Service Quality Assessment :
A Study of Kurukshetra University Library

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Abstract

A better understanding of the perceptions and expectations of users is a prerequisite for delivering high quality services. Present study has been carried out to assess the service quality of the Central Library of University from students' perspective. Data has been collected with the help of a structured questionnaire from 150 students studying in Kurukshetra University, Kurukshetra covering the three main streams i.e. Arts, Commerce and Science. A modified SERVQUAL instrument developed by Parasuraman *et al.* (1991) has been used to measure the expectations and perception of the students. It has been found that the University is lacking in providing quality services to its users as significant difference has been found between the perception and expectation of the respondents. Students are not satisfied with the physical facilities and equipment which are presently provided by the Kurukshetra University. Therefore, University needs to focus on improving the physical facilities according to the expectation of students to satisfy them. However, University Library staff is found to be supportive and ready to provide the desired assistance to the students.

INTRODUCTION

A library plays a very important role in promoting the progress of knowledge. Libraries are essentially learning organizations stimulating academic and research activities by providing access to world-class information resources. A library is the physical manifestation of the core values and activities of academic curriculum. As library has always a studious atmosphere, it helps in developing a reading habit. As the needs of the various readers are different, library serves a very useful

purpose by meeting the requirements of all readers. The fields of library and information sciences are changing and growing rapidly. Information technology has helped in improving the library facilities and Internet provides loads of information with just a click of a mouse. But the popularity of internet will not affect the importance of a library as books are one of the main source of knowledge. The best place for easy access to books is a library. A well-equipped library is indeed the best friend, philosopher and guide. Though the size of collection is used as an indicator of academic quality but in today's competitive environment customers focus on quality services. SERVQUAL is a mechanism to shift the assessment of quality of a library from the traditions of measuring collection-size and counting of its use, to begin investigation how the provision of services relate to the library users service quality expectations (Nitecki,1996). SERVQUAL has been used in various service industries, including academic, public and special libraries (Hernon, 2002). Thus, focus on delivering the quality services is essential for satisfying the customers. To make the ambience, peaceful and scholarly atmosphere in the library all possible facilities should be created and provided to the students/ readers to make it a veriTable sanctuary fit for even the most serious and zealous students.

Service quality has been defined in different ways but in the context of library it can be defined as the difference between user's expectation and perception of service performance and the reality of the same. A better understanding of the perceptions and expectations of each individual group of users is a prerequisite for delivering high quality services according to their expectations. For many developed countries, the role of service quality as a key factor of user satisfaction and organizational performance is widely recognized. In the present study modified SERVQUAL developed by Parasuraman *et al.* (1991) has been used to measure the perception and expectation of the users.

REVIEW OF LITERATURE

Nimsomboon and Nagata (2003) examined the service quality of Thammasat University library system from the user's perspective and found that all users desired expectations are not met. The results of the Zone of Tolerance revealed that each user group was treated differently. Further, the most problematic aspect of the library was insufficient and non-upgraded collection.

Seth *et al.* (2005) critically evaluated various service quality models and revealed that the service setting, situation, time and need were the important factors affecting the service quality outcomeand measurement. Further, the customer's expectations towards particular services were also found changing with respect to

factors like time, increase in the number of encounters with a particular service, competitive environment, etc. A positive correlation was found between the internal service quality with business performance and the service quality delivered to the customer.

Banga and Kumar (2008)analyzed the performance of the management institutes and found that these institutions are not meeting the expectations of the students. The study revealed a gap between the expectation and perception of the students with regard to the quality of services offered by the management institutes. The respondents indicated their need for better infrastructure, improved industry exposure and placement assurance along with other measures.

Somaratna and Peiris (2011) assessed the service quality in the libraries of University of Colombo taking into consideration the collection and access, information control, service delivery by the staff, e-resources and awareness, security, library catalogue and physical facilities for evaluation of service quality in the libraries. The collection and access were found as the best predictor of overall service quality of Columbia University system followed by information control, service quality by staff, e-resources and awareness. The physical facilities were also found relevant but less significant.

Sohail and Raza (2012) revealed that university library has not been successful in its plan for offering quality services. The majority of the respondents stated that they have been receiving average quality service. It was suggested that services should be tailor-made to accommodate the needs and wants of customers.

Rehman (2013) measured the service quality of university libraries of Pakistan from the user's perspective taking data 22 Pakistani universities. Library users rated 22 core survey items on a scale of 1 (low) to 9 (high) in terms of minimum acceptable service quality, desired service quality, and perceived service quality. Study findings indicated that libraries, overall, do not meet users' minimum acceptable and desired levels of service quality. The zone of tolerance identified eight problematic services, most of which are related to the information control dimension. Further, a wide gap between users' perceptions and expectations of service quality was found.

