Tracking Academic Outcomes: What LibQUAL+® Tells Us About How Users View Information Literacy Outcomes

Raynna Bowlby, Associate, Library Management Consulting and Adjunct Faculty, Simmons College, Graduate School of Library & Information Science

Daniel O’Mahony, Director, Library Planning and Assessment, Brown University
The Value of Academic Libraries


“academic libraries may assess if students learn from their use of library resources and services ... it is possible to assess the outcomes of an interaction between the library and the user to determine what has the student learned in terms of skills, values, and attitudes.”

Robert Dugan, Peter Hernon, and Danuta Nitecki, *Viewing Library Metrics from Different Perspectives: Inputs, Outputs, and Outcomes*, 2009
Impact Outcomes

“impact outcomes are oftentimes concerned with user satisfaction, opinion, and perceptions…”

Robert Dugan, Peter Hernon, and Danuta Nitecki, *Viewing Library Metrics from Different Perspectives: Inputs, Outputs, and Outcomes*, 2009
Impact Outcomes

“Direct measures are performance based and focus on the actual work ... produced” whereas “the intent of indirect measures is to provide assessment data that reflects ... perceptions regarding the extent of and value of ... experiences.”

When it comes to user perceptions: We have LibQUAL+®!

1,200 libraries
1.47M users
Please indicate the degree to which you agree with the following statements:

(From Strongly Disagree to Strongly Agree)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Statement</th>
<th>Options</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>The library helps me stay abreast of developments in my field(s) of interest.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The library aids my advancement in my academic discipline or work.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The library enables me to be more efficient in my academic pursuits or work.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The library helps me distinguish between trustworthy and untrustworthy information.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The library provides me with the information skills I need in my work or study.</td>
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2012 Library Assessment Conference, Charlottesville, Virginia
Why Study LibQUAL+® Outcomes?
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1.47M users
11,000 hours
(455 days)
LibQUAL+® Administrations at U.S. Academic Institutions, 2003-2011

For the purposes of this study, the authors examined the information literacy outcomes data collected from 2003 through 2011 from the administration of LibQUAL+® by U.S.-based universities, colleges, and community colleges. This represented 1,157 survey administrations from 636 unique institutions for a total of approximately 660,000 respondents. Three institutions administered annual LibQUAL+® surveys through the entire nine-year period studied, while 350 institutions administered a single LibQUAL+® survey during this period.
LibQUAL+® Information Literacy Outcomes Questions:
Average Mean Scores for All Users, U.S. Academic Institutions, 2003-2011
Questions for Consideration

Do users’ apparent increased satisfaction with library outcomes parallel or match a more general longitudinal positive trend for LibQUAL+® as a whole?

• Have perception scores on the 22 core items experienced similar positive upward progression?

• Has improvement been evident in the three areas of general and overall satisfaction?
LibQUAL+® Information Literacy Outcomes Questions:
Average Mean Scores for Faculty, U.S. Academic Institutions, 2003-2011
Questions for Consideration

- What possible factors might have led to the bump in satisfaction for faculty for Info Skills between 2009 and 2010?

- Could we ask faculty (via focus groups) to describe in more detail their perception about how the library provides information skills for faculty?
LibQUAL+® Information Literacy Outcomes Question O1: “The library helps me stay abreast of developments in my field”
Average Mean Scores, U.S. Academic Institutions, 2003-2011
LibQUAL+® Information Literacy Outcomes Question O4:
“The library helps me distinguish between trustworthy and untrustworthy information”
Average Mean Scores, U.S. Academic Institutions, 2003-2011

- **TRUSTWORTHY**

![Bar chart](image)

- Faculty
- Graduate
- Undergraduate

LibQUAL+® Information Literacy Outcomes Question O3:
“The library enables me to be more efficient in my academic pursuits”
Average Mean Scores, U.S. Academic Institutions, 2003-2011
LibQUAL+® Information Literacy Outcomes Question O2: “The library aids my advancement in my academic discipline”
Average Mean Scores, U.S. Academic Institutions, 2003-2011
Questions for Consideration

• Graduate students gave “Efficient” and “Advancement” almost identical ratings throughout the past nine years. In all but one year, graduate students’ satisfaction in both of these outcomes exceeded the other primary user groups.
  • Are there lessons/successes for possible application to other groups?

