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# Evaluation of Library Activities

*Abstract*

*The evaluation of library activities is an essential concept for measuring the quality of its services. The issues of library activity evaluation have been systematized against the background of various differential research results from both scientific-theoretical and methodological and practical perspectives, with the main components of the analysis identified and introduced into scientific discourse. The evaluation of library activities has been interpreted and the results summarized within the context of the existing socio-economic and scientific-cultural development levels of society during different historical periods. Measuring and evaluating library activities is also crucial for ensuring that libraries offer better services, use resources efficiently, and meet user needs. This article summarizes and analyzes modern scientific approaches in the context of evaluating library services.*

*Keywords: Library Activity, Bibliometrics, Scientometrics, Document Flow, Information User, Operational Information Processes*

# Kütüphane Faaliyetlerinin Değerlendirilmesi

*Öz*

*Kütüphane faaliyetlerinin değerlendirilmesi, kütüphane hizmetlerinin kalitesini ölçmek için önemli bir kavramdır. Kütüphane etkinliklerinin değerlendirilmesine ilişkin konular, hem bilimsel-teorik hem de metodolojik ve pratik açılardan çeşitli farklı araştırma sonuçlarının arka planında sistematik hale getirilmiş, analizin ana bileşenleri belirlenmiş ve bilimsel söyleme dahil edilmiştir. Kütüphane etkinliklerinin değerlendirilmesi, farklı tarihsel dönemlerde toplumun mevcut sosyo-ekonomik ve bilimsel-kültürel gelişmişlik düzeyleri bağlamında yorumlanmış ve sonuçlar özetlenmiştir.*

*Kütüphane etkinliklerinin ölçülmesi ve değerlendirilmesi, kütüphanelerin daha iyi hizmet sunması, kaynakların verimli kullanılması ve kullanıcı gereksinimlerinin karşılanması açısından da büyük önem taşımaktadır. Bu makalede, kütüphane hizmetlerinin değerlendirilmesi bağlamında çağdaş bilimsel yaklaşımlar özetlenmekte ve analiz edilmektedir.*

***Anahtar Kelimeler:*** *Kütüphane Etkinliği, Bibliyometri, Scientometri, Belge Akışı, Bilgi Kullanıcısı, Operasyonel Bilgi Süreçleri*

## Introduction

Libraries have served as crucial social institutions throughout history, playing an irreplaceable role in society by fulfilling functions related to science, information, culture, education, and upbringing. They have acted as the largest and most systematic conduits of communication tools from ancient times to the modern era. Libraries do not only store and disseminate books and other information resources, but also provide other systematic information services that meet modern requirements related to the development of information technologies. They address society's need for information, and encourage the sharing of knowledge. However, evaluating the activities of libraries and measuring their effectiveness is of great significance, both for the institution itself and for information users (Heydar, 2023). The evaluation of library activities is aimed at determining the extent to which these activities are carried out, how well they meet the needs of users, and whether they ensure the optimal use of resources. This evaluation plays an essential role in the decision-making process regarding the development and management of libraries. Thus, measuring the quality of library services ensures that they align with the expectations of both specialists and users. This article provides a systematic overview of various approaches and methods for evaluating library activities, along with an analysis of the existing problems and future development directions in this field.

## 1. Library Resources

Evaluating how library resources are used is crucial for measuring performance. These resources include physical and digital materials, human resources (library staff), as well as infrastructure and technological resources. Effective resource utilization enhances library performance. Measuring the use of resources is important for assessing how frequently materials are used, users' accessibility to resources, and the periodic renewal of resources. One of the key indicators of library performance is user satisfaction. Measuring how satisfied users are with library services helps determine the quality of service libraries offer. User surveys and feedback, gathered through various methods (such as questionnaires, interviews, and online surveys), are essential for evaluating user satisfaction and for the development of libraries. Factors such as user comfort, service speed, and staff professionalism are assessed.

## 2.  Library Performances

Various methods are available for measuring library performance:

*Quality indicators:* these include various parameters (such as the quality of library staff's work, service speed, material accessibility, etc.) used to measure service quality;

*Quantitative indicators:* the performance of libraries can be measured using numerical data. For example, the number of books borrowed, total services provided, user flow, and the number of seminars and events held (Hardashov  & Kazimi, 2023).

