

Reshaping Library Services through User Feedback: A Path to Improve User Satisfaction in Academic Libraries

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Abstract

Academic libraries are crucial in supporting teaching, learning, and research at their institutions, with a strong focus on user services. Understanding user needs through feedback is critical for enhancing service quality. This study at the University of Colombo aimed to establish a robust mechanism for collecting undergraduate feedback to improve library services. The survey targeted 12,000 registered library users from the faculties of Arts, Management & Finance, Law, and Education. A sample size of 373 was determined using the Krejcie and Morgan table, and a simple random sampling technique was incorporated to draw the sample. Data were collected via Google form-based questionnaires between March and July 2023. A total of 365 responses (97.8%) were received, with most respondents being first-year students from the Faculty of Arts (63.3%). The majority of undergraduates were satisfied with all four categories of library services used to obtain feedback: library collection, library services, technology-based facilities, and the library website. Results showed 73% of students accessed services to request reading materials. Most were satisfied with the support provided by library staff, though only 68% were satisfied with their overall library experience. Challenges included an insufficient number of books, restricted access to certain sections of the library, a lack of core books in native languages, and an outdated collection. Respondents suggested increasing e-book and e-journal availability, improving the library website, and offering more training on e-resources. A plagiarism detection service was also noted as a need.

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Despite these issues, students appreciated the support of the library staff. Suggestions included using social media for library updates and holding regular meetings with students. These measures aim to foster two-way communication and better align services with user needs. Maintaining a responsive feedback mechanism is essential to address concerns, support academic excellence, and improve satisfaction. The findings of the present study are limited to the Main Library of the University of Colombo and can be applied only to a similar context.

Keywords: Library services, User feedback, Undergraduate students, Academic Library, Sri Lanka

Introduction

Quality Assurance (QA) is embedded in the operations of all the universities in Sri Lanka to achieve excellence in education, research, and stakeholder engagement to enrich human potential for the betterment of society. The main focus of this planned systematic process is to identify and evaluate the best practices of structures, systems, services, processes, and people for continuous improvement, accountability, and a participative approach to deliver quality products relevant and responsive to the needs of the customer (McGregor, 2004). The quality assurance activities of the universities are driven by the operational guidelines laid by the Quality Assurance Council (QAC) of the University Grants Commission. Since quality is an intangible phenomenon, it is measured through indicators or criteria to make judgements about the phenomenon. User feedback is a measure that the Quality Assurance Council is using to evaluate stakeholder engagement.

User feedback emerges as a critical tool in this effort, offering a structured process to gather library users' perspectives on collections, services, and spaces. It provides valuable insights into the needs, behaviours, and challenges faced by library users. Feedback mechanisms empower libraries to enhance user experiences, evaluate satisfaction levels, identify service gaps, and adapt to the changing needs of their communities (Porat, 2016). By adopting user feedback mechanisms, academic libraries can align their services with the expectations of their users, ensuring relevance and quality in a rapidly evolving educational landscape.

Various service quality models, such as SERVQUAL and LIBQUAL, have been extensively utilized by scholars in the field of Library and Information Science to investigate user perception of academic libraries globally. Similar studies have also been conducted in the Sri

Lankan context (Jayasundara, 2010; Somaratna & Pieris, 2011; Somaratna, 2019; Arachchige et al., 2021). These studies emphasized the importance of understanding user needs to enhance library services. Identifying user expectations is an ongoing process, particularly given the changing nature of the information landscape and the continuously evolving needs of new-generation students. The rapid advancements in technology, academic publishing, and user behaviour necessitate a robust approach to gathering and addressing student feedback.

The University of Colombo, founded in 1921, is Sri Lanka's oldest higher education institution. It reached an extraordinary milestone in the year 2024 by achieving the No. 1 university in the country by four prestigious ranking systems: the Times Higher Education World Rankings, QS World Rankings, Scimago Institutions Rankings, and Webometrics Rankings (University of Colombo Newsletter, 2024). The Library was founded in the same year and is considered the knowledge hub of the university. The Main Library of the University of Colombo houses significant collections of law, management, education, and other streams of arts and humanities. The collection of the Main Library comprises both print and e-resources. The printed collection consists of approximately 300,000 books and 250 journal titles. The library provides access to digital resources including e-databases (Emerald, Taylor & Francis, Oxford University Press, JSTOR), e-journals, e-books, many other e-resources, and special collections in the subject disciplines of Humanities, Education, Law, Management and Social Sciences. In addition, the library provides a different array of services. Profoundly personalized services as research support services, to inculcate the research culture of the university community. The library is continuously equipped with modern, state-of-the-art technologies to better serve the user community with technologically advanced spaces such as smart classrooms and e-resource centres. At present, the library website acts as the gateway to most of the vital resources and services provided to the patrons.

