

ANALYSIS OF USER'S PERCEPTION AND HABITS TO USE THE LIBRARY AND ITS IMPORTANCE

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ABSTRACT

The user studies greatly help the libraries and librarians in understanding the needs of the users and in providing efficient services to their patrons. It helps to find out the weaknesses and strengths of the services provided by a library. In this paper, perception of users and their habits to use the library is analyzed including the importance of library in their lives. It is a survey based study that opens up about habits of the users. It tells about various information sources used by the users, regularity of using the library, motivation that drives the users to make use of library resources and services along with significance the library holds for them. It also reveals what the users think of functions performed by the library and the factors responsible if the library is not being put to use. The outcomes of this study guide the library officials about the areas where there is need for improvement as well as users' contentment with the library. These revelations will prove to be of immense help in improving the quality of services and make the users satisfy.

Keywords: *Habits, Library, Library services, Library use, Users*

INTRODUCTION

Libraries are integral part of institutions that facilitate teaching, learning and research. Libraries offer a wide array of services to the users like providing valuable learning material, reference service, personalised services like SDI (Selective Dissemination of Information) and CAS (Current Awareness Service) etc. The working and performance of academic libraries whether a school library or college or university library, is important to promote and fulfil the objectives of the parent institution which they are serving. To serve the users competently, it becomes very important to observe the habits of users to the use of library. So the library needs to be scrutinised and evaluated to ascertain its productivity. The user centric studies also help in framing procedures and policies to administrate the library and in its smooth functioning. Since information is vital for all-round development of the individuals, libraries are invaluable in knowledge dissemination. But the best can be achieved by analysing one's strengths and weaknesses which can be carried out by observing the perception and habits of the users of a particular library.

OBJECTIVES

The study is conducted to analyze the habits of users regarding the use of library and its importance. Its objectives are to:

1. Know about the information sources used by the students;
2. Perceive motivation behind library visit;
3. Analyze significance of using library;
4. Perceive major functions of the library;

5. Analyze the factors that are responsible for the disuse of library;
6. Perceive users' contentment with the library services and;
7. Perceive how the users appraise library services in fulfilling their requirements.

METHODOLOGY

This is a survey based study and makes use of online questionnaire to receive required information from the users. The library users, in this case, are the post-graduate students studying at University of Jammu, Jammu, India. The results are compiled on the basis of details provided in the online questionnaire by 128 users.

EXAMINATION OF DATA AND RESULTS

1. Distribution of the users on the basis of their age and gender

The users are being distributed on the basis of their age and gender in table 1(A) and table 1(B) respectively. The users here are the postgraduate students and are mostly from the age group of 21- 25 years accounting for 98.4% and the remaining 1.6% users are below 21 years.

Out of the total users participating in this survey, 64.1% are female users and 35.9% are male users.

(A) On the basis of age:

Table 1(A): Age group of the user.

Age group	Percentage (%)
Below 21	1.6
21-25	98.4
26-30Above 30	00
Total	100

(B) On the basis of gender:

Table 1(B): Gender of the users

Gender	Percentage (%)
Female	64.1
MaleOther	35.90
Total	100

2. Type of study course

The library users in this study belong to different streams and have opted for the following study courses as shown in table 2 below:

Table 2: Type of study course.

Course	Percentage (%)
M.A.	79.7
M.Sc.	7.8
M.B.A.	1.6
M.Com.	0
M.C.A.	0
Other	10.9
Total	100

3. Use of information sources

When it comes to information sources, there are different types of them. The users were asked about the information sources used by them in order to access information and to fulfil their requirements. The various information sources used by them are shown in table 3.

The users mostly relied on textbooks (56.3%), reference books (54.7%) and search engines (40.6%). The other less used sources are research articles (26.6%), study guides (9.4%) and periodical publications (4.7%)

Table 3: Use of information sources.

Information source	Percentage (%)
Textbooks	56.3
Search engines	40.6
Research articles	26.6
Periodicals	4.7
Study guides	9.4
Reference books	54.7

4. Regularity of using library

The regularity of the users to use the library is shown in table 4 which indicates how different users make use of library in day to day life. Those who visit the library regularly are 29.7%, those using sometimes are 42.2% (maximum), those using occasionally are 25% and those who seldom visits the library are 3.1%.

Library and information centres with their rich collection and diverse services have a lot to offer to their users, so it is advised to the users to make best use of such resources and services being offered to them.

Table 4: Regularity of using library.

Regularity	Percentage (%)
Regularly	29.7
Sometimes	42.2
Occasionally	25
Seldom	3.1
Hardly ever	0
Total	100

5. Motivation behind library visit

When we as a user make use of something, there is a certain guiding force or motivation behind it. The motivation that leads the users to visit library is depicted in table 5. The different guiding factors behind library visit are newspaper/magazine reading (25%), internet use (1.5%), to borrow material from the library (14.1%), to perform some specific work (40.6%) and some other purpose (18.8%).

Table 5: Motivation behind library visit.

Motivation	Percentage (%)
Newspaper/ magazine reading	25
Internet use	1.5
To borrow material	14.1
To perform designated work	40.6
Some other purpose	18.8
Total	100

6. Significance of using library

Any library or information centre has great significance for the institution to which it is attached. It helps in academics, research and intellectual development. The perception of the users on the significance of using library is shown in table 6.

Majority of the library users (84.4%) believe that using library is of great significance which means they value the importance of library in their lives and 15.6% of the users consider using library to be somewhat significant. There is no such user who thinks of library as not being significant.

Table 6: Significance of using library.

