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# Fostering humanization in academic libraries: a case study about scaffolding autonomy and trust in students

*Promoviendo la humanización en las bibliotecas universitarias: un estudio de caso  
sobre la estructuración de la autonomía y la confianza de los estudiantes*

*Promovendo a humanização em bibliotecas académicas: um estudo de caso  
sobre estruturar autonomia e confiança nos estudantes*

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**Tatiana SANCHES**

UIDEF, Instituto de Educação, Universidade de Lisboa, Alameda da Universidade,  
1649-013 Lisboa, e-mail: tsanches@fpie.ulisboa.pt

## Resumen

Se analiza el papel de las bibliotecas en la contribución a la humanización de la enseñanza superior, a través de los servicios de proximidad, y se presenta un estudio de satisfacción de los usuarios realizado en las bibliotecas de la Facultad de Psicología y el Instituto de Educación de la Universidad de Lisboa (Portugal). Se aplicó una encuesta a 100 usuarios de una biblioteca de enseñanza superior en Portugal, a lo largo de 3 años (incluyendo los años COVID-19). Una vez seleccionados los parámetros implicados en la humanización de los servicios, los resultados, medidos en una escala Likert de 1 (insatisfecho) a 4 (muy satisfecho), revelan mejoras en la satisfacción de los usuarios con la calidad de las colecciones, los servicios de referencia personalizados y la formación y el apoyo ofrecidos. Entre los retos identificados figuran la adaptación de los recursos de información a las necesidades de los usuarios, el fomento de la inclusión de la comunidad, la garantía de una atención equitativa y de calidad y la formación en técnicas avanzadas de investigación. Las bibliotecas de educación superior desempeñan un papel fundamental en la humanización de la educación superior, proporcionando servicios de proximidad que contribuyen a desarrollar la autonomía y la confianza de los estudiantes. Los indicadores positivos de satisfacción sugieren que la humanización en la enseñanza superior puede lograrse con éxito con estos servicios.

**Palabras clave:** Bibliotecas universitarias. Servicios de referencia. Estrategias de aprendizaje. Humanización. Habilidades académicas. Estudios de usuarios. Estudios de caso. Portugal.

## 1. Introduction

In the current globalized context, urban growth, accelerated movement, and cross-border circulation of people affect the most vulnerable, shaping the perception of their psychological safety (Han, 2022) and making individuals more threatened, insecure, and scared (Bauman, 2005). Humanization seems to acquire greater relevance,

## Abstract

The role of libraries in contributing to the humanisation of higher education, through proximity services, is discussed; and a user satisfaction study carried out on the subject in the libraries of the Faculty of Psychology and the Institute of Education of the University of Lisbon (Portugal) is presented. A survey was applied to 100 users of a higher education library in Portugal, over 3 years (including the COVID-19 years). Having selected the parameters involved in the humanization of services, the results, measured on a Likert scale from 1 (dissatisfied) to 4 (very satisfied), reveal improvements in user satisfaction with the quality of the collections, the personalized reference services, and the training & support offered. Challenges identified include adapting information resources to users' needs, promoting community inclusion, ensuring equitable and quality care, and providing training in advanced research skills. Higher education libraries play a fundamental role in higher education humanization, providing proximity services that contribute to developing students' autonomy and confidence. The positive satisfaction indicators suggest that humanization in higher education can be successfully achieved with the contribution of these services.

**Keywords:** University libraries. Reference services. Learning strategies. Humanization. Academic skills. User studies. Case studies. Portugal.

becoming more valuable and important in providing calm and secure interactions. In higher education, the massification of access and the consequent standardization can lead to latent tensions, disputes over identity spaces, and a certain dehumanization of contacts, harming educational communities' quality. Considering that the quality of higher education institutions is linked to the

dignified treatment of students (Sabirova, Gusenina, Sukhomlinova & Safyanov, 2019), more than teaching or instructing well, designing the best curricula or having good facilities, it is also necessary to ensure meaningful guidance, giving students the freedom and allowing them to participate in activities independently and freely (Ignatovitch, 2017). The ideas supporting the 5.0 society concept converge on the need to (re)build a sense of community and connect the school to a more authentic and student-centered pedagogy, allowing for meaningful learning experiences in life with others. Schools and institutions of higher education "can help shape this community experience by focusing on their relationships with each other and how they can model resistance and opposition to unjust policies for their students" (Sabirova, Gusenina, Sukhomlinova & Safyanov, 2019, p. 73), emphasizing the purpose of education through dignity and humanization.

