

Library Service Quality: A Comparison between SERVQUAL and LibQUAL Model

***Mamta**

****Vinit Kumar**

* Department of Library and Information Science, Babasaheb Bhimrao Ambedkar University, Lucknow (U.P.) 226025; Email: mamtasinghaljir@gmail.com

**Assistant Professor, Department of Library and Information Science, Babasaheb Bhimrao Ambedkar University, Lucknow (U.P.) 226025; Email: mailvinitkumar@gmail.com

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Abstract

Both profit and non-profit organizations need to take care of their customer satisfaction. For a service institution customer satisfaction highly depends on the quality of the service. Being a service sector institution it is paramount for libraries to evaluate the quality of services provided to the users of a library. Several models and standards have been proposed by scholars and different organizations to measure the service quality of libraries. This paper discusses the different tools for measuring the service quality and compares two prominent models SERVQUAL and LibQUAL model based on their parameters.

Keywords: Service Quality Measurement, Service Quality Dimensions, Service Quality Model, SERVQUAL, LibQUAL.

1. Introduction

Library is a hub of knowledge which provides different types of resources and services. Quality is the basic requirement in any field for effective and reliable library services. Quality of library service is one that entirely meets the outlook and necessities of the users. Quality library services mean satisfying the query of each and every user accurately, exhaustively, and expeditiously (Sharma, 2001). "The concept of service quality in the context of a library can be defined as the difference between users' expectations and perceptions of service performance and the reality of the library service (Oldman and Wills, 1977). " In ancient times libraries used to be very simple and naturally good and there was no need to evaluate them for improvement. Initially, simple library statistics were used to support administration and to describe library activities to fund providers and readers. Afterwards, statistics were exploited for evaluation of library inputs leaving the question of library goodness and accountability. Librarians and library patrons have always recognized that measures of library input metrics, such as collection counts, Libraries recommend a multitude of value-added services to their customers. The user satisfaction is the basic objectives of every library; there is a need to measure the quality of library services, here are a lot of tools and standard are available for measuring service quality such as: SERVQUAL model, LibQUAL Model, SERVPERF and WEBQUAL, etc (Sanjna and Mohmad, 2016). But now in the present time, different types of models and standards are using the measurement of service quality such as SERVQUAL, LibQUAL, WebQual, SiteQual, and Data Envelopment Analysis. The terms library quality, service quality and quality of service, user satisfaction and service quality are used interchangeably in library literature. The definition of quality put onward by Deming states "Quality" is defined as "satisfying customer's requirements" and "fitness for purpose".

Library Service Quality

Quality of library services means fulfilling the doubt each and every customer exactly and expeditiously. Quality of library services is a very significant aspect in order for the students to have continuous upgrading and the students' perception is an imperative aspect to make the reveal of how satisfied the students are towards the library's involvement in helping them in the learning method. Library must provide a good quality of services, sufficient information; good activities etc. the equivalent time solve the problems faced by the users. To make certain that libraries play a vital role in providing an effective learning atmosphere. If the challenges were not being solved, it will make users' satisfaction become lower and it is hard for the students to find what they want in the library. Therefore, the library must find out what kind of explanation that needs to be done in order to face the challenges since every year new students come with different requirements and expectations. Then, the library should do continuous improvement all the times so that they could focus on a quality service which make the services run smoothly.

Quality of Library Services

According to Kotler “A service is an activity or benefit that one party can offer to another party which is basically intangible and does not result in the ownership of anything. Its manufacturing may or may not be tied to a physical product”.

U.S. National Library of Medicine defines Library Service as “services accessible to the library user. They include reference and circulation”. A library provides the building and equipments for the use of print media (i.e. books, journals, and newspapers) and electronic media (i.e. electronic resources) to the users. It is called as library service.

2. Difference between SERVQUAL and LibQUAL Service Quality Models

SERVQUAL and LibQUAL both models help to measure the service quality, both model measures can help to measure service quality. But the researcher tried to differentiate measure some point which is given below:

Table - 1: Difference between SERVQUAL and LibQUAL Model

Dimensions	
SERVQUAL model	LibQUAL model
Tangible Reliability Responsiveness Assurance Empathy	Library as a place Affect of library Information Control
Initially SERVQUAL model developed for commercial and Industrial sectors.	It was developed for specific measuring the library service quality.
The research method to capture and analyze consumer expectation and perception.	LibQUAL research method to capture and analyze specific library users expectation and perception.
SERVQUAL model is also referred to as RATER (Reliability, Assurance, Tangible, Empathy and Responsiveness).	
It is customer oriented.	It is library user oriented.

Table - 2: Development of (SERVQUAL and LibQUAL) Model

Author	Model	Year of Development
Parasuraman, Zenithal and Berry , American Marketing gurus Valarie Zeithaml berry	SERVQUAL	1985
Association of Research Libraries (ARL)	LibQUAL	1992

SERVQUAL model is developed a group of American authors in 1985. It called as a Gap model. LibQUAL model basically development from the SERVQUAL model in 1992.

3. SERVQUAL Model

“SERVQUAL is a multidimensional research tool, designed to capture customer expectations and perception of a service along five dimensions that are believed to represent service quality. SERVQUAL which makes on the expectancy- disconfirmation model, which is simple terms means the service quality is understood as the extent to which customers’ pre consumption expectations of quality are valid or invalid by their actual user perception of service experience”

“SERVQUAL is a survey tool used to measure service quality of libraries; it was developed by “Parasuraman, Zeithaml and Berry in 1985”. Later it was modified in 1988, 1991 and 1994. It was first time applied to the business and management sector and after that it was applied in the marketing service sector also. At the first stage, it was developed them with ten dimensions and later time reduced to five dimensions. They are: Tangibles, Reliability, Responsiveness, Assurance and Empathy. It designed in twenty two points of questions with five or seven point Likert Scale to measure users' responses. The first twenty two questions collect information about the user's perceptions about services and the other twenty two questions collect information about the user's expectations about services. For measuring service quality, the instrument analyses the gap between customer expectations and perceived services. It is based on an equation developed by Parasuraman et al.

