Using LibQUAL+ to Evaluate Service Quality:
An experience of Stang Mongkolsuk Library

Sompop Sansomboonsuk
Stang Mongkolsuk Library and Information Division,
Faculty of Science, Mahidol University
Rama VI Road, Bangkok 10400, Thailand. E-mail: sompop.san@mahidol.ac.th

ABSTRACT

Stang Mongkolsuk Library is one of the medium-sized library located at Faculty of Science, Mahidol University. The service quality has been continuously evaluated in this library for nearly 10 years. Since 2009, the survey questionnaire was modified from Association of Research Libraries’s LibQUAL+ to fit the context of this library. This report is about the last 5-years survey result.

The 5-year (2009-2013) surveys were conducted during the second semester (November-December) of each year. The modified LibQUAL+ questionnaires were disseminated in hard copy to the walk-in library users e.g. students, faculty members, staff, and visitors. In each year, the average numbers of recipients were 400, the average numbers of respondents were 378 with 94.5% response rate. The objective of this survey was to evaluate service quality and compares the level of service in 4 categories i.e. 1) Library Personnel 2) Library Facilities 3) Library Place 4) Library Activities. The data were analyzed using SPSS and displayed in tables and charts. The final results were reported to public by posting all survey reports and user comments on the library website.

Key findings from 5-years survey were 1) the desired levels of all services were high (4.35) and increased every year 2) the highest desired service was Library Place (4.47) 3) the highest perceived service was Library Personnel (4.04), followed by Library Place (4.03) 4) the average gaps between desired levels and perceived levels of all services were not over 0.5 5) the satisfaction of library quality was continuously increased during the last 3 years.

The conclusion of this study is that the modified LibQUAL+ questionnaire is an appropriate tool for long-term library service quality measurement. The results from desired and perceived levels of services can be used as the proper guideline for library improvement.

Keywords: LibQUAL+, Library Assessment, Service Quality, Library Evaluation
INTRODUCTION

Stang Mongkolsuk Library is one of the medium-sized library located at Faculty of Science, Mahidol University. The library’s mission is “To excel in Science & Technology Information Services for Higher Education and Research” (Stang Mongkolsuk Library, 2011). The service quality has been continuously evaluated in this library for nearly 10 years. Since 2009, the survey questionnaire was modified from Association of Research Libraries’s LibQUAL+ to fit the context of this library.

LibQUAL+ is a standard for measure the library’s service quality adopted from ServQual which is a tool for measure the service quality. LibQUAL+ are developed by Association of Research Libraries (ARL) and Texas A&M University (TAMU) as an effective tool to measure the library’s service quality and benchmark with other libraries. The concept of LibQUAL+ is to measure user’s satisfaction by compare relation between the desired levels and perceived level of library’s use, to understand the gap of this 2 satisfaction’s levels, and to compare with the other libraries (Phipps, 2001, p.639).

SURVEY METHODS

This research study was a modified LibQUAL+ library user survey. The 5-year (2009-2013) surveys were conducted during the second semester (November-December) of each year. The modified LibQUAL+ questionnaires were disseminated in hardcopy by hand-delivery to the library users who walked into Stang Mongkolsuk Library e.g. students, faculty members, staff, and visitors. In each year, the average numbers of recipients were 400, the average numbers of respondents were 378 with 94.5% response rate (Table 1).

Table 1 Number of Respondents during 2009-2013

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Type of Respondent</th>
<th>2009</th>
<th>2010</th>
<th>2011</th>
<th>2012</th>
<th>2013</th>
<th>Total</th>
<th>Average</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Undergraduate students</td>
<td>198</td>
<td>266</td>
<td>276</td>
<td>265</td>
<td>167</td>
<td>1,172</td>
<td>234.4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Graduated students</td>
<td>135</td>
<td>124</td>
<td>88</td>
<td>72</td>
<td>74</td>
<td>493</td>
<td>98.6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Faculty members and staffs</td>
<td>53</td>
<td>34</td>
<td>19</td>
<td>32</td>
<td>14</td>
<td>152</td>
<td>30.4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Visitors</td>
<td>16</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>20</td>
<td>24</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>74</td>
<td>14.8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>402</td>
<td>432</td>
<td>403</td>
<td>393</td>
<td>261</td>
<td>1,891</td>
<td>378.2</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

The questionnaire was comprised of 3 parts, i.e.

