Testing the Service Quality Provided by the University of Girne American Library

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Abstract

This study will be very important because it is the first study will discuss in details the services which are available in Girne American University Library. The researcher in this study will test and measure the quality of these services, in addition to, he will test the user's satisfaction about these services and what are the users' needs and wants. Total samples of 100 users of students were used in this study and a descriptive statistics were used to tabulate obtained results and gap analysis was used. Moreover, the researcher will examine the usage of library, the physical environment of the library, according to library collections, library environment, library IT services, the overall quality and the most important services. The results of the study showed that most of the library users are male and enrolled in humanities and social sciences, the respondents find the overall quality is good and most of them don't find it excellent.

Introduction to the Study

Bhat (2002) viewed that to have customer focus, it is essential to understand the customer perception of quality. Since the customers' needs, values and expectations are constantly changing and becoming more demanding, there is no acceptable quality level for customers' needs and expectations.

Today the challenge for business is to produce quality for business is to produce quality products for services efficiently. This means quality is not a new concept in modern business or in service organizations. Kano (2001) breaks down quality into four categories, these four categories are: indifferent quality, expected quality, one – dimensional quality and exciting quality. The researcher found that exciting quality is the most important, which meet customers' perceptions and customers' expectations. Bhat (2002) viewed very important point that all organizations must ask these questions: Which services meet customers' expectations? Which do not? What services do customers need that they are not receiving? and Are they receiving services that they do not need?.
From these four questions, we can understand customers' needs; also customer-driven performance for standards should be used as the basis for goal setting, problem solving and performance appraisal. In addition to, users' perceptions service quality is very necessary in order to determine the level of service quality delivered by the organization.

In this research the researcher will enhance the users' perception of service quality at Girne American University Library. Users' perception of service quality can help shape the types of services provided by the library at Girne University in the future. There are so many studies and researches about service quality in various fields, less attention has been given to service quality in libraries. This shows the importance of this research.

Introduction to the Organization

Girne American University (GAU) was founded in 1985 as an independent non-profit institution of higher education, the university located in Cyprus, in Girne. GAU's goals is to become a university with and without walls, to make American model learning opportunities accessible throughout life, and to making them challenging and relevant to a diverse population to young adults. The university has more than 6000 students from around over the world.

Girne American University Library

The Center of Information Services aims to support Girne American University and UNVA's academic programs, meet the information needs of its faculty and administrative staff and students.

Library Reference and Lending Services are located on the lower level of the Millennium Building. Cybrary is located on level two of the Millennium Building, the Cybrary contains 80 Computers with Internet access are available for student use in the Cybrary facility located in the Millennium Building.

Statement of the Problem

This study aims to enhance the service quality provided by the Library of Girne American University. Specifically, this study is sought to answer the following questions:

How to determine the demographic data of the respondents in terms of:

1. Gender.
2. Educational Level.
3. Specialization.
4. Average visit.
5. Using the library as a place of study.
6. Library collection/resources.
7. Library database collections.
8. Library environment.
9. Library staff.
10. To evaluate the overall quality
11. To evaluate the library electronic services.
12. To measure the library facilities.
13-To evaluate the electronic library
14-What do the respondent wants to see more in the library?
15-What are the most important three services for the respondent in the library?

Hypothesis

1-most of the library users are from postgraduate users.
2-most of library user's visit the library once a month.
3-there is a shortage of science and technology resources.
4-there is a shortage of book collection in Girne American University Library.
5-the databases collections and the internet will satisfy and meet the user's perceptions and satisfactions.

Literature Review

Lovelock (2004) viewed the service quality sector is going through almost revolutionary change, which we live and work. New services are continually launched to satisfy our existing needs and to meet needs that we did not even know we had. Ten years ago, few people anticipated a personal need for e-mail, online banking, web hosting and many other new services. Today many of us feel we cannot do without them.

On the other hand, McColl, (1998) viewed quality to be seen as increasingly important element in defining and providing a service offer. It is often the criteria of customers use for differentiating between competing services that can lead to customer retention, in addition, understanding what dimensions of quality provided is very important to customers.

