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User satisfaction with the University of Limpopo Library Turfloop Campus services: a University student perspective.

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ABSTRACT

The paper discusses findings from a survey aimed at capturing the experience of undergraduate students at University of Limpopo's Turfloop Campus Library. The objective of the study was thus to study students' user experiences at the facility, including their views about material resources available and the quality of services provided by the University library. The study was also interested in examining student's satisfaction levels with the resources available, and to gather from users the kind of improvement required to make the library user-friendly in the context of future planning. To collect the data, a questionnaire was devised and used to survey undergraduate students at the Turfloop Campus. This report will therefore report about varying aspects generated from the study findings, including the experiences of library users, satisfaction levels and areas of improvement.

Overall, the empirical data from the study showed that the library remains an essential resource for learning and therefore resourceful for student learning and research activities. The data also point to the finding that the overall experience of library users with the services rendered by the library is 'satisfactory'. The library's cleanliness is the only service item which was overwhelmingly rated as positive and thus enrich user experience. The results of the study also highlighted key areas of improvement for the library. These include: Library opening hours, current awareness services rendered by the library and print collection. The findings of the study suggest implications of these challenges and outlining some of the choices that could be considered for improvement in library activities to achieve greater user satisfaction.

Keywords: User satisfaction, User experience, User needs, University libraries, User surveys.

INTRODUCTION

University libraries form part of institutions of higher learning and have been described as the ‘heart of the learning community’, providing places for students and university community to do their research and advance their knowledge. Fulfilling users’ needs in the academic libraries has been the main objective of libraries and librarians. Each and every year new students visit the University library with different expectations and interests. In addition effective usage of libraries is further complicated by the rapid adaptation of new technologies, electronic resources and many more innovative systems used by users and library staff to access information. New library users may not necessarily come with requisite skills to effectively and optimally use the available resources.

An effective and user friendly academic library is the one that enables researchers and students access to modern technology and quality materials, in many ways assisting and enriching users’ experience with knowledge, reference materials and current information. In recent times, there has been a shift in focus in the area of library administration, including libraries themselves seeking greater understanding of their user, including their perceptions and expectations of service and service delivery as a key driver of innovation in libraries. This knowledge also enables academic libraries to continually reinvent and reposition themselves in a rapidly competitive environment.

While it is true that users do in fact influence libraries, the library environment do have overwhelming impact on students’ perceptions about the manner in which they believe they can use the library. Key to this is the rationality that resources can lead to an increased usage of library students (Applegate, 1997). This suggests that when a library is well resourced and captures students’ disciplinary and material interests, the higher the likelihood that the facility will draw interested students.

As one would imagine, key to a successful academic library is incorporating the user’s personal needs and expectations into the development of programs and services, as Millson-Martula and Menon (1995) highlighted. It is therefore imperative that University libraries like Turfloop Campus Library not only adapt to new trends but undertake enquiries about quality service assessments, in order to solicit insights from users about the quality of service delivery, improvement areas and challenges (Jayasundara, 2008).

Though the University of Limpopo's Turfloop Campus Library has plenty of library resources available, the library has difficulty in evaluating these resources and this affects the efficacy of the Library. The varieties of information resources available are in large numbers making it difficult for library to assess them in order to determine their relevance and usefulness. Arshad (2010) conducted a service quality survey with academic libraries established that overall service quality and satisfaction of the University of the Punjab's libraries was good and users were satisfied with library staff's politeness and caring behaviour towards them. The current study builds on these studies to consolidate the voice of Library users, as one of the key recommendations made by previous studies.

King (2005) who conducted a user satisfaction survey with academic libraries found that libraries need to update their collection, services and facilities to keep pace with the advancements of information needs of user's. He recommended user-feedback model of engagement, of which he considered reliable in measuring the utility and effectiveness of any library.

