Use of Statistical Records for Library Management at University of Ilorin

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Abstract

Purpose*: The study examined the use of statistical records for library management at the University of Ilorin, Kwara State.*

Design/Methodology/Approach*: The descriptive survey research design was adopted for the study. Questionnaire was used to collect data from 40 library staff (professionals & paraprofessionals). Data obtained were analyzed using frequency counts and percentages.*

Findings: *The results revealed that library statistics are used for reference analysis, selection and acquisition of information resources, planning and decision making, preparation of library budget and determining the extent of library use*

Implication: *The study admonished that statistics should be collected appropriately in order to enhance the growth and management of the library. Experts should be in charge of ZCX interpretation, compilation, analysis and distribution of statistical data.*

Originality/Value: *The study will be off help to librarians because statistics will help them to plan library operations.*

Keywords: *Library; Management; Planning; Statistics; Statistical Records*

Introduction

University libraries today are faced with numerical and statistical information. Statistical information or data can be used for several purposes. Nwalo (2001) argued that one of the best ways to determine library effectiveness is the use of library statistics. Sokoya (2002) described statistics as derived records of library use. He also emphasized that it is vital that statistical collections and processes are regularly reviewed and updated in order to ensure that they remain relevant and useable in the management of the library.

Omekwu (2010) stated that academic Libraries are critically situated in the environment of global change and transformation. Quantitative and qualitative data about library services, library use and library users are essential for revealing and confirming the outstanding value that libraries provide. Similarly, Hammed (2004) posited that library activities can be expressed in statistical form; hence librarians compile statistics for evaluating the library.

The objectives of this study are to:

i. Examine the roles of statistics in University of Ilorin library management.
ii. Identify the challenges militating against taking effective statistics at the University of Ilorin library.

Literature Review

Ogundipe and Lucas (2005) stated that data are the input raw materials from which information is produced and they are found everywhere, and no matter what one's line of work is, one will make decisions that involve data. Library activities can be expressed in statistical form too. Adetoro (2008) argued that statistics lay the foundation for further future critical interpretations and solutions to problems for the overall improvement of library operations and services. Library activities are amenable to

statistical analysis; hence libraries have been known to keep data of their operations.

Knievel, Wicht and Connaway (2006) gave some light as to why libraries and information centers show increasing interest in keeping statistical records of their operations and use. According to them, economic difficulties and strains prompted librarians to become statistical records conscious. They contended that reducing buying power of libraries makes the use of data in collection development increasing importance as difficult selection and funding decisions are more informed when they consider usage data. In response to these challenges, libraries and collection development research have relied more on statistics based models and goal programming based approaches. Libraries have shifted from spending acquisitions budgets on the basis of speculation to spending on the yardstick of demand and this could be attained when library keeps and uses data on library usage and acquisitions. Adetoro (2008) hinted that in many libraries, statistics are usually computed daily, weekly, monthly and annually about activities including traffic, registered users and materials consulted and loaned out. According to Popoola (2000), what actually keeps the library going is the keeping of proper records. For any effective planning, decision making and controlling to take place, there must be timely access to records. The wise use of data, information, and knowledge in planning, decision making, and management can effectively improve library performance.

According to Luther (2002), compiled library statistics aid selection decision and help in making case for additional library funding. Rodrignez (2008) showed how computerized library data collection development system was used to explore the use of aggregated circulation information or a combination of circulation and budget expenditure, information divided by subject area to inform collection management decisions. In the same vein, Connaway and Littman (2002) revealed that circulation analysis have been applied to a number of important issues including evaluating collection acquisition policies, funding, management decision, allocating physical space for materials, identifying materials for office storage, allocating funding for materials and suggesting approaches to deselecting.

Hiller (2002) described the obstacles of organizational structure and inadequate leadership, librarians unease with quantitative analysis, lack of good data analysis and presentation skills, and the need to develop meaningful measures as major barriers to more extensive use of statistical data in libraries. Collection for the sake of collection is no longer possible except in the most financially insulated institutions. This new approach of wise spending decision is impossible without data which are kept and maintained by libraries

Research Method

This study adopted the descriptive survey research design. Questionnaire was the instrument for data collection. Population of this study consists of all library staff at the university of Ilorin library. The entire professional librarians and paraprofessional staff in the library provided the data which comprise of 40 staff. 40 copies of questionnaire were personally distributed to the library staff of the University of Ilorin in their respective offices between 17th to 25th of April, 2015, out of which 38 were completed and retrieved, resulting in 95% response rate.

Results and Discussion

Table 1: Response rate

University of the respondents	Copies of the questionnaire administered	Number of completed and returned questionnaire	Percentage (%)
University of Ilorin	40	38	95%

From the response rate of the respondents in Table 1, it was shown that 38(95%) of the copies of questionnaire were retrieved and completed.

