

TRENDS IN ACQUISITION AND THEIR IMPACT ON LIBRARY SERVICES AT KWAME NKRUMAH UNIVERSITY OF SCIENCE AND TECHNOLOGY (KNUST) LIBRARY

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ABSTRACT

The paper evaluated the various categories of acquisition of library materials over a period of seven years (1997/98-2003/04) in the KNUST Library. The methods of acquisition involved in the study were: purchase; donation; legal deposit; theses and exchange. The study showed that the University Library has not been adequately resourced financially and therefore relied heavily on donation, which does not allow the Library full participation in the selection of library materials. This has brought imbalance in the collection, which does not support postgraduate programmes and research pursued in the university. It also came out that most of the donations were print resources with only a small percentage of electronic resources. Good connectivity and effective utilisation of e-resources in and outside the Library were therefore proposed. The paper concluded that the University Library be well resourced to enable it purchase library materials especially core text and journals, which are mostly lacking among donated ones to support teaching, learning and research in the university.

Keywords: *Acquisitions, Donation, E-resources*

INTRODUCTION

A library is gauged or assessed by its resources – human and material – and the services it offers through these resources. There is therefore the need to regularly evaluate services provided to find out if patrons' needs are being met. For this reason most university libraries have collection development policies which they strictly adhere to. This is because a system of information is relevant only if it affords access to the right kind

of documents. In a similar vein, highly trained information staff will be ineffective if they lack the necessary resources to work with. Therefore a giant library building can be described as a "white elephant" unless it houses the needed documents and related materials for its users.

The Acquisitions and Serials Departments of the Kwame Nkrumah University of Science and Technology (KNUST) Library have the responsibility of acquiring library materials, mostly books and journals, for the University Library.

METHODOLOGY

Documentary sources, mainly books, periodical literature, pamphlets and reports were examined to obtain background information. Data were also collected from personal interview with Heads of Acquisitions, Serials and Electronic Information Departments of KNUST Library. Activities of the Acquisitions and Serials Departments were observed for a period of one year to gather relevant data and information. About 60 members of faculty and some 200 students were also interviewed on user perspective of service provided with available resources.

THE CHALLENGE OF PROVIDING USER NEEDS

University education is dependent on sharing and creating knowledge that is internationally grounded and thus served by materials written and developed by authors from around the world. Information is exploding and increasingly becoming electronically based. Thus the academic librarian's traditional role of providing community service to the university via the print resources is becoming more challenging. The challenge becomes more intense in a situation where many African academic libraries, including KNUST Library, as a result of financial constraints are mostly dependent on donors for both print and electronic resources. For instance, instead of the 10% of the total university budget recommended for the library by the University Rationalization Committee (1988), only about 3% is given. The release and utilisation of the entire 3% given is even problematic. It is therefore imperative to assess the various means of acquisitions and their impact on the library services offered.

BOOK ACQUISITIONS

Generally, library materials are acquired through some or all of the following means:

- i) Purchase;
- ii) Donation;
- iii) Legal Deposit;

- iv) Theses/Dissertation and
- v) Exchange.

Acquisitions through Purchase

Acquisition of print and non-print materials is mainly through Western sources. Over 75% of the books and journals in academic libraries in Ghana are imported from Europe and America. Huge financial layout is needed whether materials are bought locally or imported. Acquisition through purchase has some advantages. It promotes effective collaboration of faculty, students and librarians in the selection of library materials. The resultant effect is that it enables the library to buy the needed core textbooks for the various disciplines pursued in the university.

Purchase however, has its own limitations. The obvious one is that the ever-dwindling budgetary allocation demands that the library prioritises its selection of materials to buy for use by students and faculty. Then there is the foreign currency problem to deal with. While local purchases are made with local currency and materials can be bought as and when available, overseas purchases have foreign exchange constraints. Payment is done before the release of books or renewal of subscription. There is thus a long period of waiting. This deprives users of access to materials they request for particular purposes.

Acquisitions through Donation

Some individuals and organisations give free copies of diverse forms of library materials, print and non-print, and free access to electronic resources to the KNUST Library from time to time. Donations have helped a great deal to enrich the University Library's collections. Of late however, cuts in budgetary allocation to the university library have necessitated over-reliance on donations.

