

Contextual Influences on User Satisfaction with E-Books in Academic Libraries: Evidence from Interdependent Factors

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Abstract

This study examines the contextual influences shaping user satisfaction with e-books in academic libraries by investigating the interplay among key interdependent factors. Drawing on a contextual and systems-oriented perspective, the study explores how service quality, accessibility, usability, content relevance, technological support, and user experience jointly affect satisfaction with e-book services. The research emphasizes that user satisfaction is not determined by isolated variables, but by the combined effects of institutional, technological, and user-related conditions that shape e-book adoption and continued use. The objective of this paper is to identify the most salient contextual drivers and highlights the importance of aligning e-book provision with user needs, platform design, and library support services. The findings contribute to the literature on digital library service evaluation by offering a more integrated explanation of satisfaction in e-book environments. The study also provides practical implications for academic libraries seeking to improve e-book services, enhance user engagement, and strengthen digital learning support. As a quantitative study design, a structured online questionnaire with 317 valid cases was used, descriptive statistics, Pearson correlation, and multiple regressions were conducted in SPSS and conducted at Universiti Teknologi MARA (UiTM), Kota Bharu Campus.

Keywords: User Satisfaction, E-Books, Academic Libraries, E-Book Usability, Accessibility

Introduction

Digital developments have transformed academic libraries and changed how users access information resources. In higher education, e-books have become essential for supporting teaching, learning, and research activities across academic functions. Within this evolving environment, academic libraries have increasingly prioritized e-books to enhance information retrieval and optimize spatial resources. As knowledge centres, academic libraries have adopted e-books as a key information resource to improve retrieval for students and academics (Chowdhury, 2013). Montanari (2023) notes that the growth of e-books is driven by advances in digital publishing, the proliferation of mobile devices, and increasing demand for accessible academic resources. Although these collections offer distinct advantages, such as continuous availability, remote access, and embedded search tools, e-book adoption in higher education does not automatically ensure user satisfaction or sustained engagement (Van Der Westhuizen, 2022).

Academic libraries have adopted digital resources, enabling users to retrieve information in new ways, while e-books have become central to contemporary educational settings. The changing roles of academic libraries from archiving recorded knowledge to the digitization of physical collections, including access to e-books, e-journals, e-libraries and online databases, enables academic libraries to move away from extensive physical storage and shelving, thereby freeing up space for other users (Lotfy et al. 2022). E-books platforms offer several advantages over printed books, including immediate access, portability, searchability, clickable hyperlinks, and multimedia integration (Mune & Agee, 2016). Beyond basic text presentation, single e-book files typically include usability features such as adjustable text display, integrated note taking, and text highlighting, which improve reading flexibility and interaction. These functions have made e-books increasingly valuable for students and researchers because they support more efficient reading, annotation, and information retrieval within academic work processes (Jin, 2014). Thus, e-books are valued for their convenience, accessibility, round-the-clock availability, portability, and searchability, while also supporting distance learning and sustaining study and research specifically, during the COVID-19 library access restrictions (Wells & Sallenbach, 2023).

A central challenge for academic libraries lies in understanding how system design, infrastructure, and resource quality interact to influence the student experience (Cox, 2023). Existing research by Silva (2025) frequently evaluates e-book features in isolation, focusing on standalone metrics such as platform navigation, collection size, and basic accessibility. However, this segmented approach obscures how institutional support, platform functionality, and scholarly content jointly shape user perceptions in real-world academic settings. This creates a critical research gap regarding how these interdependent dimensions collectively drive user satisfaction.

To address this gap, this study provides an integrated empirical investigation into how system usability, platform accessibility, and content quality jointly predict user satisfaction with academic e-book services. Grounded in the Technology Acceptance Model (TAM), the Information Systems Success Model (ISSM), and Expectation-Confirmation Theory (ECT), the novelty of this research lies in its holistic, systems-oriented framework. Rather than evaluating isolated system attributes, the study demonstrates the empirical interdependence among usability, access, and content excellence within a higher education context. This contribution advances social science literature in digital library evaluation by demonstrating that user satisfaction is a multifaceted construct requiring alignment between technological infrastructure and academic information quality.

