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## Comprehensive Evaluation of the Library: A Case Study

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# **Comprehensive Evaluation of the Library: A Case Study**

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## **Abstract**

### **Introduction**

Libraries have an important role in improving the quality of education, research, and the knowledge-producing process by maintaining and distributing knowledge and information, particularly in universities, so evaluation of libraries according to determined standards should be considered. This study was conducted to evaluate the central library of Tabriz University of Medical Sciences based on Iranian library standards.

### **Methods**

This survey-descriptive study was performed on the Central Library of Tabriz University of Medical Sciences, Iran in 2019. The evaluation was performed using a checklist designed by the authors. The validity of the checklist was confirmed by the content validity index (0.83) and content validity ratio (0.80), as well, its reliability was confirmed using Cronbach's alpha (0.85). Four evaluators were used to evaluate the Central Library according to designed checklist. Gathered data were analyzed using descriptive statistics by SPSS-IBM24.

### **Results**

The average standard compliance based on defined Iranian library standards was 66.78%. The highest and lowest rate of compliance was related to the organization of resources (100%) and "buildings and equipment" (44.44%), respectively.

## **Conclusion**

Since academic libraries are the most important scientific, educational, and research information centers in the country, so standards adherence and compliance are a reliable way to reduce costs, prevent waste of human resources and, most importantly, improve library services.

## **Keywords**

Evaluation, Library, Standard, University

## **1. Introduction**

Academic libraries have an important role in information dissemination by collecting, organizing, and maintaining human knowledge. As well, they can provide opportunities for growing minds and knowledge of communities (2). Besides academic libraries as a part of the higher education system can be the main up-to-date information resource needed by researchers, and responding to qualitatively and qualitatively growing demands (3).

Academic libraries are required for the maintenance of knowledge, help to education, research, and progress of the high educational quality in universities and development of countries (4). The mission of modern academic libraries is to act as a dynamic educational tool for achieving higher education goals (5). The production, transmission, and dissemination of knowledge can be considered for determining the university functions. The realization of these items requires the existence of appropriate facilities, equipment, and human resources. The absence or lack of each function can lead to inefficiency (6). Universities to respond to their users' needs should invest and plan to provide funding, a team, a suitable space, and efficient staff. So these centers should assess their status to offer the optimal use of the existing budget and human resources for preventing the waste of facilities and, in particular delivery of services to users (7).

One of the methods for measuring the status of the library is to use the existing standards in this field. For example, the standard of Iranian academic libraries can be applied to this aim that consists of eight items including objectives and tasks, organization and management, human resources, acquisition, organization of resources, services, building and equipment, and budget (8). By using these standards library services can be evaluated and then appropriate model and

innovation solutions for future development and evolution can be proposed. These standards also described as an essential tool for helping librarians and societies' decision-making and activities. In other words, the use of these standards can indirectly help communities through the planning and management of library services (9).

Numerous studies have been conducted for studying the status of university libraries by using the Iranian academic libraries' standards some of which have examined qualitative aspects and others have examined quantitative characteristics (10-16).

The contribution of society in the production of knowledge is defined as one of the main indicators for measuring the development rate of a country, and with regard to the role of libraries in this process, the evaluation of libraries and improving its efficiency has more important (17). Since Tabriz University of Medical Sciences has known as one of the largest and most important universities in Iran, as well its central library has a significant role to provide library services for a large number of students and the faculty members, so improving the quality of library should be more considered. In other words, evaluating of this library is a fundamental step to inform the current status and provide the necessary opportunities for reaching effective developments in various aspects of information services delivery. Therefore, this study aimed to evaluate the central library of Tabriz University of medical sciences.

## **2. Methods**

This survey-descriptive study was conducted on the Central Library of Tabriz University of Medical Sciences, Iran in 2019. The statistical population in this study included library staff, library processes and information sources, students, and users of the library. No sampling was performed in this study. A checklist was used to collect research data that was designed based on Iranian academic libraries standard and reviewing similar studies and expert opinions.