The commitment of higher education libraries to supporting students has continued on several fronts. In information management and acquisition of resources and comprehensive collections, in the maintenance of institutional repositories and databases for research, and in increasing specialized reference services close to students' needs. Today, in a more technological society, libraries seek to follow these trends and support their students in their studies, promoting information literacy and digital fluency (Llewellyn, 2019; Rafi et al., 2019; Sanches, 2022). To fulfill their academic objectives in higher education, students must not only mobilize the knowledge learned in the classroom but also obtain it individually. For that purpose, they must access various sources, especially the information resources available in their libraries, resources that have become increasingly important and significant in higher education (Murray et al., 2016), as they provide a large part of the theoretical and methodological bases for achieving academic success, contributing to their autonomy and self-confidence. Adequate preparation to develop skills, the promotion of knowledge, and support systems for the learning experience, precede the acquisition of self-confidence, characterized by the belief in positive achievements, persistence, and self-awareness (White, 2009). However, many students face doubts, hesitations, fears, and other feelings of insecurity or frustration throughout this process, especially when writing their thesis (Sanches & Borges, 2019). Sternberg (1981, p. 190) stated that the anxieties or depressions caused by the dissertation are concentrated in three spheres:

- (a) negative feelings about the dissertation itself, particularly about its dubious result; (b) decreased

- self-esteem; (c) a real or presumed deterioration in other significant relationships, for which the requirements of the dissertation are blamed.

For these reasons, support must also be given through more direct and incisive actions that encourage the acquisition and development of skills of students to make good use of information, through tools that improve their daily lives and well-being (Saunders & Wong, 2020), understanding this type of need and humanizing services with this aim in mind. Despite seeming familiarity with computers, many do not have the critical and analytical skills to search for and access web-based information (Brindley, 2009). This is all the more reason to ensure that the skills and competencies to deal with information are developed by students, even if this is increasingly complex and presented in diverse media.

To face these challenges, we believe that developing skills such as resilience, persistence, and self-confidence are characteristics that can help overcome obstacles. This must be aligned with the purposes of society 5.0, in which the focus of developing technological solutions is human well-being, quality of life, and solving social problems. In short, a human-centered society, where we can find cyberspace mixed with physical space, data-driven, and strong in knowledge, that serves humanistic purposes (Hitachi-UTokyo Laboratory, 2020). Knowing how to search, select, organize, evaluate, and present information ethically and legally (Association of College and Research Libraries, 2016), becoming aware of information, and knowing how it is generated and circulates, provides better conditions to investigate and produce new knowledge, presumably leading to better academic results. Therefore, it is essential to promote skills that enhance the ability to critically confront content, self-sufficiency, and control over learning, with a focus on the person.

## 2. Humanizing higher education and its libraries

Transition to higher education corresponds to a stage of great expectations for students, which brings with it enormous individual and collective challenges, and whose complexity has been the subject of several studies (Holdaway & Kelloway, 1987; Ploner, 2018; Tynjala et al., 2012), as it not only involves an environmental change, but also corresponds, in most cases, to an important stage of personal transformation. Due to the new context to which these individuals move, particular importance is attached to the institutional and social environment with which the university students will interact in their adaptation process, as well as the skills they must develop so that it unfolds smoothly and pleasantly. If, on the one hand,

individual changes are accompanied by greater autonomy and responsibility with school activities (which become more complex in higher education), on the other hand, challenges arise related to academic, institutional, social, personal, and vocational dimensions (Santos et al., 2019) that needs to be responded to. All the cumulative demands of this new stage can be factors of greater stress. Each student will have to deal with more readings, a greater need for theoretical and conceptual deepening, more curricular and extracurricular activities, and develop critical and reflection skills, to appropriate the theoretical and practical knowledge inherent to their disciplinary area. Although anchored in positive feelings of success in gaining access to Higher Education, all these situations can lead to experiences of greater or lesser difficulty, predicting the decision to stay or abandon, depending on their readiness, convergence with initial expectations, and management effectiveness of these same expectations (Holdaway & Kelloway, 1987; Santos & Almeida, 2000). Several factors will influence the full integration of higher education students: involvement in academic activities, interaction with university services and professors, and relationships with peers that play an important role in this stage (Pascarella & Terenzini, 2005; Pereira, 2005), in addition to involvement with the academic library (Sanches, 2016).

