

Evaluation in information Retrieval – User Studies of Students of Shree Chandrababhu Jain College, Library, Minjur, Thiruvallur District, Tamil Nadu

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Abstract

Objective: This research is conducted to provide a new insight on the usage of the library by the students of Shree Chandrababhu Jain College, Library Minjur, Thiruvallur District, Chennai Metro, Tamil Nadu, South India. The data has been collected using questionnaire method. **Methods:** Questionnaire method, user performance, learning evaluation. **Results:** Evaluation in education has a key role in making the users truly information literate. Teaching is no longer lecture-based and teacher-based Evaluation is a win-win process which mutually benefits the teachers as well as the students. **Conclusion:** This paper attempts to highlight the role of constructivist approach in constructing knowledge by the learner. The base ideas of constructivism emphasize appropriate facilitator-supported learning that is initiated and directed by the learner. The learner faced with a problematic situation, actively engages in exploration to solve the problem and construct his own knowledge. The students are evaluated through a continuous assessment procedure. In the implementation of curriculum, theory teaching assumes more importance than practical work. Students should, on their own initiative, take an interest in the learning process rather than be passive listeners.

Keywords: Evaluation; Utilization; Library; Library services; Library users; User's needs; Information retrieval.

Introduction

The student community, in particular seeks information on their future. A user is one who seeks some information from the library. The focal word is "Information". The word "information" includes almost every subject under its ambit. The goal of any library and information system is to provide an organized and accessible collection material to support the needs of users. The output of academic performance system of the students is judged not only by the quantity of product but also by the quality of that product. This is also true for the system of higher education. The internal judgment of the output as assessed by the educational evaluation itself and second, the external judgment of the output as

assessed by society. According to the Russian born American poet and novelist Ayn Rand "The only purpose of education is to teach a student how to live his life-by developing his mind and equipping him to deal with reality. The training he needs is theoretical, i.e., conceptual. He has to be taught to think, to understand, to integrate, to prove. He has to be taught the essentials of knowledge discovered in the past; he has to be equipped to acquire further knowledge by his own effort." Quality education and evaluation is a win-win process which mutually benefits the teachers as well as the students.

Related Studies

A comprehensive review of literature is necessarily an integral part of any research endeavor, as it helps to identify the gap in research and aids the investigator in designing and analyzing research work. A literature review is a critical and in depth evaluation of previous research studies. Only a few reviews are considered for this study.

Miles and Huberman, (1994) defined the quantitative versus qualitative arguments. They made an "analytic" approach to understanding a few controlled variables, and a "systemic" approach to understanding the interaction of variables in a

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complex environment. Both approaches can coexist if required by the objectives of the particular study.

Marshall, (1995) examined that evaluation involved the use of research methods to measure the effectiveness of library and information services and systems. It was also called action research because of its application in assessing the effectiveness of specific programmes or measuring particular approaches.

Devarajan, (1995) suggested that user education is a neglected phenomenon in many libraries, which may result in the under utilization of resources available in the libraries. This under utilization had a direct adverse effect on the intellectual creativity of the individuals and will further lead to under development of the country with a minimum number of intellectual works coming from the researcher. Competitive advantages are possible only when users can gather, analyze and disseminate information in a proper manner. These functions are mostly carried out by libraries. But these functions are only complete if the libraries come forward to expose their resources to their users.

Kelleher, (1996) inferred that the systems approach was the one most usually found in the context of electronic library projects, and revealed at the heart of the Tavistock model of evaluation used in the UK e-Lib projects. This **was** where aspects of information system performance lay at the heart of the evaluation, with data on the impact of the system on users. Data also was found to impact more widely, when explicitly collected. The literature of evaluation suggested the importance of including qualitative as well as quantitative data as the basis for evaluation.

Lancaster (1997), McClure (1999), Clarke (1999). Saracevic (2000) identified the ethnographic, sociological, systems, economic and political approaches, which will be appropriate for differing audiences, with differing goals for their evaluation. At previous conferences on performance measures, papers have been presented by leading workers in the field who have made strong pleas for the central role of qualitative evidence and its involvement in the performance measurement process.

