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## Academic Library Resources and Services at Higher Education Institutions during COVID-19 Pandemic: A Case of Students' Satisfaction

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# **Academic Library Resources and Services at Higher Education Institutions during COVID-19 Pandemic: A Case of Students' Satisfaction**

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## **Abstract**

This study has been designed to inspect the library resources and services at higher education institutions during the covid-19 pandemic in terms of students' satisfaction. A quantitative study design to conduct an online survey from the students of public sector universities of Pakistan. A sample of 1823 respondents had been sampled through a proportionate random sampling technique. Moreover, a well-structured questionnaire was opted to measure the response of the respondents using an attitudinal scale of (dis)agreement. Further, frequency distribution, descriptive statistics, correlation statistical tests, and regression analysis had been used to draw results and conclusions. The study findings present that provision of required documents and available library resources have not been predicting students' satisfaction. However, other variables including access to library resources, access to library services, available library services, response to online queries, and online research support have favorable effects on students' satisfaction towards online library access and resources in public sector universities.

**Keywords:** Library Resources, Online Query, Available Document, Research Support, Students' Satisfaction

## **Introduction**

From the Library of Alexandria to the Library of Congress, libraries have served as a repository for knowledge (Appleton, 2020; Holley, 2020; Long, 2021; Wolfe, 2020). Libraries have always kept knowledge and cataloged it for potential users, from clay tablets and papyrus scrolls to encyclopedias and article databases (Shoaib, Abdullah, & Ali, 2020; Shoaib, Rasool, & Anwar, 2021). However, with the advent of the Internet, libraries were able to reach a wider audience, making it easier to access and locate information (Shoaib, Ali, Anwar, Rasool, et al.,

2021; Shoaib, Ali, Anwar, & Shaukat, 2021). Although the core function of libraries has remained the same, namely to provide the public with access to vital knowledge and literature, they have evolved beyond that in the modern day (Harlow & Hill, 2020; Holley, 2020; Hwang, Elkins, Hanson, Shotwell, & Thompson, 2020; Kingsley, 2020). Academic libraries, in addition to what they provide online, have aided their communities in improving the quality of their lives and have played essential social roles (Damerchiloo et al., 2020; Do & Nuth, 2020; Fagan, Ostermiller, Price, & Sapp, 2020). It is pertinent to mention here that the social roles change with a neoteric situation like the outbreak of the COVID-19 pandemic (Shoaib & Abdullah, 2020, 2021). According to UNESCO, 186 countries would have imposed nationwide closures by the end of April 2020, affecting 73.8 percent of all enrolled students (Condic, 2021; Shoaib, Rasool, et al., 2021; Tamaro, 2020; Xie, Siau, & Nah, 2020). Hence, this study has been designed to examine the library resources and services at higher education institutions during the covid-19 pandemic in terms of students' satisfaction.

### ***The Study Context***

The only options to limit the spread of the COVID-19 outbreak by interrupting the transmission chain are lockdown and social isolation, the closure of educational institutions has impacted a huge number of pupils (J. Garner et al., 2021; Lee & Springer, 2020; J. A. Murphy & Shelley, 2020; Zawacki-Richter, 2020). COVID-19 pandemic has prompted educational institutions all around the world to pursue innovative techniques promptly (Naciri, Baba, Achbani, & Kharbach, 2020; Nawaz, Gomes, & Saldeen, 2020; Okike, 2020). Most institutions have moved to an online method during this time, employing Blackboard, Microsoft Teams, Zoom, or other online platforms (Adams, 2020; Harlow & Hill, 2020; Wan, 2021; Xie et al., 2020). Even though libraries all around the world are working hard to enable remote access to their services and collections (Adedoyin & Soykan, 2020; Rapanta, Botturi, Goodyear, Guàrdia, & Koole, 2020). Academic libraries adopt online methods, collections, resources, services, locations, and operations that may all undergo considerable changes (Odunola & Tella, 2020; Rapanta et al., 2020). To deal with this new situation, UNESCO's Education Division is offering links to important educational resources, and its archives include a collection of historical sound recordings (Adedoyin & Soykan, 2020; Habiba & Ahmed, 2020; Weeks, Houk, Nugent, Corn, & Lackey, 2020). Moreover, Wikimedia has also set up a project on the COVID-19 pandemic to handle information on the subject (Hoogland, 2021; König, Jäger-Biela, & Glutsch, 2020). Similarly, academic libraries in Pakistan have also facilitated the students at the university level for academic activities (Shoaib, Rasool, et al., 2021). Thus, the

