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PROBLEMS FACED BY RESIDENTIAL STUDENTS: CASE STUDY AT FIJI NATIONAL UNIVERSITY, COLLEGE OF HUMANITIES AND EDUCATION – LAUTOKA CAMPUS, FIJI ISLAND

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ABSTRACT

This study was conducted to determine the level of dissatisfaction among the Fiji National University, residential students Lautoka campus towards some facilities provided. This research was focused on four major areas in its Lautoka campus. The areas of studies were to Sporting Facilities and Recreation, Hostel and Accommodation, the Information Communication and Technology (IT) as well as Library Services. The study was based on a survey carried out from the questionnaires that is administered involving fifty (50) year one (1) Primary Teacher trainees, fifty (50) year two (2) Primary Teacher trainees, fifty year one (1) Secondary Teacher Trainees and fifty year two (2) Secondary Teacher Trainees who resides at Campus. Upon using the descriptive analysis, the levels of dissatisfaction among the students towards the facilities provided were examined. The findings from this research revealed that the level of dissatisfactions shown by the residential students of Fiji National University Lautoka Campus are sort of very strong in terms of disappointment dissatisfaction as far as resources is concern in the four areas observed. The findings from this research study will surely help, guide the policy makers of the university to improve its services and provide to the residential students the very latest and best available resources comparable to university standards.

KEYWORDS

satisfaction, dis-satisfaction, facilities, teachers.

INTRODUCTION

In almost every existing University in the world, students must and should be the direct recipient of all services provided by the university. There is no two ways about it. The student's satisfaction in campus as well as being a residential student should become an extremely paramount responsibility for universities and its management itself whether it is directly or indirectly. When there are complaints, dissatisfaction from residential student's campus it should be regarded as important because they may be querying the quality of services provided by the university that will surely impose a drastic impact on their performance mentally, physically, socially and psychologically. It is believed that the University should always focus on the services to the students because they are the direct customer who receives the universities service directly from the university programme. Therefore, the primary objective of the university is to maximize student's satisfaction, minimize dissatisfaction and this would in turn improve the mirror image of this campus as well the students' performance at FNU Lautoka Campus. We strongly believe that the improvements of the services delivered and provided by any university can be achieved in so many ways. The procedure we have under taken in my research studies is one of the so many effective ways of making an informed decision about providing the best available services for the residential students at Fiji National University Lautoka Campus. Getting feedbacks, comments, complaints or objections from student's customers or residential students of FNU College of Humanities Lautoka Campus residential students is the best facts ever to get because they are the targeted group of this research studies as far as the resources is concern. Certainly from the positive or negative feedback, FNU will have a better view of the strength and weaknesses of its services so that improvement can be made wherever necessary. Moreover, this effective method of approach can be carried out continuously to gain better relationships to the residential students with regards to their physical resources needs.

Upon the completion of this research project, it will surely unveil certain issues and matters may be unknown to the FNU administrators concerning the difficulties that are being faced by the residential students of FNU Lautoka Campus with regards to better and improved facilities. The issues raised from this research project should certainly raise eyebrows or draw the attention and focused of the administrators of FNU for the betterment of facilities as to provide a conducive learning environment for the residential students of FNU College of Humanities and Education Lautoka Campus.

REVIEW OF LITERATURE

To survive in highly competitive markets, organizations need to provide goods and services that yield highly satisfied and loyal customers. When customers are satisfied, they are more likely to return to those who helped them, while dissatisfied customers are more likely to go elsewhere. The retention of very loyal customers is a key to organizational survival (Jones and Sasser, 1995).

Aldridge and Rowley (2001) stated that an expectation that cannot be fulfilled by the institutions is the key factors for students' withdrawal. As we are living in the borderless world or the era of globalization, students may have so many choices to choose and compare to such as the academic program choices offered that not necessarily could be completed or done in the class room in getting the certificate of degree. They might choose the mode of e-learning which they can be in the learning experience anywhere they want or need to. This scenario will decrease the number of students in the higher education institution where the figure of student will be calculated as the profit where every single student will contribute to the university income due to the fees of study in every semester.

Rinehart (1993) offers two distinct views of students as customers. For instance, those who regard students as primary customers associate them as being involved in the input and output of the learning process. However, those who regard students' potential employers as primary customers argue that it is important to consider the economic reality of the situation where lesson content should be tailored to employers' needs.

