

December 31, 2020

## **Stock Evaluation: A Predictor for Effective Management of University Library Resources**

Emmanuel Owushi\*<sup>1</sup>

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<sup>1</sup> Corresponding author

## Stock Evaluation: A Predictor for Effective Management of University Library Resources

**Emmanuel Owushi**

Law Library, Faculty of Law  
University of Port Harcourt  
Port Harcourt, Nigeria  
[ehagenimana@ines.ac.rw](mailto:ehagenimana@ines.ac.rw)

### Abstract:

The study investigated stock evaluation of resources in academic libraries. The population consisted of all librarians in three universities in Nigeria, University of Port Harcourt, University of Ibadan, and University of Benin. Using convenient sampling method all 69 respondents were chosen as sample. The instrument for data collection was self-designed. Data were analyzed using the mean score, independent t-test, and analysis of variance (ANOVA). The findings show that library resources are adequate and currency. The resources are useful, relevant, and have a wide scope of coverage but lack in-depth coverage. Improper funding, facilities, and inadequate requisite skills are among the challenges facing stock evaluation. The study suggested means to ameliorating the identified challenges and amongst all recommended that efforts should be made by the Nigerian university libraries to put in place adequate facilities, funding, and equipment to facilitate stock evaluation

**Keywords:** Stock evaluation, university libraries, library resources, collection development

### Introduction

Universities all over the world are established with the core mandate for research and creation of knowledge for human development. This mandate will be unrealizable without functional university libraries. University libraries are saddled with the responsibilities of selection, acquisition, processing and dissemination of information resources to support parent institutions in the areas of teaching, learning and research. Nwosu and Opara (2019) depicted that success of any library depends on its resources and the utilization. The authors maintained that library information resources are materials or information resources acquired by the library to meet the information needs of library patrons.

Barifi, Afful and Agyapong (2018) described library information resources as the raw materials that provide vital services in the teaching and learning process. The academic library is the intellectual power horse of the academic

community, which is designed to fulfill the curriculum requirements and promote learning and research. These resources could either be in print and electronic formats. Provision of these resources in the university libraries are capital intensive.

The increasing amount of investment that universities have been committing to the provision of library resources demands that there is the need for evaluation of the information resources held in university libraries. This is to determine if the collections held in university libraries are current, adequate and useful to the users they are meant to serve. Musell (2012) stated that given ever narrowing budgetary constraints, it is important for libraries to evaluate which resources are used and how well they are used to better information decision regarding resources allocation.

Nnadozie (2018) defined stock evaluation as the process of assessing and examining the entire information materials of the library in order to ascertain whether users' information needs in

the library are met. Enem and Udo (2019) stated that stock evaluation is a process of occasionally asking, looking out for or probing into the collection, in order to know whether what the library has is relevant, useful, accurate or need-based in line with users' expectations. It helps to facilitate the process of determining the strengths and weakness of the library collection.

The continuous review of library collections by the library management is crucial for maintaining active collections of current information to users. Akpom (2012) depicted that evaluation would be made to determine whether the collection was really meeting its objectives, how well it was serving its users, in which way it was efficient and what remains to be done to develop the collection. Lumande and Ojedokun (2005) documented that collection effectiveness was measured by the extent to which a library collection can facilitate research activities and how well students could rely on it for projects and assignments. Service oriented organization such library, if evaluation was not carried out it might be difficult if not impossible to determine whether library's goal and objectives had been reached or not. Stock evaluation is an important means in managing library collections in the interest of the users' community.

### **Purpose of the Study**

The purpose of the study is to investigate stock evaluation as a predictor for effective management of university library resources.

The Specific objectives were to:

- assess the adequacy and currency of the library collection.
- examine the scope, depth, usefulness and relevance of the resources to the users.
- ascertain that each item on the OPAC actually exists and is where it belongs.
- to identify the challenges to stock evaluation in university libraries
- to proffer possible suggestions to the challenges in stock evaluation in university libraries.