• What might account for the sudden dip (2008 to 2009) and then increase (2009 to 2010) in graduate scores for “Efficient”, “Info Skills”, and “Trustworthy”? (counter to more general trend of lower scores with LibQUAL+® Lite)
LibQUAL+® Information Literacy Outcomes Questions:
Average Mean Scores for Undergraduate Students, U.S. Academic Institutions, 2003-2011
LibQUAL+® Information Literacy Outcomes Question O5: “The library provides me with the information skills I need in my work or study”
Average Mean Scores, U.S. Academic Institutions, 2003-2011
Questions for Consideration

Among the three primary user groups, undergraduates consistently expressed the highest satisfaction on the outcome “Helps me distinguish between trustworthy and untrustworthy information”. What are the underlying factors for this?
LibQUAL+® Information Literacy Outcomes Questions:
Average Mean Scores for Library Staff, U.S. Academic Institutions, 2003-2011
Culture of Assessment: What can we do with this info?

“relevant data and user feedback are routinely collected, analyzed, and used to set priorities, allocate resources, and make decisions...

Continually striving for improvement ... should be the basic tenet of the library”

What Benefit Can a Library Gain from LibQUAL+® Outcomes?

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What Benefit Can a Library Gain from LibQUAL+® Outcomes?

Fine Arts **below average** on two outcomes:
- The library aids my advancement in my academic discipline or work.
- The library enables me to be more efficient in my academic pursuits or work.

Business and Hotel Administration **below average** on all five outcomes:
- The library helps me stay abreast of developments in my field(s) of interest.
- The library aids my advancement in my academic discipline or work.
- The library enables me to be more efficient in my academic pursuits or work.
- The library helps me distinguish between trustworthy and untrustworthy information.
- The library provides me with the information skills I need in my work or study.

“enrich and inform liaison perceptions of the behavior and priorities of their constituents and assist liaisons with establishing annual goals... these data suggest that information literacy and instruction would be appropriate target areas” for the respective liaison librarians.

What Benefit Can a Library Gain from LibQUAL+® Outcomes, aka Perceptions about Impact?

“For the first time [2007] we asked an ‘impact’ question on the Libraries’ contribution to faculty and student work in a number of areas. Faculty responded that the Libraries made a major contribution to finding information they needed, being a more productive researcher, enriching student learning experiences and making them more efficient with their time.

Graduate students also rated the Libraries as a major contributor to their academic success. We intend to follow up this positive response with focus groups and interviews to gain more specific information on library contributions.”
What Benefit Can a Library Gain from LibQUAL+® Outcomes, aka Perceptions about Impact?

In the survey, 64% of graduate students report that the BU libraries make a major or significant contribution to academic success (figure 6).

How do the libraries contribute to academic success? The survey also asked about the contribution to various activities (figure 7), and the results show substantial positive contribution to being a more productive researcher (65% giving a 4 or 5 rating), finding information in related fields or new areas (65%), and keeping current in your field (58%).

What Benefit Can *Your Library* Gain from LibQUAL+® Outcomes, aka Perceptions about Impact?

“Documenting the evidence we have for the impact of academic libraries on student, faculty, and institutional success will enable library leaders to respond proactively to calls for accountability and return on investment.”

Lisa Hinchcliffe, 2010-2011 ACRL President

[http://www.acrl.ala.org/value/?p=36](http://www.acrl.ala.org/value/?p=36)
What Benefit Can *Your Library* Gain from LibQUAL+® Outcomes, aka Perceptions about Impact?

“... as librarians learn about library value—that is, what library services and resources enable users to do, what outcomes libraries enable users to achieve—they improve. When academic librarians learn about their **impact** on users, they increase their value by proactively delivering improved services and resources—to students completing their academic work; to faculty preparing publications and proposals; to administrators needing evidence to make decisions. Indeed, the demonstration of value is not about looking valuable; it’s about being valuable.


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raynna.bowlby@charter.net
daniel_o’mahony@brown.edu

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