

User Perception Towards the Library: A Study at the Library, University of Sri Jayewardenepura

Wijayasundara, Nayana¹, Sampath Amaratunge²

Abstract

The University of Sri Jayewardenepura (USJ) Library continues to improve its services and products amidst challenges such as a growing student population, diverse learning styles, a rapidly changing information environment, and evolving technology. Understanding user perception to these changes is essential. This study aimed to assess the perceptions of academics and students regarding the library's physical appearance, services, and staff. Data for the baseline survey (BS) were collected using a self-administered questionnaire. Purposive sampling technique was used. Five years later, focus group discussions (FG) were conducted to compare the findings. Approximately 10% of the BS sample size was used in the FG. Comparison of the two sets of results revealed no major differences. All attributes; physical appearance, services, collections, and staff were received over 50% ratings in the 'Very Good' and 'Good' categories in both instances, indicating overall positive perceptions. However, two exceptions were noted: washroom facilities (in 2020 BS) and photocopy services (in 2025 FG) received negative perception. In contrast, remote access to e-resources was viewed highly positively. Academics rated it at 99% in the BS and 97% in the FG, while students gave it 73% and 72%, respectively. The study highlights user perspectives on library services, facilities, and staff support, offering useful insights for enhancing the library's role in the academic environment.

Keywords: Academic libraries, User perceptions, Sri Lankan universities, Library services, University of Sri Jayewardenepura

¹ Librarian, University of Sri Jayewardenepura, Nugegoda, Sri Lanka

Email: nayanaw@sjp.ac.lk  <https://orcid.org/0000-0001-6487-2498>

² Department of Business Economics, University of Sri Jayewardenepura, Nugegoda, Sri Lanka

Email: amaratunge@sjp.ac.lk



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Introduction

Rapid changes in the information environment, an increase in the student population, ever-changing technology, different teaching and learning styles, and shrinking funds directly influence academic library services. Amid profound changes, the USJ library continues to modify its services and resources to meet academics' and students' information needs. USJ is the largest university in Sri Lanka when considering student numbers (UGC, 2022). It is the only university situated in the capital city of Sri Lanka, Sri Jayewardenepura Kotte. The university has a long history that dates back to 1873. It started as a 'pirivena' where Buddhist monks were studying. In 1959, it was given university status and named Vidyodaya University. Later, in 1979, it was renamed USJ. The library has a similar history, and now it serves eleven faculties in the university, with three branch libraries dedicated to different faculties located outside the main campus premises.

The USJ library continues to fulfil its role as an academic support provider, despite the move away from traditional reading material towards electronic resources. A direct impact is expected on the productivity of research in the university by investing in e-resources. The library has allowed fast and immediate access to resources, freeing teaching, learning, and research time. A number of diversified services were introduced to the library during the last decade. It was transformed significantly from a traditional library to a modern university library embracing new technologies. However, it is understood that library services and products still need to improve to provide users with better and more efficient services. New avenues need to be thought of to fulfil various requirements of users. Hence, it is imperative to explore user preferences on the existing scenario and to know their future expectations.

In order to ascertain clear perspectives concerning usage and outcomes of services in the USJ library, it is necessary to identify relevant issues faced by those who use the library facilities. The complaints and suggestions found in the complaints book and the suggestion box are pieces of evidence of specific issues. Further, personal communications with academics and students have elaborated on some concerning issues. For example, students find it difficult to get suitable places for self-learning in the library during the examination period. Except for the open reading room, which is kept open 24x7, there is no place for users to do group studies and discussions. Since

academic library users' teaching and learning styles have changed significantly in recent years, there is little current evidence about how students and faculty staff perceive library resources at the USJ library and how library services benefit them.

With the evolution of current technologies, the emergence of new ones, and the characteristics and requirements of the student population continuing to change, it will become increasingly essential to revisit many of the issues that the present study has addressed in order to assess the nature and magnitude of changes in the academic information environment over time. As such, a study of this nature can be viewed as the initial step in an ongoing examination of perceptions of users relating to the USJ library. The findings of this study will inform future developments in the library, which will be beneficial to the students and academics as the main stakeholders of the library.

