
MEASUREMENT AND EVALUATION OF HIGH SCHOOL LIBRARY PERFORMANCE IN KUWAIT



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Introduction

School library is a crucial component of educational institutions in every contemporary society. It aims at providing students with relevant information resources and creating information awareness among them. School library should provide an environment which boosts creative self-learning, encourages reading culture and fosters information literacy among students. In order to achieve those objectives, standard institutions have developed standards and performance indicators for libraries to comply with. Those standards and performance indicators serve as guide for librarians to measure and evaluate the performance of their libraries.

Measurement and evaluation of school library performance is crucial for librarians to be aware of their strength and weakness. It

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allows them to find out how to improve their services in order to meet the need of their users. Recently, complying with school library standards has become an important factor to improve the performance of those libraries and eventually the performance of the educational institutions they are a part of.

Educational institutions today yearn for obtaining accreditation from the international accreditation institutions as it is an important factor in the recognition of the value of the education provided in those institutions. Libraries are crucial in the process of accreditation of educational institution due to their starring role in the success of education process. The success of a library is in an ongoing evaluation of the processes, activities and services it provides. That is why, measurement and evaluation of the performance of libraries is to be continuously reinforced among librarians.

Nowadays, school libraries have no choice but using modern information technology tools in their various processes, activities and services. Using modern method to measure and evaluate the performance of school libraries is the natural consequence of the use of those information technology tools (Paula, 2018). Therefore, library institutions and associations have developed a number of information technology tools that can assist librarians in measuring and evaluating the performance of their libraries.

In the Arab World, less due consideration is given to school libraries. The latter is even sometimes completely neglected. To remedy this situation, Arab Federation for Libraries and Information (AFLI) has adopted certain standards and performance indicators to be observed in libraries and information institutions in order to be accredited and recognized. School library accreditation is an important means to improve the performance of school libraries.

Importance of the Study

Measurement and evaluation are tools that help libraries improve their services, activities and processes. According to Brophy (2006) measurement and evaluation is central to library management, since without a firm grasp on what is actually being achieved, it is impossible to move forward to improved service. Measuring and evaluating what have been achieved against the underlined objectives is the way to tell that services we provide are relevant. It helps managers judge whether staff effort and resources are being used in the best possible ways. Analyzing the direct benefit of a service on its users is a mean to justify the existence of the service itself and a way to get the support of decision makers and funding bodies.

Libraries now face dwindling budgets, increasing expectations from users and decision makers, and a heightened need to demonstrate their contributions. Therefore, measurement and evaluation is central

in addressing these challenges. Evaluation studies can be a very effective way not only to improve library services but also to show research-based evidence of the contributions that the library is making to the development of its users (Jaeger, 2010).

According to Nuut (2006) libraries need to know investments spent to offer services in order to determine the perceived quality and the impact of those services and resources on library users. Libraries should evaluate their performance with the aim of improving their services by adopting the best practice. Evaluation is considered one of the essential success elements of any library.

In the 1960s, libraries had a high degree of material prosperity, and were able to grow exponentially their information resources. However, by the beginning of the 1970s, libraries were experiencing a huge increase in operating costs specially that related to local and international databases in addition to the increment in the costs of information sources of all types. This has led library decision maker to think of resources that cost less and meet the need of the users (Karim, 2018).

Statement of the Problem

Due to its fundamental role in forming information awareness and the culture of reading among students, in addition to its central

role to embody the learning process, school library has become indispensable in contemporary schools. To improve school library services, an ongoing assessment of the services is a necessity.

Literature shows that in the Arab World, a little interest is given to the measurement and evaluation of library performance in general and that of school libraries in particular. The scarcity of studies discussing this crucial question can explain that matter of fact.

During an incidental visit to a school library and our conversation with some librarians present in that event about measurement and evaluation of library performance and its implication in giving better library services, we found that the majority of them had only a rough idea about the process. Following that alarming negative impression, we decided to go deeper and investigate more. Here comes the importance of this study and the need to enlighten school librarians in Kuwait of the significance of measuring and evaluating library performance in order to improve their services. It will be a substantial guide for them to the most recent techniques used in measurement and evaluation process.

