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Expectations on Library Services, Library Quality (LibQual) Dimension and Library Customer Satisfaction: Relationship to Customer Loyalty

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Abstract:

This study examined the library users' minimum acceptable, desired, and actual observed service performance level of the University of Saint Louis (USL) College Library along the four service quality dimensions: access to information (AI), affect of service (AS), library as place (LP) and information control (IC). It also sought to determine the interrelationships of library service quality, satisfaction with library services, and loyalty to library and its services. This study utilized a questionnaire based on (a) the LibQUAL™ 2003 by the Academic and Research Libraries (ARL) and Texas A&M University Libraries; (b) satisfaction on library services; and (c) loyalty measures. It was distributed among 400 library users. Findings indicated that customers' minimum acceptable service level along AS, LP and IC are generally high except for AI. Customers' desired service level indicated that AI, AS, and IC are generally high except for LP which is very high. USL library did not meet the expectations of the customers by comparing the desired service level vis-a-vis with observed actual service performance level provided. Customers were satisfied with the circulation service, internet/online service, library instruction, current awareness services, reference service, multimedia service, and depository area/service. Customers' satisfaction with the different library services is positively correlated with their loyalty towards the library which is manifested through using the library for related purposes aside from borrowing books; encouraging friends and colleagues to use the library; saying positive things about the library services to other people; and recommending the library to someone who seeks their advice. Correlation indicated that there is a significant direct relationship between library service quality and customers' satisfaction. Furthermore, customers' satisfaction is directly correlated with their loyalty towards the library and its services.

KEYWORDS: Academic libraries, Library services, Library expectations, Library loyalty, Affect of service, Access to information, Library as place, Personal control

INTRODUCTION

Customers for almost any product or service have plenty of choices available to them today that were not available many years ago. For any organization to prosper, however that is defined, it is critical to develop a better understanding of its customers and how the customers' needs are changing and evolving. New services may be needed, and existing services must be upgraded and improved to take advantage of the potential capabilities of technology. Listening to and asking customers to share their experiences will do much to help view the libraries' services from the perspective of the customer. Involving customers through listening to their voice will ensure that library management understands the perceptions of its customers and the value the library provides rather than drawing conclusions and inferences using the one-sided vision of the library management's assumptions and beliefs.

The academic libraries have been described as the “heart” of the learning community, providing a place for students, faculty, and administrators to conduct their research and advance their knowledge in whatever field they chose. In the education system, an academic library is the center of academic life. A university library or any other library attached to an institution of higher education exists to support the vision, mission, goals and objectives of its parent organization. Since university libraries are an integral part of the higher education system, they should provide support services for the formal educational programs as well as provide facilities for research and for generation of new knowledge. It is important for any information professional working in an academic or any other library to know the real needs of the user community (Gunasekera, 2010).

Academic libraries are internally focused -- choosing and planning work priorities based on present competence, traditional work processes, and limited resources. Analysis of results for customers is not a common practice. It would be nice to be able to state that majority of libraries have developed a culture of assessment on users’ satisfaction, but sadly that is not the case. University and college libraries today are faced with challenges on several elements such as mega book stores, online information providers specially the internet, online databases (both free and subscription based), e-learning and multimedia products, document delivery services, and other competitive sources of information that seems to be threatening the role of academic libraries. As a result, academic libraries may have to adopt a more strategic direction in which the creation and delivery of service satisfaction for their users play an important role. In order to achieve customer satisfaction on services, academic libraries should conform to quality standards (national or international). Since libraries are essential part of an educational institution, one of the basic requirements of quality education in any institution is the presence of functional library which is strongly mandated by the Commission on Higher Education (CHED) Philippines to establish one. Orendain (1991, in Mayrena, 2009) elaborated that through the library, the variety of information sources both print and non-print can be fully utilized for intellectual, cultural and technical development of the whole academic community. The library is one of the most important intellectual sources for man’s quest for excellence and therefore, it should be properly and adequately equipped to meet the needs of the curriculum and the user.

In addition, according to Badival (1996), with incessant explosion of information, the library becomes interesting because of the insatiable thirst for knowledge of human contingencies and a repository of all documented outputs of mankind in varied format. It is but a common dictum that the best schools have the best libraries and vice versa. A good library speaks therefore, for excellence in the succeeding manner: (1) the quality of library services, (2) use of the library by the students and faculty, (3) periodicals, manuscripts, documents, the library collection that it has, and (4) the support of the administration in planning, promoting, organizing and developing its library services.

Just like any other academic libraries, the University of Saint Louis (USL) College Library, guided by its vision, mission, goals and objectives continuously strives to provide not only the information and the different mediums of information; it also strives to provide quality service for the information search of its customers. Based on the University Library Handbook, the library as a hub for intense academic activities is committed to (1) enrich continuously the information resources to make them more responsive to the research, teaching and learning needs

of the academic community; (2) provide a vibrant learning environment and stimulate life-long and independent learning; (3) guarantee protection, conservation and preservation of collections and resources; (4) inspire creativity, innovation, agility and expertise in its staff; (5) take leadership in forwarding the interests of librarians and libraries in the region and the country through active participation in linkages and professional organizations; and (6) assist the university in the realization of its core values of Christian Living, Excellence, Professional responsibility, Social Awareness and Involvement, Innovation, Creativity and Agility (CEPSI). Based from the University of Saint Louis Library history (n.d.) history traces back in the year 1965 with Mr. Rogelio Mallillin, the Registrar at the same time the Librarian. Due to the growing number of enrollees in the college together with the library's collection, it was transferred from one room to another building and currently, it is located at the Constant Jurgens Building occupying the fully air conditioned first and the second floors with a seating capacity of 540 users. The library collection is organized using the Dewey Decimal Classification system, cataloged using the Follett Destiny Management system. It is also equipped with modern technologies such as Electronic Check Point System or the Electronic Article Surveillance (EAS) to secure the library holdings, internet connected computers, and is also subscribing to online journal and databases such as EBSCO and INFOTRAC under the Congregation Immaculati Cordis Mariae (CICM) consortium. Because of USL College libraries' commitment to serve the institution and as a proof that the library has exemplary service, it was cited as "Outstanding Academic and Research Library in the entire country by Philippine Association of Academic and Research Librarians (PAARL) in 2010.

