

Assessing the Awareness in Using Academic References: Library of UiTM Terengganu, Malaysia Case

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ABSTRACT

The purpose of this study is to investigate the factors of low borrowed academic references among users in Perpustakaan Cendekiawan, Universiti Teknologi MARA (UiTM) Terengganu. The trend of the borrowing collection especially for academic references is not satisfied the library management compared to the investment of effort and budget spent into the initiative in supporting the knowledge culture in the campus. Thus, three components have been addressed to examine the issue namely types of academic references available in the library, level of awareness among users about the academic references and factors that influence the low borrowed academic references among the users. Several methods have been used to gather the information such as observations, interviews, surveys and data analysis. The findings and analysis are expected to create improvement in library management to make use of all the collections available.

KEYWORDS: Academic Library, Academic References, Library Collection, Library Management, Library Facilities.

INTRODUCTION

The university libraries have long been recognized as the "hearts" of their universities. Therefore, library plays a unique role in the academic life of the university. It supports and enriches the university's mission and vision to foster innovative teaching and learning. To fulfil their mission of supporting the educational objectives which include teaching, learning, research and cultural development, the libraries had to develop and maintain a collection of books, journals, digital collections and services. Thus, the academic library is one of the supported departments to the university in order to produce excellent graduates by providing learning spaces, good academic collections and encourage knowledge expansion. Nevertheless, not only for students, the roles of academic library cover the whole campus community such as academic and non-academic staffs, and also the external users namely surrounding societies and institutions.

The academic library provides rich digital and print collections, individual and collaborative learning spaces, as well as expert instruction and research assistance to students and faculty. It promotes learning, encourages the development of life-long inquiry skills, and supports the quest for new insights and the creation of new knowledge. In relation to this, as an essential part of a higher institution, it should provide excellent resources and services as well as facilities that supporting the formal education for teaching and learning that could contribute the development of knowledge as well.

As the initiatives of developing adequate resources for the university community, Perpustakaan Cendekiawan Universiti Teknologi MARA (UiTM) Terengganu as one of the UiTM branch libraries have implements collection development growth every year in order to provide adequate academic collections. Acquisition department which is the one that responsible for the selection and purchase of library collections has conducted various processes for the academic collection growth in the library such as updating the versions of references based on academic syllabus, conducting collaboration with faculties in book selections at book fair and having collaboration with the vendors to identify the current issues pertaining academic collections development.

As the technology advancement in information and education industry, academic collections today is no longer limited to the print collection but it is expanded to a mixture of local and remote, paper and electronic. The trend of assessing information among the users especially from generation-Y requires the library to be more proactive in attracting them to come and use the library collection. Study by [10] has reported that the electronic availability of journals and other periodic literature has been a prime factor in the decreasing number of personal

visits to research libraries. This is due to the increasing amount of information-seeking and retrieval carried out at researchers' desks, either at work or at home.

Trend Development of Students Accessing Academic Library

According to Manual Kualiti Perpustakaan UiTM ISO 9001:2008, students who officially registered in UiTM are categorized under process-based users in UiTM libraries which together with academic staffs and non-academic staffs. Generally, academic library serve the surrounding community that covers academic and non-academic staffs, students and societies either for universities, colleges or even schools. In [18] defined the academic library users could be categorized as primary user groups and other user groups which require the library management to plan the services and collections well. Undergraduates is one of mainstay for academic institutions, however the library sometimes have to entertain the special needs from outsiders. Thus, the library management should clearly define the terms and procedures related to this situation as well to avoid the future problem regarding the users' query such as borrowing collection policy, access towards electronic collection and so on.

Rapid development of technology changes the style of information access among students and other academic library users. The existence of electronic access towards library collections enables users to remotely view the library collection directly from their study room. This situation brings the challenge for librarians to structure new ideas to enhance the physical library access for the university library users to ensure its relevancy and make use of the physical collections, facilities and services available in the physical library as well. Almost all of the university libraries in Malaysia go to digital library to meet the current information services to their users. However, in the same time, the library management needs to put extra effort on the transformation of physical library to make it balance. For this purpose, UiTM Terengganu library keeps a good relationship with the faculties and students representatives to obtain inputs in providing the best collections, services and facilities that could meet their needs.

