



# Collection Development Policy: A Panacea for Collection Development Challenges in University Libraries in Africa

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## Abstract

*Collection development is faced with various challenges such as decreasing budget allocation, increasing cost of materials, increasing demand for information, the complexity of electronic resources, and legal issues arising from copyright and censorship. To meet these challenges, university libraries in developed countries have adopted different strategies such as using a written collection development policy (CDP) to guide their collection development activities. However, university libraries in Africa are lagging in this regard. It is either they have not formulated the policy or used it to guide their collection development activities. Therefore, this study argues that a written CDP, if well prepared and used, can address collection development challenges facing university libraries in Africa and provide standard collections necessary for teaching and research activities of the university communities. Specifically, the paper discusses major collection development challenges facing university libraries in Africa and establishes ways in which a written CDP could be used to overcome them. Methodologically, the paper is based on a review of related literature. The paper contains a literature review of papers discussing the major collection development challenges facing university libraries in Africa and ways a written CDP could be used to overcome them.*

**Keywords:** Africa, University libraries, collection development, collection development challenges, collection development policy

## Introduction

Collection development is an evolving concept of collection management that was devised to meet the changing demands of library users on collections (Bonaya, 2023; Mwilongo et al., 2020). Collection development involves several activities related to building and managing of variety of information resources to meet the desperate needs of users (Kamau & Elegwa, 2022). These activities include the assessment of users' needs, formulation and application of collection development policy, preparation of budget and fund management, selection and acquisition of materials in all formats, evaluation of materials to ascertain the extent they can meet the users' needs, planning for resources sharing and cooperative collection development activities, as well as promoting the use of library resources (Gulnaz & Fatima, 2019; Johnson,

2018; Mwilongo et al., 2020). Collection development also includes tools like publishers' catalogues, current trade bibliographies, National bibliographies, vendors list, discipline-based journals, suggestions from users, and so on (Mwilongo, 2020; Mwilongo et al., 2020).

Although the main objective of collection development is to develop and maintain adequate and relevant information resources library users, this is usually not achieved in most university libraries in Africa due to the various challenges facing the collection development activities. For instance, several research findings have indicated that funding of university libraries in Africa is inadequate and this has greatly affected collection development activities of the libraries making it impossible for them to purchase or subscribe to current and relevant information resources (Bonaya, 2023; Chaputula & Boadi, 2010;

Frempong-Kore 2021; Mwilongo 2020; Mwilongo et al., 2020; Obiano, 2021). This problem has been compounded with the increasing cost of library materials due to high inflation and fluctuating exchange rate (Harvey & James, 2014; Obiano, 2021). Other issues undermining collection development activities include the increasing demand for information caused by the increasing number of students, the complexity of electronic resources, and legal issues related to copyright and censorship (Ghalib, 2014; Kamau & Elegwa, 2022).

To meet their collection development challenges, university libraries in developed countries have adopted different strategies such as using a written CDP to guide their collection development activities (Fought, 2014; Hunt, 2017). However, university libraries in Africa are lagging in this regard (Ameyaw, 2020; Bonaya, 2023; Frempong-Kore, 2021; Mwilongo, 2020; Mwilongo et al., 2020). It is either they have not formulated the policy, updated it, or used it to guide their collection development activities. For instance, studies conducted in some university libraries of Ghana revealed that although the libraries have CDPs, the policies have not been updated since they were formulated some years ago (Ameyaw, 2020; Ameyaw & Entsua-Mensah, 2016; Frempong-Kore, 2021; Frempong-Kore et al., 2022). Similarly, studies conducted in university libraries of Tanzania revealed that the collection development activities of the libraries are performed without a written policies (Mwilongo, 2020; Mwilongo et al., 2020). Similar situations have been recorded in university libraries in Nigeria (Umar & Haliru, 2022; Umar & Bakare, 2018), Kenya (Bonaya, 2023; Kamau & Elegwa, 2022), and Malawi (Chaputula, 2014).

