

Assessment of Bangsamoro Library and Archives' Online Library Services: Implications to Users' Information Needs Satisfaction

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ABSTRACT: *As technological advancements continue to reshape the landscape of information access, libraries have transitioned to digital platforms to provide a wide array of resources and services. This study aimed to assess the quality of the online library services of Bangsamoro Library and Archives in relation to the satisfaction of the users' information needs. A modified questionnaire, which was content-validated, and pilot-tested to establish its internal consistency and reliability was distributed to one hundred (100) actual users of the library. Descriptive statistics was used to organize the data on the participants' assessment of the quality of the online services and users' information needs satisfaction and regression analysis to determine the significant influence of service quality on the online services on their information needs satisfaction. Findings reveal that participants assessed the quality of online library services considering Affect of Service and Information Control as very good, while participants' information needs in terms of educational needs and information needs were rated as generally satisfied, indicating that the library has diverse information resources available and can provide online library services needed by the participants for their informational needs. Moreover, the quality of online library services assessment significantly influenced the participants' information needs satisfaction. It is concluded that the public library understudy can cater to the information needs of the community it is serving and services and information resources in the library are being accessed by the users. This study highlights the need for the library personnel to strengthen the area on the Information Control dimension, and the subscription of electronic databases, audiovisual materials, and updated library resources.*

KEYWORDS: online library services, service quality, effect of service, information control, information needs satisfaction, Bangsamoro library and archives

INTRODUCTION

As the pandemic impacted the libraries' operations, staffing, programs, and services globally, it prompted library management to create ingenious strategies in the new normal to stay relevant and connected. The new normal causes the transition of libraries to be adaptive to the online environment. Though public libraries are challenged on how they will continue to function in the community of the 'New Normal', libraries all over the world have taken action in response to this global health crisis. Using strengths in gathering, evaluating, and curating information for the general public, libraries may take

on a significant job responsibility in providing trustworthy services during this pandemic (Wang and Lund, 2020). Libraries are actively participating in community crisis response, working to meet the educational needs of students and researchers, reporting increased use of digital services, and foreseeing future demands (American Library Association, 2020).

Consequently, the Bangsamoro Library and Archives (BLA) has been adopting and applying online services to meet the needs of its patrons. These include virtual reference, online book reservations, online loan requests, online loan renewals, online book recommendations, and online assistance to e-government services such as but not limited to online appointments to NBI (National Bureau of Investigation), DFA (Department of Foreign Affairs), etc. Intensifying its online services helps the library continue to provide its services to its users. The shift to online mode made the library easier to reach its users, and vice versa. Despite the innovation, the BLA has been challenged on how their services will continue to be relevant to the community. The shift from traditional library services to online services has led to significant changes in the way patrons access needed information.

Nevertheless, the interest in reading electronic books, borrowing electronic books, and accessing reading materials or resources online are only a few of the activities that have changed (Xu and Du, 2018). In addition, the rapid move to streamline the services to online services continues to challenge libraries. The migration to a seamless provision of online resources and services to meet students' needs, in their transition to online learning environments, has not only put extra pressure on libraries but also placed a lot of uncertainty about the future (Martzoukou, 2021; Rafiq et al. 2021). Before the pandemic, some public libraries relied on traditional physical library services. However, Begum and Elahi (2022) revealed that long before the COVID-19 Pandemic, the majority of libraries had been conducting their operations in a hybrid method. Only a few of the libraries, both public and private, began offering their users online and in digital format. But Ashiq et al. (2022) reported that many challenges were being faced by libraries during the Covid-19 pandemic, including accessibility, digital divide, and internet connectivity issues (Gotschall et al., 2021; Tamaro, 2020; Winata et al., 2021).

