



## **LIBRARY SERVICES INCLUSIVITY AND INITIATIVES: THEIR KEY ROLES ON USERS' ENGAGEMENT**

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<https://doi.org/10.5281/zenodo.19448060>

### **ABSTRACT**

Academic library services are essential in supporting the information, research, and learning needs of students. However, despite the growing emphasis on inclusivity and engagement, there is a lack of empirical research that comprehensively assess the combined effects of library services inclusivity and initiatives on user engagement. This highlights the need for integrative research that assess how these factors collectively influence user engagement behaviors in academic libraries. This study determined if inclusive library services and strategic library initiatives affect student engagement at a state university in Northern Mindanao. Data were collected from 349 randomly selected students through a researcher-made questionnaire that was validated by experts and tested for reliability. Results showed that students rated library service inclusivity as generally high with reference services receiving the highest rating reflecting strong librarian support and responsiveness. Library initiatives were also rated generally as high with online learning resources receiving the highest rating reflecting a strong level of interaction and reliance on library digital resources to support their academic and research needs. User engagement similarly received high ratings especially in resources and services utilization, suggesting that students frequently use both the library's physical and digital services. Regression analysis confirmed that inclusive services and effective initiatives significantly influence user engagement, meaning that accessible, responsive, and well-designed library services help boost student participation and usage. The study concludes that strong inclusivity and strategic initiatives greatly enhance user engagement and recommends further improving digital access, expanding information literacy programs, and upgrading technological infrastructure to support deeper user involvement.

**Keywords:** *library services inclusivity, library initiatives, user engagement, information literacy, academic libraries*

## INTRODUCTION

Academic library services are important in supporting students' research and information needs. In today's diverse society, libraries must continue to adapt the evolving needs of the users. Inclusivity not just go beyond providing physical access, this also involves by offering resources and services that respond to the specific needs of different groups so that the users feel welcomed, respected, and valued. CHED Memorandum Order No. 22, Series of 2021, requires libraries to provide facilities for persons with disabilities, including ramps and accessible restrooms. This is to ensure that equal access to information are given to the students. Inclusivity also supports the UN's Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) by making sure that everyone has equal access to information, lifelong learning, and lowering barriers for specific groups (Ellis and Becker 2025). Inclusivity also ensures that individuals regardless of their background, abilities, or needs have equal opportunities to access the resources and services (Manwiller, 2024).

Library initiatives are likewise essential in strengthening research and learning within the institutions. These initiatives include various library events, programs, and services designed to improve access to information, develop research and information literacy skills. Efforts such as expanding digital platforms and implementing inclusive programs demonstrate how libraries respond to the evolving needs of the users (Yap & Kamilova, 2020). Adopting user-centered innovative approaches and integrating technology, academic libraries go beyond traditional roles to provide flexible, inclusive, and lifelong learning opportunities (Peñaflor & Labangon, 2021).

User engagement in academic libraries refers to the extent which users actively utilize the library's services and resources. Sharma (2024) explains that engagement can be seen through users' engagement in library activities like participation in library events and their interaction with both digital resources and physical collections. This also includes activities such as conducting research, consulting librarians, for assistance, and joining academic programs organized by the library. When users participate in these activities, they can further develop their information literacy skills and recognize the role of the library as an important partner in the academic learning process (Muti and Geroy, 2025).

The primary objective of this study is to assess the roles of library service inclusivity and initiatives as independent variables that may influence user engagement, which serves as the dependent variable within the library. This approach seeks to develop a deeper understanding of how academic libraries create a welcoming, interactive, and user-centered environment that promotes meaningful engagement with the library resources and services. Despite the growing emphasis on inclusivity and engagement, many of the existing literature discusses library service inclusivity, library initiatives, and user engagement as separate topics.

This create a gap in understanding how these aspects work together to influence user experiences. Studies that assess combined impact of inclusive services, targeted initiatives, and user engagement in academic libraries remain limited. For this reason, it is important to evaluate how libraries continue to provide inclusive facilities, improve and expand digital platforms, and implement user-centered programs. Evaluating how these aspects are connected can help libraries ensure that their, services, polices, and initiatives remain responsive to the changing needs of the users. It also aligns with the standard set by the Commission on Higher Education (CHED) and supports the United Nations Sustainable Development Goals, particularly SDG 4 (Quality Education) and SDG 10 (Reduced Inequalities).

