



EVALUATION OF A PRIVATE UNIVERSITY LIBRARY SERVICES IN UGANDA

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ABSTRACT

Background: Academic Library services are extremely significant in any educational institution. This study evaluated library services at a private not-for-profit university in Luweero District, Uganda. The objectives of the study were: finding out the existing library services provided at this university for enhanced user satisfaction, evaluating the level of users' satisfaction with library services, examining the challenges faced in the provision of library services, and finally proposed strategies to improve the services provided.

Methods: The study used mixed method research approach and adopted an explanatory sequential design because it helped in identifying and explaining the kinds of factors responsible for the variables under investigation. The target population was 3630 student library users, and a sample size of 346 was used. Respondents were picked using a convenience sampling method, and questionnaires were used to collect quantitative data. For qualitative data, an interview guide for key informants and an observation guide were used.

Results: It was revealed that most respondents were female undergraduate students being served by the following services: book lending, references, internet, reprographics, e-resources, current awareness, research assistance, and reading facility. It was further revealed that library facilities which support effectiveness, and reliability had higher user satisfaction. The major challenges were outdated resources, lack of qualified staff, poor internet services, lack of a library management system, few computers and limited space. Suggested strategies were: having book reserves at school departments, increasing bandwidth for internet to speed and WIFI hot spots on campus, prioritising library needs, training library users, recruiting more qualified staff and weeding out all outdated textbooks. In conclusion, though findings revealed high user satisfaction in library effectiveness and reliability, there are challenges of poor internet services, limited equipment and space, together with a poor library management system. Therefore, there is a need for the university to give priority to the library since it is one of the main sources of knowledge in education service provision.

KEY WORDS: University services, Library services, Academic libraries, Private University, Uganda.

1. INTRODUCTION

Academic libraries are considered to be an integral part of all educational institutions and enjoy a significant place in any

educational system. University libraries are types of academic libraries that support educational and research activities in a university setting (Mahmood et al., 2021). The University library must meet the reading, referencing and academic needs of users by providing appropriate and useful information materials, which are necessary to meet their needs. A well-balanced academic library collection is made accessible to the faculty, staff, and students through modern technological tools, which enrich the academic programs and enhance the staff's skills and experience through training or capacity building. This increases accessibility, safety, timeliness, feedback, and services (Mahmood et al., 2021).

Today, services provided by libraries have drastically changed, attributed to the advancement of technology, where the internet, electronic resources, and new methods of providing information have emerged. All this has raised library users to rise their expectations and diverse needs (Nabitotto, 2020).

According to Adegoke (2015), academic library users are diverse with varying information needs. Academic library users vary from academic institutions to students, faculty, independent researchers, and non- faculty staff who have information needs.

The study sought to evaluate library services at Bugema University Library. The study focuses on the case of Bugema University Library.

Bugema University is one of the first private chartered universities in Uganda, and the Bugema University library is one of the official depositories of the Seventh-day Adventist church worldwide, with five campuses, with the main campus located in Luweero District. The library has a seating capacity of over 300 students and serves a population of about 3630 users and 10 library staff. Bugema University Quality Assurance Report (BUQAR, 2021). The library collection of over 15000 monographs, 5 million databases, journal collections, and 20,000 electronic and open access books (Lwabi, 2021). It offers services like internet services, Online Public Access Catalogue (OPAC), photocopying and Binding, reading space area, computer and Wi-Fi.

According to Bugema University Quality Assurance Office Report (BUQAR, 2021), Bugema University library has been working towards complying with the principles of the International Federation of Library Associations and Institutions (IFLA, 2002), which advocated for high standards of provision and delivery of library services.



Academic libraries are fundamental components of educational institutions because they support teaching, learning, and research. University libraries, in particular, are expected to meet

users' reading, referencing, and scholarly needs through the provision of relevant, accessible, and up-to-date information resources (Mahmood et al., 2021). However, rapid advancements in information and communication technologies have transformed library services, resulting in increased user expectations and more diverse information needs (Nabitotto, 2020). This study argues that evaluating library services at Bugema University Library is necessary to determine how effectively the library meets the diverse and evolving information needs of its users and aligns with internationally recognised service standards.