*Social and cultural impact:* library performance is not only limited to internal services. Libraries also have a significant impact on society. Their role in cultural dissemination, education, and contributing to public activities should also be considered when evaluating performance.

**\***Role in society:* libraries support public information exchange and influence the spread of culture. This aspect is also crucial for measuring library performance.

*Effectiveness and innovation:* library performance is not solely based on the efficient use of existing resources. Effective management, the application of new technologies, and innovative approaches also contribute to high performance.

*Technological innovations:* libraries that apply new technologies to offer better services are evaluated for their performance. The use of e-books, online databases, and digital services reflects the development of libraries (Mahammadi, 2024).

*Library performance evaluation and accountability:* Library performance evaluation does not end with internal checks and reports. Independent organizations, such as governmental and local authorities, track and report on library activities, and evaluations are conducted based on these reports.

*Comparative evaluation*: libraries can be compared with others in the same region or of similar size. Such comparisons help understand the library's performance better and identify directions for improvement (Qasımlı & Məhəmmədli, 2024). User surveys and feedback play a crucial role in evaluating library performance. User surveys are one of the most effective methods for assessing library activities. Through these surveys, users' opinions, experiences, and expectations are learned.

## 3.  User Surveys

User surveys are grouped into the following forms:

*Questionnaires and online surveys:* libraries can conduct surveys using various methods such as questionnaires, online surveys, or in-person interviews. Questions in the surveys

address various aspects of library services, such as material accessibility, staff professionalism, quality of technological services, and user support. Data gathered from surveys helps identify areas where improvements are needed.

*Targeted surveys:* surveys conducted on specific areas (e.g., book lending services, electronic resources, inheritance services) can reveal users' specific needs.

*Open and closed questions:* surveys may include both open (where users can freely respond) and closed questions (where users select from predefined options). Open questions help to gain more detailed insights into users' experiences, while closed questions simplify the comparison of results. (Balginova, Maydangalieva, Satygalieva & Mahammadli, 2018).

*User feedback collection:* feedback is collected both physically in the library and online. Users can use various methods to share their thoughts on services, resources, or library staff.

* *Interactive platforms*: libraries can create online platforms where users can easily provide feedback on library services. For example, special sections can be created on websites or social media accounts for users to share their reviews (Ismayilov, Mahammadli & Gasimli, 2023).

*Suggestion boxes:* traditional methods such as placing "suggestion boxes" in libraries allow users to share their feedback anonymously. This method may encourage users to give more open and honest feedback.

*Interactive discussions and focus groups*: libraries can organize focus groups to obtain more in-depth feedback on specific services. Direct discussions with users help gather detailed information about services and resources (Qasımlı & Məhəmmədli, 2024).

*Analysis of user feedback*: collecting user feedback is not enough; it must also be analyzed (Mahammadli, 2023). Based on the collected data, library management can prepare appropriate adjustments and development plans.

*Positive and negative feedback analysis*: analyzing both positive and negative feedback helps to better understand both sides. Positive feedback highlights the strengths of the library, while negative feedback identifies areas for improvement.

*Trend tracking*: regularly monitoring user feedback provides valuable insights, such as which services are more frequently used during certain periods (e.g., summer or winter) and which services are in higher demand (Kazimi & Mahammadli, 2021).

*Social media analysis:* feedback shared on social media platforms about library services is a good method for measuring public perception of libraries. Libraries can analyze feedback obtained through social media to see how services are perceived by the community.

The implementation of results and service improvements is based on the data collected from user surveys and feedback, providing library management with the opportunity to make informed decisions to enhance services. Libraries can achieve certain outcomes in the evaluation process through the following methods:

*Improving service quality*: based on user feedback, library professionals can conduct training sessions to provide more effective services and optimize resources (Ismayilov, Mahammadli & Khudiyeva, 2022).

*Introducing new services:* new services can be introduced by considering users' needs. For example, expanding the availability of e-books or introducing new digital resources.

*Improving communication channels*: libraries can create new channels for users to communicate easily, such as online support systems, email, or live chat services (Ismayılov & Khudiyeva, 2023).

User surveys and feedback help fill the gaps in library services and create conditions for services to be more accessible and modern (Mahammadli, 2018).  Accurately identifying user needs ensures the continuous development of library activities.