Thus, this study investigated the specific information needs and expectations of users within the Bangsamoro region. Understanding the unique requirements of this user group can help tailor library services to their specific needs. Furthermore, there is a need to assess the quality of online library services and the extent to which users' information needs are satisfied with the online services available. In addition, since the online services were created and served, formal assessment has not been undertaken. Without assessment, the researcher-librarian will not have any solid and objective basis for a decision on the value and serviceability of the online services. Hence, to justify the existence of the Bangsamoro Library and Archives, it is vital to offer efficient services and resources to draw potential users. Considering the aforementioned situation, the researcher realized the importance of conducting this study. This research determined whether the online library services available meet the quality standards and the extent of satisfaction they provide to users' information needs.

THEORETICAL/CONCEPTUAL FRAMEWORK

This study assumes that the quality of online library services has implications on users' information needs satisfaction. The theoretical underpinning of this study is the Customer Focus Principle of Total Quality Management (TQM) Theory (Evans and Lindsay, 2014). TQM is a management philosophy that emphasizes customer focus in an organization to meet or exceed customer expectations (Curkovic et al. 2000; McAdam and Armstrong, 2001; Prajogo and Sohal, 2003). One of the basic principles of TQM is customer focus (Bank, 2000), which refers to how well an organization consistently meets the needs and expectations of its customers (Zhang, 2000). Its objective is to improve the process of developing services to increase their value to the client (Needle, 2023). To ensure that customers are satisfied, TQM can be used to improve the quality of library services that are responsive to changes and able to adapt in the library sector (Marlini, 2018). It provides the direction to improve quality and it calls for the integration of all organizational activities to achieve the goal of serving customers

According to Marlini (2018), the assessment of librarians and libraries is now based on quality rather than quantity. One method used by libraries to gather, monitor, understand, and respond to user feedback regarding the quality of services they get is the Library Service Quality (LibQual) model. This model is aligned with the principles of TQM and encourages libraries to use the assessment results for continuous improvement efforts (Association of Research Libraries, 2015). In this study, the quality of service is measured using two of the three dimensions of LibQUAL+ namely Affect of Service and Information Control. On the other hand, customer satisfaction is represented by the users' information needs in terms of educational needs and information needs.

Affect of Service is concerned with “*the human dimension of service quality*” and is operationalized by user interactions with staff (Association for Research Libraries, 2012). It assesses users' responses to the services they receive from the library staff. It aims to gauge users'

perceptions, and experiences related to library services. Positive affect, where users have favorable perceptions of the library's services, is typically a desired outcome. Understanding the affect of service helps libraries identify areas where they can enhance the satisfaction of their users, which can ultimately lead to improved service quality and user loyalty. According to Ojei and Popoola (2023), to foster a welcoming and conducive environment for library staff interactions with library users, library staff should be exceedingly friendly and accommodating. Because the service experience of library patrons is greatly influenced by the attitudes of the staff, librarians must be reminded of their critical role in providing that service. (Anmol et al., 2021).

The developers of LibQUAL+ have defined *Information Control* as “*whether users can find the required information in the library in the format of their choosing, independently and autonomously*” (Association for Research Libraries, 2012). It encompasses various aspects of information management, including collection, access, dissemination, and use. Information control is essential for ensuring that information is handled in a way that aligns with an organization's objectives, security requirements, and compliance with relevant regulations. The ability to independently access desired materials and the degree to which access tools are modern and user-friendly are among the questions designed to represent this construct (Fagan, 2014). For instance, Kailani (2021) examined the essential library services for college students during the time of social distancing. The results of the study imply that the usage of existing online library services doubled during the period of online learning.

The dependent variable in this study is the users' information needs satisfaction. Verma and Lalrokhawma (2018) define the satisfaction of users as the means of determining if a service meets the users' needs and expectations. Thus, if services do not fulfill their needs or desires, they are presumed to be dissatisfied with the product or services. Similarly, user dissatisfaction among library users may be attributed to new technologies' inability to identify the precise use of a library's services and the challenges associated with accessing information sources (Ijiekhuamhen et al., 2015; Arumugam et al., 2019). Consequently, assessment of user satisfaction is becoming a standard practice in libraries. Examining the needs of the clientele, their level of satisfaction, and the library's performance as seen by online users is helpful to them (Ali Shah et al., 2021). The satisfaction that patrons have when they use the different kinds of information resources and services offered by the library to meet their information needs could be considered an indicator of user satisfaction (Ike et al., 2023).

