Measuring the Quality of Services in Maulana Azad Library, AMU, Aligarh: A Study

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Abstract

'Quality' means the measured standard of something against other similar kind of things or the strength of excellent of something. Here quality is customer satisfaction or the satisfaction of the users of the library services. As user satisfaction is becoming a motto of many academic libraries in the world, quality becomes an indispensable requirement of library services in order to satisfy the users. The fundamental aim of this paper is to measure the perception of the users/readers of Maulana Azad Library with regard to quality of service provided to them and how institution is accomplished in delivering such kind of services. The study is carried out among the students of the Aligarh Muslim University, Aligarh. The data were collected through a LibQUAL+ instrument to measure the quality services. This article also includes the planning, implementation and maintenance of the quality management service by the library.

1. Introduction

In the global information environment, the library and information centres are becoming very complex systems. The libraries have converted drastically from mere storehouses of books and publications to the powerhouses of knowledge and information. The advent of information and communication technology is dependable for that reason of revolution. The actual presence of libraries depends upon users' satisfaction and users are becoming satisfied as soon as the library has the capacity to as much as their expectations or meet the actual needs. A quality service is regarded as one, which satisfies the users' expectation result of an outstanding experience. Throughout history, libraries were mainly dedicated to collection development and processing. The library professionals were less concern to quality in product and services and hence never checked whether the users were satisfied or not. Yet the increasing expectations of users have challenged libraries to boost their quality of services. With constraint budget, librarians today feel more pressure to completely make use of the available resources. Consequently, several libraries and information services have adopted quality management practices in recent years.

2. Quality Service in Library

The word 'quality' has several definitions. The conventional definition is "One that wears well, is well constructed and will last for a long time" and the strategic definition is "meeting customers' requirements." Quality services are most important parameter for any institution, industry, product etc. Here, in library quality service means a lot, as it deals with the learning and research activities. Librarians

and information professionals not only providing traditional services like acquisition, cataloguing, classification and organization of the collection, but also value added service to satisfy the users (Ameen, 2010). Professional services become very people-based, which increases the level of variability in service quality (Walters, 2003).

3. Statement of The Problem

The goal of this study was to examine perceived effectiveness of the Maulana Azad Library of Aligarh Muslim University in interacting with the expectations of students. The results of the LibQUAL+, an internationally acclaimed academic library assessment instrument, provided data based on a collection of users' responses to determine satisfaction with current service quality.

4. Objectives of the Study

1. To distinguish the underlying dimensions of service quality of the Maulana Azad Library, AMU from user points of views .

2. To determine the best predictors of overall service quality of the Maulana Azad Library.

3. To understand the users expected quality service from the library as well as the problems they faced.

4. To know the degree of general satisfaction of the user through library services.

5. Methodology

To determine the service quality factors of the Maulana Azad Library, a user survey was conducted with the help of well established instrument (Libqual+) TM.

22 different service quality attributes were determined which are related to 'Measuring the quality of services in Maulana Azad Library, AMU, Aligarh: A Study', relevant statements were chosen by the researchers and an established questionnaire was well prepared using the 22 chosen statements for this proposed study. LIBQUAL+ TM was instrumented to examine the service quality of Maulana Azad Library. The questionnaire thus made used to determine users' expectations and satisfaction. To measure user objectives and satisfaction 9 (Nine) point scale was used with "1" indicating "lowest service level" and "9" suggesting" Highest Service Level".

5.1. Sample Size and Data Collection

The sample size appropriate to the Maulana Azad Library was determined and the study group was selected randomly. A total of 100 printed questionnaires were distributed among the library users. The questionnaire was distributed to users during the end of March 2017 to end of April 2017.

6. Data Analysis and Interpretation

Demographic information includes gender, age groups, class, and response rate in this study. It is very evident that the quality of any library is measured by the user's perception on services.