Definition of Quality

Juran (1989) defined quality as fitness for purpose of use. Oakland (1999) defined quality as meeting the customer requirements. Feigenbaum, (1993) viewed quality as co-operation of all activities and sections which leads to product a service requires the customer expectations. Crosby (1979) defined quality as conformance to requirements. Which means that the customer will be satisfied when the quality is exactly fulfillment the customer expectations and perceptions. From these different definitions, the researcher noted that word quality concerns on services, expectations, perceptions and customers.

Service Quality and its Measurement

Gaither (1996), viewed service quality as customer satisfaction about a product or service and conformance to his requirements. Elliot (1994), defined service quality as a subjective concept that relates to a person, attitude towards service.

There are five popular methods for measuring service quality: Complains measure, Satisfactions measure, SERVQUAL measure, SERVPER measure and user-values service-quality measure. Hemmasi *et al* (1994) the most widely used and tested service quality survey instrument has been SERVQUAL, Parasuraman *et al (1988),* devised SERVQUAL, a multiple-item scale for measuring consumer perceptions. The scale was based on a concept of 'perceived' quality (the consumers' judgment of the services they had received). Zeithaml (1987) defined perceived quality as 'the consumers' judgment about an entity's overall excellence or superiority', which can be viewed as distinct from 'objective' quality.

Measuring service quality based on the service quality `gap model' Parasuraman *et al.* (The gap model defines service quality as a function of the gap between customers' expectations of a service and their perceptions of the actual service delivery by an organization. Parasuraman *et al.* (1988) suggested that this gap is influenced by a number of other gaps such as the difference between:

1-Managers' perceptions of consumers' expectations and consumers' actual expectations;
2-Managers' perceptions of consumers' expectations and service quality specifications
3-Service quality specifications and actual service delivery;
4-Actual service delivery and external communications about the service.

Service Quality in Libraries

The rapid development of information technology, tremendous speed of 'socio-technical developments have changed needs of users added to the expectations from a service organization. A library needs to fulfill user expectations. The application of quality management in libraries is to establish a culture of continuous improvement of quality of products and services. Its implementation in libraries improves the image of the library staff and helps in public relations and marketing. (Rajan and Ravi, 2001).

Traditionally, the quality of an academic library has been described in terms of its collection and measured by the size of the library holdings and different measures of its use. This traditional method no longer fulfills the goals for successfully meeting the user's demands for information. The time has now come to evaluate the quality and significance of library service through SERVQUAL. Sharma (2001), Quality is the basic philosophy and requirement of library profession and all libraries strive to deliver the highest quality of service. A quality service is one that fully meets expectations and requirements of the users. If a library provides right information to right user at right time and in required form, then it is maintaining quality. Quality library services mean satisfying the query of each and every user individually, exhaustively and expeditiously. Gronroos (1988) viewed the quality of library services can be classified into two dimensions: technical (outcome) dimension and the functional (process) dimension Gronroos (1988).

Technical quality or tangible quality can be expressed primarily as the quality and volume of literature available in the library. Functional quality or intangible quality refers to the manner in which the library services are delivered. The service achieves quality in perception when its performance meets or exceeds the level of the consumer's expectations.

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. Quality becomes a big issue when libraries try to expand their scope and improve their service. In the library, quality may be recognized by the customers in terms of prompt delivery or lack of error in services. Quality can also be seen as relating to the fitness of a service or product to its intended purpose or use, subject to the expectations of the customer or user. Quality, therefore, must be in conformity with the customer's requirements or needs.

Therefore, quality is an ongoing process where the user is a key determinant. Quality assurance is a continuous process of examination and re-examination of needs of the user, providing the means by which expectation can be met or satisfied. Thapisa and Gamini (1999), quality service is helping a user to define his/her needs, clarifying user benefits, building confidence and monitoring and assessing the organization and the impact of its services.
Within the library literature, the concept of quality has not yet been well developed, depending on the context in which a library organization seeks to assess its service quality. Recently, some librarians are shifting their perspective of library services to represent a user driven view. The assessment of how well a library succeeds depends on the user as judge of quality. The primary goal of any library therefore should be to maximize user satisfaction and to exceed expectations.

