Association des Directeurs
& personnels de direction
des Bibliothèques Universitaires
et de la Documentation

Study on european indicators

Situation of french academic libraries compared to the other european countries over the 2013-2016 period

SUMMARY

As we are facing an evolution in research and new models of teaching and learning, a strong increase in student numbers is evident everywhere in Europe. This trend will most probably continue in the coming years, increasing the pressure on academic libraries. Facing a particularly strong situation in increased student numbers, the French HER libraries Executives association (ADBU) took the initiative to launch a European comparative study on Key and Performance indicators in Academic Libraries over the 2013-2016 period.

The study covered library buildings and equipment, space and seats per student, opening days and hours, usage levels, library services, user training, staff per student / documentary budgets / total expenditure, staff training, documentation loans / consultation / downloads, in both relative and absolute value.

These initial findings should be updated in the years to come (and as of 2017), in collaboration with our European partners, providing indicators that are more coherent between countries, or enriched, notably to try to better assess the contribution made by libraries to student success and research performance.

The situation of French university libraries compared to other European countries over the period 2013-2016

An increase in student numbers has been observed across Europe and has been particularly strong in France (+ 8.8% over 2013-2016). This trend should continue in the coming years and will increase the pressure on resources in French university libraries.

Regarding " libraries as spaces", France benefited from building programmes until 2015. This had a positive impact on indicators relating to physical space, e.g. circulation space per student, number of seats per student but regressed in 2016 due to the proportionately higher increase of student numbers in France.

Taking into account known increases in absolute value, the relative lag or falling behind of France in comparison with the wider European average (ie the average of the indicators based on the 13 countries covered by this study) is particularly evident with regard to library budgets (total expenditure, staff costs and acquisitions expenditure per student).

In terms of library staff (FTE per student), weekly opening hours and annual opening days (these two indicators being obviously linked), French libraries are clearly falling behind the European situation.

On this last point, the national HER French "Plan Bibliothèques ouvertes" ("Open Libraries" programme) should bear fruit as of 2017 or 2018, see https://adbu.fr/plan-bibliotheques-ouvertes-21-projets-detablissements-retenus/

One of the characteristics of the French situation also lies in the fact that in France *the documentary (acquisitions) expenditure, in relation to staff costs or to the total expenditure of the institution*, is lower than elsewhere - reasons for which have not yet

not been fully analysed (but probably linked to the differences between the compared countries (e.g. in publishing, labour costs and job structures).

France, on the other hand, shows a proportionally more favourable situation, albeit with room for improvement, in user training per student and library staff lifelong training by FTE.

France is following obvious and globally shared trends in terms of the evolution of use: a sharp decrease in student borrowing, along with a very strong increase in the usage of electronic resources per student, both eBooks and eJournals.

Nevertheless, the French situation remains below the European average in certain usage indicators: footfall (visits to the library) per student (decrease over the period studied in France, but with a rebound observed in 2017), document lending per student, e-reading per student (these trends are also visible in LIBQUAL surveys).

This observation can certainly be explained by the low integration of libraries into the educational curricula of French HER institutions. This situation, despite some strengthening, remains clearly less common in France than in other European countries. The low use, lower than elsewhere, that French students make of electronic resources could be explained by the fact that they are, for the most part, written in English and intended for research.

These initial observations should be updated in the coming years (and as soon as 2017), in consultation with our European partners, with more coherent indicators between countries, or enriched, in particular to try to better assess the contributions made by libraries to student academic success or research performance.

Legend :

French situation	Above European average	Below European average	At the same level as the European average

Trends over the 2013-2016 period : ↗Rise ↗↗Strong rise ↘Drop ↘↘Strong drop →Stability

