

Evaluation of the Use of College Library Resources and Services by the Students of Engineering College Coimbatore, Tamil Nadu

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ABSTRACT

This study evaluated the use of library resources and services by students of Hindustan college of Engineering (HCE), Coimbatore. The study adopted descriptive survey research method and employed a structured questionnaire and observations as instruments for data collection. The entire population of 276 students of HCE was involved in the study. The study was guided by 6 research questions. The data collected were analyzed using descriptive statistics which include percentages, frequencies and mean rating. Findings revealed that students fairly use the library for their studies. Observation shows that they use the library most during examination periods. It also revealed that resources currently available are fairly adequate and fairly accessible to the students. Furthermore, the study revealed that users are satisfied with the services and facilities provided by the library. Problems militating against effective use of the Library by the students were identified and solutions were proffered. It was recommended among others that the habit of using the Library should be inculcated into students through avenues such as organizing library display, library exhibition, library orientation, and inclusion of use of library as a course in the HCE curriculum so as to attract students to the Library.

1. INTRODUCTION

The objective of the HCE library is to support the academic programmes of the College by providing relevant information so as to respond to the ever-increasing information demands of the users who comprise the students and the academic staff of the college. The 21st Century poses radical challenges to the college libraries that the overall functions and services are influenced regularly. This is in line with the opinion of Opoku (2011) that many issues affect the way services are provided in the library on a regular basis. These challenges invariably demand that evaluation of Engineering College libraries services' remains worthwhile. In the light of this therefore, the need for this study becomes very imperative. It has become expedient to ascertain the extent to which the students of HCE are utilizing the resources in their library.

2. PURPOSE OF THE STUDY

The main purpose of this study is to evaluate the use of library resources and services by students of Hindustan College of Engineering, Coimbatore.

Specifically, the study is set out to:

- Ascertain the frequency of the use of library by the students of the HCE.
- Find out the availability/adequacy of the library resources.
- Determine the accessibility of the library resources.
- Determine user' level of satisfaction with the services rendered.
- Determine the constraints to effective use of library resources by the students.

Suggest practical ways to improve use of the library by the students of the HCE.

3. RESEARCH QUESTIONS

The following research questions to this study:

- How frequent do the students of HCE use the Library?
- To what extent are resources available or adequate in the HCE Library?
- To what extent are the resources in the College Library accessible?
- To what extent are the students satisfied with the services and facilities provided?
- What are the constraints to effective use of library resources by the students of the College?
- In what ways can the use of the library be improved among the students of the College?

4. METHODOLOGY

The study adopted descriptive survey research method and used structured questionnaire and observation as instruments for data collection. The data obtained were analyzed using tables, simple percentages, frequencies and mean rating. The population studied includes 1st Year to 4th Year students of HCE numbering 276 students. Since the population is small, there was no sampling; the entire population was studied. Therefore a total number of two hundred and seventy-six (276) questionnaires were distributed to the students across the four levels. All the students study in the College as a result, efforts were made to ensure the entire questionnaires were completed. Therefore all the 276 (100%) questionnaires were collected and analyzed.

5. RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

Table 1: Students' response based on their gender

S/N	LEVEL	MALE		FEMALE	
		TOTAL	%	TOTAL	%
1.	1 st Year	40	27	15	12
2.	2 nd Year	42	28	35	28
3.	3 rd Year	33	22	39	31
4.	4 th Year	35	23	37	29

Table 1 shows that out of 55 first year students, 40(27%) are males while 15 (12%) are females. Also, out of 77 second year students, 42 (28%) are males while 35 (28%) are female. Of 72 third year students, 33 (22%) are male while 39 (31%) are females. Furthermore, out of 72 fourth year students, 35 (23%) are males while 37 (29%) are females. The table revealed that there are more male students in 1st Year than females. Also, there are more male students in 2nd year level than females. The 3rd year Level has more females than males, while the 4th year Level has more females than males. In summary, there are more male students in the College than females.

Table 2: Student's response on the Frequency of the Use of Library

S/N	FREQUENCY OF USE	TOTAL	PERCENTAGE (%)
1.	Daily	38	13.8
2.	Five days in a week	40	14.5
3.	Four days in a week	38	13.8
4.	Three days in a week	26	9.4
5.	Two days in a week	27	9.8
6.	Once in a week	23	8.3
7.	Hardly visit the library	70	25.4
8.	I do not use the because I have all the books I need for my studies and also a laptop which provides me with all information I need	14	5

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14.5%) patronize the library five times in a week. Out of the entire respondents, 38 (13.8%) use the library four times in a week. The greatest number of the respondents which is 26 (9.4%) patronize the Library three times in a week and 27 (9.8%) of the entire population use the library two times in a week. Also, 23

(8.3%) use the Library once in a week. Those that hardly use the Library constituted 70 (25.4%) while those that claimed they have all the books they need for their studies, and possess laptops which provide them with all information they need constituted 14(5%).