The absence or poor adoption of CDP has greatly affected collection development activities of the libraries as most of the major components of collection development activities such as selection, acquisition, preservation, evaluation, and weeding of materials are done without haphazardly (Ameyaw, 2020; Frempong-Kore, 2021; Harvey & James, 2014; Mwilongo et al., 2020; Obiano, 2021). This has gone to affect the library collections as well as the learning, teaching, and research activities of the university institutions (Ameyaw & Entsua-Mensah, 2016; Obiano, 2021; Okogwu & Ekere, 2018; Mwilongo, 2020; Mwilongo et al., 2020). Therefore, academic libraries in Africa must formulate and use a written CDP to guide their collection development activities and achieve mission of their library, which is serving the information needs

of the academic community. Perhaps, if this is not done, the library collection development activities would continue to experience much difficulty, and this will have a negative effect on the library collection as well as the learning, teaching, and research activities of the university communities.

Although several authors have written on the importance of using a written CDP to guide collection development activities (Frempong-Kore, 2021; Frempong-Kore et al., 2022; Kate et al. 2022; Obiano, 2021; Mwilongo, 2020; Mwilongo et al., 2020), this study is conducted to add credence to this assertion by demonstrating how a written CDP could be used to address some major challenges facing collection development activities in university libraries in Africa and provide adequate and relevant collections that support the teaching, learning, and research activities of the university institutions.

### **Concept of Library Collection**

Defining the concept of library collection' is important for understanding the meaning of 'collection development' and 'collection development policy. Library collection refers to the totality or sum of library materials such as books (textbooks, reference books, rare books, and theses), serials (journals, newspapers, annuals, and memories), government and institutional publications (reports, commissions, and conferences proceedings), miscellaneous materials (charts, pictures, and globes), microform (microfilm, microfiche, and slides), audio-visual (a phonograph, magnetic tapes, audio cassette, video discs, videotapes), and electronic resources (CD-ROM, DVD, e-book, e-journal, e-database as well online resources) (Xie & Matusiak, 2016; Johnson, 2018). It also means all the tangible and intangible, local and remote resources, possessed by a library or other libraries but accessible by users of the library (Johnson, 2018). Library collection determines the quality of library services and must be developed continuously to satisfy the information needs of users (Nwosu & Udo-Anyanwu, 2015). It must be developed in size, market value, relevancy, scope of coverage, and depth of specialization (Nwosu and Udo-Anyanwu, 2015). This process of developing quality collections to meet the information needs of users is referred to as "collection development".

### **Concept of Collection Development**

A study of collection development at a given library would certainly be incomplete without highlighting the structural changes that have

contributed to what has become a practically universal issue about library collections. It's worth noting that the term "collection development" is relatively new in academic writing. Before arriving at the concept, the field evolved from "book selection" to "collection building," and then from "collection building" to "collection development" (Andrade, 1996). Collection development" is used synonymously by many professionals with the term "collection management". It is a combination of numerous interconnected and interdependent mainly deal with the planning, selection, acquisition, maintenance, preservation, evaluation, and weeding of library collections, to make them more relevant to users' needs (Andrade, 1996; Johnson, 2018; Patel, 2016). Collection development is also defined "as a process of assessing the strengths and weaknesses in a collection based on users' needs and community resources and then creating a plan to correct the weakness and maintain the strength" (Evans, 2000) However, this definition was then expanded in scope, with the phrase "as a process of meeting the information needs of the people (service population) in a timely and economical manner using information resources locally held, as well as from other organizations" (Evans, 2000). Collection development is a continuous process comprising six interrelated elements working together to achieve a common goal" (Evans, 2000). These elements include users' needs assessment, collection development policy, selection, acquisition, evaluation, and weeding. Among these, the policy that guides the overall collection development activities is the most important (Evans & Soponaro, 2005).