study has been designed to examine the students' satisfaction towards access and availability of academic library resources and accessibility at the higher educational level.

### ***The objective of the Study***

This study has been designed to inspect the library resources and services at higher education institutions during the covid-19 pandemic in terms of students' satisfaction.

### **Review of Literature**

Several studies have been conducted to examine online services provided by academic libraries (Adedoyin & Soykan, 2020; Alajmi & Albudaiwi, 2020; Shoaib, Rasool, et al., 2021). It has been observed that academic libraries at public sector universities are a helpful and practical tool for curriculum delivery (M. Y. Ali & Gatiti, 2020; Arora & Srinivasan, 2020). Similarly, according to the researches on the pandemic pedagogies, learners benefit from online learning for a variety of reasons, including simple access to knowledge, proper content distribution, content standardization, customized instruction, self-pacing, interaction, and enhanced convenience (Bao, 2020; Burki, 2020; Butler-Henderson, Crawford, Rudolph, Lalani, & Sabu, 2020; Churiyah, Sholikhan, Filianti, & Sakdiyyah, 2020; Coghill & Sewell, 2020). During the pandemic, online learning enabled higher education institutes to keep their digital doors open for students during the lockdown (Craft, 2020; Crawford et al., 2020; Demuyakor, 2020). Several libraries already had a strong digital presence, but many more are working to establish one to continue serving clients during the pandemic (Dwivedi et al., 2020; Fraser-Arnott, 2020; J. C. Garner & Logue, 2020). It has also been reported that libraries have emerged as a critical conduit to high-quality e-books, periodicals, and educational content as the need for reputable e-resources grows (J. C. Garner & Logue, 2020; Gonzalez et al., 2020; Honey-Rosés et al., 2020; Ifijeh & Yusuf, 2020). The library has expanded its online offerings, emphasizing bibliotherapy as a means of assisting users during the crisis, and earning positive press coverage (Jæger & Blaabæk, 2020; Jones, 2020; König et al., 2020). Academic libraries, meantime, are making every effort to provide remote access, an online article request service, webinars, and panel discussions on a variety of topics, and to act as a catalyst for effective information dissemination (Ladan, Haruna, & Madu, 2020; Lee & Springer, 2020; Ma, 2020). It has also been observed that libraries provide access to Scopus, RCAAP, PubMed, Web of Sciences, e-books database, and BON to its user amide of COVID-19 (Marinoni, Van't Land, & Jensen, 2020; Mishra, Gupta, & Shree, 2020; J. A. Murphy & Shelley, 2020).

It is pertinent to mention here that the studies have also been asserted that the learning process is less suffer due to online services rendered by libraries, besides that most of the libraries - particularly in underdeveloped countries are not prepared for this novel situation (M. P.

Murphy, 2020; Naciri et al., 2020; Nawaz et al., 2020). Nevertheless, the hard efforts by the librarian with the support of higher education institutions turn the situation into a ‘new normal’ position and the equilibrium maintained (N. Ali, Shoaib, & Abdullah, 2021; Shoaib, Abdullah, & Ali, 2021; Shoaib, Ali, Anwar, Rasool, et al., 2021; Shoaib, Rasool, et al., 2021). Besides the accessibility and availability of libraries services to the students and other users, the potential library users must have a good attitude toward technology skills, are proficient in using mobile technology, and use it daily to obtain information (Shoaib, Rasool, et al., 2021). Changes in user information needs have been noted to put increased strain on library service delivery (Srivastava & Babel, 2021). Text notifications can spread information and multimedia content such as movies, photos, and audio files via mobile devices (Koons, Scheinfeld, & Larson, 2021; Warren, Lofstedt, & Wardman, 2021). Librarians have also been used these tools to notify patrons about recent events around COVID 19, as well as safety tips and other pertinent information (Okike, 2020; Trujillo & Tallman, 2021; Wan, 2021).

