SERVICE QUALITY IN COLLEGE LIBRARIES IN UNIVERSITY OF MYSORE: LIBRARIANS' PERSPECTIVE

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Abstract This article describes measuring the quality of an information service, that is, the extent to which the service provided by the library. The study focuses on selected colleges, which come under the purview of University of Mysore, Mysore. The main question investigated is of library services provided by college libraries, and librarians' perceptions. A survey was designed for this study. A participant observation method was also employed. Descriptive and inferential statistics of frequency counts and percentages were used to analyze data gathered through the survey. The study unveils that academics and librarians emphasis places on aspects of service. Librarians express the importance of the characteristics of the staff who provide the service. Practical applications of the findings are discussed. The staffs with a wide variety of literacy skill along with the application of new technologies are the key elements to enhance the library service quantity. Library services evaluation will guarantee the improvement of the library service quantity.

Keywords: College Library, Traditional Service, Technology Based Services, Librarians

1.0 Introduction

We are breathing in the revolutionary era of information and communication technology. Every library professionals need to be empowered towards excellence in education for development of the intellectual and learning community.

Library has various resources, where library professionals serve to the intellectual society. The innovations in information communication technology have influenced libraries to serve better and adapt the changes. The libraries also have changed drastically with service provision, collection development, human resource planning and training. The librarians also have changed their mind set towards service and management of libraries.

College library is expected to provide materials for courses, research projects and institutional academic activity to satisfy the needs of the well- defined specialized clientele like faculty, students, researchers, administrators. The staff with a wide variety of literacy skill is one of the key elements to enhance the library service quantity. Library services evaluation will guarantee the improvement of the library service quantity.

Librarians believe that providing expert advice and teaching on information literacy and management is a core role for libraries. Libraries have made significant efforts to optimise the visibility and usage of their archival or special collection material through digitisation programmes. Service quality is frequently defined in terms of reducing the gap between user expectations and the service provided. Service quality is suggesting ways by which libraries can

review their own situation and set those service priorities they want to meet-allocating resources to ensure these priorities are met.

2.0 Scope and Limitation

The present study covers 53 2(F) 12(B) colleges coming under the purview of University of Mysore spread over 4 districts namely Mysore, Mandya, Hassan and Chamarajanagar. Only first grade colleges affiliated to University of Mysore 2(F) 12(B) are considered. The Other types of colleges like B.Ed., B.PEd, Law, Medical and Engineering colleges are excluded for the study.

3.0 Review of Literature

Libraries provide their collections and services to a large variety of users. Academic librarians are trying to find out what the students and faculty believe the library is doing well and also what could be improved in providing materials and services.

Hernon and Nitecki (2001) explored the concept of service quality in libraries, 'fundamental to service quality is the belief that an organisation exists to serve its customers'. Rowley (1994) has mainly explored service quality in the United Kingdom and examined customers' experiences of libraries. Hernon and Altman (1996) comment that 'libraries (like businesses) must readjust their service to better accommodate their customers', while Masters (1996) advises that 'a library should focus on providing the best services possible, and be willing to change to serve its customers'.

Web-based library services are modified versions of existing services and technology-driven library services (Arora, 2001). Latest services are transformed from traditional library services incorporating new services that are peculiar to web environment (Moyo, 2004).

4.0 Objectives

The main objectives are:

- To assess the Service Quality and traditional method;
- To assess the Service Quality and application of technology;
- To suggest measures for improvements for effective use of library services.

5.0 Research Methodology

A survey was conducted through a structured questionnaire circulated among college librarians. Although 53 questionnaires were distributes to the college Librarians only 47 filled in usable questionnaires were returned making a response rate of 88.68 percent. The researcher personally consulted the respondents and had also an informal interview. Besides this, an observation method was also used to study the effectiveness of the quality of library services. For the purpose of analysis, SPSS software is used. Wherever necessary select statistical techniques like Mean, Standard Deviation (SD), Cramer's V and P value are used.

6.0 Results and Discussion

The results and discussion aim at know how the present service quality is enhanced with the improvement in traditional method of service provided to the users. Demographic information of the librarians like gender and age-wise break up are presented. The responses of the librarian about the improvement of service quality with traditional method and with the application of technology are discussed. Finally the suggestion of improvements for effective use of library services in comparison with American colleges is also presented.

6.1 Gender

The gender of the librarians is shown in the table 6.1. It may be seen from the table that a majority of the respondents numbering 35 (74.5 percent) are male and the remaining 12(25.5percent) are female.

