

Conceptualizing User Satisfaction toward a Library Quality at Malaysia Nuclear Agency Library

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Abstract

This paper discusses the conceptual framework on user satisfaction towards library quality in Malaysia Nuclear Agency Library. Based on the framework there are five main independent variables which are environment, facilities, services, staff and collections of the library and one dependent variable which is user satisfaction used in this study. The objective of this paper is to identify the significant relationship between user satisfaction and the library quality in Malaysia Nuclear Agency Library. This paper gives an overview of a library quality that a Malaysia Nuclear Agency Library is supposed to have to satisfy its users and at the same time meet the user needs and demands. In addition, this study will help the library to improve and increase its library quality in order to ensure it can provide excellent and good library quality for its users. Therefore, it will encourage the users to come and visit the library regularly and it will also show the success of the library in delivering and providing its services for the users.

Keywords: User Satisfaction, Library Quality, Malaysia Nuclear Agency Library.

Introduction

Libraries have been around for a very long time and are traditionally seen as place for the collections of information and services. Basically a library is maintained and developed by institution, corporation, private individual or public body. It is crucial for the library to know the quality of its performance and how well users perceive its services since a library strives to meet and satisfy professional needs of its users. In addition, the quality of the library can be described from the environment of the library, the collections that the library provide, the adequate facilities offered by the library, effective and efficient services served by the library and also the ability of the staff of the library in handling the users. This becomes the main factors that will influence and affect the user satisfaction towards a particular library. The objective of a library not be met if the user are not satisfied with the services and resources provided by the library. Moreover, Snoj & Petermanec (2001) have also mentioned that, when good library quality is provided in a library, it will encourage users to come and visit the library frequently. This also has been agreed by Majid (2001) who views library quality as the most important thing in a library in order to attract the users. The ability of the library

to fully achieve its primary role of meeting the library needs of the community it serves will be reduced if there is any limitation of access done deliberately or accidentally.

To bridge the gap as sighted in literature review, the study is conducted with the following objectives:

- i. To measure how successful the library has been meeting user satisfaction by providing good and reliable library quality.
- ii. To identify any significant relationship between library environments, library facilities, library collections, library services, library staff and users satisfaction.
- iii. To examine any different regarding the quality of library environment, library facilities, library collections, library services, library staff and user satisfaction between gender.
- iv. To examine any different regarding the quality of library environment, library facilities, library collections, library services, library staff and user satisfaction between groups of age and positions.

The outcome of the study is useful for the management of library to continuously improve the quality of library as imposed and required by its prime customers, users. The current research begins with a review of the relevant literature, followed by development of conceptual framework.

Literature Review

Evaluation and assessment of library quality has began in 1995 and has continued until now. Factors such as “rich collection”, “material variations”, and “number of users” were seen as effective measures for library quality in traditional research methods years ago. But now, in order to rank library services in a quality context reflecting user satisfaction, libraries have to use users’ perceptions and expectations towards their library to measure the quality of the library. Sureshchandar (2002) stated that library quality and user satisfaction were highly related. Appropriate with the library known as a service oriented organization, the library needs to provide excellent library environment, adequate library facilities, good quality services, responsive library staff as well as the ability to offer the relevant information resources and collections to their user (Cook and Heath, 2001).

Library Environment

Library environment can be defined as a surrounding or ambience of the library. It includes library space, exterior and interior design, signage and also the conditions of the library. Library environment plays an important role in library provision. Library should be designed to be accessible to all in the community, be sufficiently flexible to accommodate new and changing services and also able to reflect the functions of a library. Library must be centrally located in an organisation. Library will provide significance contribution to the vitality of the people and be an important learning and social centre and meeting place. For the benefit of the whole community of the organisation librarians should ensure that library buildings are used and managed effectively to make the best use of the building.

Library Facilities

Library facilities are facilities that are provide by the library and give a convenience to the users. Library facilities are the most important element that a library should have. Besides good services, good facilities are also the main contribution for the user satisfaction. As a place that becomes a focus of the user, library should provide its users facilities that are

appropriate and expediency. Besides that, library also must aim to provide a variety of facilities to give convenience and also meet the needs and wants of all of its users.

Library Services

Users mostly come to a library to use the library services. Therefore, libraries must provide a variety of services to fulfill their users' needs and wants and at the same time make the users satisfied with their services. Pedramnia et al (2012) stressed that user satisfaction to a library depends on the quality of services that is provided by the library and it is important for the library to ensure it can provide good service quality to the users. In addition, the library must also ensure its services for all its users are accessible. Below are several examples of services that a library should have.

