

Achieving Quality In Library Office Services From The Perspective Of Information Specialists At The Central University Library - Tizi Ouzou

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Abstract:

In the realm of library and information institutions, quality concerns are increasingly paramount, centering on the adoption and execution of quality standards within the frameworks of library management and operational services. This investigation delves into the notion of quality in university libraries, particularly examining the level of staff awareness and comprehension of this concept. Additionally, it underscores the pivotal role that information specialists can assume in identifying and addressing service discrepancies. Utilizing a descriptive analytical method, this study evaluates the prevailing conditions at the Central University Library. This evaluation includes conducting interviews and distributing questionnaires among the library staff.

The findings culminate in a set of recommendations aimed at augmenting the quality of information services offered within the university library, thereby fostering widespread enhancement throughout various information institutions. This is to perpetually meet and exceed the evolving expectations of library patrons, highlighting the critical need for information specialists to cultivate and champion a culture of quality among the staff.

Key Words: Information Specialist; Information Services; Quality; Service Quality; Information Service Quality; Central Library; Mouloud Mammeri University (Tizi Ouzou), Algeria.

Introduction:

Organizations across diverse sectors, be it economic, political, military, cultural, or informational, are universally committed to achieving quality in their operations and outputs, with the ultimate goal of satisfying all stakeholders and aspiring towards excellence and leadership in their respective domains. In the contemporary high-demand environment of university libraries, there is an acute emphasis on delivering superior-quality products or services to fulfill the needs of users including students, researchers, and faculty.

The pursuit of quality within libraries is embraced as a forward-thinking managerial philosophy, which is dedicated to the continual enhancement and evolution of performance. This philosophy is firmly aligned with the needs and expectations of library users and is crucial for boosting the library's competitive edge, especially within the challenging confines of the digital landscape, which presents formidable obstacles for information specialists.

1. Research Problem:

The concept of quality, while traditionally rooted in business management, has emerged as a contemporary imperative in the library sector. As nonprofit entities, libraries are now situated in competitive environments that demand high-caliber, standardized services that transform information into a valuable commodity.

This transformation positions the quality initiative as a core strategic endeavor for libraries¹. The implementation of quality measures within libraries encompasses a series of phased actions, starting from strategic planning and needs identification, to the development of service attributes tailored to optimize the interplay between the internal systems of the library and the external expectations of users.

The internal system is focused on adherence to stringent service standards and specifications, whereas the external system is oriented towards enhancing the library's capacity to not only meet but surpass user expectations, thereby outperforming competitors.

¹ Al-Abbas, Hicham ben Abdellah. *Marketing Information Services Online*. Riyadh: King Fahd National Library, 2009. pp. 34-35.

This investigation examines how information specialists at the Central Library can evolve their roles in implementing quality standards in the digital era, addressing various challenges through the exploration of several pivotal inquiries:

- _ What encapsulates the concept of quality within the context of libraries?
- _ To what extent is the staff at the Central University Library aware of and familiar with library quality concepts?
- _ Does the Central Library at Mouloud Mammeri University of Tizi Ouzou uphold quality standards uniformly across its services?
- _ What roles are designated to information specialists in managing quality within university libraries?
- _ What are the principal challenges and barriers that hinder the implementation of quality principles in university libraries?

2. Study Importance:

The significance of this study is anchored in the crucial role that information specialists play within university libraries, specifically in their efforts to apply and sustain quality standards. This role is increasingly vital to align library services with contemporary advancements, ensuring that these services provide high-level, advanced interactions that connect users directly with the information they seek.

3. Study Objectives:

The objectives of this study are to:

- Deepen the understanding of the quality concept in library environments.
- Illuminate the benefits that arise from the adherence to quality standards within libraries.
- Uncover and define the evolving role of information specialists in the domain of quality management.
- Develop strategies to navigate and eliminate the hurdles that impede the effective application of quality standards in libraries.

4. Study Domains:

The domains of the study are categorized as follows:

- **Subject Matter Domain:** This domain focuses on the contribution of information specialists to enhancing the

quality of services provided at the Central Library of Mouloud Mammeri University.

- **Geographic Domain:** The study is geographically confined to the Central Library of Mouloud Mammeri University in Tizi Ouzou, where the research was conducted.
- **Human Domain:** This domain encompasses the library staff at the Central Library, totaling 50 members, who are directly involved in the study.
- **Temporal Domain:** The timeframe for this study spans the months of April and May 2024, during which the field research was executed.

5. Study Methodology:

The methodology employed in this study adheres to a descriptive analytical approach, defined as a scientifically structured method of analysis designed to accomplish specific objectives. This approach is pivotal in navigating through the path that leads to the discovery of truths in the sciences, governed by a set of general rules that orchestrate the operation of the mind and define its processes until a known result is reached ².

6. Data Collection Tools:

The framework of the study necessitates a comprehensive array of data collection tools to ensure objectivity within the field section. The primary tools utilized in this research are oral interviews and questionnaires, which collectively aim to gather and corroborate data essential to the fulfillment of the study's goals³.