### **Research Methodology**

This study opted quantitative study design to conduct an online survey from the students of public sector universities of Pakistan. A sample of 1823 respondents had been sampled through proportionate random sampling technique following inclusion criteria of students enrolled in BS (4 years) and MA/MSc (2 years) from the four public sector universities. A well-structured questionnaire was opted to measure the response of the respondents using an attitudinal scale of (dis)agreement. This measurement tool consisted of different parts including socio-demographic characteristics, access, and available library resources, access and available library services, response to an online query, provision of a required document, online research support, and students' satisfaction. The reliability of the scale was pretested randomly from 30 students and the value of C. Alpha was ranging from .762 to .947. All the questions were coded and computerized to analyze the data. Further, frequency distribution, descriptive statistics, correlation statistical tests, and regression analysis had been used to draw results and conclusions.

### **Results and Discussions**

This section provides the results and discussion of the study. It has been divided into four sections including socio-demographic characteristics, descriptive statistics, correlation statistical test, and regression analysis.

#### ***Socio-demographic Characteristics***

Table 1 shows the socio-demographic characteristics of the respondents, such as academic program and name of the faculty in which the respondents enrolled, family and/or parent

occupation of the respondents, their family monthly income, size of family (in numbers), and family type of the respondents. The table also shows that out of 1823 respondents 1119 (61.4%) are from the BS program while 704 (38.6%) were enrolled in the Master program. Both the faculties have approximately equal representation in the sample that is 933 (51.2%) from the Faculty of Science and 890 (48.8%) from the Faculty of Arts. Similarly, family occupation is shown in the table illustrations that most of the respondents' family livelihood came from agriculture and business, where 484 (26.5%) belong from a business-oriented family, while 443 (24.3%) are from an agriculture background. Adequate number 201 (11%) of respondents have family engagement in government services while some respondents 84 (4.4) are from families whose members serve in the private sector. The third high number 366 (20.1%) of the family occupation of the respondent are laborious work while 245 (13.4%) respondents' parents are retired and/or old and out of the job market.

Table 1  
*Socio-demographic Characteristics*

Program of the Students			Faculty Name of the Students		
Category	<i>f</i>	%	Category	<i>f</i>	%
BS (4 Years)	1119	61.4	Arts	890	48.8
MA/MSc	704	38.6	Science	933	51.2
Total	1823	100.0	Total	1823	100.0
Family Occupation			Family Monthly Income (PKR)		
Agriculturist	443	24.3	Up to 10000	68	3.7
Businessman	484	26.5	10001-20000	418	22.9
Govt. Job	201	11.0	20001-30000	559	30.7
Private Job	84	4.6	30001-40000	306	16.8
Old/retired/late	245	13.4	40001-50000	400	21.9
Labour	366	20.1	50001 & Above	72	3.9
Total	1823	100.0	Total	1823	100.0
Family Size (No.)			Family Type		
1-3	20	1.1	Nuclear	946	51.9
4-6	551	30.2	Joint	610	33.5
7 & Above	1252	68.7	Extended	267	14.6
Total	1823	100.0	Total	1823	100.0

Family monthly income is one of the important demographic factors that affect respondents' accessibility and adaptability to new and modern technologies and gadgets. The table shows that most of the respondents' 559 (30.7%) family monthly income fall in the range of 20001 to 30000 Rs., and 418 (20.9%) respondents' family monthly income is from 10001 to 20000 Rs., while 306 (16.8%) of the respondents' family monthly income is ranged from 30001 to 40000 Rs. The group of the respondents also comprise very high and low family income, such as 68 (3.7%) of the respondents family monthly income is below 10000 Rs., while 72 (3.9%)

respondents family monthly income is above 50000 Rs., however, the majority (approx.. 70%) of the respondents are from the medium economic status.

