

STUDENTS SATISFACTION WITH LIBRARY SERVICES IN AN ACADEMIC LIBRARY: SPECIAL REFERENCE TO TRINCOMALEE CAMPUS

S.Vijeyaluxmy

Library, Trincomalee Campus
Eastern University, Sri Lanka
vijeyaluxmy@yahoo.com

ABSTRACT

Academic libraries play an important role in the institutions they serve. The core objective of academic libraries is to support the parent institution to achieve its objectives. The purpose of the study was to identify the information needs of graduate students and assess the satisfaction level of the students towards the library services. Upon the basis of findings strong user oriented hands on training are recommended, as majority of the first year students from both faculties are lack of ICT skills. Better ICT skills are a must for effective handling of EIR, Therefore, in order to raise the awareness in accessing EIR, more vigorous campaigns are of dire necessity. It can be suggested to both libraries to revive modes and timing of providing access to EIR. Future research is required to identify particular group of students who are indeed in need of training, in order to improve ICT skills.

Keywords: libraries, satisfaction level, ICT, EIR

INTRODUCTION

Libraries are service institutions. Its activities are established to serve the needs of users. Academic libraries play an important role in the institutions they serve. The core objective of academic libraries is to support the parent institution to achieve its objectives. Any university system needs the support of well-established library. The basic function of an academic library is to provide teaching, learning and research support activities by providing relevant and useful resources in the form of books, serials and electronic resources.

According to Kotso (2010) libraries support research process by collecting, preserving and making available an array of information resources relevant to their research community. Academic library plays a vital role in teaching and learning of an academic institution. Its aims are to collect, process, preserve and disseminate documents and information to serve the user community. In order to make the resources available to its users easily and conveniently different types of facilities and services are being rendered from library.

Hiller (2001) has discussed the fact that library user satisfaction surveys have become widespread in academic libraries during the past twenty years. Surveys have often been used as a tool to assess service quality and user satisfaction. Surveys can range from broad and comprehensive to those narrowly focused on specific services or activities. Lancaster university library (2006) regularly conducts user satisfaction surveys as a means of identifying areas for service improvement and ensuring that it remains responsive to the helps in justifying resources and improving the services.

STATEMENT OF PROBLEM

A university library is attached to the university. It has a very vital role to play in the meeting the multi- dimensional demands for information and knowledge of students, teachers and research scholars. University library invests huge amount of money every year on the purchase, process and storage of information resources to serve its

user. Horovitz (1990) had mentioned that customers who have experienced poor services will reveal their experiences to other people and therefore this is likely to lead a reduction in potential customers. So that measuring users' satisfaction level is critical for a library.

Jankowska, Hertel and Yang (2006) investigated graduate expectations and satisfaction with library services. After reviewing the related literature he summarized that graduate students are unaware of the full range of library services and resources and need help in using library resources.

Eager and Oppenheim (1996) and Fidzani (1998) have pointed out that users' assessment can provide invaluable information to libraries in re-orienting their collections, services and activities for effectively meeting their information needs. Changing information environment, application of ICT in library and Information science field, availability of electronic resources forces the librarian to focus on user satisfaction surveys. Academic libraries are established to provide information resources and services to meet users' information needs.

Objectives

- To identify the information needs of graduate students.
- To assess the satisfaction level of the students towards the library services

METHODOLOGY

The data used in the study are obtained from self-administered questionnaires. Non probability convenient sampling method was adopted for the study with an intention that the regular users of the library should be selected for the study. This method helps to select desired sample units deliberately to get accurate representative respondent. Sivathaasan and Chandrasekar (2013) have collected data by distributing a questionnaire to users of the library who visited to the library during a particular period.

Gay (1987) mentioned that ten percent is adequate for a descriptive survey. A sample of 100 students who were using the library facilities was issued questionnaire at the time of the survey (20%). Total number of student at the time of study was 497. Students from three disciplines such as Business and Management Studies, Language and Communication Studies, and Siddha Medicine were selected for the study.

