真人圖書館服務績效分析:以新北市真人館藏發展為例

Performance Assessment of Human Library: A Case Study of New Taipei City Human Library

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【摘要 Abstract】

現今圖書館已不再只是典藏文獻的地方。 "圖書館可以借書外,也可以借人",這是新北市真人圖書館的口號,也代表圖書館發展的一個嶄新方向。本研究通過分析新北市真人圖書館館藏及流通服務之統計數據,找出真人圖書館之服務特徵和發展趨勢,藉此評估真人圖書館之績效表現,並根據所得結果,提出改進建議。本研究完成績效分析,得出如下三項主要成果:(一)真人圖書數量不多且主題較為單一,建議未來可納入多元性的社會議題;(二)真人圖書的借閱量大致呈現成長趨勢,建議未來可結合外展活動增加宣

傳;(三)量化指標未能全面反映真人圖書館之服務積效,建議未來評估應加上質化指標。由於新北市真人圖書館是臺灣首座成立之公共真人圖書館,期許本研究探討結果可提供國內公共圖書館未來發展此項服務之參考。

Nowadays, library is no longer just a place where documents are archived. "Books, as well as people, can be borrowed from library" is the slogan of the New Taipei City Human Library, it also represents a new direction for the development of future library. Using the statistics of collections and circulation services of the New Taipei City Human Libraries, this study critically examined its development trends, services characteristics, and performance. Eventually, recommendations for improvement were suggested. Important findings of this study are as follows: (1) The collection of human books is small and the themes are not diversified; the library is suggested to cover more current issues in the collection; (2) The circulation of human books generally is in an increasing trend; the library is recommended to increase its publicity by outreaching activities; (3) Quantitative metrics are not sufficient to reflect the performance of human library; qualitative metrics are also required for evaluating its performance. Because the New Taipei City Human Library is the first public human library in Taiwan, this study may cast light on the future development of public libraries in this country.

【關鍵詞 Keywords】

真人圖書館、真人圖書、服務績效、圖書借閱量、績效分析、績效 比率

Human library; Human book; Performance analysis; Library circulation; Efficiency ratio

壹、緒論

傳統上,圖書館被理解為一個有形的建築物,裡面存放著大量文獻,供讀者瀏覽和閱讀(Bonnand & Donahue, 2000)。從人類歷史中第一個圖書館—亞述巴尼拔圖書館(Library of Ashurbanipal)到現今世界最大館藏量的美國國會圖書館(The Library of Congress),這個理解,一直沒有改變。然而,隨著人類文明走向多樣化,圖書館的典藏已不再局限於文獻,還包括其他承傳文明、支援教育、分享知識的影音資料、物件、甚至真人,而真人圖書館(human library)就是典藏真人圖書的地方(Zhai, Zhao & Wang, 2012)。

真人圖書館沿用與傳統圖書館相似的概念,創建及收集一系列的"真人圖書"(human book)供讀者"借閱",而眾多真人圖書的標題挑戰著人類生活中的各種偏見(Groyecka et al., 2019)。通過定期舉辦真人圖書館活動(相當於圖書借閱),到場者(亦即讀者)可以選擇有興趣的主題與真人圖書進行對話(Abergel et al., 2005)。

真人圖書館為人們提供了一種既安全且方便的方式來探索社區和生活,並了解偏見是如何影響他人與周遭環境(Dobreski & Huang, 2016)。真人圖書館鼓勵真人圖書和讀者通過相互尊重的對話來討論他們之間的共同點和不同點,藉此挑戰讀者已經存在的假想和偏執(Amudha et al., 2019)。真人圖書館活動讓讀者可以提出他們害怕或心存疑問的問題,從而彼此瞭解以及消除偏見,建立正面的態度和行為(Goebel, 2015)。

另一方面,真人圖書館作為一個公共服務機構,它必須面向社會大眾,並對社會負責。因此,在公共資源必須有效分配的前題下,真人圖書館需要通過展示其服務績效來證明自己存在的合理性(Van Dooren et al., 2015)。再者,社會大眾亦有權瞭解真人圖書館的使用情形和服務績效,並在營運過程中提出寶貴意見。這是一個良性互動,源自於更廣義的監管公共部門的公民運動(Gianakis,

