

## STUDENTS SATISFACTION WITH ACADEMIC LIBRARY RESOURCES AND SERVICES: THE COVENANT UNIVERSITY LIBRARY EXPERIENCE.

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### Abstract

*This study investigated student's satisfaction with academic library resources and services. The objectives of the study was to find out whether the students are satisfied with the library resources and services or not. 500 copies of a designed questionnaire was administered to the students that used the library during the period of the study, out of which 473 was returned and used for analysis, this represented 94.6% response rate. The finding revealed that the students use the library very often, they are satisfied with the library resources and services. It is recommended that Covenant University Library should keep on maintaining the high level of library resources and services as it leads to students (users) satisfaction, there is need for the library to improve on its resources and services to users as a world class University. It is therefore concluded that management of Library and Information Centres should pay more attention to quality and library resources and services for the benefits of library users and the image of the library.*

### Introduction

Satisfaction of library users is critical and important. However, it's important to note that no library can satisfy all its users all the time. Some libraries have very limited resources and clearly are unable to satisfy their users, whereas others are large in size, have substantial and quality holdings, and can provide a variety of services. Obviously, those libraries that are able to provide users with whatever they want will achieve higher levels of user satisfaction. Thus, the availability of resources can have a significant influence on user satisfaction. It is important to note, however, that the quality of the resources may be judged from an overall perception as to whether the library can provide access to

materials when and where needed. It is this overall perception of a library's resources that contributes to user satisfaction.

Another expectation among library users is that of competent services. In the context of academic libraries, as in other libraries, users want the staff to be knowledgeable and to be able to assist them in locating needed materials and information quickly and efficiently. When users perceive that the library staff are competent, they will feel assured that problems will be easily resolved, leading to greater satisfaction with the other services provided by the library. Jayasundara (2008) in his paper notes that user perceptions and expectation studies have become one of the most popular studies in the area of service quality in many academic libraries.

### **Literature Review**

In spite of the increase of library resources, an important aspect of an academic library is the services provided by the library, and personal interaction between users and the library staff. It is important that Libraries see to it that these services show proper levels of customer care and that the information given to the users is useful at all times. King (2005) and Hiller(2001) have mentioned that the 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 a more reliable factor in measuring the utility and effectiveness of any library. This is the reason that library user 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. By making user surveys a regular part of the library's functions, librarians can provide a comparative „snapshot“ of usage in various temporal contexts.

Thus, Christopher Millson-Martula and Vanaja Menon (1995) assert that one element of high-quality service is „the incorporation of users“ personal needs and expectations into the development of programs and service. According to them, the continued success of a service organization such as an academic library depends on the organization's ability to adjust its products and services to correspond to user needs. Similarly, Peter Herson and Phillip Calvert (1997) suggest that only customers justify the existence of a library. While

Danuta A. Nitecki (1996) also claims that the assessment of how well a library succeeds depends on the user as a judge of quality. As these views gain greater acceptance among academic librarians, librarians must orient themselves and their programs to become better customer advocates and address their problem-solving needs.

Libraries are service oriented organizations established for the provision of relevant information resources and quality services to meet their users information needs. Sowole (1995) noted that users are described as the *raison* (reason for existence) of the library. Meeting the information needs of users requires the provision of the actual information resources and services that will satisfy the needs of users. Simmonds (2001) stated several factors that can influence users satisfaction; these factors include responsiveness, competence and assurances, tangibles and resources. Sowole (1995) implored librarians to make maximum efforts to ensure that their library users derived the best possible benefits from the services they render. Materials are to be provided by libraries to support the learning, teaching and research processes and to provide assistance to users. Simmonds and Andaleeb (2001) argued that providing quality services in academic libraries is now a major issue among academic librarians; they see the library more in terms of the provision of and access to service quality than as just a physical place. Technology and automation have also changed the way people perceive libraries.