Bugema University Library serves an estimated population of 3,630 users with a seating capacity of over 300 students and a staff of 10 librarians (BUQAR, 2021). The library holds more than 15,000 monographs, provides access to over five million databases, journal collections, and approximately 20,000 electronic and open-access books (Lwabi, 2021). In addition, the library offers services such as internet access, Online Public Access Catalogue (OPAC), photocopying and binding, reading spaces, computers, and Wi-Fi. Despite these resources, academic library users—including students, faculty, researchers, and non-academic staff—have diverse and sometimes unmet information needs (Adegoke, 2015). The assumption connecting the evidence to the claim is that the quality and effectiveness of academic library services are best judged not merely by the availability of resources and facilities, but by how well these services respond to user needs, expectations, and patterns of use. This is supported by previous studies showing that well-balanced collections, modern technological infrastructure, and staff capacity building enhance academic programmes and improve service accessibility, timeliness, feedback, and overall user satisfaction (Dahan et al., 2016; Goud & Madara, 2017; Mahmood et al., 2021). Furthermore, the International Federation of Library Associations and Institutions (IFLA, 2002) emphasises the importance of high standards and continuous evaluation in the provision and delivery of academic library services. Bugema University Library's commitment to these principles further strengthens the rationale for systematic evaluation (BUQAR, 2021).

The user satisfaction and service effectiveness may vary across different user groups and service categories within the library. However, Bugema University Library's substantial collections, modern facilities, and alignment with international guidelines are sufficient indicators of effective service delivery. Nevertheless, such indicators do not necessarily reflect users' actual experiences or satisfaction levels. Consequently, without empirical evaluation, it remains unclear whether the library services fully address the dynamic and diverse needs of its academic community.

Ideally, academic library services worldwide should continuously evolve in response to advancements in technology and changing educational needs. Modern university libraries are expected to provide adequate access to current digital

technologies, up-to-date information resources, and reliable infrastructure that effectively supports teaching, learning, and research. When academic libraries meet these standards, students' perceptions of library services are positively shaped by the extent to which their information needs and expectations are fulfilled (Lubua & Elias, 2021).

In reality, many academic libraries in Uganda face persistent challenges that limit their ability to deliver high-quality services. These challenges include inadequate access to current digital technologies, outdated information materials, limited financial and human resources, and insufficient infrastructure. As a result, several university libraries struggle to meet the diverse needs of their users, which negatively affects the quality and effectiveness of library services. At Bugema University, although the library strives to provide substantial and relevant collections to support faculty, staff, students, and researchers, the Bugema University Quality Assurance Report (BUQAR, 2021) indicates that the library continues to face difficulties in providing consistent and satisfactory services to its various categories of users.

Failure to meet the needs of Library users may result in underutilisation of the available resources, reduced academic support, and lower research productivity. Also, inadequate library service delivery undermines the university's broader academic mission and strategic objectives.

Hence, a need to evaluate the utilisation of library services at Bugema University. By examining how different categories of users access and use library services, the study aims to generate empirical evidence on the effectiveness of current service provision. The findings are expected to fill an existing knowledge gap, as no known empirical study has previously evaluated library service utilisation at Bugema University. Additionally, the results will provide valuable insights to guide Bugema University administration in strategic planning and decision-making aimed at improving library services.

The general objective of this study was to evaluate the library services at Bugema University, Luweero District, Uganda, for enhanced user satisfaction. Specifically, the study: 1) established the library services provided at Bugema University for enhanced user satisfaction; 2) evaluated the level of users' satisfaction with library services at Bugema University; 3) examined the challenges faced in the provision of library services by Bugema University library; 4) Proposed strategies to improve services provided at Bugema University library.

This study is justified by its intention to address this gap through an in-depth evaluation of library services at Bugema University, a private chartered institution. By examining library service utilisation from the users' perspective, the study provides a context-specific understanding of how students, faculty, and other users engage with available services. Such a user-centred evaluation is essential for identifying strengths, weaknesses, and unmet needs that may not be evident from institutional reports alone.

Furthermore, the study contributes to the existing body of knowledge by generating empirical evidence on academic library services in private universities, a domain that remains



underrepresented in Ugandan library and information science research. Practically, the findings are expected to inform Bugema University Library management and university administration in developing targeted interventions and

strategic improvements aimed at enhancing service delivery, user satisfaction, and overall academic support.