2002)。公共部門的主管使用清楚明確的標準去衡量工作成果,並根據衡量的結果進行工作目標和策略修正,這就是績效管理(performance management)的基本理念(Bouckaert & Peters, 2002)。誠如 Wholey(1999,頁 288)指出,"為了能夠對持份者和公眾負責,管理者需要使用系統中的績效資訊來管理他們的機構和項目,以展現成效或是改進表現,作為支持資源分配和其他政策性之決策依據(Managers … use performance information in systems for managing their agencies and programs, in accountability to stakeholders and the public, to demonstrate effective or improved performance and to support resource allocation and other policy decision making)"。換言之,公共服務機構需要透過績效分析,找出有關績效表現的客觀資訊,從而幫助管理者改進決策。

有鑑於此,本研究以新北市真人圖書館為例,根據新北市真人 圖書館的館藏和流通服務之統計資料,進行真人圖書館服務的績效 分析。具體的研究目標有三:

- (一)找出真人圖書館之服務特徵和發展趨勢。
- (二)評估真人圖書館之績效表現。
- (三)基於以上研究結果,提出改進建議。

本文對於圖書館學研究有兩個貢獻。其一,由於新北市真人圖書館是臺灣首座成立之真人圖書館,因此研究新北市真人圖書館, 對於臺灣圖書館發展有極大意義。其二,新北市真人圖書館是亞洲 區內唯一發展真人圖書活動的公共圖書館,有別於世界絕大部份的 真人圖書館皆為私立或非營利機構,研究新北市真人圖書館的服務 績效對於如何發展公共圖書館具有參考價值。

貳、真人圖書館發展背景與概況

一、真人圖書館運動和新北市真人圖書館

真人圖書館是一個新興的國際運動,它起緣於丹麥人羅尼·艾柏格(Ronni Abergel)在 1993年成立的「停止暴力(Stop the

Violence)」組織。這個組織提倡"通過對話消除偏見,互相溝通、停止暴力";自成立後,發展迅速,短短幾年間就有超過3萬人加入(中華民國身心障礙聯盟,2021; Aacharya, 2021; Human Library, 2021b)。

2000 年丹麥羅斯克爾德音樂節(Roskilde Festival)籌備委員會邀請「停止暴力」組織在音樂節期間舉行真人圖書館。在長達 4 天 (每天 8 小時)的音樂節,「停止暴力」組織舉辦了超過 50 個不同主題的真人圖書活動,總計超過 1000 名讀者參與。多樣化的真人圖書為讀者帶來深刻的體驗,無論對組織者、真人圖書。圖書館員和讀者,都帶來極大的震驚,亦成功地顛覆社會對於圖書館的刻板印象。 艾柏格在音樂節後,以非政府組織(Non-Governmental Organization, NGO)的型式創立"真人圖書館",真人圖書館便由此誕生(中華民國身心障礙聯盟,2021; Human Library, 2021b;新北市真人圖書館,2021)。

丹麥真人圖書館的成功引起了巨大的迴響和共鳴。2003 年,歐洲委員會成為開發和推廣真人圖書館計劃的支持者。歐盟委員會向不同階層的政策制定者推薦真人圖書館作為整合社會的實踐方式,並鼓勵歐盟成員國支持在本地組織真人圖書館並舉辦相關的活動(Bagci & Blazhenkova, 2020)。目前全世界已有80多個國家建立了真人圖書館(Human Library, 2021c)。

在臺灣,新北市立圖書館於 2014 年成立了新北市真人圖書館。 打著 "圖書館可以借書外,也可以借人"的口號,新北市真人圖書 館邀請不同領域、背景和生命經驗的人化身為真人圖書,讓讀者能 認識不同社會文化背景的人(新北市真人圖書館,2021)。新北市 真人圖書館安排由真人圖書主持的閱讀活動,為讀者提供一個沒有 壓力的場域,可以充分的與真人圖書直接對話,坦誠交流。現代人 越來越習慣網路上的虛擬生活,人與人之間的交流卻變得越來越疏 離;真人圖書和讀者的面對面接觸,有助於建立人際經驗交流的溝 通和分享平台(新北市真人圖書館,2021)。

二、新北市真人圖書館的實施作法

要借閱新北市真人圖書館的真人圖書,讀者必需至少於一週前預約。方法是填寫網上申請表單(圖1),報上心儀的真人圖書和讀書的相關資料便可。成功預約後,讀者可於當日持借閱證到圖書館閱。如果讀者是 12 歲或以下,則需由家長陪同方能借閱。每人每次限借一本真人圖書,每本真人圖書最多可以容許十分同時借閱。每次借閱時間以 30 分鐘為限,必要時可以延長至 45 分鐘,但真人圖書有權隨時終止借閱。若無其他人預約,在真人圖書館內進行,真人圖書館不提供外借服務。真人圖書的內進行,真人圖書館若發現交流過程與討論議題書任閱規則,館方有停止真人圖書服務的權利。真人圖書借閱規則,館方有停止真人圖書服務的權利。真人圖書借閱規則,館方有停止真人圖書服務的權利。真人圖書借閱之完, 其人圖書館服務性質,若借閱者之言行侵犯真人圖書之隱私或超真人圖書所訂定之交流範疇,真人圖書有權拒絕回答提問(新起真人圖書館,2021)。

