FACTORS INFLUENCING THE RENDERING OF SERVICES IN ACADEMIC LIBRARIES

by

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DECLARATION

"I declare that FACTORS INFLUENCING THE RENDERING OF SERVICES IN ACADEMIC LIBRARIES, is my own work and that all the sources I have used or quoted have been indicated and acknowledged by means of complete references.

F. R. HOSANA

Signed..................................

Date...................................

Acronyms

AACR	**Anglo American Cataloguing Rules**
BL	**British Library**
CALICO	**Cape Library Co-operative**
CD-ROM	**Compact Disk Read Only Memory**
DDC	**Dewey Decimal Classification**
ESALS	**Eastern Seaboard Association of Libraries**
FRELICO	**Free State Library and Information Consortium**
GAELIC	**Gauteng and Environs Library Consortium**
ILL	**Interlibrary Loan**
ITS	**Integrated Tertiary Software**
LC	**Library of Congress**
MARC	**Machine Readable Catalogue**
SABINET	**South African Bibliographic Network**
SACat	**South African Catalogue**
SEALS	**South Eastern Academic Libraries' System**

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FACTORS INFLUENCING THE RENDERING OF SERVICES IN ACADEMIC LIBRARIES

1. INTRODUCTION

1.1 Background of the problem

In the field of user studies, very little research has been done on rendering of services in academic libraries. These services need to be examined in depth in order to be able to provide academic library users with more appropriate information services.

There is clearly a need to determine what the real needs of academic library users are and how they prefer to look for information. The rapid growth of information technology could have a great influence on service rendering to academic library users.

1.2 Statement of the problem

The aim of this study is to identify the services that are rendered in the academic libraries.

The main objectives is to determine:

1. What kind of services are rendered in academic libraries?
2. Who are the academic library users?
3. What are the needs for academic library users?
4. What role does departments within academic libraries play in service provision for its users?
5. What is the importance of multi type library cooperation?
6. How can information services to academic libraries users be improved?
7. Is academic library staff training important?
8. What kind of a library building is needed to render a better service?

1.3 Importance of the study

This could have great value for academic librarians and library assistants who provide information services to this kind of users. Their role in providing information services to academic staff, students and researchers, needs clarification, and this study should provide some guidelines in this regard.

2. The purpose of academic libraries

There is a great need of academic libraries in order to increase and improve the quality of tertiary education for the users. It also plays a significant role in their studies and research. This can be fulfilled through the use of library materials as well as the assistance of librarians. The services offered by academic libraries have to be based on the necessary selectivity that users require and must create means by which the most relevant information can be selected (Budd, 1998:341).

Staff is responsible for delivering services to users and is probably the library's most important asset. A large academic library will employ more staff, each with specialists' skills, and the coordination and management of all this effort to create a coherent service is a major undertaking (Brophy, 2000:91).

According to the National Education Policy Investigation Services (1992: 4), "there are 88 University, college and technikon libraries in South Africa attached to their parents institutions". They are primarily responsible to their students' bodies, teaching and research staff. They are established to support and enhance the study, teaching and research programmes of their academic institutions.

Due to the impact of the proposed amalgamations amongst tertiary institutions this will change in the near future. Academic libraries will be less than 88, for example Vista university-Sebokeng campus, University of Potchefstroom and University of the North will become one academic library, as well as other institutions. Mergers and incorporations will come into effect in January 2004 and January 2005.

Their valuable collections form part of the formal resource sharing system, but wider access to these resources could contribute to non-formal education. All academic libraries operate their services from dedicated buildings, and it is highly unlikely that this position will change drastically in the near future.

According to Bryson (1999:379), "the delivery of a service to the user is only the beginning of the relationship between information service and the user. The user approach to management is service driven and quality oriented. The user of an information service can vary". The user approach considers how the users perceive the quality of the products and services and the total performance of the organization.

There should be an openness and willingness to communicate with users, to identify and resolve problems in service delivery and to ensure that the information products and services meet their needs. The organizational culture should reflect the user approach (Bryson, 1999:379).

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Most academic libraries offer some specialist services which are designed to meet the needs of particular user groups or which relate to particular parts of the stock. Such services must be designed to meet local requirements and Conditions, but again they must present a coherent approach to the users.

2.1 Who are the academic library users?

The users of the academic libraries are students, lecturers, and members of the community. Librarians will need to be very clear about the purposes that their libraries serve, and design the range of services they offer with the purpose in mind.

2.2 Users of academic library

An academic library exists to provide a service to people who need it. The service may be the provision of access to textbooks, assistance with information enquiries, the provision of a place to study, help with using a complex computer-based information retrieval package, but it is always the user on whom such activities are focused (Brophy, 2000:55).

It is a useful exercise for librarians to ask themselves, before any service is introduced or even planned, 'what do the users want? what do the users need? How can users best be served? To help answer these questions, and then to provide suitable management and service responses, it is useful to borrow the techniques of quality management, developed in the industrial and commercial sectors but now widely implemented throughout public services (Ward, 1997:45).

Fundamental to quality management is the understanding that quality is inextricably linked to customer's requirements and quality is fitness for the customers' purposes (Line, 1990:115). Some academic libraries have developed specific services to try to meet the needs of these non-traditional groups, for example, weekend opening has become more common, collections of textbooks earmarked for loan only to part-time students have been introduced and document delivery services that accept requests from home or work and deliver in the same way have been established (Brophy, 2000:55).

Some study spaces will need to be equipped with computer workstations, but others will need to be suitable for the use of printed materials and many users of course will want flexible spaces suitable for both. Undergraduates are also likely to be heavy users of reference and enquiry services.

Students make a great deal of use of photocopying facilities to the extent that it sometimes appears that photocopying is a substitute for reading. They will also need to be able to collect computer printout (Ward, 1997:47).

2.2.1 Undergraduate students

The extent to which college, technikon or university undergraduates use their institution libraries has been a matter of concern to a number of investigators who were interested in demonstrating the value or use of library services (De Jager, 1991:32). A considerable amount of anxiety and fear of inadequacy may be generated when students first approach academic libraries (De Jager, 1991:34). They feel lost, confused and neither knew where to begin or what to do.

De Jager (1991:34) states that, "librarians could play an important role in alleviating student anxiety and in reconstructing library instruction sessions to convince students that the library is not a frightening place. Students perceptions of the library and their willingness to use it, will depend on their ability to find what they need, or the amount of effort they think will be required to achieve the necessary skills in the library".

Undergraduate students often lack the basic skills to make good use of libraries and it should not be forgotten that many, particularly younger, students' will never before have encountered a library on the scale of the typical university library (Brophy, 2000:59). If their experience is of school libraries, they will need to acquire a number of new skills quickly in order to be effective users and in particular will need to come to grips with the sheer range of resources at their disposal (White, 1995:64).

2.2.2 Postgraduate students

According to De Jager (1991:34)," postgraduate study with its generally high research component and emphasis on self study rather than on lecturing and group teaching, may be regarded as qualitative different from undergraduate study". This would lead one to assume that library use by postgraduate students should reflect these differences. The differences may be quite significant, is suggested by the paper cited above, in which it was shown that students' library habits change as they move up the academic ladder (De Jager, 1991: 34).

It will be important for libraries to realise that these students will require more attention and to recognise that they have a particular responsibility for addressing their needs effectively in order for them to succeed at University.

