola (nd) defined collection development as a process of selecting, ordering and payment of information materials for the use of the users in the library. Based on this, collection development helps to enhance the assemblage and provision of a variety of information materials to meet the desperate need of library users. Nnadozie (2006) opined that collection development is a planned, continuous and cost effective acquisition of quality and relevant materials to meet the needs of the users and objectives of the university libraries.

Commenting on the importance in Nigerian university libraries, Olanlokun and Adekanye (2005) submitted that collection development is an important aspect of library service that can promote libraries. They went on to say that university libraries need to rise up to their responsibility by providing materials capable of supporting teaching, learning and research, and also for community services. Collection development is the vehicle through which library activities can be measured by the users. It is also important to note that the strength and the weakness of a library collection can be measured or determined by its collection III.

## 3 Quality Collection of Library Resource in Meeting Users' Needs

The library collection is said to be quality when the collection of the library resources are current, relevant in meeting the various needs of library patrons. It is the expectation of the society that the library should provide all forms of information materials that will meet their needs. Libraries play vital roles in research and development. No individuals, organizations, communities or nations can survive without information, the reasons being that information has become a critical resource for survival of humanities. The library is the nerve center of academic activities in universities and is a depository of knowledge, with varied and useful information stored in different kinds of materials, each of which has its unique way of handling. University libraries must help reach the academic goals of their parent institutions and this can be achieved through adequate library collections. ??hukwu (1998) cited in Owolabi and Akintola (nd) maintains that the major indicator of a good library is the quality and quantity of its collections. It is necessary for university libraries in Nigeria and elsewhere to acquire current and relevant information resources necessary for sustaining the teaching, learning, and research activities that universities are known for.

Materials should meet high standards of quality in content, expression, and format. On the other hand, the selector should not hesitate to acquire a low quality book that will be read in preference to a superior book that will not be read. The quality of materials must be related to the other two basic standards of selection, which are purpose and need. The library performs a variety of roles, which in turn demands a variety of materials. (Olajo & Akewukereke, 2006) The collection of reading materials for instance in public libraries needs to be

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more quality to make people love to reads. Many people depending on public library to have reading materials such as books that they are unable to have it. The collections of public libraries in very poor condition, the main factors that contribute to this situation are the given to libraries in the local development process is not high in completion with such other basic as portable water, electricity, good road mentioned but few. Any academic institution that does not give library priority with other necessary facilities may not be able to produce excellent students that will compete favourably with their counterpart within and outside the country.

New ways to conceive of and measure quality in libraries are needed—and alternate approaches emerge in the business sector where organizations are increasingly evaluated in terms of their service quality. The primary focus of a library is service, and service quality is the most studied topic in marketing research during the past decade. A repeated theme in the marketing literature is that service quality, as perceived by consumers, is a function of what customers expect and how well the firm performs in providing the service (Danuta, 1997). It should be noted that any academic library that provides quality and relevant information materials will keep the users and they will continually using the library. This makes library users to have good perception about library services.

## 4 IV. Information Recourses Development Policy

According to Olajo and Akewukereke (2006) a collection development policy establishes ground rules for planning, budgeting, selecting, and acquiring library materials. This document provides a framework for coordinated collection development programme throughout the university libraries. In addition, this policy helps the library to serve the academic community. It assists bibliographers in making not only routine selections, but also approval of plan profiles and gift acceptance decisions. With common terminology and collection standards, bibliographers can work with greater consistency towards defined goals. The standard processes to be considered include selection, scope of collecting, and replacement of missing but useful materials and worn-out materials. According to Eguavon and Ochai (2002), collection development is a planned, systematic development of a collection based on the objectives of the library. Ikem (1995) cited in Olajo and Akewukereke (2006) opined that collection development policy is the vehicle through which the library achieves the goals of its readers' services. Proper budgeting (in line with the collection development policy) and its careful operation are vital to the success of library service activities. It should be used as a planning and monitoring instrument. Just as no group of activities can succeed without proper planning, so also the activities of meeting users' needs cannot succeed without proper policies and monitoring. It is very important for library and information center to have a robust collection development policy that will enhance quality in library and information services.

