



Enhancing Library Services Through Effective Library Management At L.N. Mithila University, Darbhanga

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Abstract: This research was carried out to enhance library services at the L.N. Mithila University Library through the application of management functions. The objective of this study is to assess library management's role in improving services at the L.N. Mithila University Library. The research employs qualitative methods, utilizing observation, interviews, and document analysis for data collection. The findings indicate that the effectiveness of a college library service is influenced by the satisfaction and appropriateness of library users, who are both consumers and providers of information needs. High-quality service is likely to attract visitors and enhance the library's role as an information hub. Essentially, the quality indicators of library services are intrinsically linked to the impact of management functions integrated into library management, which include planning, organizing, directing, and controlling. Library management involves the organization and administration of the library concerning human resources, systems, information sources, service functions, and overall library operations to achieve set objectives. The L.N. Mithila University Library has currently adopted library management practices in line with established management processes and functions, as outlined in policies and standard operating procedures for each service. While these practices have been implemented and are functioning effectively, the application of library management is an ongoing process that continues to evolve, with improvements in planning, organizing, directing, and controlling to meet established goals.

Keywords: Library services, Library management, Library operations, Improvements, Organizational goals.

1. INTRODUCTION:

The information requirements of library patrons represent a key responsibility that libraries must address in order to assist and fulfill these needs. This information is derived from a necessity that pertains to students, aiding their learning endeavors. The specific context of the university library involves the academic community, which includes students, faculty, and educational staff. As members of a scholarly community, they undoubtedly bear obligations and responsibilities in executing the functions of higher education, such as conducting research, engaging in community service, and providing education. The evolution of learning activities has led to an increasing demand for information from libraries. Consequently, the significance of libraries within the university setting is paramount, serving as a vital resource for enhancing the accessibility and visibility of information for users, thereby contributing to the realization of higher education objectives.

Essentially, the university library serves as a crucial component within the academic setting. It functions not merely as a supportive facility but also as the core of the university. Enhancing the quality of higher education is intrinsically linked to the library's role as an information hub, research center, and a place for recreation and education, as well as a repository. Its objective is to facilitate the execution of higher education initiatives, which include research, education, and community service. The primary responsibility of the college library is to deliver information services to its users in a manner that is appropriate, independent, effective, efficient, and professional.

A fundamental aspect of any university library is its library service, which plays a crucial role in determining user satisfaction and shaping how library services are perceived by both satisfied and dissatisfied users. The library acts as an essential resource in providing high-quality services to its patrons. It is widely recognized that exceptional service from the library encourages users to seek additional information and motivates them to return for future visits. The range of services provided encompasses various areas, including the availability of collections, circulation services, membership services, audio-visual resources, research consultation, complimentary services, and a host of other offerings unique to each library. This raises an important question: who is responsible for managing and promoting these services?

The individuals responsible for executing library service activities include librarians, all library personnel, and volunteers associated with the University library. The skills and competencies that librarians possess, along with the delineation of job descriptions for each service, certainly entail specific tasks and responsibilities. Nevertheless, all of this operates under a single command or organizational structure established and initiated by the library head, who serves as the leader of the organization. However, fundamentally, library service activities often do not proceed smoothly or align with the expectations and targets that have been set. Numerous factors influence the effectiveness of library services, including the inadequacy of librarians in delivering services to library users, the accessibility of library information to meet users' informational needs, discord among employees or diminished team morale, insufficient leadership focus on the library's existence, and a lack of budgetary support for executing each work program. Such challenges may be encountered by many libraries, yet a significant number have achieved the required standards. This situation can be attributed to a lack of understanding of organizational and library management principles, which is not detrimental, and it also presents a solution for enhancing library services by effectively implementing library management practices.

Management involves the process of attaining goals that are systematically planned, organized, mobilized, and supervised across all activities and resources available. The library serves as an institution that oversees essential information sources within the educational and training framework, applicable in schools, universities, the workforce, and society at large. It acts as a barometer for a nation's advancement, indicating that the progress or regression of a nation can be assessed through its library, as it is a social institution established and sustained by the community. The presence of a library is crucial for the

community, particularly for educational institutions, as it enables students to easily access references for the curriculum materials being taught and to expand their understanding of the subjects they study.