Table 1 - Demographic Information

Response	Frequency(N)	Percentage(N percentage)
Distributed	100	100%
Collected	90	90%
GENDER		
Male	56	62.22%
Female	34	37.78%
AGE		
Upto 20	18	20.00%
20-24 years.	22	24.44%
25-34 years.	35	39.00%
34-44 years	15	16.66%
CLASS		
Under Graduation	24	26.66%
Post Graduation	40	44.44%
Research Scholars	26	29.00%
Others	00	00.00%

As students are the primary users of the library, so researcher selected all types of students excluding faculty members and other staffs. Total 100 questionnaires were distributed and 90 questionnaires were collected from the users and the response rate was 90%. A majority of the user respondents 56 (62.22%) were male students and 34 (37.78%) were female students. This gender distribution is as per the proportion of students in the university.
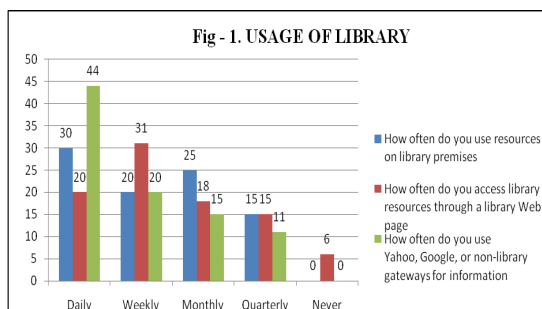

Figure 1: Library Usage Patter

The study shows that the given library is very important for the users and they also responded to the filled questionnaire. Fig - 1 shows that a majority of respondents about 44 (48.88%) daily use the Google, Yahoo or Non library Information for information. About 31(34.44%) respondents access the library web pages on weekly basis, and 25 (44.10) students use library once in a month.
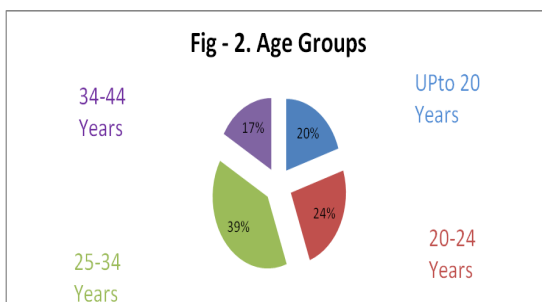

Figure 2: Age Groups of Respondents.

Fig- 2 shows that a majority of students were from a younger generation. Most of the respondents were within the age group range from 25 to 34 years old, i.e. 39% , followed by 24% from 20-24 years age group and 20% belongs to up to 20 years of age group.
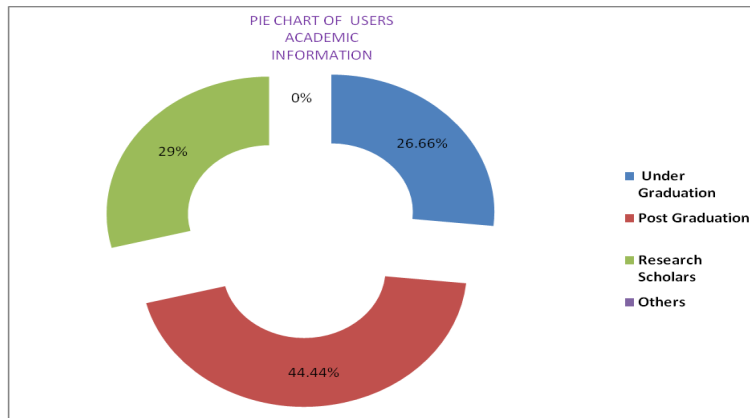
Figure 3: Users Academic Information

Figure 3. shows that a majority of 40 (44.44 %) respondents belongs to Post Graduate Class. Interestingly, there are 26 research Scholars, i.e., (29%) and 24, i.e., (26.66%) respondents are from Under Graduate Courses.

