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Users Satisfaction with Academic Library Services by Faculty and Students at the University of Health and Allied Sciences, Ho.

ABSTRACT

Academic libraries today are facing their greatest challenge since the explosion in tertiary education and academic publishing all over the world. In every institution, there is an existence of academic libraries to support teaching, learning and research work. Academic libraries were mostly established to support higher learning institutions in order to promote research teaching and learning in the universities. Faculty and students mostly make use of the library for information they may need to satisfy their needs in academic discourse. This paper examines the relationship between service quality and users satisfaction at UHAS and also examines how user surveys have been employed. The study revealed that the faculty and students who formed the population of the study were found to have used the library mostly. It was revealed that users were satisfied with the services of the library.

Keywords: Users, satisfaction, Academic, Library, Services, Faculty, Students, UHAS

INTRODUCTION

Background to the Study

Academic libraries are libraries attached to academic institutions of higher learning to serve teaching and research needs of students and staff. These libraries serve two complementary purposes: to support the university curriculum, and to support research of the university faculty and students. The library plays a key role in the nation building process. Adeniran, (2011). noted that academic libraries today are facing their greatest challenge since the explosion in tertiary education and academic publishing all over the world. The author further argued that the global digital revolution is affecting both the traditional forms of the creation, organization and dissemination of knowledge and the world of tertiary education itself. Academic libraries should strive to survive and grow their user base focusing on meeting their users' expectations. Dahan, Taib, Zainudin, & Ismail (2016) in the paper noted that user perceptions and expectation studies

have become one of the most popular studies in the area of service quality in many academic libraries. The user expectations and satisfaction has been used to determine the service quality which is seen as critical for service organizations to position themselves strongly in a competitive environment Jayasundara, 2008.

The Structure of the University

The University of Health and Allied Sciences, Ho (UHAS) was established by an Act of Parliament (Act 828 in December, 2011) and envisioned to become a pre-eminent research and practically oriented health educational institution dedicated to community service. The main campus including the central administration is in Ho. A second campus is located in Hohoe.

The University started operations in September, 2012 with 154 students. Students' population currently stands at 3,752 (3,727 undergraduates and 25 postgraduates) while the staff strength is 611. Staff to student ratio in UHAS is 17:1, which is currently the best among all state universities in Ghana.

The University currently runs eighteen (18) undergraduate programmes in six (6) schools and one (1) institute, namely; School of Allied Health Sciences (SAHS), School of Basic and Biomedical Sciences (SBBS), School of Medicine (SOM), School of Nursing and Midwifery (SONAM), School of Public Health (SPH), School of Pharmacy (SOP) and Institute of Health Research (IHR). Others yet to be established are School of Sports and Exercise Medicine, School of Dentistry, Institute of Medical Education and Institute of Traditional and Alternate Medicine.

Statement of the Problem

Libraries are established to provide information resources and services to meet users' information needs. The purpose of a library is defeated if its users are not able to meet the satisfaction level they required with the resources and services it provides. This study is to find out if users of UHAS library are being satisfied with the services the library renders to them.

Objectives of the Study

This study was undertaken to:

1. Identify who amongst the academic staff and students used the library mostly.
2. Identify any challenges faced by users in obtaining needed library materials.
3. Examine the extent of users' satisfaction with the library services.

Research Question

The study was guided by the following questions conducted at UHAS;

1. Which academic staff and students have the highest frequency of library use?
2. Does the user obtain materials on current research areas in the library?
3. Are users' able to access the needed information easily?
4. What is the users' opinion of the conduciveness of the library environment?
5. Does the users' find the library staff efficiency relatively satisfactory with the services they render?

Limitation of the study

The scope of study is narrowed to a single public university in Ghana that is UHAS. The data is a representative; it limits itself to the University faculty members and students' on campus in all the seven schools and dealt with 50 participants. Extending the selection of participants to other campuses or increasing the sample size will have altered the results of the study.

