

Awareness, Competencies and Preferences of the Zamboanga City Library Users: Input for Effective and Efficient Library Services

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Abstract: The study determined the level of awareness, competencies and preferences of the library users at the Zamboanga City Library. Specifically, it sought answers to the following questions: What is the level of awareness of the Zamboanga City Library users in terms of: availability of resources, accessibility to resources; and provision of services? What is the level of competencies of the Zamboanga City Library users in terms of: bibliographic skills, research skills; and information literacy skills? What is the level of preferences of Zamboanga City Library users in terms of: tangible, reliability, responsiveness, assurance and empathy? Is there a significant difference on the level of awareness, competencies & preferences of the Zamboanga City Library users when grouped according to their profile? On basis of the findings, what library program can be designed? The study surveyed a total of two hundred seventy-two (272) respondents who answered the survey questionnaires. mostly of the library users were junior and senior high school students whose age range from 13 to 19 years old with 146 respondents or 53.7 percent. There were 105 respondents or 38.6 percent whose age range from 20 to 29 years old. 11 respondents or 4.0 percent were ages 30 – 39 years old; 1 respondent or 0.4 percent ages 40- 49 years old; 1 respondent or 0.4 percent ages 50 – 59 years and 5 respondents or 1.8 percent whose age range from 60 years and above.

The results on the level of awareness of the Zamboanga City Library users in terms of availability of resources, accessibility of resources and provision of services. In terms of availability of resources in all the five indicators, the respondents are much aware that the Zamboanga City library provides general information such encyclopedias, dictionaries etc. (4.38), the library provides periodicals sources such as newspapers, journals, magazines, etc. (4.27), provides materials for recreational reading (4.25), provides updated and accurate information sources (4.20), and they provide Wi-Fi/internet access (4.19). Overall, the result reveals that the level of awareness of the Zamboanga City Library users in terms of availability of resources is high, as manifested on the overall weighted mean of 4.26. The finding implies that respondents are much aware of the librarians or personnel of the Zamboanga City Library effort to ensure that the library clients are provided with library resources in all formats from print to non-print, and ensure that these materials and facilities are available in the library when users want to utilize them for their information and research needs. The levels of competencies of the Zamboanga City Library users in terms of bibliographic skills, research skills, and information literacy skills. In terms of bibliographic skills, the respondents believed that they possessed advance bibliographic skills in locating and accessing the needed information (4.18); ability to search information on e-resources (4.13); ability to search an accurate and reliable sources (4.11); competence to use the bibliographic tools to locate the resources (4.10); and searching scholarly-made articles and resources (4.08). Overall, the findings revealed that the level of competencies of the Zamboanga City Library users in terms of bibliographic skills is advance. To sum it up, the results on the level of preferences of the Zamboanga City Library users in terms of tangible, reliability, responsiveness, assurance and empathy are much preferred by the respondents. The result implies that library users' expectations are growing. They do not merely come to the library to find the materials they need but they expect that the library staff are there to serve them the best way they can. Furthermore, the respondents also preferred the library should create an atmosphere conducive for learning and study with functional library facilities and equipment. Also, the respondents preferred much that librarians who attend to them must possess a good human relation and the knowledge to answer to their queries and to locate the materials for them. On the other hand, there is significant difference on the level of awareness, competencies, and preferences of the Zamboanga City library users when the respondents were grouped according to their age. Whereas, there is no significant difference in the level of awareness, competencies, and preferences of the Zamboanga City library users in terms of the community sector and sex. The study recommended that should be adequately funded to financially support the library plans, program and projects; and include the library in the City Development Plan.

Keywords: Awareness, Competencies, Preferences, Management, Input, Process, Output, Library services, Resources, Services, Effective library services, Efficient library services.

1. Introduction

Public libraries are found in every society and culture at different stages of development. They vary in content, operation, and services provision. Oyegade, Nasarawa and Mokogwu (2003) viewed national and public libraries as the people's universities which provide for life-long learning, independent decision-making and cultural development of individual and social groups. It holds true for public libraries, which are established to provide resources and services in different forms to serve the needs of every individual for information, professional upliftment, and personal development including leisure and recreation purposes. Public libraries have an important role in the development and maintenance of a democratic society by giving the individual access to a wide and varied range of knowledge, ideas and opinions. Hence, the City Government of Zamboanga is aware of its role that has made possible for the establishment of the Zamboanga City Library with the aimed to cater to the information needs of the general public. The agency is under the direct supervision of the City Secretary to the Sangguniang Panlungsod in Zamboanga City. Under the Local Government Code, it is stated that the Secretary to the Sangguniang Panlungsod shall take custody of the local archives, the local library and annually account for the same. In addition, the library is affiliated to the National Library of the Philippines (Santiago, 2000).

The Zamboanga City Library is house in a two-storey building. Through the years, the library has expanded its collection and arranged them according to Dewey Decimal Classification System, for easy access and retrieval. However, as has been observed and experienced by the researcher, the utilization of the library is very minimal, the corrosive sea spray that can cause damages to the library building and resources, and prone to natural calamities such as typhoons, flooding and even earthquake. In finding ways to solve this growing issues and concerns, Agustin (2010) conducted a study on the Management of the Zamboanga City Library. In her recommendation, she mentioned the need to increase the library budget, hiring of additional staff, and the conduct of an evaluation on the status of library collection, and the provision of facilities such as photocopier among others. Eight years had passed since the conduct of the study and some of these concerns had not been given utmost attention. Library problems regarding resources, services, facilities, equipment, and location still continued and occurred. The abovementioned issues prompted the researcher to conduct a study to determine the level of awareness, competencies and preferences of the library users at the Zamboanga City Library, where the result of the study will formulate a Library program not just to improve the services but the library as a whole, and mitigate the perennial problems of the library.

2. Literature Review and Conceptual Framework

This study was anchored on the "Five Laws of Library Science" which was advocated by S. R. Ranganathan (1931) as cited by Tubog (2012). The Five Laws of Library Science is a theory detailing the principles of operating a library system. These laws are: books are for use, every person his or her book, every book its reader, save the time of the reader, and library is a growing organism (Rubin, 2004).

