



Impact of Staff Assistance of Readers' Services Section on the Patrons' Satisfaction with the University of Ruhuna Library

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Abstract

The Readers' Service Section of an academic library plays an important role in providing access to information resources and assisting the patrons to find information on their own. Today, users expect the provision of conventional resources as well as online services assisted by modern technology. It is important to evaluate how the assistance provided by the library staff impacts the fulfillment of the user's needs. This paper examines the impact and challenges of staff involvement in performing readers' services at the University of Ruhuna Library. The study used a survey with a sample of 560 library patrons randomly selected from the University of Ruhuna. The questionnaire included 5-point Likert-scaled survey statements and open-ended questions. Findings indicated that staff involvement in areas of courtesy, responsiveness, paying attention to patrons' needs, customer care, and knowledge of ICT, highly satisfied the users, while areas of active and fast service delivery, and good communication skills were between 'neutral' and 'dissatisfied'. Among the sections of the readers' services, the top five readers' service areas were the Lending section (34.29%), Reference section (26.43%), Legal deposit section (20.36%), Ceylon room (14.46%), and Periodical section (4.46 %). Correlation results indicated that staff experience had a strong impact on users' satisfaction while staff rotation had a negative impact. The study found that staff characteristics and skills were more important than the number of staff members. The library employees should be given ongoing directions and training on customer care.

Keywords: Academic Library, Information Seeking, Library Staff Assistance, Reader Services.

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