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Readers' Perceptions and Expectations about Quality Services in Engineering University Libraries of Balochistan

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Abstract: *The study intended to explore readers' perceptions and expectations about quality of library services in engineering university libraries of Balochistan. In this the major focus related to reader`s perceptions and expectations is about service providing staff, facilities provided by the library as well as the accessing of information. University libraries have significant role in accomplishing overall institutional missions, the quality service cannot be provided without the understanding of reader needs and expectations. University libraries have essential role to satisfy the library reader needs and continues changes in technology readers expectations are increasing highly. This study is conducted using qualitative method; the questionnaire was developed on the bases of related literature, discussions with seniors and bases of previous studies to investigate the readers' perceptions and expectations about quality services. The findings of the study revealed that insufficient space for group learning, less number of computer workstations, difficulties to access electronic databases, inadequate printed books, journals and IT infrastructure for speedy and easy services for readers.*

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Introduction:

The academic libraries have demonstrate their contributions by providing the quality services and presents the concept of libraries in new shape. With the passage of time library services have been changed, the information centers or knowledge centers and libraries developed from collections centered to readers centered organizations. Ameen (2005) indicates that size of growing collections is the purpose of libraries and this is measured as sign of prominence. In the time of 19th century libraries constructed to conserve huge collection of manuscripts, books, journals and pamphlets etc., but the utilization practice was not measured fair. During that time librarians started realizing that the readers of the library need personal help in order to use large collection in the library.

The developments in the field of computer and internet in 1990`s the revolution of information was triggered (Jain, 1996). These technological advancements produced information from different sources of internet, and brought changes in transformation of information to the end users that everyone can easily access information through different channels. Due to rapid and advancement in technological innovations expectations and needs for information are increased about quality services. In order to satisfy readers' library professionals also IT experts have to perform the traditional library services such as acquisition, cataloguing, and organizing of the collection though to offer valuable services. Upsurge of gravities on the libraries due to social and economic changes have caused towards critical assessment and their quality services. Quality service is the essential pre-requisite and libraries struggle to provide the maximum quality services to its readers. The quality service that which totally meet the expectations and needs of readers. Quality maintenance is that if the library delivers right information to concern reader at the right time as needed form (Sahu, 2007).

The rapid expansion of Pakistani University libraries were started from 2002, so the methods of learning also have changed, the libraries recruitment within the Universities have increased, and libraries were standard as significant source of learning due to the development in science and technology. Readers centered approach have got much more importance in libraries. There has not been a study led in the readers to discover the expectations on the libraries quality services, even in spite of expanding expectations for library services in Pakistan.

Literature review

The existing literature on numerous aspects of readers' perceptions and expectations about quality services in engineering university libraries, the related literature of different features about quality of library services has been reviewed. The scholarly literature is available on the various aspects of library quality services in the developed countries however there were only a

few studies from developing countries with no comprehensive study on the engineering university libraries in Pakistan. There are many studies that have examined the significant difference on perceived quality service on demographic variables (user types, gender, and academic disciplines) but these studies produced mixed results. This research has effort to know and identify the readers' perceptions and expectations about quality services of engineering university libraries of Balochistan.

Quality service

Quality service is defined in four ways the perspectives and encompassing definition among four perspectives is meeting or exceeding expectations. If the perceptions are equal to respondent's expectations then it shows that libraries are meeting their expectations and if they are above the expectations then it indicates that libraries services are exceeding their expectations and offer high quality services. If the perceptions are below readers' expectations it shows the low quality service of libraries (Hernon & Nitecki, 2001). Rendering to expectation philosophy the readers/consumers judge the quality of service in comparison with their expectations regarding service performance. So, if the service performance is exceeding the readers/customer's expectations then a positive disconfirmation occurs and readers' least preferred expectations are fulfilled. Moreover, in condition the service performance is beneath the readers/customer's expectations then a negative disconfirmation occurs. Thus the service is measured as underprivileged quality (J. Green, 2006).

Quality service in libraries

Library and information science (LIS) literature broadly indicates the term 'library service' on the other hand there is no agreement on its definition. It is unclear, unfixed in subjective concept. In the primary stages the researchers defined the quality as effectiveness, suitability and standards (Orr, 1973). Quality service of a library is basically defined in terms of gap analysis; between readers/customers` least expectations and perceptions of real services (Hernon and Whitman, 2001).

Ebbinghouse (1999) remarked on quality of readers` service; like "the provision of an expected product at the expected time. Unfortunately for librarians in this electronic age, the expected time is right now" (p. 86), with the advent of internet the library services and access of information has improved. What they have expected their expectations fulfilled by the use of internet. The readers quickly search information on computer without visiting the library selves, and saving there time. Therefore, the services of librarian and library staff have improved from custodian to information scientist.