The checklist consisted of 40 items divided into eight sections including objectives and tasks, organization and management, human resources, acquisition, organization of resources, services, building and equipment, and budget. The Content Validity Ratio (CVR = 0.80) and the Content Validity Index (CVI = 0.83) were determined by a group of experts (three individuals), and also reliability was calculated by Cronbach's alpha ( $\alpha = 0.85$ ). In this study, four evaluators independently evaluated the central library. The evaluators consisted of four master's degree individuals including two experts in health information technologies, and two library and

information science expert that had experience and skills in evaluation. The collected data were assessed and any disagreements were discussed and resolved through experts. Finally, the data were analyzed by using Excel and SPSS IBM-24 software.

### 3. Results

Tabriz University of Medical Sciences is one of the high-rank universities in Iran Medical Sciences universities. The total number of students and permanent faculty members was 8872 and 860, respectively at Tabriz University of Medical Sciences. The library had 7 staff consist of 2 Master's and 1 Bachelor's degree in library and information science, and four individuals from other fields (non-specialized). Evaluations of the Central Library of Tabriz University of Medical Sciences according to 8 standards were shown in Table 1.

Table 1: Standards compliance evaluation in the Central Library of Tabriz University of Medical Sciences

Standards	Standard description	Tabriz library
1-Objectives and Tasks	The library manager should perform the following tasks: 1. determine and write his/her aims 2.announce organization's responsibilities and tasks to Library staffs	✓
	The library should have short-term, medium-term and long-term goals	✗
	Goals should be clear and approved by the chief	✓
2- Organization and Management	It should provide the maximum and best utilization of resources to achieve the goals in the organization	✓
	The library should be defined in the administrative hierarchy	✓
	There should be communication between the head of the library and organization, as well, plans and policies should be determined.	✓
	There should be consultative committees in the library	✗

3- human resources	The library should have efficient human resources with specialized knowledge of library and information science	✓
	Responsible for the following sections should be identified: acquisition, reference, informing, and dissemination of selected information	✓
	In addition to specialization in the library and information science, the chief of the library should cooperate with the educational staff	✓
	Employees should learn the necessary educations during the course	✓
	The conditions and benefits of library employee hiring should equal to the technical staff of other universities	✗
	The average ratio of specialist librarians to total employees is about 20 percent. This means that 2 out of 10 library staff should have a master's degree or higher in the library and information science	✓
	The average ratio of specialist librarians and specialist staff to the total number of employees is 60%. This means that 12 out of every 20 library staff must have a library knowledge	✗
	For every 250 students and full-time professors, there should be one full-time specialist, and for every 25,000 books or other library resources in the acquisition, there should be one expert	✗
4- Acquisition	The university library should provide a balanced and organized set of related to the goals and programs of the organization. This acquisition should contain the latest information and documents available in various printed and non-printed (digital) forms	✓
	The scope of the library acquisition should be able to provide the current and future educational and research needs of its academic community	▲
	The library acquisition should be up-to-date and dynamic and provide the latest scientific information in the relevant fields	✓
	It is necessary the library provides the necessary resources and information quickly through important and relevant databases and connecting to the Internet for users	✓
	The participation and cooperation of university libraries in the sharing of inter-library loan resources and networks is essential	✓
	The library needs to be prepared to accept technological change and upgrade its computer systems by maintaining data integrity and accuracy	✓
	For every 6 associate and bachelor students, at least one title for every 2 master's and above students, at least one title for every 2 full-time faculty members, at least one title. However, no library should have less than 50 current periodicals	✗