Educational needs refer to the specific requirements and resources that individuals, typically students, require to achieve their educational goals and objectives effectively. They also refer to the self-development of the individual group at whatever stage of education, closing the gap between the individual and the recorded knowledge. It is expected that learners will look for information from a variety of reliable sources to fulfill their educational information needs since they are required to study and are given homework, assignments, or projects (Richard, 2018).

Informational needs refer to the specific requirements or desires of individuals, organizations, or groups for information to help them make informed decisions, solve problems, or fulfill their objectives. These needs can vary widely depending on the context and can encompass a broad range of topics and sources of information. Thus, the desire to identify the users' information needs is important, and so are the various methods used to meet those needs. According to Muthuraja et al. (2018), the primary goal of libraries is to gather a wide range of information sources and offer different services to meet the information needs of users. The services that are offered for information vary depending on the type of library or information center and the type of customers.

This assessment envisions to provide direction in the planning and decision- making process for the continuous improvement of the library as well as a positive impact on the recipients of the study.

PURPOSE OF THE RESEARCH

This study assessed the satisfaction of the information needs of the patrons in Bangsamoro Library and Archives concerning online library services. Specifically, the study aimed to determine if the participants' assessments of the quality of online services significantly influence the users' information needs satisfaction

METHODOLOGY

A descriptive-correlational research design to analyze and interpret the collected data regarding the variables was employed for this study since descriptive research design deals with describing the data before conducting further analysis or comparisons.

Simple random sampling was used in this investigation. Noor & Co. Al. (2022) characterize this as a sample selection technique in which each member of the population has an equal probability of being selected. The study included one hundred library patrons, including sixty-five students, eight professionals, three people with disabilities, fifteen staff members, and nine parents. They were identified to be eligible to take part in the research with the use of Google forms.

The instrument that was used in this study was a modified questionnaire that was based on the concepts of the questionnaires developed by Sumalinog (2018), Ido-Pajara (2019), Olarongbe et al. (2013), and Guidelines for Behavioral Performance of Reference and Information Service Providers (RSS Management of Reference Committee, 2011).

Following all of the panel's recommendations during the research proposal, the researcher sought approval from the Graduate School Research and Ethics Committee (REC). Before the conduct of the study, the researcher communicated to the library administrator for her to secure

permission for the conduct of the study. Upon securing permission, the researcher administered the questionnaires to the patrons who visited the library, specifically those who availed the online services, so that inquiries about the questionnaire were immediately addressed appropriately. Simultaneously, an online questionnaire was also used for data collection via Google Forms. Permission from the participants was also asked for ethical purposes.

The following statistical tools were used in this study to organize and analyze the findings. For Problems 1 and 2, descriptive statistics such as frequency, percentage, mean, and standard deviation were utilized to present the participants' assessment of the quality of the online services and users' information needs satisfaction. For Problem 3, regression analysis was employed to determine the significant influence of the service quality of the online services on their information needs satisfaction.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSIONS

Table 1 below shows the summary of the participant's assessment of the quality of online library services. Results reveal that both the quality of online library services in terms of Affect of Service and Information Control got a very good rating.

