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ANALYSIS OF CUSTOMER SATISFACTION WITH LIBRARY SERVICES AT THE SOKOINE NATIONAL AGRICULTURAL LIBRARY (SNAL) IN MOROGORO REGION IN TANZANIA

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Abstract

This paper analyses customer satisfaction with services of the Sokoine National Agricultural Library (SNAL) using a mixed method approach. Both qualitative and quantitative data were collected using questionnaire and interviews, which were supplemented by document analysis. A total of 72 respondents were selected using simple random and purposive sampling procedures. Data were analysed descriptively and were presented in tables, pie charts and percentages. The expectancy-disconfirmation theory with Four-Level Zone of Tolerance (ZoT) developed by Oliver (1980) guided data analysis in this study.

Findings indicate that leaning materials and services provided by SNAL are relatively sufficient due to satisfaction level of majority of customers being over 50%. This shows that the library has relevant learning materials which mostly meet users' satisfaction. However, some respondents showed dissatisfaction with challenges they faced in accessing library resources due to: poor arrangement of books in shelves that made users to spend a lot of time in searching materials, lack of adequate security in the Library that made some users' properties in their bags temporarily kept in the library being stolen and lack of good customer care practices from some library staff.

The study recommends the factors prompting users' dissatisfaction be addressed so as to regain customers' satisfaction and loyalty to the library.

Key words: Customers/users, satisfaction, dissatisfaction and services

1.0 Introduction

Customer satisfaction is a concept widely used in private business organisations to determine factors that positively or negatively influence customers' wants, needs and demands for organizational products and services. The major purpose being to take rectification measures in case there will be factors that make customers dissatisfied with products and services offered.

As a result of increasing information providers, libraries came to realize that they are not the sole provider of information services needed by their customers. And as technology kept on advancing, the number of customers used to pay physical visits to libraries kept on decreasing. This made library scholars to see the need of conducting customer satisfaction studies so as to determine factors that

encourage or discourage their customers from using their services so that improvement measures can be taken to justify to the parent organisations and the general public that libraries are still important to the surrounding communities.

This study is therefore, going to examine factors that make users satisfied or dissatisfied with library services from the research conducted at the Sokoine National Agricultural Library (SNAL). The paper is divided into five sections including this introduction. Section two focuses on the review of literature on the concept of customer satisfaction in detail, Section three dwells on the methodology used in the study, Section four depicts findings of the study in question, and chapter five provides conclusion and recommendations.

2.0 Review of Literature

This section dwells on the theoretical literature review about the concept of customer satisfaction and the theory/model used, including empirical literature review that focuses on the findings of previous researchers about the customer satisfaction as shown below:

2.1 Theoretical literature review

In order to understand customer satisfaction, it is useful to identify who is a customer and what does satisfaction means to such a customer. According to Grigoroudis and Siskos (2009), a customer is a person who assesses the quality of a resource or a service. And according to Oxford Dictionary of English (2010) satisfaction means fulfillment of one's wishes, expectations, or needs, or the pleasure derived from this.

Therefore, customer satisfaction can be explained as the fulfillment of a person's needs and expectations after evaluating and using a product or service. Since satisfaction is a subjective concept (e.g. customer needs, emotions) and a resource or service being an objective concept, satisfaction or dissatisfaction may vary from one person to the other for a given product or service (Shodhganga, 2013).

According to Kottler (2006) customer satisfaction is a personal reaction of either ecstasy or discontent resulting when balancing a product perceived performance in relation to the expectations. Satisfaction or dissatisfaction of library users can be observed through a library evaluation. The evaluation of

library services should be conducted periodically in order to monitor user's satisfaction with library resources.

Customer satisfaction or dissatisfaction may result from either confirmation or disconfirmation of individual expectations regarding a service or product. Satisfaction or dissatisfaction is often associated with interaction of customers with the service providers and the outcomes experienced by service users from such interactions (CSSP, 2007). Satisfaction occurs when discrepancy is not found when comparing perceptions against a standard (e.g. expectations) and vice –versa.