Pedramnia *et al.* (2014) measured library service quality using 22 items and found that the highest average score was Service affect and the lowest belonged to Library as place. The authors emphasized the importance of librarians' specialized knowledge level in presenting appropriate services in circulation and reference sections. A significant outcome, is in the information control dimension, and appropriate working hours; classification system for searching and accessing to information and appropriate time for loaning

resources. The biggest gap related to updated multimedia databanks, appropriate number of computers and adequate facilities like laptops/PCs and broadband networks for better access to subscribed electronic resources through the MUMS central library web site.

Asogwa *et al.*(2014) revealed that in developing countries, all the service indicators when evaluated are negatively marked. Significant difference has been found between the perceptions and expectations of library users. It has been found that tangibility was the highest dimension and empathy as the lowest dimension in developing countries. Further, it was also found that lack of modern facilities, poor funding and weak e-leadership were negatively affecting the quality of library. It was suggested that more efforts should be channeled to reduce the gap between perception and expectation of library users.

Sahu (2014) found that JNU is not lacking in providing quality service. However, to achieve total quality in information services the JNU library should provide a comprehensive information programmer predicated on the needs and activities of the users.

NEED OF THE STUDY

Kurukshetra University, Kurukshetra is the oldest university in the state and so its library, The University Library is centrally located having three storey air-conditioned building with modern infrastructure and 1,06,730 sq. feet plinth area. It has seating capacity of 1270 users at a time and remains open on 360 days from 9.00 a.m. to 12.00 midnight. The University Library has a rich collection of 375030 volumes in all the major disciplines. The Library has also provided internet connectivity through ERNET Centre in the central building and to the entire campus through Wi-Fi internet connection. In addition to this, under U.G.C.-INFONET E-Journals consortium library provides an access to 8453 scholarly journals. The Library has automated its in house activities such as library membership, circulation of documents, holdings of periodicals, catalogue as Online Public Access Catalogue (OPAC). It seems that Kurukshetra University Library is offering a number of services /facilities to its users.But,the assessment of service quality provides an important feedback for libraries to assess and improveits services to various users. In light of the above, it becomes imperative to measure the perception of students studying in Kurukshetra University to determine how far the library succeeded in delivering quality services to its users.

OBJECTIVES OF THE STUDY

- To analyze the quality of services provided by the Kurukshetra University Library.
- To compare the perception of Arts, Commerce and Science students regarding library services quality.
- To find out the relationship between the service quality perception among different students.

RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

The present study is descriptive cum analytical in nature. The study is based on primary data which has been collected with the help of a structured questionnaire from 150 students studying in different departments of Kurukshetra University, Kurukshetra covering the three main streams i.e. Arts, Commerce and Science. 50 respondents have been selected from each stream. Service quality measurement instrument developed by Parasuraman (1991) namely SERVQUAL has been used to evaluate the service quality of the Jawaharal Nehru (JLN) Library of Kurukshetra University.

The SERVQUAL model has mainly five dimensions i.e Tangibles, Reliability, Responsiveness, Assurance and Empathy. SERVQUAL, instrument measures the service quality as difference between perception and expectation (P-E). The expectations and perception of students related to service quality have been collected with the help of astructured questionnaire (annexure-I). After that service quality score has been calculated by subtracting perception score from the expectation score given by the respondents. Respondents have also been requested to give respective weights to five dimensions of SERVQUAL model (annexure-II). The overall scores are obtained by averaging the SERVQUAL scores. Service quality scores are multiplied with the respective weight given by the respondents. The higher the weighted service quality score, the better is the service quality. The negative score of P-E is an indicator of the gap/deficiency in the service performance from customer perspective. To find out the relationship between the service quality perception of Arts, Commerce and Science students, Correlation has also been used.

ANALYSIS AND RESULTS

(A) Overall Service Quality

The overall service quality assessment is summarized in Table 1. The overall service quality score is showing a negative SERVQUAL score (-1.56). It

indicates that there is difference between the perception and expectation of the students in relation to the various services provided by the Kurukshetra University library.

