



How do they Perceive and Use Library Services? An Exploratory Analysis of Learning, Reading and Academic Achievement

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ABSTRACT

The purpose of this paper is to provide information on the level of perceptions of law graduates and researchers about library services. The qualitative approach was used in the study. Semi-structure interviews were conducted with 12 participants, and the constant comparative method was used for data analysis. The paper shows that the patrons of the law college library are not fully satisfied with library services because the library does not offer much better services than what it should provide to different users. This paper attempts to provide the law college library with basic information about the user's perceptions of library services and their sources. But there are some gaps between library services and users. Library administration should improve the perception of users. The originality of the paper is the thing to be understood by users about the law college library, which is essential to improving the library services.



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Introduction

Law-related education is a variety of disciplined and multi-purpose education. The basic purpose of law-related education is to increase the skills of human resources to reinforce the legal system and play a key role in national reconstruction, development, and social change (Sathe, 1989). The most significant factor in the field of legal education is information, because legal information is desperately needed by every person everywhere, so the entire community is more dependent on information, especially professional information.

The Law College Library is one of the best law libraries in Pakistan because it was established before the Partition of the Subcontinent. It has a huge law collection—procedures, case laws, judgments, etc.—so many students, undergraduates, researchers, faculty, and practitioners use the library according to their needs.

In any civilized country in the world, it has been accepted as a basic right for an individual to have access to information and education. From whatever angle—moral, social, cultural, economic, or political—education has been recognized as a prelude to the growth, development, and long-term progress of human society (Bhatti, 2003, p. 67–89). (cited in Bhatti, 2009; Dhiman & Sinha, 2002, p. 2–5).

As far as library faculty concerns, the faculty taught different subjects at different times, and they also engaged in legal academic activities like seminars, workshops, etc. that are conducted in the college, so the law library played a role. They used library sources for these activities. It is a law librarian's responsibility to be aware of all sources that may be required in their activities.

User satisfaction and organizational performance depend much more on service quality, which is a key factor in any organization. The early studies mentioned that libraries were collection-oriented, but now libraries are service-oriented. Libraries provide much better services in the computer age (Rehman & Sabir, 2012).

The primary function of any library is to satisfy its users by providing different products and services. If the user satisfies your library services, which you offer, then they will give a positive opinion and have a good perception regarding library services, and they will again come and use the library.

User perception depends on the quality of services that libraries provide to them, and service quality is measured by how well the service fulfills the needs of the user.

Statement of the Problem

Within the changing environment of higher education in Pakistan, the significance of library services remains crucial but has not been well examined, especially in relation to individuals who have completed a legal degree. A recent study has revealed significant disparities in the quality of library services among different educational institutions in the Punjab region. The findings suggest that both the attributes and dimensions of service quality do not meet the expected standards of users, including law graduates (Mahmood et al., 2021). Moreover, students frequently have higher expectations for the quality of library services than what they actually see, suggesting a disparity that could have an impact on their academic achievements and professional readiness (Shah et al., 2021).

This study intends to investigate the perceptions and utilization of library services among law graduates in Pakistan. The focus is on discovering any discrepancies between their expectations and the actual services offered. These findings are essential for optimizing resource allocation, promoting user happiness, and ultimately supporting the career development of law graduates. The study aims to offer practical suggestions for library administrators and policymakers to address these disparities, thereby promoting a more efficient learning atmosphere for prospective legal practitioners in Pakistan.

Review of the Literature

The literature on related topics Law graduates' perceptions about library services are very different, but very little study has been conducted in Pakistan. The main purpose of this study is to investigate what the perceptions of law graduates are about library services.

Blandford, A. et al. The use and usability of digital libraries are necessary in the digital age, and digital libraries are to be considered considering how easy it feels to work with them. This paper investigates which sources are often used by graduates, either print sources or electronic sources.

The most important component of quality-oriented organization culture is performance measurement, where users use the services; if they do not receive any services, they are not satisfied and complain about the quality of the performance. In some special libraries, libraries cannot use maximum resources for providing information to meet the needs of their users (Johari & Zainab, 2007).