Table 6.1 Gender

S/N	Gender	No. of Responses	Percentage
1	Male	35	74.5
2	Female	12	25.5
	Total	47	100.0

6.2 Age

The age wise break up of Librarians is shown in table 6.2. It may be seen from the table that the respondents in the age group of 31 - 35 years and >50 years age range scores 13 each, representing 27.7 percentage. The respondents the age ranges of 41 - 45 score 10, representing 21.3 percent. The age group of respondents ranging 36 - 40 years scores 6, representing 12.8 percent. This is followed by the respondents with less than 30 years of age range (3; 6.4percent) and 46 - 50 years of age range (2; 4.3 percent).

Table 6.2 Age

S/N	Age Range in years	No. of Responses	Percentage
1	< 30	3	6.4
2	31 – 35	13	27.7
3	36 – 40	6	12.8
4	41 – 45	10	21.3
5	46 – 50	2	4.3
6	> 50	13	27.7
	Total	47	100

6.3 Increasing Service Quality with Traditional Method

The librarians felt that 'User friendly, civil and polite approach in service' has biggest choice of 'strongly agree' with score of 34 representing 72.3 percent; followed by 'disagree' with a score of 12 (25.5 percent); whereas, the choice 'neither agree nor disagree' scores 1(2.1 percent); The other options 'agree' and 'strongly disagree' has no response. Thus, there are significant differences (χ^2=36.04; p=.000) for the service improvement - '**User friendly, civil and polite approach in service**' with a **mean** value of **4.70** and **SD** being **0.51**.

The respondent's main choice is 'strongly agree' for 'Prepare new arrival list' with score of 27 representing 57.4 percent; followed by 'agree' with a score of 17 (36.2 percent). The above choices 'strongly agree' and 'agree' put together score 44 (93.6 percent); equal number of respondents choose 'neither agree nor disagree' 'strongly disagree' and 'disagree' scores 1(2.1 percent) each'. Thus, there are significant differences (χ^2=61.62; p=.000) for the service improvement - '**Prepare new arrival list**' with a **mean** value of **4.45** and **SD** being **0.83**.

The respondent's main choice is 'strongly agree' for 'Prepare a library guide' with score of 23 representing 48.9 percent; followed by the choice 'agree' with a score of 21 (44.7 percent). The above choices 'strongly agree' and 'agree' put together score 44 (93.6 percent); number of respondents who choose 'neither agree nor disagree' scores 2(4.3 percent); so also the choice 'disagree' scores 1(2.1 percent) responses; there are no responses to the choice

'strongly disagree'. Thus, there are significant differences (χ^2=35.98; p=.000) for the service improvement - '**Prepare a library guide**' with a **mean** value of **4.40** and **SD** being **0.68**.

The respondent's main choice is 'strongly agree' for 'Introducing paper clipping service' with score of 22 representing 46.8 percent; followed by 'agree' with a score of 20 (42.6 percent). The above choices 'strongly agree' and 'agree' put together score 42 (89.4 percent). Almost equal number of respondents choose neither agree nor disagree' scores 3(6.4 percent) and 'disagree' scores 2(4.3 percent) in the same order; whereas, the choice 'strongly disagree' has no response. Thus, there are significant differences (χ^2=29.34; p=.000) for the service improvement - '**Introducing paper clipping service**' with a mean value of 4.32 and SD being 0.78.

The respondent's foremost choices are 'strongly agree' and 'agree' for 'Conduct competitions about library use awareness' with score of 20 representing 42.5 percent each; The above choices 'strongly agree' and 'agree' put together score 40 (85 percent). Number of respondents who choose 'neither agree nor disagree' scores 6 (12.8 percent); the choice 'disagree' scores 1 (2.1 percent), the choice 'strongly disagree' has no response. Thus, there are significant differences (χ^2=24.23; p=.000) for the service improvement - '**Conducting competitions about library use awareness**' with a **mean** value of **4.26** and **SD** is **0.77**.

The respondent's main choice is 'strongly agree' for 'Use reward system for best user' with score of 21 representing 44.7 percent; followed by 'agree' with a score of 19 (40.4 percent). The above choices 'strongly agree' and 'agree' put together score 40 (85.1 percent). Almost equal number of respondents choose 'neither agree nor disagree' scores 5 (10.6 percent) and 'disagree' scores 2 (4.3 percent) in the same order; whereas, the choice 'strongly disagree' has no response. Thus, there are significant differences (χ^2=23.72; p=.000) for the service improvement - '**Use reward system for best user**' with a **mean** value of **4.26** and **SD** is **0.82**.

