Service Quality in Sungai Petani Public Library:

Malaysian Evidence

QUALITE DE SERVICE DANS LA BIBLIOTHEQUE PUBLIQUE A SUNGAI PETANI:

UNE EVIDENCE MALAISIENNE

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Abstract: Service quality has emerged as a key strategic issue in management. The service quality assessment tool SERVQUAL was introduced by Parasuraman (1988) that cover tangibles, reliability, responsiveness, and assurance and empathy dimensions of service quality. The objective of this study is to identify the

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relationship between dimension (tangibles, reliability responsiveness) and service quality in Sungai Petani Public library in Kedah State Government and to investigate which service quality dimensions that mostly influenced the service quality in public library in Sungai Petani. The issues regarding public library are the physical aspect of the public library make people lack of interest to go, the public library facing problem in term of qualified staff to deliver quality of service and also comments by people regarding on the problem of the contents in public libraries in the poor condition. The study was conducted among library users and the information was gathered via questionnaires which consisted of structured questions. In this study, simple random sampling was used where only 132 respondents were selected. The discussion methods are using the Descriptive Statistic, Pearson Correlations, Cronbach's Alpha and Multiple Regressions used to analyze the result of this study. The findings indicated that all three hypotheses which are tangible dimension, reliability dimension and responsiveness dimension was accepted by the researchers. Based on the finding, the reliability dimension is a significant relationship with service quality in public library Sungai Petani which is strong positive relationship. However the researchers recommend that the management of public library Sungai Petani needs to focus on several services that needs further improvement such as the online public access catalogue (OPAC) and welcoming atmosphere is important part of providing excellent services towards modern library service. In future research, the library's management should take an effort to create the pleasant surroundings to encourage the widest possible segment of the population to use the library and to regard it as an essential part of community life and more 'user freindly' with the customers.

Key words: Service; Quality; Service Quality; SERVQUAL; Library; Public Library; Users

Résumé: La qualité de service est apparu comme un enjeu stratégique dans la gestion. L'outil d'évaluation de la qualité de service SERVQUAL a été présenté par Parasuraman (1988), qui contient les dimensions de la tangibilité, de la fiabilité, de la réactivité et de l'assurance et l'empathie de la qualité de service. L'objectif de cette étude est de déterminer la relation entre les dimensions (la tangibilité, la réactivité, la fiabilité) et la qualité de service de bibliothèque publique du gouvernement de l'Etat de Kedah à Sungai Petani et d'analyser quelles sont les dimensions de qualité de service qui influencent le plus la qualité de service dans la bibliothèque publique à Sungai Petani. Les problèmes concernant la bibliothèque publique dans les mauvais états sont l'aspect physique de la bibliothèque publique qui rend les gens manque d'intérêt d'y aller et des problèmes en terme de personnel qualifié pour fournir une service de qualité ainsi que des commentaires sur les livres. L'étude a été menée auprès des utilisateurs de bibliothèque et les informations ont été recueillies via des questionnaires avec des questions structurées. Dans cette étude, on a utilisé l'échantillonnage simple aléatoire lorsque seulement 132 sondés ont été sélectionnés. Pour analyser le résultat de cette étude, les méthodes de travail utilisées sont les statistiques descriptives, la corrélations de Pearson, l'Alpha de Cronbach et les régressions multiples. Les résultats ont indiqué que les trois hypothèses, c'est-à-dire la dimension de la tangibilité, $, la dimension de la fiabilité et la dimension de la réactivité, ont été acceptées par les chercheurs. Selon la constatation, la dimension de la fiabilité est un facteur important de la qualité de service dans la bibliothèque

publique à Sungai Petani. Toutefois, les chercheurs recommandent que la gestion de la bibliothèque publique à Sungai Petani devrait se concentrer sur plusieurs services qui sont à améliorer, tel que l'accès publc au catalogue en ligne (APCL) et l'atmosphère d'acceuil est aussi une partie importante d'un service excellent dans une bibliothèque moderne. Dans la recherche ultérieure, la gestion de la bibliothèque devrait faire un effort pour créer un environnement agréable pour encourager une partie la plus grande possible de la population à utiliser la bibliothèque et à la considérer comme une partie essentielle de la vie communautaire et les personnels devraient être plus amicaux avec les utilisateurs.

