MEASURING THE AVAILABILITY OF AWARD WINNING TITLES IN PUBLIC LIBRARIES

Ahmad Nadzri Mohamad, Mohd Sharif Mohd Saad, Fuziah Mohd Nadzar

ABSTRACT
This study evaluates the completeness of award winning titles in public library holdings. Three book awards were selected as authoritative lists: (i) National Book Award, (ii) National Prime Literary Award and (iii) National Library Book Award. Three Public Library Corporations were chosen namely Selangor (PPAS), Terengganu (PPNT) and Pahang (PPAP) Public Library Corporations. The objectives of the study were threefold**:** (i) to identify the availability of award winning books (ii) to identify the completeness of winning titles in each award and (iii) To identify books with the highest number of copies in public library corporations. An inductive checklist evaluation method was used. Collectively, it was found that PPAS has the highest number of copies, i.e. 66.4% (2450 books), followed by PPNT, 30.2% (1115 books) and PPAP with 3.4% (124 books). The public library corporation with the most complete collection is PPAS at 42.8% (62 titles), followed by PPNT at 33.1% (48 titles) and PPAP at 24.1% (35 titles). Award winning titles with the highest number of copies was listed accordingly. This study is imperative to determine the awareness of public libraries in selecting award winning titles as a part of their collection.

Keywords: *National award winning titles, national book award, Malaysian book award, literary awards, collection development and collection evaluation, public libraries.*

INTRODUCTION
A library can never afford to remain at a standstill; it has to steer forward, adapt to changes, assimilate best practises, and the librarians need to evaluate library collections to fulfil demands and to exceed beyond users' expectations. In the acquisition of library materials, an appropriate selection policy of library items is imperative to ascertain that the library holdings are of high value to existing and potential library users. One of the underlying principles of the public library is that it is open to all, and the public librarian is entrusted with the responsibility of selecting for all members of the community – even when they may not go to the library (Carter, 1974). Hence, in the selecting and deselecting of library items, the librarians need to identify, select and evaluate quality and recognised works to justify their expenditure, to build and maintain collections that will meet their collection development goals and appropriate for their information seekers (Agee, 2005). In deciding the relevant titles to be purchased by libraries, a tremendous number of selection aids can be used, such as reviews, national bibliographies, subject lists, award winners and "*best of''* lists (Hall, 1985; Alabaster, 2010). Apart from collection development and accreditation purposes, these sources can be used as an evaluation tool in assessing library collections (Dennison, 2000; Hall, 1985). On the fundamental level, collection evaluation means assessing the intrinsic quality of a library's holdings (Nisonger, 1992). On a broader level, the term includes determining how well the collection is serving its purpose, objectives and meeting informational needs of the community being served and to the library's potential users (Magrill & Corbin, 1989; Reitz, 2004). According to Mosher (1979), Hall (1985) and Lamb & Johnson (2004), several benefits of conducting an evaluation of library collection include:

   i. Understanding the collection's scope, depth and utility
   ii. Assisting with collection planning
   iii.Measuring a collection development policy's effectiveness
   iv.Determining collection quality
   v. Improving the collection by rectifying deficiencies
   vi.Focusing human and financial resources on areas requiring attention

In general, this study aims to identify the availability and completeness of awarded titles in public library holdings. Inductive method was employed as the research method. From the literature, a deficient number of studies were found concerning to development and management of special collections (Norhazwani & Zainab, 2007; Taler, 2011; Thornton, 2010). There is a crucial need to discover and to trace back the collection development pattern of awarded literature in the public libraries. It was found that no similar study has been conducted to determine the availability of book award titles in public library holdings. Hence, this study is conducted to examine the completeness of Book Awards' winners in three Malaysian public library corporations, as these awards are regarded as among the prestigious awards in the country.

