

University Library Services and Student Academic Performance

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ABSTRACT

In many countries, university libraries are required to demonstrate quantitatively their value to their institutions. Consequently, many universities spend a large part of their institutional budgets on acquiring new library books, paying for high online journal subscription fees, and recruiting library staff. However, few studies have been conducted to evaluate the contribution of the university libraries to the students' success. Thus, this study, which applied a quantitative survey methodology to quantify the contribution of a Namibian university library to student academic performance, was conducted. The study determined the contribution of the university library services to students' academic performance. Additionally, the study established a relationship between students' library service satisfaction and academic performance. Analysis of library user satisfaction, student age, and gender were also examined.

KEYWORDS

Achievement, Age, Chi-Square, Cross Tabulation, Gender, Library Usage, Regression, Satisfaction

INTRODUCTION

Background and Problem Statement

There is a need for university libraries to demonstrate quantitatively their value to their institutions (Luther, 2008). Consequently, studies such as that of Lonsdale (2003) was conducted and revealed that a strong library program that is adequately staffed, resourced and funded can lead to higher student academic performance. Similarly, Wells' (1995) study established a positive relationship between academic achievement and the use of a number of different library resources or services. Brown and Malenfant (2015) also affirm that university libraries contribute to student learning and success. In addition, Ida (2016) demonstrated that students from schools with libraries with adequate relevant academic materials perform better than those from schools with no libraries. In light of these views, higher education institutions are encouraged to advance and refine strategies that focus on the library's contributions to universities' missions when it comes to student success (Brown & Malenfant, 2015). The current study examines relationships between factors such as age, gender, library usage, and satisfaction and student academic performance. The expected research output is to produce a model that university managements can use to determine the value of the university libraries to its primary customers: students.

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Research Objectives

- To determine the contribution of library usage to student academic performance.
- To assess whether there is a relationship between library service satisfaction and student academic performance.
- To analyze library user satisfaction with reference to students' period of study, age and gender.

Significance of the Study

The study will quantify the role of a university library when it comes to student academic performance. The importance of ensuring good library customer service to students will be demonstrated by analyzing student academic performance outcomes. University libraries can use results of the research to convince their university management to continue investing in developing library academic resources. The study can be used as a benchmark by universities to model the value of their libraries based on the students' feedback in order to source for extra funding from other stakeholders such as the United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization (UNESCO) who are involved globally in the development of the education system.

STUDY FOCUS AREAS

Library Usage and Student Academic Performance

In a modern educational system, access and usage of academic materials by students is very important for the success and academic achievement of the students (Nazy, Socheata, Sopanha & Vichea, 2018). Consequently, it is imperative that students understand the value and take advantage of the benefits that a library can provide (Nazy et al., 2018). As such, libraries are set up in universities to enhance the academic performance of students (Gbemi-Ogunleye, 2016). The immediate implication is that students' access to electronic resources positively contributes to student academic performance (Sulit-Leonen, 2012). In their study, Ramsden and Stone (2013) established a positive association between student book borrowing and degree result, and electronic resource access and degree result. Using the same line of thought, Gbemi-Ogunleye (2016) also revealed a significant association between library usage and the students' academic achievement. In addition, de Jager (1997) supports this idea by observing that there is a positive relationship between the use of a library open shelf books and academic achievement. The assumption drawn from these scholarly views is that, as the frequency of library usage goes up, student academic performance is also likely to increase.

Conversely, Sulit-Leonen (2012) concluded that borrowing of books is statistically insignificant to student academic performance. This view is confirmed by Ramsden and Stone (2013) who note that, there is no association between library student entries/access and degree result. For instance, many students only go to the library to meet up with their friends and discuss things that are not academic related (Nazy et al., 2018). Similarly, Confessore, Lai, Ng and Zakaria (2016) discovered that non-academic-related activities showed statistically significant negative relationships with the students' academic performance.

Library Service Satisfaction and Student Academic Performance

In many cases library users, especially students, are highly dissatisfied with the library opening hours (Nawarathne & Singh, 2013). Similarly, Aghojare, Ferdinand and Patrick (2015) revealed that students would like the library to stay open longer for them to have enough time to gain access to more educational materials that assist them in improving their academic performance. However, students' library satisfactions can vary within the university's faculties, schools or departments. For instance, Nawarathne and Singh (2013) observed that students from the Faculty of Management Studies were

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