### **Concept of Collection Development Policy**

Collection development policy (CDP) is often used synonymously with selection or acquisition policy (Johnson, 2018). CDP is a written document of the principles guiding the selection, acquisition, evaluation, preservation, weeding, and other collection development activities of a library (Demas & Miller, 2012; Johnson, 2018; Gregory, 2019). The main purpose of CDP is to prevent a library from being influenced by personal interests and from acquiring materials that might not support the mission of the library (Mwilongo, 2020). The policy provides a guideline for the selection of materials, a strong foundation for future planning, support for cooperative collection development and resource sharing, and protection for collection development decisions (Mwilongo, 2020). Despite the importance of CDP,

a vast majority of university libraries in Africa have not either formulated the policy or used guide their collection development (Ameyaw, 2020; Mwilongo, 2020; Mwilongo et al, 2020). For instance, In Tanzania, studies conducted in university libraries revealed that collection development activity is performed without a written CDP (Mwilongo, 2020; Mwilongo et al., 2020). In Ghana, the studies revealed that although the university libraries have CDPs, the policies have not been updated since they were formulated nine years ago (Ameyaw, 2020; Frempong-Kore, 2021). Similar research findings have been reported in university libraries in Nigeria (Umar & Haliru, 2022; Umar & Bakare, 2018), Kenya (Bonaya, 2023; Kamau & Elegwa, 2022), and Malawi (Chaputula & Aubrey, 2014; Harvey & James, 2014). This has had a significant impact on the collection development activities of the library as most of the essential elements of collection development activities such as selection, acquisition, weeding, and preservation are done haphazardly (Harvey & James, 2014; Mwilongo, 2020b). Therefore, it is important that university libraries in Africa seriously consider formulating or using CDPs to guide their collection development activities.

### **Collection development challenge in university libraries in Africa**

Several authors (Chaputula & Aubrey, 2014; Mwilongo et al., 2020; Pfohl, 2018) have discussed various challenges facing collection development activities in university libraries in Africa. However, this study focuses on the major notable collection development challenges identified in the literature, which include decreasing budget allocation, increasing cost of materials, increasing demand for information, the complexity of electronic resources, and the legal issues arising from copyright and censorship.

#### ***Decreasing budget allocation***

A budget is a description of the financial plan that outlines the estimated revenues and expenditures (Maqbool, 2016). In the context of a library, a budget means the financial allocation for the procurement of documents and the provision of access to information resources for a specific period (Maqbool, 2016). Budget is the most crucial factor that determines the success or failure of any library operation including collection development activities (Mwilongo et al., 2020; Chaputula, 2011). However, several research findings have pointed out that budget allocation for university libraries in Africa is inadequate and this

inadequacy of funding has seriously affected collection development activities in the libraries (Frempong-Kore, et al., 2022; Chaputula & Aubrey, 2014; Obiano, 2021; Olaka, 2010; Frempong-Kore, 2021; Mwilongo, 2020b). The findings revealed that the library budget allocation for collection development activities has fallen far below the recommended threshold of the total institutional recurrent budget (Chaputula & Boadi, 2010). Consequently, the libraries are unable to purchase enough books, subscribe to adequate print and electronic journals, provide access to electronic information resources, bind or repair damaged books, and support the teaching, learning, and research needs of the universities (Chaputula & Boadi 2010; Frempong-Kor, 2021; Mwilongo, 2020b; Frempong-Kore, et al., 2022). They are also forced to rely on books and journal donations as a principal means of growing their collections (Frempong-Kore, 2021; Chaputula & Boadi 2010). The libraries' major source of funds besides money generates from the payment of overdue fines, missing books, replacement fines, photocopying charges, printing services, lost borrowers cards, etc., is subvention from parent institutions (Chaputula & Boadi 2010; Chaputula & Aubrey 2014). However, such a fund is no longer available as the university managements tend to ignore this arrangement or are reluctant to release adequate funds to libraries (Abubakar, 2011; Okojie, 2010). Additionally, the unnecessary delay on the part of the university finance offices in releasing funds has further frustrated the collection development activities; as such a fund is usually released towards the end of the year, leaving insufficient time to complete the paperwork for importing books from other countries (Abubakar, 2011; Okojie, 2010). Moreover, the poor economic situation of the countries which resulted in the underfunding of university institutions has severely impacted libraries and subsequently their collection development activities (Olaka 2010; Pfohl 2018). This situation is scary and immediate action need to be taken if the libraries are expected to provide adequate and relevant information resources that support the teaching, learning, and research activities of the university institutions.