Readers` perceptions and expectations about quality services of libraries

The readers' perceptions and expectations by quality services of the libraries, the research studies have expected readers' perceptions and

expectations what extent libraries are meeting those prospects. The university authorities questioning to library administers to disclose the worth of the libraries and it`s services to the institution public, these questions have increased responsibility of librarians, the librarians have been inspired to study the perceptions of readers on provided library services (Kaufman, 2008). According to Jiang and Lu Wang (2006) the perception is the readers' assessment and judgment towards the services which they use, and the performance they have receiving are fulfilling their needs. The university libraries are one of the main parts providing education to the students, researchers and other readers, then the disagreement appears from the library administers how they determine their existence and value to the readers. The university libraries shall contribute to the academic system as well as perform to the society for changing social needs.

Muddiman (2000) explored that the research has very important and vital role in uplifting of library services and society, it is innovating new social parts especially when a reader struggles to find the particular information to fulfill the needs, such demonstration has helpful contribution not only to the services of libraries also to the other institutions. Readers' do not have one level of expectations they have two levels that is 'minimum expectations' and 'desired expectations'. The minimum expectations are that level of service which readers reflect as satisfactory so on the desired expectations are readers perfect expectations which they wish to receive from the library.

Crowley and Gilreath (2002) Survey in Texas A&M University, and tells that readers' perceptions are lower in their desired expectations the consistency of library staff is to accurately and consistently perform the committed services and the declaration of employees knowledge to their work is accomplishing with the confidence and truth dimensions.

Thompson, Kyrillidou and Cook (2007) revealed no difference in their study accordingly, there is extensive space in the literature about quality services of the libraries; in this context the emerging countries needed to learn similarities as well as the differences among readers over types, gender and educational disciplines for the quality service, the researchers studied the elements that effects the different demographic variables such as readers type, sex/gender and educational discipline in the "Service Adequacy Gap (SAG) and Service Superiority Gap (SSG)". Scott (1992) added in the study that the library administration have to recognize the various needs of the readers on the priority basis to respond. The library management shall evaluate the library services for better policies to make the library environment smooth for research. Besides, the library could not be functional to separate from the readers. The administration have to know the readers perception and expectations for the improvement of quality services in the library.

Arshad (2009) studied momentous readers' expectations of students at departmental libraries of University of Punjab, Lahore. He analysis questions of (123) open ended that readers demand environmental facilities such as clean atmosphere, air conditioned all areas, and sufficient sitting capacity moreover, the collection of the libraries up-to-date books, journals and modern facilities like candle readers, laptop, printing, photocopying, scanning capability and Online Public Access Catalog (OPAC). The readers` expects cooperation from library staff for quick services of information and to solve problems which they face also they demanded 24/7 timing for reading, research.

Croft and Bedi (2004) Lead a study about preferences between e-books and printed books at the University in British Columbia, Canada. In the study they have found the connections in the readers' which gives preferences for utilizing printed books, so the others hand which were utilizing e-books. In the results they have decided that momentous readers/students 67% percent preferred to read printed books. Others 33% percent give preferred to read e-books, the students read e-books definitely for research, well the printed books were used for study purpose.

Library quality service and readers' satisfaction

The library services are changing with development of technologies, in every decade a big change appears in the library services. The library administration and decision makers have to be quick in the adoption of new required services to meet the needs and expectation of the readers. While library service exercise is changing, the collection of books and other reading resources without additional tools, instruction, manuals and online connections are like a storehouse, not libraries. The library managers (librarians) in all types of libraries have to confirm that their organizations/institutions deliver high quality service. The quality service has significant aspect to carrying out the mission in supporting reading, teaching, learning, and research in all educational institutions. The library administration how to know that the readers requirements are being fulfilled which they have expectations of high quality services, The libraries are heart of the universities, the main aims of the universities is to provide quality education and produce research for the betterment of society. Therefore, the University libraries have the prime responsibility to deliver readers' the right and accurate information for their academic research activities. The educational and research environment demands the facility of quality services in the libraries for fulfilling needs of the readers' expectations and change perceptions about libraries and its services.

Bolton and Drew (1992) acknowledged that satisfaction has appositive influence on the quality service, however researchers such as Cronin Jr and Taylor (1992) called them as interconnected ideas to specify quality services of the libraries as pioneer for readers satisfaction. The expectations and

perceptions in both arenas founded as disconfirmation theories, the readers satisfaction and perception is higher than expectations it effects positive disconfirmation. When the readers' expectations outstrip perceptions the outcomes are negative disconfirmation.

