



Factors Influencing Reader Satisfaction and Quality of Service in Modern Libraries

Kazimi Parviz Firudin Oqlu^{1*} and Azad Qurbanov²

¹*Baku State University, Azerbaijan.*

²*BDU, Kitabxanaçılıq-İnformasiya Fakültəsi, Dosent, Azerbaijan.*

Authors' contributions

This work was carried out in collaboration between both authors. Both authors read and approved the final manuscript.

Article Information

DOI: 10.9734/SAJSSE/2021/v11i330285

Editor(s):

(1) Dr. John M. Polimeni, Albany College of Pharmacy and Health Sciences, USA.

Reviewers:

(1) Soumik Gangopadhyay, Institute of Engineering & Management, India.

(2) Nirmal Kumar Betchoo, Université des Mascareignes (UdM), Mauritius.

Complete Peer review History: <http://www.sdiarticle4.com/review-history/70720>

Received 24 April 2021

Accepted 29 June 2021

Published 01 July 2021

Short Communication

ABSTRACT

The article examines the factors influencing the overall satisfaction of readers and the quality of service in order to identify the strengths and weaknesses of the library and information activities of Azerbaijan. The research was carried out on the basis of the "SERVQUAL" model. The Customer Satisfaction Index (CSI) was calculated, evaluated on a 7-point Laykert scale for 5 dimensions and a "threshold" index was determined. Based on the analysis of the results obtained, the ergonomic environment, the provision of new information, the professionalism of the staff and openness to managerial innovations were identified as the main factors influencing the satisfaction of readers and the quality of service.

Keywords: *Ergonomic environment; reader satisfaction; SERVQUAL model; library ethics and professionalism; library management.*

1. INTRODUCTION

Information has become the locomotive of the economy of the XXI century, intellectual capital is

of great value and is an indispensable factor of production. Prompt access to accurate and complete information is today the most relevant social order of society and one of the main tasks

*Corresponding author: Email: pkazimi@mail.ru;

of information management enterprises and especially libraries. Today, in addition to libraries, there are many organizations that provide information services, including commercial enterprises. Access to new information as a result of the constant updating of knowledge is an essential element of the competitiveness of an information service.

Also, efficiency, continuity of service, efficiency and quality are considered the main indicators of information services. Unlike commercial information institutions, the main purpose of information services in libraries is not financial gain, but the satisfaction of readers (consumers). Ensuring reader satisfaction is key for libraries to sustain and expand their information marketplace in the global ICT-driven information environment. To ensure user satisfaction, it is necessary to determine what the modern reader expects from the library and how he perceives the information service provided, to calculate the satisfaction index and determine the factors influencing the index [1,2]. Identification of these factors underlines the need for scientific analysis using methods to measure the quality of services.

The quality of library service can be characterized as the result of a subjective assessment by the user of the level of library and information services provided to him and the comparison of the level of service that is provided to him with the level that, in his opinion, he deserves.

When talking about the quality of library service, we mean various forms of interaction between the library and its users. These are contacts in the library building, as well as contacts made by telephone, postal service, web services. Often, when visiting a library or accessing its website, the reader / user is not satisfied with the lack of library resources or a narrow range of services, but with poor-quality work of the staff and poor quality of service (slowness, incorrect / impolite response, no response to a request, or receiving an irrelevant, inaccurate information, etc.).

Thus, the "human factor" comes to the fore, that is, a library specialist who possesses the aggregate potential of professional knowledge, skills and abilities, has labor motivation, shows loyalty to the library, has personal qualities that contribute to attracting users and increasing the level of provision. services. The level of competence of a librarian-bibliographer is determined by erudition, experience, mentality and moral and psychological qualities. To be

attentive, friendly, tactful, polite and punctual, competent, focused on the needs of a particular user - these are the main commandments of high-quality library service, which should form the basis of the organizational culture of the library (otherwise, the corporate style).

2. RESEARCH MODEL

The assessment of the library's activity in the library theory of the USSR was determined mainly on the basis of library archives - the fund, rare copies, a prepared bibliographic index and resources, bibliographic reviews, the number of readers, attendance and other parameters. Unfortunately, this method is still used in Azerbaijan. However, developed countries such as Western Europe, Turkey, the United States and Canada have used a different approach to assess the quality of library and information activities since the 1990s. and the Russian Federation in recent years methods of measuring the quality of services [3]. It should be noted that problem-oriented issues of the quality of library services have been studied in the areas of library management and marketing, quality management, and personnel management [4-6]. A.A. Parazurman, L. Berry, B. Zeitzmal, K. Cook, F. Heath, B. Thompson and other authors have shown in their works methods for measuring the quality of service [7-16].

