

أساليب جودة الخدمات المقدمة من قبل المكتبات الأكاديمية

في منطقة الخليج العربي

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مستخلص:

استهدفت الدراسة الحالية مسح أساليب جودة الخدمات المقدمة من قبل المكتبات الأكاديمية في منطقة الخليج العربي التي توظف طريقة LibQUAL®+ مع الاهتمام بمميزاتها وعيوبها. كما تناولت الدراسة مجموعة من الأساليب التي يمكن من خلالها التغلب على عيوب هذه الطريقة. ولقد استخدمت الدراسة الحالية المنهج الوصفي المسحي، عن طريق تطبيق استبيان بالتعاون مع 27 مكتبة أكاديمية من مكتبات الخليج العربي والتي تقوم بإجراء دراسات مسحية وتابعية. ولقد أسفرت نتائج الدراسة إلى أن 25% من الذين استخدموا طريقة LibQUAL® ما بين عامي 2016 و2017 فضلوا استخدام الواجهة التي تركز على اللغة

العربية، كما أسفرت نتائج اختبار "ت" إلى أن جودة الخدمات المقدمة من المكتبات الأكاديمية في المؤسسات المختلفة بمنطقة الخليج العربي قد اختلفت اختلافاً جذرياً علي ما يجب توافره فعلياً. ولقد قدمت الدراسة مجموعة من التوصيات التي تتعلق بطريقة المسح LibQUAL® لتحسين مستوى الخدمات المقدمة من المكتبات الأكاديمية بمنطقة الخليج العربي.

Service Quality methods used in the Arabian Gulf Academic Libraries: A Survey

INTRODUCTION:

Since years, library and information sciences professionals and researchers have been looking for user's information needs, demands, and the perceptions of the significance and importance of library services. They looked for an indefinable and multidimensional concept which characterized quality as a category (involving size, current titles, and subject coverage of the category) or utility of library services (involving the number of fulfilled goals). However, in the recent few years, researchers have shown a tendency toward retrieval and other texts to focus on user perceptions and adopting a qualitative approach to reflect the viewpoints of users or customers about library services (Nitecki & Hernon, 2000).

Academic and research libraries have made extraordinary efforts to offer better definitions for new scales that outline their services. Increases in the users' demands for better services have led these libraries to evaluate themselves based on the feedback they receive. On the other hand, it is only through retaining and attracting more customers and focusing more on meeting their expectations that academic libraries could survive today's uncertain environment, as Kazempour, Asemi, and Ashrafi Rizi (2010) explained that instead of using resources and data evaluation indicators, nowadays, libraries have come under an increasing pressure to evaluate their performance by outcome-based measures. In other words, the performance of a library is measured by the quality services it provides, and this shows the efficiency and effectiveness of the library.

Recently, LibQUAL+® shows up as a standardized instrument, which enables benchmarking worldwide. LibQUAL+® is a Web-based survey instrument, which utilizes the Gap Theory of Service Quality to learn what the users anticipate from the library services just as how they see the nature of services got.

From all over the world, the library administrators have successfully used LibQUAL+® survey data to distinguish best practices, analyses deficits, and successfully dispense available resources. LibQUAL+® give the service providers good opportunity to get feedback from users which is useful to show area of services that need betterment, and accordingly service provider can act promptly and better control their users' expectancies. LibQUAL+® can assist to expand services that greater meet users' expectancies by comparing the information obtained from a library with that of peer institutions and then reviewing the practices of libraries, which were evaluated specifically by their users.

LITERATURE REVIEW:

Since many years' researchers like Killick and Town (2012), Rehman, Kyrillidou, and Hameed (2017) and Thompson, Cook, and Kyrillidou (2019) emphasis on the quality, compatibility, and effectiveness of the educational library services. This emphasis tied to the partial financial difficulties that put additional requirements on universities to work and make a positive impact for strategic planning and business processes established by universities. In addition, the needs of quality assurance requirements and students' expectations of service who have the strong customer voice.

Atkinson (2016) discussed in detail about the quality services in academic libraries and mentioned that quality is always rather an elusive concept. Atkinson (2016) quoted the definitions of quality from the Oxford English Dictionary highlight the problem as 'The standard of something as measured against other things of a

similar kind” p.3. This definition is probably very relevant about the quality of academic libraries.

