

ASSESSMENT OF LIBRARY WEEDING AS A TOOL FOR THE SUSTAINABLE INFORMATION SERVICES PROVISION IN TANZANIA

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ABSTRACT

In this study the data was collected from librarians in Tanzania. The purpose was to assess weeding library collection for the sustainable collection development. The study involved the total of 120 librarians from various libraries in the country. The study was purely qualitative by nature. Three specific objectives guided the study: to establish a status of weeding Practice in Tanzania; to identify criteria used for weeding library collection in the study area and to identify challenges facing process of library weeding in a study area. Data was collected through questionnaires and analysed by SPSS. Among other issues the study revealed; lack of weeding library collections, lack of weeding policies guiding library collection; fear of creating spaces without new replacement, lack of funds to procure new replacement; no specific time allocated for weeding collections and the negative perceptions of management towards weeding. The study therefore came up with some recommendations: increasing of budget for acquisitions, need to put more emphasis on the use of electronic resources, needs for libraries allocating specific time for weed, as well as keeping user statistics easily to determine weeding of non-use resources.

Keywords: *Weeding, Collection Development, Challenges of Weeding, Collection Evaluation, Libraries in Tanzania.*

1.0 Introduction and background

Library is a place having books, periodicals, and other reading material (Tiefel, 2004). It is a building in which people visits to read and borrow books (Alabaster, 2010). These libraries are categorized into academic, public and special libraries. Academic library usually attached to higher learning institutions to supports curriculum development, research and consultancy (Clayton, 2001; Baker, 2003; Dushu, 2016). Public library cater information need of the general public. While special library established to provide information of targeted groups (Tiefel, 2004). For long time, these libraries depended much on donations, gifts, interlibrary loan and legal deposit law as a sources of acquiring its collections (Clayton, 2001; Baker, 2003; Nyerembe, 2014). It was reported that most of donated books is outdated which is not in line with users' needs (Baumbach & Linda, 2006; Bridges & Karl 2014). Therefore, based on that, the diversity of users' information seeking behaviour resulting library to shift its services to e-information sources. This shift creates a pressure of increasing library budgets for acquiring modern equipment to supports e-access (Luambano, 2013). New needs for use e-resources necessitated libraries to change their ways used to manage their services to cope with the e- information era. It was anticipated that shift would solve problem of scarcity of library spaces as well as obtained update resources. Moreover, rapid increase of users in libraries resulting them facing with inadequate spaces (Munro, 2008& Babu, 2015; Nkebukwa, 2016). Conversely, Bridges & Karl (2014) added that, the diversity of users' needs and introduction of new programs necessitates frequently acquisitions of new resources. The print collections limited by the available space (Mcharazo and Olden, 2000; Nyerembe, 2004; Nawe, 2013). In this regard, libraries require to remove all outdated materials to create spaces for newer replacements (Nelson, 2007). This process of removing old materials is called weeding or collection evaluation (Mix, 2010) or collection appraisal (Kaur & Rupesh, 2017; Tiefel, 2004; Engeldinger (2006). In view of Baumbach & Linda, (2006) lack of space in library associated with lack funds to extend library buildings. Based on such problem Alabaster (2010) & Nyerembe (2014) suggested weeding the collection as a best way on creating space in libraries. Therefore, librarians have to make sure the collections are up to date and attractive, as urged by Doll and Pamela (2002) that it is a time for blessing weeding without fear.

1.2 Overview of Weeding Library Collections

Meaning of wedding library collection

Weeding is the systematic removal of library information sources based on the selection criteria or weeding policies. Library weeding became a vital process which makes a collection active and keeping collections more relevant (Johnson, 2009). The library weeding involves the removal of print and non-print collections (Dubicki, 2008). Based on weeding criteria, weeding is a periodic and repetitive process (Alabaster, 2002). To remove obsolete damaged materials (Bormann, 2002). Reducing rarely used books (Dilevko, Juris, 2003).

Benefits of weeding the library collections.