### ***The increasing cost of materials***

Funding has not been the only impediment to collection development activities in university libraries in Africa. A constant rise in the cost of materials has further frustrated the collection development activities (Obiano, 2021; Okojie 2010; Sasikala & Nagaratnamani,

2014). The cost of materials has increased much more rapidly than the library budgets due to high inflation and the depreciating exchange rate (Ameyaw & Entsua-Mensah, 2016; Mapulanga, 2012; Okojie, 2010). For instance, in Malawi, Chaputula & Boadi, 2010 stated that between 1986 and 2002, serial unit costs rose by up to 227 per cent while expenditures rose by a similar percentage. Over the same period, additional increases were noted in monograph unit costs, which increased by 75%, and expenditures for monographs, which increased by 62 % (Chaputula & Boadi, 2010). In a similar vein, Okojie (2010) reported that while the average cost of an overseas book in Nigeria was N50 naira in 1993 and N8,000 naira in 1998, the average cost of imported books was estimated to be around N15,000 per book in 2010. Another factor that has negatively affected the price of the materials is the economic reform programs introduced by most African governments (Lynden, 2013; Okojie, 2010). The introduction of the economic reform programs which resulted in the devaluation of local currencies has made it difficult or more expensive to import books and journals from overseas. Besides, over-reliance on foreign information resources has made the libraries spend more money on library materials because of the depreciation of local currencies needed to buy the materials from overseas (Okojie 2010; Frempong-Kore, 2021; Okojie, 2010). The few locally published materials are not appealing to buy due to poor editing, outdated information, insufficient bibliographic control tools, and difficulty in locating the materials and journals have short lifespans (Okojie 2010). Moreover, a critical shortage of foreign currency has reduced the countries' ability to import goods and services including books and other information resources (Harvey & James, 2014). Therefore, Lynden (2013) suggested that since the costs of library materials cannot be stopped from raising the effects of the cost rise should be minimized by developing strategies to counteract the increase.

### ***Increasing demand for information***

Users are very essential in libraries and must be provided with adequate and quality collections to satisfy their informational, educational, and recreational needs (Johnson, 2018; Kohn, 2013). However, the increasing demand for information resources due to the increasing number of students has posed a great challenge to collection development librarians of university libraries in Africa (Olaka 2010). For instance, the UNESCO Institute for Statistics revealed that the number of students enrolling in universities in

Africa has doubled from six million to more than 12 million during the past 15 years. Similarly, In Kenya, Olaka (2010) reported that the population of students in universities has dramatically increased due to the increase in the number of departments, faculties, and the introduction of parallel degree programs. He added that while the average Kenyan public university enrolment in the 1990s was 10,000 students per year, there were over 100,000 students enrolled in Kenyan universities in 2010, and the number was expected to climb to 160,000 students in the year 2015 (Olaka, 2010). In Nigeria, Nigerian National University Commission found that there are over 2.1 million populations of students currently studying in Nigerian universities; up from 1.7 million students in 2017 (NUC 2020). The increasing number of students with diverse information needs has made it difficult if not impossible for university libraries to provide adequate collections that would satisfy their information needs. In other words, the increase in student population in recent years coupled with the reduction in funding allocation has left African university libraries struggling to meet up with the demand of users yearning for information. This is especially true given that the library budget is not keeping pace with student enrolment and university expansion (Olaka, 2010).