Wilson (2000), republished a paper in which he discussed the methods used in information research, which he saw as a particularly diverse field of study, more of an applied than a basic science. The output of information science research is applied in a given managerial or organizational setting. Wilson stressed the importance of this method. He saw that social survey methods were often misused to collect a great deal of data without the researcher having a

theoretical (or even descriptive) framework into which to fit the data. He suggested that, in effect, collecting data became a substitute for thinking about the problem. This was a particular risk in the case of practitioner-based research.

Oliver and Conole, (2000) made a statement that the strategies for quality enhancement rely on the identification of areas of potential improvement and the specification and implementation of plans. Evaluation can fulfill a variety of roles in the quality assurance process, including acting as part of the quality assessment process or as a structure for devising quality enhancement plans. Toolkits are decision making frameworks based on expert models. The formats of toolkits mean that they can be used in a standard, linear fashion, or can be 'dipped into' by users whose level of expertise is stronger in some areas of the design process than others.

Huotari M-L, Wilson TD (2001), attempted to demonstrate the mapping process of the CSFs (Critical success factors) and the related information needs. This way of displaying the organizational information needs support the comprehensive analysis required to fulfill the advisory role of an information audit. The figures can be further elaborated, for example, to display the problems in the information flows or with the use of IS to access essential information. By giving an overview of the critical issues and problems to be overcome, it provides the auditor with a solid base for recommendations for different units or organizational levels. A participative process involving major actors in each unit is necessary to create a coherent framework of organizational information behaviour for ensuring interactive IS (Information System) design and development. However, it should be noted that some factors might be more time-dependent than others. Thus, the auditing process should be repeated at regular intervals.

Rowley (2003) investigated a number of studies that focused on the needs of library and information professionals or the systems development communities, and increasingly academic-librarian partnerships. To begin to explore student behaviour from an educational perspective, this paper reported the results of a small-scale study that aimed to investigate an example of current information literacy provision by observing student behaviour in the online environment with a view to future enhancement. Haklay and Tobón, (2003) made an effort to evaluate and understand a web site's usability by the number of people using it.

Mutula (2004) suggested that libraries required

sufficient funds to acquire modern ICT facilities such as computers, servers, scanners, photocopiers, software as well as paying for online and offline services such as e-journals and digital libraries. Most of these ICT facilities and services are very expensive and can be purchased from developed countries. On the contrary, experience reveals that most university libraries in Africa and other developing countries can get very little funds from their parent institutions and the government for support of their activities. (OECD, 2006). International comparisons of education can be achieved through comprehensive quality management and quality criteria (Finnish National Board of Education, 2008; (Organization for Economic and Development). As a result, the emphasis is shifting from developing physical learning environments using norms and regulations to comparing these environments on the basis of qualitative improvement.

Academic libraries must understand the information needs of faculty members, research scholars and students in order to address those needs. These related studies explore quality education in the evaluation of user studies.

Student evaluation

Student's feedback is an essential tool for quality enhancement. It requires to be highlighted that student feedback can be taken in terms of institutional functioning in which students are actually involved. Methods of student evaluation are many such as-Students' feedback, Colleagues feedback, Self assessment, and Teaching effectiveness...etc. Studies are commonly seen as being either quantitative or qualitative. Quantitative data are seen as being objective, quantifiable, hard, generalisable, based on numbers, whereas qualitative data are seen as being subjective, socially constructed, soft and non general sable, based on words. User studies are, by definition, about people, behavior and contexts. They need both quantitative and qualitative approaches to be combined to produce the both the holistic view and the robust data needed to triangulate and thereby validate data collected.

Quality of Education

Quality is not a destination but a continuous journey. The quest for quality never ends. Quality requires judgments by users with experience, standards related to objectives of appropriate academic standards by teachers that are essential. The improvement of quality is essential to enrich the

dimensions like teaching-learning process, research consultancy and evaluation, student support service and co-curricular activities of institutions. Teaching is external and learning is internal. Value oriented education should include student participation in decisions about discipline and evolving a voluntary accepted system of public morality. The true education for students must promote the inculcation of noble motives and objective thinking for implementation of one's decisions.

