

COLLECTION DEVELOPMENT AND MANAGEMENT PRACTICES OF ARABIC COLLEGE LIBRARIES IN SRI LANKA

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Abstract

This study aimed to investigate the collection development practices of Arabic College (AC) libraries in Sri Lanka. Specifically, the study examines the existing collection development practices such as types of resources, languages, selection tools, selection criteria and acquisition methods of the selected Arabic Colleges in Sri Lanka. This study involved 12 senior Arabic College Libraries as a purposive sample among the 30 senior Arabic Colleges and used qualitative and quantitative data collection and analysis methods. The study used a questionnaire and analyzed it by using descriptive methods. It reveals that the existing collection development practices of most of the Arabic college libraries are below the proper collection development practices of academic libraries. However, some libraries are in the developmental stage. The reasons identified for inadequate collection development practices of Arabic college (AC) libraries are the absence of collection development policy, lack of collection evaluation, lack of selection responsibility, lack of awareness in electronic media, lack of proper budget allocation, lack of trained staff, lack of coordination and cooperation among existing Arabic college libraries and low participation by the Arabic College administration in collection building.

Keywords: *Collection Development Practices, Academic libraries, Arabic College Libraries, Sri Lanka.*

Introduction

Arabic colleges are institutions where programs are conducted to learn and understand Islamic studies and the Arabic language. The history of Arabic Colleges in Sri Lanka goes back to hundred years ago. Arabic colleges' history is simultaneous with



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the history of Muslims in Sri Lanka (Mahroof 1990). We can observe the rapid development in the number of Arabic colleges in the post-independent era due to section 4 of

Ordinance No.26 of 1939, which stated that "instruction of the religion of each pupil in a government school shall be given to that

pupil as part of his course studies. It led to the recognition of certificates issued by approved Arabic Colleges(Mahroof 1995).

Today, Sri Lanka has 75 senior Arabic colleges per the Muslim Religious and Cultural Affairs Department record. The curriculum of Arabic colleges in Sri Lanka is an eight-year or seven-year program that includes the elementary stage to the university stage of Arabic education. The students are prepared for the Al-Alim examination conducted by the Examination Department of Sri Lanka.

The Arabic college libraries included in this study were as follows:

- Naleemiah Institute of Islamic Studies (NI, Beruwela)
- Gafooriya Arabic College (GAC, Maharagama)
- Muslim Ladies Arabic College (MLAC, Kal-Eliya)
- Daruth Thawheed Arabic College (DTAC, Kurunegala)
- Rahmaniyyah Arabic College (RAC, Akurana)
- Islahiya Arabic College (IAC, Madampe)
- Dheeniya Arabic College (DAC, Panadura)

-Sahwa Islamiya Arabic College (SIAC, Palamunai)

-Bahjathul Ibraheemiyaa Arabic College (BIAC, Weligama)

-Casimiyyah Arabic College (CAC, Puttalam)

-Falah Arabic College (FAC, Kattankudy)

-Anwarul Uloom Arabic College (AUAC, Makola)

There are many AC libraries of this kind in Sri Lanka. However, the above mentioned 12 AC libraries were selected for this study as a purposive sample. Therefore, the study explores the existing collection development practices in the twelve Arabic college libraries in Sri Lanka.

Objectives of the study

To investigate the types of collections of Arabic College libraries, and their languages

To explore the existing practices in selecting, acquiring, financing, assessing and weeding the collections

Literature Review

Searches of Library and Information Science Abstracts (LISA), library literature and databases, exposed no paper on collection development practices among Arabic College

libraries. Due to the shortage of literature on this specific topic, this review focuses on the works describing collection development, management theory, and practices among academic libraries. The last decade's collection development and management literature enlighten further developments, issues, philosophies, and procedures.

Collection Development

The collection is defined as several separate works or parts of works, not forming a treatise or monograph on a single subject combined and issued together as a whole (Belanger and Young 1983). The move towards an ideology of access rather than ownership of library collection cannot be ignored by librarians involved in acquisitions, collection development and selection (Moffat 1996). Due to a lack of publication on collection development theory, library professionals need to discover principles through inference from writings and observation of existing practices.