Since USL strives to become locally and globally competitive as shown by its commitment to adhere to accreditation standards such as of the Philippine Association of Accredited Schools, Colleges and Universities (PAASCU), it assures clients that its vision and mission are realized through its various course offerings and commitment to provide global Catholic quality education. One way of assuring this is to adhere to existing set of standards from accrediting institutions such as CHED and PAASCU of good quality education and services to its stakeholders. USL's commitment to adhere to high standards of quality catholic education allows the improvements of delivery of instruction, services, facilities including buildings and equipment. Having high quality of services, coupled with a prestigious reputation, increases the chances of having more student enrollees. Having obtained the autonomous status by CHED and majority of the academic programs of USL are accredited by the PAASCU, it strives to conform to the standards set by them. Among one of the important area of concern during accreditation is the library in all aspects – from library management to services offered. To conform to the requirements of the PAASCU on the quality of library and the services provided, the USL librarians annually assess their programs, services and activities vis-à-vis with the action plans created before the academic year. Aside from the PAASCU standard for library, USL librarians also conform to that of Philippine Association of Academic and Research Libraries (PAARL). Based on the PAARL standards for 2010 under library services, "the library shall conduct a periodic study or research on customer satisfaction and needs analysis, inclusive of all library functions/services as basis for further improvement of its services." This is one of the reasons why this research is undertaken. It has been observed that the USL College Library has not utilized a formal patron user survey for the past years to assess the customers' level of satisfaction with the library and the services provided, and to collect other information from the users' perspective and not of the librarians/library staff's point of view of quality library and

services. Aside from the reason that there is an underlying fear that expectations may develop that cannot be met as a result of the assessment process, the USL library has been contented with meeting minimum expectations as what most academic libraries do. Meeting the minimum expectations of customers is not enough to say that the library is indeed providing quality services and that their customers are really satisfied.

The use of customers' expectations and perceptions of performance of various service quality attributes are essential in determining the most effective means of predicting customer satisfaction and loyalty. Although adequate resources, facilities and staff are made available at the USL college library, the emphasis on assessing the delivery of quality service and its impact to users is lacking. Unlike in other bigger universities, users' perception of library service quality is not regularly assessed. There is no data available to inform library managers and administrators about users' expectations and perceptions or about gaps between perceptions and expectations across individual services, dimensions, and user groups. According to Francoise (1994), when library and customers' measure of quality are not congruent, the library may be meeting its internal standards of performance but may not be performing well in the eyes of its customers. It is therefore essential that library administrators consider emphasis on predicting customer satisfaction in relation to service quality as very critical. This was stipulated by the director of libraries during the action planning for the current school year and how this goal should be attained is the concern of the entire library staff. Gone are the days when librarians dwell on just providing what the users need. Nowadays, it is a major concern among librarians how to achieve the highest satisfaction level and surpass the minimum level of expectations among its customers. By doing so, it is one way of justifying the existence of librarians and libraries as an important entity in providing globally competitive educational institution.

The purpose of this study is to look into the library customers' expectations and actual observed service performance/observations of USL library using the four library service quality (LibQUAL) dimensions, satisfaction with library services, and loyalty and the interrelationship among these.

Specifically, this study aimed to determine the following:

1. customers'

1.1. expectations (a) minimum acceptable service level and (b) desired service level;

1.2. actual observed service performance level of the USL library in terms of the following dimensions of library service quality (LibQUAL):

- a. access to information;
- b. affect of service;
- c. library as place; and
- d. personal control;

2. level of customers' satisfaction with library services in terms of: circulation service, internet and online service, library instruction, current awareness service/information dissemination, reference service, multimedia service and depository area service

3. level of customers' loyalty on library and services; and

4. significant interrelationship among: expectations (minimum acceptable and desired library service level), actual/observed service performance level of the USL library, customers' satisfaction, and customers' loyalty on library and services.

Statement of Hypothesis

There are no significant interrelationships among (a) expectations (minimum acceptable and desired service level), (b) actual/observed service performance level of the USL library, (c) customers' satisfaction, and (d) level of customers' loyalty on library and services.

LITERATURE REVIEW

Many of the definitions of service quality revolve around the identification and satisfaction of customer needs and requirements. Service quality is based on the gap theory which was first developed by Parasuraman, Zeithaml, and Berry in 1988. It has been conceptualized as the difference between customer expectations regarding a service to be received and perceptions about the service being delivered. In contrast, Heron and Altman (2001) focused their studies on service quality and proposed four perspectives of service quality as excellence, value, conformance to specifications, and meeting and/or exceeding expectations. Their research emphasized "meeting and/or exceeding expectations" and led them to develop a framework for service quality in academic libraries. In an academic setting where libraries belong, measuring services based on the given attributes is different from the point of view of the business sector. Rao (2010) attributed this to the following reasons: firstly, due to the intangibility of service, it cannot be displayed, physically demonstrated or illustrated. Secondly, service cannot be standardized. As services cannot be inventoried, performance is dependent, to some extent on the level of demand. Thirdly, there is a high degree of customer involvement in the delivery of service. While goods are produced, sold, and then consumed, services are sold, then produced and consumed simultaneously. Thus, the buyer of service usually participates in producing the service thereby affecting the performance and quality of service. These characteristics make it difficult for a service organization such as academic libraries to control and provide a consistent level of service thus making evaluation of service quality more challenging than evaluating quality goods or services. To solve this different perspective of service quality measure, Zeithaml and Bitner (2000) conducted a study on service quality in a library context wherein it is assessed using the expectations and perceptions of service. According to them, expectations fall into two categories, namely the desired and minimum expectation categories of service. The desired expectation is what the customer hopes to receive from a service. The minimum expectation of a service is the lower level of expectation for acceptable service that a customer will accept. Parasuraman, Zeithaml, and Berry (1988) argued that if expectations are greater than performance, then perceived service quality is less than satisfactory and a service quality gap materializes. This does not necessarily mean that the service is of low quality but rather, customer expectations have not been met hence customer dissatisfaction occurs and opportunities arise for better meeting customer expectations. Service Quality (SERVQUAL) measure was introduced by Parasuraman et al. (1988) as an instrument for assessing customer perceptions of service quality in service and retailing organizations. It consisted of 22 pairs of statements, the first of which measures the expectations of a service provider's customers by asking each respondent to rate on a 7-point scale how essential each item is for the highest service provider to deliver.

Based on the SERVQUAL, as cited by Stuart and Barbara (2007), the LibQUAL™ was formulated to cater to library service quality measurement. LibQUAL™, designed by Academic and Research Libraries (ARL) in partnership with Texas A&M University Libraries, is one measurement activity that has been developed to solicit, track, understand, and act upon users'

opinions of service quality. It has emerged as both a process and a tool that enables institutions to address service quality gaps between their expectations and their perceived service delivery program. It is an internationally recognized web-delivered survey that now includes hundreds of libraries of all sizes throughout the world and pioneering the use of large-scale, web-based survey applications in a digital library environment. It is a tool that attempts to measure library users' perceptions of service quality along four dimensions such as: access to information (AI), personal control (PC), library as place (LP), and affect of service (AS) and identifies gaps between desired, perceived, and minimum expectations of service. The survey instrument is designed to be useful to the library administration on several levels: identifying deficits in service performance at an individual library, allowing comparisons with cohort libraries from multiple perspectives, identifying best practices, and responding to pressures for accountability. Customer satisfaction, on the other hand, is defined as the post-consumption evaluation of a product or service, is essential to successful marketing of services because satisfied customers are more likely to show loyalty and to spread positive word-of-mouth recommendations (Yuksel and Rimmington, 1998). Consideration of satisfaction should be an important part of the evaluation of library services. Satisfaction depends, to some extent, on patron expectations of services. Satisfaction appeared to be related to student perceptions of information accessibility, staff competence and helpfulness, computer usefulness and ease of use, and skill level for using libraries (Stamatoplos and Mackoy, 1999).