Hiller (2001) discussed that during the past decades the library readers` survey for satisfaction has become general in the university libraries. The survey tool has been often used to know the readers satisfaction level in quality service, this has been managed in numerous ways. Although it may be reasoned that we live in 'evaluation culture' generally the library and information service providers in this era are increasing the attention in understanding needs and satisfying to fulfill the readers need in quality services. Moreover, he added that less budgets and budget cuts not let the services to meet the satisfaction levels of the readers but libraries maintain awareness and keep marketing their services in effective fashion.

Naz (2007) accompanied a study regarding satisfaction of readers utilization of Online Public Access Catalogue at library of Punjab University, the main purpose was to tell existing status of the library staff cooperation in the OPAC service, physical facilities, powers and faults of the OPAC. The study results disclosed the areas such as in the automation parts, the acquisition module, cataloguing module, classification areas were under developing the use of automation in reference area looked good. The problems rise due to lack of funds, IT experts, check-in/check-out, and reservation services faced by students.

Rafi (2006) conducted case study to know the status of reference services and information services at public library readers and studied the physical facilities providing in the reference section of libraries. Also point out the readers' problems related to R&I services, in the study the results displayed that the respondents were satisfied about reference section the environment provided and they were covenant regarding readers expectations facilities but the reference books and resources were not updated. The reference section staff was expert and cooperative in providing services traditionally but needs to be skilled in new technologies to fulfill the reader needs. The staff behaviour and communication skills were satisfactory.

Results and conclusion

Introduction

This research aimed to determine readers' perceptions, expectations and suggestions about quality services. This study presents the findings, interpretation and discussion given in sections, categorized according to the objectives of the research.

1. Readers' expectations about quality services

To achieve the first objective of this study about the expectations of readers' about the quality service, the respondents were inquired in three categories. First category was about the service provider staff, second category was access to information and the third category was about library facilities.

Table 1.1 Readers' expectations about the service providing staff

Service providing staff (N=300)

Statement	Mean	SD
Staff who give readers individual attention	2.77	1.102
Staff who deal with readers in caring fashion.	2.67	1.208
Subject librarians who improve readers research skills	2.65	1.160
Staff who are willing to help readers	2.63	1.142
Staff who are knowledgeable to answer readers' questions	2.58	1.178
Staff who motivate confidence in readers	2.44	1.216
Staff who provide information skills to readers, needed for work or study	2.39	1.147

Scale: 1=SA, 2=A, 3=N, 4= D 5= SD

SD* = Standard Deviation

Two out of seven items in the table 1.1 got mean score (2.44, 2.39), here the responses are near to 'agree'. Statement got mean score 2.44 shows that staff is capable in motivating confidence in readers', and second statement got mean score 2.39 indicate that staff meet the expectations of readers' by providing information skills to the readers' which are needed for work or study. The responses about these two statements indicate positive attitude of the respondents about the expectations of the library readers' regarding quality services given by the staff. First five items in the table 1.1 got mean score (2.77, 2.67, 2.65, 2.63, and 2.58). It shows that responses are near to neutral but not exactly neutral. Here the first statement having highest mean score of 2.77 followed by statement having mean score 2.67 indicate that staff is providing individual attention to the readers', staff deal with caring fashion. Statements (subject librarians who improve readers' research skills, staff willing to help readers' and staff who are knowledgeable to answer readers' questions) indicate that responses are near to neutral but not exactly neutral.

Table 1.2 Readers' expectations about access to information

Access to information (N=300)

Statement	Mean	SD
A library website which enables me to locate information at my own.	2.56	1.075
In time inter library loan	2.51	1.255
An adequate print journal	2.44	1.079
Easy access to electronic databases.	2.44	1.288
Adequate printed library material.	2.42	1.135

Scale: 1=SA, 2=A, 3=N, 4= DA, 5= SD

SD* = standard deviation.

Table 1.2 contains five statements regarding expectations of readers' about access to information. The last three statements got mean score (2.44, 2.44, and 2.42). These statements show that responses are near to 'agree'. In description to these statements one can analyze that library provides adequate print journals, easy access to electronic databases and adequate printed library material to the readers'. These responses reflect the positive attitude of the respondents about library regarding access to information. The first two items got mean score (2.56, 2.51).These two statements indicate that responses are near to neutral. The respondents were neutral in their response that "library website enables them to locate information according to their own pattern and In time inter-library loan".

