The State of a Customer-Focused Library Service
for Rajabhat University

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ABSTRACT

Library service for Customer-focused has become a keyword in this era because the customers have choices in seeking information or services that responds to a variety of needs. Therefore, the library has to revise its service by focusing on the customers in order to build the relationship between the library and the customers studying their behavior and needs as well as good relationships between librarians and the customers. Then, the derived information is readjusted, to seek for the opportunity for excellent service provision. Rajabhat Universities are a local university which provides on education, supports academic and advanced career opportunities, research, society service, transfers knowledge and technology, and preserves the arts and culture and community services. Additionally the library plays an important role in supporting, such as, mission for the success in objectives and goals of the Rajabhat University.

The objective of this dissertation was to study the state of customer-focused library service for Rajabhat Universities, using qualitative research method. The samples were directors of the library, head of department library service who was the librarians from 8 Rajabhat Universities. The research results was found: mission vision strategy and policy of customer-focused library service for Rajabhat Universities and factors that support the development of customer-focused in library service. The results of this study is illustrated from the development model of a customer-focused library service appropriate a new paradigm of library in 21st Century.

Keywords: Customer-focused, Library Service, Rajabhat University

Introduction

The library is the heart of creating a learning society and the support of teaching, learning and research in higher education institutions. Nowadays,the state-of-the-art information technologies have resulted in managerial changes and innovative library services in order to attract more library users. The library has to revise its service by focusing on the customers in order to build the relationship between the library and the customers via studying their behavior and needs as well as good relationships between librarians and the customers. Then, the library should readjust the acquired information and seek the opportunity for excellent service provision.

The customer-focused library service has become a keyword in this era because the customers have choices in information seeking or service that responds to a variety of needs. Hence, the library needs to revise and emphasize its user-focused library services in order to build and maintain the customer engagement. Moreover, in the marketing view, the customer-focused library service relates to the customer relationship management (John, 2003). The customer-focused service is a key to provide service to customers. The critical importance is the customer-focused service should added value to the user. These incidents reflect the service-driven process focusing on the needs of customers (Bryson, 1999). According to Piyawan Siriprasoetsin, Kulathida Tuamsukand, Cholapat Vongprasert (2010) their research indicates that the customer-focused in the university library applying the customer relationship management in the library will generate the value of library services ensuring the confidence and customer satisfaction as well as increasing the number of customers because the customer relationship management is a customer-focused business strategy to improve performance and customer satisfaction.

The Rajabhat University is a higher education institution for local development with the purpose to educate and promote the academic and professional in higher education, teach, research and provide the academic services to society, improve, provide and develop technology and maintain the arts and culture as well as produce teacher and promote teacher's education originally developed from the Teachers College. With these mission, the library is an important part,especially in promoting the missions to achieve its objectives and goals. Therefore, the researcher is interested in studying the customer-focused in library service state of Rajabhat University Library that leads to the concrete customer-focused library service and clear practice for Rajabhat University library as well as a guideline for the development and improvement of library services of Rajabhat University.

Research Objectives

To study the state of customer-focused library services of Rajabhat University libraries

Literature Review

The key element of information services is to know the users and their needs and behaviors that help to be more effective information service management, more user's satisfaction and confidence. Therefore, the service providers or agencies who are responsible for information services require user data file process to build relationships with consumers (Pruttikul, S, 2014), customer-focused library services become a marketing keyword in this era because the users has a various option of information seeking or services to meet their needs or customer responsiveness as Stock-Kupperman (2012) argues that the customer-focused library service meeting their needs offers new services to attract more users and maintain the existing users to access the service continuously by studying their attitudes towards library services,observing their behavior as well as the satisfaction of users towards library services.

Therefore, the customer-focused library service means focusing on users by studying the user's behavior and needs and applying such information in improving and seeking opportunities for library service management as well as making relationships and connection with users for long-term library service success.

According to the information use situation, the users can use the technology and integrate the information technology into part of their daily life. In the past, the library services focused on resource storage by keeping resources and waited for the users to visit the library. Nowadays, the library services have to change its services in terms of information resources to become a mixed media focusing on the service all the time without visiting the library (Stueart & Moran, 2007). The other researches show that users search information via a search engine rather than a library website (Online Computer Library Center, 2011), for example, Cribb (2012) indicates that the information source of Turkish university students used in doing homework and research is a website, 80.3% followed by 50.9% of books; the information sources used in doing a report and research is internet of 93.6% while the library is only 3.8%. Deakin University's library has changed its format customer-focused service due to the information technology change.The customers currently are using electronic information resources rather than borrowing a book (Deakin University Library, 2013). Future library services have to manage services to meet the users'real needs. Its services have to be changed by paying attention to the users as well as creating a service value and applying the information and communication technology in the library services (Bryson, 1999).