The **first Law: "Books are for use"**, comprises the basis for the library services. Dr. Ranganathan observed that books were often chained to prevent their removal and that the emphasis was on storage and preservation rather than use. He did not reject the notion that preservation and storage were important, but he asserted that the purpose of such activities was to promote use. Without user access to materials, there is little value in these items. By emphasizing use, Dr. Ranganathan refocused the attention of the field to access-related issues, such as the library's location, loan policies, hours and days of operation, as well as the quality of staffing and mundane matters like library furniture, temperature control and lighting. This law means that books in libraries are not meant to be shut away from users (Rubin, 2004).

The **second law, "Every person his or her book"**, means that librarians serve a wide collection of patrons, acquire literature to fit a vast collection of needs, and do not judge what specific patrons choose to read. Everyone has different tastes and differences and librarians should respect that. Alyson (2018) in her article on the duties and responsibilities of librarians explained that, librarians' duties vary, but no matter the task, the job comes down to one priority: it is to help people in seek of information. From ordering books for easy finding to coordinating programming such as children's reading hours, librarians are responsible for making libraries an important community resource (Rubin, 2004).

The **third law: "Every book its reader"**, means a library's books have a place in the library even if a smaller demographic might choose to read it. Provision of library materials is not based on the population but on the needs of the library users (Rubin, 2004).

The **fourth law “Save the time of the reader”**, means that all patrons should be able to easily locate the material they desire quickly and efficiently. In his study Tarranza (2006) punts out that to effectively and efficiently serve the information needs of the library users, library resources must be suitably organized for effective use (Rubin, 2004).

The **fifth Law: “The library is a growing organism”**, means that a library should be a continually changing institution, never static in its outlook. Books, methods, and the physical library should be updated over time (Rubin, 2004). Badiru, as cited in Tarranza (2006) explained the need for a library to be opened and inclusive, in a sense that it must provide space for everyone coming in and can freely access to its available resources and services as a living and dynamic system, libraries need to change and grow (Rubin, 2004).

This study is also supported by the following sub-theories: the **Dervin’s theory** (Dervin, 2002), which focuses on the manner the users seek, acquire, understand and use of information through the use of library resources. Dervin’s theory is associated with “user-centered”, with the idea of increased attention to the needs of users or system. It recognizes the traits which users share information and that acquiring of information (Apao, 2018).

SERVQUAL introduced in 1988 by Parasuraman, Zeithaml, & Berry. SERVQUAL is the most widely used approach for measuring service quality to compare customers’ expectations before a service encounter and their perceptions of the actual service delivered (Nimsomboon & Nagata, 2003). **The SERVQUAL** is consisted of 5 dimensions as follows: (1) **Tangibles**. Physical facilities, equipment and appearance of personnel; (2) **Reliability**. Ability to perform the promised service dependably and accurately; (3) **Responsiveness**. Willingness to help customers and provide prompt service; (4) **Assurance**. Knowledge and courtesy of employees and their ability to inspire trust and confidence; (5) **Empathy**. Caring and individualized attention that the firm provides to its customers. The concept of quality and customer service is not a new phenomenon for library and information science professionals as it is rooted in library philosophy and principles. The applications of SERVQUAL have been traced in the Library Information Science discipline from 1990s. The instrument has found to be effective and have been used in academic, public and special libraries.

Conceptual Framework

The study was conducted to assess the level of awareness, competencies and preferences of the library users in Zamboanga City Library.

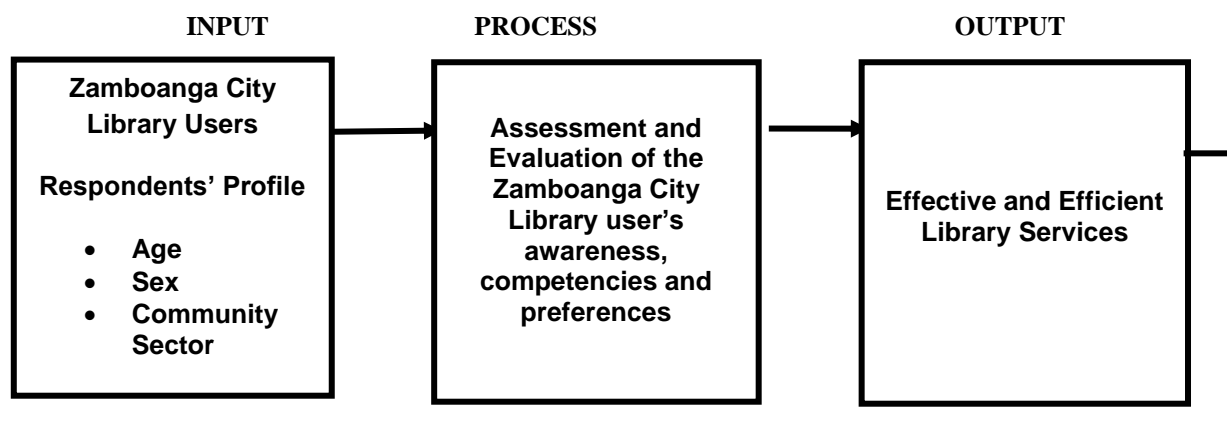


Figure 1
Conceptual Paradigm of the Study

Figure 1 shows the conceptual paradigm of the study showing the interplay of the variables included in the study through the use of IPO Model which consist of the three phases: the input, process, and output. Systems Approach is based on the **Systems theory** which was proposed in 1940's by Ludwig Von Bertalanffy. System concepts include: system-environment boundary, input, output, process, state, hierarchy, goal directedness, and information. The Library as an organization, is a system that interacts to both internal and external stakeholders that entails the following stages input, process and output. (Heylighen and Joslyn, 1992).

The first phase of the paradigm is the input which is the Zamboanga City Library Users, namely: senior citizens, professionals, students, children, and others. The second phase is the process to determine the library users' level

of awareness in terms of availability of resources, accessibility to resources, and provision of services; library users' level of competencies in terms of bibliographic skills, research skills and information literacy skills; and the library users' preferences towards the service quality of the Zamboanga City Library in terms of tangible, reliability, responsiveness, assurance, and empathy. The last phase is the output, or the expected result will be the effective and efficient library services.