They are likely want to make considerable use of the periodical literature and they will need to explore abstracts and indexes, whether paper or electronic, to identify items of interests, many of which may need to be supplied by interlibrary loan. Postgraduate students may make different demands on the library for study space as, depending on the structure of their courses, they may be engaged in individual or group study and the types of spaces they need will depend on this (Brophy, 2000:60).

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2.2.3 Research students and staff

Research and teaching are seen as the main responsibilities of academic staff who may also be involved in academic administration governance of the University through faculty and senate committees and in service to the community (De Jager, 1991:36). Many academic institutions affirm the equality of their commitment to both teaching and research, but academics also know that research activities provide much more recognition and prestige than teaching.

De Jager (1991:36) states that, "the library is central to much of the research activity conducted at the university or technikon, but the nature of the research support provided by the library will differ from faculty to faculty and depend to a large extent on the nature of the research concerned".

Researchers in the Faculty of Arts, for example, tend to be involved in critical appraisal, or, the perusal of texts, whether old or new. Arts researchers do read current literature and take note of trends, but they often search primary sources and archival materials, and in reporting their information seeking activities, they tend not to be highly in favour of computer-aided searching for reference materials. The library will be able to provide materials for Arts research activities required by the researchers (De Jager, 1991:36).

Research activities at university and technikon, are usually conducted at a number of levels of depth and sophistication. Some faculties establish research groups consisting of both postgraduate students and members of staff, in which cutting edge research may be conducted. It has long been taken for granted that library support is essential for research at these levels (De Jager, 1991:36).

According to Brophy (2000:61), "the needs of all these users will be similar. Their research is original, and presumably at the leading edge of developments in their field, the library requirements is for in-depth coverage of a highly specialists areas and time is usually of the essence, for example, rapid supply of interlibrary loans is important". In other words, they are highly demanding library users.

They will certainly want to access a range of electronic resources, such as specialist databases and datasets, and may require original materials, which are comparatively rare and difficult to locate. Of course these users also want the standard library services: photocopying, printouts, and lending (Brophy, 2000:61).

They may also require rather more specialised study space than others, especially if they do not have adequate space in their departments. They may also place heavy demands on interlibrary loan services. When they are externally funded they may be more willing to pay for this from their research grants than others would be (Snyder & Fox, 1997: 87).

2.2.4 Academic staff

Most staff in universities have both teaching, and research responsibilities, although the balance between these vary markedly. Although teaching and research will be closely related, and the results of research will be used to inform teaching of the subject, staff may differ in their requirements of the library (Brophy, 2000:61).

With the development of new teaching and learning methods and increasing use of Information and Communication Technology's to deliver teaching, the demands on the library are changing (Brophy: 2000:61). Academic libraries commonly request reading lists from teaching staff well in advance of the start of the course, to allow time for them to be checked, books to be ordered and processed and changes made to the loan status, for example by transferring copies into the short loan collection. Libraries do not always recognise the constraints under which teaching staff work.

With modular courses in particular, staff may not be sure what they will be teaching until a few weeks before the start of the session and in any case requests sent out in the middle of the examination season are hardly likely to receive priority attention.

It is important that there is a dialogue between two sides so that, with understanding of each other's problems, there may be effective action to ensure that the students will be able to access the resources they need when they need them.

The needs of staff for library support for their research will be similar to the requirements of research students and staff, although of course as experts in their field academic staff will be even more demanding. They may value current awareness services, where these are available, and they will appreciate the availability of co-operative agreements, which enable them to use a broader range of collections (Brophy, 2000:62).

2.2.5 External readers

De Jager (1991:36) states that, "a commitment to serve the wider community of which is part of the university, is a recognised feature of many university mission statement. A great deal of skill and expertise resides in University faculties, which might not be fully utilised by imparting them to the next generation in the form of tuition".

As the Universities are supported by the state and by their communities, service is one way of paying back some of their obligation to society. Such service may also enhance the prestige and influence of the university and provide its students with opportunities to put into practice in a supervised environment what they have learnt (De Jager, 1991:36).

Although few academic libraries have a large body of external readers, apart from where the library attracts significant numbers of researchers to its specialist collections, this group can be important. Those academic libraries with major collections can find themselves under considerable pressure from this direction (De Jager,1991:36).

Some professional groups in the health area may find the university library offers the best source for the information needed to support evidence –based practice. Services to such groups will normally be offered at a fee. The fee itself may be set on an individual basis or may be a group fee. Care needs to be taken to establish a clear contract, which states what the library will and will not provide.

According to De Jager (1991:41), "libraries may support the service mission of their university or technikon by making their collections, skills and resources available to outside users who are not members of the University". The extent to which this is done, and whether or not payment will be involved, will depend on the library's perception of the community it intends to serve and the nature of the service to be provided.

2.2.6 Users with special needs

According to Brophy (2000:64), "Many people require assistance or special consideration if services are to be accessible to them. Making library services accessible is important because they form such a vital part of the overall service to any member of the university, and careful consideration is therefore needed when services are designed or changed".

The best strategy for academic libraries is usually to integrate services for disabled users into the mainstream service as far as possible and to try to ensure that such users are not singled out. However, it is sometimes desirable to offer enhanced levels of service – an extended loan period would be an obvious example and this may mean providing a special ID card. Staff should careful not to draw attention to the disability when this kind of produce is necessary (Brophy, 2000:64).

2.2.6.1 Blind and visually impaired people

Blind and visually impaired people face many difficulties when accessing library services. Not only do they face the problems of physical access, such as the placing of doorways and barriers, which have to be negotiated, but also they may be unable to read signs and guides. There are two complementary approaches to making information sources accessible to blind and visually impaired people (Brophy, 2000:64).

First, it is possible to provide services, which enable existing resources to be transcribed into a suitable format: for example, chapter of a book could be transcribed into Braille. Simply providing a magnifier or a large PC screen can help a surprisingly large number of visual impaired people. Tools can be provided which enable the 'native' format, usually electronic, to be read satisfactorily by a non-visual output device (Brophy, 2000:64).

Second, a screen reader can be used to turn the contents of a workstation display into audio output device.

2.2.6.2 Deaf and hearing-impaired users

While most deaf and hearing-impaired users are able to read text and view images, the needs of deaf blind people who cannot must not be ignored- they still need special consideration from library staff. Text telephones are available which enable a deaf person to type and/or receive back typed messages on a small screen, and it is good practice for academic libraries to install at least one (Brophy, 2000:64).

A particular issue is whether deaf users can be alerted to emergencies, library closure, a visual fire alarm system may be needed, and the procedure for closing the library in the evening designed to ensure that deaf and hearing-impaired people are made aware of what is happening.

Since many deaf people can lip-read, training staff to speaking clearly and observing a few other elements of good practice-such as facing the person being served, and keeping your hands away from your face can make all difference. Training one or two staff in sign language is a useful strategy (Brophy, 2000:64).

2.2.6.3 Users with motor disabilities

The most obvious problems for users with motor disabilities are those of access within the building. Users with motor disabilities may need accessible reader places for example, they may need additional width to accommodate a wheelchair. They may also need help from staff, for example to take books down from high shelves.

According to Brophy (2000:64), "the core services of the academic library include the provision of a learning environment, reference and enquiry services and access to information sources". Each library must tailor its precise service mix to the needs of the users it serves.

2.3 What are the needs for academic library users?

Different users will have different needs even though they may be undertaking the same course of study. Individual user needs will clearly be influenced by the choices of electives or topics for projects and dissertations.