Mots-clés: service; qualité; qualité de service; SERVQUAL; bibliothèque; bibliothèque publique; utilisateurs

1. INTRODUCTION

The service quality is very important to be practices in public library services because the users satisfaction in based on the quality of service that they received. Service quality will lead to customer satisfaction. The concept of service quality in library was defined as the difference between library user's expectations and perceptions towards service performance (N.Mehran and Mostafa, 2008). Based on this definition, the service quality is about what public library users received from public library services that leads to their behavior and satisfactory towards the services whether it is good or bad. The public library is a library which is available and accessible to all regardless of age, skill level, or ability to pay. Public library is different from other library such as school library and academic library in term of the service that serves the public with the information generally. In Malaysia, every state has public libraries that manage by Perbadanan Perpustakaan Awam Negeri and cooperate with local government respectively. In Kedah state, there are 10 main branches of public libraries in every district under the management of Perbadanan Perpustakaan Awam Negeri Kedah. In this study, the researcher's just focus on the public library in Sungai Petani that located at Jalan Pegawai and nearest of Jubli Intan Park in the area of Bandar Sungai Petani. Public library Sungai Petani is a branch that officially start operated on April 1997. Public library Sungai Petani provides services such as books circulations, journals and article, internet access for relevant information, multimedia materials and handles many programs that related to reading activities. It received around two hundred to four hundred visitors a day from all level of age and races.

Many studies have been carried out towards service quality in public libraries. Unfortunately, not so many researches have been studied in Malaysia even public libraries provided in every single state government. The services that provided by public libraries are still needs of improvement to fulfill the users satisfaction. By using the service quality assessment tool SERVQUAL introduced by Parasuraman (1988) that cover tangibles, reliability and responsiveness dimensions of service quality dimensions will give benefits to the researchers. By having the result of findings and recommendations will get a value added in identifying and solving the pattern of service quality among Malaysian This result will provide relevant information for the government to improvise in service quality dimensions. The results from this research also can identify the level of tangibles, reliability and responsiveness of local people towards service quality which is can change the mentality of Malaysian readers towards public libraries up to the standard as it. Thus, the objectives of this research are to identify the relationship between dimension (tangibles, reliability responsiveness) and service quality in Sungai Petani Public library in Kedah State Government.and to investigate which service quality dimensions that mostly influenced the service quality in public library in Sungai Petani.

2. PROBLEM STATEMENT

The public libraries in need of quality staff leads to the Education Ministry looks into the shortage of qualified and permanent staff in public libraries to help the public libraries be effective. The state governments needed to create more permanent post for public librarians, adding that the lack of staff was the most pressing problems facing the libraries. Datin Paduka Shahaneem Hanoum, chairman of the Council of Public State Libraries Directors, said the lack of qualified staff at state and district libraries had limited their activities. This report shows that public library facing problem in term of qualified staff to serve quality service to the public library users. The reliability and responsiveness dimension of service quality rely on personnel or staff of the public library. The attitude and the mentality of public library staff needs to change in order to make public libraries more proactive as a centre of education, culture and recreation in local community. The physical space and the facilities in public libraries need to be change and improve to support this plan (Utusan Malaysia, 2006). This statement shows that the personnel of the public libraries are the important element that needs to focus on as a major challenge to determine good service quality of public library.

 The Regional Conference on Public Libraries Malaysia in 1997 was emphasized on the importance of making public libraries user friendly and the need to attract children and young people. The problems in the plan action includes the objectives and role of public libraries that consists of vision, mission and objectives that need to redefine with the role in relation to local community needs in urban and rural areas. The needs to setting standards and guideline for public libraries in order to monitor assess and identify opportunities for improvement of collections and service provided (IFLA Regional Conference on Public Libraries Malaysia, 1997).

The collection of reading materials in public libraries needs to be more quality to make people love to reads. Many people depending on public library to have reading materials such as books that they are unable to have it. According to Datuk Zawiyah Baba, the former director of National Library, the collections of public libraries in very poor condition, the main factors that contribute to this situation are the lack of priority by the authorities and insufficient of funds to support public libraries (Utusan Malaysia, 2006).

The Park Ridge Public Library in America reveals the current physical facility presents major challenges to the library. The lacks sufficient space to meet the needs of the community limits the library's to increase its collections without reducing other collections, provide adequate space for children and teens and provide quite space for the library users. Furthermore, the library also not able to offer separate programs to serve different segments of the community and not able to provide adequate workplace for staff. The strategic plans also cover on staffing challenge, it is about the needs to employ and support a knowledgeable, flexible and equitably compensated staff team that can respond positively and creatively to the changing public library environment (The Park Ridge Public Library Board of Trustees, 2008).