The study also considered the following intervening variables, such as age, sex, and community sectors that may affect other variables included in the study. A feedback loop was included to provide the necessary information to the input.

3. Methodology

This study utilized the quantitative-descriptive method. This research design was employed to determine the awareness, competencies and preferences of the library users. A survey-questionnaire was used as the instrument for the gathering of data. De Franco (2011) points out that quantitative research is used to quantify the problem by way of generating numerical data or data that can be transformed into usable statistics. It is used to quantify attitudes, opinions, behaviors, and other defined variables – and generalize results from a larger sample population. She further explains that quantitative research uses measurable data to formulate facts and uncover patterns in research its data collection methods include various forms of surveys – online surveys, paper surveys, mobile surveys and kiosk surveys, face – to – face interviews, telephone interviews, longitudinal studies, website interceptors, online polls, and systematic observations.

Scope and Delimitation of the Study

The scope of this study was delimited to determining the library users' level of awareness in terms of availability of resources, accessibility to resources, and provision of services; library users' level of competencies in terms of bibliographic skills, research skills and information literacy skills; and the library users' preferences towards the service quality of the Zamboanga City Library in terms of tangible, reliability, responsiveness, assurance, and empathy. The respondents of the study were library users of Zamboanga City Library, namely: senior citizens, professionals, students, children, and others. The profile of the respondents in terms of age, sex, and community sectors was considered. Furthermore, this study was conducted at the Zamboanga City Library, school year 2019-2020.

Research Environment

This study was conducted at the Zamboanga City Library, a two-storey building located at the R.T. Lim Boulevard, Zamboanga City. The library is the only public library within the locality, with floor area of 860.20 SQ.M. It is a venue for all constituents from all walks of life, such as the senior citizens, professionals, students, children, and educators among others thrive in for the benefits of the nation. The Zamboanga City Library aimed to provide quality services to its clientele by providing reference service to every library user who considers the public library as a reliable source of information. At present, the Zamboanga City Library is manned by the city librarian, three professional librarians and four library staff to carry on with its smooth operation.

The Zamboanga City library was established on 1920 to cater to the information needs of the city populace and all those who are in search of information. The library has put up several section/areas to make the place conducive to learning and study namely: Circulation Section, Technical Section, Periodical Section, Children Section, Filipiniana, Zamboanga Collection, Chinese Collection, Fiction Section, Rotary Library Corner and Learning Commons. Most of its collections are donations from individuals, partners, and non-government organizations, private sectors and universities. (Zamboanga City Library Procedures Manual, 2019).

Research Participants

The target respondents of this study were the library users who regularly visited and utilized the resources and services at the Zamboanga City Library. The study employed a non-probability sampling technique through purposive sampling design. This sampling approach is a strategy where respondent of a sample is chosen with a purpose to represent a location or type in relation to the criterion. In summary, the researcher chose the respondents who availed the services of the library and utilized the library within 2 weeks.

Sampling Techniques

Table 1 Demographic Profile of the Respondents

Profile		f	%
Age	60 years and above	5	1.8
	50-59 years	1	0.4
	40-49 years	1	0.4
	30-39 years	11	4.0
	20-29 years	105	38.6
	13-19 years	146	53.7
	12 years and below	3	1.1
TOTAL		272	100
Gender	Male	119	43.8
	Female	153	56.2
TOTAL		272	100
Community Sectors	Senior Citizens	5	1.8
	Professionals	45	16.5
	Students	207	76.1
	Children	1	0.4
	Others	14	5.1
TOTAL		272	100

Table 1 shows the demographic profile of the respondents. There was a total of two hundred seventy-two (272) respondents who answered the survey questionnaires. As reflected on the table, most of the library users were junior and senior high school students whose age range from 13 to 19 years old with 146 respondents or 53.7 percent. There were 105 respondents or 38.6 percent whose age range from 20 to 29 years old. 11 respondents or 4.0 percent were ages 30 – 39 years old; 1 respondent or 0.4 percent ages 40- 49 years old; 1 respondent or 0.4 percent ages 50 – 59 years and 5 respondents or 1.8 percent whose age range from 60 years and above.

In terms of gender, the data shows that a lot of the city library frequent goers were female library users with one hundred fifty-three (153) or 56.2 percent respondents compared to the number of male library users, with one hundred nineteen (119) respondents or 43.8 percent. When the respondents were grouped by community sectors, the students had the highest number of respondents with 207 or 76.1 percent. This was followed by professionals with 45 or 16.5 percent. Others (Non-professional), came in third with 14 respondents or 5.1 percent, the fourth number of respondents came from Senior Citizen with 5 respondents or 1.8 percent and least numbers were Children with 1 or 0.4 percent. The result implied that students were more inclined to visit and utilize the Zamboanga City Library. This is because the library location is nearer to some schools and colleges such as the ZCPSC, Western Mindanao State University, Zamboanga City High School West, and Pilar College. The same finding was revealed in the study conducted by Caluang (2015), entitled “UZ Islamic Information Center: Its resources, services, utilization, management and student’s attitude”, the profile of the respondents in terms of sex, religion, year level, and program or courses were considered to measure the significant difference in the level of Islamic Information Center when respondents were grouped according to profile. The result of the study disclosed that majority of the library users were female compare to male student-respondents.