Needs will also be influenced by different learning styles, form and mode of attendance at the college, technikon and university, and by any special needs arising from library users being physically challenged or through their personal or domestic circumstances (Brophy, 2000:56)

Academic libraries are increasingly appreciating the diversity of need and making special provision for groups such as part-time students, students with physical disabilities, students with dyslexia and international students. The services of most academic libraries still remain predominantly geared towards the needs of traditional full-time students (Bryson, 1999:379).

Our users also need to be able to use our facilities and resources effectively. Knowledge is power and the user needs to know the following in order to be empowered in the use of library facilities and services:

- Knowledge of what facilities and services are available. Libraries need to spell out, and to publicise widely, exactly what services they offer their users. Any changes in availability or location need to be communicated to the users.
- A knowledge of how to access these facilities and services. The user needs to know where and when it can obtain access to the facilities and services offered. It will also need to know how it obtains registration or passwords and whether there are any restrictions on use.
- Knowledge of how to use these facilities and service effectively. The user needs to be able to use the facilities and services confidently and effectively to enable it to be as self reliant as possible in its learning or research.

McDonald and Micikas (1994:1), define library effectiveness as "the accomplishment of tasks in ways that promote the well-being of an organisation, its users, staff and researchers". According to McDonald & Micikas (1994:10), "effectiveness is equated with the ability of the organization to address the needs and expectations of its users".

The criteria users apply to evaluate a library's effectiveness is:

- The availability of needed information on demand
- The presence of well developed mechanisms for access to information in remote libraries and value of service.

It is certainly true that academic librarians have to think carefully before introducing new services as it is always very difficult to withdraw them once they have begun, but it is a great strength of the academic library that is well used and needed (Jordan, 1998:133).

2.3.1 Needs and preferences for various types of information sources

The term information sources media or records refer in this study to the actual physical carriers of the information.

2.3.1.1 Books

Books have been found to be either the most important medium for students, staff and researchers. Brophy (1996:116) says that, "to the academic library, the term 'books' may be taken to mean far more than the traditional textbook or research monograph, important as these are:

- Conference proceedings,
- Encyclopaedias,
- Dictionaries,
- Thesauri,
- Yearbooks,
- Guides to organisations,
- Pamphlets,
- Exhibition catalogues, and others

Categories of publication will all be important.

It is undeniable that academic library users still use printed books extensively to meet their information needs.

2.3.1.2 Journals

Since journals have, traditionally, provided the main route for researchers to report their findings, it is not surprising that they form a major element of academic libraries' stock (Brophy, 2000:116). Articles in journals are very important information sources for academic library users. In order to keep up with recent developments in their fields, they choose to consult articles. Electronic journals also play an important role to these users
(Van Zijl, 2000:26).

2.3.1.3 Electronic information sources

Electronic information sources are becoming increasingly important to academic library users. Van Zijl (2000:28-29), "discovered in their survey that electronic media are seen as being very important to the users. They encourage the use of CD ROM databases because of the way this technology enables users to have more comprehensive information of what they are studying".

2.3.2 Reference and enquiry services

The task of providing this type of service is complex and draws on a wide range of skills. To begin with, it is vitally important that library staff have the interpersonal communication skills to be effective in this role. This means the ability to listen carefully to users and to draw out from their real needs.

It also means the ability not just to find an answer to the query but in so doing to help the user to learn how to resolve similar queries for themselves in the future-in other words, the reference service should be a learning opportunity for the user. These interpersonal skills must sit alongside highly developed knowledge of their literature and increasingly of the technology used to deliver that literature of the subject in question.

Katz (1993:47) state that, "reference librarians must ensure that the first impression of the library is that the facility is inviting. Encourage self-reliance to help build user confidence".

2.3.3 Role of library and information service staff

Ruth (1997:171) states that, "if students are going to learn to be information users, perhaps we need to provide opportunities for them to think about information itself. Libraries cannot teach students to be effective information seekers and users until they have formulated for themselves some concept of information".

According to Dougherty & Dougherty (1993:346), "academic professionals and especially students need to be information literate in order to fully contribute to and compete in today's and tomorrow's world".

Another aspect of the information search process is feelings and attitudes. Four reasons for feeling lost, fear, and anxiety:
• The size of the library
• Not knowing where things were
• Not knowing what to do
• And not knowing how to begin the search process.

According to Ruth (1997:173), "students fear are due to a feeling that other students are competent at library use while they alone are incompetent. This lack of competence is somehow shameful and must be kept hidden". Lecturers definitely have a responsibility to teach and develop critical skills, while librarians play a facilitating role in helping students to apply to those skills in the research process. Library instruction is merely one way of reaching small groups of students as opposed to the one interaction at the reference desk, in offices, and among the shelves (Ruth, 1997:176).

With the implementation of technology on a large scale in higher education, the needs of the user are changing which is bringing about a resolution, not just in the role of librarians but also in the skills required to help these students most effectively.

The student will not just need advice in the use of information resources but also in how to print-out their findings, how to transfer references into a word-processor, how to display graphic images. These skills are often found in staff who works in computing centres, in higher education and in libraries, which is bringing about a gradual change in the way in which users are supported.

2.4 What to expect from library staff

Provide adequate library facilities containing materials in specialised subject areas as well as basic reference materials. Ensure that the relevant library has at least one copy of each book and article recommended in module guides by teaching staff (Katz, 1993:48).

Maintain a comprehensive, accessible and easy to use library catalogue and reservation system for books and other materials both within the libraries and through any campus network terminal. Ensure libraries and resource centres opening times are suitable, well publicised and, unless for good reason, are adhered to.

Ensure that any planned changes to the availability of learning support and computing facilities are suitably publicised in advance. Provide a quiet study environment, including a designed silent study area in each library and ensure that regulations governing their use are enforced.

Provide a resource centre within each school to complement learning support facilities with the university. Provide reasonably priced photocopying facilities for the self-service use in all libraries and in resource centre whenever possible (Bryson, 1999:378).

Provide access to general computing facilities within each faculty/ department so long as a timetabled class does not require a given facility. Publicised details in each computer laboratory and resource centre of how to seek assistance if you have a technical problem when using the computers.

Students are expected to:

- Respect the rights to other users by maintaining a quiet study environment and observing request for silence in designated silent study areas.
- Return items on loan promptly and pay fines on items not return by their due date.
- Abide by regulations governing libraries and resource centres and responds to reasonable requests from their staff.

- Familiarise yourself with and abide by the university regulations governing computers and their use.
- Take reasonable steps to protect computing facilities and other users from computer viruses.

2.5 Service quality

Hernon and Altman (1996:81) define libraries, "as systems in which entire organization works toward the accomplishment of common goals". Service quality is a concept the entire organization must embrace. Librarians need to improve the service, be truly responsive to the needs and preferences of users, and 'take services to users rather than expecting everyone to come to one place to fulfil their needs (Hernon and Altman, 2001:14).

Excellent service is hard work. Great service organisation build a culture of achievement, achieving at work is rewarding (Hernon & Altman, 1996:158). Library staff is responsible for ensuring quality in terms of satisfying the user in all they do, and the approach is one of prevention of errors and faults rather than detection and correction (Jordan, 1998:16).

Service quality is the provision of services, which meet the needs of all users, based in the tertiary institution, in accordance with the university, technikon, and college policy on equality of opportunity and within available resources (Jordan: 1998:23).