Table 1

Summary Table of the Participant's Assessment of the Quality of the Online Library Services

Quality of the Online Library Services	M	Interpretation	SD
Affect of Service	4.50	Very Good	0.51
Information Control	3.78	Very Good	0.68
OVERALL	4.14	Very Good	0.45

It can be gleaned from the table that both the affect of service and information control obtained a "very good" rating. This implies that the affect of service and information control aspects are essential factors on the quality of the service being studied, which is indicative of a positive user experience. As to the Affect of Service, the community the library was serving was able to get services from the library employees. The interactions between library staff and customers have been handled professionally, and they showed respect for their clients. Because the service experience of library patrons is greatly influenced by the attitudes of the staff, librarians must be reminded of their critical role in providing that service (Anmol et al., 2021). Similarly, participants assessed the quality of online services considering the Information Control at a generally very good level which indicates a very good performance of the library in providing information sources. This finding implies that participants believe that online services are effective in managing information and maintaining its quality. This finding aligns with the result of the study of Abukari (2019) revealing that the majority of students visit the library every day, which implies that they

are making use of its resources. Table 2 shows Users' Information Needs Satisfaction. The users' information needs satisfaction in terms of educational needs, and informational needs were rated as generally satisfied, as indicated in the overall mean of 4.10. Table 2

Summary Table of the Users' Information Needs Satisfaction

Information Needs Satisfaction	M	Interpretation	SD
Educational Needs	4.03	Satisfied	0.67
Informational Needs	4.17	Satisfied	0.63
OVERALL	4.10	Satisfied	0.52

The information users' needs satisfaction that got the highest mean was informational needs. This indicates that the library has diverse information resources available and can provide online library services needed by the participants for their informational needs. This finding aligns with the study of Macapodi (2020) who concluded that the Bangsamoro Library and Archives (formerly BARMM Regional Library) provides quality information resources. In addition, the library has a sufficient amount of information resources, and these resources are useful for meeting not only the academic needs of the community but also their non-academic or informational needs.

This is then followed by educational needs, which indicates that the library has successfully met or fulfilled their educational needs which imply a positive perception of the library's performance in meeting those needs based on the participants' experiences or expectations. This finding resonates with what Macapodi (2020) pointing out those community members who participate in academic pursuits have had their informational needs satisfied in terms of educational needs. Furthermore, the need to maintain information resources can help ensure the maximum satisfaction of the academic and non-academic needs of library users. Overall, the study shows that the patrons were generally satisfied with the library resources and services.

Table 3 shows the regression analysis of the influence of participants' assessment of the quality of online services on their information needs satisfaction. Data reveal that the whole model is significant. Thus, the null hypothesis is rejected. That is, the quality of online library services assessment significantly influences the satisfaction of the participants' information needs.

Table 3

Regression Analysis of the Influence of Participants' Assessment of the Quality of Online Services on their Information Needs Satisfaction

	B	Unstandardized Coefficients Std. Error	Standardized Coefficients Beta	t	Sig.
Constant	1.415	.445		3.18	.002
Affect of Service	.331	.087	.323	3.79**	.000
Information Control	.317	.065	.417	4.89**	.000
Model Summary					
R = .550	R ² = .303	Adjusted R ² = .289	F = 21.08**	p = .000	

**significant at 0.01 level

For every unit increase in their assessment of the Information Control they received from the library, there is a corresponding increase in their level of information needs satisfaction. Thus, while all the service quality dimensions were used in this study,

Information Control was seen as the most significant dimension. This result shows that Information Control has a considerable effect on the information needs satisfaction of the users. This could mean that when a library provides effective and well-organized information services, users are more likely to be satisfied with the resources and assistance offered, leading to a positive experience in meeting their information needs. This emphasizes how crucial it is to make sure the library has a variety of resources to cater to the diverse needs of its patrons, including databases, electronic resources, updated books, and a range of subject areas. It is worth mentioning that the library was able to meet the users' demands. The library has provided its users with relevant library resources that match the information needs of the users and the library has made its collections available to the users including educational and informational needs. Thus, if a library wants to enhance users' satisfaction with their information needs, they might consider focusing on improving the quality of service provided, as perceived by the users. This could involve aspects like efficiency of service, accessibility of resources, and overall positive user experiences within the library. In addition, the result provides a valuable feedback mechanism for the library to continuously assess and improve its services. Regularly seeking user feedback on Information Control and using it to make adjustments can lead to an ongoing cycle of improvement, ensuring that the library remains responsive to user needs. In summary, the practical significance of this result is that it provides insights for the library to enhance user satisfaction by focusing on improving Information Control. By doing so, the library can better meet the needs of its users and maintain or increase its relevance in a dynamic information landscape.

