

EVALUATION OF LIBRARY SERVICE QUALITY USING THE SERVQUAL METHOD AT TRIDINANTI UNIVERSITY LIBRARY PALEMBANG

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Abstrak

Keywords:

*Quality Of Service,
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The use of reference services by students is still less than optimal, even though the library has provided various facilities and services that can support academic needs. The purpose of this study is to analyze student perceptions of the quality of reference services at the Tridinanti University Library, Palembang. The research method uses descriptive qualitative with data collection including observation, interviews, and documentation with the SERVQUAL Method. Informants in this study were 4 students who frequently visit and use reference services. The results of the study show that student perceptions of the quality of reference services at the Tridinanti University Library, Palembang are as follows: (1) tangibles, students assess that the physical facilities in reference services are adequate, but there are several obstacles, such as dim lighting and narrow collection rooms. (2) reliability, students assess that the accuracy and suitability of the information provided by librarians and staff is very good, complete, and easy to understand, (3) responsiveness, students assess that librarians have helped and provided information according to user needs, even willing to serve even during break times, (4) assurance, students assess that librarians and staff of the Tridinanti University Library, Palembang Unit are very friendly and polite in serving visitors, and are able to provide accurate information accompanied by proof of their reliability, thus increasing user confidence in library services, (5) empathy, students assess that communication between librarians and users is going well, because user needs can be met according to expectations, the librarian's open and honest communication attitude makes interactions smooth and builds positive relationships. The conclusion in this study is that students' perceptions of reference services at the Tridinanti University Library, Palembang Unit still need to be improved, especially in tangible aspects. In this service, there are obstacles, namely minimal lighting and limited space for reference collections.

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INTRODUCTION

Rapid changes in science and technology have led to an increasingly rapid growth in information. Libraries must therefore function as information resource centers. This allows them to provide more effective, relevant, and tailored services to meet the needs of their users. College libraries are a vital part of the educational process and play a strategic role in providing services that support education, research, and community service (Sulistyo-Basuki, 1993). One such crucial service is reference services, which help users find the information they need quickly, precisely, and accurately. The quality of reference services is determined not only by the completeness of the collection but also by the librarians' ability to provide professional information assistance.

Field observations at the Tridinanti University Library in Palembang indicate that reference services are not yet being utilized effectively. Some students prefer to search for information independently online rather than seek assistance from librarians. This is despite the library providing consultations on scientific literature, access to academic databases, and an online catalog (Online Public Access Catalog/OPAC). This situation indicates a discrepancy between the utilization of available facilities and the number of students using them. Some students stated that librarians were friendly, responsive, and competent, but their main obstacles were the inadequate reference collection and the lack of service promotion. This indicates that reference services still need to be thoroughly evaluated to ensure they meet academic needs.

One of the important factors determining the quality of university library services is reference services, which makes this research important. According to Siregar (2019), user satisfaction with libraries is greatly influenced by service quality, especially the librarian's ability to provide accurate and reliable information. Further analysis is needed on how students perceive reference services, as there is a mismatch between the potential services available and the level of student utilization. This perception is crucial in determining whether the services provided meet user expectations.

Many previous studies have been conducted on the quality of library services. For example, research conducted by Erma (2019) at IAIN Tulungagung showed that although limited collections affect user satisfaction, librarian reliability and empathy significantly influence the level of user satisfaction. Meanwhile, research conducted by Nora Junita (2015) found that librarian competency is the knowledge, skills, and behaviors that a librarian must possess so that their performance meets the standards set by the library and the parent university organization related to organizational culture and other aspects. Furthermore, research by Nurhayati (2020) emphasized the importance of librarians having the skills to use digital technology to improve the quality of reference services. Previous studies have similarities, namely a focus on assessing service quality. However, the differences in this study lie in the research location, namely Tridinanti University Palembang, and the use of the SERVQUAL model, which assesses five dimensions of service quality: tangible, reliability, responsiveness, and empathy.

