

# **The Use of Faculty Opinion for Collection Evaluation at Redeemer's University (RUN) Library, Nigeria**

**By**

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## ***Abstract***

*The Survey research design was adopted. 70 academic staff participated in the study. Questionnaire was use for data collection. Data collected were analyzed and results summarized using charts and tables. Findings showed that majority of academic staff occasionally find relevant information materials in the collection and the information materials they find are current and sufficiently reflective of the curriculum of teaching courses at Redeemer's university (RUN) Nigeria. It showed that the collection is effective and strong in Subject, reference and virtual library but poor in physical journals collection. The study revealed that library users judge the quality of a collection by the extent to which it can meet their teaching, learning and research requirements It therefore recommended that collection development librarians should consider, in consultation with academic colleagues, what the library can and should provide, and how this balance will relate to teaching, learning and research needs of users.*

**KEYWORDS:** Use of faculty Opinion; Collection Evaluation; Collection Development; Redeemer's University Library

## **Introduction**

Developing a balanced and usable collection is an important aspect of library services in any academic institution. Academic library collection is built to meet specific research and information needs of University or institution's academic programmes. The curriculum is the frame upon which the Library collection is built. Consequently, all the programmes run by the institution have to be covered to facilitate effective teaching, learning, research and community services. Collection analysis and evaluation are crucial to ensuring efficient, effective and usable collection. Collection effectiveness according to Lumande and Ojedokun (2005) depends on the extent to which a library collection can facilitate research activities and how much students can rely on it for project and assignments. Since Pausch and Popp (1997) maintained that accountability, outcomes measurement, and assessment are the subjects of most discussions in higher education, and coupled with the fact that libraries collections consume a larger proportion of the budget, libraries have to ensure that what is collected matches or meet the expressed needs and information expectation of both lecturers and students of the university communities. One of the processes of ensuring that such needs are met is through collection evaluation within the framework of the planned curriculum of the University.

Crowder (1997) has defined curriculum as the courses or programmes of study offered by an educational institution. It is used to include all the activities which students must do if they are to finish a programme of study and achieve the intended learning goals. More often than not, Curriculum development is change-oriented in that it introduces changes with far reaching implications for institutions, teachers, and learners and for a wide range of external “clients”. Since the curriculum is not a fixed product but a dynamic process that responds to changes both in the society and in the educational institution, the library should be positioned to effectively respond to changes as dictated by the curriculum of study.

Another reason for collection evaluation is that various programmes have to be accredited by the appropriate accreditation bodies such as the Nigerian Universities Commission (NUC), Nigerian Legal Council, Nigerian Medical and Dental Association and others. This imposes more responsibilities on the library which has to ensure that the collection reflects the needs of the institutions, as well as the requirements for accreditation of programmes. Wright (2005) viewed accreditation as the vehicle to monitor the quality of education.

### **Collection Evaluation Methods**

Pastine (1996) has identified a number of methodologies in literature which have received varying acceptance and usage in academic and research libraries. Some methods rely on collecting qualitative or quantitative statistics (Credaro, 2001). Quantitative statistics involves variables such as the current number of items in the collection, number of items added or rate of growth and items available per student in comparisons to recommended lists or to similar library collections and the study of the age of the collection. On the other hand, qualitative approaches include analysis of circulation and Inter Library Lending (ILL) statistics and in-house use studies of materials. A user satisfaction survey of faculties and students which employs questionnaire or evaluation forums is another technique. This method is sometimes followed up with telephone interview with faculty (Silveria, 1996). Studies of the citations and bibliographies of customers’ publications to find out if items cited are available in the collections are also employed in collection evaluation and for the assessment of possible customer satisfaction (Pastine, 1996). Credaro (2001) has also identified three methods of evaluating library collection: survey of user opinion, which is user centered (through questionnaire or interview); the conspectus approach which involves the use of detailed set of subject descriptors, and then the cumulative approach, which combines some of the above methods of collection assessment. Credaro however, concluded that “the success of any method of assessment depends on how well it meets the goals of the evaluation”. In evaluation of multimedia resources, Lamb (2004) agreed that collection evaluation can centre on either the collection or the customer. He identified three methods: collection mapping, circulation statistics and patron survey.