LITERATURE REVIEW

Libraries are services 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 user's 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 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 and access to service quality than as just a physical place. Technology and automation have also changed the way people perceived libraries. As a result, the roles of libraries and librarians themselves have been re-evaluating their role as reflected in many literatures. The librarians should implore high provision of library services as more important to users than the mere physical library building. The perspective as stated in Simmonds & Andaleeb's article entitled: Usage of Academic Libraries: the role of service quality, resources, and user characteristics (2001) evidenced in several recent studies on users' satisfaction with academic library 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 customers in today's competitive environment. When library customers are faced with a variety of alternative channels of information delivery, many of which are more convenient and can compete on cost, libraries need to re-examine the range and quality of their services they render and develop systems for proper interrogations and consultations and cooperation with their customer needs and expectations as the topmost priority in order to meet the satisfaction needs they want. Abagai (1993) noted that the use of library by users and indeed their satisfaction with library services depends on the availability of suitable learning materials, accommodation and competent staff in the library. Furthermore, Abagai, argued that the main objective of any library is to support the mother institution so that the

objectives laid down can be achieved through systematic acquisition and organization of all forms of recorded information in all fields pertinent to the goals of the institution and by making such information available to the members of the institution. Again, Simmonds and Andaleeb (2001) posited that by providing quality services and satisfaction to users, academic and research libraries distinguish their services through friendly, helpful and knowledgeable advice and the best technological resources available. Because academic library uses have varying needs and expectations, it is the responsibility of the library staff to know these needs and expectations in order to strive high 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 and this helps in a long way to encourage users to regularly visit the library more often. Again, Simmonds and Andaleeb (2001) stated that the effectiveness of libraries has often been measured by the volume of library materials available to patrons, the amount of use of services and resources, and apparent satisfaction of patrons. Song (2009) writes on designing library services based on user needs. He noted that user needs change continuously and recognize also the need to reach out to users with new services. Ikolo (2015) evaluates the services and collection of the Federal Medical Centre Library, Owerri, Nigeria. His findings revealed that the librarians were not proactive and that there was no personalized information service in place. The author concludes that the basic tools and facilities for the delivery of qualitative library services are either available in inadequate quantities or completely non-existence; this according him explains why most of the patrons are not satisfied with the library services. A number of recommendations were offered to improve the situation. Dougherty, Jones, Lahr, & Pheatt, (2016) said when a customer contacts companies for a service, they care about certain things. Their recent research demonstrates that most customers care most about two things: is the frontline employee knowledgeable? And is the problem resolved on the first call? The result shows that more than half of the customers surveyed across industries said they have had bad service experience and nearly the same fraction think many of the companies they interacted with do not understand or care about them. On the average, 40% of customers who suffer through bad experiences stop doing business with the offending company. The findings here serve as inspiration for this study. Mundt (2003) conducted a research on users' satisfaction in order to determine the quality of service in selected libraries.

The survey carried out indicates that comparative data are suitable means of identifying cases of “best practice” in service institutions, customers satisfaction is regarded as customer can get more benefits than their cost (Liu and Yen, 2010). Customer satisfaction plays the most important role in total quality management. In comparison with other traditional performance measures, customers’ satisfaction is probably less sensitive to seasoned fluctuations, changes in costs or changes in accounting practices (Kotler, 2006) therefore; many researchers consider customer satisfaction to be the best indicator of a company’s future profit. Martensen and Gronholdt (2003) reviewed literatures and survey focused groups indicating that key determinant for library service quality were: electronic resources, collection of printed materials or publications, other library services, technical facilities, library environment and human side of user service. Majid et al. (2001) applied a questionnaire survey to investigate all possible factors that had great impact on library performances. The result showed that collections equipment and physical facilities were viewed as most important issues. Brady et al. (2001) employed LISREL analysis to study customers of fast –food restaurant in America and Latin America the result indicated that there was a certain relationship between a quality and customer satisfaction based on different cultural background. In addition, service quality had significantly impacted on customers’ satisfaction. Sureshchander et al. (2002) found that service quality and customer satisfaction were highly related. Users’ expectations have increased as a result of rapid development of advanced information technology, increasing generation of new knowledge and information availability from print as well as online media. Users’ satisfaction and optimization of resources have become an important area for libraries to maintain awareness of. Many libraries especially university libraries are focusing on evaluating the users’ needs and their satisfaction with their services. Users’ 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 and be confident in the assistance provided at the 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). Similarly, Hiller (2001) has mentioned 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 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 in the 21st century. Surveys have been used as a tool to assess service quality and user satisfaction.