Q= Perception-Expectation

Q = Quality

P = User perception about the library services

E = Customers expectations about services

SERVQUAL Model (Dimensions)

In this SERVQUAL model the five dimensions are include, which are given below:

- **Tangibles:** This dimension emphasis on tangible variable nature such as physical facilities and appearance of the personnel.
- **Reliability:** This dimension measures the ability of the staff to provide services and accurately.
- **Responsiveness:** It shows the willingness of the staff to help users and provide adequate knowledge service.
- **Assurance:** Shows knowledge and the courtesy of employees their ability to enhance and instill the confidence in their users.
- **Empathy:** An Empathy measure how well the staff is ready to respond provides personal care and attention of library users.

SERVQUAL Model Support by the Authors

At first, initial stage librarians used simple library statistics were kept to help the library's management figure out how well the library was doing its job. Initially, the size, variety, and diversity of the library's collection, the amount of money spent on progress the collection, the number of staff, and registered users were used to measure the library's quality, but these factors are more quantitative in nature than qualitative. For qualitative analysis of the library professionals and library staff have developed and implemented the variety of quality measurement instruments, including Total Quality Management (TQM) (Reddy, 2017). Some author's names are given below who were used SERVQUAL model in their study to measure the service quality.

- Sohail and Raza, 2012;
- Das and Handique, 2020;
- Trivedi and Bhatt, 2020;
- Suresh and Mohan, 2015;
- Hossain and Islam, 2013;
- Hossain and Ahmed, 2014;
- Shoeb, 2011; Shoeb, 2010;
- Hossain and Islam, 2012.

4. LibQUAL Model

LibQUAL is an instrument for measuring library quality. It is a survey tool developed by Association of Research Libraries (ARL) in cooperation with Texas and A&M University Libraries. LibQUAL is based on SERVQUAL. Initially it contains fifty five questions and afterward it was reduced to twenty five and then to twenty two questions. The LibQUAL+TM tool identifies three customer perceptions - minimal, optimal, and current service levels. The relative ranking of the current perceived level to the minimal and optimal levels constructs gaps, which serve as the basis for service quality analysis. Between minimal and optimal expectations is a user-defined zone of tolerance (Wall, Tom B 2002). Zone of tolerance is the area between a customer's adequate service level and desired service level. Majeed (2005) in his study about four dimensions of LibQUAL model such as: library as a place, affect of service, access to library collection and reliability. He is also recognized thirty four items under these 4 dimensions are affect of service (11 items), library as a place (9 items), access to collection (7 items), and reliability (seven items). Killick (2013) discussed about 3 dimensions of library service quality; they are effect of service, library as place and information control. This tool addresses three dimensions of service quality that have been found to be valid in previous studies of library services given below:

- Library as Place,
- Affect of Service,
- Information Control.

This draft will permit the analysis of user's gaps between user's expectations, perception, and minimum acceptance level of service (www.LibQual.Org). "LibQUAL+TM were a web based survey tool (SERVQUAL). It contains a twenty two items in questions was provided with the questionnaire for writing and suggestions of the respondents. A point of Likert Scale is used to measure the responses. Users and staff were asked to evaluate their library and on the basis of such evaluation, necessary actions are taken to improve the quality of library

services. It also helps to maintain a good relationship between users and staff. Such surveys help to recognize best practices for providing quality services in the library.

LibQUAL (Dimensions)

LibQUAL model is a library service quality model; it is measured service quality on the basis of mainly 3 dimensions, which is given below:

1. Library as Place,
2. Affect of Service,
3. Information Control.

LibQUAL model has been supported by these authors which are used the model of LibQUAL to determine the quality of library services (Modiramani and Ghanbarabadi, 2012; Biranvand and Khasseh, 2013; Jabbari, Dizaji, and Malekolkalami, 2020; Ghaedi et al 2020; Neshat and Dehghani, 2013; Pourahmad, Neshat, and Hasani, 2016; Fun and Wagner, 2019; Wang, Yuan and Shi, 2019).

5. Conclusion

Quality is required for every part of library moves smoothly function. Library professionals are moral duty of providing quality services to the users with smile face. Therefore continuous training of human resources is required to keep them up to the changing demands of users. Then libraries require paying greater attention to service quality and providing a work productive work environment. Libraries should be formulating practical and effective plans to improve the working ambiance in order to achieve the attractive quality. Hence, the library management should have to identify and verify the user needs and thereby implement changes in process, of measuring, and practices and satisfy the query of each and every user. In this paper the two service quality models SERVQUAL and LibQUAL model and their dimensions are discussed. LibQUAL model is basically origin from the SERVQUAL model. The elaborate model helps bridge the gap between customer expectation and their need. Table1 indicates the major difference of both models (SERVQUAL and LibQUAL). In table 2 shows that the development of the models. Major difference of service quality model SERVQUAL model is customer oriented model, while LibQUAL model's we can say library user oriented model. We conclude that although there are different types of service quality models and standards for measuring the service quality in the library, the measures need to be updated with changing user expectations.

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