According to Engeldinger (2006) weeding practiced over hundreds years for the purpose of ensures useful, attractive and accessibility of library resources (Eliot, 1902; Boll, 1980; Clark, 1991; Segal, 1980; Kirby, 1995). As supported by Frank and Richard (2007) that the library collections must reflect to the current demand of users. Various authors highlighted the value of weeding the collection, these are to create new space for replacement (Evans, Edward and Saponaro, 2005); to serve users time (Jacob, 2001); to simplifying shaving of materials (Perez, 2004); to make the collection more appealing with attractive current books (Fuller, 2006); to build public trust (Hoffmann and Richard, 2007); to promote constant feedbacks in terms of strength and weaknesses of a collection (Metz and Caryl, 2005). Zimmerman (2009) viewed books as an agent of weeding. Based on criteria all print with duplicated versions are the candidates of weeding. As proposed by Wilkinson and Lewis (2003) that the subject specialist has to determine whether there is a need to retain duplicates copies or supplement with electronic versions. Other benefits of weeding collection in libraries creates opportunities of keeping the collection relevant to the community it serves (Nyerembe, 2014); Reduces overcrowding of unwanted materials (Moore, 2002); Makes it easier for students and teachers to find what they are looking for (Munro & Philips, 2008); Makes space for new items (Naick, Doraswamy & Mohan, 2017); Ensures the library has current, accurate materials (ibid, 2017); Keeps the collection fresh and appealing (Nyerembe, 2014). The conclusion made by various authors that all unused duplicate copies have to be weeded from a collection (Roy 2000; Holleman, 2000); Handman, 2002; Tucker & Torrence, 2004; Singer, 2008).

Criteria for weeding the library collections.

These criteria have to guide weeding in terms of age, currency and accuracy of contents in a collection (Gamsby, at all, 2011). Therefore, library materials of all types (which include, but not limited to books, journals, microforms, and maps) may be considered for weeding after meeting criteria (Bhatt, 2011). However, in some cases librarians need to make consideration on faculties by making inquiries or seeking historical background of user's needs. Based on the weeding criteria any decision for removal has to consider time, access and usage as well as physical condition of documents.

First, based on time, Frank and Richard (2007) & Leiter (2003) suggested seven years old weeding for law, space, geography travel and transportation related documents. For example, dictionaries that are in ten years or older will be removed since it is appear to miss newer words or changes of languages and vocabulary. However, in regarding to time, Dushu (2016) suggested maximum of five years old for weeding materials relatively to technology, science, health and medicine. Contrary to almanacs and yearbooks which suggested to be removed within two years old (Gamsby, at al., 2011). Similar finding on age factor was also noted by ALAC (2009) that there is some subjects which needed staying current including materials in law, medicine, or technology.

Secondly, little or non-usage of an items may be considered as a factor for weeding decision (Israel, 2012). In this regard librarians have to rely on circulation statistics to determine and to make weeding decisions. Therefore, books with no table of contents, no index, and poorly organized content have to be removed in a collection (Lee, 1993).

Thirdly, the back issues of periodicals which are not indexed also have to be removed from the collection. In line with the back issues, the library is still advised to continue to withdraw items from the collection regarding to "non-frequently borrow" (ALAC, 2009; Boon, 2009; Naick, Doraswamy & Mohan, 2017; Reddy, 2015). This is so called the usability of materials, in other words such materials are no longer meet the need of the parental community, so they have to be weeded (Suresh, 2003). Librarians ensure all faculty members are benefited with the available collection (Dubicki, 2008).

Fourth, based on physical condition, materials that are badly deteriorated or damaged beyond reasonable preservation efforts will be weeded (Olaajo & Akewukereke, 2006; Israel (2012). In this regard therefore Patel (2016) suggested the use of inventory could help to determine damaged or material needed to be removed (Handis, 2007). Remaining with duplicate copies will depends on the space available. This is the discretions of librarians either to remain with duplicates or not depends on the number of users needs such duplicate materials (Handis, 2007; Leiter (2003). Otherwise, the library often has to withdraw multiple copies which are no longer required (Engeldinger, 1986; Bhatt, 2011). Basing on a precaution by Hightower & John (2012) that retaining duplicates depends on the frequency of use in order to maintain the equity of access (ALAC, 2009; Hoffmann & Wood, 2005; Slote, 2008). But according to Wittenbach (2005) & Jacob (2001, 2008) such condition is not limited to retaining very unique materials.

