QUALITY ASSESSMENT OF ACADEMIC & PUBLIC LIBRARY

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Abstract
In this paper we have discussed about the quality assessment process in academic and public libraries in this modern era. Concept of quality assessment is not new for library and information systems. Every user needed quality services and a quality services is what the user expected before to use the services and perceived level of services received. User satisfaction is one of the major components to evaluation of quality services in the academic and public libraries. There are various criteria of library assessment. These criteria are the facilities given by the academic and public libraries to users. User evaluated the quality according to their experience with the services they use in the library.
Keywords: - Public Library, Library Assesment, Library Evaluation, Quality Services.

Introduction

Academic library and public library are providing information to all the users who needed the information. But the question is that whether these libraries are providing quality services to users or not. Users are satisfied or not. The quality of libraries are assessed the facilities render by library and today's all the services of libraries are user oriented which is most important for library users so that they could enjoy library materials. There are many elements which assess library service qualities for instance rich collection, number of title increased in a year, area of subject coverage and library budget. Library budget is the main element which directly influences the library quality services.

The Evaluation of Quality Concept

The standard of something as measured against other things of a similar kind; the degree of excellence of something is quality. Quality is a characteristic by which the things could judge by the users or patrons. Now before to assessment of service quality, it would be quite apt to know about the inherent characteristics of the quality as described below:

1. Tangible: Physical facilities, equipments, and appearance of personnel.
2. Reliability: Ability to perform the promised service dependably and accurately.
3. Responsiveness: Willingness to help customers and provide prompt service.
4. Assurance: Knowledge and courtesy of employees and their ability to inspire trust and confidence.
5. Empathy: Caring, individualized attention the firm provides its customers. (Parasuraman et. Al., 1988, p. 23)

Parameters of Quality in Library and Information Science

Every subject has its own set of parameters and the same should be assessed or evaluated in terms of those parameters only. Library and information service too has its own parameters for assessment/evaluation as illustrated in Table 1.

Table 1 Library Quality Elements and Parameter

S.No.	Elements	Parameter
1	Reading materials	• Every document its user • Best documents for the largest number at the least cost • Right document for the right user at the right time
2	Library techniques	• Simple to follow • Purposive to the specific library • Uniform application • Logical but practical • Easy to practice
3	Library users	• Every user his/her document • Save the time of the user • Document are for use
4	Library building, furniture and equipments	• Functional • Comfortable • Aesthetic
5	Library environment	• Conducive reading atmosphere
6	Library staff	• Academically qualified • Professionally trained • Motivated • Update with information
7	Library management	• Having capacity to planning, organizing ,staffing, directing, coordinating, reporting, budgeting

Changing Concepts of Quality in a Library

Library is the information provider centre to all the users who needs information in our studies or researches, which are very essential for them. Libraries are now changing from traditional services to modern services. In other words general to specific and now libraries are rendering quality services to its users. Academic and public libraries are using new technologies in their daily works which get the library work smoothly done. These new technologies not only get the work easy to staff but also beneficial for library users too. Now academic libraries are rendering quality services to library users by adopting modern techniques and software. So that user can easily found their information without wasting of time. Skilled library staff provides smoot access to information regardless of format, whether the user is in the library or at the other location. Historically, the quality of the library has been measured in terms of its collection (size, number of title and area of subject

coverage) and various counts of its use, budget and manpower and services.

Now this concept has been changed towards the nature of services rendered by the librarians and not merely on the library collection and size. These days quality is the basic philosophy and requirement of library services and all libraries tries to deliver highest quality of service. If a library provides appropriate information to the users at the right time and in the required form, then it could be argued to be maintaining quality. Now service quality is viewed as the comparison of what the patron expected before to use of services and the perceived level of services received.

Peter Brophy, starting from the general management literature, has adapted a set of quality attributes to the libraries. Table-2 relies for the most part of Brophy's set and shows the quality criteria with typical example of their appliance of LIS.

Table 2 Criteria of library quality

S.No.		Criteria of library quality	Examples
1	Performance	A service meets its most basic purpose	Making key information resources available on demand
2	Features	Secondary characteristics, which add to the service but are beyond the essential core	Altering services
3	Reliability	Consistency of the service's performance in use	No broken web links
4	Serviceability	Level of help available to users	Complaint service
5	Aesthetics	Visual attractiveness	Physical library, website
6	Usability/Accessibility	Ease of access and use	Opening hours, website structure
7	Courtesy/Responsiveness	Accessibility, flexibility, and friendliness of staff	Reference service
8	Speed	Quick delivery of services	Interlibrary lending
9	Perceived quality	The users' view of the service	User satisfaction
10	Assurance/Credibility	Good experience with staff' knowledgability	Correct reference answers

Scope of Quality Assessment Study in Libraries

Library quality can have many facets and these facets can change if seen from the point of view of the various stakeholders (are all groups that have an interest in functioning of an institution) for a library the differ stakeholders are as follows.