They emphasize the provision of good library service as more important to the users than the mere physical library building. This perspective as stated in Simmond's and Andaleeb's (2001) article titled: „Usage of Academic Libraries: The role of service quality, resources, and user characteristics“ is evidence in several recent studies on users satisfaction with library services with academic libraries services. The authors stressed that access to information provided by libraries is seen as more important than the materials physically available in a library. Quality service is a competitive necessity for businesses and service organizations. Assessing service quality is therefore the first step in retaining costumers in today's competitive environment.

Simmonds and Andaleeb (2001) posited that by providing quality services and satisfaction to users, academic and research libraries can distinguish their services through friendly, helpful and knowledgeable advice and the best technological resources

available. Because academic libraries users have varying needs and expectations, it is the responsibility of the library staff to know these needs and expectations and strive to meet them.

Igben (1993) noted that for a library to be most functional, the services it renders should correspond closely with the needs of its users. Ensuring that relevant information resources are provided and made accessible to users goes a long way to encourage users to visit the library more often. Simmonds and Andaleeb (2001) stated that the effectiveness of libraries has often been measured by the volume of library materials available to clients, the amount of use of services and resources, and the apparent or quantified satisfaction of clients. Song (2009) writes on designing library services based on user needs. He notes that user needs change continuously and recognizes also the need to reach out to users with new services.

Sureshchandar et al. (2002) found that service quality and customer satisfaction were highly related. User's expectations have increased as a result of rapid development of advanced information technology, increasing generation of new knowledge and information availability from both printed as well as online media. User satisfaction and optimization of resources have become important areas for libraries to maintain awareness of. Many libraries especially the university libraries are focusing on evaluation of the users' needs and their satisfaction with their services. User surveys can provide useful perceptions of service quality in libraries.

For example Texas University libraries conducted focus group studies in 2001 with graduate and undergraduate studies in order to gather specific information related to their satisfaction with and confidence in the assistance provided at library service points. The sessions revealed that users were generally pleased with the assistance provided them by professional staff at reference desks and that they found librarians to be usually patient and helpful although there were some elements of dissatisfaction identified by the respondents. The findings of such studies are being used to improve library directional tools and to improve staff training for public service staff (Crowley and Gilreath, 2002).

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Another study by Unomah, (1988). surveyed students' use of library, he discovered that students did not use library resources for various reasons, among which are students' ignorance resulting in wrong approaches in using the libraries. For instance, he found that about 69% indicated that they approached the library resources by first going to the shelves instead of the catalogues. McCarthy (1999) studied students' use of library resources at the University of Rhodes Island. The results showed that 60% of the students believed that they are effective seekers and users of library resources, only 40% were not satisfied with their search for resources in that library.

Berling, and Cudd (1997) assert that the library user is regarded as the most logical source to determine whether the library is playing its role satisfactorily or not. The resources of a library can influence its use as depicted by Adeoti, (1998) which showed that students indicated that they use the library more to read their personal books than for any other purposes. Osinulu, (1998) examines patterns of use in a university library in Nigeria by analyzing user records and data which show low use of the library due to lack of awareness.

The emerging role of the libraries as an information professional in the new knowledge dispensation is enhanced by two main challenges. First, the value of information lies in the ability to access and adapt to suit new applications and improve the efficiency of existing systems. Universities are called upon not only to generate new knowledge but also to be able to market the innovations that have been generated out of knowledge transferred and adapted. Since this requires an atmosphere of research, libraries are challenged to provide access to relevant information by applying ICTs to facilitate quick, efficient access, integrate and repackage information for the end-user that will capacitate higher educational institutions to conduct research.