In practice, the management of university libraries represents the most effective approach or solution for achieving the objectives of each library program, whether designed for the long or short term, through a methodical approach involving planning, organization, actualization, monitoring processes, and service evaluation. Effective library management necessitates the establishment of standards or procedures for each service area to ensure that services are more focused, planned, organized, and that the service process for users is facilitated efficiently.

The L.N.M.U. University Library is endeavoring to implement an integrated library management system based on observations made, and aims to operate in accordance with the principles of predetermined management. To achieve its objectives, the L.N.M.U. University Library necessitates human resources along with various other resources, which include techniques or systems, physical equipment, information, ideas, and technology. These components are overseen through a management process that encompasses planning, organizing, leading, and controlling, with the expectation of producing goods or services that can be utilized by student users. Consequently, library management is anticipated to enhance student interest in utilizing the library. Efforts to improve optimal service patterns demand effective library management.

2. REVIEW OF LITERATURE :

Management is not solely confined to the marketing environment of an organization; it is equally essential within the library context for effective library management. This implies that management can also be understood as the act of overseeing or administering, which is inherently linked to the organizational framework of a company. Library management is recognized as a discipline that involves the organization or administration of a library (Sutarno NS 2008, 125). Furthermore, another definition describes library management as a methodology for organizing and managing, motivating human resources, securing information sources, evaluating performance, and enhancing library services with the objective of achieving specific targets efficiently (Basuki 2018, 449).

From the aforementioned understanding, it can be concluded that library management encompasses a series of activities aimed at managing and organizing libraries, which include systems, human resources, budgets, policies, work programs, supervision of information resources, performance evaluation, and library services, all of which have defined goals and objectives that must be met. Additionally, library management is intrinsically linked to its role, function, and impact in fostering the order and existence of higher education libraries.

Rajev and Sriram (2014) carried out a study aimed at identifying the various services and facilities needed by the academic library users at Sur University College in the Sultanate of Oman, as well as assessing their impact on user satisfaction.

Gohain (2013) examined the utilization of library resources, user satisfaction with these resources and services, and the information-seeking behaviors of students and research scholars at Tezpur University. The findings indicated that the library plays a crucial role in fulfilling the diverse information and knowledge demands of students and research scholars. It was noted that user guidance is essential to assist library users in addressing their information needs and to raise awareness about the available library resources and services.

Poll and Payne (2006) assert that various projects worldwide are attempting to demonstrate that the use of library services can positively influence users' competencies, skills, attitudes, and behaviors. They proposed that the benefits experienced by academic library users through the utilization of library services can be assessed in terms of the information acquired, information literacy, educational and professional success, social integration, and enhancement of overall well-being.

3. MATERIAL & METHODS :

This study employs qualitative research methodologies. Qualitative research is a method utilized to investigate a research subject, where the researcher serves as the primary instrument. The techniques for data collection are triangulated, and the analysis of data is conducted inductively. The outcomes of the research aim to comprehend meanings, construct phenomena, and identify occurrences (Sugiyono 2018). This study specifically concentrates on management strategies aimed at enhancing library services at LNMU Library. The research methodology involves gathering data through observation, interviews, and document analysis.

4. RESULT AND DISCUSSION :

Planning

LNMU Library's service planning has been incorporated into both short-term and long-term work strategies. One of the objectives is to establish policies and standard operating procedures (SOPs) for each service and operational area within the library. At present, LNMU Library offers 88,040 titles and 229,921 copies of printed materials. The printed collection is organized according to the 22nd edition of the Dewey Decimal Classification (DDC) system. The library's housekeeping operations are automated, encompassing cataloging, circulation services, and the procurement of library materials. To assist users in locating collections, the library offers search tools through its online catalog, specifically the OPAC (Online Public Access Catalogue). In the planning function, LNMU Library has developed a planning process aimed at delivering services to users in an optimal manner, guided by clearly defined goals and user-oriented objectives. The library head is accountable for overseeing the execution of the planning process, which involves librarians and library staff as the primary implementers.