Challenges of weeding the library collections

According to Singers' (2008) weeding is removing of unwanted properties. However, according to him individuals feel difficulty throwing their properties away. The information professionals and librarians are among them (Dushu, 2016). Conversely, librarians have to agree with inevitability to throw away un-valuable items even from homes. However, according to Futas & Tyron (2000) it has been proved that it was not easy for librarian to make decisions despite its importance of weeding. Weeding involves evaluation of the collection in order to determine which resources are still needed or not (Roy, 1990; Jacob, 2001; Dushu, 2016). In the same vain Vijayakumar & Vijayakumar (2000) highlighted the following challenges: lack of time allocated by libraries for weeding process (ibid, 2000); Munro & Philps (2000) highlighted that the process is time-consuming effort. (Fuller, 2006); lack of staff coordination (Evans, et al., 2005); poor perceptions among management towards weeding (Vijayakumar & Vijayakumar, 2000); inadequacy of budget to purchase new books for replacement (Budd and Watt (2002). Apart from all these challenges, the prominent reason of developing countries fearing to weed is to remain with empty shelves (McKee, 2001).

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The study was addressing three specific objectives.

- To establish a status of weeding Practice in Tanzania.
- To identify criteria used for weeding library collection in the study area.
- To identify challenges facing process of library weeding in a study area.

1.3 Study Methods

The study involved questionnaire survey to librarians from various institutions in Tanzania. It was conducted in two years January, 2017 to December, 2018. The stratified random sampling procedures were used to select the sample from public, special and academic libraries. This study employed quantitative research design. According to Collis and Hussey (2003) viewed this method as a statistical techniques processes for gathering data in a social phenomenon. In order to determine the sample size, Kish's (1965) formula for cross-sectional studies employed. The sample therefore, was calculated at the 95 per cent confidence interval of estimate and margin of error in the estimate equals to four (4). The total population of 224 participants were drawn from the Tanzania library services membership list. All selected were librarians who are working in various libraries. At the beginning 150 librarians showed the intention to participate in the study. However, at the end of data collection only 120 respondents returned questionnaires for being analysed. The librarians were selected purposively as the key respondents because they are ones who are responsible for plan and implement weeding exercise in their places. The survey, used statistical package and service solution (SPSS) version 22.0 to derive frequencies and percentages to determine relationship among variables.

Findings of the study.

Targeted population were 150 but 120 returned questionnaire to be analysed 120 (80%, n=150). The respondents involved in the study were males 54(45%, n=120) and female were 66(55%, n=120). Based on the distribution of age of respondents, the majority ranged from 30-35 years old 35(45%, n=120). Based on the education levels involved majority possessed certificates 35(29.1%, n=120) and Masters 35(29.1%, n=120). In addition to that, basing on the working experiences, the majority ranged from 11-20 years working in libraries 60(50%, n=120).

Table 1: Demographic Characteristics.

Respondents' Population	Targeted population	Distributed Questionnaire	Returned	Percentage
Population	150	150	120	80
Respondents' Gender				
Male	54		54	45
Female	66		66	55
Respondents' Age				
31-35	35		35	30
36-40	10		10	8.3
41-45	20		20	16
46-50	30		30	25
51-60	15		15	12.5
Education levels				
Certificates levels	35		35	29.1
Diploma	20		20	16.6
Degree levels	35		35	29.1
Master's Degree levels	15		15	12.5
Phd levels	4		4	3.3
No responses	11		11	9.1
Work Experiences				
1year- 10 years	40		40	33.3
11years -20 years	60		60	50.0
21years -30 and above	20		20	16.6

Source: Field Data, 2017/2018

The finding revealed the majority who were involved in the study were female who were 66(55%, n=120). This was contrarily to a historical nature of education in developing countries where women scholars have been noted the minority until 20th century. As reported by Nkebukwa (2018) that gender ideology was associated with formal discrimination against women. In this regard, recruiting more women in libraries of Tanzania was contrarily to such notion. Also it was contrarily to Omolade (2012) who noted that the administrators and policy makers hold masculine stereotypes which women were not trusted to lead the higher positions (Omolade, 2012).

Basing on age distribution of respondents the majority ranged from 30-35 years old 35(45%, n=120). However, age category was not among the objectives of the study. But the researcher found the importance of understanding age distributions due the fact that ages sometimes influences the people's maturity in revealing relevant and valuable information.

Basing on education levels the respondents possessed certificates 35(29.1%, n=120) and Masters 35(29.1%, n=120). In addition to that, based on work experiences, the majority ranged from 11-20 years working in libraries 60(50%, n=120). The implication of the finding is that, having long work experience would enable them in providing valuable information on weeding practices. The result corresponds to that of Akerejola (2008) that work experience resulted to fully participation in any occupation after college. In this regard, the researcher believed that long working experiences would influence them on a proper decision on handling the library materials as well as predicting materials to be weeded. The factor of education levels was noted by various studies of career decision-making where examined ways in which individual decisions are made (Pappas and Kounenou, 2011; Gati et al., 2010; Omolade, 2012).

