



## **ACADEMIC LIBRARY USERS' EXPERIENCE: A REVIEW ON RELATED CONCEPTS AND EMPIRICAL IMPLICATION**

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### **Abstract:**

In order to answer the questions raised to guide this study, there is need to review previous literature that relates to variables understudied. Also, to operationally define key concepts used for this study to ensure clarity of the concepts. Literature review shows a vibrant section and significant untouched materials to structure the infrastructure of a precise subject component in whichever category of a research study. It is conducted to obtain a clear consideration about the precise area of study. The literature review is arranged developing themes directly drawn from the literature, chronologically and thematically in this study. Researchers followed literature Review as the main methodology to review the existing empirical knowledge to build conceptual content to support for the proposed research directions. The findings provide the insights on how empirical findings being shared in literature reviews connecting the concept of Band Citizenship behavior and related concepts and implications. Based on the discussion, postulate the future research directions in line with the empirical knowledge gaps found within.

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## 1. Introduction

This literature review enlightens an outline of theoretical fundamentals which considers a notion of library users, the role of the librarian, the concept of service, and the concept of service quality, service quality in library service and marketing in library perspective. A methodical literature examines numerous databases and numerous characteristics of this topic were reviewed. The literature review is arranged to develop themes directly drawn from the literature, chronologically and thematically within from every section. Its goal is to recognize the varying viewpoints, the current tasks, and the benefits offered by investigative information science specialists' opinions. The main service quality concepts are recognized throughout a strategic planning approach, which has been suggested as the most fruitful by the popular of researchers.

## 2. Literature Review

The Literature is starting broadly with a discussion of the concept of User Experience, Web Presence, E-Service, Online Aesthetic, Library, Library Environment, Marketing Approach, User Experience, Library Patronage and User Attitude. The literature search helps in the identification and location of relevant documents and other sources. Search engines can be used to search web resources and bibliographic databases. Conceptual frameworks can be a useful tool in developing an understanding of a subject area. Creating the literature review involves the stages of: scanning, making notes, structuring the literature review, writing the literature review, and building a bibliography.

### 2.1 Web Presence

Websites are part of our everyday life and are used to exchange and to convey information between user communities. In the traditional library, users had to enter the library in order to use its services: the collections, the reading-rooms, the equipment, or the lending and help services. With the development of electronic collections and services libraries have started to offer a new virtual "entrance" to their services: the library website. Users can "visit" the library and use many of its services from remote places, e.g. from their workplace or from home. Such visits, in analogy to the traditional physical visits, are called "virtual visits". The library website may be the library's own domain, or it may be places within the institution's/community's website.

New electronic services and their quality evaluation constitute an important field of research and challenge in the modern libraries. Economic and technological developments have changed library services and environments – today libraries are rapidly expanding into the virtual space. New electronic services and their quality evaluation constitute an important field of research and challenge in the modern

academic libraries, bringing about high interest of practitioners as well as heated discussions among theorists. In recent years, interest in quality management, user satisfaction, service, and e-service quality evaluation has considerably increased in the academic libraries (Babakus & Boller, 1992). An organization without a website can be said to be lacking a very significant factor in its development. Nowadays people want to explore the services and products of an organization on their desktop, and explore its services in order to make up their mind whether or not to deal with that organization. A website not only lends credence to its services but also creates a confidence among its users that they are going to be provided with services of very high order.

## 2.2 E- Service

The concept of an e-service has been used increasingly by researchers and practitioners from the beginning of this century. An e-service is defined as *"the provision of service over electronic networks such as the internet"* and includes *"the service product, the service environment, and service delivery that comprise any business model, whether it belongs to a goods manufacturer or a pure service provider"* (Rust and Kannan, 2002, p. 4). Whitman and Woszczynski (2004) define e-service as an interactive, content-centered and internet-based customer service, driven by the customer and integrated with related organizational customer support processes and technologies with the goal of strengthening customer and service provider relationship. Thus, e-service has two main characteristics: the service is accessible within electronic networks; and the service is consumed by a user via the internet. According to this, the most important difference between traditional service and e-service in a library is that the e-user has to participate in the service processes more actively. He or she relies entirely on own ability to use technology to obtain the service. Two main research approaches in studying e-service quality can be distinguished from the literature. The first approach is technological: since e-services are based on technology, there is often a natural temptation to understand quality as conformance to technical specifications (Van Dyke et al., 1997; Ojasalo, 2010).

