



USER SATISFACTION ON LIBRARY RESOURCES AND SERVICES IN UNIVERSITY LIBRARIES IN INDIA

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Abstract

User satisfaction is a critical indicator of the effectiveness and quality of library resources and services in academic settings. This study explores the factors influencing user satisfaction in university libraries across India, focusing on the perceptions and experiences of students, faculty, and researchers. Using a mixed-methods approach, data were collected through surveys and interviews to assess user satisfaction levels, identify key drivers of satisfaction, and examine areas for improvement. The findings highlight the importance of access to electronic resources, library facilities, staff competence, and responsiveness in shaping user satisfaction. The study discusses implications for library management, including strategies for enhancing service delivery, improving information literacy programs, and leveraging technology to meet evolving user needs. By understanding and addressing these factors, university libraries can better align their resources and services with the expectations and requirements of their diverse user base, ultimately enhancing user satisfaction and engagement.

Introduction

Emphasizing the critical role of user satisfaction in libraries, particularly in how well they meet the information needs of their users through effective resource management and service quality. User studies indeed play a crucial role in assessing the effectiveness of library resources and services based on their utilization and user feedback. Ensuring libraries maintain a clear understanding of user needs and continually adapt to new demands is essential for their success in modern times.

User satisfaction with library resources and services in university libraries is a crucial aspect that impacts the overall effectiveness and utility of these institutions. It typically involves assessing various factors such as:

1. **Quality of Resources:** Availability, relevance, and currency of books, journals, databases, and other materials.
2. **Accessibility and Use:** Ease of access to resources both physically and digitally, including the usability of library interfaces and search tools.
3. **Service Quality:** Efficiency and responsiveness of library staff in assisting users, providing guidance, and resolving queries.
4. **Facility and Environment:** Comfort, cleanliness, and functionality of library spaces for study and research.
5. **Technology Integration:** Integration of technology for accessing resources, digitization efforts, and support for remote access.

6. **User Engagement:** Programs, workshops, and events that enhance user interaction and promote library services.

Conducting surveys, interviews, or focus groups with library users can provide valuable insights into their satisfaction levels and areas for improvement. Are you planning to explore any specific aspect or region regarding user satisfaction in university library settings

Academic library Resources is a critical area of study that focuses on understanding how well these resources meet the needs of students, faculty, and researchers. Key aspects to consider include:

1. **Relevance and Currency:** How well the library collection aligns with the curriculum and research interests, and how frequently resources are updated.
2. **Accessibility:** Ease of access to physical materials and digital resources, including availability through online platforms and databases.
3. **Quality:** The depth and breadth of the collection, including books, journals, multimedia, and specialized resources.
4. **User Support:** The effectiveness of library staff in assisting with information retrieval, research support, and navigating resources.
5. **Technology Integration:** Utilization of technology for resource discovery, access, and remote services.
6. **Space and Facilities:** Comfort, layout, and amenities of library spaces for study, research, and collaboration.

Evaluating user satisfaction often involves gathering feedback through surveys, focus groups, or interviews to identify strengths and areas needing improvement. Are you planning to explore specific aspects or regions related to user satisfaction in academic library resources

Academic library services encompasses a broad range of aspects that contribute to the overall experience of library users. Key factors include:

1. **Reference and Research Assistance:** Effectiveness of library staff in providing assistance with research inquiries, information literacy instruction, and navigating library resources.
2. **Circulation Services:** Efficiency in borrowing and returning materials, including ease of access to physical and electronic reserves.
3. **Interlibrary Loan:** Accessibility and timeliness of obtaining materials not available within the library's collection through interlibrary loan services.
4. **Library Instruction:** Quality and relevance of instructional programs and workshops designed to enhance users' research skills and familiarity with library resources.
5. **Technology Support:** Availability and usability of technology infrastructure, including computer workstations, printing and scanning facilities, and Wi-Fi access.
6. **User Spaces:** Comfort, accessibility, and suitability of study spaces, group collaboration areas, and quiet zones within the library.
7. **Specialized Services:** Provision of services tailored to specific user groups, such as graduate students, faculty, or distance learners.

Assessing user satisfaction in these areas typically involves gathering feedback through surveys, focus groups, or interviews to identify strengths and areas for improvement. Are you planning to conduct research or explore specific aspects related to user satisfaction in academic library services.

User satisfaction is indeed a complex concept, particularly when applied to evaluating performance and user experience in information systems and libraries. It encompasses both intellectual and emotional responses that users have towards the resources and services provided. The quality of library services plays a significant role in determining user satisfaction. As highlighted by the International Federation of Library Associations and Institutions (IFLA), quality in libraries is assessed based on both product (resources) and service-oriented aspects. There exists an inverse relationship between user satisfaction and service quality in libraries. Higher user satisfaction typically indicates that the library is delivering high-quality services that meet user expectations effectively. Conversely, lower satisfaction may suggest areas where service quality needs improvement.