### **Review of Related Literature**

Stock taking is very important activity that is usually embarked upon by the university libraries. This is with the view to ensure that what libraries have in their collection reflected what are exactly in the library shelves. If this is done it enable users to locate books without difficulties. Nwali in Otunla and Akanmu-Adeyemo (2012) expressed that library stocktaking is vital in order to ensure that all the books listed in the catalogue (OPAC) can be accounted for in the interest of library users. In order to maintain active library collection, Nixom (2009) submitted that it is essential to do annual or regular inventories. Whether it could be done annually or regularly depends on the policy of a particular university library, such provision should be contained therein in the collection development policy of university library. Obinyan, Adetona and Obinyan (2019) noted that it is an unfortunate turn of events that most university libraries today in Nigeria do not have collection development policy. That where it exists, it has little relevance to the process of collection development in so far as collection development in most contemporary Nigeria university libraries are left at the whims of a few individuals to implement on the eve of accreditation.

Edoka and Okafor (2002) recorded that stocktaking goes beyond checking the list of books, overdue list and other circulation statistics but involves observing the books physically on the shelves in order to know the condition of the titles. Otunla and Akanmu-Adeyemo (2012) depicted that stocktaking help libraries to identify missing items, lost items and miss-shelved books. This is with view to detect areas in the library collections that deserve management attention

Ifidon (2006) depicted that the aims of the collection evaluation are to determine the depth and usefulness of the collection, test the effectiveness, utility and practicability of the collection development policy, assess the adequacy of the collection and thereby highlight the inadequacy and suggest ways of rectifying them, re-allocate resources so that the areas that

really need them can receive greater attention, convince the library's authorities that the allocated resources are also inadequate; and identify areas where weeding is required for evaluation to be properly done.

Eze and Eze (2006) affirmed that there are many reasons for evaluation of library materials among which are the fact that it helps to determine, from time to time, how well the selection policy is working. That if the library is acquiring a lot of materials that are not being used or if it is not acquiring material that are needed by the students or other users, those directly involved in collection development need to know so as to make adjustments and modification in the selection policy.

Moore in Umoren (2008) asserted that a library collection must serve the basis of any educational setting. The author stressed that for the students to become problem solvers, decision makers and life-long learners in contemporary society, the library should provide useful and current information. In concluding this assertion, the author depicted that to uphold and enhance the reputation of the library, periodic renew, evaluation and weeding should be undertaken.

Ozioko and Ekere (2011) opined that there is always the need to justify budgetary demand. The authors maintained that it is only evaluation can yield the data required to support increase budgetary demands. Enem and Udo (2019) succinctly summarized benefits of stock evaluation in Nigerian university libraries to include among others:

- stock evaluation helps university libraries to achieve public trust and goodwill, thereby attracting financial support from parent institutions and other philanthropic organizations.
- It serves as the beacon through which the informational, educational, recreational and research needs of present and potential users of the library are met.
- It helps to channel available financial resources to areas of absolute necessity,

even as these financial resources are competing for attention with many other library activities and functions.

- Stock evaluation brings about a balance in the collection of university libraries whereby all disciplines are equitably catered for. This is because, through stock evaluation, areas of inadequacies are identified and reasonably provided for etc.

Ozioko and Ekere (2011) stated that whatever reason given for evaluation, it is a healthy and necessary task. That it can only result in an improved knowledge of the collection and it is hoped to improve library services. Many factors have accounted for stock evaluation of university libraries, such as changes in the curriculum of study, revision of existing courses, introduction of new programmes. In a broader perspective, stock evaluation is designed to verify the scope, depth, currency, adequacy and usefulness of the library collections.

University libraries could be evaluated through qualitative and quantitative statistical approach. Quantitative approach involves variables such as the current number of items in the collection, number of items added or rate of growth and items available per students in comparisons to recommended lists or similar library collections and the study of the age of the collection. Qualitative approach includes analysis of circulation and inter-library lending statistics and in-house studies of materials.

Besides, compilation of statistics on holdings, use, and expenditures, is another method of stock evaluation of university library collection. This method focuses at the gross size of library collections, Ifidon (2006) depicted that the size of a library stock is directly proportional to the academic excellence of the institution in which the library serves. The author reiterated that high-ranking tertiary institutions requires a minimum of 50,000 volumes in their collections in order to be able to support diverse research interest of all users, most especially, post-graduate researchers. Ozioko and Ekere (2011) documented that evaluation of collection by this technique will

better results and statistics are obtained on different part of the collection on the specific subject fields can be assessed. Library evaluators mostly rely on statistics available in the of course evaluation of library collections.

