

Readers Statistics: A Veritable Tool for Effective Service Improvement in Renaissance University Library, Enugu State

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Abstract

This paper examines the effectiveness of readers' statistics towards service improvement in Renaissance University library. Descriptive Survey research design was adopted for the study. The data generated was analysed using simple frequency table and simple percentage. The population of the study is 15 Librarians. To obtain relevant data and information for the study, three research questions were formulated based on the research objective to guide this research work. A case study research design was used to study the staff of the university. Questionnaire and document inspection and analysis were used as the instrument for data collection. 15 copies of the questionnaire were distributed, while 14 were filled and retrieved from the respondents. From the analysis and findings, it was deduced that readers' statistics is very importance to the growth of the library. However, it was revealed that there is no thorough supervision and use of the statistical records. It was also revealed that the readers leaves before the next statistics is taken because of the unconducive reading environment. The researcher recommends that the library staff should be up and doing in keeping statistical records, the management should provide a good reading environment to prevent the users from leaving the library indiscriminately, there should be more awareness on resource location in the library to prevent readers from moving up and down. Readers statistic gives a true picture on the extent to which users visit the library and to the extent they utilise information resources housed in the library.

Keywords

Library, Readers, Statistics, Renaissance University

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State Chapter

Introduction

Library has become a focal place for enrichment, entertainment, education and empowerment through knowledge. The library is an important and integral part of any higher institution which has offered opportunity for students and staff to explore and expand in minds (Okeke, 2020). The library must be seen to be much more than a collection of books and the people who help find them; it is in fact the heart of any academic institution.

Oladugba (2012), library activities can be expressed in statistical form, because they are effective tool used for the management appraisal of a library. Statistical record in

library covers a wide range of library operations.

Library statistics are primarily divided into two basic categories- use and user studies. Libraries are expected to put this two groups into consideration when taking statistics in the library. Library statistic reveal a wealth of materials of hidden success stories where libraries have opened and ensured access to relevant information for all groups of the population. Library statistics is applicable to almost every aspect of library operations as it is required in planning, evaluation and assessment for growth and development. It is understandable that the bedrock of library assessment or performance evaluation is the

statistics that have been gathered, stored, analysed and used over a period of time. Library statistics are the basis for the establishment of standards in a library. The most common types among these statistics are the size of collection, books consulted by library patrons and reader's statistics. Library use and library users are essential for revealing and confirming the outstanding value that library provides. Library statistics are necessary for effective management of libraries, but they are still more important for promoting and improving library services. Library statistics shows at a glance the number and type of information material consulted by readers periodically.

As perceived by the researcher, library statistics is the statistical representation of various records in the library. It encompasses readers' statistic, book, acquisitions and statistics of

Statement of the Problem

Effective utilization of libraries has been a matter of concern to librarians, information scientists and educationists in general. Therefore, underutilization of readers statistics has no doubt assume a worrisome dimension, given that libraries and librarians have a responsibility of ensuring that their resources and services are effectively utilized especially when huge amount of money is voted for resource procurement. Though there is statistical data kept on readers' usage of the library and information resources at Renaissance University library, this data has neither been analysed nor updated and compared with data on previous years. This study has therefore been focused on investigating the effectiveness of reader's statistics, the frequency at which readers statistical record is been taken, the usefulness of reader's statistical record to the library and the challenges faced while taken the readers statistics. library collections. Readers' statistics are the bases for the establishment.

Review of Related Literature

In library and information science profession, collection of data is often seen as part of administrative duties. In other instances, it has been found necessary to collect data from patrons about their opinion and usage of resources as far as statistics and subject of study or discipline is concerned.

Attah (2022) saw statistics as the scientific method of collecting, organizing, summarizing, presenting and analysing data. Statistical information is a vital tool for the management and development of any organization. Keeping statistics of activities is basic on the survival and progress of a library and enables the library to measure its performance periodically as the basis for the assessment of performance and the needs or improvement. Statistical records are basic to the growth and development of each and every library. Library statistics are needed in order to be able to ascertain the level of the different resources and services that a library provides and how the resources and services are being utilized by different classes of patrons.

According to Omotoso and Igiomoh (2012), the effectiveness of any library rests upon its ability to maximize the satisfaction of its users' needs while minimizing the time spend in obtaining the requested information resources. Jonathan (2014) stated that most library standards are quantitative in nature, besides many library records which provide the materials of standards are statistical.

