

Evaluating Students' Perceptions of Library Service Quality and Its Utilization in Arts and Science Colleges in Western Tamil Nadu

K. Udhayakumar^{1*}, Dr. T. Sarathy²

¹ Ph.D Research Scholar, Department of Management Studies, Periyar University, Salem, India

² Professor, Department of Management Studies, Periyar University, Salem, India

*Corresponding Author Email: drudhaya@periyaruniversity.ac.in

Abstract

This study aims to explore students' perspectives on the development and utilization of library service quality in arts and science colleges in Western Tamil Nadu. The research focuses on assessing the effectiveness of library services in meeting the needs and expectations of students, with a particular emphasis on quality service delivery. The main library of the arts and sciences colleges as it relates to quality service and to how well it has achieved in providing such service to its students. The study was conducted among students at the colleges of arts and sciences. The data collection tool used was a questionnaire. Structured questions were used as the instruments for data gathering. To assess both respondent satisfaction and service quality perception, all closed-ended questions were created to generate replies on a five-point Likert scale. The simple percentage and Chi-square analysis methods were used to analyze the gathered data. The findings seem to suggest that the main arts and science library provides a high-quality service. Nevertheless, it's important to understand that a quality information service involves assisting users in articulating and fulfilling their information needs, instilling in them confidence in using information retrieval systems, and ensuring that the entire interaction with library staff is enjoyable. All major libraries should offer a complete information program based on the needs and behaviors of their users in order to attain complete quality in information service. This research may benefit libraries that are genuinely committed to improving user satisfaction and offering better services to their patrons. Additionally, this study offers several suggestions for enhancing user satisfaction with library services.

Keywords

Service Quality, Library, Students, Opinion, Western Tamil Nadu and Satisfaction

INTRODUCTION

Background of the Study

In higher education, libraries serve as essential academic resources that provide students with access to books, journals, databases, and other learning materials that are crucial for their studies [1]. The quality of library services can have a significant impact on student learning experiences, academic performance, and overall satisfaction with their institution. In arts and science colleges, particularly in Western Tamil Nadu, libraries play a pivotal role in supporting the educational journey of students. The development and utilization of these library services are key areas of concern for both students and educational institutions alike [2].

With the evolution of libraries from traditional book-lending spaces to modern information hubs offering digital resources and virtual learning tools, it is essential to assess how well these services meet students' needs [3]. In regions like Western Tamil Nadu, where access to advanced educational infrastructure may vary across institutions, it is crucial to understand students' perspectives on the quality of the services provided by their college libraries [4].

The role of libraries in shaping the academic landscape of higher education institutions is crucial. Libraries serve as gateways to knowledge, providing students with essential

resources for research, learning, and personal development [5]. In the context of arts and science colleges, libraries hold a significant position in supporting the diverse academic needs of students across various disciplines [6]. As educational institutions grow and technological advancements redefine traditional modes of learning, the focus on library service quality becomes even more imperative [7]. The quality of services provided by these libraries directly impacts the academic experience, student satisfaction, and academic performance [8].

Situated in southern India, Western Tamil Nadu is home to several well-known colleges of arts and sciences that serve a broad spectrum of academic subjects including humanities, sciences, social sciences, and business [9]. The region is known for its vibrant educational ecosystem, with institutions contributing significantly to higher education in the state. Major cities in Western Tamil Nadu, such as Coimbatore, Erode, and Salem, are prominent educational hubs with numerous institutions offering diverse undergraduate and postgraduate programs [10].

Service Quality and Its Dimensions

In the context of library services, service quality refers to the extent to which a library's offerings meet or exceed the expectations of its users. It encompasses multiple dimensions that are integral to the overall satisfaction of students and

faculty members. Some key dimensions of service quality in libraries include: [11].