Adeniran (2011) who conducted a user satisfaction survey with academic libraries services in Redeemer University library found that students used the library more than academic staff, and it also showed that users were satisfied with the services of the library. His study was aimed at identifying who among the academic staff and students made use of the library the mostly, as well as to measure the level of frequency in library usage. The researcher was also interested on the overall usability of the library, in terms of the ease of finding and using resources available in the library.

In conclusion, his data showed that library users of the Redeemer University library were satisfied with the library services. However, the study suggested that there was a need for virtual library to improve library services. He indicated that his study will help libraries to improve library services so that they can assist academic staff in teaching and research.

Kassim (2009) reported that a study on customer satisfaction reveal many things that libraries can do in terms of activities that would benefit library users. The results of their studies found that students consider the library as a good place to concentrate on their studies.

By considering the importance of user satisfaction, the researcher decided to carry out a user survey of University of Limpopo's students to assess and investigate experiences in using the library has been overwhelmingly positive of not, and what are issues affecting their

(un)satisfactory experiences in the library. The assessment will help the library to improve its services and resources which can lead to an increase in library resources usage by students.

OBJECTIVES

1. To examine the extent of users' satisfaction with library services.
2. To identify challenges faced by users in obtaining library materials.
3. To assess the use of information resources and services by users' in the University of Limpopo Library's Turfloop Campus Library.

METHODOLOGY

Convenience sampling method was used as sampling criteria. The researcher decided to use convenience sampling because it is fast, costs effective and the subjects are readily available. Questionnaire contained structured and unstructured question, which were open-ended questions. The questionnaire consisted of 11 questions was distributed to one hundred and twenty (120) respondents.

The questionnaire included questions such as general information about the users, library frequency visit, reasons for the visit and overall satisfaction about the library. The questionnaires were distributed at the University Library Turfloop Campus foyer; targeting respondents who enter and exit the library. The Library foyer was identified as a suitable area because all library users use this area on a daily basis. The collected data were analysed and findings are as follows.

OVERALL DATA

A total of 70 completed questionnaires were received out of 120 giving an overall response rate of 58%. In the data, 60% of the respondents were female students whereas 40% were male students and 60% of the respondents are in the age group between 18-21 years and 40% are between the age group of 22-25 years.

FINDINGS

Library Resources and Services Usage

The results of the study showed that 97% of the survey respondent sees the library as an important element to facilitate learning, research activities and improving their academic skills

Rate of Library visit

Figure 1: Rate of library visit

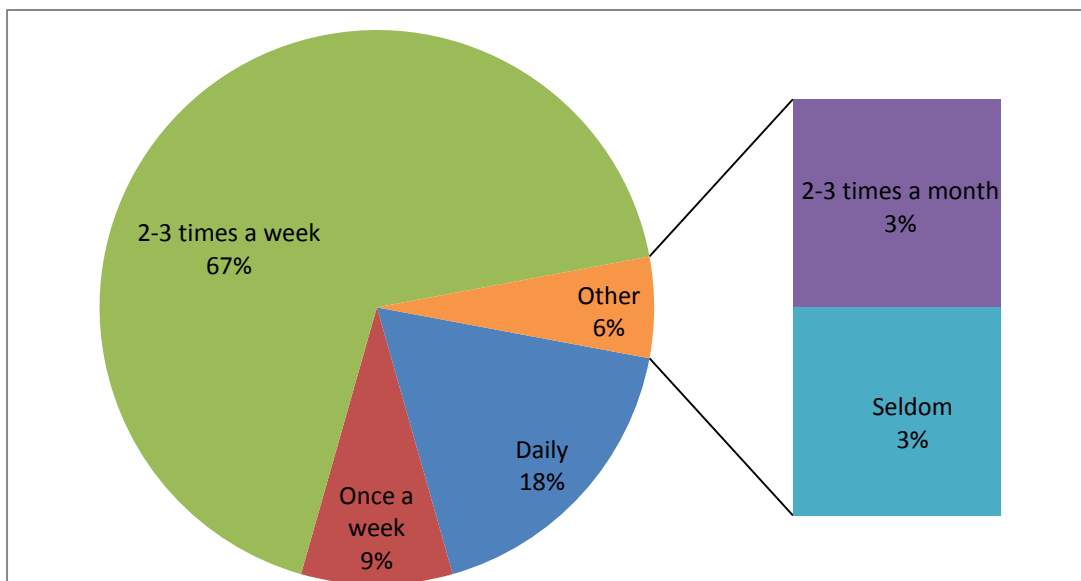


Figure 1 show that the majority of the respondents 85% visit the library often, or daily and 2-3 times a week and 6% seldom. The study revealed that the library is heavily used by students.