7. Study Terminology:

- **Information Specialist:** This term identifies professionals working in the informatics sector who are significantly influenced by the digital landscape. They act as pivotal intermediaries between the information being sought and the user, striving to fulfill user needs with high precision and efficiency.
- **Information Services:** These encompass the array of facilities provided by the library to enable users rapid and varied access to information. The scope and diversity of

² Al-Aydi, Muhammad Awad. *Preparation and Writing of Research and Academic Theses: A Study on Research Methodologies*. Cairo: Shams Al-Ma'arif, 2005. p. 35.

³ Al-Aydi, Muhammad Awad. *Ibid.* p. 35.

these services are determined by the library's human, material, and financial resources.

- **Quality:** As defined by the American Institute of Standards, quality comprises the collection of attributes and characteristics of a product or service that are essential for satisfying specific user requirements⁴.
- **Service Quality:** This is characterized as the standard to which the actual performance of a service aligns with customer expectations⁵.
- **Information Service Quality:** This concept connects the quality of information services with a commitment to their continuous improvement, using the finest available methods, including modern marketing techniques focused on positioning the beneficiary at the core of service activities, thus ensuring enduring user satisfaction⁶.
- **University Library:** Defined as a library or a collection of libraries that are established and managed by universities, providing a range of services to the academic community including students, faculty, administrative staff, and sometimes the local community. The primary functions of these libraries are education, scientific research, and community service. They utilize specialized academic programs for training and development, aiming to effectively support these functions through the provision of necessary resources and services⁷.

Theoretical Aspect of the Study:

1. Concept of Total Quality Management:

1.1 Concept of Management:

⁴ Al-Barwari, Nizar Abdul Majid; Bashawah, Lahcen Abdullah. *Quality Management: An Approach to Achieving Excellence and Leadership*. Amman: Al-Waraq Foundation, 2011. p. 138.

⁵ Al-Mahayawi, Qasim Naif Alwan. *Quality Management in Services: Concepts, Operations, and Applications*. Amman: Dar Al-Shorouq, 2006. p. 90.

⁶ Bouaafia, Said. *Quality of Services of Dr. Ahmed Arwa Library at the University of Prince Abdelkader for Islamic Sciences: Application of the Perceptions and Expectations Scale*. Master's Thesis in Library and Documentation Science. Constantine: Mentouri University, 2006. p. 45.

⁷ Alian, Rabhi Mustafa. *Library Management: Foundations and Operations*. Amman: Dar Safaa, 2009. p. 35.

Management is described as the process of directing, monitoring, supervising, and coordinating within an organization to successfully achieve predetermined goals, utilizing resources economically and considering the needs of individuals involved. It encompasses specific managerial functions carried out by managers and their subordinates across different organizational types⁸.

1.2 Concept of Quality:

▪ Linguistically:

The term 'quality' derives from the verb that implies producing something commendable in speech or action, where the attribute 'good' stands in contrast to 'poor'⁹.

▪ As Defined in Encyclopedic Dictionary of Library and Information Terms:

Quality control involves procedures aimed at monitoring and regulating a production process to maintain appropriate standards and meet acceptable specifications¹⁰.

▪ Economically:

Economically, the term 'quality' is a strategic cornerstone widely recognized across various sectors, representing a gateway to producing superior services or products. It embodies the goal of perpetually enhancing and developing performance to precisely align with customer or client demands.¹¹

The Japanese perspective of quality champions "absolute customer or client satisfaction," which encompasses satisfaction with not only the product's quality and type but also with aspects such as timing, cost, and all related

⁸ Hariz, Sami Muhammad Hisham. *Skill in Crisis Management and Problem Solving: Theoretical and Practical Foundations*. Amman: Dar Al-Bidayah, 2006. p. 11.

⁹ Al-Mursi, Abi Al-Hassan Ali Ibn Ismail Ibn Sidah; Al-Hindawi, Abdul Hamid. *Al-Muḥkam wa al-Muḥīṭ al-A'zam*, Volume 7: K-J-Sh. Beirut: Dar al-Kutub al-Ilmiyah, [no date]. p. 528.

¹⁰ Al-Shami, Ahmad Mohammed; Sayed, Hasballah. *Encyclopedic Dictionary of Library and Information Science Terms: English – Arabic*. Riyadh: Dar Al-Marekh, 1988. p. 925.

¹¹ Hamouda, Khairy Omran Abdul Raouf. *Extent of Implementation of the 2008-2012 Strategic Plan for Basic Education System in Palestine in Light of Total Quality Standards*. Master's Thesis in Fundamentals of Education. Palestine, Al-Azhar University-Gaza, 2012. p. 47.

operations¹². Additionally, another viewpoint defines quality as "performing work correctly the first time and preventing mistakes," resonating with the Japanese philosophy of 'do it right the first time'¹³.

According to the ISO 9000 standards, quality is described as "the degree to which a set of inherent characteristics fulfills requirements," including both explicit and implicit customer needs¹⁴. This definition underscores the dual focus on the customer, suitability for use, and on the product, excellence in performance, design, and conformance¹⁵. Despite the diversity in interpretations, the essence of quality consistently emphasizes excellence, optimal performance, and minimizing errors.

1.3 Concept of Totality in Quality:

The concept of totality in quality management implies a comprehensive pursuit of quality in every facet of work, beginning with understanding the consumer's needs and culminating in assessing their satisfaction with the delivered services¹⁶. Total Quality Management (TQM) is further defined as "an integrated system designed to satisfy consumer needs, empower employees more fully in decision-making, and underscore the continual improvement of goods and service production processes"¹⁷.