Staff in the service department should have a clear awareness of the institutional and library's mission statement, and strategic plan. The services should clearly be able to show how they fit into this plan and how they derive their quality assurance measures from it and support it (Jordan, 1998:27).

According to Bryson (1999:378), "user expectations and perceptions of quality often vary, as it is an individual judgement. There are also cultural differences in user expectations and perceptions of quality, that on the service delivery".

Quality is judged in terms of:

- Timeliness of service delivery in responding to requests for information, files help desk queries or the ordering and supply of new equipment.
- A service that does not break down and is easy to use.
- A value for money and a service delivered by courteous, knowledge and accurate staff (Bryson, 1999:378).

The model identifies three gaps that cause unsuccessful service delivery

- The gap between user expectations and management perception, management does not always perceive correctly what users want or how users judge the service components.

- The gap between management perception and service quality specifications, management might not set quality standards. They might be clear but unrealistic, or they might be clear and realistic but management might not be fully committed to enforcing this quality level.
- The gap between service quality specifications and service delivery, this includes factors such as poorly trained or under resourced staff, how morale, equipment breakdown or drives for efficiency at the expense of user satisfaction.

2.6 User expectations

A library user is demanding a service and expects that service. One way to view users expectations is to substitute the concept of user demand. The idea is to supply what it is that the user demand. If a library supplies something that is not in demand, users will place very little value on it.

As a starting point, libraries should focus their efforts on their existing users. The idea is that it is important to provide excellent service to existing users, instead of devoting too many resources to getting new users. Those who know the library and how the facility works should be easier to work with since they already understand the system (Stuart, 1996:29).

Improved user service and satisfaction is a long-term strategic initiative. It requires commitment of time and money to provide training, to allow time for staff to meet, focus, and to get feedback from users. A strategic focus on user service and satisfaction is an effective tool to help libraries accomplish their mission.

Stuart (1996:28) states that, "When library improves its service, a temporary increase in satisfaction can be expected. This service level then becomes the baseline for provision and user expectations rise again". Materials availability increased as shorter loan periods were introduced. As materials availability improved, user satisfaction initially went up, as the students were more likely to get hold of the books, which they sought.

This cycle of improved service provision, rise in customer satisfaction, higher user expectations, and then a fall in satisfaction appears to rotate much faster in the electronic age. The effective library will seek to continually improve its services and ensure that they remain user oriented and meet user needs.

User expectations, however, can be managed and the effective library will seek to do so through publicity materials, student and staff induction, and liaison with stakeholders, and just possibly through initiatives such as charters and service level agreements (Stuart, 1996:29).

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Library management has the aim to maximise user satisfaction by minimising the gap between service delivery and user expectations. This is achieved partly through continuous service improvement based on an awareness of users' views and opinions.

2.7 User satisfaction

Stuart (1996:26) defined user satisfaction as, "the level of service a user believes can and should be delivered, and adequate service, or the level of service the user considers acceptable". A significant role of academic libraries is to prepare individuals for meaningful participation in economic and social responsibilities in a multicultural environment. Such preparation is not possible if academic libraries themselves are not prepared.

According to Brophy (2000:154), "most academic libraries offer some specialist services which are designed to meet the needs of particular user groups or which relate to particular parts of the stock. Such services must be designed to meet local requirements and conditions, but again they must present a coherent approach to the users".

Academic librarians are beginning to study user satisfaction and user expectations in more depth. It is the time and place when the service provider translates the service philosophy into reality. Librarians need to be involved in reviewing new proposals for academic programs that will require library resources (Dougherty and Dougherty, 1993:343).

According to Dougherty & Dougherty (1993:343), "librarians need to spend more time on campus making things happen and less in attending meetings with other librarians". Libraries are challenged to change old practices and develop new ones to ensure that diversity is incorporated into all areas of library services; such changes include not only diverse collections and new approaches to services, but attitudes as well. Reference librarians need to respond in a pro-active manner to the problems faced by users (Brophy, 2000:155).

3. The role of departments within a library

3.1 Departments in the library

There are different departments within the library to make the service provision easier for the staff and users. Departments differ from library to library. There is collection development and acquisition, cataloguing and classification, circulation, short loan, reference, audio-visual, periodical section and interlibrary loan department.

3.1.1 Collection development and acquisition

Collection development is the term given to the process of selection, acquisition and evaluation of useful library materials (print and non print media) that will contribute to the teaching, studying, research and management tasks of the university (Cobley, 1997:48).

In the university, college and technikon library, collection development is guided by two important factors:

- The majority of students using the library are undergraduate who take structured formal courses with defined literature needs that is, recommended titles. The trend, therefore, has been to develop a separate study or reserve collection to meet the mass demand for recommended literature.
- The literature and information needs of teaching and research require the development of a comprehensive research collection.

3.1.2 Stock selection

The selection of items for stock is a highly specialised responsibility, which requires not only good subject knowledge and good knowledge of the literature but an ability to anticipate user's needs and draw academic staff's attention to items of potential value (Brophy, 2000:114). A proportion of material will be selected on the basis of requests from users, most often from academic staff wishing material to be purchased either for student use or to support their research interests.

According to Brophy (2000:114), "One of the librarian's tasks is to ensure that this does not happen and that the overall balance of the collection is maintained. In selecting stock a number of criteria will be used in addition to the subject matter. Knowledge of different publishers will be important, the reputation of the publisher is a good indicator of quality".

The stock of the academic libraries remains predominantly books and journals, together with materials in formats appropriate to specific representations, such as slides other image formats, audio and videotapes. Libraries also provide access to a mix of electronic and traditional formats, often providing both (Brophy, 2000:115). A number of methods are available to evaluate collections, including statistical techniques based on usage and issue counts.

Careful selection of resources, whether they are traditional books and journals or electronic data services, is essential if the library's users are to have access to the information they need. Close liaison with users, particularly with teaching and research staff, will be essential, as will be the monitoring of stock usage (Brophy, 2000:122).

3.1.3 Acquisitions

The acquisitions function in the university and technikon library is the physical acquirement of library materials by purchase, gifts or exchange.

There are three priority types of acquisitions
- Rush order
- Faculty and staff request
- And publishers' weekly requests by assistant librarians.

According to Brophy (2000:137), "the ordering or acquisition module is designed to control all the processes involved in placing orders, sending these to suppliers, receiving books or other materials and controlling associated expenditure".

3.1.4 Cataloguing and classification

3.1.4.1 Classification

The Dewey decimal classification, DDC system is used to describe the main content of a resource. This is a numerical system, which is supplemented by a three letter alphabetical code. The exact location of an item on shelf is determined in this manner. There are a number of libraries using classification system such as Cape Technikon and Vaal Triangle Technikon.

When classifying an item, different factors such as the user's requirements and the given set of rules for classification have to be balanced. The classification numbers in this department are allocated using DDC 21. Headings are allocated using the LC subject headings in conjunction with the list of LC free-floating subdivision. Back up tools including ITS (Integrated Tertiary Software), Erudite, Innopac and AACR (Anglo American Cataloguing Rules) are used.

3.1.4.2 Cataloguing

Before doing the original cataloguing, searches on SACat (South African Catalogue) and Library of Congress databases must have been done to establish that there is indeed, no record.

3.1.4.3 Database search

Regarding books SABINET (South African Bibliographic Network) is searched using an author title search in the sense that hardback and paper editions of the same book have different ISBN numbers. After the SABINET searches have been collected, it can be established whether an item is not on record and needs to be catalogued from scratch or whether the item is on record but needs more details, for example, subject headings and classification.