In the context of library, customer satisfaction refers to the situation in which customers are interested to continue using library services, because of perceived benefits they gain. It is a measure of how much the library is performing, in terms of whether or not its learning resources and services are satisfying customers. It is an important concept that need to be studied so as to get customers views, in particular of those who are dissatisfied so that deficiencies they pinpoint can be corrected by improving learning resources and services.

In this study, customer satisfaction with library resources and services is analysed using the expectancy-discomfirmation theory with Four Zones of Tolerance (ZoT) formulated by Oliver (1980) as shown below:

2.2 Expectancy-Discomfirmation Theory

This theory is defined as the consumer's responses to the evaluation of a perceived discrepancy between the pre-conceptualized performance standard and the actual performance of the service after a customer had experienced using it (Cristobal, 2018). This means that when performance is greater than expectations (or other pre-conceptualized standards) it results in a positive disconfirmation and satisfaction occurs. When performance is less than expectations (or other pre- conceptualized standards) it results in a negative disconfirmation and dissatisfaction occurs (Cristobal, 2018). .

The term disconfirmation refers to the discrepancy between two concepts that is the discrepancy between a pre-consumption standard (such as expectations or desires) and actual performance (Spreng and Page, 2003). It can thus be noted that disconfirmation is a difference between a standard (expectations or wishes) and the perceived level of any attribute. According to Oliver (1980),

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disconfirmation is evaluated as a distinct cognitive state, subjectively perceived by the consumer, which therefore can be measured irrespective of its antecedents. On the other hand ,confirmation which is in the middle of the model refers to moderate satisfaction or indifferences.

To further elaborate the Theory, before using a service, customers have some pre-conceptualized standards in their minds that guide their decision to use a resource or a service. After using it customers evaluate performance of the service against pre- conceptualized standards to judge whether or not a resource or a service satisfies their needs.

In this theory, confirmation which is a standard zone in the middle of the model occurs when performance and expectations match that result in moderate satisfaction or indifference as hinted above. And higher satisfaction occurs towards the direction of positive disconfirmation from the standard zone of moderate satisfaction or indifference, while dissatisfaction occurs in the direction of negative disconfirmation which lies in the defective zone from the standard zone as shown in Figure one below:

According to the model, the variables: dissatisfied, satisfied, delighted and surprised are outcomes of experiences/feelings of the customer after consumption of a given resource or service.

Figure 1: Four-level Zone of Tolerance (ZOT): Determining user satisfaction/dissatisfaction level
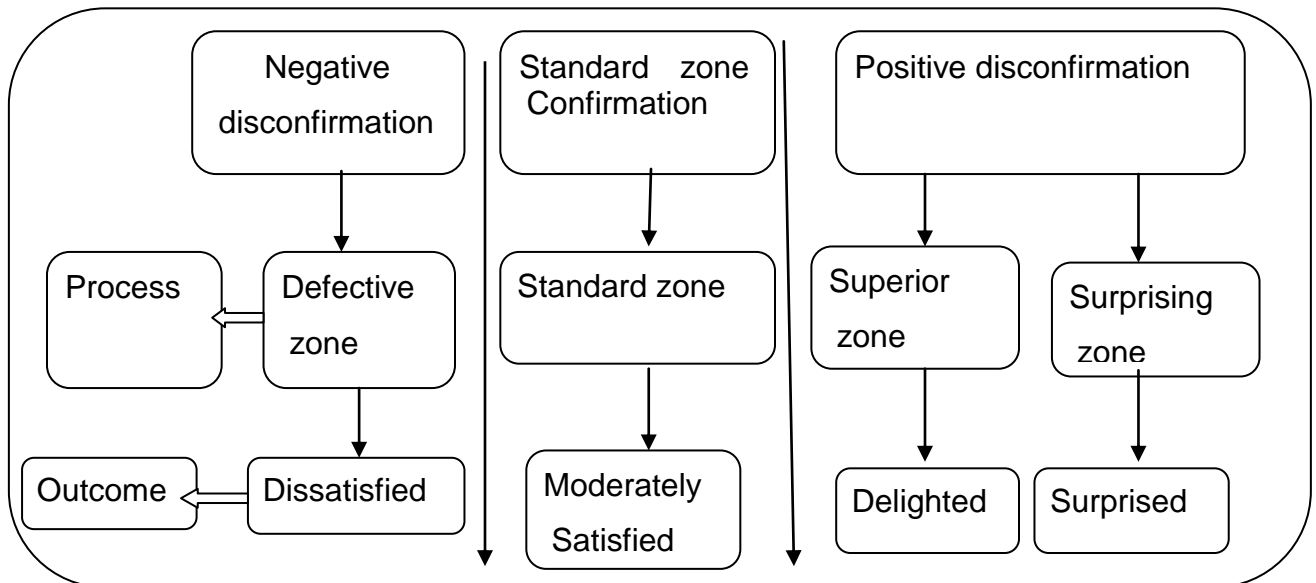
Adapted from Oliver, 1980