2. Quality in University Libraries:

University libraries serve as pivotal institutions within the higher education ecosystem, fulfilling key roles in supporting the academic community, which includes students, researchers, faculty, and staff. These roles manifest through the libraries' significant educational and cultural contributions to society. University libraries present an exemplary setting for the implementation of quality standards, underpinned by their

¹² Al-Tayti, Khader Misbah. *Information Technology Management*. Amman: Dar Al-Hamed, 2012. p. 143.

¹³ Tawfik, Abdul Rahman. *Total Quality: A Comprehensive Guide to Concepts and Tools*. Cairo: Center for Professional Expertise in Management "BMC", 2011. p. 31.

¹⁴ Hamouda, Khairy Omran Abdul Raouf. Ibid. p. 48.

¹⁵ Al-Mahayawi, Qasim Naif Alwan. Ibid. p. 25.

¹⁶ Al-Tarturi, Muhammad Awad et al. *Total Quality Management in University Libraries and Information Centers*. Amman: Dar Al-Hamed, 2008. p. 31.

¹⁷ Al-Tarturi, Muhammad Awad et al. Ibid. p. 30.

well-defined objectives centered on education and scientific research.

The pursuit of quality in university libraries entails translating the needs and expectations of library users into a framework of specific characteristics that guide the design and delivery of information services. This involves the evaluation of inputs, processes, and outputs to ensure they align with established quality standards¹⁸.

The successful implementation of these standards hinges on the capabilities and expertise of the library's human resources. Effective management at the highest levels is crucial, as it makes strategic decisions and provides direction for the other departments to follow, ensuring quality standards are implemented and goals are achieved.

3. Stages of Achieving Quality in University Libraries:

Implementing a quality approach in university libraries entails a structured process that optimizes resource utilization. All officials and librarians are tasked with developing plans and objectives that are reflective of the desired quality standards. The stages involved in this process are outlined as follows:

3.1 - Quality Planning:

Quality planning is pivotal and involves the articulation of goals and the strategies to achieve them, taking into account both the current and anticipated needs of the users and the staff of the university library. This stage often necessitates a reevaluation of traditional tasks and behaviors to accommodate new quality benchmarks.

3.2 - Identifying User Needs:

Users of information services in university libraries are categorized into actual and potential users. The quality principle within the library begins with a clear recognition of

¹⁸ Al-Hamza, Munir. *Quality Measurement of University Library Services in Higher Education Institutions: Application of Perceptions and Expectations Indicators? A Field Study at the University of Tebessa Libraries*. Presented at the 25th Conference of the Arab Union for Libraries and Information "Performance Standards in Libraries, Information Centers, and Archives". Tunis - Hammamet. October 28-30, 2014. p. 1157. Accessed: April 20, 2022. Available at: <https://www.arab-aflil.org/index.php?page=20&link=55&sub=0&article=1215>

user patterns, followed by an identification of their needs based on the dynamics of supply and demand, demand being the needs expressed by the users, and supply being the services the library offers.

To address these needs effectively, university libraries must deepen their studies into user requirements to cater to both immediate and future demands. This is particularly crucial in adapting to the challenges posed by the digital environment.

3.3 - Developing Service Features:

The development of service features in university libraries relies heavily on understanding the value users place on each aspect of the service and the operational efficiency of the management and staff. This approach is aimed at providing services that are free from defects, where quality itself becomes a catalyst for change and improvement. The following operational controls are established to support this objective:¹⁹

- Assisting researchers and users in accessing information both swiftly and accurately.
- Continuously updating the library's information resources.
- Offering selective dissemination of information and services for current awareness.
- Ensuring a welcoming and professional interaction with users.
- Employing monitoring as a crucial tool to measure the tasks and functions performed by those responsible for library and information services, which aids in the assessment and refinement of these services²⁰.

3.4 - Setting Goals:

This stage is intrinsically linked with the planning phase and focuses primarily on establishing specific objectives to realize quality within the library. Modern university libraries are increasingly concentrating on the effectiveness of the internal organizational structure to ensure that the library's goals are in harmony with the overarching goals of the parent university.

¹⁹ Bouaafia, Said. Ibid. pp. 92-94.

²⁰ Rahaili, Mohamed. *Quality in Libraries and Documentation Institutions: A Field and Comparative Study*. Master's Thesis in Library and Information Science. Constantine: Mentouri University, 2005. p. 37.

This alignment is critical for the seamless integration of quality standards across the institution²¹.

4 - Role of the Quality Specialist in University Libraries:

The quality specialist in university libraries plays several roles to improve library services, but it is essential that the information specialist is well-versed in the quality domain to be a fundamental partner in achieving a library-specific quality policy. Key roles include²²:

- Coordinating between different library departments to ensure roles and tasks are not duplicated.
- Offering management solutions and proposals without interfering in decision-making.
- Monitoring and tracking technical operations in the library and their outputs, especially cataloging physical and digital information resources, without intervening in the procedures of the cataloging team and department heads.
- Coordinating with various library sectors, such as engineering and construction, to ensure building compliance with standards and addressing issues related to lighting or different devices in the library to maintain worker safety.
- Regularly evaluating library operations to improve performance by offering suggestions and guidance to the library director, focusing on departmental productivity rather than individual evaluations.
- Ensuring that various documents are properly organized and shelved to facilitate easy access, especially if shelves are open to users.
- Engaging with the library's user base through interviews and surveys to gauge their desires, listen to their suggestions, and identify and address any weaknesses.