Legal Deposit

The Books and Newspapers Registration Act, Act 73 of 1961, enjoins all publishers in Ghana to deposit at least a copy of each publication

with the public universities and some Research Institutes' libraries in Ghana. This has contributed a great deal to the development of a special collection at KNUST Library called Ghana Collection. This section is very rich in materials on Ghana. It has also enriched the serial collections of the University Library most especially the daily and weekly newspapers. Publishing Houses were the most committed depositors.

Theses

The university demands that undergraduate students submit dissertation on some chosen or given topics in partial fulfilment for the award of degrees, and postgraduate students also submit theses on chosen topics in partial fulfilment for the award of advanced degrees. Copies of the theses are kept in the Main Library. These constitute a rich collection mainly on disciplines studied and researched into in the university, especially on science and technology. A catalogue database of these theses is a resourceful guide to postgraduate students and potential researchers.

Exchange

The library used to exchange both library and university publications with some universities and accredited institutions within and outside Ghana. Through this exchange, the Library of Congress of USA sent lists of highly specialized publications to the library for selection. After ticking the selected items the list was sent back to the Library of Congress for supply. All selected items were supplied in exchange for a few local publications. This constituted a valuable means of acquiring useful library materials including university prospectus, course outlines and research publications from universities abroad.

It is unfortunate that this exchange programme has ceased, depriving the Library of such rich collections. With the current regular publication of the university journal and the intensification of other publications by the university, the Uni-

versity Library should be exchanging some of our publications with institutions locally and abroad.

ANALYSIS OF ACQUISITIONS FOR 1997/98 – 2003/04 ACADEMIC YEARS

Purchase

In 1997/98 a total of 364 books were purchased from both local and overseas sources. Out of this, 81 were bought locally and the remaining 283 from overseas. Only 60 books were purchased locally the following year, 1998/99. There were no foreign purchases. A total of 71 volumes were purchased in 1999/2000, 19 of which were made locally. Surprisingly, purchases shot up to 1156 volumes in the year 2000/01. The leap made in the 2000/01 academic year fell down again to 621 volumes out of which 42 were purchased from overseas. The highest purchases were recorded in the year 2002/03. In that year, 2053 volumes were bought. They were made up of 1469 and 584 local and foreign purchases respectively. This impressive purchase record tumbled woefully to 470 volumes in the very last year under the study, 2003/04.

Donation

In 1997/98, 1490 volumes were received as donation from overseas and 1146 from local donors, giving a total of 2536. A total of 3,442 books were received from both local and foreign donors in the year 1998/99. The year 1999/2000 recorded a total of 4604 volumes of donated books, 353 of which were received locally. The 2000/01 academic year saw a slight decline in the number of books donated. That year recorded a total of 4385 books. The respective volumes donated locally and from abroad over the 2001/02 were 218 and 2,118. In spite of the impressive purchases recorded, the University Library was still heavily dependent on donation in the year 2002/03. That year recorded a total donation of 2101 out of which 509 were received from abroad. Donation reached its peak

of 6067 volumes in 2003/04, the last of the years under study.

Major donors included the Ghana Book Trust, the United Nations and its Agencies, International Federation of Library Associations and Institutions (IFLA), Library of Congress, Brothers' Brother Foundation, Adventist Relief Agency (ADRA) and other miscellaneous ones.

Legal Deposit

The total number of books acquired through legal deposit from 1997/98 to 2003/04 was 565. The numbers kept fluctuating over the years but the highest deposit was recorded in the 1997/98 academic year. The break down is as follows:

1997/1998	-	269
1998/1999	-	13
1999/2000	-	41
2000/01	-	72
2001/02	-	48
2002/03	-	80
2003/04	-	42
Total	-	565

Depositors included Standard Chartered Bank, Parliament of Ghana, Bureau of Ghana Languages and some local publishing houses, notably Ghana Universities Press and Woeli Publishers.