Second, the new knowledge economy emphasizes that knowledge from wherever it is produced can be transferred to where it is needed. Library use study as an aspect of users' studies is a vital aid for effective planning and management in academic libraries. Most evaluative studies on library use have always concentrated on students' use of academic

libraries. Though, students are an important part of the set up of academic institutions and perhaps the major users of academic library facilities, nevertheless, the staff of academic institutions, particularly the academic staff also use the library. The need for good libraries in higher institutions of learning cannot be over-emphasized, as the quality of any education depends on the library, not the library as a magnificent building but the use of it. It is important that libraries serving academic communities have the broadest possible collection of books and other essential materials. The academic library is an inexhaustible store house of knowledge, where one can go at will, unrestricted to help himself to the whole field of knowledge and practical life of the past, present and prognostications for the future. If a library is well stocked and the students know they can find more information than what they are taught, they will use the library maximally.

### **Profile of Covenant University and Its Library**

Covenant University is located in Ota, Ogun State, Nigeria. It was established in October, 2002. Presently, it has two colleges: College of Development Studies and College of Science and Technology also there is school of postgraduate studies. In addition to the traditional mission of Universities of teaching, research, and community service, Covenant University is also saddled with the mandate of raising new generation of leaders.

The Covenant University Library is popularly known as Centre for Learning Resources. It is fully automated and uses Millennium library software which is web based. The library has a collection of over 110, 000 volumes of books, 40,000 journal titles, and over 9 online databases which contain thousands of electronic journals and textbooks. It has a seating capacity of over 3,500.

### **Statement of Problem**

The question in mind is why should library administrators care about patron satisfaction? Some think patron satisfaction is of secondary importance that the purpose of a library is to provide information and services and that evaluation of the library performance ought to be judged from that perspective alone. However, others recognize that failing to satisfy the patron is failing to serve the patron. This is not about just making patrons “feel good.”

There is a basic reason for focusing on patron satisfaction: Who is the best judge of whether a patron has been served well or poorly? Professional librarians may know whether they have provided accurate, timely information in response to a request. That may not be enough. Clearly, accurate and timely information is a minimum requirement, but unless the patron is satisfied, in general, the service could have been better. Hence user expectations and satisfaction has been used to determine the service quality which is been seen as critical for service organizations to position themselves strongly in a competitive environment.

**Objectives of the study are to:**

- determine if the students uses the library.
- determine if the users are satisfied or not with the library resources.
- Determine if the users ar satisfied with the library services.
- Identify areas that need to be improved upon by the library.

**Methods**

Survey research design was used for the study. Population of the study comprised the entire registered library users. Questionnaire were designed and 500 copies were administered to all the students that uses the library during the period of this research work, and this comprises of both the undergraduate and post postgraduate students, out of which 473 were returned and used for this study this represents 94.6% response rate..

**Findings and Discussion**

**Table1: Sex of Respondents**

Sex of Respondents	Frequency	Percentage
Male	212	44.8%
Female	261	55.2%
Total	473	100%

Table 1 above shows the sex of respondents. 212 (44.8%) are male while the remaining 261 (55.2%) respondents are female.

**Table 2: Level of Respondents**

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Level of Respondents	Frequency	Percentage
Post Graduate Students	62	13.1%
500 Level	88	18.6%
400 Level	116	24.5%
300 Level	81	17.1%
200 Level	94	19.9%
100 Level	32	6.8%
Total	473	100%

Table 2 revealed the level of respondents. 62 (13.1%) of the respondents are postgraduate students, 88 (18.6%) are in 500 level, 116 (24.5%) respondents are in 400 level, 81 (17.1%) are in 300 level also 94 (19.9 %) are in 200 level while 34 (6.8%) of the respondents are in 100 level.

**Table 3: Frequency of library use by students**

How often do you use the Library	Frequency	Percentage
Very Often	322	68.1%
Sometimes	151	31.9%
Never	-	-
Total	473	100%

Table 3 shows the frequency of library use by the respondents. 322 (68.1 %) of the respondents use the library very often, while 151 (31.9%) use the library sometimes.