- The users (Actual and potential)
- Funding institution (a university, a community)
- Policy makers
- Library Staff
- Library Managers
- General public

The perception of library quality (Table-3) will different according to their experience with the services they use. They will not bother for the efficiency of background processes, but for the effective delivery of services.

The funding institution will be interested in the library's benefit to the institution and in the library cost effectiveness. On the other hand staff will rate the library's quality by their working conditions, by adequate offers for further education, by an effective organization. Not all the given named have are criteria of library quality.

It is possible to access library collections, services and facilities from various vantages. Adopting an organization perspective, for instance, librarians might examine issues of extensiveness, efficiency, or effectiveness, perhaps even within a cost framework. Taking a customer perspective, they might examine service quality or satisfaction.

Table 3 Library quality perceptions of the stakeholders

Users	- Access to information worldwide - Delivery of information to the desktop - Speed and accuracy of delivery - Good in-library working conditions - Responsiveness of staff - Reliability of services
Financing authorities	- Clear planning, effective organization - Positive outcome on users - Benefits for the institution's goals - Effective cooperation with other institutions - High reputation of the library
Staff	- Good working conditions - Clear planning, straight processes - Systematic staff development - High reputation of library

One way of evaluation does not preclude the use of others; rather, each offers different insights and opportunities to engage in planning and improved decision-making. There are various options for assessing the quality of library.

1. **Performance indicators:** it measures the effectiveness and cost-efficiency of library services. They produce quantified data and are therefore sometimes called "objective

2. **User surveys:** measure the perceived quality, users' estimate of library services. They produce qualitative data and have a subjective bias.
3. **Outcome assessment:** tries to prove the value and benefit of libraries for individual users and society.

The standards established by Tann are valid for the general assessment of library quality:

- Faultless delivery of service.
- Knowing the customers' needs.
- Efficient administration.
- Good facilities.
- Feedback loops to build in improvement procedures.
- Efficient back-up service.
- Reliable equipment.
- Try to find measures that assess quality in the sense of stakeholder groups.
- The best way for any library to measure quality is to
- Assess what its users (or non-users) expect from the services they use (or do not use because of bad experience).

Rodski survey

The Rodski survey methodology gives library management the opportunity to measure and assess any gaps between client expectations and service delivery. This data can be used to improve levels of service delivery by redistributing resources and efforts to services clients' rate as very important but performing to a lower standard. Thirty-three variables are grouped into the following areas.

- Service quality
- Virtual library
- Communication
- Service delivery
- Library staff
- Facilities and equipment

- The name has been changed from Rodski to Insync survey

International Standards for Library Quality

ISO has designed standards dealing with library statistics and indicators (ISO 2789, ISO 11620 and others projects which are still under development). These can be used as reference documents and strategic tools in a performance assessment process in library.

ISO 2789—assessing quantity (International Library Statistics), and ISO 11620— assessing quality(Performance indicators for libraries), which is based on an international consensus of experts, takes into account, as much as possible, the recent evolutions in library structures and services. In addition, they are related to classical and shared assessment models. So, although their aim is not to draw up an assessment framework, they prove themselves useful for basic operations in such a framework: to define objects and services, and to classify, count, and build appropriate indicators.

Conclusions

Academic and public Libraries must accomplish evaluation programmes as management techniques oriented to recognize services needed improvements, as new ones to be implemented. The ability to learn and to develop library activities from a patron's point of view as well as involvement of the library staff can help to improve the quality of libraries. Academic librarian deals to the patrons in an effective way as a motivator, a mentor or a guide. The ability for library to create quality improvements is highly dependable of its ability to verify its activities from a patron's point of view. The difficulty lies in trying to find a single model or set of simple indicators that can be used by different institutions, and that will compare something across large groups that are by

definition only locally applicable i.e., how well a library meets the needs of its institution. Librarians have either accepted oversimplified national data or have undertaken customized local evaluations of effectiveness, but that has not been devised an effective way to link the two. Quantifiable data obtained from any tool is not an end in itself. Library staff should discuss user perceptions and expectations, using their experience to interpret service quality data and suggest how perceived shortfalls could be addressed.

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