1. **Tangibles:** The physical environment, including the library's infrastructure, cleanliness, and the availability of equipment such as computers, printing facilities, and multimedia resources.
2. **Reliability:** The ability of the library to consistently provide accurate and dependable services such as timely access to resources and seamless online services [12, 13].
3. **Responsiveness:** The library's ability to respond promptly to user needs, such as assistance with finding resources or addressing technical issues [14].
4. **Assurance:** The confidence students have in the library's staff and their expertise in guiding users through available resources and services.
5. **Empathy:** The library's efforts to cater to the unique needs of its users, providing personalized services that meet specific academic requirements [15, 16].

Library Services and Trending Technologies

Modern library services have evolved beyond traditional book lending to encompass a wide range of digital tools and technologies that enhance the user experience. These advancements are integral to meeting the expectations of the current generation of students, who are increasingly reliant on digital resources for their learning. Some key trends in library services and technology include: [17, 18].

1. **Digital Libraries and E-Resources:** Access to digital databases, e-journals, e-books, and online research databases that allow students to access vast academic resources remotely, ensuring 24/7 availability [19].
2. **Library Management Systems (LMS):** Advanced software tools that facilitate efficient management of library resources, including automated cataloging, circulation, and user accounts [20].
3. **Virtual Reference Services:** Offering real-time assistance through chatbots, online queries, or video consultations to guide students in finding resources or troubleshooting issues [21].
4. **Cloud-Based Storage:** Using cloud technologies to store and share academic resources, enabling students to access materials from any device.
5. **Smart Libraries:** Integration of Internet of Things (IoT) devices to enhance library management, such as smart shelves, RFID technology for easy check-out, and facial recognition for library access [22].

Incorporating these technologies ensures that libraries remain at the forefront of academic development, making resources accessible and convenient for users.

The Need for Evaluating Students' Perceptions

Given the growing importance of libraries in academic achievement, it becomes essential to evaluate how students perceive the quality of library services and how effectively they utilize them. Understanding students' experiences helps libraries identify areas for improvement and adopt strategies to enhance service delivery [23]. This study, therefore, aims

to evaluate students' perceptions of library service quality and their utilization of library resources across arts and science colleges in Western Tamil Nadu. By understanding student needs, libraries can improve service delivery, enhance user satisfaction, and foster an environment conducive to learning [24].

This research will not only contribute valuable insights for library management but also offer recommendations that can guide improvements in service offerings, making libraries more effective and user-friendly in the digital age. The ultimate goal is to ensure that libraries continue to be central to academic success and student development in this vital region of Tamil Nadu [25, 26].

Statement of the Problem

While the importance of libraries in academic success is well-established, there is often a gap between the services provided by libraries and the expectations of students. This gap can affect the extent to which students use library resources and their satisfaction with the educational support they receive [27]. In Western Tamil Nadu, where several arts and science colleges cater to a diverse student population, it becomes necessary to evaluate how well library services are aligned with student's academic needs and whether these services are utilized effectively [28]. Understanding students' perceptions of library service quality, including the availability of physical and digital resources, study spaces, and staff support, will provide critical insights into areas that need improvement [29]. This study aims to address these gaps by examining the development and utilization of library services in arts and science colleges in the Western Tamil Nadu [30].

Significance of the Study

Libraries are integral to the academic success of students, especially in arts and science disciplines where access to diverse resources is critical for research and learning. By understanding students' perspectives on library service quality, this study will help colleges improve their services to better meet student needs [31]. Furthermore, the findings of this study will contribute to the broader field of library science and educational service management, providing valuable insights into how modern libraries can adapt to changing student expectations in the digital age [32].

This research will benefit not only the educational institutions in Western Tamil Nadu but also policymakers and library administrators looking to enhance service quality across colleges in Tamil Nadu. Improvements in library services can lead to increased student satisfaction, better academic performance, and a stronger institutional reputation [33].