Monitoring Evaluation

Evaluation and Quality in education are two popular words. They are dictating the trends of present world order in higher education. Evaluation is a complex term. Its real meaning and implications are generally inadequately understood. It has remained a subject of debate among academia and policy makers. However, evaluations should be cost effective. Many institutions of higher learning are beginning to work under corporate management. Methods for evaluation should be based on variety of indicators that may be norm-referenced, criterion-referenced, or self-referenced. Evaluation and feedback on a student's progresses are important both to the student and to the faculty.

Methods of evaluation in study skills

There are many methods for the evaluation of library's performance and its effectiveness a few of these evaluation skills are presented below.

- a. *Individual study skills:* Case studies are a superior vehicle for encouraging students to carry out independent research outside of the classroom environment.
- b. *Information analysis skills:* Many case studies require resource investigation and encourage students to utilize a number of information from different sources, i.e., Internet, library, laboratory results and contacting experts in industry. During this process the learning becomes faster than normal.
- c. *Presentation skills:* Most of the case studies require students to present their work in a variety of roles or formats. These include oral presentations, poster presentations and summary presentations of reports or outcome from a given situation or case.

Systematic and formative feedback of evaluation

Evaluation is the systematic assessment of the worth or merit of some object. There are many types

of evaluations that do not necessarily result in an assessment of worth or merit-Descriptive studies, implementation analyses, and formative evaluations, to name a few. The definition is that emphasizes the information-processing and feedback functions of evaluation. Evaluation is the systematic acquisition and formative assessment of information to provide useful feedback about some object.

Both definitions agree that evaluation is a systematic endeavor and both use the deliberately ambiguous term 'object' which could refer to a program, policy, technology, person, need, activity, and so on. The latter definition emphasizes acquiring and assessing information rather than assessing worth or merit because all evaluation work involves collecting and sifting through data, making judgments about the validity of the information and of inferences we derive from it, whether or not an assessment of worth or merit results.

Types of Evaluation

There are many different types of evaluations depending on the object being evaluated and the purpose of the evaluation. Perhaps the most important basic distinction in evaluation types is that between *formative* and *summative* evaluation. Formative evaluations strengthen or improve the object being evaluated. They help form it by examining the delivery of the program or technology, procedures, inputs, and so on. Summative evaluations examine the effects or outcomes of some object. They summarize it by describing what happens subsequent to delivery of the program or technology. They assess whether the object can be said to have caused the outcome. They determine the overall impact of the causal factor beyond only the immediate target outcomes and estimating the relative costs associated with the object.

Definition of Evaluation

Evaluation involves the use of research methods to measure the effectiveness of library and information services and systems. According to Lancaster felt that evaluation is performed to gather data useful in problem-solving or decision making activities. Winkworth recommended that every library should undertake regular evaluation, including occasional formal events and Gauri Srivastava focused on student evaluation from gender perspective.

Most significant characteristics of a good library will depend upon the availability of the following

services in the students' perspective.

- The availability of books
- Availability of periodicals
- Availability of non-book materials
- Quality of reference service
- good reference collection
- A quiet place conducive to reading and study
- Integrity of the catalogue
- Friendly service
- Copying facilities
- Helpful librarians
- Audio and Videotaping.
- Course portfolios and others.

Measuring Techniques

This part is not intended to survey all instruments of measuring the quality of library services, but only a selection of useful methods applicable to an academic library. As more and better measures of performance are devised and used, the task of library evaluation will become easier.

The researcher has distributed 105 questionnaires to evaluate for each service.93 of the questioned responded for each service and the result is given in the table.

Membership service

As per the questionnaire, 23of the students have scored the membership service as excellent whereas 26 students have given their opinion as very good. The rest of 27 and 16 students have given their opinion as good and fair. So the students are satisfied with the membership service as good.

Circulation service

As per the questionnaire, 29 of the students have scored excellent for the membership service whereas 22 students have given their opinion as very good and the remaining 24 and 18 students have given their opinion as good and fair. It shows that most of the users are agreed that the circulation service is excellent.