Previous research has shown that collection creation must be tailored to user needs, so that libraries can provide relevant and up-to-date information. Furthermore, a more comprehensive service promotion strategy is needed to encourage students to learn about and utilize existing facilities. As emphasized by Nurhayati (2020), librarian competencies must be improved through information literacy training and mastery of digital technology. According to Annisa Dwi & Leni Adithya (2022), the effectiveness

of reference services is also influenced by the availability of digital-based online services that can be accessed via a stable internet connection. Furthermore, Yusuf (2024) argues that hybrid services offer numerous benefits to users, especially in higher education settings. Wider access to a variety of information resources can be used as an alternative solution to address the limited number of librarians due to the increasing number of visitors.

This study uses the SERVQUAL theory, developed by Parasuraman, Zeithaml, and Berry (1988). According to this theory, there are five dimensions used to assess service quality: tangibles (physical aspects), reliability, responsiveness, assurance, and empathy. The SERVQUAL model is the right choice because it can provide a comprehensive picture of the quality of reference services, both from the perspective of facilities and librarian interactions with users. With this theoretical framework, the study is expected to provide objective evaluations and practical input for the development of reference services in libraries.

Reference services are a type of information service that focuses on helping users find the print and digital resources they need (Sulistyo-Basuki, 1993). The major benefits of these services include improving students' information literacy, strengthening the library's role as an academic reference center, and providing access to relevant resources to support learning and research. This study aims to identify students' perceptions of the quality of reference services at the Tridinanti University Library in Palembang, identify supporting and inhibiting factors, and make suggestions for improving these services. Based on the description above, this study has a strong urgency to be conducted. There is a need to evaluate and improve reference services at the Tridinanti University Library in Palembang, as indicated by the problem background, field observations, previous research results, and underlying theories. Therefore, it is hoped that the findings of this study will not only help library development but will also contribute to information services research at the national level.

LITERATURE REVIEW

I Made Rayvan Virgantara, Made Kastawa, and Richard Togaranta Ginting in the academia edu journal entitled "Library User Perceptions of the Quality of Circulation Services at the SMA N 1 Kuta Utara Library". The purpose of this study was to determine the perceptions of library users towards the quality of circulation services at the SMA N 1 Kuta Utara library. This study used a quantitative descriptive method. The results showed that the perceptions of library users towards the quality of circulation services at the SMA N 1 Kuta Utara library were classified as good. This can be seen from the majority of respondents who stated that they strongly agree and agree. The statement that has the highest value of all the statements referred to in the questionnaire is "The existence of the library helps users in doing school assignments". While the statement that has the lowest value is "Officers are able to provide information regarding the location and type of collection requested quickly". The difference in the research of I Made Rayvan Virgantara, Made Kastawa, and Richard Togaranta Ginting focuses on circulation services, while the researcher focuses on reference services, another difference also lies in the method used, namely the quantitative descriptive method, while the researcher uses the qualitative descriptive method. The similarity is that it focuses on the perceptions of library users.

Ana Rizka Mashud (2020) in the Journal of Library and Information Science entitled "Evaluation of Library Service Quality at SMA Negeri 7 Purworejo in the LibQual+™ Perspective". The purpose of this study is to determine the quality of library services at SMA Negeri 7 Purworejo and what attributes are important to be allocated by library managers in order to provide good service quality. The method used is quantitative. The LibQual+™ theory includes (1) Service Affect (ability & attitude of librarians in serving), (2) Library as Place (facilities & atmosphere of the library room), (3) Personal Control (instructions and means of access), (4) Information Access (access to information). The method used in this study is a quantitative method. With a sample of 251 people, sampling used a simple random sampling technique, namely a sampling technique that is carried out randomly without paying attention to the strata in the population. The analysis was conducted using the Importance Performance Analysis (IPA) model, namely the analysis of the level of importance and satisfaction of library users using a Cartesian diagram that can show the location of indicators in the LibQual+™ dimension contained in the first quadrant. The results of this study indicate that the quality of library services at SMA Negeri 7 Purworejo is 8471.66% or more than 80%, meaning that library users are satisfied with the performance of library services. The difference in Ana Rizka Mashud's research is the use of qualitative methods and LibQual+™ theory. Another difference also lies in the evaluation of service quality as a whole, while the researcher focuses on reference services. The similarity lies in assessing the quality of library services.