Customer loyalty can be defined according to loyalty behavior and loyalty attitudes. Loyalty behavior means the act of customers making repeat purchases of their current brand, rather than choosing a competitor brand instead. Loyalty behavior is also called "customer retention." Loyalty attitudes are those judgments and feelings about your product, service, brand or company that are associated with repeat purchases. A person who purchases a product or uses a service at the same place regularly is "behaviorally" loyal, while a person who tells others how great a product or a service is, or simply feels really positive about the product or a service to him or herself internally, is "attitudinally" loyal. Sometimes customers exhibit loyalty behavior without having loyalty attitudes, as in markets dominated by a monopolist. Sometimes customers exhibit loyalty attitudes without demonstrating much loyalty behavior, as in the case of true blue customers who buy very infrequently. Still, it is worthwhile to examine loyalty behavior and attitudes in a more detail way, because each definition has value.

Based on the definitions of service quality, customer satisfaction and customer loyalty, this present study relied on the expectancy-disconfirmation theory by Oliver (1980) and Parasuraman, Zeithaml and Berry (1988). According to expectancy-disconfirmation theory, before using a service, customers have some pre-conceptualized standard(s) in their minds (such as performance expectations) that guide their decision to use services. After using a service, customers evaluate the performance of the service against these pre- conceptualized standards. Accordingly, disconfirmation theory is defined as the consumer's responses to the evaluation of a perceived discrepancy between the pre-conceptualized performance standard and the actual performance of the service after a customer had experienced using it. When performance is greater than expectations (or other pre-conceptualized standard) resulting in positive disconfirmation, satisfaction occurs. When performance is less than expectations (or other pre-conceptualized standards) resulting in negative disconfirmation, dissatisfaction occurs. Confirmation occurs when performance and expectations match resulting in moderate

satisfaction or indifference. Thus, the extent in which a customer experiences satisfaction or dissatisfaction is related to the size and direction of disconfirmation. To sum it up, the level of satisfaction a customer experiences is a function of the direction and magnitude of disconfirmation.

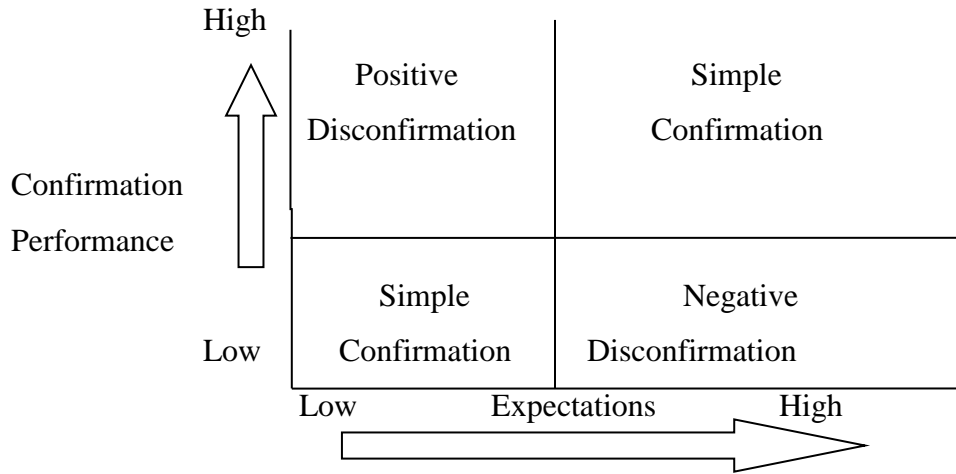


Figure 1. Expectancy Disconfirmation theory (Oliver, 1980)

THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK OF THE STUDY

This study is based on the theoretical justification by Cronin, Brady and Hult (2000) that service quality and value appraisals precede satisfaction which further leads to customer loyalty. Customers show different degrees of loyalty to a service depending on the satisfaction experienced with the service. Customer satisfaction will also depend on how the organization has addressed the customers' needs, wants and expectations. Customer loyalty is one of the goals of service organizations such as library that focuses their efforts on building and strengthening relationships between service organization and customers. When building relationships between customers and service organization, there is a need to ask them to provide information on their expectations and perceptions on the service and products.

Anderson and Srinivasan (2003) also established a positive relationship between perceived value and intention to purchase or repurchase (also termed as customer loyalty) a product or service. Perceived value contributes to the loyalty of library customers by reducing an individual's need to seek alternative service/information providers. When the perceived value is low, customers will be more inclined to switch to competing service/information provider as an alternative in order to increase perceived value, thus contributing to a decline in library loyalty. Even satisfied customers are unlikely to patronize one source of information if they feel that they are not getting the best value for their library fee. Instead, they will seek out other medium in an ongoing effort to find a better service/information provider. The relationship between satisfaction and loyalty appears strongest when the library customers feel that their library provides higher overall value than that offered by competitors. However, not many studies on library and information science have examined these relationships. There is a need to add an understanding of the interrelationships between these constructs especially since the literature has still not reached a consensus of the nature of these issues. According to Schiffman and Kanuk (2004, in Bin Md.Ariff, Hiew Sok Fen and Ismail, 2012), the overall objective of

providing value to customers continuously and more effectively than competitors is to have and to retain highly satisfied customers. Satisfaction has been widely studied as a predictor of customer loyalty (Yang & Peterson, 2004). This overall satisfaction has a strong positive effect on customer loyalty intentions across a wide range of product and service categories (Gustafsson, Johnson and Roos, 2005). It is an important factor for a long-term relationship between a firm and a customer (Anderson and Srinivasan, 2003).

Based on the theories presented above on customer satisfaction, customer loyalty and expectancy disconfirmation, it is therefore assumed in this study that library users' expectations and experiences based on evaluation of service quality and satisfaction can be determinants of customer loyalty. Using the theories on service quality, customer satisfaction and customer loyalty, the succeeding paradigm of the study was formulated.

Paradigm of the Study

Figure 2 illustrates the paradigm of the study. This model presents the interrelationship of: a) library service quality b) level of customer satisfaction and c) library customer loyalty.