Objectives of the study

The main objective of the study was to determine the perceptions of user categories towards overall library. To ascertain that the following specific objectives were formulated; to explore the perception of users towards

- (1) physical appearance and the arrangement of the library
- (2) library services and,
- (3) library staff

Literature Review

When the other studies done worldwide related to the present study were explored, Donabedian et al. (2018) found that it was essential to identify the habits and preferences of library users to maintain and develop well-formulated, enhanced library services. Anwar (2019) aimed to identify the facilities at the library that students consulted in developing and moulding their study patterns and the material they accessed. Nunekpeku (2019) conducted a study to assess clients' satisfaction with the library services provided. Most recent studies on library access have moved towards research based on digital libraries and students' access to online material.

Some researchers (Lopatovska et al., 2014; Kumar & Batra, 2018; Yalman, 2015; Tripathi & Jeevan, 2013; Leonard et al., 2020) focus on digital resource usage and Web 2.0 applications'

usage (Boateng & Liu, 2014) in academic libraries. Zha et al.'s (2015) main intention was to observe the shifts in usage from print to electronic resources and concluded that more users have shifted from using print resources to electronic due to the wide availability and the ease of accessibility. Coombs (2005) states that users access electronic resources from inside the library, and some users extensively access the same resources from different locations outside the library. Pokorna et al. (2020) studied providing remote access to digital content in academic libraries.

Leonard et al. (2020) state that academics utilize library e-resources for research, publications, and teaching purposes. Another study by Callinan (2005) revealed that students studying biochemistry in their final year sought the help of the e-library facilities to continue their coursework. However, he concluded that most students did not access the electronic databases due to their lack of awareness about the available resources. Gelfand (2005) revealed that many students discovered the university library to be a place that offered security, comfort, and a quiet environment to continue their studies.

A study conducted by Creaser and Spezi (2013) investigates the value of an academic library in teaching and research for the staff in higher education. Some respondents stated that the library resources do not play an adequate role in their studies, reflecting that most academics were unaware of the available resources for their specific teaching areas. Leung et al. (2021) and Majid et al. (2001) presented a study based on surveys designed to observe and explore users' perceptions of library effectiveness. They suggest that all the factors affecting academic library usage should be investigated to comply with and prepare better plans and systems to maintain the success of academic libraries. Walsh (2008) revealed a considerable increase in the usage of library resources by students who received information and training sessions on how to access the library during the orientation period. Similarly, Abdul Kargbo (2001) identified that library services should be frequently reviewed and investigated by the staff, especially librarians, to explore and discover the problems and shortcomings that might arise. Scale (2013) researched how the availability of tablet devices facilitates students' options for searching for possible content in study activities. Most library users have agreed and shown great interest in the availability of tablet devices at libraries. This technique is a modern way of searching for content and accessing e-resources. Dominguez et

al. (2015) consider the usage of the library website to derive an understanding of the usage of electronic resources by students.

In another study (Mangrum & Foster, 2020), the students were asked to deliver their opinion on traditional library facilities such as borrowing, reservation, and searching for materials, and other library services such as printing and photocopying. They were also asked to present their ideas about library spaces. The study presented that most students were satisfied with the available resources and spaces. One of the critical findings of Mangrum and Foster's (2020) study was that most graduate students specifically use the study areas for research purposes, compared with undergraduate students who use the same spaces for peer group discussions.

Past studies similar to this research were found in Sri Lanka by Bandara et al. (2021) at the South Eastern University, Amarasekera and Marasinghe (2020) at the Open University, Gunasekera (2010) at the University of Peradeniya, and Wickramanayake (2010) at the Sabaragamuwa University. Going a step further, Jayasundara et al. (2009, 2010) explored service quality and customer satisfaction in Sri Lankan university libraries. A few other researchers studied the usage of libraries by a particular set of students (Wijetunge, 2015) or on a particular service such as e-resources (Gunasekera et al., 2021) and e-books (Vithana, 2016).