Theoretical Framework

The study was guided by the SERVQUAL model developed by Parasuraman et al. (1988), a widely validated framework for assessing service quality across service-oriented organisations. SERVQUAL conceptualises service quality as the extent to which users' perceptions of actual service performance align with or exceed their expectations, thereby providing a robust measure of perceived service quality. Grounded in gap theory, the model posits that high service quality is achieved when discrepancies between users' expectations and their perceptions of delivered services are minimised or eliminated (Gathoni & Van der Walt, 2019).

The SERVQUAL model operationalises service quality through five core dimensions: tangibles (physical facilities and equipment), reliability (ability to perform promised services dependably and accurately), responsiveness (willingness to assist users and provide prompt service), assurance (knowledge and courtesy of staff and their ability to inspire trust and confidence), and empathy (caring and individualised attention given to users). The underlying assumption of the model is that when perceived service performance exceeds expectations, users evaluate the service as being of high quality.

Studies applying the SERVQUAL model affirm that its five dimensions are applicable to academic libraries because they reflect fundamental aspects of user experience that cut across service contexts. In addition, the model aligns with total quality management principles by emphasising a user-centred evaluation of service quality (Parasuraman et al., 1988; Gathoni & Van der Walt, 2019). Building on this theoretical grounding, the next section presents the study's conceptual framework, which operationalises the SERVQUAL dimensions—tangibles, reliability, responsiveness, assurance, and empathy—as key determinants of library service utilisation. Specifically, the conceptual framework illustrates how these service quality dimensions are expected to influence users' perceptions and patterns of library service utilisation at Bugema University.

Geographical Scope

Geographically, the study was carried out among the students, library staff, and faculty members of Bugema University, Luweero District, Uganda. Bugema University is located 32km North of Kampala City on Kampala -Gayaza -Ziobwe Road. Luweero District is one of the districts in the Central region of Uganda. It lies between latitude 2° North of the Equator and East between 32° and 33°. The university library is located centrally next to the Administration building between school of Theology and the Department of Natural Sciences and Agriculture.

2. LITERATURE REVIEW

Academic libraries play a crucial role in providing resources and infrastructure to students and staff to do their research and advance their knowledge. The value and importance of libraries in higher education have been acknowledged worldwide. Numerous studies (such as Nabitotto, 2020; Lutaaya & Hoskins, 2019; Stojanovski & Papic, 2012; Lutaaya, 2004) have been conducted to evaluate library resources and services. Some of them are reviewed here in this research study. The review has been done and prepared under the following sub-themes: Library services cover the following aspects: (book loan services, access to library, Library staff support and library facilities and reference service), Relevance of library services, Level of users' satisfaction with library services, Challenges faced in service provision and Strategies to improve library services.

Several researchers (Nabitotto, 2020; Lutaaya & Hoskins, 2019; Stojanovski & Papic, 2012; Lutaaya, 2004) have defined library services as services which library staff directly give to users so that they achieve the required information. The same authors give a number of academic libraries' services: among which is the provision of general and specific information, assistance in the location (searching) of documents and assisting the library users in their concerns and needs of the general library services. Reference services, inter-library loan services are those services which require 'establishing contact between a reader and his documents in a personal way (Nabitotto, 2020). These services encompass: user education, current awareness, selective dissemination of information to those persons with disabilities or special interest groups, reservations of documents, advisory services to users, document delivery, stock-taking, registration and orientation of new library users (Adegoke, 2015; Kumar, 2006; Lutaaya, 1999).

The essence of libraries is to satisfy the needs of their users, providing information resources and services that meet the university programmes and curriculum. A library is most functioning the services provided/corresponds closely with the information needs of its users. (Oyeleye and Oluwafemi, 2021; Ochieng, 2012). Past studies have evaluated libraries' performance using library statistics like statistics of borrowed books, staffing levels and the number of library members and visitors (Mahmood et al., 2021). According to Fatma et al. (2021), the evaluation of libraries' services, capacity and quality of academic libraries is gradually shifting to an input-output-based result based approach. Ntui and Orim (2014) argue that the quality of a university is measured by the services provided by the library because of its unique contribution to the achievement of the overall goals of the university. Ntui and Orim (2014) continue to say that for a university to perform its myriads of functions, quality and efficient library information services are a prerequisite in a bid to satisfy the information needs of users; quality and efficient library information services must be ensured.