讀者閱讀真人圖書時,必須遵守相關之四大守則(新北市真人 圖書館,2021):

- (一) 勿"以貌取書",不應帶著有色眼鏡去借閱真人圖書。
- (二)以開放的心去閱讀真人圖書,用真誠的態度去聆聽、對 話和交流。
- (三)讀者可以盡情發問並分享個人觀點,但必須保持對真人 圖書的尊重與禮貌。

(四) 除非獲得真人圖書之允許,不能錄音或攝影。

直人圖書借閱預約

請填寫以下資料後,本館會盡快與您連絡, 若您有任何問題,請電洽(02)2996-3841#22 林先生,或寄信至 cad2170003@ntpc.gov.tw

【個人資料蒐集告知聲明】

新北市立圖書館(以下簡稱本館)依據「圖書館 法」提供各項服務,依個人資料保護法(以下簡 稱個資法)第8條規定,公告下列事項,請詳 閱。

一、蒐集之目的:

適用於您與本館洽辦圖書館相關業務、使用圖書 館服務及參與活動所涉及個人資料蒐集、處理與 利用行為。

二、蒐集之個人資料類別:

您於本館相關申請表內容之文件所填載或與本館 往來期間所產生屬於個資法第2 條所定義之 「個人資料」。

- 三、個人資料利用之期間、地區、對象及方式: (一)期間:個人資料蒐集之特定目的存續期 間、依相關法令或契約約定資料之保存所訂保存 年限(如:檔案法等)或本館因執行公務所必須
- (二)地區:臺灣地區。
- 之保存期間。 (三) 對象:
 - 1. 新北市政府及其所屬機關。
 - 2. 配合依法調查之機關。
- 3. 配合主管機關依職權或職務需要之調查 或使用。
- 4. 基於善意相信揭露個人資料為法律所必 需。
 - 5. 您於本館網站或依本館所指定網站所
- 為,已違反網站服務條款,損害本館或他人權
- 益,本館揭露個人資料係為採取法律行為所必要 者。
 - 6. 有利於您的權益。
 - 7. 經您的書面同意。
- 8. 基於委外契約關係,本館依約履行提供 個人資料義務。(本館委託他人處理事務之項目 包括預約通知、催還通知及其他與圖書館權利義 務履行有關之各種表單製作、寄發等作業。) (四)方式:以自動化機器或其他非自動化之利 用方式。

- 四、依據個資法第三條規定,您得以書面或致電 本館保有您的個人資料得行使下列權利:
- (一)得向本館查詢、請求閱覽或請求製給複製 本,而本館依法得酌收必要成本費用。
- (二)得向本館請求補充或更正,惟依法您應為 適當之釋明。
- (三)得向本館請求停止蒐集、處理或利用及請 求刪除,惟依法本館因執行業務所必須者,得不 依您的請求為之。
- 五、您得自由選擇是否提供相關個人資料: 您得自由選擇是否提供相關個人資料,惟您若拒 絕提供相關個人資料,本館將無法進行必要之審 核及處理作業,致無法提供您相關服務。

六、本館保留隨時修改本同意書規範之權利,本 館將於修改規範時,於本館網頁(站)公告修改之 事實,不另作個別通知。如果您不同意修改的內 容,請勿繼續接受本服務。否則將視為您已同意 並接受本同意書該等增訂或修改內容之拘束。

姓名*
電話*
信箱*
借閱證號*
要借閱的真人圖書姓名*
同行人數(含自己)* O 1~3人 O 3人以上(最多10人為上限)
希望借閱日期 * MM DD YYYY / /
希望借閱的時間 *

圖 1 新北市真人圖書館網上申請表單

資料來源:新北市真人圖書館(2021)。新北市真人圖書館。取自 https://activity2.library.ntpc.net.tw/index.html#video

下午

叁、研究設計

理論上,評估圖書館的服務績效時,需同時考慮「輸入」圖書館投入之各項資源(input)和「輸出」之各項服務(output)(盧秀莉,2005; Poll, 2003; Crawford & McGuigan, 2011; Van Dooren et al., 2015)。然而,由於圖書館的投入多涉及內部機密和財政數據,除非是內部人員,外人一般難以獲得。因此,現今大多數對於圖書館績效的研究都集中於分析產出數據。