The collection development process includes the activities such as user needs, selection, acquisition, evaluation, de-selection, collection development policy, funding for collection development, resource sharing and consortia building (Thanuskodi 2012). Collection development is a comprehensive

activity consisting of multiple collection development and management components about content strategy (Thanuskodi 2012). The library collection development budget is utilized to fund many costs other than resources materials (Horava and Levine-Clark 2016).

Several factors have direct influence on how collections are developed and managed in the academic libraries. According to Khan & Bhatti (2016) these factors are as follows;

- Goals of collection development and management policies and procedures,
- User needs,
- Collection development policies (CDPs),
- Collection development budgets,
- Collection evaluation to determine the strength and weaknesses of various subjects in the collections,
- Selection of reading materials,
- Formats in which materials are selected,
- The issues of access versus ownership,
- Cooperative collection development,
- Resource-sharing programs and
- legal issues in collection development and management (Khan and Bhatti 2016)

Collection Development Policy

The absence of the collection development policy on electronic resources and inadequate library budget are significant challenges the libraries face (Ashilungu 2017). Well-

reviewed written collection development policy and successful access to online information resources are prerequisites for proper collection development practice (Ameyaw, Entsua-Mensah, and Edward 2016). Moreover, as curriculum designers and teachers, they can be able to select appropriate sources.

Collection Evaluation

Experimental measures of the adequacy of library collections and services are of interest among scholars. A single technique will not solve all issues, and new works on evaluation methods always find an audience (Grover 1999). Academic libraries adopt different strategies for collection evaluation. User-centered approach, physical assessment and specific subject support are major approaches that employ many unique evaluative methods (Agee 2005).

Two approaches were practiced to measure the library services: Collection centered; client-centered. There are six basic evaluation approaches focused on the collection itself (Budd 1992). Weeding is one of the necessary functions of collection development in any library, and the increase of electronic resources usage reduces print collection circulation. However, many other factors also affect circulation, comprising the

level at which the material is shelved. Remote storage, the alternative to weeding often preferred for research collections, is no longer controversial. The issue is no longer whether libraries should move books into storage facilities but rather how to select books appropriately. There is no relation between use and age, and it is unnecessary to defer sending older journals to storage to accommodate researches in secondary fields (Ackerson 2002).

collection development is not exclusively a library practitioner activity but needs to be considered within a broader context that takes account of multiple strands of collection selection and management (Hunt 2017).

Methodology

The present study was adopted the convenience sampling technique. The research instrument was a questionnaire that was evaluated for reliability and face validity with the support of a few faculty members and librarians. After incorporating the comments of experts, it was twisted and corrected. The final questionnaire was designed through google forms, conducted face-to-face interviews, telephone interviews, visited the selected libraries, and observed the collection development practices of the libraries. The questionnaire was sent to twelve advanced Arabic college libraries

which were selected as the sample of this study. The collected data was analyzed, and descriptive statistics was used. A comparison also was made between the selected libraries. Finally, the findings and conclusions of this study were drawn based on the collected data.

Library Resources

Table 1: Collection of materials in the Arabic college libraries

Library	Books	Periodicals (Titles)	Theses	Reports	Manuscripts	A/V	Maps
NI	35,000	40	350	100	30	50	25
MLAC	34,000	20	-	10	-	-	05
GAC	15,000	10	-	-	-	-	-
DTAC	11,000	10	112	07	-	-	10
RAC	10,000	10	-	-	-	-	05
IAC	10,000	18	70	10	-	75	10
DAC	7,000	10	-	06	-	-	08
CAC	6,000	05	-	-	12	-	02
BIAC	5,000	03	07	-	25	-	05
AUAC	5,000	05	-	04	-	-	05
SIAC	5,000	10	-	05	-	-	04
FAC	4,000	12	95	-	15	-	10

Library collection

Table 1 provides a bird's eye view of the types of resources in each AC library. It reveals that books are the primary information resource in these libraries. We can find general uniformity that exists in

Results

All responses to the questionnaire were obtained in six weeks. Seventy-five per cent of libraries responded with comprehensive and detailed answers. Findings are described under the subheadings as follows.

these libraries that concentrate on subjects like religion and humanities. The table analysis shows that the Naleemiah Institute library (NI) has the most extensive collection, and the Falah Arabic College (FAC) library contains a small collection compared to other libraries.

