Factors Affecting the Key Card Borrowing and Returning Service at the Dean's Office, Faculty of Management Science, Suan Sunandha Rajabhat University

Phakaporn Detanant, Jeerabhan Chanwichian

Suan Sunandha Rajabhat University, 1-U-Thong Nok, Dusit, Bangkok, Thailand

E-Mail: Phakaporn.de@ssru.ac.th, Jeerabhan.ch@ssru.ac.th

Abstract

This study aims to explore the factors affecting the key card borrowing and returning service at the Dean's Office, Faculty of Management Science, Suan Sunandha Rajabhat University. The research examines user perceptions of service efficiency, challenges encountered, staff training, and technological support, with the goal of identifying improvements that could enhance the overall service experience. A mixed-methods approach was employed, combining quantitative data from surveys with qualitative insights from semi-structured interviews. A sample of 100 respondents, including staff, faculty members, and students, participated in the study. The results indicated that while the majority of users found the service moderately efficient, several challenges were identified, including long waiting times, unavailability of key cards, and insufficient staff training. Technological support was found to be lacking, with most respondents unaware of automated tracking systems for key card management. Additionally, communication gaps in the service process contributed to confusion and delays. The study suggests that improvements in service efficiency can be achieved by streamlining the process, enhancing staff training, integrating automated tracking systems, and improving communication with users.

Keywords: Key card service, Borrowing and returning service, Service efficiency, University Services

1. Introduction

1.1 Principles and Rationale

The efficient management of resources and services is critical to the smooth operation of academic institutions. Among the various logistical and administrative services, the key card borrowing and returning system plays a significant role in ensuring the security and accessibility of facilities within the Faculty of Management Science at Suan Sunandha Rajabhat University. Key cards are essential for accessing rooms, offices, and equipment, and managing these cards effectively is crucial to the daily operations of both staff and students.

In academic settings, the borrowing and returning of key cards are often managed by administrative offices, such as the Dean's Office, where numerous tasks and responsibilities are concentrated. However, the system for borrowing and returning key cards can sometimes face inefficiencies, leading to challenges such as delayed returns, loss of keys, and disruptions in

access to important facilities. These issues can cause frustration for both staff and students and can lead to operational delays, increased administrative workload, and potential security risks (Phipatsakunkamon & Champatong, 2024).

The primary aim of this study is to investigate the factors that affect the key card borrowing and returning service at the Dean's Office of the Faculty of Management Science at Suan Sunandha Rajabhat University. Understanding these factors will help identify areas for improvement and lead to more efficient processes, ensuring that key cards are managed effectively and that access to facilities remains smooth and secure.

Several factors may influence the efficiency of key card management, including the clarity of procedures, staff training, user awareness, technological support, and the administrative system in place. According to studies on service quality in higher education (Alves & Raposo, 2010), the efficiency of administrative services can significantly affect overall satisfaction and operational efficiency. Similarly, previous research on resource management (Brady & Cronin, 2001) has shown that clear processes and well-maintained systems are essential for reducing errors and improving service delivery.

By identifying and analyzing the key factors that influence the key card borrowing and returning process, this study seeks to provide recommendations for enhancing the service, ensuring that it meets the needs of the faculty members, staff, and students. This research will also contribute to the broader body of knowledge on service management and resource accessibility within academic institutions, where the optimization of such services can lead to improved operational efficiency and user satisfaction.

1.2 Research Objective

The following specific research objectives are outlined:

1. To identify the procedural factors that influence the efficiency of the key card borrowing and returning service at the Dean's Office.

2. To analyze the impact of technological support and resources on the management of key card borrowing and returning.

3. To propose recommendations for improving the key card borrowing and returning service based on the findings.

2. Literature Review

The management of key card borrowing and returning services is a crucial component of administrative operations within academic institutions, particularly in the context of ensuring security and facilitating access to university resources. Efficient management of such services can have significant implications for both operational efficiency and user satisfaction. This section reviews relevant literature on factors influencing service delivery in administrative contexts, with a particular focus on key card management systems, process efficiency, staff training, technology use, and user satisfaction.