METHODOLOGY

A survey research method was adopted for the study because similar studies adopted this approach. Population of the study comprised of 200 and was shared among faculty and students out of which the questionnaires were distributed to 50 faculty and 150 students from seven (7) schools at UHAS, namely, School of Medicine (SOM), School of Pharmacy (SOP), School of Nursing and Midwifery (SONAM), School of Basic and Biomedical Sciences (SBBS), School of Allied Health Sciences (SAHS), School of Public Health (SPH) and School of Sports and Exercise Medicine (SSEM) to collect data. A closed-ended questionnaire was used to collect the required data from participants as it was convenient for both the participants as well as the researcher. A total of 199 questionnaires were duly completed and found useable for the study. The data was analysed using simple percentages and frequency counts.

Table 1: *Demographics of Respondent(s) based on Gender*

Gender	Faculty	Percent (%)	Students	Percent (%)
Male	21	42.0	65	43.33
Female	28	56.0	85	56.67
No Response	1	2.0	0	0
Total	50	100	150	100

Field Data, 2021

The data showed both males and females holistically participated in the study with a total population of 199 out of 200 participated and the responses were good. 1 (2.0%) faculty did not indicate gender.

Table 2: *Status of Respondents'*

Status	Frequency	Percent (%)
Faculty	49	98.0
Students	150	100.0
No response	1	2.0
Total	200	100

Field Data, 2021

The data presented in table 2 showed the breakdown of the target population by status. It revealed that 49(98.0%) were faculty and 150(100.0%) were students while 1(2.0%) of the respondent did not indicate the status. This informs that the participation in the study although voluntary but was relevant to the satisfaction needs of the respondents.

Table 3: *Breakdown of Respondents' by schools/Department*

School/Department	Faculty	(%)	Students	(%)
School of Medicine(SOM)	5	10%	20	13.33%
School of Pharmacy(SOP)	8	16%	25	16.67%
School of Nursing & Midwifery(SONAM)	13	26%	30	20%
School Basic and Biomedical Sciences(SBBS)	8	16%	22	14.67%
School of Allied Health Sciences(SAHS)	5	10%	18	12%
School of Public Health(SPH)	7	4%	22	14.67%
School of Sports and Exercise Medicine(SSEM)	3	6%	13	8.67%
No response	1	2%	0	0%
Total	50	100	150	100

Field Data, 2021

The data collated based on departmental response was encouraging in the sense that majority of the respondents 36 faculty members, representing (72.0%) and 99 students representing (66.0%) from four schools out of seven sees the need to part take in the study and have shown their interest and willingness on the feedbacks received.

Table 4: *Frequency of Respondents' use of the University Library*

Frequency Use	Faculty	(%)	Students	(%)
Very often	10	20.0	45	30.0
Often	25	50.0	100	66.67
Not often	14	28.0	5	3.33
No response	1	2.0	0	0
Total	50	100	150	100

Field Data, 2021

From Table 4, it was revealed that 10(20.0%) of faculty and 45(30.0%) of students use the library very often whereas more than half of the faculty 25 (50.0%) and students 100 (66.67%) said they use the library often while the representation of faculty and students who do not often use the library were marginal this represents 14 (28.0%) of faculty and 5 (3.33%) of students. This suggests that the library is relevant in the development of the learning outcomes of students and also assist faculty in research; hence, its use should be encouraged at all times. Also, most of the respondents have seen the use of library.

Table 5: *Perception of Access to Resources (materials) on current research areas*

Perception of Access	Faculty	(%)	Students	(%)
Very satisfied	5	10.0	40	26.66
Satisfied	30	60.0	85	56.67
Dissatisfied	14	28.0	25	16.67
No response	1	2.0	0	0
Total	50	100	150	100

Field Data, 2021

Based on the responses captured in Table 5, access to resource materials on current research areas by faculty and students were very good. This showed that 30(60.0%) of faculty and 85 (56.67%) of students were satisfied with access to materials on current research areas of interest to them and has helped to facilitate their work as well as support the faculty in teaching and learning and preparation of their lessons. A faculty did not give his or her respond to the data reported. Both faculty and students were satisfied with the materials stocked in the library and its easy accessibility and retrieval.