Collection in different languages

Table 2: Collection in different languages

Library	Arabic	Tamil	English	Urdu	Sinhala
NI	15000	2,500	11,000	500	350
MLAC	33,000	7,500	2,500	-	250
GAC	13,000	1,000	200	300	250
DTAC	9,000	2,000	500	50	200
RAC	9,500	200	50	1000	-
IAC	7,500	2,000	500	-	250
DAC	6,000	500	50	100	50
CAC	4814	800	200	100	150
BIAC	4,500	250	50	08	100
AUAC	4,000	750	50	100	100
SIAC	5200	160	02	08	05
FAC	2660	900	250	100	50

Table 2 gives us the diversity of languages in the Arabic college library setting. Most Arabic college libraries have materials in four different languages. Materials in the Arabic language contain 70% of the total collection. But, NI library has a balanced collection. Only one library has a considerable amount of materials in the English language.

SIAC has only 02 books in English, and, regrettably, most of the Arabic colleges lack a balanced collection.

Table 3: Collections in different Languages

Language	Percentage
Arabic	70%
English	12%
Tamil	08%
Urdu	05%
Sinhala	05%

The survey deals with documents in five languages existing in AC libraries in the Country. It deals with Arabic, English, Tamil, Urdu and Sinhala languages. However, generally observing, the Arabic language appears to be the most extensive Collection in AC libraries in Sri Lanka. Tamil and Sinhala languages are the Country's official languages; the Collection in AC libraries contains a tiny percentage of the total collection. Yet, we cannot ignore that the Collection in AC libraries includes a small part of the entire collection in the English language even though it is an international language. Nevertheless, there is a variation in the collection among the different AC libraries. Table 3 reveals that the Arabic language materials are a significant part of the collection, the medium of instruction in these institutions.

Financing and Budgeting

Most of the AC libraries in Sri Lanka have no fixed budgets. The libraries suffer from a lack of funds simultaneously; library budgets are being subjected to severe cuts by the administrative body of the Arabic Colleges. Generally, the management of these institutions concentrates on the maintenance and the functioning of the institutions. As a sequence, the AC libraries are unable to cope with the demand of users.

The respondents were asked whether they had a funding programme. Most of the libraries replied that they had funding programs locally as well as well-wishers. 50% of libraries have funding programmed locally, and at the same time, another 50% have well-wishers' funds. However, 75 % of libraries depend on local as well as well-wishers funds. However, through the interview conducted by the researcher, the respondents clearly stated that the well-wishers' funds are small scale in the total budget. Some officers in charge of libraries mentioned that some of the alumni support acquiring the library materials.

The respondents were asked to indicate the amount allocated for library materials. The budget of most of the libraries is below 300 US\$. The main reason for lacking a fixed budget is that the libraries of AC are dependent on acquisition through gifts and donations from college alumni and other charity organizations.

Table 4: Criteria for budget allocation

Criteria	No. of Libraries	%
Curriculum support	10	83
Circulation for primary clientele	4	33
Student population	8	67
Cost	6	50

The information users in AC libraries are no less demanding and exacting in their requirements.

Table 4 indicates that most AC libraries allocate the budget according to curriculum support. Student's population, cost, and

format are other critical criteria that AC libraries follow in allocating the small budget.

Allocation Percentage

Table 5: Allocation percentage

Allocation Component	Allocation percentage	No. of Libraries	%
Teaching Learning Support (Textbooks)	20 - 30	3	25
	30 - 40	6	50
	40 - 50	3	25
Research Support (Monograph/ Journals)	10 - 20	4	33
	20 - 30	5	41
	30 - 40	3	25
Journals (Print /Electronic)	10 -20	2	16
	20 – 30	4	33
	30 - 40	6	50
Other (Binding, Stationeries ILL etc.)	5 - 7	8	66
	7 -10	4	33

Table 5 gives the allocation percentage for each component of the resources. The library collection development budget is generally prepared early in the year and consists of four categories, as shown in table 5.

Teaching and Learning Allocation; Funds to support teaching and learning are allocated in AC libraries without using any formula. Most of the libraries consist of 50 % and 30% – 40% allocation of funds for this component. The priority goes to the purchase of

textbooks and other materials on subject reading lists.