Part I of the questionnaire consists of three questions to gather information about the frequency of library visit, purpose of visit and range of material used Part II gathers information on the library material collection, access to materials, library services, library environment, library staff, library procedures and suggestion for future development. Part two consist of thirty questions. These seven variables have the Spearman- Brown coefficient equal length values as 0.593, 0.687, 0.444, 0.932, 0.728, 0.793 and 0.853 respectively. These values show that the factors taken into consideration for the study are reliable. The overall Cronbach's alpha value is 0.886. This shows that the factors are reliable for the research to be carried out. Pre- test with ten students were carried out to clarify the questionnaire and its content.

The registers available at the counter were observed and analyzed to study the user needs. Lending register, overnight register, photocopy service register, fine register and student membership register were observed by the researcher. Discussions with counter staff of library was useful to the researcher to clarify the usage of materials by

students, pattern of visit from various discipline, frequent queries from students and peak hours of service delivery.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

SPSS package 16.0 was used for the analysis. Decision criterion is if the mean value is 1.5-2.5 low level of agreement. Mean value is between 2.51 - 3.5 moderate level of agreement. If mean value is 3.51-5.0 is high level of agreement.

Materials collection has 3.0 as mean value. It is in a moderate level of agreement. It shows that improvement is still needed in material collection. It may be the result of lack of current and up to date collections in terms of copies of text books and recreational materials. Access to material has a moderate level of agreement. It is also an important feature of the service quality. It has a mean value of 3.0. Readers need assistance to locate materials. Library service has a mean value of 3.3. It is a moderate level agreement of readers regarding this service. Library environment has a moderate level of agreement with a mean value of 2.7. Result is little bit higher from the low level of agreement limit of 2.5. It clearly shows that readers are not much happier with the library environment. Library staff variable has a high level of agreement with a mean value of 4.2. Result has shown that library users are with high level of expectation to get more services. It is clear with a mean value of 4.6. This is due to the users' acceptance for an automated system in library operations.

Responses from the students for the frequency of visits show that library is not underutilized. Responses for the purpose of the visit show that the library is being utilized by the students to access relevant information. Students have mentioned that they use books, magazines, thesis and newspapers more among the other materials available to them. The overall mean value of 3.59 and standard deviation value of 0.48 shows that users are in moderate level of agreement for the overall services offered in the library.

CONCLUSION

The following implications are presented from the results of the study.

1. Students have sufficient reading and library use habits. Many students' readings are subject oriented. Students visit library regularly to borrow books for their studies and recreational reading. Additional copies of the textbooks and recreational reading collection should be improved.
2. Signage needs to be designed clearly. OPAC terminals should be increased and updated for the readers. Book shelves arrangement should be convenient for users.
3. Library services should be provided in electronic based platform to be convenient for the users. Possible services should be included and expanded for the betterment of users.
4. Library environment is not conducive for the readers and this should be improved in future.
5. Library staffs are helpful in delivering services based on the material collections.
6. Library procedures for its services are acceptable by the users. Orientation programme should be more informative and attractive by using multimedia projector presentation.
7. Library administrative body should pay more attention on library automation, ICT based services, e-resource collection and online access to deliver library services.

RECOMMENDATION

The following recommendations are made based on the conclusion. In-depth user satisfaction surveys should be conducted by the university libraries regularly to find out the changing information requirement of users.

Library should acquire collections which meets users' intellectual, informational and recreational needs. Librarian should ensure library documents are shelved properly to enable the user to locate the materials easily. Arrangements should be made to facilitate easy access. In an open access libraries shelving of documents is highly important. Display of latest issues of journals and new arrivals of text books are important to make the user to be informative about the resources. Infrastructure is an important aspect which includes exclusive calm, quiet and well-furnished study area, display of periodicals, internet browsing facility, comfortable seating arrangement, proper lighting and ventilation etc. Academic library should conduct user awareness program at the beginning of each academic session. Friendly approach of staff, efficiency and willingness of staff to assist users will contribute to user satisfaction. Continuous training is essential to enhances positive attitude in service delivery, knowledge about library collection and skill to tackle problems effectively. Automation helps the library administration to establish the features of user friendliness, customer care and helpfulness in delivering services to their users. ICT based services can improve the efficiency of library services which contribute to accelerate user satisfaction level. Library Management needs to conduct user studies annually in order to have feedback from users on how well the library meeting their information needs. The results of the survey should be conveyed to the library administrative body for the necessary step towards library development and user satisfaction.

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