Literature Review

Definition of e-books

An e-book is an electronic version of a printed book that can be read on a personal computer or handheld device designed specifically for that purpose (Anuradha & Usha, 2006). Moreover, e-books are digital versions of printed texts that users access through computers, tablets, and e-readers (Warren, 2022). Technological advancement has gradually reshaped academic library collections, underscoring the continued importance of managing both physical and electronic resources in the twenty-first century. E-books, or digital books may be purchased or freely downloaded in formats that can be read on standard computers, or they may be designed in proprietary formats for specific devices (Muthu, 2012). Most academic

libraries already provide e-book content that users can download and access on standard computers (Mune & Agee, 2016).

Factor influencing user satisfaction with e-books

Study have identified several critical factors that significantly shape user satisfaction with electronic book access in academic libraries. E-book access is a primary determinant of user satisfaction, as reliable and convenient availability directly shape user's overall experience (Thuy & Thi, 2025). Student learning experiences are enriched by multimedia features, such as interactive charts and videos, embedded within e-book resources (Yohannes et al., 2023). Another study on user satisfaction (Amrina & Rahmi, 2024) resulted, the use of e-book system positively influences the quality of learning content, while also fostering students' creativity and collaborative learning. These findings indicate that integrating e-books into educational practice can strengthen student engagement and improve learning outcomes by supporting more innovative and interactive forms of learning.

Assessing E-Book Use and Effectiveness

E-books have become an essential component of academic library collections, providing flexible and accessible learning resources for students, faculty, and researchers. A systematic assessment of e-book usage and effectiveness enables researchers to understand how these resources influence academic outcomes, user experience, and collection management strategies (Blummer & Kenton 2020). Recent research (Schilhab et al. 2018) indicates that students perceive e-books as easy to read and effective learning tools. Similarly, Evans (2017) reported that students enjoyed reading on iPads, further suggesting that book-based and digital reading formats can be effective in supporting student engagement and learning (Amirtharaj et al. 2023). Yet, another study on learning outcome (Suriani et al. 2023) stated among available formats, interactive e-books appear to be the most effective because their embedded multimedia features, user-responsive elements, and active engagement mechanism can better support comprehension, retention and sustained learner interest.

Theories Related

We examines major e-book user satisfaction elements by studying accessibility along with usability together with content quality while analysing these factors on student visits to academic libraries. This study draws on the Technology Acceptance Model (TAM; Davis 1989), Expectation-Confirmation Theory (Oliver, 1980), the Information Systems Success Model (DeLone & McLean, 2003), the E-commerce Platform Quality Model (2023) and, the User Satisfaction with M-government Services Model, which has been frequently adopted in prior research (Kala et al. 2024). The existing literature on e-books is commonly grouped into three major strands: (i) user satisfaction with e-book usage, which examines both behavioural intention and actual service use; (ii) e-book effectiveness; and (iii) e-book usability. Based on the combination theories adopted, we construct this study with usability, accessibility and content quality as in Figure 1.

