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Impact of self-loan technology on circulation services in South African academic libraries

The aim of this paper is to investigate the extent to which the introduction of self-loan technology has impacted on the circulation services in South African academic libraries. The study addresses the following specific research questions: to what extent has self loan technology impacted on the organisation of circulation sections, the roles of circulation services supervisors, the job satisfaction of circulation supervisors, the skills of circulation librarians, and the quality of lending service? A survey method was used to obtain the views of circulation services supervisors on the impact of self-loan. A total of 6 (out of 23 academic libraries in South Africa) which had implemented self-loan circulation facilities were included in the survey. Self-administered questionnaires were used to collect data from the respondents. The study then adopted the existing technology impact measures to measure the impact of self-loan technologies on circulation services in selected academic libraries in South Africa. Preliminary findings indicate that , the introduction of self loan technology has not had a great impact on South African libraries, but has had somewhat of an impact, as demonstrated by the total median of 3 in the responses of informants. However, it is worth noting that as Mbambo-Thata (2010) commented, this situation should be expected when the adoption of new technology is at the early stage. It will therefore be interesting if this study could be revisited when more libraries have adopted self loan technology and are also at the mature stage of adoption. Conclusions and additional recommendations are also offered in the paper.

References

Mbambo-Thata, B. 2010. Assessing the impact of new technology on internal operations: with special reference to the introduction of mobile phone services at UNISA Library. *Library Management*, 31(6): 166-475.

Summary

Self-Loan service, Academic libraries, South Africa, Information Technology

Primary author: Prof. ONYANCHA, Omwoyo Bosire (University of South Africa)

Co-author: Mr MANGADI, Joseph Mosekare (Monash University)

Presenters: Mr MANGADI, Joseph Mosekare (Monash University); Prof. ONYANCHA, Omwoyo Bosire (University of South Africa)