- Borrowing and returning of books
- Reference desk services
- Information desk services
- Readers' advisory services including reservation services
- Library catalogue services
- Literacy program services

Library Staff

Staff is a key resource in an organization. In achieving the objectives of the library, the staff plays important and significant roles. The performance of staff has a significant impact on the contribution that libraries can make to their communities and also can determine to a large extent the quality of user satisfaction. In order to offer a high quality service to all of its users, the library has an implicit and explicit mission. The main interface with users is an experienced staff who manages the service. In addition, a library staff requires a range of skills and qualities such as interpersonal skills, social awareness, confidence and friendly and competence in the practices and procedures of the organisation should have in a library staff. Below are the primary or basic qualities and skills that a library staff should have: The:

- Ability to communicate with people
- Ability to understand the needs and wants of the users
- Ability to cooperate with individuals and groups of people
- Knowledge of the materials that forms the library's collection and how to access it
- Imagination, vision and openness to new ideas and practice
- Knowledge of information and communications technology.
- Professionalism in their dealings
- Approachable manner
- Ability to respond in a timely manner

Library Collections

A library has been defined as an organised collection of sources. A library is also as a place for users to get unrestricted access of information in many formats and from many sources (Dele, 2011). According to James (2005), library collection is a total accumulation of books and other material owned by a library, arranged and catalogued for ease of access and basically consists of several smaller collections such as special collections, circulating books, serials, rare books, reference, etc. Therefore, a library and its collections cannot be separated because without collections the library cannot stand successfully. Mehran & Mostafa (2008)

have mentioned a quality of collections and the size of the library as the elements to accessing the library quality.

Users' satisfaction

User satisfaction has been characterised as meeting the user needs and wants and making the users feel satisfied with what the library has to provide. In simple words, User satisfaction can be defined on how satisfied library users are with the quality and services provided by the library. In addition, user satisfactions with a quality of the library are related to the behaviour and attitude of the user with the library environment, library collections, library services, library facilities and the library staff itself.

Proposed Conceptual Framework

The conceptual framework for this study is adapted and modified from Brady and Cornin model, Haywood- Farmer service quality attribute model, LibQual+ model and also from theoretical framework from a study entitles "Let the user judge the quality of faculty library" by Snoj & Petermanec in 2001. Previous study showed that there is a significance relationship between user satisfaction and library quality. In this study, the independent variables focused on library environment, facilities, services, staff and collections of the library while the dependent variable specify the user satisfaction toward the library quality as illustrated in Figure 1 below.

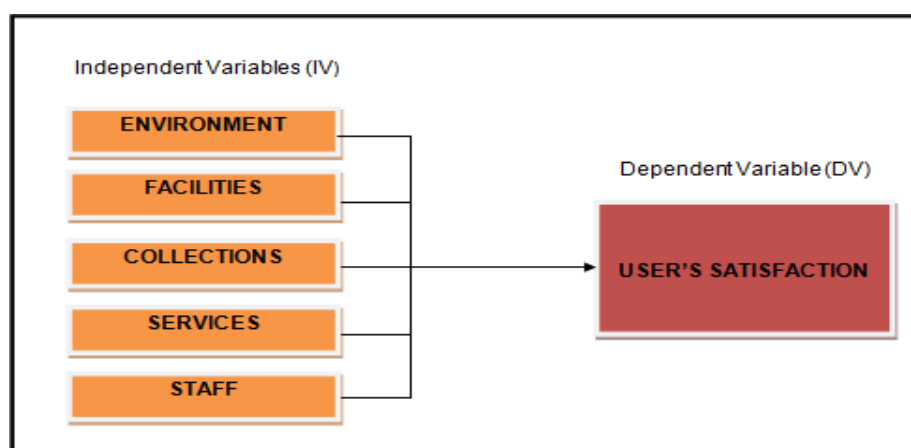


Figure 1: Proposed conceptual framework

Conclusion

It is not enough to ensure the long term existence of a library in order to meet quality criteria and achieve high user satisfaction but the ability of the library to integrate user needs into the development of the library's user satisfaction depends to a large extent on the library ability to provide good library qualities to its users. Users will use the services provided by the library over and over again if the services meet their satisfaction. If the services meet the expectation and satisfaction, it is not possible they will recommend and tell others. It is because something is good or bad, people always communicate and share their experiences. It means people also will tell others their experience although they receive the bad service and vice versa. According to Snoj & Petermanec (2001), a user is the judge for the library quality. Library effectiveness can be determined from the user satisfaction with the services provided and offered (Thong & Yap, 1996). Therefore, it is clear that a library is important to ensure that its users are always satisfied. Simmonds and Andaleeb (2001) said that library

can reach user satisfaction by providing good quality of services, friendly staff, helpful and knowledgeable librarian, greatest resources and adequate facilities.

Through the finding it demonstrates that Malaysia Nuclear Agency Library users have high perception and observation towards a quality of the library. In simple words, it shown that the library users do concern about the library quality.

Therefore, it can be concluded that a library can achieve high impact on the quality if it emphasize the user satisfaction and meet all the user needs and wants. In addition, this study contributes significantly to the organization to increase its library quality in order to reach high user satisfaction and expectations.

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