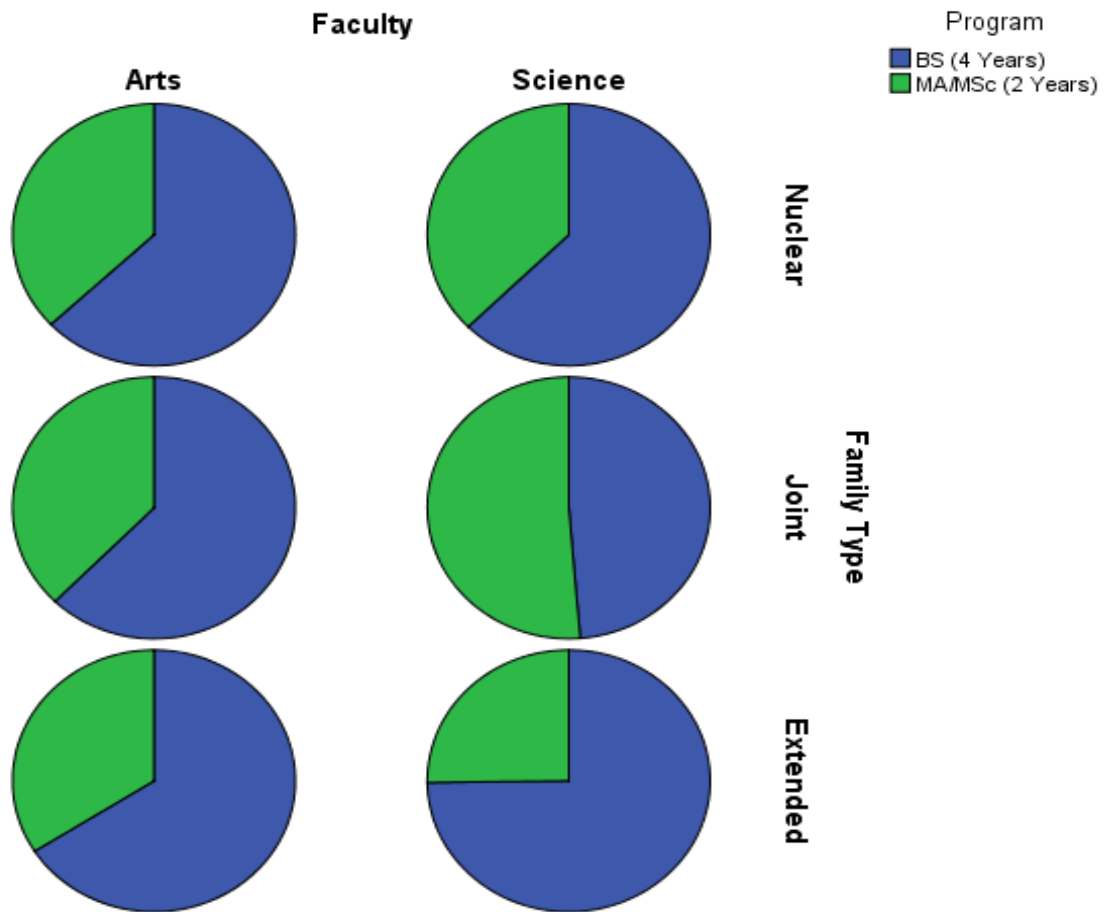


Figure 1. Showing Program, Faculty, and Family Type of the Students

Another important demographic factor is the family size, the table depicts the real position of Pakistani family where 1252 out of 1823 (68.7%) respondents has more than seven family members, 551 (30.2%) has four to six family members while only 20 (1.1%) of the respondents has one to three family member. The last section of the table is about the family type of the respondents, it shows that most of the respondents 946 (51.9%) are living in the nuclear family, where parents are living with their unmarried children, 610 (33.5%) respondents are living in the joint family setup, while 267 (14.6%) of the respondents are the inhabitant of extended family.