Organizing

LNMU Library service management requires organizational efforts from various aspects, including the service system, annual work programs, as well as monthly and weekly policies, alongside human resources, specifically librarians who act as the field implementers for library users utilizing library services. The head of the LNMU Library has established an organization and division of work systems, along with job descriptions for each librarian, to effectively deliver each service.

Briefing

Direction refers to the actions undertaken by the leaders of an organization concerning human resources or staff as they fulfill their duties and responsibilities in alignment with the collectively established policies, procedures, and systems. This direction is executed by the library leader in collaboration with the chain of command. The LNMU Library, under the guidance of the library head, directs and oversees the library's operations and is accountable for all activities and work programs within the library. Library leaders impart knowledge on how to effectively serve users in accordance with the established SOPs and national library standards, while also prioritizing the interests of users. The LNMU Library offers a variety of services to users, which are outlined in the library's SOP. Below are the types of services:

- The circulation services offered by LNMU libraries encompass membership, borrowing, renewal, return, billing, and the issuance of library exemption certificates.
- Reference services consist of library activities designed to assist users in locating information by responding to inquiries using reference collections and offering guidance on how to find and utilize these collections. In LNMU libraries, reference services include reading and photocopying services; due to the limited nature of the collection, library materials are not available for loan. However, if a library user requires access to the collection, photocopying is permitted.

- This internet service is readily accessible via the wifi and HotSpot facilities provided by the library. Users can utilize internet services freely and at no cost, provided they are library members. Upon becoming a member, the library will issue a username that grants access to its internet services. LNMU Library offers complimentary internet access to its users by providing several computer units for the academic community to obtain the necessary information.
- The LNMU Library also offers digital services to its users, representing a variation of the types of services required by them. At present, the LNMU library has digitized its materials, including books and collections of student final projects, thereby facilitating easier access to the information users seek.
- As the new academic year commences, the LNMU Library is implementing user education services, particularly aimed at all incoming students. The objective of this user education is to ensure that users can utilize the library effectively and appropriately.
- The LNMU Library not only supplies information in the form of printed materials such as books, journals, proceedings, scientific papers, and magazines, but it also offers audio-visual services that enhance the information available through the library. This audio-visual service can significantly improve the retention of information among library users.
- The LNMU Library additionally offers photocopying services for individuals seeking to obtain necessary reference materials.

The aforementioned services represent the offerings of the LNMU Library available to its users. Nevertheless, the implementation of these services may vary based on the library's specific capabilities. Delivering a wide range of services to users undoubtedly enhances the library's value.

Control

Control represents the ultimate action process encompassing all organizational activities related to performance evaluation, regulation, and supervision of organizational resources, aimed at achieving specific goals aligned with the organization's work plans and strategies. This library service management function is designed to assess performance outcomes and serve as a platform for monitoring the ongoing execution of duties and responsibilities concerning organizational resources by librarians in delivering various services to users. The evaluation of service performance is a key indicator of success for a library organization. A library leader bears significant responsibility for overseeing every service provided by librarians, which includes not only the availability of collections but also the types of services, systems, and roles undertaken by librarians. The LNMU Library, under the direction of the library head, consistently supervises and evaluates the performance of each librarian to ensure that the objectives outlined in the work plan and the expectations of library users are satisfactorily met.

5. CONCLUSION :

The effectiveness of a university library service is gauged by the satisfaction and practicality experienced by library users, who are both consumers and custodians of their information requirements. Providing optimal service will enhance attraction and visitation, as well as the library's role as a vital information hub. Essentially, the quality metrics of library services are intrinsically linked to the impact of management functions that have been integrated into library administration, which include planning, organizing, directing, and controlling. Library management involves the organization and oversight of the library concerning human resources, systems, information sources, service functions, and the various aspects of library operations, all aimed at achieving high-quality library services.

The LNMU Library has adopted library management practices in alignment with the management processes and functions outlined in specific policies and standard operating procedures for each service.

While these practices have been effectively implemented and are functioning significantly, the process of library management is ongoing and continuously evolving, with enhancements in planning, organizing, directing, and controlling to meet established objectives.

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