Purpose of the Library Visit

Figure 2: Purpose of the library visit

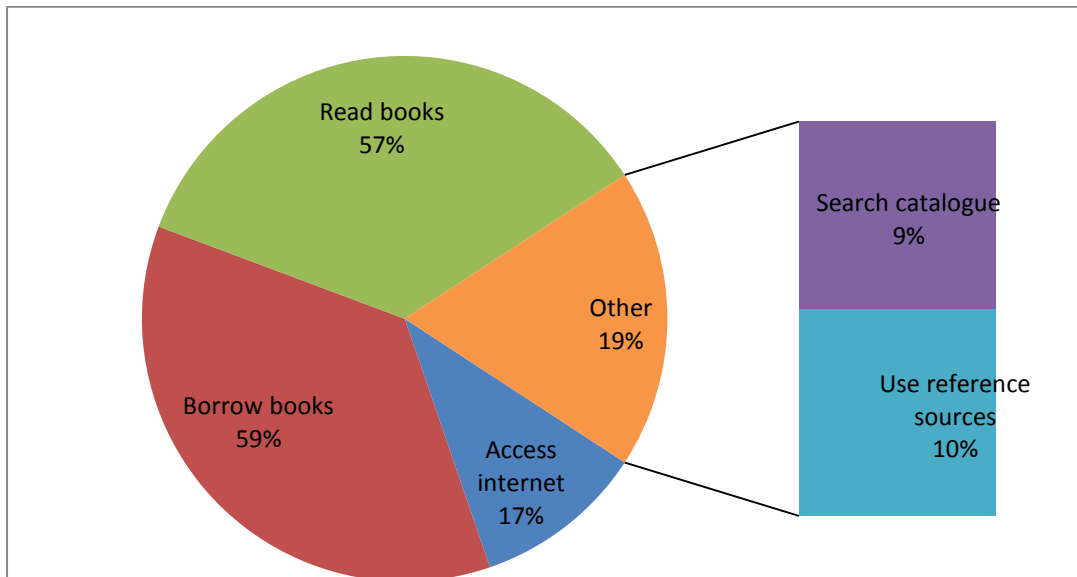
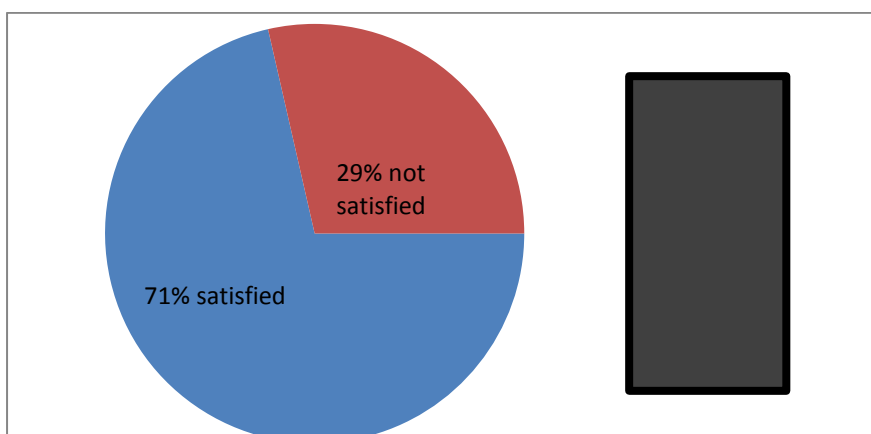


Figure 2 revealed that 57% visited the library to read books and 59% stressed that they visit the library to borrow books. 17% indicated that they visit the library to access internet and 10% for reference sources and a mere 9% to search the Library catalogue. Respondent’s comments were “library rocks”, “I use the library to study in peace”, “peace and quiet all the time” emphasised that the library is wonderful place to study and that it is a quiet place to study.