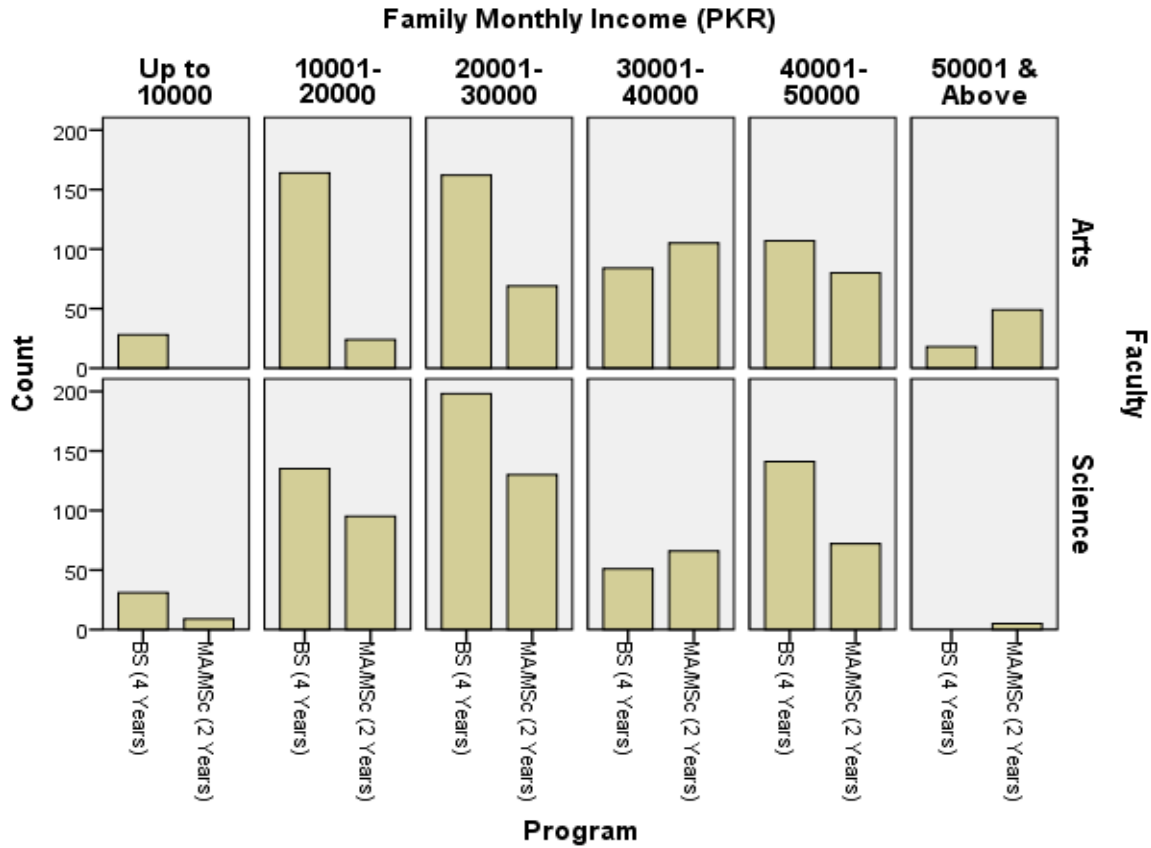


Figure 2. Showing Program, faculty, and Family Monthly Income (PKR)  
**Descriptive Statistics**