Research Questions

This study tries to answer the following questions:

1. Are high school librarians in Kuwait aware of the importance of measurement and evaluation of library performance?
2. How often they carry out the measurement and evaluation of library performance?
3. What are the criteria they use to measure and evaluate the performance of their libraries?
4. What are the techniques and tools they use to measure and evaluate the performance of their libraries?
5. What are the obstacles they encounter to conduct measurement and evaluation of their libraries performance?
6. How can they overcome those obstacles to improve the process?

Objectives

This study aims at achieving the following objectives:

1. Shed light on the measurement and evaluation of school libraries in Kuwait.
2. Identify obstacles to measurement and evaluation of school library performance.
3. Provide school librarians with the most recent methods and techniques through which they can measure and evaluate their libraries performance.

4. Highlight the role of school libraries in improving educational achievement of schools they belong to.
5. Spread measurement and evaluation culture among school librarians.

Research Design and Methodology

To investigate measurement and evaluation of high school library performance in Kuwait, an exploratory visit was conducted to 5 high school libraries based on which the need to conduct a generalized examination was assumed. A survey questionnaire of three main axis - current situation, main obstacles, and proposed solutions -was constructed to collect the required data. The questionnaire consisted of statements subject to answer projected research questions.

After examining subjectivity of the statements and suitability of the questionnaire by some experts in the field, the survey was administered to a sample of 100 out of a population of 217 librarians from 60 Kuwait public high schools. Selection of schools was based on a random sampling. As high schools are segregated in Kuwait, 40% of the sample was from male schools and 60% from that of female. Of 100 librarians surveyed, 95 responses were found valid and 5 responses were rejected.

The data collected was statistically analyzed to draw general tendencies of the responses and the responses were descriptively analyzed to draw general conclusion. Some conclusions were drawn based on the short visit of the target libraries and the informal interview with some of the library staff.

This study was conducted to examine the current situation of measurement and evaluation of public high school libraries in Kuwait during the second semester of 2018/2019 academic year. The study does not include private school libraries.

Literature Review

Although plenty of literatures on library services discuss the necessity of measuring and evaluating regularly library performance in order to provide better services, there have been few field studies and scientific articles that talked about the subject in the Arab world, most of those studies have dealt superficially with the topic. Below are the reviews of some of those studies.

In 2010, Ahmed and Hassoun pointed out that most of librarians who work in school libraries are not well qualified and that they are not fully working for the library, but are teachers of other materials, which reduced their interest in the development of the library. They stressed that there are many difficulties and problems

that interfere with the work of librarians such as lack of modern office infrastructure.

In a study about total quality and evaluation of the performance in Prince Sultan College for Tourism and Management Library in Jeddah, (Abu AlKhair, 2010) indicates that evaluation is an essential component of any academic library's success as well as professional development of librarians and information specialists through training them on the latest information technology.

The study of (Khaled, 2015) relied on a set of selection criteria to identify their implementation in selection process of library collection in the College of Science Library at the University of Zakho, Iraq. The study concluded that books examination criteria and the opinion of the Selection Committee were the most used criteria for selecting books before purchasing. She found that 95% of the books was not excluded based on coverage standard (content evaluation). The study also recommended the necessity to adhere to the application of total quality management approved in the study.

On the local level, in a study on the reality of information services in school libraries in the State of Kuwait from the point of view of librarians (Aluthaymeen, 2018) found the necessity of conducting user need studies at least once at the end of each academic year, in order to collect the opinion of the users and their satisfaction

with the information services provided to them. The study stated that the most important problems facing information services in school libraries are financial problems, administrative problems, training programs related problems. Technical and technological related problems were also mentioned as handicaps to achieving the desired goals of school libraries.

In a study on the measurement and evaluation of performance in school libraries in the State of Kuwait, (Alkhurainej, 2019) found that school libraries do not adhere to the standards of quality measurement and evaluation of the performance of school libraries proposed by the Public Education Sector, Ministry of Education. School librarians agreed upon the concordance of only six (6) indicators out of twenty (20) indicators, while the remaining fourteen (14) indicators did not meet their agreement.

It is clear from these literatures that the situation of school libraries in the Arab world is almost identical. We find that these studies on local and Arab world level are very insufficient. This is a clear indication of the importance of conducting further research on the topic, that will help highlighting the situation and proposing solutions to attain the objectives of school libraries in the State of Kuwait.