2.3 Empirical literature review

A study conducted by Solanke and Nwalo (2016) illustrated various factors that contributes to user satisfaction which includes: availability of current information, facilities and assistance from library staff.

Tiemo and Ateboh (2016) in their study concluded that, users were totally dissatisfied with library information resources and services rendered to them, due to lots of deficiencies in information resources and services. Motiang, Wallis and Karodia (2014) in their study found out that, 57.51% of respondents were unhappy with availability of library items such as shortage of up to date reading materials.

Omotosho and Okiki (2012) highlighted various factors that users are dissatisfied with that include: inadequate budget that affects carrying out of needed improvement in the library, and inadequate skilled staff to improve library ICT services for improvement of information access to customers.

Nnadozie (2009) states that most customers are not satisfied with library services for the following reasons: *librarians are not proactive and highly skilled in information activities, few tools and facilities for delivering quality library services*. Arua and Chinaka (2011) in their study found out that majority of respondents (students and staff) who were 42 (86%) were dissatisfied with library services due to lack of current and up-to-date information resources.

Jamil, Tariq and Jamil (2013) also found out that lack of reading and research related resources were the major problems faced by teachers and students, and that this made some of them to use their personal money to buy those unavailable materials they need for their studies. The study by Esharenana *et al*. (2009) also generalized that, lots of students were not satisfied with totality of their subject materials and shortage of current resources in their fields.

Cristobal (2018) pointed out that since customers have plenty of choices available to them such as switching to the global library/internet) and other information providers, there is a dire need for libraries to be conducting frequent customer studies or surveys to determine their changing needs and to address them, otherwise they may continue losing many customers that can jeorpadise their

existence. This is in line with the argument that, any organization that is not committed to providing expectations of customers' point of view will not survive (Clair, 1993). Therefore, libraries must take measures to improve quality of their services to enable them cope with challenges of increasing competition from other information providers in this ICT age (Adeniran, 2010). Cristobal (2018) added that:

> It 'is critical to develop a better understanding of customers and how their needs are changing and to address them by adding new services and improving existing ones to keep them satisfied with library services. And that involving customers through listening to their voices will enable library management to understand their perceptions and work out any dissatisfying factors rather than drawing conclusions on their own experiences which is one-sided.

3.0 Methodology

The study used a mixed method approach that combines strengths of the two main research approaches that is quantitative and qualitative. The benefits of complementing approaches adopted has improved interpretation of findings by supplementing quantitative data from questionnaire by qualitative data from interviews.