Thus, this study relies on Social Inclusion Theory and Diffusion of Innovations to provide a strong theoretical foundation in the assessment of the relationship between library services inclusivity and initiative to the users' engagement. Social Inclusion Theory (Barron, 2015) highlights the importance of equitable access, representation, and participation in the activities. In academic libraries, this theory emphasizes that all users can access library services and participate in programs regardless of their background, abilities, or status. Nevius (2025) further explains that inclusive services encourage active participation and help build a strong sense of belongingness. Libraries that ensure services are offered are accessible and welcoming to everyone, students are more likely to engage with available resources and services.

The Diffusion of Innovations Theory, introduced by Rogers in 2003 explain how new ideas, services, and technologies are developed and adopted by the library users. In library setting, this theory provides useful framework for understanding how library initiatives such as information literacy programs, online learning tools, and other library services encourage library users to adopt new technologies. Through these initiatives, libraries can support users in adopting innovative tools that improve academic and research experiences. These theories also highlight the importance of inclusive services and show how well-planned initiatives can maintain user engagement.

## Research Questions

1. What is the participants' assessment of the Library Services Inclusivity in terms of:
  - 1.1. Access Services;
  - 1.2. Facility Services;
  - 1.3. Reference Services; and
  - 1.4. Information Services?
2. What is the participants' assessment of the library initiatives in terms of:
  - 2.1. Information Literacy Programs; and
  - 2.2. Online Learning Resources?
3. What is the participants' library engagement considering:
  - 3.1. Resources and Services Utilization;
  - 3.2. Participation in Library Events; and
  - 3.3. Social Media Interaction?

4. Do the participants' assessment of the Library Services Inclusivity and Initiatives significantly influence their engagement?

## METHODOLOGY

This study employed a descriptive correlational research design. According Putri et al. (2025), correlational design is appropriate when the researcher aims to describe the characteristics of variables and examine the relationships among them without manipulating any of the variables. This design allows for the observation and analysis of naturally occurring patterns and associations among variables in real-world settings. In the present study, the design enabled the researcher to measure library services, inclusivity, initiatives, and users' engagement, and to determine the extent to which variations in the independent variables are associated with differences in the dependent variable.

The participants of the study were the selected students of a state university in Northern Mindanao, focusing on students who were enrolled in the first semester of Academic Year 2025-2026. A sample size total of 360 students from the different colleges were considered as the sample size taken from the whole population of 3,657 using the Taro Yamane formula. However, after data cleaning, there were outliers which were taken out so the final sample size is 349.

This study utilized a researcher-made questionnaire that incorporated elements from the LibQUAL+ instrument developed by the Association of Research Libraries (2003) to gather data. It also incorporated elements from the university's System Wide Library Manual 2020 edition and CHED Memorandum Order (CMO) No. 22 Series of 2021 which outline minimum requirements for academic library facilities, services, programs, staffing, and resource provision in higher education institutions. The questionnaire consists of two parts. The first part addressed the participants' assessment of library services inclusivity in terms of access services, facility services, reference services, and information services. The second part addressed the participants' assessment of library initiatives in term of information literacy programs and online learning resources. Finally, the third part assessed the level of participants' engagement in the library, specifically in terms of resources and services utilization, participation in programs, and social media interaction.

To establish the validity of the instrument, its contents were evaluated by an expert in the field and the members of the panel. Their comments and suggestions were considered in finalizing the questionnaire. To establish the instrument's reliability, the researcher conducted a pilot test to students in another school. The Cronbach Alpha Coefficient was used to determine the reliability of the instrument. Results of the reliability analysis showed that the Library Services Inclusivity in terms of Access Services obtained a Cronbach alpha value of 0.905; Facility Services got 0.895; Reference Services obtained 0.821; and Information Services obtained a Cronbach alpha value of 0.877. The Library Initiatives in terms of Information Literacy Programs, obtained a Cronbach alpha value of 0.849 and Online Resources, obtained 0.869; while the Users' Engagement considering the Resources and Services Utilization obtained 0.832. Participation in Programs got

0.865 and Social Media Interaction got 0.826. According to Creswell (2018), for a survey to be considered reliable, its Cronbach's Alpha should be 0.70 or higher, which is deemed acceptable for research purposes. Since the values were above the acceptable value, the instruments were reliable.

