Research of users relations in accordance with library service

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Abstract: *This poster shows the results of a comparison between three city libraries in different geographic regions in Croatia (Zadar, Šibenik and Vinkovci). The research was based on interviews of a library employees (4 librarians), and active library users (9 users) who were representatives of various groups (teenagers, middle-aged people, retirees). The conversation took place in the area of the respective library. The aim of this research was to find out how often users visit the library, for which purposes, and how do they feel inside the library. Impressions and reactions to library services were generally positive. Users recognize the importance of libraries as the organizer of the social life of the community and they agree that library could be considered as a third place. One of the additional aims of this research was to find out why the employers think their libraries are visited in the first place.*

Keywords: public library, "library as a third place," library users, library services

Research of users relations in accordance with librarian services

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Theory:

In 21 century, the public library is an infallible part of the community and society as a whole. These days it no longer represents a 'silent temple of learning', it became the so called 'third place', a neutral place which encourages and enables social interaction without any loads and imposed values and rules (Goulding, 2010). The most important change in the perception of a public library is its function as a communal place that enables gathering and interaction between all members of the community. This is also the main reason which distinguishes it from other public institutions, portraying its value to individuals and society. It is the space itself, within which the library is located, which represents its main trump. It offers services which are flexible and easily adjustable to the needs of the modern time while, at the same time, being able to maintain their original purpose – the selection and organization of information which are now available to everyone. Services are being shaped according to users' demands and needs and the characteristics of a community where the libraries are located.

Purpose:

In this poster, the stated claim will be examined through the services that public libraries offer and their success in satisfying users and their expectations.

Methodology:

To prove the theory; this research was conducted in three public libraries in Croatia (Zadar, Šibenik, Vinkovci). These libraries were chosen because they are of similar size and are located in different parts of Croatia, which is interesting for exploring the differences within one country. Two of these libraries (Zadar and Šibenik) have been renovated recently and the third one (Vinkovci), after its building was completely destroyed by bombing during the war. It is now located in an old school building and waiting for new premises. Research was conducted by interviewing library employees (4 librarians), and active library users (9 users) who were representatives of various groups (teenagers, middle-aged people, retirees), and the conversation took place exclusively in the area of the library. The aim of this research was to find out how often they visit the library, for which purposes, and their general mood in its space. One of the additional aims of this research was to find out why the employers think their libraries are visited in the first place.

Results:

According to the results of the surveys conducted in these three libraries, it is concluded that the theoretical concept of the library as a third place functions in reality. Users believe that the library is a pleasant place which enables them to achieve communication with other users through organized projects, and unintentional visits to the library. Active members spend four days a week on average in the library. Considering that all chosen public libraries are central ones in their respective Croatian regions, it is not surprising that these libraries offer numerous programs for different user groups. Users agree with the fact that the organization is not monotonous and that they are always able to find something interesting to attend (exhibitions, films and papers, etc.). The majority of respondents feel the changes happening in the library, running events on the social level. The main score of the surveyed members of the library is "very good."

Conclusion:

The results of the surveyed employees and users of the public libraries in Zadar, Šibenik and Vinkovci show that all three libraries achieve the vision and mission of the modern public library. They provide the required services to users, and their librarians are involved in various community projects. Library as a third place must be well organized in today's information age and provide users with the services they require. As cultural centres of surveyed cities, these libraries perform their genuine function. The goal of a librarian is to see a satisfied user. Mutual content promises future collaborations, which enable us to remain in the lives of our users.

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