School Library

School library is a resource center within schools where students and teachers have access to a variety of resources. The objective of school library is to ensure that all members of school community have equitable access to the information resources that meet their information needs. To escort the new technology, contemporary school libraries should provide all types of resources and serve as learner-oriented laboratories that support school curriculum. The role of school library has considerably changed with the advent of new information technology. We should get rid of the outdated idea that “libraries are only for books”. Libraries are places for exploration and hubs that encourage students to read, research, explore, connect, and create (Klein, 2016).

According to Busayo (2011) school library is an integral part of educational system that cannot be ignored without risking the quality of education in schools. The school library is an important part of elementary, middle and high school programs without which students would not thrive academically and invariably find it most difficult to conduct academic research before they reach college level. It constructs foundation based on which students will build their research experience.

Technology consideration is also important. Students and staff should have direct and supervised access to the Internet, copiers and printers. Voice, video and audio creation and consumption should be carefully supervised. School library should have appropriate number of wireless access points, devices and charging stations in good locations (Wolf, 2016).

User satisfaction is generally acknowledged as a prime criterion for judging quality and a great deal of time and effort is expended on measuring it across all industries and services. Asking the users about their satisfaction with the service they are receiving is a clear way of judging performance for any user-oriented organization (Brophy, 2016). The easiest way to find out the satisfaction level of users is measurement and evaluation of library performance.

Measurement and Evaluation

A variety of technical methods that can help librarians analyze the impact of their services to justify their existence. The importance and usefulness of the measurement and evaluation of school library performance is that it helps school library managers to:

Continue or stop an activity: All depend of the impact of the activity on library users. School library managers may stop purchasing resources for mathematics for sometimes if they find that resources in

that filed are not being used by students and teachers. Or, continue purchasing more resources in English language to respond to the heavy use of resources in that field.

Improve service of the library: Knowing the deficiency of a service after measurement and evaluation process can help you think of ways to improve that service. Increasing the number of times the newsletter is sent to students and teachers can help to improve current awareness if it was deficient.

Add, cancel or change a service: If measurement and evaluation process reveals the inefficiency and uselessness of a service, library managers may decide to cancel that services or change the way it is delivered to make it efficient taking in consideration suggestions given by library users in the process.

Reconsider the distribution of the budget: After finding out that library users are using periodicals more than books for example, you can increase the budget allocated for periodicals and consequently decrease the budget allocated for books.

The ultimate goal of measurement and evaluation of library performance is to improve the services that library provides in order to impact positively the overall educational process of the school. This is based on a number factors; i) infrastructure of the library, ii) its

location and area management, iii) the number of resources it has, iv) the quality of those resources and, v) the readiness of people who work in the library to serve.

Measurement and Evaluation Methods and Techniques

In library field, measurement and evaluation refer to several kinds of measures that reflect the performance of the library. It includes the measures of resources used to provide library services (inputs), the measures reflecting internal operations in the library (processes), the extensiveness and effectiveness of services delivered (outputs); the ratio of outputs to inputs (productivity); and the effects of the services provided on library users (outcomes). Performance measurement is the key phrase for management decision making in library (Salisbury, 2018) and (Nancy Van House, 1989). These measures are essential to conduct effective and efficient measurement and evaluation of library performance.

Evaluation of library infrastructure: It is concerned with library location, furniture, appliances, tools and space management. It investigates how suitable are furniture, how convenient are spaces managed, and how appropriate are tools and medias used in the library.

Evaluation of library collection: It examines how many resources were acquired monthly, quarterly or annually, the type of those resources (books, references, periodicals, stories, maps), their forms (print, electronic, multimedia) and quality.

Evaluation of technical processes: This measure is related library operations including collection development, acquisition, cataloging, circulation and inventory processes. It investigate how efficient and effective are those processes. It also measures the functionality of library automated management system and the performance of library staff.

Evaluation of services: This is mainly related circulation services. It measures usage of library resources and the impact of that on users reading development, knowledge and information literacy. It also measures how many of resources were used daily, weekly, monthly, quarterly or yearly, and in what way. All other related services such as photocopy services, inter-library loan service and reference services are measured to improve library services.

Evaluation of Activities: Library undertakes many activities to attract and encourage library users, especially school students, to ready and use library resources. These activities should be measured to ensure their efficiency and effectiveness to achieve their objectives.

It can be both quantitative and qualitative to find out how many or how much the activity impact the users.