In another view, students have been categorized as the primary beneficiaries of education and hence should be treated as customers. This perspective stems from the understanding that educational institutions are highly competitive on the market with strategies being aggressively developed to satisfy students' needs in order to attract a sustainable market share (Joseph and Joseph, 1998).

According to the study by Kanji, Abdul Malek and Wallace (1999), as referred to the situation of the Higher Education Institution in Malaysia, most institutions do give a great deal of importance to meeting customer's expectations which is similar to business organization, but they still lack of customer awareness among the staff and it has become a common drawback for many institutions. The customer that we try to emphasize here is the students itself.

According to Pace (1985) it is possible to consider that individuals could be accurate reporters of self-concepts and objective score gains, and what is expected of their gains and interests. Hill et al. (1998), state that students' self-perception of their educational experiences provide significant measurements for the evaluation of university outcomes. It could be inferred that students' knowledge of programs and services is an important predictor of satisfaction with programs and services.

Satisfaction can be defined as an experience of fulfillment of an expected outcome (Hon, 2002). Satisfaction or dissatisfaction with a program or facilities is influenced by prior expectations regarding the level of quality (Ekinci, 2004; Sigala, 2004). In some cases, information or disinformation lays the ground for the expectations of quality. If what is relayed or communicated to the customer, does not match the expectation or experience, a negative perception of quality and satisfaction is generated (Solomon, 1996). Overall, satisfaction with a service product can be of a single component of service, or of the experience on a number of components that make up the total experience.

The metaphor of students as consumer or customer has become more than common in the public discourse of higher education in North America and Europe (Fisher, 1993).

(Bribgham, 1993) asked a question. "If we can reconfigure the firm as customer or consumer – oriented, why can't we do the same for the college and universities?" By regarding the students seriously as the consumer or customer, we can address pressing issues of accountability, efficiency, relevance and practically.

Relationship between service quality and customer satisfaction has been extensively studied by researchers (Sureshchandar, Rajendran & Anantharaman, 2002; Jones & Suh, 2000; McDougall & Levesque, 2000). Ghobadian, Speller and Jones (1997) concluded that companies with higher perceived quality goods and services will enjoy higher long term economic benefits. The correlation between the quality of goods and services and customer satisfaction, has led organizations to continuously upgrade their quality and measure their clients' satisfaction.

Satisfaction measurement, however, is a difficult task to achieve as customer satisfaction is similar to attitude (Attiyaman, 1997). Quality too, according to Sureshchandar et al. (2002) is a form of attitude.

In the case of higher education institutions such as universities and colleges, many broaden their scope of evaluation to include students' total experience rather than limiting it only to the assessment of the quality of teaching and learning, (Aldridge & Rowley, 1998) as the interaction between students and the institutions do not stop nor confined only to classroom environment.

American College Personnel Association, (1994); and Schroeder & Mable, (1994) stated that "Problems confronting higher education, such as public skepticism, and slowness to innovate have faster an era of consumerism which mandates attention. The increase in public attention given to institutional performance, students' outcomes, and institutional accountability has heightened the focus on measurable outcomes in higher education (Astin, Korn & Green 1987). As we concern, one of the most important outcomes of the higher education institution was the students' academic performance following by others.

Association (1994), stresses the importance of systematically assessing the outcomes associated with college attendance as a way to improve institutional productivity. One area that has been given increasing attention is students' satisfaction with various components of the college experience (Astin, 1993; Astin et al, 1987; Strange, 1991). As we discussed the college experience are including the facilities and services provided such as accommodation, transportation and sport facilities. A pioneering example of universities that provided residential facilities to their students is Al-Azhar University in Cairo, Egypt. Since its establishment in 969 AD, it has provided a complete educational system consisting of a theological and educational atmosphere to its living-on campus students. The university has been described as "a society of individuals living and working together for the advancement of learning and the dissemination of knowledge" (Zahran, 1972).

The quality of any of the service encounters, or "moment of truth" (Carlzon, 1989) experienced by customers forms part of their overall impression of the whole service provided (Dale 2003) and by implication, their impression of the organization itself.

Deming (1982) commented, most people from their opinions based on the people that they see, and they are either dissatisfied or delighted, or some other point on the continuum in between.

