

Leveraging LibQUAL+ Results to Improve the Academic Library Experience

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Introduction/Purpose

The University of Saskatchewan (U of S) Library has 145 FTE faculty and staff serving over 27,000 U of S faculty, staff and students.



LibQUAL+ is administered at the U of S to examine the gap between library user expectations and the library's level of service delivery.

Purpose

- Undertake a comprehensive analysis and examine trends in LibQUAL+ results over time (2013, 2010) and compare to our U15 peers (group of Canadian research universities) for 2013.
- Analyze open-ended qualitative comments and tie back to the quantitative findings to provide further insight to the ratings.
- Establish actionable recommendations through identification of strengths/areas for improvement and close the assessment loop by communicating actions taken to library users.

Design/Methodology

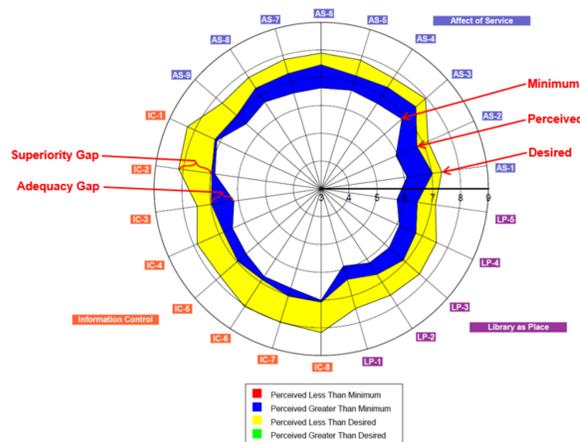
LibQUAL+ measures library users' perceptions and expectations of library service quality in 3 dimensions:

- Affect of Service:** Customer services provided by library staff
- Information Control:** Library resources, collections, and access to resources
- Library as Place:** Library spaces, facilities and amenities (for study, meeting, etc.)

Asked to rate minimum, perceived and desired levels of service quality for each question on a scale of 1-9 (1=low and 9=high)

Gap between minimum expectations/perceived levels of service = *adequacy gap* (extent to which minimum expectations being met)

Gap between desired expectations/perceived levels of service = *superiority gap* (extent to which desired expectations being met)



- Conducted in 2007 (full version) and 2010/2013 (lite version)
- 2013 survey sent to ~10,000 undergraduate/graduate students and faculty
- Response Rate = 19.4% (52% undergraduate/35% graduate students and 13% faculty)

Overall Quantitative Findings

Analysis of Strengths

- 10 questions where perceptions were farthest from minimum expectations and closest to desired expectations
- Overall, majority of strengths found in Affect of Service related to customer treatment and employee/job knowledge (one strength in Information Control and Library as Place)

Analysis of Areas for Improvement

- 10 questions where perceptions were closest to minimum and farthest from desired expectations (top desired expectations)
- Overall, all areas for improvement found in Information Control related to information delivery/resources

Comparison of U of S Results (2013 vs. 2010)

- Undergraduate:** lower perceptions, closer to minimum, farther from desired (slightly higher desired expectations)
- Graduate:** higher perceptions, closer to minimum, farther from desired (higher minimum/desired expectations)
- Faculty:** higher perceptions, closer to minimum, closer to desired (much higher minimum expectations)

Comparison of 2013 Results (U of S vs. U15 peers)

- Undergraduate:** higher perceptions, farther from minimum, closer to desired (slightly higher desired expectations)
- Graduate:** higher perceptions, closer to minimum, closer to desired (higher minimum expectations/slightly lower desired expectations)
- Faculty:** higher perceptions, closer to minimum, closer to desired (higher minimum expectations)

Summary: 2013 U of S results were less favourable than 2010 especially for undergraduate students. However, when compared to the U15 average, 2013 U of S results were more favourable especially for undergraduate students.

Strengths

ID	Question Text	Minimum Mean	Desired Mean	Perceived Mean	Adequacy Mean	Superiority Mean	n
Affect of Service							
AS-1	Employees who instill confidence in users	6.11	7.37	7.04	★.93	★-.33	462
AS-2	Giving users individual attention	5.94	7.20	6.77	★.83	★-.43	419
AS-3	Employees who are consistently courteous	6.84	7.96	7.51	★.67	★-.45	434
AS-4	Readiness to respond to users' questions	6.68	7.76	7.37	★.69	★-.39	458
AS-5	Employees who have the knowledge to answer user questions	6.71	7.85	7.26	★.55	★-.59	477
AS-6	Employees who deal with users in a caring fashion	6.64	7.89	7.47	★.84	★-.42	1855
AS-7	Employees who understand the needs of their users	6.59	7.84	7.32	★.73	★-.52	418
AS-8	Willingness to help users	6.73	7.78	7.33	★.60	★-.46	431
AS-9	Dependability in handling users' service problems	6.57	7.71	7.03	.45	-.68	411