Research Support Allocation; Funds to support research are allocated in AC libraries, excluding methods or principles. 33% of libraries give 10 – 12 percentages for this area.

Journals allocation; Generally, a single portion supports library-wide journals subscriptions and covers all formats, including databases, print and electronic journals.

Other allocation; A small portion is made for binding, stationery, and document delivery in AC libraries. Though the AC libraries' focus on collecting the books, the above table reveals that 50% of AC libraries allocate 30 – 40 % of funds to purchase journals. By the interview and the observation carried out by the researcher found that AC libraries are interested in buying print journals. It would be difficult for AC libraries to fix with principles for allocating a proportion of the budget.

Selection of Materials

Table 6: Members selecting the material for the library

Responsible Person	No. of Libraries	Percentage
Librarian	4	33%
Library committee	2	16%
College Principal	7	58%
Others	-	

The college principal is responsible for selecting library materials in many AC libraries; this practice exists in 58% of AC libraries. Furthermore, only 16% of AC libraries use library committees in the selection of materials. Unfortunately, only one person in many AC libraries selects, that resulting in these unbalanced and unusable collections. It is also noteworthy that the

principal has more powers and responsibilities in selecting library materials in most AC libraries. The above survey deals with three types of responsible persons prevalent in AC libraries. Although the 'Library Committee' is persuasive authority for selecting materials, a significant minority of AC libraries practice consulting the library committee for the selection.

However, there are collegial variations; for example, the advanced Arabic colleges like Naleemiah Institute, Dharuth Dawheed Assalafiyah institute and Muslim Ladies Arabic College show much greater preference for employing library committees than that of the traditional Arabic Colleges. It is necessary to highlight that a tiny percentage of libraries involves the library committees in selecting materials.

Selection tools

The survey deals with four types of selection aids used in the AC libraries in Sri Lanka. It deals with 'Book reviews', 'publishers' announcement', 'subject bibliographies', and readers' suggestions.

Although publisher's announcement is traditionally the dominant selection aid used by the libraries, it is significant that only 50% of AC libraries appear to use that tool.

But, significantly, the great majority of AC libraries depend upon book reviews appearing in professional journals. Yet, we cannot ignore that 50% of AC libraries use all the selection aids mentioned in the above table. However, Naleemiah Institute (NI) library states that Internet and CD ROMs are used as the selection tools. Nearly all the AC libraries use "Book Reviews" for selecting the information resources.

Selection Criteria

12 AC libraries (100% of libraries) consider "the importance of the subject" as the preferred criteria for their selection. At the same time, all criteria have been considered by 50 % of libraries.

Acquisition Methods

The survey handles four types of acquisition procedures found in AC libraries. It deals with 'Acquisition through gifts', 'Acquisition through purchase', 'Acquisition through exchange', 'Acquisition through institutional membership'.

Observation of the AC libraries reveals some interesting facts about the status of gifts and exchanges in AC libraries in Sri Lanka. In addition to collecting information, an attempt was made to obtain personal opinions on the value of gifts and exchange programs. Visiting libraries and sending questionnaires made it possible to learn firsthand how gifts and exchanges are being handled in AC libraries today. Although not surprising, the fact that all AC libraries receive gifts quickly became apparent. None of the people interviewed believed that a library should adopt a policy of not accepting donations because there is no way out of it. It is also difficult to say 'No' to well-meaning donors, especially since it is well-known that libraries

are currently experiencing budgetary constraints. Apart from these reasons for receiving gifts, however, the fact is that historically gifts have played an essential role in the collection building efforts of AC libraries. In addition to significant gift collection and endowments, AC libraries also benefit from many smaller gifts. The single volume of donations and small gift collection comprise a considerable portion of gift-giving to AC libraries. The sources for such gifts include alumni of Arabic Colleges, residents, individual authors, various social service movements, religious organizations, foundations, and the people who go for hajj pilgrimage to Mecca. While most AC libraries are generally satisfied with their gifts program, some expressed concern about the small percentage of gifts added to the collection compared to the bulk of gift materials received.