There are many benefits derivable from collection evaluation. Lamb (2004) submitted that “collection evaluation helps librarians to review the strength and weaknesses of the entire collection through graphic representation” and that the “idea is to look at the quality, quantity and condition of the collection”. According to Franklin–Essex–Hamilton (1999) collection assessment or evaluation can be used in the process of budget estimates as it would be based on the actual figures or statistics resulting from a comparison of the present collection in a given subject area against the relevant course

unit. Supporting this view, Daigneault (2004) states “I divide the budget by priorities and set aside certain amounts for each area of the curriculum. I don’t try for balance; instead I try to fill curriculum needs”. He submitted that when the collection is pertinent to the curriculum, it will be used. As Pastine (1996) observed, “...an academic library’s reputation is no longer primarily based on quantity and number of volumes held but on quality of the collections along with access capabilities”. Therefore, librarians are to ensure a balance collection so that a narrow aspect of each discipline is not developed at the expense of others.

As academic library plays the role of both intermediary and adjudicator of collection purchase, faculty involvement in library resources decisions is not only common place, but essential to making these campus decisions (Atkinson, 1993). Faculty opinion of library collection is the aggregate of the individual views, attitudes and beliefs about the extent to which the collection of a library, has met the demands of the curriculum by the teaching or research staff of a University or College. The development of an academic Library collection is not just the duty of the librarian; it is a cooperative effort between Librarians and the teaching faculty. This is to avoid having a deficient collection. As Olanlokun (2005) has noted, a deficient collection can have an adverse implication on the institution. Therefore, it is imperative that the collection must be developed in such a way that it would meet the aspiration of the Library patrons. Faculty opinion of library collection as a process of evaluating collection development will assist in identifying areas of strength and weakness in the collection so, that through focused acquisition processes such gaps and inadequacies can be filled.

### **Redeemer’s University (RUN) Library**

The Redeemer’s University (RUN) Nigeria started full academic activities in September, 2005 with five hundred students for the 2005/2006 academic session at its temporary site. The university which started with three colleges – Humanities, Management and Natural Sciences opened its library to users in September, 2005 with a core collection of 6,000 volumes. The collection, a magnificent gift from the Ondo State indigenes in the US consisted largely, of recently published materials which were particularly strong in the Management Sciences. The donation was not limited to printed books; it contained a sizeable collection of non-book materials such as CD’s Diskettes, Videos and illustrated transparencies. There were also runs of back issues of journals and other serial titles. This initial collection has been added to through purchase, generous donations of unique, not easy to come by publications and reference materials.

In line with the Vision of the University to build a high technology-based institution and a paperless community, the library has sought to compliment the book resources with e-resources, particularly e-journals, full-text databases and access to remote libraries. Material collections in the Library include such resources as major dictionaries, encyclopedias, historical survey, monographs, textbooks, fiction, pamphlets, archival materials, audio and video materials, bibliographies, biographies and periodicals in various formats including print and electronic others includes, a collection of Christian books authored by renowned evangelists and great Christian leaders and a collection of books written about Nigeria and Africa (Nigeriana and Africana). Beyond the scope and content of the collection, other factors such as cost, relevance, usability and currency also determine acquisition priorities. Today, the Redeemer’s University library holds more than twelve thousand volumes.

One of the ways to ensure the effectiveness of a collection of this nature is through periodic evaluation. This study is aimed at evaluating the present collection in Redeemer's university library using teachers' opinions. The objectives of the study are: to examine how often users find relevant and current information in the collection; to determine the extent to which the Library collection is reflective of the curricular objectives of the University; to examine the effectiveness of the collection, to identify areas of weakness and strength in the collection, to determine the qualitative level of collection support for a specific academic program. This study will be significant in establishing areas which need to be targeted for special attention in future collection development process in Redeemer's University Library. It will also be useful in mapping out modality for developing a balance collection in a most cost effective way that will reflect the curricular objectives, culture and vision in private Universities in Nigeria.