Academic References in Academic Library Collection

Providing academic references based on curricula is one of the universal policies in an academic library. In order to ensure that the academic collection align with the syllabus offered in UiTM Terengganu, Perpustakaan Cendekiawan has collaborate with the faculties in updating the collection of academic support textbooks and references sources to support academic writing for teaching and learning. Besides, Perpustakaan Cendekiawan has invited each of the faculties together in selecting appropriate textbook during International Book Fair Festival. Each faculty has been allocated by an amount of budget and all requests upon this matter have been completed as possible. Unfortunately, there has been growing concern about students and staffs use of the library, due to the importance of the library in the successful completion of their teaching and learning.

Academic libraries foster information literacy and provide resources to both students and staffs. According to [3], libraries provide numerous services to users, addressing their diverse needs, characteristics and interest. In line with this, in [8] argued that a library can fulfil its function best by pursuing a policy of constant self-evaluation in order to be alert to the changing needs of its users. According to [17], an academic library has the mission to build and maintain a collection that will support and enhance the instructional needs of the institution. In [5] has discovered that the most popular reference collection accessed for coursework and research in library are journals and textbooks.

Library collection which is provided to support the excellence of students' academic performance is no longer popular among students. In [11] found that the library collection are not fully being used in a library because either the users not aware or do not consider them as important. It is very subjective to evaluate the usage of library collections especially for printed collection, since the statistic measurement only counts the circulated collections where students might only access the collections inside the library.

PROBLEM STATEMENT

Libraries in universities are partners in helping their researchers both through traditional ways (providing research collections, research skills training and document delivery) and through more recent innovations (establishing institutional repositories, advice on copyright and intellectual property and involvement in knowledge management activities) [29].

Besides providing electronic collection for library users, Perpustakaan Cendekiawan is always committed in developing its printed academic collection. Complying with the fifth UiTM library's quality objective in ISO 9001: 2008 from the year 2008 to 2015, all UiTM libraries including branches require to increase 10% the library collection per year. In line with this, Unit Pembangunan Sumber Ilmu as the acquisition department in the library has mapped various strategies to ensure the objective could be achieved. This quality objective then being revised on April 2015 as the acquisition department needs to ensure the preparation of syllabus collection should be completed 100% by the year 2018. Besides, Perpustakaan Cendekiawan also needs to fulfil the UiTM

Terengganu quality objectives for library departments which require the increasing of 5% academic reference collection per year.

The collaborations with the faculty members in selecting appropriate textbooks and academic references become such an important mutual effort to complete these objectives and support users in their learning, even the book selection for purchasing are recommended from the representative of the faculties offered in UiTM Terengganu. While the Perpustakaan Cendekiawan aims to facilitate information access to all, only a portion of the users namely students and staffs uses its collections such as computer facilities, reference services and library programs. In other words, despite decades of investment in academic collections, evidence point to the fact that there is still low level of collections borrowed compared to the academic collections holding

Based on the statistic of circulation library collection from the year 2012 to 2014 by Unit Pengurusan Koleksi dan Pengurusan Pelanggan Perpustakaan Cendekiawan as seen in Table 1, the trend of academic collections borrowed are found as not balanced with the academic collections holding. In 2012, there were 24467 copies of collection circulated and for 2013 the statistic are reduced to 23844 copies. The circulation statistic in Perpustakaan Cendekiawan then are found less to 16960 copies. This issue affects the return of investment of every ringgit spent in yearly purchasing the academic collection. Based on the statistic of borrowed academic collections, it was found that from 2012-2014 only 652714 copies have borrowed the academic collections.