Thus, it is difficult to comprehend why many AC libraries accept everything that is offered. The reasons for getting virtually everything include the desire for good public relations and the chance to acquire a more valuable collection in the future. However, there is no practical reason for libraries to become the discarding grounds for unwanted public books. If AC libraries develop criteria for unacceptable gifts and incorporate them into

written collection development policies, it becomes easier to decline unwanted library gifts tactfully. Such practice reduces the cost of processing donations since it requires less time to sort gift materials and dispose of unwanted items.

All AC libraries apply the gift & donation procedures for their acquisition. Among the selected libraries, 75% of libraries do not have any criteria for accepting donations and gifts and 25 % of libraries have criteria for accepting donations and gifts. The later mention that gifts may be added to the collection when they are relevant to the existing collection. Books and other information materials are donated to AC libraries by different NGOs and other charity organizations, and the libraries receive these materials and stack them on their shelves. Some of the libraries accept only donations without any conditions. Some libraries follow a method to inform the donors that the library cannot use the gifts will appropriately dispose of them.

Since the AC libraries' budget is small, "acquisition through purchase" is limited to the textbooks and subject-related reading lists. Of the twelve libraries observed, six currently have exchange programs, although the number of exchanges maintained is limited in some cases. While three libraries

maintain 50% of exchanges, most libraries tend to have 10% of exchanges, and a large percentage of these is foreign institutions.

As with gifts, most AC libraries' librarians believe that the material received in exchange supplements the collection with valuable research material that might not otherwise be acquired. Most AC libraries do not have a specific policy concerning the terms of exchange. Yet, we must point out that an exchange program is maintained by three AC libraries in Sri Lanka whereby copies of selected journals published by the parent organization are exchanged with other institutions. Naleemiah Institute (NI) library currently has exchange programs with 15 organizations. Daruth Thawheed Arabic College (DTAC) library and Islahiyyah Arabic college (IAC) library maintain exchange programs with five organizations. But there is also some variation between these libraries in exchanging the publications.

Purchasing Procedure

The above survey deals with four types of purchasing methods applied by AC libraries in Sri Lanka. It deals with the 'Quotation method', 'Direct ordering with publishers', 'Open purchase', and 'Books on approval'. Significantly, all AC libraries use the 'open purchase method' when they purchase library materials. Some AC libraries almost totally

reject books on approval' pursued by one AC library, and significant preference is shown to the 'Direct ordering with publishers - method'. It is also noteworthy that approximately 40% of the AC libraries pursue quotation methods for their acquisition by purchase.

Censorship in selection

The respondents were questioned whether they follow any censorship in the process of book selection. Nearly most AC libraries mentioned that they follow some kind of censorship in book selection. However, there are significant variations between the traditional AC libraries and modern AC Libraries.

The censorship policy of the Naleemiah Institute (NI) library states that the official responsible for selection resides in the library committee, which includes the Director, Deputy Director, Dean of Academic Affairs and Librarian. Materials are purchased and collected to support specific coursework, and censorship would make much of that work possible. However, the library committee is watchful about selecting inappropriate titles. Though, censorship appears to be non-acceptable to the higher academic Arabic colleges, on the other hand, by an observation made by the researcher, some AC libraries

seem to be more positive towards censorship than other libraries.

User Assessments

Most AC libraries do not consider user assessment as an essential aspect of collection development. However, 25% of AC libraries responded that they had assessed their users' needs and reading interests, but they had not explained their methods. Naleemiah Institute (NI) and Islahiyya Arabic College (IAC) libraries indicate that they have conducted discussions with senior students and staff members to understand their users' needs. Daruth Thawheed Arabic College (DTAC) library states that they use a straightforward method to identify users' needs. One suggestion box and paper are kept near the counter labelled with 'suggestions' for the library users to mention their needs. AC libraries in Sri Lanka lack proper methodology for studying the users' interests and needs with an appropriate approach.

Significantly, 41% of AC libraries agree that their collection meets users' needs. Yet, we cannot ignore the fact that many AC libraries are lacking in the proper collection. Still, there is a significant difference between the libraries with extensive Collections and the libraries with smaller Collections. Librarians of AC libraries of 33% accept that their

collection does not meet the users' requirements.