Reference services are those services provided through personal assistance to library users seeking information. Reference service traditionally has been offered in person in many libraries at designated desks within the library building, and



more recently, libraries have expanded to offer reference service electronically (Adegoke, 2015). These services encompass; user education which is a systematic approach for teaching patrons how to effectively utilise the library resources, current awareness that involves keeping users abreast with the latest events in the library, selective dissemination of information that targets those persons with disabilities or special interests, reservations of documents, advising users what to read, document delivery, stock-taking, and registration

of new library users. Initially, this service assists and directs users on where to locate information (Nabittoto, 2020; Lutaaya, 2004)

Current Awareness Services are services of notifying current document users of library and information services. Libraries use various methods to provide current awareness services to keep current with academic and professional literature. According to Naqvi (2013), current awareness services exist in many forms in university libraries. These include: library bulletin and newsletters, periodicals, telephone services, Email and bulletin board services, and display, among others. This process enhances usage because at the time of integrating these new books into the general library collection, the clientele will already be informed about their existence, making it easy to access them.

Document reproduction services, also known as reprographic, are multiple content reproduction methods such as scanning, photocopying and digital printing of documents and images in both physical (hard copy) and digital (soft copy) formats. This facilitates the utilisation of rare documents and information materials that the library maintains in single copies, whose regulations are supposed to be used only from within the library, but whose demand is possibly very high (Udochukwu, 2019). One of the ways to access library services is the library website, which is one of the most effective tools for marketing library services, creating awareness among all stakeholders, including potential clients, researchers, university staff and students. They provide important issues concerning library affairs, including library operations and services, which are posted on the website for clients to access and read (Stojanovski & Papić, 2012)

Library support staff are expected to offer quality customer service and guide users through the various sections of the library and the information resources found there, how to locate information sources, and also exploit information from these sources. At its core, quality customer service is about making sure customers feel they are valued, treated fairly, and appreciated by your business (Nabittoto, 2020; McQuerrey, 2018).

According to Ajegbomogun et al. (2018), the International Federation of Library Associations (IFLA) postulates the minimum standards of facilities that a library should provide (IFLA, 2001). Library equipment and similar technical infrastructure that support the library functions should be appropriate and well function. The library should have a conducive environment of space, heating or cooling, and lighting to attract user entry and provide a comfortable

environment for library personnel (Kadir et al., 2016). Oriogu et al. (2014) and Lutaaya (2022) contend that it is important to note that the provision and use of ICT is an integral part of student learning and research. Iwhiwhu & Okorodudu (2012) in their study in Benin City, Nigeria, discovered that library facilities were not enough to enhance customer satisfaction.

Every service-providing institution has its clients or customers to whom services are rendered. The main goal of these institutions is to deliver quality services that will satisfy the needs of their customers. They make sure customers feel valued, treated fairly, and appreciated. User satisfaction is an integral and significant value to hold on to for any service-providing institution. User satisfaction is one of the main determinants of academic libraries' performance in delivering quality to users. Educational institution libraries are obliged to render quality services that will satisfy the needs of their users. They have a duty to deliver quality library services to satisfy students' study, learning, and research needs (Gyau, 2021). Libraries are constantly increasing their resources and developing new activities to meet the various information needs in their use of the library services (McQuerrey, 2018).

User satisfaction and service quality are both unique variables that can be connected by use of the SERVQUAL model for measuring service quality, with the view that customer satisfaction is the precursor to service quality. User satisfaction can be summed up as the satisfaction users obtain from utilising the library's range of information resources and services to accomplish their everyday needs. Rendering quality service to users significantly influences their satisfaction with the services rendered to them. University libraries, to satisfy the needs of the users, need to conduct regular user surveys to elicit user satisfaction for better improvement on current services (Arumugam, 2019).

Kavulya (2014) asserts that public university libraries in Kenya have faced challenges characterised by inadequacy in information service, less allocated budget, fewer facilities, low equipment and low technological progress.

Money is needed for the acquisition of information and communication technology equipment, for internet subscriptions, staff training, enrolment and maintenance. The strength of a library lies in its information resources, both print and online. The problems inhibiting IT applications in African libraries include apathy and inadequate government funding. This is evident in the work of Kirya & Lutaaya (2023) and Emezie & Nwaohiri (2015), who argue that funding is essential to excellent library services.

Other challenges to effective information services delivery in the 21st century include: lack of competency, lack of technology literacy, poor internet connectivity, inadequate power supply, and poor funding.

