

## STUDENTS' SATISFACTION AND QUALITY IN LIBRARY SERVICES – A CASE STUDY

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### ABSTRACT

*The purpose of this paper is to explore the perception of the student users of Library in a private academic institution in the United Arab Emirates, Middle East. A questionnaire with a 5-point Likert-Type scale was used to obtain feedback from students (users) about the library services. All the students who visited the library during the two week- data collection period were requested to partake in the survey. A total of 109 students from different study programs provided the requested data. The questionnaire generated data on several different aspects of the library service. Data analysis was done using percentage and frequency counts. Mean, standard deviation, factor grouping and ANOVA were also applied using SPSS. The results of the study revealed that the respondents were highly satisfied with the library services (mean score of 4.0), followed by the library facilities (mean score of 3.9). The aim of this study is to encourage the library professionals to be involved in user satisfaction surveys, improvement processes, and to focus on delivering quality service to merit the trademark of a quality library. The concept of service quality assessment of a small private university using this methodology can be used as a guide for other academic libraries that are interested in offering quality services.*

**Keywords:** User satisfaction, Feedback survey, Academic, Quality, Library services.

**Library of Congress Classification Number:** Z711

### 1. INTRODUCTION

Service quality has been a strategic issue in management. Satisfying the user needs and providing quality service is the key element for the success of any organisation. To stay competitive in a global environment, it is essential for business enterprises to satisfy their customer needs and view customer-satisfaction as a core business value. Similarly non-commercial organisations also believe in customer-satisfaction and customer focused results. Library is a service profession providing access to information and related resources to the users. (Gupta and Ashok, 2002). The users may range from students, non-teaching staff or teaching faculty. User satisfaction is studied with the analysis of a feedback survey to identify services gaps and areas where improvement is needed.

University libraries have become competitive and are facing challenges to obtain quality management and quality services. Therefore, "quality is an ongoing process where the user is a key determinant" (Thapisa and Gamini, 1999). Evaluating and satisfying users' needs are the main objective of the libraries and library professionals. Service quality is the extent to which a service meets user needs. With the proliferation of learning resources, both print and electronic, it has been a threatening role for the libraries to manage and maintain the quality of resources; to deliver the right resources; to extend

quality service, and to meet the satisfaction level of the users. In this study, the library actively seeks student feedback on its support services and uses this feedback to identify services gaps and areas where improvement is needed. This paper attempts to explore the library's performance on services and facilities by measuring the users' satisfaction level. The paper also attempts to compare the differences on satisfaction level among respondents of different Colleges.

## **2. LITERATURE REVIEW**

Amitha S. Pradhan and Neela J Deshpande, (2009) in their paper have emphasized the need of quality services to be offered in the Library and Information Center, while catering the information needs of the users. Information audit is the best tool selected to measure the effectiveness of the services which automatically leads to quality. The authors have chosen case study method to prove the performance of information audit. The inferences gathered are supporting the need of information audit to enhance the quality of services in any library and information center.

Jamali and Tooranloo (2009) performed a research among the students of Ferdowsi University, Iran. Their aim was to prioritize the library service quality indicators from the student's point of view using the Fuzzy logic tool. It also aims to identify the main indicators that help users satisfaction and consequently, the best budget allocation by library managers.

Zabed Ahmed and Mohammed Zahid Hossain Sheob (2009) reported the service quality of Dhaka University Library (DUL), a premier public university library in Bangladesh, from the users' point of view. A survey was conducted among, faculty, graduate and undergraduate students of DUL using modified version of SERVQUAL. The gap differences between users' expected and perceived services were calculated. The concept of zone of tolerance was applied to see which items of service quality equalize, exceed or fall short of user perception. The study analyzed the desired service expectations of the users. Finally, the dimensions of service quality were determined through exploratory factor analysis. The results of the study showed that DUL services are lagging far behind from what is expected by its users. The results of the zone of tolerance showed that most of the items of service quality are not within the range of tolerance. A number of users' desired expectations for the service quality are identified. The results obtained through exploratory factor analysis suggest that University library service consists of four dimensions which are different from SERVQUAL's original dimensions.

Kachoka and Hoskins (2009) contend that LibQUAL+ instrument was used to assess the students' perceptions and expectations of the quality of service. The minimum expectation of service that the students would accept was also examined. Using a self-administered questionnaire and an interview schedule it was found that Chancellor College Library did not perform well in all the LibQUAL dimensions of service quality namely: affect of service, library as place and information control. Undergraduate students of the Chancellor college had higher expectations of service quality than the perceived quality of service both for desired expectations and minimum expectations leading to negative adequacy and superiority gaps.

