

Users Perception and Satisfaction on the Services of Academic Libraries in Puducherry Region: A Study

S. S. Balasubramanian and M. Sadik Batcha

Department of Library and Information Science, Annamalai University, Annamalai Nagar - 608 002,
Tamil Nadu, India

E-mail: bala.sivam@rediffmail.com

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Abstract

The primary focus of a library is service, and the quality of service is the most studied topic in marketing research during the past decade. Service quality contributes to value experienced by customers. Value becomes an outcome of excellent service. This paper aims at evaluating and analyzing the level of various services provided in academic libraries of Puducherry region and also analyzed their satisfaction and perception level. The appropriate data were collected through the questionnaire method of data collections. There were about 900 respondents analyzed. This study is useful for further development in applying recent technology and improvement in providing the services to attain the maximum satisfaction of library users in the academic libraries of Puducherry region.

Keywords: Information Services, Perception, Quality, Total Quality Management

1. INTRODUCTION

Academic Library services have changed tremendously in the past two decades. Network based services, e-resources and World Wide Web occupies a predominant position in providing various levels of library services. Academic librarians must equip themselves with the latest advancements in technology. It is quite obvious that the librarians must use management tools, to run academic library services quality and performance assessment of libraries is very important to manage academic libraries and information services, because the evaluation process produces data that can help librarians to make decisions and to improve services.

1.1 The Concept of Quality in Academic Library Services

Most of the Librarians believe that they only have the expertise to assess the quality of library service. They strongly have the opinion about users that they cannot judge the quality. But in real it is totally irrelevant. Users' opinions play a crucial role in developing or improving the level of quality of services in academic libraries. The academic libraries are always to be in the state of

“openness to new ideas” and “willingness to change”, to sustain with quality of its services. The quality of academic libraries is connected with services, product as well as staff, and facilities. “High quality staff can transform even the poorest library into an operation offering excellent service” [1&2].

Because libraries are service oriented organizations and the quality in the context of a library is often treated as the quality of service.

2. OBJECTIVES

- i To find out the users perception on quality of various types of services provided in academic libraries in Puducherry region;
- ii To identify methods of effective Services;
- iii To emphasize the role of academic librarians in providing best services to its users to attain their satisfaction.

3. RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

In order to accomplish the objectives, a well structured questionnaire instrument was designed and distributed to respondents for getting correct responses. It consisted of open and close ended questions on demographic characteristics, library use, information need, and sources of information. The target of this study was the students and the faculties of academic

libraries of Puducherry region. The academic institutions were classified on the basis of geographical area viz Urban, Semi-urban, and Rural. Also the type of academic programs viz, UG courses only; PG courses only; both UG & PG courses; Research only; and UG, PG, and Research are classified. The respondents were asked to reveal their opinion about various types of services provided to them.

4. DATA ANALYSIS AND INTERPRETATION

Table 1Satisfaction among the Library Services

Types of Services	Level of Services					
	Very Good	Good	Fair	Poor	Very Poor	Total
Circulation Services	431 (47.9%)	32 (33.6%)	32 (3.6%)	74 (8.2%)	61 (6.8%)	900 (100%)
Book Reservation	120 (13.3%)	482 (53.6%)	171 (19.0%)	53 (5.9%)	74 (8.2%)	900 (100%)
Reference Service	199 (22.1%)	420 (46.7%)	139 (15.4%)	88 (9.8%)	54 (6.0%)	900 (100%)
Current Awareness Service	175 (19.4%)	370 (37.8%)	235 (26.1%)	96 (10.7%)	54 (6.0%)	900 (100%)
Translation Service	174 (19.3%)	307 (34.1%)	232 (25.8%)	117 (13.0%)	70 (7.8%)	900 (100%)
Referral Service	135 (15.0%)	350 (38.9%)	251 (27.9%)	101 (11.2%)	63 (7.0%)	900 (100%)
OPAC Service	199 (22.1%)	367 (40.8%)	171 (19.0%)	71 (7.9%)	92 (10.2%)	900 (100%)
Internet Service	208 (23.1%)	302 (33.6%)	172 (19.1%)	152 (16.9%)	66 (7.3%)	900 (100%)
Book Bank Service	213 (23.1%)	371 (41.2%)	155 (17.2%)	78 (8.7%)	83 (9.2%)	900 (100%)
Reprographic Service	199 (22.1%)	269 (29.9%)	244 (27.1%)	75 (8.3%)	113 (12.6%)	900 (100%)
Inter Library Loan Service	143 (15.9%)	271 (30.1%)	224 (24.9%)	149 (16.6%)	113 (12.6%)	900 (100%)
ICT Based Service	223 (24.8%)	339 (37.7%)	193 (21.4%)	61 (6.8%)	84 (9.3%)	900 (100%)
Newspaper Clipping Service	291 (32.3%)	260 (28.9%)	117 (13.0%)	185 (20.6%)	47 (5.2%)	900 (100%)

It is evidenced from Table 1 that the majority of respondents revealed their most satisfaction in Circulation services and News paper clipping services provided to them. The ICT based services occupies next level of satisfaction. The ICT based services occupies a predominant position in every academic libraries. The role of LIS professionals has become as facilitator. Due to the introduction of ICT the libraries are facing many

challenges. The e-publishing has the great impact on the mode of services to the user community [3&4]. The other services are found to be more or less equal level of satisfaction among users, whereas the OPAC services; Reprography Services and Inter Library Loan services are found to be dissatisfied among the users. The other services have more or less equal satisfactory level.