Book Awards in Malaysia

Book Award titles are awarded titles with quality assurance as the awards are given based on rigorous criteria decided by a group of professional panel members. Some of the well-known book awards include Nobel Prize Award, Pulitzer Award, International Book Awards, Caldecott and Newberry Medals, Man Booker Prize and Carnegie Award for Children's Literature. Interestingly, in the field of children's literature alone, hundreds of awards are given in the United States and many more are designated throughout the world (Allen, 1998; Jones, 1994; Mahmound, 1996; Raines & Isbell, 1994). In the context of Malaysia, there are two types of awards. The first is the writing competition, and the second type is the book awards. Nur Alina (2007) exemplified a number of book awards in Malaysia, that include: (a) the literary awards organised and administered by Dewan Bahasa dan Pustaka (DBP); (b) the Mobil Literary Prizes; (c) the Esso-Gapena Literary Prizes; (d) Siswa-Bank Rakyat Literary Prizes; (e) Utusan Group Literary Prizes; (f) Standard Chartered-Utusan English Short Story competition; (g) National Book Prize; (h) Malaysia Premier Literary Prize; (i) National Library Book Awards; (j) the MBBY-Bitara Book Awards; (k) MPH Search for Young Malaysian Writers Competition; and (l) other minor national literary awards. National Book Award, National Literary Award and National Library Book Award are major awards, and these are regarded as the most prestigious awards in the country. The availability of these book titles is pivotal to ensure that public libraries are able to develop their library collections that contain quality literary works to serve their library users.

a) National Book Award

National Book Award is a biennial event, introduced in 1991 during the International Kuala Lumpur Book Fair by the National Book Council of Malaysia. According to Md. Sidin (2005), the National Book Award is one of the most prestigious book awards in recognition of best books in Malaysia. The aim of the award is to encourage the publishing of high-quality books in the national language and as a symbol of appreciation for the writers' and publishers' contributions towards book development in Malaysia (Rabiatuladawiah, 1999). Various prizes were introduced since the inception of the National Book Award. Three major prize categories were offered in the National Book Award, including (a) Children's Book Prizes, (b) Young Adult's Book Prizes, and (c) Adult's Book Prizes. A few additional

categories were introduced, such as National Book Prize, Best Editor Prize, Best Design Prize, Best Illustrator Prize and Judge's Special Prize (Rabiatuladawiah, 1999).

b) National Library Book Award
The National Library Book Award is intended to recognise writers' and publishers' contributions towards the national book industry, to encourage quality book writings, to encourage writings for societal development and to encourage submission of books to the National Library in accordance to the Deposit of Library Materials Act 1986 (Md. Sidin, 2005). The National Library Book Award participation is open to the public, in particular to publishers, writers and libraries to nominate their books for this award.

c) The Prime Malaysia Literary Award
The Prime Malaysia Literary Award, formerly known as National Literary Prize was initiated in 1971 with a purpose to recognize high quality literary works in Bahasa Melayu and to reward writers in various literature genres (Othman Putih, 1995; Siti Irni Yuslinda Mosman, 2010). Initially, the National Literary Prize was introduced by the Malaysian government under the premiership of Tun Abdul Razak Hussein. However, the name was changed to Malaysian Literature Prize and from 1996/1997 to the present; it is known as the Prime Malaysia Literary Award. The introduction of the Malaysian Literature Prize has produced numerous writers, and the Malaysian Literature Prize is regarded as a motivational instrument for young writers to improve their writings and considered also as a ''passport'' to become a prestigious national laureate in Malaysia (Othman Putih, 1995).

LITERATURE REVIEW
In general, collection evaluation techniques used in collection assessment can be broadly categorised into two, i.e. (i) Collection centred approach and (ii) Client or user centred approach (Tan & Chennupati, 2002; Lockett & American Library Association, 1989). In the former, the assessment is towards the overall size, scope and depth of the library collection, and the latter focuses on the satisfaction of library users on the library collection. According to Hall (1985) collection centred approach may include techniques such as compiling statistics, checklist method, direct observation, conspectus and applying standards. On the other hand, client or user centred approach include techniques such as user surveys, availability and accessibility studies, document delivery test, interlibrary loan studies, circulation studies and citation analysis.