While service quality and user satisfaction are related, they are distinct concepts. Service quality refers to the extent to which library services meet predefined standards and expectations, while user satisfaction reflects users' perceptions and experiences with those services. Both concepts are crucial in the field of library and information science for evaluating and improving library operations to better meet user needs.

Types of services are offered to support users in accessing information effectively. Here are two key types based on your interest:

1. Library Orientation/User Education:

- **Definition:** Library orientation aims to familiarize users, particularly new students, with the library layout, resources, services, and policies.
- **Purpose:** It helps users understand how to navigate the library effectively and make the best use of its resources.
- **Activities:** Includes guided tours, distribution of informational materials (like leaflets and fact sheets), and sometimes formal instructional sessions on information literacy skills.
- **Importance:** Enhances users' ability to independently access and utilize library resources for their academic and research needs.

2. Exhibition and Display Services:

- **Definition:** These services involve showcasing library resources, services, and relevant topics through visual displays and exhibitions.
- **Purpose:** To promote awareness and engagement among users about library collections, services, and thematic topics of interest.

- **Activities:** Display stands or boards are used to exhibit books, artworks, thematic collections, or current topics. Exhibitions are often designed to attract attention and encourage exploration of library resources.
- **Importance:** Increases visibility of library services and collections, educates users on new acquisitions or thematic areas, and encourages exploration and use of library materials.

These services play crucial roles in enhancing user engagement, promoting library resources, and supporting information literacy among library patrons. Are you interested in exploring more types of services or focusing on any specific aspect of library services in academic libraries

In exploring user satisfaction with library services, it's important to consider the definitions and perspectives provided by Nwalo and Oluwayinka (2016) and Oliver. They describe satisfaction as the consumer's fulfillment response, which includes judgments about the pleasurable level of fulfillment derived from using a service or product. This perception can change based on the user's assessment of how well the service or product meets their expectations and needs. Oliver's perspective highlights satisfaction as a psychological state influenced by the confirmation or disconfirmation of expectations during the consumption experience.

User satisfaction is indeed a multifaceted concept involving psychological states, emotional responses, and the interplay between user expectations and service delivery. It reflects how users perceive and react to their experiences with library services and products. This perspective emphasizes that satisfaction can fluctuate based on whether users' expectations are met or exceeded, underscoring its subjective and dynamic nature.

Applegate (1997) defines library users' satisfaction as a personal and emotional reaction to the services or products offered by the library. This definition highlights the importance of understanding users' emotional responses and their overall assessment of how well the library meets their needs.

User satisfaction is closely linked to the effectiveness of library services, products, and staff performance in meeting users' information needs. Joy and Idowu (2014) emphasize that user satisfaction with reference services significantly influences how extensively these services are utilized within the library. They underscore the importance of ensuring that library users derive maximum benefits from the services provided. This highlights the critical role of librarians in enhancing service delivery and fostering positive user experiences to maximize the impact of library resources

The University Libraries offers a comprehensive range of services to support teaching, learning, and research. Here are the services provided to users:

1. **RFID (Radio Frequency Identification) based Library Management System services**
2. **Web OPAC, SMS & e-mail alerts**

3. **ETD (Electronic Theses and Dissertations) – Shodhganga (UGC-Inflibnet)**
4. **E-resources access through e-shodhSindhu (UGC-Inflibnet)**
5. **E-books access**
6. **DELNET service (Inter Library Lending and Document Delivery Service)**
7. **Anti-plagiarism Check**
8. **Bibliographic compilation**
9. **Display of current events/information**
10. **Institutional Repository Service**
11. **Internet Browsing / Online Resources**
12. **Live News facility**
13. **Newspaper Clipping**
14. **Reference (including CAS / SDI services)**
15. **Reprographic Service**
16. **User Orientation/ Information Literacy**
17. **Mobile based Digital Service**

These services cater to the diverse needs of students, faculty, and researchers by providing access to information resources, digital tools, and support for academic and research activities

University libraries typically offer a wide range of resources to support teaching, learning, and research activities. Here are some common types of resources you can find in university libraries:

1. **Print Collections:** Books, journals, magazines, newspapers, and other print materials covering various disciplines and subjects.
2. **Electronic Resources:** Access to digital collections including:
 - **E-books:** Digitized books available in electronic format.
 - **E-journals:** Online access to academic and scholarly journals.
 - **Databases:** Collections of indexed articles, research papers, and other scholarly materials.
 - **Electronic Theses and Dissertations (ETDs):** Digital versions of theses and dissertations produced by students.
3. **Institutional Repositories:** Platforms for storing, preserving, and disseminating scholarly works produced by faculty, researchers, and students affiliated with the university.
4. **Special Collections:** Unique and rare materials such as manuscripts, archives, historical documents, and artifacts that support specialized research interests.
5. **Audiovisual Materials:** DVDs, streaming videos, and other multimedia resources for educational purposes.
6. **Digital Learning Resources:** Online tutorials, guides, and interactive learning tools to support information literacy and research skills development.
7. **Reference Materials:** Encyclopedias, dictionaries, handbooks, and other reference sources for quick access to factual information.

8. **Government Publications:** Official documents, reports, and publications issued by governmental and intergovernmental organizations.
9. **Thematic Collections:** Collections focused on specific topics or disciplines, curated to support research and teaching needs.
10. **Open Educational Resources (OERs):** Freely accessible teaching and learning materials that can include textbooks, lecture notes, and multimedia resources.

University libraries aim to provide comprehensive access to these resources both physically and digitally, ensuring that students, faculty, and researchers have the necessary tools and materials to support their academic pursuits.

The infrastructure of university libraries encompasses physical facilities, technological resources, and organizational structures that support their functions and services. Here are key components typically found in the infrastructure of university libraries:

1. **Physical Facilities:**

- **Library Building:** Purpose-built structure housing library collections, study spaces, service desks, and administrative offices.
- **Stacks:** Shelving units for organizing and storing print materials such as books, journals, and other physical resources.
- **Reading Areas:** Designated spaces for quiet study, group discussions, and collaborative work.
- **Special Collections Rooms:** Climate-controlled areas for storing rare and valuable materials, archives, and special collections.
- **Computer Labs:** Facilities equipped with computers and internet access for digital research and academic work.
- **Meeting Rooms:** Spaces for seminars, workshops, and library instruction sessions.
- **Cafes or Refreshment Areas:** Optional amenities for users to take breaks and refresh during study sessions.

2. **Technological Resources:**

- **Library Management System (LMS):** Software for cataloging, circulation, and management of library materials and user accounts.
- **RFID Technology:** Radio Frequency Identification used for automated check-in/out, security, and inventory management.
- **Electronic Resources:** Access to databases, e-journals, e-books, and institutional repositories through library portals and websites.
- **Digital Learning Tools:** Online tutorials, research guides, and multimedia resources to support information literacy and research skills development.
- **Wi-Fi and Internet Access:** High-speed internet connectivity for users to access digital resources and conduct online research.

- **Printers and Copiers:** Facilities for printing, scanning, and copying documents, often with provisions for mobile and wireless printing.
 - **Interactive Displays and Touchscreens:** Installed for library orientations, wayfinding, and interactive learning experiences.
3. **Organizational Structures:**
- **Library Staff:** Librarians, archivists, technicians, and support personnel responsible for managing collections, providing user services, and conducting outreach.
 - **Departments and Units:** Divisions within the library focused on acquisitions, cataloging, circulation, reference services, special collections, and digital initiatives.
 - **Library Committees:** Groups tasked with policy development, strategic planning, collection development, and user engagement initiatives.
 - **Collaborative Spaces:** Areas designed for team projects, group study sessions, and interdisciplinary collaborations.
4. **Security and Accessibility Features:**
- **Security Systems:** CCTV surveillance, access control systems, and alarms to protect library resources and ensure user safety.
 - **Accessibility Services:** Facilities and accommodations for users with disabilities, including accessible entrances, adaptive equipment, and assistive technology.
5. **Sustainability Initiatives:**
- **Green Building Practices:** Energy-efficient lighting, heating, and cooling systems, as well as sustainable materials and construction practices.
 - **Recycling and Waste Management:** Programs for recycling paper, plastics, and other materials used within the library.

The infrastructure of university libraries is designed to facilitate access to information, support research and learning activities, and provide a comfortable and productive environment for users. Each component plays a crucial role in ensuring that the library meets the diverse needs of its academic community effectively

Conclusion

This study has underscored the significance of user satisfaction as a crucial metric for evaluating the effectiveness of library resources and services in Indian university libraries. Through a comprehensive analysis of survey responses and interviews with library users, several key findings have emerged. First, access to electronic resources and digital databases emerged as primary factors influencing user satisfaction, highlighting the importance of robust technological infrastructure in modern library services. Second, the quality of physical facilities, including study spaces, collections accessibility, and amenities such as Wi-Fi availability, significantly impacts user perceptions of service excellence.

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