Research Article

LIBRARY RESOURCES AND SERVICES UTILIZATION: A BASIS FOR A PROPOSED MARKETING AND PROMOTION PROGRAM FOR SPUP UNIVERSITY LIBRARY

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A R T I C L E   I N F O

A B S T R A C T

The research attempted to determine the extent of utilization of the University library resources and services by the students of St. Paul University Philippines. Eventually, the findings of the assessment were the bases for the proposed marketing and promotion program. Descriptive survey research method was utilized and a survey questionnaire was floated to the participants. The study was guided by four research questions. The data collected were analyzed using the descriptive statistics which include, frequencies, percentages and mean rating. Findings revealed that students are aware of the resources and services offered by the University library. The General Collection, General References, Library Displays, and Serials were all utilized "Often" by the SPUP library users. On the other hand, the users find the library to be the most convenient place to mingle with others and share whatever they want with each other. Majority of the respondents believed that well designed, interactive and updated bulletin boards would be most effective in encouraging the use of library resources and services always.

INTRODUCTION

The young generations as so-called 21st-century learners are living in a globally competitive environment where information explosion is evidently irrepressible. Their information need is becoming comprehensive and they can easily access and retrieve information quickly at their fingertips through advanced technology. Most of the young generations opt to access information using technology rather than using their library that challenges the role of librarians in the society. Librarians should be actively marketing and promoting their library resources and services to combat the challenges of digital age. They should rekindle their passion and interest in working for their users to come back to the library and love to read books and other resources of all formats and enjoy the services offered. As such, Das and Karn (2008) remind that only satisfied customers will come back and there are greater chances that an unsatisfied customer will find some other suppliers of information to meet his information need. They added that most libraries seem to be underutilized and have failed to satisfy the information needs of their users. Libraries have been reluctant to acknowledge their competitors. Some libraries have embraced the notion that service delivery was never better. Others see no change and deny the existence of competition - of course libraries are a "good thing", which is recognized by all – maybe (Schmidt, 2011). Marketing and promotion of library resources and services are not new to academic libraries. In fact, some academic libraries have designed marketing and promotion program for their resources and services to be highly utilized. However, they have no proper planning and implementation. The majority of libraries and information centers seem to be conventional, supply-led, and isolated in their service provision. Library personnel have not properly understood potential opportunities of their library business. They are less aware of their challenges and are not prepared to win the competitive advantages in the market. Thus, Saravanan (2010) ably stresses that marketing of information services and resources in any library is most significant in a competitive environment and the librarians and information professionals are responsible for enhancing the use of their resources and services. This is so because Schmidt (2011) said that it is very tragic to note that many library clients do not know what services are provided for their use. Effective marketing is the key to future survival followed by excellence in service delivery and library experiences which meet user expectations and requirements. Thus, marketing library services and resources are very important.

Ever since, the concept of marketing was introduced to libraries. However, certain barriers have prevented the libraries in implementing marketing programs. Along with this concept, Gupta (2003) states that there is still considerable misunderstanding in most of the library and information sectors as to what constitutes effective marketing. To some, it is still primarily equated with selling and the pursuit of sales, rather than customer satisfaction. Many libraries are still reluctant to make the change necessary to focus on the marketplace, even when the need for more active

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marketing is generally agreed. As such, the developing marketing initiatives of libraries and understanding of the total marketing concept among library and information professionals need some basic marketing frameworks that they have taken so far.

Given these situations, Saint Paul University Philippines (SPUP), is not exempted with the challenges this digital age has brought to the field of librarianship. Besides, despite the growing literature on library marketing, there remains a lack of familiarity with the total marketing concept among librarians. It is in this plight that the researcher would like to determine the extent of library services and resources utilization by the students in order to come up with Marketing and Promotion Program for the SPUP library. As Smith (2011) puts it, the development of marketing activities for an academic library as an outgrowth of an overall library strategic plan can assist in clarifying which key resources and services should be promoted and in developing the optimal activities for communicating their benefits. Marketing as an ancillary process to strategic planning can increase awareness and use of library resources and services among targeted user groups and can present a clear, consistent image to students, faculty, and administration as to what the library offers to the life of the university and community.

