SCAMeL Speedy Startup

Examining Library Outreach & Resource Barriers

February 6, 2017

Overview:

The proposed project will examine what type of library outreach activities lead to patrons registering with the library and patron perceptions of available resources. Currently at Louisiana State University Health Sciences Center - New Orleans (LSUHSC-NO) Libraries when patrons register for privileges, library staff do not know how those patrons were referred to the libraries. The proposed project will fill that knowledge gap by administering a monthly questionnaire throughout the Fall 2017 semester. As a pilot study, recruitment will come only from the School of Public Health (SPH) in order to keep the sample size manageable without additional staff. The target sample size is 60 participants based on SPH library registrants from the Fall 2016 semester.

Proposed Research:

The study design will be longitudinal throughout the course of the Fall 2017 semester. After SPH patrons register with the libraries, a librarian will approach them to ask their consent to participate in this research project. Once informed consent is attained, a questionnaire will be administered electronically. This baseline questionnaire will ask why they are registering, how they learned to register, and what library resources they believe they will use most often. Following completion of this questionnaire, the research subjects will be compensated with a $5 gift card.

One month after this initial questionnaire, participants will be approached to complete a follow-up questionnaire to gather information on personal resource usage. These questionnaires will also explore participants’ articulated barriers to access and how they have overcome these challenges, if they have. Upon completion, the participants will each receive $5 as compensation for their time.

These subsequent research questionnaires will continue monthly from the date that the previous questionnaire was completed. At the end of the semester, subjects will complete a final questionnaire to gather their perceptions about the library’s resources. Compensation of $5 will be given upon completion. This concludes the subjects’ involvement in the project.

A major consideration is patrons who register later in the semester. Regardless of when in the Fall 2017 semester an SPH patron registers, the individual will be offered the opportunity to participate in the study. The rationale is that those registering later in the semester may have different experiences and motivations than those registering at the beginning of the semester. Therefore their inclusion is beneficial to enrich the data’s representation. In fact, patrons are eligible to be recruited until the end of the semester. If this occurs, the subjects will only be administered the baseline survey with $5 compensation. No final questionnaire will be administered in these cases.

Importance:

By examining outreach success and use behavior, this research allows libraries to better target their resources. Libraries can make evidence-based decisions about resource promotion. Whether this means librarians focus more on activities that have greater impact on registrations or library staff change instruction topics is up to library leadership’s discretion. For example, based on patron feedback, the library may offer additional classes on citation management software or modify individual teaching to address shortcomings. However, these are only the immediate benefits of this research.

Librarians implementing the changes can tailor their methods based on gathered information. Without insight into local patron behavior and expectation, any modifications will have a greater potential to be unfocused. This research can provide such insight. Furthermore, the simplicity of the study allows replication among other schools and institutions, enabling a more precise approach in particular settings. At its most fundamental, this research will examine the feasibility of such a small-scale, low-impact use testing.

Staff:

As liaison librarian to LSUHSC-NO School of Public Health, John Bourgeois will have the primary responsibility for carrying out the project. The tasks that will fall to him will be collecting informed consent, administering questionnaires, compensating participants, and analyzing data. However, he will not be the only party involved in this research. Circulation staff will reserve “Patron Registration” forms on which the registrant indicates association with the SPH or a program/department within that school. Also, other librarians’ input will be sought when developing questionnaires in order to collect as much pertinent information as possible without becoming too burdensome on the research subject.

Timeline:

March 2017: Award Given. Instrument Development Begins.

April 2017: Finalize Instruments. Consult IRB Staff for Guidelines.

May 2017: Prepare IRB Packet.

June 2017: IRB Paperwork Submitted.

July 2017: IRB Approves Study.

August 2017: Subject Recruitment Begins.

September 2017: Recruitment & Questionnaires.

October 2017: Study Continues. Analysis Begins.

November 2017: Study Continues. Analysis Continues.

December 2017: Questionnaires Completed. Analysis Finishes.

Budget:

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| --- | --- | --- |
| **Cost** | **Item** | **Rationale** |
| $1,500 | Subject Compensation | 60 subjects at $5/survey for 5 surveys |
| $2,420 | 2 x Base SPSS Package | This is a data analysis software. Two copies are needed for multiple computers. |
| $37 | Using IBM SPSS Stats, 2nd edition | This book is necessary as a reference during analysis. |
| $200 | Printing Costs | Needed for printing envelopes and reminders for students. |
| $4,157 | **TOTAL** |  |

**Revised Budget Approved:**

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| **Cost** | **Item** | **Rationale** |
| $1,500 | Subject Compensation | 60 subjects at $5/survey for 5 surveys |
| $1,210 | 2 x Base SPSS Package | This is a data analysis software. Two copies are needed for multiple computers. |
| $37 | Using IBM SPSS Stats, 2nd edition | This book is necessary as a reference during analysis. |
| $200 | Printing Costs | Needed for printing envelopes and reminders for students. |
| $2,947 | **TOTAL** |  |