If an item is not found on the SACat database can be searched on the record. The record can then be copied on to SACat if found. Printouts of the items, which are not on record and need to be catalogued from scratch, are sent to the cataloguer for cataloguing, classification and allocation of subject headings.

These items are catalogued and interim standard records are upgraded or completed by the cataloguer. Thereafter books may be covered and receive tattle tape, date sheet as well as library stamp. Finally the labels are placed on the spine of the book. Thereafter the books are further processed and prepared for the open shelf.

3.1.4.4 Cataloguing and indexing of information sources

Once information sources are available in an academic library, they must be processed and organised so as to provide maximum access to the collection. This is achieved through the cataloguing, classification and indexing of the information.

3.1.5 Circulation department

The control of lending and related operations is perhaps the most critical function of the modern Library Management System (Brophy, 2000:140). This is where the library administration takes place. All Cape Technikon staff and students formally registered with the institution need not join the library, as membership of the library is part of registration process and the library make use of the university staff and student records for the purpose of issuing materials.

At Vaal Triangle Technikon, access course students and short course students need to join the library. Members' forms are completed in the main issue desk and membership cards are to be collected. In this department, library assistants control the membership registration and membership fee, for example, all members of the public, including companies, may use the resources in the library but an annual membership fees is charged for those who would like to borrow books.

In academic libraries, circulation services ensure that numerous volumes are loaned to users. Computerised record systems have been developed to control the daily flow of library materials. No university library is able to possess in its collection all the recorded knowledge and information that the user groups may need to pursue their tasks (Montanelli & Sternstrom, 1999:118).

3.1.5.1 General books and circulating bound periodicals

Normally undergraduate students are given a loan period of 14 days, and postgraduates a period of 1 month, as well as staff. Renewal must be done only once; a total of six items may be borrowed at a time, meaning that all other library materials may only be used in the library, this kind of service differ from university to university.

3.1.5.2 Reservation of materials

The user has to complete " reserve book" form and ensure that all information is provided. Desk staff place holds on system daily and notices are also printed out daily. When the item is available, the notice is sent to the user to come and collect the item, the user produces or presents the notice sent to him. The item can be issued to the user in a normal manner.

3.1.5.3 Overdue items

Over dues are printed out daily, the normal overdue of students and other users are posted in envelopes, whereas overdue of staff are posted in internal mail.

3.1.5.4 Lost items

Lost items are reported to the senior librarian in the cataloguing department so that the item can be withdrawn from the catalogue. Finally the user can be charged for a lost item.

3.1.6 Short loan

This special system of the library is geared to the provision of high demand material, that is, when many students need access to the same items within a limited period of time. This occurs when books are required for class assignment, prescribed reading and recommended reading.

Books on short loan are normally transferred temporarily to this section for the duration of a certain period. The lecturers are responsible to their students to make the necessary arrangements. The library is given at least three weeks advance notice of pending assignments, to allow time to search for reserve, gather together and relocate the best items available in the short loan section.

Types of materials that can be put on short loan at the discretion of lecturers or the librarians are: selected books, which are there on a permanent basis, certain selected periodicals or periodical articles, expensive materials and lecture notes.

3.1.7 Information and reference services

An information and reference service represents the contact level between the user (lecturer, researcher, student) and the information source. Three levels of information and reference service can be distinguished:

- Minimum service whereby assistance is rendered on the level of instruction that is a user is directed to an information source.
- The information desk in the University library usually renders this level of service by answering ready reference and catalogue enquiries
- Intermediate service whereby a user is supplied with information sources or bibliographic references that might supply an answer. Most information and reference services supplied by the subject reference librarian occur on this level. Maximum service whereby the actual information required to solve a specific problem is evaluated and supplied to the user.

3.1.8 Audio-visual

A loan of six days may be given to each user without any renewal. Materials are issued according to membership status. Returned materials are also checked in at the main desk. Books are returned on the computer; thereafter books are taken to the resensitising desk and reshelved.

3.1.9 Periodical section

Periodical articles provide current information, and as such are considered vitally important information resources, especially at the research level but also for pre and postgraduates projects.

3.1.9.1 Ordering

The subject librarians, lecturers and other staff members inform the periodical department about new journal titles. The periodical staff then does a search of that title by using reference sources to get additional information regarding price and frequency. The library assistant request sample copies from the vendors by indicating in the same copy request back and also send the received copies to the subject librarian.

The selections are then made using a combination of criteria such as price, need, budget and availability in the nearest University library. If the item is unavailable within the university libraries of that region they just borrow from an institution outside the region, which has that item, this is called library co-operative and has been discussed in detail in this project.

Selection depends on how much they have in the budget. The subject librarian reports back to the faculty which items are selected and not selected. The orders and covering letters are then posted to the vendors.

3.1.9.2 Receiving of new journals

When the new journals arrive, they are checked by one of the periodical staff to ensure that the information matches with the request form. Requests, which have not been approved, are kept for future considerations.

3.1.9.3 Binding

Previous year's issues are kept in bound form on the general periodical shelves. Periodicals are regularly removed for binding and sent to an outside bindery. A slip is struck on the shelves to indicate which issues have been removed. The above-mentioned services depend on the type of academic library, and on how they want to provide its services.

3.1.10 Interlibrary Loan (ILL)

University, college and technikon libraries have, therefore, entered into formal arrangements for sharing resources (at the national and international level). This facility is known as interlibrary loans.

Brophy (2000:142) says that, "one of the reasons that the interlibrary loans module has been the last to be integrated is that it does not rely on the home library's catalogue". Instead it generates a request to another library for the supply of an item, which, usually, it does not have in its own local stock.

3.1.10.1 Service that plays an important role to users

Libraries exist to serve their users. In seeking to provide appropriate services, it is essential that the needs of all the different users are taken into account and that the library plays its part, by providing opportunities for the development of information resources from different tertiary institutions, in enabling all users to make the most of their interactions with information resources (Dougherty and Dougherty, 1993:344).

Woodsworth (1991:95) says that, "the idea that libraries should, in some way, find means to work co-operatively to provide people with access to books unavailable in nearby library is a deeply rooted concept in librarianship".

The need to have access to materials that they cannot afford to purchase, automation of services and operations through shared computer systems, economies scale in sharing costs of purchase, academic libraries have been the ones most actively engaged in co-operative activities as a means to extend the availability of resources for instructional and research purpose (Woodsworth, 1991:95).

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Participants in library co-operatives and networks usually are able to meet the daily needs of their primary users. Academic libraries have relied on each other to build databases and communications structures that expand access to information for students and researchers (Woodsworth, 1991:96). Academic libraries have found different network outputs to be important depending on their mission.

3.1.10.2 Multi-type library co-operation

Thompson (1981:147) defined multi-type library as a "reciprocally beneficial sharing of resources, developed or pre-existing, by two or more libraries. It is a way of exploring the possibilities of maximising resources". Stirling (1981:162) states that, "there must be a willingness to support and sustain whatever organisation is established to plan, to finance and to administer any resource sharing scheme".

Library resource sharing is based on a commitment to serve the larger population of library users and on the understanding that every library has something to offer to other libraries (Gorman, 1991:7).

Academic library co-operation within geographically discrete areas has opened up access to information for users by lifting those restrictions, which seemed petty to them. One can argue that it favours the poor at the expense of the well funded and agreements need to take this into account (Davids, 2001:33).

