

An Assessment of the Quality of Services in Public Libraries Using the Gap Analysis Model, Based on the Users' Perspective: A Case study of Public Libraries Located in Tabriz Province

Yaghoub Norouzi (Corresponding author)

Assistant Professor, Department of LIS, Qom University
Ynorouzi@gmail.com

Mahdi Deram Nesari

M. A. Student of LIS, Islamic Azad University, Hamadan Branch
Deramnesari@gmail.com

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Abstract

Purpose: The purpose of this study is to assess the quality of services of Tabriz province's public libraries based on the users' perspective, using the Gap Analysis Model, LibQual.

Methodology: This is an analytical survey. 19 public libraries are involved in this study. At the time of data collection, the number of members of Tabriz public libraries was 46,000. The sample size of this survey with 5% error coefficient is calculated to be 381, while for higher precision, 455 libraries' members were selected as the research population. After uncompleted questionnaires have been removed, 414 questionnaires were used for data analyses. In order to perform statistical analysis, Mann-Whitney U and Kruskal-Wallis tests were used.

Results: This study shows that the level of services received by users of libraries in all cases is greater than the expected minimum level, but still does not provide the optimal level. According to the findings, the main weakness of libraries stems from their collections (information resources stock), while their strong point is the perceived courtesy of the librarians. Results also demonstrate that where the quality of current services is concerned, there is a significant difference between the maximum and minimum levels of library services from the users' viewpoints

Originality/Value: With regard to the significant role of libraries in information provision, this survey assesses the quality of services of Tabriz province's public libraries based on the users' perspective by using the Gap analysis method. Therefore, the results of this survey will be helpful for improving library service quality, and for filling the gap between the optimal and present level of services quality.

Keywords: Public libraries, Service quality, Gap analysis model, Users' perspective, Tabriz, Evaluation models, LibQual.