Overall Library Collection User Satisfaction

Figure 3: Overall library collection user satisfaction



Respondents were asked whether they are satisfied with the overall collection in the library and 71% of the users said that they were satisfied with the collection, and Figure 3 shows majority of the responded were satisfied with the collection available in the library. Twenty nine percent (29%) of the responded indicated that there were not satisfied.

Satisfaction with Library Services

Figure 4: Satisfaction with library services

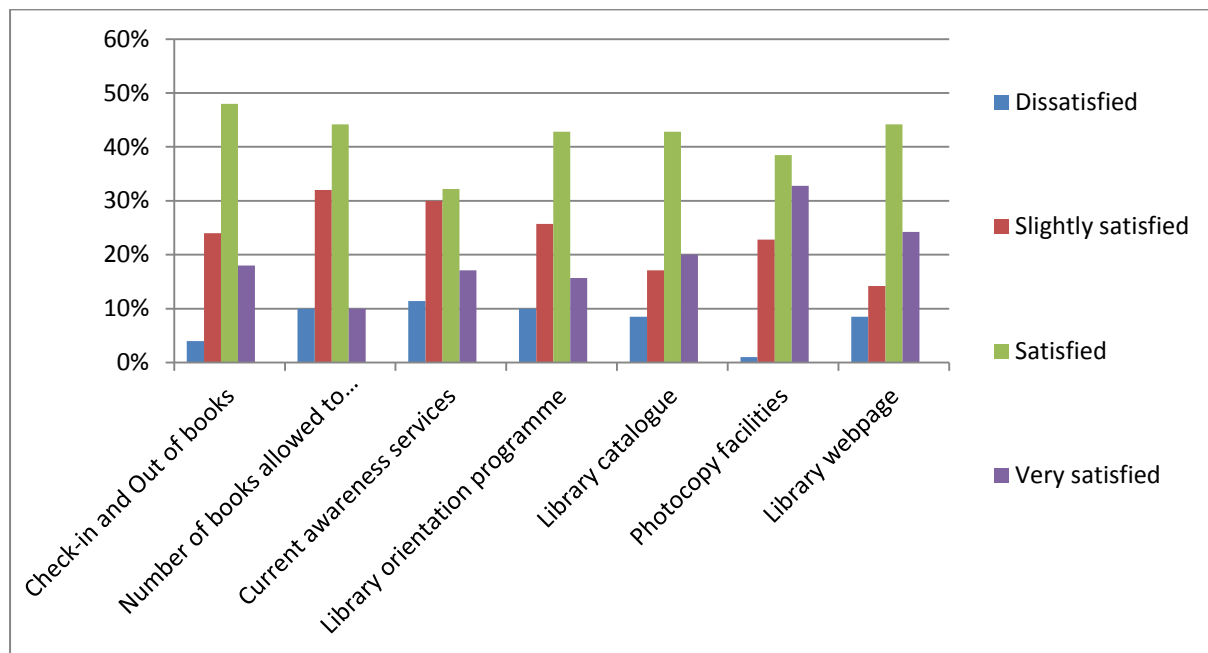
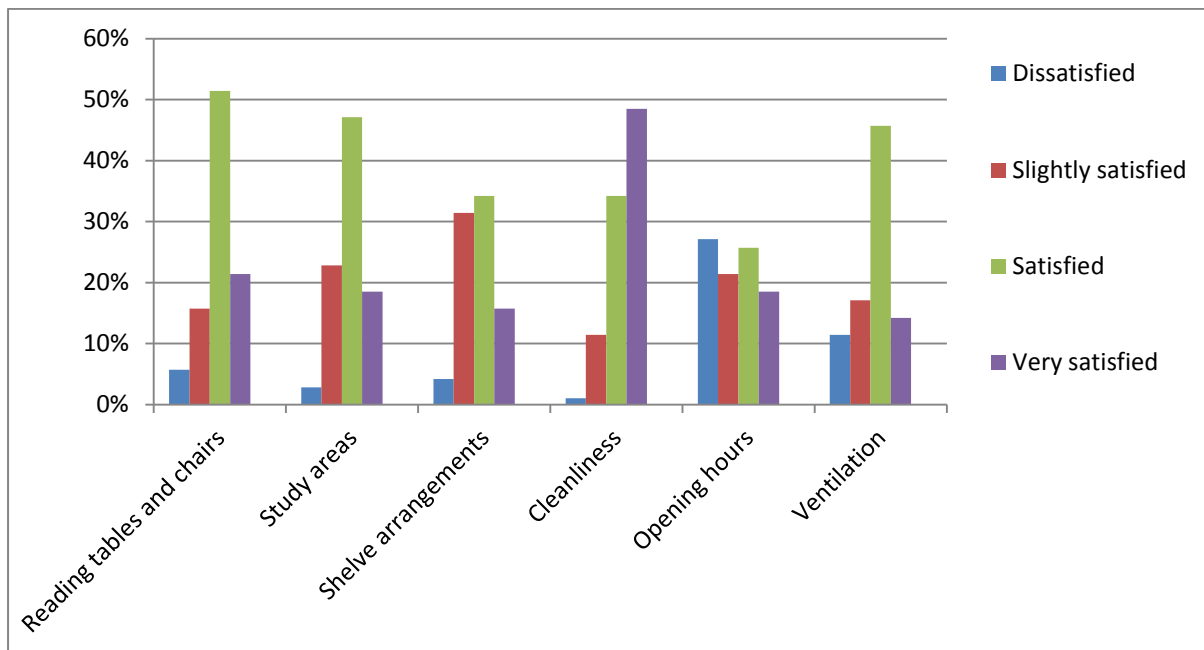