Measurement and evaluation can be quantitative "*Quantitative*" which usually measures the size of library collection, the number of staff, the volume of the budget and the size of the space in the library. It is generally concerned with the number rather than the quality. It can also be "*Qualitative*" which usually measures quality of resources in library collection, productivity and efficiency of the process undertaken by library staff, efficient allocation of library budget, and effective management of library activities.

There are many measurement and evaluation techniques in library that help library measure and evaluate their operations, services, and activities.

Questionnaire: It is usually considered to be most authoritative, highly structured evaluation techniques, if a quality element is introduced into all questions in the questionnaires. Here, open-ended questions should be avoided as they might lead to difficulties in the analysis of data. There are a number of tools that can be used to survey library users especially with introduction of digital and online survey tools such as LibQUAL+ (a web-based survey tool that libraries use to solicit, track, understand, and act upon users' opinions of service quality), LibSat (an online surveys tool designed

to enable library systems capture customer satisfaction information), SERVQUAL and Monkey Survey which are general purpose survey tools.

Interview: A verbal discussion is the best way of getting an in-depth understanding of a situation, from the viewpoint of a user of an information system. The format of interview can vary, from being formal, closed or structured to free, unstructured or informal.

Observation: It is a valuable supplement to interview, on the basis that what people do is likely to be more revealing than what they say. Observations too, may be entirely unstructured or structured depending upon the situation. Very often, observation has been found to be very valuable for evaluating real life situations or getting first-hand information.

Decision Analysis: In the context of evaluation, decision analysis aims at providing an objective procedure for reaching and justifying a decision, which itself is a choice of alternatives. The procedures for this require the user to specify all the considerations which come into the making of the decision, to give each of these alternatives a value as to how well they meet the requirements posed by each consideration, and to calculate an overall value for each alternative. The highest value naturally wins.

This method allows for a great deal of subjective judgment in the choice of considerations, in the weights given to them and in the values for the alternatives. Quantitative decision analysis is also possible and many times helps to take decision between two alternatives. Another form of decision analysis is the checklist which can be used for the choice of all manner of things and services related to library information work.

Cost-Benefit Analysis: The performance of any information system or service without a consideration of resources is pointless. These resources are always assessed in financial terms, which come under the heading of costs. To know details of this aspect, a six-level categorization of cost-related evaluations can be carried out. These six aspects are: cost, effectiveness, benefit, cost-effectiveness, cost-benefit and cost-performance benefit

User Studies: It is a measure usually conducted about library user satisfaction. It allows librarians to decide whether to introduce or exclude a service or an activity based of the satisfaction or suggestion of library users.

In any information system or service, studying the user characteristics and behavior is very essential. Satisfaction of user needs is the ultimate, and only, justification for the existence of any information service, for obtaining information as to the way in which it is used,

and the degree of success achieved by its users is a fundamental part of its evaluation.

Usage reports: Before the advent of modern library technologies and integrated library management systems, it was difficult to compile and analyze data directly. Librarians relied on total circulation counts and employed boring, time consuming, and unscientific sampling plans and simple in-house data collection methods such as asking users not to re-shelve library materials so librarians could count them.

This began to change once libraries began to automate in the last quarter of the twentieth century, using their equivalent of electronic inventory control systems. The data collected by the automation of cataloging and circulation systems made it easier to count collection size and circulation, and break them out by subject.

Obstacles to Measurement and Evaluation

There are a number of reasons why school librarians do not regularly conduct assessment and evaluation of library. Assessment and evaluation process needs time which most of the school librarians claim not having. The process needs scientific foundations which school librarians are not familiar with. They lack of expertise and knowledge of scientific research methodology and tools and statistical

analysis. The human resource element is another reason since the process needs well trained librarians with required competences and skills (Baker, 2000)

In addition to these, Baker (2000) mentions other reasons. He thinks that some of librarians believe that the results of measurement and evaluation of library performance are illogical and that it is impossible to determine whether the objectives of the library have been achieved or not. Librarians think that long-term goals cannot be measured by means of measurement and evaluation used currently.

Another reason advanced is the fear of some library managers and their employees for the results of the measurement and evaluation to reveal the shortcoming and the weakness of their libraries which will indicate their failure themselves. On the other hand, the beliefs of librarians that school administration lack the commitment to implement the results of measurement and evaluation of library performance.