In South Africa, there are forty (40) well known academic libraries that work together in their regions to provide quality service as well as achieving the goals of each tertiary institution through resource sharing.

In the Western Cape Province, there are five (5) academic libraries that provide this type of service (Inter-library loan) and it is called CALICO (Cape Library Co-operative), that is, the Universities of Cape Town, Stellenbosch, and the Western Cape, and the Cape and Peninsula Technikons. They share information without paying postage and delivery.

In the Gauteng Province, there are sixteen (16) academic libraries, called GAELIC (Gauteng and Environs Library Consortium) that is, Medical University of South Africa, Rand Afrikaans University, Technikon Northern Gauteng, Technikon North West, Technikon Pretoria, University of Pretoria, Technikon South Africa, University of South Africa, Technikon Witwatersrand, University of the Witwatersrand, Vista University, Vaal Triangle Technikon, University of the North, Potchefstroom University, Technikon of the North West and University of Venda.

In the Orange Free State Province there are seven (7), and is called FRELICO (Free State Library and Information Consortium), that is University of Orange Free State, Technikon Free State, Vista University (Welkom), Vista University (Bloemfontein), University of the North (Qwaqwa), Bloemfontein City Library Services, and Sasol Library.

In the Eastern Cape Province there are seven (7), and is called SEALS (South Eastern Academic Libraries' system), that is University of Fort Hare, University of Port Elizabeth, Rhodes University, University of Transkei, Border Technikon, Port Elizabeth Tehnikon, and Eastern Cape College.

Finally Kwazulu Natal there are five (5), and is called ESAL (Eastern Seaboard Association of Libraries), that is University of Natal, University of Zululand, University of Durban Westville, Natal Technikon, and ML Sultan Technikon.

Each and every Province, for example the Gauteng Province, they call its' consortium GAELIC, they share information without any costs. When one institution within this consortium (Gauteng and Environs Library Consortium) is looking for information in Kwazulu Natal or Western Cape it has to pay for the postage and delivery. The most important part of it, is that users especially researchers are able to complete their thesis or dissertation through this consortia.

SABINET has created a web page for request of materials among all libraries that participate in this kind of service. Librarian at the ILL (Interlibrary Loan) Department, search for the material the user is looking for. If the item is available within the participating Libraries, Librarian request for that item and it appears on the screen immediately to libraries that own that particular item.

As soon as those libraries receive the request, they look for an item on the shelves and the librarian who got that item first, notify the lender electronically that the book is on the way. Libraries communicate by using the ILL codes. Librarians knows that, for example, University Of Cape Town is 6520, and University of South Africa is 2570 as well as other libraries.

According to Gorman (1991:5), "interlibrary loan have encouraged library use by providing speedy, inexpensive, effective services that the users want. This type of resource sharing is not only for academic libraries but as well as for special, public and government libraries. Some of the materials are found in the public or special libraries. If academic librarian is looking for information and is available at the public, special or government library, that academic library has to pay for the service.

This service is very quick, if an academic library user is looking for a journal article. If the article is available, the requesting academic library receive the article same day using an Ariel. Libraries without an Ariel, they receive it through Fax and again send the copy of an article through courier.

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Consortia library activity participates in preparing graduates to meet the challenges of the knowledge economy (Darch, 1999:26). There is no doubt that they will be able to deliver information far more effectively and efficiently than individual libraries, and they will bring additional benefits of partial redress through access for the inequities of the past (Darch, 1999:30).

Hirshon (1999:73) states that, "Consortia can be become excellent facilitators in the process of collecting, digitising, organizing, and making accessible these new electronic library resources". To help improve the services that libraries offer, consortia can help libraries to expand their service offerings and to do so at a lower cost (Hirshon, 1999:74).

4. The improvement of academic library services

Firstly, the academic librarians must answer this question of, how information service can be improved to the users? In order to improve the library services. The solution to this is staff training. This should be an ongoing process, since academic librarians in the academic library profession are living in exciting times of Information Technology. Hirshon (1999:67) says that "It is not just the speed of change which provides the excitement, but the recognition that they can make a significant contribution to the progress of the academic community".

4.1 Staff Training

4.1.1 Traditional structures and the need for change

It is important to understand that library organisation should be about services rather than staffing. A staff structure is irrelevant to customers.
Customer care is more than social civility. It is not simply about being superficially friendly and polite. It is not simply using the right body language or accepting that the customer is always right. Customer is more than how we treat people.

It is a key management strategy, which must underpin how libraries manage the total relationship with their user community. Good customer care is not simply good for maximising library funding. It may also lead to increase in job satisfaction and motivation (Buckland, 1989:392)

4.1.2 Developing a customer care culture

Customer care training must involve all staff and must be a continuous process. Good practice should be encouraged from the outset, as early as recruitment and selection (Pinder & Melling, 1996: 126).

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Effective training builds on existing strength: in most libraries, the staff, and their relationship with users of the service, can rightly be regarded as an area of great strength. Surely this forms a sound foundation for staff training and development within the context of the customer care philosophy.

4.1.3 Staff empowerment

According to Crist (1994:56), "empowerment enables the staff on the front lines to have the authority and knowledge to do their jobs without recourse to anyone "above" them. This means providing staff training and orientation in organisational values, direction, and policy at a level sufficient for staff to meet the users needs consistently at the front line".

According to Pinder & Melling (1996:136) "empowerment means encouraging staff to make decisions and take responsibility for identifying and implementing service improvements themselves". There are difficulties inherent in empowerment: many staff does not want to accept responsibility and prefer to use 'rules' as an excuse to do nothing (Pinder & Melling, 1996:136).

It is generally recognised that giving staff freedom and responsibility to act on their own initiative with customers, can generate increased commitment and loyalty and can improve staff motivate –itself a vital component in the success care programme. Staff at the sharp end who hears the complaints, comments and compliments can put forward ideas that come from direct involvement with customers rather than ideas.

Developing a customer care culture requires commitment from all staff levels. It means practising customer care and not just talking about it. Customer service must be at the core of a library's activities and must pervade all aspects of its processes and procedures. Employees must be involved at all levels and at all stages of a customer care programme. The danger with empowerment is that staff may have different views on what is best for the customers and the service with a consequent loss of consistency and uniformity approach (Pinder & Melling, 1996:127).

4.1.4 The training imperative

Training is essential if academic libraries intend to provide quality services to their customers but customer service is ultimately a management issue-not a training issue- but it is a management issue in which training is central. Managers need to have a clear view of what needs to be achieved and how best to achieve it (Pinder & Melling, 1996:129).

Academic library exists to provide a variety of services (to aid research and teaching) to the community of students and scholars. The nature of this academic community, regardless of its size, effectively defines the backgrounds of its members. Academic librarians, as both members of the community should be prepared for the roles they are expected to assume (Whetherly: 1994:14).

According to Whetherly (1994:14), "library and Information programs must ensure that their curricular provide a solid foundation for library and information science professionals by teaching basic values of the profession, stressing theory over performance of specific duties, stressing service to the user of the information, and preparing librarians with a plan for continuing education". Curricular must be continuously updated.

4.1.5 Awareness and Training

Librarians must take advantage of appropriate in service training, and they in turn also need to be able to train their users to cope with the vast amount of networked information that is now available. They will need to develop information retrieval skills and, in particular to make effective use of the tools available for searching and retrieval (Whetherly, 1994:14).

