



ASSESSMENT OF DISTANCE LEARNING STUDENTS TO NALLRC'S RESOURCES AND SERVICES: BASIS FOR LIBRARY ORIENTATION AND PROMOTIONAL STRATEGIES PROGRAM

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ABSTRACT

This study was conducted to find out the level of awareness and satisfaction of distance learners to the NALLRC's resources and services and to be able to formulate a library orientation and promotional, strategic program that is focused mainly to the distance learners. The descriptive research method was used to determine the level of awareness and satisfaction of 187 distance learning graduate students. It was found out that they are somewhat aware of the resources and services which resulted in being unsure of their satisfaction for both areas. This implied that there is a great need for a library orientation for DL and to make ways to promote the said areas. Additionally, the study discovered that distance learners have a number of concerns and problems that they encountered in accessing the library's resources and services. Among the recommendations are 1) to take in consideration a library orientation designed specifically for DL a strategic promotional program to be able to market the library resources and services to DL; 2) for the administration to be able to market the library resources and services to DL; 3) for the library to consider offering NALLRC services during onsite classes and assign a distance learning librarian to assist in their research needs; and lastly, 4) further research may be done to improve the gaps in this study, specifically in terms of the enhancement of programs that will support their research needs of DL.

Keywords: *Academic libraries, distance education, distance learners, library resources and services*

1. INTRODUCTION

Education plays a significant role in shaping developing nations. One of the essential support systems influencing the quality of education is the provision of library and information services and resources. Distance education has reconstructed the delivery and accessibility of education and has also modified how critical library and information support services are (Watson, 2008).

As distance learning and online learning are making their mark in the academe, the support that the library is providing is essential (ACRL, 2016). With this, libraries are now facing the challenge in providing library support to distance learners equal or parallel to on-campus students. Librarians, who realized that traditional research support is insufficient in supporting the online environment, make use of different tools and methods to meet the needs of researchers. With the rapid emergence of technological trends, nature of information access, and the demand for equitable services for students, serving the needs and preferences of distance students has become increasingly important (Alijani & Khasseh, 2015).



The Polytechnic University of the Philippines has been offering distance education since 1990. Their main library, Ninoy Aquino Library and Learning Resource Center (PUP NALLRC) serve as the heart of the university and the gateway to global information access. Thus, it is the library's priority to cater to every academic need of its patron by providing adequate and efficient library support.

This study is made to focus on investigating the awareness and satisfaction of distance learners to the library's operation, specifically on the resources and services, in meeting their academic needs. Moreover, as a result of this study, the researcher aims to produce a library orientation and strategic promotional program for DL. With this, this study intends to enhance the library support for DL that would not only aid in promoting the library's resources and services to the DL but would also help them acquire their information needs. The improved library support would also then benefit not only the library but the DL, whom the library value most.

2. MATERIALS AND METHODS

The descriptive research method was used to determine the level of awareness and satisfaction of DL. Using the IPO Model the researcher administered questionnaire consisting questions that would gather data on DL's awareness and satisfaction on NALLRC's resources and services. The questionnaire used was adapted from the Standards of Distance Learning Library Services prepared by ACRL (2016). The data gathered in the process was used to propose a library orientation and promotional strategies program targeting DL in particular.

3. RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

From the data gathered, the researcher discovered the following results:

1. Most of the respondents belonged to the age group 25 years old and below wherein most of the DL who participated in the study are female; most of the participants are from the Masters of Educational Management.
2. Data revealed based that the DL is only somewhat aware of the library's resources and services.
3. In terms of the levels of satisfaction, respondents were unsure of the library resources and services.
4. When it comes to the problems that they encountered, borrowing books, obtaining study materials, information sources not readily available, lack of tools, remote resources, an unstable internet connection were most of their struggles.
5. The test of significant differences revealed that there is no significant difference in the assessment of the respondent on both library resources and services when grouped according to profile.

4. CONCLUSION

DL is not fully informed of what the library has in store for them causing them to be unsure of their satisfaction of the said areas in the library operation. The study also revealed the respondents' struggles in accessing the library's resources and services for a number of reasons. Thus, the following are the recommendations of the researcher basing from the derived conclusions:

1. With the desire to enhance the library's support to DL and to be able to provide access to all, the result of this study shows the great need of the library to provide a library orientation program that would intentionally focus on DL.



2. The researcher recommends to provide a strategic promotional program to be able to market the library resources and services to DL, informing them and encouraging them to utilize the resources and services readily available for them.
3. The library administration may take into consideration assigning and delegating DL librarian focused on assisting all DL, both faculty and students, providing services to meets their information needs.
4. Administration may be requested for necessary funding in materializing the proposed program this is to show support to the library management and to the students as well.
5. The library may consider opening the NALLRC library during onsite classes (Sundays) with an assigned librarian on duty to cater their research needs. This is for the DL to make use of the library while they are around since that is their only time to be around the campus. Online resources may be available but the need for the physical library is inevitable.
6. The researcher recommends an active virtual presence. Since, DLs are not physically present, it is through virtual contact that they can reach the library and make their necessities known and attended to.
7. The OpenU faculty may give requirements and activities involving library use and they should build up partnership with library for library orientation and other programs.
8. Further research should be done to improve the gaps in this study, specifically in terms of the enhancement of the programs that will support the research needs of DL.

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