Although user feedback on library resources and services is vital in providing user-centred services, the aspect was not given much emphasis until the establishment of the Library Quality Assurance cell. Therefore, this study aims to explore undergraduate students' perceptions of the University of Colombo library resources and services through a structured user feedback mechanism. By doing so, it seeks to contribute to the ongoing dialogue on improving academic library services to better align with user needs and expectations in a rapidly changing academic environment.

Literature review

Academic libraries are vital in higher education, serving as critical information providers that support teaching, learning, and research. These institutions prioritize user-centric approaches, tailoring services to meet user expectations with the ultimate goal of achieving satisfaction and loyalty. Understanding user needs and expectations is essential for libraries to maintain relevance in the face of evolving educational landscapes.

Many scholars have emphasized the importance of collecting user feedback to enhance library services. Porat (2016) describes user feedback as "a systematic process of obtaining users' opinions about services, collections, and space in order to improve the experience and therefore, satisfaction" (p. 214). Gathering the feedback allows libraries to gain valuable insights into user behaviours, needs, and challenges, enabling them to refine their services. Feedback can be collected through both formal and informal methods. Formal methods include structured studies focusing on aspects such as Library as place, navigation, satisfaction, and user experience, while informal methods involve tools such as suggestion boxes, website feedback forms, social media, and student forums (Porat, 2016). Despite being time-intensive and resource-heavy, systematic user feedback processes are considered worthwhile investments due to their capacity to address service gaps and improve the overall library experience. User satisfaction is inherently tied to users' perceptions of service quality. Hernon and Altman (2010) define satisfaction as "an emotional reaction, the degree of contentment or discontentment with a specific transaction or service encounter". When library services meet or exceed expectations, users are satisfied; otherwise, dissatisfaction arises. This subjective experience reflects the degree to which library services, staff attitudes, and physical and digital environments meet users' needs and expectations (Tetteh & Nyantakyi-Baah, 2019).

Studies have identified various factors influencing user satisfaction. Vijeyaluxmy (2015) highlights that updated textbooks, recreational reading materials, and supportive staff are crucial for student satisfaction. Similarly, Ranganadham and Babu (2012) stress the importance of balancing e-resources and print collections to address shifting user preferences, advocating for targeted awareness programs to improve resource access. Andaleeb and Simmonds (1998) emphasize the need for user-centric service models, particularly as technological advancements reshape library operations. Emerging technologies such as the Internet of Things (IoT), cloud computing, and artificial intelligence have significantly transformed library functions, enabling them to maintain their pivotal roles in education and research.

The role of library spaces and facilities in user satisfaction has also been highlighted in several studies. Kassim (2009) found high satisfaction levels with physical spaces and facilities in Malaysian libraries, though satisfaction with service quality and collection adequacy varied. Khoo et al. (2016) stress the importance of equipping library spaces for technological support, while Brunskill (2020) highlights accessibility challenges in library web services. Innovative methods, such as sticky-note surveys and pop-up feedback forms, have proven effective in capturing actionable user insights (Camacho et al., 2020; Chiranov, 2011).

Libraries also play a critical role in promoting academic success through information literacy initiatives. Soltani and Nikou (2020) revealed gaps in information literacy among international students in Finnish universities, underscoring the importance of targeted training programs. Borghuis (1997) similarly explored the impact of user feedback on enhancing e-resources and information literacy programs, demonstrating their importance in fostering academic achievement.

Service performance and technological integration are critical to shaping user experiences. Wilson and Orr (1995) found that part-time students at the University of Ulster valued staff support more than facilities, demonstrating the impact of interpersonal interactions on satisfaction. Adeniran (2011) emphasized the relationship between service quality and user satisfaction, recommending continuous service and infrastructure upgrades to meet evolving demands. Studies, including those by Sykes (2007) and Ranganadham and Babu (2012) underscore the need for academic libraries to balance traditional and digital resources to remain relevant in the "Google generation." Feedback systems, such as those implemented at Montana State University, have demonstrated the value of incorporating user insights into library strategies (Frank, 2023).

Although collecting user feedback is often costly, it provides libraries valuable opportunities to align services with user expectations. Porat (2016) stresses the necessity of integrating user insights into strategic planning to effectively address service gaps. Differences in satisfaction levels across demographics and disciplines further highlight the importance of tailoring services to diverse user groups. Terhile and Anthanissus (2013), recommended improving the organization and quality of library materials after studying user satisfaction in Nigerian academic libraries, reflecting global trends in service customization.

User feedback studies in Sri Lankan academic libraries

Research on user satisfaction with library resources and services in Sri Lankan university libraries has offered diverse insights into user experiences and expectations. Traditional library services, including staff support, cleanliness, and seating capacity, have consistently received positive feedback, while dissatisfaction has been more commonly linked to digital resources and access-related challenges.