Library service is much more meaningful because it is related to learning and research activities. To satisfy librarians and information professionals, not just popular services such as acquisition, catalog, rating, and organization, but even additional services are provided (Raza & Samim, 2017).

Thompson et al. (2019) mentioned three primary mechanisms for interpreting the Quality Diagnosis Score for library service. First, researchers could have compared to the scores received on the same scale last year than compared to our scores. Its the final form of benchmark because nobody is like us in comparison with us. Second, researchers can compare the contrast of the score received against the rating for both the least acceptable service scores and required service scores. The second set of two scores makes a "tolerance area" against which researchers can describe the quality of the rating of the customer's quality of service quality. Third, the researchers can explain the score obtained such a harmony and compare it with other score from another institutions. Some library services allow quality diagnostic protocols (e.g., LibQUAL+®) which allow libraries to use any combination or all these three entertaining frameworks.

LibQUAL+® is a library service quality evaluation and improvement protocol in which library service quality library utilizes the Internet to measure consumer views. By date, LibQUAL+® has been used to collect data from approximately 1,000,000 users from over 1,000,000 organizations.

There are numerous mechanisms in which libraries are used in search of input from students and other stakeholders to increase service development (Atkinson, 2016). Ideally, to make a continuous improvement internally, the monitoring approach will expect to see sustained growth. The organization is continually

challenging the positioning library within the perspective of continuous improvement. Most academic libraries recognize survey boundaries to provide intelligence on the quality of the library and apply other approaches to obtain ideas on service quality. Kiran (2010) mentioned that researchers of various subjects adapt SERVQUAL as a tool to assess the quality of service in the library's layout. The SERVQUAL device reflects the quality of five dimensions (RATER) from the customer's perspective, which reflects the basic quality, which is Reliability, Assurance, Tangibles, Empathy and Responsiveness. Each dimension is measured by four to five items, in which 22 overall things provide service based on measuring and optimizing customer's expectations. The difference is then considered as a difference between "perception score " and "expectation score." However, the operationalization of the space scores for many years has been questioned, and it has been categorized that the quality of service is more accurately evaluated by measuring standard concepts.

Libraries must effectively evaluate the quality of service for half a century (Kazempour et al., 2010). In the 1970s, customer-based thinking-thinking customers encouraged to see the quality of service more than standard and to libraries to participate in consumer expectations. Although evaluation and evaluation have influenced all types of libraries in today's Global Information Market, researchers focus on evaluation in educational libraries due to their primary role in promoting society's knowledge. Historically, an educational library has been described in terms of its reservoirs, the size of the library's holding and the various variations of its usage. The overall measurement of the library has become entirely unusual. Nowadays, library managers should evaluate the quality of service with a new perspective that meets the needs of the customers, because the purpose of the Library is to meet the expectations of the user.

Therefore, using customer-based tools is very important.

One of these instruments is LibQUAL. The LibQUAL instrument derives from the gap theory of service quality and SERVQUAL instrument (Kazempour et al., 2010). The controversial method has fallen into itself; the only single acceptance assembles the SERVQUAL protocol itself: through a series of 22 questions. This service is set up according to quality building. LibQUAL is a web-managed quality evaluation protocol used for library service across worldwide.

LibQUAL+® is a 100% bought in the survey, which requires at least staff management time, but some respondents have commented on the complexity of the survey, the time length for completing and repeat the query. Although local questions can be included in the LibQUAL+® survey from the starting list, some authors have concluded that the results are not always satisfactory by LibQUAL+® and that LibQUAL+® has a particular survey for additional or replacement. May need other authors to emphasize the need to take a broader view of LibQUAL+®, depending on the customer's service delivery when considering the library's effectiveness (Atkinson, 2016).