Purpose and Statement of the Problem

This research attempted to determine the extent of utilization of library resources and services by the students of St. Paul University Philippines.

Specifically, it sought to answer the following questions:

1. What are the resources and services offered at the SPUP University Library?
2. To what extent are the resources and services of the SPUP University Library utilized by the students?
3. What are the problems/difficulties encountered by the students in the utilization of the resources and maximization of the services of the University library?
4. What marketing and promotion program can be proposed to maximize the utilization of the SPUP University Library resources and services?

METHODOLOGY

This study used the descriptive analysis approach to generalize search results which lead to drawing fundamental conclusions since the study attempted to determine the extent of utilization of SPUP library resources and maximization of the services by the students. A survey questionnaire was floated to at least four hundred (420) bonafide students of SPUP and the data were tallied and analyzed using frequency counts, percentages, and weighted means.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

The gathered data in graphical form with its respective analyses, interpretation, and implications are presented.

Resources and Services offered by the SPUP's Knowledge and Information Resource Network Center?

Table 1

| Library Resources	Percentage
1. Academic Research Collection	59%
2. Audio Visual Materials	56%
3. E-periodicals	88%
4. Fiction Books	85%
5. Filipiniana Materials	90%
6. General Collection	87%
7. General Reference	89%
8. Library Displays	55%
9. Library website	52%
10. Online Resources	89%
11. Serials	91%

Table 1 above reflects the library resources offered by SPUP's Knowledge and Information Resource Network identified by students.

Table 2

Library Services	Percentage
1. Circulation	75%
2. Current Awareness Services	66%
3. Depository	65%
4. Electronic monitor/security	78%
5. Internet Section	67%
6. National Book Week Celebration	56%
7. Online Public Access Catalog (OPAC)	93%
8. Online Resources Orientation	69%
9. Reading Area or Leisure Area, etc.	76%
10. Reference service	61%%
11. Referrals	55%
12. Technical Services (Others)	64

Extent of Utilization of Library Resources and Services

Library Resources
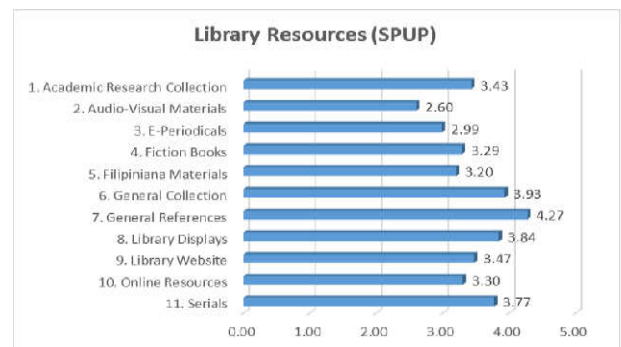
Graph 1

As shown in the graph above, the utilization of library resources such as: Academic Resource Collection, Audio-visual materials, E-periodicals, Fiction books, Filipiniana materials, Library Website, and Online resources with mean scores of 3.43, 2.60, 2.99 3.29, 3.20, 3.47, and 3.30 respectively are to a "Moderate Extent". This means that though these resources are all available in the library, they are not often used by the users, hence, a note for the SPUP library that its marketing and promotion for these resources are not quite effective.