Khan and Bhatti (2015) conducted a quantitative research study to explore the use of collection and services among law faculty members at the University of Peshawar. In this regard, 19 law colleges of universities and 18 law colleges of affiliated institutes were approached. The study found that faculty members were visiting law libraries to issue and return books; they were consulting libraries to have textbooks for their courses to teach. Scoulas (2021) conducted a study to explore library use, perceptions, and the effect of these library services on the grade point average (GPA) of science, technology, and engineering mathematics students. A survey was conducted in 2018 with 2277 graduate students through a self-developed instrument, the Assessment Coordinator Advisory Committee (AC2), with the help of relevant literature. The study reported that STEM students were considering specific library resources necessary for them, like course guides, subject-related readings, and library workshops. These services significantly affected the GPA of the students, as those who were using these library services had a higher GPA than those who were less or less users of the library services.

Dalbehera (2020) carried out a study to identify web-based library services in the Odisha State of India by employing the ES-QUAL model from the perspective of research scholars. The dimensions like privacy, system availability, digital library satisfaction, and loyalty of the users were assessed by employing a questionnaire among 350 university library users. The study provided a foundation for the enhancement of the quality of digital library services for graduates and researchers to ensure their sustainability with library services. Jabbar (2019) conducted a study to understand the reasons behind the lack of library visits among political science graduates, using face-to-face interviews. It found that they were unaware of the professional skills of the librarians and had some misperceptions; they encountered multiple bad experiences in the past regarding library services; their assignments and the nature of the topics of the dissertations did not require any use of the library; they were unaware of the availability of the Higher Education Commission's databases; and they were less guided to use research articles in their assignments and theses.

Historically, the measurement of the quality of library services has been done through a traditionally quantitative approach, which includes library collection, size of the library, how many visitors there are, statistics of issuing and returning, budget, and quantity of staff (Weiner, 2005). Now libraries measure their services and maintain them according to the needs of their users. Their prime focus on library services is user satisfaction, another way to define the modern concept of library service quality measurement, the major difference between users' perceptions of actually received services and their expectations about the services they need.

There are some factors that contribute to expanding users' perceptions of library services effectively. These factors are collection services and the library environment in both traditional mode and electronic mode, respectively. These factors change the perceptions of the users positively (Majid et al., 2001). Some other factors also affect user perception positively, like

selection of materials, physical environment, personal assistance, and convenient library location.

Kasim and Zakaria (2009) assert that the notion of user satisfaction in the library literature has progressed to encompass a wider emphasis on the user's viewpoint on libraries. Satisfaction refers to an individual's emotional response to a library service and can be broken down into two parts: service encounter satisfaction, which is the dissatisfaction a consumer feels after a specific service interaction, and overall service satisfaction, which is the consumer's general dissatisfaction with the organization based on all their interactions and experiences with that organization.

Majid et al. (2001, p.176) assert that the perceptions of library effectiveness are closely associated with factors such as the sufficiency of collections, services, and facilities, the adequacy and efficacy of library promotion, user involvement in material selection, convenient library locations, participation in user education programs, availability of assistance for utilizing library resources and facilities, and the subject expertise of library professionals.

In his work, Burke (2011) argues that modern users no longer view the library as their main source for research. This is because users have shorter memory compared to librarians, who see the library as transitioning from a print-based model to an electronic one. Users, on the other hand, only perceive the library within the context of their electronic paradigm.

Objectives of the study

The objectives of this study regarding user perception of law colleges library services:

1. To determine the level of user perception regarding library services.
2. To investigate the gender base perception of library services.

Methodology

Following section will discuss the research design, Interview technique, and data collection procedure of the study.

Research Design

The study employs a qualitative research approach. A face-to face Semi structure interview is to be conducted with graduates or research students who are studying at the college. There were 12 interviews conducted. The researcher designs the interview guide and conducts the interview individually. There are eight questions included in the interview guide. Data are analyzed through the constant comparative method.