Taking this context into account, studies related to adaptation to university have been focusing on an important factor: the social support received upon entering higher education – also known as academic hospitality. The need for students to create social bonds is met throughout the socialization process with the help of the environment in which family, friends, teachers, and librarians, among others, circulate. These interlocutors will allow interactions that improve the conditions of adaptation to the academic environment, the institution, or even the city, different from those previously known. Social support will result in better integration, as it allows sharing and provides a feeling of belonging, essential for adjusting to the new reality, and thus contributing to well-being and positively interfering with students' social and academic performance (Bennett & Rice, 2008). In the words of Seco and colleagues (Seco et al., 2005, p. 27)

[...] the fact that students perceive themselves as reinforced in their value by families, friends and the higher education institution itself, if they feel guided by the challenges they face, they realize that they have available a set of interpersonal relationships that can help them solve their problems, specific conditions that facilitate the transition process and the perception of well-being.

Institutional availability for social support is achieved firstly through academic hospitality, based on the assumption that first-year university students must provide curricular and organizational policies that enhance emotional stability and facilitate the conscious and rational construction of a professional and personal future (Nico, 2000; OECD, 2019). At this important stage in life, students may experience some obstacles, namely a feeling of confusion in different dimensions of their life, or feelings of volatility and indefiniteness which, if not specifically managed, can worsen into more complex emotional and social problems. From this point of view, well-being is a necessary individual condition for adequate academic involvement, which can be enhanced by institutional hospitality, providing comfort. Academic comfort is based, according to Nico (2000), on institutional, relational, pedagogical, and personal dimensions. Therefore, it is important to create conditions to prepare a more appropriate and considered way of receiving students, framing them in organizational terms, providing positive experiences, avoiding uncomfortable situations, and generating a climate of trust, stability, and predictability, guarantees of desirable balance for personal development. Associated with the concept of hospitality, reflections on the need for humanization must be evident across the entire educational context. Humanization in teaching becomes more pressing in this global space, where the movement and circulation of people accentuate the vulnerability and psychological insecurity of those involved.

Treating a human being with dignity is also a condition that is associated with the quality of higher education institutions, so, more than teaching or instructing well, designing the best curriculum, or having good facilities, it is also important to guarantee significant guidance, giving students freedom and allowing them to participate in independent activities, choosing a suitable organization and improving the educational process. Cronbach, cited by Aspy (1978), already mentioned the humanization of teaching should be based on cordiality. This presupposes the spontaneous expression of feelings, the support and encouragement, contingent social reinforcement, tact and consideration, and, finally, the students' feelings of acceptance. The stressful factors of the tertiary education system largely arise from the uncertainty associated with it (increased by the pandemic context), such as academic success or future employment. Faced with the challenges that attending higher education presents, protective factors (or psychological resources to deal with those) must be activated, which include, according to (Baik et al., 2017), an integrated sense of self and gains (autonomy), strong

connections with others who share the same values (sense of belonging), loving and secure personal relationships (relatedness), and experiences of being effective and able to meet the academic requirements of your course (competence).

Research already consistently suggests that students' mental well-being, as well as their academic performance, are strengthened by learning environments that promote the development of five aspects that underlie this well-being (28, p. 8):

- Autonomous motivation – we are autonomously motivated when we do things because we find the activities intrinsically interesting or satisfying, or when we believe our actions will facilitate valued goals
- Belonging – we experience belonging when we feel that we are accepted and valued by others within social groups and organisations
- Relationships – we experience positive relationships when we trust, rely on and care for others and experience others trusting, relying on or caring for us
- Autonomy – we experience autonomy when our actions, tasks and goals are self-chosen and self-concordant (authentic), rather than imposed or controlled by others
- Competence – we experience competence when we are able to manage the interactions, tasks and challenges that we face.