Alajmi (2019) says that while workspace is required to create an enabling environment for self-fulfillment, to encourage collaboration, and nurture motivation, librarians and other professionals need to be willing to contribute to and engage in the different types of activities and projects in their libraries. Their engagement and contribution are valuable to the continuous

improvement and development of their motivation and needs satisfaction.

Inadequate technology infrastructure and tools is another important reason mentioned by librarians as a handicap to measurement and evaluation of library services. According to Al-Fadhli (2016) library staffs are not involved in decision-making related to the adoption of technology infrastructure and tools which negatively impacts their use within libraries.

Standards for Measurement and Evaluation in School Libraries

Frances Henne was the leader in the development of school library standards during her career as a teacher, librarian, and library educator. She was the driving force behind the publication of the 1945, 1960, and 1969 national standards for school libraries. Her imprint is evident in the research and philosophical foundations for the 1975, 1988, and 1998 national standards (Kester, 2004).

Schultz-Jones (2018) stated that standards address a range of issues by providing guidance, aspirational direction and assessment criteria. They believe that standards are best practices against which libraries can align their efforts to implement new initiatives and benchmark their progress toward achieving excellence. Standards are

typically developed through a consultative process that includes experts in the discipline, analysis of trends, and future oriented expectations.

The purpose of school library standards is to provide the means by which the quality of library services can be assessed. They are guidance provided to improve the libraries, and a framework proposed for countries to develop their library standards. Standards in libraries focus on three key elements discussed earlier; inputs, outputs and their outcomes.

Standardization Organizations

Standards are produced, maintained and improved by accreditation institutions. To ensure implementation of standards in education institutions, educational accreditation was introduced in the education arena. Thus, educational accreditation is a quality assurance procedure in which services and operations of educational institutions are evaluated by an external institution to determine whether some predefined standards are met or not and accredited status is granted accordingly by that institution. One of the requirements of school accreditation is to have a library that comply with all the requirement of standards and performance indicators set for school libraries

There are various agencies at the national and international level, which are responsible to maintain and update the standards and guidelines. These bodies are involved in standardized procedures, working methods and guidelines, which improve library and information services. There are a number of standard organizations and committees or bodies or groups. We are introducing few of them next.

1. AdvancED (Previously CITA)

AdvancED is a non-governmental organization that provides accreditation to more than 32,000 primary and secondary schools in about 100 countries. It aims at improving the quality of education around the world. AdvancED's school accreditation model is one of the most successful in the world. It consists of five standards: i) Purpose and Direction, ii) Teaching and Assessing for Learning, iv) Resources and Support Systems, v) Using Results for Continuous Improvement. Each of these standards has several indicators for quality.

One of the indicators of the fifth standards (Resources and Support Systems) states that "students and school personnel use a range of media and information resources to support the school's

educational programs. That indicator implies that i) school has a library with sources of information that adequately support educational data, ii) the library provides a variety of information sources of all types and forms carefully acquired in accordance with the mission and objectives of the school, iii) the library provides various services, activities and equipment to school library users, and iv) the library uses the latest technical means (computers and networks), and allow information to be made available to all users.

2. International Federation of Library Associations and Institutions (IFLA)

The International Federation of Library Associations and Institutions (IFLA) is the leading international body representing the interests of library and information services and their users. It is the global voice of the library and information profession.

The first edition of the IFLA Handbook was published in 1996 and dealt with academic libraries. It was widely accepted and translated into a number of languages. The edition was expanded to include public libraries. The guide provides set of (40) indicators, with practical assistance through descriptions and examples of each indicator. The guide serves as a practical tool for evaluating library services. Although they are specifically intended for academic and

public libraries, most of the indicators can also be applied to school libraries and all other types of library.

3. International Organization for Standardization (ISO)

ISO is an independent, non-governmental international organization with a membership of 164 national standards bodies. It is the world's largest developer of international standards by providing common standards between nations.

The International Organization for Standardization (ISO) has developed ISO 9000, which includes set of quality assurance standards. These standards are being applied globally and have been used as basis to measure organizations' effectiveness and performance. The system outlines selected specifications suitable for the organization. Twelve of these of standards are closely related to education, including standards for the school library building (Peters, 1999).