The service quality is about customer's long term, cognitive evaluations of a firm's service delivery and the service quality is determination of satisfaction among the public library's users. The SERVQUAL is a standardized scale that measures expectations and perceptions about critical quality dimension.

3. LITERATURE REVIEW

The service quality is very important to be practices in public library services because the users satisfaction in based on the quality of service that they received. Service quality will lead to customer

satisfaction, according to Vavra (1997). The concept of service quality in library was defined as the difference between library user's expectations and perceptions towards service performance (N.Mehran and Mostafa cited by Oldman and Wills, 1977). Based on this definition, the service quality is about what public library users received from public library services that leads to their behavior and satisfactory towards the services whether it is good or bad. Based on the research by Marshall.G.W,Baker,J.,& David,W.F.(1998), indicate that service quality can be achieve through understanding all aspects of service that important and meet users needs. According to Proctor,R., Usherwood,B.,& Sobczyk,G. (1997), the number of public library users are high when the service that provided is in great value, enhancing quality of life and can fulfilling an essential need for majority of library users. To achieve the service quality, service that delivered to the users must be in the right way, good manner in overall aspects and can gives something that valued for them. In the other words, a quality service is means as fully meets the expectations and requirements of the users (Sharma cited by Ashok, 2006). In the article of Service Quality Dimension a Study on Various Sizes of Grocery Retailers by Nor Khalidah Abu (2004), that used physical aspects, reliability, interpersonal relationship, problem solving and policy in service quality dimensions to measured service quality on various sizes of grocery retailers based on previous studies. The study finding indicate that the physical aspects and inter-personal relationship dimensions contribute significantly to the overall service quality in a medium sized grocery store. The overall service quality measure for a large size grocery retailer significantly determine by the physical aspect, reliability and policy dimensions. This finding shows that the customer's satisfaction can lead by the appearance of physical aspects such as the interior environment that safety, clean and well manage. The Measurement of Service Quality: a new P-C-P attributes model is an article by George Philip and Shirley-Ann Hazlett (1996) discussed on the management and evaluation of service quality in service sector. In the attributes model, they adopted some of questions that relating to dimensions from original SERVQUAL scale. The issue such as responsiveness of the staff delivers the service to the customer; it is about how staff response to the customer queries for help including prompt service and individual attentions are addressed. The article of service quality at University of Tehran Central Library by N.Mehran and N.Mostafa (2008), investigate the importance of service quality aspects from the user's perspective. The SERVPERF methodology was used to measure service quality in University of Tehran Central Library. The reliability aspect of service was measured that refers to the delivery of service as dependability and accuracy (N.Mehran and N.Mostafa cited by Parasuraman, 1988). The research finding indicate the most important aspect of service quality identified by users of University of Tehran Central Library are the availability of computer terminals without excessive waiting, service at circulation desk and keeping records consistent with actual status. The Hypotheses of the study is There is a significant difference between dimension of tangible and service quality on the public library in Sungai Petani, there is a significant difference between dimension of reliability and service quality on the public library in Sungai Petani and There is a significant difference between dimension of responsiveness and service quality on the public library in Sungai Petani.

4. METHODS & MATERIALS

A cross-sectional survey was conducted in Sungai Petani Public Library from July 2008 until April 2009 using a quantitative towards respondents. A total of 132 respondents were selected as respondents due to larger size of population. The data was analyzed using statistical Statistical Package for the Social Science (SPSS) in getting data and information. By this SPSS, the researchers used the analysis method like Descriptive Statistic, Cronbach's Alpha, Pearson Correlation and Multiple Regressions.

5. RESULTS & DISCUSSION

5.1   Profile of Respondents

In this section, the researchers discuss about the respondents demographic such as gender, age, marital status, race, monthly salary and level of education. Based on the Table 1, majority of the respondents are female which representing 57.6% (n=76). Meanwhile, males are the minority which representing 42.4% (n=56).

In the Table 2, majority of the respondents are Malay which representing 78% (n=108), 9.1 % (n=12) representing Chinese respondents and 12.9 (n=17) representing Indian respondents.

Based on the Table 3, majority of the respondents are single which representing 60.6% (n=80). Meanwhile 39.4 % (n=52) of the respondents are married.