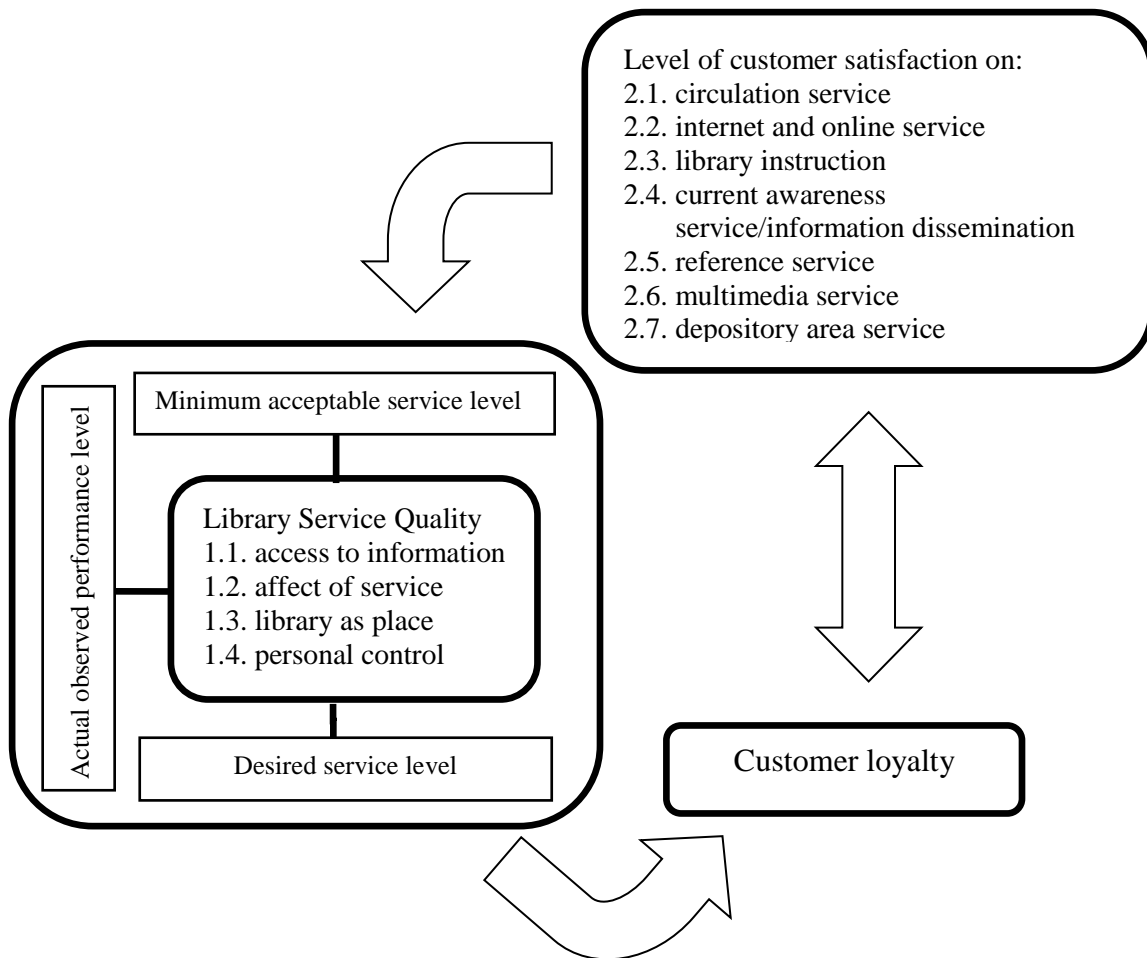


Figure 2. Paradigm of the study

When library customers are faced with a variety of alternative channels of information delivery, many of which are more convenient and at a lesser cost, libraries need to re-examine the range and quality of the services they provide and develop systems for consultation. They need to ensure that their services meet the customers' needs and expectations in the highest degree. That is, libraries need to compete both in terms of service quality and customers' satisfaction so that they would not be considered as useless among customers.

In the context of library service, service quality is viewed as dealing with users' expectations of the service and satisfaction as an emotional reaction to the cumulative experiences a customer has with the service provider. Service quality is cognitive, whereas satisfaction may focus on affective or emotional reactions to a specific transaction or a cumulative judgment based on collective encounters (overall satisfaction).

Studying the interrelationship of customers' expectations and experiences based on the library service quality evaluation and customer satisfaction as factors that would determine library customer loyalty is important in order to improve the library. When utilization is maximized, that is, when a library customer is continuously receiving positive outcomes from a service provider, he/she may serve as a good marketing agent of the library which in turn becomes beneficial to libraries. As [Keller and Berry \(2006\)](#) stated, in marketing, the channel with the greatest influence... is neither the traditional media of television, radio, or print advertising, nor the new medium of World Wide Web but the "human channel" of individual, person-to-person, word-of-mouth communication and in the phrase "word-of-mouth", what is important is the mouth and not the word. As [Angelova and Zekiri \(2011\)](#) stated, "happy customers tell 4 to 5 others of their positive experience; dissatisfied customers tell 9 to 12 how bad it was".

Nowadays, the greatest challenge in the library service is the challenge of promoting a new concept in the profession. As librarians, we should actively and continuously change the negative concept our customers have about libraries and librarians. One way of doing this is to market and to promote our library and services the way it should be in order to inform our customers what our libraries are really meant for. If customers are not informed of the existence of the programs, services, facilities and activities, how can we expect them to have a strong relationship with the library? Library marketing and promotion however does not only end in information dissemination or awareness on the part of customers. Its major aim is to build strong customer relationships with the library users. By building a good library image to customers, its existence would be justified. But how could we do marketing if librarians do not know where to start? This is where the evaluation comes in. As [Dudden \(2007\)](#) indicates, the purpose of evaluation is to gather evidences for: 1) development of services and programs, 2) improvement of services and programs, 3) informed decision making 4) accountability to show others that the services and programs are effective, and 5) demonstration of value and worth of an information service to the user's life and work.

How is customer satisfaction developed? Customer satisfaction is developed based on the evaluations, judgments, and feelings that result from interactions with objects and consumptions, including brands, products, and services, and the organizations that produce them. It is an interpersonal response to the various physiological, psychological, functional, and symbolic

benefits that consumption confers upon an individual group of individuals or buying unit (Blackwell Encyclopedia of Management, 2005). Customer satisfaction is achieved by not merely providing the needed facilities, equipment and collections of a library. It also entails good programs carefully planned and executed by people who man them. Thus, the human sides who deliver these services are also a point to consider in evaluating customer satisfaction. Matthews (2007) stated that ensuring the greater majority of customers who are satisfied is a good indicator that the library's resources are used well. More library customers will use the library's collection and services only if they exist, thus marketing and promotion are very important. The relationship of library marketing, promotions and customer satisfaction is really undeniably important to look into. They all work hand-in-hand in ensuring the library's relevance today and in the future.