Collection maintenance and Weeding Methods

The respondents were asked whether they had a written weeding policy or specific criteria to weed a document or leave it on the shelf or in the collection. It is highly noteworthy that most AC libraries do not think about weeding policy as an essential part of the weeding practices. However, 17% of AC libraries, 2 out of 12, follow some guidelines in weeding out the collection. The respondents were questioned whether they had any systematic withdrawal methods for weeding the collection. Most AC libraries neither did evaluate nor weed their collection, while a significant minority of AC libraries weeds out the collection. However, there are procedures and practices used by the libraries that weed out the collection. According to the description written by the respondents, 17% of AC libraries use the formal procedure for weeding. It is essential to point out that the traditional form of weeding practices is still the most widely preferred in some AC libraries.

Discussion

This study aims to find out the current collection development practices of Arabic college libraries in Sri Lanka. A concise evaluation of the above case study is essential to highlight the present condition of the CD practices and suggest a course of action for the overall integrated development of the Arabic college libraries. More than seventy-five per cent of Arabic College funding comes from local donors and some well-wishers. According to the survey, more than 50 % of AC libraries do not allocate fund for electronic media. The survey indicates that most AC libraries use four kinds of tools for selecting materials. The use of 'Review Columns in Journals and News papers' is an increasingly common selection tool among the majority of the AC libraries. Some AC libraries often use readers' suggestions, which carry advantages of leaving the selection process to the users.

The breakdown of expenditure for the AC libraries showed: textbooks 30%; Journals and Monographs 30%; print journals 25%; Binding and stationeries 15% (these are average percentages). Most AC libraries neither did evaluate nor weed their collection as per the survey. When efforts were made to find out if there were significant weaknesses in the Collection development practices, as

per research question two, findings showed substantial shortcomings in the CD practices of these AC libraries.

As the analysis of the questionnaires, interview and the observation made by the researcher shows that the weaknesses which exist in the collection development practices can be classified as follows:

Lacking of Collection development Policy:

While Collection development is a primary activity of the library, most AC libraries still do not have a collection development policy. A written collection development policy will be an essential tool in achieving the goal collection development of their strengths and weaknesses. Most AC libraries do not have clearly defined, measurable collection development goals and policies.

Poor Collection Evaluation: Based on the observation, only a very few AC libraries have a way of analyzing the collection. Lack of collection specialists is a shortcoming in the AC libraries. Many AC libraries do not have the human resources to do the job.

Shared Selection Responsibility: Only a few AC libraries have a systematic selection process shared with different people. It does not mean that most AC libraries do not practice collection development, but rather that the structure is other than what we

expected in the academic libraries. Typically, the library staff concentrates on services and the principal of the college shoulder the responsibility of selection.

Awareness in electronic media: Many AC libraries do not understand the importance of acquiring electronic media for collection development. The survey shows that the allocation percentage of approximate 25% goes to the journals purchasing in 33% of AC libraries, and none of them buys the electronic media by this allocation.

Small Budget allocation: In most AC libraries, Arabic college management controls the library's annual budget. The management allocates a large portion of their budget to the college administration. The libraries are given a small amount of funding that makes them suffer from a lack of funds.

Lack of Trained staff: Most AC libraries are running with untrained staff. As more collections are acquired in AC libraries, the urgent need for professional staff and training facilities has become apparent.

Conclusion and Recommendation

Systematic Collection development practices ensure the academic libraries' effective and efficient resources and services. The study revealed a gap in implementing proper collection development practices among the

Arabic College (AC) Libraries. This study shows differences and weaknesses in the collection development practices among them due to various factors consisting of the absence of collection development policy, lack of collection evaluation, lack of selection responsibility, lack of awareness in electronic media, lack of proper budget allocation, lack of trained staff, and low participation of the Arabic College administration in collection building.

This study also attempted to explore the collection development practices of Advanced Arabic Colleges with libraries with enough collections and the issues faced by them. Results of this study reflect those of other Arabic college libraries in Sri Lanka. This study does not cover Advanced Arabic College libraries with small Collections and facilities and excludes the primary Arabic Colleges. The study has the limitation that considers 12 AC libraries as a sample from the Sri Lanka context.

This study recommends the AC libraries to formulate a collection development policy and procedure that could include, proper guidelines for selection, budgeting, ordering, accepting donations, evaluation criteria, collection management, weeding and all other essential components to implement and

practice proper collection development and management.

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