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Measuring User Need and Satisfaction: a study of Dhaka University residential hall libraries, Bangladesh.

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Abstract

Users are the main attention of a library. Every library tries to meet the needs and requirements of its users. Knowing user needs and measuring their satisfaction is very important to ensure a better library service. Actually, library performance depends on the satisfaction of user towards services. For this purpose library authority needs to know the demands of its user first. The main objective of the study is to assess user's needs and satisfaction of the residential hall libraries of the University of Dhaka. A survey questionnaire was developed and used to collect data on students' demographics, their needs and requirements, their satisfaction and perceptions of their residential hall libraries' services. The research showed that most students aren't satisfied with the existing performance of their residential hall libraries. The study recommended also some exploratory guidelines for improving the present library performance.

Key words: User need, User satisfaction, Dhaka University residential hall library.

Introduction

Libraries have been a part of the institution of higher education for many years and are central in the educational process (Jackson, 2005).Each and every higher educational institution like university has a library for academic as well as research purpose. Higher education is mainly based on research for the contributing to the kingdom knowledge. Knowledge is created and communicated largely through teaching and research. University libraries are an integral part of teaching and research. Teaching and research depend upon the library, and achievements in teaching and research are not possible without the library (Ranganathan, 2012).

Aims and objectives of the study

The main aim of the study is to assess user's needs and satisfaction of the residential hall libraries of the University of Dhaka. Other objectives are to:

 - ➢ know the present condition of the libraries
 - ➢ know what types of materials and sources are used frequently

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- ➢ know how and why the libraries are used
- ➢ know about the potential users of the libraries and

Background of the study

Dhaka University is the oldest and the largest public university in Bangladesh. It was once called the "Oxford of the East". Dhaka University has always played an active role throughout the history of Bangladesh. Its contribution to the modern history of Bangladesh is something that can't be denied. The university has well accommodation facilities as it has a number of halls and hostels for both male and female students. In the beginning (1921), the journey of Dhaka University started with three halls- (i) Salimullah Muslim Hall, (ii) Jagannath Hall and (iii) Dhaka Hall (Shahidullah hall). Altogether Dhaka University now has 19 residence halls and five hostels which provide library services for the resident students of the university.

Residential hall library system is a good idea that provides the residents with resources that meet their educational, social and cultural needs. It is a wonderful way to get necessary documents without ever leaving one's residence. The primary mission of the residence hall library system is to provide desired information of the residents.

The University of Dhaka has a central library which is the biggest library (in the term of collection) in this region, besides every department, institution, research center and residential hall has its individual library for research and higher study. Hall libraries are playing a great role by assisting residential students of the hall to their academic study. In this study we try to know the user needs and measure their satisfaction towards library performance of the residential hall libraries of Dhaka University. This study covers the 19 residential hall libraries (including male and female) of the university.

Review of related literature

User is the main part of a library. Librarians and information managers should analyze the needs of their users and the role of the libraries in meeting these needs. According to Nurul Kawsar (2008) libraries or information delivery systems should attempt to meet the needs of the users in order to serve the community effectively and actively. To fulfill the user needs in right time it is necessary to know the user information needs first. Mezbah-Ul-Islam and Gausul-Hoq (2005) refers information needs as individual information needs of the user. Information needs is an individual or groups desire to locate and obtain information to satisfy a conscious or unconscious need. The purpose of a library or an information system is of course to fulfill some needs for documents and information for users or potential users. Such needs for example, may be related educational information, information for professional purposes or cultural purposes or for personal need. Satisfying users' needs is the primary objective of any library and librarian. And to ensure users' satisfaction it is necessary to identify and assess their needs and requirements. Satisfaction a function of relative level of expectations and perceives performance (CheRusuli, 2013). Applegate (1997) defines user satisfaction as "a personal, emotional reaction to a library