Quality indicators are essential for evaluating library activities and measuring performance. The quality of services provided by libraries directly impacts users' experiences and satisfaction. The following forms of quality indicators are fundamental tools for evaluating the effectiveness and success of library services:

*Service speed and effectiveness*: The speed and efficiency of library services are of special importance to users. Various parameters are monitored to evaluate how fast and effective the service is (Ismayilov, Ismayilov & Mammadova, 2019).

*Number and duration of borrowed books*: The quick delivery of books to users and their timely return demonstrate service efficiency.

*Use of electronic resources*: The frequency and effectiveness of using digital services and online resources are included in the quality indicators (Kazimi, Abdullayeva & Ismayilov, 2020).

*Waiting time*: the amount of time users spend waiting for different services (such as consultation services or information retrieval) is an indicator of service speed and quality (Ismayilov, Mahammadli & Gasimli, 2023).

The degree to which existing resources meet users' needs and their accessibility levels are also assessed as quality indicators. This process is also organized in the following directions:

*Updating library collections*: regularly providing new publications or resources that meet users' needs enhances the quality of library services (Nadir & Sevda, 2022).

*\*Balance between physical and digital resources*: ensuring a proper balance between e-books, databases, and other digital resources with physical materials ensures user satisfaction (İsmayılov & Məhəmmədli, 2024).

*\*Innovations and special resources*: the provision of special collections, rare materials, archives, and other unique resources enhances the quality of library services (Karabalina, Maydangalieva, Satygalieva, Ahmetalina & Mahammadli, 2018).

User satisfaction is one of the most important indicators for evaluating the quality of library services. The following methodological forms are defined to assess this process:

*\*User surveys and feedback polls*: regular user surveys measure how satisfied users are with the services provided (Kenzhebayeva, Urmurzina & Mahammadli, 2018).

*\*User feedback*: feedback from users indicates their opinions and experiences with services. Positive feedback highlights strengths, while negative feedback identifies areas for development (Kushzhanov & Dashgin, 2019).

*\*Service quality*: factors such as staff professionalism, how user-friendly the service is, and the manner in which services are provided are key factors that define user experience and satisfaction (Ismayilov & Bayramova, 2022).

The professional qualities and relationships of library staff with users have a significant impact on service quality, which includes systematizing the mentioned methodologies:

*\*Staff training and professional development*: regular staff training and opportunities for professional development improve service quality

*\*Staff attitude*: the way library staff communicate with users, how helpful they are with their inquiries, and their overall attitude directly affect the quality of service (Kushzhanov & Dashqin, 2019).

The application of modern innovative technologies ensures that library services are contemporary and effective. Today, libraries are enhancing their services through digital technologies. The quality of digital services is determined by essential indicators such as online catalogs, digital resources, and other technological services, which show how easily users can access information and use services. The presence of technological infrastructure, such as Wi-Fi, computers, virtual assistants, and online resources, as well as their accessibility to users, affects service quality. Libraries do not only provide information but also offer training and support to users on how to utilize their services. Information search and training services contribute to improving service quality by helping users learn how to find information and use

online resources, thus reflecting customer support quality. Libraries also provide services tailored to various social groups and different needs, which is another quality indicator. Services for different user groups (such as libraries offering special services for the elderly, children, students, disabled individuals, and other social groups) indicate quality. Accessibility (how physical and digital resources are accessible to different users) is also one of the main evaluation criteria. Quality indicators are crucial tools for improving library performance and increasing user satisfaction. Regular monitoring of these indicators provides valuable insights for enhancing libraries and offering better services.

**Conclusion**

The evaluation of library activities is an important tool for measuring the effectiveness of library services, the use of library-information resources, and user satisfaction. Modern libraries should not be limited to the storage and presentation of information; they must also have the ability to adapt to users' needs and offer innovative services. This evaluation process serves as a fundamental mechanism to strengthen library operations, ensure more efficient use of library-information resources, and enhance the satisfaction of information seekers. The results obtained indicate that the professional development of library staff, the effective application of modern information technologies, and efficient communication with users play a crucial role in optimizing library operations. In the near future, the methodology for evaluating library activities will be further deepened, and more differentiated approaches will be developed in line with modern scientific requirements. In the context of the modern information society, the constantly growing role of digital libraries, the application of new technologies, and the use of social media should be considered in the evaluation process, as these factors will contribute to the more purposeful future development of libraries.

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