

RESEARCH SUPPORT ACTIVITIES OF **LIBRARY, UNIVERSITY OF MORATUWA:** Bringing to a Next Level via Research Commons



Research Commons is dedicated library space for researchers. Research Commons in libraries are important to develop research culture in the university environment [1]. In order to review and enhance the current status of research support activities of the Library, University of Moratuwa (UoM) a survey was carried out among all academic staff members and postgraduate students at the UoM. The survey aimed to investigate the usage and importance of current research support services and find out the importance of some proposed research support services. As the research instrument, a questionnaire was developed after conducting a pilot study among eminent researchers and focus group interviews with library academics. Current library services as well as new library services were ranked using average weighted scores [2]. Average weighted score was calculated to determine overall order of preference as shown below. Largest weight was given for most preferred choice.

$$\text{Average weighted score} = \frac{X_1W_1 + X_2W_2 + \dots + X_nW_n}{\text{Total response count}}$$

Where W = Weight of the ranked position
 X = Response count for answer choice

Out of 389 permanent academic staff members of the UoM, 16.45% (64) responded. Out of 3581 postgraduate students, 6.31 % (226) responded (Fig. 1- Fig. 3). The mostly used library service by academic staff members as well as postgraduate students was 'Access to online journals and databases' (Fig. 4). They also recognized this as the most important current research support activity of the library (Fig. 5). Academic staff members ranked it with an average weighted score of 9.01 and postgraduate students ranked with 8.18. Usage statistics of electronic databases from the year 2010 to 2020 clearly indicate this fact (Fig. 6). Library proposed seven services such as open access service, research impact assessment service, Assistance in scholarly publishing, Assistance in literature searching, Information on research funding, scholarships, Research data management through data repository, Provision of research guides and subject guides etc. Aca-

ademic staff members ranked 'Open access services' as the most important proposed research support service with an average weighted score of 8.74. However, postgraduate students ranked 'Literature searching assistance' as the most important proposed research support service with an average weighted score of 8.41 (Fig. 7). Respondents recognized Demo Videos as the preferred method of developing awareness of library resources and services (Fig. 8).

It is clear that academic staff members as well as postgraduate students prefer electronic information sources and services of the library than traditional library services. Since the ranking of existing and proposed services with the average weighted score provides an understanding of existing demand or the need among the respondents, it is essential to prepare a schedule for implementing the proposed new activities while strengthening existing library research support services.

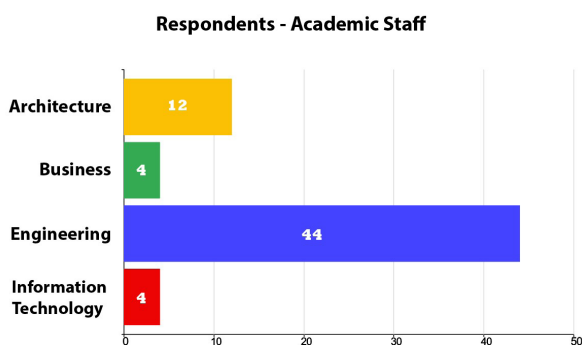


Figure 1: Activity Flow Variation For An Ideal Disaster [3]

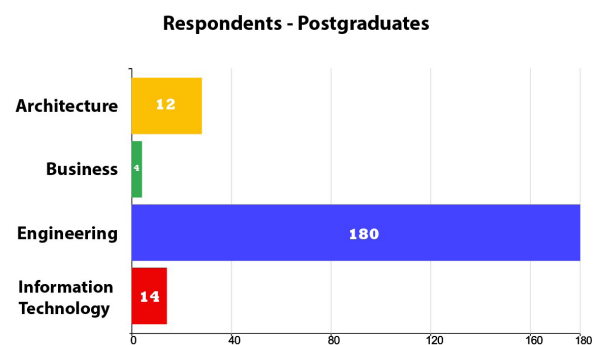


Figure 2: Conceptual model developed for Meethotamulla garbage dump collapse [3]

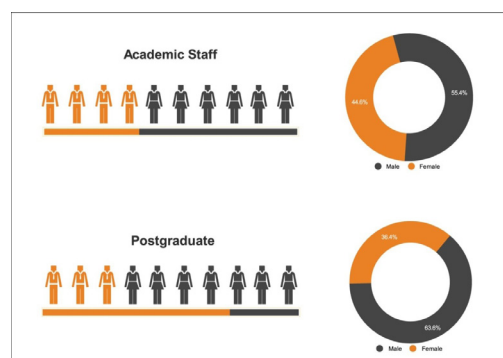


Figure 3: Conceptual model developed for the Indian Ocean tsunami in 2004 [3]