Table 1: Statistic of circulation collection Perpustakaan Cendekiawan 2012 to 2014

Year	Statistic of Circulation Collection (Copies)
2012	24467
2013	23844
2014	16960

Given the investment in purchasing academic reference collection and the expected benefits of borrowed academic collections for teaching, learning and research, the issues of low borrowed and usage academic collection therefore need urgent attention. Therefore, the purpose of this study intends to investigate factors responsible for low adoption and borrowed of academic reference collections and usage by students in UiTM Terengganu by using Perpustakaan Cendekiawan as a case study.

OBJECTIVES OF THE STUDY

The purpose of this qualitative research is to carry out an investigation into the factors responsible for low borrowed of academic references by staff and students in UiTM Terengganu by using Perpustakaan Cendekiawan as a case study. The study will answer the following research questions:

1. What types of academic references are available for academic writing and references among students in Perpustakaan Cendekiawan UiTM Terengganu?
2. What is the level of awareness among students in accessing academic references for academic purpose in Perpustakaan Cendekiawan UiTM Terengganu?
3. What are the factors that influence for low borrowed academic references for academic purpose in Perpustakaan Cendekiawan UiTM Terengganu?

LITERATURE REVIEW

Being as a supportive department towards the excellent graduate in the university, Perpustakaan Cendekiawan continuously struggle to provide adequate library resources in term of services and collections parallel to the academic purposes. The trend of assessing library resources usage nowadays becomes more complex as the rapidly changing of library services which affected by the electronic environment expansion. Networked electronic resources via library portals and the Internet have provided users with benefits that go far beyond anything available when physical use was the only alternative [16]. In [27] however stressed that book collections that available in academic library collection is still crucial to academic success for students.

Facilities/Collection/Services

Library collection is the most valuable asset in academic institution. Based on [19], academic collection refers to a corpus of current literature for readers studying for degrees of the University of Oxford and for qualifications issued by other institutions associated with the Union Society. The academic references are provided based on taught courses reading for degrees in the subjects from schools offered in the university. In [13] who are one of earlier studies that evaluated an entire academic library using circulation statistics and interlibrary loan data. The study conducted has reveals the usage of academic collection by faculties in University of Colorado using the comparisons between library collections and items circulated. It has been

evaluated by classification of Library of Congress subject to trace on the subject that mostly used in the library. The findings however been analyzed based on the subject taught in the faculties offered in the university.

Assessing academic references in library collection could be both electronic and physical. In this digital library trend practicing in UiTM libraries, the electronic usage could be detected through the login to the system and the hits of downloading item. While physically could be identified by circulation analysis which refers to the statistic of borrowing items in the library. These varieties of information resources access bring a must for an academic library to upgrade the facilities and services to the users to cope with the current trend. Even library collection is the most precious asset in a library collection, the measurement of an effective of an academic library nowadays involves not only the size of the collection since students use the library in many ways. In satisfying users' needs, an academic library has to commit and continuously improve the facilities, collections and services to the campus society. In order to provide excellent facilities, collections and services, the understanding of nature of information need should be concerned. In [14] stated that each individual user conveys the dynamic multifaceted concept of information need which is different to other user.

In [26] have conducted a study of library usage that concern on electronic access collection on databases and webs, loans, interlibrary loans, using computer workstations, peer consultations, attending workshops and training. In [21] had conducted a study of the usage of library resources, services and facilities among students in Faculty of Medicine and Health Science, Universiti Putra Malaysia. The study found that students mostly visited the library to study and use the Internet. For resources, Internet became as the first option for the students to obtain information while library online website become the third rank after newspaper. For facilities, students frequently used discussion rooms, followed by prayer room, printing and photocopy.

Technology Change

Technology existence brings the revolution formats of information packages. It influences the trend of information usage and access, especially for the youth and young generation which also known as Gen-Y. However, in [20] defined the generation that affected to the technology development today who mostly use the search engine such Google also included young and old, professor, students and even child. This revolution change our way in assessing information as it bring high impact towards the information retrieval, information seeking and evaluation of information. To fit with this need, library has to improve the library branding to be parallel to the "market demand".