Recently, some studies have devoted greater attention to libraries' contribution to social well-being. One example is the study dedicated to English public libraries that have improved the quality of life of their users (Fujiwara et al., 2015). This trend is also emerging in higher education libraries, with several authors focusing on students' mental health and well-being, whether through the space, services, or entertainment provided (Brewerton & Woolley, 2016). Ramsey and Aagard (Ramsey & Aagard, 2018) state that, although these structures are not always considered regular contributors, they are considered safe and reliable spaces that help their users, allowing equal access to information, that is freely available to the entire school population. They even emphasize that the trend towards more flexible and comfortable spaces, which even include space for short naps or relaxation, has made it possible to identify libraries as spaces for health and well-being, as they allow students to "recharge their batteries", take short breaks or socialize, relieving academic stress. This same vision is found in later studies (Merga, 2021): that higher education libraries should operate as safe spaces for young people, promote and provide

resources for initiatives that promote mental health and well-being, and support and develop bibliotherapeutic practices and reading for pleasure, to meet the expressed or implicit needs of students regarding their mental health. The students appreciate and recognize that library spaces are safe features, identifying them as a place of belonging in the community and recognizing and appreciating opportunities for reading, relaxing, and renewing energy.

In the United Kingdom, due to the pandemic situation and the anxiety associated with it (which was revealed in concerns about access to resources, the sense of community, and perceived loneliness or generalized symptoms of anxiety and depression), a holistic support model was designed for student mental health and well-being in the library (Cox & Brewster, 2020). This was based on eight aspects: the inherent value of the library, impact of library services, well-being as a library service, detection of problematic situations, hospitality, signage, library as a good partner, and well-being of library staff. Although results are still difficult to gauge, the authors believe the library can support students' mental health and well-being, complementing the whole-university approach, and being increasingly adopted in the UK.

Bladek (2021) highlights the importance of libraries for the well-being of students, particularly after the COVID-19 pandemic, as university services that must address these concerns cannot be limited to health offices or psycho-pedagogical support to the student. Despite recognizing the difficulties that distance has added to higher education services in general and to libraries in particular, his study gives concrete and successful examples of actions to promote students' mental health, based on collections (and their effects on the feeling of belonging through sharing readings and choosing topics), services (related to flexible schedules, study support or exam support services, as well as support for students with games and activities) and spaces (to relax, take breaks or even sleep, furnished invitingly and comfortably). Academic library spaces have been recognized as enhancing confidence, creativity, and interaction, contributing to a sense of social and emotional well-being and, for these reasons, actively and healthily promoting student learning (Sanchez, 2016; Willis et al., 2019).

This work seeks to deepen this knowledge, which relates to higher education libraries and student well-being, describing users' assessment of library operating strategies that can contribute to the general quality of the academic journey of its patrons.

### 3. Methods

A case study is presented, supported by a literature review on the relevance of ensuring the well-being of higher education students and the contributions that libraries can make in this context. The case study differs from other research methods by the depth with which it addresses an example in its context, reflecting the participants' perspective involved in it, being idiosyncratic and specific (Amado & Freire, 2017). This methodology allows us to analyze real and contemporary situations considering their contextual influences (Yin, 2009).

#### 3.1. Institutional Context

The performance of a higher education library in Portugal, belonging to the University of Lisbon, is presented. Being the largest in Portugal, the University of Lisbon serves a population of around 50,000 students, with around 3,500 teaching staff and 2,500 non-teaching staff. Located in the capital, it includes 18 schools (colleges and institutes). Colleges are schools dedicated to teaching and offering undergraduate and postgraduate courses and institutes more focused on research. The Institute of Education (IE) is a school dedicated to investigating, training, and intervening in specific Education and Training problems. The Faculty of Psychology (FP) is another school dedicated to training future psychologists concerned with intervening in individual and collective behavior. The observed library serves these two institutions and their academic community and has around 2,500 students, teachers, and researchers. With around 70,000 visitors per year, this library offers around 50,000 book titles, 1,500 magazine titles, several databases, and thousands of electronic documents and, in its 370 m<sup>2</sup>, offers around 130 seats for the general public.