Application of library standards is another means of evaluating library collections. This means applying minimum benchmark/ yardstick of stock adequacy level below which, university libraries are rated inadequate or insufficient. Library standards are yardstick initiated by library association for effective criteria for evaluating library stock, example of such association are American Library Association (ALA), Nigerian Library Association (NLA) International Federation of Library Association (IFLA) etc. Services of university services are usually measured by applying library standards formulated by these associations. Library standards help university libraries to beef up their collections both in quality and quantity in all their programmes.

Obtaining the opinion of regular library users is another system of evaluating university library stock. This means regular library users could evaluate whether the library's collection is adequate, sufficient, relevant, current, and reliable with the view of meeting their training needs. The regular users' opinions are sought and information obtained are normally used for decision-making process in management of library collections. This method gives opportunity to users to assess holdings of the university libraries, with regards to the strengths and weakness. This method of evaluation can be carried out through the use of questionnaire, opinion, interview and checklist.

Apart from this accreditation bodies, these constitute of professionals /subject specialist from various disciplines/professions such as Nigerian Bar Association, Nigerian Dental and Medical Association, the Nigerian Society of Engineers, Nigerian Council of Legal Education, Nigerian Library Association etc. their primary task in stock evaluation is to verify the scope, depth, adequacy, relevance and usefulness of the library collection to those that are meant to serve. Despite the numerous advantages in evaluation of library

stock, there are problems militating against evaluation of library stocks in Nigerian university libraries, such problems are:

Most university libraries in Nigeria do not include stock evaluation provision in their collection development policies. Collection development policy defines and specifies the guidelines of what should be done, when, by whom and why. Since this is lacking it is necessary that Nigerian university libraries should incorporate stock evaluation in their collection development policies for effective management of library resources.

Facilities like air conditioning systems, conducive working environment, storage facilities, and computers are grossly inadequate in Nigerian University libraries. Enem and Udo (2019) remarked that situations like poor working environment, and inadequate storage facilities, make stock evaluation, which are very tedious and difficult. Besides it is obvious that without funding, highly trained staff would not be employed, neither would adequate and current information resources be acquired, also facilities that are required for the libraries to operate would not be procured. For effective library service such stock evaluation, acquisition of information resources, hiring qualified librarians etc. entails that the university libraries should be well-funded for enhanced performance.

### **Methodology**

The survey method was used in the conduct of this study as it is considered to be the most suitable for this kind of study that is meant to elicit relevant information from the librarians working in the university libraries in three academic libraries. The universities include University of Port Harcourt, University of Ibadan and University of Benin, where convenient sampling method was used to sample all the 96 staff. Structured questionnaire was used as instrument gathering of data. Independent t-test, Analysis of Variance (ANOVA) and mean ( $\bar{x}$ ) and standard deviation ( $\pm$ ) was used to analyze the data.

Table 1: Population of the Study

SN	Universities	Population of Librarians	Sampled Librarians
1	University of Port Harcourt	23	23
2	University of Ibadan	30	30
3	University of Benin	16	16
<b>Total</b>		<b>69</b>	<b>69</b>

## Results and Discussion

Table 2: Adequacy and currency of the library collection

S/N	Groups	N	$\bar{x}$	$\pm$	t.cal.	Crit. t	df	Decision
1	Lower bound	32	47.73	2.51	4.38	0.679	67	Significant
2	Upper bound	37	61.09	1.56				

N = 69

To realize the first objective of the study, the respondents were grouped into upper bound and lower bound based on their responses. The mean score of the data was determined and used as a criterion for separation of the group. Respondents with mean score above, the mean score were assigned to upper bound while those with scores below the mean score were assigned to the lower bound. The upper bound obtained a mean score ( $\bar{x} = 61.09$ ) higher than the lower bound group ( $\bar{x} = 47.73$ ) (Table 2). Thus, library collections in the understudied institutions are adequate and current. Furthermore, Independent

t-test was utilized in testing the mean difference between the two groups. The t-test and calculated t of 4.38 with a critical t of 0.679 which is statistically significant at 0.05 alpha level ( $t = 4.38 \geq 0.679$ ). Therefore, mean difference between the upper bound and lower bound is statistically significant. This finding supports the assertion that that evaluation is a healthy and necessary designed to verify the scope, depth, currency, adequacy and usefulness of the library collections aimed at improving knowledge (Ozioko and Ekere, 2011).

Table 3: The scope, depth, usefulness and relevance of the resources to the users.