For data interpretation, the study used the prescribed scoring procedure with five descriptive ranges: 4.51-5.00 (Very High), 3.51-4.50 (High), 2.51-3.50 (Moderate), 1.51-2.50 (Low) and 1.00-1.50 (Very Low). The following statistical tools were used in this study to organize and analyze the findings. Problem 1, 2 and 3 employed descriptive statistics such as frequency, percentage, mean and standard deviations to describe the participants' assessment of library services inclusivity, library initiatives and users' engagement. Problem 4 employed regression analysis to ascertain the influence of participants' assessment of the library services inclusivity and initiatives on their engagement after ensuring that the data set approximated the normal distribution.

## RESULTS

**Research Question 1.** What is the participants' assessment of the library services inclusivity in terms of: Access Services; Facility Services; Reference Services; and Information Services?

**Table 1 Summary Table of Assessment of the Library Services Inclusivity**

<b>Dimensions of Library Services</b>	<b>Mean</b>	<b>Interpretation</b>	<b>SD</b>
Access Services	4.29	High	0.55
Facility Services	4.31	High	0.57
Reference Services	4.39	High	0.56
Information Services	4.33	High	0.52
<b>Overall Library Services</b>	<b>4.33</b>	<b>High</b>	<b>0.49</b>

**Research Question 2.** What is the participants' assessment of the library initiatives in terms of Information Literacy Programs and Online Learning Resources?

**Table 2 Summary Table of Assessment of the Library Initiatives**

<b>Dimensions of Library Initiatives</b>	<b>Mean</b>	<b>Interpretation</b>	<b>SD</b>
Information Literacy Programs	4.26	High	0.55
Online Learning Resources	4.29	High	0.56
<b>Overall Library Initiatives</b>	<b>4.27</b>	<b>High</b>	<b>0.52</b>

**Research Question 3.** What is the participants' engagement considering: Resources and Services Utilization; Participation in Library Events; and Social Media Interaction?

**Table 3 Summary Table of Participants' Engagement**

Dimensions of Engagement	Mean	Interpretation	SD
Resources and Services Utilization	4.22	High	0.62
Participation in Library Events	3.99	High	0.71
Social Media Interaction	4.14	High	0.73
<b>Overall Engagement</b>	<b>4.12</b>	<b>High</b>	<b>0.59</b>

**Research Question 4.** Do the participants' assessment of the Library Services Inclusivity and Initiatives significantly influence their engagement?

*Ho<sub>1</sub>: The participants' assessment of the Library Services Inclusivity and Initiatives do not significantly influence their library engagement.*

*Ho<sub>2</sub>: The participants' assessment of the Library Services Inclusivity does not significantly influence their library engagement.*

*Ho<sub>3</sub>: The participants' assessment of the Initiatives does not significantly influence their library engagement.*

**Table 4 Regression Analysis of the Influence of Participants' Assessment of Library Services Inclusivity and Initiatives on their Engagement**

	Unstandardized Coefficients		Standardized Coefficients	T	Sig.
	B	Std. Error	Beta		
(Constant)	.692	.211		3.2	.001
Inclusivity	.175	.082	.145	2.13*	.034
Initiatives	.624	.077	.556	8.15**	.000

Model Summary

R = .670 R<sup>2</sup> = .460 Adjusted R<sup>2</sup> = .458 F(2,346) = 148.22 p = .000

\*\* significant at 0.01 level;

\*significant at 0.05 level

## DISCUSSION

Table 1 presents the summary table of participants' assessment of the library services inclusivity. The data show that the participants rated library services inclusivity as high with overall mean of 4.33. Among the specific services in the library that offers inclusivity, Reference Services got the highest mean rating of 4.39 and Access Services got the lowest mean (M = 4.29), but still both are interpreted as High.

Table 2 presents the summary table of participants' assessment of the library initiatives. The data show that the participants rated the library initiatives as high with overall mean of 4.27. Among the two dimensions of library initiatives, online learning resources received a slightly higher mean of 4.29 while information literacy programs received a mean of 4.26.

Table 3 presents the summary of participants' engagement across the three dimensions. The data shows that the participants' engagement was generally rated as High with overall mean of 4.12. Among the three dimensions, resources and services utilization receives the highest mean of 4.22. The next higher rated was social media interaction which received a mean of 4.14. The lowest mean that is still interpreted as high was participation in library events which received a mean of 3.99.

Table 4 presents the regression analysis of the influence of participants' assessment of library services inclusivity and initiatives on their engagement. Data reveal that the whole model is significant [ $F(3,346)=148.22$ ,  $p=.000$ ]. Thus, the null hypothesis is rejected. Furthermore, 46 percent of the variability in their engagement as being accounted for by a combination of inclusivity and initiatives ( $R^2 = .460$ ).

