

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

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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

1. INTRODUCTION

Libraries are service institutions. It's 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.

The libraries hold printed materials including books, periodicals, newspapers, thesis collection, reports, and special collection of government documents and wide range of electronic resources among others. A well-established academic library system can significantly contribute to student and other users' development in a wider perspective. Osburn (1992) mentioned that periodic collections are relevant, current and adequate in meeting the information needs of users.

Yang (2004) noted that user satisfaction is based on the degree of perceived quality that meets users' expectations, therefore library management should periodically evaluate the services they provide to their users. That is the only way to assess users' needs and expectations as far as the services of a library are concerned. Periodic survey studies need to be done to evaluate all the existing resources and services since necessary measures can be taken in case users are dissatisfied with the services. Resources are critical to user satisfaction. The availability of resources both print and electronic can have significant influence on user satisfaction. The overall perception of a library's services and resources contribute to user satisfaction. Ensuring that relevant information resources and to users goes a long way to encourage users to visit the library more often in future. Library is a warehouse of information without users. The users are the ultimate consumers of the library services.

SIGNIFICANT

Libraries from time to time, need to be assessed and evaluated by its users. The users' satisfaction is considered to be a reliable benchmark for determining library effectiveness. Majid, Anwar and Eisenschitz (2001) had mentioned that the goal of most surveys is to gauge user's perception of library effectiveness regarding services, resources and activities.

Eager and Oppenheim (1996) mentioned that users' assessment can provide invaluable information to libraries to re-orient their collections, services and activities for effectively meeting their information needs. Fidzani (1998) says that the significance of this survey rest on the fact that it is only through a survey that the library would know whether it serves to meet the users. It points out which kind of services and resources of the Library are to be concerned for the improvement. The survey will serve as a guide to improve the collection and services. The results of the survey will inform gap in the path of development to the university library management team.

King (2005) says that information needs and expectations are continuously changing in the rapidly changing information scenario. Libraries need to re-orient their collections, services, and facilities to keep pace with these advancements. User feedback is considered as the most reliable factor in measuring the utility and effectiveness of any library. Librarians can provide a comparative snapshot of usage by making user surveys a regular part of the library's activity. Basha (2010) when he noted that only the users of a library are the best judge to assess its services. So that the researchers think it necessary to conduct this study to reveal users' satisfaction with the services provided.

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.

2. METHODOLOGY

The data used in the study are obtained from a 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 a desired sample units deliberately to get accurate representative respondent. Probability sampling technique involves scientific techniques of selection. This method was not employed since the researcher's expectation is to get the opinion from the users of the library not from the non-users. Larson and Owusu(2012) have adopted the availability sampling method for the users who are regular users of library and available at the time of study were asked to respond to the questionnaire as they entered the library. 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. The respondents belong to Trincomalee Campus of Eastern University of Sri Lanka. Since data was collected by issuing a questionnaire at the time of library visit the response rate was at the maximum level of hundred percentage.

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 shows 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.

The services and facilities provided by this library are borrowing of books and other materials, reference services, catalogue, photocopying services, printing services and online public access catalogue information services. Services provided by Trincomalee Campus were considered for this study. The study was conducted to find out users' satisfaction over the current services and resources available at the Library.

Satisfying the needs of the user is the prime objective in academic libraries. It has two major customer segment of academic staff and undergraduate students. The study considers the student satisfaction since every year new students come to the university with different needs and expectations and practically have more regular visits to library than the staff. In the study of Larson and Owusu(2012) the satisfaction level of the students have been examined.

3. RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

SPSS package 16.0 was used for the analysis. Decision criteria is if the mean value is 1.5-2.5 low level of agreement. If mean value is 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. Respondents have suggested that the latest edition of text book and reference materials should be added to the library collection. Text books usage account for many reasons for library visits. Availability of resources can have significant influence on user satisfaction. Academic libraries are specially appreciated by readers based on specific discipline collections.

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. If they are familiar with the library environment they can search for materials through card catalogue and by OPAC (Online Public Access Catalogue). Moderate level of satisfaction is due to availability of labels on the shelves, helpful staff, classification system, signage and OPAC service. Signage shows proper arrangement of materials. The classification system of the library is an important source of its holdings. The catalogue displays updated record. Library usage is ensured when the documents are kept in their proper place. Results show that the access to materials still has the room for the development in future.

Library service has a mean value of 3.3. It is a moderate level agreement of readers regarding this service. Since it has received a moderate level of mean value still this aspect needs further attention from the library administration.