Variable	$\bar{x}$	$\pm$	c. $\bar{x}$	Decision	F	Alpha	S. Decision
Scope	3.7	1.59	3.0	Adequate	3.710	0.05	Significant
Depth	3.1	3.74		Adequate	0.295		Not Significant
Usefulness	4.3	1.83		Adequate	2.317		Significant
Relevance	4.2	1.74		Adequate	2.532		Significant

N= 69

Table 3 shows the analysis on the scope, resources to users. On scope of the resources, the depth, usefulness and relevance of the library respondents obtained a mean score of 3.7 which is

higher than the criterion mean of 3.0 ( $3.7 > 3.0$ ), and an F of 3.710 which is statistically significant at 0.05 alpha level ( $F = 3.710, P < 0.05$ ). For the depth of the resources, a mean score of 3.1 which is higher than the criterion mean score of 3.0 ( $3.1 > 3.0$ ), an F of 0.295 which is statistically significant at 0.05 alpha level ( $F = 0.295, P < 0.05$ ). In response to the usefulness of the resources, the respondents responded with a mean score higher than the criterion mean score ( $4.3 > 3.0$ ) signifying that the resources are useful, also, an F of 2.317 which is statistically significant was obtained. Finally, on relevance of the resources, the respondents obtained a mean score of 4.2 which is higher than the criterion mean of 3.0 ( $4.2 > 3.0$ ), and an F of 2.532 which is statistically significant at 0.05 alpha level ( $F = 2.532, P > 0.05$ ).

This means that with the exception of in-depth coverage, the resources in the institutions studied are relevant, useful, and adequate in scope. In concord, Ifidon (2006) asserted that the

aims of the collection evaluation are to determine the scope/depth and usefulness of the collection, test the effectiveness, utility and practicability of the collection development policy, assess the adequacy of the collection and thereby highlight the inadequacy and suggest ways of rectifying them, re-allocate resources so that the areas that really need them can receive greater attention, convince the library's authorities that the allocated resources are also inadequate; and identify areas where weeding is required for evaluation to be properly done. In addition, accreditation bodies, these constitute of professionals/subject specialist from various disciplines/professions such as Nigerian Bar Association, Nigerian Dental and Medical Association, the Nigerian Society of Engineers, Nigerian Council of Legal Education, Nigerian Library Association etc. their primary task in stock evaluation is to verify the scope, depth, adequacy, relevance and usefulness of the library collection to those that are meant to serve.

Table 4: Congruence between item positions in the OPAC and shelf.

S/N	Groups	N	$\bar{x}$	$\pm$	t.cal.	Crit. t	df	Decision
1	Lower bound	21	33.03	4.89	14.2	0.679	67	Significant
2	Upper bound	48	72.19	2.52				

N = 69

To ascertain that each item on the OPAC actually exists and is where it belongs, using the general means score as a determinant, responses from respondents were grouped into upper and lower bound. From the Table 3, the upper bound obtained a mean score ( $\bar{x} = 72.19$ ) higher than the lower bound group ( $\bar{x} = 33.03$ ). Thus, item on the OPAC actually exists and is where it belongs. Also, Independent t-test was utilized in testing the mean difference between the two groups. The t-test and calculated t of 14.2 with a critical t of 0.679 which is statistically significant at 0.05 alpha level ( $t =$

$14.2 \geq 0.679$ ). Therefore, mean difference between the upper bound and lower bound is statistically significant.

Accordingly, this finding is with the view to ensure that information resources are exactly in the library shelves as Nwali in Otunla and Akanmu-Adeyemo (2012) expressed that library stocktaking is vital in order to ensure that all the books listed in the catalogue (OPAC) can be accounted for in the interest of library users, in order to maintain active library collection.

Table 5: Challenges to stock evaluation in university libraries

SN	ITEMS	SA	A	D	SD	$\bar{x}$	Decision
1	Lack of collection policy	7(10)	14(20)	28(40)	21(30)	2.1	Rejected

2	Lack of proper funding	21(30)	35(50)	7(10)	7(10)	3.0	Accepted
3	Falsification of records	10(15)	24(35)	17(25)	17(25)	2.4	Rejected
4	Inconsistency of stock evaluation	4(20)	12(60)	4(20)	0	3.0	Accepted
5	Lack of data on resource usage	17(25)	45(65)	7(10)	0	3.2	Accepted
6	Attitude of staff	7(10)	21(30)	28(40)	14(20)	2.3	Rejected
7	Lack of adequate facility	24(35)	38(55)	7(10)	0	3.3	Accepted
8	Lack of requisite skills	24(35)	28(40)	10(15)	7(10)	3.0	Accepted

N= 69

The analysis on Table 5 shows that while items 1, 3, and 6 (Lack of collection policy, Falsification of records, and Attitude of staff) were not favourably responded to in terms of challenges facing stock evaluation, items numbers 2, 4, 5, 7, and 8 (Lack of proper funding, Inconsistency of stock evaluation, Lack of adequate facility, and Lack of requisite skills) were accepted by the respondents as challenges plaguing stock evaluation in libraries.

