Assessment of service quality based on the SERVQUAL model in Tehran municipal public libraries

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Abstract

Purpose: This study aims to describe the current status of services offered by Tehran municipal public libraries and to determine the users' expectations of libraries.

Methodology: This is a survey-analytical research study. Data was collected through a modified version of the SERVQUAL questionnaire. The sample was selected using a random sampling approach, and the questionnaires were distributed among 300 active members of Tehran municipal public libraries (8 libraries). In this study, the gap between the current level of services that users receive, and their expectations is investigated in   terms of factors such as physical facilities, library collections, staff, technical processes and library services in general.

Findings: Results show that Tehran municipal public libraries are not providing the level of service quality demanded by users. The current services are recognized to be in good conditions (score 3 to 4,   but in all areas the users' expectations are identified as exceeding what is currently being offered to them, i.e. They are not being met (score greater than 4). Among the investigated areas, "physical facilities" is observed to display the highest gap (with a gap of 1.18 and a score of 4.67 as opposed to 3.50), and the "staff" dimension is observed to have the lowest gap (with a gap of 0.60, and a score of 4.18 as opposed to 3.59). The results of this study indicate a high level of users' expectations in relation to libraries and inadequate accountability by libraries to meet these expectations, with an overall gap of 0.86, suggesting that Tehran municipal public libraries need to improve in all areas of service quality.

Originality/value: This study provides empirical results that could help Tehran municipality in the planning and management of its libraries.

 Keywords: Service quality / SERVQUAL   / Municipal public libraries, Tehran / Users' expectations.