Scope and Limitations

The scope of this study is limited to arts and science colleges in Western Tamil Nadu. Data will be collected from students currently enrolled in these institutions to assess their perspectives on library services [34]. The study will focus on

several key aspects of service quality, including the availability of physical and digital resources, infrastructure, staff support, and overall satisfaction [35].

Limitations of the study include potential biases in student responses due to varying levels of library usage and access to technology [36]. Additionally, the study will not focus on the technical or administrative aspects of library management but will instead prioritize student experiences and perceptions [37].

Definition of Key Terms

- **Library Service Quality:** Refers to the overall effectiveness and efficiency of library services in meeting the academic needs of students [38]. This includes access to resources, availability of study spaces, and support from library staff.
- **Digital Resources:** Electronic materials such as e-books, online journals, databases, and other web-based academic resources that students can access through the library [39].
- **Infrastructure:** The physical facilities available in the library, including seating arrangements, lighting, Wi-Fi access, and computer labs [40].
- **Utilization:** The extent to which students use the available library services for academic purposes [41].

Conceptual Framework

The conceptual framework of this study is based on the **SERVQUAL model**, which assesses service quality across five key dimensions: tangibility, reliability, responsiveness, assurance, and empathy [42]. In the context of this study, these dimensions will be applied to evaluate library service quality from the students' perspective. Additionally, factors such as the availability of digital resources and the adequacy of physical infrastructure will be examined in relation to overall student satisfaction and library utilization [43].

LITERATURE REVIEW

Library services are crucial in supporting the academic success of students in higher education. Effective libraries not only provide access to necessary academic resources but also enhance the overall learning experience by offering high-quality services [44]. Evaluating the service quality of libraries from students' perspectives allows institutions to assess how well libraries meet student expectations, and where improvements can be made [45].

(Kiran, 2010) Libraries in higher education institutions, particularly in arts and science colleges, serve as hubs of academic resources. Service quality in libraries is often assessed through the SERVQUAL model, which measures dimensions such as tangibles (infrastructure and facilities), reliability, responsiveness, assurance, and [46]. Research has demonstrated that libraries with modern facilities and a responsive staff positively impact student satisfaction. In the context of Western Tamil Nadu, where arts and science colleges often face challenges related to resource constraints, understanding how students perceive the quality of library

services is crucial for institutional improvement [47].

Students are key stakeholders in assessing the quality of library services. Their satisfaction depends on several factors, including the availability of digital resources, the ease of accessing materials, and the quality of study environments. According to a study by Chandrakar and Arora (2012), students prioritize access to up-to-date academic resources and the functionality of digital libraries, especially in resource-limited settings like many colleges in Western Tamil Nadu [48].

A study conducted in 2018 evaluated the resources and services offered to disabled library users at the Federal College of Education (Special) Oyo and the University of Ilorin. In order to conduct the investigation, the study adapted the qualitative research methodology. The study's population included all physically disabled library patrons at the University of Ilorin and the Federal College of Education (Special) Oyo [49]. This study employed three data collection tools: interviews, observations, and questionnaires. The majority of disabled library users at the Federal College of Education (Special) Oyo stated that, unlike those at the University of Ilorin, the library's resources and services are accessible. They also suggested that their needs were addressed by the library's information resources and services [50].

In addition, the physical infrastructure of libraries, such as seating arrangements, lighting, and study spaces, contributes significantly to students' perceptions of service quality. Poor maintenance of these aspects often leads to dissatisfaction [51]. A key concern in Indian higher education libraries is the adoption of digital technologies, where limited access to e-resources and Wi-Fi connectivity can hamper the overall student experience [52].

Research has shown that students tend to underutilize library services when access to materials is difficult or when library staff are perceived as unresponsive (Sharma, 2013). Libraries in the Namakkal District face a similar challenge. While the availability of resources is important, ensuring that students know how to effectively use these resources is just as vital. Training students on how to navigate digital repositories and offering orientation sessions are strategies that have been recommended to improve library utilization [53].