The issues of ensuring the quality of library services are considered within the framework of theoretical and practical directions in the field of library management and marketing (RD Stueart and BB Moran, M. Trask, M. N. Kolesnikova, V. V. Karmovsky, V. K. Klyuev, I. M. Suslov) personnel management quality management, economics of librarianship, based on the fundamental principles reflected in the classical works of M. Armstrong, P. Drucker, J. Carlson, R. Marr, etc. Speaking about the quality of service, one cannot fail to mention the concept of TQM (Total Quality Management), part of which is the organization of "continuous quality improvement". The core idea of TQM is that the organization should work not only on the quality of products, but also on the quality of services, including the work of employees. Continuous simultaneous improvement of these three components (product, organization, personnel) allows for faster and more efficient development of the library. The problems of satisfying and improving the quality of library services to users require the implementation of TQM and ISO-9000 standards. There are examples of TQM

implementation in libraries, but not all libraries are able to follow this concept and choose other ways and methods to improve the quality of their work.

A number of models have been developed to assess the quality of service. However, in practice, the models SERVQUAL, SERVPERF, Grönroos and Gap (Gap), Critical Event are used more often [3,8,11].

The main advantage of these models is that they are versatile and easily applicable in the field of information services. We also preferred the SERVQUAL model as our research model. This model was presented in the scientific literature in 1983-1988. Specialists from the USA - A. Parazurman, L. Berry and B. Seytman [7]. The essence of the model is to determine what the user (reader) expects from the quality of service and how satisfied he is with the real service, as well as to determine the gap between the expected result and the real result. Please note that the cut is calculated using the following mathematical formula:

$$Q=P-E$$

The study assessed the quality of service of 10 university libraries and 5 public libraries based on the following 5 measurements and 22 parameters:

1. Library environment, space and equipment.
2. Competence of staff.
3. Opportunities for independent work.
4. Access to information.
5. Customer Relationship / Empathy.

In a questionnaire based on a 7-point Likert scale [9], 500 readers rated the actual and expected result of the service for each parameter. The breakpoint was identified based on the assessment. In this case, unlike other similar studies, the zone of tolerance was taken into account.

Analysis of the results showed that no "negative cut-off" was found for both university and public libraries in terms of staff competence and customer relationship empathy measurement group. This means that the staffing of the libraries participating in the research fully meets the requirements of the readers. Satisfaction of readers with access to group information in university libraries is not ensured. Paradoxically, public libraries are very satisfied with access to

information. This can be explained by the fact that university library readers are more demanding of new scientific information. Reader satisfaction was not entirely satisfied in the self-study group.

3. FACTORS AFFECTING READER SATISFACTION

The library environment is of particular importance for the satisfaction of readers. Readers spend 7-8 hours in the library, in some cases even more. During this period, it is necessary to create ergonomic conditions that ensure the comfort of the reader. An ergonomic environment directly or indirectly affects the human body, the elements that make up the musculoskeletal system, bones, joints, muscles and the nervous system [17]. The ergonomic environment is also important for employees in terms of health and safety. If this is not achieved, the dissatisfaction that the librarian may have will manifest itself in the service process and cause legitimate reader discontent.

The creation of an ergonomic library environment depends on equipment, atmospheric and sound characteristics, and forms of lighting. Please note that library equipment must be appropriate for the "anthropometric" size of the person. Unfortunately, since there is no specialized enterprise for the production of library equipment in Azerbaijan, this is rarely done, and as a result, after a while readers feel tired and uncomfortable.

The air quality, temperature, humidity, pressure and electrical climate inside the library building are the atmospheric characteristics of the building. The air quality in the library depends on the clean air you breathe. Fresh air is defined as air with a concentration of harmful concentrates below the level established by the authorities, which does not contain known pollutants and which 80% or more of the people who breathe this air are dissatisfied with the quality of the air. Since the library is an enclosed space, air pollution negatively affects human health and productivity. Carbon monoxide, carbon dioxide, sulfur dioxide, nitrogen oxides, formaldehyde, cigarette smoke, radon, asbestos, volatile organic lead compounds, various microorganisms and allergens cause the spread of microorganisms such as viruses, bacteria and fungi that cause respiratory distress.

