
An Assessment of Informational Guide and Students' Utilization of Information Services in University of California Libraries

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ABSTRACT

The study was to investigate on the informational guide and students' utilization of information services in University of California libraries. Survey research design was adopted for the study. The study was conducted in University of California. The population of the study consisted of 422 registered undergraduate students in faculty of education. The sample of the study was 422 registered undergraduate students in faculty of education, University libraries made up 260 females and 162 males. The instrument used in this study for data collection was a questionnaire titled "Informational Guide and Students' Utilization of Information Services Questionnaire (IGSUISQ)". Face and content validation of the instrument was carried out by an expert in testing, measurement, and evaluation to ensure that the instrument has the accuracy, appropriateness, and completeness for the study under consideration. The reliability coefficient obtained was 0.80, and this was high enough to justify the use of the instrument. The researcher subjected the data generated for this study to appropriate statistical techniques such as percentage analysis. The test for significance was done at 0.05 alpha levels. The study concluded that informational guide foster independent and critical thinking. It solves wayfinding problem in unfamiliar environment, it helps library user to use the appropriate data, tools and facilities of the library, bringing about coordination in academic libraries and aid students in wayfinding and effective retrieval of the needed information. Hence, library signage has great influence on students' utilization of information services in the University of California libraries. One of the recommendations made was that the government should increase budgetary allocation to universities to ensure adequate fund for provision of library signage in academic libraries.

KEYWORDS: Informational Guide, Students' Utilization, Information Services, University of California Libraries

Introduction

The university library is an important element in supporting the learning process. It plays a key role as a place for access to information, knowledge building, and problem solving. The nature and quality of the environment in the university library also influence how and what students learn. Information signage is one of the important signs in the library. This is in line with Dalton (2014), who stresses that informational signage is also one of the keys to information services utilisation in university libraries. Signs give information, and in wayfinding signage, different types of signs are necessary to deliver information. Knowing what those signs are is an integral part of creating a useful system of wayfinding signage. When designing the system, the simpler the wayfinding signage system is, the better it is for the visitors using it to get around. The idea behind designing signs is to convey as much information as possible. Dwight (2008) postulates that information signs help to answer certain questions, such as, what are the hours of operation? Kyung (2000) believes that information signage contains necessary information for library users to use appropriate data, tools, and facilities of a library. The signage includes administrators' intentions, general information, restrictions, opening hours, titles of facilities and exhibitions, handing descriptions and operational manuals.

According to Johnston and Bishop (2011), the academic library should be a place where children can find things easily and learn to be independent library users. This requires that the university library be designed so that students are directed to the materials they need as well as navigate easily and independently, especially to find information they need for learning and pleasure. Libraries are growing organisms, and in this digital age, users are expected to find them more complex and confusing than ever before. Regular visitors to a library need help to inform and guide them through the continual changes that a library undergoes. Polger and Stemper (2014) posited that this assistance is often provided through signage, which must be regularly reviewed and updated. According to Ahn (2011), signage is the methodology of arranging indicators to guide people to their destinations. A successful signage system is intuitive and self-navigable, and it protects the overall visual integrity of the site. Library signage is an indispensable tool in enhancing the utilization of information services in the library. Like other media employed to educate library users, they derive their importance and usefulness from the needs that users experience as they search for information.

Statement of the problem

Over the years, user wayfinding in all library types is beginning to emerge. University library manuals seem to pay little or no attention to library signage and support that students need to increase the usability of their services. It seems in university libraries; signage content conveys little or no spatial information to students. A researcher's observation shows that students are often confused when trying to locate specific areas of the facility, which may hinder utilization of the information service in the library. This problem may be attributed to poor library signage in the university libraries. Further observation reveals that shy and timid students frequently turn around and leave without even approaching a librarian with a question if they find the library too confusing and difficult to navigate.

Objective of the Study

- To determine the extent to which informational guide predict students' utilization of information services in University of California libraries.

Research Question

- What is the extent to which informational guide predict students' utilisation of information services in universities of University of California libraries?

Hypothesis

- The extent to which informational guide predict students' utilisation of information services in University of California libraries is not significant.