According to the above literature, research in library usage has been widely conducted. Every academic library needs to continue studies in this aspect, as this will generate an understanding of the strengths and weaknesses of the library. It is also apparent that the scope of academic library usage is vast and that research can be conducted with various approaches and methods. Research in library usage will also be beneficial in implementing and planning the future of libraries. Thus, such research must be conducted often at academic libraries.

Background of the research issue and the significance

At the USJ, several innovative support services have been introduced by the library in recent years. Numerous enhancements were made to improve the library's appearance and create a more welcoming environment. It is important to know how these services and changes are perceived by the library users. The previously uninviting and gloomy lobby was transformed by removing the large stacks of card catalogue cabinets. The addition of colourful lobby benches, gadget corners

with standing computer tables, a bookshelf in the shape of the word "READ," and a touchscreen-enabled kiosk collectively contributed to a more elegant and modern look for the space. Glass-framed reading promotion posters and strategically placed natural foliage pots enhanced the aesthetic appeal of the library. Traditional classroom-style seating was replaced with a variety of flexible arrangements, including individual tables and group clusters. In the Interactive Study Area, triangular computer tables were introduced, offering versatility to accommodate different user types and group sizes. Clusters comprising five to six units proved particularly effective for students engaging in collaborative study or computer-based discussions. In the Ceylon Room, the removal of study carrels allowed for the installation of a large conference-style table, which facilitated the use of oversized materials such as the National Atlas and palm leaf manuscripts with extended folios. Both the Ceylon Room and the Interactive Study Area were equipped with air conditioning and carpeted flooring, creating a comfortable environment conducive to extended periods of study.

Until 2014, a membership card-based system was used, requiring students to present both their library cards and university identity cards when borrowing books. Academic staff had to manually complete a slip with member and book details for each loan. With the implementation of the KOHA Integrated Library Management System, users are now automatically identified by scanning the barcode embedded in their university identity cards. Library books are similarly barcoded, with metadata stored in RFID tags. Retrieving book information is now as simple as swiping the barcode across a scanner. The automated system is widely appreciated for its efficiency, and its data accuracy is considered more reliable than the previous manual method. Therefore, it is essential to know the user perceptions in the present situation where many changes have been brought to the past situation and for future developments.

Research Methodology

A survey method was used in 2020 as the first phase. The data collection was done mainly using a self-administered questionnaire. The questionnaire consisted of questions to gather opinions of users under general facts on the physical appearance of the library, library services, collections, and staff. The questionnaire was developed based on the ideas found in past studies like Dickenson's study (2006). The structure was mainly giving statements to mark their preference

according to a 5-point Likert scale and a few open-ended questions to which the respondents had to provide their ideas and opinions.

For this study, only six faculties listed in Table 1 were considered. The Faculty of Graduate Studies was excluded as there is only one academic, the Dean of the faculty, and students are postgraduates including part-time students. The newly established Faculty of Allied Health was also excluded as there were only first-year students. The other three faculties; Urban and Aquatic Bio Resources, Dental, and Computing, were established during the research study period.

The population size of academics was 857, and for students, it was 13,006. The Krejcie and Morgan (1970) formula was used to select the necessary sample size. The sample size for academics was 266, and for students, it was 374. The sample size from each faculty was selected proportionately. It enabled the collection of views from respondents representing all the faculties. The sample size of academics and students for each faculty is given below in Table 1. The sample within each faculty was taken using purposive sampling.

Table 1. Sample size distribution – Baseline Survey

Faculty	No. of Academics	No. of Students
Humanities and Social Sciences	52	99
Applied Sciences	55	65
Management Studies and Commerce	71	138
Medical Sciences	54	34
Technology	19	28
Engineering	15	10
Total	266	374

It was planned to distribute the printed questionnaire to the selected respondents. However, amidst the distribution process, the country had to go into an unexpected situation of complete lockdown due to the COVID-19 pandemic. Hence, the remainder of the questionnaires were distributed through email. Respondents were given options to fill it as a Word document and send it via email or complete the Google Form through the provided link. Data analysis included simple descriptive statistics like percentages and qualitative analysis of ideas and opinions. Data analysis was done using SPSS version 22.0.

