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INFORMATION NEEDS OF INTERNATIONAL STUDENTS AT A MALAYSIAN UNIVERSITY

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1

Introduction

- The desire to pursue higher education is increasing.
- Not only school leavers entering colleges and universities,
- Working and mature adults are also entering or returning to higher education.

2

Introduction

- The need for quality higher education often takes students to out of their home countries.
- Malaysia is one country that attracts international students for higher education.
- Malaysian government aims to make Malaysia a *center of excellence for higher education in the region*.

3

Introduction

- To achieve this aim, Malaysian government and institutions of higher education are striving to:
 - Provide high quality education
 - Offer wide range of courses
 - Keep living costs low
 - Use English as language of instruction

4

Introduction

- These factors have resulted in Malaysia becoming an attractive destination for more than 40,000 foreign students from various parts of the world

5

Introduction

- Studying abroad provides challenges/problems for students, due to
 - Different educational system background
 - Adapting to new educational and social environment
 - Communication problems
 - Financial pressures
 - Etc.

6

Introduction

- Information is an important resource for personal and educational success of international students
- Libraries play a vital role in meeting their information needs

7

Objectives

- To examine the information needs of international students at University of Malaya
- To identify the barriers in meeting these needs

8

Methodology

- Method: Survey Research Method
- Instrument: Open-ended questionnaire
- Respondents: 54 out of 70
- Case study: University of Malaya

9

Findings

- Five main areas of *information needs* in order of priority were :
 - Information about university and faculties (33.3 %)
 - Information related to their program of study (27.8%)
 - Information related to the their courses (18.5%)
 - Information related to continuing education after their graduation (16.7%)
 - Local information about Malaysia (14.8%)

10

Findings

Majority (70.4%) of international students had faced *barriers* in meeting their information needs

11

Findings

- Five main *barriers*, in order of priority, were:
 - Language barrier (40.7%)
 - Unfamiliarity with the library organization and mission of academic library (20.4%)
 - Inability to seek, obtain and evaluate information (14.8%)
 - Hesitant to approach reference station and professional librarians (9.3%)
 - Inadequate knowledge about library system (7.4%)

12

Findings

- Relationship between the level of English language proficiency and success in meeting the information needs
- No relationship between the level of computer and Internet proficiency with the barriers in meeting the information needs

13

Conclusions

- Main information needs of international students focus on university, faculty or course related information.
- Students face barriers in meeting their information needs, primarily related to language and understanding the library

14

Concluding Statement

- No. of international students is increasing
- They face problems in new environment
- Libraries must try to understand the needs of these international students
- Meeting the information needs of these students can be mutually beneficial to both the institution and to the students

15



Thank you

16