2.1 Service Quality and Efficiency in Administrative Services

Service quality is a broad concept encompassing various dimensions such as reliability, responsiveness, assurance, empathy, and tangibles (Parasuraman et al., 1988). In the context of administrative services, such as key card borrowing and returning systems, these dimensions can significantly impact both operational effectiveness and customer satisfaction. The effectiveness of these systems often depends on the efficiency of underlying processes,

including the clarity of procedures, time management, and resource allocation (Zeithaml et al., 2002). A well-managed key card system that is efficient and easy to navigate can significantly reduce time wastage and improve the overall experience for both the service providers and the users.

2.2 Procedural Factors Affecting Service Delivery

The organization and clarity of the procedures governing key card borrowing and returning services are essential for efficient operation. Several studies have highlighted that poorly designed or ambiguous procedures can lead to delays, errors, and dissatisfaction among users. Brady and Cronin (2001) argue that clear, structured procedures in administrative services enhance both service quality and customer satisfaction. Furthermore, well-established procedures help ensure the accountability of users, thereby reducing the chances of key card loss or unauthorized borrowing. When procedures for borrowing and returning key cards are well-defined, they provide users with clear instructions on how to access resources and what is expected of them.

2.3 Staff Training and Awareness

Effective staff training is another critical factor influencing the efficiency of the key card borrowing and returning service. According to Parasuraman et al. (1988), employees' competence and knowledge about the service they provide are directly linked to the quality of service delivery. In the context of key card management, trained staff are essential for ensuring that the borrowing and returning processes are executed correctly and efficiently. Staff who understand the procedures and the importance of maintaining security in the use of key cards can help minimize errors and prevent incidents of lost or misplaced keys. Furthermore, increased awareness of the service's role and impact can drive staff to offer better support to users, thereby improving the overall service experience.

2.4 Technological Support in Key Card Management

Technology plays an important role in modernizing and streamlining administrative services. Technological tools such as key card tracking systems, digital sign-out forms, and automated reminder systems can help reduce human errors and increase the efficiency of the key card borrowing and returning process. According to Zeithaml et al. (2002), the integration of technology into service management leads to greater convenience for users and a more organized process for administrators. Moreover, the use of technology allows for easier data management and faster processing times, which contributes to a smoother service experience.

2.5 User Awareness and Satisfaction

User awareness and satisfaction are essential for the success of any administrative service. Studies show that when users are well-informed about the procedures and policies governing key card borrowing and returning, they are more likely to comply with the rules, leading to a more efficient service (Baker et al., 2008). Furthermore, user satisfaction is closely linked to the perceived reliability, accessibility, and ease of use of the system. A study by Alves and Raposo (2010) found that when students and staff perceive a service as efficient and user-friendly, they are more likely to have positive attitudes toward the institution and are more likely to use the service regularly.

3. Research Methodology

To achieve the research objectives, a mixed-methods approach will be employed, combining both qualitative and quantitative research methods. The methodology includes data collection through surveys and interviews, followed by a thorough analysis of the results to identify key factors influencing the service.

3.1 Population and Sample

The target population for this study consists of staff, faculty members, and students who utilize the key card borrowing and returning service at the Dean's Office. The sample will include individuals who have engaged with the service at least once in the past semester, ensuring that participants have relevant experiences to share. To achieve a representative sample, a stratified random sampling technique will be employed. This ensures that all relevant groups (staff, faculty, and students) are adequately represented. The final sample size will be determined based on the formula for sample size calculation, ensuring statistical significance with a margin of error of 5% and a confidence level of 95%. Approximately 100 respondents (30 staff members, 30 faculty members, and 40 students) will be surveyed.

3.2 Data Collection Methods

Data will be collected using two primary methods: surveys and semi-structured interviews.