### ***The complexity of electronic resources***

Like in other parts of the world, university libraries in Africa are moving from print to electronic resources (from holding to access) to provide remote access, increased readership, productive research outcomes, and academic excellence (McAllister & Scherlen, 2017; Mishra & Ngurtinkhuma, 2015). However, despite the numerous advantages of electronic resources, there are certain problems relating to their collection development activities that are not encountered with print resources (McAllister & Scherlen, 2017; Mishra & Ngurtinkhuma, 2015). The greatest problem of electronic resources is the pricing model which is not fixed like in the case of printed materials (Chandel & Saikia, 2012; Woolwine, 2014). Different publishers have different pricing models which go on changing from time to time and keeping up with these changing models is always difficult for collection development librarians (Chandel & Saikia, 2012; Woolwine, 2014). Similarly, different subscription rates are depending on various factors such as the number of potential users, length of time of access, level of access, duration of the subscription, nature of the institution, availing of inter-library loan, use of a standalone system, local

area network, IP address or proxy server, and so on (Chandel & Saikia, 2012; Woolwine, 2014). Another essential issue that poses a serious challenge to electronic resources development is the negotiation of the terms of the license agreement (Chandel & Saikia, 2012; Woolwine, 2014). Electronic resources are subject to licensing agreements imposed by publishers and vendors to restrict the re-use of content to authorized users only and accessing these resources under the licensing policy sometimes poses serious problems to collection development librarians, especially after the expiration of a subscription (Benny, 2015; Johnson, 2018). In addition to pricing and license agreements, electronic resources present unique considerations in addition to criteria apply to printed materials which include comparing various access and delivery media for the same content, large cost, complex pricing structures, wide consultation with others in the library, licensing agreements and many more technical factors of the electronic resources (Benny, 2015; Johnson, 2018).

### ***Legal issues arising from copyright and Censorship***

Legal issues are directly or indirectly connected to collection development activities in university libraries and any other types of libraries (Khan & Bhatti, 2016). The most common ones are copyright law and censorship (Johnson, 2018; Khan & Bhatti, 2016). These two concepts have become more important as more information resources are now available in electronic format. Copyright is a form of legal protection for the authors of original works in both published and unpublished formats (Kawooya, et al., 2015; McAllister & Scherlen, 2017). Copyright law has posed many challenges and becomes a barrier to the freedom of access to information in university libraries in Africa (Olaka 2010). For instance, in developing countries where there is an acute shortage of current information resources, copyright law has made it difficult for libraries to copy materials for exchange, cooperation, replacement of mutilated copies, or photocopy of a certain number of pages (Khan & Bhatti, 2016; McAllister & Scherlen, 2017). Another issue troubling libraries in Africa and other parts of the world when building a collection is censorship of information (Kincaid & King, 2018; Nye, 2017). Censorship is an act of preventing and controlling the creation, access, and dissemination of information that certain individuals, groups, and government officials find objectionable. Censorship has come from a variety of different sources, including

parents, government officials, community leaders, and even librarians themselves (Khan & Bhatti, 2015). Most of the attempts of removing or restricting access to information are made on the grounds of immoral obscene or sexual nature (Johnson, 2018). Other reasons for excluding information are age-appropriateness, political subversion, or social offensiveness (Johnson, 2018; Steele, 2018). Therefore, a written CDP that integrates the ethical statement made by American Library Association is required to prevent censorship of information and ensure that ethical guidelines are followed when providing access to information resources (Morrisey, 2008; Nye, 2017).

Given the current situation facing collection development in university libraries in Africa and indeed in many other countries with similar collection development challenges, what could be done to solve these problems? In other words, what is the possible solution to collection development challenges facing university libraries in Africa?