Nyakwebwa et al. (2022). Lutaaya and Hoskins (2019) suggest the following: improvement of librarian competency to meet the needs of the user community, improvement of information literacy in the form of user education, enhancement of local content creation, improvement of electronic resources and



library systems, and library promotional strategies as strategies for improving library services in public Universities in Kenya.

Furthermore, Lubua & Elias (2021), Lutaaya & Hoskins (2019) and Amaechi (2018) argued that adequate funds should be provided to carry out the transformation processes effectively. Finance is required to procure ICT facilities, hire the right staff, train and re-train the staff, and implement other staff development programmes. To ensure that this is achieved, there should be orientation amongst library and information science practitioners on strong lobbying and advocacy strategies as a way of attracting funds.

Nabitotto (2020) and Amaechi (2018) pointed out that functional ICT facilities should be provided for university libraries to facilitate the change process. Being in the digital age, however, it will require the availability of the right ICT facilities for the library to render effective library services expected of the 21st-century librarians. The right software should be made available in university libraries.

Despite the availability of studies on the evaluation of library information services in university libraries. There was no study conducted on the evaluation of library information services in Bugema University, Luweero District, Uganda. This research is intended to fill the knowledge gap.

3. METHODS

The study adopted a mixed research approach, which was inclusive of both qualitative and quantitative research methods (Almalki, 2016). Creswell (2014) cites that the qualitative and quantitative methods aim to minimise bias from respondents and ensure the perfection of the study findings was used to analyse data.

The study adopted an explanatory sequential design with both qualitative and quantitative data to confirm the qualitative observations and results. McCombes (2021), Schoch (2020), and Gilbert (2014) state that the quality of a research design significantly impacts the results of the study, affecting both its validity and reliability.

Study Population and Sample Size

Bugema University records (2023) revealed 3630 users who included; 3220 undergraduate and 410 postgraduate students, males and females. In all, the total accessible population of the Bugema University library service users was 4093. A sample size of 346 was selected, derived from Krejcie & Morgan (1970) (Majid, 2018). The study employed non-random sampling techniques, adopting convenience and purposive sampling. (McCombes, 2021).

The key informants included University administrators, faculty, library staff and non-teaching staff. The sample size of these was determined based on Creswell (2014), who advises that a sample of at least 10% is good enough to give the needed information in research.

Data Collection, Validity and Reliability

Quantitative data were collected using a structured, self-administered questionnaire rated on a 5-point Likert scale (1 =

Strongly Disagree to 5 = Strongly Agree). The instrument measured existing library services and the level of user satisfaction with library services. Questionnaires were checked on-site for accuracy and completeness before being accepted. Content validity was established through expert review (CVI = 0.93). Construct validity was ensured by aligning library services with established user satisfaction (Sekaran and Bougie, 2016). A pilot test with 10 respondents, who included three senior library staff and 7 students from Ndejje University, since this university has similar characteristics to the chosen study area, being a private, missionary, and chartered university like Bugema University. Cronbach's Alpha Reliability Coefficient was calculated using the Statistical Package for the Social Sciences (SPSS). It was estimated to be above 0.7, which was accepted, as shown in the table below. (Johnson & Christensen, 2017; Amin, 2005).

Table 1: Population Category Sample and Sample Size

Category		Population	Sample Size	Sampling Technique
Students	Schools			
	Health Science	805	69	Convenience
	Theology	805	69	
	Education Social sciences	805	69	
	Physical Science & Technology	805	69	
	Graduate Studies	410	70	
Sub total		3630	346	
Faculty		303		Purposive Sampling
Non-teaching staff		130		
Library Staff		10		
Administrators (Admin board)		20		
Total		4093		

The level of Users' Satisfaction with Library Services was measured based on book loan services, access to the library, library staff support, and library facility services. Further investigations were made on users' satisfaction with the library as an institution by use of customer satisfaction and quality gap (SERVQUAL model), which was also subjected to Yes or No responses using the following five factors, namely: Reliability, Tangibility, Empathy, Assurance and Responsiveness; moreover, physical observation using an observation checklist.



Data were collected by physical examination of daily attendance records, borrowers' statistics, and checking computers to see if they were functioning properly. This approach allowed direct interaction with users and systems, providing insights into the library's operations and user behaviour. Further interaction with staff using the questionnaire with more services was identified, and they included daily newspaper provision, user education, book reservation services, document delivery services, and library bag custody.