Significance	Percentage (%)
Newspaper/ magazine reading	25
Of great significance	84.4
Somewhat significant	15.6
No significance	0
Total	100

7. Major function of the library

A library performs different functions and strives to satisfy the needs of its users or clientele. The users were asked to present their view on the major functions of the library; their response is being tabulated in table 7.

Most of the users (57.8%) are of the view that the major function of the library is to provide suitable learning environment. The other functions are to provide access to vital resources (29.7%), to support curriculum (10.9%) and skill enhancement (1.6%).

Table 7: Major functions of the library.

Role	Percentage (%)
To provide suitable learning environment	57.8
To provide access to vital resources	29.7
Skill enhancement	1.6
To support curriculum	10.9
Total	100

8. Factors responsible for not using the library

Table 8 reveals the various factors being responsible for the disuse of library. Out of these factors, reluctance comes out to be the major factor for not using the library with 59.4% users. The users feel reluctant to go to the library and ask for services of the library which may be due to the factor that they are less aware of library resources and services and donot know how to access them and feel shy to ask to the staff.

Other factors contributing to the disuse of library are lack of awareness of awareness of library services (18.8%), insufficient collection (9.4%) and some other unknown reasons (12.4%). The factor “No cooperation from staff” has not being favoured by any of the users which clearly reveals that the staff working at the library is very cooperative and hence the users must not hesitate to ask for help.

Table 8: Factors responsible for not using the library.

Factor	Percentage (%)
Reluctance	59.4
Lack of awareness of library services	18.8
No cooperation from staff	0
Insufficient collection	9.4
Some other unknown reasons	12.4
Total	100

9. Role of library in making the users competent

The users were asked regarding the role of library in making them competent as indicated in table 9. The numbers of users who consider that the library has considerable role in making them competent are 35.9%, those who consider its role to be moderate are 17.2%. Maximum users (45.3%) believe that library has fair role to play in making users competent whereas only 1.6% users consider that library has no role in competence.

Table 9: Role of library in making users competent.

Role	Percentage (%)
Considerable	35.9
Moderate	17.2
Fair	45.3
No role	1.6
Total	100

10. User's contentment with library services

Table 10 indicates the users' contentment with library services. Most of the users have intermediate contentment with the library services (48.4%). 23.4% and 17.2% users have very high and high contentment level respectively. Those users with low and very low contentment with various library services are 9.4% and 1.6% respectively.

Table 10: User's contentment with library services.

Contentment	Percentage (%)
Very high	23.4
High	17.2
Intermediate	48.4
Low	9.4
Very low	1.6
Total	100

11. Scope for improvement

The users were asked to present their view regarding the scope for improvement in various areas of the library (table11).

It is observed that work is needed to be done in internet section as revealed by 46.9% users. 25% users suggested improvement in holdings of the library. Other areas where improvement is required are infrastructure (12.5%), assistance from staff (6.2%) and some other (9.4%).

Table 11: Scope for improvement.

Category	Percentage (%)
Infrastructure	12.5
Library holdings	25
Assistance from staff	6.2
Internet facility	46.9
Some other	9.4
Total	100

12. Library's appraisal in fulfilling the requirements of the users

The users were asked to appraise the library in fulfilling their requirements (on scale of 1-5, where 1 is lowest and 5 are highest). Their appraisal can be seen in figure 1.

Nearly half of the users (48.5%) have given a score of 4 and 14% have given a score of 5 which means they are fully satisfied with the services provided by the library. 31.25% users are neutral (neither satisfied nor dissatisfied) with the use of library. Only 6.25% students have given a rating of 1, meaning that they are not satisfied with the library. If we compare, the number of users who positively appraised library are 62.5% whereas only 6.25% users negatively appraised and 31.25% are neutral.

CONCLUSION

The above study is performed to examine the perception and habits of library users whose outcomes could be decisive for the librarian to analysis of present services and shows the way for the betterment of the library. Textbooks and reference books are the mostly used sources by the users. The main motivation

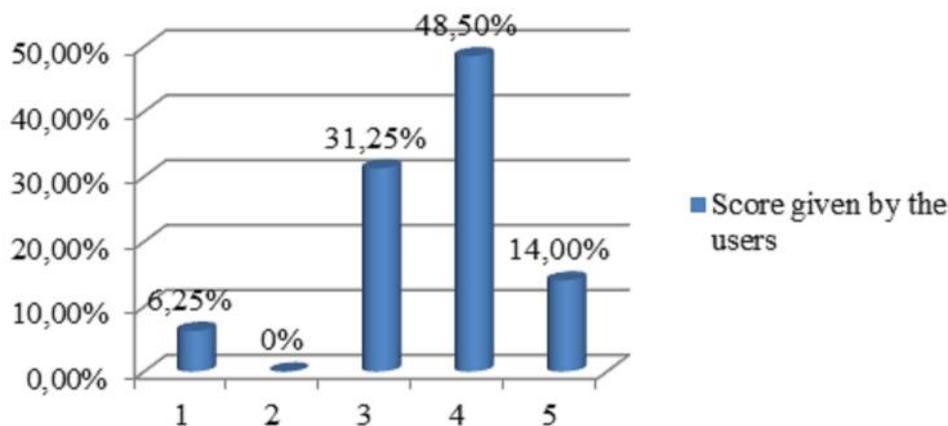


Figure 1: Library's appraisal in fulfilling the requirements of the users.

to use library is to perform a designated task. The significance of the library is revealed to be high. The users are of the view that the major function of the library is to provide suitable learning environment. Reluctance is the major contributing factor for the disuse of library, hence there is need to eliminate the hesitation from the users by making them comfortable with different sections of the library. This can be done by conducting an orientation programme. The contentment of most of the users with the library is intermediate. Major improvement is required to be done in areas of internet and holdings of the library.

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