### **Solutions to collection development challenges in university libraries in Africa**

Although there is no single or simple solution to collection development challenges, this study has summarized four ways a written CDP could be used to address the collection development challenges facing university libraries in Africa. Such ways include using the CDP as a tool for selection, planning/budgeting, cooperation, and protection to collection development decisions.

#### ***Using CDP as a tool for selection***

The primary function of a written CDP is to guide library staff when selecting both print and electronic resources for the satisfaction of users' needs (IFLA, 2001). This is important for university libraries in Africa, especially in recent times when information resources are available in electronic formats and when decisions have to be made regarding subscriptions to electronic resources. The policy is important to outline the criteria and steps to follow in selecting as well as deselecting their materials (Harvey & James, 2014). According to Lastres (2011), the selection criteria that university libraries can use include the cost of the materials, content, currency, reputation of the author and publisher, frequency of citation, anticipated usage, availability of similar materials, and staff time for maintenance. Hollingum (2013) added that committing these criteria in a written CDP

can help the libraries in working more consistently toward established objectives, leading to a stronger collection and more effective use of the limited fund. It can also prevent them from being influenced by their interest or by some fashionable temptations which might result in developing collections that would not support the mission of the library (Harvey & James 2014; Mangrum & Ellen Pozzebon 2012; VanZijl, 2014). Besides outlining the criteria, a written CDP can be used to describe the tools to use in the selection of the materials (Harvey & James, 2014). In the area of electronic resources, a written CDP can be used in setting out preferences that can be used in negotiating with publishers, such as requesting a license for one concurrent user rather than one named user, and considering whether content can be shared and stored within the library (Evans & Saponaro, 2015; Hollingum, 2013; Lastres, 2011). It can also be used in exploiting open-access electronic resources to supplement the library-subscribed resources (Harvey & James, 2014). These initiatives would ensure that the library information needs of users are catered for.

#### ***Using CDP as a tool for planning/budgeting***

Another importance of a written CDP is that it provides a solid foundation for future planning, thereby assisting in setting priorities when financial resources are limited (IFLA, 2001). As budget allocation for university libraries in Africa continues to decrease coupled with the increasing price of materials, the policy is important in rationalizing the limited resources by setting out priorities and ensuring that the limited resources are spent on these priority areas (Harvey & James, 2014; Johnson, 2018). It can also be used in setting price limits on the materials to be purchased which would in turn reduce the cost of materials and ensure optimal and equitable utilization of scarce financial resources (Harvey & James, 2014; Johnson, 2018). According to Lastres (2011), a written CDP is important when dealing with a limited budget and in demonstrating a proactive approach to financial management. He added that the policy can be an effective financial control mechanism (Lastres, 2011). This view is supported by Hollingum (2013), who argued that a written CDP is important in responding to both positive and negative changes in budgetary allocation. In university libraries, the budget can be allocated based on subject area or discipline (biology, geography, etc.), formats of materials (books, journals, print or electronic, etc.), location (main library, branch library, etc.), and so on. This strategic approach to

budgeting, backed up by a written CDP, can ensure that limited resources are allocated to the most important areas. In addition to budgeting, a written CDP can be used to prepare grant proposals, budget requests, and fundraising plans (Johnson, 2018). In the broadest sense, fundraising is the process of seeking additional monies from sources other than the parent organization and covers seeking gifts, bequests, and grants. Although a written CDP is not necessary by law, it is usually demanded by funders as a condition of granting financing to libraries (Nye, 2017). Lastly, the policy can be used to demonstrate accountability by presenting a plan for careful management of fiscal resources and describing the results of funding decisions (Pickett, et al., 2011).