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. It is due to lack of seating capacity, desk space and surrounding environment to study. The environment means the physical conditions in which the service is provided. The physical facilities like reference space, furniture for seating, heat in reference area, clean flooring, comfortable seating arrangement, proper lighting and ventilation create a proper service environment for the readers to stay for a long

time in library. Awana(2007) had received the same findings for the seating capacity and for the heat.

Library staff variable has a high level of agreement with a mean value of 4.2. This result indicates that library staff are helpful to the readers to meet their needs, offer timely response, no discriminative treatment among the users and knowledgeable about the materials.

The quality of services rendered to users in any library reflect the quality of the staff. In separate studies conducted by Richardson(2003) and Awana(2007) noted that the friendly disposition of staff, efficiency and willingness in assisting users to get the needed information contribute to user satisfaction. Staff provides exhausting all necessary avenues to users to find an answer to a query will encourage users to be satisfied.

Library procedures has a mean value of 4.1. It is a high level of agreement from the user's point of view. The results show that readers are satisfied with membership arrangement of the library, clear rules and regulation of library usage, acceptable fine system of the library and orientation programme to make the user to be aware of the library practices, collections and procedures. Portmann and Roush (2004) assessed the effects of library instruction. Their study found that library instructions significantly increase student library use.

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, E-resource collection development, internet and computer facility to the resource access and periodical collection development. Respondents indicated that more electronic based materials should be collected in future. The same result was received for the study conducted by Edem, Aniand and Ocheibi(2009) for students' perceived effectiveness in the use of library resources. They suggested that e-library, and e-resources will be helpful for the improvement of the library usage and development. In another study which was carried out by Tella, Owolabi and Attama(2008) pointed out about the general use of the library. They found out that majority of the students 98.8% mentioned that unavailability of internet in library was the main problem. In this study also the same opinion of the students can be observed.

Responses from the students for the frequency of visits are shown in the figure 2.1. 63% visits the library for 2-3 times within a week, 16% accounted for daily and 21% is for the fortnightly visit. This is an indication that library is not underutilized.

Responses for the purpose of the visit has shown that 21% of students visit the library to read books, 20% to read newspaper, 12% to borrow the books. Class assignment and recreational reading have a portion of 14% out of the all respondents. Results 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 results indicated that different type of materials are being used to satisfy their information needs.

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. These findings agree with the results of the YangYe(2004) and Bamigboye(2010). Thus it is clear that the user satisfaction is based on the degree of quality of services offered by the library that meet the user's expectation.

4. CONCLUSION

The following implications are presented from the results of the study. These implications could be the recommendations for the management of the academic libraries of the university system to standardize their libraries' operations and services. The major findings of this research are:

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 main purpose of any library is to provide relevant and up- to-date materials with a view to satisfying the information needs of users. 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.

Acquisition of library materials determine the effectiveness of library. A qualitative collection is vital for academic library since it is the resource for education, research, consultancy and training. Library should acquire collections which meets users' intellectual, informational and recreational needs. Comprehensive collection is indicated by range of collection, availability of updated journals, access to print and non-print materials, range of collection of CDs and newspapers in different languages. Service quality of any library depends on the resources.

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. User guidance for better utilization of resources is part of librarian's job. Self-explanatory boards, labels on

the shelves and tracks, proper signage for subjects, staff help, display of rules and regulations, location map, help menu for OPAC, library orientation and information literacy programmes are important aspects to be considered to make aware of the available library resources and services. Access points created should be conveyed to users to make them to feel that they are well attended and properly guided. User guidance plays vital role to satisfy multidimensional demands of students.

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. The study desks should be convenient and properly designed for the user to spend more time in library.

Academic library should conduct user awareness program at the beginning of each academic session. This will encourage the newly arrived students from various background to be familiar with the library system. It should cover the library procedures of particular library and the services offered. It should include knowledge of availability of library materials, approach to reference services, borrowing pattern, opening and closing time, technicalities of using the catalogue, the classification system in use, getting assistance from the library staff and in the library etc.

The staff is an important dimension in delivering library services. Counter staff who confronts the user makes the impression about the library. Consideration of users' suggestions and complaints is most important for them. Friendly approach of staff, efficiency and willingness of staff to assist users will contribute to user satisfaction. Continuous training is essential to enhance 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. Explosion of modern information technology forces the academic library to provide sufficient number of computers in library. The e-resources are the most essential knowledge source. The e-database, e-journals, e-books, and other e-resources should be acquired and upgraded to help the library users in gathering information related to their course of studies. ICT based services can improve the efficiency of library services which contribute to accelerate user satisfaction level.

In the present environment information explosion and customer care are the major challenges. In this context it is inevitable for an academic library to provide richer information sources to their users to meet information needs. 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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