Table 3: Student's response on the Availability and Adequacy of Library Resources

S/N	RESOURCES	MEAN (x)	DECISION
1.	Reference Resources	2.86	FA
2.	Text Books	3.01	A
3.	Journals	2.76	FA
4.	Newspapers	2.85	FA
5.	Magazines	2.67	FA
6.	Special Collections/Government Publications	2.48	FA
7.	Students Long Essays (Projects)	2.67	FA
8.	Electronic Online Resources	2.45	FA
	Grand Mean	2.73	FA

Note: VA = Very Adequate, A = Adequate, FA = Fairly Adequate, NA = Not Adequate

Decision Rule: Very Adequate 3.51 - 4.00, Adequate 3.01 - 3.50, Fairly Adequate 2.01 – 3.00 Not Adequate 1.00 – 2.00. Results in Table 3 shows that out of eight items that asked questions on the availability and adequacy of library resources, the students scored 2.86 and below in items 1, 3, 4, 5, 6, 7, and 8. These reveal that the library resources are fairly adequate in those areas. The students also score 3.01 in item 2. This implies that resources are adequate in this area. Also, the grand mean rating of 2.73 shows that resources are generally fairly available and adequate in the library.

Table 4: Students' Response on Problems Affecting Effective Use of the Library and Library Resources

S/N	PROBLEMS	MEAN (X)	DECISION
1.	Little/No assistance from the library staff	2.44	D
2.	Poor organization of the materials on the shelves	2.58	D
3.	Ineffectiveness of the library catalogue	2.65	D
4.	Lack of organization in the library	2.46	D
5.	Collections are inadequate	2.67	D
6.	Collections are not relevant	2.32	D
7.	The library has little or no resources in my course of study	3.06	A
8.	The library is usually dark and this discourages reading	2.30	D
9.	The library is deficient in electronic/online library services	3.08	A
10.	Users are not educated on how to use the library.	2.43	D

11.	The library has no guide to direct users to appropriate sections of the library.	2.32	D
12.	The library environment is not conducive/friendly for reading and learning.	2.36	D
13.	The library staff are not friendly and therefore scare users away from the library	2.67	D
	Grand mean	2.56	D

Note: SA = Strongly Agree, A = Agree, D = Disagree, SD = Strongly Agree

Decision Rule: Strongly agree 3.50 - 4.0, Agree 3.00 – 3.49, Disagree 2.00 – 2.99, strongly Agree 1.00 – 1.99.

From the result in Table 4, the respondents scored below 3.00 in item 1 to 6, 8, 10 to 13. This shows that they disagreed with these negative statements posed as problems affecting effective use of the Library and its resources. However, they scored 3.00 and above in items 7 and 9 above and this is an indication that the respondents agreed with these two statements which said that the library has little or no resources in their courses of study, and the library is deficient in electronic/online library services. The grand mean of 2.56 shows that the students almost disagreed with all the negative statements posed as problems affecting effective use of the library and its resources.

Table 5: Students' Response to Ways to Improve Use of the Library and Library Resources

S/N	SOLUTIONS	MEAN (X)	DECISION
1.	The staff should be well-trained in handling diverse users' problems	3.58	SA
2.	Materials on the shelves should be well-organized to save the time of users	3.40	A
3.	There should be effective library guide to direct users to sections of the library.	3.52	SA
4.	The library catalogue should be harnessed and be made functional	3.54	SA
5.	The library should be well-organized	3.59	SA
6.	Generally, the Library should collect more resources in all subject	3.92	SA
7.	There should be a standby generator to power the library when there is power outage	3.86	SA
8.	The library should enhance provision of online/electronic library services	3.93	SA
9.	The library should be automated to improve services.	3.77	SA
10.	User education should be strengthened/encouraged in the library.	3.57	SA
11.	The library should be conducive and friendly for reading all the time.	3.95	SA
	Grand mean	3.69	SA

Note: SA = Strongly Agree, A = Agree, D = Disagree, SD = Strongly Agree

Decision Rule: Strongly Agree 3.50 - 4.0, Agree 3.00 – 3.49, Disagree 2.00 – 2.99, Strongly Agree 1.00 – 1.99

As shown in Table 7, the students scored 3.50 and above in items 1, then 3 to 11. This implies that they strongly agreed with these statements posed as ways to improve use of the Library and its resources. On the other hand, the students scored 3.40 in item 2 and this shows that the respondents agreed with that statement which says that materials on the shelves should be well-organized to save the time of users. The grand mean of 3.69 is a clear

indication that the respondents strongly agreed with the statements posed as ways of improving use of the Library and its resources by the students.

6. CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATIONS

In this empirical study, the authors were bent on evaluating the use of library by the students of HCE Coimbatore. Information was elicited from them on various aspects of areas of use of library. Examined were the frequency of the use of the library, the extent to which resources are available and adequate in the library, the extent to which the resources are accessible in the library, users' satisfaction with the services and facilities provided, problems affecting effective use of the library by the students, and ways of improving the use of the library by students.

In the light of the findings of the investigations, the researchers make the following recommendations:

1. The habit of using the Library should be inculcated into students through avenues such as organizing library display, library exhibition, library orientation, and inclusion of use of library as a course in the HCE curriculum so as to attract students to the Library.
2. The library collection has to be enhanced to ensure that there is enough and balanced collection reflecting the interest of all the departments.
3. Organization and arrangement of the library collection through cataloguing, classification and indexing should be taken seriously in order to facilitate access and retrieval to the resources.
4. The Library Management should embark on activities that would enhance users' satisfaction because if users are satisfied, their patronage will be secured and the frequency of patronage will also be increased.
5. Electronic/online library services have to be enhanced and users should be encouraged to use them.
6. The Library should be provided with alternative means of power supply in case to anticipate power failure; standby power-generating sets should be made available to the Library to take care of this.
7. Services in the Library have to be automated so that users' information needs could be responded to promptly and without delay.

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