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## 5 User Education and Creating Awareness of New Arrival

User education is a way of training library users on how to effectively utilize the library materials. Having acquired library materials of different formats, it is very important to train users of library on how to access those materials both printed and non-printed resources. Training of library users can take different forms such as library orientation, one credit unit course on the use of library, conduct seminar/ workshop, etc When library users are taught on library use, information materials acquire would be properly used.

E-Library User Educational Module is an elearning package about new computer technologies, explained in a very simple and accessible manner. Participants will be taken through the essentials of using computerized catalogue systems in libraries, databases, virtual libraries, and the Internet or web-page design. Through presentations, explanations and quizzes, participants will have the opportunity to make their first step into the digital information world. (UNESCO, 2005) According to ??de and Omokaro (2007), the 'library instruction' helps to widen the educational horizon of library users as it exposes them to other areas of study, which are far remote from their areas of disciplines. Furthermore, the library instruction grants the users intellectual freedom because the knowledge they acquire expose them to have free access to all information resources that they may require.

Creating awareness of new arrival is the process of informing the library users of newly information materials of different formats acquired by the library. This service can take the form of displaying of those materials, sending memo to faculty, or emails to respective library users VI. Theoretical Framework on Quality Library Services: Quality Management Model for LLibrary

In 1950s, Dr W. Edwards Deming used his own quality methods to help Japan move into the global competitive marketplace. It is Deming and Joseph M. Juran who are generally recognized as the two primary thinkers in the quality management community, Deming for his belief that a company or organization can achieve a quality framework through a radical organizational transformation, and Juran in his theory that organizations can be managed for quality. In the Juran approach to quality management, three conditions must apply: commitments and action from top management, In order for academic libraries to provide relevant and quality information resources to support universities' curriculum, the concept of quality management must be established. In line with this, this paper adapts Deming's 14 points management plan for libraries. It is expected that every academic libraries should have mission statement. When there is no clear mission statement, staff, users and organizational management will not have a clear picture of the roles of academic libraries in institution of higher learning. Therefore Deming's 14 point adapted for libraries are summarized by Clair (2000) as follow:

## 8 VIII. QUALITY COLLECTION OF LIBRARY

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1. Establish constancy of purpose for service improvement. Libraries should avoid short-term 'band-aid' solutions to quality problems. Instead, long-term planning at the board administrative levels must consider how quality service delivery can best be achieved 2. Adopt the new quality philosophy. Those who work in the libraries must adopt a philosophy in which negativism and poor service are all acceptable. Unhappy patrons not only cease visiting libraries (which reduces the need for staff), but also resist tax hikes and avoid making financial contribution to support the library. 3. Cease dependence upon mass inspection.

Continuous improvement -not quality assurance-is the key to excellent service. With a quality assurance approach, staff members will assume their errors will be detected by others, and thus may underemphasize the importance of doing things right the first time. Quality breakdown are more difficult to fix after than before the fact. 4. End the practice of awarding vendor business based on price alone. Rather than constantly searching for cheaper supplies, long-term relationships should be established with the vendor. For example, when choosing a CD-ROM service, more than price should be considered. The capabilities of the system and service support will be important to the librarian. 5. Improve constantly and forever very system of service. Total Quality Management is not a one-time effort, not even something that is ever accomplished. Instead, it is a journey. Once this journey is embarked upon management is obligated to continually improve the library. Because of the high level of interdependency among organizational members in a library, a team approach is require for making decision about quality improvements.