關於圖書館輸出評估的研究,影響最深遠的應該是由美國公共圖書館學會所編製的一系列著作,其中包括《公共圖書館輸出評量手冊(Output Measures for Public Libraries)》(Zweizig & Rodger, 1982)以及《以實用方法量度公共圖書館績效表現(Measuring Academic Library Performance: A Practical Approach)》(Van House, Weil & McClure, 1990),其中衡量圖書館績效表現的常用指標,包括圖書借閱冊數、活動參加人數、參考問題回答題數等。

臺灣圖書館的績效研究起步較晚,其研究對象亦以公共圖書館為主(例如:王珮玲,2001;應立志、黃長永,2006;柯皓仁,2014)。新北市真人圖書館自 2014年成立至今,雖已歷經八載,然而多屬服務內容介紹,進行服務績效評估之探討較為缺乏。

(一)圖書館之館藏(即新北市真人圖書館館藏之真人圖書)。

- (二)活躍的圖書數量(即曾經被借閱一次或以上之真人圖書)。
- (三) 圖書借閱次數(即真人圖書之借閱量)。
- (四)讀者數量(即借閱真人圖書之實際參與讀者人數)。

這些數據,本身就是常用於衡量圖書館績效的單項指標(Zweizig & Rodger, 1982; Van House, Weil & McClure, 1990)。通過組合這些單項指標,本研究進一步為真人圖書館服務績效釐訂三個複合指標,說明如下:

- (一)圖書借閱次數/活躍真人圖書:此比率反映平均一本活躍 真人圖書會被借出多少次,是書籍流通(circulation)情 況的指標。
- (二)圖書讀者數量/活躍真人圖書:此比率反映平均一本活躍 真人圖書會有多少個讀者,是真人圖書的效能 (efficiency)指標。
- (三)圖書讀者數量/圖書借閱次數:此比率反映平均一次真人 圖書借閱次數會有多少個讀者,是圖書借閱量的效能指標。

本研究藉由前述總計七項指標分析真人圖書館之服務績效,除了可觀察真人圖書館之發展趨勢和服務特徵,亦可評估真人圖書館的成效表現。最後,本研究亦於2021年12月透過網路會議方式,訪問新北市真人圖書館的負責人員,聽取真人圖書館之的業務現況說明,以對照、查證及補充數據分析之結果。

肆、研究結果分析

一、真人圖書館之館藏

截至 2021 年 12 月,新北市真人圖書館館藏共有 87 本真人圖書 (即藏書量),但根據真人圖書館借閱次數之統計資料,2014-2021 屬於活躍真人圖書(即曾經被借閱一次或以上之真人圖書)只有 51 本。這 51 本真人圖書,以性別劃分,男 27 人,女 23 人,和夫妻 1 對。以真人圖書參考標題來劃分,由多至少,與職業或專業相關者有 23 項 (包括:學者專家、社工師、特教宣導師、藝術家、建築師、程式設計師、劇場演員、關懷志工、創業家),特殊經歷者 17 項 (包括:生命鬥士、旅遊探險家、個案輔導者、生涯規劃者、政治受難者),創作者 5 項 (不同領域的作家),教師 4 項,與閱讀有關者 2 項。真人圖書與實體書或電子書不同,他們不是永遠典藏於圖書館中。隨著時間推演,部分真人圖書會退出,也有新的真人圖書加入。新北市真人圖書館的大部分真人圖書活躍期都不長,平均為 2.92 年;活躍期 1-2 年共 25 人,其次為 3-4 年有 15 人,最長活躍期為 7-8 年,只有 3 人。在活躍期間,大多數真人圖書的借出次數僅為 1-4 次,平均為 3.1 次,只有一本真人圖書借出 13 次以上(表 1)。

表 1 新北市真人圖書館的活躍真人圖書概況 (N=51)

項目		次數
性別	男	27
	女	23
	夫妻	1
參考標題	專業或職業	23
	特殊經歷	17
	創作	5
	教育	4
	閱讀	2
活躍期	1-2 年	25
	3-4 年	15
	5-6 年	8
	7-8 年	3
活躍期間借出次數	1-4 次	41
	5-8 次	9
	9-12 次	0
	13 次以上	1