Table 2: Mean Score for Each Statement. (N 90)

Sl. No	Asked Statement	Minimum Service Level	Desired Service Level	Perceived Service Level
1	Employees who instil confidence in user	5.01	6.98	3.02
2	Easy-to-use access tools that allow me to find things on my own	4.90	7.03	3.09
3	Print and/or electronic journal collections I require for my work	6.02	8.02	4.02
4	Readiness to respond to users' questions	4.68	8.09	5.85
5	Quiet space for individual activities	4.15	8.04	6.26
6	Willingness to help users	5.28	7.89	5.32
7	A comfortable and inviting location	4.28	7.41	6.09
8	Dependability in handling users' service problems	7.21	8.64	5.38
9	Giving users individual attention	4.22	7.63	4.24
10	Library space that inspires study and learning	6.29	8.36	6.35

Sl. No	Asked Statement	Minimum Service Level	Desired Service Level	Perceived Service Level
11	The printed library materials I need for my work	6.63	7.17	6.89
12	Employees who have the knowledge to answer user questions	6.52	8.43	4.12
13	Modern equipment that lets me easily access needed information	5.86	8.12	5.11
14	Employees who are consistently courteous	6.72	7.48	4.2
15	Electronic information resources I need	6.23	8.17	7.45
16	Community space for group learning and group study	5.42	8.34	5.89
17	Employees who deal with users in a caring fashion	5.73	8.22	4.09
18	Making information easily accessible for independent use	5.28	8.02	6.43
19	Employees who understand the needs of their users	6.23	7.28	6.55
20	A getaway for study, learning, or research	5.27	8.56	5.91
21	Making electronic resource accessible from my home or office	5.63	7.45	6.01
22	Availability of online help when using my library's electronic resources	6.55	7.42	3.45
Overall Mean Score		5.64	7.85	5.26
Minimum Mean		5.01	6.98	3.02
Maximum Mean		7.21	8.64	7.45

7. Perception of Service Quality by the students

7.1 Desired and Minimum Quality Service Level

The overall desired expectation service was 7.85. 'Library as a Place' has the highest mean score of 6.57, followed by the 'Information Control' mean Score is 6.29 and 'Affect of service' mean score of 6.22. The mean score of minimum expectation service is 5.64. The highest 'Information Control' minimum service mean is 5.61, followed by 'Affect of services' 6.65 and 'Library as Place' is 5.61. Results indicate that Minimum service quality level is not so high.

The overall mean score of the Minimum service level is 5.64, desired service level is 7.85 and Perceived service level is 5.26.

Table -1, the result shows that respondents considered the following areas of service as important: 'Dependability in handling users' service problems' (8.64) as the highest expectation, followed by 'A gateway for study, learning, or research' (8.56), 'Employees who have the knowledge to answer user questions' (8.43), 'Library space that inspires study and learning' (8.36), 'Community space for group learning and group study' (8.34), 'Employees who deal with users in a caring fashion' (8.22) and 'Electronic information resources I need'(8.17).

7.2 Perceived Quality Service level

As library has the central character for providing quality service to its users. Highest perceived service provided by library as users perspective, such as follows: 'The Electronic information resources I need' (7.45), 'The printed library materials need for work' (6.89), 'Employees who understand the needs of their users' (6.55), 'Make information easily accessible for independent use'(6.43), 'Library space that inspires study and learning'(6.35).

7.3 Gap Score

The findings revealed that the gap of negative growth in Service Superiority gap and positive adequacy in service adequacy gap.

Table - 3. Service Superiority Gap Score

Item No.	Perceived Service Level	Desired Service Level	Service Superiority Gap Score
12	4.12	8.43	-4.31
17	4.09	8.22	-4.13
03	4.02	8.02	-4
22	3.45	7.42	-3.97
1	3.02	6.98	-3.96
2	3.09	7.03	-3.94
9	4.24	7.63	-3.39
14	4.2	7.48	-3.28
08	5.38	8.64	-3.26
13	5.11	8.12	-3.01
20	5.91	8.56	-2.65
06	5.32	7.89	-2.57
16	5.89	8.34	-2.45
04	5.85	8.09	-2.24
10	6.35	8.36	-2.01
05	6.25	8.04	-1.78
18	6.43	8.02	-1.59
21	6.01	7.45	-1.44
07	6.09	7.41	-1.32
19	6.55	7.28	-0.73
15	7.45	8.17	-0.72
11	6.89	7.17	-0.28