### 6 Year

From the above Deming's 14-points management plan adapted for libraries, it is very important for every academic library that aims at providing quality and relevant information resources to users should take note of these critical points. It is expected that academic library should have mission statement that gear towards quality service delivery. They should adapt the new philosophy of quality. There should be continuous improvement in acquisition of library information materials. Libraries should institute training procedures both for the staff and the library patrons for effectiveness and efficient services. The management style to adopt should be favourable to staff at all level. Teamwork spirit should be encouraged, and there should not be barriers among departments. Management should put everybody in the library to work to accomplish the transformation

## 7 VII. Relevance of Theoretical Model to This Study

Libraries are not profit orientated establishments; yet competitive intelligence approach can still be used in order to offer quality services as well as competing favourably among other academic libraries. Any library that desire to provide quality collection need to consider Deming's 14-points discussed above. Quality collection of library resources involves acquisition of relevant and current materials in different format. Library collections consist of prints and non-print materials such as books, reference materials, serials like journals or magazines, audio and video materials CD-ROM, electronic resources, internet resources and others. The library administration needs to setup the library system that will gear towards quality philosophy and meeting users' needs. Academic library users are students, faculty, staff community members and visitors. There is need for creating library awareness and user education programme. From Deming's 14points theoretical frame work adapted for libraries, academic libraries in Nigeria would be able to offer quality service and thereby improve the quality of her graduates. This conceptual model can be derived.

## 8 VIII. Quality Collection of Library

Resources: A Competitive Approach

Competitive intelligence (CI) has become a necessary activity in business. It compels companies and institutions to look beyond internal business activities and to integrate events in the external environment into the information picture of a company on an ongoing basis -not once a year! Different to knowledge management and other information management tools, CI provides focus to the information management activity in companies, attempts to make sense from available information and interprets information to make it actionable for use in strategic decision making. It presupposes a human roleinformation is turned into intelligence through a process of interpretation. According to McGonagle and Vella (1990), cited in Muller, (2003) CI can assist business leaders to make better decisions than their competitors. Areas where CI can provide a competitive advantage include:

- competitive activities, for example mergers and acquisitions;
- marketing planning, for example new product development;
- regulatory issues, for example the impact of new legislation on the business; and
- customer activities, for changing needs and preferences;

In order for academic libraries to meet the information needs of their users, they have to know their information needs and provide it in a manner that meets their perceptions and their expectations.

According to Clair (2000) quality management is a combination of process, technique, and management style put together with a commitment to an ongoing effort that establishes quality management as the basis for all process decisions in the organization. These elements then came together to form an information services culture, build on an unwavering commitment to customer satisfaction, that utilizes a wide spectrum of quality -focused

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management procedures and policies, leading to continuous improvement and the provision of the highest level of excellence in information products, services and consultations.

Competitive intelligence tends to involve gathering information about outside environment in order to plan for the future of your own company and products/services (Calof, 2001) cited in Langton (2005) Diversity of library resources collection and competitive intelligence approach

In Nigeria, there are twenty seven (27) federal universities, thirty seven (37) state universities and forty one (41) private universities. How can libraries in private, state or federal government universities compete favourably with one another? Here comes the issue of competitive intelligence. Competitive intelligence has become increasingly important for organizations both in private and a public sector because of intensity of competition has increased in recent years. Any library that provides quality information resources that are adequate, current and relevant will probably meet the information needs of its users. Information resources come in different formats, any academic library that collects information materials in divert formats based on users' needs will defiantly meet the needs of its patrons. Particular information can be documented in hard copy, tape, CD-ROM and electronic formats. This gives the library users the opportunity to use the one that is ("competitive benchmarking"), to identify risks and opportunities in their markets, and to pressure-test their plans against market response (war gaming), which enable them to make informed decisions. Most firms today realize the importance of knowing what their competitors are doing and how the industry is changing, and the information gathered allows organizations to realize their strengths and weaknesses. Academic libraries in federal universities, state and private universities should be able to compete favourably among one another. They should identify their weakness and opportunities. They should explore the opportunity and seek for information among their counterparts to improve the library services and thereby provide quality information materials to meet the library users' needs.

There is need for libraries in academic institutions to acquire information materials in variety of formats such as textbooks, serials, references materials, CD-ROMs, films, cassettes, databases, grey literature, audio, video, ephemerals, recreational materials, children materials, and all other information resources that will be useful to users. Any library or information center that acquires the needed materials will retain its users and has good perception of its services by users.

