

Sustainability | Individual communication

IC - (20880) - STUDENTS' PERCEPTIONS OF THE PHYSICAL AND SOCIO-PHYSICAL ENVIRONMENT IN UNIVERSITY LIBRARY LEARNING SPACES: ASSOCIATIONS WITH EDUCATIONAL AND PSYCHOLOGICAL OUTCOMES

Daniel Raymond Mckay¹; Edward Edgerton²; Jim Mckechnie²; Amanda Simpson²; Ehsan Mesbahi³

1 - University of St. Andrews; 2 - University of the West of Scotland; 3 - Victoria University of Wellington

Background and objectives

In recent years there has been a substantial investment in the Scottish university estate. This investment has been accompanied by an increased use of 'co-design' approaches to learning space development. Such 'user-centred' approaches consider students as 'experts' who should be consulted in learning space design and evaluation. However, quantitative research on students' perceptions of the physical and socio-physical environment in their campus learning spaces has focused predominantly on classroom spaces and is methodologically flawed. The present study aimed to (i) develop a new, theoretically sound, and psychometrically tested measure of university students' library learning environment perceptions and (ii) explore associations between students' perceptions of their learning environment, educational outcomes, and psychological outcomes.

Process and methods (for empirical research)

A new and bespoke academic library learning space questionnaire was developed based on focus groups with students and instructors, established people-environment transaction theories, two literature reviews, and pilot feedback from students. The questionnaire subscales measured how often the learning environment matched students' Spatial, Acoustical/Privacy, Ambient, and Decisional Control (choice of congruent spaces) needs for both individual and collaborative learning. The questionnaire was distributed to students across three academic library spaces at a Scottish, multi-campus and multi-geographic, university.

Main results (or main arguments in the case of critical reviews)

Measurement model analyses using structural equation modelling revealed that the questionnaire had good internal consistency reliability and construct validity for both individual (N=418) and collaborative learning (N=307). Structural model analyses found that students' perceptions of the environment were associated with a range of educational and psychological outcomes when using academic library learning spaces for individual and collaborative learning, including, academic stress, learning task engagement, and performance/productivity.

Implications for research and practice/policy | Importance and originality of the contribution

The significant associations suggest that positive perceptions of the library environment were associated with better outcomes. To enhance sustainability through future-proofing library learning spaces, designers should aim to involve students in the design and evaluation process and increase flexibility/choice of learning activity congruent spaces.

Palavras-chave : university libraries, learning space perceptions, bespoke questionnaire, educational and psychological outcomes