As indicated in table 4, Respondents are categorized into five age groups which range from less than 25 years old, 25-35 years old, 36-45 years old, 46-55 years old and more than 56 years old. From the table, majority of the respondents' age are less than 25 old which representing 54.5% (n=72), followed by 24.2% (n=32) under group of 36-45 years old, 16.7% (n=22) under group 25-35, 2.3% (n=3) under both group of 46-55 years old more than 56 years old.

In the Table 5, majority of the respondents' education level are SPM/ STPM level which representing 53.6% (n=47), 26.5% (n=35) representing Degree level, 23.5% (n=31) representing PMR level, 8.3% (n=11) representing Diploma level, 5.3% (n=7) representing others and o.8% (n=1) representing Master Degree.

As indicated in the Table 6, most of the respondents' occupation are students representing 55.3% (n=73), followed by government sector representing 16.7% (n=22). Meanwhile the other occupation is from business representing 12.9% (n=17), followed by occupation in private sector representing 10.6% (n=14) and others representing 4.5% (n=6).

Based on the Table 7, frequency users go to library is most of them is sometimes which is representing 53% (n=70), followed by always go to library representing 25% (n=33) and 22% (n=29) users are seldom go to library.

In Table 8, the main reason the respondents go to library because to find information representing 57.6% (n=76), followed by reason to study representing 26.5% (n=35). Meanwhile, the others reason why they go to library representing 8.3% (n=11) and go to library because to borrow or return of books representing 5.3% (n=7). The last reason why they go to library because to using internet representing 2.3% (n=3).

5.2 Result of Findings

The Pearson Correlation obtained for the three intervals scaled variables shown as indicated as follows:

Hypothesis 1:

H_1: There is a significant difference between dimension of tangible and service quality on the public library in Sungai Petani.

As indicated in Table 9, there is a significant relationship between Service Quality and Tangible dimension where $p < 0.01$ (p= 0.000) and r= 0.773, which is fairly strong positive relationship. As a result, the researchers do accept the H1.

Hypothesis 2:

H_1: There is a significant difference between dimension of reliability and service quality on the public library in Sungai Petani.

Table 10 shows there is a significant relationship between Service Quality and Reliability dimension where $p < 0.01$ (p= 0.000) and r= 0.809, which is strong positive relationship. As a result, the researchers

do accept the H2.

Hypothesis 3:

H_1: There is a significant difference between dimension of responsiveness and service quality on the public library in Sungai Petani.

In Table 11 shows there is a significant relationship between Service Quality and Responsiveness dimension where $p<0.01$ ($p=0.000$) and $r=0.831$, which is strong positive relationship. As a result, the researchers do accept the H3.

5.3 Result of Findings

The result from Multiple Regressions analysis is an equation that shows an extension of bivariate correlation and used when the independent variables are correlated with one another and with dependent variable. Table 12 is the summary of three independent variables that are entered into the regression model. R (0.898) is the value for correlation of the three independent variables with the dependent variable, after all the inter correlation among the three independent variables are taken into account. The R Square (0.806), which is the explained variance, is actually the square of the multiple R (0.898).

In the *ANOVA* Table 13 shows that the *F* value of 177.772 is significant at the 0.000 level. In the *df* (defree of freedom) in the table 4.3.2 the first number represents the number of independent variables (3), the second number (128) is the total number of complete responses for all the variables in the equation (*N*), minus the number of independent variables (*K*) minus 1. (*N-K*-1) [(132-3-1) = 128]. The *F* statistic produced (*F*= 177.772) is significant at the 0.000 level.

Table 14 helps the researchers to see which between three variables influence most the variance in service quality. The column Beta under *Standard Coefficients*, the researchers found the highest number in the beta is 0.433 for responsiveness dimension, which is this independent variable, is significant at the 0.000 level.

5.4 Result of Findings

As indicated in Table 15, the three independents and dependent variable are reliable since the *Cronbach's Alpha* is 0.938 greater than 0.5.