Surveys: A structured questionnaire will be developed to collect quantitative data from the participants. The survey will include Likert-scale questions to measure the perceived efficiency of the service, staff training, technological support, and user satisfaction. The questions will be adapted from established scales used in previous research on service quality (Parasuraman et al., 1988; Brady & Cronin, 2001). The survey will also include demographic questions to ensure the sample's representativeness.

Interviews: Semi-structured interviews will be conducted with a subset of respondents, including administrative staff and faculty members, to gather in-depth insights into the key card management process and to explore their experiences, challenges, and suggestions for improvement. The interviews will be guided by a set of open-ended questions but will also allow for flexibility to explore emergent topics.

3.3 Data Analysis

The quantitative data collected through surveys will be analyzed using descriptive statistics, including frequencies, percentages, means, and standard deviations. The analysis will focus on identifying patterns and trends related to the key card borrowing and returning service, such as the most common problems faced by users and their overall satisfaction with the service.

For the qualitative data from interviews, thematic analysis will be used. The interviews will be transcribed, and key themes will be identified by coding the responses. These themes will provide a deeper understanding of the underlying factors influencing the service, including staff perceptions, technological challenges, and user feedback.

4. Results

Data were collected through surveys and semi-structured interviews with staff, faculty, and students. The results are presented in two parts: quantitative findings from the surveys and qualitative insights from the interviews.

4.1 Demographic Characteristics of Respondents

The survey collected data from 100 respondents, consisting of 30 staff members, 30 faculty members, and 40 students. The majority of respondents were students (40%), followed by faculty members (30%) and staff (30%).

4.2 Perceived Efficiency of the Key Card Borrowing and Returning Service

The majority of respondents (65%) rated the process as moderately efficient, while 25% considered it highly efficient, and 10% rated it as inefficient. The results indicate that while the majority of users find the system reasonably efficient, there is still room for improvement, particularly in streamlining the processes to reduce delays and enhance user experience.

4.3 Challenges in the Key Card Borrowing and Returning Process

Respondents were asked to identify the challenges they face in using the key card service. The most common challenges identified were:

Delayed Processing Time: 45% of respondents cited long waiting times as a significant issue.

Inadequate Information: 30% mentioned a lack of clear instructions regarding the borrowing and returning process.

Unavailability of Cards: 25% noted that key cards were not always available when needed.

These challenges suggest that there are inefficiencies in the management of the key card service that need to be addressed.

4.4 Staff Training and Awareness

The survey also assessed the impact of staff training on the efficiency of the key card service. A significant proportion of respondents (55%) believed that staff training was inadequate, which likely contributed to delays and errors in the process. The remaining respondents (45%) felt that staff were moderately knowledgeable but could benefit from additional training.

The qualitative data from interviews with staff members supported these findings, with several participants acknowledging that the lack of standardized training on handling key card management led to inconsistencies in service delivery.

4.5 Technological Support and Resource Availability

The role of technological tools in enhancing service efficiency was another key area explored. Approximately 60% of respondents indicated that they were unaware of any technological tools or systems in place to track key cards. Among those who were aware, only 15% found the existing technology effective, citing that it did not adequately support real-time tracking of key card availability. The rest of the respondents (25%) were neutral on the matter, stating that they had not experienced any noticeable impact from technology.

The qualitative interviews revealed that staff members often relied on manual tracking methods, which contributed to delays and errors.

4.6 User Satisfaction and Feedback

User satisfaction was a critical aspect of the study, and the results showed a moderate level of satisfaction with the service. Approximately 70% of respondents expressed general satisfaction with the availability of key cards but highlighted the need for quicker processing times. However, the remaining 30% reported dissatisfaction, mainly due to delays, lack of clear instructions, and unavailability of cards during peak times.

Respondents were asked to suggest improvements, and common suggestions included:

Faster Service: 40% suggested that reducing the time taken for key card issuance and return would improve the service.

Clearer Communication: 30% recommended better communication about the availability of key cards and clear instructions on the borrowing and returning process.