²¹ Bouaafia, Said. Ibid. p. 95.

²² Otman, Rania. *The Role of Quality Specialists in Libraries and Information Institutions*. Presented at the 25th Conference of the Arab Union for Libraries and Information "Performance Standards in Libraries, Information Centers, and Archives". Tunis - Hammamet. October 28-30, 2014. pp. 309-310. Accessed: April 22, 2024. Available at: <https://www.arab-aflii.org/index.php?page=20&link=55&sub=0&article=1215>

- Conducting training sessions, seminars, and multimedia lectures for library staff to raise awareness about the concept of quality and its importance in information institutions.
- Implementing quality standards and criteria applicable to similar information institutions and specialized bodies such as ISO and IFLA.

5. Barriers to Implementing Quality Management in University Libraries:

Some university libraries encounter failures while implementing total quality management programs. The variation in success among libraries can be attributed to each library's strategic planning, environment, capabilities, and realities. The challenges include:

- **Adapting Total Quality Standards:** Quality standards, originally developed in the business and industrial management sectors, which are profit-oriented, may not always be suitable for some service sectors like university libraries that are often non-profit. This misalignment poses a significant challenge in adapting these standards to the library environment.
- **Duration for Adopting Quality Standards:** Implementing total quality management as a foundation for improving overall library performance is a long-term investment. It often requires years to alter the organizational culture within the library, along with changing the structure of operations and activities.
- **Issues Related to Personnel:** Challenges include a lack of expertise, the need for training and retraining, and resistance to change from employees who may fear new responsibilities and changes in their routine work.
- **Balancing Administrative Controls and Employee Empowerment:** There is a crucial need to balance the administrative controls over library operations with empowering employees and granting them the necessary freedom to initiate and develop work while adhering to quality specifications.
- **Financial Burdens and Pressures:** Implementing quality standards necessitates qualitative improvements in the library's physical resources to support the infrastructure, furniture, and acquisitions (library information resources), as well as issues related to training. This requires a

dedicated budget to support digitization projects and the computerization of all library operations²³.

- **Lack of Commitment from Senior Management:** Sometimes senior management may neglect the reward system that supports the quality program or fail to provide the necessary resources and efforts for its implementation. There is also a tendency to view the quality system not as an integrated whole but to focus on certain details while neglecting others²⁴.

Field Aspect of the Study:

The study population includes all 50 employees of the Central Library of Mouloud Mammeri University, consisting of librarians, computer specialists, and administrative staff. A questionnaire was distributed to all employees without exception.

The human resource is a vital element for achieving the library's goals; therefore, the library management must provide skilled and competent labor, which is crucial for enhancing performance and adherence to quality principles, preparing for competition in the modern technological environment. The survey distributed among the staff aims to understand their perspectives on quality in university libraries, considering that employees are both active participants and beneficiaries of the system.

The following is an analysis of the survey to gauge employee attitudes towards the quality concept and to explore the effective role that information specialists can play in improving the quality of library services at the study site.

Results Analysis:

Study Sample Description:

Table (01): Description of the Study Sample by Specialty

²³ Al-Adly, Omaima Hameed. *Application of Total Quality Standards in Iraqi University Libraries: The Graduate Studies Library at the College of Management and Economics, University of Karbala as a Model*. Journal of the University of Karbala, Vol. 13, No. 2, 2015. p. 247.

²⁴ Al-Kamishi, Latifa Ali. *University Libraries Under Total Quality Management*. Journal of the Academy of Humanities and Social Sciences, Issue 5, December 2013. pp. 144-145.

Specialty	Frequency	Percentage (%)
Library and Documentation Specialists	40	80
Computer Specialists	6	12
Administrative Staff	4	8
Total	50	100

As shown in Table (01), the workforce at the Central Library of the study site is diverse, divided into three categories based on specialties among a total of 50 employees. This includes 40 library and documentation specialists, representing 80%, 6 computer specialists accounting for 12%, and 4 administrators making up 8%.

This indicates a specialized and diverse human resource capable of performing various functions according to the library's hierarchical structure, from librarians handling various technical processes to computer specialists managing the library's website, networks, and databases, and administrators ensuring routine administrative processes are smoothly conducted.

First Axis: Information About the Respondent

1- Academic Qualification:

Table (02): Academic Qualification

Academic Qualification	Frequency	Percentage (%)
Postgraduate Studies	1	2
Engineer	1	2
Master's	1	2
Bachelor's Degree	21	42
Advanced Technician	26	52
Total	50	100

Table (02) reveals the varied academic qualifications of employees at Mouloud Mammeri University's Central Library. The majority hold an Advanced Technician certificate,

representing 52%, which includes those specialized in computer science or DEUA in library and documentation studies. This is followed by those with a Bachelor's degree, constituting 42% from the department of library and documentation studies, and lastly, employees with postgraduate studies, Master's degrees, and engineering degrees in computer science, each constituting 2%.