The rigour and reliability of qualitative data were ensured through planning and extended involvement of respondents, together with honesty, comprehensive and detailed explanation of questions being asked, and recording responses effectively. Data analysis

Qualitative data were analysed by recording, writing, and identifying themes and subthemes verbatim, applying to objectives 1, 2, 3, and 4, while the quantitative data were triangulated and descriptively analysed using IBM SPSS Statistics software version 20 for objectives 1 and 2 using

Ethical Considerations

The respondents who consented were given time to answer the questionnaire, while those who refused, the questionnaire was withdrawn and safely kept with the rest of the unanswered questionnaires. The respondents were thanked for their willingness to participate in the study, and their responses were treated with utmost privacy and confidentiality. Before data collection started, the proposal was approved by the Bugema University Research and Ethical Review Committee (BU REC) (REF: BU-REC-2023-2).

4. RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

This section presents and discusses the findings of the study on the evaluation of library services in university libraries. The results are organised according to the study objectives: 1) Established the library services provided at Bugema University for enhanced user satisfaction; 2) Evaluated the level of users' satisfaction with library services at Bugema University; 3) Examined the challenges faced in the provision of library services by Bugema University library; 4) Proposed strategies to improve services provided at Bugema University library.

Biographical Characteristics of the Respondents. The study had a sample size of 346 respondents, and all respondents (100%) returned the questionnaire duly filled out.

Table 2: Biographical Data of the Library Users

Biographical data		Frequency	Percent
Gender	Male	172	49.7
	Female	174	50.3
	Total	346	100.0
Age	18-25 years	210	60.7
	26-33 years	81	23.4
	34-41 years	36	10.4
	42 & above	19	5.5
	Total	346	100.0

Programme registered for	Certificate	41	11.8
	Diploma	41	11.8
	Bachelor	208	60.1
	Masters	51	14.7
	PhD	5	1.4
Total		346	100.0

According to the results in Table 2 above, many library users were female students (50.3%), implying that most of the respondents were female students.

Results in Table 2 further show that most (60.7%) of the respondents were in the 18–25-year age group. The above age distribution implied that most library users are younger and mainly undergraduate students. This was confirmed by the results in Table 2 above, which further show that 60.1% of the respondents were undergraduate students, followed by 14.7% pursuing a master's degree.

Objective 1 established the existing library services provided at Bugema University Library.

Table 3 below shows the various library services provided at this university library. The services identified include book lending, E-resources, internet services through WIFI and cable internet, photocopying, plagiarism checking services, and book binding.

The next objective was to identify the services available at this university and how these were known and used by the users. This is shown in Table 3 below.

Table 3: Existing Library Services Provided at Bugema University Library

Services	N	YES (%)	NO (%)
Book lending services	346	77.2	22.8
Reference services	346	48.0	52.0
Internet Services	346	79.5	20.5
Reprographic /photocopying services	346	15.9	84.4
Inter-library Loan Services	346	12.4	87.6
Online /e-resources	346	52.3	47.7
Current awareness Services	346	23.1	76.9
Reader Advisory Services	346	30.9	69.1



Research assistance	346	46.8	53.2
Services			
Research room Facility	346	74.3	25.5

i. Book Lending Services

The results in Table 3 above show that the majority (77.2%) of the users are aware of the existence of the book lending services at this library

ii. Reference Services

However, most of the users (52%) are unaware of the reference services offered by the library. Several authors (Adegoke, 2015; Lutaaya, 1999; Nabitotto, 2020) have previously argued that reference services are very important to any library because they assist and direct users to where to locate required information and information sources.

iii. Internet Services

Clearly, most (79%) of the nurses are aware of the internet services in this library. Passive observations by the researchers showed that these users were accessing the internet on top of having indicated so in the register upon getting into the library. In recent times, the existence and use of the internet in libraries, learning and research in universities has become mandatory, as reported by Oriogu et al. (2014).

iv. Online or Electronic-Resources

On top of the use of the internet, many users (52.3%) were also aware of the existence of e-resource services. However, this is relatively low compared to those using internet services.

v. Reprographic or Photocopying Services

Relatively few (15.9%) users were aware of the reprographic services at this library. However, these services have been reported (Udochukwu 2019, Nina et al., 2023 and Lutaaya 2023) to be very important in libraries because they facilitate utilisation of rare documents and information materials that the library maintains in single or extremely few rare copies, yet demand for the same is high.

vi. Inter Library Loan Services

Despite having interlibrary loan services, the results show that only 12.4% of the respondents were aware of the existence of this service. A previous author (Nabitotto, 2020) argued that it is a good and important practice for universities and other faculties to educate users about the existence of interlibrary loan services. This contributes to fulfilling the library user's needs. Current Awareness Services (CAS)

The results in Table 3 show that very few (23.1%) library users were aware of the existence of the current awareness service in this library.

