

LibQUAL Analysis of Library Services in University Libraries in Sri Lanka

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Priyanwada Lakmali Wanigasooriya (Ph.D.)¹

Abstract

Currently, in an 'open/service-oriented information society' technology has increased access to content by bringing up information resources to one's fingertips and the provision of such services are increasingly becoming the signifier of excellence of quality. Therefore, over the years, the role of conventional university libraries has led to sophisticated service centers superseding the traditional storehouse concept. Thus compared to the global situation, university libraries in Sri Lanka have attempted to provide overall best services for their targeted users. But, in the Sri Lankan context some questions such as what are the users' right information desires, are these desires being fulfilled, what are the evaluation criteria for library quality, what are the reasons for the lack of frequent library usage and why do people gradually drop out from libraries, what steps have to be taken to provide better services and how to retain registered users while attracting new ones remain unanswered. For an understanding of these matters and how the existing shortcomings can be fixed, sound studies are vital.

This study aimed to evaluate the user perception and overall quality of services at university libraries in Sri Lanka. It provided suggestions to overcome identified difficulties encountered during the reception of library services. As the first LibQUAL survey conducted in Sri Lanka, this survey helped to assess current service performance (perceived services), users' minimum and maximum (desired services) expectations and service quality gaps (adequacy and superiority) of their main user groups.

The study concluded that there were only seven (31%) propositions in the entire survey that the users' minimum expectations were met. They included giving users' individual attention, employees' knowledge to answer users' questions and their caring fashion, remote accessibility of electronic resources, quiet comfortable and inviting location which inspires studying and learning. Comparing "library as place" and "effect of service", "information control" dimension received lowest perceived performance level at the