Theses

The figures for theses also kept fluctuating over the period under study as depicted in Table 1. It moved up from 190 in 1997/98 to 244 in 1998/99, registering an increase of about 28.4%. It however decreased to 107 the following year, by about 56%. The up and down trend continued till it attained its lowest of zero in the year 2003/04. This trend may be explained by the fact that some students admitted on graduate programmes are not able to complete their programmes within the specified duration. This tended to either increase or decrease the number expected for particular years. In all, a total of 984 theses were collected over the years under study. Table 1 is a summary of all the major sources of acquisitions over the years under study.

DISCUSSION

Analysis of the data showed that in the 1997/98 academic year, 75.5% of all books acquired by the university library was through donation. This was followed by purchase with 10.8%. Eight percent of the books were acquired through legal deposit while 5.7% came through submission of theses.

Table 1: Summary of Major Sources of Acquisition

Academic Year	Purchase	Donation	Legal Deposit	Theses	Total
1997/98	364	2,536	269	190	3359
1998/99	60	3,442	13	244	3759
1999/2000	71	4,604	41	107	4823
2000/01	1,156	4,385	72	100	5713
2001/02	621	2,336	48	204	3209
2002/03	2,053	2,101	80	97	4331
2003/04	470	6067	42	0	6579

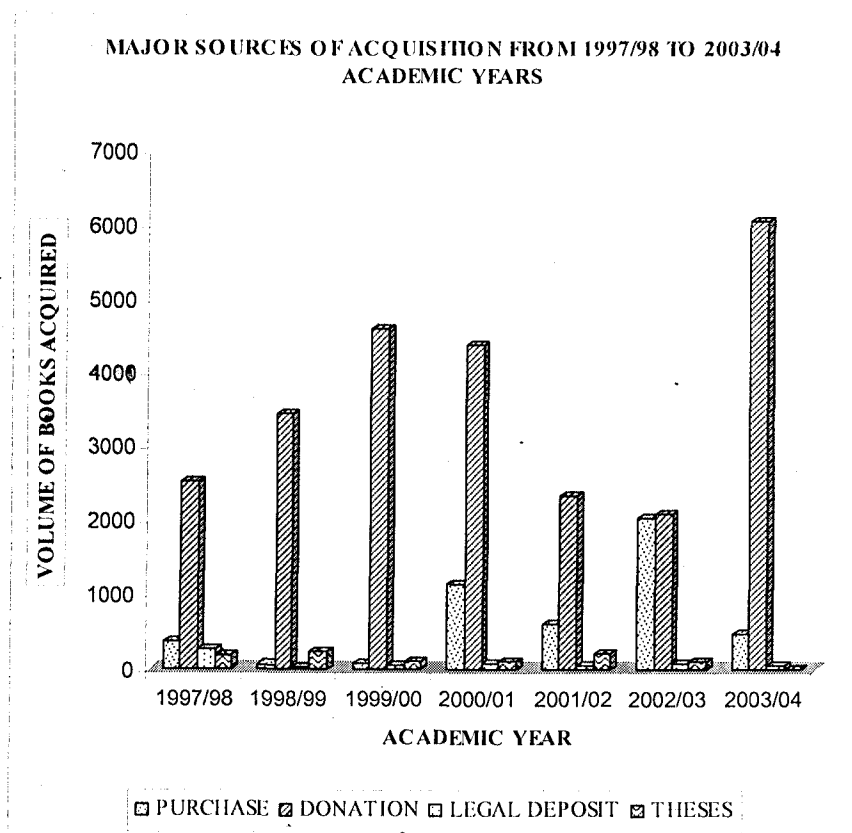
Source: *Acquisitions Department, University Library, KNUST*

The trend for 1998/99 academic year did not change very much from the previous year. In that year acquisition through donation soared from 75.5% to 91.6%. On the other hand, acquisition through purchase dropped from 10.8% to 1.6%. Legal deposits also dropped woefully from 8.0% to 0.3%. The 1999/2000 trends witnessed no deviation from that of the previous year. Purchases constituted about 1.5%, donation both foreign and local, gave about 95.5%, 0.8% for Legal Deposit and 2.2% for theses. In that year, the total number of books acquired went up slightly over that of the previous year.