Methodology

In this research, the researcher using qualitative research methodology to study the agencies' personnel including administrators and librarians on the customer-focused library service management by studying vision, mission and strategic plan of library service as well as factors supporting library services and customer-focused library service by the In-depth interviews.

The sample was selected by using the Proportional Stratified Random Sampling. Regions of the Rajabhat University library groups were divided into 5 groups as follows: Southern group of Rajabhat University, Northern group of Rajabhat University, Central group of Rajabhat University, Northeastern group of Rajabhat University, Bangkok group of Rajabhat University. Then, the samples from Rajabhat Universities'libraries were selected with the simple random sampling methodby drawing a name of libraries representing 20% of each region group and acquired 8 Rajabhat Universities' libraries.

Research Result

1. The State of customer-focused library services of Rajabhat University in the context of administrators

1.1 Vision, Policy, Strategic Direction or Strategic Plan on the written library service for the users

According to the study, it was found that all 8 libraries of Rajabhat Universities set its vision, policy, strategic direction or strategic plan on providing the library services to the users in the libraries' vision as a guideline for the management of Office of Academic Resources and Information Technology as follows:

"Office of Academic Resources and Information Technology is the excellent center of learning and service of the region" (5)

"The office is an excellent source of learning in providing services with modern technology to meet the requirement of universities and communities"(6)

"The office is an excellent source of learning in providing services with modern technology to meet the requirement of local and international community "(7)

Subsequently, 2 libraries have set its philosophy accounted for 25% as follows:

"Modern learning resources, Advanced Technology, Excellent Quality Service and Educating Community (4)

"To be the center of local and regional modern learning resources. Technologies providing accessible and various information resources. Focused on the efficient and complete services and standard Office of Academic Resources and Information Technology under the motto 'Modern Information Technology, Service Mind, Quality Development"(8)

Consequently, all 8 libraries of Rajabhat Universities have defined its philosophy, vision, policy, strategic direction or strategic plan in accordance with university. Most sources of the plans were constituted by the involvement of staffs and participants in library services.

1.2 How to drive the practice of customer-focused library services

According to the study, it was found that Rajabhat Universities'libraries has implemented the policy allowing the staffs to participate in library planning to develop the library plan.

In terms of the customer relationship management, Rajabhat University library has policies including sending news, notifying a book schedule, publishing service and agency information regularly, setting up an agency providing accessible information to the users, notifying news and events of the library via Facebook,Line, Twitter, promoting the borrowing book promotion extending the borrowing time on the users' birthday and discounting a book fine on university foundation day.

The library had an event to build the relationships with the users,for example, a librarian is enthusiastic to provide services to users and the users ask librarians for new services or activities of the library frequently. However,on the customer engagement, there was no library defining this policy clearly because the performance indicators did not contain this point.

Regarding the service culture,the Rajabhat Universities library realize the users' opinions by surveying the satisfaction of users to respond the service promptly and attentively. Sometimes, some suggestions could not perform in a short term due to the lack of budget and personnel.

Concerning the technology supporting library services, Rajabhat University library applied the information technology in the library services connecting to users through social networks including Facebook, Line, YouTube, Twitter, Instagram, online databases and so on.

On the subject of study of users' behavior and requirement, the library surveyed the users at every semester but Chiang Rai Rajabhat University did survey every month to obtain the information to develop the library services.

Problem of practice of customer-focused library services

According to the study, it was found that 75% of Rajabhat University libraries found that the problem of practice policy of customer-focused library services was the lack of personnel in providing services thoroughly and budget to develop the service according to the users' suggestion.

1.3 Library Management Experience on customer-focused library services in the context of administrators

According to the library's established missions, the SWOT analysis was performed to develop a library plan. As currently the users have more options, the libraries have to attract them to the library as much as possible. Most library service on customer-focused library services is as follows:

1.3.1 All libraries investigate the user's satisfaction and requirement once a semester to have the result applied in the development of library services. However, Chiang Rai Rajabhat University surveys the users' satisfaction every month by distributing the questionnaire to various service points of the library to get feedback from all parties and present the satisfaction analysis on the library website. The users can access the data. Additionally, the user satisfaction result (disclosed) was presented in a library staff meeting to improve some solvable library issues e.g. modifying service providers as the user suggested and meeting with the staff to ensure that this suggestion could be put forward to technical work, buying a sofa that the users wanted most as well as increasing the speed of the Internet.