The positive role of library staff and the physical environment in enhancing user satisfaction is a recurring theme across studies. A recent study done by Hindagolla (2021) identified user satisfaction with library resources and services at the Library of Science Faculty and discovered that the majority of the students are satisfied with library services and available resources. Findings from the Main Library of the University of Peradeniya revealed high satisfaction levels among undergraduates with cleanliness, lighting, seating capacity, and staff support. However, moderate satisfaction was noted for computers and photocopy services, with unawareness of available resources limiting their full utilization. Comprehensive information literacy programs were recommended to address this gap (Gunasekera, 2010). Similarly, research at the Trincomalee Campus of Eastern University and the Open University of Sri Lanka indicated that users appreciated the professionalism of library staff, structured procedures, and conducive environments. Nonetheless, both studies emphasized the need for enhanced electronic resource collections and improved internet access (Vijeyaluxmy, 2015; Amarasekara & Marasinghe, 2020). At General Sir John Kotelawala Defence University, users expressed satisfaction with traditional services such as reference and circulation, as well as online reservation systems, but highlighted areas for improvement in digital services (Ranawella & Rajapaksha, 2017). Another study was conducted at the Library of the Institute of Indigenous Medicine (IIM), University of Colombo, on users' satisfaction with information resources and services and revealed that the majority of the users are satisfied with the resources and services. The study especially emphasised the inadequacy of existing electronic resources (Gamage, 2022).

However, dissatisfaction with digital resources and electronic services is a persistent issue. Bioscience undergraduates at the University of Jaffna expressed dissatisfaction with the electronic collection, despite frequent library visits for borrowing books and completing assignments. This finding underscores the need to update library collections and expand digital resources (Chiranov, 2011). Postgraduate students at the Open University of Sri Lanka also

expressed dissatisfaction with remote access to e-resources, OPAC/Web OPAC, and scanning services, stressing the importance of strengthening digital offerings (Rubasinghe & Bodhinayake, 2018). Challenges related to slow internet speeds, inadequate training, and limited awareness of available resources were similarly noted in a study of medical officers, identifying these as significant barriers to effective e-resource utilization (Sritharan, 2018). Illangarathne (2018) studied the user satisfaction with e-library services in academic libraries of Sri Lanka using structural equation modelling. The study revealed that there are direct associations between user satisfaction with service quality and service value.

Infrastructure and collection limitations were identified as additional areas for improvement. Undergraduates at the University of Jaffna highlighted the need for updated library collections to meet academic demands (Chandrasekar & Murugathas, 2012). A broader study involving three major Sri Lankan universities revealed dissatisfaction with aspects such as ventilation, opening hours, and e-learning facilities, emphasizing the importance of improving both physical and digital infrastructure (Nawarathne & Singh, 2013).

Nawarathne and Rathnayaka (2019) conducted an evaluation on user satisfaction with academic library services using the Cross-Industry Standard Process for Data Mining (CRISP-DM) process by considering physical facilities, library collection, library services, and website services. Furthermore, the study revealed that library collection and library services are highly correlated with physical facilities, whereas library services are highly correlated with library collection and library website services.

Satisfaction levels also vary across academic disciplines. At the Trincomalee Campus, Arts students reported higher satisfaction with available resources compared to Science students, a trend similarly observed at the Open University of Sri Lanka (Vijeyaluxmy, 2015; Rubasinghe & Bodhinayake, 2018). Despite these findings, there remains limited research specifically targeting the needs of Natural and Applied Sciences undergraduates, leaving a significant gap in understanding their unique requirements.

The importance of aligning library services with user needs and assessing service quality from a user's perspective has been emphasized in several studies. By utilizing the SERVQUAL model, Somaratna et al. (2010) identified key service quality attributes relevant to Sri Lankan academic libraries, offering actionable insights for improving user satisfaction. Similarly, a study at the University of Jaffna found that access to periodicals, adequate seating, convenient

opening hours, and orientation programs significantly impact satisfaction, emphasizing the importance of aligning services with user expectations (Sivathaasan, 2013). Gunawardena (2016) further highlighted that infrastructure facilities play a critical role in the effectiveness of library management systems, with user feedback being essential for refining these systems. These studies underscore user feedback significance in shaping library services to better meet user needs.

The literature framework derived from previous studies is depicted by Figure 1. Across these studies, user feedback emerges as a foundational tool for enhancing library services, infrastructure, and user experiences. Addressing these gaps is essential for ensuring that academic libraries remain relevant and effective in catering to the needs of diverse user groups.