Instruments

The data in this study were obtained from a survey-questionnaire checklist to the respondents to determine the awareness, competencies and preferences of the users of Zamboanga City Library. The survey-questionnaire checklist was adopted from a standardized questionnaire which is the SERVQUAL Evaluation tool (Parasuraman, Zeithaml, & Berry, 1988), some of the constructs were modified by the researcher to solicit the answers needed for the study where the 5-Point Likert’s Scale type of questionnaire in numerical ratings with the corresponding verbal descriptions, were utilized. The survey-questionnaire was composed of two parts. Part I solicited information about the respondent’s profile such as age, gender, and community sector. Part II was the questionnaire-checklist which determined the level of awareness, competencies and preferences of the library users of the Zamboanga City Library. Letter A of the questionnaire was on the level of awareness of the library users in terms of: 1) availability of resources; 2) accessibility to resources; and 3) provision of services. The following rating scales was utilized for the responses and interpretation of the data:

Rating Scales	Verbal Description	Interpretation
5	Strongly Agree	Very much aware

4	Agree	Much aware
3	Moderately Agree	Moderately aware
2	Disagree	Less aware
1	Strongly Disagree	Not aware at all

Letter B of the questionnaire was on the level of competencies of the library users in terms of: 1) bibliographic skills .2) research skills; and .3) information literacy skills. The following rating scales was used:

Rating Scales	Verbal Description	Interpretation
5	Strongly Agree	Expert
4	Agree	Advanced
3	Moderately Agree	Proficient
2	Disagree	Average
1	Strongly Disagree	Basic

Letter C of the questionnaire was on the user's preferences towards the service quality of the Zamboanga City Library in terms of: 1.) tangible, 2.) reliability, 3.) responsiveness, 4.) assurance and 5.) empathy. The following rating scales was utilized.

Rating Scales	Verbal Description	Interpretation
5	Strongly Agree	Very Much Preferred
4	Agree	Much Preferred
3	Moderately Agree	Moderately Preferred
2	Disagree	Less Preferred
1	Strongly Disagree	Not Preferred at all

Data Gathering Techniques

The researcher sent a letter of permission to conduct the study to the Secretary to the Sangguniang Panlungsod thru the City Librarian of the Zamboanga City Library. After permission was granted by the Secretary, the researcher coordinated with the different sections in charge to conduct the survey. After which, the researcher personally administered the survey questionnaires to the target respondents, the same were retrieved right after the respondents finished answering the given survey-questionnaires. The researcher was able to meet the target time of two weeks for the conduct of the survey.

Statistical Treatment of Data

The following statistical measures were employed:

Frequency and Percentage. This statistical tool was used to determine the tallied number of respondents' profile in terms of age, sex, and community sector.

Weighted Mean. This was employed to measure the level of awareness, competencies and preferences of the respondents.

t-Test and One-Way Analysis of Variance. This tool was used to determine the significant difference in the ratings of the respondents in the level of awareness, competencies and preferences when they are grouped or classified according to their profile.

Ethnical Consideration in Research

The researcher observed proper decorum in the gathering of data. The researcher attached a cover letter to the survey-questionnaire, requesting the respondents to participate in the survey. The respondents were given the liberty and freedom in case they would decline to answer the survey. During the conduct of the survey, the

researcher practiced courtesy at all times. Respondents were treated with respect, and respect of opinion was observed. All information obtained from the respondents were treated with great confidentiality. The researcher did not force the respondents to answer an item in the questionnaire, when they did not feel answering them.

4. Results, Discussions and Analysis

This chapter presents the result and discussion of data gathered based on the research problems and hypotheses posited for this study. The presentation of data is presented according to the statement of the problems in an attempt to answer them systematically.

Results

The first research problem that the study required to answer is, **“What is the level of awareness of the Zamboanga City Library users in terms of: availability of resources, accessibility to resources; and provision of services?”**

Library services not only confine with the provision of a library building to the clients, Administrator has to make sure that the library provides different types of services, library resources and facilities, making them available for use and accessible for easy retrieval. Librarians must possess a good human relation because it is part of their job to sell their product and to entice the library users to make use of the services and resources of the library. It is the duty of the librarians to make the users aware what the library offers and why they deserve users' support (La Guardia, 2012).

Table 2 Level of Awareness of the Zamboanga City Library Users in terms of Availability of Resources, Accessibility of Resources and Provision of Services

A. Availability of Resources I am aware that the library...	Mean Response	Remarks
1. Provides general information resources (encyclopedia, dictionaries, etc.).	4.38	Much aware
2. Provides materials for recreational reading.	4.25	Much aware
3. Provides updated and accurate information sources.	4.20	Much aware
4. Provides Wi-Fi/internet access.	4.19	Much aware
5. Provides periodicals sources (newspapers, journals, magazines, etc.).	4.27	Much aware
Grand Mean	4.26	Much aware
B. Accessibility to Resources I am aware that the library...		
1. Provides assistance in locating library materials.	4.25	Much aware
2. Provides the card catalog/OPAC for easy access to information and resources.	4.19	Much aware
3. Provides bibliographic tools to easily locate the resources.	4.27	Much aware
4. Adopts a standard classification system (Dewey Decimal System).	4.13	Much aware
5. Provides a well organize library collection.	4.36	Much aware
Grand Mean	4.24	Much aware
C. Provision of Services I am aware that the library...		
1. Provides computers with electronic resources and internet connection.	4.29	Much aware
2. Provides orientation and bibliographic instructions.	4.13	Much aware

3. Provides community literacy program.	4.12	Much aware
4. Provides different section for special collections.	4.25	Much aware
5. Conducts library tour.	3.95	Much aware
Grand Mean	4.15	Much aware
Overall Weighted Mean	4.22	Much aware

Legend: 4.51 – 5.0 Very much aware

3.51 – 4.50 Much aware

2.51 – 3.50 Moderately aware

1.51 – 2.50 Less aware

1.00 – 1.50 Not aware at all

Table 2 presents the results on the level of awareness of the Zamboanga City Library users in terms of availability of resources, accessibility of resources and provision of services. As can be gleaned from Table 2, in terms of availability of resources in all the five indicators, the respondents are much aware that the Zamboanga City library provides general information such as encyclopedias, dictionaries etc. (4.38), the library provides periodicals sources such as newspapers, journals, magazines, etc. (4.27), provides materials for recreational reading (4.25), provides updated and accurate information sources (4.20), and they provide Wi-Fi/internet access (4.19). Overall, the result reveals that the level of awareness of the Zamboanga City Library users in terms of availability of resources is high, as manifested on the overall weighted mean of 4.26.