Table 2 Distribution of Sample on the Basis of Issues and Return of Books

Factors	Faculty		Students		Over All		Total	Percentage
	Male	Female	Male	Female	Male	Female		
Manual Process	12 (1.3%)	4 (0.4%)	177 (19.7%)	40 (4.4%)	189 (21.0%)	44 (4.9%)	233	25.9
Barcode Scanner Process	46 (5.1%)	10 (1.1%)	410 (45.6%)	93 (10.3%)	456 (50.7%)	103 (11.4%)	559	52.1
Computerization Process	0	0	54 (6.0%)	14 (1.6%)	54 (6.0%)	14 (1.6%)	68	706
RFID Technology	5 (0.6%)	3 (1.3%)	25 (2.8%)	7 (0.8%)	30 (3.3%)	10 (1.1%)	40	4.4
Total	63	17	666	154	729	171	900	100.0

The Table 2 indicates that the distribution of sample on the basis of Issues and Return of books. Out of 900 library users 233 (25.9%) were drawn from Manual Process, 559 (62.1%) were drawn from Barcode Scanner Process, 68 (7.6%) were drawn from Computerization Process and 40 (4.4%) were drawn from RFID technology. In the case of factors from Manual Process there were 21.0% of male and 4.9% female. In Barcode Scanner Process 50.7% of respondents were male and 11.4% female. In Computerization Process 6.0% of respondents were male and 1.6% of female. In RFID technology 3.3% of respondents were male and 1.1% female. The statistical result that P value is < 0.001 , which is significant, shows that there is an association in type of respondents and Issue and Return of books.

By analyzing the above Table 3, it is evident that according to the users perception, the Lack of Adequate Infrastructure Facilities (40.4%), Lack of Adequate Management (37.1%), and Delay in Implementing IT initiatives (34.9%) are the major causes for difficulties in providing effective and efficient library services in Academic Libraries in Puducherry region. At the same time the users strongly disagree with the factor of inadequate staff structure (14.7%) and lack of technical know-how in ICT enabled services (18.4%). The other factors have more or less equal degree of impact in providing the effective and efficient library services.

Table 3 Difficulties in Providing Effective and Efficient Library Services

Difficulties Facing	Level					Total
	Strongly Agree	Agree	Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Not Applicable	
Inadequate Fund Allocation	181 (20.1%)	416 (46.21%)	102 (11.3%)	147 (16.3%)	54 (6.0%)	900 (100%)
Inadequate Staff Structure	204 (22.7%)	329 (36.6%)	132 (14.7%)	190 (21.1%)	45 (5.0%)	900 (100%)
Subscription of International Journals	282 (31.3%)	210 (23.3%)	102 (11.3%)	259 (28.8%)	47 (5.2%)	900 (100%)
Lack of Technical Know How in ICT Enabled Service	215 (23.9%)	258 (28.7%)	229 (25.4%)	166 (18.4%)	32 (3.6%)	900 (100%)
Lack of Coordination among Library Staff	269 (29.9%)	219 (24.3%)	93 (10.3%)	273 (30.3%)	46 (5.1%)	900 (100%)
Lack of Adequate Infrastructure Facilities	364 (40.4%)	240 (26.7%)	61 (6.8%)	189 (21.0%)	46 (5.1%)	900 (100%)
Lack of Adequate Management	334 (37.1%)	298 (33.1%)	40 (4.4%)	157 (17.7%)	71 (7.9%)	900 (100%)
Delay in Implementing IT Initiatives	314 (34.9%)	228 (25.3%)	45 (5.0%)	241 (26.8%)	72 (8.0%)	900 (100%)

Table 4 Users Opinion about Information Services on the Basis of Nature of Institution

Nature of Institution	N	Mean	Std. Deviation	F-Value	Level of Significant
Academic Only	254	48.01	10.28	93.54	Significant
Academic Research	138	38.73	9.12		
Research Only	8	13.00	0		
Total	900	46.28	11.06		

Users do not differ significantly in their opinion about library information services on the basis of Nature of Institution.

The above Table 4 shows that Academic only group has scored higher mean value (48.01%) than the other groups. This is statistically proved by the obtained F-ratio (93.54), which is significant at 0.01 level. So, users differ in their opinion about library information services on the basis of Nature of Institution.

5. CONCLUSION

It could be seen clearly from the above analysis that the inadequate fund allocation factor had an impact upon providing the effective and efficient library services, followed by inadequate staff structure; lack of adequate management; lack of adequate infrastructure facilities; delay in implementing IT initiatives; lack of co-ordination among library staff; lack of technical knowhow in ICT enabled services; and subscription of international journals. Moreover the nature and level of library and information services are not having any correlation between the nature of institution and the services.

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