2. Professional Rank of the Surveyed:

Table (03): Professional Rank of the Surveyed

Professional Rank	Frequency	Percentage (%)
Chief Librarian of University Libraries	00	00%
University Libraries Librarian	02	04%
Assistant Librarian Level 2	02	04%
Assistant Librarian Level 1	16	32%
Documentary Archivist	02	04%
Library Assistant	18	36%
Computer Engineer	01	02%
Advanced Technician in Computer Science	05	10%
Administrative Manager	02	04%
Chief Administrative Assistant	02	04%
Total	50	100%

The composition of the workforce within the surveyed library includes 50 employees, with library assistants forming the largest segment at 36%. These individuals primarily hold advanced technician certificates from vocational training centers or DEUA degrees, indicating a robust training background tailored to the library's operational needs.

Assistant librarians level 1, who mostly possess bachelor's degrees, represent 32% of the staff, highlighting a substantial educational foundation within the team. A smaller fraction, accounting for 10%, comprises advanced technicians in

computer science, who play a crucial role in maintaining the library's technological infrastructure.

The remaining roles such as university librarian, level 2 assistant librarian, documentary archivist, administrative manager, and chief administrative assistant each make up 2% of the workforce. Notably, the position of chief librarian, typically pivotal in university libraries, is absent, reflecting the university's strategic staffing decisions under its current financial policy for library positions.

3 - Highest Position Held:

Table (04): Highest Position Held

Position	Frequency	Percentage (%)
Library Head	01	20%
Department Head	04	80%
Total	05	100%

The structure of leadership within the library is outlined in Table (04), where the distribution of the highest positions held is detailed. The library head, responsible for overarching management and decision-making, comprises 20% of these roles, while department heads, who oversee the four key library departments established by the joint ministerial decision of August 24, 2004, make up 80%²⁵. This decision delineates the administrative organization within the university, shaping the operational framework of the library.

4 - Department Where Employees Work:

Table (05): Departments of Employee Allocation

Departments	Frequency	Percentage (%)
Acquisition Department	03	06%

²⁵Joint Ministerial Decision dated 08 Rajab 1425 corresponding to August 24, 2004. Specifies the administrative organization of the university directorate, college, institute, and university annex and its joint services. In the Official Gazette of the Algerian Republic, Issue 62, dated September 26, 2004. p. 9.

Bibliographic Research Department	12	24%
Processing Department	04	08%
Guidance Department	22	44%
Computer Science Unit	06	12%
Secretariat	03	06%
Total	50	100%

Employees at the Central Library are strategically allocated across several departments, ensuring a balanced distribution of tasks and responsibilities. The Guidance Department employs the largest number of staff at 44%, where employees are engaged in guiding users, managing internal and external lending, arranging documents, and other essential services. The Bibliographic Research Department accounts for 24% of the workforce, focusing on training users on search tools and managing automated library catalogs.

The Computer Science Unit, representing 12% of the staff, ensures the efficient operation of internet and intranet connections and the maintenance of computer systems, which is critical in today's digital environment. The Processing Department, which includes 8% of the employees, is tasked with cataloging, indexing, and maintaining high-quality classification and abstracting standards.

Lastly, both the Acquisition Department and the Secretariat each account for 6% of the workforce. The former is responsible for the development of library collections through various acquisition methods, while the latter handles essential secretarial tasks, contributing to the smooth administrative functioning of the library. This detailed allocation highlights the library's commitment to quality and efficiency, ensuring that each department contributes effectively to the overarching goal of providing exemplary library services.

5 - Years of Experience:

Table (06): Years of Experience

Years of Experience	Frequency	Percentage (%)
1 – 5 years	04	08%

5 – 10 years	10	20%
More than 10 years	36	72%
Total	50	100%

The table above illustrates that the majority of employees, 72%, have more than 10 years of experience, reflecting the hiring policy during that period, which opened considerable positions in the library sector benefiting Mouloud Mammeri Library. This is followed by 20% of employees with 5 to 10 years of experience.

Employees with less than 5 years of experience represent the smallest group due to a general lack of hiring in the public sector and libraries specifically. Employees with 1 to 5 years are typically recent university graduates skilled in modern technologies, those with 5 to 10 years are more familiar with the library's conditions and affairs, and those with over 10 years need retraining on databases, networks, software, and administrative technologies due to developments in the university library sector.

The researcher believes it is essential to link professional experience with competence because experience without skill signifies little; thus, continuous training on new developments in the field of libraries and information is necessary.

Second Axis: Information on the Concept of Quality in University Libraries:

6 - Meaning of Service Quality in University Libraries:

Table (07): Concept of Service Quality in University Libraries

Service Quality in Libraries	Frequency	Percentage (%)
Mastery of work and conformity to standards	20	25.97%
Meeting the needs of beneficiaries	24	31.17%
Working to promote a positive image of the library	21	27.28%

Attention to all aspects of management and library operation	12	15.58%
Total	77	100%

From the table, diverse viewpoints on the concept of service quality among the staff of the Central Library are evident. The highest percentage, 31.17%, believe that service quality means meeting the needs of users, focusing on the beneficiaries and their requirements. Following this, 27.28% think that quality means working to promote a positive image of the library, emphasizing both external appearances and the essential internal aspects.