Before satisfaction is observed among customers, first, they form expectations of the specific product or service prior to use or actual experience of the services or products. Second, consumption or use reveals a perceived quality level which is influenced by expectations if difference between actual quality and expectations is perceived as small. That is, if consumer expectations are not met during the actual experience of the service or product, their level of satisfaction can be affected which may further affect customer loyalty (repurchase/re use and behavioral intentions). Based on the theory of Parasuraman, Zeithaml and Berry (1988) known as Expectation Confirmation Disconfirmation theory, customers have some standards or expectations on their minds before making a purchase. After buying the product or service, the performance of the product or service is compared to this pre-purchase standard. If performance exceeds the pre-purchase standard, a positive disconfirmation occurs, which in turn leads to satisfaction. If performance comes below the pre-purchase standards, it results in a negative disconfirmation which creates dissatisfaction. In the case where performance matches expectations, confirmation occurs, and this leads to indifference (moderate satisfaction). To sum it up, the level of satisfaction a customer experiences is a function of the direction and magnitude of disconfirmation. Based on these theories on customer satisfaction, customer loyalty and Expectation Confirmation Disconfirmation, it is therefore assumed in this study that library user' expectations, experiences, evaluation of service quality and satisfaction can be determinants of customer loyalty.

RESEARCH DESIGN AND METHOD

The researcher used the descriptive-correlation method of research to determine and describe the relationship of expectations on library services in terms of library quality (LibQUAL) dimension and library customers' satisfaction on services. Furthermore, it also measured the relationship between library customers' satisfaction on services with their intention to be loyal to the library (library customer loyalty). Respondents of the study are composed of 400 college students from different departments who are officially enrolled during the school year 2015-2016.

Table 1. Demographic Profile of the Respondents (n=400)

I. Courses	Count	%	II. Year Level	Count	%
BS Accountancy	127	31.75	First Year	79	19.7
BS Financial Management	43	10.75	Second Year	154	38.5
BS Civil Engineering	35	8.75	Third Year	88	22.0
Bachelor of Medical Laboratory Science	20	5.0	Fourth Year	59	14.8
BS Information Technology	17	4.25	Fifth Year	20	5.0
BS Electrical Engineering	15	3.75			
BS Hospitality and Tourism Management	15	3.75			
BSED English	15	3.75	Daily	151	37.75
BS Hotel and Restaurant Management	14	3.50	Twice or thrice a week	143	35.75
BS Architecture	13	3.25	Once a week	55	13.75
BS Pharmacy	12	3.00	Twice or thrice a month	40	10
BSED General Education	11	2.75	Twice or thrice a semester	11	2.25
AB Psychology	10	2.50			
BSED Social Studies	8	2.00			
BS Music, Arts, Physical Education and Health	7	1.75			
BS Nursing	6	1.50			
BS Computer Science	5	1.25			
AB Political Science	4	1.00			
AB Legal Management	4	1.00			
BS Electronics Engineering	4	1.00			
BSED Mathematics	4	1.00			
Bachelor of Library and Information Science	4	1.00			
BS Interior Design	3	0.75			
AB Philosophy	1	0.25			
BS Geodetic Engineering	1	0.25			
BS Marketing Management	1	0.25			
BSED Biological Science	1	0.25			

The table shows that majority of the respondents are enrolled in Bachelor of Science in Accountancy, 127 (31.75%). In terms of year level, most of the respondents are second year 154 (38.5%), while the respondent's frequency of visit was daily 151 (37.75%).

FINDINGS

Table 2 shows the overall level of USL library service quality according to four Library Quality (LibQual) dimensions across the minimum, desired and actual observed service performance. It can be seen that the minimum acceptable, desired and actual observed service performance level of library service quality were all described to be high across all the four library quality (LibQual) dimensions except for the students' minimum acceptable service level on the access to information ($\bar{x} = 6.39$) and the students' desired service level on the library as a place ($\bar{x} = 7.69$) which were perceived to be above average and very high respectively. This implies that in terms of access to information, their desired level of service ($\bar{x} = 7.25$) is higher than the actual service ($\bar{x} = 6.78$) being received which is an indicator that the USL College library did not meet the expectations of customers. In terms of affect of service, their desired level of service ($\bar{x} = 7.41$) is higher than the actual service ($\bar{x} = 7.00$) being received which means that the USL College library did not meet the desired service level or expectations of customers. Comparing the minimum acceptable, desired and actual observed performance level of the library as a place in the LibQual dimension, the customers' desired level of service is higher ($\bar{x} = 7.25$) than actual observed performance level of service ($\bar{x} = 6.78$) being received which means that USL college library did not meet the desired level or expectations of customers. It is noted however that the customers' minimum acceptable level of service required was met. Comparing further the minimum accepted, desired and actual observed performance level on the personal control as LibQual dimension, the customers' desired level of service is higher ($\bar{x} = 7.38$) than the actual observed service performance level ($\bar{x} = 6.93$) which means that USL college library did not meet the desired level or expectations of customers. It is further noted that, customers' minimum accepted level of service required was met.

Generally, customers have high level of minimum acceptable service and high level of desire on the quality of library service except for the dimension library as a place. They also describe the actual observed performance level of quality of service they receive as high, which means that USL college library customers have relatively high desire and minimum acceptable level of service quality. However, if we will compare between the desired level of service of customers' and actual performance level of service provided by USL college library, there is an observable gap. This would mean that across the four LibQual dimensions, USL college library did not meet the customers' desired service level. This is in consonance with the findings of the study of Rehman (2013) about the evaluation of graduates, undergraduates and faculty members of the University of Pakistan Libraries using the modified LibQual+ 22 core questions. The study found that libraries overall do not meet users' minimum acceptable and desired levels of service quality. Even if the desired or expectations of customers are relative and not so easy to meet, it is still suggested that the college library should focus on this aspect of LibQual dimension. As Nitecki and Herson (2000) commented "It is important to remember that the judgments about the importance of the attributes and the perceptions of services delivered are

relative and are merely indicators of where priorities might be placed for improvement effort." (p.263)

Table 2. Summary of Minimum Acceptable, Desired and Actual Observed Service Performance Assessment according to Library Quality (LibQUAL) Dimensions

LibQual Dimensions	Level of service	Mean	SD	Qualitative Description
Access to Information	Minimum Acceptable Service Level	6.39	1.35	Above Average Level
	Desired Service Level	7.25	1.29	High Level
	Actual Observed Service Performance Level	6.78	1.24	High Level
Affect of Service	Minimum Acceptable Service Level	6.65	1.37	High Level
	Desired Service Level	7.41	1.25	High Level
	Actual Observed Service Performance Level	7.00	1.24	High Level
Library as Place	Minimum Acceptable Service Level	6.96	1.55	High Level
	Desired Service Level	7.69	1.32	Very High Level
	Actual Observed Service Performance Level	7.13	1.42	High Level
Personal Control	Minimum Acceptable Service Level	6.58	1.48	High Level
	Desired Service Level	7.38	1.33	High Level
	Actual Observed Service Performance Level	6.93	1.36	High Level