Kassim, N. A (2009) reported a quantitative study that aimed to evaluate the library's performance by measuring the users' satisfaction with a) library services, and b) infrastructure / space provided by an

academic library in Malaysia. The results showed significant differences on the satisfaction on services, and infrastructure, among the respondents of three faculties. The concept of service quality has been used interchangeably with customer satisfaction.

Sahu (2006) mentions that competition for resources, increasing prospects of users, growing complexity of information provision from a range of new suppliers/providers and rising cost of information carriers have contributed to libraries having to justify their role and value.

### 3. OBJECTIVE

The objective of this study is:

- 1) to assess students' level of satisfaction regarding services and facilities and
- 2) to compare the differences on satisfaction level of library services and facilities among respondents of different Colleges.

Based on the objectives, the following hypotheses were formulated:

**Hypothesis 1 :** There is no relationship between the satisfaction on library services on overall quality of the library.

**Hypothesis 2:** There is no relationship between the students' satisfaction level of environment, space and facilities on overall quality of the library.

**Hypothesis 3:** There is no difference in satisfaction levels among respondents of different Colleges.

### 4. METHODOLOGY

A questionnaire with a 5-point Likert-Type scale was used to obtain student feedback about the library services. The respondents were also requested to make written comments on the quality of library service. The survey was conducted in the library in April 2012. All the students who visited the library during the two week- data collection period were requested to join in the survey. A total of 109 students from different study programs provided the requested data.

### 5. FINDINGS

The questionnaire generated data on several different aspects of the library service. In the following pages, we summarize the results and highlight some of the main points emerging from the data analysis.

#### 5.1 Background of the students

Data presented in Table 1 shows that majority (63.3 percent) of the survey participants were male students and 36.7 percent of them were female. In terms of their program of study, little more than two-fifth (40 percent) of the students were from *College of Engineering* from both the programs (CSE & EEE) followed by 30 percent from *College of Business*, 8 percent from *College of Computing* and seven percent from *Interior Design department*. It is encouraging to note that the participation of

students have increased in number of statistics due to the implementation of new programs of *MBA*, *Law* and *Education*. Participation of MBA students shows 3.6 percent, Law students are 2.7 percent, and the Education students are 4.5 percent. *Foundation* students participated showing a score of 2.7 percent.

**Table 1: Background of the students who participated in the survey**

Background	Percentage
<b>Gender</b>	
Male	63.3
Female	36.7
<b>Program (College/Department)</b>	
BBA (College of Business Studies)	30.2
CIS (College of Computing)	8.2
CSE (College of Engineering and Applied Sciences)	5.5
EEE (College of Engineering and Applied Sciences)	34.8
ID (Department of Interior Design)	7.3
MBA	3.6
Law	2.7
Education	4.5
Foundation	2.7
<b>Frequency of visiting library</b>	
Everyday	42.5
Often	27.5
Sometimes	27.5
Rarely	2.5
<b>Total number of respondents</b>	<b>109</b>

Data analysis on frequency of visiting library shows that 42.2 percent students (46 out of 109) visit library 'everyday' and about twenty seven percent (30/109) stated 'often' while the equal percent said they visit library 'sometimes'. About 2.5 percent students mentioned that they visited the library 'rarely'.

**Table 2a. Frequency of library visits (gender analysis)**

Frequency of Visit to Library	Male	Female	Total
Everyday	26	20	46
Often	14	16	30
Sometimes	26	4	30
Rarely	3	0	3
Total	69	40	109

A gender analysis (as shown in Table 2a.) of the data revealed that male students were somewhat more likely to visit the library on daily basis (56 percent) as compared to female students (43 percent). No major difference was observed by frequency of visiting library when data was analysed by colleges.

**Table 2b. Frequency of library visits (program-wise gender analysis)**

Gender	BBA	CIS	CSE	EEE	ID	MBA	LAW	EDU	FND
Male	20	2	6	19	7	4	3	5	3
Female	13	7	0	19	1	0	0	0	0
Total	33	9	6	38	8	4	3	5	3

Program-wise gender analysis of the respondents (as shown in Table 2b) indicates that male students have outnumbered the female students in participation of survey in all the programs. Out of 33 students from college of business, 20 were male and 13 were female. While in the college of engineering, 25 were male and 19 were female participants . However it was reverse in case of college of computing as most of the respondents from CIS program 7 were female students and only 2 were male respondents. In case of department of interior design out of eight respondents seven were male and one was a female. In case of MBA, Law, Education and Foundation programs, the respondents were only male students. Four MBA students, 3 Law students, 5 Education students and 3 Foundation students participated in the survey respectively.