Another 25.97% state that service quality involves mastering work and adhering to the standards and specifications used in university libraries throughout the documentary chain stages. Lastly, 15.58% assert that service quality is about paying attention to all management aspects, as all directives and orders originate from administration, known as management quality. The researcher notes that although viewpoints vary, all efforts aim to ultimately achieve the continuous satisfaction of users with the services provided by the library and to understand their behaviors.

7 - Initiatives to Achieve Quality in Reality:

Table (08): Initiatives to Achieve Quality in Reality

Quality Achievement Initiatives	Frequency	Percentage (%)
Introducing modern technologies	28	49.19%
Conducting training courses for beneficiaries	18	31.58%
Continuous improvement in inputs and outputs	11	19.30%
Total	57	100%

Responses reveal various preliminary notions about initiatives to achieve quality in reality. The highest percentage, 49.12%, believe that introducing modern technologies across all services and departments is essential. However, merely introducing technologies is not sufficient to ensure quality. This

is followed by 31.58% who view quality achievement through conducting training courses for users to efficiently use these technologies, as possessing tools without mastery is ineffective.

Furthermore, 19.30% suggest that continuous improvement in inputs and outputs ensures library quality, but such enhancements are only possible through proper use and application of modern means and techniques. The researcher believes that all initiatives, no matter how modest, should not be overlooked as they contribute to achieving quality in the practical and operational environment of the university library.

8 - How to Achieve Desired Quality in All Library Operations:

Table (09): How to Achieve Desired Quality in All Library Operations

Quality in Library Operations	Frequency	Percentage (%)
Continuous training and good employment of skills	27	27.55%
Adherence to scientific standards	17	17.35%
Proper handling of collections	15	15.31%
Provision of electronic resources	19	19.39%
Good accessibility of collections and content	16	16.32%
Other: Good acquisition	04	04.08%
Total	98	100%

From the survey responses at the study library, various perspectives of employees on the most appropriate method to achieve quality in all library operations, i.e., service quality, are diverse. The highest proportion, 27.55%, cites continuous training and the effective employment of skilled personnel as key to ensuring good service performance. This is followed by 19.39% who argue that providing electronic resources is essential for achieving desired library quality, noting that availability of these resources without proper devices for accessing them and without knowledge of how to search databases constitutes a challenge. Others, 17.35%, believe that

adhering to well-defined and controlled scientific standards helps achieve library quality.

Additionally, 16.32% think that quality is only achieved through good accessibility of catalogs, bibliographies, and databases containing the library's collections. Meanwhile, 15.31% view that proper processing of collections achieves the intended purpose by avoiding and correcting errors, with good processing following standards in cataloging, indexing, and abstracting. Finally, 4.08% add that a wise acquisition policy, based on the needs and expectations of users, enhances the library's collections, rather than merely filling storage spaces.

Third Axis: To What Extent Does the Library Meet the Needs of Its Users?

9 - Providing Users with Printed and Electronic Resources Regularly and Adequately Meets Their Needs:

Table (10): Providing Users with Regular and Adequate Printed and Electronic Resources

Providing Adequate Resources	Frequency	Percentage (%)
Yes	41	82%
No	09	18%
Total	50	100%

According to the table above, 82% of respondents affirm that the Central Library regularly provides users with both printed and electronic resources that meet their needs, while only 18% report that the library does not regularly supply various resources or meet their informational needs. In an interview with the head of the Acquisition Department, it was noted that the high cost of electronic resources often limits their availability.

The library subscribes to platforms like SNDL, the OPU digital library, Technique de l'ingénieur review, PDOC, and the LMD review database, and also purchases printed resources, often accompanied by CDs. The budget for acquisitions varies annually²⁶, making it unrealistic for the Central Library to meet

²⁶ Interview with the Head of the Acquisitions Department at the Central Library. April 24, 2024, at 11 AM.

all the diverse and specialized needs of its entire university audience consistently and with a variety of resources.

10 - Library's Assessment of User Needs:

Table (11): Library's Assessment of User Needs

Assessment of User Needs	Frequency	Percentage (%)
Yes	45	90%
No	05	10%
Total	50	100%

Most respondents, 90%, confirm that the Central Library conducts studies to understand the needs of its users, while 10% indicate that the library does not explore the desires of its patrons, possibly due to some employees not performing this task. However, according to an interview with the library manager²⁷, there is an ongoing effort to assess informational needs, not conducted randomly but as part of a well-documented and controlled collection development policy, requiring the involvement of all staff to perform this task effectively.

11 - How the Library Assesses User Needs:

Table (12): Methods of Assessing User Needs in the Library

Methods of Assessing Needs	Frequency	Percentage (%)
Via surveys to understand user needs	00	00%
Through interaction between librarians and users	22	40%
Through a suggestion box	29	52.73%

²⁷ Interview with the Head of the Central Library. April 24, 2024, at 12 PM.

