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Service quality dimensions and quality view point of university librarians in Gujarat

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Abstract: The present study focus on service quality dimensions and their attributes for measuring service quality of any kind of libraries. The study also discovered the quality viewpoints of librarians in terms of five elements of quality mainly: Leadership, Policy & Strategy, Staff management, Resources and finally the process aspects. For collecting the data, researchers has prepared a close ended questionnaire and collected data from five private university libraries. After analysis of the data, findings revealed that the all university librarians willing to improve quality services in the library and they are positive to listen to library users needs to improve the overall service quality of the university library. Study also discovered that average quality elements calculated mean score was observed 4.36 in all five quality elements. At the end, study also suggested the best practice to be followed to improve the service quality and overall performance of university library services.

Kew Words: Service Quality; User satisfaction; SERVQUAL; LibQUAL+ Academic Library System;

Introduction:

University library is the heart and soul of any university set up which cater the need and demands of its academic stakeholders by providing academic resources and support in academic, research and publications activity of university. In early days of the academic library, library measured its success based on the footfall and they only focus on the numbers of visitors. The scenario is almost change now and library initiated to focusing more on user need and overall satisfaction. As now a days, user want good library with sound collection of books, longer operating hours, core library services

without paying any charges and technical help and support from knowledge badge librarians (Paraschiv, 2017). According to Garvin, there are five approaches in defining the quality which includes Transcendent based quality, product based quality, manufacturing based quality, value based quality and user based quality (Garvin, 1984). Measuring service quality is origin from marketing disciplines and now it is widely accepted in the service sector. Many studies have been under taken globally and in India for measuring service quality of academic libraries using SERVQUAL methodology and LibQual+ Model. (Parasuraman *et al.*, 1988; Cook *et al.*, 2001)

Literature review

There are many studies undertaken for measuring service quality of university or academic library. Few important studies on assessment of service quality are discussed below:

Nitecki, (1996) assessed three major services of academic library Inter Library Loan (ILL), Reference Service and Reservation services at university of Maryland. She adopted SERVQUAL methodology and check the applicability of the same in university library setup. Study concentrated more on relevance and implications part. Data collected with total 351 users and analysed the factor analysis of the results and checked the reliability and validity of the tool. The finding of the study revealed that reliability dimension rated as most important dimensions and tangible were less important dimension in perceived service quality of library users and it pointed out that SERVQUAL can use with minor change in service attributes to measure service quality in academic library.

Asefeh *et al.* (2010) measured service quality of engineering and technical government university library of Tehran city of Iran based on LibQual methodology. Study found that library users were not satisfied with library facilities and infrastructure whereas library doing good performance in information control dimension.

Trivedi and Bhatt (2019) assessed the service quality of special academic institute library. Study applied SERVQUAL Model and collected data from total 100 users of library. The findings indicated that library provides satisfactory services to the faculty members but need to improve the level of services to the other user category in reliability and tangible dimension.

Sahu (2007) measured the service quality of Jawaharlal Nehru University (JNU) Library. The findings suggested that JNU Library is not deficient in the quality of the service. Study recommended that JNU library must provide a wide-ranging information programmes for improvement in the library operations and services.

Kiran (2010) examine the perception and satisfaction level of service quality of academic library staff of Malaysians University. The SERVQUAL findings revealed that academic staff perceived the quality of library services to above the average level and library has positive impact on the teaching, learning and research within academic fraternity of the university and overall they were satisfied with the library services.

Somarathna and Colin (2011) assessed service quality of Colombo library system at Sri Lanka. Study adopted modified SERVQUAL methodology with total 634 populations. Study found that “collection and access” dimension received preeminent predictor of the overall service quality followed by “Information control” and “service delivery”.

Udem *et al* (2020) measured the perception of the quality of undergraduate library users of Southeast Nigeria. The findings discovered that the undergraduate’s library users has a positive perception of the quality of library services delivered by Prof. Festus Aghagbo Nwako Library. Further findings also exposed that there is no significant differences in mean rating of gender perception of quality and value of library services received by the users.

Hossain and Islam (2021) discussed the process improvement of academic libraries based on the user centric approach. Study proposed framework which focus on user satisfaction and loyalty which will help academic library to retain its users and improve the overall quality of library.

Asante *et al* (2020) discovered the quality performance of library staff of academic libraries in Ghana region. Study found that except strategic planning, there were positive relationship in rest all independent variables like Training & Development, Employee engagement, communication and management commitment with quality performance.