Table 6: *The Process of Obtaining needed Information for research from the Library promptly*

Process of Information	Faculty	(%)	Students	(%)
Very satisfied	5	10%	35	23.33%
Satisfied	35	70%	105	70%
Dissatisfied	9	18%	10	6.67%
No response	1	2%	0	0
Total	50	100	150	100

Field Data, 2021

From Table 6, 35(70.0%) of faculty and 105(70.0%) of students were satisfied as they obtained the needed information from the library for their academic work and research activities whereas very few were dissatisfied and 1(2.0%) of faculty did not give any respond. It implied that the library meets the needed information needs of their clients promptly.

Table 7: Respondents' Perception of the library environment

Perception	Faculty	(%)	Students	(%)
Yes	35	70%	145	96.67%
Somehow	15	30%	5	3.33%
No	0	0	0	0
Total	50	100	150	100

Field Data, 2021

When the participants were asked on the perception of the library environment, It was revealed that majority representing 35(70.0%) of faculty and 145(96.67%) of students said “Yes” whereas 15(30.0%) of faculty said “Somehow”. This response from the faculty was in line with the fact that the space available is not enough; hence there is a need for more space. It clearly shows that the library environment is conducive in terms of its serene, independent nature and comfort for leaning and research activities but lacks space.

Table 8: Respondents' Perception of the staff efficiency

Perception	Faculty	(%)	Students	(%)
Yes	40	80%	135	90%
Somehow	10	20%	15	10%
No	0	0	0	0
Total	50	100	150	100

Field Data, 2021

The data presented therefore indicates that the library staffs were efficient and effective in the discharge of their routine duties. This can be seen from the table above. The response again showed that the staff of the library provided relevant and personalized services to the users and also assist them with their information needs on timely basis. In summary, the participants were happy with the services rendered to them by the library staff.

DISCUSSION

The findings of this study revealed that users' satisfaction is a function of the quality of staff and services of a library. It implies that user-satisfaction with services in libraries which are well-stocked and the materials properly arranged and labeled by well-qualified experienced staff would be significantly higher than user satisfaction with libraries with less qualified and impolite staff. Users would always be encouraged to make use of the library where the quality of services rendered to them will help satisfy their requests. It was revealed that provision of relevant information on materials, access points and conducive environment for learning, teaching and research lead to an increase in the use of the library.

These findings confirm the earlier findings of Simmonds and Andaleeb (2001), Abagai (1993), Martensen and Gronholdt (2003), King (2005) and Hiller (2001). These studies observed in their findings revealed that with qualified and experienced library staff, quality services are rendered to users who will always be encouraged to visit the library again. These findings found out that if services rendered to users correspond with their needs, if users' needs are identified and satisfied and if easy access points to library e-resources is provided with conducive environment is also created for teaching and research activities, readers would be encouraged to visit and use the library resources frequently.

CONCLUSION

Based on the findings of this study, it was concluded that users of UHAS library were satisfied with the library services, however, there is a need for improvement in the services provided by the library. The purpose of this study is to enable the library to improve on the services it renders to the university community as a whole as captured in the questionnaire used for the study. This research paper would be needful to libraries to improve upon library services especially in supporting faculty in teaching and research. This study would be made available to the university library management for implementation.

RECOMMENDATIONS

This study was carried out to examine users' satisfaction with academic library services precisely at UHAS library. The study aimed at identifying who among the faculty and students used the library mostly; and examine the level of users' satisfaction with library services; it was recommended that:

1. Management of UHAS library should ensure that users have inputs in what the library would stock.
2. Management of UHAS library should seek audience /attention with the faculty on books the library should acquire.
3. The user community should be adequately informed on materials that are available on the University library OPAC system as well as the website.
4. The management of UHAS library should endeavor to seek the opinion of users of the library on how the library services can further be improved.
5. The management of the library should intensify efforts to enhance the accessibility of books and internet access in the electronic library to be fully operational.
6. UHAS library management should organize proper in-service training for staff to further improve upon their skills to give quality services to users.
7. Students should be sensitized with the importance and types of materials in the library during library orientation and how they can use the materials for their academic work such as; assignments and their research works.
8. Management should ensure that good channels such as; (suggestion boxes or whatsapp lines or electronic mails) are provided in order to receive feedbacks from users who may need urgent attention.
9. Management should make provision to expand the sitting capacity of the library to contain larger number of library users.

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