1.3.2. The library should organize projects and events so that the users could notify the service provider the news and information via e-mail and facebook of the library.

1.3.3 The library should Organize a Book fair so that the users participate in the information resources selection process.

In addition to above mentioned universities, the libraries use the customer-focused library services management experience are as follows:

Kamphaeng Phet Rajabhat University Library establishes the database of academic customers. The library has a network with outsiders. In case of meeting or academic seminar, the participants attend the meeting as expected and organize activities with external networks such as temples, hospital, reading promotion and arts in garden.

Nakhon Ratchasima Rajabhat University assigns the librarians to oversee the provision of information resources and instructor services by one student from each faculty. In addition, the librarian coordinates with instructors who recommend books lists after receipt of the books via e-mail, telephone or other means to notify the instructors.

Suratthani Rajabhat University Library organizes a program inviting celebrities and famous singers. Students are interested in joining the program enthusiastically. Other interesting services and projects based on the user's suggestion include the electronical index of journals by which every index contains the attached file of full article to facilitate the users.

Rajanagarindra Rajabhat University Library collaborates with external agencies to share resources as well as listening to the suggestions from university instructors. However, some suggestions could not be done due to the limitation of location and budget.

1.4 Success Library Study Experience on customer-focused library services

According to a study of university libraries with customer-focused services, it was found that 62.5%was considered the ideal example and the best practice i.e. the Library of KhonKaen University followed by Information and Librarian Office,

National Institute of Development Administration; the Library Office, Chiang Mai University and TK Park share the same 12.50% with following impressive items:

1. Library service access the users and provides new services promoting the service resulting in more users

2. Clear systematic management since this library has enough manpower so it can achieve each department's goal set at KhonKaen University

3. Library service access the users and provide new services promoting the service resulting in more users

4. Apply technology in order to make faster service

TK Park is a successful library a sits service which understands the users fully. To achieve this goal, it relies on various elements and factors including enough personnel and budget resources as well as the independent management reasonably.

After visiting some oversea universities, it was found that California State University is open 24 hours and provides a self-service library separated clearly and the library of Edith Cowan University, Australia provides a wide hall with computers at corners and comfortable sofas with coffee and snacks attracting users. The library is filled with attentive and orderly students who study. No one causes annoyance and disorder. This is an impressive image and wonder how the library succeeds in the service.

2. The state of customer-focused library services of Rajabhat University in the context of Librarian

2.1 Librarian sparticipating in customer-focused library services policy

The librarians participate in setting up a library service policy focusing on users i.e.analyzing that different users need different requirement and how to attract these users to use the library. The current process is facilitating the users and providing more flexible service. The librarians have to improve themselves and review their roles to provide service, meet the users' requirement and satisfaction. Furthermore,the library of Baan Somdej Chaopraya, Rajabhat University has set the slogan "WE CARE FOR YOUR NEEDS"as the motto the librarians need to impress more users and organize activities to promote the use of library services and the user engagement with the library.

The librarians gather the users' satisfaction by informal interview and questionnaire to assess the satisfaction level. After that, the data is presented to improve the project and propose to the director with emphasis on excellent service, user's opinion according to the users' satisfaction evaluation as follows:

1. Service meets the users' requirement to attract more customers

2. All library users are important.

3. Up-to-date and swift information resource services

4. Study the customer's satisfaction

5. Study the statistics on the use of services with increasing number of users

6. Provide proactive services to users who are instructors such as finding books for academic work

2.2 Librarians applying the customer-focused library services policy

According to customer-focused library services policy, the librarians have adopted the policy as follows:

2.2.1 Personnel needs to understand the customer-focused library services and is able to rotate its position. The librarian needs to realize the customer's satisfaction and continually develop its academic knowledge.

2.2.2 Customer Relationship Management It required to publish service and organization information regularly through Facebook,Line andTwitter according to the popular channel. The library arrange sevent building relationship with the users such as distributing a promotion for book borrowing, extending borrowing time on birthday, discounting a book fines on university foundation date. The library organizes a meeting for users at each faculty and departments.

2.2.3 Customer Engagement All librarians do realize that all users are an important customer.

2.2.4 Service Culture The users' needs are the major criteria in the service management focusing on the proactive service to reach users quickly and equally; providing services to meet the needs of users in attracting more users.

2.2.5 Technology supporting library services The VPN is distributed to students to search the library's information anywhere and anytime. The media for providing information resources should focus on online media to match the users' behavior. The information technology is affecting information services currently. Therefore, the library has to adapt and keep with the advancement of information technology and changing the users' behavior.