One of the earliest and still one of the most frequently used methods of collection-centred evaluation is the checklist method, which is the comparison of a library's holdings against an authoritative list (Hall, 1985; Dennison, 2000). From the literature, various authoritative lists were used in the application of the checklist method as a research methodology. For instance, Meehan and Nisonger (2007) conducted a study to evaluate the Free Library of Philadelphia's (FLP) collection. In the study, a list compiled by an expert was checked against the FLP's OPAC from a remote location in Indiana. Each of the listed items was searched using basic searching strategies, mainly by author, title, keyword, and subject. Subsequently, the items held by the library indicated through its catalogue were calculated in terms of percentage. In another instance, Meehan and Nisonger (2007) conducted a study to evaluate the library collections and simulated semi-availability study of the rowing collections of the Harvard and Yale University library systems. In this study, a list of rowing materials was compiled by an expert. The list which consists of 70 items was checked against the Harvard and Yale library OPACs. Each item on the list was initially checked by title, and if not found, by author. Each of the item was recorded as a ''match'' (when the exact edition

was found), ''no match'' (a different edition of the title was located in the system) and ''no match'' (no edition was found).

Contrary, Ming, Yu, Chia & Shih (2010) used titles from Choice and Bowker's Global Books in Print as an authoritative list and the titles were checked against 156 Taiwan university libraries' OPACs to investigate the availability of books. However, inaccessible and under maintenance OPACs were excluded from the study. In another study, Bolton (2009) evaluated Women's Studies Collections in various degree-granting institutions across the United States. A self-developed list was used based on the Women's Studies Section (WSS) of the Association of College and Research Libraries (ACRL) entitled "Essential Titles" for every Women's Studies collection. The titles were selected randomly and checked against the library's OPAC using title, author, and year as keywords.

METHODOLOGY

This research method was developed by Herbert Goldhor in 1973 for the evaluation of library collection in public libraries. In general, the ''inductive method'' is an alternative version of the checklist method (Goldhor, 1973; Moss, 2008). The inductive method checks a sample of several quality and recommended lists against the library collections. The main idea is to compare the number of items in the multiple lists and the total number of items available in the library; hence providing a percentage on the availability of books in the library holding. Nisonger (2007) believed that the more titles are covered in the lists, the more it can be supposed to measure the collection's quality. Nevertheless, the checklist method was selected as the research instrument based on the objectives of this study. In order to measure the completeness of selected book award winning titles in public library holdings, an authoritative list was developed based on the winning list of three awards, namely (i) National Book Award, (ii) National Prime Literary Award, and (iii) National Library Book Award. The authoritative list was developed and checked against the OPAC (Online Public Access Catalog) of three state library corporations, specifically Selangor Public Library Corporation (PPAS), Terengganu Public Library Corporation (PPNT), Pahang Public Library Corporation (PPAP). The research procedures employed in this study is similar with Nisonger and Meehan (2007) in their evaluation of the rowing collection at the Free Library of Philadelphia. Likewise, Moss (2008) as cited by Ciszek and Young (2010), Lee and Freedman (2010) used a similar approach in the evaluation of gay, lesbian, bisexual, and transgender (GLBT) collection at the Louisville Free Public Library. In this study, the Online Public Access Catalog (OPAC) of three state libraries was accessed remotely via their web pages in early 2011. Then, each item in the authoritative list was checked against the public library holdings. Three basic search strategies (author, title, and keyword) were searched to ascertain the number and availability of copies in the main and branch libraries.

FINDINGS
1) **To identify the availability of award winning titles in public library holdings.**
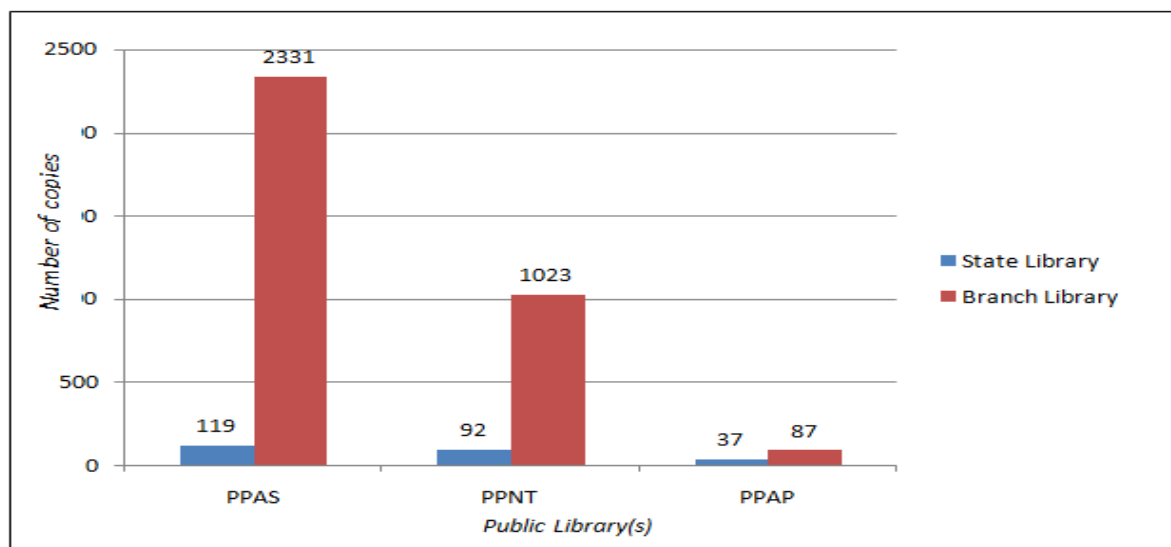