RESEARCH METHODS

This research used a qualitative method with a descriptive approach. The study was conducted at the central library of Tridianti University, Palembang, located at Jl. Kapten Marzuki, Jl. Kamboja No. 2446, 20 Ilir D. III, Ilir District, Tim. I, Palembang City, South Sumatra 30129. The technique used was purposive sampling. The informant selection criteria included:

1. Active students at Tridianti University, Palembang
2. Previous use of library reference services
3. Willingness to be research informants

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

1. Student Perceptions of the Quality of Reference Services at the Tridianti University Library, Palembang

Tangibles (Physical Aspects) are an important aspect of service quality, encompassing the library's physical facilities, equipment, staff appearance, and available communication tools. User satisfaction with library services is greatly influenced by comfortable, tidy, and adequate physical facilities. Regarding the physical aspect (Tangibles), the researcher asked two questions: Indicator 1: What do you think about the physical facilities (room, tables, chairs, lighting, and comfort of the reference room)? Are they adequate?

According to Dwi Desriani, a student from the Faculty of Agriculture, "The reference facilities, such as tables and the room, are very good and comfortable, but the lighting is still very dim." This was followed by Rita Indah Atika Arhab's statement, "I feel it's quite adequate, but the reference room is too cramped."

Indicator 2: Has the online catalog helped you find your reference collection?

According to several students interviewed by the researcher, one, Dwi Destriani, stated, "It's very helpful because it helps you find the collections you need and it functions well." This statement was also agreed by Rita Indah Atika Arhab, who said, "Yes, it's very helpful." Based on the

researchers' observations, it is true that the physical reference service facilities at the Tridinanti University Library in Palembang are comfortable and adequate. However, there are obstacles, such as inadequate lighting and a cramped reference room, which forces users to take turns searching for collections on the shelves.

Reliability is the ability to provide promised services quickly, accurately, and satisfactorily to users. To explore student perceptions, the researcher asked related questions such as:

Indicator 1: In your opinion, do the reference services at the library meet the promises?

Informant 2 stated, "Yes, the service is quite good." Informant 1 followed, "Yes, because I think this library is quite adequate, with services such as computers and books that are quite good and complete."

Indicator 2: How accurate are the librarians in providing the information or references they need?

Informant 2 stated, "It was quite good, the service was very friendly and the information was clear." Informant 1 also stated, "The information provided was very accurate." Informant 4 also stated, "Yes, it was quite clear and appropriate to what was needed." And Informant 3 stated, "Very good." Based on the results of the researcher's observations, it is true that the accuracy and appropriateness provided by the librarian and staff in providing information is very complete, making it easy for users or other students who visit the Tridinanti Palembang University Library to understand.

Responsiveness is the willingness and desire of library staff to assist users and provide prompt and responsive service. To explore student perceptions regarding this aspect, researchers posed the following questions:

Indicator 1: How do librarians respond when asked for assistance in finding information sources?

Several students responded, "Very nice, very friendly in helping students," said informant 2. Informant 3 responded, "Very good." And informant 4 responded, "Quite helpful."

Indicator 2: Are librarians responsive and quick to respond to your needs?

Informant 2 responded, "Yes, they are quite quick to respond to students' needs here." Several other students also responded, "Quite helpful, and very responsive and ready to respond to us if we are having difficulties or need other services," said informants 1 and 4. Based on the researchers' observations, the librarians' responsiveness in assisting and providing information is consistent with user needs. Librarians and library staff are always available to serve users, even during break times.

Assurance encompasses the librarian's ability to provide accurate information, be polite, and demonstrate trustworthiness, so that users feel confident and comfortable using the service. Questions in this aspect are as follows:

Indicator 1: Do you feel confident in the librarian's ability to provide accurate information?

Several students interviewed by the researcher stated, "Yes, they are confident that the information provided by the librarian is accurate, because after we investigated, we found out that the information is true," said informant 1.

Indicator 2: How polite and friendly were the library staff when serving you?

According to informant 1, "They are polite in serving library visitors; they always smile at every visitor." According to informant 2, "The service here is very polite and friendly, which helps students and doesn't make us afraid to ask questions." Based on the researcher's observations, the librarians and library staff at the Tridinanti University Library in Palembang are indeed very friendly and courteous in serving students and other visitors. They also provide accurate information because each librarian and staff member provides information and provides proof of its accuracy.