Thompson and Kyrillidou (2011) discuss the LibQUAL+® Long, and LibQUAL+® Light includes some modes to leave users incredible data. First, long and light users are removed in data if users have the maximum number of items at the maximum acceptable service level at the rate of the same at the service level. Reflecting such material as casual or neutral, and thus unreliable, answerable to non-logical anonymous invaders. Second, the data on the given user is removed when users do not select unacceptable "responses" responses because such users submit informative information to insufficient information about library services. Are not able to Label + Tired Protocol has yet to give another way to evaluate the

confidence of a library service quality so that the quality of service improvement will be based on just a valid score.

Rehman et al. (2017) discussed the validity of LibQUAL+® and mentioned that reliability alone is not enough. Scales need to be correct. According to the assessment, the voice of individual awareness based on scores is that measurement is necessary, but do not even assume what measure they do not want to do. There are different types of validations: Quality-related credentials (such as mutual trust, validity validation). By the point of view, it is a point to indicate that different construction measures are different. The most common and widely used procedure for data validation is the element analysis. Quantity researchers have used this method extensively to verify data validation.

LibQUAL+® at King Fahd University of Petroleum and Minerals (KFUPM)

The KFUPM Library administration during the 1970s and 1980s use to invite several eminent librarians from North American university libraries such as University of Michigan, CalTech, Colorado School of mines, etc. for overseeing the quality of library services and collections offered by the KFUPM library and they used to suggest areas for further improvement. However, the library also on their use to conduct user-based surveys and their results were evaluated and implemented successfully. The last user survey about the KFUPM library was done by the Office of Planning & Quality (OPQ) Department of KFUPM in 2011, and the results show significant improvements in several areas and some deficiencies. Therefore, since KFUPM already have the experience and expertise in conducting such exercises in the past, so they decided to conduct their survey or involve the OPQ to keep the objectivity and confidentiality of the results.

Finally, the decision was made to use LibQUAL+®. As LibQUAL+® is a rigorously tested, survey those measures library users' perceptions of the quality of service at their library. More than 1,300 libraries have implemented the survey since 2000. The LibQUAL+® exclusive service permits libraries to send focused reminders most effective to potential contributors who have now not answered to the survey. LibQUAL+® survey was conducted in Nov/Dec 2013 by the KFUPM Library and is provided with a rich source of information from the community (Faculty, Students & Staff). Judicious implementation of these results is enabling KFUPM Library to transform its future service plans. The survey has also helped us to assess and evaluate the effectiveness of the present library collections, services, IT infrastructure and facilities.

METHODOLOGY:

To investigate the Service Quality Methods that used in Arabian Gulf Academic Libraries, a survey questionnaire was conducted which is highly recommended as an appropriate tool for measuring and assessing the library services and quality (Sansomboonsuk, 2015). The target audience of the study comprised academic libraries in the Arabian and Gulf region countries. The survey was conducted through the questionnaire. Based on the reviewed literature, a questionnaire was designed in MS Word. The tool consisted of demographic variables, use of LibQUAL+®, format and language of the survey and its effect on library services. For all universities either as local (Saudi Arabia) or to other Gulf Countries questionnaire distributed through email. After reminders, follow up phone calls and personal interaction, 27 libraries responded and returned the filled questionnaire. The data of 27 filled questionnaires were analyzed by using Statistical Package for Social Sciences (SPSS) version 21 for Windows.

DATA ANALYSIS:

In SPSS (21) data was analyzed through frequency distribution for independent variables. For dependent variables, firstly normality distribution test was conducted to rollout the null hypothesis. After the normality test, the paired sample t-test was conducted to compare desired and perceived mean and to evaluate the feedback of respondent institutes.

Type of Survey:

	Frequency	Percent
Annual	10	37
User Satisfaction	10	37
LibQUAL+®	7	25.9
Total	27	100

[Table 1: Type of Survey]

The data according to table 1 portrays the type of surveys conducted by the respondent institutes. Out of 27, ten academic libraries conducted annual surveys, ten conducted user satisfaction survey and seven that used LibQUAL survey as their tool for measuring service quality of the library. Voorbij (2012) mentioned in his study that almost half of the libraries, which used an alternative tool for the survey, indicated that they might use LibQUAL+® in future. Dole (2002) and Thompson, Kyrillidou, and Cook (2010) supported the results and mentioned in their studies that it is essential to follow up LibQUAL+® with local assessment and to probe to find out what users are trying to say.