### **Methodology**

The total number of academic staff available for this study is 82 spread across the colleges of Humanities, Management, and Natural sciences. This population of the available academic staff constituted the sample for the study. This is because the number of academic staff is not too large as the University is just two years old and in its first phase of academic development. Despite the fact that all members of the university community use the library, this study is targeted at academic staff (lecturers) because they are well informed of the curricular expectation and framework of the university. Besides, lecturers are in the best position to indicate if the collection is at variance with the curriculum. The data collection instrument used for this study is the user-centered questionnaire method. The questionnaire is structured to clearly identify important variables associated with academic staff assessment opinion of the existing collection in relationship to the curriculum in teaching areas. A total of 82 copies of questionnaire were distributed to respondents (academic staff). 74 were retrieved and after data sorting 70, representing 85.4% were found valid for analysis.

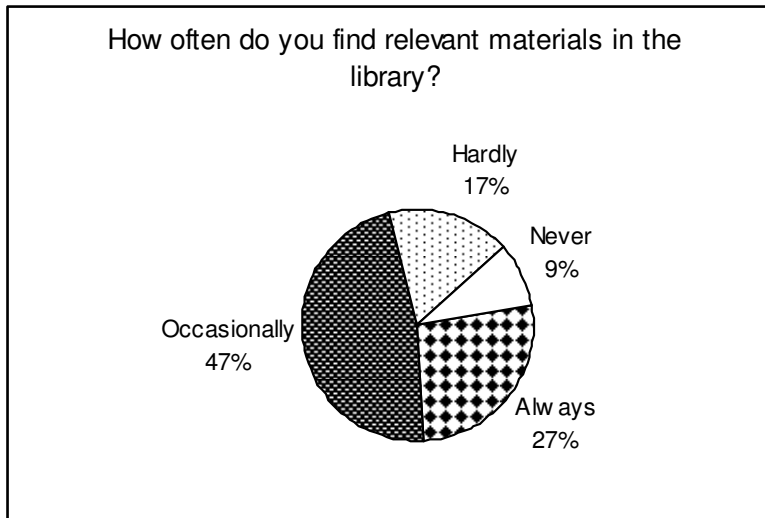
### **Results**

The findings on the use of faculty opinion for collection evaluation at redeemer's university (RUN) library, Nigeria are reported in seven main headings. These are the purpose for which respondents use RUN library, how often users find relevant materials in the library, currency of the information materials they find, respondents' opinion of the extent to which the collection is reflective of the curriculum objective of the teaching courses, the effectiveness of the collection based on the levels of study in the university and the strength of the collection in the various sections of the library. Others include respondents' opinions on the sections of the library that should be enhanced and the subject areas that should be improved upon in the next phase (6 -10 years) of academic development.

### **Purpose for using RUN Library**

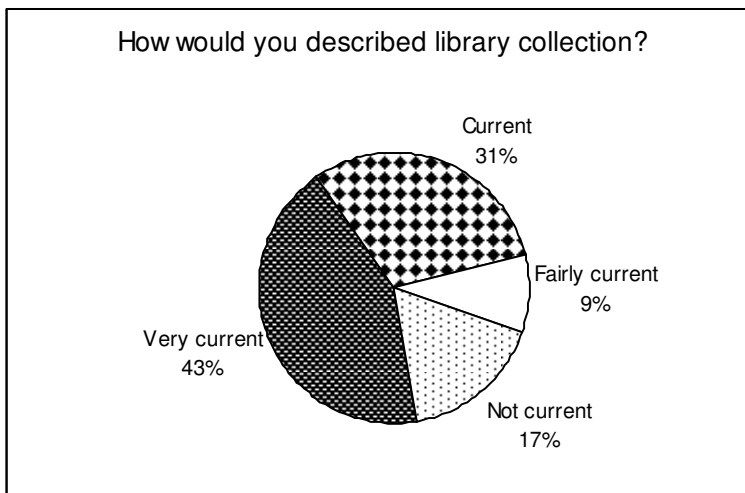
The study revealed that majority of respondents use Redeemer's University (RUN) library collection to support teaching and independent study. The reasons one can advance for this is that majority of the academic staff to whom this study is targeted at are Ph D students in other universities in Nigeria as such, would find academic library useful for teaching, studying and independent research.