#### 2.2. Participants and procedures

The International Standard Organization (ISO, 1998) developed standards to measure library performance, resulting in the ISO 11620/98 Standard (Information and Documentation Library Performance Indicators). Later, closely following this standard, IFLA issued a guiding document for measuring quality in libraries. Both documents, applicable to all types of libraries, place the notion of performance at the center. Performance is based on the relationship between efficiency (use of resources) and effectiveness (achievement of objectives). The IFLA guidelines (Pool, Boekhorst & Mundt, 2007) specify the requirements for a performance indicator for libraries and establish a set of indicators to be used by libraries of all types. It also provides guidance on

how to implement performance indicators in libraries where such indicators are not already in use. The set of indicators to be used in the evaluation will depend on the perspective that will be considered (users, institution or work teams) and what is intended to be evaluated. It is within this guiding framework that the developed instrument develops. The questionnaire design was also based on the LibQual methodology (Cook, 2015), which assesses the level of users' perception of the services provided. In this case, we sought to be inspired by the assessment of the human aspect of the service quality dimension. This relates to the user's interaction with the library team, mainly in their assistance and competence. The study was developed based on a survey, distributed in May 2022 to 100 users (compared to the one previously launched, in 2020, to the same number of users), and analyzes respondents' perceptions of the library's offer. The survey analysis is inspired by the ISO 16439 (2014) standard indicators, regarding the impact on individual well-being, that "means the influence of library contacts and library services on individual persons, but it can also concern whole groups" (ISO, 2014, p. 14). According to the international standard, this influence can have effects and changes in skills and competences, attitudes and behaviors, higher success in research, study, or career; and individual well-being.

Responses were based on a Likert scale, between 1 (not satisfied) and 4 (very satisfied), and with the additional option "I have no opinion". Despite the use of a quantitative instrument (Likert scale questionnaire), the aim is to analyze the results more in line with a qualitative study, thus seeking a more holistic and integrative understanding of their interpretation. The first topic concerns parameters related to library collections made available to users, given the following characteristics - the quality of books, periodicals, and electronic resources; the suitability of the collection to your needs; the frequency of acquiring new products; dissemination of the collection (exhibitions, thematic exhibitions, newsletter). In the second topic, regarding service, users are asked about the kindness and commitment to meeting their needs, the presence and availability of technicians in person, the agility of service, and the confidence in the information provided. Finally, in training and support, the ability of technicians to guide and support research work was questioned; and satisfaction with the training offered.

In both periods, the survey was distributed to the academic community that frequents the library space (students, teachers, researchers, and non-teaching staff). This represented the community served by the library, with an average of 96 %

students, 3 % teachers, and just 1 % in the other category. As for the institution of origin, most (76%) of those interviewed were enrolled at the Faculty of Psychology. Regarding the teaching cycle, the distribution of students was as follows: 1st cycle with 64 %, 2nd cycle with 19 %, 3rd cycle with 8 %, and 6 % attending postgraduate studies that do not lead to a degree. Finally, 3 % were teachers.

## 4. Results and Discussion

Although these results are part of a more comprehensive survey, we only focused on the three topics mentioned – Collections, Reference Services, and Training & Support. These are the ones that can directly relate to the mental well-being of students, as well as their academic performance, as they are characterized by actively promoting the five fundamentals of well-being in learning environments (Baik et al., 2017), already identified previously, namely: autonomous motivation, belonging, relationships, autonomy, and competence.

### 4.1. Library Collections

Library collections analysis is the first aspect considered, as they allow equal access to information and evoke a feeling of identity and belonging to the academic community, considering they are a source of knowledge and a basis for development for most academic work. This parameter reveals users' perception of documentary resources regarding the quality of available documents (regarding their suitability, frequency of acquisition, and dissemination). As one of the main objectives is to make all this documentation accessible, it is essential to understand whether it corresponds to the needs felt by students, teachers, and researchers. Thus, the quality of printed, digital, and media documents is systematically addressed.