### 5.2 Students' perception about the library resources and services

Students were asked to express their opinion on seven statements related to library and its services by checking one of the following response categories: 'Strongly Agree', 'Agree', 'Neutral', 'Disagree' or 'Strongly Disagree'. The analysis of their responses is presented in Table 3. Data shows that more than three-fourths of the students (84 percent) perceived that the library has good and calm environment for study. However, about 13 percent of the students were neutral and two percent of them were disagreed with the same statement. A vast majority of the students (95 percent) said that the library staff was cooperative and helpful.

With respect to borrowing a book, majority of the students (81.6 percent) agreed that the procedure for borrowing a book is simple, and similarly 72 percent of the students said that the seven-day duration for keeping a borrowed book is reasonable. However, 13 percent of the students disagreed with the policy of issuing a book for seven days. About two-third of the students also indicated that the current policy of allowing students to borrow three books at a time is adequate to meet their needs. About 17 percent of the students opined that the library does not have sufficient number of copies of reference books.

**Table 3: Students' perception about the library resources and services**

Statements	Strongly Agree (%)	Agree (%)	Neutral (%)	Disagree (%)	Strongly Disagree (%)	Mean	Median	Std dev.
Library has good and calm environment for study	53.2	31.1	12.8	1.8	0.9	4.34	5.0	0.841
Library staff is helpful and cooperative	65.1	30.2	1.8	1.8	0.9	4.57	5.0	0.712
Procedure for borrowing book is simple	43.1	38.5	17.4	0.9	0	4.25	4.0	0.760
The number of books a student can borrow at a time (i.e. 3) is enough to meet his/her needs	36.6	35.7	24.7	1.8	0.9	4.05	4.0	0.886
Duration of borrowing a book (7 days) is reasonable	39.4	39.4	12.8	5.5	2.7	4.07	4.0	0.997
Library has sufficient number of copies of reference books	30.2	37.6	23.8	4.5	3.6	3.86	4.0	1.023
Books are systematically arranged in the shelves and are easy to locate	39.4	42.2	15.5	1.8	0.9	4.18	4.0	0.818

### 5.3 Students' perception about other facilities in the library

Students were also asked about other facilities in the library including the group study room, availability of internet facility, photocopying facility, and access to e-books/e-journals, (Table 4).

**Table 4: Students' perception of other facilities in the library**

	Excellent (%)	Very Good (%)	Good (%)	Fair (%)	Poor (%)	Mean	Median	Std. Dev.
Group study room in the library	40.3	28.4	22.9	3.6	4.5	3.97	4.0	1.093
Photocopying facility	28.4	31.1	22.9	11.9	5.5	3.68	4.0	1.154
Internet facility	41.2	23.8	22.0	6.4	6.4	3.92	4.0	1.148
Access to e-books/e-journals	34.8	27.5	22.0	5.5	10.0	3.76	4.0	1.224

A very large proportion of students (91 percent) gave a high rating (40 percent rated it as excellent and 51 percent gave it very good or good rating) to the group study room facility in the library. A similar high proportion of the students (87 percent) found to be satisfied with the internet facility in the library. Although more than 82 percent of the students reported the photocopying facility as excellent, very good and good but a substantial proportion of the students did not agree with it. The photocopying in the library was rated as poor by 17 percent of the students. Over three-fourths of the students express their satisfaction with the access to e-books/ e-journals as they rated it, with 49 percent as very good or good and 34 percent as excellent (Table 4).

## 6. ANALYSIS

A mean value for each statement was calculated on the following basis;

'Strongly Agree' = 5, 'Agree' =4, 'Neutral' = 3, 'Disagree' = 2 'Strongly Disagree' = 1

The score could range from 1 (Strongly Disagree) to 5 (Strongly Agree) on each item. A score of less than 3.0 indicates dissatisfaction, score in the range between 3.0 - 3.5 indicates an average level of satisfaction, while a score of 4.0 or greater, indicates a high level of satisfaction.

Similarly, a mean value for the facilities in the library and overall rating of available resources & quality of services was calculated on the following basis;

'Excellent' = 5, 'Very Good' =4, 'Good'= 3, 'Fair' = 2 'Poor' =1

Here, a score of 2.5 or less indicates dissatisfaction, score in the range 2.6 - 3.5 indicates an average level of satisfaction, while a score of 4.0 or greater, indicates a high level of satisfaction.