Figure 4 clearly indicates that 95% of the respondents were satisfied with the services provided by the library. Almost twenty five percent (25%) of the responded expressed dissatisfaction regarding the library current awareness services and long queues at the circulation desk were also expressed users.

Thirty two percent (32%) of the respondents expressed their dissatisfaction regarding the number of books undergraduates students are allowed to borrow. The respondents however showed that they were very satisfied with the photocopy service while 32% had comments like, “The photocopy Services is the best”.

Library Environment

Figure 5: Library Environment



Majority of the participants were satisfied about the library environment a total of 97% respondents were satisfied. They also consider the library as a desirable place to concentrate on their studies. The respondents were satisfied with the existing reading tables and chairs, study areas and ventilation. The library's cleanliness is one of the service item to receive overwhelming acknowledgement and was cited as ensuring optimum satisfaction of the users (as seen in figure 5). Thirty percent (30%) of the respondents indicated that were slightly satisfied with the library's shelf arrangement, though some highlighted that some of the library's shelves are too high. The students proposed slightly mid-sized shelves accommodate disabled students, while others called for improvement in the book collection.

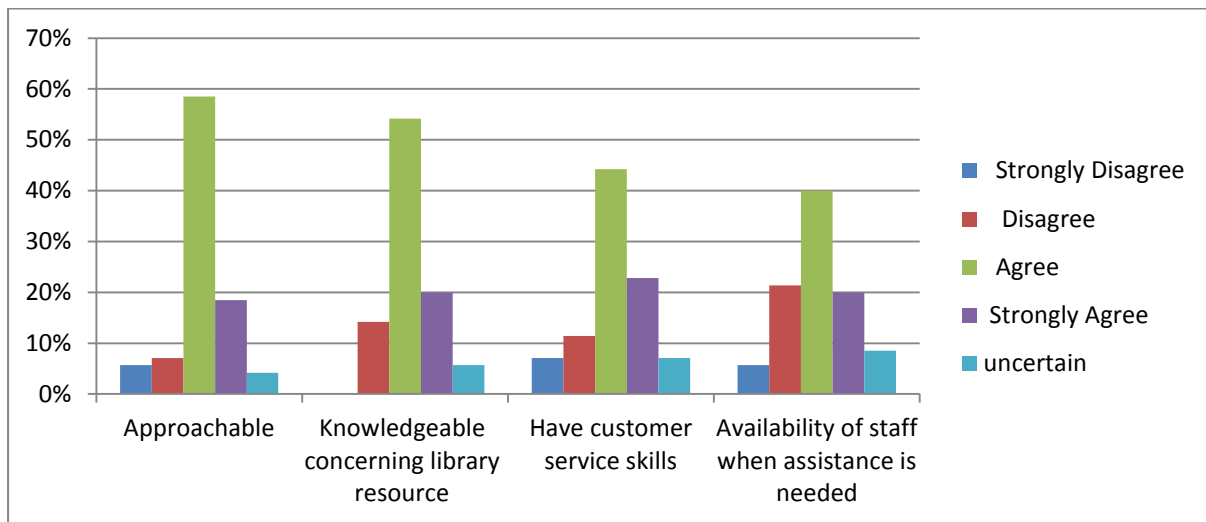
In addition 28% of the responded showed that they were not satisfied with the library opening hours as the participants suggested that the library opening hours must be extended and library services must be provided 24/7 to users. Respondents further requested that there be separate noise rooms and coffee shop.

User opinion about the library staff

Figure 6 indicated that library users are satisfied with library staff members' attitudes, the support they receive and access to materials currently stored in the facility. This clearly indicates that the library staff are aware that a well-furnished and function library is essential

for learning. Users rely on library staff for assistance with their information needs. Therefore library staff members are expected to have knowledge and be able to assist users at all times as well be approachable. Ninety eight percent (98%) of the respondent were satisfied with library staff to help the library users.

Figure 6: Users opinion about the library staff.