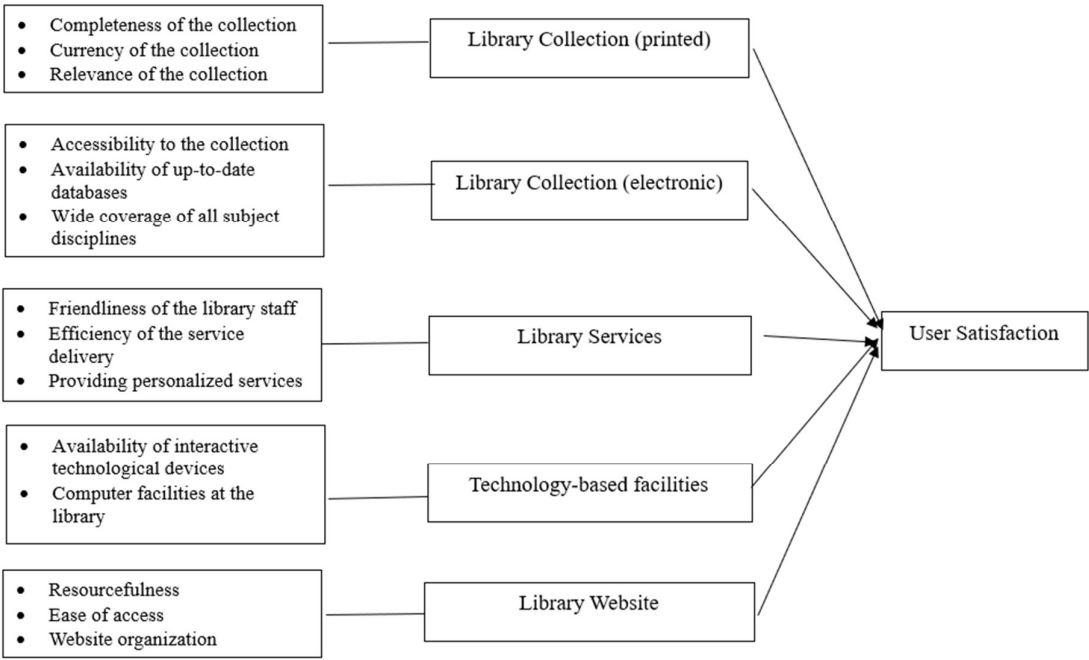


Figure 1: Literature Framework

This study aims to fill the identified literature gap, particularly in exploring user satisfaction with library services in the University of Colombo library. To achieve this aim, three objectives were set: to explore undergraduates’ satisfaction with the library collection and its services, technology-based library facilities, and the library website.

Methodology

This study was conducted at the University of Colombo Library from March to July 2023, employing a mixed-method research strategy and data were collected through feedback forms. The Main library serves a total of 12,000 registered undergraduates. The sample size was determined using the Krejcie and Morgan Table (Krejcie & Morgan, 1970), resulting in a selected sample of 373 students. The simple random sampling technique was applied to draw the respondents, and a questionnaire was used as the data collection tool, which adhered to the policies of the University of Colombo. The questionnaire was structured into five sections: demographic data, library collection (printed collection, electronic collection), library services (user support provided by staff, circulation/counter services, article request service), technology-based facilities (interactive/technological devices, smart classroom facilities, computer facilities at the E-resource centre) and the library website (resourcefulness, ease of access, website organization). These major areas were further divided to sub-categories as follows;

- library collection (printed) - completeness of the collection /currency of the collection/ relevancy of the collection
- library collection (electronic) - accessibility to the collection/ availability of up-to-date databases/ wide coverage of all subject disciplines
- library services - friendliness of the library staff/ efficiency of the service delivery/ providing personalised services
- technology-based facilities - availability of interactive/technological devices/ facilities available at the smart-classroom/ computer facilities at the E-resource centre
- library website - resourcefulness/ ease of access/ website organization

Students' satisfaction was obtained using a five-point Likert scale. Open-ended questions were included under each subcategory to capture in-depth insights into library resources and services. The questionnaires were distributed via Google Forms through registered university emails and WhatsApp groups. In addition, printed questionnaires were distributed among library users. A total of 365 responses were received, yielding a response rate of 97.85%. The data was analyzed using descriptive statistical methods, while thematic analysis was applied to open-ended questions.

Results and Analysis

Undergraduates' demographics

The majority of the respondents were from the Faculty of Arts, with a percentage of 63.3%. 22.0% were from the Faculty of Law, followed by the Faculties of Management & Finance (9.4%) and Education (5.3%). Of the total respondents, 57.7% were First-year undergraduates and 22.9% were from the second year. Both the third and fourth years covered 19.5% (figure 2).