The respondent's main choice is 'strongly agree' for 'Give more number of library cards' with score of 22 representing 46.8 percent; followed by 'agree' with a score of 16 (34 percent); The above choices 'strongly agree' and 'agree' put together score 38 (80.8 percent). Number of respondents who choose 'neither agree nor disagree' scores 6 (12.8 percent); whereas, the choice 'strongly disagree' scores 2 (4.3 percent); the choice 'disagree' scores 1 (2.1 percent). Thus, there are significant differences (χ^2=36.09; p=.000) for the service improvement - '**Give more number of library cards**' with a **mean** value of **4.17** and **SD** is 1**.03**.

The respondent's main choice is 'strongly agree' for 'Arrange book talks and author speak' with score of 17 representing 36.2 percent; followed by 'agree' with a score of 16 (34 percent). The above choices 'strongly agree' and 'agree' put together score 33 (70.2 percent). Equal number of respondents having a score of 7(14.9%) responses each; say 'neither agree nor disagree' and 'disagree' in the same order; the choice 'strongly disagree' scores no response. Thus, there are significant differences (χ^2=7.72; p=.052) for the service improvement - '**Arrange book talks and author speak**' with a mean value of **3.91** and SD being **1.06**.

The respondent's main choice is 'agree' for 'Introduce Table Of Content (TOC) service' with score of 25 representing 53.2 percent; followed by 'strongly agree' with a score of 9 (19.1 percent). The above choices 'strongly agree' and 'agree' put together score 34 (72.3percent). Whereas, the choice 'neither agree nor disagree' scores 10 (21.3 percent); the choice 'disagree' scores 2 (4.3 percent); so also, the choice 'strongly disagree' scores 1 (2.1 percent).Thus, there are significant differences (χ^2=39.28; p=.000) for the service improvement - '**Introduce Table of Content (TOC) service**' with a mean value of **3.83** and SD being **0.87**.

The respondent's main choice is 'agree' for '**Introduce overnight issue of rare books and journals**' with score of 17 representing 36.2 percent; followed by 'strongly agree' with a score of 15 (31.9 percent). The above choices 'strongly agree' and 'agree' put together score 32 (68.1percent). Whereas, the choice 'disagree' scores 9 (19.1 percent); so also, the choice 'neither agree nor disagree' scores 6 (12.8 percent); there are no responses for the choice 'strongly disagree'. Thus, there are not-significant differences (χ^2=6.70; p=.082) for the service improvement - '**Introduce overnight issue of rare books and journals**' with a mean value of **3.81** and SD being **1.10**.

Table 6.3   Increasing Service Quality with Traditional Methods

S/N	Methods	Responses in Percentage (N=47)					Mean	SD	χ^2	p value
		1	2	3	4	5				
1	User Friendly, Civil and Polite Approach in Service	0 (0.0)	12 (25.5)	1 (2.1)	0 (0.0)	34 (72.3)	4.70	0.51	36.04	.000
2	Prepare New Arrival List	1 (2.1)	1 (2.1)	1 (2.1)	17 (36.2)	27 (57.4)	4.45	0.83	61.62	.000
3	Prepare Library Guide	0 (0.0)	1 (2.1)	2 (4.3)	21 (44.7)	23 (48.9)	4.40	0.68	35.98	.000
4	Introduce Paper Clipping Service	0 (0.0)	2 (4.3)	3 (6.4)	20 (42.6)	22 (46.8)	4.32	0.78	29.34	.000
5	Conduct Competitions about Library Use Awareness	0 (0.0)	1 (2.1)	6 (12.8)	20 (42.6)	20 (42.5)	4.26	0.77	24.23	.000
6	Use Reward System for Best User	0 (0.0)	2 (4.3)	5 (10.6)	19 (40.4)	21 (44.7)	4.26	0.82	23.72	.000
7	Give more Number of Library Cards	2 (4.3)	1 (2.1)	6 (12.8)	16 (34.0)	22 (46.8)	4.17	0.89	36.09	.000
8	Arrange Book Talks and Author Speak	0 (0.0)	7 (14.9)	7 (14.9)	16 (34.0)	17 (36.2)	3.91	1.06	7.72	.052
9	Introduce Table Of Content (TOC) service	1 (2.1)	2 (4.3)	10 (21.3)	25 (53,2)	9 (19.1)	3.83	0.87	39.28	.000
10	Introduce Overnight Issue of rare Books and Journals	0 (0.0)	9 (19.1)	6 (12.8)	17 (36.2)	15 (31.9)	3.81	1.10	6.70	.082

Key: 1 – Strongly disagree, 2 – Disagree, 3 – Neither agree nor disagree, 4 – Agree, 5 – Strongly agree, SD = Standard deviation, N=Number of Respondents, Numbers in Parentheses Indicates Percentage; χ^2 = chi-square; P = Probability; P≤.050 – Significant; P> .050 – Not Significant.