Figure 1   Total of National Award winning title copies in three public libraries

It was found that 93.3% (3441 books) of copies were located at the branch libraries and only 6.8% (248 books) were placed at the state libraries. Selangor Public Library Corporation (PPAS) has the highest number of copies 66.4% (2450 books) in state and branch libraries, Perbadanan Terengganu Public Library Corporation (PPNT) has 30.2% (1115 books) and Pahang Public Library Corporation (PPAP) has 3.4% (124 books). With regard to the total of 248 books in the state libraries, it was recorded that Selangor State Library has 48% (119 books), Terengganu State Library has 37% (92 books) and Pahang State Library has 15 % (37 books). These three public libraries have a total of 3689 copies of the winning titles of the National Book Award, the National Prime Literary Award and the National Library Book Award.

2) **To identify the completeness of book award titles in public library collections.**

Table 1   Award winning titles in selected public library corporations

Public Libraries	National Book Award (33)		National Library Book Award (17)		National Prime Literary Award (50)		Total (100)	
	Number	%	Number	%	Number	%	Number	%
Selangor Public Library Corporation (PPAS)	19	57.6	10	58.8	33	66	62	62
Terengganu Public Library Corporation (PPNT)	15	45.5	10	58.8	23	46	48	48

Pahang Public Library Corporation (PPAP)	13	39.4	-	-	22	44	35	35

In this study, the most complete collection of titles is determined by the number of titles available, excluding the number of copies of each title. In a simpler analogy, a library which possesses the highest number of titles based on the authoritative list has the most complete collection of the awarded works. In this case, PPAS has the most complete collection among the three public libraries. Specifically, PPAS has 62% (62 titles), PPNT has 48% (48 titles) and PPAP has 35% (35 titles). Therefore, PPAS has the most complete collection of award winning titles, followed by PPNT and PPAP. On the other hand, it was found that a substantial percentage of award winning book titles were not available in the three public libraries. For instance, although PPAS has the largest percentage (62%), indirectly it can be surmised that, 38% of the winning books were not available in PPAS. The same can be said about PPNT and PPAP, with 52% and 65% of missing titles respectively.

3)   To identify books with the highest number of copies in public library corporations.

Books with the highest number of copies were determined and the finding indicated that the highest title in public library holdings was '*'Setaman Pantun Kenangan''* with 339 copies followed by *"Dalam Ribuan Mimpi Gelisah: Memoir Said Zahari"* and *"Hidup Bekerjasama"*. The number of copies for each title was decided based on the records both in branch and state libraries as follows:

Table 2   Top ten award winning books in public library corporations

No.	Copies	Publishing year	Title (s)	Author (s)
1	349	2006	Setaman Pantun Kenangan	Abdul Halim
2	309	2006	Dalam ribuan mimpi gelisah: memoir said zahari	Said Zahari
3	188	2006	Hidup Bekerjasama	Norashikin Hashim
4	131	1997	Warna-warna pelangi timur	Shahriza Abdul Rahman
5	101	2001	Bukan Legasi Lalang	Sri Rahayu Mohd Yusuf
6	94	1991	Empangan	Zakaria Ali
7	93	1992	Aiman ke Dusun	PUTEH Mohamed; illustrated by Zauinuddin Jamil
8	90	1990	Singapura dilanggar todak	Zainal Abidin Bakar
9	89	1991	Hendak ke mana, Cantik?	Mohd. Yusof Ismail as author and illustrator
10	89	2007	Ensiklopedia Untuk Anak-anak Muslim	E-Media Publication