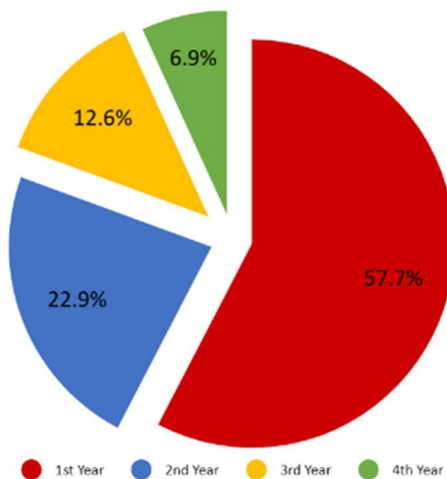


Figure 2: Undergraduates Based on the Year of Study

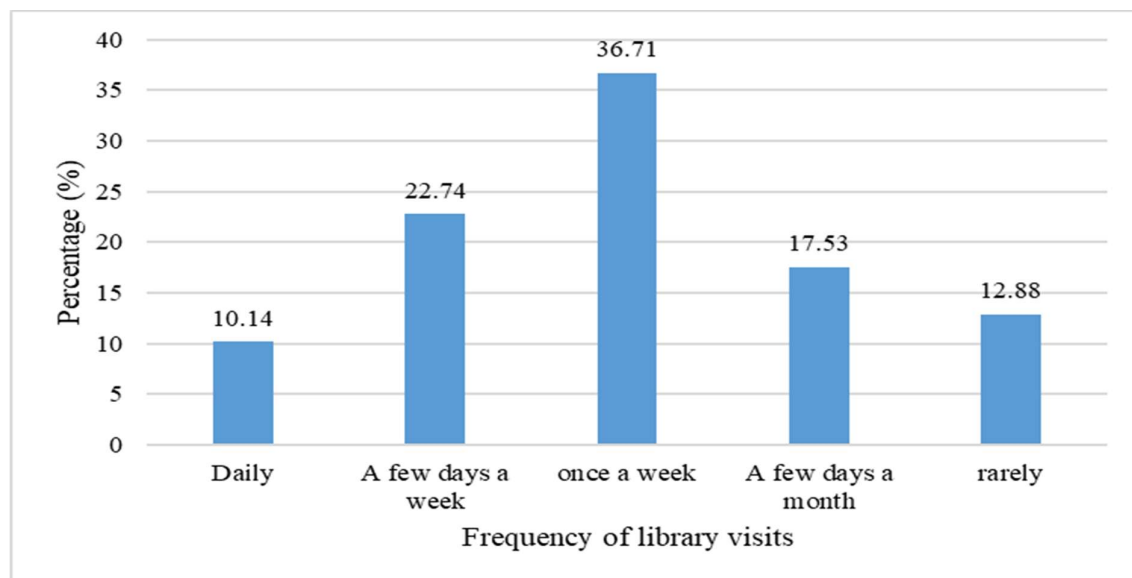


Figure 3: Frequency of Library Visits

Frequency of library visits

Most students visit the library at least once a week, as depicted in Figure 3. Among them, 10.11% were daily visitors, 22.74% visited a few days a week, and the majority (36.71%) visited the library at least once a week.

User feedback on the library collection

Printed collection

Undergraduates' satisfaction with the main printed collections of the library reveals that they are satisfied with the available collections. The satisfaction rates for each collection are shown in Figure 4; Lending collection- 76.7%, Reference collection- 81.8%, Law collection- 62.6%, Periodicals collection- 70.4% and Ceylon collection- 69.5%.

Overall, 24.82% of undergraduates reported being very satisfied with the physical library collection, while 47.38% were satisfied. Additionally, 25.8% had a neutral opinion, and nearly 2% expressed dissatisfaction with the collection. Of the undergraduates who are using the Main Library, nearly 60% strongly "Agreed" or "Agreed" with the completeness of the library collection. This is mainly reflected by comments received for open-ended questions from the students of the faculties of Arts and Law. However, only 48% agreed with the currency of the collection. "Though the collection covers all the main subjects of my discipline, it is difficult to find the latest editions," commented an undergraduate of the Faculty of Management & Finance. Similar comments were received from students who are following economics and geography from the Faculty of Arts. Overall, 65% of the respondents were satisfied with the relevancy of the printed collection of the Main Library.

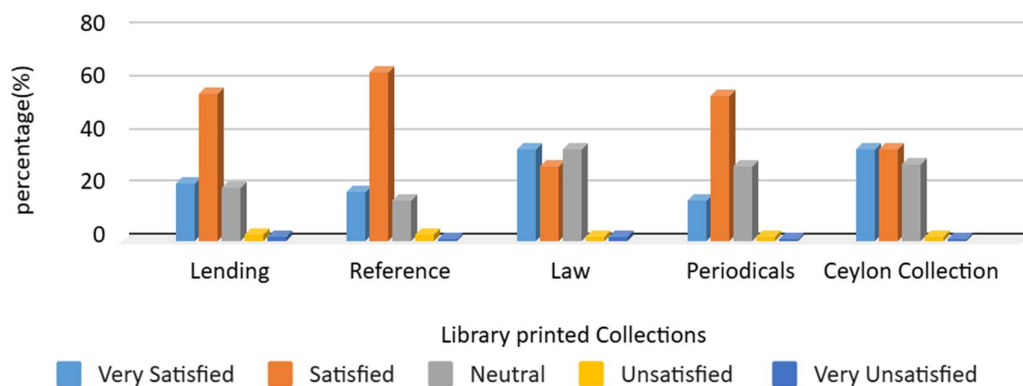


Figure 4: Undergraduates' Satisfaction with Different Collections in the Library

E- Collection

Results obtained for the undergraduates' satisfaction with the e-collection depict that only 58.4% of the students are satisfied with the electronic collection. From the e-resources, 78% of respondents were satisfied with e-journals and e-databases, 42% with e-books, and 57% with website resources. Subscribed databases Emerald, Taylor & Francis, Oxford University Press, and JSTOR were identified as databases that are used by Arts and Management students, while Law students ranked HeinOnline and Law Lanka as their preferred databases. Students of the Faculty of Management & Finance preferred the Emerald Database over the other databases. However, 41.6% of students were dissatisfied with available electronic databases, as their specific needs are not covered by them.