Researches on quality in higher education, although differ in their definitions of quality itself, its dimension and measurements (Lagrosen, Sayyed-Hashemi & Leitner, 2004;

Zhao, 2003, Kwan & Ng, 1999; Cheng & Ming Tam, 1997) seem to agree in their dimensions and measurement that characteristics of quality is a prerequisite for the measurement process (Owlia & Aspinwall, 1996).

Education quality, according to Cheng (2003) is the character of an input, process and output of the education system that satisfy both internal and external stakeholders by meeting their explicit and implicit expectation. Jagdeesh (2000) in his article on the quality in management education however, defined education quality from the perspective of knowledge base and skill set of the graduates. Zhao (2003) proposes the quality of a university's online education to be evaluated from the standpoint of its course effectiveness, adequacy of access to technological infrastructure, student satisfaction and academic satisfaction.

IMPORTANCE OF THE STUDY

This study will determine the level of dissatisfaction/ satisfaction among the Fiji National University Residential students Lautoka Campus towards some facilities provided. The study will surely determine the student's dissatisfaction / satisfaction towards the facilities provided by Fiji National University on the areas of concern i.e. Sporting Facilities/ Recreation, Information Communication and Technology System, Accommodation as well as the Library Services which should become a part of the residential student's experience during their period of study at Fiji National University, Lautoka Campus.

This research will be focusing on four major areas in its Campus. Sporting Facilities and Recreation, Hostel and Accommodation, the Information Communication and Technology (IT) and Library Services

The study was based on a survey carried out from the questionnaires that was administered involving fifty (50) year one (1) Primary Teacher trainees, fifty (50) year two (2) Primary Teacher trainees, fifty year one (1) Secondary Teacher Trainees and fifty year two (2) Secondary Teacher Trainees who resides at FNU Lautoka Campus.

Upon using the descriptive analysis, the levels of dissatisfaction among the students towards the facilities provided were examined.

STATEMENT OF THE PROBLEM

The level of dissatisfaction / satisfaction for every residential student may vary from one student to another due to their culture, background, races and status.

OBJECTIVE

To check and compare facilities provided by Fiji National University to the students in terms of sports, hostel, library and recreational facilities.

HYPOTHESIS

Some residential students might be satisfied after using the facilities provided by Fiji National University because of their family background. Students from the middle class might be satisfied with the basic facilities while students from high class or from a rich family might have higher expectation towards the facilities provided by FNU.

RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

This study is an exploratory in nature where the purpose is to describe the level of students' satisfaction / dissatisfaction on the facilities provided such as the sports facilities and recreation, accommodation and campus bus services. Since this study is a descriptive study, no hypothesis was developed and the analysis conducted was only the descriptive type.

SAMPLING

Samplings are the process of selecting a sufficient number of elements from the population, to generalize the characteristics of the population elements. Sampling is done due to the large amount of the FNU students. Besides that, by using sampling it can save time and cost involved compare than if the researcher needs to gather information from the whole customers (students). Simple random sampling was chosen whereby every element is selected independently and the sample is drawn by a random procedure from the sampling frame. According to Uma Sekaran (2003), through simple random sampling technique, all elements in the

population are considered and each element has an equal chance of being chosen as the subject. This sampling design best when the generalize ability of the findings to the whole population is the main objective of the study.

DATA COLLECTION METHOD

Primary data are data gathered an assembled specifically for the project. It's using the several techniques like survey, observation, interviews, and questionnaire. A researcher originates primary data for the specific addressing the problem at hand.

Primary data was generated from the questionnaire distributed to the selected students. The researcher chose to use the questionnaire method as a tool of data collection. Closed-ended questionnaires most of which were likert-type scale. The researcher took great care to ensure that the questions asked would properly structured, focused, phrased and asked in a manner that is to intelligible to respondents, able to minimize bias and able to provide data that can be statistically analyzed. This achieved through careful considerations for four interrelated issues in questionnaires design.

SAMPLE SIZE

This step is concerned with how many people that should be surveyed. According to Roscoe (1975), the sample size those are large than 30 and less than 500 are appropriate for most research. Large sample give more reliable results than smaller samples. Despite, it is not necessary to sample the entire target population or even a substantial portion to achieve reliable results. In this research, the researcher only chose 60 sample units as the sampling size randomly due to the time constraints, cost and other human resources. Sixty questionnaires were being distributed to respondents who are the residence of the FNU Students Residential Hall.