The programme would encompass the following areas:
- Development and provision of in-service training courses and workshops for librarians in the use of networked information.
- Development and maintenance of training materials for use by librarians and others to teach users how to use network.
- Promotion and publicity in the use of networked information resources
- Network training workshops aimed at groups of users
- Collaborative pilot projects to encourage shared use of training resources
- Liaison with schools and departments of information studies on both initial professional training and on the needs of the profession for continuing education programmes in this area.

4.1.6 Academic librarians as managers

Almost every professional librarian in an academic library has to perform some managerial tasks. The librarian should be assessing students' performance, providing positive, negative, and constructive feedback as needed. Without the academic librarian, the quality of teaching, research, and public service in our colleges, technikons and universities would deteriorate seriously and programs in many disciplines could no longer be performed (Budd, 1998:310).

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The academic librarians' contribution is intellectual in nature and is the product of considerable formal education, including professional training at the gradual level. Therefore, college, technikon and university librarians must be recognized as equal partners in the academic enterprise, they must be extended the rights and privileges which are not only commensurate with their contributions, but are necessary if they are to carry out their responsibilities (Budd, 1998:312).

4.1.7 Impact on librarians

The good news is, more and more, librarians are instructing users on how to do research with new technologies, thus teaching both content and technology basics. Librarians must be able to address these skill levels quickly without creating more anxiety for the users. Mission of the library and the needs of the users must drive the sensible use of technology (Merrill, 1999:31).

It is important for librarians to train users on how to use Information and Communication Technology, the use of different databases. Most recent information can be found in different databases especially electronic journals for researchers.

5. Physical layout of the academic library

Van Zijl (2000:68) states that, "users need to be able to enter libraries and information service without fear and anxiety". There must be friendly and welcoming staff, free access to material, use of facilities such as photocopying and bibliographic tools.

5.1 Academic library building

Services in academic libraries cannot be rendered without a building, reason being that it provides services to a large number of users. It is important to render services to users in the library that is always welcoming, attracting, well planned, and in which materials are well organised and easy to find, where they can easily get help from librarians and library staff, where the staff members are friendly.

Buildings remain at the centre of library services and are likely to do so for the foreseeable future, even where many users receive their service remotely. If the library building is well planned, situated next to the lecture halls, it always reminds the users to come and study. An academic library that is well planned plays an important role in service rendering in the sense that if there is no enough space to study, materials are not well organised, librarians offices are not visible, the furniture is not comfortable, not enough OPAC's, and there are no signs and guides, then the purpose of the library is likely to be of no use. Users will see the library as a place of collecting materials and leave. Librarians will have less work to do.

Bisbruick (2001:12) states that, "the buildings that house libraries should reflect their role, and the future they help to create". They should excite the eye as well as the mind. Academic Libraries deserve great buildings. If the library is well planned, will show pleasure in learning. It is likely to quicken the processing of items; it will show the integrity of knowledge (Bisbruick: 2001:13).

Brophy (2000:126), designed questions which need to be asked at the outset including:

- Which user groups will use the building and what will their pattern of use be?
- How much space, and what kind of space, will be needed to store the library's stock in conditions which will be both facilitate expected use and permit long term preservation for the benefit of future users within the building, implications do these have both for the use of available space and for the layout of the building?
- What spaces will be needed for library staff to enable them to provide these services?

Looking at these questions will give the librarian, architect, interior designers and library staff the opportunity to look at these aspects carefully before they make a decision of what kind of academic library they want to build.

A successful academic library-building plan is the outcome of the sustained dialogue and partnership and effort between librarian and architect, interior designers and library staff, and for this reason it is important for them to achieve a close professional and personal understanding.

The architect should be able to design a building, which is aesthetically pleasing, functionally efficient and pleasant to use and to work in (Bisbruick and Chaveinc 1999:35). The librarians must consider its implication in terms primarily of space for books and other materials, for readers, staff and ways in these factors interact in the functioning of library services. The convenience that is comfort and suitability of readers is the most important consideration in planning a library space and facilities, which they require careful, thought.

According to Brophy (2000:126), "It is particularly useful to consider some examples of a typical user's interactions with the building when planning the design. For example, one user might:

➢ Arrive at the campus by public transport
- Where is this relation to the planned building and its entrance?
- Will the route to the library accessible to the disabled people?
- Will the route be well lit at night?

> Enter the building
>   - Is the entrance accessible to a disabled user?
>   - How will users know where to go next when they enter?
>   - Which services should be immediately visible?
> Return some books
>   - Where will the return point be in relation to the entrance?

> Consult the catalogue
>   - How many OPAC's will be needed and where should they be sited for maximum convenience and usability?
> Look for books on the shelves
>   - How will the main sequences be laid out, for example, Dewey sequence by floor?
> Consult the electronic reserve
>   - How will electronic services to be accessed?
> Go to toilet
>   - Where should these be situated?
>   - How many?
>   - What about disabled facilities?
> Leave the building
>   - How will exits be controlled, for example, by staff or purely by an electronic security system?

5.2 General principle of designs

According to Brophy (2000:127), "a number of general principles should inform design. These are accessibility, both in the sense of being physically accessible, especially to people with disabilities".

5.2.1 Shape

There are plans of various shapes among these are square, circle, triangle and t-shape and hollow ring plan with a central courtyard. Although many library-building planners prefer to work with the rectangle for interior layout, a building form with a square shape is ideal and it is less costly with the least amount of exterior wall construction. It is important that immediately entering the library the right kind of atmosphere is created in the readers mind.

5.2.2 Flexibility

A building is good for academic library when the concept of flexibility has been incorporated from the beginning of the planning process, when it is low in cost to operate and maintain, when it increases the productivity of its occupant stimulating them by means of an ergonomic, comfort, and secure setting when it takes into considerations the ecological environment (Brophy, 2000:127).

Flexibility can be defined as the capability of rearranging space so as to add new services, equipment, and collections in keeping with technological advancement (Bisbruick and Chaveinc, 1999:110). It is the adaptability of a given space to serve a variety of functions, both initially and in the future, with a minimum inconvenience and minimum costs.

Flexibility continues to make greater demands on library planners today as the library function is defined and includes recorded information in all its variant forms and media (Bisbruick and Chaveinc, 1999:109-110).

5.2.3 Compactness

It is desirable that the library's key and most used services should be placed as near as possible to each other, to avoid users having to move around the building too much from one service point to another (Brophy, 2000:127).

5.2.4 Environment

Library activities require the provision of suitable environment, which may or may not be adapted. Satisfactory plan for a library building must be adequate in four particulars: in its provision of sufficient space for study of a more advanced type either by the library users and for administrative work of the library staff, shelving, and storage books. The needs of the library stock for a stable environment should be considered (Brophy, 2000:128).

Bisbruick and Chaveinc (1999:18) state that, "external wall should be considered as an environmental filter or regulator and it reduces heat loss in winter and solar gain in summer, and it keeps out intrusive external noises yet provide windows for prospect". Recommended standards of humidity for libraries, both books and people, average 55% and if normal climatic conditions exceed or fall short of this for any real length of time humidity control is advisable.

The temperature standards which are: 18.5 degrees Celsius to 21 degrees Celsius, to achieve the desirable comfort conditions, it is important and economic to use the free facility nature offers from the external environment and induce it into the building with control to regulate according to need.