Table 2  
**Descriptive Statistics (n=1823)**

Variables	Min-	Max-	Mean	Std. Dev-	Var-
Provision of Required Document	8	20	15.09	2.330	5.427
Access to Library Resources	7	20	17.60	2.320	5.383
Available Library Resources	10	24	20.83	3.158	9.976
Access to Library Services	5	20	15.91	3.769	14.206
Available Library Services	8	20	17.52	2.387	5.698
Respond to Online Query	9	20	17.99	2.289	5.241
Online Research Support	7	16	14.30	1.793	3.217
Students' Satisfaction	11	20	17.78	2.240	5.016

Table 2 present the descriptive statistics of the variables. Analysis reveals that the minim value of the scale of provision of required documents is 8 and the maximum is 20 along with a 15.09 mean value. Similarly, the standard deviation is 2.330 and 5.427 variance has been reported. Further, the descriptive statistics of the variables including access to library resources, available library resources, access to library services, available library services, response to an online query, online research support, and students' satisfaction have also been provided in the table.



### ***Correlation Statistical Test***

Table 3 reveals the correlation statistical test of the variables. As the data was parametric and normally distributed, hence, Pearson correlation test has been applied to check the correlation among variables. The correlation between available library resources and access to library resources has been reported as moderately significant positive as .586. However, the provision of required documents has a weak correlation with access to library services. It is pertinent here to mention that all the variables have a significant positive correlation among each other as mentioned in Table 3.

Table 3  
*Correlation Statistical Test*

Var.	PRD	ALR	AVL	AVS	ACL	ROQ	ORS	STS
PRD	1	.262**	.295**	.122**	.265**	.386**	.145**	.253**
ALR		1	.586**	.251**	.564**	.302**	.250**	.433**
AVL			1	.305**	.503**	.454**	.315**	.431**
AVS				1	.496**	.268**	.070**	.282**
ACL					1	.440**	.216**	.448**
ROQ						1	.455**	.583**
ORS							1	.418**
STS								1

### ***Regression Analysis***

Table 4  
*Regression Analysis Predicting Students' Satisfaction towards Online Library access and resources*

<i>Predictors</i>	Unstandardized Coefficients		Standardized Coefficients	t	Sig.
	B	Std. Error	Beta		
Provision of Required Document	-.010	.019	-.010	-.531	.595
Access to Library Resources	.188	.023	.195	8.249	.000
Available Library Resources	.020	.017	.029	1.217	.224
Access to Library Services	.040	.012	.068	3.318	.001
Available Library Services	.083	.023	.088	3.557	.000
Respond to Online Query	.375	.022	.384	16.691	.000
Online Research Support	.204	.025	.164	8.167	.000
(Constant)	2.417	.438		5.514	.000

F=208.017, Sig.=.000<sup>b</sup> R=.667<sup>a</sup> R Square=.445, Adjusted R Square=.443, n=1823

Table 4 illustrates the multiple regression analysis predicting students' satisfaction towards online library access and resources in terms of academic libraries of public sector universities. The study findings present that provision of required documents and available library resources have not been predicting students' satisfaction. However, other variables including access to

library resources, access to library services, available library services, response to the online query, and online research support have favourable effects on students' satisfaction towards online library access and resources in public sector universities.

It has been observed that any endeavor to improve the effectiveness of online learning from the libraries must take into account the users' perspectives (Azonobi, Uwaifo, & Tella, 2020; Popoola & Olajide, 2021; Smith, 2020). Students have both positive and negative attitudes toward online services afforded by academic libraries (Shoaib, Rasool, et al., 2021). These favorable and unfavorable acuties depend on, consistency of libraries online services, the interaction of students with the librarian, rate of connective and flexibility of the online setting, social presence and conferencing with other teachers and classmates, and students' proficiencies and capabilities to use of new and updated technologies (Shoaib, Abdullah, et al., 2021; Shoaib, Ahmad, Ali, & Abdullah, 2021; Shoaib & Ullah, 2019, 2021a, 2021b). Furthermore, several flaws in online learning have also been identified in the literature in the provision of libraries online services such as suspension of services, late responses, slow internet connectivity, feeling of isolation, problems in collaboration with peers, over searched and overload sites, and the necessity for internet users to commit to studying regularly.

