

Effective Use of Library Resources and Services by the End Users at PP Savani University, Surat

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Abstract

This qualitative research study examines the perceptions of students and faculty regarding the utilization of library resources and services at P. P. Savani University (PPSU), Surat. While the library has modern infrastructure, an extensive print collection (25,000+ books) and digital collection (64,200+ e-journals, 18,500+ e-books), and full automation via KOHA (a widely used open-source Integrated Library System (ILS)), a nuanced understanding of user experiences is paramount to truly optimize its value. The purpose of this study is to delve into the current usage patterns, identify specific challenges, uncover unmet needs, and gather direct suggestions for enhancing user experience and promotion. The methodology involves semi-structured interviews and focus group discussions to collect rich, in-depth narratives, which are analyzed thematically. The analysis indicates that while digital resources are valued for convenience, users face technical and interface challenges. Print resources are appreciated for their tangible nature, but their currency is a concern. The main barriers to service utilization are awareness gaps, time conflicts, and procedural complexities. Users recommend improving promotions, streamlining online interfaces, offering flexible learning support (e.g., on-demand workshops), and enhancing physical infrastructure (e.g., Wi-Fi, power outlets). The study's limitations include its qualitative, non-generalizable nature and the reliance on self-reported data. However, the study's originality and value lie in providing actionable, context-specific insights. These implications will directly inform the library's strategies for enhancing accessibility, improving usability, and fostering a more engaged and effective use of its offerings, ultimately contributing to academic success and research vibrancy at PPSU.

Keywords: Library resources, library services, PP savani university, surat, library information, end user experience, digital literacy, information utilization

INTRODUCTION

The P. P. Savani University library, a cornerstone of this NAAC A+ accredited institution, serves as the intellectual heart of its academic community. Established in 2017, it provides a state-of-the-art facility spanning 10,000 sq. ft., with seating for 300 readers. The library's impressive collections include over 25,000 print books, more than 18,500 e-books, and over 64,200 e-journals from leading platforms such as ProQuest, Gale Cengage, and J-Gate. Furthermore, it is fully automated with the KOHA software, offering seamless access through its Web-OPAC. However, the mere availability of these robust resources does not guarantee their effective use. Understanding the human element, the perceptions, challenges, and motivations of the library's users—is paramount to ensuring these significant investments truly serve the academic community.

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Evolution of the Research Focus

This research evolved into a qualitative inquiry from a broad interest in the effective use of library services. This shift was prompted by the critical realization that factors such as user awareness, perceived relevance, ease of access, technical comfort, and human interaction play crucial roles in resource utilization. Instead of simply measuring usage statistics, this qualitative approach allows us to explore the "why" and "how" behind user behaviors. By gathering narratives and personal experiences, we can gain a more holistic understanding of library engagement, which is essential for designing nuanced interventions that will genuinely improve the user experience. This study, therefore, moves beyond statistics to give a voice to the students and faculty who are the library's actual and potential users.

Research Objectives

This qualitative study aims to achieve the following objectives:

- To examine how end-users perceive the accessibility and usability of the library's print and electronic resources.
- To uncover the specific challenges and barriers that hinder end-users' utilization of key library services, including reference assistance, interlibrary loans, and study spaces.
- To gather user-driven recommendations for improving the library's promotional efforts and enhancing the overall user experience.

Need and Importance of the Study

The modern university library is a vital, active partner in the academic and research ecosystem, and for an NAAC A+ accredited institution like P.P. Savani University, optimizing its substantial investment in resources and services is essential. This study is crucial for several reasons: it will ensure a strong return on investment by understanding actual utilization; enhance academic performance and research output by identifying and addressing barriers to effective use; foster critical information literacy and lifelong learning skills; enable the library to design targeted outreach and develop services truly aligned with user needs; and ultimately strengthen the library's role as an indispensable campus hub. By exploring the human dimension of library engagement through qualitative inquiry, this research aims to provide nuanced insights that will transform the library from a well-resourced facility into a fully integrated and effectively utilized partner in every academic endeavor at Savani University.

REVIEW OF LITERATURE

Based on a review of recent literature, enhancing the effective use of library resources and services is a multifaceted challenge centered on adapting to technological shifts and meeting evolving user needs.

Research highlights the growing importance of digital infrastructure and technology as a core driver of library utility. Aboelmaged et al. (2025)[1] position conversational AI as a transformative force, optimizing information retrieval and providing personalized service. This digital focus is echoed by Prasad (2021)[6] and Ahmed et al. (2024)[2], who documented libraries' successful pandemic-era transition to remote and online service models through virtual tools and robust websites. Similarly, Singh and Kadyan (2021)[7] observed a gap where underutilized traditional resources existed alongside highly used digital ones.