The second phase of the study, after five years from the BS, the FG, was carried out using the same questionnaire. The sample size for the focus groups was taken as 10% of the BS, and it is represented in Table 2. However, since 10% of the total value for the students of the Engineering Faculty came to 1, it was taken as 2 to make the results more rational.

Table 2. Sample size distribution –Focus Groups Discussions

Faculty	No. of Academics	No. of Students
Humanities and Social Sciences	5	10
Applied Sciences	6	7
Management Studies and Commerce	7	14
Medical Sciences	5	3
Technology	2	3
Engineering	2	2
Total	27	39

Data Interpretation

The scale used was 1 to 5, 5 for 'Very Good' and 1 for 'Poor' in measuring specific dimensions. The total of percentage values of more than 50% for 'Very Good' and 'Good' were considered positive perception and less than that was considered as negative perception.

Results and Discussion

Response rate

The response rate of academics was 62.4%, and it was 68.4% for students for the BS. Both rates are considered acceptable response rates and good enough to continue analyzing and interpreting data. For the FG, the response rate was 100%.

Perception of users on physical appearance and the arrangement of the library

The perception of users regarding the library's physical appearance, spatial arrangement, and supporting amenities was evaluated based on eight key attributes, as presented in Table 3. The results of the BS reveal that for all attributes, except washroom facilities, the combined percentage of respondents who rated them as 'Very Good' (VG) or 'Good' (G) exceeded 76% among academics and 52% among students.

The results of the FG showed similar results to those of the BS; however, the attribute Washroom Facilities scored more than 50% in total. After 5 years, the results increased to 58% and 62% for academics and students, respectively. This clearly indicates a generally positive perception among both user groups towards the physical infrastructure and services offered by the library. Academics demonstrated a higher level of satisfaction compared to students. The high values can be attributed to recent improvements such as the renovation and repainting of the library building, which has significantly enhanced its overall appearance. Improvements in lighting, ventilation, seating arrangements, and the provision of helpful guides such as floor plans and bay guides have contributed to the positive user experience, as users mentioned in the FG.

Table 3: Perception towards the physical appearance and arrangement of the library
 (BS – Baseline Survey & FG – Focus Group discussions)
 Data is presented in percentage values

Attributes	VG		G		A		P		VP	
	BS	FG	BS	FG	BS	FG	BS	FG	BS	FG
Academics (Percentage)										
Appearance of the library	23	51	59	31	15	18	1	0	2	0
Lighting & Ventilations	18	23	69	55	10	10	2	10	1	2
Seating arrangement	12	25	69	49	16	14	2	8	1	4
Availability of floor plans	13	20	68	52	14	12	3	10	2	6
Providing bay guides	13	26	70	67	13	6	2	1	2	0
Cloakroom facility	22	30	58	54	17	10	1	5	2	1
Elevator	25	31	58	50	16	12	0	7	1	0
Washroom facilities	3	20	10	38	17	21	58	13	12	8
Students (Percentage)										
Appearance of the library	34	58	55	40	8	0	2	2	1	0
Lighting & Ventilations	32	32	46	48	17	14	3	3	2	3
Seating arrangement	25	41	50	40	18	12	5	5	2	2
Availability of floor plans	21	20	40	32	30	34	5	10	4	4
Providing bay guides	17	20	53	37	20	29	7	8	3	6
Cloakroom facility	28	41	47	48	14	2	5	3	6	6
Elevator	34	58	46	30	13	10	2	1	5	1
Washroom facilities	15	32	13	30	23	21	29	10	20	7

Source: Survey data, 2020 & 2025 (Scale; Very Good=5, Good=4, Average=3, Poor=2, Very Poor=1)

An analysis of the results obtained through the FG conducted five years after the BS reveals that both academics and students continue to hold positive perceptions regarding the physical attributes of the library. All evaluated attributes received combined 'Very Good' and 'Good' ratings exceeding 50%, indicating sustained user satisfaction. Notably, the attribute related to Washroom Facilities, which had previously received the lowest satisfaction scores, showed a marked improvement scoring 58% in the 'Very Good' and 'Good' categories by academics and 62% by students. This shift suggests a positive change in user perception, likely due to the renovation of the washrooms with modern sanitary fittings carried out approximately two years ago.