The finding implies that respondents are much aware of the librarians or personnel of the Zamboanga City Library effort to ensure that the library clients are provided with library resources in all formats from print to non-print, and ensure that these materials and facilities are available in the library when users want to utilize them for their information and research needs. In a similar study conducted by Tubog (2012), entitled “User’s Awareness, Preferences and Attitudes on the Reference Services of the Arturo Eustaquio Libraries and Information Centre”, the level of awareness of the library users in terms of the availability of resources, it yielded a good result. However, she recommended that the library has still the need to regularly market their resources and services to raise the awareness the library users. The researcher believed that the same should be done by the Zamboanga City Library personnel to increase the level of awareness of the library users on the different types of information resources and facilities available at the Zamboanga City Library. In terms of Accessibility to Resources, the result shows that all five indicators got a weighted mean between 3.51 to 4.50. The respondents are much aware that the Zamboanga City library provides of a well organize library collection (4.36); the library also provides bibliographic tools to easily locate the resources (4.27); it also provides assistance in locating library materials (4.25); provides the card catalog for easy access to information and resources (4.19); and the library adopts a standard classification system which is the Dewey Decimal System (4.13). The findings show that the level of awareness of the Zamboanga City Library users in terms of accessibility to resources is much aware, it further denotes that the library users rated high on these indicators, simply because they know that the Zamboanga City Library make it a point to provide an easy access of its resources to the library users through its open-shelves system where they can locate and browse the resources directly on the shelves. In an article published by the American Library Association (2019) it discusses the importance of fairness and universal access and suggested that a library should formulate a service delivery model with the end view of serving the community and providing them with the resources they need and making these resources accessible to the library users. ALA further explains the role of libraries as the major sources of information to society, libraries serve as the custodian of the public’s access to information. In the evolution of traditional to digital era libraries face the challenges on how they can provide information and how public can obtain them. In these modern times when people turn to computer for information, libraries should make sure that they maintain they role in helping ensure that library users have access to information they need, regardless of their economic status, race, beliefs, age and gender. In terms of the provision of services, the data shows that the respondents agreed that they are much aware that the Zamboanga City Library provides computers with electronic resources and internet connection (4.29); provides different section for special collections (4.25); provides orientation and bibliographic instructions (4.13); provides community literacy program (4.12); and the library conducts library tour (3.95). Overall, the respondents agreed that they are much aware that the Zamboanga City Library provides the abovementioned services. The finding implies that the library users have surely availed the services of the Zamboanga City Library. The Zamboanga City Library provides different types of services for library user’s satisfaction. The services include Reference service, current awareness, informal library instruction, and the provision of library materials such as books,

journals, magazines and digital resources and facilities to carry on with its goal in giving maximum services to library users. The level of awareness for library services can be determined by library users' level of satisfaction. The statement above is evident in the study conducted by Apao (2018) entitled "Status, Issues and Challenges of the Zamboanga State College of Marine Sciences and Technology Library: basis for Library development plan" in terms of library services and utilization, the result shows that the respondents of the study agreed and rated high on their level of satisfaction with regards to the services offered by the library. This implies that there is a clear indication of frequent and productive use of the library. IGI Global (2019) explains that the library should include instruction on how to access and utilize library materials. This may consist of the provision of reference services for quick and in-depth answers to student questions; and materials delivery services that provide students with access to library materials. The services that the Zamboanga City Library can offer may include library tour and orientation, reference services, current awareness, books borrowing, internet, and many more.

The second research problem that the study required to answer is, **"What is the level of competencies of the Zamboanga City Library users in terms of: bibliographic skills, research skills; and information literacy skills?"**

Table 3 Level of Competencies of Zamboanga City Library Users in terms of Bibliographic skills, Research skills, & Information Literacy Skills

A. Bibliographic Skills I have the...	Mean Response	Remarks
1. Ability to locate and access information.	4.18	Advanced
2. Competence to use the bibliographic tools to locate the resources.	4.10	Advanced
3. Competence in searching scholarly-made articles and resources.	4.08	Advanced
4. Ability to search an accurate and reliable sources.	4.11	Advanced
5. Ability to search information on e-resources.	4.13	Advanced
Grand Mean	4.12	Advanced
B. Research Skills I have the...		
1. Competence in searching for information that is relevant to the subject being studied.	4.21	Advanced
2. Ability to evaluate print and online information.	4.18	Advanced
3. Ability to use an accurate and reliable information effectively.	4.16	Advanced
4. Competence in proper citations.	4.08	Advanced
5. Competence to conceptualize research problems.	4.07	Advanced
Grand Mean	4.14	Advanced
C. Information literacy skills I have the...		
1. Ability to identify what information is needed.	4.30	Advanced
2. Ability to understand how the information is organized.	4.24	Advanced
3. Ability to identify the best sources of information for a given need.	4.22	Advanced
4. Ability to locate and evaluate the sources critically.	4.19	Advanced
5. Ability to share or disseminate the information gathered.	4.15	Advanced
Grand Mean	4.22	Advanced
Overall Weighted Mean	4.16	Advanced

Legend: 4.51 – 5.0 Expert 1.51 – 2.50 Average
 3.51 – 4.50 Advanced 1.00 – 1.50 Basic
 2.51 – 3.50 Proficient

Table 3 presents the levels of competencies of the Zamboanga City Library users in terms of bibliographic skills, research skills, and information literacy skills. In terms of bibliographic skills, the respondents believed that they possessed advance bibliographic skills in locating and accessing the needed information (4.18); ability to search information on e-resources (4.13); ability to search an accurate and reliable source (4.11); competence to use the bibliographic tools to locate the resources (4.10); and searching scholarly-made articles and resources (4.08).

Overall, the findings revealed that the level of competencies of the Zamboanga City Library users in terms of bibliographic skills is advance, meaning the respondents can perform the actions associated with this skill without assistance. This implies that the library users especially students and professionals who constantly avail of the services at the Zamboanga City Library have the advance knowledge to go straight to the section or directly to the shelves where they can easily find the information they need, simply because they always utilize the available resources in the Zamboanga City Library.

Moreover, the finding above is similar with the result of the study conducted by Handumon (2010), entitled “Library Competencies of College Students in Universidad de Zamboanga: Basis for Enhancing Library Instruction Program” on library competencies, the findings revealed that the respondents are competent in searching engine like Google, Yahoo, Yehey and the likes in searching related articles.