service or product". Bitner and Hubbert (1994) suggest that user satisfaction consists of service encounter satisfaction, "the consumer's dis/satisfaction with a discrete service encounter," and overall service satisfaction, "the consumer's overall dis/satisfaction with the organization based on all encounters and experiences with that particular organization". Milson-Martula and Menon (1995) stated that one element of high quality service is "the incorporation of users' personal needs and expectations into the development of programs and service." According to them, the continued success of a service organization such as an academic library depends on the organization's ability to adjust its products and services to correspond to user needs. They represent user satisfaction as the difference between what users expect and what they got. Cook and Heath (2001) identified the customer or user is the most critical element in assessing service quality. Similarly, Peter Hernon and Phillip Calvert (1997) suggested that only customers justify the existence of a library. Danuta A. Nitecki (1996) also claimed that "the assessment of how well a library succeeds depends on the user as a judge of quality." Abdul Majed and Bavakutty (2006) mentioned in their study user satisfaction survey is a tool to assess the quality of library services from the point of view of user satisfaction. It is assumed that the satisfied users are the real indicators of assessing the quality of library service.

Users' satisfaction of the services rendered by libraries relates to effective use of the services and resources provided by the library. The satisfaction derived by users greatly influences the utilization of the services rendered by the library (Aina, 2004). There is no doubt that satisfaction of library services influences the degree in which the services are used and it has been found to be an important factor that affects the use or non-use of library services. According to Calvert (2001) three dimensions of customer expectations those concern staff attitudes, the library environment and services that help the customer to find and use the library materials efficiently, are found in his study. Abagai (1993) explored that the usage of the library users and certainly their satisfaction with the services of the library depends on the availability of the skilled staff, knowledge materials and accommodation in the library.

A library's resources are important to user satisfaction. However, no library can satisfy all its users all the time. Some libraries have very limited resources and clearly are unable to satisfy their users, whereas others are large in size, have substantial holdings, and can provide a variety of services. Harris (1991) states that a collection of appropriate resources which supports the needs of the academic community and reflects the volume of relevant recorded knowledge. Obviously, those libraries that are able to provide users with whatever they want will achieve higher levels of user satisfaction. Thus, the availability of resources can have a significant influence on user satisfaction (Andaleeb 1998).

Responsiveness is another important element of service quality. It denotes the willingness of the staff to be helpful and to provide prompt services. At academic libraries, users expect that the library personnel will attend to their needs quickly and efficiently. Another expectation among

library users is that of competent services. They want the staff to be knowledgeable and to be able to assist them in locating needed materials and information quickly and efficiently. When users feel that the library staffs are competent, they will be ensured that their problems will be resolved easily, leading to greater satisfaction with the services.

Competency of staffs was also proposed as a separate component of service quality. For this, Andaleeb (1998) proposed that "The greater the perceived competence of the library staff, the greater the level of satisfaction."

The general behavior (demeanor) of library staffs also can have a significant impact on user satisfaction. Users look for staffs that are friendly and approachable, but not unnecessarily disturbing. So, positive demeanor of the library staffs causes the greater satisfaction of the users.

Physical or tangible evidence is another component of service quality that makes create higher satisfactory to library services. Andaleeb (1998) investigated that this factor can influence user satisfaction judgments.

There are two general approaches to the measurement of user satisfaction-the *Objective* and the *Subjective*. With the *Objective* approaches the library is the unit of analysis, and the proportion of items that the library can supply upon demand is the measurement of satisfaction. These measures of satisfaction are purported to be indicators of library performance, and it is assumed that users of libraries experience a satisfaction of their demands commensurate with these levels of library performance. With the *Subjective* approaches the user is the unit of analysis, and the user's opinions of how well the library has performed in satisfying his demands are the measurement of satisfaction. It is assumed that these user evaluations are valid indicators of library performance (D'Elia and Walsh-1983).

Methodology
The researchers used quantitative approach for conducting the research. At first a number of secondary sources (e.g. journals, thesis, research papers, proceedings, and relevant text books, etc.) were consulted to find out what had been written on measuring user need and satisfaction. In order to understand the nature of service quality and actual service position of DU hall libraries, researchers used a questionnaire survey to gather primary information directly from students of different residential halls of the university. In this study a closed-ended questionnaire was used where the respondents had to answer from the given options. The questionnaire was mainly designed into three parts. These questions consisted of following elements:

1. Demographic and academic information of respondents such as name, gender, age group, department, residential hall and academic year.
2. Respondents' information needs and requirements, and

3. Satisfaction of respondents towards library services.

For the category (3) above, a 5-point Likert scale was used for each question where 1 is for 'lowest' and 5 is for 'Highest'.

