



Users Satisfactions Measurement and Evaluation at the Academic Libraries

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Abstract. The paper aims to get the real scenario of measurement and evaluation practices in Malaysian Academic Libraries. The scope is on the users' satisfactions towards the services provided by the academic libraries in Malaysia. This is meant to fulfill the needs and expectations of the academic libraries' users. The study, which focusing on the measurement and evaluation practices of users' needs and expectations in Malaysian academic libraries highlights how libraries establish their measurement and evaluation exercises. It includes the perspectives of librarians who directly involved in measurement and evaluation activities in the academic libraries. It may serve a baseline in a general sense for academic libraries of all sizes that could leverage the ideas of fulfilling the needs and expectations of the users.

Keywords. Users satisfactions; Measurement and evaluation and academic library

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1. Introduction

Fulfilling customers' needs are the most common challenging aspect while remaining competitive in the market. The same situation goes to the library. [1] inform that understanding satisfaction formation process in library users has been a concern of researchers and practitioners alike in the field of library and information sciences. All libraries also aim to ensure that services are

provided to meet users' needs and requirements. Nevertheless, to ascertain the needs of users are met well is not an easy business and can't be held lightly. A lot of things, particularly in the interior of the library should be noticed that the purpose and objective of the library to supply the best service to users can be implemented as they expected. [2] stress that library these days are switching. Funding limits and customers' demands are transforming staffing levels, service models, access to resources, and services to the public. Thus, every aspect related to users' needs should be addressed and the library should pay serious attention to the execution of more robust services to users. This also includes the academic libraries at universities. [3] mentions that academic libraries are mostly found in tertiary educational institutions such as the university. The being of the academic libraries is to foster the missionary station of its host institution which basically is teaching, research and community service. Therefore, the role of the library, especially academic libraries are very significant to the development of teaching and learning in a university. No matter whether they are academic libraries in public universities or private universities, libraries still play a unique role in meeting and fulfill the needs of the university community. For that reason, the objective of the study is to explore the measurement and evaluation approach used by Malaysian academic libraries in measuring their users' satisfaction.

2. Literature Review

Libraries are considered as knowledge treasures which are also known as a storehouse of knowledge. [4] So that, libraries play essential roles in providing and preparing the good knowledge and the best library facilities and services to the users. Library service is a library core business. At the same time, reference service is said as a key asset of academic libraries for over 100 years [5], with librarians answering questions and assisting library users in the research process. The service occurs in person, by telephone, by e-mail, through instant messages, or through as 'ask-a-librarian' link provided by the academic library. In providing successful services, librarian courtesy, interest, and helpfulness are crucial as stated by [6]. Therefore, libraries must carefully select and retain staff who directly doing service orientations towards users. Several factors that influenced user satisfaction have been identified by [7] consist of responsiveness, competence and assurance, tangibles, and also resources.

3. Library Measurement and Evaluation Practices

Library measurement and evaluation practices are very important to all kinds of library no matter it is a public library, special library or an academic library. [8] in his book has been using four perspectives as the core elements which are based on the original idea of [9]. The format is supporting the belief that there is no 'one size fits all' method to measure library performance and metrics, and it normally rely on the context, primarily the purpose of the metrics and who is going to use it or be given it. The following table shows the perspectives of measurement and evaluation activities:

Table 1. Measurement and evaluation perspectives

Measurement & Evaluation Perspectives		
1.	Library perspective	A significant place of traditional input and output has been measured. The measurement was also measured the current approach which provides cross-organizational comparisons like LibQUAL+. Essential to build up new metrics that can assess latest electronic resources.
2.	Customer perspective	Stresses on providing excellence in customer service. The questions of what is excellence in this approach and whether it can be measured.
3.	Institutional perspective	Not actually trying to measure the institution but to provide an institutional metrics. The metrics for this element should be simple and transparent as it is closely related to the key stakeholders of the institution. In certain situation perhaps it should be given a priority.
4.	Stakeholders perspective	The joy of using the metrics in measuring organization services. One of the methods used to measure the library services.

Based on the above table, the first element is the **library perspective**. For this, a significant place of traditional input and output has been measured. The measurement was also measured the current approach which provides cross-organizational comparisons like LibQUAL+. They added that it is become essential to build up new metrics that can assess latest electronic resources. The second element is **customer perspective** which stresses on providing excellence in customer service. The questions of what is excellence in this approach and whether it can be measured. [9] stress that the key measure is what the customers expect. While the third element is the **institutional perspective**. For this element, it is not actually trying to measure the institution but to provide an institutional metrics. They emphasize that the metrics for this element should be simple and transparent as it is closely related to the key stakeholders of the institution. In certain situation perhaps it should be given a priority, because if it is not meeting the expectations of key stakeholders groups then the library services could fail sooner or later. For the fourth element, which is considered as **stakeholders perspective** is discussing the joy of using the metrics in measuring organization services. Therefore, the elements discussed could be one of the methods used to measure the library services.