Murray & Stephen (1998) as cited by Jonathan (2014) defined statistics as the scientific method for collecting, organizing, summarizing, presenting and analyzing data as well as drawing valid conclusions and making reasonable decisions on the basis of such analysis. This is usually done in order to minimize uncertainty.

Abutu (2023) remarked that statistical data are the input raw materials from which information is produced and they are found

everywhere. So no matter what your line of work is, you will make decisions that involve data. Statistics can be defined as a way of gathering organizing and summarizing data that was gathered for a particular purpose.

Jilovsky (2011) reported that library statistics should reflect yesterday i.e. record and measure the past, reflect today i.e. incorporate new data elements whilst retaining continuity with past statistical reports and reflect tomorrow i.e. develop measure which will assess and record evolving library services.

According to Oluwabunmi (2020), library statistics are equally useful for providing users with current awareness services and selective dissemination of information. Library data and statistics generated from the records and surveys of the information needs and service preferences of users enable the library to provide them with latest available and relevant information in the appropriate formats, such as lists of newly acquired books or journals issues, content pages of latest journals, abstracts of publications, or complete full text publications).

Explaining library user statistics, Reiz (20014), states that it is "the extent to when the facilities and resources of a library are actually used by its clientele. Common measures includes overall or per capita circulation, turnover of collection(s), gate count, program attendance, internet use with the building, inter-library loan and reference transactions, etc. statistical records or the extent of library use is important in documenting effectiveness and justifying funding for any meaningful library". Civilization of any nation is dependent on the library materials available and the number of information materials that are effectively used by its patron.

Library statistics are the basis for the establishment of standards in a library. The most among these statistics are the size of

collection, books consulted by library patrons and reader's statistics. Library use and library users are essential for revealing and confirming the outstanding value that library provides. Library statistics are necessary for effective management of libraries, and very important for promoting and improving library services.

Keeping appropriate library statistics is very important for the growth and service improvement of any library. It is important to put the statistical record into proper usage because it helps to reveal where lapses are found in the library and also helps their management to support the growth of the library.

According to Nuur (2002), readers' statistics are valuable source for library performance and measurement. It plays a very important role in decision making of many organizations as well as libraries. It also helps in revealing gaps in the library collections. Disraeli (2022) stated that the systematic compilation and publication of library statistic is a phenomenon, and that it is one of the best ways to determine library effectiveness is the use of readers' statistics. Libraries also benefits from the use of readers' statistics to foster development in its activities and also for improved service. Statistics are the most common means of measuring a library performance; libraries use the facts of statistics to press on management to release funds for library growth and development.

According to Kumar (2019), library readers' statistics shows the strengths and weaknesses of a library in terms of resources, equipment, staff and finance. Library data and statistics generated from the records and surveys of the information needs and service preference of users enable the library to provide them with latest available and relevant information in the appropriate formats. In recent times it has become necessary for libraries to compile daily, weekly and monthly acquisition and user's

statistics. This has facilitated annual compilations and request for data from external, independent and corporate sources and body.

According to Nwalo (2003), library readers' statistics is the art of keeping quantitative records of operation in the library. He went further to state that every standard library keeps a variety of statistics on routine operations and occurrences such as acquisition, cataloguing, bindery, circulation, reference services. IFLA (2010) manifesto identifies some usefulness of library readers' statistics. These include: promotion of library services to different types of stakeholders, showing the adequacy of library service to their respective population, demonstrating the cost effectiveness of libraries in their service. Othman (2019) stressed the relevance of readers' statistics as helping in service improvement in the library. They are evidence on which policies are built; they help identify needs, set goals and monitor progress. Without good readers' statistics the development process will be slow.

Readers' statistics is an art of keeping record of library users on regular basis; it can be done hourly, daily, weekly, or monthly depending on the library policy and schedule. It can be done statistically for easy retrieval and accessibility. Items that are easy to count or those that have been counted in the past may not be needed to answer certain questions that need to be answered in today's libraries. So it is vital that the statistical elements are regularly reviewed and updated in order to ensure that relevant data is collected. However, as it is important that longitudinal data is available so that trends and changes can be traced over time, it is also critical that the review process takes this into account. In particular, statistical elements should not be deleted without appropriate consideration of their long-term importance. The challenge is then to keep the total number of data elements manageable whilst incorporating new

measures and maintaining sufficient data to record trends. Libraries are not all under the same authority, most of them serve specified institutions (Universities, commercial firms etc.) or communities. Other institutions may be responsible for the mission, functioning, or legal regulation of libraries in their domain. Therefore, various institutions and organizations with differing objectives may feel responsible for collecting data about the libraries within their authority. The collection of library data will always start in the individual library, but the aim should be a compilation of the data on the regional and national level. For this purpose, libraries should collaborate to form regional/national networks for library statistics in order to ensure that a national library system is running effectively.