Literature Review

Informational Signage and Students' Utilization of Information services

Academic libraries are left with no option or choice but to provide access to relevant information resources by applying this to enable quick access, integrate and repackage information for the end user that will capacitate and enrich higher educational institutions' means of conducting research. Basically, library resources are materials that users consult in making decisions and also for problem-solving. Libraries have always played a significant role in enabling people to engage with all kinds of information and available knowledge resources (Curran, Murray, Norrby, & Christian, 2006). However, availability of information does not imply accessibility and utilization; thus, university libraries must provide informational signage to aid in the utilization of available library information. Perhaps, informational signage in academic libraries enhances accessibility and utilization of library resources because it provides necessary information for library users to use appropriate data. Ugah (2007) opines that the more accessible information resources are, the more likely they will be used, and that readers tend to use resources that require the minimum effort to access. Informational signage saves students' time and reduces the level of stress and challenge in locating the material of interest. Even though the world is experiencing the concept of information "explosion" or "overload," the third world countries, can be said to be experiencing information poverty. This is, according to Ochogwu (2007), due to the failure of our library professionals to provide complete access to those information resources due to a lack of informational signs related to indexing, abstracting, and bibliographic.

Informational signage is one of the keys to information services' utilization in academic libraries. Johnston and Mandel (2014) opine that informational signs comprise all other signs, including advertisements, art, etc. The basic guiding principles behind the design and placement of those signs should be the same. Signs deliver information, and in wayfinding signage, different types of signs are necessary to deliver information. Knowing what those types of signs are is an integral part of creating a useful system of wayfinding signage. The simpler the wayfinding signage system is designed, the better for everyone involved, from the designers of the system to the visitors using it to get around. The idea behind designing signs is to convey as much information as necessary in as little space as possible. The role of the librarian is to connect people to information, and according to Schmidt and Etches (2014), signs can be seen

as tools to achieve this, and hence their design falls well within the scope of library work. Dwight (2008) postulates that informational signs help to answer certain questions, such as what are the hours of operation? Is public Wi-Fi available? All this and more can be supplied to visitors through informational signs. While informational signs can be found at locations marked by identification signs, they can also provide information about other things along the route. For instance, if an area is under construction, it'd be nice to give a little heads-up to anyone in sandals that the road might get a little rocky. If a way is temporarily closed, that's also good to know ahead of time. Kyung (2000) opines that information signage contains necessary information for library users to use appropriate data, tools, and facilities of the library. The signage includes administrators' intentions, general information, restrictions, opening hours, titles of facilities and exhibitions, handling descriptions and operational manuals.

Ahn (2011) maintains that the informational role of library signs permits or restricts certain behaviors of users to help them find their destinations. An information sign is a very legibly printed and very noticeable placard that informs people of the purpose of an object or gives them instruction on the use of something. An example is a traffic sign, such as a stop sign. Information signs have been increasing in visibility due to the explosion of sign technologies. For hundreds, if not thousands, of years, signs were crafted out of wood. Words and images were then hand-painted on the sign. The other traditional way of creating signs dealt with individual constructed letters carved from wood, moulded or wrought from metal, which were then individually placed in the appropriate sequence. While both of these methods are still employed, technology has moved in around them. Woodworking machinery can now be controlled by computers, leading to much greater consistency. Moulded signage has changed dramatically with the advent of plastics, which are far more flexible than metal and significantly cheaper to produce. Additionally, altogether new sign technologies have come into being, such as computer-cut vinyl signage. Admin (2016) maintains that informational signage gives information. It provides knowledge of how what one requires could be seen. Informational signage in academic libraries serves as a guide to direct students to where they should locate any material needed. Ahn (2011) notes that the signage plays a role in indicating information. Informational signage provides all the basic information to library users, it is a tool to discern various books, service points, and facilities. However, Ahn observed that delivering messages in signs should be simple and straight-forward.

