Repositioning the Library to Attract and Retain Clients Using Bibliometrics: An Overview

By

Kasa, M. Gabriel, Adedokun, A.R. and C. A. Danbaki

Abstract

Librarians have been under scrutiny in recent times and urged to seek measures to address the massive loss of clients who daily are distracted from particularly visiting institutional libraries, at the same time are worried on what must be done to attract new ones. To overcome the challenges, librarians are implored to explore bibliometrics and apply it on her franchise (information resources and services) to fit into the current and emerging information needs of clients. Bibliometrics as a platform is capable of attracting and retaining library clients interested on trending information issues, facilitate selection and deselection of resources acquired for client use. This becomes imperative to unravel influencing factors and the behavioral tendencies of clients during information seeking, use and needs so that the library is reposition into a better competitive, responsive and conscious information provision centre that eventually attract and retain its clients', provide access within contents and medium and aid timely additional information resources acquisitions of the libraries.

Introduction

"Bibliometrics masters the flood of information, analyse and ensure cognitive understanding by revealing numerous measurable quantitative aspects of messages contain information for the use of all who seek such information"

(Price, 1963)

Leveraging on Price submission on the role of bibliometrics, it suffices to admit that bibliometric is a vital platform that when explore by librarians shall enable them to respond to the information needs of their clients, it broadens librarians knowledge of stock and the contents of acquired information resources, the categorize fields, subject, themes and how skewed these resources are (concentration), etc. What is necessitating the exploration of new methodologies is to salvage the library from losing clients and lacking the capacity to attract new clients (Kasa, n.d). Unfortunately for the library, numerous factors are reported to be blamed, however, poor articulating of the activities of the library thwarts libraries from streamlining its activities to conform to clients dynamics (behavioural and social) and using appropriate emerging trends (technologies) to integrate its activities (Daudu & Kasa, 2014). The library is also challenged by the growth of knowledge and scientific literature, international collaboration and competition, increasing specialisation as well as growing importance of cross- and interdisciplinarity in scientific research which has now reached a stage where funding systems based on personal knowledge and evaluations by peers became more and more difficult (Millar & Senkar, 2000). Unfortunately for the libraries, no one is giving them the chance or mindful of the tasks before them.

The emergence of bibliometrics was for a discipline analysis, creating models of scientific communication and for benchmarking of knowledge (Glänzel & Schoepflin, 1994, van Raan, 1997, Weingart, 2003). It has now metamorphosed to the recognition and reflection of scientific publication behaviour, status, published results and the reception their scholarship get from their colleagues. Timeliness and respond to client information needs by librarians and services of a library is affected by the distorted behaviour of clients; patrons want immediate resource (quick time), ask specific questions and expect specialize response. This implies that for as long as the roots of

changing behaviour of patrons is not detected and addressed the problem of the libraries shall remain far from resolution.

The dilemma of the library is the distortion of its rich traditional processes of harnessing information resources which accord respect to the opinion of clients, availing them the liberty to pick from the pool of vast information resources which must be categorized according to numerous parameters like subjects, authors, types and format to meet the library clients information needs is no longer the norm. Clients expect the library and librarians in particular to determine the manner in which scientists go about choosing the problems they work on and the trending in a particular field (Debackere & Rappa, 1994, Weingart, 2005). The prediction of Garfield in 1975 that librarian shall influence choice of career and information resources has now come to fruition but the librarians are failing to take the mantle of leadership; failure to recognize this fit could be the reasons why the library is losing it clients and lacking the ideas and drive to attracting new ones. Therefore, the earlier this is done, the better.

The Concept of Bibliometrics

Bibliometrics is a branch of information science study productivity of information resources using quantitative and qualitative methods. The term "Bibliometrics" was coined by Alan Pritchard in 1969 and defined it as "the application of mathematics and statistical methods to books and other media of communication" (Sun, Wung & Ho, 2012). Researchers apply bibliometric methods to measure texts, patterns of publication within a given body of literature, determine author productivity, and describe author(s) collaboration.