Research Framework and Construct Measures

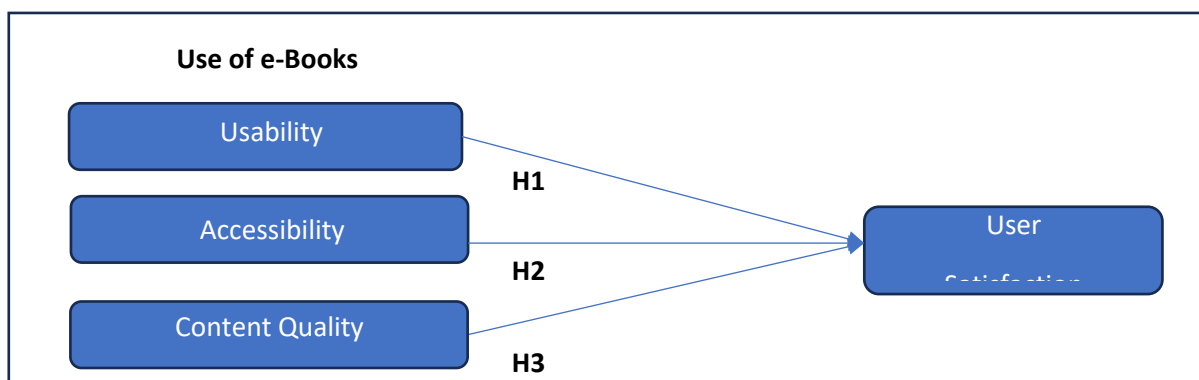


Figure 1: Theoretical Framework of the Study

Usability

Usability, as an independent variable in e-book usage, refers to the extent to which an e-book platform enables users to complete their intended tasks efficiently and with ease (H1). Its core dimensions include intuitive navigation, minimal learning effort, and user-friendly interaction design. Tovstiadi et al. (2018) argue that usability significantly shapes students' perceptions and usage patterns of e-books. A well-designed interface reduces cognitive load, allowing users to remain focused on their learning objectives. In addition, features such as search functions, bookmarking, and annotation tools enhance the overall user experience and contribute to higher levels of satisfaction.

Accessibility

Accessibility is a key independent variable in e-book usage because it shapes users' ability to access and benefit from digital reading platforms (H2). As Sadueste & Masalinto (2023) note, accessibility is a critical determinant of user satisfaction in digital libraries, particularly when platforms can be accessed seamlessly across smartphones, tablets, and computers. When users encounter minimal technical barriers, reliable internet connectivity, and convenient download options, their satisfaction with e-book systems increases. Conversely, limited compatibility and restrictive access conditions reduce usability and weaken the overall user experience.

Content Quality

Content quality is an important independent variable in e-book usage because it reflects the accuracy, relevance, and comprehensiveness of the information delivered to users (H3). Sunder et al. (2016) reported that users directly link content quality to perceived e-book value and satisfaction. When e-books provide reliable, up-to-date, and educationally useful content, users are more likely to trust the platform and continue using library services. In particular, students tend to be more satisfied with e-book materials that combine dependable sources with interactive features and well-organized information.

User Satisfaction

User satisfaction is a dependent variable in e-book usage because it reflects the extent to which e-books meet students' academic and research needs, thereby influencing their intention to continue using them. In academic libraries, user satisfaction serves as a key indicator of digital resource performance, capturing expectations related to usability,

accessibility, content quality, and overall interface experience (DeLone & McLean, 2003). According to Kadir et al. (2016), likewise found that students are more likely to value e-books when they perceive them as beneficial for learning and research activities. Therefore, user satisfaction is shaped by the combined effects of academic relevance, accessibility, usability, and the broader quality of the user experience. Enhancing these dimensions can strengthen students' engagement with e-books and support more sustained use of digital resources in academic settings.

Table 1

Usability construct

Item	References
The e-book platform provided by the academic library is easy to navigate.	(Croft & Davis, 2010a; Muir & Hawes 2013; Wang & Huang 2015; Blummer & Kenton, 2020).
I can easily locate specific e-Books using the library's search features.	
The e-books load quickly and without technical issues.	
The layout and design of the e-book platform make it easy to read and interact with the content.	
I find it easy to download, bookmark, and highlight content within the e-books.	
I find it intuitive to use advanced search features on the e-book platform.	
The e-book platform provides adequate user support (e.g., tutorials or help sections).	

Based on Table 1, the usability construct items for this study were developed by adopting and adapting measures from previous literature. Back on definition of usability that describes to which an e-book platform enables users to complete their intended tasks efficiently and with ease, the construct on easy to navigate, locate and technical enabling to speed download are adopted from Croft & Davis (2010a). With the consideration of e-book, on easy to read, interact, download, intuitive and provide user support are combination are adopted from (Muir & Hawes 2013; Wang & Huang 2015; Blummer & Kenton, 2020).

Table 2

Accessibility construct

Accessibility	References
I can access e-Books anytime and from any location through the academic library platform.	(Clay, 2011; Okojie et al., 2020; Jbeen et al. 2022)
The e-books provided by the academic library are compatible with various devices (e.g., smartphone, tablet, laptop).	
The library provides sufficient access to a wide range of e-Books across different subject areas.	
The process of logging in and accessing e-books is simple and straightforward.	
The academic library ensures continuous and reliable access to e-books without interruptions.	
I can access the academic library's e-books even during peak usage times without issues.	
The academic library provides alternative options for users with limited internet access.	