2.0 Status of Library weeding Practice in Tanzania.

This question intended to get information on a status of weeding exercise in libraries. The majority revealed that their libraries had not practiced weeding since its establishment 65(54.1%, n=120). Based on the finding, these libraries

undertake a temporary weeding where materials which still have value to the community are taken from the shelves because of damage to be repaired or for binding. In these cases, if the material is no longer available on sale, the materials may be sent to a commercial bindery for repair. Upon their return from the bindery, they are returned to the collections.

While few of them 20 (50%, n=40) revealed having weeding exercise once or twice since its establishment, the reasons necessitated them to weed a collection was to remove materials beyond repair or un-used materials. For example, un-used materials in small library may still be useful to a library serving a larger number of users. The advantage disposing of materials in this way the materials remain available to the community and valuable shelves do not taken up by materials that are not likely to be used often. The same criteria was also noted by Nyerembe (2004) that in developing countries the poor physical condition is among of major reason necessitates an items to be removed from the collection.

Moreover, the researcher wanted to know actions taken after weeding the collection. Based on the findings weeded materials are donated in other institutions needing them. The implication of the finding is the absence of library policies guiding weeding process. Absences of policies in libraries noted in a study of Neal-Schuman et al., (2005) that many libraries have no guiding policies. Lack or absences of policies or guidelines leads librarians to failure in making a proper decision on what and when to weed books from a collection. Various authors proposed some guidelines of weeding which needed to be adopted into library policies, these criteria are; to remove outdated or obsolete material, old editions (Reddy, 2015. As Perez (2004) added that books in low usage or with poor condition requires replacement. Removing unnecessary duplication, and/or lack of relevancy to course curriculum (Patel, 2016 & Akewukereke, 2006). According to Munro (2008) the process of reviewing the curriculum without updating library collection reduces usage of some items in the collection as well as necessitates weeding.

2.1 Criteria used in weeding library collection in the study area

The purpose was establishing if libraries have collection development procedures adhered in line with the collection development. The results were as follows; 40(33.3%, n=120) answered that their library do not maintain a collection development policy, specifically weeding policy. However, the researcher noted absenteeism of a written weeding policies, weeding canon is folded into the library policies for those having it. While 75(62.5%, n=120) indicated ‘No’, meant they were not aware even of such policies. However, 20(26.6%, n=75) explained that they were still working on the library policy that would include similar policy. While, 55(45%, n=75) claimed that they were still working on the writing of the guidelines for the collection development policies, the researcher noted little pressing efforts to support the need of having a written collection development policy. The major concerned, hire raised by respondents a fear and the reluctance of weed the collection (Alabaster, 2002; Buhari & Linda, 2006).

Further, a question extended to respondents claimed that they have been using weeding guidance on making weeding decision. Regarding on the question, the findings revealed that they relied on CREW guides 27(67%, n=40). The CREW is the abbreviation of the word (Continuous Review, Evaluation, and Weeding). This method incorporates process to streamline on smooth and ongoing routine to ensure that the information services is well accomplished. According to Larson (2018) CREW makes it easier to remove all unused and outdated materials from the collections. In this regard, the model helps librarians to learn where collections having gaps. The CREW model therefore confirms a book after circulation for use. The document entered into CREW records for inventory and its maintenance. In other words, the CREW ensures useful life cycle of books in the collection (Patel, 2016).

However, in libraries often new books become very popular at first and future are kept on the shelf waiting users occasionally. At this stage books become worn because their information becomes outdated and replaced with the new updated information. According to Larson (2008) CREW generates information on strengths, gaps and saturation points of the collection (Ward & Teper, 2005). According to Munro (2008) since the past decade CREW model used to direct librarians in culling outdated or less useful resources. Similar to the Ranganathan’s CREW model which provides six basic criteria called MUSTIE acronym. Basing to Ranganathan’s MUSTIE stands for ‘M’; Ugly--worn beyond mending or rebinding stands for ‘U’; Superseded by a new edition of much better books stands for ‘S’; Trivial of no discernible literary or scientific merit stands for ‘T’; Irrelevant to the needs and interests of the library’s community stands for ‘I’ and Elsewhere the material is easily obtainable from another library stands for ‘E’. In this regard, basing on the MUSTIE model weeding policies in libraries has a positive effect on continuing the intention of the library Collection development (Alabaster, 2002; Buhari & Linda, 2006; Bashir, 1990; Bromann, 2002). However, other criteria was mention in other studies but it is not popular in surveyed area, these are the “just-

in-case” collection model to build its collections (Evans & Zarnosky, 2004; Tucker& Torrence, 2004; Evans & Saponaro, 2012)