Legend:

8.50-9.00	Extremely high level	5.50-6.49	Above average level	2.50-3.49	Low level
7.50-8.49	Very high level	4.50-5.49	Average level	1.50-2.49	Very low level
6.50-7.49	High level	3.50-4.49	Below average level	1.00-1.49	Extremely low level

Table 3 presents the overall level of satisfaction of the respondents with the different services of the library. Result shows that customers are satisfied with the circulation service ($\bar{x} = 3.64$), internet and online service ($\bar{x} = 3.52$), library instruction ($\bar{x} = 4.03$), current awareness service ($\bar{x} = 4.12$), reference service ($\bar{x} = 3.93$), multimedia service ($\bar{x} = 3.67$), and depository service ($\bar{x} = 3.77$). In general, customers are satisfied with the library services of USL with an overall mean of 3.81. The table also indicates that among the services of the library “current awareness services” was rated with the highest level of satisfaction ($\bar{x} = 4.12$) and “internet and online services” as the lowest level of satisfaction ($\bar{x} = 3.52$). Although there are 50 units of computers at the Electronic Resource Center (ERC), the satisfaction level of internet and online services is low probably because customers are given a limited number of hours (10 hours) per student per semester in using the internet services of the library. This finding is also the same with the finding of the study conducted by [Nawarathne and Singh \(2013\)](#) using the Wilcoxon Signed Rank Test and Service Quality Indexes Test among 200 undergraduates in

University Libraries of Pakistan which indicates that internet facilities for library users were one of the poor services offered including convenient service hours and availability of information in the online catalogue. Similarly, **Dagusen's (2009)** study on service quality and customer satisfaction of the University of Baguio Library services satisfaction among its users found out that the employees have higher level of satisfaction with library services as compared with students. As **Anderson and Srinivasan (2003)** stated, "even satisfied customers are unlikely to patronize one source of information, if they feel that they are not getting the best value for their money. Instead, they will seek out other medium in an ongoing effort to find a better service/information provider". (p. 128). This finding is in agreement with the finding of **Martin (2003)** from the investigation of service quality in health libraries which revealed that users were generally satisfied with library services despite having specific concerns on some aspects of library services. The findings in both studies, however, support the fact that users are yet to derive maximum satisfaction with all of library services. Therefore the ERC should improve its internet service such as speed of access and review the policy of number of hours allotted for internet use to improve the satisfaction level of customers.

Table 3. Summary on Customers' Overall Level of Satisfaction with the Library Services

Dimensions	Mean	SD	Qualitative Description
Circulation Service	3.64	0.73	Satisfied
Internet and Online Service	3.52	0.83	Satisfied
Library Instruction	4.03	0.67	Satisfied
Current Awareness Service	4.12	0.67	Satisfied
Reference Service	3.93	0.72	Satisfied
Multimedia Service	3.67	0.80	Satisfied
Depository Area/Service	3.77	0.83	Satisfied
Overall	3.81	0.60	Satisfied

Legend

4.50-5.00 Very satisfied 2.50-3.49 Neither satisfied nor dissatisfied 1.00-1.49 Very dissatisfied
3.50-4.49 Satisfied 1.50-2.49 Dissatisfied

As can be seen from the Table 3, users' level of loyalty, in general, was found to be high with an overall mean of 4.11. Specifically, the respondents described their level of loyalty as high through saying positive things about the library services to other people ($\bar{x} = 4.33$); recommending the library to someone who seeks their advice ($\bar{x} = 4.31$); encouraging friends and colleagues to use the library; and using the library for related purposes aside from borrowing books ($\bar{x} = 4.45$); doing more researches/assignments/activities in the library ($\bar{x} = 4.18$); using the internet section of the library instead of available internet cafes outside ($\bar{x} = 3.59$); choosing the library over other resources in doing academic related activities ($\bar{x} = 4.16$); using the library resources rather than internet shops outside ($\bar{x} = 3.86$); using the library resources for my personal needs rather than other information providers ($\bar{x} = 3.98$); and using the USL library even after graduation ($\bar{x} = 3.85$). Based on the table, it is noted that using the internet section of the library instead of available internet cafes outside has the lowest mean as a measure of being

loyal to the library. This is also the same result as to the satisfaction with the internet/online service earlier mentioned. This would mean that customers had the tendency to prefer internet providers outside the university premises over the internet provided inside the library.

Table 4. Customers’ Level of Loyalty to the Library

Items	Mean	SD	Qualitative Description
I will say positive things about the library services to other people	4.33	0.66	High
I will recommend the library to someone who seeks my advice	4.31	0.69	High
I will encourage friends and colleagues to use the library	4.43	0.69	High
I will do more research/assignments/activities in the library in the next few days/months	4.18	0.82	High
Even though I will not borrow books, I will still use the library for other purposes (academic related or personal development)	4.45	0.70	High
Even though internet is available outside, I will still prefer using the internet section found inside the library.	3.59	1.15	High
The library is my best choice with regards to research or any academic related requirements	4.16	0.79	High
I spend more time in the library for my research work than in the internet shops outside	3.86	1.08	High
I prefer using the library resources and services for my personal needs rather than other information providers/media	3.98	0.89	High
I will be using the USL library even after graduating from the university	3.85	0.99	High
Overall	4.11	0.61	High

Legend

- 4.50-5.00 Very high level of loyalty
- 3.50-4.49 High level of loyalty
- 2.50-3.49 Neither loyal nor disloyal
- 1.50-2.49 Low level of loyalty
- 1.00-1.49 Very low level of loyalty

Table 4 shows the interrelationship among four library service quality dimensions such as access to information, affect of service, library as place and personal control based on customers’ minimum acceptable service, desired service level and actual observed performance level; satisfaction on library services; and customers’ loyalty in using the library and its services. As can be gleaned from the table above, the respondents’ minimum acceptable service level with respect to the first library service quality dimension which is access to information significantly affects the satisfaction of the respondents across all library services and their overall loyalty to the library. It can also be inferred that using the r values, though it is weak, it is still important to note the positive effect of access to information to satisfaction with circulation service ($r = .184, p = .000$), satisfaction on internet and online services ($r = .207, p = .000$), library instruction/bibliographic instruction ($r = .219, p = .000$), current awareness services ($r = .231, p = .000$), reference service ($r = .204, p = .000$), multimedia service ($r = .171, p = .000$), and depository area service ($r = .165, p = .000$). Furthermore, it can also be seen that

minimum service level assessment on access to information is weakly but positively correlated with loyalty of the respondents to the library ($r = .296, p = .000$).