Kumar and Mahajan (2019) assessed the service quality of centre library of Maharshi Dayanand University. Study used LibQUAL methodology. Results revealed that user has high desired expectation in the quality dimension “library as place” followed by information control and effect of services. Study recommend to improve the shortfall of some of the service quality attributes which will help library authority to improve the overall performance of quality services.

Form the above stated study indicates that service quality in library is very vital for achieving maximum user satisfaction. There is a no affirm study found in Gujarat state for viewpoints of librarians or head of the university library about willingness to implement quality in library, hence current study attempted to understand the same from librarian perspective.

Objectives

- (1) To understand the service quality dimensions for measuring service quality of library and information centre
- (2) To discover the viewpoints of university librarians on core elements of service quality
- (3) To suggest best practices to be followed for improving overall service quality of university library.

Methodology

Based on the core objectives of the study, the research has explore various literature review on the topic service quality in academic library in line to response to first objective and for second objective,

the researchers have prepared a structure close ended questionnaire and collected data from the respective librarians. The close ended questionnaire has total 20 statements related five elements of quality mainly: Leadership (6 elements) , Policy & Strategy (4 elements), Staff management (5 elements), Resources (3 elements) and finally the process (2 elements) aspects with five point Likert scale 1 to 5 where 1 is strongly disagree to 5 strongly agree on these elements. At the end of the questionnaire open space provided for librarians to express opinion about improving quality of library services.

After collecting data from the university librarians, the same has been entered in the MS Excel and calculate the mean score using MS Excel formula and presented in the tabular format in the analysis.

Scope and Limitation

In the current study, total five private university library identified for the study as mentioned at Table 1

Table 1
List of University Libraries selected for the study

Name of University Library	Code	Place	Est. Year	Type of University	Courses offered
NIRMA University	NU	Ahmedabad	2003	Private	Doctorate, PG, UG, Diploma & Certificate Courses
Parul University	PU	Vadodara	2015	Private	Doctorate, PG, UG, Diploma & Certificate Courses
CHARUSET University	CU	Changa	2009	Private	Doctorate, PG, UG, Diploma & Certificate Courses
C U Shah University	CUS	Wadhwan	2013	Private	Doctorate, PG, UG, Diploma & Certificate Courses
Uka Tarsadia Univesity	UTU	Bardoli	2011	Private	Doctorate, PG, UG, Diploma & Certificate Courses

The purpose of selection of these private university libraries as because of rich collection, value added library services and sound ICT infrastructure and large population of library users available under these university libraries. As per UGC Record, total 42 Private universities are established in Gujarat state, but due to the time and cost constraints, study have not covered all private university libraries and only consider above five university libraries in the study. For data collection, researchers has only approached to the Head librarian of the university or in charge librarian of the respective university

which is responsible and supervise for Main university library and also supervise and control their respective departmental libraries.

Findings & Discussion

As per the literature review in form of research papers, published books, dissertation and thesis, it is observed that there are two well accepted models for measuring service quality in the academic libraries. SERVQUAL methodology was developed by Parasuraman *et al* in 1985 and has following five dimensions and it also called RATER Model. Total five dimensions contented 22 service qualities attributes (Parasuraman *et al*, 1985). This model is widely used by many researchers in university or academic libraries. (Zabed and Hossain, 2009; Arshad and Ameen, 2010; Trivedi and Bhatt, 2019)

Dimensions of SERVQUAL

Tangible: Appearance of physical facilities, equipment, personnel and communication materials.

Reliability: Ability to perform the promised service dependably and accurately

Responsiveness: Willingness to help customers and provide prompt service

Assurance: Knowledge and courtesy of employees and their ability to convey trust and confidence

Empathy: Caring, individualized attention the firm provides its customers

Dimensions of LibQual+

Based on the SERVQUAL model, the Association of Research Library (ARL) has developed the model called “LibQual+” for dedicate to measure the service quality of especially for library (ARL, 2012). LibQual+ contented following three major dimensions with 22 service quality attributes:

Affect of Service: Affect of Service concerns “the human dimension of service quality” (ARL, 2012) and is operationalized with nine questions about user contacts with staff. Aspects of this dimension include user perceptions of staff usefulness, capability, constancy, and care for users.