Perception towards Library Services

When considering the library services, it was identified that further categorizing the services mainly into standard and diversified library services would help better understand this area.

Standard Library Services

In line with the study's objective to assess user perceptions of library services, Table 4 presents key findings on users' experiences with essential operational functions of the USJ Library. Across both the BS and FG, a clear trend of positive perception is evident, with all listed attributes receiving over 50% in combined 'Very Good' and 'Good' responses from both academics and students. This suggests overall satisfaction with the library's fundamental services. However, variations across individual services provide valuable insight into areas of strength and those requiring further improvement.

A notable concern identified was the Photocopy Service, which received the lowest user satisfaction. Already poorly rated in the BS (70% by academics and 58% by students), perceptions dropped sharply to just 7% in the FG for both groups. This reflects ongoing dissatisfaction due to frequent service disruptions, use of low-quality paper and ink, and lack of prior notification—all stemming from the outsourced nature of the service. These issues led to frustration among users and created additional burdens on library staff.

Conversely, Regular Opening Hours were highly rated, particularly following the extension of closing time from 6:00 p.m. to 8:00 p.m. in 2014. This change significantly improved accessibility

and was well received by both user categories, demonstrating the importance of flexible scheduling to support diverse academic routines. Main Counter Services also received strong approval, underpinned by the successful implementation of the open-source library management system Koha in 2014. The automation of circulation functions such as borrowing and returning books, streamlined service delivery. The transition to barcode scanning and the use of university ID cards eliminated the need for manual library cards and issuing slips, significantly reducing wait times. Further, the installation of cash machines at the main counter enabled users to make fine payments on-site, avoiding the inconvenience of visiting the university's Shroff counter located in a separate building.

Table 4: Perception towards standard library services
 (BS – Baseline Survey & FG – Focus Group discussions)
 Data is presented in percentage values

Attributes	VG		G		A		P		VP	
	BS	FG	BS	FG	BS	FG	BS	FG	BS	FG
Academics (Percentage)										
Regular opening hours	17	50	67	44	13	2	2	2	1	2
Main counter services	20	70	66	26	11	3	0	1	3	0
Inquiry counter services	23	61	67	24	8	8	1	5	1	2
Photocopy service	11	2	59	5	13	7	5	30	12	56
New accessions	17	56	65	28	14	4	2	7	2	5
ILL	25	80	58	18	15	0	0	1	2	1
Newspaper reading	27	72	57	20	14	5	0	2	2	1
Students (Percentage)										
Regular opening hours	30	58	50	27	15	8	4	5	1	0
Main counter services	39	63	50	19	10	9	1	6	0	3
Inquiry counter services	29	49	49	23	19	19	2	7	1	2
Photocopy service	20	4	38	3	11	4	11	40	20	49
New accessions	21	50	54	22	19	13	4	8	2	7
ILL	22	48	47	16	20	20	7	12	4	4
Newspaper reading	37	69	46	18	12	6	3	1	2	6

Source: Survey data, 2020 & 2025 (Scale; Very Good = 5, Good = 4, Average = 3, Poor = 2, Very Poor =1)

The “New Accessions” list, planned as part of the acquisition of books, was also well received. This digital listing on the library’s website helps users stay informed of the latest additions, particularly important for researchers. Academics consistently rated this feature higher than students in both BS and FG, indicating its relevance to their research and teaching needs. The Inter-Library Loan (ILL) Service remains a core function of academic libraries, and at USJ, it continues to be appreciated, especially by academics. In both survey phases, academics rated the ILL service significantly higher than students. This reflects their more frequent and advanced research needs. The USJ Library has strengthened its ILL network over the years, extending services to foreign libraries and establishing an account with the British Library Document Supply Service (BLDSS) in 2012. More recently, the ILL service has been supported through the CONSAL (Consortium of Sri Lankan Academic Libraries), which is funded by the University Grants Commission (UGC), further expanding the library’s reach and enhancing user access to external scholarly resources.

