

User Satisfaction for Library Space in Academic Institutions

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Abstract: - *In today's educational environment, it is important to focus on the library space and also to aware that whether it meets user's needs in practice. This paper will examine how students in Academic Institutions work their furniture, technology and spaces needs. This paper presents an overall review of published literature on user satisfaction for library space. The study reveals the user satisfaction with library facilities ie; library area, lighting, comfort, noise level, basic amenities, furniture comfort, type, seating arrangement, equipment, technology available and other physical facilities. This paper summarizes the open comments on space by library users. It is felt that, user awareness is essential to make aware about various study resources available in library and help to increase the utilization of library. And it is essential to enhance the library facilities to increase the satisfied users. The present paper will discuss the changes and the suggestions in the library according to the user's needs. In this paper, a review of the selective and useful studies related to the research problem has been attempted.*

Keywords: Library Space, User Satisfaction, Library Facilities, User's Need, User's Perspectives.

Review of Literature

In a highly competitive academic environment, Library is an essential component of an institution's intellectual expression, said by Chandra et al (2009). Libraries must design their spaces in a way that meet the needs of 21st century learning, teaching, and research. According to the Katagi (2017), Library is called as the soul of the education. In the recent years

there are a lot of changes in the education system and a library has to work mutually for the benefit of the students, in case of libraries they are providing all the facilities needed to the students. The university libraries are taking this as an opportunity to serve the needs of its users, thus providing all the needed resources required by them to fulfil the need ie; to support the users of its parent institution.

Library Space

A study carried out by the Zverevich (2012) on "Real and Virtual Segments of Modern Library Space" defined the library space as "an aggregate of all physically existing squares, where documents on traditional carriers are stored and reader services and the library's operational, technological and communication activities take place, as well as physically intangible spaces where circulation of electronic resources takes place, including the library computer's memory and telecommunication channels". It was found that the library space consists of two segments: internal and external. Internal space is physical space with traditional documents and services, and the external segment is physically intangible virtual space dealing with virtual services using electronic resources.

Katagi (2017) mentioned that the space is the most significant factor for academic libraries; the concept of space has vividly changed, and the development in information technology played predominant role. An effort was made to show cast the library space in order to meet the demands of library users. Space is one of the most valuable assets a library possesses. Space is required to study, to research, collect, archive and access recorded information (Chand and Spodick (2014). Library must possess adequate space for a reading room and storage space for books and journals, audio-visual materials and staff accommodation (Mairaj and Naseer, 2013). The

problem of library space can be managed by many ways, eg. Use of electronic forms of information, optimization of space etc. (Barevadia, 2017).

Learning Space:

Chan and Spodick (2014) studied on "Space development: A case study of HKUST Library". The study states that the library in the future will continue to play its important legacy role as a place. It is still a communal space where learners can study, while maintaining the tradition of the library as a place for students to engage in quiet, solitary and contemplative study. It was concluded that the students love to study in an environment where they see other members of the learning community are also engaging in reading, writing and other kinds of intellectual reflection. In addition to the theoretical literature on the library as a place, charting the changing conception of the library from a space for collection to an information or learning commons, a space that supports the creation of information in a variety of medium (Lippincott, 2012; Turner, Welch and Reynolds, 2013).

Flexible Space:

Chan and Spodick (2014) in their paper, "Space development: A case study of HKUST Library" studied that Library users are not a one-size-fits-all population, nor are their requirements able to be standardized – changes in educational pedagogy, technological ubiquity and social flexibility require all aspects of library space to be as flexible and multi-modal as possible. Another

study was conducted by the University of Leeds (2014) on “Library Space Plan, 2014-2020”. The article describes the nature of the estates provision which the Library seeks to deliver in this period and the major planned changes. A space has been created that are adaptable and flexible to support a wide variety of activities.