According to Naqvi (2013), current awareness services exist in various forms and help to integrate information from other materials like periodicals, letters, posters, bulletins, among

others, into the library collections. It is advantageous when the users know their existence and use.

vii. Readers Advisory Services (RAS)

In the same way, very few (30.9%) users of this library are aware of the advisory services being provided. Even though this service enables easier access to information and quicker guidance in a library, as reported earlier by Taylor (2012), the users here are unaware of this service.

viii. Research Assistance Services

Most libraries have research assistance services, but most (53.2%) of users of this library were not aware of this service, indicating that they may be using other sources of assistance, but not from the library. Santharoban (2022) earlier reported that it is important for university libraries to provide basic research assistance services which guide the users for ease of getting what they need from the library.

ix. Research Room Facility

Most of the respondents (74.3%) were aware of research room facility services.

Several researchers (Ikenwe et al, 2014 and Lutaaya, 2023) have recently emphasised that a library, being an independent resource centre for reliable information and meant to preserve the recorded knowledge for use, is very important for it to have a facility where research can be carried out.

Findings from physical observations clearly show that, in addition to the library staff relating very well with the users, the library environment was very quiet and ambient for the users. This implies that the majority (54%) of the respondents are unaware of the services provided at this university.

These findings are in line with the description of (Lutaaya & Hoskins, 2019; Naqvi, 2013; Lutaaya, 1999), who pointed out that library services are those activities or assistance provided by any library staff directly to the users of the library so that they can be able to fulfil the needs required by the patrons. Lutaaya (1999 and 2004) pointed out several other library services like a conducive working environment, book borrowing and lending, and photocopying or scanning.

Another observation was that several users were borrowing and using the library computer laboratory to easily and quickly access e-resources.

Objective 2 evaluated the level of users' satisfaction with library services.

To evaluate the level of users' satisfaction with library services at this university, as indicated earlier, the SERVQUAL model was used on five factors, namely: Reliability, Tangibility, Empathy, Assurance, and Responsiveness, and the results are given below in Table 4.

**Table 4: Respondents' responses on the services provided at Bugema University Library.**

Categorized services offered at BU Library	Mean	Std. Deviation	Interpretation
Book Loan Services	3.25	1.45	Moderate
Access To Library	3.48	1.22	High
Library Staff Support	3.57	1.20	High
Library Facility Service	3.72	1.22	High
N = 346			

Legend: Very low = 1.00-1.79, low = 1.80-2.59, Moderate = 2.60-3.39, High = 3.40-4.19, Very High = 4.20-5.00

The results in Table 4 above clearly show that access to the library, the library staff support, and facility services were high, while the book loan services were moderate.

This implies that respondents are satisfied with most of the services provided, apart from the book loan services.

This is in support of the findings by Acheampong et al. (2025) that although users have moderate awareness of the existence and functioning of book loan services, there are potential areas for improvement in institutional support, digital access, and service efficiency

Table 5: Representing Users' Satisfaction using SERQUAL Model in Service Quality

USER SATISFACTION	Mean	Std. Deviation	Interpretation
Library staff provide services accurately with minimum interruption(Reliability)	3.50	1.16	High
Library facilities are visually appealing, such as computer, Audio-visual (Tangibles)	3.30	1.19	Moderate
Library understands the needs of the users(Empathy)	3.38	1.16	Moderate
Library staff assure users of accuracy and confidentiality of their personal information(Assurance)	3.51	1.13	High

Library staff promptly serve users 3.69 1.15 High (Responsiveness)

AVERAGE MEAN 3.47 1.16 Moderate

N = 346

Legend: Very low = 1.00-1.79, low = 1.80-2.59, Moderate = 2.60-3.39, High = 3.40-4.19, Very High = 4.20-5.00

The findings in Table 5 clearly indicate that staff provision of services accurately, accuracy of confidentiality, and promptness were established to be high. At the same time, the audiovisual appealing level and understanding the needs of the users (Empathy) were found to be moderate. The final average, taking into consideration all the factors, was found to be moderate.