Under the standard Information and Documentation, ISO issued in 2014 Library performance indicators (ISO 11620:2014) is applicable to all types of libraries in all countries. However, limitations on the applicability of individual performance indicators were listed in the scope clause of the description of each indicator. Therefore, performance indicators can be used for comparison over

time within the same library but comparisons between libraries can only be made with caution. Since, that will need to take into account any differences in the constituencies of the libraries and library attributes, with a good understanding of the indicators used, limitations to comparisons, and careful interpretation of the data (ISO, 2014).

4. Arab Federation for Libraries and Information (AFLI)

The Arab Federation for Libraries and Information (AFLI) is the largest professional body representing the interests of library and information services in the MENA region. It is an independent, non-governmental and not-for-profit organization that was founded in 1986 with over 14,000 members in over 20 Arab countries in the MENA region (Ismail, 2018). In 2013, the Arab Federation for Libraries and Information (AFLI) presented set of performance indicators suitable for national, academic, public and school libraries in the Arab world.

Standardization Efforts in Kuwait

The development of school library in Kuwait began after the first real library was established in 1944. However, their progress was slow, especially in the early stages, due to the inadequacy of funding and lack of skilled staff (Buabbas, 2010).

Public education sector in Kuwait has recently completed the first phase of a project initiated by the Ministry of Education. The objective of the project was to spread the culture of quality in public education. It includes implementation of international standards to enhance the performance of public schools in Kuwait. The project intended to shift measurement and evaluation methods of education processes from the traditional methods to standardized ones based on a set of criteria and standardized indicators. It also projected development of standards and performance indicators for quality assurance and accreditation as a prerequisite to improve the educational processes in Kuwait.

In order to achieve this objective of the project, a Committee of Quality in Public Education was formed by the Minister of Education under the leadership of Assistant Undersecretary for Public Education and the membership of a number of specialists in the field of quality and school accreditation.

The Committee made a strategic plan in four stages: i) Setting standards and performance indicators for school accreditation, ii) Developing the procedural guide, iv) Applying standards and performance indicators to a sample of schools, v) Improving the standards and the indicators to be applied to all remaining schools and obtaining accreditation from international organizations.

Findings and Discussion

It is clearly ascertained in the literatures that measurement and evaluation of library performance is crucially important to improve not only library services but also educational achievement of library users. Therefore, low performance a library will negatively affect the performance of the school it belongs to. In the context of new information technology, the role of schools has changed from teacher based learning environment to students based learning environment, and school libraries are the culminant point in that change.

	Male	%	Female	%	Total
Population	85	39.17	132	60.83	217
Sample	38	40	57	60	95

Table (1) High School Librarians by Gender

In this study we tried to investigate the situation of measurement and evaluation of high school library services in Kuwait. Of 95 high school librarians surveyed, 38 (40%) was male and 57 (60%) was female which reflect male-female proportion of high school librarians (Table 1). These librarians were found to diversely appreciate measurement and evaluation of library performance. To

the crucial question of how important is the measurement and evaluation of library performance, their responses were shocking.

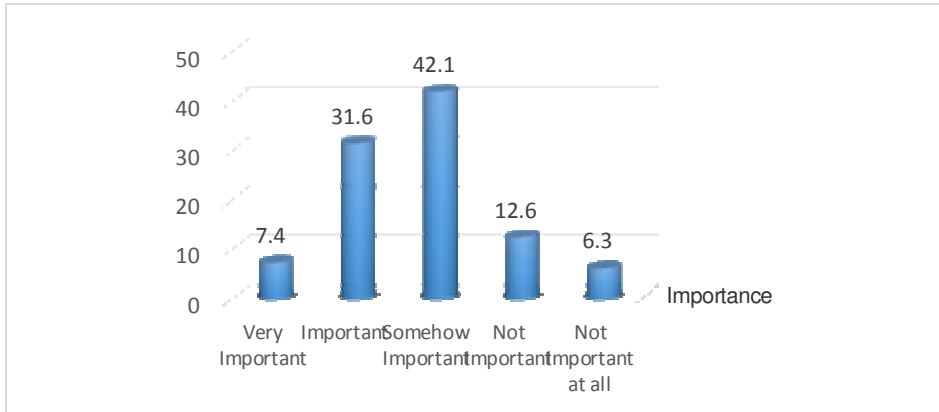


Figure (1)

Of 95 librarians, 40 (42.1%) estimated that measurement and evaluation of library performance is *somehow important*, 30 (31.6%) thought it is *important*, while only 7 (7.4%) believed it is *very important*. This clearly indicates that high school librarians do not give due consideration to measurement and evaluation of library performance a logical consequence of low performance in school libraries in Kuwait.