Table 2: Guidelines used on making weeding decision N=40

QUESTION	Responses	Yes	No	No response
Guidelines used for weeding library collection	CREW Method	22 (55%)	4(10%)	1(2.5%)
	MUSTIE	5(12.5%)	4(10%) ⁵	1(2.5%)
	Others	3(7.5%)	0%	0%

Source: Field data 2017/18

2.2 Challenges facing process of library weeding in a study area.

Basing on the findings the major challenges identified which necessities library to in-proper weeding collections, was lack of funds to procure new material for replacement 65(54.1%, n=120). This is a common problem in many library especially in the developing countries including Tanzania. This usually intensified by limited budgets allocated for the library. Therefore, according to Dubicki (2000) selection and purchase of books in libraries is also limited due to the financial constraints. Therefore, absence or inadequate funds limiting the predictions or anticipating the users’ demands. In normal practices development library collection relied on both professionalism and funds. This practice corresponds to Slote (1989) that the selection of books in libraries depends on the judgment basing to available budgets.

Regarding to financial crisis libraries operating in difficult situation, this is working in very small buildings with limited space, keeping old books, remaining with poor and limited information infrastructures. As a result libraries in developing countries remain working in traditional way (Alabaster, 2002; Buhari & Linda, 2006). This, approach necessitating users to have physical visits. Which is contrally to Rosenberg (2000), view library as the growing organism needs the effective infrastructures. In line with that, Young (2003) & Adegboro (2011) opposed that libraries are not only places for books but also centers for dissemination of knowledge (Borin & Yi, 2008; Nkebukwa, 2016).

Similarly, all these has been characterized by the absence of the library policies. The absence of written library policies intensifies many challenge to manage library functions. The advantages of having a library policy might guide development of collection of such libraries; Patel (2016) added that, unavailability of library policies affects even the selection and acquisition of reading materials in libraries. As argued that faculty members are crucial for a collection development processes as may suggest on what libraries have to acquire to strengthen their collections and fill gaps related to user’s needs.

Table 5: Challenge of weeding Libraries Collections

Responses	Frequency	Percentage
Lack of weeding policies and procedures guiding weeding	35	29.9
Limited space to keep print resources;	5	4.1
Fear of creating spaces without new replacement	10	8.3
Lack of funds to procure new material for replacement;	65	54.1
No specific time allocated for weeding library collection	5	4.1
and the negative perceptions of management towards weeding library materials	10	25

Sources: Field data, 201/18

Conclusion

The findings have revealed a number of challenges facing library weeding in Tanzania. These challenges were: fear of weeding library collections disputed the fact that libraries have limited spaces; lack of weeding policies guiding library collection; fear of creating spaces without new replacement, lack of funds to procure new material for

replacement; absence of specific time allocated for weeding collections and the negative perceptions of management towards weeding library materials. Furthermore, it has been noted that libraries have no collection development policies guide the weeding exercise. However, it was noted in some case that weeding policy was folded into the collection development policies. Moreover, the findings have shown that CREW methods in some cases used to make decision of weeding. Further, they noted reasons for weeding in developing countries is to remove outdated or obsolete material, old editions with poor conditions.

Recommendations.

Basing on the findings, the study provided the following recommendations;

- i. There is a need for library management to ensure the keeping of only current books that meet the needs of users or supporting curriculum development of the parental bodies.
- ii. There is a need for the parental body setting aside enough budget that will accommodate acquisition of current material frequently basing on new demand of users as well as enabled the subscription of e-books, e-Journals, e-databases and other related electronic documents.
- iii. The study further recommends the universities and colleges to employ subject - librarian's liaison model for collection management, for selection and de-selection of library resources. Therefore, the institutions or faculty liaison librarians should also consult respective department regarding the acquisitions of materials when there is establishment of new programs.
- iv. The study recommends for librarians to consider necessary criteria during selection and weeding collection. In making selection and de-selection decisions, librarians should be careful and ensure balanced collections which is focusing on the current affaires as well as meet demand anticipation.
- v. The study further recommends that libraries should not accept all donations and gifts of books from donors without appraising them. When possible the management should have consultation with librarians to evaluate gifts and donations prior to accepting them.

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