On accessibility, this study highlights the effortless manner through which users attain and employ e-books in academic libraries. The constructs on accessibility in Table 2, which are anytime accessible, compatibility with various device, sufficiently and regardless of processes are adopted from literature Jbeen et al. (2022). User consideration on interruption to access e-book, including peak times and accessibility with limited internet connection are considered for this construct (Clay, 2011; Okojie et al. 2020).

Table 3

Content Quality construct

Content Quality	References
The e-books provided by the academic library contain accurate and reliable information.	(Bringula, 2017; Blummer & Kenton, 2020)
The content in the e-books is up-to-date and relevant to my academic needs	
The e-books offer comprehensive coverage of the topics I am studying	
The language and presentation of information in the e-books are clear and understandable.	
I prefer using e-books because they provide instant access to academic resources.	
The e-books provided by the academic library include references to other useful academic resources.	
The academic library regularly updates its e-book collection to include new and emerging research.	

This study refers content quality as the relevance, accuracy, and depth of information available in e-books. In Table 3, the construct on quality content that describes accuracy, reliable, up to date, relevant information regardless of related topic and understandable are adapted from the literature (Blummer & Kenton, 2020). While other study lists instant access, references and regularly providing update collection are considered to measure in this construct (Bringula, 2017).

Table 4

User satisfaction construct

User Satisfaction	References
I am satisfied with the overall quality of e-books provided by the academic library.	(Nie et al. 2011; Nasser, 2014; Jebriil & Ahmad, 2024)
The e-Books available in the academic library meet my academic needs	
Using e-books has enhanced my learning and research experience.	
I am satisfied with the ease of accessing e-books through the library's digital platform.	
I would recommend the use of e-Books in the academic library to other students.	
I feel that the academic library's e-books provide good value for their cost or accessibility.	
The academic library's e-books meet my expectations for academic materials.	

User satisfaction represents the level at which academic library users perceive their e-book needs and expectations to be fulfilled with e-book utilization. The constructs in user satisfaction in Table 4 on academic library providing quality of e-books, meets academic needs, enhanced learning as well research experience is adapted from (Jebriil & Ahmad, 2024).

Yet, another item that measured is accessing from digital platform, recommendation from other student, cost related and meet expectation for academic materials are considered in this construct (Nie et al. 2011; Nasser, 2014).

Data Analysis and Results

Cronbach's Alpha Values

As indicated, all the constructs recorded the Cronbach Alpha statistics of above 0.9, making it an excellent internal consistency. The high values of greater than 0.9 declare them as excellent values according to (Ahmad et al. 2024), which thereby implies that the items with which each of the constructs was measured were very reliable and ideal to be used in the next stages of the analysis in Table 5.

Table 5

Item-Total Statistics

	Scale Mean if Item Deleted	Scale Variance if Item Deleted	Corrected Item-Total Correlation	Cronbach's Alpha if Item Deleted
User Satisfaction	1.8551	.078	.884	.960
Usability	1.8483	.073	.930	.947
Accessibility	1.8442	.074	.932	.946
Content Quality	1.8401	.077	.898	.956

Descriptive Statistics

In this study, descriptive analysis was employed to show the central tendency, as well as variability of 4 principal variables, namely the User Satisfaction, Usability, Accessibility, and Content Quality. As the outcomes, as represented in Table 3 show, the mean ratings of the variables are rather high; consequently, it means that the feedback of the 317 participants are positive in the major part.

Content Quality was also rated highest as a content variable ($M = 4.1965$, $SD = 0.72933$) meaning that the respondents put the content provided in the e-book system as a variable that is of good quality. The least mean rating ($M = 4.0829$, $SD = 0.79536$) was usability that, however, was still positive, reflecting the idea that the system could be considered usable and, possibly, not very optimal.

Other than the variables that were normal, the standard deviations in all of them were within the range of 0.72933 and 0.79536 showing a decent consistency in the response pattern among the participants. The results give an overall notion of the perception and the level of satisfaction of e-book services under consideration.