Users of Maulana Azad library ranked 'affect of service' and 'library as place' with a gap score of (-1.92) and 'service effects' with a negative adequacy gap of (-2.61). The large negative superiority gap in all 'information control' area is (–2.69) which

indicates that the Maulana Azad Library (MAL) is far from meeting its users' desired expectations. For the dimension of 'affect of service' the lowest score was observed 'Employees who have the knowledge to answer user questions' (-4.31) and 'Employees who deal with users in a caring fashion' (-4.13). The lowest score for 'library as place' dimension were observed for the attributes of 'Modern equipment that lets me easily access needed information' (-3.01) 'A gateway for study, learning, or research' (-2.11). For the dimension of mean of 'Information Control' lowest score was observed 'Easy-to-use access tools that allow me to find things on my own' (-3.94).

Lowest rankings for 'affect of service' dimension were observed for the 'printed library materials I need for my work'(-0.28) and 'Electronic information resources I need' (-0.73). Lowest ranking for 'library as a place' being 'Employees who understand the needs of their users' (-0.73), followed by 'Quiet space for individual activities' (-1.78). So it was found that Maulana Azad Library is not doing well in the 'service affects' and 'Library as a place'. The result shows the need for an immediate attention in those areas having very wide gap scores.

Statement 12 'Employees who have the knowledge to answer user questions' has the highest superiority gap of (-4.31), followed by statement 17 'Employees who deal with users in a caring fashion' and statement 3 'Print and/or electronic journal collections I require for my work'.

Table – 4. Service Adequacy Gap Score

Statement No.	Perceived Service Level	Minimum Service Level	Service Adequacy Gap Score
5	6.26	4.15	2.11
7	6.09	4.28	1.81
15	7.45	6.23	1.22
4	5.85	4.68	1.17
18	6.43	5.28	1.15
20	5.91	5.27	0.64
16	5.89	5.42	0.47
21	6.01	5.63	0.38
19	6.55	6.23	0.32
11	6.89	6.63	0.26
10	6.35	6.29	0.06
6	5.32	5.28	0.04
9	4.24	4.22	0.02
13	5.11	5.86	-0.75
17	4.09	5.73	-1.64
2	3.09	4.09	-1.81
8	5.38	7.21	-1.83
1	3.02	5.01	-1.99
3	4.02	6.02	-2
12	4.12	6.52	-2.4
14	4.02	6.72	-2.52
22	3.45	6.55	-3.1

Table- 4 indicates the Service Adequacy level of Maulana Azad Library, Aligarh. To what extent the library meet the minimum user expectations. Statement 5 ' Quiet space for individual activities' has the highest adequacy gap score of (2.11) that

means users are getting their expected service in the very quiet space for individual learning activities and Statement 7 'A comfortable and inviting location' has positive service adequacy level. But on the other hand a negative service adequacy is also indicated in various statements such as the statement of 22 'Availability of online help when using my library's electronic resources' has the lowest level of service adequacy level of -3.1 in Maulana Azad library of Aligarh Muslim University.

library materials I need for my work' and statement 14 'Employees who are consistently courteous'. Other statements which were far from the Zone of Tolerance especially those were statements included as: 05 'Quiet space for individual activities ', statement 07 'A comfortable and inviting location', statement 09 'Giving users individual attention', statement 12 'Employees who have the knowledge to answer user questions', statement 14 'Employees who are consistently courteous', and statement 17 'Employees who deal with users in a caring fashion' . These services were far from meeting the users' expectations. Not any item was above the desired service level which means no item meet the user's desired expectations.
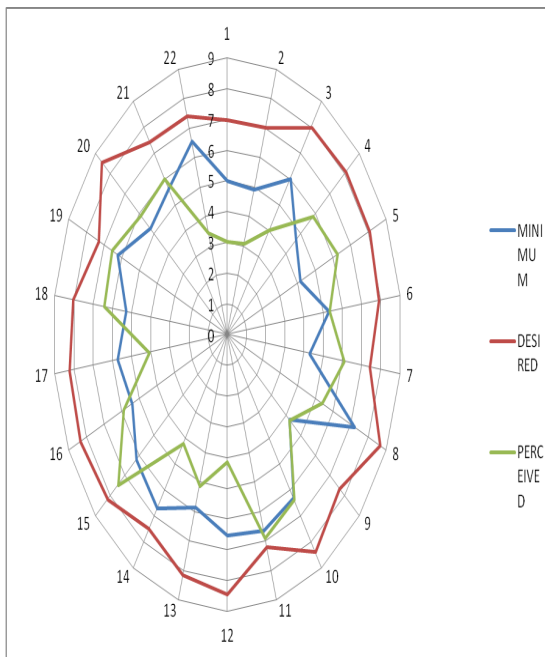