### ***Using CDP as a tool for cooperation***

Besides being a tool for selection and planning, a written CDP is important to facilitate cooperative collection development and resource sharing among libraries (Hollingum, 2013; Johnson, 2018; Khan & Bhatti, 2016). This is important for university libraries in Africa to effectively address the issue of budget cuts, cost of materials, and increasing demand for information. Through this system, the libraries can join together into cooperatives, consortia, or alliances with other libraries either locally, regionally, nationally, or even globally to provide a variety of information resources that meet the needs and expectations of users at lower cost (Chaputula & Aubrey, 2014; Ghalib, 2014; Harvey & James, 2014; Johnson, 2018). However, for this venture to succeed, there must be a written CDP that can be used as a basic framework for decision-making regarding the content of local the collection and when the collections are managed collectively (Chaputula & Boadi, 2010; Chaputula & Aubrey, 2014; Ghalib, 2014; Johnson, 2018; Kasalu & Ojiambo, 2015). It can also be used to define the operating principles of the cooperation such as the number of institutions involved, the roles and responsibilities of individual libraries in the collaborative environment, the potential risks and benefits of the cooperation, and the funding model employed (Demas & Miller, 2012; Hollingum, 2013; IFLA, 2001) Therefore, without a written CDP, cooperative collection development and resources sharing among the libraries can be difficult to achieve.

### ***Using CDP as a tool for protection***

Another importance of a written CDP is that it protects libraries against unethical and unnecessary

challenges regarding the selection or rejection of certain materials (Van Zijl 2014). This is important for university libraries in Africa to prevent censorship of information and protect intellectual freedom (that is to provide access to information resources from all points of view without any restriction). The CDP is important to justify the library collection development activities when challenged by faculty members, students, administrators, and those who have saying on how collection decisions are made (Johnson, 2018; VanZijl, 2014). In other words, the policy can be used to clearly state the reasons why some materials were selected and others were rejected. For instance, users who challenged the library can be referred to the library's collection development policy (Buzzard, 1979; Johnson, 2018). Similarly, the policy can be used to resist undue pressure to acquire materials that are not relevant to a larger population of users or to exclude unpopular or controversial materials (McAllister & Scherlen, 2017; Nye, 2017), thereby enabling them to provide materials that represent the interest, and views of all users of the university communities without regard to race, sex, and other potential discriminators (Johnson, 2018; McAllister & Scherlen, 2017). Besides protecting the libraries, the policy can provide vital information to staff responsible for developing the collection, users who want to know why certain materials are or are not acquired, funding bodies who provide funds for the development of the collection, and anyone else who has an interest on why and how certain decisions are made (Mangrum & Ellen, 2012; VanZijl, 2014). Weeding materials is another issue that is sometimes challenged by users or administrative agencies (Nye, 2017). However, a written CDP with criteria for weeding decisions can offer a measure of protection against those who are suspicious of and criticize such decisions.

### **Conclusion**

From the above discussion, it has become apparent that collection development in university libraries in Africa is faced with various challenges such as decreasing budget allocation, increasing cost of materials, increasing demand for information, complexities of electronic resources, and legal issues arising from copyright and censorship. It has also been known that a written CDP if well prepared and used, can address the collection development challenges and provide standard collections that support the teaching, learning, and research activities of the university communities. The study has argued that a written CDP

can be used to effectively address the complexities of electronic resources by outlining criteria and steps to follow when selecting the materials. It can also be used in setting out preferences that can be used in negotiating with publishers, such as requesting a license for one concurrent user rather than one named user, and considering whether content can be shared and stored within the library. The study has also argued that a written CDP can be used to rationalize the limited resources by setting priorities and ensuring that the limited resources are spent in these priority areas. It can also be used to minimize the cost of materials by setting limits on the price of materials to be purchased which would in turn reduce the cost of materials. Furthermore, the study has argued that a written CDP can be used to facilitate cooperative collection development and resource sharing among the libraries which would offer greater opportunities to provide more access to a variety of information resources and meet the increasing demand for information at a low cost. Lastly, the study has argued that a written CDP can be used to prevent censorship of information and ensure intellectual freedom by integrating the ethical statement made by American Library Association.

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