DISCUSSION

In the first objective, it was found that Perbadanan Awam Negeri Selangor (PPAS) has the highest copies of awarded titles, followed by Perbadanan Awam Negeri Terengganu (PPNT) and Perbadanan Awam Negeri Pahang (PPAP). Interestingly, it was found that 93.3% of the copies of the award winning book titles were located at each of the public library's branch libraries, while only 6.8% of the copies of the award winning book titles were placed at the state libraries. In the second objective, it was found that the public library with the most complete collection of awarded titles is 62% (62 titles), PPNT has 48% (48 titles) and PPAP has 35% (35 titles). It is worth mentioning that although PPAS has the most complete collection in three of the state libraries, indirectly PPAS has not acquired a total of 38% of the awarded titles. Varatorn (1999) conducted a similar study to identify the availability of national book awards in some leading academic, school, public and national libraries. Using the similar approach, the finding shows that academic libraries in Thailand provided the majority of the awarded titles. Interestingly, each of the four academic libraries owned 1-10 copies of each title in Thailand's National Book Award. Similarly, The National Library of Thailand has 89.90% (178 titles) of the awarded works. However, it was revealed that public libraries in Bangkok have only 48 titles of national award books (24.24%) available in their libraries. In the study, it was recorded that academic libraries provided most of the awarded books, followed by national library, public libraries and school libraries. The researchers acknowledged that national book awards have been overlooked as quality information resources of the nation, and are therefore not fully used. This similar pattern is identified in this study, in particular the availability of awarded books in three of the public library corporations.

Documenting the rationale behind unavailability of award winning titles can be found from the literature. For instance, Zainab (1995) argued that one of the challenges for documentation centres is when the titles that won awards never get published hence not available for general distribution or purchase. This may as a result hinder acquisition of award winning books. In brief, information can be obtained from various listings and sources such as journal articles, books, newspaper reports, anthologies of winning works, printed programme books and the internet in general. The unavailability of one-stop centre for such information has, to certain extent challenges public libraries to acquire award winning books in particular when several awards or prizes were inconsistently organised (Md. Sidin, 2005). Apart from that, acquisition policies influence the purchase of various library collections including award winning books. Many libraries have started articulating their policies on the selection of materials. Guides, selection criteria, recommended literature and listings from numerous authorities, publishers, and library associations are readily available from the Net for references. However, certain libraries may, for instance find such idea as impractical in nature. Other libraries, may select their library materials according on their public and users' demand. In this philosophy, libraries can obtain books that are less notable for literary quality or artistic value but appealing to the public (Usherwood, 2007). In the end, librarians need to decide between providing their readers with what they want or to concentrate on developing recognised reading materials.

DIRECTIONS FOR FUTURE STUDIES & CONCLUSION

In conducting this study, a number of recommendations can be made. In general, recommendations include the coverage on various book awards in the country, the number of public libraries in the study, and the application of mixed methods in the research methodology. There are numerous book awards and prizes allocated by the government and

private organizations. It is suggested that these awards or prizes need to be included as an integral part of the authoritative list in order to obtain an accurate picture on the availability of awarded books in the public libraries. However, this may require considerable time to compile the information on the winners of the various awards, such as book titles and authors. Future study must consider a comprehensive scope on the number of public libraries. In order to determine the usage of award winning titles, the researcher needs to commune with the representative of each public library, as information on the borrowing usage is not retrievable from the library's OPAC. This information is only obtainable through the circulation module of the library systems used by the public libraries. Needless to say, it was found that numerous integrated library systems were used by the public libraries. In this regard, it is uncertain if all of the library systems had been designed to capture such data, as well as enable retrieval of such information.

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Ahmad Nadzri Mohamad
Faculty of Information Management
UiTM Kampus Puncak Perdana
40150, Shah Alam, Selangor
Email: nadzri.mohamad@gmail.com
nadzri590@puncakalam.uitm.edu.my