In this study, the residents of 19 residential halls of Dhaka University are the population. 25 students from each hall were selected as sample using simple random sampling. Thus a total of 475 resident students are the sample of this study.

After collecting data through structured questionnaire each of them was revised and verified that the data recorded in the questionnaires have been carefully and accurately filled in. Then the quantitative data were analyzed using the SPSS (Statistical Package for Social Sciences). Before analyzing data the variables were defined in a dataset using the software on the basis of the questionnaire. After all the variables of the questionnaire have been defined in a dataset, data was inputted for the 308 filled questionnaires which have been collected during the survey. And finally prepare an analysis report of the study.

Result of the study
A total of 308 students took part in this study. Among them only 61.69% (190) students used their hall libraries and among them maximum (28.90%) students used library for their academic purposes. Most of the respondents (58.77%) were in the age group of 21-25 years and 25.32% were of faculty of Arts of the university. 67.21% respondents were male and 32.79% were female in this study.

Usage of Libraries	Frequency	Percent
Yes	190	61.69
No	118	38.31
Total	**308**	**100**

Table I: Scenario of using hall libraries

Above table shows that out of 308 respondents, 190 (61.69%) students use their hall libraries and 118 (38.31%) students don't use the libraries. This suggests that a significant number of students who know about their hall library still don't use it.

Duration	Spending time in the library (hour/day)				Total
	less than 1	1-2 h/d	3-5 h/d	more than 5	

Daily	0	5	4	8	**17**
Most days	8	19	10	8	**45**
A few times every week	4	27	19	5	**55**
At least once a week	7	16	12	5	**40**
At least once a fortnight	2	8	4	2	**16**
At least once a month	10	5	1	1	**17**
Total	**31**	**80**	**50**	**29**	**190**

Table II: Duration of using hall libraries

Table II indicates that, among the 190 students who use libraries, 17 students were using library daily, 45 were using most days, 55 were using a few times every week, 40 were using at least once a week, 16 were using at least once a fortnight and at least once a month. On the other hand, 31 students were using libraries less than 1 hour/day, 80 students were using 1-2 hours/day, 50 students were using 3-5 hours/day and 29 students were using more than 5 hours/day.

Faculty	Frequency	Percent
Arts	78	25.32
Science	36	11.69
Law	11	3.57
Business Studies	37	12.01
Social Sciences	45	14.61
Biology	34	11.04
Pharmacy	7	2.27
Earth and Environmental Sciences	9	2.92
Engineering and Technology	16	5.19
Institutes	35	11.36
Total	**308**	**100**

Table III: Faculty of the respondents

The above table shows that out of 308 respondents, 78 (25.32%) were from the Faculty of Arts, 36 (11.69%) were from Sciences, 11 (3.57%) students were from Law, 37 (12.01%) were from Business Studies, 45 (14.61%) were from Social Sciences, 34 (11.04%) were from Biology, 7 (2.27%) were from Pharmacy, 9 (2.92%) were form Earth and Environmental Sciences, 16 (5.19%) were from Engineering and Technology, and 35 (11.36%) students were from various Institutions of DU.

Table IV shows that among 308 students, 207 (67.21%) were male and 101 (32.79%) were female. This suggests a balance between male and female respondents. Among them 76 (24.68%) students were aged between 15-20 years. The largest group of students (181, 58.77%) comprised of those in the age group of 21-25 years, 44 (14.29%) students were aged between 26-30 and the smallest group of respondents (7, 2.27%) was above 30 years.

Age group		15-20		21-25		26-30		Above 30		Total	
		n	%	n	%	n	%	n	%	n	%
Gender	Male	44	14.29	129	41.88	32	10.39	2	0.65	207	67.21
	Female	32	10.39	52	16.88	12	3.90	5	1.62	101	32.79
Total		76	24.68	181	58.77	44	14.29	7	2.27	308	100.00

Table IV: Age group by gender

Table V express that, 63 (20.45% of total respondents) students were visiting library for regular study, 89 (28.90%) were for academic purposes, 53 (17.21%) were for group study, 34 (11.04%) were for reading newspaper/ magazine, 16 (5.19%) were for using internet, 44 (14.29%) were for reference work, 28 (9.09%) were for reading fictions and 34 (11.04%) were using libraries for other purposes. In this question there was an opportunity to choose more than one option for respondents.