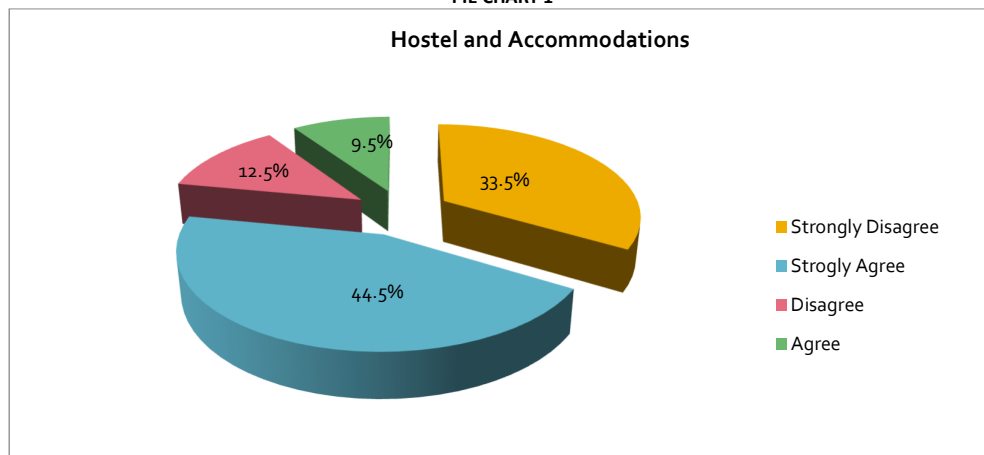
RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

STUDENTS AND HOSTEL FACILITIES

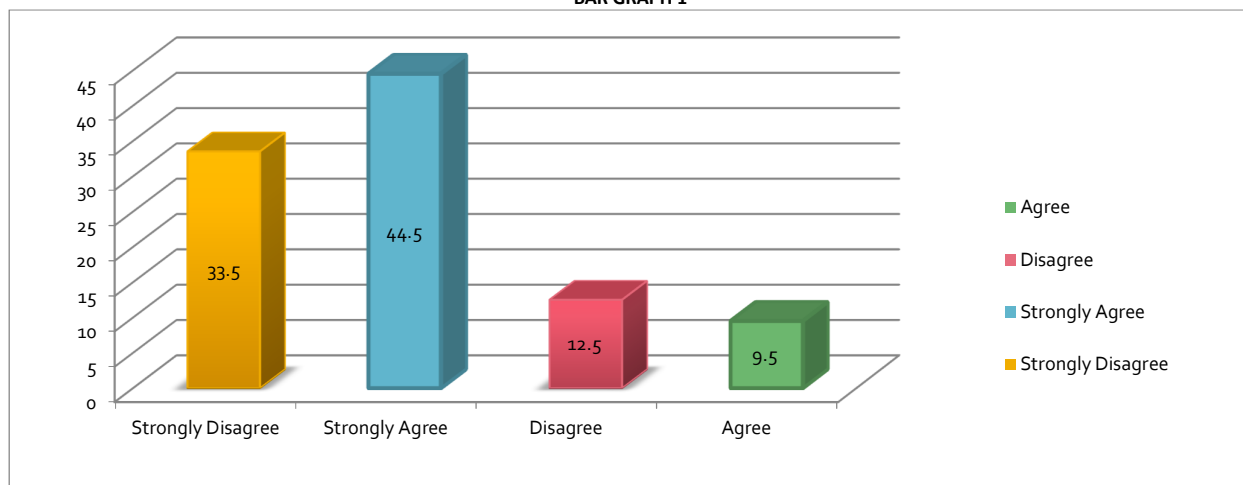
Students’ housing facilities or accommodation is one of the integral components of the university in promoting the university as an element to help students attain intellectual competence, enliven personal character in fulfilling living experience.

(Zahran,1972) said that residential systems help enlarge a student’s perspective and knowledge of disciplines other than his own through contacts with roommates of different backgrounds who are specialized in other field of study. Therefore, the contribution of sustainable campus housing facilities achieving the quest of improving the performance of students should not be underestimated.