Alfonzo, Sakraida and Hastings-Tolsma (2014) posited that bibliometrics offers several opportunities that support research and scholarship purposes. Bibliometrics fine tune the roles and duties of the

librarian in the twenty first century. For example, Heinze (2013) recommended that it challenge the librarian to observe accomplishments. Corrall, Kennan and Afzal (2013) reported that it facilitate librarians within an academic library to find the most published papers, and using quality indicators to calculate trend of topics and titles over time. To Amos, Mower, James, Weber, Yaffe and Youngkin (2012), bibliometric methods empower librarians to analyse publishing patterns and use of generated data to inform an institution of scholarship output to promote planning. Yao, Peng-Hui, Ma, Yao and Zhang (2013) posited that bibliometrics readily map research outcomes and the ability to effectively evaluate the impact of scholarly work by individuals and research teams. In other areas, particularly shaping career development, Ismail *et al.* (2009) reported that bibliometric methods can support job applications.

Repositioning the Library into Competiveness

Today, libraries in the academic and public dictate the survival of the communities. For instance, in tertiary institutions course accreditation, learning, teaching and research depends significantly on the performance of the library. In public domain, most members of the communities rely on the library for sensitization. These typical roles show the indispensability of the library, but like many talents, the evolution of bibliometric from a sub-discipline of LIS was dormant. The proliferation of information on the internet, easy access and the indiscriminate hosting of information on it became fierce competitor of the library. Enhancing the library competitiveness amidst these threats is possible because there are disadvantages using these platforms and is not the case with the library.

Using bibliometrics, avails the library to dig into its archives and include them into current and emerging technologies, making the library robust with the use of bibliographic databases and application

of research methods. Beyond any doubt, solidifying the competiveness of the library and transform the neglected profession to the most desired. However, this can only happen when librarians undertake research into the deficiencies of other competitors, identify the causes and effects of clients behavioral changes, their information needs that are articulated using a clear, deliberate and consciousness that is aimed at shifting the ways library operates that is detrimental to it survival in the current and emerging trends in the information service domains.

Intervening Areas Bibliometrics Can Ensure Library Competiveness in the Current and Emerging Information Service Domains

1. Bibliometric analyses can contribute to the literatures growth in specific field and discovering of related publications. The aim goes beyond the resuscitation of parameters such as self-identity of the library, the library will know its patrons information needs and be able to at any time respond specifically to these information needs because of the readily accessible platform bibliometrics methods provide for use.
2. Bibliometric delineates core publications and reveal the concentrations in others.
3. Bibliometric application is not restrictive; it is an invisible college capable of showing how information is disseminated through communication network among scholars (journals, books, conference, bulletin, etc).
4. It is found to be the most appropriate subject mapping tool that enable the librarian to surf different fields and from query from a client reveal the evolution of a disciplines over time and its bifurcation into various sub-disciplines.
5. Bibliometric assists in the development of new information retrieval methodologies (authorship, institutional, regional, global).

6. It provide tools that librarians can utilize to effectively and efficiently study information use and its impact, understand and facilitate the information seeking activities of library clients. So that using of technology to systematically assess parent institutions, clients and library literary performance can be systematically attain easily, report easy and readily articulated, interpreted and measurable using numerous veritable tools.
7. Bibliometrics can assist librarians to consciously analyze scientific publications, research the researchers by describing and evaluating all trending works and contributions to development.

Conclusion

In conclusion, the submission made shows that since the inception and domestication of emerging technologies the library has been left in a mix and unfortunately, the libraries cannot do without these technologies and requisite competences to operationalize them for as long as the library will want to end the depleting of its patronage. The library is therefore in dare need to attract and retain clients, the old traditional routines of arranging, organizing, acquisition, classifying and cataloguing is no longer popular from the clients perspectives whose attention focuses on responsive and tailored services with librarians having cognitive understanding of disciplines.

The repositioning of library goes beyond the survival of the library, it requires that the routines performed by staff must also be redefined within the confines of the traditional portfolios but operated using modern facilities and platform. Emphasis on more specific genre such as bibliometrics can provide the necessary details and areas of coverage such as subject, themes, authors, fields, key terms, ranking, currency, concentrations and trends of scholarship so as to be able to provide specific outcomes. These reconsideration are imperative to

keeping track of the patrons and resource performance, trends of disciplines and behaviour of patrons over a specified period.

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