Purposes	Frequency	Percent
Regular study	63	20.45
Academic purpose	89	28.90
Group study	53	17.21
Reading newspaper/ magazine	34	11.04
Using internet	16	5.19
Reference work	44	14.29
Reading fiction	28	9.09
Other purposes	34	11.04

Table V: Purpose of using/ visiting hall libraries

User needs and requirements
Among the respondents maximum (32.79%) students prefer books as their required materials, some of them prefer newspaper; others prefer research report, magazine etc. whereas maximum of them prefer printed format to any other format (i.e. digitized, electronic, online version etc.)

However most of them use both Bengali and English language to meet their information need and library catalogue is the most used tool to find their required materials.

Materials	Frequency	Percent
Book	101	32.79
Journal	69	22.40
Magazine	57	18.51
Newspaper	77	25.00
Research report	58	18.83
Others	49	15.91

Table VI: Preferred materials to the respondents

Above table indicates that, 101 (32.79% of total respondents) students preferred Book, 69 (22.40%) preferred Journal, 57 (18.51%) preferred Magazine, 77 (25.00%) preferred Newspaper, 58 (18.83%) preferred Research report and 49 (15.91%) preferred others materials. In this question there was an opportunity to choose more than one option for respondents.

Material's type	Frequency	Percent
Printed	100	52.63
electronic version	43	22.63
online version	40	21.05
Others	7	3.68
Total	**190**	**100.00**

Table VII: Preferred material's type

This table indicates that out of 190 respondents 100 (52.63%) students preferred printed materials, 43 (22.63%) preferred electronic version, 40 (21.05%) preferred online version and 7 (3.68%) students preferred others version of materials.

Preferred languages	Frequency	Percent
Bengali	28	9.09
English	77	25.00
Both Bengali and English	95	30.84
Arabic	6	1.95

Table VIII: Preferred languages

Table VIII indicates that 28 (9.09%) students preferred Bengali languages, 77 (25.00%) preferred English, 95 (30.84%) preferred Both Bengali and English and 6 (1.95%) students preferred Arabic language to read documents. In this question there was an opportunity to choose more than one option for respondents.

Preferred Library service

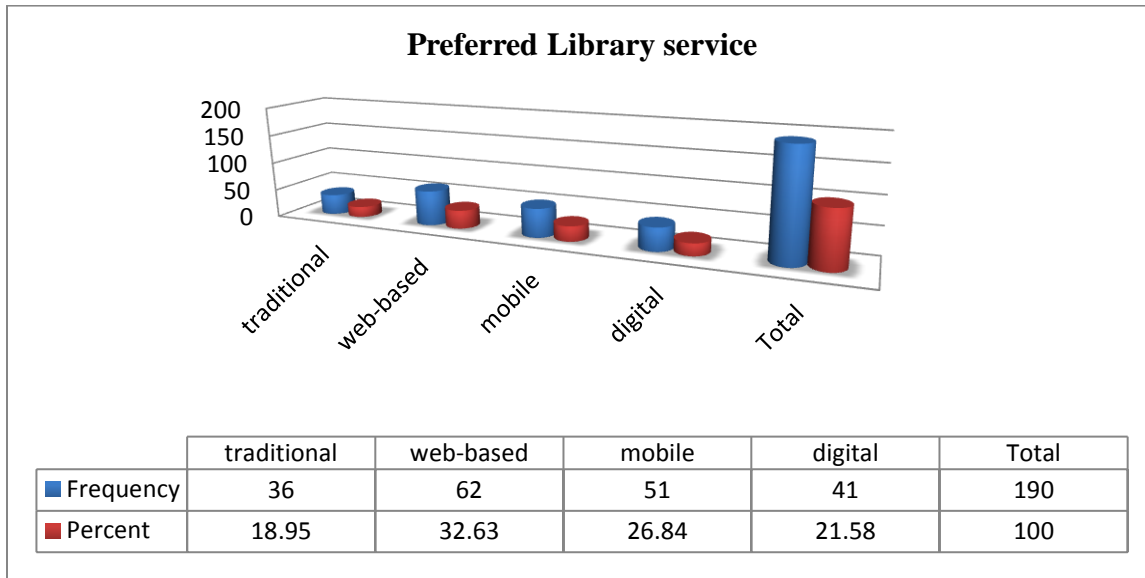|	traditional	web-based	mobile	digital	Total
■ Frequency	36	62	51	41	190
■ Percent	18.95	32.63	26.84	21.58	100

Figure I: Preferred library service

This figure indicates that 36 (18.95%) students preferred traditional library service, 62 (32.63%) preferred web-based library service, 51 (26.84%) preferred mobile library service and 41(21.58%) students preferred digital library system among the 190 students who used their hall libraries.