3.1 Data analysis procedure

Data were analysed, edited and presented in tables, pie charts and percentages. Findings are as shown in section four that follows:

4.0 Findings, analysis and discussion

4.1 Level of satisfaction: The level or the extent of customer satisfaction found in this study at the SNAL for each of the twelve main library items in column one are as shown in Table one below:

Table 1: Level of satisfaction. (N=72)

| Level of satisfaction	Distribution of Respondents by frequency Percentage									
	Excellent		Good		Fair		Poor		Total	
	F	%	F	%	F	%	F	%	F	%
1.Helpfulness of library management	14	19.4	54	75.0	4	5.6	0	0	72	100
2.Friendliness of library management	15	20.8	36	50.0	16	22.2	5	6.9	72	100
3.Library Catalogue	20	27.8	41	56.9	10	13.9	1	1.4	72	100
4.Staff availability	24	33.3	39	54.2	9	12.5	0	0	72	100
5.Usefulness of information available	28	38.9	25	34.7	14	19.4	5	6.9	72	100
6.Library Opening hours	27	37.5	34	47.2	11	15.3	0	0	72	100
7.Uploaded/currency of information materials	20	27.8	31	43.1	19	26.4	2	2.8	72	100
8.*Speed of downloading information*	*5*	*6.9*	*28*	*38.9*	*32*	*44.4*	*7*	*9.7*	*72*	*100*
9.*Customer needs*	*11*	*15.3*	*37*	*51.4*	*20*	*27.8*	*4*	*5.6*	*72*	*100*
10.Speed of responses to customer needs	12	16.7	40	55.6	13	18.1	7	9.7	72	100
11.Ease of finding information materials	13	18.1	48	66.7	11	15.3	0	0	72	100
12.All services in general	8	11.1	53	73.6	11	15.3	0	0	72	100

Source: Field Data (2018)

As it can be noted from Table one above, majority of respondents who were library customers were moderately satisfied with some library services. This is because their satisfaction level was above 50% as depicted from item number 1- 7 and number 10-12. This moderate satisfaction is supported by the expectancy-disconfirmation theory explained above which provides that customers with moderate satisfaction are those in the standard zone which is in the middle of model presented in section two of this study.

Among the library service items that got low satisfaction level of below 50% are those shown in item 8 and 9 in the Table one above which have been italised: These are speed of downloading information and customer needs. Since respondents who were library customers rated the above services as low in satisfaction, it means that there are improvements which need to be done.

4.2 Challenges facing the SNAL

When respondents were asked to mention challenges facing the SNAL Library that need to be addressed to improve services, they mentioned the following: poor customer care 17 (23.6%), internet problem 14 (19.4%), few electrical sockets for power supply for library computers and students laptops 13 (18.1%), shortage of chairs 11 (15.3%), security problem 9 (12.5%), poor allocation of materials 5 (6.5%), and inadequate reading area or low sitting capacity 3 (4.2%) compared to number of students. These challenges are as shown in Figure two below.

Figure 2: Challenges facing the SNAL
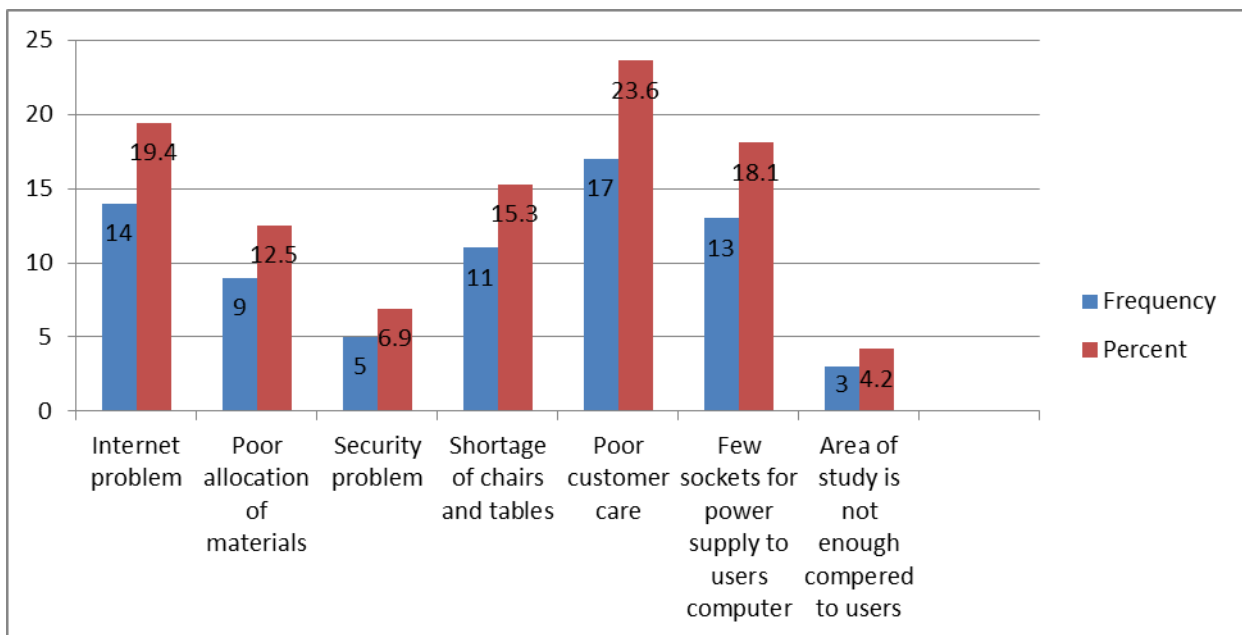
Source: Field Data (2018)