Trying to understand how kids at the Kenneth Dike Library explores the role of these spaces for learning and related services within the academic environment of the University of Ibadan's existing premises using their physical area. To gather user feedback, a Survey method was used. It discovered that most respondents to Kenneth Dike Library are drawn by rather study space [54].

Highlighting how growth affects inclusivity, grouped higher education systems into elite, mass, and universal access stages. Socioeconomic obstacles continue to sustain inequalities in developing countries even as they grow. Socioeconomic obstacles continue to sustain inequalities in developing countries even as they grow. A 2020 report

stresses that, especially for underserved communities, fair access continues to be a challenge [55, 56].

SERVQUAL could be used to investigate how content in four areas of support services theoretically related to enrolment management (academic records, administration, career services, and financial aid). He stated on p. 339 that "this model may not suit all areas of education it holds promise a means for evaluating the quality of selected support services" [57]. Furthermore used SERQUAL instrument to record views of service quality of those who leave a university before finishing their studies as well as those who remain to finish [58].

RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

Research methodology, as defined in *Research Methodology: Methods and Techniques* refers to the systematic process of conducting research, which includes defining the research problem, designing the research process, collecting data, analyzing results, and drawing conclusions [59].

The study employed a descriptive research design to evaluate students' perceptions of library service quality and its utilization in arts and science colleges in Western Tamil Nadu. This design was chosen as it facilitates the systematic collection and analysis of data to describe the current scenario accurately [60]. The target population consisted of students from various arts and science colleges in the Western Tamil Nadu region, and simple random sampling was used to ensure unbiased representation. A total of 250 questionnaires were distributed among students to gather their opinions on library services. However, only 150 completed questionnaires were returned, making this the final sample size for analysis [61]. Data from the respondents was gathered using a structured questionnaire, and Microsoft Excel 2019 was used for analysis [62]. The current study's data was gathered from students enrolled in multiple arts and science colleges in Western Tamil Nadu and the surrounding area. This study's demographic factors included monthly family income, gender, age, field of study, degree, and year of the study [63]. The quality of library services was evaluated using fifteen items related to the main library's service quality in the study area. The questions used a five-point Likert scale, with scores ranging from 1 to 5, where 1 indicated "highly satisfied," 2 indicated "satisfied," 3 indicated "normal," 4 indicated "dissatisfied," and 5 indicated "highly dissatisfied." The distribution of the respondents' demographic variables was determined using percentage analysis. The chi-square analysis was used to evaluate the significant difference between overall satisfaction and degree satisfaction. The use of quantitative analysis helped in interpreting students' perceptions effectively and presenting the findings in a clear and structured manner. This methodology ensured reliability and provided meaningful insights into the quality and utilization of library services in the selected colleges [64].

SIMPLE PERCENTAGE ANALYSIS

The Table 1 displays the distribution of respondents according to gender, age, stream, degree, and year of study. Among 150 participants, 60.7% of the respondents were women. 43.34% of respondents were from the age bracket 21 to 25. 80% of the replies were from Arts stream. 74% of the respondents were UG students. The Government college majority was 52%. 53.34% of them were first year students. 86.67% of students agreed to have own library structure. Most people 63.34% think they offer no awareness about library services. 70% respondents said there is no display the new arrivals of the books and journals. Majority 66.67% respondents accept there is available digital library facility. 77.34% of respondents were accessing library internet resource. 92% Respondents were chosen there is no lift facility in library. Majority 92.67% respondents said there is not gives awards for best library utilize. 90% of respondents accept there is proper hospitality provided. 92.67% of respondents accept there is an adequate restroom facility. 80% of respondents accept that there is advanced technology used for book issues and receiving.