First LIBQUAL+® Survey Conducted

	Frequency	Percent
2013	2	28.56
2015	1	14.28
2016	4	57.12
Total	7	100

[Table 2: First LIBQUAL+® Survey Conducted]

In table 2 collected data shows about the information of years in which respondent institutes conducted the LibQUAL+® survey. Based on table 1 researchers came to know that only seven institutes responded that they performed the LibQUAL+® survey, so based on their response it shows that one institute conducted a LibQUAL+® survey in 2014, 3 in 2016 and 3 in 2017. The result indicates that the gradual increase in the use of LibQUAL. The gradual increase between 2004 and 2011 is also mentioned by Killick and Town (2012) in their study.

Format of the Survey

	Frequency	Percent
Full-Survey	2	28.56
Lite-Survey	5	71.4
Total	7	100

[Table 3: Format of the Survey]

In Table 3 respondents were asked to give their feedback on the format of the survey they used for their LibQUAL+® survey; two respondents mentioned that they used full-survey and remain five used light survey. Most of the scholars discuss in details about the LibQUAL+® lite protocol as Thompson et al. (2019) observed in their study that more people who receive the invitation to complete the survey so compete for the survey when the invitation for the lite protocol.

LibQUAL+® Language

	Frequency	Percent
Arabic	4	57.12
Both	3	42.84
Total	7	100

[Table 4: LibQUAL+® Language]

In Table 4 respondents were asked about the language of the LibQUAL+® survey they opted, and four respondents mention that they use Arabic and remaining three mentioned that they used both languages (Arabic and English). Voorbij (2012) supported the results and mentioned in his study that the availability of translation in languages has stimulated the growth of LibQUAL+®.

LIBQUAL+® Satisfaction

	Frequency	Percent
Very-Much Satisfied	1	14.28
Satisfied	6	85.68
Total	7	100

[Table 5: LIBQUAL+® Satisfaction]

In Table 5 respondents were asked to give their response on satisfaction level about using LibQUAL+®. One of the respondents mentioned that they are very much satisfied with the use of LibQUAL+® and the remaining six has responded with a satisfied response on LibQUAL+®. Thompson et al. (2010) mentioned that results show most of the users are satisfied concerning information control and library as place.

Dimensions of Library Service Quality

Dimension		M	SD
Affects of Services	DM	7.87	.34801
	PM	7.10	.43396
Information Control	DM	7.84	.27340
	PM	6.70	.45893
Library as Place	DM	7.82	.29842
	PM	6.69	.50849
Over-All	DM	7.84	.27573
	PM	6.90	.51724

(M=Mean, SD=Std. Deviation, DM=Desired Mean, PM=Perceived Mean)

[Table 6: Dimensions of Library Service Quality]

Table 6 displays the mean scores and standard deviation for each dimension of library service quality according to the response of seven respondents who mentioned that they conducted a LibQUAL+® survey to measure the quality of library services. Researchers take an average of all seven responses using SPSS descriptive analysis. Each dimension of library service quality has different means like minimum, desired, perceived, adequacy and superiority and the number of respondents for that dimension. However, in the current study, researchers mainly focused on desired and perceived means.

For the first dimension Affects of Services, the scores for DM (M=7.86, SD=0.35) and PM (M=7.09, SD=0.43). For Information Control the scores for DM (M=7.84, SD=0.27) and PM (M=6.70, SD=0.46). For Library as Place the scores for DM (M=7.82, SD=0.30) and PM (M=6.68, SD=0.31). For the Over-All the scores for DM (M=7.84, SD=0.28) and PM (M=6.89, SD=0.52).

The findings show that the Desired Mean (DM) is greater than Perceived Mean (PM) of each dimension. Sansomboonsuk (2015) mentioned that the average gap between desired levels and perceived levels of all categories were not over 0.5 which supports this study results.

A paired-samples t-test was conducted to compare Desired Mean (DM) and Perceived Mean (PM) for each dimension. A pre-requisite for paired-samples t-test, the scores were analyzed to verify normality.