Table 6

Descriptive Statistics

Variable	N	Minimum	Maximum	Mean	Std. Deviation
User Satisfaction	317	1.00	5.00	4.1762	.74763
Usability	317	1.00	5.00	4.0829	.79536
Accessibility	317	1.00	5.00	4.1528	.75261
Content Quality	317	1.00	5.00	4.1965	.72933

Pearson Correlation

A Pearson correlation was applied to find the correlations among the variables of User Satisfaction, Usability, Accessibility and Content Quality. Table 4.7 shows that this is the case as all the variables are strongly and positively interrelated with one another at the 0.01 level of significance (2-tailed). All the pairs of correlations correlate the value of respondents (N) = 317 hence providing reliable and the same statistical result. There is strong correlation between Usability ($r = .833$, $p < .001$), Accessibility ($r = .818$, $p < .001$), and Content Quality ($r = .818$, $p < .001$) and User Satisfaction. These findings show that the user satisfaction is correlated with larger usability, the ease of access and quality of content. There is also quite strong positive correlation between Usability and Accessibility ($r = .847$, $p < .001$) and Content Quality ($r = .827$, $p < .001$) meaning that systems or platforms which are seen as more usable are also seen as more accessible as well as having higher quality contents. The highest correlation calculated on the table between Accessibility and Content Quality ($r = .874$, $p < .001$), implies that the greater the accessibility increases, the greater Content Quality perceptions increase too. These ascertain liberties to support interdependence of the discussed variables in a strong manner. Specifically, the correlation scores show that potential improvements to the usability, accessibility, and quality of the content can take a long way in improving user satisfaction. Table 7 indicates the results.

Table 7

Pearson Correlation

		User Satisfaction	Usability	Accessibility	Content Quality
User Satisfaction	Pearson Correlation	1	.833**	.818**	.818**
	Sig. (2-tailed)		<.001	<.001	<.001
	N	317	317	317	317
Usability	Pearson Correlation	.833**	1	.847**	.827**
	Sig. (2-tailed)	<.001		<.001	<.001
	N	317	317	317	317
Accessibility	Pearson Correlation	.818**	.847**	1	.874**
	Sig. (2-tailed)	<.001	<.001		<.001
	N	317	317	317	317
Content Quality	Pearson Correlation	.818**	.827**	.874**	1
	Sig. (2-tailed)	<.001	<.001	<.001	
	N	317	317	317	317

** . Correlation is significant at the 0.01 level (2-tailed).

Discussion

The main focus of this work was on highlighting the entanglement of the contextual factors. Core system usability emerges as the principal determinant of e-book user satisfaction. Grounded in the TAM and the ISSM, the findings indicate that academic users value not simply access, but an intuitive interface, efficient navigation, and robust search functionality that facilitates rapid text retrieval and precise location of relevant terms. In

regression analysis, usability consistently records the strongest positive effect relative to other system dimensions, confirming that reducing cognitive effort and streamlining information seeking substantially enhances both user satisfaction and adoption.

Content quality is a critical determinant of user satisfaction, encompassing the accuracy, currency, depth, and scholarly relevance of e-book collections. Students and researchers assess digital platforms primarily by their ability to meet rigorous academic and coursework demands, and satisfaction is strengthened when current editions and broad multidisciplinary coverage align with expectations, consistent with Expectation Confirmation Theory. In contrast, outdated, incomplete collections and restrictive digital rights management policies undermine usability and negate system advantages, demonstrating that even well-designed platforms cannot satisfy users when the underlying content fails to meet academic standards.

System accessibility plays an indispensable supporting role in user satisfaction by enabling 24/7 availability, remote access, and platform compatibility. Although its relative effect is smaller than usability, the combined influence of accessibility, usability, and content quality explains a substantial share of variance in user satisfaction (0.756). This indicates that satisfaction is shaped holistically, with accessible infrastructure providing the foundation while usability and content excellence exert the strongest influence on positive user perceptions in higher education.

Conclusions

In conclusion, the empirical investigation of this study, demonstrates that user satisfaction with e-books in academic libraries, specifically within the Universiti Teknologi MARA context is significantly and positively influenced by system usability, content quality, and system accessibility. Grounded in the TAM, ISSM and ECT, the statistical analysis reveals that combination of the variable usability, accessibility, and the quality of the content would give a proportion of variance as 0.756 ($R^2 = 0.756$) with an explanatory power of 75.6 out of 100, which represents a great predictive model of an academic library setting. Crucially, system usability emerged as the strongest single determinant, signalling that while baseline accessibility and scholarly relevance are indispensable, providing an intuitive, user-friendly digital interface is the primary operational mechanism for academic libraries to maximize student adoption and elevate satisfaction with e-book services.

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