6.4 Increasing Service Quality with the Help of Technology

It is assumed that Librarians are most responsible persons for the library; hence an attempt was made to know how the present service quality is enhanced with the application of technology provided to the users. The responses of the librarian are presented in the table 6.4.

Libraries are making use of potential of internet and computing power to provide new and innovative services. Internet access: Providing access to internet and internet based services providing access to web based resources: E-Journals, E-Books, Open access to research findings are growing. The Directory of Open Access Journals (www.doaj.org). Providing access local or internal information resources in digital form:

The respondent's main choice is 'strongly agree' for 'Introducing scanned question bank service' with score of 26 representing 55.3 percent; followed by 'agree' with a score of 14 (29.8 percent). The above choices 'strongly agree' and 'agree' put together score 40 (85.1 percent). Almost equal number of respondents choose 'disagree' scores 4(8.5 percent) and 'neither agree nor disagree' scores 3(6.4 percent) in the same order; whereas, there is no response for the choice 'strongly disagree'. Thus, there are significant differences (χ^2=29.34; p=.000) for the service improvement - '**Introducing scanned question bank service'** with a **mean** value of **4.32**and **SD** being **0.93**.

The respondent's main choice is 'strongly agree' for 'Introducing OPAC and WEBOPAC' with score of 23 representing 48.9 percent; followed by 'agree' with a score of 17 (36.2 percent). The above choices 'strongly agree' and 'agree' put together score 40 (85.1 percent). Almost equal number of respondents choose 'neither agree nor

disagree' scores 4 (8.5 percent) and 'disagree' scores 3(6.4 percent) in the same order; whereas, the choice 'strongly disagree' has no response. Thus, there are significant differences (χ^2=24.75; p=.000) for the service improvement - '**Introducing OPAC and WEBOPAC**' with a mean value of 4.28 and SD is 0.88.

The respondent's biggest choice is 'agree' for 'Service through e mail' with score of 29 representing 61.7 percent; followed by 'strongly agree' with a score of 14 (29.8 percent); The above choices 'strongly agree' and 'agree' put together score 43 (91.5 percent). Equal number of respondents having a score of 2 (4.3 percent) responses each, say 'neither agree nor disagree' and 'disagree' in the same order; whereas, the choice 'strongly disagree' has no responses. Thus, there are significant differences (χ^2=41.94; p=.000) for the service improvement - '**Service through e mail**' with a mean value of **4.17** and **SD** is **0.**70.

The respondent's main choice is 'strongly agree' for 'Library Portal service' with score of 21 representing 44.7 percent; followed by 'agree' with a score of 19 (40.4 percent). The above choices 'strongly agree' and 'agree' put together score 40 (85.1 percent). Number of respondents who choose 'disagree' scores 7 (14.9 percent); there are no responses for the choices 'strongly disagree' and 'neither agree nor disagree'. Thus, there are significant differences (χ^2=7.32; p=.026) for the service improvement - '**Library Portal service**' with a mean value of 4.15and SD being 1.02.

The librarians felt that 'Introduce smart membership cards' has the choice of 'strongly agree' with score of 19 representing 40.4 percent; followed by 'agree' with a score of 14 (29.8 percent); whereas, the choice 'neither agree nor disagree' scores 12 (25.5 percent); so also, the choice 'disagree' scores 2 (4.3 percent); whereas, the choice 'strongly disagree' has no response. Thus, there are significant differences (χ^2=13.00; p=.005) for the service improvement - '**Introduce smart membership cards'** with a mean value of**4.06**and **SD** being**0.92**.

The respondent's main choice is 'agree' for 'Introduce RFID technology' with score of 22 representing 46.8 percent; followed by 'strongly agree' with a score of 15 (31.9 percent). The above choices 'strongly agree' and 'agree' put together score 37 (78.7 percent). Number of respondents who choose 'disagree' scores 7 (14.9 percent); whereas, the choice 'neither agree nor disagree' scores 2 (4.3 percent); so also the choice 'strongly disagree' scores 1 (2.1 percent). Thus, there are significant differences (χ^2=34.17; p=.000) for the service improvement - '**Introduce RFID technology**' with a mean value of **4.06** and SD being **1.15**.