In terms of Research skills, the data shows that the respondents’ competencies are advance on searching for information that is relevant to the subject being studied (4.21); ability to evaluate print and online information (4.18); ability to use accurate and reliable information effectively (4.16); competence in proper citations (4.08); and competence to conceptualize research problems (4.07); and competence to conceptualize research problems. Furthermore, the overall finding indicates that the level of competencies of the Zamboanga City Library users in terms of Research skills is advanced, this means that the respondents are responsible enough to research without assistance. The result also implies that the library users are diligent in their search for knowledge. Hence, as per observation of the researcher most of these users utilized the library resources for the purpose of research, assignments, and class discussion. In terms of Information literacy skills, the data shows that the respondents’ competencies are advance in identifying what information is needed (4.30); the respondents also believed that they have the ability to understand how the information is organized (4.24); ability to identify the best sources of information for a given need (4.22); ability to locate and evaluate the sources critically (4.19); and the ability to share or disseminate the information gathered (4.15). Overall, the findings further reveal that the library users possessed an advance competency in terms of information literacy (4.22), which means that the library users have the ability to search, browse and make use of the information in a responsible way. This is an indication that the library users are competent enough to use the information gathered for their personal and intellectual growth.

In summary, among the three skills, information literacy skill ranks first with the highest weighted mean of 4.22, followed by Research Skills (4.14), and Bibliographic Skills (4.12) in which all the skill is interpreted as Advanced. The result reveals that the library users of the Zamboanga City Library are information literate and most of them utilized all the available resources in variety of formats in their research needs.

The finding above is also supported by the study of Handumon (2012) entitled “Library Competencies of College Students in Universidad de Zamboanga: Basis for Enhancing Library Instruction Program”, she evaluated the library skills of the clients in terms of research skills, bibliographic skills and information literacy skills. It was revealed that all three indicators yielded a result of “Very Satisfactory.”

The third research problem that the study required to answer is, “**What is the level of preferences of Zamboanga City Library users in terms of: tangible, reliability, responsiveness, assurance and empathy?**”

Table 4 Level of Preferences of Zamboanga City Library users in Terms of Tangible, Reliability, Responsiveness, Assurance, Empathy

A. Tangible. “Appearance of physical facilities, equipment, personnel and communicate materials”	Mean Response	Remarks
1. The library should have a modern and functional equipment that allows easy access to information.	4.46	Much Preferred
2. The library should be conducive to study and learning.	4.43	Much Preferred

3. The library should provide comfortable and inviting atmosphere.	4.39	Much Preferred
4. The library should have adequate sitting capacity to accommodate users.	4.44	Much Preferred
5. The library should provide functional infrastructures to ease learning.	4.40	Much Preferred
Grand Mean	4.43	Much
B. Reliability. “Ability of the organization to perform the promised service	Mean	Remarks
1. The library should provide access tools that allow users to find things on their own.	4.39	Much Preferred
2. The librarian should have the ability in handling research problems.	4.24	Much Preferred
3. Statistical records should be available, and appropriately kept and	4.35	Much Preferred
4. Users should be provided with updated and accurate information	4.35	Much Preferred
5. Users should be well informed about the library time and services.	4.36	Much Preferred
Grand Mean	4.34	Much
C. Responsiveness. “Willingness of organization’s staff to help customers and provide them with prompt service”	Mean Response	Remarks
1. Librarians should assist users in locating the resources they need.	4.35	Much Preferred
2. Library staffs should be readily available to respond to user’s needs.	4.38	Much Preferred
3. Library staffs should be competent in solving user’s problems.	4.33	Much Preferred
4. Library staff should see to it that library facilities are functional and can inspire study and learning.	4.43	Much Preferred
5. Users prefers prompt service at all times.	4.35	Much Preferred
Grand Mean	4.37	Much
D. Assurance: Knowledge, competence and courtesy of employees and their ability to convey trust and confidence in the customer towards the service firm”.	Mean Response	Remarks
1. Library staffs should treat all class of users fairly.	4.47	Much Preferred
2. The librarian should have the ability to guide the users.	4.38	Much Preferred
3. Library staffs should be willing to help users at all times.	4.43	Much Preferred
4. Service should be provided at pre-determined time.	4.35	Much Preferred
5. The Librarians should see to it that the users are secured and relaxed	4.44	
Grand Mean	4.14	Much
E. Empathy. “Caring, individualized attention the firm provided its		
1. Library staffs should pay attention to individual user’s need.	4.46	Much Preferred
2. Library staffs should show compassionate and patient when talking to	4.44	Much Preferred
3. Library staffs should be consistently courteous.	4.38	Much Preferred
4. Librarians should listen intently to user’s questions.	4.42	Much Preferred
5. Librarians should provide an adequate and quiet space for individual	4.44	Much Preferred
Grand Mean	4.43	Much
Overall Weighted Mean	4.39	Much

Table 4 shows the level of preferences of Zamboanga City Library users in terms of tangible, reliability, responsiveness, assurance, and empathy. As reflected on Table 4, in terms of tangible or the appearance of physical facilities, equipment, personnel and communicate materials, the respondents agreed that they are much preferred that the library should have a modern and functional equipment that allows easy access to information (4.46); the library should have adequate sitting capacity to accommodate users (4.44); the library should provide comfortable and inviting atmosphere (4.43); the library should provide functional infrastructures to ease learning (4.40); the library should provide comfortable and inviting atmosphere (4.39). The result implies that the respondents are comfortable if the library provides the adequate facilities and equipment for study and research.