Part 1: Library’s user information
Part 2: Question about service quality in 4 categories e.g. 1) Library Personnel 2) Library Facilities 3) Library Place 4) Library Activities.
Part 3: Suggestion for further development

The data were analyzed using SPSS for average (mean) with five rating scales of Likert’s Scale as follows:

Average 4.51 – 5.00 = Highest
Average 3.51 – 4.50 = High
Average 2.51 – 3.50 = Fair
Average 1.51 – 2.50 = Fewer
Average 1.00 – 1.50 = Least

The results of library user survey were displayed in tables and charts. The final results were reported to public by posting all survey reports and user comments on the library website at http://stang.sc.mahidol.ac.th/survey/survey.htm.
RESULTS

The satisfaction level from the 5-year surveys were as follows: (table 2)

- Categories 1 (Library Personnel): the desired level was high (4.38), the perceived level was high (4.04)
- Categories 2 (Library Facilities): the desired level was high (4.43), the perceived level was high (3.98)
- Categories 3 (Library Place): the desired level was high (4.47), the perceived level was high (4.03)
- Categories 4 (Library Activities): the desired level was high (4.12), the perceived level was high (3.67)

Table 2 was shown that the average satisfaction level of all categories: the desired level was high (4.35), the perceived level was high (3.93). The highest desired level was Library Place (4.47). The highest perceived service was Library Personnel (4.04), followed by Library Place (4.03).

Table 2 Desired level and perceived service levels in each categories

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Library Personnel</th>
<th>Library Facilities</th>
<th>Library Place</th>
<th>Library Activities</th>
<th>Average</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Desired levels</td>
<td>Perceived level</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4.38</td>
<td>4.43</td>
<td>4.47</td>
<td>4.12</td>
<td>4.35</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4.04</td>
<td>3.98</td>
<td>4.03</td>
<td>3.67</td>
<td>3.93</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

The average gaps between the desired levels and the perceived levels of all categories were not over 0.5 in each year, as shown in Table 3.

Table 3 The average gaps between the desired levels and the perceived levels
The perceived levels of all categories were constantly high (average 3.51–4.50) within 5 years, as shown in Table 4.

Table 4 The perceived levels of all categories (year 2009-2013)

![Bar chart showing perceived levels of all categories over 5 years]

The average perceived levels of Library Website, Overall Service, and Library Quality within 5 years are high (3.70, 3.87, 3.93), as shown in Table 5.

Table 5 The average perceived levels of overall services within 5 years

![Bar chart showing perceived levels of Library Website, Overall Service, and Quality]
The perceived level of Library Quality was obviously increased in the last 3 years (3.78, 4.06, 4.19), as shown in Table 6.

### Table 6 The perceived level of Library Quality in the last 3 years

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Year</th>
<th>Perceived Level</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>2011</td>
<td>3.78</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2012</td>
<td>4.06</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2013</td>
<td>4.19</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Besides, the library users provided some additional comments in each topics. The most comments of library users retrieved from the 5-year survey were shown in Table 7.

### Table 7 Top-5 comments from library users

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>User comments</th>
<th>Library Response</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1. “Library opening hour should be extended.” (22.89%)</td>
<td>The library extended service hour before and during final examinations for one hour (from 07.30 pm to 08.30 pm.).</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2. “Study rooms for small group discussion should be provided.” (16.72%)</td>
<td>Due to space limitations, the library was not be able to solve these problems in short term periods. The long-term solution was then proposed.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3. “Library space for students should be extended.” (12.99%)</td>
<td>The library allowed students to recommend textbooks for purchase, arranged a special event called “Mini Book Fair” inside the library, arranged “Library Book Shopping Day” for bringing students, faculty members and staffs to select their required textbooks directly from the bookstores.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4. “Text books are not varied enough. Some titles are not update and insufficient.” (11.53%)</td>
<td>The 3rd floor of library was changed to be Quiet Zone. A lot of study carrels were provided in that area.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5. “Loud noise in the library.” (9.58%)</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
CONCLUSION AND SUGGESTION

This paper was about the 5-year service quality survey using LibQUAL+ modified for the context of Stang Mongkolsuk Library. The results of this 5-year user survey showed that the desired levels and the perceived levels of all categories were high. The highest desired level was Library Place (4.47) and the highest perceived level was Library Personnel (4.04), followed by Library Place (4.03). The average gaps between desired levels and perceived levels of all categories were not over 0.5. The average of 5-year perceived levels of Library Website, Overall Service, and Library Quality are high. The perceived level of Library Quality was obviously increased in the last 3 years (2011-2013).

Finally, these library surveys were used as customer focus tools for Faculty of Science, Mahidol University’s quality assessment. In Malcolm Baldrige Education Criteria for Performance Excellence, voice of the customers (VOC) can describe how our organization listens to students and stakeholders and gains satisfaction and dissatisfaction information. After completing the survey, all library staff then arranged a brainstorm meeting, discussed how to solve all service problems, developing new services that meet users’ needs, and planning for the long-term service improvement.

From our experience, using LibQUAL+ questionnaire is highly recommended as an appropriate tool for measuring and assessing the library services and quality. The librarians will know the desired levels and the perceived levels of their users and know the gap between the desired levels and the perceived levels of all services. Besides, the librarians can compare the survey results in each year to see the trends of user satisfactions. LibQUAL+ is the acknowledged standard solution for worldwide libraries, so the service results can be used to benchmark with other libraries, both locally and internationally.

REFERENCES


Phipps, Shilley. (Spring 2001). Beyond measuring service quality: ILearning from the voices of customers, the staff, the processes and the organization. Library Trends, 49(4), 635-61.