5.2.5 Designing reading areas

De Jager (1991:29) says that, "study space in academic libraries could therefore be regarded as a significant aspect of the goal of providing support for the University's teaching and learning activities. Studying activities are an essential aspect of the services rendered by both the library and the University".

The library is a very real teaching aid not only in the sense of making available to users the materials in. its collections as expressed by its goal statements, but as a facilitator of the university teaching and learning processes by providing the physical circumstances where these two are able to meet (De Jager, 1991: 29).

It is important that libraries provide a variety of study areas suited to different user requirements. For example, some spaces will be straightforward reading desks, which may need individual reading lights, and it is of course important that a suitable surface is provided (Harrison, 1990:6).

5.2.6 Comfort

Bearing in mind that users and staff will spend long periods of time in the building, it should be comfortable place in which to work with due attention paid to all aspects of ergonomics (Brophy, 2000:128).

5.2.7 Furniture

The furniture should be designed to meet program specification. Libraries often appear to provide a better atmosphere with more attention given to the needs of users. All pieces of furniture should be modular which can allow interchange ability of parts.

In order to provide space for books, computers and reader's papers, a table of size 1200mm x 800mm is necessary, and a generous space allowance of between 2.5m square and 4m square (Bisbruick and Chaveinc, 1999:197). Tables for reading a book are much different than tables that support computers that are interconnected via network.

5.2.8 Use of natural light

Reader spaces should be sited to make the most of natural light. The needs of staff that work in the building should also be considered – it is unacceptable to force people to spend their working hours away from all natural light (Brophy, 2000:128).

Lighting is exceptional, maximising natural, shielded light for the reader and staff, yet supplementing it with artificial light when needed to raise the level. Tables and other work surfaces should provide task lighting that can be switched on and off depending on the user preferences.

The incorporation of many computer screens requires special attention to the placement of lighting for computers. The higher the window, the wider is the distribution of light, which enters it. Sunlight is good for humans but it is bad for books and it is deteriorating both to paper and binding as far as possible books should be protected from it (Bisbruick and Chaveinc, 1999:197).

5.2.9 Signs and guides

Clear signage is of the utmost importance, not only to enable users to find their way round the building easily but to reduce demands on staff. Indeed it is worth keeping a record of casual queries from users to staff, of where is the...? Variety, as a way of checking on the functioning of library signs (Brophy, 2000:131).

With new building it is usual to contract a specialist firm to provide the signage, but attention needs to be paid to the ease and economy with which signs can be moved or replaced (Brophy, 2000:131). A useful exercise is to ask a few new users to find specific services or areas, and to report back on any difficulties they experience in identifying them.

5.2.10 Air conditioning

The comprehensive air conditioning system which include full control of temperature, humidity, airborne dust, dirt and such gaseous contaminants as sulphur dioxide, ozone, nitrous oxide should be used for the health and comfort of staff and readers and for preservation and conservation of the collection. Air conditioning with high quality filters; cooling humidity control temperature control per floor per area per room is needed for a perfect academic library building (Bisbruick and Chaveinc, 1999:195).

5.2.11 Ventilation

There should be controlled ventilation system, independent of heating and cooling system. If warm air is used, this effectively gives ventilation. A major effort must occur to prevent the air from becoming stale, even unhealthy and all adhesives must meet air quality standards. Machines such as photocopiers should be located in specially vented rooms (Bisbruick and Chaveinc, 1999:195).

5.2.12 Information technology

This is the most important aspect of the library services, support will be needed at a variety of levels but there will be much more emphasis on low-level support than libraries have traditionally offered (Bisbruick, 2001:12).

Noise from banks of PC's is considerable, and there is more of a culture of noisy a study among PC users. Although traditionally libraries have preferred to operate as silent environments, the demands of modern teaching and learning methods, to say nothing of user preferences, have changed perceptions.

It is also helpful if some library staff is based adjacent to each area so that they can ask users to observe the rules on noise. Indeed, having a quiet area to which users can move is one of the keys to successful operation of 'silence' rules (Brophy, 2000:129).

5.2.13 Acoustical treatment

Attention should be given to the acoustical properties of the building, including offices and staff working areas, conference rooms, auditoriums, reading rooms, and noise limitations.

Noise levels within a building are mainly affected by people's movements and conservation and to some extent by mechanical plant within the building (air conditioning, typewriters and telephones). In the case of external noise, it is necessary to make sufficient use of sound-proofing materials to reduce the noise level to acceptable standards, through fewer of these seem to have been promoted than for other aspects of library design (Bisbruick and Chaveinc, 1999:195).

5.2.14 Disabled access

The building plan should provide full access to disabled users, for them to enjoy and to be part of all that is in the library. Special committees for each handicap must review the plans for elevators, ramps, and other transportation zone.

The centres for the blind and visually handicapped, the deaf and hearing impaired, the dyslexic, and the illiterate should be available, as well as a device such as "touches" a talking sign, the sign that transmits a message to the receiver indicating what is located at the sign or what is head. This is a new technology, by using this device; it is possible for a blind person to navigate from various facilities (Bisbruick and Chaveinc, 1999:197).

5.2.15 Toilets

Toilet accommodation is a necessity and should be provided on every floor.

5.2.16 Security

Security of the collection has always been of prime importance in libraries. The security system for the interior of the building should provide visual surveillance and motion detection of the entire building to the security control centre. The centre should be adjacent to the user entrance and exit point that contains the collection theft detectors (Brophy, 2000:128).

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Buildings remain at the centre of library services and are likely to do so for the foreseeable future, even where many users receive their services remotely. Careful attention to the design of the building and physical service points may make the difference between a well-used and neglected service.

6. Conclusion

There is clearly a need to determine what the real needs of academic library users are and how they prefer to look for information. **This can be a guideline for providing a relevant service to them**. The rapid growth of information technology could have a great influence on service rendering to academic library users.

There are many factors that have an influence on service rendering at University Libraries. Without dedicated staff no library could operate. Staff is required both to acquire and organise resources and to design and take part in the interaction with users, which is at the core of the library's purpose. First and foremost libraries are services. No service survives without continuously re-examining its products and the ways in which they are delivered to ensure that they meet their customers' real needs.

Academic libraries will have to take into account a number of changes and developments to ensure the appropriateness of their services into the future. It is of significant benefit to its parent body, the university, and that it is designed to serve all members of the academic community.

Academic library exists to meet the information needs of students, lecturers and other researchers that are members of the institution. The needs and requirements of these user groups are very different and the academic library has to cater for them all.

To take a customer-oriented view of the future academic library would be to place emphasis on user needs ahead of how those needs are met. By linking together higher education's objective of enabling learning with their information-handling expertise, academic libraries should be able to create a vision of their future, which is credible, attractive and attainable.

Buildings remain at the centre of library services and are likely to do so for the foreseeable future, even where many users receive their services remotely. Careful attention to the design of the building and physical service points may make the difference between a well-used and neglected service.

Libraries exist to serve their users. In seeking to provide appropriate services, it is essential that the needs of all the different users are taken into account and that the library plays its part, by providing opportunities for the development of information skills, in enabling all users to make the most of their interactions with information resources.

Academic librarians in the academic library profession are living in exciting times. It is especially important that librarians consider carefully their responsibilities to future generations, since among their duties is that of helping to preserve the memory of humanity.

Librarians will need to be very clear about the purposes that their libraries serve, and will need to design the range of services they offer with those purposes in mind.

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