Beyond technology, studies point to significant operational and strategic factors. Mahawariya and Yadav (2022)[3] identify critical barriers such as inadequate ICT, a lack of professional staff, and low user awareness, which can severely hinder resource utilization. Pal and Barman (2020)[5] and Munshi and Ansari (2023)[4] further reinforce the need for sufficient staffing and a resource base that meets the rising demand for both print and digital materials.

Finally, user-centric research emphasizes the connection between user satisfaction and resource engagement. Wang and Si (2024)[8] link effective library use to public policy and digital literacy education, positioning libraries as key drivers of social inclusion Khan I, Sharma 2022 et.al.[9]. A study

by Chatterjee S (2023)[10] found high overall user satisfaction but also identified specific areas for improvement, such as digital resources and physical amenities, underscoring the need for libraries to continuously align their offerings with user feedback to maximize their value.

RESEARCH GAP

Despite broad quantitative studies on library utilization and challenges, a significant research gap exists in providing a context-specific, in-depth qualitative understanding of user experiences within well-resourced academic institutions. Existing literature often quantifies usage but fails to deeply explore the nuanced "why" and "how" behind student and faculty engagement with specific library resources and services. There is limited qualitative insight into precise subjective barriers (e.g., complex digital interfaces, perceived irrelevance, or unique technical glitches) and the specific motivations that drive deeper library engagement. Furthermore, research lacks focus on the practical, day-to-day institutional challenges and opportunities for promoting effective library use, particularly in adapting to evolving user preferences and post-pandemic shifts.

RESEARCH TYPE AND METHODS

The study on 'Library Resources and Services in PPSU is qualitative research. This approach focuses on understanding the "why" and "how" behind user behaviors by exploring in-depth perceptions and motivations, rather than just measuring frequencies. Data was collected through unstructured and semi-structured interviews and focus group discussions. The analysis of this non-numerical data involved thematic, qualitative content, and narrative analysis to identify key insights and patterns, with a specific focus on uncovering underlying barriers and drivers of library resource use. Traditional statistical analysis was not employed.

DATA ANALYSIS AND INTERPRETATION

This section details the systematic approach used to analyses and interpret the rich, non-numerical data gathered from PPSU's end-users (students and faculty). The researcher primarily employs thematic analysis to identify, analyze, and report recurring patterns within interview transcripts and focus group discussions. As this is a qualitative study, the researcher collected transcribed responses from the end users through semi-structured interviews that allowed for flexible follow-up questions based on interviewee responses and focus groups.

Data Analysis (Snippets from Interviews/Focus Groups)

The qualitative data analysis began with the meticulous interpretation of transcripts derived from original semi-structured interviews and focus group discussions. For the first objective, which aimed to explore end-users' in-depth perceptions and experiences regarding the accessibility and usability of the library's print and electronic resources, we employed a rigorous thematic analysis.

Initially, the raw data was decoded by the researcher, highlighting relevant phrases and assigning initial codes to capture the essence of each statement. For instance, a student's comment like "e-journals—sometimes it's a headache. I click a link... and it just leads to a blank page or asks for another login" was coded as "E-resource Frustration," "Technical Glitch," and "Login Complexity." Similarly, positive remarks such as "e-books are super convenient" were coded as "Positive E-book Convenience."

Following this initial coding, the process of developing themes began by grouping these granular codes into broader, overarching categories that reflected recurring patterns and significant insights. This led to the emergence of key themes:

- *Usability and accessibility of digital resources (challenges):* This theme encompassed frequent user encounters with technical hurdles and complex interfaces, leading to frustration and hindering effective utilization of electronic resources.

- *Perceived convenience and efficiency of digital resources (strengths)*: Despite the challenges, users consistently valued the convenience, searchability, and efficiency of digital resources, particularly e-books and specialized databases, for quick information retrieval.
- *Physical library environment and print collection perceptions*: This theme captured positive perceptions of the physical library's organized print collection, helpful staff, and conducive study spaces, alongside a noted desire for more current print acquisitions.

By presenting these themes supported by end-user quotes, the analysis directly addressed the first objective. It is concluded that while digital resources are highly valued for end users' convenience, their accessibility and usability are often hampered by technical and interface complexities. Conversely, the physical library offers a positive environment and ease of print discovery, though its print collection's currency remains a concern for users. This systematic approach allowed us to move beyond surface-level observations to uncover the nuanced "why" behind user experiences.

For the second objective, which aimed to explore end-users' in-depth perceptions of resource accessibility and usability and to identify specific challenges and barriers encountered across various library services, the qualitative data were meticulously analyzed.

The data, collected through semi-structured interviews and focus groups, provided rich narratives from students and faculty. For instance, participants highlighted issues such as workshops clashing with class schedules, the complexity of the interlibrary loan form, the unavailability of the reference desk when needed, and the constant booking of group study rooms. Some faculty members also expressed an unclear understanding of what "reference assistance" actually entails, often resorting to general search engines instead.