## 2.3 Online Aesthetics

One of the fundamental issues of library user experience: how to attract and win over the user in the highly competitive Internet marketplace. Although services provided by the library websites have played major role in teaching and research process of the university, there is no proper framework to evaluate the quality of the eservices provided in the university libraries in Sri Lanka (Wanigasooriya & Ranaweera, 2017). In the online service context, aesthetic appeal denotes consumers' perception concerning the online ambient condition and to the extent they interpret the environment as attractive or alluring (Harris and Goode, 2010). The aesthetic appeal dimension reflects Bitner's (1992) *"ambient condition"* (Zeithaml et al., 2002; Grewal et al., 2003; Montoya-Weiss et al., 2003). Aesthetic appeal explains online audio-videos (Evans and King, 1999), page graphics, the overall visual appeal, perceived originality of pages and sites (Dreze and Zufryden, 1997), its nature, size, overall presentation, and number of online images (Ekhaml, 1996).

Studies have shown those consumers' perceived aesthetic appeal leads to service quality perceptions (Montoya-Weiss et al., 2003) and e-satisfaction and user experiences (Szymanski and Hise, 2000).

## 2.4 Library Environment

Additionally, the library environment is changing from a noiseless zone to a user friendly and relaxing atmosphere. Atkinson (2001) remarks that the new library must be mainly a social gathering place, somewhat noisy, with plenty of coffee while Connor (2005) views that a commodious atmosphere with state of the art equipment draws patrons. This suggests that modern libraries are no longer reading places but learning spaces where people gather to participate in group discussions, trainings, and conferences. In today's libraries, patrons can watch television, play games and listen to music. Beyond the physical visits, social media are employed to enable communication and provide interactive services. These innovations are products of the networked environment. Consequently, academic libraries are stepping up the ladder to meet user expectations through innovative services and practices.

Within the library space an individual has to identify an environment that helps to achieve learning goals he/she has set. Striving to find rich and empowering learning environments in the library, the educational environment has to be created in the library. The latter should meet the needs of academic study programmes, have the potential to be transformed into multifunctional learning environments as well as define the aims for developing participants' information and meta learning competence (Juceviciene, P., Tautkeviciene, G., 2002). Thus, the aims and content of academic curriculum operate in the educational environment of academic library. It means that an academic library is influenced by the content of this curriculum.

The educational environment of academic library is characterized by the academic specificity (Juceviciene, P., Tautkeviciene, G., 2002): it is an integral part of university's educational system; it has to interact with all the educational environments of academic study programmes; its regular clients (students, teachers, researchers, administration staff) interact with each other; the selectivity of academic library learning environments depends on the type of clients and the educational environment of study programme (it is important for students in particular).

## 2.5 Marketing Approach

Renborg (1997, p. 2) presents a historical review of marketing library services, dating back more than a century, suggesting that "*marketing is not a new library activity*". She argues that marketing library services has its roots in Samuel Swett Green's quoted speech at the ALA Conference in 1876. Kies (1987, p. 18) also mentions Green's "*early example of marketing thinking*", which was giving prominence to "*users' interests and needs*". In the early 1970s, librarians and information specialists began to consider that marketing their library according to their users' needs could contribute both towards the fulfillment of the overall library objectives and the improvement of the existing services (Koontz et al.,

2006). Gupta (2003, p. 99), in a brief historical account, suggests that the changes noticed in the use of the “*marketing concept*” in library and information services indicate a shift from the “*selling concept*” to the “*product development*” and finally to the “*customer focused concept*”. Wood and Young (1988) defined in detail the concepts/orientations (“*production*”, “*selling*” and “*marketing*” orientation) regarding this “*historical progression*”.

They argued that the “*product*” or “*production*” orientation is based on the development of quality products or services (like information systems designing or collection development) without, however, determining user satisfaction. The “*selling*” concept was defined as a company-oriented approach that could assist an organisation to convince customers to buy or use its offered products or services without taking into account their needs.

Essentially, the “*marketing*” orientation was described as the only customer-focused approach that would depend on the mutual exchange and long-term interaction of the organization with its customers. Therefore, the effective adoption of the marketing concept will reinforce libraries to take over not only “*the reactive role of responding to apparent community needs*” but also “*the active role of studying and analyzing such needs*” (Wood and Young, 1988, p. 7). Koontz et al. (2006) presented in chronological order hundreds of publications addressing the issue of library marketing applications. The paper documents the constant growth of the related body of literature, which became more apparent from the mid-1970s onward. Rowley (2003) indicates that related literature includes mostly how-to guides and case studies. Efforts aiming at implementing marketing strategies to different library types also have been made worldwide (Balabanidou et al., 2009). Articles documenting the application of marketing principles in libraries are also produced in developing countries like Ghana (Martey, 2000), Sri Lanka (Arachchige, 2002a; Block and Edzan, 2002), Botswana (Nkanga, 2002) and Kenya (Kavulya, 2004). Furthermore, it is worth mentioning that publications on library marketing have not only increased in number but also have become more specialized. Marketing library services has always been a major interest of libraries. Through marketing strategies, a library can expect to improve its visibility and image, thus attracting more users to utilize its materials and services.