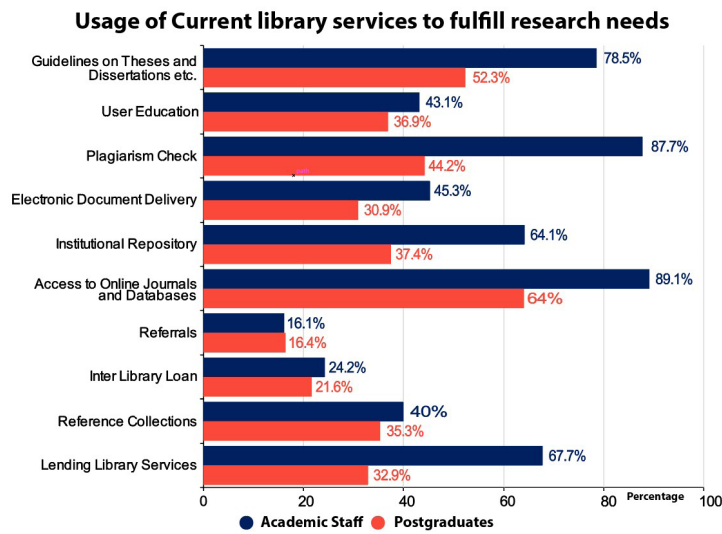


Figure 4: Stakeholder communication network for Floods [4]

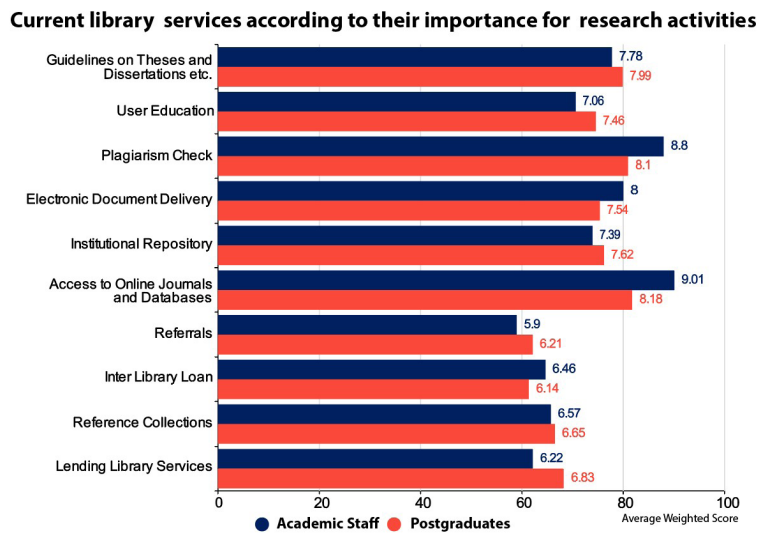


Figure 5: Current Library Services according to their Importance for Research Activities

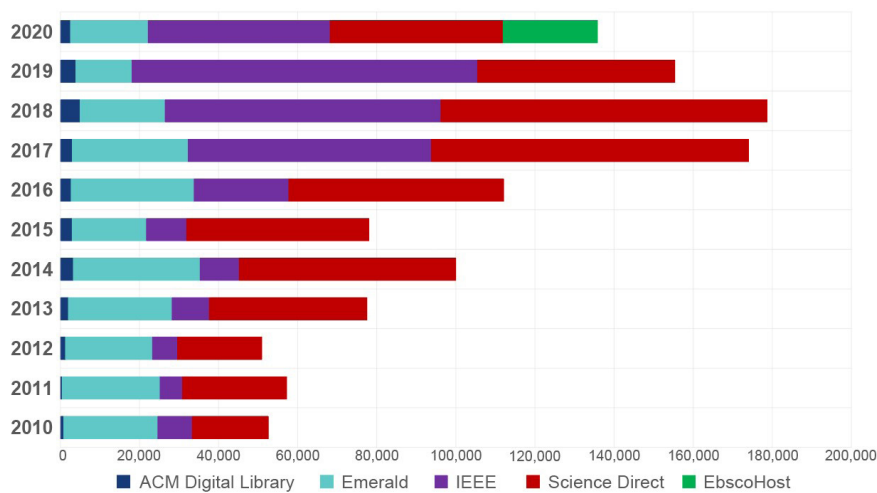


Figure 6: Usage of Electronic Databases (2010-2020)