In terms of Responsiveness or the willingness of organization’s staff to help customers and provide them with prompt service, the respondents are much preferred for a librarian that is willing to assist them and give them

immediate services when they are in search of information in the library (4.35); where these staff should be available at all times to serve the library users (4.38); the respondents also prefer much if the librarians are competent in handling library works especially reference service and possess a willingness to help them find solution to their information needs library (4.33). Apart from this, the librarians should in any way make sure that the facilities provided in the library are useful and functional (4.43). Overall, the finding reveals that the respondents are much preferred if the Zamboanga City Library performs well in the aspect of Responsiveness or the willingness of organization's staff to help customers and provide them with prompt service. Meaning, despite of the advancement in technology and with the availability of these technological gadgets and other resources in the library, the library users still prefer and appreciate the willingness of the librarians to personally assist them in their information needs with prompt services. In terms of Assurance or knowledge, competence and courtesy of employees and their ability to convey trust and confidence in the customer towards the service firm, the data reveals that the respondents are much preferred if the librarians will treat them fairly (4.47) regardless of age, gender, economic status and the like; they also much preferred if the librarians should see to it that the users are secured and relaxed when interacting with the librarians (4.44); Library staffs should be willing to help users at all times (4.43); the librarian should have the ability to guide the users (4.38); service should be provided at pre-determined time (4.35) are also much preferred by the respondents. The overall finding indicates that the library users of the Zamboanga City Library preferred much that librarians should have the knowledge, competence and courtesy when dealing with the customers and they should have the ability to convey trust and confidence in the customer towards the library. This implies that library users are much preferred to get in touch with librarians who are approachable and friendly and who are willing to assist them and guide them in their research needs.

In terms of empathy or caring, individualized attention the firm provided its customers. The data shows that the respondents are much preferred if the library staff should pay attention to individual user's need (4.46); they are also much preferred if the library staff should show compassionate and patient when talking to users and librarians should provide an adequate and quiet space for individuals (4.44); librarians should also listen intently to user's questions (4.42); and the library staff should be consistently courteous (4.38). The result further reveals that the respondents preferred much a librarian who do a one-on-one type of services and who speaks well and exude courtesy while talking to her clients. The type of librarian who has always in mind the comfort and care towards them, and the librarian's role to satisfies the needs of the library users To sum it up, the results on the level of preferences of the Zamboanga City Library users in terms of tangible, reliability, responsiveness, assurance and empathy are much preferred by the respondents. The result implies that library users' expectations are growing. They do not merely come to the library to find the materials they need but they expect that the library staff are there to serve them the best way they can. Furthermore, the respondents also preferred the library should create an atmosphere conducive for learning and study with functional library facilities and equipment. Also, the respondents preferred much that librarians who attend to them must possess a good human relation and the knowledge to answer to their queries and to locate the materials for them. A similar study on the service quality was conducted by Muyengwa and Marowa (2014) the purpose of evaluating the service quality of a university library. The researchers utilized a modified version of SERVQUAL in their survey to determine the views of library users about the service level. The findings of the study showed a significant difference between the student's expectations and perceptions in all five dimensions of service quality and in all dimension's students' expectations had a higher level than that of the perceptions. The findings revealed that the dimension ranked number 1 on the basis of average gap score (-0.434) was Tangible and the lowest gap score (-0.796) was Assurance. The same result was observed on the level of preference of the Zamboanga City Library users where Tangible got the highest grand mean of 4.43 and assurance with the lowest grand mean of 4.14. Research conducted by Podbreznik (2014) on "Using SERVQUAL for Public Library Service Quality Assessment", he points out the mission and the dynamics of public libraries in line with the technological and social development. According to him, public libraries is considered the center for social, educational, and cultural of their respective local communities. Public libraries should be customer oriented to enable them to provide quality service to library users. Services which are designed to meet the information needs of users, by providing them with benefits at a given time and a given place. It is stated on the standard for Philippine Public Libraries (2015) that the library shall provide spaces for collection, reading, multimedia and other spaces as may be necessary. Moreover, equipment and furniture shall be sufficiently provided for a conducive learning environment, and shall have facilities for information technology and communication services. (Revised Standard for Philippine Public Libraries, 2015)

The Fourth research problem that the study required to answer is, **"Is there a significant difference in the level of awareness, competencies and preferences of Zamboanga City Library users in terms of their Sex?"**

Table 5 Significant Difference on the Level of Awareness, Competencies and Preferences of the Zamboanga City Library users in terms of their Sex

	Gender	Mean Response	t-value	P-value	Remarks	Decision on Ho
Awareness	Male	4.22	0.086	0.931	Not Significant	Accept Ho
	Female	4.21				
Competencies	Male	4.16	0.076	0.940	Not Significant	Accept Ho
	Female	4.16				
Preferences	Male	4.35	-1.332	0.184	Not Significant	Accept Ho
	Female	4.43				

Table 5 exhibits the significant difference on the level of awareness, competencies, and preferences of the Zamboanga City library users in terms of their sex. The result reveals that when data were compared it resulted to a t-value of 0.086 with a P-value of 0.931 for awareness. In terms of competencies, the t-value is 0.076 with a P-value of 0.940, while for preferences; the t-value is -1.322 with a P-value of 0.184. Since all the P-values are greater than 0.05 level of significance, this means that there is no significant difference on the level of awareness, competencies, and preferences of the Zamboanga City library users in terms of their sex, therefore the null hypothesis is accepted. This can be deduced that both male and female library users have more or less the same level of awareness, competencies, and preferences about the Zamboanga City Library. It is very much evident that Zamboanga City Library consistently delivers its services and educates the library users regardless of what are their gender identity.

On a similar way, in the study of Agustin (2010) entitled “Zamboanga City Library Management: Basis for Development Program”, the findings of the study disclosed that in terms of personnel by gender, the data shows that the female respondents have slightly higher mean than the male respondents. In terms of budget/finance, the data shows that the female respondents got the highest mean than the male respondents. In terms of holdings/collections by gender, the data shows that both female and male library users obtained the same computed mean. In terms of utilization of services by gender, the data shows that the female’s library users gained the highest computed mean and male library users got the lowest computed mean. In terms of physical facilities, the data shows that the male library users gained the highest computed mean and female library users got the lowest computed mean. Overall, the data revealed that when the respondents were grouped according to gender, the results revealed that there were no significant differences in the responses of the respondents in terms of personnel, budget/finance, holding/collections, services and utilization and physical facilities.