Normality Test

Dimension		Shapiro-Wilk		
		Statistic	df	Sig.
Affects of Services	Desired Mean	.973	7	.918
	Perceived Mean	.956	7	.781
Information Control	Desired Mean	.894	7	.299

	Perceived Mean	.883	7	.239
Library as Place	Desired Mean	.859	7	.148
	Perceived Mean	.942	7	.657
Over-All	Desired Mean	.978	7	.948
	Perceived Mean	.889	7	.267

[Table 7: Normality Test]

In table 7, we conducted normality test to analyse the normal distribution. A Shapiro-Wilk test is used to test the null hypothesis that the data are normally distributed. For all dimensions with respect to Desired and Percived Means, the p-value is greater than 0.05. So, we fail to reject the null hypothesis and then conclude that the data comes from a normal distribution.

Paired Sample T-Test

Dimension			Paired Differences				t	df	Sig. (2-tailed)	
			Mean	Std. Deviation	Std. Error Mean	95% Confidence Interval of the Difference				
						Lower				Upper
Affects of Services	Pair 1	Desired Mean - Perceived Mean	.77571	.30648	.11584	.49227	1.05916	6.70	6	.001
Information Control	Pair 1	Desired Mean - Perceived Mean	1.14000	.40772	.15410	.76292	1.51708	7.40	6	.000

Library as Place	Pair 1	Desired Mean - Perceived Mean	1.13286	.57746	.21826	.59880	1.66692	5.20	6	.002
Over-All	Pair 1	Desired Mean - Perceived Mean	.94571	.48062	.18166	.50122	1.39021	5.21	6	.002

[Table 9: Paired Samples Test]

In table 9, a paired-samples t-test was conducted to compare Desired Mean (DM) and Perceived Mean (PM) for each dimension. Paired samples t-tests results indicate that there are significant differences between Desired Mean (DM) and Perceived Mean at each dimension; including the affects of Services ($t=6.70$, $p=0.001$), the Information Control ($t=7.40$, $p=0.003$), and the Library as Place ($t=5.20$, $p=0.002$). The findings confirm that the Desired Mean (DM) is greater than Perceived Mean (PM) of each dimension.

Furthermore, the differences between the overall dimension of Desired Mean (DM) and Perceived Mean (PM) were tested by paired samples t-tests. The paired samples t-tests result for overall dimension indicate that there are significant differences between overall Desired and overall Perceived ($t\text{-Test}=5.21$, $p=0.002<0.05$). The results confirm that the overall Desired Mean (DM) is greater than the overall Perceived Mean (PM). The findings reveal that the quality of library services provided by the respondent institutions are significantly different from those that must be provided. Mardani, Alavi, and Zare (2014) also discussed about a gap between expectation and perception of the expectation of the users and the librarians, but the gap is very little which can be covered by providing the necessary facilities.

Want LibQUAL+® in Future

	Frequency	Percent
Yes	18	90
No	2	10
Total	20	100

[Table 10: Want LibQUAL+® in Future]

Table 10 was also about the respondents who mentioned some other surveys they conducted but not LibQUAL+®. So, this table is about their intention about the future use of LibQUAL+®. Thus, among all 20 respondents, an 18 mentioned that they want to conduct LibQUAL+® surveys in the future and only respondents who did not show their intention to use LibQUAL+® in future as well. In comments, the reason mentioned by the majority of respondents who shows interest in future use of LibQUAL+® is the latest assessment techniques used by LibQUAL+® and the overall growing culture of using standard assessment survey tool instead of using regular annual or user surveys. These results also validated through Sales (2006) study, who mentioned that all institutions that conducted LibQUAL+® survey in 2005 are intended to undertake the survey again.

CONCLUSION AND DISCUSSION

This study was conducted to evaluate the awareness and usage of service quality methods used by academic libraries among Arabian Gulf countries. It reveals that most of the academic libraries are not utilizing LibQUAL+®, which is the most recognized international service quality methods used by libraries around the world (Sansomboonsuk, 2015). It reveals among all, only 25% of institutions using LibQUAL+® and rests 75% are using some other methods like annual and user satisfaction survey.