Table 2: Gender distribution of the respondents

Gender	No of respondents	Percentage
Male	16	42
Female	22	58
Total	**38**	**100**

Table 2 showed that 16 (42%) males and 22 (58%) females respectively constitute the gender distribution of the respondents. It is evident from the above that majority of the respondents were females.

Table 3: Marital status of respondents

Marital status	No of respondents	Percentage
Single	11	29
Married	27	71
TOTAL	38	100

Table 3 revealed that 11 (29) single and 27 (71) married respondents responded respectively. This showed that majority of the respondents were married.

Table 4: roles of statistics in library management

Roles of statistics in library management	Agree		Disagree		Undecided		Total
	No	%	No	%	No	%	%
Statistics is used for reference analysis	36	95	2	5	-	-	100
Guide selection and acquisition of library materials	33	86.8	4	10.5	1	2.6	100
Used for planning and decision-making	33	86.8	1	2.6	4	10.5	100
Preparing library budget	32	84	6	16	-	-	100
Determining the extent of library use	30	79	5	13	3	8	100
Bench-marking	27	71	9	24	2	5	100
Evaluating staff size and strength	19	50	15	39	4	11	100

Table 4 showed that library statistics is used for various managerial purposes at the University of Ilorin library. It revealed that library statistics is predominantly used for reference analysis with 36(95%) respondents as it ranked highest. In descending order, it serves as guide in the selection and acquisition of library resources with 33(86.8%) respondents, planning and decision-making with 33(86.8%) respondents, for preparing library budgeting with 32(84%) respondents, for determining the extent of library use with 30(79%) respondents and for bench marking with 27 (71) respondents. This finding is in conformity with Popoola (2000) who stated that what actually keeps the library going is the keeping of proper records. For any effective planning decision making and controlling to take place, there must be timely access to records. Similarly, Lako (2002) noted that libraries have assumed new responsibilities in a changing information world; they need new statistics for managing and promoting these new tasks. IFLA (2009) states that library statistics are necessary for the effective management of libraries, but they are still more important for promoting library services to the different types of stakeholders: policy makers and funders, library managers and staff, actual and potential users, the media and the general public. Where statistics are aimed at policy makers, managers and funders, they are essential for decisions on levels of service and future strategic planning. Library statistics can reveal a wealth of material, of hidden success stories where libraries have

opened and ensured access to relevant information for all groups of the population.

Table 5: Problems militating against taking effective statistics at the University of Ilorin Library

Roles of statistics in library management	Agree		Disagree		Undecided		Total
	No	%	No	%	No	%	%
Inappropriate collection of statistics	23	61	7	18	8	21	100
Poor statistics keeping methods	23	61	13	34	2	5	100
Inappropriate interpretation of statistical data	21	55	16	42	1	3	100
Inadequate staff	20	53	17	45	1	3	100
Lack of ICT facilities	19	50	16	42	4	11	100
Lack of trained personnel	17	45	17	45	4	11	100
Poor attitude of staff	16	42	19	50	3	8	100

Table 5 has to do with the problems militating against taking effective statistics at the University of Ilorin library. The major problems include inappropriate collection of statistics with 23(61%) respondents, poor statistics keeping methods with 23 (61%) respondents, inappropriate interpretation of statistical data with 20 (55%) respondents, inadequate staff with 20 (53%) respondents, and lack of ICT facilities in taking statistics with 19 (50%) respondents. This finding is supported by Hiller (2002) who described the obstacles of organizational structure and inadequate leadership, librarian unease with quantitative analysis, lack of good data analysis and presentation skills, and the need to develop meaningful measures as major barriers to more extensive use of statistical data in libraries. This is in line with the view of Lakos (2002) who observed that the sheer amount of data is obviously one obstacle to using it for library management, the organizational structure of many libraries, with their extensive divisional hierarchy and lengthy consultation process.

Conclusion and Recommendations

The study concludes that library statistics are used for reference analysis; guide the acquisition librarian during selection and for determining the extent of library use. However, several problems militate against taking effective statistics at the University of Ilorin library. There is the problem of poor statistics keeping method, inadequate interpretation of statistical data, inadequate staff and lack of ICT facilities in taking and keeping statistics.

The researchers provided the following recommendations:

i. ICT facilities should be provided at the University of Ilorin library in order to aid accurate taking and keeping of statistics.

ii. Qualified librarians should be employed to solve the problems militating against taking effective statistics. The university management should engage in training the staffs of the library for proper interpretation and manipulation of data.

iii. Qualified experts should be in charge of interpretation, compilation, analysis and distribution of the statistical data.

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