This implied that the respondents are moderately satisfied with the library services.

The above findings are in agreement with the argument of McQuerrey (2018), who pointed out that, at its core, quality customer service is about making customers feel valued, treated fairly, appreciated, and receive a service in a conducive environment appreciated by everybody.

The Challenges Faced in the Provision of Library Services by BU University Library

This objective was addressed by information from key informants who reported as follows:

Both KI 1 and KI 2 reported that "There are a lot of resources which are outdated, especially those in print like physical books, periodicals, journals and other documents on library shelves."

The above observations were confirmed by KI 3 and KI 4, who stated that the library budget is limited and small, and this limits the acquisition of new books and other print materials. There is also a lack of qualified staff. Imagine 4,000 users being served by a third of the total professional staff expected!!

Another key informant (KI 5) pointed out that although we get short training, the library profession is a technical one which requires not only short training but also to learn it professionally.

The above comments are supported by several authors (Lutaaya & Hoskin, 2019; Kadir et al., 2016) who reported that library workers should be knowledgeable, well-qualified, and supportive in guiding library users to access information of their interests easily.

The key informants also raised the challenge of poor internet services. They (KI 6 and KI 4) reported that many users complain of poor internet connectivity, and this makes them fail to get or sometimes download the information of their interest. This poor network was due to low internet bandwidth.

Another key informant (KI 8) revealed that there is a lack of an automated library management system in this library, which would assist in cataloguing books and other materials for easy access.



Lutaaya (2023) argued that libraries need to have clear systems that guide users and should acquire hard copies and electronic copies, plus software that helps researchers access the required information.

Several key informants (KI 8; KI 9; KI 10, and KI 11) have reported that: “Priority sometimes is not given to required items; there is a lot of bureaucracy in procuring required items like computers, and this affects service provision.”

Emezie and Nwaohiri (2015) argued that funding libraries is very critical in offering essential and excellent library services to users.

The researcher observed that there was a lack of space for the various services being provided by this library. A key informant (KI 14) confirmed that “Some library services are provided in a space reserved for rooming areas/rooms. For example, services like book binding and computers used for e-resources are in areas gazetted for reading.”

One key informant (KI 1) concluded the above observations as follows: “There are many challenges faced by library users, like poor network connectivity, limited space, especially during examination, and limited library staff, which forces the library to be closed usually 2 hours earlier than gazetted.”

x. Proposed Strategies to Improve Services at this Library

The fourth objective of the study was to propose strategies that could improve service provision at the BU library. Through interviews, key informants were requested to specifically suggest ways in which the challenges can be overcome.

Key Informant (KI 1 and KI 6) suggested that:

“There is a need to stock more new physical books as most of those available were outdated, and also to increase the bandwidth of the internet, because if users accessing the internet are more at the same time, it becomes unstable and weaker for the users to access and download the resources”.

Another key informant (KI 10) suggested that:

“The library as an academic unit needs to be given more attention in terms of budget allocation to improve its services to users. Actually, most of the challenges faced by the library persist mainly due to low funding”.

On internet connectivity, another key informant (KI 11) suggested that:

There is a need to boost internet access to more points around the campus and also improve the spread of internet boosters. On top of this, there is a need to increase the number of computers in the library alongside other library facilities, which are now very limited.”

Several authors (Nyakwebwa et al., 2022; Nkechi, 2015) have made similar recommendations in their studies as the key informers above.

In conclusion, the above recommendations agree with the postulation that high-quality service can be achieved by closing the gap between users’ expectations and perception derived by using the SERQUAL model (Parasuraman, 1988).

This library needs to improve its performance, which will translate into quality services to its users.

5. CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATIONS

The study revealed that basic services required by the library users exist, and these include book lending services, reference services, internet services, reprographic services, e- resources, current awareness, research assistance, and reading facility services. However, they are utilised at different capacities and levels. While the library services offered are in line with IFLA recommendations, there are several challenges which need to be addressed in order to provide satisfactory services to the library users.

Also, the student ratio to the library seating capacity is below the National Council for Higher Education requirement (NHCE 2005), which is one seat for every four users at the rate of 2.5 square meters per user.

There is a need for the university to develop a plan of action using the challenges identified above and address them effectively.

It is finally recommended that a longer study be undertaken to establish the impact of these challenges on the learning and products of this university over time if they are not addressed.

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