On the other hand, the library resources such as: General Collection, General References, Library Displays, and Serials with mean scores 3.93, 4.27, 3.84, and 3.77 respectively were all utilized by the SPUP library users to a "Great Extent". This implies that these are resources which are frequently or repeatedly used by the users and an acclaim for the library for its effective marketing and promotion on these type of resources.
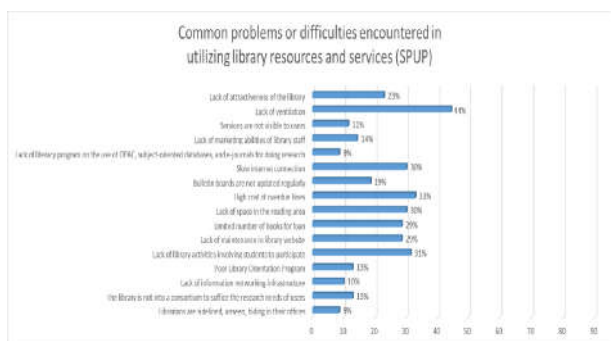
Library Services
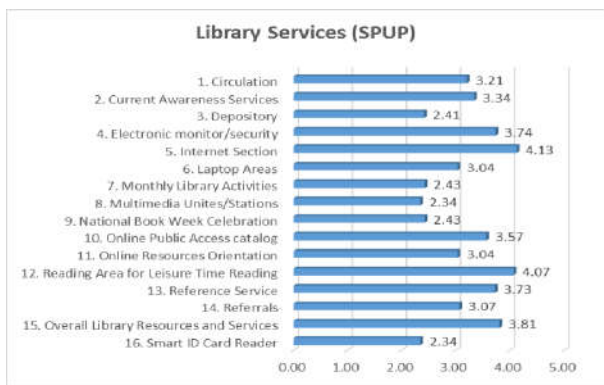
Graph 2

Based on the graph above, it can be inferred that library services: 3. Depository; 7. Monthly Library Activities; 8. Multimedia Units/Stations; 9. National Book Week Celebration; and 16. Smart ID Card Reader with respective means of 2.41, 2.43, 2.34, 2.43, and 2.34 are utilized by the library users to a "Moderate Extent". This means that these services are rarely availed of by the library resources and that the SPUP's library marketing and promotion strategies on these services are not that effective and meaningful.

Meanwhile, Circulation, Current Awareness Services, Laptop Areas, Online Resources Orientation, and Referrals with mean scores of 3.21, 3.34, 3.04, 3.04, and 3.07 respectively are the library services which are moderately used by the SPUP library users. This implies that these services are availed of occasionally or at times availed of by the users. Hence, library marketing and promotion of these services are not quite effective.

Lastly, items like Electronic monitor/security, Internet Section, Online Public Access Catalog, Reading Area for Leisure Time Reading, Reference Service, and Overall Library Resources and services with mean scores 3.74, 4.13, 3.57, 4.07, 3.73, and 3.81 respectively are all availed of by the users to a "Very Great Extent". This means that these services are the types that are frequently used or needed by the library users, thus, marketing and promotion done on them by the SPUP library are effective and meaningful.

Common problems/difficulties encountered by students in utilizing library resources and services

Graph 3

As shown in the graph above, majority or more than 50% of the SPUP library respondents see the lack of ventilation as the most common problem or difficulty encountered in utilizing library resources and services. This draws an implication that although the library may exhaust its efforts on marketing and promotion strategies for the maximum utilization of library resources and services, lack of ventilation hinders this aim or discourages library users to make use of them.

The high cost of overdue fines is the second common problem or difficulty encountered in utilizing library resources and services with (47%) respondents identifying it. This may mean that although library users would want to make the most of using library resources and services, the high cost of overdue fine discourages them to do so.

The third common problem or difficulty encountered with almost 50% of the respondents identifying it is the lack of library activities involving the students to participate. This may imply that though resources and services are available in SPUP library, activities are not conducted to remind students of their existence. Hence, maximum utilization is not attained.

On the contrary, lack of the program on the use of OPAC, subject-oriented databases, and e-journals for doing research; and librarians are sidelined, unseen, hiding in their offices are the least common problem/difficulty encountered in utilizing library resources with 54 out of 420 SPUP respondents identifying them. This implies that the library is on its full gear in giving assistance to its clients when it comes to the use of OPAC, databases, and e-journals. Furthermore, SPUP librarians are very visible and are easily approached to whenever there are user queries.