Students (72%) responded that they can access electronic databases easily through the links provided via the library website. A final-year undergraduate from the Department of Economics commented that “most of the time, when I try to download some of the latest articles for my research, it won't allow me to download.” However, the majority of undergraduates positively commented on the availability of online databases, which allow them to access even remotely. Around 62% of the students agreed that e-databases cover their subject disciplines. A student from the Faculty of Law commented that HeinOnline is a very useful database for Law students as it is a completely subject-specific database and requested electronic databases with wide coverage and current article downloading facilities.

User feedback on Library Services

Library services such as user support provided by staff, circulation/counter services, and the article request service offered by the Main Library were evaluated. Undergraduate satisfaction with staff support in the library's main service sections is illustrated in Figure 5. The results show that nearly or above 75% of students were satisfied with the support they received across all service sections.

When analyzing student support received at the library's main counter, nearly 90% of students expressed satisfaction with the counter services. Additionally, undergraduates were satisfied with the library's article supply service, which successfully fulfilled 83.33% of the requested journal articles during the period.

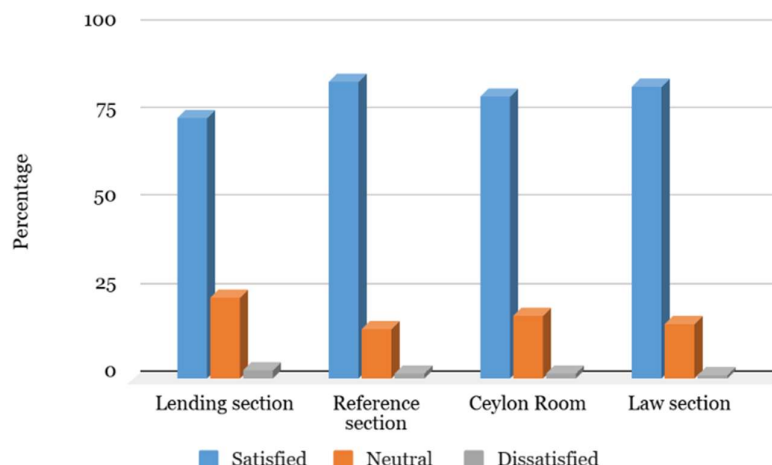


Figure 5: Undergraduates' Satisfaction with User Support Received from the Library Staff

Undergraduates (65.8%) are satisfied with the friendliness of the library staff. Furthermore, they agreed with the efficient service delivery of the staff, and the satisfaction rate was 72.5%. Students appreciated the provision of personalized services through the Research Support Service launched by the library. One of the final-year Political Science undergraduates commented that “library staff is very friendly. They always help me to find information for my assignments, and most importantly, the guidance I received for literature review writing is highly commendable”. Another undergraduate of the Faculty of Education commented, “Even though the library has limited resources on some of the information I’m looking for, library staff always try to fulfil my needs from other libraries through the Interlibrary Loan (ILL) service”. According to the student feedback, nearly 82.2% were satisfied with the personalized services rendered by the library staff to achieve their specific information needs.

User feedback on Technology-based facilities

Student feedback on technology-based facilities at the main library was gathered under three categories: satisfaction with interactive/technological devices, smart classroom facilities, and computer facilities at the E-resource centre. The findings indicate that undergraduates were satisfied across all categories, with satisfaction rates of 77.13%, 60.6%, and 62.8%, respectively (Figure 6).