Jonathan (2014) posits that utilization of information by any clientele is influenced by the kind of job done, profession or function one performs as perceived by the researcher. Readers' statistics is a technique that can be used in collecting, analysing and interpreting data in the library and information science profession.

As perceived by the researcher, readers' statistics is a technique that can be used in collecting, analysing and interpreting data in the library and information science profession.

Purpose of the Study

Generally, the purpose of the study is to examine the effectiveness of readers statistics towards, library service improvement in Renaissance University Library. The study specifically intended:

1. To determine the effect of readers' statistics on library service improvement in Renaissance University library.
2. To examine how readers' statistical record is being used in Renaissance university library.

3. To find out the challenges faced by library staff in taking readers' statistical records in Renaissance university library.

Research Setting

Renaissance University Ugbawka,(RNU) in Enugu State Nigeria was established and approved by the Federal Executive Council in 2005 and admitted its first set of undergraduates students in 2007. The University Library houses series of collections both print and non-print. The university was established under the Federal Government of Nigeria initiative to build human capital. Renaissance University library has organizational structure for effective operation. The organizational structure has to do with the departmentalization of the library. E.g, Administrative unit, Readers service unit, circulation unit, Reference unit Cataloguing unit etc. Renaissance university library is being headed by the University librarian who happens to be the chief administrative and academic officer in the library. The university library is the hub of academic activities of the institution. Students, staff and researches make use for learning, teaching and research and development. The library operates duties in order to ensure that users make maximum

use of the materials. The library has a great capacity to accommodate large number of students and also it has various departmental libraries servicing the students and lecturers.

Research Methodology

A case study research technique was employed to carry out this study. Case study was considered appropriate since there was need for an in-depth study of a single library's staff population. The instruments used for data collection are questionnaire, document inspection and analysis. Dangwaran (2017) is of the opinion that questionnaires is widely used and it is a useful instrument for collecting survey information, providing structured often numerical data, being able to be administered without the presence of the researcher and often comparatively straightforward. The target (population) of this study comprises of 15 library staff of Renaissance University Library. Because the population is small and manageable, the entire population was used for the study.

Results

Data collected where analysed using descriptive statistics, which consist of frequencies, percentages and degrees.

Table 1: Extent at which readers' statistics affect service improvement in the library

S/NO	Items	High Extent	Low extent
1	Planning library budget	11(78.6%)	3(21.4%)
2	Creating of more reading rooms to accommodate readers	10(71.4%)	4(28.6%)
3	New acquisition	13(92.3%)	1(7.7%)
4	It helps to improve services Being rendered in the library	9(64.6%)	5(45.4%)
5	Extension of library opening hours	2(14.2%)	12(85.8%)

Table 1 above reveals that 11(78.6%) of the respondent agreed that statistic been recorded is been used for planning the library budget in a high extent while, 3(21.4%) said it is not been used for planning the library budget. 10(71.4%) were of the opinion that the statistical records helps the library management in creating of more reading rooms to accommodate library users to a high extent, while 4(28.6%) disagreed.

13(92.3%) agreed that statistical record is used for new acquisition to a high extent while 1(7.7%) respondent said it does not.

Make the library acquire new collection. while 9(64.6%) are of the opinion that readers statistics helps to improve services being rendered in the library to a high extent, 4(15.4%) did not agree to it. 2(14.2%) respondent are of the opinion that library statistics helps extension of library hours to a

high extent, while 12(85.8) disagreed to the fact that library statistics helps the extension of library opening hours.