PIE CHART 1



BAR GRAPH 1

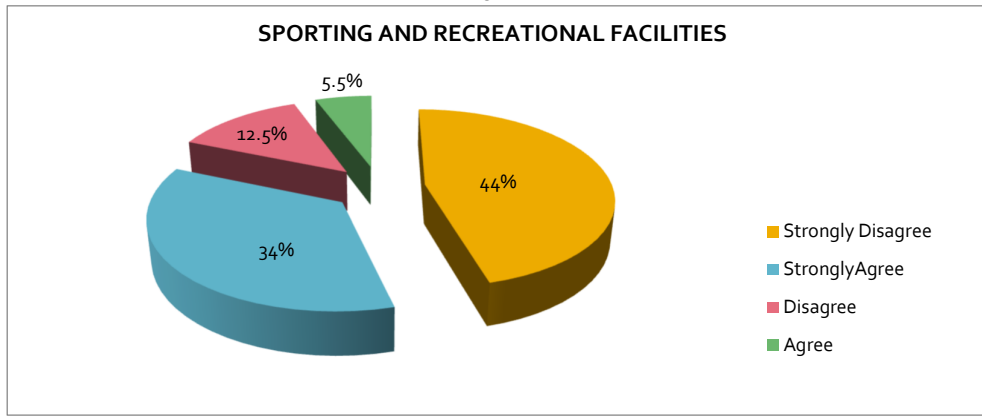


SPORTS AND RECREATIONAL FACILITIES

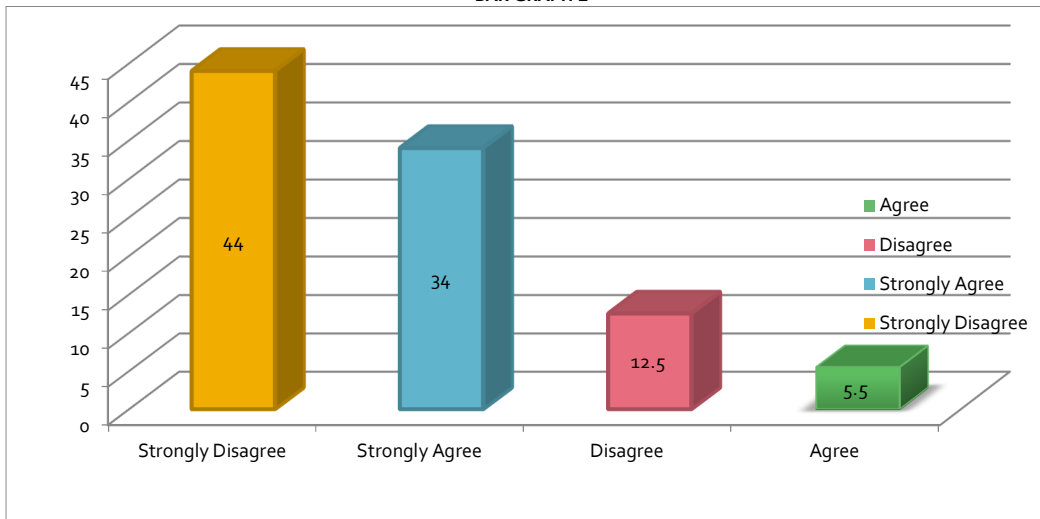
The social life of students on the campus can gradually diminished in friendliness probably because of lack of sporting activities and spaces to bring them together for necessary relaxation to enhance good relationship amongst them.

Akinola Arikawe a Nigerian scholar mentioned that the main purpose of recreation is basically the relaxation and revitalization of people so that they may efficiently return to their routine activities, which are not recreational but economically gainful. It involves physical, mental and emotional activities. It can reward the participants in terms of intellectual, physical and social growth, better health, improved citizenship and other qualities of personal development.