Barclay and Scott (2012) assert that informational signage tells building users where they are and what they can (or cannot) do. Some informational signage, such as room identification signage, is also regulatory. Informational signage can also be directional. Say that a copier room is located in the middle of a long hallway. A perpendicularly mounted, double-sided sign reading "Copier Room" is informational in that it identifies the space, but it is also directional in that it can be seen from either end of the hall, thus guiding library users to the copier room. Most of the signage mistakes mentioned in the sidebar involve informational signage, so it is crucial to think carefully before deciding whether an informational sign is needed. Barclay and Scott (2012) maintain that a special type of informational signage is donor-recognition signage. Whether it takes the form of generic engraved brass nameplates on a walnut plaque or elaborate tributes that move into the realm of high art, donor-recognition signage should not hinder wayfinding or library operations. There is no single, simple solution for creating a library space that allows users to successfully find their way. Eliminating obstacles to navigation cannot solve everything. A building designed with wayfinding in mind is a great asset, but even

that cannot win the battle all by itself. These elements need to be combined and harmoniously tuned to allow successful wayfinding. Finally, even in the best-tuned building, some users will require human assistance from time to time to find their way.

Methodology

Survey research design was adopted for the study. The study was conducted in University of California libraries. The population of the study consisted of 422 registered undergraduate students in faculty of education. The sample of the study was 422 registered undergraduate students in faculty of education, University of California libraries made up 260 females and 162 males. The instrument used in this study for data collection was a questionnaire titled "Informational Guide and Students' Utilization of Information Services Questionnaire (IGSUISQ)". Face and content validation of the instrument was carried out by an expert in testing, measurement, and evaluation to ensure that the instrument has the accuracy, appropriateness, and completeness for the study under consideration. The reliability coefficient obtained was 0.80, and this was high enough to justify the use of the instrument. The researcher subjected the data generated for this study to appropriate statistical techniques such as percentage analysis. The test for significance was done at 0.05 alpha levels.

Result and Discussion of the Finding

Research Question One: What is the extent to which information guide predict student's utilization of information services in the University of California libraries?

Table 1: Simple linear regression analysis for the extent to which information guide predicts student's utilization of information services in the University of California libraries.

Variable	R	R-Square	Extent of prediction	Remark
Information Guide	0.337	0.114	11.4%	Low Extent
Students Utilization of Information services				

The entries in Table 1 indicates the R for the strength of the relationship and R² for the determination of the extent to which information guide predict or determine students' utilization and information service in the University of California. The R- Value of 0.337 indicates a low extent of relationship between the two variables. The calculated R² of 0.114 which is the coefficient of determinant indicates that only 11.4% of students' utilization of information service is predicted by information guide. This implies that information guide to a low extent predicts student's utilization and information service in the University of California libraries.

Hypothesis One: The extent to which information guide predict student's utilization of information service in the University of California libraries?

Table 2: Simple linear regression analysis for the prediction between information guide and student’s utilization of information service in University of California libraries.

Model	Sum of Squares	df	Mean Square	F-Cal	F-Crit	Decision @ p< .05
Regression	75.689	1	75.689			
Residual	79.146	396	21.159	50.837	3.89	*
Total	54.834	397				

***Significant at p< .05**

The in Table 2 shows that the calculated F-value of 50.837 is greater than the Critical-F value of 3.89 at .05 level of significant with 1 and 397 degrees of freedom. The result therefore means that there is significant extent to which information guide predicts student’s utilization of information service in the University of California libraries. The result therefore is in agreement with the research findings of Admin (2016) who maintains that informational signage gives information. It provides knowledge of how what one requires could be seen. Informational signage in academic libraries serves as a guide to direct students to where they should locate any material needed. Ahn (2011) supported that the signage plays a role as indicating information. Information signage provides all basic information to library users, it is a tool to discern various books, service points and facilities. However, Ahn observed that delivering messages in signs should be simple and straight forward. The significance of the result caused the null hypotheses to be rejected while the alternative was accepted.

Conclusion

The study concluded that informational guide foster independent and critical thinking. It solves wayfinding problem in unfamiliar environment, it helps library user to use the appropriate data, tools and facilities of the library, bringing about coordination in academic libraries and aid students in wayfinding and effective retrieval of the needed information. Hence, library signage has great influence on students’ utilization of information services in the University of California libraries.

Recommendations

1. The government should increase budgetary allocation to universities to ensure adequate fund for provision of library signage in academic libraries.
2. Librarians should ensure that informational guide should contain clear and precise information that will help in the arrangement of materials on the shelf units to avoid confusion and frustration in accessing information and other library services.

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