5- organization of resources	The library resources should be organized in such a way that all of them can be accessed quickly and easily	✓
	It is necessary for each university library to organize its resources and materials based on national and international principles and rules so, in addition to accelerating and facilitating the retrieval of these resources, the library information system should be coordinated with the global information system	✓
	Library materials and resources should be maintained in such a way that they provide the highest level of access for users (avoid the division and disintegration of the resources as much as possible)	✓
	It is necessary for librarians to have access to a comprehensive range of services and machine facilities, electronic bibliographic media, and creditable databases of other internal and external libraries	✓
	The preparation of materials after organizing should be done within a maximum of three days	✓
	An average of 15 minutes should be considered to search for the specifications of each title in the bibliographic sources	✓
6- Services	The university library should be open at least 5 days per week (each day = 12 hours)	✓
	The library should print the "Guide to Using Library Services" booklet and make it available to users at the beginning of the school year	✓
	The academic community needs to be constantly informed about the new resources and materials of the library	✗
	The university library should provide facilities for the use of services for all groups, including the disabled and the blind persons	✗
	The university library should have a variety of programs at different levels to familiarize users with the work and services of the library and teaching them how to use references and bibliographic resources	✓
	The university library should provide appropriate and appropriate information services in order to realize the educational and research programs and goals of the organization and make it possible to use the resources more and better	✓
7- building and equipment	Library buildings should be designed in such a way that it can be expanded if needed, in other words, the library needs should be predicted for the next 30 years	✗
	The library should be able to provide the study space for 20% of the total number of students at the same time	✗
	It is necessary to consider one square meter of space for every 120 volumes of the book or its equivalent	✗
	For every 20 current periodicals, one square meter of space should be provided	NA

	Study space : 2.5 square meters per person 3 square meters for each desk	✗
	Employee space: The average space per employee is 10 square meters	✓
	Proper lighting (about 500 Lux) should be provided on the study desk	✓
	The library should have well-equipped and uniform heating equipment (maximum 24 and at least 20. C) in winter and summer	▲
	It is necessary to control the humidity between 45 and 55 percent in the library	✓
8- budget	It is necessary to allocate 3% of the total current educational, research, and administrative budget of each university or faculty to its library. This amount should be increased to 5%, if the library facing some limitations	✗
	The university library must have a sufficient, independent, and appropriate budget to its goals and tasks so it can easily facilitate the information needs of users	✓
	The current budget of the library should be a specific part of the current university or faculty budget and should be announced to the library chief at the beginning of each fiscal year	✗

✓ = It is according to standard      ▲ = it approximately is according to standard  
 ✗ = it is not according to standard      NA = Not Applicable

Formula 1 was used for calculating the acquisition. The total number of the Central Library of Tabriz University of Medical Sciences acquisition should be 763093464, but which were 36598, so there also has not a minimum acquisition. Our result shown 85.71% of the fourth standard has been reached.

Total library acquisition = basic acquisition + 100 F + 12 E + 335 U + 3000 M + 20000D

F = Number of full-time faculty members

E = Total number of full-time students

U = Number of undergraduate fields

M = Number of Master's Degrees fields

D = Number of PhD fields

(1)



In general, 66.66%, 75%, 62.5%, 85.71%, 100%, 66.66 %, 44.44%, and 33.33% of the objectives and tasks, Organization and Management, human resources, acquisition, organization of resources, Services, building and equipment, and budget standards were observed in the central library of Tabriz University of Medical Sciences respectively (Figure 1).