二、真人圖書館的產出特徵和趨勢

通過這 51 本真人圖書,新北市真人圖書館自 2014 至 2021 年總共舉辦了 158 次圖書借閱,總讀者人數為 719 人。圖 2 顯示自 2014 至 2021 年新北市真人圖書館歷年之活躍真人圖書數量、圖書借閱數量和相應讀者人數。自 2014 年新北市真人圖書館成立至 2019 年,活躍真人圖書的數量和圖書借閱的數量都穩步上升。2014 年只有 12 本真人圖書被借出,增加至 2019 年之 20 本,總增幅 66.67%。由於部分比較受讀者歡迎的真人圖書會重複被借出,所以圖書借閱的數量會大於活躍真人圖書的數量;2014 年有 14 次圖書借閱數量,到了 2019 年則有 28 次,總增幅達到 100%。但到了 2020 年,由於新冠疫情爆發,政府實施一系列的防疫措施,對真人圖書館的借閱造成影響,活躍真人圖書的數量和圖書借閱的數量都大幅滑落,其水平甚至低於 2014 開館之時。讀者人數的年度變化亦相類似,自 2014 年底69 人上升至 2019 年 123 人,旋於 2020 年急劇下降;但不同之處是讀者人數的高峰值出現於 2017 年,這是因為該年有數次大型的圖書借閱活動,最大型一次有讀者 52 人。

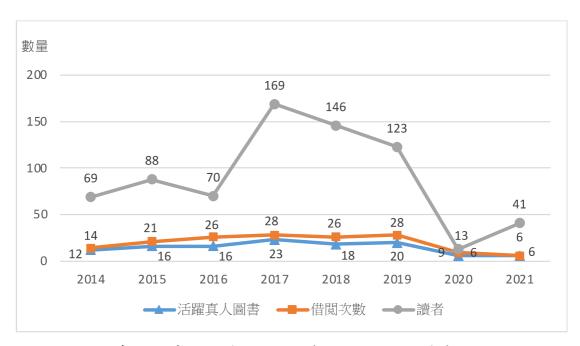


圖 2 新北市真人圖書館歷年之產出 (2014 至 2021 年)

圖 3 顯示自 2014 至 2021 年新北市真人圖書館不同月份之總產出。整體來說,新北市真人圖書館下半年的產出比上半年為高。不同月份之活躍真人圖書和圖書借閱數量的月際變化相對平穩,讀者人數則有較大幅度變化。自 2014 至 2021 年,不同月份的活躍真人圖書數目分布於 5-17 本,而圖書借閱次數介乎 5-21 次,讀者人數則介乎于 8-108 人。特別一提的是讀者人數似乎受寒假和暑假的影響,2-3 月和 7-8 月的讀者人數出現明顯下降。反觀一般書籍,其借閱率最高是暑假期間,其次是 2-3 月(新北市文化局,2018)。由於真人圖書和一般圖書之借閱數量變化並不一致,可知兩種圖書的讀者群並不重疊。

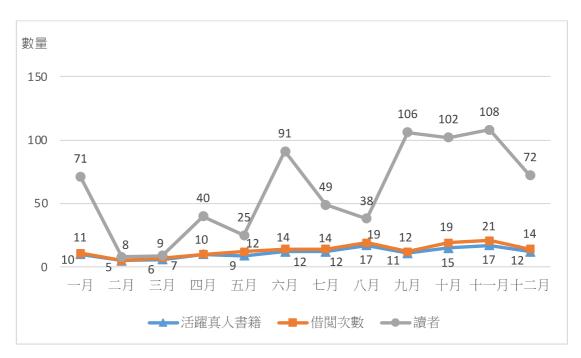


圖 3 新北市真人圖書館不同月份之總產出 (2014至 2021年)

圖4顯示自2014至2021年新北市真人圖書館產出之一週變化。整體而言,星期六和星期日的產出明顯比平日為高。相對讀者人數,活躍真人圖書和圖書借閱數量在平日變化比較平穩。自2014至2021年,平日的活躍真人圖書數目介乎7-15本,圖書借閱次數介乎8-23次,而讀者人數介乎27-158人。到了星期六或星期日,活躍真人圖書數目、圖書借閱數量和讀者人數都會增大4-6倍不等。真人圖書館負責人表示,因為真人圖書大多數有工作在身,所以能在星期

六及日實現借閱的可能性會較高。值得一提的是,星期六的產出要 比星期日高,而星期三的產出又比其他平日為高。

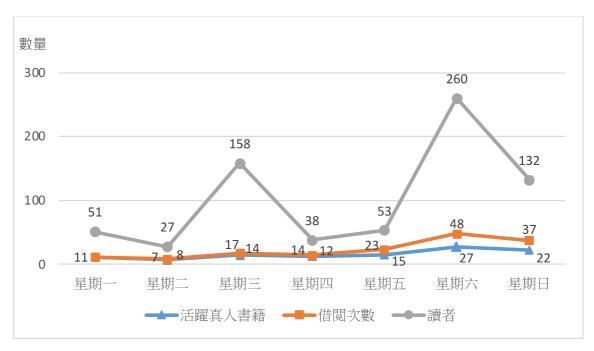


圖 4 新北市真人圖書館一週之產出 (2014 至 2021 年)