As it can be noted from the above Table, the major challenge that was mentioned by many respondents was poor customer care, followed by internet problem and few electrical sockets. This shows the need for the SNAL Library Management to address this challenge and others so as to improve customer satisfaction level to make them continue using the Library and its resources/services.

4.3 Respondents' suggestions on how to improve library services

When respondents were asked to suggest main services that need to be improved to increase their satisfaction level, they mentioned: security services 22 (30%), shelf reading 21 (29%), opening

hours/hours for accessing information 17 (24%) and bandwidth for internet access 12 (17%) as shown in Table two below.

Table 2: Library services that need to be improved as per the customers views: (N=72)

Services which need improvement	Frequency	Percent
Security services	22	30
Opening hours/Hours of accessing information	17	24
Shelf reading	21	29
Bandwidth of internet	12	17
Total	72	100

Source: Field Data (2018)

This shows that the main issue that needs to be given priority in finding solution is the security problem. Because there were cases of student properties in their bags that were kept in the Library Cloakroom being stolen by unfaithful students. However, according to the SNAL Library policy, the Library is not responsible for safeguarding students properties kept in the bags that are brought into the Library. According to the Policy students are advised to come with empty bags, and those who breach this rule they do so at their own risk. Since customers are dissatisfied with this service within the Library, there is a need for the Library to consider fixing security cameras to identify wrong doers/thieves for disciplinary measures. Otherwise this complains/dissatisfaction may continue to tarnish the image of the Library.

5.0 Conclusion and recommendations

5.1 Conclusion

According to the findings of this study, it can be noted that majority of customers are satisfied with the SNAL services as shown by satisfaction level of over 50% of majority of customers as shown in Table one above. The study has further shown that despite such moderate satisfaction level, there are customers who have shown dissatisfaction with some services as shown in Table one above in item 8 and 9 with satisfaction level of below 50%.

In addition, customers have also pointed out challenges facing the SNAL library as shown in Figure 2 above that needs to be addressed to keep on improving services for the benefits of both customers and the Library.   Similarly, when customers were asked to suggest main services that need to be improved, they mentioned four services as shown in Table 2 above. Due to these findings, the study provides recommendations to the SNAL Management which if implemented may improve services and increase customer satisfaction level.

5.2 Recommendations

In order to address challenges facing the SNAL as pointed by customers the study recommends the following areas to be worked to increase customer satisfaction level.

- The SNAL management should develop a plan of conducting regular surveys or customer satisfaction studies so as to address their changing needs to keep their satisfaction level higher.

- All challenges pointed out by their customers have to be addressed so that library resources and services can continue to satisfy customer needs.

- The SNAL management should also conduct regular staff training on customer care practices such as the use of friendly language, prompt assistance to their needs and positive attitudes towards customers even if they are not in good moods.

- Since experience has shown that majority of library customers/students are not fully aware of location of learning materials relevant to their studies, the SNAL management is advised to be conducting marketing of learning resources and services regularly to increase usage of library resources and services which is critical increasing customers satisfaction level.

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