Libraries and information centers are facing a time of unprecedented change and challenge. Recent technological developments are creating new forms of information, new sources of information and new ways of providing information by passing traditional institutional like libraries. There has been an increasing pressure on libraries to mobilize resources and become self-reliant. Library users are transforming into customers with rising expectations, diverse needs and wants, and choices. Now, the real challenge for library and information professionals is not to manage the collection, staff and technology but to turn these resources into services. The notion of services has also changed, from basic to value added, from staff assisted to self -service, from in-house to outreach, from free to priced, from reactive to pro-active, and from mass customization to individualized service. As in such an environment librarians are finding new ways of

serving users or customers effectively and efficiently. The principles of marketing have gradually been accepted both as relevant and beneficial to the library environment. Marketing provides an opportunity to see as to how they can offer effective and efficient services to their users or customers.

University libraries, a huge amount invests on collection development, processing and storage of information resources. Effective utilization of these resources and services can be achieved through new marketing approach and this type of tools is assisting in the universities. The library should give priority to provide excellent user service enhancing its image as information provider in the information era. Marketing of library and information service includes users' priorities, expectations, individuality, responsiveness, relationship, quality of services, professional skills and competencies, value-added services, etc. Therefore, university libraries must develop a process for understanding the information needs, wants and opinions of clients from the industries, and develop products and services which satisfy these information needs (Bhatt, 2009).

Academic libraries will need to provide a range of new value-added resources and services, for internally generated and externally acquired and academic scholarly information, and may be involved in the delivery of administrative information as well (Verma and Pateria, 2010). However, the first priority of the electronic academic libraries will be to support the institution's teaching and learning and research activities. The marketing is a process which carries goods and produces to ultimate users. Marketing approaches are providing to be effective in assisting academic libraries to adjust to changes in its client base and will ensure that services delivered continue to fit the needs (Bharti (2010)). Therefore, the marketing policy of the libraries needs careful planning, structuring, execution and evaluation with regular review. The librarians need to understand the importance of the service marketing mix the library service.

The market approach to information services and products is an endeavor to accelerate the services to provide the researchers and scholars with the required information support. Marketing has become vital to the viability of public and non-profit organizations (Kotler and Levy, 1969). Over the past three decades, libraries have embraced marketing to improve library services and create stronger contacts with the user community (Garoufallou, Siatri, Zafeiriou and Balampanidou, 2013; Siddike et al.,2015) so as to increase library use, enhance the value and image of the library, provide user education, and change user perceptions (Al-Daihani and AlAwadhi, 2015).

Marketing of library services is the successful implementation of the considerable number of activities connected with growing satisfaction of clients by giving most value to them. It is a complete answer for library and information service center. There have been huge advancements in marketing of library and information services around the world (Guptha, 2016). Nowadays, we live in competitive world. The library and information services segment works in a situation which is experiencing consistent advancement and change. Library professionals are considerate that the distribution of effective and efficient services must be established on strategic planning. The capacity of organizations and businesses to make potential users aware of their products or to

promote their services can mean the distinction amongst extinction and success (Kotler, 1997). Today's essential element of libraries is marketing knowledge effectively.

## 2.6 User Experience

User Experience (UX) is gaining momentum as a critical success factor across all industries and sectors, including libraries. While usability studies of library websites and related digital interfaces are commonplace, UX is becoming an increasingly popular topic of discussion in the community and is emerging as a new specialization for library professionals (MacDonald, 2015).

UX is *"the totality of end users' perceptions as they interact with a product or service. These perceptions include effectiveness (how good is the result?), efficiency (how fast or cheap is it?), emotional satisfaction (how good does it feel?), and the quality of the relationship with the entity that created the product or service (what expectations does it create for subsequent interactions?)."* Thus, UX relies on understanding user needs, behaviors and attitudes through empathic methods. The term empathy is central to any UX work. Bell (2014,) argues: *"In the absence of empathic design, there is a disconnect between what the designer intended and how the user experiences the system."* In the psychological literature, empathy is beyond perspective-taking.