**Chart 1 below shows how often respondents find relevant information materials in the library.**



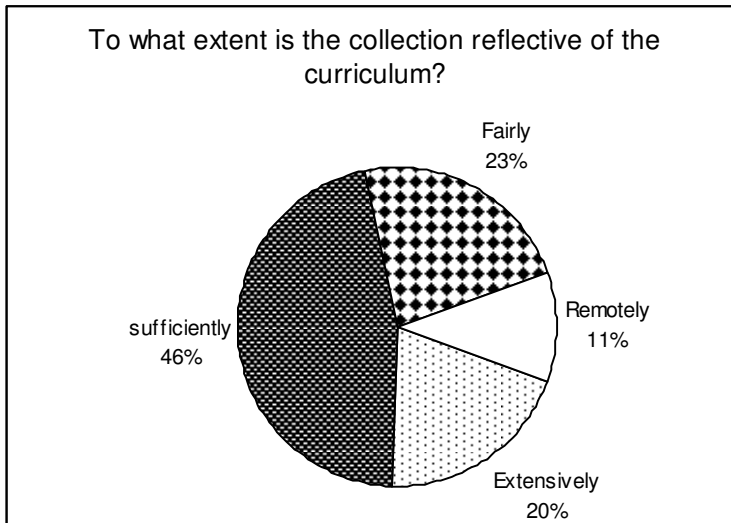
The quality of a collection reflects the image of a library. In carrying out an evaluation of a library collection, it is important to find out how often respondents find relevant materials in the collection. Findings in this study show that majority of respondents occasionally find relevant information materials in their areas of interest.

**Chart 2 reveals respondents' opinion on the currency of information materials they find in RUN library.**



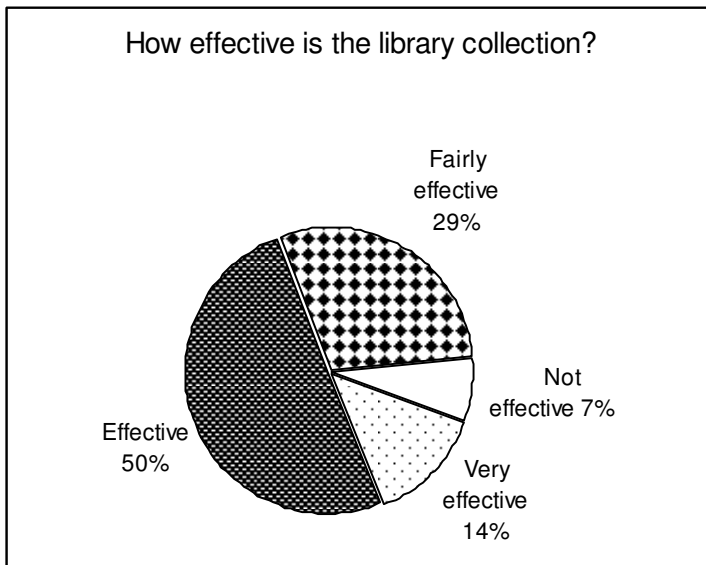
An overwhelming majority of the respondents described RUN library collection as very current.

**Chart 3 below shows respondents' opinions on the extent to which the collection is reflective of the curriculum of their teaching courses at RUN.**



Results from the chart 3 indicate that the collection is sufficiently reflective of the curriculum of respondents' teaching courses. .

**Chart 4 below reveals respondents' opinions of the effectiveness of the library collection**



Results from the chart above revealed that majority of respondents, hold the opinion that RUN library collection is effective in meeting their information needs.

The table below shows respondents' opinions of the strength of RUN library collection

	<b>Excellent</b>	<b>Good</b>	<b>Fair</b>	<b>Poor</b>
<b>Subject library collection</b>	(31%)	(50%)	(13%)	(6%)
<b>Serials collection</b>	(3%)	(20%)	(27%)	(50%)
<b>Reference collection</b>	(36%)	(44%)	(9%)	(11%)
<b>Virtual Library</b>	(6%)	(43%)	(33%)	(18%)
<b>Total</b>	<b>(19%)</b>	<b>(40%)</b>	<b>(20%)</b>	<b>(21%)</b>

Distribution of respondents as revealed in the table above shows respondents' opinion of the strength of the library collection in meeting their information needs at Redeemer's University (RUN). The table indicates that the collection is good and excellent in subject, reference and virtual library but poor in serials collection.