**Table 5. Students' Overall satisfaction level**

Overall	Mean	Median	Std.Dev.
Availability of resources in the library	3.80	4.0	0.916
Quality of services offered by the library	4.16	4.0	0.915

The mean score for overall availability of resources shows 3.80 indicating above average level of satisfaction. The mean score of overall quality of services shows 4.16 which clearly indicates a high level of satisfaction.(Table 5)

## 7. HYPOTHESIS TESTING

**Hypothesis1** proposes no relationship between the student's satisfaction level of library services and quality performance. This hypothesis was tested using bi-variate correlations coefficient at 0.01 levels indicating significant link between the students' satisfaction level of services and the quality of library. Thus the null hypothesis is rejected to accept the alternate hypothesis.(Table 6)

**Table 6. Correlation matrix of quality construct factor scores (library services):**

	A	B	C	D	E
A	1.000				
B	0.891	1.000			
C	0.917	0.908	1.000		
D	0.855	0.917	0.918	1.000	
E	0.954	0.921	0.959	0.882	1.000

Note: All correlations are significant at 0.01 level.

**Hypothesis2** proposes no direct relationship between the student's satisfaction level of environment, space and facilities and quality of services. This hypothesis was tested using bi-variate correlations coefficient at 0.01 levels indicating significant link between the students' satisfaction level of environment and the quality of services in the library. Hence the null hypothesis is rejected to accept the alternate hypothesis.(Table 7)

**Table 7. Correlation matrix of quality construct factor scores (environment):**

	A	B	C	D	E
A	1.000				
B	0.893	1.000			
C	0.931	0.887	1.000		
D	0.890	0.905	0.918	1.000	
E	0.930	0.902	0.973	0.931	1.000

Note: All correlations are significant at 0.01 level.

**Table 8. Reliability Test for service and environment:**

Level of satisfaction	Number of statements	Cronbach's alpha
a) Satisfaction with service	5	0.978
b) Satisfaction with environment	5	0.981

Reliability test was conducted to study the degree of relativity. Cronbach's alpha coefficient was calculated for satisfaction with library service as 0.978 and the satisfaction with environment as 0.981 respectively which indicates that all dimensions have strong reliability (Table 8). Hence it can be concluded that the measures of quality management have a high degree of criterion-related validity.

**Hypothesis3** proposes no difference of satisfaction levels among respondents of different programs.

One way analysis of variance (ANOVA) and Duncan Multiple Range Test was carried out to determine the difference among the programs. The result is shown in Table 9.

**Table 9 : Comparison of satisfaction levels on quality of services**

	Sum of Squares	Df	Mean Square	F	Sig.
Between Groups	70.033	8	8.754	43.090	.000
Within Groups	20.316	100	.203		
Total	90.349	108			

**Post Hoc Tests**

Duncan

Category	N	Subset for alpha = .05			
		1	2	3	1
Interior Design	8		3.00		
MBA	4		3.00		
Law	3		3.00		
Education	5		3.00		
Foundation	3		3.00		
Electrical and Electronics Engineering	38			3.79	
Business Administration	33				5.00
Computer information systems	9				5.00
Computer science engineering	6				5.00
Sig.			1.000	1.000	1.000

Means for groups in homogeneous subsets are displayed.

a Uses Harmonic Mean Sample Size = 5.710.

b The group sizes are unequal. The harmonic mean of the group sizes is used. Type I error levels are not guaranteed.

The results of the comparison of mean satisfaction scores between different programs are presented in Table 8. Duncan Multiple Range Test confirms that the most satisfied level is rated by the respondents of Business Administration program ( M=5.00) followed by the respondents of Electrical and Electronics Engineering program (M=3.79) and least satisfied are the respondents of other programs like MBA, Interior Design, CIS and CSE, Education and Law (M=3.00).

The null hypothesis 3 is rejected and justified that there is significant difference in the satisfaction levels of respondents of different programs.

## 8. CONCLUSION AND IMPLICATIONS

This study has presented information on the users' satisfaction towards the library services and environment/facilities. The results of the study revealed that, the respondents were highly satisfied with Library services and facilities in the library as a whole. The respondents were most satisfied with the library services (Mean=4.0) followed by the library facilities ( Mean =3.9). In case of comparative study of satisfaction level among different programs, results showed that the highest level of satisfaction was rated by the Business Administration program (M=5.00) followed by the Electrical and Electronics Engineering program(M=3.79) and the least satisfaction level was rated by the other programs (M=3.00) .

From the above results, it is clear that the library has contributed towards attaining quality service towards the students. The evaluation exercise will be an ongoing process, to maintain the same level of satisfaction in future and also look into the changing needs of the users. The result of this paper can be of vital importance for the library professionals who are involved in improvement processes, to focus on delivering quality service to merit the trademark of a quality library.

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