Information Control: The designers of LibQUAL+ have distinct Information Control as “whether users are able to find the required information in the library in the format of their choosing, in an independent and autonomous way” (ARL, 2012). The eight questions formed to represent this construct involve having the accurate print and electronic resources in the collections, being able to access chosen resources autonomously, and the range to which access tools are modern and intuitive.

Library as Place: Library as Place is defined as “the physical environment of the library as a place for individual study, group work, and inspiration” (ARL, 2012). The five questions assess the availability of quiet and community spaces, the comfort and welcoming feel of space, and the correctness of space for study, learning, and research.

This model is widely been used by many researchers in university or academic libraries. (Greenwood et al., 2011; Wei et al., 2001; Xi et al., 2018; Kumar and Mahajan 2019)

For objective 2, present study has gathered data about opinion or view point of librarians with total five quality elements and findings are presented and discussed below:

Table 2
Analysis of librarian's view on quality element: Leadership Quality

Attribute ID	Attribute	Private University (Mean Score)					
		NU	CU	PU	CUS	UTU	Total
L1.	Leadership quality plays an vital role in achieving the desired level of competence and efficiency of the library.	5	4	5	4	5	4.60
L2.	My approaches convey my commitments and proficiency towards effective library services.	4	4	5	4	4	4.20
L3.	Effective co-ordination among library team memebr are maintained to keep our customers happy.	4	5	5	4	4	5.20
L4.	I really appreciate my team members for any outstanding performance and complain privately for improvement of performance.	5	4	5	5	4	4.60
L5.	I believe that my entire team have equal potential to work for the common goals of library.	3	4	4	5	5	4.20
L6.	I strongly believe in team work rather than an individual work.	5	5	5	4	5	4.80
Total		4.33	4.33	4.83	4.33	4.50	4.46
Total Average Mean Score		4.46					

It is observed from the above table 2 that most of the librarians of private university library expressed that leadership quality is important in managing quality in the service delivery of university library. Study found that maximum mean score of 4.83 was received for Parul university library followed by 4.50 from Uka Tarsadi University with 4.50 and the rest university was rated with 4.33 mean score. Total average mean score of 4.46 was found in Leadership quality element.

Table 3
Analysis of librarian's view on quality element: Policy & Strategies

Attribute ID	Attribute	Private University (Mean Score)					
		NU	CU	PU	CUS	UTU	Total
PS1	Library mission, vision, goals, objectives and library strategies are carefully designed and communicated to entire team for batter service quality.	4	5	5	4	5	4.60

PS2	SWOT (Strength, Weaknesses, Opportunities and Threats) analysis of library is conducting regularly for batterment.	2	4	4	3	3	3.20
PS3	I believe that customer service & satisfaction lie at the heart of service quality and only end- users of the library judge the library services.	3	4	5	4	5	4.20
PS4	I conduct survey & taking feedback periodically which will help in improving library services.	5	4	5	4	4	4.40
Total		3.50	4.25	4.75	3.75	4.25	4.10
Total Average Mean Score		4.10					

It is observed from the above table 3 that “policy and strategy” is very vital elements in quality. Maximum mean score reported by Parul University with 4.75 mean score followed by 4.25 mean score for Charuset University and Uka Tarsadi University. The overall average mean score for policy and strategy elements was reported 4.10 mean score.

Table 4
Analysis of librarian’s view on quality element: Staff Management

Attribute ID	Attribute	Private University (Mean Score)					Total
		NU	CU	PU	CUS	UTU	
SM1	I condiser my library staff as an asset to be developed rather then a commodity to be used.	4	4	4	5	4	4.20
SM2	I fouds on profesional training, re-training of self and my team for continuous improvement in our profession.	5	4	5	4	4	4.40
SM3	I trust in deligate the authority and accountability to my subordinates.	4	4	5	4	5	4.40
SM4	I want to use my team members head and heart in addition to their hands.	3	5	4	4	4	4.00
SM5	In most of the cases I received positive support from my higher authorities.	5	4	5	5	4	4.60
Total		4.20	4.20	4.60	4.40	4.20	4.32
Total Average Mean Score		4.32					

Table 4 shows the calculation of Staff management of university libraries. Managing library personnel is also an important quality element. From the analysis, it is revealed that Parul University and C.U Shah University has received highest mean score with 4.60 and 4.40 respectively. Total average mean calculation was reported with 4.32 mean score.