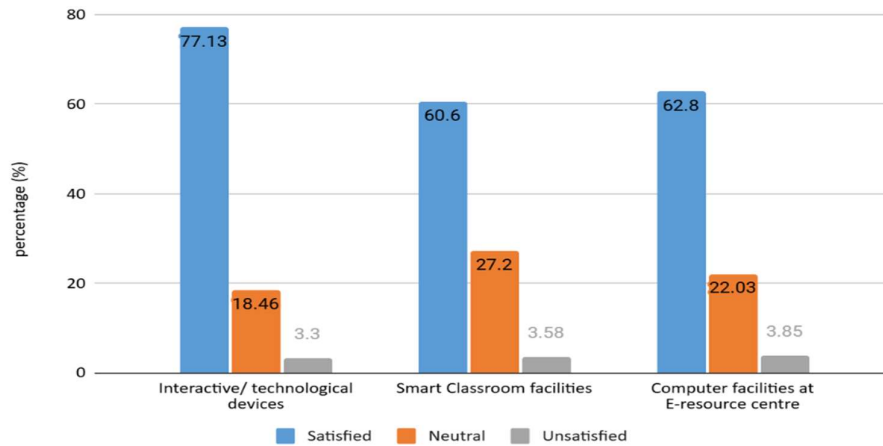


Figure 6: Undergraduates' Satisfaction with Technology-based Facilities

User feedback on the Library Website

Undergraduates' satisfaction with the library website was evaluated based on three criteria: resourcefulness, ease of access, and website organization. Regarding the first criterion, the resourcefulness of the library website, 67.5% of undergraduates expressed their satisfaction. For the second criterion, ease of access, 57.6% reported being satisfied. Finally, for the third criterion, website organization, 52.3% of respondents indicated their satisfaction (Figure 7). Overall, 59.2% of undergraduates were satisfied with the library website, while approximately 30.0% were neutral and about 12.0% were dissatisfied.

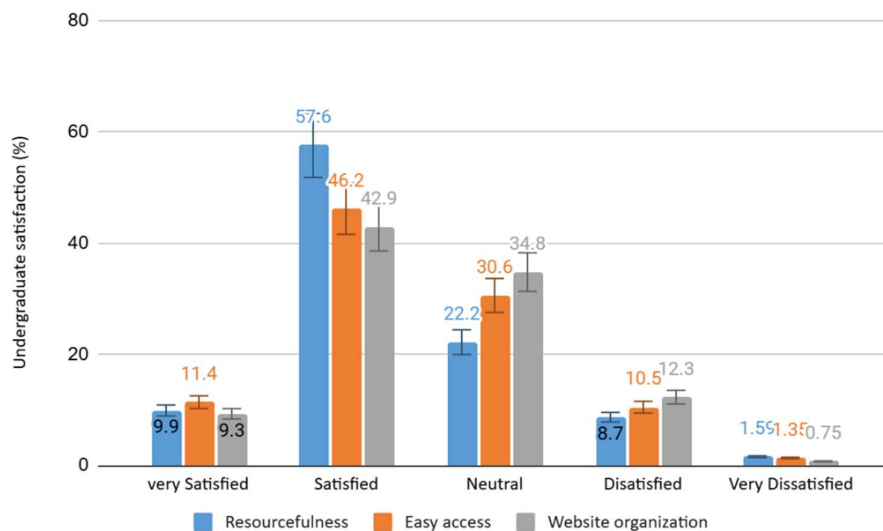


Figure 7: Undergraduates' Satisfaction with the Library Website

A student from the Faculty of Arts commented that the “Library website is well organized and links are available for all the important information sources, such as the library catalogue, Past Paper database, and electronic resources”. However, 42% of the students were either neutral or dissatisfied with the website. This group has commented that the website is too crowded and difficult to find links for important information sources without guidance. They have requested awareness sessions on how to use the library OPAC and Learning Management System.

User perception of the overall library experience

Results for user satisfaction with the overall library experience revealed that around 68% of students were satisfied with the overall library experience they received from the main library of the University of Colombo (Figure 8). However, 22.6% were neutral, and around 10% were dissatisfied with the overall experience.

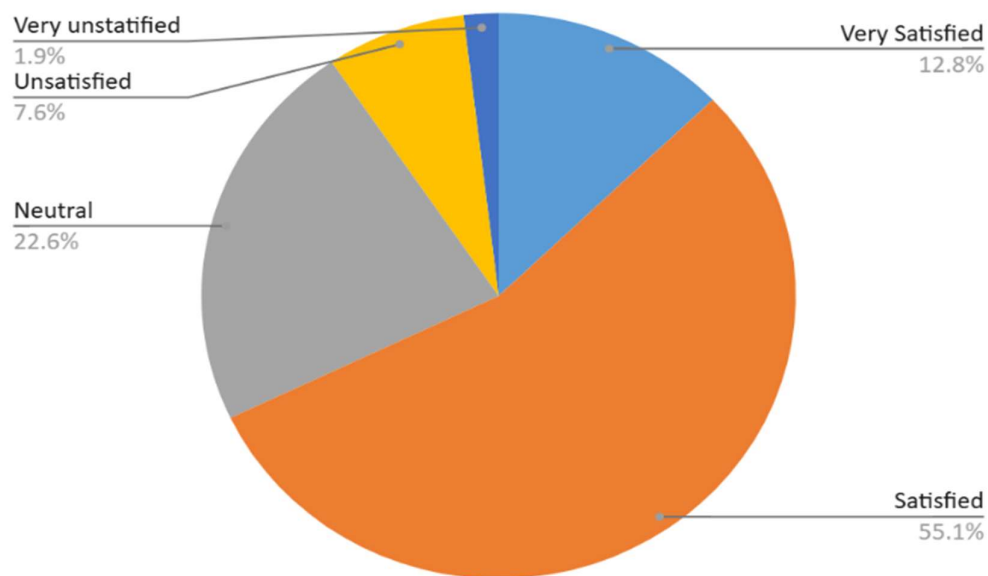


Figure 8: Undergraduates’ Satisfaction with the Overall Library Experience

User comments on the overall library experience

Comments received from user feedback forms were categorized into three main areas: positive feedback on library services (32.8%), negative feedback on library services (28.3%), and suggestions for improvement (38.9%). These comments were grouped into five broad themes: accessibility to library resources and services, academic/research support services, effective communication channels, library staff support, and library management.