6. CONCLUSION

Based on the finding, the tangible dimension is a significant relationship with service quality in public library in Sungai Petani which is fairly strong positive relationship. However, to incerease the service quality in tangible dimension, the management of public library Sungai Petani can create enjoyable environment through modern and good interior design, bookshelf, appropriate furniture especially for the kids and providing more computer terminals and internet access points to the users. The reliability dimension is a significant relationship with service quality in public library Sungai Petani which is strong positive relationship. The researchers recommend that the management of public library Sungai Petani should be sufficient OPAC terminals available for library users to search library collection. The information on the OPAC must be clearly, accurately and ease to use by the library users. In this matter, the role of staff is very important to help the users to get the right resources and information from queries catalogue and more effective in providing modern services. The researchers found that the attitude and willingness of the librarian have the significant relationship with the service quality in public library Sungai Petani which is strong positive relationship. Based on the findings, the researchers recommend that the management of the library to introduce the training programs for the librarians. The training and retraining programs for the librarians are important to ensure that service quality on service delivers

towards public library's users can be improved. The research also can focus on the issue of public library collections development with current user's demands. In conclusion, the researchers conclude that all of two objectives in this study which are to is to identify the relationship between dimension (tangibles, reliability responsiveness) and service quality in Sungai Petani Public library in Kedah State Government and to investigate which service quality dimensions that mostly influenced the service quality in public library in Sungai Petani have been answered by this research. For the future research, the assessments on service quality in public library Sungai Petani should cover all five dimensions including assurance dimension and empathy dimension to more transparent in providing their services.

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TABLES

Table 1: Gender of Respondents

Gender	Frequency	Percent
Male	56	42.4
Female	76	57.6
Total	132	100.0

Table 2: Race of Respondents

Race	Frequency	Percent
Malay	103	78.0
Chinese	12	9.1
Indian	17	12.9
Total	132	100.0

Table 3: Marital Status of Respondents

Marital Status		Frequency	Percent
	Single	80	60.6
	Married	52	39.4
	Total	132	100.0

Table 4:   Age of Respondents

Age	Frequency	Percent
<25 years	72	54.5
25-35 years	22	16.7
36-45 years	32	24.2
46-55 years	3	2.3
>56 years	3	2.3
Total	132	100.0

Table 5:   Education Levels

Education Levels		Frequency	Percent
	PMR	31	23.5
	SPM/STPM	47	35.6
	Diploma	11	8.3
	Degree	35	26.5
	Masters	1	0.8
	Others	7	5.3
	Total	132	100.0

Table 6: Occupations

Occupations		Frequency	Percent
	Government Sector	22	16.7
	Private Sector	14	10.6
	Business	17	12.9
	Students	73	55.3
	Others	6	4.5
	Total	132	100.0

Table 7: Frequency Users Go to Library

Frequency	Frequency	Percent
Always	33	25.0
Sometimes	70	53.0
Seldom	29	22.0
Total	132	100.0

Table 8: Main Reasons Go to Library

Reasons	Frequency	Percent
Borrow /return books	7	5.3
Find information	76	57.6
Using internet	3	2.3
Study	35	26.5
Others	11	8.3
Total	183	100.0

Table 9: Tangible dimension

	Tangible dimension	Service Quality
Pearson Correlation	1	.773(**)
Sig. (2-tailed)		.000
N	132	132

** Correlation is significant at the 0.01 level (2-tailed).

Table 10: Reliability dimension

	Reliability dimension	Service Quality
Pearson Correlation	1	.809(**)
Sig. (2-tailed)		.000
N	132	132

** Correlation is significant at the 0.01 level (2-tailed).

Table 11: Responsiveness dimension

	Responsiveness dimension	Service Quality
Pearson Correlation	1	.831(**)
Sig. (2-tailed)		.000
N	132	132

** Correlation is significant at the 0.01 level (2-tailed).

Table 12:   Model Summary

Mode	R	R Square	Adjusted R Square	Std. Error of the Estimate
1	.898(a)	.806	.802	1.77590

a Predictors: (Constant), Responsiveness dimensions, Tangible dimensions & Reliability dimensions.

Table 13:   ANOVA (b)

Model		Sum of Squares	df	Mean Square	F	Sig.
1	Regression	1681.972	3	560.657	177.772	.000(a)
	Residual	403.687	128	3.154		
	Total	2085.659	131			

a Predictors: (Constant), Responsiveness dimensions, Tangible dimensions, Reliability dimensions
b Dependent Variable: Service Quality

Table 14:   Coefficients (a)

Model		Unstandardized Coefficients		Standardized Coefficients	t	Sig.
		B	Std. Error	Beta	B	
1	(Constant)	2.078	.933		2.227	.028
	Tangible dimensions	.323	.062	.300	5.231	.000
	Reliability dimensions	.205	.052	.265	3.969	.000
	Responsiveness dimensions	.367	.052	.433	7.000	.000

a Dependent Variable: Service Quality

Table 15:   The Reliability Statistics

Cronbach's Alpha	N of Items
.938	25