Based on Manual Kualiti Perpustakaan ISO 9001: 2008, Prosedur Operasi Perpustakaan UiTM and Prosedur Pengurusan Perpustakaan UiTM that being referred in conducting library activities in UiTM libraries, Perpustakaan UiTM has concluded the library collections as library materials which been defined as printed and electronic materials which have been referred by users that covers journals, books and online databases [22]. Terms of library collections in that policy and procedures are defined separately (i.e. materials, journals, online databases etc.) to clarify the usages and functions of themselves in related procedures and activities. The collection analysis such as evaluation of statistic and usage of library collection are commonly based on the categories of formats. However, all the activities are aligned with the university mission and vision in supporting intellectual and research needs.

The intervention of technology should be viewed in a new perspective as it is the combination of the past (printed collection) and the present (new information technologies) in order to add the value to the academic institution's mission and moving with that institution into the future [9]. Technology has transformed the academic library to become a critical department that contributes to an intellectual center of life and university today.

Attitude/Motivation/Awareness/Behavior

The decreasing of borrowing copies in library academic collection becomes a concerned issue to be debated for this century. In [11] found that users are not fully using library resources and services because either they are not aware of the resources and services or do not consider them as important for their studies. The library should take a good effort in educating students by conducting comprehensive information literacy classes since students mostly are not familiar to the latest techniques of book searching [1]. The support from faculty in encouraging the students to visit and use the library sources seems an alternative to promote the usage of library academic collections. However, the faculties are found that not taking the advantage of the library services and resources in students learning [24]. It is a recommendation for the library to improve faculty awareness of its services and resources.

Electronic resources and digital libraries affect the usage of print resources and traditional libraries, which seems to become as a factor to the tendency of students accessing library academic collection as well. In [15] reveals that graduates students in a metropolitan university use print and online resources provided by library according to circumstances. Cost becomes a major factor for students in choosing either to use digital library or traditional library. They intend to access digital library to avoid costly photocopying, however they would use traditional library if they had to pay for the required online information. It could be seen that physical use of

academic library is only the alternative since all information could be accessed through internet and network without able to visit the library and borrow books.

Trend of information seeking behavior affect the way students get into information for academic references, especially to complete the academic tasks. However, a study has been conducted by [26] shows the positive relationship between students with high achievement in academic performance with the usage of the library assesses. Years to years, many researches have been conducted to explore the impact of the library to the academic achievement. In [12, 4, 28, 7, 20, 23, 6] explored the relationship between library usage and academic performance. Students who went to the library mostly score good grades.

In [2] however had make some moves to the study to identify the purpose of students who visit the library in term of assessing the collections using the services and facilities provided or even use the library environment to study. This variability of indicators in students assessing the library requires the library management to take concern to enhance its functions in supporting the university to produce excellent graduates as well. Thus, future research should be conducted to analyze in depth the inspired factor of users assessing the academic library to enhance the relevance of library for this net age.

FINDINGS AND DISCUSSIONS

For this study, there are several sources have been referred to gather information such as interviews, observations, library statistic studies and doing surveys.

What types of academic references are available for academic writing and references among students in Perpustakaan Cendekiawan UiTM Terengganu?

Most of the participants are recognized the reference sources that available in Perpustakaan Cendekiawan as they use for completing their academic tasks and assignments based on their own courses. Some of them are addressed by their lecturers to be included as the requirement for the courses, and some of them being referred to complete the assignment as the students' own initiatives. Popular academic references among the participants are books, journals, dictionaries, newspapers, magazines and examination papers.

What is the level of awareness among students in accessing academic references for academic purpose in Perpustakaan Cendekiawan UiTM Terengganu?

Basically, students are not aware about the academic references in the library since they feel that the sources are not important for them and prefer to study the lecture notes. Thus, for additional information, they choose to surf the internet as they could get the information with less effort and less time. Most of the participants know the availability of academic resources in the library from their lecturers who request to have the library academic references as one of the requirements to complete the assignments. There are a few of the participants who go to the library with their own initiatives to borrow books.

What are the factors that influence for low borrowed academic references for academic purpose in Perpustakaan Cendekiawan UiTM Terengganu?