PIE CHART 2



BAR GRAPH 2

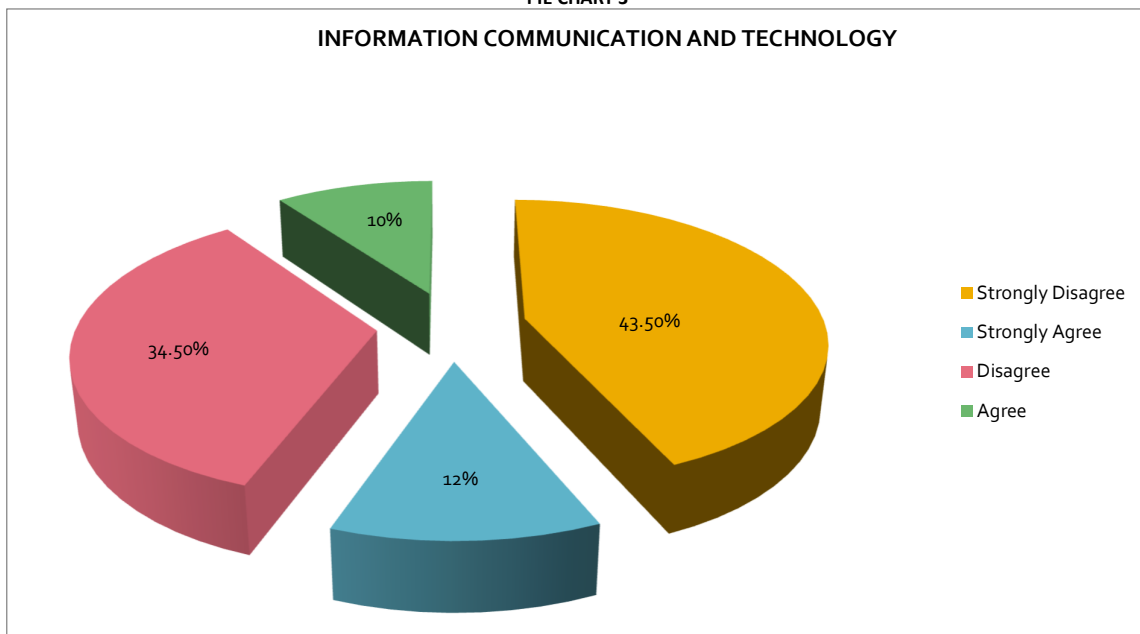


INFORMATION COMMUNICATION TECHNOLOGY

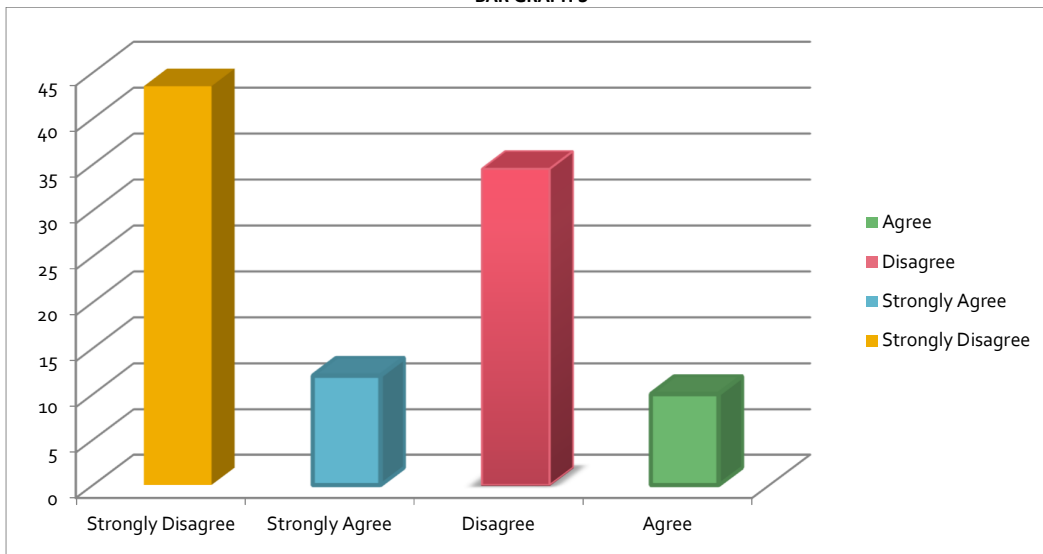
Education is one of the most important needs for the well-being of individual and that of the society. Thus, education is a powerful instrument of social, political, and economic progress without which neither an individual nor a society can attain professional growth.

Information and communication technology (ICT) is an indispensable part of the contemporary world. In fact, culture and society have to be adjusted to meet the challenges of the information age. Information and communication technology (ICT) is a force that has changed many aspects of people’s ways of life.