Some responded were dissatisfied regarding availability of staff when assistance is needed and to maintain a high level of user satisfaction amongst the users. This suggest that authorities have to take immediate remedial actions to improve the situation, and thus make an effort to introduce a national standard for benchmarking library services in order to improve the quality of university libraries (Hossain, 2012).

CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATION

This study has presented information on the user experience and satisfaction based on a survey at the University of Limpopo’s Turfloop Campus Library. The study found that on the average, the library users are satisfied with the services such as library environment, photocopy services, library webpage, library catalogue, reading area, and most importantly they are very satisfied with the library’s appearance. They rated the library as favourable place for learning, study and research. Though users were satisfied with the overall library collection they have pointed that some library books are outdated and that the library’s main reserve section needs to have latest prescribed book and the current reserve books needs to be improved. Text books were the main information sources among the undergraduate students,

and it is strongly recommended that the book collection be improved by combining new and latest edition both on the open shelves and at the reserves sections.

- From the results, of the study the following recommendations are made:
- In terms of library infrastructure, University libraries should be trend-setters and be willing to move with times and effect changes in library technology. Making use of self- checking unit system will eradicate long queues at the circulation area, and provide fast and efficient self-service to users.
- Library staff must be prompt enough in putting books back on the correct shelves rather than leaving them lying around reading tables or trolleys. The problem of incorrect shelving of books can be resolved if the library can implement the Radio Frequency Identification (RFID) and the Digital library assistant (DLA) these new library technologies will help with shelf-reading, weeding and stocktaking.
- The other implication is librarians should also do research on customer focus and user satisfaction. A University library which is well-known for its research works is normally supported by quality library services and activities. The data collected can be used for continuous research for the improvement of the library.
- In conclusion, it is hoped that the information produced through this study will be of use to the improvement of library services, and betterment of the library profession and the University of Limpopo's Turfloop Campus Library services and resources.

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