Information Control

IC-1	Making electronic resources accessible from my home or office	7.13	8.30	7.22	.09	-1.08	623
IC-2	A library Web site enabling me to locate information on my own	6.86	8.17	6.97	.12	-1.19	529
IC-3	The printed library materials I need for my work	6.16	7.49	6.98	★.82	★-.51	449
IC-4	The electronic information resources I need	6.49	7.88	6.83	.35	-1.04	1925
IC-5	Modern equipment that lets me easily access needed information	6.57	7.80	6.97	.40	-.83	517
IC-6	Easy-to-use access tools that allow me to find things on my own	6.76	8.05	6.90	.14	-1.16	540
IC-7	Making information easily accessible for independent use	6.74	8.02	7.04	.30	-.98	523
IC-8	Print and/or electronic journal collections I require for my work	7.01	8.17	7.08	.07	-1.09	592

Library as Place

LP-1	Library space that inspires study and learning	5.89	7.48	6.40	.50	-1.08	1837
LP-2	Quiet space for individual activities	6.18	7.56	6.67	.50	-.89	467
LP-3	A comfortable and inviting location	6.23	7.67	6.91	★.68	★-.76	455
LP-4	A getaway for study, learning, or research	6.10	7.56	6.75	★.66	★-.81	459
LP-5	Community space for group learning and group study	5.75	7.14	6.49	★.74	★-.65	412

Areas for Improvement

ID	Question Text	Minimum Mean	Desired Mean	Perceived Mean	Adequacy Mean	Superiority Mean	n
Affect of Service							
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Quantitative Summary/Qualitative Analysis

Summary of Strengths/Areas for Improvement by User Group

Question Text	Undergraduate	Graduate	Faculty
Affect of Service			
Customer Treatment Giving users individual attention	★	★	★
Customer Treatment Employees who deal with users in a caring fashion	★	★	★
Customer Treatment Employees who are consistently courteous	★	★	★
Customer Treatment Readiness to respond to users' questions	★	★	★
Customer Treatment Willingness to help users	★		
Job Knowledge Employees who instill confidence in users	★	★	★
Job Knowledge Employees who understand the needs of their users	★	★	
Job Knowledge Employees who have the knowledge to answer user questions	★		⊗
Job Knowledge Dependability in handling users' service problems			⊗
Information Control			
Information Delivery Making electronic resources accessible from my home or office	⊗	⊗	⊗
Information Delivery A library Web site enabling me to locate information on my own	⊗	⊗	⊗
Information Delivery Easy-to-use access tools that allow me to find things on my own	⊗	⊗	⊗
Information Delivery Making information easily accessible for independent use	⊗	⊗	⊗
Information Delivery Modern equipment that lets me easily access needed information			
Information Resources Print and/or electronic journal collections I require for my work	⊗	⊗	⊗
Information Resources The electronic information resources I need		⊗	⊗
Information Resources The printed library materials I need for my work	★		★
Library as Place			
Library as a Place of Study Community space for group learning and group study		★	★
Library as a Place of Study Library space that inspires study and learning	⊗		★
Library as a Place of Study Quiet space for individual activities	⊗		★
Library as a Place of Study A comfortable and inviting location	⊗		★
Library as a Place of Study A getaway for study, learning, or research			

Qualitative Results

Open-ended comments coded by several categories/themes

- LibQUAL+ Dimensions: Affect of Service, Information Control, Library as Place
- Categories including physical environment, quiet space, group space, IT related, non-computer equipment, collections, e-resources, print resources, resource discovery, off-campus, instruction, inter-library loan, client services, hours, policies, positive comments, closure concerns
- Specific U of S library branch (if identified in comments)
- Survey categories: age, sex, user group, branch, discipline

Summarized qualitative results and identified comments and themes that directly related to the quantitative findings.

Much of the qualitative data, related to each LibQUAL+ dimension, supported the findings in the quantitative data.

Qualitative analysis provided insight to better understand the quantitative ratings and further pinpoint overall strengths and areas for improvement.

Qualitative Findings

Affect of Service:

Overwhelming number of comments related to library employees providing exceptional services and how much they were appreciated for being friendly, helpful, and informative



Information Control: Majority of comments related to difficulty navigating library website, confusion with online/electronic journal system, USearch tool for finding articles, lack of subscriptions to electronic journals

Library as Place: Mixed results – comments on strengths included physical environment of library offering a quiet and comfortable setting to work/study; comments on areas for improvement included more group/individual study space, increased cleanliness and reduced noise in certain areas of the library

Practical Implications/Value

Comprehensive approach to analyzing the LibQUAL+ 2013 results provided local context since last administration of the survey in 2010 and national context compared to our U15 peers. Locally, analyzing the qualitative results and connecting to the quantitative findings provided more specific context to the overall ratings allowing for the identification of actionable recommendations. The assessment loop is closed through communication back to library users (see examples below) on changes/improvements made to library services/quality.

Communication on Actionable Results

You Told Us....

You appreciate individualized service

We implemented sending emails to remind you that your books and materials are coming due.



You Told Us....

You would like more study space

We are adding over 20 group study rooms in the Les and Irene Dubé Health Sciences Library opening in 2013.