Regarding library resources, students suggested expanding the library's collection by adding more core textbooks, increasing the availability of high-demand books, and enhancing the e-book collection. They also recommended opening special collections, such as the Law book collection, to all user groups rather than restricting access to specific faculties. Additionally, they proposed to improve and expand the facilities in the learning commons and study areas.

Under academic and research support services, students requested access to plagiarism-checking tools, increased awareness programs on available library resources and services, and dedicated guidance programs for undergraduate research. They also suggested implementing current awareness services via email and social media and enhancing communication channels with subject liaison librarians. Further, the undergraduates requested to have regular meetings with students to convey updated information about the library.

Students appreciated the library staff's commendable service, noting their efficiency and user-friendly approach. Furthermore, they acknowledged the overall quality of services the library offers and commended the library management for their commitment to maintaining high service standards.

Discussion and Conclusion

This study examined student feedback on the library services at the Main Library of the University of Colombo across four key dimensions: library collection, library services, technology-based facilities, and the library website.

The findings revealed that while a majority of students expressed satisfaction with the existing library collection, approximately 25% were not. In particular, feedback on the electronic collection (e-databases, e-journals, and e-books) showed that only about 60% of students were satisfied, leaving a significant 40% dissatisfied. This highlights the need for library managers to focus more on addressing the specific collection development expectations of undergraduates to ensure the collection meets diverse academic needs.

Students reported overall satisfaction with the services provided at the library's main service points, as well as the academic and research support services. However, they suggested introducing periodic current awareness services to better inform them of the library's resources and offerings. Additionally, students requested more specialized services, including plagiarism

checking and guidance for undergraduate research. These suggestions indicate a need for library management to establish a robust mechanism for enhancing resource and service awareness, potentially through subject liaison librarians. Equipping library staff with advanced teaching and research skills will also contribute to better support for student needs.

In today's digital age, expanding technology-based facilities in the library is crucial to meet the expectations of a generation of digital natives. Although most students expressed satisfaction with the current technological infrastructure, the library must remain adaptable to the rapidly evolving global information and technology landscape. This proactive approach will help maintain the library's relevance and competitiveness. Students were generally pleased with the library's website, particularly in terms of its resourcefulness, ease of access, and organization. To maintain this positive feedback, the library needs to invest in effective web management and continuous updates to ensure the website remains user-friendly and aligned with student needs.

The study revealed that the majority of the library users during the period from March to July 2023, were first-year undergraduates belonging to the Faculty of Arts. Although the Main Library serves four faculties - Arts, Education, Law, and Management and Finance, the primary beneficiaries of the Main Library are undergraduate students of the Faculty of Arts, which implies that they use library resources and services for academic activities more than the undergraduates of the other faculties. However, as the majority are first-year undergraduates, findings can be biased based on their experiences.

In conclusion, library management must stay attuned to the evolving expectations of users and the developments within the global information landscape. By addressing specific areas of concern, such as collection development, service expansion, technological improvements, and website management, the library can enhance its role as an essential hub for academic resources for students.

Limitations of the study

Firstly, the present study adopted the simple random sampling technique to draw the sample from the population, which hinders the equal representation of the respondents from the studied faculties. Secondly, although the service quality is a multifaceted attribute, the present study only considered four aspects, namely library collection, library services, technology-based

facilities, and the library website. Thirdly, this study was conducted as a cross-sectional study from March to July 2023, which is a snapshot at one point in time, showing bias and difficulties in establishing causal and effect relationships. Finally, the findings of the present study are limited to the Main Library of the University of Colombo and can be applied only to a similar context. The research findings may be biased due to the varying experiences of the undergraduate students.

Future studies

Future studies could explore several other areas to enhance library services and address evolving student needs. Investigating specific gaps in the library collection, particularly in under-represented subjects or resource types, would help align the collection with undergraduate expectations. Comparative studies across faculties or departments could also provide insights into designed resource development. Another key area is evaluating the effectiveness of current awareness programs in increasing student engagement with library resources. Longitudinal studies tracking changes in student satisfaction over time would be valuable in assessing the long-term effectiveness of library improvements. Also, comparative analyses with other local and international universities could identify successful strategies for further improvement of libraries. These studies would offer actionable insights for continuous innovation in academic libraries, ensuring they remain aligned with global trends and the dynamic expectations of users. To overcome the bias, future studies should seek diverse perspectives and actively work to represent a wider range of voices and experiences.

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