Parasuraman, Berry and Zeithaml (1998) reiterate customer based approach to conceptualize and measure service quality, suggests intriguing alternative to view and measure the quality of library services. They identified

1-Reliability: The ability to perform the promised service both dependably and accurately.
2-Responsiveness: The willingness to help customers and to provide prompt service.
3-Assurance: The knowledge and courtesy of employees as well as their ability to convey trust and confidence.
4-Empathy: The provision of caring, individualized attention to customers.
5-Tangibles: The appearance of physical facilities, equipment, personnel, and communication materials.
Zeithaml, Parasuraman, and Berry identify the five service quality dimensions and use them to develop a model of service quality that is commonly known as the Gaps Models (Fitzsimmons, and Fitzsimmons, 2000).
1-Not knowing what customers expect.
2-The wrong service quality standards.
3-The service performance gap.
4-When promises do not match delivery.
5-Expected service—perceived service gap.

Synthesis

From this literature review, the researcher noticed that SERVQUAL has been widely used and tested in different organizations and libraries, which shows validity and ability to measure service quality in libraries. So this instrument will be employed in this study.

Research Methodology

This part describes the research approach, design and methods that have been developed to address the research questions.

Research Design

This study aims to find out the service quality provided by Girne American University Library to it users. The study adopts a descriptive survey research design and primary instruments used in gathering the data is questionnaire.

Questionnaire Design

The questionnaire used in the study is a researcher-based questionnaire. The, questionnaire is evaluated by a group of specialized librarians who are working in Girne American University Library,

Population and sampling Procedure

The researcher used the percentages statistics procedure by excel program to determine the sample sizes and analyze them. The number of the respondents was 120; the researcher doesn't include in this study the new coming students because they can't measure the library services very well.

Data Collection

First, the researcher took the permission from the director of the library; the researcher distributed the questionnaire by himself randomly. When he finished, he began to collect the data from the students. The researcher did not leave the library even he collected the samples from the students. The researcher also explained to the students the difficult points that they could not understand.
In addition to, the researcher distributed the samples in the lecture classes and the university square. The period of distributing the samples was two days.

Statistical Treatment

The statistical tool used in this study is the normal statistics, which is the percentage, the baseline and statistical data were presented, analyzed and interpreted.

Limitations of the Study

In as much as this study aims to assess the service quality of Girne American University Library, however, delimitations are acknowledged in the course of collecting the data as follows:

1-Some respondents did not return the questionnaire.
2-Some respondents did not complete the questionnaire.

3-Some respondents answered all the questions in the same rate.
4-Some respondents found difficulty in understanding the questionnaire.

Finding and Results

In this part the researcher will report the results of analyzed the data collection using a survey instrument. There are 25 sample are missed, because some of respondents didn't return the questionnaire, some of them didn't complete answering all the questions and some of them answered all questions in the same way.

Table 1	A	B
Question 1	63 %	37 %

Table one showed 63 % of respondents is male and 37 % of respondents are male. This can show that most of students at GAU are male.

Table 2	A	B
Question 2	32 %	68 %

Table two showed 32 % of respondents are undergraduate and 68 % of respondents are postgraduate. Because the researcher tried to include the postgraduates students more in this study. Because the postgraduate students are heavily use the library resources more than the undergraduate students.

Table 3	A	B
Question 3	65 %	35 %

Table three showed that most of respondents are enrolled in humanities and social more than science and technology. At GAU humanities and social science specializations are included higher numbers of students than science and technology.

Table 4	A	B	C	D
Question 4	15 %	10 %	15 %	60 %

Table four showed 60 % of respondents visit the library each month, 15 % of them visit the library once a day, 10 % of them visit the library once a week and 15 % of them visit the library once every two weeks.

Table 5	A	B
Question 5	43 %	57 %

Table five showed 43 % of respondents use the library as a place of study and 57 % of respondents don't use the library as a place of study.