It also observed through the data come through Morris and Roebuck (2019) that some institutions in Arabian Gulf start using it since 2004, therefore, the researchers can conclude that the academic institutions in the Arabian Gulf start using it at the very beginning of LibQUAL+®. Most of the institutes, which stated that they are, conducted some other surveys but not LibQUAL+®; they also did their surveys between 2016 to 2017. Therefore, with these facts, researchers can come up with some evidence that the trend of library service quality more enthusiastically started in recent years. These facts are also reveal that most of the institutions preferred light-survey instead of full-survey and, they preferred language of survey as Arabic or used both Arabic and English, there was no institution who opted only English as the language of the survey. This is in support of the fact that if LibQUAL+® is available in local languages then the potential for further growth in using it (Voorbij, 2012). The satisfaction level of academic libraries after use of LibQUAL+® was very good. Core dimensions of LibQUAL+® service quality method were also evaluated against each institute who claimed that they conducted LibQUAL+® and the result indicates that the quality of library services provided by the respondent institutions are significantly different from those that must actually be provided. Researchers also added the question to check the intention of institutions to use LibQUAL+®, which not yet used it, and the majority of institutions show their interest in using it in the future to evaluate their library service quality.

Researchers collected LibQUAL+® data directly from Morris and Roebuck (2019) and then analyzed based on different aspects such as profile of the participants, type, language, and country. The researchers observed that there is a gradual increase in the participating institutions since its start from 2000 till 2017, as in 2000 number of institutions were only 13 and the numbers of responses were

4,407, but in 2017 the number institutions reached to 80 and number of responses 112,098. The same way the use of LibQUAL+® also increased among academic institutions as compared to other types of libraries. English is the main language in which most of the LibQUAL+® surveys conducted in Arabian Gulf perspective. The researchers observed that the first Arabic survey was conducted in 2013. Concerning participating countries among Arabian Gulf, UAE in 2004 was the first country to use the LibQUAL+® in the region. Meanwhile, researchers also observed it was more actively used in multiple times in some Arab countries since 2003. Researchers noticed that KFUPM also used it in 2013 and recently KFUPM planned to conduct the LibQUAL+® survey at the start of 2019.

Overall, this study concludes that awareness about LibQUAL+® is increased among academic institutions of the Arabian Gulf to and to use the international standard library service quality methods. There are many in the Arabian Gulf institutions who already used it or have the plan to use it in the near future. There are multiple seminars and training workshops conducted in 2012, 2013 and 2015 in Bahrain to create awareness among professional to make better use of the LibQUAL+®. The researcher chaired a workshop in 2015 held at Arabian Gulf University, in which researchers from five universities namely; Bahrain Polytechnic, Arabian Gulf University, King Fahd University of Petroleum and Minerals, Qatar University and University of Bahrain presented the best practices of the LibQUAL+® survey which conducted in their respective universities. There was a total of 19 representatives from the libraries of Arabian Gulf universities who attended the seminar. Now, the researchers feel more comfortable in using it in their local language instead of bilingual. The researcher also share and recommend it on multiple events and through the Special Library Association (Gulf Chapter) which is the biggest event of the library community in Arabian Gulf and through

local Saudi Library Association and Saudi Digital Library (SDL). SDL is a consortium of Saudi Arabia institutes to subscribe the electronic resources for all participating institutes, with SDL LibQUAL+® can be used for all universities in Saudi Arabia. Also, researchers mainly focused on standardizing the library quality to meet the vision 2030 of the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia. In Bahrain, they are focusing on library quality to achieve the Bahrain vision 2030, and same way the other Arabian Gulf countries are concentrate on the library quality to achieve the local government vision and policies.

Researchers recommend Association of Research Libraries to further work on LibQUAL+® Arabic version to make it more user-friendly and convenient to get a better response from the users. It also needs to be added details of Arabic version on the website to make it available for users to understand the features in the Arabic language. This survey was limited to Academic libraries of Arabian Gulf universities. It can be replicated in many ways such as the public libraries of the Arabian Gulf, as well as the academic libraries of the Arab world. It will contribute to the overall insight about its awareness and use in all Arab countries. The current study researchers are recommending conducting more seminars and workshops on this issue to create awareness about the use of library quality tools such as LibQUAL+®.

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