The breakdown of respondents by gender, age, stream, degree, year of study, and year of study is shown in Table 1. The majority of the 150 survey participants were female, accounting for 60.7% of the total. 43 respondents, or 34%, were between the ages of 21 and 25. The majority of the respondents, 80%, were from the arts stream. 74% of the respondents were undergraduate students, and 52% were enrolled in government colleges. 53.34% of the students were in their first year. The majority of the students, 86.67%, responded affirmatively when asked if they had a building for a library. The majority of respondents, 63.34%, chose not to provide any information about library services, and 70% said there was no display of new books or journals. The majority of respondents, 66.67%, agree that a digital library is available. 77.34% of respondents reported using internet resources from the library. 92% of respondents selected that the library does not have a lift. 92.67% of respondents stated that there is no award given for the best library use. 90% of respondents believe that proper hospitality is provided. 92.67% of respondents agree that there are enough restroom facilities. 80% of respondents believe that advanced technology is used for issuing and receiving books. The majority of respondents indicated high levels of satisfaction with various aspects of the library: 67% were highly satisfied with the adequacy of books and journals, 46.67% with the adequacy of space, 43.34% with the lighting and ventilation, 46% with the maintenance, 45.34% with the support from the library staff, and 55.34% with the rack arrangements. Additionally, 29.34% of respondents were extremely happy with the lock room facility, while 36.67% were highly satisfied with the computer lab feature and the improvements to book searching.

Table 1. Simple Percentage Analysis

S. No	Particulars	Category	No. of Respondents	Percentage
1	Gender	Male	59	39.34
		Female	91	60.7
2	Age	Below 21	60	40
		21 to 25	65	43.34
		Above 25	25	16.67
3	Stream	Arts	80	53.34
		Science	70	46.67
4	Degree	UG	74	49.34
		PG	51	34
		Research Scholar	25	16.67
5	Type of College	Government	60	40
		Private	78	52
		Aided	12	8
6	Year of Study	1 st Year	80	53.34
		2 nd Year	33	22
		3 rd Year & Above	37	24.67
7	Appropriate Own Building Availability	Yes	130	86.67
		No	20	13.34
8	The library provides the Current Awareness Service	Yes	55	36.67
		No	95	63.34
9	The library shows recently arrived books and journals.	Yes	45	30
		No	105	70
10	Available digital library facility	Yes	100	66.67
		No	50	33.34
11	Get the Library materials via internet	Yes	116	77.34
		No	34	22.67
12	Library have lift facility	Yes	12	8
		No	138	92
13	Awarded for top library utilization	Yes	11	7.34
		No	139	92.67
14	Provide proper hospitality	Yes	135	90
		No	15	10
15	Adequate rest room facility	Yes	139	92.67
		No	11	7.34
16	Adopt new technology for book receiving and issuing	Yes	120	80
		No	30	20
17	Sufficient number of books, Journals available	Highly satisfied	79	52.67
		Satisfied	42	28
		Normal	20	13.34
		Dissatisfied	7	4.67
		Highly dissatisfied	2	1.34
18	Sufficient space available in library	Highly satisfied	60	40
		Satisfied	70	46.67
		Normal	12	8
		Dissatisfied	5	3.34
		Highly dissatisfied	3	2
19	Sufficient lighting and ventilation available	Highly satisfied	65	43.34
		Satisfied	59	39.34
		Normal	20	13.34
		Dissatisfied	4	2.67
		Highly dissatisfied	2	1.34