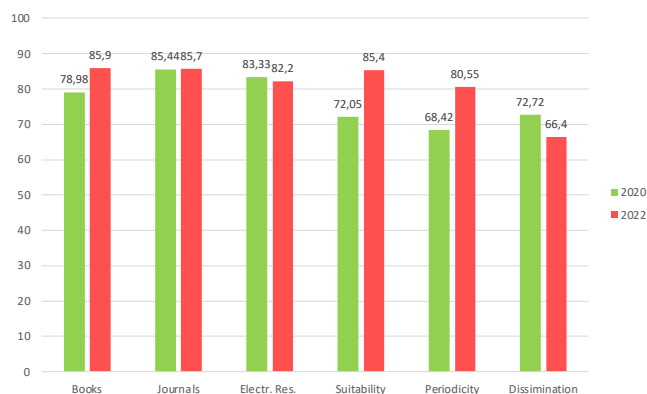


Figure 1. Collection' satisfaction

In this first parameter, referring to the evaluation of collections by users, the valuation was generous and obtained 81.03 % general satisfaction in 2022 (76.82 % in 2020). Regarding the quality of the collection of books, periodicals, and electronic resources made available, we note that the evaluation increased compared to the previous year, reaching 85.9 % (79.29 % in 2020). In periodical publications, satisfaction practically remained from 85.4 % to 85.7 %. Electronic resources are also very stable in readers' perception, going from 83.3 % to 82.2 %. Efforts to acquire new resources have been even to increase previous values, revealing that students, teachers, and researchers are overall "very satisfied" with these resources. In the collection' suitability to needs, there was a sharp increase in the evaluation compared to the previous year, with 85.4% satisfaction now recorded (72.46 % in 2020). In purchasing new items frequency' the change was from 68.4 % satisfaction in 2020 to 80.6 %, demonstrating significant appreciation for the continuous effort to keep the collection updated. The dissemination of the collection (exhibitions, thematic exhibitions, newsletter) reveals a decrease this year. In 2020, there was 72.7 % satisfaction, and after it reached only 66.4 %. Therefore, it is necessary to renew the dissemination strategies, continuing the thematic exhibitions and reading suggestions, which have had a good response, estimated both by the dozens of leaflets that sell out each exhibition and by the relative success of the use of the social network, even though this is not enough to achieve excellence.

### 4.2. Reference Services

Reference Service was considered an important humanization measure, as it is the visible face to create the conditions for personal interaction and prepare the reception of students adequately and thoughtfully, framing them in organizational terms, and seeking to provide positive experiences. The service seeks to avoid uncomfortable situations and generates a climate of trust, stability, and predictability, guaranteeing the balance necessary for personal development (as previously explained). In the service parameter, an improvement trend is observed. The corresponding average rose sharply from 83 % to 92.3 %. Despite the difficult circumstances experienced (due to COVID-19), and the systemic and structural shortage of personnel, the team showed resilience and professionalism, remaining coherent and balanced in interpersonal relationships and dialogue strategies that aim to foster motivation for the development of academic activities (mainly information research and study). It should

be noted that the items in this parameter are the best evaluated in the entire survey.

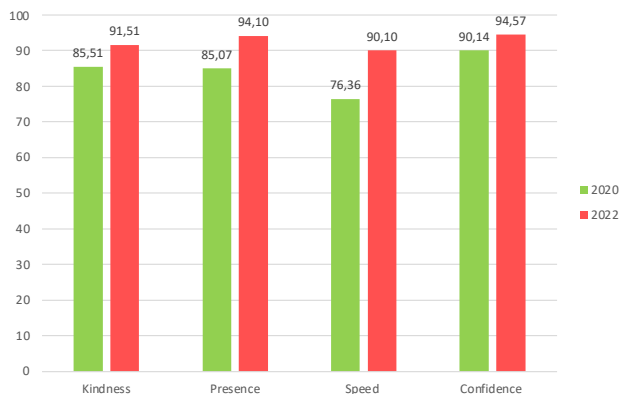


Figure 2. Reference Services' Satisfaction

Regarding friendliness and commitment to satisfying their needs, we obtained a satisfaction rate of around 91.5 % (in 2020 it was 85.5%). Regarding the presence of staff, there was also an increase, with this item obtaining 94.1% satisfaction (85.1 % in 2020), a significant value that reveals the usual reception of technicians, despite the increase in difficulties in managing spaces and user flow. Response speed has consistently increased, from 76.4 % (in 2020) satisfaction to 90.1 % (in 2022). Regarding confidence in the information provided by technicians, one of the best scores in the entire survey was obtained, with 94.6 % satisfaction, also increasing in the evaluation compared to the previous 90.1 %.

