A Gap Analysis of User Perception on Information Content of the University Libraries in Sri Lanka

Wanigasooriya, P.

priyanwada@kln.ac.lk

Abstract

This paper evaluated user perception on content of information or collection of university libraries in Sri Lanka. Study employed LibQUAL tool to collect data from university community and research revealed that library collections are not in a satisfactory level among users in university libraries.

Keywords: Information content, LibQUAL, Sri Lanka, University Libraries

Introduction

The important factor of any library is the collection or content of information. Traditionally, libraries are established as a store of human knowledge. Ancient kings showed their power by the knowledge/books they collected at the libraries. But gradually storehouses became service organizations and having a rich collection was the best library parameter. The Online Computer Library Center (OCLC) in their survey carried out in 2010 confirmed this idea and they concluded that users' perception mainly develops depending on the resources available. Nowadays, libraries are hybrid since the collection in the libraries consists of printed and electronic materials (Oppenheim & Smithson, 1999). As such, users can access to this collection of resources both online and offline. The physical and electronic collection in the library plays a vital range of roles in fulfilling users' desires. A majority of young users (between 18-24 years old) access the library through its website than personal visits (OCLC, 2010). Thus compared to the global situation, university libraries in Sri Lanka have attempted to provide overall best information sources for their users. But, some questions such as what are the users' right information desires, how are these desires being fulfilled, what are the actual information obtaining procedure and what are the obstacles faced by users during information acquiring. For an understanding of these matters, continues user studies are vital.

Objectives

This study aimed to evaluate the user perception on information content at the university libraries in Sri Lanka. It made suggestions to overcome identified difficulties encountered during use of information sources.