ST = student ; AS = Academic staff

Values and evolutions	France	Average for the countries of the study (13)	Germany	United Kingdom
Target audience of the libraries				
D0. Population	66 million ↗+1,8%	Total : 327 million ↗+1,6%	82 million ↗+2,1%	66 million ↗+2,3%
D1. Students	1,7 million ↗+ 8,8%	Total : > 9 million ↗ (NC 3 countries)	2,4 million ↗+7,8%	1,9 million ↗+1,1%
I0. Percentage of students in the population	2,5% ↗+ 6,9%	2,9% (NC 3 countries) ↗+2,5%	3% ↗+ 5,6%	3% →-0,5%
Physical libraries				
I1. Gross floor area per student	0,45 m2 / ST ↗+5,6%	0,46 m2 / ST →+0,1%	0,42 m2 / ST →-0,4%	NC
I2. Nb of students per seat	10,1 ST / seat ↘- 3,1%	13,5 ST / seat →+0,1%	19 ST / seat ↘-4,5%	9,7 ST / seat ↘-5,4%
D15. Opening hours per week	59 h / week (lib. > 100 seats) →+0,8%	67,5 h / week ↗+7,7%	70 h / week + ↗+2,3%	NC
D16. Opening days per year	235 d / year (lib. > 100 seats) ↘-1,1%	266 d / year →+0,1%	290 d / year ↗+1,5%	NC
Library human resources				
I3. Staff (FTE) / 1000 students	3,8 FTE / 1000 ST. ↘-6%	5,0 FTE / 1000 ST ↘-5,3%	4,9 FTE / 1000 ST →-0,6%	5,1 FTE / 1000 ST →+0,2%
I20. Nb of training days / year/ member of staff (FTE)	3 d / year / FTE ↗+4,6%	2,8 d / year / FTE ↘-8,5%	2,5 d / year / FTE →-0,6%	NC

Values and evolutions	France	Average for the countries of the study (13)	Germany	United Kingdom
Library expenditure				
I13. Total expenditure / student	272 € / ST ➘-5,3%	503 € / ST ➚+1,3 (except CH)	403 € / ST ➘-1,1%	450 € / ST ➚+3,7%
I16 Staff expenditure / student	178 € / ST ➘-4,2%	232 € / ST ➙-0,7% (except CH)	230 € / ST ➙+0,3%	202 € / ST ➚+2,7%
I17. Information expenditure per FTE user (ST+AS)	62 € / (ST + AS) ➘-5%	138 € / (ST + AS) ➚➚10% (except CH)	127 € / (ST + AS) ➘-2,4%	175 € / (ST + AS) ➚+5,4%
I18. % Information expenditure / total expenditure	24% ➙	31% ➘-2,2%	33% ➘-1,2%	42% ➚+2%
I25. Information expenditure / library staff expenditure	0,37 ➘-1,2%	0,61 ➚+6%	0,58 ➘-2,6%	0,94 ➚+3%
I19. % Information expenditure for electronic resources	62% ➚➚+17%	73% ➚➚+10,3%	59% ➚➚+28,2%	NC
I21. % Budgets excluding institutions or Ministry	5,6% ➙-0,3%	15% ➙-0,7%	8,7% ➘-7,7%	8% ➘-17,5%
Physical use				
I4. Nb of visits / year / student	38,5 visits / year / ST ➘-7,2%	47,9 visits / year / ST ➚+12,2%	39,7 visits / year / ST ➘-2,8%	60,3 visits / year / ST ➘-1,4%
I8. Nb of physical loans / year / student	6,5 loans / year / ST ➘➘-12,6%	11,6 loans / year / ST ➘➘-16,1%	13,7 loans / year / ST ➘➘-19,6%	11,9 loans / year / ST ➘➘-23,9%
Electronic use				
I9. Article dowloads from electronic journals / year / (ST+AS)	28,9 articles / year / **(ST+AS)** ➚+23%	70,7 articles / year / **(ST+AS)** ➚➚+16,7%	30,6 articles / year / **(ST+AS)** ➚➚+29%	116,5 articles / year / **(ST+AS)** ➚➚+10,8%

Values and evolutions	France	Average for the countries of the study (13)	Germany	United Kingdom
I10. Total use of Ebooks / year / (ST+AS)	17,5 Ebooks / year **(ST+AS)** ⬈⬈+194%	51 Ebooks / year / **(ST+AS)** ⬈⬈+53,7%	29,6 Ebooks / year / **(ST+AS)** ⬈⬈+49,6%	131,7 Ebooks / year / **(ST+AC)** (sections) ⬈⬈+37,7%
Users training courses				
I6. % of students attending training courses	24% ⬈⬈+26,4%	29% ⬈⬈+11,6%	22% ⬊-7,5%	NC
I7. Nb of hours of training courses / 10 students	0,43 h ⬈⬈36,4%	0,34 h ⬈+7%	0,22 h ➡-0,8%	0,55 h ⬈+3,7%