New research support services, according to their importance for research activities

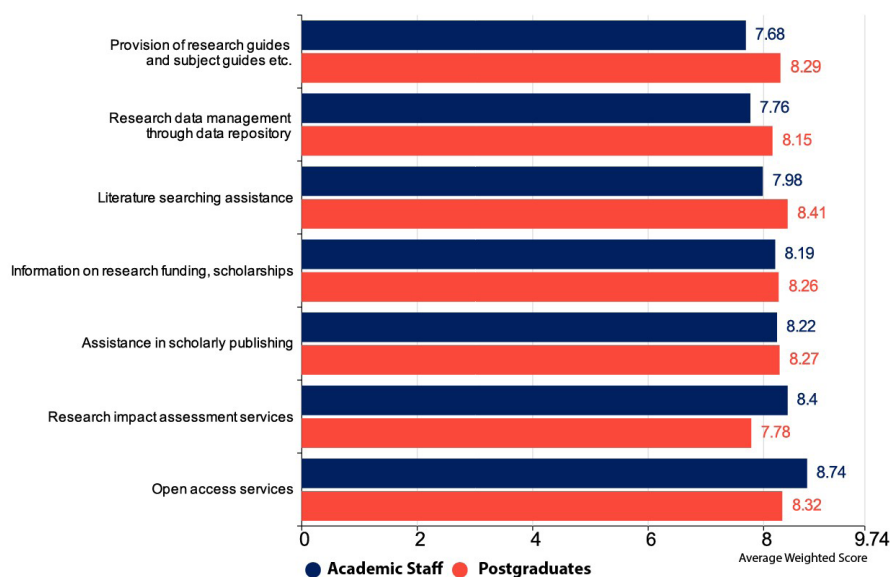


Figure 7: New Research Support Services according to their Importance to Research Activities

Preferred method to develop awareness on library resources and services

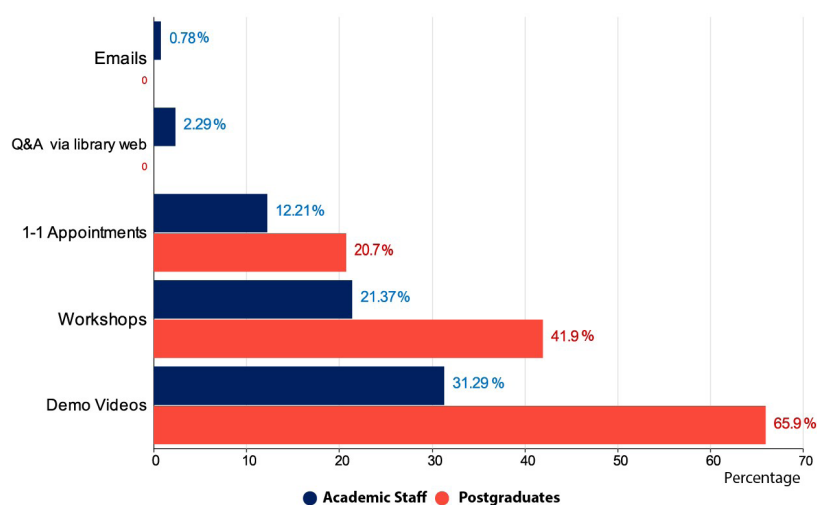


Figure 8: Preferred Method to Develop Awareness on Library Resources and Services

References:

- [1] E. Felix, The seven roles of research commons: forecasting trends, Brightspot, Nov. 2019. Accessed on: Nov. 2, 2021. [Online]. Available: <https://www.brightspotstrategy.com/research-commons-roles-academic-libraries/>
- [2] H.Y. He, M. Gerbig, and S. Kirby, "Need assessment for improving library support services for dentistry researchers," Journal of Medical Library Association, vol. 107, no. 3, pp. 352–363, Jul. 2019. Accessed on: Oct. 20, 2021. [Online] Available doi:10.5195/jmla.2019.556

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