On the contrary, in the study conducted by Caluang (2015) entitled “UZ Islamic Information Center: Its resources, services, utilization, management, and student’s attitude”, when the respondents were classified or grouped according to gender, the findings revealed that there were significant differences in the responses of the respondents in terms of resources, services, management, and student’s attitude. The result implies that the level of Islamic Information Center in terms of resources, services, management and student’s attitude varied when the respondents were grouped according to gender.

Moreover, Onifade, Ogbuiyi and Omeluzor (2013), undergo a study on “Library resources and service utilization by postgraduate students in Nigeria private university. The result of the study indicated that male postgraduate students were in the majority, 58% were males and 42% were females.

Table 6 Significant Difference in the Level of Awareness, Competencies and Preferences of the Zamboanga City Library users in terms of their Age

	Age	Mean Response	F-value	P-value	Remarks	Decision on Ho
Awareness	60 and above	4.79	2.596	0.018	Significant	Reject Ho
	50-59	4.00				
	40-49	2.93				
	30-39	4.26				
	20-29	4.27				
	13-19	4.16				

	12 and below	4.11				
Competencies	60 and above	4.31	2.833	0.011	Significant	Reject Ho
	50-59	4.00				
	40-49	2.67				
	30-39	4.25				
	20-29	4.26				
	13-19	4.10				
	12 and below	4.32				
Preferences	60 and above	4.48	2.811	0.011	Significant	Reject Ho
	50-59	3.96				
	40-49	2.72				
	30-39	4.40				
	20-29	4.47				
	13-19	4.36				
	12 and below	3.91				

Table 6 presents the result of the Analysis of Variance (ANOVA) computation, the data exhibits the significant difference on the level of awareness, competencies, and preferences of the Zamboanga City library users when the respondents were grouped according to their age. The result reveals that when data were compared it resulted to a t-value of 2.596- with a P-value of 0.018 for awareness. In terms of competencies, the t-value is 2.833 with a P-value of 0.011 while for preferences; the t-value is -2.811 with a P-value of 0.011, with the probability of occurrence under the null hypothesis greater than 0.05 level of significance. This means that there is significant difference on the level of awareness, competencies, and preferences of the Zamboanga City library users when the respondents were grouped according to their age. Therefore, the posited hypothesis was rejected since there was a significant difference on the variables tested in the study.

The finding implies that the level of awareness, competencies, and preferences of the Zamboanga City library users when the respondents were grouped according to their age significantly vary. It can be deduced that most of the professionals and senior citizens are more competent and more aware of the services being offered by the Zamboanga City Library compare to the younger ones. It can be inferred that these people are the ones who spend most of their time at the library. However, in a similar study conducted by Suleiman, Vashista & Jimah. (2018) entitled "Awareness and Utilization of Library Resources by Library Users' of NIMS University Central Library, Jaipur, India", the findings revealed that majority of the respondents who utilizes the library were less than 30 years old (92.3%) the result suggested that library users over the age of 50 occasionally use the library and they have less awareness of its services and resources.

Table 7 Significant Difference in the Level of Awareness, Competencies and Preferences of the Zamboanga City Library users in terms of their Community Sector

	Community Sectors	Mean Response	F-value	P-value	Remarks	Decision on Ho
Awareness	Senior Citizens	4.75	1.416	0.229	Not Significant	Accept Ho
	Professionals	4.20				
	Students	4.20				
	Children	4.07				
	Others	4.29				

Competencies	Senior Citizens	4.27	1.373	0.808	Not Significant	Accept Ho
	Professionals	4.25				
	Students	4.20				
	Children	4.13				
	Others	4.44				
Preferences	Senior Citizens	4.48	0.401	0.416	Not Significant	Accept Ho
	Professionals	4.42				
	Students	4.38				
	Children	4.60				
	Others	4.53				

Table 7 presents the result of the Analysis of Variance (ANOVA) computation, the data exhibits the significant difference in the level of awareness, competencies, and preferences of the Zamboanga City library users in terms of their community sector. The result reveals that when data were compared it resulted to a t-value of 1.416 with a P-value of 0.229 for awareness. In terms of competencies, the t-value is 1.373 with a P-value of 0.808 in terms of preferences; the t-value is 0.401 with a P-value of 0.416. Since all the P-values were greater than 0.05 level of significance, this means that there is no significant difference in the level of awareness, competencies, and preferences of the Zamboanga City library users in terms of community sector they belong, therefore the posited null hypothesis is accepted. This can be deduced that the library users who belong to the senior citizen, professionals, students, children and other sector have the same level of awareness, competencies, and preferences towards the Zamboanga City Library. Moreover, in a study conducted by Alaya-ay (2013), entitled "The Iligan City Public Library and Services: Its community sectors' awareness and responses" it was revealed that when respondents were grouped according to community sector, an overwhelming majority or 88.46% are students, followed by the children with 4.74% and the professionals with 3.87% patronage. There has been no patronage from the handicaps and inmates and very least from the out-of-school youth, non-professionals, and senior citizens. Factors affecting these wide gaps between the legitimate and the actual users include: awareness in ICPL's existence and the mandate of Republic Act 7743, geographical accessibility, policies of ICPL, library services, and the presence of other information centers within the city. These findings imply that the Iligan City Public Library must plan massive outreach programs in order to bring the library resources closer to all sectors of its intended users which are the whole of the Iligan City community.

The Fifth research problem that the study required to answer is, **"On the basis of the findings, what library program can be designed?"**

In response to this research problem, a library program was crafted for the improvement of the Zamboanga City Library.

5. Conclusions

In light of the foregoing findings of this study, the following conclusions were drawn:

1. The library users of the Zamboanga City Library are much aware of the availability of resources, accessibility of resources, and the provisions of library services.
2. The level of competencies of the Zamboanga City Library users in terms of bibliographic skills, research skills, and information literacy skills are advanced.
3. The level of preferences of Zamboanga City Library users in terms of tangible, reliability, responsiveness, assurance, and empathy are much prefer
4. There is significant difference on the level of awareness, competencies, and preferences of the Zamboanga City library users when the respondents were grouped according to their age. Whereas, there is no significant difference in the level of awareness, competencies, and preferences of the Zamboanga City library users in terms of the community sector and sex.
5. A 5-Year Library Program was crafted for the improvement of the Zamboanga City Library.

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