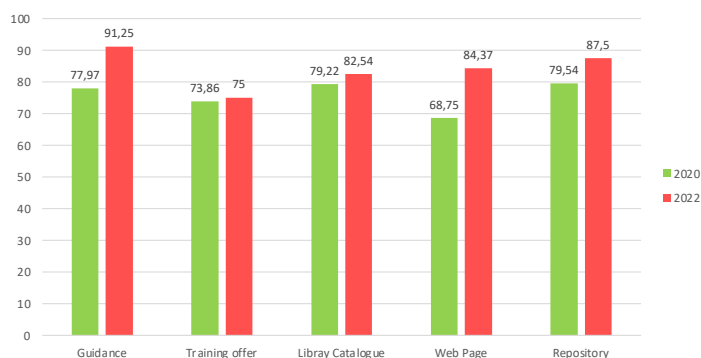


Figure 3. Training & Support' Satisfaction

#### 4. 3. Training & Support

Concerning training, the questions focus on the ability of technicians to guide and support research work; satisfaction with the training offered to readers; the ease of use of the library catalog web page, and the institutional repository utilization. This includes encouraging autonomy in the

actions, tasks, and objectives arising in academic work, in the context of the library, as well as in promoting the development of skills, that is, in the support given for the tasks and challenges that student face, providing adequate training and support for these same tasks.

The ability to guide and support research work this time achieved 91.3 % satisfaction (78.00 % in 2020), continuing to reveal the technicians' skills in understanding the questions asked and guiding users to the most appropriate resources to fulfill the requirements of your academic objectives, definitely contributing to your academic success. Regarding the training offer for readers, we obtained a satisfaction rate of around 75 % (in 2020, the figure was 73.9 % satisfaction). We believe that this evaluation continues to demonstrate the benefit of reader training practices and the commitment of technicians to assist them in a personalized way, regarding their information literacy skills development. Additionally, the ease of use of the library's catalog and web pages also increased in appreciation, achieving a satisfaction level of 82.5 % (79.2 % in 2020). A high level in our readers' assessment of the accessibility of the catalog, electronic resources, and other information that the library provides and which, in recent years, has undergone a platform update, which could partly explain these results. The website is evaluated in the ease-of-use item (friendly/intuitive). This item has around 84.4% satisfaction, rising sharply compared to the 68.8 % achieved in 2020. Finally, we have the item related to the Institutional Repository. Here we find a significant increase reaching 87.5% in user satisfaction (79.5 % in 2020). Although the overall assessment is "very good" and necessarily results from the availability of digital theses and dissertations, together with self-archived documents, we feel that it is possible to improve it, through more effective and consistent dissemination of this resource use.

## 5. Conclusions

This work was intended to reflect and deepen the knowledge related to higher education libraries and student well-being. To this end, users' assessment of library operating strategies over three years was described. the analysis revealed that some strategies recommended to promote well-being in higher education, applied to libraries, can contribute to the general quality of the academic career of their visitors. Given the challenges that arise in promoting well-being in higher education, with benefits for academic success and student retention, it is necessary to: (a) ensure that information resources meet users' needs, contributing to the development of their



research skills, (b) promoting inclusion in the community, ensuring equitable and quality care and (c) providing training in advanced research skills for the development of academic work, promoting the well-being of students. Throughout this study, we sought to demonstrate that higher education libraries can be closer to their users, through management oriented towards the humanization of the services offered, as it is with services and resources focused on the community that well-being is built, welcoming and providing better conditions for each person to face academic challenges. In the words of Bauman (2003, p. 134):

If there is to be a community in the world of individuals, it can only be (and needs to be) a community woven together from sharing and mutual care; a community of interest and responsibility for the equal rights of being human and equal capacity to act in those rights defence.

The results presented result from a strategy to raise awareness among the work team about the needs of these students and user feedback obtained every two years. The services provided are on the right path for the student's academic development, as they resonate with the references that support the pillars of student well-being: motivation, belonging, relationships, autonomy, and competence (Baik et al., 2017). This is what we tried to do, relating in this analysis the diversity and quality of the collections to the feeling of identity and belonging; serving autonomous motivation and fostering positive relationships; and training and support for autonomy and academic skills development.

Based on this case study, it is legitimate to consider that proximity support contributes to students' autonomy and confidence in addition to information literacy skills. This is the first step to understanding that educational and pedagogical functions in higher education go far beyond formal and restricted teaching. Academic libraries, through proximity services, where personal relationships are an investment, are suitable spaces to open higher education institutions to humanization, contributing to the building of communities.

## Notes

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