Table 5
Analysis of librarian's view on quality element: Resources

Attribute ID	Attribute	Private University (Mean Score)					
		NU	CU	PU	CUS	UTU	Total
R1	I make in-depth planning for allocatin of library budget for optimum utilization.	5	4	5	4	5	4.60
R2	I would like to provide quick and effective quality services in marginal price.	4	4	4	5	5	4.40
R3	I always put honest determinations in preserving the library premises, resources, furnitures and equipments in a good and working condition for users.	5	4	5	5	4	4.60
Total		4.67	4.00	4.67	4.67	4.67	4.53
Total Average Mean Score		4.53					

Table 5 shows the analysis of "Resource" element. As library is service organization and procurement of resources is vital and very important quality element. It is observed from the analysis that all university librarians expressed positive opinion about this element and rate 4.67 mean score except only Charuset University received 4.00 mean score. The average mean score was reported with 4.53 score under resource quality element.

Table 6
Analysis of librarian's view on quality element: Process

Attribute ID	Attribute	Private University (Mean Score)					
		NU	CU	PU	CUS	UTU	Total
P1	I permit my team to identify key procss by breaking them in to the small activities.	4	4	5	4	4	4.20
P2	I consult my team and library users in develping and designing new process and purify outdated process.	5	4	5	5	4	4.60
Total		4.50	4.00	5.00	4.50	4.00	4.40
Total Average Mean Score		4.40					

Table 6 indicate the analysis of "Process" element. For smooth functioning and operations of library services, process must prepare in line with vision and mission of the university. It is observed from the analysis that Parul University rated full score of 5.00 followed by Nirma University and C.U. Shah University with 4.5 mean score. Average mean score was reported with 4.40 mean score under process quality element.

Table 7
Analysis of librarian's view on overall quality elements

Overall quality Elements	Private University (Mean Score)					
	NU	CU	PU	CUS	UTU	Total
Leadership	4.33	4.33	4.83	4.33	4.50	4.46
Policy & Strategies	3.50	4.25	4.75	3.75	4.25	4.10
Staff Management	4.20	4.20	4.60	4.40	4.20	4.32
Resources	4.67	4.00	4.67	4.67	4.67	4.54
Process	4.50	4.00	5.00	4.50	4.00	4.40
Total Average of Five Quality Elements:	4.36					

Table 7 shows the overall average of all five quality elements of private university libraries. It is observed that respondents of university library has rated highest score under “resource” element with 4.54 mean score followed by 4.46 mean score under “Leadership” element, 4.40 mean score under “Process” element, 4.32 under “staff management” and 4.10 mean score under “Policy and strategy” element. It is also revealed that average quality element calculated mean score was observed 4.36 in all five quality elements.

Findings of open ended question

At the end of the questionnaire, researcher has asked university librarian to give feedback and suggestions. While analysis of open ended response, it is observed that some of the librarians expressed that library required more revenue and capital budget to enhance present library services. Also it is observed that lack of man power and skilled ICT professional are required to provide better library services in current scenario.

Suggestions to improve library services:

As university library is mostly now focusing on e-resources and e-services (Trivedi et al., 2021). University library need to serve the core requirements of students, research scholars and faculty members of the university. For creation of maximum user satisfaction and provide quality library service, university librarian must think to implement following suggestions:

1. Library must prepare and provide user education program for physical and e-services to each category of library users.
2. Library should prepare user manual and guidelines for using library online databases and e-resources
3. Library must update the library collection based on the current need of faculty and other users.
4. Library may invest more on ICT (Information and Communication Technology) infrastructure by adding more capital budget.

5. Library should regularly update its users when adding new resources and services.
6. Library users must facilitate with user friendly approach when they access library resources or services.
7. Library staff must trained with latest technology and also polite with library users and enhance communication and soft skill.
8. Library must provide comfortable and user centric infrastructure to its users.
9. Library should update their policy and process documents based on the user experience.
10. Library should periodically collect feedback from user in terms of services and infrastructure by systematic survey and formal meetings with library users.

Conclusion

As present study is only focus the quality elements and opinion from librarian about managing quality in the university library. The future research may conduct with SERVQUAL or LibQual+ instrument and take the perception and expectation from user perspective about service quality. Library must undergo with quality ISO certification which will impact the current library services. As the five quality elements are important and university library must focus to improve the performance of these element.

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