三、績效比率指標

本研究衡量真人圖書館績效比率的指標,如前述研究設計說明,以圖書借閱次數/活躍真人圖書,反映活躍真人圖書流通情況;以圖書讀者數量/活躍真人圖書,反映活躍真人圖書平均有多少位讀者;最後是圖書讀者數量/圖書借閱次數,反映真人圖書借閱次數平均有多少個讀者。

在反映活躍真人圖書流通情況,分析新北市真人圖書館 2014-2021 年借閱次數與活躍真人圖書之比率(圖 5)。可知真人圖書的流通量並不高,年度變化亦不大。一本真人圖書同一年借出少於兩次,平均是 1.36 次。

真人圖書館服務績效分析:以新北市真人館藏發展為例 / 黃鳳媚、林巧敏

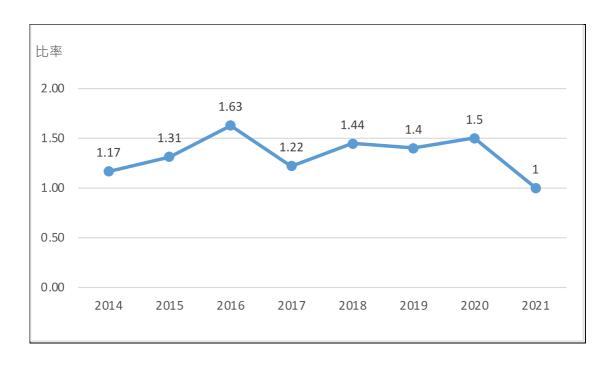


圖 5 歷年之圖書借閱次數與活躍真人圖書比率 (2014至 2021年)

以圖書讀者數量/活躍真人圖書,是從讀者的角度分析圖書讀者數量與活躍真人圖書比率,顯示新北市真人圖書館的效能亦不高。 一本真人圖書一年的讀者人數介乎於 2.17-8.11 人,平均 5.78 人(圖6)。

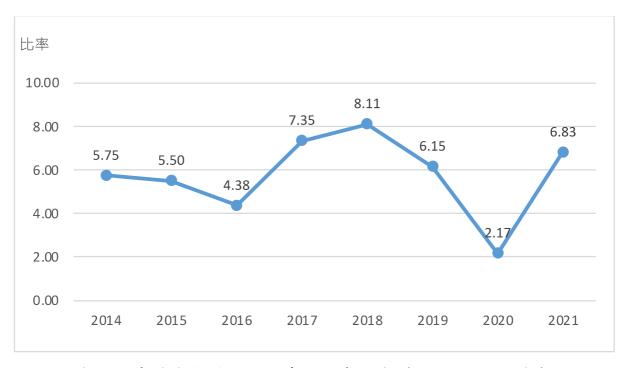


圖 6 歷年之圖書讀者數量與活躍真人圖書比率 (2014至 2021年)

進一步以圖書讀者數量/圖書借閱次數之比率呈現真人圖書館的服務績效,可知一次圖書借閱的讀者人數介乎於 1.44-6.83 人(圖7),平均 4.52 人。雖然目前根據真人圖書館的規定,每本真人圖書最多可以容許十人同時借閱,但或許未來可以考量容納更多讀者同時借閱真人圖書。

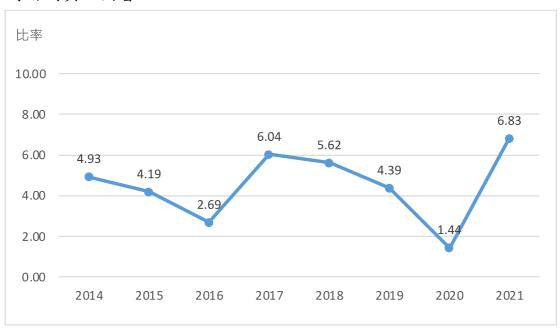


圖 7 歷年之圖書讀者數量與圖書借閱次數比率 (2014至 2021年)