Table: Uses of readers' statistical records in the University library

S/NO	Items	High Extent	Low extent
1	It helps in formulating library policies	11(78.5%)	4(28.5%)
2	For effective management of the library	13(92.7%)	4(28.5%)
3	It helps in the implementation of the formulated policies	9(64.3%)	5(35.7%)
4	It makes the university management aware of the Challenges the library is facing	6(42.9%)	8(57.1%)
5	It helps to determine the adequacy of the library Services to the readers.	8(57.1%)	6(42.9%)

From table 2 above, it was deduced that 11(78.5%) of the respondents agree that statistical record helps in formulating library record to a high extent, while 4(28%) said it doesn't help in formulating library policies. 13(92.7%) indicated high extent for effective library management while 4(28.5%) disagree to the fact that statistical record helps the effective management of library. 9(64.3%) of the respondent agreed that library statistics helps in the implementation of the formulated policies, 5(35.7%) disagree that library statistics helps in the implementation of formulated policies. 6(42.9%) of the

respondent are of the opinion that library statistics makes the university management aware of the challenges the library is facing while 8(57.1%) of the respondent are of the opinion that library statistics does not make the university management aware of the challenges the library is facing. 8(57.1%) are of the opinion that library statistics helps to determine the adequacy of the library services to the readers. While 6(49.6%) disagree that readers statistics helps to determine the adequacy of the library services to the readers.

Table 3: Challenges of taking statistical records in the library

S/NO	Items	High Extent	Low extent
1	Its tiring and at times staff often forget	12(85.7%)	2(14.3%)
2	No adequate supervision and usage of the statistical Records by librarians	11(78.5%)	3(21.5%)
3	Readers often move from one reading hall to another in search of resources	10(71.4%)	4(28.6%)
4	Lack of good reading environment (readers often live before statistics is taking)	13(92.8%)	1(7.2%)

From table 3 above, it was deduced that 12(85.7%) are of the opinion that readers statistics is often tiring and sometimes the people in charge forget while 18(69.3%) disagree that tiredness and forgetfulness is not a challenge facing readers statistical record. 11(53.9%) indicated that No adequate supervision and usage of the statistical records by Librarians while 3(21.5%) disagree to no adequate supervision and usage of the statistical records by librarians. 10(71.4%) are of the

opinion that readers often move from one reading hall to another in search of resources while 4(28.6%) disagree to that fact that readers often move from one reading hall to another in search of resources. 13(92.8%) indicated that readers statistics is affected by lack of good reading environment (readers often live before statistics is taking) while 4(15.4%) disagree that readers statistical record is affected by lack of good reading environment (readers often live before statistics is taking).

Discussion of Findings

From the data gathered, the following emerged that library statistics helps in planning the library budget. This study is in line with Kumar (2019), who stated that library readers' statistics shows the strengths and weaknesses of a library in terms of resources, equipment, staff and finance. This study is also in line with Nwalo (2003) who stated that every standard library keeps a variety of statistics on routine operations and occurrences such as acquisition, cataloguing, bindery, circulation, reference services. The study also reveals reader's statistical record will help the library management in the area of creating more reading rooms to accommodate their members. This work is in line with Oluwabumi (2023) who stated that the provision of reading spaces in any meaning library is dependent on the number of potential users using or intended to use the library. From the finding, it was deduced that the study helps in acquisition of new collections in the library.

The data gathered also shows that reader's statistics is good for formulation, implementation of policies and for effective management of library service. This study is in line with Nwalo (2003), who asserted that library readers' statistics is crucial, for it ensures keeping quantitative records of operation in the library. He went further to state that every standard library keeps a variety of statistics on routine operations and occurrences such as acquisition, cataloguing, bindery, circulation, reference services. This study is in collaboration with previous researches conducted on reader's statistic. The findings of this study is acceptable because it does not contradict with the observations made before this research was empirically conducted

Conclusion

In the library and information science profession, collection of data is often seen as part of administrative duties.

Given the findings in this study, some pertinent conclusions were drawn 15 questionnaires were distributed to the staff of Renaissance university library and 14 questionnaires were completely filled and retrieved from the respondents. From the findings, it was discovered that the University is faced with some challenges. The document inspected and analysis done showed that some days in the week were missing in the statistical record book due to how tiring it appears when taking statistical records and that staff often forget. It was also discovered that no adequate supervision and usage of statistical records by the library. Readers usually move from one reading hall to the other in search of information resources by so doing it alters the statistical readers records. Lack of good reading environment is also a major factor contributing to the problems of effective readers statistics.

Recommendations

There are some recommendations that can help the staff of the university library when taken statistical records.

- The library staff should be up and doing in taking statistical record of users regularly in order to improve service delivery
- There should be thorough supervision of the processes involved in taking readers statistical and more especially, it should be put in use for effective service delivery
- The university Management through the university library should provide adequate and conducive environment for readers to allow them stay longer in the library.
- Finally, such statistics should be periodically examined and analyzed by the university librarian for further recommendation to Management for improvement in resources acquisition and service delivery.

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