OPAC service

As per the questionnaire, 24 of the students have presented as excellent for the membership service

whereas 28 students have given their opinion as very good and rest of 21 and 20 students have given their opinion as good and fair. Hence the students are convinced in OPAC service which is very good.

Reference service

As per the questionnaire, 21 of the students have opined the reference service excellent whereas 23 students have given their opinion as very good and the remaining 24 and 25 students have given their opinion as good and fair. Hence majority of the user’s community are satisfied that the reference service is fair.

Suggestions

Based on the findings of the study, the following suggestions are put forward to improve the library services in user community.

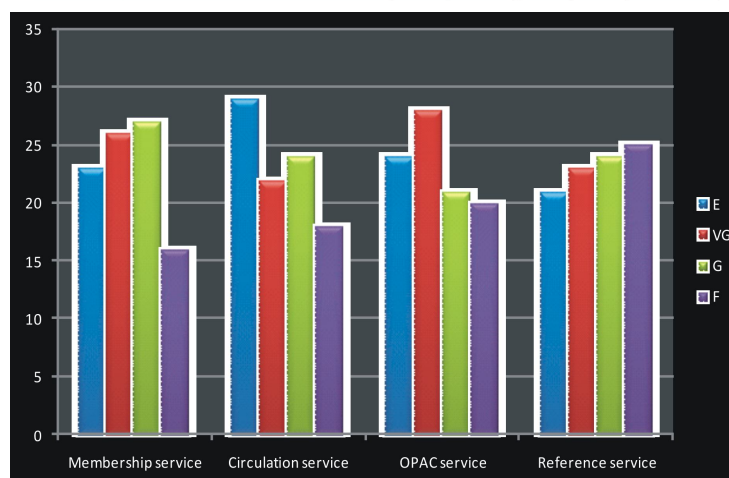
- ❖ To improve the library service new arrivals of books may be displayed.
- ❖ Periodicals/books that are displaced should be properly arranged every day.
- ❖ Current awareness service may be implemented to increase the satisfaction level of the library service.
- ❖ Interpretation oriental program may be conducted to the faculty members.
- ❖ The reading section should be separate without any disturbance.

- ❖ Faculty development program has to be conducted by exploring various library facilities namely online journal availability and e-books.
- ❖ While seeking information from internet the users should use more than one search engine because only one search engine cannot be considered as comprehensive.
- ❖ Reading circles and reading societies can be created which will meet periodically to read aloud, discuss and talk about particular authors and topics.
- ❖ Open House can be conducted where students are requested to come out and offer their suggestions for improving the library.
- ❖ Students can be asked to enter their suggestions for books and authors which the library currently does not have.
- ❖ There is a need for library attenders specially for cleaning the library.
- ❖ It is suggested that more Book bank books may be purchased,.
- ❖ While seeking information it is important to spell correctly in order to reach the source.

In an age of globalization and expansion in the frontiers of knowledge assisted by modern communication technologies, it is very essential that the pattern of student’s evaluation meet the global standards.

Response from Library services through our students

S. No	Description	E	VG	G	F	Total
1	Membership service	23	26	27	16	93
2	Circulation service	29	22	24	18	93
3	OPAC service	24	28	21	20	93
4	Reference service	21	23	24	25	93



India has the third largest higher education system in the world, behind only the US and China producing about 2.5 million graduates every year. This is just about 10% of India's youth. There is no dearth of talent in India. We have to put in place a system that helps spur creativity and innovative thinking. Students skill potential may enable our institutions to shine on the global higher education map. In view of the parameters set for the global ranking, we have to revamp our evaluation system and then introduce with the joint effort of the universities and other statutory bodies of higher education Institutions.

Conclusion

In conclusion, the author highlighted the fact that developed and developing countries of the world should design a pattern of student's evaluation. It encourages students all over the globe to pursue their cherished goals and get enrolled in institutions of their choice. Library evaluation is an important management function in library and information services. Subject command as well as communication skill should be blended for the improvement of a student. Teaching is no longer lecture-based and teacher-based. Evaluation is a win-win process which mutually benefits the teachers as well as the students. Students' feedback is an essential tool for quality enhancement.

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