

Brief Communication

Quality of Educational Services in the Library of Kermanshah School of Medicine Based on Library Standards (2011-2012)

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Abstract

Libraries play a pivotal role in the sustainable development of the country. The aim of the present study was to investigate the quality of educational services provided by library of medical faculty of Kermanshah according to the library standards. In this descriptive cross-sectional study, 309 library members were studied through Libqual questionnaire. Data were analyzed by descriptive statistics. The library could meet the expectations of its members in 67% of cases (positive adequate value). In terms of access to information, the maximum and minimum means were reported for printable or electronic journals (7.62%) and electronic resources and websites (5.55%), respectively. With regard to personal control, the maximum and minimum means belonged to easy-access instruments (6.15%) and modern equipment (5.63%), respectively. For location, however, appropriate space acquired the maximum mean (6.59%). Based on the obtained findings, Kermanshah library of medical faculty (LMF) has not been able to fulfill the maximum expectations of its members.

Keywords: Library, Medical faculty, LibQUAL scale, Educational services

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Introduction

Library is one of the major components of every educational organization and plays a strategic role in the process of the quality of educational and research systems (1). Nowadays, the libraries are more successful that can enhance the quality of their educational services to an optimal and noticeable level. Therefore, evaluation of the library quality service and information centers is highly significant in the higher education assessment system (2).

Since 2003, the quality of library services has been evaluated based on Library quality (Libqual), which is derived from the "service quality measurement" (Servequal) model developed by Parasuraman (3). In Libqual model, the gaps between the expectations and perceptions of customers are identified and analyzed (4). This model is based on the "confirmation-disconfirmation" theory, and if performance is higher than the given standard, it leads to satisfaction, if it is lower than the standards, it results in

dissatisfaction and in cases where it conforms to the expectations, it leads to average satisfaction (5).

The related studies on this topic have been carried out in different universities like Kerman (8), Sistan and Baluchestan (9), Yazd (10) and Kermanshah (11) through a questionnaire designed and approved by Association of Research Library (ARL) (6,7). In Kerman University, a relative satisfaction was obtained, but in other universities, the educational services could not meet the users' expectations (8). In Yazd University, there was a larger gap between the users' expectations, and information control and access to information dimensions (10). The libraries of Sistan and Baluchestan University were not able to meet the expectations of their users in any of the dimensions of service quality, but provided good quality services in the library as place dimension (9).

In a study conducted in three universities in Tehran, the services provided by the central library of Iran University of Medical Sciences were reported to be higher in quality, but the difference was not statistically significant. There was a larger gap between the services provided by the three libraries in information control dimension and the users' expectations (12). In university libraries of Pennsylvania State, the highest scores belonged to information control dimension followed by affect of service and library as place dimensions (14), and in Alabama University library, the service quality was higher than the adequacy level (15).

Analysis of the educational services provided by the libraries of Kermanshah University of Medical Sciences (KUMS) in previous years indicated that the LMF ranked lowest in terms of service quality (mean: 5.36) (11). During the recent years, many changes have occurred in

the library of medical faculty. The present research was aimed to analyze the educational services provided by this library and to determine the minimum and maximum service quality in the viewpoint of its users.

Methods

This descriptive cross-sectional study comprised all members (n=309) of Kermanshah LMF, which included 49 faculty members and 206 medical and master's students. 88% of the participants completed the Libqual questionnaire consisting of two sections. The first section included demographic and personal information (9 items) and the second section contained 30 items about service quality which were designed in 4 dimensions: affect of service (12 items), library as place (4 items), access to information (9 items) and personal control (5 items) based on Likert 9-point scale (1-9). This questionnaire was completed by the respondents based on three levels: minimum, maximum and desired service level. The validity of the questionnaire was approved by the Association of Research Library (ARL), and the reliability of the questionnaire was 95% obtained through Cronbach's alpha coefficient. Data were analyzed by descriptive statistics, tables of frequency and percentage.

Results

The overall analysis of service quality in five dimensions of Libqual model at Kermanshah LMF indicated that in terms of minimum service level, the highest score was reported for affect of service (53.3%) followed by personal control (51.8%). For the maximum service level, however, the highest score belonged to affect of service (69.9%) followed by personal control (69.1%) (Table 1).