In 2000/01, purchases recorded 20.2% of the library's acquisitions and about 76.8% for donation. Legal Deposit increased from the previous 1.7% to 3.1% while theses decreased only marginally. In the 2001/2002 academic year, acquisition through purchase dropped again. It decreased from the previous year's 20.2% to 19.4%. Donation dropped slightly from 76.8% to 72.8%. While legal deposit dropped from 3.1% to 1.5%, theses increased from 4.3% to 6.3%.

A close look at figure 1 reveals that in the year 2002/2003, purchases registered the most im-

Figure 1: Major Sources of Acquisition From 1997/98 to 2003/04 Academic Years



pressive record of all the years under study. It nearly equalled donation. While purchases increased from the previous years 19.4% to 47.4%, donation decreased from 72.8% to 48.5%. Legal deposit went up from the previous year's 1.5% to 1.9%. Rather, these dropped from 6.3% to 2.2%. After the impressive purchases made in 2002/03, the trend was expected to continue in the subsequent years. There was however, a return to the usual trend dominated by donation. In 2003/04, purchases recorded about 7.2%. Donation gave about 92.2% while legal deposit registered about 0.6%.

One noticeable impression in all the years is that, donation stood highest among all the categories of acquisitions. This is conspicuously depicted in the bar graph, Figure 1, representing the major sources of acquisition over the years under study.

SERIALS SUBSCRIPTION

Serials are publications in any medium issued in successive parts bearing numerical or chronological designations and are supposed to be continued indefinitely. Their frequencies vary from the dailies through the quarterlies to annuals and bi-annuals. Serials contain very rich and current information which may take a long time, even years, before they are concretised into books. They report events as they occur and research findings as they come out. Some information in serials may lose their focus when later they appear in books.

Lawoe (2004) described the history of development of the Serials Section as chequered. It does not have serials policy, which sets out the criteria for selection. The section had earlier been subscribing to over 1,500 journal titles but it was not possible to pay subscriptions to essential journals by 1979. The economic recession experienced by the country in the 1980's, which drastically reduced Government funding of the universities, brought the directive from the Ministry of Education, to procure only core journals.

By 1986 subscription of journals had reduced to almost nil.

Between 1994 and 1997 the KNUST Library, together with other public university libraries in Ghana, benefited from World Bank/Overseas Development Agencies' (WB/ODA) facility that enabled the public universities to subscribe to core journals through Blackwells to support teaching and research in the universities (under the Educational Sector Adjustment Programme) EDSAC. The KNUST Library managed to subscribe to 750 core journals during the period. This project ended in December 1997. Since the end of that project, the KNUST Library has not been able to place any significant subscription to core journals. However, a few outstanding supplies continued to arrive to fill titles that were not fully supplied during the contract period. Again, like the monographs, donation stood out in all the years under study as shown below:

Statistics of Journal Subscription for 1997/98 – 2003/04 Academic Years

Year	No Of Titles Donated	No of Titles Subscribed To	Total No. of Titles Received
1997/98	400	20	420
1998/99	260	18	278
1999/00	205	26	231
2000/01	129	28	157
2001/02	400	15	415
2002/03	230	11	241
2003/04	329	11	340

Source: *Serials Department, KNUST*

ELECTRONIC RESOURCES

Current trends make it impossible for any single library to depend solely on its own stock to meet the needs of its clientele. At the First User's Convention on E-Resource, held at North East-

ern Regional Institute of Science and Technology (NERIST), Nirjuli, Tanager, India, Singh (2004) stressed the need to maintain a reasonably good connectivity for proper utilisation of e-resources in libraries. The need to equip university libraries with e-resources has not been fully appreciated by Ghanaian university authorities and policy makers to ensure that the minimum acceptable financial support is sustained. In the United Kingdom for example, (Poulter, 2000) writes that there is a great deal of interest into researching and building digital or electronic libraries. This is a direct response from the UK higher education funding bodies to exploit networking to help alleviate pressures on academic library resources, as student numbers and worldwide production of information spiral inexorably upwards. As a result the Joint Information Systems Committee (JISC) announced funding for a range of projects under the Electronic Libraries Programme (eLib) in 1995. African academic libraries including KNUST library must not be different.