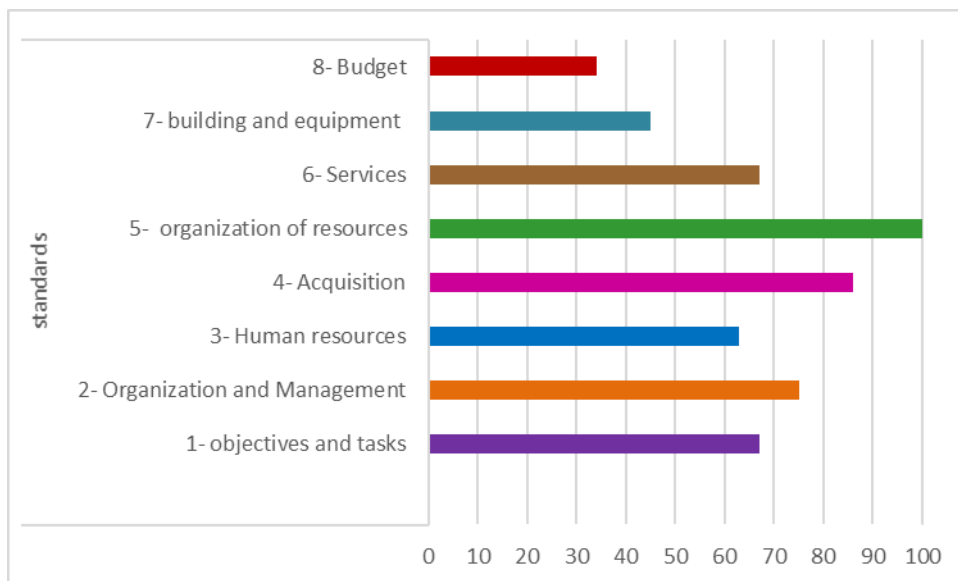


Figure 1. Compliance percentage of defined 8-standards in the Central Library of Tabriz University of Medical Sciences

#### 4. Discussion

The standard of Iranian university libraries by providing indicators for measuring the status of libraries based on the number of students, faculty members, the number of information resources, etc., allows officials and administrators to pay attention to the current conditions of the university as well as compare their status with the other universities.

The average compliance of the eight standards in the Central Library of Tabriz University of Medical Sciences was 66.78%. In Geliory et al. study, the compliance of research libraries of the Ministry of Jihad Agriculture with standards was reported to be 42.6%, which indicates that the central library of Tabriz University of Medical Sciences has a better status rather than the agricultural research organization libraries (18). According to the findings of the present study, some components of the Central Library of Tabriz University of Medical Sciences, such as

buildings, equipment, and budget, were substandard. These results are consistent with the research findings of Rasoul Abadi, Sadri, Khajeh Ali Jahanteghi, Taher, Ashour and Pathis (19-24).

Results showed 28.57% of the library staff was efficient and have knowledge about the encyclopedic dictionary of Library and Information Sciences, as well, libraries were open 5 days per week (each day 12 hours). While Hashemian et al. stated that only 29% of library managers of hospital libraries in Iran, Tehran, and Shahid Beheshti University of Medical Sciences were adherence from the study course and their educational field and 16% of them in hours and days of service delivery (25).

According to the standards, the total number of libraries acquisition in the Tabriz School of management and medical informatics should be 763093464, while there also is no minimum acquisition. These results are in accordance with the results of Shokooh Amiri, Hashemian, Ebrahimi, Hosseini and all of which indicate the difference between the current situation and the standards (6, 25-27).

This study showed that the highest level of compliance with library standards belonged to the organization of resources (100%) while in the study of Geliory et al., The number of employees had the highest compliance with library standards by 95.4%. In present study, the compliance rate of the objectives and tasks was 66.66% while Geliory et al. reported it to be 14.4%. Determining the tasks of the library can play an important role in preventing confusion, so special attention should be paid to them. Also, according to the findings, there was no specific and regular annual budget allocation in this library, which is consistent with the results of Geliory research (18).

The study conducted on the libraries of Payame Noor University in the central provinces has shown the average compliance based on the standard of human resources with a quantitative approach was 5.72% while it was 62.5% in this study (28). The Central Library of Tabriz University of Medical Sciences does not have enough space according to the standard, and these results are consistent with the findings of Rasoul Abadi and Azami Sardavi studies (29, 30).

Since Tabriz University of Medical Sciences is responsible for educating the users and promoting scientific and research findings, so performing these important tasks depends on completing and equipping the central library in this university. Paying attention to the library

services and also more consideration to the managers and standards compliance can be a beacon for the future development of educational libraries.

## **5. Conclusion**

The results of the present study revealed that the Central Library of Tabriz University of Medical Sciences has a moderate status according to the eight components of library standards. Compliance of standards such as buildings, equipment, and budget had in poor condition and standards of objectives and tasks, organization and management, human resources, acquisition, and services in relatively good status and organization of resources in good condition. University libraries are the most important scientific, educational, and research information place, so adhering to standards is a surefire way to reduce costs, prevent waste of human resources, and most importantly, improve library services for users.

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