Considering the contribution of the components, findings reveal that for every unit increase in their assessment of the Affect of Service they received from the librarians, there is a corresponding increase in their level of information needs satisfaction. It implies that participants who have a higher assessment of the online service quality in terms of their interaction with the librarians and library staff also have high levels of information needs satisfaction. It further implies that library staff having a positive approach helps in building a sense of community within the library. Users are more likely to feel connected to the library as a welcoming and supportive space, fostering a positive relationship between the library and its patrons. This highlights the importance of having a library environment that prioritizes empathy, user well-being, and positive interpersonal relationships. This can contribute to a more holistic and positive experience for library users. Recognizing the impact of librarian interactions on satisfaction underscores the importance of a user-focus approach. The library can prioritize user experience in its policies, procedures, and training programs to ensure that users consistently have positive interactions with librarians. To sum up, the practical significance of this result emphasizes the crucial role of librarians in shaping user satisfaction. By focusing on improving the affect of service provided by librarians, the library can enhance user experiences, build positive relationships, and create a welcoming and supportive environment for its users.

CONCLUSION:

In light of the difficulties brought up by the pandemic, the public library understudy can cater and is responsive to the information needs of the community it is serving. Services and information resources in the library are being accessed by the users and they are generally satisfied with the services that are available to them. The researcher's assumption based on the Total Quality Management theory that the assessment of online library services has implications for users' information needs satisfaction is confirmed in this study.

This indicates that participants who have a higher assessment of the online service quality also have high levels of information needs satisfaction. Librarians who see to it that sufficient resources are acquired in consideration of the user's information needs are much appreciated by the library users. The finding of this study confirms the existing claims that service quality is crucial to the practices in public library services because the users' satisfaction is based on the quality of services that participants obtained. Service quality, therefore, leads to customer satisfaction (Zakaria, Z., et al., 2010).

Additionally, Bangsamoro Library and Archives are delivering quality library services as they effectively and consistently satisfy their users' diverse information needs both educational and informational needs. The library also offers extensive support services to its users by implementing new library services to ensure access to information resources and services while adhering to COVID-19 regulations. The findings of this study highlight the need for the library

personnel to strengthen the area of the Information Control dimension, more importantly on the subscription of electronic databases, audiovisual materials, and updated library resources. Continuous improvement is essential for sustaining the relevance and effectiveness of online library services. Finally, as the digital landscape continues to evolve, this study provides valuable insights for administrators and library personnel working collaboratively to shape the future of online library services.

RECOMMENDATIONS

Based on the findings and conclusion generated in the study, the following recommendations are offered:

1. *For Library Personnel.*
 - a. Explore the possibility of creating a library committee reviewing the Collection Development Policy with the relevant stakeholders to ensure that balanced collections reflect the needs of the users particularly on their school projects, preparation/taking of lecture notes, test preparation, and information on legal matters, health, and security/crime prevention.
 - b. Periodically assess the information needs of the users to cater to their diversified information needs for an effective user-centered library and information services.
2. *For Library administrators.*
 - a. Allocate sufficient budget for the update and upgrade of resources to remain relevant to users, thereby acquiring resources, particularly on the subscription of electronic databases, audiovisual materials, and updating library resources.
 - b. Encourage and support library personnel in acquiring and learning new skills required to keep them up to the changing needs of users.
3. *For Patrons* to take advantage of the use of the available resources and services in the library to satisfy fully their information needs.
4. *For Future researchers* to consider exploring other variables of public library user satisfaction including facilities, user loyalty, information availability, and other types of information needs.

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