Collaboration Space:

According to Choy and Goh (2016) collaborative space is the space that caters to students working together as a group and not the more comprehensive notion of learning commons and its variants. Groups of students can get together anywhere to meet, hold discussions or collaborate on a piece of work or project. Students experienced various frustrations with finding space to work together on group projects (Andrews, Wright and Raskin, 2016). Most users work individually or within pre-organised groups, but usually do not make new connections with co-present, unacquainted users (Bilandzic and Foth, 2013).

Silent Space:

Choy and Goh (2016) studied a paper on "A Framework for Planning Academic Library Spaces", in which they discussed that in contrast to group and collaborative spaces where a high level of noise is inevitable and acceptable, the traditional quiet space which was prevalent and indeed synonymous with libraries in the past, has been pushed to the background. Despite the popularity of collaborative and noisy spaces in

libraries today, the demand for silent spaces by students is high for effective learning and studying. Andrews, Wright and Raskin (2016) in their study found that the characteristics students wanted included: quiet and lack of distractions while they were studying; spaces that weren't overcrowded and where they had a windows, glass walls or open space for good views.

Environmental Factors

Chandra (2009) conducted a study on “Ergonomic Issues in Academic Libraries in Kolkata West Bengal: A Pilot Study”. The author assessed the library shelving, collection arrangement and makes an observation of environmental conditions (illumination, noise, temperature, humidity). The result showed that the users are not satisfied with existing facilities and services, although there is satisfaction with staff support, collections, and library cleanliness.

According to Seal (2015), “Comfort, to oversimplify, might be said to require conditions that enable the occupant to forget about such matters as temperature, humidity, drafts, lighting, visual and auditory distraction, and to go about work oblivious to their physical surroundings.” “Zoning should be conducted in the way that provides readers with maximum comfortable working conditions, to make reader services more effective, to make the service range as diverse as possible, to avoid the reader flows intercross each other, and to make sure that all elements of library

space meet the requirements of sanitary and technical regulations” (Zverevich, 2011).

Lighting:

Mairaj and Naseer (2013) explained that, Lighting is one of the main considerations in library design. It was observed that the proper light arrangement is a prerequisite for studying and poor light affects eyes. Chandra (2009) examined that there are specifications for illumination of reading areas, staff work areas, and shelves. The findings indicated that illumination was very poor in most of the academic libraries in West Bengal. Daylight has a strong effect upon patron preference and satisfaction with using the library. Sunlight, a free and abundant natural resource, has a powerful effect upon creating a comfortable and usable learning space (Kilic and Hasirci, 2011).

Noise:

Chandra (2009) discussed that, Noise is another important factor that affects work in the library. It was found that the noise has a psychological effect and creates concentration problems in studying or work. Students noted that, Library is the only place where other students are conscious of their noise level (Dominguez, 2016). Readers’ perception of the provision of quiet space in the library has greatly improved. The study provided evidence showing the effectiveness of interventions, such as the development of a noise policy, zoning, rearranging of furniture, removal of service points from reader spaces, and

structural improvements (McCaffrey and Breen, 2016).

Furniture

Choy and Goh (2016) studied on "A Framework for Planning Academic Library Spaces". The study states that the appropriate furniture and furnishing in the library can make a huge difference to the attractiveness and functionality of library spaces. This in turn raises its desirability in attracting students to use the spaces fully. According to Watson (2017), there should be modular furniture that can be readily reconfigured into conference rooms, computer laboratories, in addition to relaxed study and learning environments.

Andrews, Wright and Raskin (2016) conducted a research on “Library Learning Spaces: Investigating Libraries and Investing in Student Feedback”, found that the main characteristics needed for furniture were variety, comfort, adjustability and mobility. Students wanted a variety of furniture styles for different purposes. Students desire for modular, movable, easily reconfigurable furniture that is comfortable and attractive (Council on Library and Information Resources, 2012).

Comfort:

Sinnasamy and Ramu (2014) in their paper, “Users’ perspectives of Library Space: An Analysis of User Satisfaction Survey at the

University of Malaya, Malaysia”, found that the users want the library look more lively with vibrant, bright colours instead of the dull, sober shade of colour. Some students wished the old tables and chairs could be replaced with modern ones. According to Andrews, Wright and Raskin (2016), Comfort was in the eye of the beholder. The angle of incline on chairs, texture of materials, mix of cushioning and support, presence of armrests, and availability of footrests and space for belongings or laptops were also considerations in choosing furniture. Mobility and adjustability were also key in many participants’ eyes.