Preferred tools	Frequency	Percent
Library catalogue	87	28.25
OPAC	24	7.79
Database	40	12.99
Content page	51	16.56
Index	42	13.64
Abstract	12	3.90
Bibliography	38	12.34
Accession list	52	16.88
Others	24	7.79

Table IX: Preferred library service

Table IX express that, 87 (28.25% of total respondents) students were using library catalogue, 24 (7.79%) were using OPAC, 40 (12.99%) were using Database, 51 (16.56%) were using content page, 42 (13.64%) were using index, 12 (3.90%) were using Abstract, 38 (12.34%) were using Bibliography, 52 (16.88%) were using Accession list and 24 (7.79%) were using other tools for finding out their required materials. In this question there was an opportunity to choose more than one option for respondents.

Respondents' satisfaction towards library services
Respondents were requested to express their perception towards residential hall library service based on some questions. In this section, the respondent's perceptions were analyzed using frequency table.

Table X shows the means and standard deviations (on a 5-point scale) of students' opinion on library performance of Dhaka University residential halls. It seems students' satisfaction levels on library performance are generally low as most ratings fell below 3 (i.e. the average score).

Variables	Mean	SD
present library opening hour	2.95	0.99
existing collection	2.56	0.88
Find required materials	2.81	0.83
up-to-date materials	2.66	0.78
fulfill demand	2.87	0.78
circulation function	2.77	0.80
reader service	2.75	0.81
environment	3.02	0.85
rules and regulation	2.93	0.90
helpful library personnel	3.04	0.80
knowledgeable personnel	2.81	0.89
attitude of staffs	2.78	0.87
overall library service	2.79	0.81
Overall satisfaction	2.88	0.82

Table X: respondent's satisfaction towards hall library performance

Users' opinion and intention
Maximum numbers of students think that web-based library service is more preferable to any other systems. Most (54.55%) students intend to use hall library in future where some have no intention and a small number of the students are uncertain. Some students who do not use library mentioned the reasons for not using it. They noted that in their hall libraries there have no

enough update materials, adequate fiction in the collection, sufficient place, furniture etc. Others mentioned that library hour is not convenient; environment is not good.

Intention	Frequency	Percent
Yes	168	54.55
No	85	27.60
Unsure	55	17.86
Total	**308**	**100**

Table IX: Respondents' intention to use library

Table IX indicates that 168 (54.55%) students have their intention to use library while 85 (27.60%) have no intention and 55 (17.86%) were unsure to use library.

Discussions
Among the respondents maximum (32.79%) students prefer books as their required materials, some of them prefer newspaper; others prefer research report, magazine etc. whereas maximum of them prefer printed format to any other format (i.e. digitized, electronic, online version etc.) However most of them use both Bengali and English language to meet their information need and library catalogue is the most used tool to find their required materials. Maximum numbers of students think that web-based library service is more preferable to any other systems. Most (54.55%) students intend to use hall library in future where some have no intention and a small number of the students are uncertain. Some students who do not use library mentioned the reasons for not using it. They noted that in their hall libraries there have no enough update materials, adequate fiction in the collection, sufficient place, furniture etc. Others mentioned that library hour is not convenient; environment is not good. Maximum users are dissatisfied to existing library collections and they think there is a great lack of update reading materials. Most of them are on average level of satisfaction of present opening hour, library circulation function, reader service, library rules and regulations and finally overall library services.

Conclusion
Knowing user needs and measuring their satisfaction is very important to ensure a better library service. Actually, effective library service will be ensured by knowing users' demand and their satisfaction to library performance and serving them as their demand. So, every library should conduct user survey after a certain period of time with the aim of improving the library's performance.

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