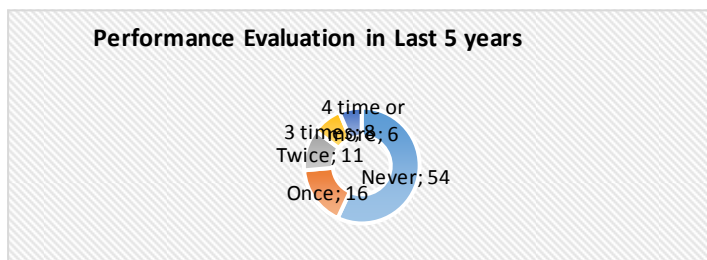


Figure (2)

Measurement and evaluation is a regular ongoing process which can be daily, monthly, quarterly or yearly depending on the type of evaluation and its ultimate objectives. To the question of how many times have they measure and evaluate their library performance during the last five years, 54 (56.8%) of high school librarians had *never* conduct evaluation of their libraries performance during the last five years.

Extraordinarily, only 6 (6.3%) asserted to have done the evaluation of their libraries performance during the last five years more than 4 time which means once a year. The most important reason given by most of them is lack of staff 41 (43.2.4), while 32 (33.7%) think that lack of time is to most important reason (Figure 3).

Although, the majority of high school librarians affirmed to have *never* conducted evaluation of their library performance during the last five years, they all agreed that evaluation can give them a clear idea of the need of their users and how to satisfy that need. They estimated that if all conditions were given they could do it every year at least.

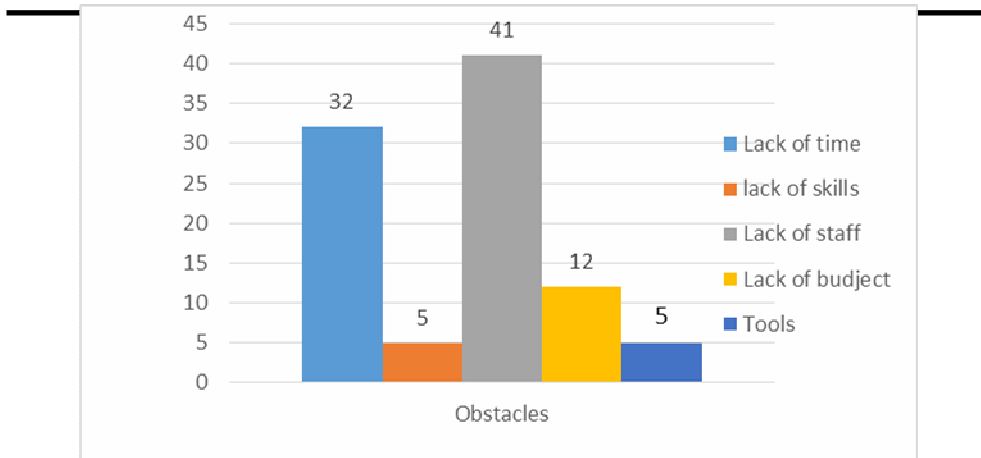


Figure (3)

We found that measurement and evaluation of library performance in high school libraries in Kuwait faces a number of obstacles. The number of school librarians has declined, with many school librarians being laid off or assigned to other teaching duties. The majority of high school librarians believe the less number of library staff is the big obstacle to conducting regularly evaluation of their library performance.

It is worth noting here that the average number of librarian in high school libraries in Kuwait is two librarians per school. As school library are assigned to other teaching or school tasks, there is a lack of time to dedicate themselves to library work.

On the other hand, 5 (5.3%) of librarians surveyed mentioned that poor skills was the obstacle, while 5 (5.3%) other think that lack

of tools was the most important obstacle to conducting library performance evaluation.

Nonetheless, our investigation proves that inadequate training of high school library staff in Kuwait is a real handicap to measurement and evaluation process since majority of them did not learn it in their academic programs and have not taken any professional training.