Furniture Type:

Andrews Wright and Raskin (2016) studied on “Library Learning Spaces: Investigating Libraries and Investing in Student Feedback”. It was found that Tables for two or four for quiet study in proximity to each other, small end tables, and tables in a variety of shapes and heights were mentioned, especially tables at ergonomic heights and work surfaces with plenty of room to spread out materials and belongings. Singh and Arora (2015) undertook a study on “Library Resources and Services in the Selected University Libraries of Haryana, India”. The paper describes the role of selected university libraries in Haryana, India in higher education and research of Engineering, Science and Technology. The details of the library furniture consist of tables, chairs, almirahs, book racks, display racks, and book-cases. It was found

that O.P. Jindal Global University library has maximum number of study tables and chairs.

Seating Arrangement:

Kumar and Bhatt (2015) presented a paper on “A Study of Using Informal Learning Spaces at Indian Institute of Technology, Delhi” to explore the students’ opinion of Indian Institute of Technology, Delhi, regarding the use of Informal Learning Spaces. The study revealed the majority of the student’s opined comfortable sitting as the best advantage. It shows that the students love to learn in an informal environment. A variety of seating space in supporting group work is essential in designing an effective collaborative space. Seating should be configured to cater to the needs of different group activities, different group size and accommodation of the necessary seating and technological support (Choy and Goh, 2016).

Technology and Equipment

A study carried out by Kwong et al. (2011) on “Libraries as Learning Spaces – 2011 Study Summary Report” explains that the technology is a very important feature in learning spaces. Concerning the use of technology, the results clearly indicated that technology has become an important component in students’ learning. A priority should be to keep the technology as current as possible, and most importantly, to make sure it remains functional (Robert, 2014).

Another study was conducted by Bilandzic and Foth (2013) on "Libraries as Coworking Spaces:

Understanding User motivations and perceived barriers to Social Learning". The results showed that people of the edge mainly use the space to access computers, the internet, multimedia equipment, hardware and software for free. Seal (2015) observed that the most striking change in the character of the library over the past few decades has been the result of computer systems, the internet, the World Wide Web, the personal computer, the laptop computer, email.

Computers:

According to Choy and Goh (2016), many group tasks today require or are aided by the use of technology. Most group spaces have to be technologically enabled to serve the basic needs of students when working in groups. Large computer monitors, projection screens and electronic smart boards, where group members can share their files or work together on a common file are becoming the norm. This is a form of user interaction with library resources. The most common factor for selecting spaces was computer availability (Ramsden, 2011).

Wi – Fi Access:

Kumar and Bhatt (2015) presented a paper on “A Study of Using Informal Learning Spaces at Indian Institute of Technology, Delhi”. It was observed that majority of the opined that all the factors, advent of internet, availability of information in e-form, intranet, and availability of library 24x7 have forced them to use the informal learning space for learning or academic purpose.

Zverevich (2012) concluded that Library resources are accessible via mobile devices either from the internal segment of library space or from its web space because M-library could be switched to physical library via Wi-Fi from almost any point world-wide.

Power Outlet:

According to the “Facility Standards Library Design Guidelines” (2010), Electrical outlets in libraries should take into account loads to be served. Computer loads should be served with isolated-ground circuits. Using an under-floor distribution system for electrical outlets and data ports is recommended. Such systems provide flexibility to change the public area layout as library needs change. There should be additional electrical support to provide power, for use or recharging of student-owned devices (Andrews, Wright and Raskin, 2016).

Conclusion

Thus, from the review of literature it is concluded that the University library physical space has an important role in learning, teaching and research. The design of the student learning commons has followed the ‘Library as Place’ trend by including a collaborative areas, and computer technology such as printing services within the same space. Existing research has mixed results upon which new methodology could provide a renewed view of the University library.

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