Table 1.3 Readers' expectations about library facilities

Library Facilities (N=300)

Statement	Mean	SD
Adequate printing facilities	2.60	1.205
An adequate number of computer workstations	2.56	1.047
Adequate photocopying facilities.	2.56	1.213
Computer that work efficiently well in the library.	2.51	1.172
Sufficient space for group learning and group study	2.36	1.250
Quite and comfortable space for individual activities	2.25	1.125
Library space which inspires study and learning.	2.25	1.202

Scale: 1=SA, 2=A, 3=N, 4= DA, 5= SD

SD* = standard deviation

Table 1.3 comprises upon seven statements. Last three items in the table got mean score (2.36, 2.25 and 2.25) these responses were near to 'agree'. The library fulfills the expectations of these respondents regarding provision of facilities and they were agreed that library provides sufficient space for group learning and group study, quite and comfortable space for individual activities and library space which inspires study and learning. These responses show positive attitude of the respondents. The first four statements got mean score (2.60, 2.56, 2.56, and 2.51) indicate that responses were near to neutral. The respondents were neutral in their expectations regarding library facilities that "printing facilities are adequate, adequate number of computer workstations, adequate photocopying facilities and computers that work well in the library". So these responses were near to neutral.

2. Readers' perceptions about quality services

To achieve the second objective of this study regarding the perceptions of readers' about the quality service, the respondents were inquired in three categories. First category was the perception about service providing staff, second category was access to information and the third category was about the library facilities.

Table 2.1 Perceptions about service providing staff

Service providing staff (N=300)

Statement	Mean	SD
Staff who give readers individual attention	2.75	1.133
Staff who deal with readers in caring fashion	2.74	1.223
Subject librarians who improve readers research skills	2.69	1.146
Staff who are knowledgeable to answer readers questions	2.65	1.165
Staff who are willing to help readers	2.60	1.311
Staff who provide information skills to readers, needed for work or study	2.56	1.202
Staff who are knowledgeable to answer service problems	2.56	1.154
Staff who motivate confidence in readers	2.53	1.220

Scale: 1=SA, 2=A, 3=N, 4= DA 5= SD

SD* = standard deviation

The table 2.1 consists of eight items. The last four statements achieved the mean score (2.60, 2.56, 2.56, and 2.53). These responses indicate that readers' were not so much close to 'neutral' in their perceptions regarding the services provided by the library staff that "staff who are willing to help readers', staff who provide information skills to readers' needed for work or study, staff who are knowledgeable to answer service problems and staff who motivate confidence in readers'". These statements do not show positive attitude of respondents about services provided by the library. The first four items got mean score (2.75, 2.74, 2.69, and 2.65). These responses show that respondents were very close to neutral. Respondents were very close to neutral in their perceptions that "staff gives readers' individual attention, staff deals with caring fashion, subject librarians who improve readers' research skills and staff who are knowledgeable to answer readers' questions".

Table 2.2 Perceptions about Access to information

Access to information (N=300)

Statement	Mean	SD
A library website which enables me to locate information at my own	2.73	1.109
Adequate print journals(periodical)	2.71	1.161
Electronic journal that are easily accessible	2.65	1.216
Easy access to electronic databases	2.58	1.247
Adequate printed library material	2.58	1.120
In time inter-library loans	2.57	1.271

Scale: 1=SA, 2=A, 3=N, 4= DA, 5= SD

SD* = standard deviation

The responses about the perceptions of the respondents regarding access to information by the library are shown in the table 2.2 The table contains six items. Last three statements got mean score (2.58, 2.58, and 2.57). These responses which indicate that respondents were near, but not so much close to neutral in their perceptions about access to information. Statements (easy access to electronic databases, adequate printed library material, In time inter-library loans) show neutral behavior of respondents. While the first three statements that got mean score (2.73, 2.71, and 2.65) indicate that responses were very near to neutral. The statements (a library website which enables me to locate information at my own, adequate print journals (periodicals), and

electronic journals that are easily accessible) show almost neutral attitude regarding access to information by the library.