伍、討論及結論

一、真人圖書館之館藏

新北市真人圖書館在建立和營運館藏時,主要面對兩個困難。 其一為真人圖書有別於一般書籍或其他實體館藏,真人圖書有自己 的生活和工作,他們化身成為真人圖書可以被理解是一種志工活動, 所以他們的參與度會受到很多外在條件所限制。真人圖書館負責人 表示,處理真人圖書的行政量很大,特別是在預約借閱真人圖書方 面,為了媒合真人圖書及讀者就要花上很長的時間。因此,新北市 真人圖書館館藏的真人圖書數量並不多(活躍真人圖書為51項), 真人圖書借出次數亦不多(平均3.1次),流失量也大(活躍期平均 只有2.9年)。其二,新北市真人圖書館因為是公立圖書館,所以比 國外的私立真人圖書館所受到的規範大得多,因此新北市真人圖書 的參考標題比較集中於中性和大眾趣味方面(例如:職業、特殊經歷)。相反,國外真人圖書館從"停止暴力"或"消除偏見"入手,可以自由地選擇一些具爭議性的真人圖書(Human Library, 2021a)。南康乃狄克州立大學(2020)列出真人圖書館的圖書範疇,當中不乏爭議性的議題,例如受害者範疇有虐待、強姦、仇恨犯罪、亂倫的受害者等;種族範疇有白人、黑人、亞洲人、索馬利人、羅姆人、土著等;宗教範疇有不可知論、佛教、基督教、天主教、印度教、猶太教、穆斯林等,代表真人圖書內容議題非常多元。而新北市真人圖書館負責人表示,真人圖書館有意將真人圖書數量增至 100 本,對於未來可能新增的真人圖書數量,本研究建議可以參考國外經驗,考量納入社會關注的多元議題,以加強館藏的廣度和多樣性,藉此擴大讀者群,並能更大程度達到消除人際藩籬和偏見的目標。

二、真人圖書館之發展

三、真人圖書館之績效

純粹就數字而言,新北市真人圖書館的借閱績效顯然低於一般的圖書館。就以新北市立圖書館來做一個簡單比較,2018 新北市立圖書館藏書量 約713 萬冊,借閱數約1,055 萬(冊/件),讀者人數約398 萬人(新北市文化局,2018)。反觀新北市真人圖書館,營運8年,真人圖書藏書量87項(但活躍圖書只有51項),借閱次數為158次,總讀者人數只有719人,兩者相差甚遠。其他績效比率也顯示,新北市真人圖書館的流通量、真人圖書的效能和圖書借閱量的效能皆有待提升。儘管如此,真人圖書館和傳統圖書館,無論目標和服務都有很大的差別。傳統圖書館旨在滿足讀者的閱讀需求,是單向的溝通;但真人圖書館著重人與人的接觸,讓讀者認識不同社會文化背景的人,其溝通是雙向和互動。由於不同的圖書館有不同的讀者,評估方式亦應有差異(Goodwill, 1988),所以衝量真人圖書館積效時,除了量化指標,更需要有質化指標去瞭解借閱真人圖書的讀者對於此服務的感受和意見,才能得到合理的評估結果。

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Performance Assessment of Human Library: A Case Study of New Taipei City Human Library

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Abstract

Nowadays, library is no longer just a place where documents are archived. "Books, as well as people, can be borrowed from library" is the slogan of the New Taipei City Human Library, it also represents a new direction for the development of future library. Using the statistics of collections and circulation services of the New Taipei City Human Libraries, this study critically examined its development trends, services characteristics, and performance. Eventually, recommendations for improvement were suggested. Important findings of this study are as follows: (1) The collection of human books is small and the themes are not diversified; the library is suggested to cover more current issues in the collection; (2) The circulation of human books generally is in an increasing trend; the library is recommended to increase its publicity by outreaching activities; (3) Quantitative metrics are not sufficient to reflect the

Performance Assessment of Human Library: A Case Study of New Taipei City Human Library / Wong & Lin

performance of human library; qualitative metrics are also required for evaluating its performance. Because the New Taipei City Human Library is the first public human library in Taiwan, this study may cast light on the future development of public libraries in this country.

Keywords: Human library; Human book; Performance analysis; Library circulation; Efficiency ratio

SUMMARY

Introduction

In this modern world, the library collection is no longer limited to literature, but also includes other items which can transmit civilization, support education, and share knowledge. That may include audio-visual materials, objects, and even real people. A human library is a place where real active people (i.e., human books) are collected.

Human library adopts a similar concept to the traditional library, creating and collecting a series of human life books for readers to check out. Through dialogues with real people, readers can understand each other, eliminate prejudices, and build positive attitudes and behaviors.