The KNUST Library has electronic access to online journals through a donor-supported project. Electronic access to online journals and even monographs, therefore, constitute a substantial part of the library's resources. The library also holds materials in CD-ROM format. It has online access to EBSCO publications (with CD-ROM back up), Blackwell Synergy, Gale (Thompson), MCB/Emerald, Oxford University Press and African Journals Online. Besides, there are other databases that can be used to access journals and books that are not in the library. The proportion of the total library collection in electronic format is about 9%. However, about 90% of all the electronic resources were received through donation. The most unfortunate aspect of these resources is sustainability.

Donors have indicated that they cannot financially support access forever and their pull out remains a serious threat to the library's access to these electronic resources, as the library cannot

currently financially sustain it. For instance, subscription to the Online Computer Catalogue Centre (OCLC) expired in 2001 and since then because the KNUST Library has not been able to renew its subscription, access to the OCLC has been denied. In a similar manner the university library will lose access to over 9 000 electronic journals because donors like DFID, DANIDA and others who have been sponsoring the project through the International Network for the Availability of Scientific Publications (INASP) expect the library to subscribe from its funds, which is currently not feasible. The sponsorship offered through the Programme for the Enhancement of Research Information (PERI) of INASP also ended in December 2004.

USER-PERSPECTIVE OF SERVICE PROVIDED WITH AVAILABLE RESOURCES

Interviews were conducted along this study in seeking the relationship between available stock and user demands. In all 60 members of faculty and 200 students were interviewed. The number of students interviewed was few taking into account the current student population of about 18,000, but the interviewees were selected at random in the library, so it is believed that it is a reflection of the true situation on the ground. Interviewees were requested to indicate as to whether stock available (i) completely met their needs, (ii) partially met their needs or (iii) did not meet their needs at all. The results have been tabulated below:

These results indicated that 50 out of 100 undergraduate respondents, representing 50% indicated that materials partially met their needs. The remaining 50% of the undergraduate respondents however indicated that materials in the library completely met their needs.

Among the 100 postgraduate students, 40 out of 100 representing 40% were partially satisfied with the stock, none or 0% indicated that materials completely met their needs and 60 out of 100, that is, 60% said materials did not meet

Category of users	Number of users interviewed	Stock completely met their needs	Stock partially met their needs	Stock did not meet their needs at all
Undergraduate	100	50	50	0
Postgraduate	100	0	40	60
Faculty	60	0	15	45

their needs at all. Only 15 out of 60 faculty members, interviewed represented 25% were partially satisfied with the stock. None responded that the materials completely met their needs while 45 out of 60 indicating 75% of faculty interviewed indicated that material did not meet their needs at all. This means that there is the need to build up the stock to meet the needs of the postgraduate students and faculty.

Acquisitions and the Collegiate System

Until December 2004 the university had a total of 12 faculties, institutes and schools. Each of the twelve had a library, with only 3 of them manned by professional librarians. Even though the Main Library coordinated administrative duties of the libraries, acquisition of library materials was individualistic and uncoordinated even within one faculty of many departments. Cooperative acquisition was lacking. This tended to overstretch the limited budgetary allocations of the faculties, institutes and schools. Thus they also depended substantially on donation with minimal purchases. Donations used to come to the faculty libraries directly from donors or occasionally from the Main Library, out of donated multiple copies.

The new collegiate system redefines the nature of acquisitions for the six colleges. The system has become compact with some related faculties coming together. Now resources can be pooled together to increase acquisition through purchase, which most of the time allows librarians, faculty and students to participate in the selection of library materials. Duplication of activities,

will be eliminated and a new College Library for each of the six colleges can look forward to a well-balanced stock to support teaching, leaning and research.

The Role of the Ghana Book Trust and Book Acquisition

The Ghana Book Trust (GBT) is a non-governmental, non-profit organization with a mission of promoting a literate environment in Ghana through the provision of books. Established in 1990 by CODE (Canadian Organisation for Development through Education) it has partnered with donors including DANIDA, Sabre Foundation, Book Aid International, International Book Bank and Ford Foundation in support of various educational initiatives, especially book supply in Ghana.