**Table 4: Questions on student's satisfaction with Library Resources**

Library Resources	Strongly Agree	Agree	Un - Decided	Disagree	Strongly Disagree	Total
I am satisfied with the volumes of text books in my field of study?	162 (34.2%)	294 (62.2%)	17 (3.6%)	-	-	473 (100%)
I am satisfied with the volumes of reference books	179 (37.8%)	253 (53.5%)	32 (6.8%)	9 (1.9%)		473 (100%)

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in my field of study?						
I am satisfied with the number of journals in my field	173 (36.6%)	251 (53.1%)	43 (9.1%)	6 (1.2%)	-	473 (100%)
I am satisfied with the number of databases available in my field	218 (46.1%)	255 (53.9%)	-	-	-	473 (100%)
I am satisfied with the currency of the materials	416 (88.0%)	53 (11.2%)	4 (0.8%)	-	-	473 (100%)
I am satisfied with the WebPAC for searching of materials	291 (61.5%)	167 (35.3%)	15 (3.2%)	-	-	473 (100%)
I am satisfied with the number of computers available in the E- Library	161 (34.1%)	237 (50.1%)	63 (13.3%)	12 (2.5%)	-	473 (100%)
I am satisfied with the library Temperature and lighting	279 (59.0%)	153 (32.3%)	33 (7.0%)	8 (1.7%)	-	473 (100%)
I am satisfied with the seating capacity of the library	317 (67.0%)	115 (24.3%)	41 (8.7%)	-	-	473 (100%)

Table 4 above revealed information on user's satisfaction with the library resources. The different library resources were highlighted and the responses show in the above table.

**Table 5: Questions on student's satisfaction with Library Services**

Library Services	Strongly Agree	Agree	Un- Decided	Disagree	Strongly Disagree	Total
I am satisfied with users education programme i received	115 (24.3%)	323 (68.3%)	35 (7.4%)	-	-	473 (100%)
I am satisfied with services	128	294	33	18	-	473

from the Library staff	(27.1%)	(62.2%)	(6.9%)	(3.8%)		(100%)
I am satisfied with the library policy on loan period	257 (54.3%)	178 (37.6%)	-	25 (5.3%)	13 (2.8%)	473 (100%)
I am satisfied with the number of books i can borrow at a time	123 (26.0%)	337 (71.3%)	11 (2.3%)	2 (0.4%)	-	473 (100%)
I am satisfied with the opening hours of the library	295 (62.4%)	173 (36.6%)	5 (1.0%)	-	-	473 (100%)
I am satisfied with the photocopying and printing services in the library	-	89 (18.8%)	223 (47.2%)	98 (20.7%)	63 (13.3%)	473 (100%)
I am satisfied with the bindery services in the library	93 (19.7%)	116 (24.5%)	78 (16.5%)	122 (25.8%)	64 (13.5%)	473 (100%)
I am satisfied with the reference services i received	237 (50.1%)	188 (39.7%)	43 (9.1%)	5 (1.1%)	-	473 (100%)

Table 5 above sort for information on the students' satisfaction with the library services. The different services that the library rendered to the students were pointed out and responses were also received as to whether they are satisfied with the services or not.

**Summary of findings.**

The study revealed that:

1. The library in Covenant University is well utilized by students.
2. Both the undergraduate at different level and postgraduate students uses the library.
3. There is high level of satisfaction with the library resources by the students .physical observation by the researchers revealed that the library has over 101,000 volumes of

books ,and the book are very recent at present there are 2012 edition of books and journals on the shelves.

4. The students are also satisfied with the services of the library to a very large extent.
5. Photocopying, scanning and binding services need to be improved upon.
6. The study revealed that there is relationship between quality, quantity resources/ services and students satisfaction.

### **Conclusion**

There is need for Covenant University library to keep on maintaining the high level of resources and services as a world class university as quality resources and services will lead to high level of user's satisfaction. Photocopying, scanning and binding services need to be improved upon. The library should build on her strength and at the same time improve on the challenges. Conclusively, user's satisfaction is the hall mark of any library and information centre. Therefore, management of library and information centres should pay more attention to quality and quantity library resources and services as it leads to user's satisfaction.

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