Table 2.3 Readers' perceptions about library facilities

Library facilities (N=300)

Statement	Mean	SD
An adequate number of computer workstations	2.67	1.002
An adequate printing facilities	2.62	1.075
Sufficient space for group learning and group study	2.57	1.091
Computers that work efficiently well in the library	2.53	1.140
Quite and comfortable Space for individual activities	2.43	1.103
Hours of service that are adequate	2.42	1.114
Library space which inspires study and learning	2.39	1.161
An adequate photocopying facilities	2.29	1.165

Scale: 1=SA, 2=A, 3=N, 4= D 5= SD

SD* = standard deviation

The table 2.3 comprise upon eight statements regarding the perceptions of respondents about library facilities. The last four statements achieved mean score (2.43, 2.42, 2.39, and 2.29) indicate that responses were near to agree. The statements (quite and comfortable space for group individual activities, hours of service that are adequate, library space which inspires study and learning, and adequate photocopying facilities) reflect positive attitude about library facilities regarding perceptions of respondents. While the first four items got mean score (2.67, 2.62, 2.57 and 2.53). These responses were near to neutral. Statements (an adequate number of computer workstations, adequate printing facilities, sufficient space for group learning and group study, computers that work efficiently well in the library) indicate that respondents were near to neutral in their perceptions regarding facilities provided by the library.

3. Readers' suggestions to improve library services

In order to achieve this objective of the study respondents were ask openly to provide suggestions regarding the improvement of library services. In total of 300 there were 230 respondents who did not give the suggestions regarding the improvement of library services. There were 66 respondents who gave different suggestions for the improvement of library services and only four respondents were satisfied by the library services.

Table 3.1

Suggestions from the respondents N=300

Suggestions	Frequency	Percent
No comments	230	76%
Satisfied	4	6%
Give suggestion	66	22%

Six Main themes were drawn from 66 suggestions provided by the respondents' i.e. Human resources, IT infrastructure, Library services, library collection, library facilities and Information literacy. Detail is given in table 3.2

Table 3.2

Themes drawn from suggestions n=66

Sr. No.	Suggestions	Frequency
1	Human resources	20
2	IT Infrastructure	12
3	Library Services	14
4	Library Collection	4
5	Information Literacy	4
6	Library facilities	23

3.2.1 Human Resources

Out of 66 suggestions, 20 suggestions were about improvement of human resources. The respondents suggested that library staff should be professional, fully trained, behavior of staff should be good, staff should be skillful, well-educated and cooperative, helpful to the readers', knowledgeable, there should be motivation in staff and there should be the supporting staff in the libraries.

3.2.2 IT infrastructure

Regarding IT infrastructure there were 12 suggestions about computers, internet facility, and digital library, web OPAC and e-mail alerts. Respondents suggested that computers and internet facility should be provided, computers should be easily available and should be large in numbers, OPAC facility should be provided and library should inform readers 'about new arrivals through E-mail alerts.

3.2.3 Library services

14 respondents provided suggestion regarding library services. These services were about circulation, references and SDI special services for research students. The respondents suggested that process of issuing library card should be easy, reference librarian should be available and library services should be improved.

3.2.4 Library collection

There were four responses about library collection. The respondents suggested that library should improve the journal collection, there should be adequate journals' availability and library collection should cover all subjects.

3.2.5 Information literacy (IL)

Library staff should guide library readers' about use of library, library should guide in searching OPAC.

3.2.6 Libraries facilities

There were 14 responses about library facilities. Responses show that there should be separate section for discussions and joint group studies. Library environment should be good and attractive.

Conclusion

The following conclusions are drawn on the basis of the findings of the study:

Majority of the respondents were neutral in their expectations from service providing staff that subject librarians who improve readers' research skills, staff willing to help readers' and staff who are knowledgeable to answer readers' questions.

Most of the responses regarding expectations of readers' about access to information agreed that library provides adequate print journals, easy access to electronic databases and adequate printed library material to the readers'.

Majority of the library readers' were about to neutral in their responses regarding adequate printing facilities, adequate number of computer workstations, adequate photocopying facilities and computers that work well in the library while some of the agreed that library provides sufficient space for group learning and group study, quite and comfortable space for individual activities and library space which inspires study and learning. These responses show positive attitude of the respondents about library facilities.

Most of the library readers' looks neutral in their perceptions that "staff gives readers' individual attention, staff deals with caring fashion, subject librarians who improve readers' research skills and staff who are knowledgeable to answer readers' questions".

Half of the respondents were about to neutral in their perceptions regarding access to information. The same numbers of readers' were not close to neutral and not agreed.

Half of the respondents were agreed in their perceptions that library facilities are adequate and half of them were near to neutral in their perceptions about library facilities.

Majority of the respondents didn't give their suggestions and suggestions given were regarding improvement in library facilities', several

responses were about human resources to improve staff of the library. Respondents also gave their suggestions to improve library services i.e. circulation and reference services. Some responses were about to improve IT infrastructure regarding adequate computer workstations, speed of the internet, provision of OPAC desk etc. Very few responses were about provision of adequate library journals. Readers' also suggested starting information literacy programs to improve searching, accessing and retrieving techniques of library readers.

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