Table 1

Overall SERVQUAL Score

Service Dimension	Expectation (E)	Perception (P)	SERVQUAL Score (SQ = P–E)	Weight	Weighted SERVQUAL Score	Ranks
Tangibles	6.13	4.31	-1.82	29.19	-2.41	5
Reliability	6.10	4.01	-2.09	18.97	-1.80	4
Responsiveness	4.91	4.23	-0.68	17.94	-0.55	1
Assurance	5.99	4.00	-1.99	17.53	-1.59	3
Empathy	6.15	4.18	-1.97	16.37	-1.47	2
Overall	5.86	4.15	-1.71	100.00	-1.56	

Source : Primary Data

The highest difference between the perception and expectation of the respondents has been found in tangibles dimension (-2.41) followed by the reliability (-1.80). So, it can be inferred that students are not satisfied from the physical facilities, and equipments which are presently provided by the Kurukshetra University. The University needs to focus on improving the physical facilities according to the expectation of students to satisfy them. The lowest service quality difference has been found in case of Responsiveness dimension i.e. -0.55. It indicates that the Kurukshetra University Library staff is supportive and ready to provide the desired assistance to the students.

(B) Stream-wise Assessment of Service Quality

(i) SERVQUAL : Arts Students

The service quality scores given by Arts students are shown in the following Table. The overall service quality score is -1.49 is an indication of the negative service quality of library. Thus, it may be concluded that the services offered by the University Library is not meeting the requirements of the students.

Table 2

SERVQUAL Score of Arts Students

Service Dimension	Expectation (E)	Perception (P)	SERVQUAL Score (SQ = P–E)	Weight	Weighted SERVQUAL Score	Ranks
Tangibles	6.06	4.22	-1.84	26.80	-2.24	5
Reliability	6.08	4.12	-1.96	18.32	-1.63	4
Responsiveness	4.88	4.36	-0.52	18.26	-0.43	1
Assurance	5.84	3.94	-1.90	18.88	-1.63	3
Empathy	6.10	4.25	-1.85	17.74	-1.49	2
Overall	5.79	4.18	-1.61	100.00	-1.49	

Source : Primary Data

Above Table shows that the highest difference is between the perception and expectation oftangiblesdimension (-2.24), which includes the physical facilities, equipments and appearance of the library followed by the reliability (-1.63). Therefore, the library is required give more attention to the tangible attributes to meet the expectations of the students to their satisfaction.

(ii) SERVQUAL : Commerce Students

The overall service quality perception and expectations of the commerce students has been presented in the following Table 3. The overall service quality score in case of commerce students is -1.19 indicating thereby they have a negative service quality perception in relation to the facilities provided by the library of the Kurukshetra University.

Table 3

SERVQUAL Score of Commerce Students

Service Dimension	Expectation (E)	Perception (P)	SERVQUAL Score (SQ = P–E)	Weight	Weighted SERVQUAL Score	Ranks
Tangibles	6.06	4.64	-1.42	29.66	-1.91	5
Reliability	5.93	4.25	-1.68	20.10	-1.53	4
Responsiveness	4.85	4.58	-0.27	18.08	-0.22	1
Assurance	5.92	4.36	-1.56	17.06	-1.21	3
Empathy	6.00	4.46	-1.54	15.10	-1.06	2
Overall	5.75	4.46	-1.29	100.00	-1.19	

Source : Primary Data

Above Table 3 depicts that tangibles dimension has the greatest service quality gap (-1.91) followed by the reliability (-1.53) and assurance. It can be concluded that the commerce students are not satisfied with the tangible facilities of the library and they are demanding more physical facilities, equipments and appearance of the library.

(iii) SERVQUAL : Science Students

The service quality score of science stream students is -2.01 which indicates that there is a huge gap between the perception and expectations of science students.

Table 4

SERVQUAL Score of Science Students

Service Dimension	Expectation (E)	Perception (P)	SERVQUAL Score (SQ = P-E)	Weight	Weighted SERVQUAL Score	Ranks
Tangibles	6.26	4.08	-2.18	31.12	-3.08	5
Reliability	6.30	3.66	-2.64	18.48	-2.22	4
Responsiveness	5.00	3.75	-1.25	17.48	-0.99	1
Assurance	6.20	3.69	-2.51	16.66	-1.90	3
Empathy	6.34	3.83	-2.51	16.26	-1.86	2
Overall	6.02	3.80	-2.22	100.00	-2.01	

Source : Primary Data

Above Table 4 illustrates that the most disappointing dimension is tangibles (-3.08) followed by the reliability (-2.22) when service quality is examined from the point of view of science students. This is also the highest service quality gap among the three categories of the students. However, it may be due to the fact that central library do not have the desired facilities which are required for science students for their practical purpose. So, the University library is required to focus on improving the physical facilities and equipments according to the requirements of science students.