Perspective-taking and empathy may overlap (Galinsky et al., 2008). However, there is a fine line that differentiates between the two concepts. Perspective-taking is defined as the process of taking an alternate point of view and thus is associated with a cognitive skill. It does not necessarily lead to feelings of empathy, which are associated with an emotional capacity, which may be made after the perspective-taking process has concluded (Davis, 1983). The UX designer, by being empathetic, needs to recognize not only users' thoughts, but also their emotions. Since then, UX has become an increasingly popular discussion topic throughout the library community, with a particularly strong push in the academic library community (Walton, 2015).

Experience is likely to arise across channels, the cumulative effect of numerous encounters, rather than being driven by a single episode. We do not understand how consumers synthesize these multi-channel encounters into an overall assessment of experience, but it is likely not to be a pure addition of individual service episodes (Sharma & Patterson 2000; Chandon *et al.* 2005). Hassenzahl (2008) defines UX as *"a momentary, primarily evaluative feeling (good-bad) while interacting with a product or service."* Kuniavsky (2010) provided a more detailed definition. For him UX is *"the totality of end users' perceptions as they interact with a product or service"*.

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## **2.7 Library Patronage**

Generally, in real sense, it is important for organization that is providing service for monetary purpose to have insight in how to promote satisfaction to their customers for continuing patronage. The library in the view of Oyelude (2003) is a vital part of the world's system of education and information storage and retrieval that makes books, films, recordings and other media of knowledge available to people in an organized manner. Wali (1993) on the other hand, sees it as a *"repository of knowledge or an intellectual storehouse serving as a giant memory to mankind"*. To encourage library patronage, Akinade (2000) affirms that usage of electronic database aids easy access and reduces the time spent while searching for materials compared to traditional service method.

However, Adeya and Oyelara (2003) warned library and information professionals, by pointing out that mere exposure to technology does not guarantee usage, and as such the existence of information within the society does not assure its use and concomitant acquisition of knowledge. In order for library and information professionals to render effective services so as to remain relevant, Kigongo-Bukanya (1999) advised them to be *"contingent"*. That is with their training, they should be able to measure up with the challenges involved in information provision. Patronage is born out of a desire to be committed to an organization either based on its service quality or perceived service qualities. Hence, the extent to which a library user will patronize the services of an academic library depends on how the user perceives the library physical environment (servicescape) and how the customer also thinks and feels that the condition of the service environment is consistent with his / her personality.

Tahir and Abu-Bakar (2007) found that cumulative satisfaction refers to customers' overall evaluation of patronage experience from inception to date. Specifically, in service industry service quality the delivery of services need to be performed carefully so that the ultimate customers are delighted by the service delivery (Oyeniya and Joachim, 2008; Kim et al. 2008; Cronin et al., 2000; Choi et al., 2004; Badri et al., 2007; Scotti Harmon and Behson, 2007; Lee et al. (2010) and Yesilada and Direktör (2010).

It is therefore important to note that as undergraduate students, there is always the need to patronize the university library. Based on the findings, the study concluded that library patronage is essential for enabling undergraduate students in the universities to source for information resources in the library for learning and research activities



## 2.8 User Attitude

Attitude is defined as “learned predisposition to respond in a consistently favorable or unfavorable manner on a given object” (Fishbein and Ajzen, 1975). Attitude is one of the fundamental factors influencing consumers’ buying behavior and has, therefore, attracted considerable attention from researchers probing the behavior of bank customers and their relationship with these institutions (Bashir and Madhavaiah, 2015). In this study, attitude is defined as positive and negative feelings of an individual toward academic library services.

## 3. Conclusion

Librarians are able to apply the attributes to the service quality, technological, environmental, and marketing dimensions investigated in this study and infuse perceived user experience. The study discloses how it can facilitate understanding the customer experience and provide valuable insights to support to the service design process of the academic library sector in Sri Lanka. Moreover, the findings of this study provide more benefits not only to the decision makers but also the staff and the library users at the academic library premises itself in Sri Lanka. This study will also provide valuable insights to the decision-making processes in this regard. The researchers in this field can also use the model identified in the study and its findings in their future research interventions. These facts finding of the study are also significant to the librarians who are responsible for supervising of the activities of their subordinating staff. Furthermore, the facts sought in the study will also be used to identify the areas for program planning in relation to the service improvement and total service quality in the library from the customer’s perspectives. The study also paves the path in identifying determinants of library user satisfaction. As discussed, the decision makers can use these revealing to assess the effectiveness of the existing services from the user’s point of view.

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