20	Library Maintenance	Highly satisfied	55	36.67
		Satisfied	69	46
		Normal	18	12
		Dissatisfied	6	4
		Highly dissatisfied	2	1.34
21	Library staffs are most helpful	Highly satisfied	56	37.34
		Satisfied	68	45.34
		Normal	18	12
		Dissatisfied	6	4
		Highly dissatisfied	2	1.34
22	Library lock rooms	Highly satisfied	44	29.34
		Satisfied	34	22.67
		Normal	25	16.67
		Dissatisfied	26	17.34
		Highly dissatisfied	21	14
23	Library computer lab facility	Highly satisfied	55	36.67
		Satisfied	45	30
		Normal	25	16.67
		Dissatisfied	12	8
		Highly dissatisfied	13	8.67
24	Books search advancements	Highly satisfied	56	37.34
		Satisfied	48	32
		Normal	25	16.67
		Dissatisfied	11	7.34
		Highly dissatisfied	10	6.67
25	Books rack arrangements	Highly satisfied	83	55.34
		Satisfied	43	28.67
		Normal	12	8
		Dissatisfied	6	4
		Highly dissatisfied	6	4
26	Overall satisfaction about the library	Highly satisfied	75	50
		Satisfied	35	23.34
		Normal	19	12.67
		Dissatisfied	12	8
		Highly dissatisfied	9	6

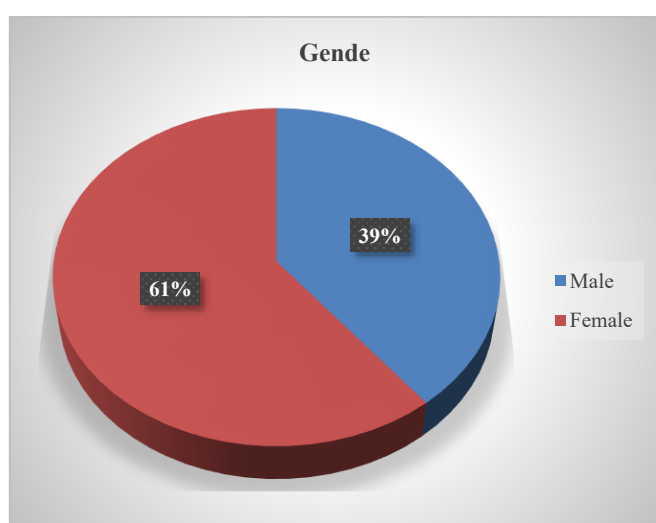


Figure 1. Gender of the Respondents

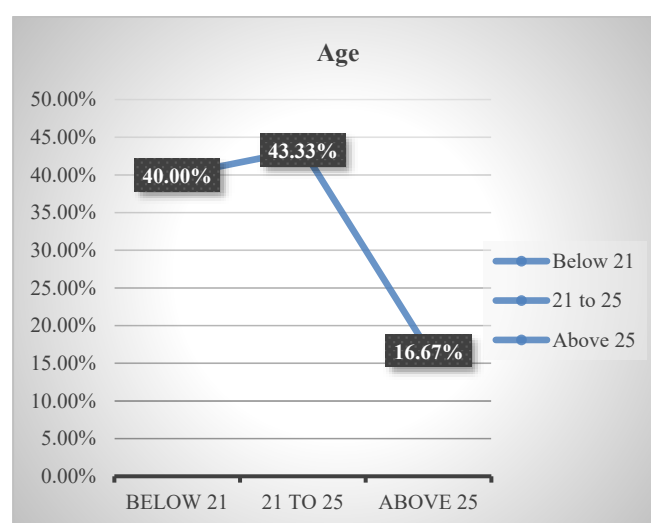


Figure 2. Age of the Respondents (Chart 2)

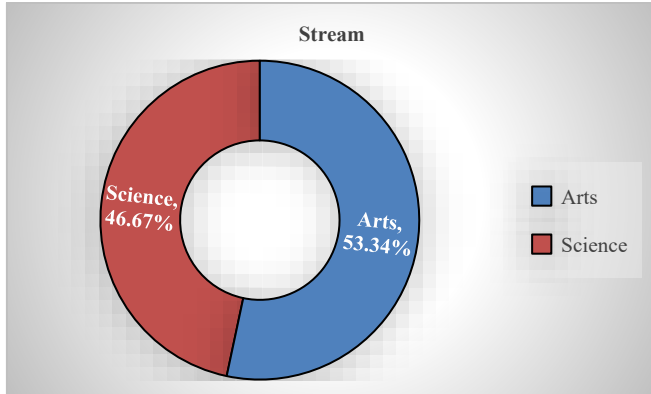


Figure 3. Stream of the Respondents (Chart 3)