Empathy encompasses ease of establishing relationships, good communication, the ability to understand user needs, and the librarian's attention to each individual. The researcher asked the following questions:

Indicator 1: Do you feel the librarian understands your needs personally?

Informant 1 stated, "Yes, they are quite understanding and understanding, because we can ask for the information we need directly." Several other students also stated, "They are quite understanding and very helpful."

Indicator 2: How was your experience communicating with the librarian? Was it easy and helpful? Informant 2 stated, "My experience communicating with the librarian was very good. When I was looking for a book I needed, the librarian was very kind and clear in choosing vocabulary that I could understand." Informant 3 stated, "In my experience, the librarian here was very helpful and easy to understand when I needed help." Based on the researcher's observations, communication between the librarian and the user was good, as all user needs were met according to their needs. The librarian's communication with the user was also open and honest, which contributed to a smooth communication relationship.

2. Strategies for Improving the Quality of Reference Services at the Tridinanti University Library, Palembang

Based on interviews with librarians and staff at the Tridinanti University Library in Palembang, several pieces of information were obtained regarding reference services. The librarians stated that the thesis collection is arranged by year of publication to make it easier for students to find relevant academic literature. Furthermore, students can search for references using the CIP (Clear Information Library) application on the library's computers. However, this search system remains limited because it can only be searched by author and title. To ensure that students receive information in a timely manner, the librarians also emphasized the need for constant availability of reference services. They also acknowledged that the lighting and room conditions of the reference collection were inadequate. However, the librarians acknowledged that responsiveness remains a problem, particularly in responding quickly to student inquiries. Proactive approaches, such as providing additional information without being asked, have not been fully utilized. Furthermore, they emphasized the importance of building student trust by providing evidence of reference sources and creating a friendly service environment. In terms of empathy, the librarians strive to communicate with students directly, for example by explaining the features in the CIP (*Clear Information Library*) application.

The interviews identified several issues that need to be addressed. First, the Clear Information Library (CIP) application has limited search capabilities, preventing students from searching for references by publication year, faculty, or department. Second, in terms of physical facilities, although considered adequate, users face obstacles such as dim lighting and cramped collection spaces, which reduce the comfort of searching and reading. Third, librarians' responsiveness must be improved to answer student questions more quickly and accurately. Third, a proactive approach to providing additional information has not been fully implemented, preventing students from having a more in-depth service experience. Furthermore, librarians' understanding of student needs has not been carried out with a more systematic approach.

To address this issue, librarians have employed various approaches. Organizing theses by publication year and general collections by classification code is one way to make it easier for students to navigate information sources. Efforts to improve services are also evident through the implementation of the CIP (Clear Information Library) application as a reference search tool, although this feature is still in development. In terms of facilities, librarians have added lighting to the reference room. In terms of service quality, librarians are increasing student trust by consistently including reference sources, providing friendly service such as expressing gratitude, and communicating directly with students to explain how to use library facilities. Furthermore, these efforts are expected to result in more organized, responsive, and user-friendly services.

CONCLUSION

Based on the results of the study on student perceptions of the quality of reference services at the Tridinanti University Library in Palembang, it shows that this service is quite good, although some aspects still need improvement. Physical facilities are considered adequate in terms

of tangible dimensions, but students still face problems such as poor lighting and cramped collection space. In terms of reliability, students assess that librarians can provide accurate, complete, and easy-to-understand information to meet their academic needs. In terms of responsiveness, librarians are considered quite responsive and remain available to serve after office hours, but their responsiveness still needs to be improved. In the assurance dimension, librarians and staff demonstrate a friendly, polite attitude and are able to provide reliable information, increasing student confidence in the service. In terms of empathy, communication between librarians and students is well established through an open attitude and easy-to-understand explanations, which creates a positive relationship between users and librarians. Overall, student perceptions of reference services indicate that library services have met most user needs, but there are several weaknesses that need to be addressed. Reference services are expected to improve the user experience better and meet students' overall academic needs. These improvements may include improvements to the physical facilities of the reference room, increased librarian responsiveness, and the implementation of proactive strategies for providing information.

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