#### **Subject areas that should be improved upon**

Majority of the respondent commented that their subject areas should be improved upon. They also commented that the library should acquire more of Nigerian local publications as over 90% of the books are foreign publications. The dominant reasons advanced include: Nigerian books are easier to understand, studies in the university has not reached such an advance level where students would appreciate highly advanced foreign text books. Another major reason is that most advanced foreign books project foreign environment.

#### **Discussion**

Findings showed that majority of academic staff occasionally find relevant information materials in the collection. It revealed that the information materials they find are current and sufficiently reflective of the curriculum of teaching courses in the university. The study showed that based on the levels of studies at Redeemer's university, the collection is effective and strong in subject (reader's service section), reference section and virtual library but poor in physical serials collection. Since the library was set up primarily to acquire, organize and make accessible to the users, within the quickest possible time all forms of information materials required, the fact that majority of academic staff occasionally find relevant information materials in RUN library has implications for RUN library to intensify library use education and information literacy programme in order to get the users familiar with the collection. Even though Redeemer's university library subscribes to electronic journal, this study has established that collection of serials in physical format is very important and should be improved upon.

#### **Conclusion**

Universities worldwide are mandated to extend the frontiers of knowledge through research, dissemination of knowledge through teaching and involvement in and contribution to the application of specialized knowledge through public service. For these mandates to be accomplished, the university library has an important role to play. The library is to serve as a gateway to the latest information resources needed by the university staff and students irrespective of location, and enhance learning, teaching and

research in prompt, cost-effective and painless manner. This can be achieved if the library collection is not at variance with the curriculum of study. One of the ways to ensure that the collection is not at variance with the curriculum is by seeking the views of faculty staff about the collection through regular assessment of faculty opinion about library collection and services. Collection building as it concerns the library needs to be clearly understood. Much talk about collection development, especially in developing countries, focuses on input rather than output which is why libraries achieved little even with so much input. Further enquiry showed that most libraries are committed to meticulous observance of the rules, rather than provision of a quality or an appreciation of their services by the people served. But usable library collection is known by the outcomes. Moreover, studies have shown that collection efficiency and effectiveness depends on the extent to which it can facilitate research activities and how much students can rely on it for project and assignment. Osborne (1999) has defined efficiency and effectiveness as bringing greater output per unit input and ensuring qualitative provision of services needed and meeting those needs well. The goal of effectiveness requires responsiveness to clients, for which collection and staff should be committed and motivated.

The importance of collection and curriculum evaluation is to ensure that users' needs are met as much as possible. This study has been able to pull the target users of Redeemers' University (RUN) library out of their shells and articulated their opinions and interest about the Library collection. It has shown that the opinions of academic staff are needed in identifying and meeting their expectations. Since meeting users' expectations is a great way of encouraging them to use the library, this study recommends that collection development librarians in Nigerian universities should consider, in consultation with academic colleagues, what the library can and should provide, and how this balance will relate to teaching, learning and research needs of users. Efforts should be made to carry along library users, especially academic staff in collection analysis and evaluation. Even though university libraries subscribes to databases with e-journals, this study has established that collection of serials in physical format is very important and should be improved upon to complement e-journals.

The position held in this study suggests that library users judge the quality of a collection by the extent to which it can meet their teaching, learning and research requirements. This judgment might become even more critical in an environment where they do not have any means of expressing their opinions on the direction to which the collection should be developed. A high rate of failure to find relevant information in the collection should be an indication of the mismatch in the process to satisfy curricular objectives. This mismatch can easily be identified by seeking the opinions of the users especially the faculty teaching staff who understand the philosophical framework, or educational ideology, which is adopted during the curriculum development process. If Nigerian academic libraries must be seen to be relevant to their communities for which they are established, they must ensure that their collections are not at variance with the curriculum of studies. One of the ways to accomplish this is to seek the opinion of users in developing and evaluating the collections as this will also help to determine why they do and do not use the libraries.



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