Table 1. Quality of services in Kermanshah LMF based on Libqual model (2011-2012)

Components	Service quality (%)			Maximum service quality (%)			Minimum service quality (%)		
	Good	Average	Poor	Good	Average	Poor	Good	Average	Poor
Affect of service	59.2	30.9	9.9	69.9	20.6	9.6	53.3	35.7	11
Library as place	45.2	43.8	11	64.3	25.7	9.9	47.1	42.6	10.3
Access to information	35.3	51.8	12.9	61.8	28.7	9.6	44.1	42.6	13.2
Personal control	46.3	40.4	13.2	69.1	18.4	12.5	51.8	33.1	15.1
Library service quality	43.4	45.6	11	66.2	24.6	9.2	46.7	42.6	10.7

With regard to the library service quality level, 45.7% of students reported good level for it, whereas only 41.4% of faculty members considered the service quality as good. The largest superiority gap was reported for library as place. On the other hand, the lowest superiority gap was

observed in the affect of service dimension. Moreover, the personal control dimension obtained an adequate level and the rest of dimensions were lower than the adequacy level (Table 2).

Table 2. Overall quality of services at Kermanshah LMF based on Libqual model, superiority gap and adequacy level in each of the dimensions (2011-2012)

Components	Minimum service quality	Maximum service quality	Service quality	Superiority gap	Adequacy gap
Affect of service	2.22 ± 6.32	2.41 ± 6.86	2.45 ± 6.21	2.18 ± 0.65	2.41 ± -0.11
Library as place	2.68 ± 5.35	2.89 ± 6.19	2.76 ± 5	-1.19 ± 2.59	2.58 ± -0.35
Access to information	2.33 ± 6.06	2.72 ± 6.59	2.40 ± 5.84	2.36 ± -0.75	2.52 ± -0.22
Personal control	2.32 ± 5.86	2.53 ± 6.78	2.44 ± 6.11	2.05 ± -0.67	2.36 ± 0.24
Library service quality	2.41 ± 5.59	2.78 ± 6.43	2.73 ± 5.26	2.56 ± -1.17	2.50 ± -0.33

Discussion

In the present study, from among four major dimensions of Libqual model, only a positive figure was reported for adequacy level in the personal control dimension, which indicated the current service quality level in this dimension was higher than the minimum acceptable service quality. This was followed by affect of service and access to information which obtained more favorable status compared to other dimensions. However, these indices were lower than the adequacy level, but were indicative of the relative satisfaction of the library members. The negative superiority gap among all the components showed that Kermanshah LMF could not meet the maximum expectations of its members.

The largest service gap was reported for lack of access to electronic resources at home or office, inability to use the library's website, inadequacy of the print or electronic journals, lack of inappropriate public space and a higher demand for up-to-date information in the library. Further, the largest superiority gap belonged to the library as place dimension, which indicated the overall library space was way far from the users' expectations.

In terms of superiority gap, Kermanshah LMF was not able to meet the most favorable expectations of its users, which is, to a large extent, in line with the results of most of the studies conducted in the libraries of the country as well as the former study carried out about the libraries of KUMS (8, 11). Mir Ghafouri et al (10) reported that the four dimensions of library service quality have coefficients of similar importance from the view of the users. In the study carried out by Ghafouri (11), the superiority gap of the services was negative for all dimensions of Libqual model and the library could not meet the users' expectations in any of the dimensions, which is compatible with the findings of the present study.

Moreover, in the previous study carried out at KUMS, the adequacy level for the components of access to information and library as place was negative and the

largest superiority gap was reported for information control (11). In the present study, however, the largest superiority gap was observed in the physical space of the library. Our results were in agreement with the findings of another study in that the current service quality of libraries of medical faculty was at average level (13).

Conclusion

Kermanshah library of medical faculty could not meet the minimum expectations of its members in many components of Libqual model. However, to fulfill the expectations of its users, it needs to review and promote the quality of various aspects, especially access to information, space and appropriate location of the library.

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