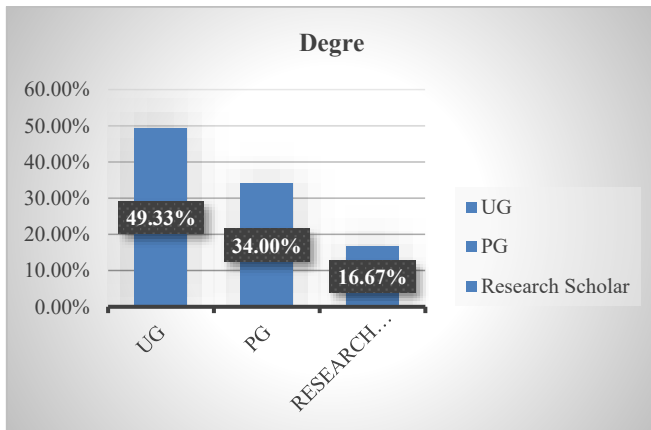


Figure 4. Degree of the Respondents

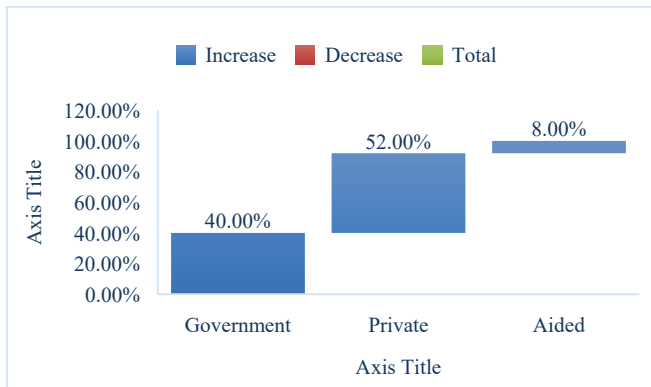


Figure 5. Type of the College for the Respondents

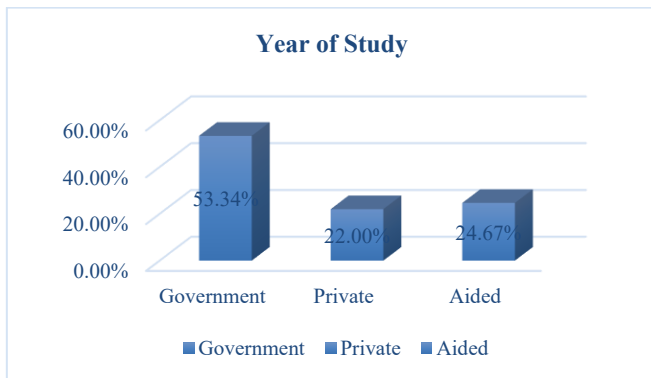


Figure 6. Year of the Study for the Respondents (Chart 6)

Table 2. Chi-Square Analysis

Testing of Hypothesis

H0: There is no significant relationship between the degree and the overall satisfaction.

H1: There is a significant relationship between the degree and the overall satisfaction.

O	E	(O-E)	(O-E) ²	(O-E) ² /E
33	37	-4	16	0.432432
28	25.5	2.5	6.25	0.245098
14	12.5	1.5	2.25	0.18
19	17.26667	1.733333	3.004444	0.174003
12	11.9	0.1	0.01	0.00084
4	5.833333	-1.833333	3.361111	0.57619
10	9.373333	0.626667	0.392711	0.041897
6	6.46	-0.46	0.2116	0.032755
3	3.166667	-0.16667	0.027778	0.008772
7	5.92	1.08	1.1664	0.197027
3	4.08	-1.08	1.1664	0.285882
2	2	0	0	0
5	4.44	0.56	0.3136	0.070631
2	3.06	-1.06	1.1236	0.36719
2	1.5	0.5	0.25	0.166667
Total				2.779384