The respondent's main choice is 'agree' for 'Promote your library through social media (face book, twitter etc.)' with score of 18 representing 38.3 percent; followed by 'strongly agree' with a score of 16 (34 percent). The above choices 'strongly agree' and 'agree' put together score 34 (72.3percent). Whereas, the choice 'disagree' scores 8 (17 percent); so also, the choice 'neither agree nor disagree' scores 5 (10.6 percent); the choice 'strongly disagree' has no response. Thus, there are significant differences (χ^2=9.94; p=.019) for the service improvement - '**Promote your library through social media (face book, twitter etc.)**' with a mean value of **3.90** and SD being **1.07**.

The respondent's main choice is 'agree' for 'Install burglar alarms' with score of 25 representing 53.2 percent; followed by 'strongly agree' with a score of 12 (25.5 percent). The above choices 'strongly agree' and 'agree' put together score 37 (78.7percent). Whereas, the choice 'disagree' scores 7 (14.9 percent); so also, the choice 'neither agree nor disagree' scores 3 (6.4 percent); the choice 'strongly disagree' has no response. Thus, there are significant differences (χ^2=23.38; p=.000) for the service improvement - '**Install burglar alarms**' with a mean value of **3.90** and SD being **0.96**.

Table 6.4   Increasing Service Quality with the Help of Technology

S/N	Service Methods	Responses in Percentage (N=47)					Mean	SD	χ^2	p value
		1	2	3	4	5				
1	Introduce Scanned Question Bank Service	0 (0.0)	4 (8.5)	3 (6.4)	14 (29.8)	26 (55.3)	4.32	0.93	29.34	.000
2	Introduce OPAC and WEBOPAC	0 (0.0)	3 (6.4)	4 (8.5)	17 (36.2)	23 (48.9)	4.28	0.88	24.75	.000
3	Service through e mail	0 (0.0)	2 (4.3)	2 (4.3)	29 (61.7)	14 (29.8)	4.17	0.70	41.94	.000

								SD	χ^2	P
4	Library Portal Service	0 (0.0)	7 (14.9)	0 (0.0)	19 (40.4)	21 (44.7)	4.15	1.02	7.32	.026
5	Introduce Smart Membership Cards	0 (0.0)	2 (4.3)	12 (25.5)	14 (29.8)	19 (40.4)	4.06	0.92	13.00	.005
6	Introduce RFID Technology	1 (2.1)	7 (14.9)	2 (4.3)	15 (31.9)	22 (46.8)	4.06	1.15	34.17	.000
7	Promote your Library through Social Media (Face book, Twitter etc.)	0 (0.0)	8 (17.0)	5 (10.6)	18 (38.3)	16 (34.0)	3.90	1.07	9.94	.019
8	Install Burglar Alarms	0 (0.0)	7 (14.9)	3 (6.4)	25 (53.2)	12 (25.5)	3.90	0.96	23.38	.000

Table 6.4   Increasing Service Quality with the Help of Technology

Key: 1 – Strongly disagree, 2 – Disagree, 3 – Neither agree nor disagree, 4 – Agree, 5 – Strongly agree, SD = Standard deviation, N=Number of Respondents, Numbers in Parentheses Indicates Percentage; χ^2 = chi-square; P = Probability; P≤.050 – Significant; P> .050 – Not Significant.

American College Libraries are providing the services ask *a librarian*, where almost all libraries respond to phone and e-mail inquiries and some offer instant or text messaging. Ten college libraries have gone further by joining an international consortium that offers their students librarian assistance 24/7. Another service *Inter Library Loan*; all Libraries are committed to providing access to the full world of information and resources, including those sources that they do not own. There are multiple ways for researchers to obtain materials outside of their local college's collections. One more service, *library & research instruction;* libraries provide formal course-related or workshops for undergraduates, graduate students, and faculty. Library faculty are experts in finding and using information as well as tools for information retrieval and use, and stay current on new resources across the disciplines and new research strategies, including accessing eBooks and citation management applications. Finally one more service, *scholarly communication;* Libraries dedicated to collecting and providing access to the research, scholarship and creative work which is the institutional repository, content in Academic Works is freely available to all.

The above services can also be implemented in our college libraries. For that infrastructure, training, facilities, finance and the required manpower is essential. Higher authorities can make policy and even our services can be improved and right information to the right person will reach on right time, which in turn changes the college library scenario.

8.0 Conclusion

Improvements to user service can always be made, and libraries should continually assess the quality of user service to ensure that service standards are maintained and library users' expectations are being met and, where possible, exceeded. Libraries have made significant efforts to optimise the visibility and usage of their archival or special collection material through digitisation programmes. Further progress in realising the potential of open access to optimise access to research outputs will require effective interaction between users and libraries. The library staffs with a wide variety of literacy skill along with the application of new technologies are the key elements to enhance the library service quantity. Library services evaluation will guarantee the improvement of the library service quantity.

9.0 Reference

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