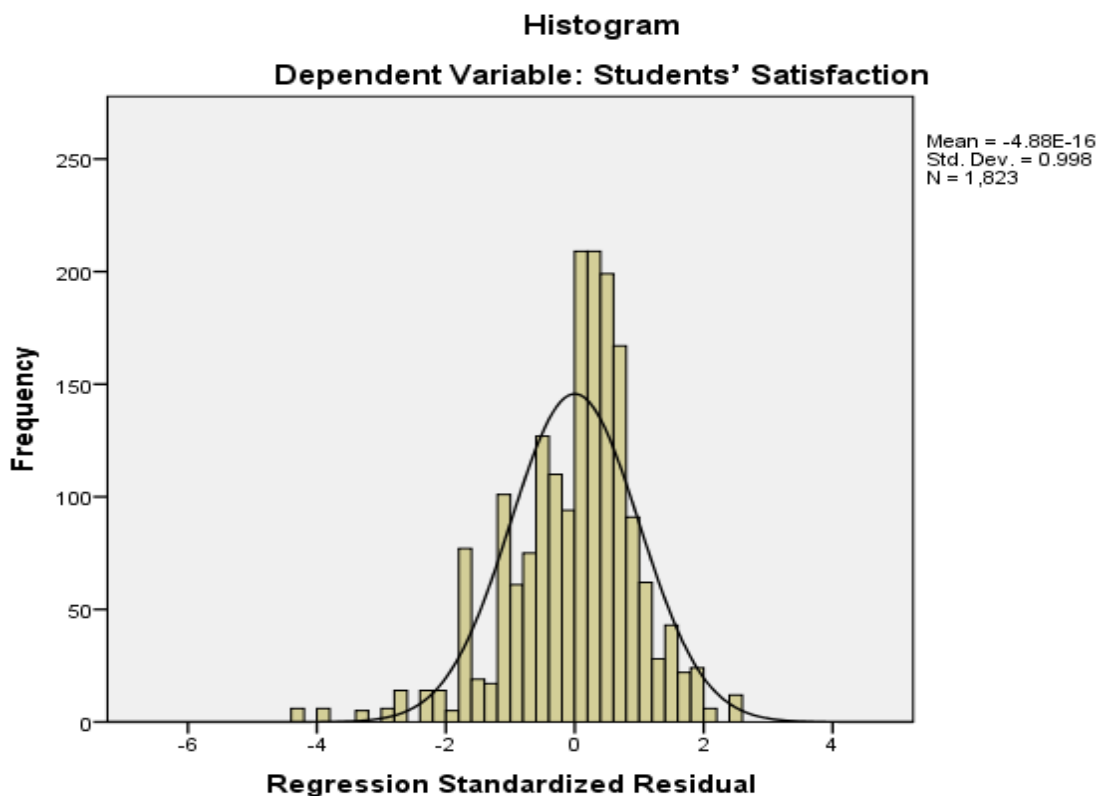


Figure 3. Showing Histogram

## **Conclusion**

The overall conclusion that we reached based on the study is that the provision of required documents and available library resources have fewer effects and predicting students' satisfaction towards online library access and resources in public sector universities. However, other variables including access to library resources, access to library services, available library services, response to an online query, and online research support have favorable effects on students' satisfaction. University students are satisfied with their libraries' response to the COVID-19 pandemic, noting the positive help they have received from library staff. The usage of available electronic resources, on the other hand, has not been as envisaged; most students are ignorant of the presence of reference databases on campus and the capacity to access them online. In terms of online library resources, students have a positive self-perception of their knowledge and skills in terms of access and availability in public Sector universities.

## **Limitations of the Study**

The study is limited to quantitative study design and students of public sector universities using library online resources for their academic activities. Further, selected variables in terms of online library resources and students' satisfaction have been used in this study.

## **Future Implications**

This study will be an addition to the existing body of knowledge and will become part of the literature.

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