2.2.6 Study of users' behavior and needs The customer satisfaction is investigated by allowing the librarians in each department develop their plans to develop their work to make the users most satisfied. Providing services to meet the needs of users will attract more users to use library and allowing students and library users to engage in library and services.

Regarding the obstacles caused by the customer-focused library services policy, it was found that all libraries had problems of insufficient manpower accounted for 100%.

2.3 Factors supporting the customer-focused library services concept

2.3.1. Various service of library

2.3.2 The user, receive the service that meet their requirements

2.3.3 Clear working process

2.3.4. Proactive public relations reaches all area, faculty or activities of University

2.3.5 Technologies that the users interested in

2.3.6 Building relationships to impress the users

2.3.7 Advanced technologies that facilitate the information services

2.3.8 Unity of library personnel that leads to successful work

2.3.9 Enough and up-to-date information resources

2.3.10 budget

2.3.11 Administrator providing support

2.3.12 Personnel must have service mind

2.4 Success Library Study Experience on customer-focused library services

According to a study of university libraries with customer-focused services, it found that 50 % was considered the ideal example and the best practice i.e. the Library of KhonKaen University followed by Information and Librarian Office, National Institute of Development Administration; the Library Office, Chiang Mai University; Library of Kasetsart University;Office of Academic Resource and Information Technology,Nakhon Ratchasima Rajabhat University and Information and Librarian Office, Mae Fah Luang University share the same 12.50% with following impressive items:

2.4.1 Library services that access the users and provides new services, promoting the service that result in more users

2.4.2 Clear systematic management since this library has enough manpower so it can achieve each department's goal set at KhonKaen University

2.4.3 Apply the technology in order to make faster service

2.4.4 Well-decorated place and new activities

2.4.5 Answering a question and helping via various channel are impressive such as answering a question at front counter, replying via Facebook and answering via Virtual Reference Services

2.4.6 Each personal works as all-inclusive in its department and has created thinking such as sending with online databases for research

2.5 Librarians' Opinions towards customer-focused library services

According to the study, it was found that librarians of Rajabhat University library had opinions towards the customer-focused library as follows:

2.5.1 Library with various services meet the users' requirement and impress them when they use the service

2.5.2 Service must be fast and quick

2.5.3 Behavior of library users has changed according to the progress of information technology. The library must have flexibility in its rules and regulations of the service.

2.5.4 The user network is essential to the development of the library work, academic service and public relations because the library is known by both insiders and outsiders.

2.5.5 Providing services meets the needs of users and attracts more users to the library services.

2.5.6 Up-to-date Information resource services

2.5.7 Enough information resources for providing service both book in shelf and other forms

2.5.8 Create a service strategy to impress the users as both an activity and a librarian service.

2.6 Problematic Experience of Librarians on customer-focused library services

According to the study, it was found that the librarians of Rajabhat University library who had worked under the customer-focused library services had the same problems and obstacles i.e. they failed to understand the library users completely as the users had different requirement, they managed to provide the best services. With another problem, students didn't realize the importance of the library so the service providers couldn't reach them. The secondary problem was the human resource management for putting the right people on the right job in order to provide the best service; and the staff couldn't handle an emergency problem as well as the discretion as a service provider and budget. Finally, the crucial part of the customer-focused library services was the library administrators had to realize the importance and understanding of the library.

Conclusion

According to the study of the customer-focused library services of Rajabhat University Library, it was found that the conclusion divided into 2 two levels as follows:

1. Level of service provider set the policy on performance It was found that all 8 Rajabhat University libraries have stipulated their vision, policy, strategic direction or strategic policy on the library services for users in the library's vision as a managerial guideline of the Office of Academic Resources And Information Technology in accordance with the university development strategy and the philosophy of Rajabhat University as "Higher Education Institutes for Local Development".In this mission, the library is a key element to drive such mission to achieve its objectives and goals.

2. Level of staffs, key persons lead the customer-focused library services to success.They are part of determination of the customer-focused library services policy by analyzing methods to attract a different user with different requirement to the library. The current solution is providing the users with convenience as they are visiting the library and becoming more flexible with the users. So the librarians have to manage the library services to attract the users. In addition, the librarians are required to improve themselves and review their roles in provide the most user-friendly service because they are close to the user, and are able to handle the emergency issues, as well as creat, an innovation for the users.

The library is able to operate for now and future among a variety of social influencers such as Google, Search engine, theater, YouTube and Social Media which have increasing usage statistics. This research result provide new knowledge on customer-focused library services.

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