

User perceptions on pleasure reading facilities provided by the Main Library of the University
of Colombo

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Pleasure reading refers to free, voluntary and non-goal oriented reading which provides enjoyment or a pleasure to the reader. It is different from reading related to the curriculum. Promotion of pleasure reading is not generally considered as a priority in most of the academic libraries. However, recent studies strongly prove that pleasure reading can exert significant, positive impacts on the overall performance of academic library users. Being a leading academic library in Sri Lanka, Main Library of the University of Colombo also holds this responsibility into a greater extent. Objectives of this study were to identify perceptions of pleasure readers (undergraduates) on the benefits gained through pleasure reading, and to identify the perceptions of pleasure readers on current facilities provided for pleasure reading, by the Main library of the University of Colombo. The three mostly accepted benefits of pleasure reading were: pleasure reading gives enjoyment (99%), pleasure reading helps to escape from routine work (98%) and pleasure reading helps to relax (96.2%). The two most significantly rated services related to pleasure reading are; having a suitable physical environment in the library for pleasure reading (85.1%) and having a helpful library staff to find pleasure reading materials (77.5%). Comparatively, the three lowest rated services are; the ability to find pleasure reading materials easily (52.7%), having enough number of pleasure reading materials from the preferred language (59.3%) and having enough number of pleasure reading materials in the library (61.8%). A majority of undergraduate users believe that promotion of pleasure reading must be a priority of a university library (97.1%). These findings can be used as justifications to allocate more budget, staff time, space and other resources to promote pleasure reading at the main library of the University of Colombo.

Keywords: Pleasure reading, Academic Libraries, User perceptions, Pleasure reading facilities.
Benefits of pleasure reading