## 9 Environmental scanning and library administration decision making

Environmental scanning involves looking at information and looking for information from similar libraries to see their collection and provision of information resources. According to Morrison, (1992) the ability of management to adapt to the rapidly changing external environment is a yardstick for successful management. This calls for academic libraries administrators to seek for information from other similar libraries and use this information to their competitive advantage for quality collections of information resources in their libraries. Environmental scanning is a methods that will enable the administration to understand the external environment and the inter association of its various sections as well as the ability to translate this understanding into the organizations planning and decision making process.

Choo, (2002) cited in Langton (2005) submitted that environmental scanning casts an even wider net and analyses information about every sectors of the external environment that can help management to plan for the organization's future. Scanning covers not only competitors, suppliers and customers, but also includes technology, economic conditions and political regulatory environment.

Challenges of quality management and relevant collection of library resources and possible suggestions Libraries challenges are those constraints that hinder libraries at all levels from providing adequate and quality services to the users. Inadequate funding is the major challenge of libraries in developing countries especially in Nigeria. This made the libraries to have few current books, journals, and other reading resources. Many libraries have no e-mail, fax, telephone and computer based services. The inability of the Nigeria government to stock libraries with relevant books 'and journals particularly in the academic institutions has a great implication for learning, teaching, research and development. This has led to conscientious efforts made on the part of the Nigerian government to come up with virtual library initiatives and other relevant information and communication technology policies to provide higher institutions access to relevant and current information resources. Deming also identified seven deadly diseases that can spell doom to quality improvement in an information centre as follow: 1. Lack of constancy of purpose 2. Emphasis on short-term profits 3. Evaluation by performance, merit rating, or annual review of performance 4. Mobility of management 5. Running a company on visible figures alone 6. Excessive medical costs 7. Excessive costs of warranty, fueled by lawyers who work for contingency fees "A Lesser Category of Obstacles" includes 1. Neglecting long-range planning 2. Relying on technology to solve problems 3. Seeking examples to follow rather than developing solutions 4. Excuses, such as "our problems are different" 5. Obsolescence in school that management skill can be taught in classes 6. Reliance on quality control departments rather than management, supervisors, managers of purchasing, and production workers 7. Placing blame on workforces who are only responsible for 15% of mistakes where the system desired by management is responsible for 85% of the unintended consequences 8. Relying on quality inspection rather than improving product quality Despite the roles of academic libraries in the society and in national development, the above challenges can be of quality library services can be reduced if not totally eradicated by the following suggestions:

1. Governments and parent organizations should make libraries and information resources center as part of their priorities. Libraries budgetary allocation should be increased in order to meet the needs of libraries patrons. Library's management should take a drastic measure to attain quality in all ramifications. 3. Theme work spirit must be promoted. Robust collection development policy must be established in line with the library mission statement to provide quality services.

4. The seven deadly diseases identified by Deming that can doom quality improvement in libraries an information centres should avoided. 5. Governments and parent organizations should invest more in the provision of internet and ultra modern library facilities. 6. All the appropriate databases and information resources that are relevant and current should be acquired. 7. The system should be in place to facilitate effective use of library resources acquired. 8. Deming 14 points management plan for library should be adapted IX.

## 10 Conclusion

In conclusion, library is primary set up to acquire, organize, store, preserve and disseminate information resources to users as soon as possible in meeting their information needs. Quality library collection is the setting of high standard of information resources and services that are relevant and capable of meeting library users' information needs. Information resources come in different formats, such as printed like textbooks, journals, encyclopedia, newspapers, dictionaries, and others, non print information materials such as CD-ROM, electronic databases, electronic books, audio, video, and others. Academic library that offers quality library services will properly meet the information needs of its users. The competitive approach in providing quality services in academic libraries is the ability to seek information from other counterpart's libraries and make use of this information to provide quality services and be in better position than others. <sup>1 2 3 4 5 6</sup>



Figure 1:

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