It should be noted that libraries are traditionally a place for long-term storage of printed materials,

where the concentration of cellulose dust is high. This, in turn, affects the quality of the air that people breathe in the library.

The library's air quality definition is based on the latest ASHRAE (American Association of Plumbing Engineers) ventilation standard for indoor air quality in 1999. Contaminated air in libraries is mainly characterized by excessive dust particles, imbalances in humidity and lack of oxygen. Library activities involve more elements of mental activation than physiological activities. It is very important for the brain to get enough oxygen for mental activity. Fresh air has a direct impact on perception. Thus, adequate and high-quality ventilation is considered to be a factor positively influencing the satisfaction of readers. The temperature in the library should be 22-26 C in winter, 18-22 C in summer, relative humidity 30% - 65%. The maximum value of the absolute humidity is 11.5 g / kg of air. To achieve normal temperature levels, it is necessary to install an appropriate heating and air conditioning system, taking into account the external climate and the size of the room in which it is located [17].

One of the factors that can affect user satisfaction with libraries is "sound" characteristics. Readers are engaged in mental activities in the library and want the library to be a quiet and comfortable place. Noise distracts them and, as a result, negatively affects their psychological state. In libraries, it is important to take special acoustic and noise isolation measures. On the other hand, modern libraries provide multimedia services. Special conditions are required to provide this service. Unfortunately, however, most of the public libraries in Baku are located on the first floors of high-rise buildings and do not meet sound standards. This also causes legitimate discontent of the reader.

Lighting is also an issue that worries readers and is very important for libraries. Libraries use natural and artificial lighting. Natural light during the day can be provided by ordinary windows. However, there are limited natural lighting techniques for library buildings with high ceilings and large areas. For this reason, and also because natural lighting is difficult to control, the use of artificial lighting is inevitable.

Correct lighting in library buildings is extremely important [18,19]. Today, library archives contain a huge amount of information that is transmitted on microfilm, films, music and electronic media

and available to researchers. Libraries have special rooms for listening to music, watching films and computer labs equipped with special tools for analyzing and evaluating such materials. It is inevitable that the lighting needs of such places will be different from the lighting needs of reading rooms. Artificial lighting is a light source used when sunlight is not available or sufficient. The main purpose of lighting is to provide the maximum visual environment. Since the artificial light source can be monitored, visual detection can be achieved in the most advanced way. The fact that the lighting is suitable for the interior of the building allows the reader to master the material without any problems.

Libraries have bookshelves, counters, shelves, reading rooms, waiting rooms, etc. which are divided into different sections. The number of these departments varies depending on the student structure of the institution or campus and the number of library buildings. The lighting in these areas may also vary depending on the situation. In other words, depending on the purpose of the department, different lighting equipment and technology can be used.

One of the most important factors affecting reader satisfaction is access to new information. Due to the high level of funding, access to reputable scientific journals, full-text scientific and indexed databases in university libraries is lower than expected, which negatively affects reader satisfaction.

Other factors affecting reader satisfaction include poor library uptime and poor weekend schedules, a shortage of computers and peripherals (printer, scanner, copier, reader, multimedia), and poor or no internet connection.

4. CONCLUSION

It turns out that significant financial support is required to ensure a high level of reader (consumer) satisfaction. While universities provide this at their own expense, public libraries must provide it with government and budget funding. Thus, the degree of reader satisfaction can be defined by the categories of library structures.

The importance of organizational culture for improving the quality of library services can hardly be overestimated, since it is on its basis that a positive image of the library is created, contributing to the formation of an impeccable

reputation and dissemination of opinions about the high quality of work, that is, the creation of a favorable and strong image. A strong image of a library is wide popularity and a good reputation, expressed in a preferable attitude towards it, as well as a set of other specific image attributes that affect the predisposition to its services, their positive assessment, the desire of specialists to work in it, etc.

The study and assessment of the work of library specialists involved in the service processes allows to identify both the capabilities of the library staff and the strengths and weaknesses of personnel management. In this regard, the importance of the following problems related to personnel is increasing:

The efficiency of librarians,

Loyalty of employees;

Service culture (image);

- discipline (timely and accurate performance of official duties);
- competence and quality of work;
- management discipline (timely and accurate fulfillment of the assigned tasks);
- quality of management;
- control over the work of employees.