Data Analysis

After the completion of the interviews with law graduates and researchers, the record of all data from the interviews was transcribed. First of all, the researcher did all interviews as photocopies because, when interviews have been transcribed, the documents of the original interviews have been saved. When all interviews are photocopied, then make a different category from the interview guide. Then assign some code to the categories. When the coding of all categories is complete, the next step is to pick up the major theme from the interviews. So important themes are selected from interviews and listed under the most relevant category. When this step is completed and all important themes are selected under the major category, then move on to the next step of the research study, which is finding results and discussion.

Finding/Results/ Discussion

The total number of respondents involved in this study was 12, and all 12 respondents were from University Law College. There were nine males and three females. The ages of the participants were between 22 and 32. In qualification wise, seven out of 12 are from the graduate level and five are from the LL.M. level.

Q1- What are your preferred sources for research/class assignment?

This question is based on library sources that the user used in their research study or class-based assignment in the law college. The majority of users use print sources. In print sources, they used books for their research. The second major source for information is Wikipedia, followed by

Google. Users also use encyclopedias, law journals, and the and the West Law Site for their research work. But very few users used dictionaries, LexisNexis, and HEC digital libraries for their projects.

The results show that law college students mostly use print sources because they feel comfortable with print sources, and in print sources they use books specially related to law because in the law college library there is very little collection of general books. Wikipedia is the biggest source of information, not only for law students but also for other students from different disciplines. Like that, Google is also a very popular source of information, but it was surprising to me that very few students use LexisNexis and the HEC digital library. Even they don't know about the HEC digital library.

Q2- How frequently you use electronic databases for your research work?

Users used libraries and electronic databases almost regularly, but most users did not use electronic databases regularly; they used them once a week. But very few students used electronic databases for their research assignments; they used them once a month.

Most students answered that they use electronic databases regularly for their research work, but they said they have no full credit for those sources; they just put the query on Google and reached the exact or similar information point. They used electronic databases for less than one hour or one to two hours, but they are not satisfied with these databases.

Q3- What you think library collection meets your needs adequately?

The library has a huge collection related to law, but some users said the collection did not meet our requirements according to need. But some users said library collections sometimes meet our requirements and sometimes do not. One participant said the collection is good, but it is not enough to fill the need.

The Law College Library has one of the largest law collection libraries in Pakistan. Many users's perceptions are that this collection does not meet their needs because the collection is out-dated, old, and books are not that conditioned to read them.

Q4- What is the perception of the Law researchers/ Graduate's regarding the attitude, cooperation and work efficiency of the library staff?

This question is based on library staff, attitude, and the way they provide services. Many users told me they felt comfortable with the staff. Staff is always available, approachable, and welcoming to help them when they need library services. Participants also agree that library staff listen carefully and help to search for the required needs. But three participants said library staff does not give any kind of instruction about how to use the library. This is a negative opinion regarding library staff.

In the Law College library, the total number of staff is 12. There's enough staff, but the problem is that most staff are untrained; they have no formal education. They do not provide information to the user in a good manner because they do not know where electronic information exists. But staff is fully committed to their jobs; they try to provide the best services to the users, but it is very important to train the staff according to the digital environment.

Q5- What is the Law researchers' /graduate's response towards I.C. T (Information Communication Technology)?

In the field of information and communication technology (ICT), the majority of students lack knowledge; they just know about basic research, not advanced searches. They just typed the query on Google and got the answer. But some know about advance search, and they used different law-related websites and online journals to fulfill the need for information.

There is serious concern about I.C.T. in Law College students because they only know about basic research and do not know about advance search. When I conducted the interview with the students, not a single user used the online journals; they just used Google, Wikipedia, and basic law-related websites. So it is also necessary to provide assistance and training on how to use ICTs. Then they are able to search independently according to their needs.

Q6- What is your opinion about library services?