In 2014, the New Taipei City Human Library was developed as a new service of the New Taipei City Library. As a public amenity, the New Taipei City Human Library needs to justify its existence by demonstrating the effectiveness of its services, and at the same time, the public has the right to understand its usage and service performance and provide valuable opinions on the process of operation. In this regard, this study assessed the performance of the New Taipei City Human Library using the statistics of collection and circulation services. The findings may cast light on the

future development of public libraries in Taiwan. The research objectives of this study are threefold:

- 1. To identify the service characteristics and development trends of the New Taipei City Human Library;
- 2. To evaluate the performance of the New Taipei City Human Library; and
- 3. To make recommendations for improvement based on the above findings.

Methodology

The official data (2014-2021) of collection and circulation services of the New Taipei City Human Library were retrieved from the websites of the New Taipei City Human Library and the New Taipei City Library. A total of seven performance indexes were assessed in this study. They are:

- 1. Library collection (i.e., human books in the collection of the New Taipei City Human Library);
- 2. Number of active human books (i.e., Human books that have been checked out at least one time);
- 3. Number of book loans (i.e., the number of loans of human books);
- 4. Number of readers (i.e., the number of readers who borrowed the human books);
- 5. Number of book loans / Number of active human books (This ratio is an indicator of book circulation);
- 6. Number of readers / Number of active human books (This ratio is an indicator of the effectiveness of human books); and

7. Number of readers / Number of book loans (This ratio is an indicator of the effectiveness of book loans).

In addition, this study interviewed the responsible person of the Taipei City Human Library through a web conference to consult the current business situation of the human library and also clarify, verify, and supplement the results of the data analysis.

Results

As of December 2021, there were 87 human books in the collection of the New Taipei City Human Library, but there were only 51 active human books, with the most reference titles related to occupations or professions (23 books), followed by special experiences (17 books), and less than 5 human books in other categories. The average active period of human books was 2.92 years, and the average loan was 3.1 times.

From 2014 to 2021, the New Taipei City Human Library held a total of 158 book loans and 719 readers. Over the years, the performance of the human library generally is in an increasing trend. The number of active human books increased from 12 in 2014 to 20 in 2019, and the number of book loans increased from 14 in 2014 to 28 in 2019, respectively. However, both numbers significantly declined in 2020 because of the outbreak of COVID 19. The annual change in the number of readers follows a similar trend, rising from 69 in 2014 to 123 in 2019, and then declining in 2020.

Seasonally, the second half of the year was significantly higher than the first half of the year for the output of the human library. The number of active human books and book loans varied relatively steadily from month to month, but the number of readers significantly dropped in February-March and July-August. The number of active human book loans in

different months ranged from 5 to 17, while the number of book loans ranged from 5 to 21 and the number of readers ranged from 8 to 108.

Within a week, the output on Saturday and Sunday was higher than that on weekdays. Compared to the number of readers, the number of active human books and the number of book loans were relatively stable on weekdays. From 2014 to 2021, the number of active human books on weekdays ranged from 7 to 15, the number of book loans ranged from 8 to 23, and the number of readers ranged from 27 to 158. On Saturdays and Sundays, the number of active human books, the number of book loans, and the number of readers increased by 4-6 times, respectively.

On average, a human book was checked out 1.36 times in the same year, with 5.7 readers, and 4.4 readers for a book loan, respectively.

Discussion and Conclusion

There are two major difficulties in establishing and operating the collection of the New Taipei City Human Library. First, the involvement and commitment of human books are affected by many external factors. Consequently, the collection of human books is small, and their drop-off rate is high. Second, because the New Taipei City Human Library is a public library, human books are mostly related to neutral themes and popular interests. This study suggests that the human library should include human books related to various social issues so that the breadth and diversity of the collection can be enhanced.

Over the years, the demand for human books has been increasing. Although demand has declined in the last two years due to the outbreak of COVID19, the New Taipei City Human Library will gradually resume an upward trajectory as the epidemic is expected to terminate in the near future. Due to the distribution of low and high seasons and the difference

between weekend and weekday borrowing, this study suggests that the human library should formulate its development plan according to the rhythm of patron demand, and further analyze reader data to understand their reading patterns and preferences, which will have a positive impact on borrowing and marketing. On the other hand, the human library should organize more outreach events, which not only increase the performance of the human library but also increase its publicity to the public.

Finally, the values of performance indexes of the New Taipei City Human Library are significantly lower than those of conventional libraries. However, there are substantial differences, both in terms of goals and operations, between a human library and conventional libraries. Therefore, different assessment schemes should be applied to them. Because the human library targets human contact and interaction, apart from quantitative indexes, it is necessary to have qualitative indicators to reflect the feelings and opinions of readers. In such a way, a reasonable assessment of the human library can be obtained.

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