In support, Enem and Udo (2019) remarked that situations like poor working environment, and inadequate storage facilities, make stock evaluation, very tedious and difficult. Also, the finding contradicts the assertion of Obinyan, Adetona and Obinyan (2019) that most university libraries today in Nigeria do not have collection development policy.

Table 6: Possible suggestions to the challenges in stock evaluation in university libraries.

SN	ITEMS	SA	A	D	SD	$\bar{x}$	Decision
1	Proper funding	38(55)	24(35)	7(10)	0	3.7	Accepted
2	Training and retraining of staff on stock evaluation	35(50)	21(30)	10(15)	3(5)	3.8	Accepted
3	Provision of adequate facility	41(60)	28(40)	0	0	3.6	Accepted
4	Adequate and Proper data collection on resource use	48(70)	17(25)	3(5)	0	3.7	Accepted
5	Regular supervision of stock evaluation process	28(40)	41(60)	0	0	3.4	Accepted

N= 69

From the Table 6, the respondents accepted all the under-studied items in the magnitude order of Training and retraining of staff on stock evaluation (3.8), Proper funding (3.7), Adequate and Proper data collection on resource use (3.7), Provision of adequate facility (3.6), and Regular supervision of stock evaluation process (3.4).

This proves that the respondents understand the importance of stock evaluation as a mean to improving research, teaching, and learning. The finding supports the view that Ozioko and Ekere (2011) that it is only evaluation can yield the data required to support increase budgetary demands in the library. As, Enem and Udo (2019) succinctly summarized benefits of stock evaluation

in Nigerian university libraries to include among others:

- stock evaluation helps university libraries to achieve public trust and goodwill, thereby attracting financial support from parent institutions and other philanthropic organizations.
- It serves as the beacon through which the informational, educational, recreational and research needs of present and potential users of the library are met.

It helps to channel available financial resources to areas of absolute necessity, even as these financial resources are competing for attention with many other library activities and functions.

- Stock evaluation brings about a balance in the collection of university libraries whereby all disciplines are equitably catered for. This is because, through stock evaluation, areas of inadequacies are identified and reasonably provided for.

### Conclusion

University libraries are saddled with the task of selection, acquisition, processing and dissemination of information bearing materials to support the parent institutions in the areas of learning, research and teaching.

The increasing amount of investment that universities have been committing to the provision of library resources demands that there is the need for evaluation of the information resources held in university libraries. This is necessary to ascertain if the collections held in university libraries are current, adequate and useful to those they are meant to serve. The continuous evaluation of library stock will help library management to determine the strengths and weakness of library collections. This will alert the library management the resources that are efficient and what remain to be done.

However, it was discovered that there are challenges plaguing the process of stock evaluation

such among the challenges include improper funding, lack of adequate facility, and lack of requisite skills among others. The primary goal of the library cannot be achieved if these challenges are not reduced to the barest possible, perhaps, it is a cue for library administrations and university management to key in and ensure proper and efficient stock evaluation towards improved knowledge propagation among the university community of library users.

### Recommendations

Based on the findings of the study, the following recommendations were made;

1 Nigerian university libraries should formulate definite policy to guide stock evaluation, such policy should spell out in a clear terms the duration for stock evaluation, if possible, university libraries should create unit that should be entrusted with stock evaluation.

2 Efforts should be made by the Nigerian university libraries to put in place adequate facilities and equipment to facilitate stock evaluation,

3 University management and other stakeholders should try to provide sufficient funds to Nigerian university libraries in order to carry out library support services such as stock evaluation, replacement of lost books, binding of weak materials held in libraries,

4 Nigerian university libraries should from time to time embark upon staff training and retraining on the overall working functions and activities of the library such as stock evaluation. This will enable the library staff to appreciate the essence of the stock evaluation as a function and process of management.

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