The research initiated a coding process to systematically categorize these insights. Phrases like "workshops. during my classes" were coded as "Timing Conflict (Workshops)," while "the form was so long and confusing" became "Service Complexity (ILL)." Similarly, "reference desk. often busy" was coded as "Accessibility Barrier (Reference Desk)," and "group study rooms. always booked" as "Availability Barrier (Study Rooms)." There were instances where users "don't know what 'reference assistance' entails," coding this as an "Awareness Gap (Service Scope)."

Through this iterative coding, three overarching themes were developed. First, "Accessibility and Timeliness of Services" captured challenges related to inconvenient timings for workshops, high demand for study rooms, and busy reference staff. Second, "Clarity and Ease of Service Utilization" emerged, highlighting how a lack of clear understanding about service offerings and complex procedures (like ILL) deterred users. Finally, "Desire for Personalized and Flexible Support" reflected users' expressed preferences for online appointment booking, flexible workshop delivery, and more tailored assistance.

These themes provided a detailed picture of the challenges and barriers. The analysis concluded that while library services exist, their effective utilization is significantly hindered by issues of availability, complexity, and a lack of clear communication regarding their scope and benefits. This often leads users to seek alternative, potentially less reliable, information sources. This systematic qualitative approach, through coding and thematic analysis, yielded actionable insights crucial for addressing these specific barriers.

The analysis for the third objective focused on gathering actionable suggestions to enhance the library's promotional efforts and overall user experience. The researcher meticulously reviewed the transcribed interviews and focus group discussions, assigning initial descriptive codes to specific user statements. For instance, Student P's request for "short, weekly emails highlighting just one new e-

journal relevant to our department" was coded as "Promotion: Email Frequency/Length" and "Promotion: Departmental Relevance," while Faculty Q's desire for "cleaner, big, clear buttons" on the website became "UX: Simplicity/Clarity" and "Recommendation: Website Redesign." Similarly, Student R's wish for "recorded and put online" workshops was coded as "Service Suggestion: On-Demand Access," and Student V's idea to "use Instagram more" for "visually appealing and interactive" content was categorized under "Promotion: Social Media Channel" and "Promotion: Engaging Content Ideas."

These initial codes were then grouped into broader, more abstract themes. "Targeted and Concise Digital Promotion" was identified as a key theme, encompassing desires for relevant, bite-sized digital communications. Another prominent theme was "Enhancing Digital User Experience (Website & Tools)," reflecting calls for intuitive interfaces and reliable technical functionality. "Flexible and Accessible Learning Support" emerged from suggestions for on-demand online content and decentralized librarian assistance. Finally, "Improving Physical Space Infrastructure" captured recommendations for better Wi-Fi and power outlets. By synthesizing these themes and supporting them with direct user quotes, our analysis provides concrete, user-generated recommendations, offering a clear, actionable roadmap for the PPSU Library to enhance its offerings and better serve its community.

LIMITATIONS AND DELIMITATIONS

This qualitative study, while offering rich insights, has inherent limitations. Its findings are not statistically generalizable beyond the purposively selected sample at P.P. Savani University, reflecting context-specific perceptions. The interpretation is subjective, relying on self-reported data, which provides a snapshot in time and may be influenced by social desirability bias. The design prioritizes depth over breadth, meaning it doesn't quantify the prevalence of observed phenomena.

Regarding delimitations, the study is strictly confined to PPSU, focusing solely on currently enrolled students and active faculty. It exclusively employs qualitative methods (interviews and focus groups), intentionally excluding quantitative data or statistical analysis. The research's primary aim is to understand the "why" and "how" of user perceptions and experiences, rather than measuring utilization frequency or correlating it with academic outcomes. Lastly, it is an exploratory and diagnostic study, not an intervention, and data collection is limited to English and Gujarati.

FINDINGS AND CONCLUSION

The qualitative analysis reveals that while Savani University Library is a highly valued and appreciated asset, its full potential is not yet realized. The research uncovered a dichotomy in user experience: digital resources are valued for their convenience and authority, but they are often hindered by frustrating technical and interface complexities. In contrast, the physical library is praised for its conducive study environment and ease of print discovery, though there is a desire for more current print acquisitions.

Crucially, the study identified key barriers to effective utilization, including a widespread lack of awareness of specialized services and a perception that some procedures are overly complex. In response, students and faculty provided clear, actionable recommendations. They desire targeted digital communication (e.g., departmental emails, social media), a streamlined website interface, and flexible, on-demand learning support (e.g., recorded workshops, pop-up librarian desks).

In conclusion, the findings provide a clear roadmap for the library to transition from a well-resourced facility to a truly indispensable intellectual hub. By prioritizing user-driven recommendations to improve digital usability, communication, and physical infrastructure, the library can cultivate a user-centric ecosystem that ensures its extensive collections and services are not only available, but also effectively and seamlessly utilized by the entire academic community.

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