	1	**2**	3	4	5
Question 6	**24**	**25**	46	4	1
Percentage	0.24	0.25	0.46	0.04	0.01
Question 7	**20**	**30**	15	10	25
Percentage	0.2	0.3	0.15	0.1	0.25
Question 8	**18**	**17**	46	13	2
Percentage	0.18	0.17	0.46	0.13	0.02
Question 9	**19**	**21**	36	15	9
Percentage	0.19	0.21	0.36	0.15	0.09
Question 10	**13**	**23**	36	12	16
Percentage	0.13	0.23	0.36	0.12	0.16
Question 11	**14**	**27**	42	11	7
Percentage	0.14	0.27	0.42	0.11	0.07
Question 12	**17**	**35**	36	7	5
Percentage	0.17	0.35	0.36	0.07	0.05
Question 13	**15**	**21**	39	14	11
Percentage	0.15	0.21	0.39	0.14	0.11

Question sex showed most of the respondents finds the library collections doesn't meet the respondent's satisfaction and perception, because 0. 01 of respondents finds the library collections excellent and 0.49 of them find the library collections between the rage weak and accepted.

Question seven showed most of respondents find the databases collection meets the respondent's satisfaction and needs, 0.25 of them find the database excellent and 0.2 of them find it weak. And 0.25 of them find the databases collection between good and very good.

On the other hand, question eight showed 0.02 of respondents find the library environment excellent and 0.46 of respondents find it good, so in general library environment is good and meets the respondents' satisfaction. But it is not very good and excellent.

Question nine showed most of respondents satisfied with the library staff, they find them helpful, and 0.09 of respondents find them excellent and 0. 036 of respondents find the library staff good. So in general the library staff meets the respondent's expectations and needs.

Question ten showed the rate of overall quality in the library is good and meets the respondent's satisfaction and needs. On the other hand, 0.36 of respondents rated the overall quality between weak and accepted and 0.16 of respondents rated it as excellent. In addition to, 0.48 of respondents rated it between good and very good.

Question eleven showed 0.07 of respondents agreed and finds the library electronic services such as the computers, printers and scanners are excellent and most of them find these services are good. So in general the electronic services meet the user's satisfaction and perception.

Question twelve showed 0.05 of respondents are very satisfied and find the library facilities are excellent, on the other hand, 0.36 of them find the library facilities are good, and 0.52 of them ranged the library facilities between weak and accepted, in general the library facilities meet the user's wants and needs.

Question thirteen showed 0.11 of the electronic library users are very satisfied and find it excellent, on the other hand 0.39 of the electronic library users find it good. So in general, the electronic library meets the user's satisfaction and expectations.

In question fourteen, the respondents suggested to see more services in the library, such as more history books, updated engineering and computers books, more printed periodicals, more computers, high speed internet, law journals, study rooms and more spaces, more references books, more staff and finally more books about science.
In question fifteen, the respondents find that the most important three services are high speed of internet, more book collections and helpful and knowledgeable staff.

Conclusion

Based on the results presented, it is obvious that the service quality in Girne American University Library meets the students' perceptions and expectations. The majority of the students found what they need and is satisfied with the services provided. But the library must increase the library resources and collection, must develop their employees and training them very well, libraries also, must develop the services very well and take care about library environment in order to meet the student's perception and satisfaction. There was a weakness in the IT facilities. The library management should intend to address this issue over the next period and keep it as one of its priorities Therefore; these services must be improved in order to meet the user's expectations and needs. The researcher expects that the library management will take in consideration the important points which indicated by the respondents in the future to develop the services and to meet user's expectations.

Recommendations

From the research findings and conclusions, the following recommendations are made for Girne American University Library by the researcher.

The first recommendation calls for increasing the library resources, printed and updated books especially the science collections.

The second recommendation calls for training the librarian, especially the ones who are working in information service department, to develop communication skills dealing with the customers, and searching skills to be able to help students in searching the internet and databases.

The third recommendation calls for providing more library sessions for the students and faculty, introducing the library resources, services, and encouraging the users to visit the library more frequently.

The fourth recommendation calls for conducting surveys on regular basis to measure service quality and assess the improvement in Girne American University library performance.

The fifth recommendation calls for using updated computers and IT equipment's in the library, such as printers, scanners and computers.

The sixth recommendation calls for creating a library committee consist in representatives from the colleges, active students and skillful librarians, in order to act as a link between the library and colleges, interpreting the needs of students, disseminate information and maximize the relationship and communicate between the library and its users.

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