Taken together, the feedback on these standard services demonstrates a generally high level of user satisfaction, especially in areas where the library has made strategic technological and procedural improvements. At the same time, it highlights critical pain points, like the photocopy service, that require urgent attention. The findings reinforce the value of user-centred innovation in enhancing service delivery and maintaining the library’s role as a pivotal academic support centre.

Diversified Library Services

Aligned with the study’s objective to assess user perceptions of library services, Table 5 presents findings on the diversified services offered in addition to standard library functions. These services play a crucial role in addressing the evolving needs of users, especially in a dynamic academic environment. The overall results show a consistent trend of positive perceptions from both academics and students in both the BS and the FG, with each attribute receiving more than 50% of combined ‘Very Good’ and ‘Good’ ratings.

Extended hours of opening stood out as a widely appreciated improvement. The shift in operating times, from opening at 8:00 a.m. to 5:00 a.m. and extending closure until 10:00 p.m.—has

significantly increased library accessibility, especially for early-morning and late-evening users. Both academics and students viewed this change favourably, reflecting the importance of time flexibility in meeting varied schedules. Wi-Fi availability also received strong approval, particularly due to its ability to support independent learning and research. Reliable access to scholarly resources and the internet within the library space enhances users' ability to work using personal digital devices. The laptop lending service, introduced in 2015, has gained notable popularity, especially among students. Though academics use it less frequently, their high ratings indicate recognition of its value for the student community. The university's pioneering role in offering this service in the island has likely contributed to its positive reception.

Table 5. Perception towards diversified library services
 (BS – Baseline Survey & FG – Focus Group discussions)
 Data is presented in percentage values

Attributes	VG		G		A		P		VP	
	BS	FG	BS	FG	BS	FG	BS	FG	BS	FG
Academics (Percentage)										
Extended hours of opening	14	61	64	23	21	10	1	4	0	2
Wi-Fi facility	21	80	66	16	11	0	1	3	1	1
Laptop lending service	11	77	63	16	20	4	5	0	1	3
Remote access facility	49	59	50	28	1	7	0	5	0	1
Just-Returned books	20	42	58	39	19	12	2	5	1	2
Refreshment facilities	27	60	54	21	16	2	2	10	1	7
Research support services	25	68	58	22	16	11	0	7	1	2
Students (Percentage)										
Extended hours of opening	41	75	45	20	9	2	3	3	2	0
Wi-Fi facility	33	77	39	18	12	1	8	4	8	0
Laptop lending service	32	66	51	23	9	8	5	2	3	1
Remote access facility	28	52	45	20	19	4	3	14	5	10
Just-Returned books	23	61	55	22	20	5	2	9	0	3
Refreshment facilities	31	73	40	22	13	4	8	8	8	3
Research support services	34	42	43	23	12	16	6	10	5	9

Source: Survey data, 2020 & 2025 (Scale; Very Good = 5, Good = 4, Average = 3, Poor = 2, Very Poor =1)

Remote access to e-resources, enabled through a Single-Sign-On (SSO) system from 2018, was another highly valued service, especially by academics. This reflects the growing need for off-campus access to research materials, underscoring the importance of technological solutions in expanding service reach. The “Just-Returned Books” rack emerged as a simple yet effective solution for improving access to high-demand materials. Both user groups appreciated this feature, which promotes efficient circulation and discovery. Refreshment facilities, provided through a vending machine, received positive feedback, particularly from students. Its convenience supports longer study hours and accommodates early library visitors, adding comfort to the learning environment. Lastly, Research Support Services were perceived as especially valuable by academics. Services such as one-on-one consultations on information literacy, reference management tools, journal selection, and predatory publishing guidance were praised for their direct relevance to academic work. While students also rated this service positively, a slight decline in FG scores may indicate the need to further tailor or promote these services to the student demographic. In summary, these findings confirm that USJ Library’s diversified services are largely meeting the needs and expectations of its users, reinforcing the library’s adaptive and user-focused approach.