In relation to the specific predictors, findings reveal that the participants' assessment of the library initiatives has the highest influence on their engagement, indicating that for every unit increase in the library initiatives, there is a corresponding .624 increase in their engagement ( $B=.624$ ,  $t=8.15$ ,  $p=.000$ ). Thus,  $H_{o2}$  is rejected. This is followed by inclusivity, with the findings indicating that there is a .175mincrease in their engagement for every unit increase in the library services inclusivity ( $B= .175$ ,  $t=2.14$ ,  $p=.034$ ). Thus,  $H_{o3}$  is rejected.

## Conclusions

The library illustrates a significant level of inclusivity by providing equitable access to resources, facilities, and services that address the diverse needs of each student. These inclusive practices that was supported by competent and responsive library staff, help to foster a very welcoming environment that promotes user satisfaction and engagement. The library initiatives, such as information literacy programs and online learning resources, play an important role in improving students' academic competency, digital literacy, and information-seeking behavior.

Higher levels of students' engagement with the library indicate frequent utilization of the resources, active participation in every library program, and consistent interaction through library social media platforms. Furthermore, the positive and significant influence of inclusivity and library initiatives on the students' engagement highlights the importance of maintaining user-centered, equitable, and adaptive library policies to foster a dynamic, inclusive, and sustainable learning environment.

The findings correspond with Social Inclusion Theory and Diffusion of Innovations Theory, which support the significant relationship between library services inclusivity and user engagement. The study demonstrates a positive relationship between library services inclusivity, library initiatives, and user engagement. This supports the idea that when users feel accommodated, valued, and included, they are more likely to actively utilize library resources and participate in library programs. Collectively, these theories support the study's conclusion by illustrating that inclusivity foster engagement, while innovation

promotes participation, thereby affirming the essential function of inclusive services and initiatives in enhancing user engagement in academic libraries.

## **Recommendations**

The following recommendations are drawn based on the findings of the study: The University Administration and the Office of the Library Services can increase the number of computer units, improve the internet connection, and regularly upgrade the hardware and software used in the library. These can help students who heavily dependent on the library's technology for their research and online classes. The Office of the Library Services can further enhance the inclusive library practices by providing more assistive technologies and accessible furniture, and more advanced and specific information literacy training for the students, particularly the online-based ones, in order to further enhance the library initiatives. The library can improve its presence in the social media by regularly posting updates and information in the library's accounts in order to encourage two-way communication and engagement with the students. Future researchers can further improve the library's digital platforms by improving the ease of access of the students, despite the high ratings of the library's access services and online resources.

## **Compliance with Ethical Standards**

Ethical clearance was first obtained from the Lourdes College Research Ethics Committee to ensure that the study was conducted in accordance with the ethical guidelines for research. A formal letter addressed to the University Chancellor Permission to conduct the study was requested through a formal letter. Informed consent was also obtained from all participants prior to data collection following the ethical principles of respect for persons, beneficence, and justice as stipulated in the Belmont report. The participants were informed about the purpose of the study and their voluntary participation, including their right to refuse or withdraw from the study at any time without penalty. Confidentiality of responses and protection of personal information were ensured in accordance with Republic Act No. 10173, otherwise known as the Data Privacy Act of 2012. After obtaining necessary approvals and consent, the researcher administered the survey questionnaire and explained the purpose of the study to the participants to ensure clarity and transparency throughout the data collection process.

## **Acknowledgments**

This study would not have been possible without the guidance, support, and encouragement of many individuals who generously shared their time, knowledge, and expertise throughout its preparation and completion. The researcher extends sincere appreciation to the thesis adviser and panel members for their constructive criticism, valuable suggestions, and expertise, which greatly contributed to the successful development of this study. Appreciation is also extended to the university officials, faculty, and staff who granted permission and assistance during the research process. The researcher is especially thankful to the research participants and all others who shared their time and knowledge, providing invaluable cooperation and input. Above all, the



researcher is deeply grateful to family and friends for their unwavering encouragement, understanding, and support throughout the completion of this study.

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### APA Citation:

Bactol, M. S., & Acedera, A. P. (2026). LIBRARY SERVICES INCLUSIVITY AND INITIATIVES: THEIR KEY ROLES ON USERS' ENGAGEMENT. *Ignatian International Journal for Multidisciplinary Research*, 4(4), 1–9. <https://doi.org/10.5281/zenodo.19448060>

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