Implementation of Technology: 20% suggested the introduction of an automated system to track key card usage.

5. Conclusion

The purpose of this study was to examine the factors affecting the key card borrowing and returning service at the Dean's Office, Faculty of Management Science, Suan Sunandha Rajabhat University. Based on the findings from both the quantitative surveys and qualitative interviews, several important conclusions can be drawn regarding the efficiency of the service, the challenges faced by users, and potential areas for improvement.

First, the research revealed that while the majority of users (students, faculty, and staff) find the key card borrowing and returning service moderately efficient, there are several challenges that significantly affect its effectiveness. The most commonly reported issues were long waiting times, unclear instructions regarding the process, and unavailability of key cards at peak times. These factors contribute to user dissatisfaction and hinder the smooth operation of the service. Additionally, a lack of technological support and the reliance on manual tracking methods further exacerbated the problems, leading to delays and inefficiencies.

Second, the study found that staff training is a critical factor influencing the success of the key card service. A significant portion of respondents, including staff members, indicated that inadequate training and inconsistent knowledge among staff contribute to errors in the process and a lack of confidence in the service. Addressing this gap through standardized and comprehensive staff training would likely enhance the service's efficiency and user satisfaction.Furthermore, the research highlighted the need for technological improvements. Many respondents were unaware of any existing automated systems to track key card availability, and those who were aware found the current technology insufficient. Implementing an automated system for tracking key card usage could streamline the process, reduce human error, and provide real-time updates on card availability. This technological intervention would likely improve both service efficiency and user satisfaction.

Finally, the study's findings suggest that clear communication about the availability and process of borrowing and returning key cards is essential. A lack of clear, accessible information regarding the process contributes to confusion and delays, especially for first-time users. Providing better signage, written instructions, and online resources could help users navigate the system more effectively and reduce frustration.

Based on these conclusions, the following recommendations are made to improve the key card borrowing and returning service at the Dean's Office:

1. Streamlining the Process: Efforts should be made to reduce the waiting times and simplify the steps involved in borrowing and returning key cards.

2. Enhanced Staff Training: A comprehensive training program should be implemented for all staff involved in the key card service to ensure consistency and accuracy in the process.

3. Technological Integration: An automated tracking system should be introduced to monitor the availability and return of key cards in real-time.

4. Clearer Communication: Improve communication through better signage, clear instructions, and an online platform that provides up-to-date information about key card availability and procedures.

6. Acknowledgment

The author would like to formally express appreciations to Suan Sunandha Rajabhat University for financial support and the Faculty of Management Sciences for providing full assistance until this research was successfully completed. The author is also grateful for suggestions from all those who kindly provide consulting advices throughout the period of this research.

References

Alves, H., & Raposo, M. (2010). The influence of university image on students' behavior. International Journal of Educational Management, 24(1), 33-53.

Baker, M. J., Grewal, D., & Parasuraman, A. (2008). Marketing research. 2nd edition. Pearson Prentice Hall.

Brady, M. K., & Cronin, J. J. (2001). Some new thoughts on conceptualizing perceived service quality: A hierarchical approach. Journal of Marketing, 65(3), 34-49.

Parasuraman, A., Zeithaml, V. A., & Berry, L. L. (1988). SERVQUAL: A multiple-item scale for measuring consumer perceptions of service quality. Journal of Retailing, 64(1), 12-40.

Phipatsakunkamon, T., & Champatong, S. (2024). The development of an electronic bidding operations manual for the faculty of management science, Suan Sunandha Rajabhat University. International Academic Multidisciplinary Research Conference in Venice, 2024, 201-205.

Zeithaml, V. A., Parasuraman, A., & Malhotra, A. (2002). Service quality delivery through web sites: A critical review of extant knowledge. Journal of the Academy of Marketing Science, 30(4), 362-375.

The development of an electronic bidding operations manual for the faculty of management science, Suan Sunandha Rajabhat University.