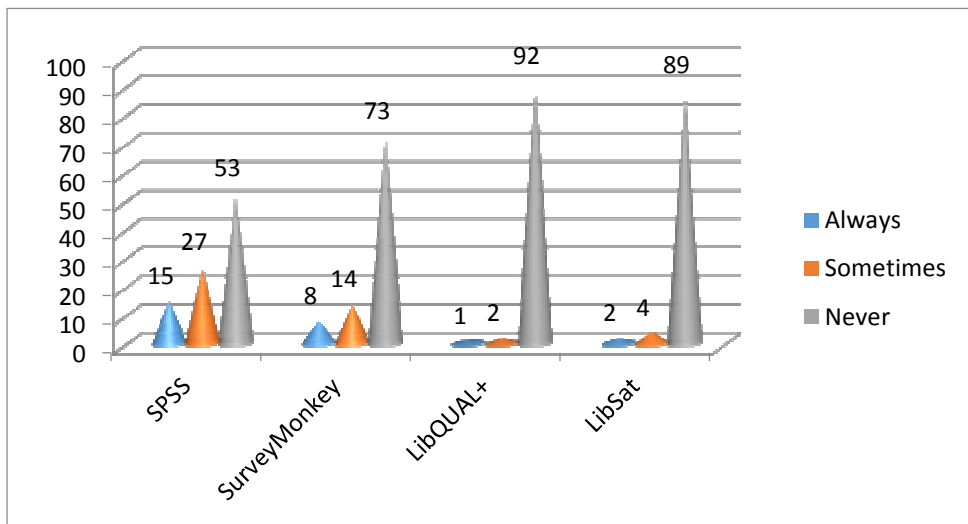


Figure (4)

Survey questionnaires are the most popular tools to measure user satisfaction of library services. Many online tools have been developed to help librarians generate instantaneous reports about the satisfaction of their users, circulation statistics of their resources and efficiency and effectiveness of their activities. We found that majority

of high school librarians were not familiar with current survey tools. Only 15 (15.8%) were always using SPSS for analyzing the collected data of their evaluation, while 53 (55.8) have never used SPSS. About 73 (76.8%) have never used Survey Monkey, one of the most popular free online survey tool for customer satisfaction. They do not use and do not even have idea about well-known survey tools among librarian such as LibQUAL+ and LibSat.

Only few of them could explain what library standards are about. They were not even familiar with the concept of measurement and evaluation of library performance. They confound it to the evaluation of the performance of library staff based on which they will be appraised. Library supervision in educational divisions was found accomplice in the perpetuation of the situation since they do not consider the issue as important as to put it their priority list for supervision.

Conclusion

One of the most rational reasons behind the failure of these efforts is the lack of appropriate library management skills among school librarians. Although majority of them did not receive adequate qualification, no clear professional development plan is made to enhance their skills. Hopelessly, there is no motivational incentive provided to let school librarians improve themselves independently.

Moreover, the importance of school libraries in enhancing independent learning attitude among students is underestimated. This has played a critical role in misjudging the importance of libraries to the schools' performance as a whole. Lack of consideration for measurement and evaluation of library performance among school librarians is the natural consequence of that matter of fact. Kuwait high school librarians have contributed negatively to forming that misjudgment of the importance of libraries to their schools. They did not do enough to change the situation not only in the mind of decision maker but also in the mind of their students.

Measurement and evaluation of school library performance following modern methods and techniques, applying regional and international standards and indicators, and reporting the results to decision makers with suggestion and recommendations for improvement are crucial to changing the situation. Kuwait high school librarians should demonstrate more proactive attitude in order to motivate students to use school library and monitor carefully the information need of the students based on which library resources should be required and acquired.

It strongly recommended that Library and Information Science programs in both Kuwait University and PAAET (Public Authority for Applied Education and Training) incorporate measurement and

evaluation of library performance in their academic programs. High school library managers should care for professional development of their staff in order to embark them upon new development not only in the field of measurement and evaluation of library performance but also in providing learner-based services. Measurement and evaluation of library performance should be criteria in assessing and evaluating the efforts of librarians not as appraisal tool but that of motivation. Authorities responsible for high school libraries should adopt regional and international standards and seek for accreditation from regional and international accreditation institutions such as AFLI and IFLA. Local library associations may also contribute to the dissemination of evaluation culture among librarians without which library will not perform for the satisfaction of the users.

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