The most influenced factor that contribute to the low borrowing academic collections in the library is the existence of internet that provide prompt information at anywhere and everywhere. It requires students less effort since they have not to spend much time to go to the library and make searching and obtain the information in a window. The trend of getting information on the fingertips affect the information provided in the library and influence the statistic of book borrowed among the students.

The distance of the library and the hostel also become such another factor that contribute to low borrowed library academic references for the students. The busy students' life that require much time need them to choose the best initiative for them to save their time in doing daily activities, including choosing the short path to get information sources for their academic assignments. Besides, their lecturers do not strictly request the specific academic references for them to refer in order to finish the assignments. Thus, they are freely to obtain the information sources and choosing the internet to obtain information becomes such favorable medium among the students.

Limited period that given for book borrowed which is 2 weeks per charging is not enough for the students to have the books for their study. Even the renewal are allowed twice for each book with the extra length of two weeks, the participants feel that the time given still not enough for them to have the book. Thus, they prefer not to borrow library academic references to avoid from the fine charged for the late return. Those participants who go to the library do not have skills in searching the book or even using the library system to get the book. Too many books with too little time require the students to not using library academic collection. Even there are manual guide attached next to the library system or Online Public Access Catalogue (OPAC) terminal and there are library staffs that always available at library reference counter, students feel it is hard for them to refer them all.

The behavior of ashamed to ask for assistance, not interested in reading and getting more knowledge (enough with the lecture and lecture notes as they study to sit for examination) and do not have effort in seeking for authoritative academic references such as textbooks, printed journals and other printed collections in the library also contribute to the low borrowed academic references in Perpustakaan Cendekiawan. The unawareness of the existence of academic library collection gives the perception of the lack of academic references provided in the library even the purchasing of the syllabus references has been made frequently.

Other than that, students who come to the library only for personal study such as for reading newspapers, have fresh air and for the environment and equipment provided whether individual or even group study. There are participants who giving comments on some of the library staffs in the library do not friendly in handling the users.

Improvement in Providing Academic References at UiTM Terengganu Library

For improvement, library is required to provide simple guide for students to search the book using the system. For the students, the existed guide is too complicated to be understood. The library also is suggested to provide latest version of academic collections and do promotion on them in order to inform the users about the availability of them in the library. Library staffs are recommended to be friendlier in handling the users. Besides, library also is advised to conduct some promotional activities from time to time with the user to encourage students to borrow books and use the library resources especially academic references.

Based on the information, there could be concluded that the factors that influenced the low borrowed academic references in the UiTM Terengganu library are the dominant of technology advancement of information seeking behavior among the students which giving them the option to obtain the information. Traditionally, the connection of library and academic study is very closed since the center of knowledge and references hub available freely and there is no other option for students to obtain information. With the facilities of wireless and network in every spot in the campus facilitated by the campus management, the usage of internet in accomplishing academic tasks becomes very popular and it as well affect the usage (and borrowing statistic) of academic references in the library among the students as well as campus community.

Other factors seem not too dominant in affecting the low borrowed academic references such as the distance of the hostels and library, period of term in borrowing books since the distance are static and period of book borrow are not even changed. However, the collaboration of lecturers in making use of the academic references in the library among the students are seen as a good alternative to encourage the students to borrow the academic references that available in the library. In the other hand, library staffs should eagerly conduct promotional activities and create simple guide for the students to get the academic references in any ways.

CONCLUSION

The issue of academic references not being used in an academic institution nowadays is a global issue. Students prefer to go for internet to gain information. They refuse the complicated things such as get to OPAC, making search then go to shelf for a piece of information. However, the image of library as the hub of knowledge in the campus community needs the library management to create initiatives to get back the trust in providing information to the academic society in the campus as well. Academic references in the library are the main asset that specially provided to produce knowledgeable graduates. To ensure this library academic references are worth in term of its return on investment (budget and usage), the related parties that related to the production of knowledgeable graduates in an academic institution should play the roles in making use of this golden asset to achieve the academic institution's objective as well. This mutual collaboration for sure would bring the achievement of goals in flying colors.

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