The table above also shows the respondents' minimum acceptable service level on the second library service quality dimension which is affect of service. It significantly affects the satisfaction of the respondents across all the library services and their loyalty. It can also be inferred that using the r values, though it is weak, it is still important to note the positive effect of affect of service to satisfaction with circulation service ($r = .183, p = .000$), internet and online services ($r = .193, p = .000$), library instruction/bibliographic instruction ($r = .240, p = .000$), current awareness services ($r = .256, p = .000$), reference service ($r = .294, p = .000$), multimedia service ($r = .189, p = .000$), and depository area service ($r = .156, p = .000$). Furthermore, it can also be seen that minimum acceptable service level on affect of service is weakly but positively correlated with loyalty of the respondents to the library ($r = .272, p = .000$).

Customers' minimum acceptable service level on the third library service quality dimension which is library as place significantly affects the satisfaction of the respondents across all the library services and their loyalty. It can also be inferred that using the r values, though it is weak, it is still important to note the positive effect of affect of service to satisfaction on circulation service ($r = .209, p = .000$), satisfaction with internet and online services ($r = .154, p = .000$), library instruction/bibliographic instruction ($r = .200, p = .000$), current awareness services ($r = .215, p = .000$), reference service ($r = .173, p = .000$), multimedia service ($r = .140, p = .000$), and depository area service ($r = .153, p = .000$). Furthermore, it can also be seen that minimum acceptable service level on library as place is weakly but positively correlated with loyalty of the respondents to the library ($r = .239, p = .000$).

As shown further in the table, customers' minimum acceptable service level on the fourth library service quality dimension which is personal control significantly affects the satisfaction of the respondents across all the library services and their loyalty to library. It can also be implied that using the r values, though it is weak, it is still important to note the positive effect of personal control to satisfaction with circulation service ($r = .171, p = .000$), internet and online services ($r = .241, p = .000$), library instruction/bibliographic instruction ($r = .277, p = .000$), current awareness services ($r = .272, p = .000$), reference service ($r = .226, p = .000$), multimedia service ($r = .218, p = .000$), and depository area service ($r = .177, p = .000$). Furthermore, it can also be seen that minimum acceptable service level on personal control is weakly but positively correlated with loyalty of the respondents ($r = .278, p = .000$).

This finding implies that the higher the minimum acceptable level of service of the respondents are along the four library quality dimension the library must provide, the higher is the customers' level of satisfaction and their loyalty to the library. This indicates further that USL customers have relatively high minimum acceptable level of service expectations; thus the library must provide a more satisfactory service so that customers will have a higher probability of being loyal to the library services.

Customers' desired service level on the first library service quality dimension which is access to information shows significant effect on the satisfaction in all the services provided by USL library. It can be seen from the table that desired level of service with respect to access to

information is only significantly related to satisfaction on current awareness services ($r = .171, p = .001$) and the overall loyalty of the respondents to the library ($r = .154, p = .002$). On the second library service quality dimension which is affect of service, customers' desired service level is only significantly related to respondents' satisfaction with library instruction ($r = .167, p = .001$), current awareness services ($r = .233, p = .001$), reference service ($r = .207, p = .001$) and to the respondents' overall loyalty ($r = .182, p = .000$). Further, customers' desired library as place is only significantly related to respondents' satisfaction in current awareness service ($r = .186, p = .002$) and respondents' overall loyalty ($r = .166, p = .002$). In relation to the fourth library service quality dimension which is personal control, customers' desired service is only significantly related to respondents' satisfaction with library instruction ($r = .207, p = .000$), current awareness service ($r = .280, p = .000$), reference service ($r = .182, p = .000$) and to the respondents' overall loyalty ($r = .209, p = .000$). Though the effect is only weak, it is important to indicate the positive relationship between the said variables.

It can be implied then that those who wanted or expected a higher level of library service quality tend to be more satisfied with the library services such as library instruction, current awareness, and reference service. It also indicates therefore that since USL customers have a high level of desire and expectations on the services indicated along the four service quality dimensions, the higher their satisfaction level with the services and the more likely customers will use the library over other information providers.

The table also shows that, actual observed service performance level of the USL library based on the dimension access to information significantly affects the satisfaction of the respondents across all the library services and their loyalty to USL library. It can also be implied that using the r values, though it is weak, it is still important to note the positive effect of actual observed service performance provided by USL library to satisfaction with circulation service ($r = .252, p = .000$), internet and online service ($r = .266, p = .000$), library/bibliographic instruction ($r = .304, p = .000$), current awareness services ($r = .293, p = .000$), reference service ($r = .247, p = .000$), multimedia service ($r = .237, p = .000$), and depository area service ($r = .241, p = .000$). Furthermore, it can also be seen that actual observed performance level on the access to information as service quality dimension is weakly but positively correlated with loyalty of the respondents to the library ($r = .359, p = .000$).

Customers' actual observed service performance level of the USL library on the dimension affect of service significantly affects the satisfaction of the respondents across all the library services and their loyalty to the library. It also be implies that using the r values, though it is weak, it is still important to note the positive effect of actual observed performance level provided by USL library to satisfaction with circulation service ($r = .318, p = .000$), internet and online service ($r = .263, p = .000$), library/bibliographic instruction ($r = .354, p = .000$), current awareness services ($r = .354, p = .000$), reference service ($r = .399, p = .000$), multimedia service ($r = .304, p = .000$), and depository area service ($r = .290, p = .000$). Furthermore, it can also be seen that actual observed performance level on the affect of service quality dimension is weakly but positively correlated with loyalty of the respondents ($r = .404, p = .000$). Indicated further in the table, actual observed service performance level of the USL library as place significantly affects the satisfaction of the respondents across all the library

services and their loyalty. Using the r values, though it is weak, it is still important to note the positive effect of actual observed performance level provided by USL library to satisfaction on circulation service ($r = .403, p = .000$), internet and online service ($r = .276, p = .000$), library/bibliographic instruction ($r = .327, p = .000$), current awareness services ($r = .327, p = .000$), reference service ($r = .282, p = .000$), multimedia service ($r = .313, p = .000$), and depository area service ($r = .315, p = .000$). Furthermore, it can also be seen that actual observed performance level on the library as a place service quality dimension is weakly but positively correlated with loyalty of the respondents ($r = .384, p = .000$).

On the fourth library service quality dimension which is personal control, customers' actual observed service performance significantly affects the satisfaction of the respondents across all the library services and their loyalty. Using the r values, it implies that, though it is weak, personal control had a positive effect to satisfaction with circulation service ($r = .339, p = .000$), internet and online service ($r = .333, p = .000$), library/bibliographic instruction ($r = .400, p = .000$), current awareness services ($r = .422, p = .000$), reference service ($r = .345, p = .000$), multimedia service ($r = .343, p = .000$), and depository area service ($r = .327, p = .000$). Furthermore, it can also be seen that actual observed performance level on the library as a place service quality dimension is weakly but positively correlated with loyalty of the respondents ($r = .417, p = .000$). This means that the higher the actual observed service level of the library, the higher are the respondents' level of satisfaction and level of loyalty to the library. It can be further inferred that customers who claims that the USL library offers a high quality service, customers tends to be more satisfied and more loyal in using the library. This finding was supported by Wantara (2015) wherein service quality had a positive effect on customer loyalty of library services.