Other: Proposing book acquisitions electronically via the website	04	7.27%
Total	55	100%

Respondents employ varied methodologies for gauging user needs. A majority, 52.73%, utilize a suggestion box positioned at all lending desks, providing a platform for users to freely articulate their interests and desires. An additional 40% of respondents highlight the ongoing interaction between librarians and users, which encompasses precisely understanding user needs and addressing requests submitted via the library's social media channels (Facebook, Twitter, LinkedIn).

A smaller segment, 7.27%, notes that needs are assessed through a service that enables users to recommend book acquisitions directly on the library's website. Currently, the library does not conduct surveys to ascertain user needs, presenting an opportunity for enhancement. It is advised that the Central Library adopt a multifaceted approach to need assessment, actively involving staff and specialized faculty to procure documents that bolster curricula and academic offerings.

Fourth Axis: Information Services in the Library

12 - Provision of Databases to Researchers:

Table (13): Library's Provision of Databases to Researchers

Provision of Databases	Frequency	Percentage (%)
Yes	50	100%
No	00	00%
Total	50	100%

The table clearly shows that the library provides databases to researchers 100% of the time by subscribing to various platforms:

- **National Remote Documentation System (SNDL):** Accessible at www.sndl.cerist.dz, the library sets up individual accounts with passwords for users. It offers 51 databases, including 18 commercial and 33 open access

databases, available only to master's students, PhD candidates, and faculty members as agreed with CERIST. The researcher considers this exclusion of other students as unfair.

- **Techniques de l'ingénieur Database:** Contains technical articles accessible at www.techniques-ingenieur.fr. Despite its high cost, the university library annually subscribes because it offers reliable articles linked to science and technology. Each user interested in this magazine is given a personal account.
- **OPU Digital Library:** www.igraa.opu.dz/igraa, the university library subscribes to this platform providing students, faculty, and researchers with remote access to books, references, and publications across various disciplines and languages.
- **Algerian Documentary Platform (PDOG):** Since 2021, the library subscribes to this platform at www.pdog-dz.com, offering registered users access to books, articles, and various databases and archives, along with the opportunity to deposit and share scientific research both domestically and internationally. Each user is provided with an account and password.
- **LMD Review Sagacité Database:** Available at www.sagacitelink.com, this multidisciplinary database is provided by the Central Library through a subscription available to affiliates of Mouloud Mammeri University.

Additionally, the Central Library offers on its website access to a range of free information sources:

- **Institutional Digital Repository (Dspace):** www.dl.ummo.dz, for accessing the intellectual scientific production of the university.
- **Links to open access databases and academic social networks:** Such as Google Scholar, ResearchGate, and Academia.edu.

The researcher advises the Central Library to allocate a budget for these types of resources, which offer extensive storage potential and the ability to be used by multiple users simultaneously, showcasing the benefits of electronic formats.

13- Key Services Provided by the Library's Website:

The Central Library's website, seamlessly integrated into the university's main portal, stands as an essential conduit of

information and a pivotal link between the library and its patrons. It is imperative that the website furnishes high-quality information to satisfy the diverse needs of its visitors. The site not only helps delineate the university's academic landscape but also serves as a portal to introduce the library's comprehensive services, operational schedules, and policies. Detailed below are the principal services offered via the website:

- **Library Information:** This section provides an overview of the library, outlining its vision, future objectives, operating hours, contact information, services provided, observance of official holidays, and a catalog of recent additions to the collection.
- **New Arrivals:** Regular updates concerning the latest materials incorporated into the library's holdings.
- **Selective Dissemination and Current Awareness Services:** These services are designed to keep users informed about the newest resources available at the library and deliver targeted communications to users based on their specific interests. Additionally, this section highlights ongoing library-sponsored events such as seminars, lectures, and symposiums.
- **Online Public Access Catalog (OPAC):** Offers users the ability to search through the library's exhaustive catalog via this <https://www.ummto.dz/ccummto/>.
- **Interlibrary Loan Services:** Facilitates a networked borrowing system among partner university libraries, detailed further at <https://www.ummto.dz/opac/>.
- **FAQ and Inquiry Services:** Provides answers to frequently asked questions regarding library functionalities and services.
- **Communication Services:** Enhances interaction between the library staff and its users through email and other digital communication platforms.
- **Registration Services:** Enables users to register online for access to library services.
- **Participation in Acquisitions:** Empowers users to suggest purchases, contributing to the growth and relevance of the library's collection.

- **Database Access:** The library offers entry to its proprietary and subscribed databases, generally protected by personalized user credentials.
- **Reading Services:** Grants access to a variety of owned or licensed digital resources for browsing or downloading, along with links to additional informational mediums such as books, journals, and newspapers.

14- The Importance of Networking Among Libraries in Achieving Quality:

Table (14): The Importance of Networking in Achieving Quality

Networking Importance	Frequency	Percentage (%)
Yes	50	100%
No	00	00%
Total	50	100%

There is unanimous agreement among the respondents that networking plays a pivotal role and significantly contributes to the enhancement of library services, with 100% acknowledging its importance. Despite the absence of a current network, there was an initiative known as RIBU, which, regrettably, did not achieve its intended goals. The researcher advocates for a dedicated effort to bring to fruition such critical inter-library projects, which hinge on a genuine commitment to these objectives.