Respondents' perception on the use the library
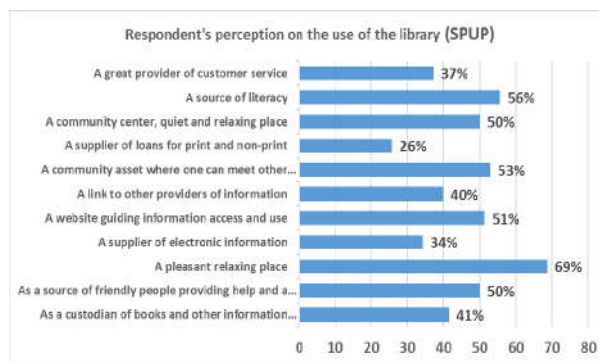
Graph 4

Almost all of the respondents assessed SPUP library as a pleasant/relaxing place as shown by the graph above. Though it was earlier shown that lack of ventilation is the most common difficulty or problem encountered in the utilization of library resources and services, this does not follow that the library is no longer a pleasant/relaxing place. It only means that the library itself is the most encouraging place to stay when it comes to relaxation. This may be brought by the library ambiance, the green or lovely nature surrounding it, and the materials it offers for relaxation.

The second is the library common to all SPUP respondents is a source of literacy with 80% of the respondents identifying it. This only means that majority of the respondents are aware of the library's function to educate and to provide information.

Thirdly, a community asset where one can meet other people is perceived by the respondents on the library with 76% of the respondents identifying it. This implies that users of SPUP library treat the library as a venue for socialization where one can acquaint with others. As an open place inside the campus

where everyone is welcome to be accommodated, the users find the library to be the most convenient place to mingle with others and share whatever they want with each other.

On the other hand, the least perception of the library with only 37% of the respondents identifying it is the library as a supplier of loans for print and non-print. This means that the library users are not greatly aware of the library's function to lend for home use its library collection, hence, a juncture again to realize ineffective marketing and promotion Part III.
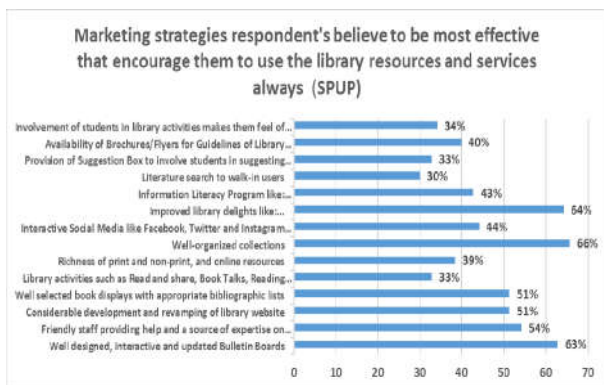
Graph 5

As shown in the graph above, majority or 94% of the respondents identified well organized collection as a marketing strategy to be the most effective in encouraging the use of library resources and services always. This implies that for the users of SPUP library, well organized collection by finding the books or needed materials easily and that there is easy access is the most important in the maximum utilization of library resources and services.

Another marketing strategy believed by SPUP library users to be most effective in encouraging the use of library resources and services always is the information literacy program like online resources orientation with (91%) respondents identifying it. This implies that for SPUP library users, orientation on the use of online resources would encourage them more to use library services always. Hence, better marketing and promotion efforts should be done as a form of information literacy program. This is in consonance with the results in the utilization of online resources orientation where it was rated "Sometimes" by the respondents.

The majority of the respondents (90%) believed that well designed, interactive and updated bulletin boards would be most effective in encouraging the use of library resources and services always. This means that information zones play a vital role in encouraging SPUP library users to come and make use of the library with the attention drawn to them by these bulletin boards.

Meanwhile, the least effective marketing strategy for SPUP library users is literature search to walk-in users with only 43% of the respondents identifying it. It can be implied that literature search may be done however this strategy may not be needed by the users as the library offers various forms of literature search.

CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

The SPUP library offers magnanimous resources and variety of services where students can utilized and maximized. However, there are some problems/difficulties in the utilization of the resources and services. It is in this regard that the marketing and promotion program shall be proposed to effectively address the problems/difficulties the library users encounter in utilizing them. Thus, a detailed marketing and promotion plan is needed to successfully meet this objective.

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