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DIGITAL REFERENCE SERVICES (DRS) IN SELECTED PUBLIC ACADEMIC LIBRARIES IN MALAYSIA: A CASE STUDY

by

Wan A. Kadir Wan Dollah

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Outline of Presentation

- Introduction
- Statement of Problems
- Definitions
- Objectives of Study
- Research Questions
- Methodology
- Data Analysis and Findings
- Conclusions and Recommendations

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Introduction

. Reference service provides personalized assistance to users and is considered one of the academic library's main activities

. Over time, numerous technological development have affected the provision of reference service.

. Librarians are exploring ways of assisting users in emerging virtual communities

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Statement of Problems

- The applications of ICT is widespread in many disciplines
- Great number of users connect to the Internet
- Users expect their libraries to provide services online
- The academic library services were not fully utilized and the services provided not being used effectively

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Definitions

- Reference Service
- Digital Reference Service
- Academic Libraries
- Case Study

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Reference service

Refers to personal assistance provided to library users seeking information

Including:

1. Information services
2. Library instruction
3. User guidance

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Digital Reference Services

Mechanism by which users can submit their questions and have them answered by a library staff member through some electronic means (e-mail, Web forms, chat, etc.) not in person or over the phone.

Elements: 1. the user

2. the interface

3. information professional

4. electronic resources

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Academic libraries

Libraries attached to academic institutions (above the secondary or high school level) serving the teaching and research needs of students and staff

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Case study

. A research design that entails the detailed and intensive analysis of a single case

. Case studies typically combine data collection methods such as questionnaires, interviews, observations and documentation.

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Objectives of Study

1. To identify the existing status of DRS
2. To identify the usage of such services
3. To determine the effectiveness of such services
4. To identify the perceived needs of such services
5. To identify issues and problems faced by librarians and users in their use of such services
6. To recommend solutions pertaining to DRS in academic libraries

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Research Questions

1. What is the existing status of DRS
2. How are DRS used by the librarians and students
3. How effective is the DRS offered
4. What are the perceived needs for DRS
5. What are the issues and problems faced
6. How can DRS be improved

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Methodology

- Questionnaires
  - Structured questionnaires were distributed to 1. Librarians 2. Students
- Interviews
  - Structured interviews were conducted
- Observations
  - to record the services available
  - to note how the services are offered
  - to view the guidelines for service provision/policy

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Data Analysis and Findings

1. **All the 4 public academic libraries in Malaysia have implemented DRS**
   - **E-mail reference**
   - **Web forms**
   - **Ask-A librarian**
   - **FAQs**

(Administration, Policy, Types of Reference Questions and Subject Areas)

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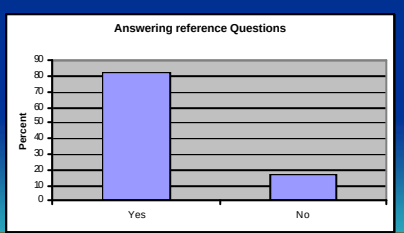
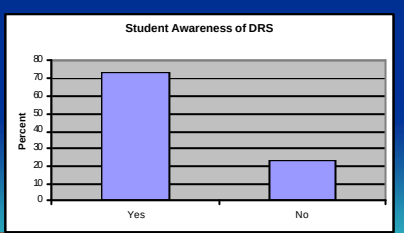
Cont…

2. High percentage of librarians and students have been using DRS





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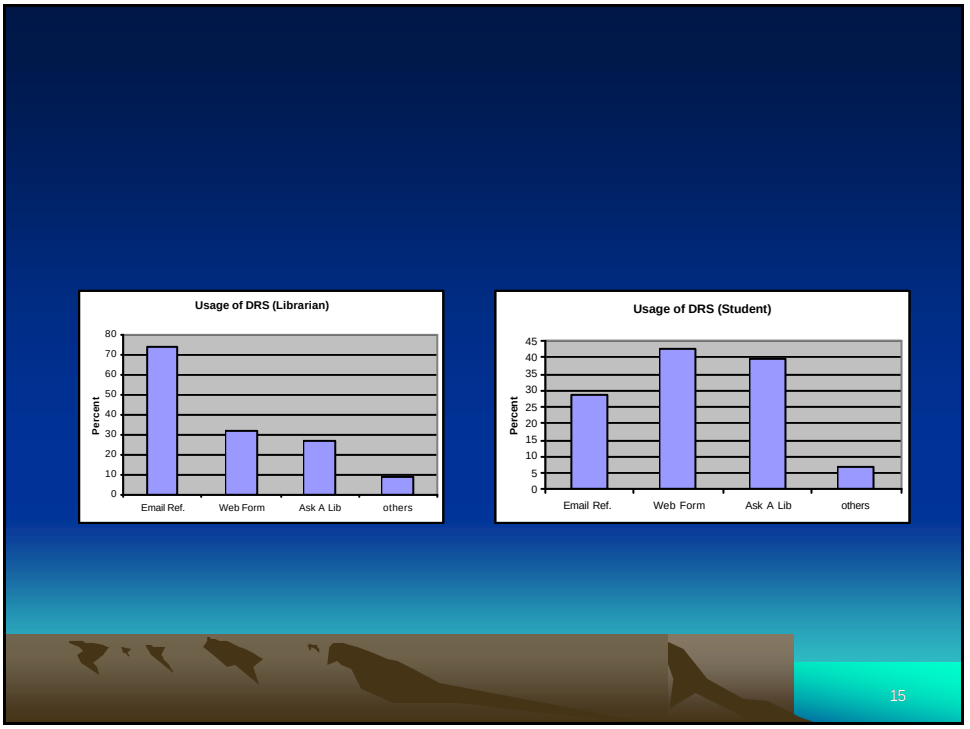

Cont…

3. DRS are effective forms of service delivery in Malaysian academic libraries

   (Awareness, Libraries' performance, Users' satisfaction)

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4. There are needs for DRS

5. There are a number of benefits and problems of DRS

6. The Solutions

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Further Study

1. A more detailed study of DRS in academic libraries (other public and private universities and colleges)
2. Populations from other faculties
3. Comparative studies
4. Research is required to set some common standard or benchmarks for the quality of DRS in academic libraries

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Recommendations

1. **Librarians need to be trained**
2. **There is a need to promote DRS**
3. **Academic libraries in Malaysia should use the latest format of DRS**
4. **The academic libraries should stabilize the system and infrastructure**
5. **Academic libraries should co-operate/collaborative DRS**

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Thank you

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