15- The Importance of Information Networks Among Libraries:

Working within a documentary network offers several benefits, such as:

- Standardizing work and criteria across various library operations.
- Exchanging expertise and keeping up with developments in the library and information fields.
- Providing access to a broader range of resources.
- Saving time, effort, and costs and avoiding redundancy.
- Remote reservation of documents.

- Competitive advantages between libraries to achieve comprehensive quality.
- Creating shared catalogs and documentary products.
- Cooperation in all areas: cooperative supply, cataloging, storage, and interlibrary loan.

16- The Library's Marketing of Information Services:

Table (15): The Library's Marketing of Its Information Services

Marketing of Information Services	Frequency	Percentage (%)
Yes	48	96%
No	02	4%
Total	50	100%

96% of the employees affirm that the library actively markets its services as they have been trained in marketing for libraries and information centers. However, 4% believe the library does not market its services, activities, or documentary products effectively. This may be due to a lack of marketing culture within the library, considering marketing as solely relevant to the economic and industrial sectors, rather than public institutions like libraries, which are not profit-oriented.

17- How the Library Markets Its Services:

Those who acknowledged the library's marketing efforts described both traditional and digital methods, including:

- Bulletin boards for announcements.
- Lists of new acquisitions.
- Exhibitions, study days, seminars, and lectures held periodically.
- Catalogs and brochures.
- Training sessions for library users.
- Online marketing through the library's website.
- Social media platforms of the library:
- <https://www.facebook.com/pg/Biblioth%C3%A8que-Universitaire-UMMTO-Bastos-311078696355485/posts>

- <https://twitter.com/CentraleUmmto>
- <https://www.linkedin.com/in/biblioth%C3%A8que-universitaire-a68522183/?originalSubdomain=dz>

Results:

The field study conducted at the Central Library has yielded insightful results, underscoring the composition and qualifications of its staff as well as the efficacy of its service delivery, resource availability, and marketing strategies. The key findings are outlined as follows:

- Most employees of the central library are specialists in the field of libraries and documentation, and there are also specialists in information technology and other fields such as administration and secretarial work.
- The majority of workers hold higher technical diplomas, either in information technology or the university applied studies diploma (Deua) in libraries and documentation, followed by those holding a bachelor's degree, then those with master's degrees, postgraduate studies, and state engineers in information technology.
- The majority of workers are classified as library assistants, then as level 1 library attachés, higher technical specialists in information technology, level 2 attachés, conservators, administrators, and state engineers.
- There are four administrative services where employees are distributed in varying proportions, headed by the library manager.
- The majority of the workforce has over ten years of experience.
- Despite differing views on the definition of service quality in university libraries, there is consensus on its importance and benefits, which consist of sustaining user satisfaction with the services provided by the library and maximizing the value of all initiatives to achieve quality in reality. Various methods and styles work together in an integrated manner to achieve the desired quality in all services and activities.
- The central library provides printed and electronic resources, but it does not comprehensively meet the needs of users, and the acquisition budget varies from year to year and is sometimes insufficient. It primarily relies on

print resources, while electronic access depends on subscriptions to databases like SNDL, Opu, Pdoc, Sagacité, Techniques de l'ingénieur, and some free sources like the university's own digital repository and various open access database links.

- The majority of employees agree that the library studies the needs of its users through several methods, most notably the suggestion register and through continuous interaction between users and librarians, although it does not rely on surveys, which are considered the best method.
- The central library has an online site, part of Mouloud Mammeri University of Tizi Ouzou's website, which provides an interface to introduce the library and its services, operating hours, a student guide, and internal regulations. It also offers services that save the need for physical visits, such as remote registration and ongoing updates on new information, and allows access to electronic resources.
- All employees agree that working within a network is crucial and aids in achieving quality through standardization of work and criteria, exchange of experiences, and time, effort, and cost savings, leading to a competitive advantage between libraries to achieve comprehensive quality.
- From the field study, there are manifestations of quality, but there is no clear, planned policy or written commitment to quality from the administration.
- Most employees are aware that the central library markets its information services, both traditionally and modernly through catalogs, brochures, the website, and social media.

Suggestions and Recommendations:

Based on the study's findings, we propose several recommendations to enhance the role of information specialists in achieving quality information services:

- Promote a culture of quality with all its principles among information specialists in university libraries.
- Provide a suitable environment for achieving quality in university libraries.
- Familiarize with all library quality standards and specifications and apply them (technical operations, storage, broadcasting, general library environment...).

- Establish a clear and written quality policy, involving all employees (information specialists) in the plan and assigning roles and tasks starting from organizing work in library services and regularly measuring outputs.
- The foundation for achieving quality in libraries comes back to the genuine and true desire of information specialists to improve library services.
- Continuous training and education for information specialists in quality standards and specifications.
- Organize seminars and workshops to introduce quality in libraries and the benefits of applying standards.
- Encourage initiatives and innovation that improve library services to achieve comprehensive quality in university libraries.
- Consider some revenue-generating activities and cultural events in libraries to cover financial expenses.
- Learn from international experiences in managing total quality in libraries.
- Measure the quality of information services provided to users using scientifically studied measures such as ISO 11620, the Servqual scale for perceptions and expectations, and the Servperf scale for actual service performance, to assess their satisfaction and the extent to which their information needs are met.

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