PIE CHART 3



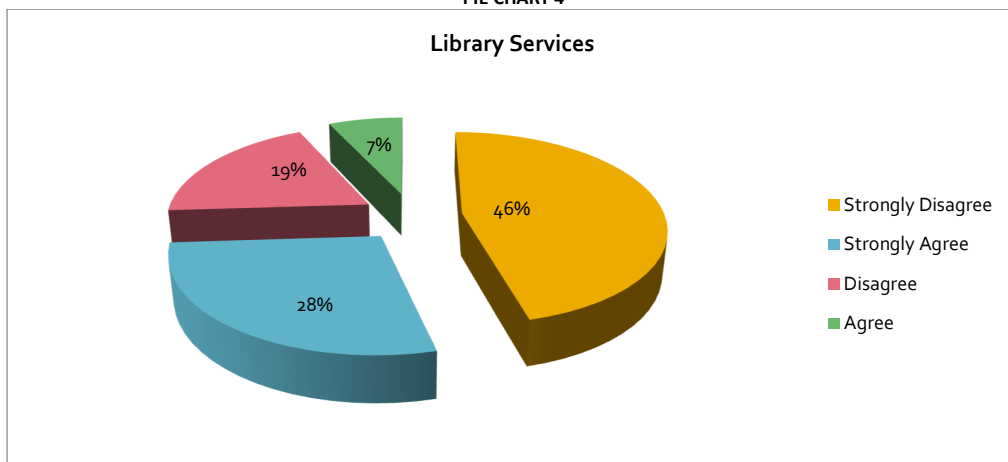
BAR GRAPH 3



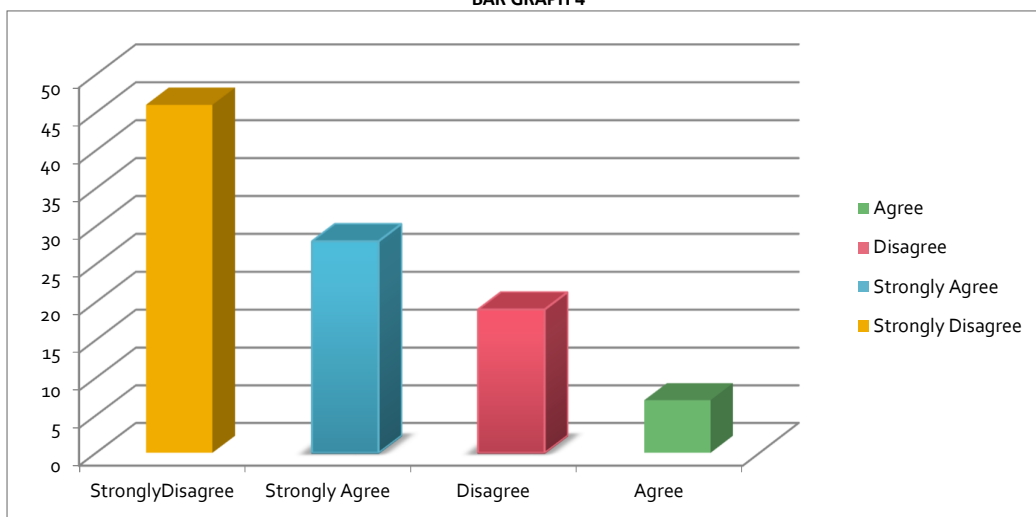
LIBRARY SERVICES

Libraries are at the centre of the academic excellence of all educational institutions providing all the relevant information resources necessary for sustaining the teaching, learning and research functions of these institutions. The academic health, intellectual vitality and effectiveness of these educational institutions in producing high quality graduates into the labor market depend largely on the quality of information resources available in their libraries to support the teaching, learning and research activities.

PIE CHART 4



BAR GRAPH 4



FINDINGS

Fiji National University needs to improve all four the facilities discussed in this research for betterment of the students.

RECOMMENDATIONS/SUGGESTIONS

Research may be conducted every year to check the facilities are in improving trend. Sample size may be increased to have more representations.

CONCLUSION

In almost every existing University in the world, STUDENTS must and should be the direct recipient of all services provided by the university. So it my opinion that FNU must comply with the above statement if we are to retain our marketability and sustainability.

LIMITATIONS

Sample size was very less because Fiji National University has more than two thousand students, we were unable to differentiate urban and rural populations including gender balance.

SCOPE FOR FURTHER RESEARCH

Fiji National University have lots of further research scope at its different campuses for improving facilities to attract international students.

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