Different users have different opinions; some say the library should increase its services. The services the library provides to the users are not satisfactory, so the library should enhance the services. Another opinion comes forward: library books should have open shelving and not be locked into cupboards. One participant said the library should provide up-to-date information to its users. The library should also provide quick responses to its users.

Law College Library should increase their services according to users' needs. They should focus on why users are not happy with the library's existing services. There are some rezones, like: books are in the lock, the collection is very old, the infrastructure is not according to the library, and there is a very congested atmosphere in the library. So the library should overcome these issues.

Q7- What kinds of problems are faced by the law researchers/ graduate's regarding library services?

This question relates to problems faced by law researchers and graduates regarding library services. Results show that mostly users answered that access to books was a big problem, as well as user objections, and criticized all those who highlighted or wrote something in books. There are some other issues, like infrastructure, air-conditioning, paint, etc., which are also big issues regarding the library. Lack of knowledge among library staff is also a problem faced by users. Some users among the selected participants said that there was dust on books, tables, and chairs and no cleanness in the library. Books are outdated.

There are so many problems faced by users while they use the library, but major problems are broken infrastructure, books are not open, the library is not a study environment, and there is no computer lab in the library. Library and college administrations both take notice of all these problems that users face daily.

Q8- What you think how library improve their services?

When asked this question by the participants, the participants of the study answered that the law college library should change its traditional mode to a digital library, just like the Punjab University main library. Participants also want the library to have open shelving and books not be under lock. Selected participants said the library should improve the infrastructure and focus on cleaning in the library; they want complete silence in the library and a fully air-conditioned atmosphere. There are so many services to be improved, according to the participants, like college administration and library administration, which both should play roles in improving library services and filling the gaps. They want reference books to be issued for their research study. One of the participants said the library should purchase new books and subscribe properly to LexisNexis. One of the participants said college administration should give the chance to library staff for proper training, and one of the participants said staff should be increased.

According to users suggestions, the library should change the medium from traditional to digital, just like the main library. The library should provide the best services to its users. College administration should involve all kinds of library issues that users face.

Recommendations

- The law college library is a growing organism, so it is suggested that the college library should provide a better environment, especially for researchers.
- Law college librarians should organize different activities in the library, and in these activities, the library should invite all kinds of students and faculty to participate.
- The main problem faced by library professionals is funding. If sufficient funding is provided to the library manager, it is better to change the infrastructure and reduce the electricity problem.
- The Law College Library should be fully lighted and have air conditioning.
- Users want the College Library to be fully computerized, whatever the software used.
- Digitized all the library collections because it is easy to access them all.

- The Law College Library should cooperate with other law-related libraries or court libraries to provide better services to their users.
- Expensive subscriptions to online journals and different databases will be reduced through this cooperation with other law libraries.
- Law college librarians should take initiative and develop new services in the library, like SDI, CAS, interlibrary loans, referral services, etc.
- Libraries should organize an information literacy program for users and teach how to research according to their needs from different search engines, different libraries, websites, and digital libraries.

Conclusion

This study tries to find out the users's perceptions of the Law College library. Their preference sources, frequency of use sources, how library collection is adequate to fulfill the needs of students, staff behaviors, information about ICT, what are the opinions about library services, problems faced by users, and how libraries can improve their services. The conclusion of this study is based on the results and findings. Graduates and researchers preferred sources for their study are print sources. They use the databases frequently. The majority of students stated that the library's collection sometimes meets their needs and sometimes doesn't. And the behavior of staff is according to professionalism; they are fully cooperative with library users, but they lack technology. So there is a dire need to focus on electronic source libraries in the digital world.

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Appendix Interview Guide

1. What are your preferred sources for research/class assignment?
2. How Frequently you use electronic databases for your research work
3. What you think library collection meets your needs adequately?
4. What is the perception of the Law researchers/ Graduate's regarding the attitude, cooperation and work efficiency of the library staff?
5. What is the Law researchers/graduate's response towards I.C. T (Information Communication Technology)?
6. What is your opinion about library services?
7. What kinds of problems are faced by the law researchers/ graduate's regarding library services?
8. What you think library improve their services?