Figure 4: RADAR CHART of Zone of Tolerance of Maulana Azad Library Service.

Figure 4 depicts the statements which are inside and outside of the Zone of Tolerance. Zone of Tolerance is the distance between 'minimally-acceptable 'and 'desired' service levels. Almost all the statements were not in the range with the exception of statement 8 ' Dependability in handling users' service problems' , statement 11 'The printed

Table 5: General Satisfaction Statements and Information Literacy Outcomes

Sl. No.	Statements	Mean	Standard Deviation	N
A.	**Satisfaction Statements**			
1	In general, I am satisfied with the way in which I am treated at the Libraries.	6.03	1.46	90
2	In general, I am satisfied with library support for my learning, research, and/or teaching needs	5.28	1.34	90
3	How would you rate the overall quality of the service provided By the library?	5.92	1.42	90
B.	**Information Literacy Outcomes**			
1	The library helps me stay new developments in my field(s) of interest or study	5.63	1.11	90
2	The library aids my advancement in my academic discipline	6.02	1.44	90
3	The library enables me to be more efficient in my academic pursuits	5.63	1.2	90
4	The library helps me distinguish between trustworthy & untrustworthy information	6.98	2.16	90
5	The library provides me with the information skills I need in my work or study	5.62	1.15	90

This research study also gathered information about general satisfaction perception as well as the views on information Literacy outcomes in the Maulana Azad library. That is why, the researcher used the five point Likert scale from Strongly Agree to Strongly Disagree and library users responded accordingly.

A. Satisfaction Statements

❖ The Table- 5 shows that most of the students are satisfied by the treatment of the Maulana Azad Library. Library provides a vast amount of services to its users on daily basis. From the mean score, it is proved that students are satisfied by the library services;

❖ It is found that most of the users are not very much satisfied with the library support for research and learning activities;

❖ Overall, the Quality service is relatively good but not outstanding according to the user's perspectives.

B. Information Literacy Outcome Perception

❖ The Table- 5 shows that the users are minimally satisfied with the service rendered by the library to stay informed;

❖ The students of Maulana Azad Library are satisfied with the support for academic advancement;

❖ The users of the library are satisfied with the academic pursuit rendered by the Maulana Azad Library;

❖ The users are highly satisfied in the statement of 'users satisfaction' in library helped in 'distinguished between trustworthy and untrustworthy information';

❖ Users of the Maulana Azad Library are not highly satisfied in the field of 'information skills needed by the users'.

8. Conclusion and Recommendation

The study result shows that there is a wide gap between user perceptions and expectations of quality service rendered to users by Maulana Azad Library of Aligarh Muslim University. The study showed that students had higher expectations of library service quality. They expected convenient library employee's help; library staffs had information to meet the queries from students, online help by the library staff etc. The results therefore resulted in negative adequacy gaps and very wide superiority gaps. Though libraries quality service is very good in 'Quiet space for individual activities', the printed materials as well as electronic materials services available in the library. The study recommends that.

❖ The library should develop a well designed website which includes all web 2.0 technology.

❖ Information literacy programmes should be organised by the library for the students and faculty members in different course level at the initial stage of classes.

❖ Library employee should hold all the professional and technical knowledge to meet the needs and queries of the users. So that library should organize training programmes, workshops for its own employees etc.

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