Perception towards the library staff

Three attributes; courteousness, helpfulness, and promptness of the library staff were included in measuring the dimension of users’ perception towards the library staff. There were 14 academic staff, 1 academic support staff, and 59 non-academic staff serving in different sections of the library when the BS was conducted in 2020. This has been reduced to 12 academic staff, 1 academic support staff, and 38 non-academic staff in the permanent category due to government-imposed restrictions on recruiting replacement staff for those who retired or resigned. The results show that academics and students positively perceive the library staff. According to Table 6, for both the BS and the FG, all attributes measuring users’ perceptions towards the library staff have obtained more than 50% in the combined categories ‘Very Good’ and ‘Good,’ indicating positive perceptions.

Table 6. Perception towards the library staff
 (BS – Baseline Survey & FG – Focus Group discussions)
 Data is presented in percentage values

Attributes	VG		G		A		P		VP	
	BS	FG	BS	FG	BS	FG	BS	FG	BS	FG
Academics (Percentage)										
Courteous	28	67	55	25	13	0	0	5	4	3
Helpful	28	72	54	16	15	5	1	6	2	1
Promptness	30	70	59	14	9	7	0	6	2	3
Students (Percentage)										
Courteous	29	63	41	27	20	6	5	0	5	4
Helpful	29	56	45	32	17	4	5	4	4	4
Promptness	23	64	50	25	19	3	4	8	4	0

Source: Survey data, 2020 & 2025 (Scale; Very Good = 5, Good = 4, Average = 3, Poor = 2, Very Poor =1)

Conclusion

This study was undertaken to evaluate user perceptions of the library at the USJ, focusing on physical environment, services, and staff, in light of major transformations introduced over the past decade. At the core of the research was the question: How do library users perceive the enhancements and innovations implemented at the USJ Library in recent years? The findings gathered through a Baseline Survey (BS) in 2020 and validated through a Focus Group (FG) in 2025 demonstrate consistently positive user perceptions across most dimensions. This affirms that the library's efforts in modernizing services, improving physical infrastructure, and leveraging technology have largely met user expectations.

While most standard and diversified services were perceived positively, key exceptions like the photocopy service highlighted how outsourced services can undermine overall user satisfaction when quality control and responsiveness are lacking. This issue reinforces the need for strategic decisions about whether critical services should remain outsourced or be managed internally, possibly in collaboration with student or staff bodies. The study also confirms that users; both academics and students highly value enhancements such as automated main counter services, Wi-

Fi accessibility, laptop lending, and the creation of aesthetically appealing and functionally flexible study environments. The transformation of the lobby and reading areas has not only improved user experience but also aligned with broader trends in user-centered library design. These shifts clearly reflect the library's commitment to creating inclusive and adaptable learning spaces. The results also emphasize that library modernization is not limited to infrastructure. Technological integration such as the adoption of KOHA and RFID, has streamlined operations and improved accuracy and user convenience. The success of these implementations provides a compelling case for future investments in systems like self-check-in/check-out kiosks and book drop-boxes, especially in scenarios where contactless service delivery becomes essential.

Another strategic insight relates to research support services. Although positively perceived, feedback suggests the need for a more structured and professionalized approach, including staff trained in academic publishing, information literacy, and scholarly communication. As research becomes increasingly complex and competitive, libraries must evolve to provide not just access to information, but also intellectual support services that empower researchers. Several future directions emerged from the FG discussions included expanding the laptop lending service to meet growing student demand, establishing mechanisms for 24x7 library access, which will require policy changes, infrastructure adjustments, and staff support strategies such as transport and incentives, strengthening collection development by addressing subject-specific gaps and increasing the availability of e-books, improve photocopy and printing services, possibly through in-house management or stakeholder partnerships and institutionalizing research support units within the library with trained personnel.

Importantly, the study underscores the library's role as a dynamic academic support hub rather than a static repository of books. As such, regular user feedback should inform service innovation, and the outcomes of this research should be shared with university administrators and policymakers to advocate for continued investment. Ultimately, these findings contribute to the broader discourse on academic library performance and provide a valuable reference for other institutions seeking to modernize their services in line with user expectations and technological trends. By aligning future planning with user feedback, libraries can reinforce their position as essential pillars of academic success.

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