Moreover, table 16 also shows that respondents' overall assessment of the library was significantly affected by their satisfaction with circulation service ($r = .442, p = .000$), internet and online service ($r = .503, p = .000$), library/bibliographic instruction ($r = .496, p = .000$), current awareness services ($r = .545, p = .000$), reference service ($r = .524, p = .000$), multimedia service ($r = .501, p = .000$), and depository area service ($r = .528, p = .000$). The r values further imply that respondents' satisfaction with circulation service, internet and online service, current awareness service, reference service, multimedia service and depository area service are highly positively correlated with respondents' overall loyalty. This finding is supported by Wantara (2015) that customer satisfaction on services had a positive effect on customer loyalty of library services.

Overall, similar findings of other studies correlated library service quality, satisfaction and loyalty. The study of Chih-Feng and Chao-Jen (2010) on institutional repositories (IR) service quality and users' loyalty in Taiwan found out that IR service quality has a significant positive prediction on users' loyalty, however, the forecast of IR service quality on user loyalty declined when a mediator was added. Users' satisfaction has a significant positive prediction on users' loyalty, indicating that user satisfaction had a mediating effect between service quality and user loyalty. The results show that perceived value had a moderating effect between user satisfaction and loyalty. The higher the user satisfaction, the higher the user loyalty if the perceived value is high. Conversely, the lower the user satisfaction, the lower the user loyalty if

the perceived value is low. Therefore, if the library users understand the utility and convenience of IR digital services, user loyalty can be increased.

Table 4. Relationship between the Library Service Quality, Satisfaction on the Library Services, and Customers' Loyalty

Library Service Quality Dimensions		Satisfaction							LOY
		CS	IOS	LI	CAS	RS	MMS	DA	
Minimum Acceptable Service Level: Access to Information	Pearson Correlation	.184**	.207**	.219**	.231**	.204**	.171**	.165**	.296**
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.000	.000	.000	.000	.000	.001	.001	.000
Minimum Acceptable Service Level: Affect of Service	Pearson Correlation	.183**	.193**	.240**	.256**	.294**	.189**	.156**	.272**
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.000	.000	.000	.000	.000	.000	.002	.000
Minimum Acceptable Service Level: Library as Place	Pearson Correlation	.209**	.154**	.200**	.215**	.173**	.140**	.153**	.239**
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.000	.002	.000	.000	.000	.005	.002	.000
Minimum Acceptable Service Level: Personal Control	Pearson Correlation	.171**	.241**	.277**	.272**	.226**	.218**	.177**	.278**
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.001	.000	.000	.000	.000	.000	.000	.000
Desired Service Level: Access to Information	Pearson Correlation	.084	.023	.123*	.171**	.066	.020	-.043	.154**
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.094	.642	.014	.001	.190	.689	.391	.002
Desired Service Level: Affect of Service	Pearson Correlation	.121	.062	.167**	.233**	.207**	.062	-.004	.182**
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.016	.214	.001	.000	.000	.217	.942	.000
Desired Service Level: Library as Place	Pearson Correlation	.125	.028	.107*	.186**	.103	.004	.025	.166**
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.012	.583	.032	.000	.039	.937	.619	.001
Desired Service Level: Personal Control	Pearson Correlation	.110	.094	.207**	.280**	.182**	.078	.025	.209**
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.028	.059	.000	.000	.000	.121	.621	.000
Actual Observed: Performance Level Access to Information	Pearson Correlation	.252**	.266**	.304**	.293**	.247**	.237**	.241**	.359**
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.000	.000	.000	.000	.000	.000	.000	.000
Actual Observed Performance Level: Affect of Service	Pearson Correlation	.318**	.263**	.354**	.354**	.399**	.304**	.290**	.404**
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.000	.000	.000	.000	.000	.000	.000	.000
Actual Observed Performance Level Library as Place	Pearson Correlation	.403**	.276**	.327**	.327**	.282**	.313**	.315**	.384**
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.000	.000	.000	.000	.000	.000	.000	.000
Actual Observed Performance Level Personal Control	Pearson Correlation	.339**	.333**	.400**	.422**	.345**	.343**	.327**	.417**
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.000	.000	.000	.000	.000	.000	.000	.000
Over all Assessment	Pearson Correlation	.442**	.503**	.496**	.545**	.524**	.501**	.528**	1
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.000	.000	.000	.000	.000	.000	.000	

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

Legend:

CS	Circulation Service	RS	Reference Service
IOS	Internet and Online Service	MMS	Multimedia Service
CAS	Current Awareness Service	DA	Depository Area/Service
LI	Library/bibliographic Instruction	LOY	Loyalty

CONCLUSIONS:

Based from the results, the researcher concludes that (1) customers' expectations (minimum acceptable and desired service level) were generally and relatively high across the four library service quality dimension except on the dimension access to information and library as place. Based on their desired service level, customers have a very high expectation that USL library is a comfortable and inviting place to study or stay while inside the campus. Thus, customers still consider the library with a traditional reading room their favorite area of the library—the great, vaulted, light-filled space, whose walls are lined with, books. Further, they do not only come to the library for its resources but also to use the facilities such as computers, reading area, discussion rooms, and others. Though customers described the actual observed service performance provided by USL college library generally as high, their expectations (desired service) was not met. However, their minimum acceptable service level was met as compared with the actual observed service performance of USL library; (2) Customers were generally “satisfied” with the different services offered by the library such as circulation service, internet and online service, library instruction, current awareness services, reference service, multimedia service, and depository area/service. However, their satisfaction level did not reach the highest level; (3) Customers manifest high loyalty to the library and its services. However, their loyalty did reach the highest level; and (4) Library service quality, customer satisfaction and customer loyalty are interrelated. This indicates that USL customers have relatively high level of service expectations (minimum acceptable and desired); thus the library must meet their expectations and provide a more satisfactory service so that customers will have a higher probability of being loyal to the library and its services. Furthermore, the higher service quality provided, the more satisfied customers are and the more they will manifest loyalty to the library and its services.

RECOMMENDATIONS

Based from the findings, the researcher recommends that even if the desired or expectations of customers are relative and not so easy to meet, it is still recommended that (1.) the USL college library should focus on aspects of LibQUAL dimension regarded as very important to customers in order to meet the desired service level of customers by providing innovative services to customers. (2.) Continuously improve the library services rated as lowest in terms of satisfaction level among customers so that library collections, facilities and services will be maximized. (3.) An annual evaluation of library services should be conducted to further justify the results and findings of this study. (4.) Develop strategies to gain customer loyalty such as giving of loyalty cards, extended loan privileges and others.

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