The calculated value = $(O-E) / E^2 = 2.78$

Degree of freedom (DF) = $(R-1) (C-1)$

= $(5-1) (3-1)$

= 8

The table at a 5% degree of significance = 15.507

Interpretation

The computed value is lower than the table value at the 0.05% significance level. As a result, we disprove our null hypothesis. Therefore, overall satisfaction and degree are strongly correlated.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

This study examines the impact of library service quality on student satisfaction, with a particular focus on arts and science colleges in Western Tamil Nadu. The chi-square analysis yielded a calculated value of 15.507 and 8 degrees of freedom, indicating that there is no notable difference between the level of library service quality and overall satisfaction; thus, the null hypothesis is rejected. The majority of respondents are nearly satisfied with the proportion of 50 to 60 percent of the library's services. Only a small number of respondents expressed dissatisfaction with a few amenities, such as maintenance, internet access, and notifications of new book arrivals.

SUGGESTIONS

1. Enhance Digital Infrastructure and E-Resources

Increase subscriptions to e-journals, e-books, and online databases to ensure 24/7 access for students. Ensure high-speed internet in libraries to support seamless access to digital resources. Implement cloud-based storage solutions for easy

sharing and remote access to academic materials [65].

2. Modernize Library Management Systems

Upgrade to advance Library Management Systems (LMS) for efficient cataloging, check-out, and user account management. Introduce RFID tags for self-checkout and smart shelves to track resource availability in real-time [66].

3. Improve Physical Infrastructure

Ensure adequate seating, lighting, and ventilation to enhance comfort (only 43.34% satisfaction reported). Install lifts (92% reported no lift facility) and restrooms to accommodate all students, including those with disabilities [67].

4. Boost Staff Responsiveness and Training

Equip librarians with skills to assist students in navigating e-resources and databases. Offer real-time support via chatbots or video consultations for remote queries [68].

5. Increase Awareness and Engagement

Conduct orientation programs to educate students on available resources (63.34% reported no awareness initiatives). Regularly update displays of new books/journals (70% reported no such displays) [69].

6. Foster Student-Centric Initiatives

Introduce awards for "Best Library User" (92.67% reported no such awards) to encourage utilization. Use feedback to tailor resources to specific academic needs (e.g., discipline-specific databases) [70].

7. Address Gaps in Advanced Technologies

Improve book search advancements (only 37.34% highly satisfied) with AI-driven recommendations. Explore smart libraries with facial recognition for access and IoT-enabled environmental controls [71].

8. Policy and Administrative Recommendations

Advocate for institutional funding to modernize libraries. Use SERVQUAL metrics to conduct periodic assessments and address gaps [72].

9. Future Research Directions

Track changes in satisfaction post-implementation of improvements. Benchmark services against national/international standards [73].

CONCLUSION

The primary aim of this study was to Evaluate Students' Perspectives on the Quality of Library Services Development and Usage in Western Tamil Nadu Arts Colleges. But it's crucial to keep in mind that a good information service should help patrons express and fulfil their information demands, build their confidence in utilizing information retrieval tools, and make sure that contact with library staff is generally pleasurable. All major libraries should offer a complete information program based on the needs and behaviors of their users in order to attain total quality in information service. The Chi-square analysis revealed no significant association between overall satisfaction and degree. The majority of students expressed favorable views on the library

service quality and infrastructure facilities, and they also rated the quality of the service and the entire infrastructure highly. Only a handful of respondents acknowledged some of the advanced technologies, such as automated systems, search engine improvements, and other facilities.

The library administration or university management should so concentrate on particular enhancements like library service awareness campaigns, excellent hospitality, and maintenance; they should provide some prizes to inspire library users. This digital age will lengthen the amount of time people spend in libraries.

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