(D) Comparative Service Quality Assessment of Kurukshetra University Library

The comparative service quality analysis of different faculty students (Arts, Commerce and Science) of Kurukshetra University has been given with help of Table 5

Table 5
Comparative Service Quality Assessment

Service Dimension	Weighted SERVQUAL Score		
	Arts	Commerce	Science
Tangibles	-2.24	-1.91	-3.08
Reliability	-1.63	-1.53	-2.22
Responsiveness	-0.43	-0.22	-0.99
Assurance	-1.63	-1.21	-1.90
Empathy	-1.49	-1.06	-1.86
Overall	-1.49	-1.19	-2.01

Source : Primary Data

Overall, the students of different streams have rated the service quality as negative. It indicates that the services provided by Kurukshetra University Library are not meeting the requirements of the students hence, students are not satisfied. The highest difference between perception and expectation of respondents has been found in case of Science students (-2.01) followed by Arts students (-1.49).

CORRELATION ANALYSIS

The correlation between the service quality perceptions of three different streams' students is presented in the following Table 6.

Table 6
Correlation Analysis

	Arts	Commerce	Science
Arts	1	.977**	.960**
Commerce		1	.974**
Science			1

**. Significant at the .01 level

The analysis of above Table shows that the there is a strong positive correlation among the three categories of respondents regarding the library service quality. In case of Arts and Commerce students strong positive correlation (r = 0.977) has been found. Further, a high degree positive correlation has been found between the Commerce and Science students (r = 0.974). Respondents of Arts and Science have also been found strongly positive correlated (r = 0.960). In other

Annexure I

Dimensions	My EXPECTATION towards the Library Performance is : Low................High							My PERCEPTION towards the Library Performance is : Low................High						
1. My library provides appropriate physical environment & facilities which are conducive for study.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
2. My library is reliable/quick in providing required material related to my study	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
3. Library staff is competent and qualified	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
4. My library takes interest in providing practical experience & industrial exposure through various forms of interactions.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
5. My Library is having visually appealing facilities & materials associated with education.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
6. My library is having appropriate linkages and associations with the industry, institutions and organizations, etc.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
7. My library provides the course curriculum material and services as promised/desired.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
8. Library is having modern fixtures &equipments that facilitates learning	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
9. My library is helpful in providing suitable competitive books and magazines	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	1	2	3	4	5	6	7

Contd. Annexure I

10.	My library staff instills confidence in students	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
11.	My library staff keeps students' best interest at heart	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
12.	Image & reputation of my library.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
13.	Willingness & promptness of staff in assisting students in solving their problems	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
14.	Readiness to respond to students' requests.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
15.	Understanding the specific needs of the students	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
16.	My library Provides special help/aid to the needy students.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
17.	Approachability and ease of contact with the library staff.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
18.	Punctuality in opening the library and providing other services.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
19.	Various facilities like computer labs, canteen, drinking water, toilets etc. are convenient to the students	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
20.	My library provides operating/sitting hours convenient to the students	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
21.	Atmosphere of my library helps in improving my skills & personality, thus making me more attractive prospect for the corporate world	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
22.	My library provides facilities to access online journals and books.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	1	2	3	4	5	6	7

Annexure-II

No.	Dimension	Definition	Points
1.	Tangibles	The physical appearance of the library- building, canteen, computer rooms, modern equipments and other physical infrastructure and materials.	
2.	Reliability	The ability of the library and its staff to perform the promised service dependably and accurately.	
3.	Responsiveness	The willingness of library and its staff to help students and provide assistance.	
4.	Assurance	The knowledge and competences of library and its staff and their ability to convey trust and confidence.	
5.	Empathy	The caring individualized attention that library and its staff provide to students.	

Total Points Assigned **(Total Must Be Equal To 100)**

words, it can be said that the three categories of respondents have given closely related responses in relation to the assessment of service quality of university library.

DISCUSSION

A good library services enables the readers to use the library resourceseffectively .Therefore, proper understanding of users/students perceptions along service quality dimensions is essential for any academic institution including university library to serve according to the expectations of the students. Presently, Kurukshetra University library is lacking in providing quality services to its students. There has been a significant difference between the perception and expectations of the students.The findings of the present study are supported by Rehman (2013), Md. and Raza (2012), Nimosonboon and (2003) and Asogwa *et al.*(2014) where a significant difference has been found between the perceptions and expectations of the library users. The findings indicate that despite modern infrastructure, the library has not been successful in its plan for offering quality services. However, Sahu (2014) findings are different as no difference between the perceptions and expectations of the library users has been found.

CONCLUSION

From the above analysis it is concluded that though University library is having modern infrastructure and appearance but have not been successful in providing quality services according to the satisfaction of the users. The students are not satisfied with the physical facilities and equipment which are presently provided by the university library. Therefore, need of the hour is to improve the quality of services according to the expectations of the students to satisfy them. The library is required to examine its present system in a comprehensive manner and redesign its policies/resources to meet the expectations of the users.

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