Publishers, universities and school boards in Canada, USA and Britain donate the books through GBT. GBT selects from a list of titles from the donors and is responsible for clearance and the subsequent handling charges, which are later, paid by beneficiary institutions. Currently books that are donated through the Ghana Book Trust attract ₵20,000.00 per copy as handling charge. For a large number of volumes, handling charges can run into millions of cedis.

The KNUST Library has been a constant beneficiary of this book programme, and supply of books from GBT constitutes about 50% of donated books received yearly. It must be noted, however, that though GBT may be able to meet some of the needs of the library, and for that

matter its users, it cannot meet or supply specific titles or set books for the programmes offered in the university. In such a situation, such books must of necessity be purchased.

Problems with Acquisition

The problems with acquisition over the years under study were mostly related with donation. After realizing the importance of information in development, the people of developing economies struggle with the problem of accessing information that is generated especially in the advanced world. Basics like payment of salaries, solution to accommodation problems, etc. preoccupy the attention of university authorities to the extent that stocking university libraries is no longer a priority.

In the midst of current economic problems, donors, especially foreign-based ones, constitute both relief and rescue to users of academic libraries. Thousands of volumes of used books are received into university libraries of developing economies, including KNUST Library, from donors each year. The question is, to what extent do the donations help users of these libraries? It has become abundantly clear in this study that, whether the needed positive impact will be felt or not depends on the nature and quality of the library materials donated.

Donors would do the recipient libraries a great deal of good if they could involve them and other stake-holders, especially faculty representatives, in the selection of books to be donated. Libraries in developing economies should not be used as dumping grounds for only used and unwanted books as it happens when sometimes about one hundred copies of a particular title (not very relevant to the programmes offered in the university) are donated. When this happens they are rather sent to Polytechnics, second-cycle schools, and children's libraries. Again some of the used books that come through donation are very old and marked. Cost is incurred in mending them in the bindery even before they

can be put on the shelves. While the rules regarding the use of the library disallow marking of books, the library is undecided on putting already marked books on the shelves even when they are found to be good for users. It must be noted that the KNUST Library for instance is interested mostly in science and technology related books to support the programmes undertaken in the university. The old adage "a beggar has no choice" would not serve the general interest of both the donor and the recipient. Here, beggars should have choices.

RECOMMENDATIONS

Donated books are to help the library in its efforts to meet the information needs of the clients. These books will be used over a long period of time. For that matter it is recommended that very good books should be donated. Questionable materials must be discarded.

Costs involved in transporting books are high, so recipients, in this case the Library, should be contacted always to find out if the books to be donated are indeed needed.

The Exchange programme must be intensified and the library must also come up with some publications like recent additions to stock, which was formerly exchanged with other publications of both local and foreign sources. "Piece by piece" arrangement can also be made. In this case the Library can select institutions, organizations, etc., whose publication are considered useful to the parent organisation or the library and exchange documents with them. Specific publications should be indicated as those required or wanted by the library. In the same way, items that these institutions, organisations, etc., require may also be indicated, and the library may acquire them and use as exchange materials.

With more research being done and journals being published, cost of available information rises while library budgets do not keep pace. It

is therefore recommended that the library participates in a consortium that will promote access to electronic journals and document delivery services.

It is finally recommended that 10% of the total university budget be regularly allocated for library operations (support services including e-resources) excluding staff salaries.

CONCLUSION

The university is rated partly by the standard of its library. The library in turn is rated by what it has and for that matter, what it can offer, and not just the buildings it occupies.

To a large extent, the study has revealed that the University Library has not received the needed financial assistance to equip it to meet the information needs of its users and has depended heavily on donation. This has not allowed the Library to participate effectively in the selection of library materials for programmes pursued in the university. Core text and e-resources, are most of the times, either lacking or limited among donations. In spite of these limitations, the Library has strived to provide its over 10000 users with some of their information needs.

It is, however, advised that the need to equip the Library with e-resources should be appreciated by the university authorities. The Library must of necessity maintain reasonably good connectivity for proper utilisation of e-resources available within and outside the Library.

Finally, the Library should be well resourced to purchase the needed library materials so as to curtail the distortions brought about by over dependence on donation. Where donation should be made the Library must be contacted to make sure materials to be donated are really needed and in good condition.

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