4. Research Methodology

Based on the researcher philosophical stance, the qualitative approach was adopted to highlight the aim of the study in getting the real scenario of measurement and evaluation practices in Malaysian academic libraries. This study adopted a case study approach to eight (8) academic libraries practicing the measurement and evaluation activities at their libraries. The librarians

in charge with the measurement and evaluation works were the respondents based on their involvement in the measurement and evaluation activities at their libraries. The Qualitative approach allows data to be collected from the respondents. The data collection method was based on the semi-structured interviews. The constructions of librarians experiences into narrative forms includes of how measurement and evaluation activities were carried out, the collections of statements and their views and tasks were collected. The analysis was done by using the narrative analysis technique.

The study focused on the measurement and evaluation practices of users' needs and expectations towards the facilities and services provided by the academic libraries. It provides the measurement and evaluation scenario of how the local academic libraries work on meeting and fulfilling the needs and expectations of their users. The study is generally significant in promoting and providing better facilities and services to the academic libraries users. The results obtained from the survey conducted for the measurement and evaluation works helped the libraries a lot in constructing the library strategic planning. This has drawn the good impact to the library management system. The staff as well as the library users have benefited from the improvements done by the library.

5. Findings

The study was conducted in eight local university consists of four public higher learning institutions and four private higher learning institutions. Each library taken as the sample of this study informed that measurement and evaluation practice in the library have been existed since long before, but after ISO was introduced in Malaysia, the requirements related to the data item cannot be denied. The following table shows the findings of the study:



Figure 1. Measurement and evaluation activities of the Academic Libraries

Based on the data gathered, the informers informed that before ISO began to be emphasized, measurement and evaluation activities have been initiated in certain parts of the academic libraries. The original purpose of the measurement and evaluation activities was to determine the level of users satisfaction with the services provided to them. Each university library has their own way in gathering the data for these purposes. Total questions asked are different between all universities. Similarly, the methods of data collections by each university library are not the same. As stated by library F, in the early stages they do have the activity survey on library services to users, but it was not implemented formally. Only after 2006 they were seriously thought of conducting the measurement and evaluation of information services to formally organize by the libraries.

Measurement and evaluation works are one of the most important elements in the library management system. Measurement and evaluation work become a yearly activity to all academic libraries which became the samples for this study. All of the informants inform that the library is meant for the academic staff, students, non-academic staff and the researchers to seek for information. For that very special reason, the management teams of the library feel that they need to conduct a specific survey in identifying users satisfactions on the facilities and services provided. All libraries that became the respondents of this survey use the questionnaire as the instrument in collecting data from the library users.

From the study, it is found that measurement and evaluation works are normally done by the Customer Service Department. The informants from all libraries that the researcher interviewed mentioned that Customer Service Department of their libraries is responsible for conducting users' satisfaction survey. All libraries that become respondents to this study agree that measurement and evaluation works are very important to their libraries. Besides implementing it to fulfill the needs of quality management at their libraries, all of the libraries involved, informed that they do a survey to improve the quality of services and facilities provided to the library users from time to time. All libraries are using questionnaires as the instrument to collect data in the measurement and evaluation works at their library.

In essence, the performance measurement and evaluation practices of the university library information service are complex. University library users consisting of those from various backgrounds with different profiles such as academicians, administrative staff, local and international students as well as general public. Therefore, this will require a different approach in addressing their needs. Various kinds of information needs from the library users would be a bit challenging to the university library in general and to the library staff in particular. The library staff involved, needs to have knowledge about the library collections and services offered to ensure that they could provide the best services to the users. Collections consist of the amount of materials available, the library materials subject areas offered, collections of the latest materials according to the field of studies at their universities and many other related aspects that should be considered.

6. Conclusion

In general, the concept of measurement and evaluation activities at the academic libraries is to assess the survey conducted towards the library facilities and services provided by the libraries to the library users. The results of the assessment are used in feeding the library strategic planning of all academic libraries in terms of the library facilities and services provided by the libraries. Therefore, it is very crucial for the academic libraries to systematically conduct the measurement and evaluation works towards library facilities and services at their libraries. This is for the improvement and enhancement of the library facilities and services provided to the library users.

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Competing Interests

The authors declare that they have no competing interests.

Authors' Contributions

All the authors contributed significantly in writing this article. The authors read and approved the final manuscript.

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