All these factors, in one way or another, affect the success of the library, and their unresolved, on the contrary, leads to an increase in user dissatisfaction and image losses. These problems are interconnected. For example, without solving the problem of control, all measures to improve the image, that is, to create a favorable image of the library that the reader has after visiting it, may be ineffective.

Reader satisfaction surveys in libraries are important for every library in order to align its future activities with modern requirements. For this, the library can contact independent quality management companies and independently conduct research with the involvement of relevant qualified specialists. Libraries themselves can use the LibQUAL + (™) information system [9,11-16] to check the quality of service. After the readers answer the questions of the questionnaire online, the program analyzes the answers and makes an assessment.

COMPETING INTERESTS

Authors have declared that no competing interests exist.

REFERENCES

1. Bulgan U. Measurement of service quality in the library sector and the application of a university library, Beykent University, Institute of Social Sciences, Master's thesis; 2002.
2. Nitecki Danuta A. Quality assessment measures in libraries // *Advances in Librarianship*. - Academic Press. 2001;25:133.
3. Redkina N. S review of modern methods for assessing the quality of service for library users // *Bibliosfera*. 2016;(3):65-73.
4. Basamygina IN, Apanasenko AA Marketing as a technology of modern library management. Moscow: Litera. 2009;126.
5. Vasilyeva TV Library personnel management: A specialist's view // *Information bulletin of the RLA*. 2008;(46):67-69.
6. Kolesnikova MN. Management of library and information activities: textbook. for universities. Moscow: Libereya-Bibinform. 2009;255.
7. Parasuraman A, Zeithaml VA, Berry LL. A Conceptual model of service quality and its implications for future research // *Journal of Marketing*. 1985;49(3):41-50.
8. Parasuraman A, Zeithaml VA, Berry LL. SERVQUAL: A multiple-item scale for measuring consumer perceptions of service quality // *Journal of Retailing*. 1988;64(1):12-40.
9. Shorb SR, Driscoll L. LibQUAL + (™) meets strategic planning at the University of Florida // *Journal of Library Administration*. 2004;40(3/4):173-180.
10. Parasuraman A, Berry LL, Zeithaml V. Alternative scales for measuring Service Quality; A comprehensive assessment based on psychometric and diagnostic criteria // *Journal of Retailing*. 1994;70(3):201-230.
11. Linden IL. A new tool for assessing the quality of library services - SERVQUAL / LibQUAL // *scientific and technical libraries*. 2008;(4):45-54.
12. Makeeva OV. Possibilities of the LibQUAL method. A new program to increase work

- efficiency // Library. 2010;(6): 38-42.
13. Cook C, Heath F, Thompson B. LibQUAL +: One instrument in the new measures toolbox // ARL newsletter: A bimonthly report on research - library issues and actions from ARL, CNI, and SRARC. 2000; 4-7.
 14. Thompson B, Cook C, Heath F. The LibQUAL + gap measurement model: The bad, the ugly, and the good of gap measurement. Performance Measurement and Metrics. 2000;(1):165-178.
 15. Cook C, Heath F, Thompson B, Thompson RL. LibQUAL +: Service quality assessment in research libraries // IFLA Journal. 2001(4):264-268.
 16. Cook C, Thompson B. Psychometric properties of scores from the webbased LibQUAL + Study of perceptions of library service quality, library trends. 2001;49(4-Spring):585-604.
 17. Galip Akın, Başak Koca Özer. "Ergonomik tasarım ve tasarımdaki ergonomik kriterler", standard, türk standartları enstitüsü, Yıl. 43, Sayı 510, Haziran. 2004; 80.
 18. Müjgan şerefhanoglu basic properties and distinctions of daylight and lamp light in interior lighting of buildings, Yıldız Technical University, Faculty of Architecture, Istanbul. one
 19. Feyyaz ataç natural and artificial lighting criteria in libraries: Investigation of reading halls of the Middle East Technical University Central Library, Social Sciences Institute.

© 2021 Oqlu and Qurbanov; This is an Open Access article distributed under the terms of the Creative Commons Attribution License (<http://creativecommons.org/licenses/by/4.0>), which permits unrestricted use, distribution, and reproduction in any medium, provided the original work is properly cited.

Peer-review history:
The peer review history for this paper can be accessed here:
<http://www.sdiarticle4.com/review-history/70720>