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## The Performance of Academic Libraries: A Case Study at Research University (Rus) In Malaysia

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*Abstract* - The academic library at the Research University should show quality performance. The performance of an academic library can be measured using several elements i.e. number of books on the shelves, the treatment given by the staff, the library collection is up-to-date, accurate information that can shared by the staff, accessibility to the internet, or its online database. This study is conducted to examine the service quality performance of the academic library at four (4) research universities using five (5) SERVQUAL dimensions like the library as a place, its collection, its access to information, reliability and empathy. Four (4) research universities in Malaysia were chosen to be the sample for this study namely Universiti Malaya (UM), Universiti Kebangsaan Malaysia (UKM), Universiti Sains Malaysia (USM) and Universiti Putra Malaysia (UPM). The five SERVQUAL dimensions used in this study show a significant positive relationship with the performance of the academic library and this result are in line with the previous researches done by Collen & Fred (2001), Junaida, Aishah, Mahadir, Sharunizam, Siti Hajjar & Afida (2011), Narit & Haruki (2003) and Ashok Kumar (2007). The essential lesson that all academic libraries in Malaysia can learn from this study is the academic libraries should adapt the five SERVQUAL dimensions in their daily services to enhance their performance, the loyalty and the satisfaction of their users.

*Keywords* : Academic Library, SERVQUAL, Performance, Research University, Malaysia.

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# The Performance of Academic Libraries: A Case Study at Research University (Rus) In Malaysia

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**Abstract** - The academic library at the Research University should show quality performance. The performance of an academic library can be measured using several elements i.e. number of books on the shelves, the treatment given by the staff, the library collection is up-to-date, accurate information that can shared by the staff, accessibility to the internet, or its online database. This study is conducted to examine the service quality performance of the academic library at four (4) research universities using five (5) SERVQUAL dimensions like the library as a place, its collection, its access to information, reliability and empathy. Four (4) research universities in Malaysia were chosen to be the sample for this study namely Universiti Malaya (UM), Universiti Kebangsaan Malaysia (UKM), Universiti Sains Malaysia (USM) and Universiti Putra Malaysia (UPM). The five SERVQUAL dimensions used in this study show a significant positive relationship with the performance of the academic library and this result are in line with the previous researches done by Collen & Fred (2001), Junaida, Aishah, Mahadir, Sharunizam, Siti Hajjar & Afida (2011), Narit & Haruki (2003) and Ashok Kumar (2007). The essential lesson that all academic libraries in Malaysia can learn from this study is the academic libraries should adapt the five SERVQUAL dimensions in their daily services to enhance their performance, the loyalty and the satisfaction of their users.

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## I. INTRODUCTION & LITERATURE REVIEW

There are four (4) research universities in Malaysia namely, Universiti Sains Malaysia (USM), Universiti Putra Malaysia (UPM), Universiti Malaya (UM) and Universiti Kebangsaan Malaysia (UKM). As a part of the entity in a Research University the academic library should play a vital role to achieve the goals in providing and sharing up-to-date knowledge to the community of the Research University.

The academic library should play a significant role and performs its task as a center of knowledge

and parallels its performance to the research university status. With this it can encourage the researchers to come and get the services from the academic library at the Research University (RU).

In previous researches, the performance and worth of an academic library in meeting the users' needs were measured using several instruments i.e. the size of collections, budget, expenditure and staff (Nitecki & Franklin, 1999).

The academic library performance refers to the implementation of the service quality dimension in delivering their services and meeting the users' needs. A previous study by Collen & Fred (2001) showed that all SERVQUAL dimensions have a positive relationship with the performance of an academic library.

Besides that, the research conducted by Junaida, Mahadir, Siti Hajjar, Sharunizam & Kamaruzaman Jusoff (2009) showed that the reliability dimension plays an important role in the performance of an academic library.

Therefore, the objective of this study is to measure the five (5) SERVQUAL dimensions in providing quality services performance in the academic libraries at the Research Universities (RUs). The five (5) dimensions are library as a place, its collection, and its access to information, reliability and empathy.

It is hoped that by utilizing these five (5) dimensions, the academic libraries in Malaysia are able to maintain their performance and influence the users to visit and fully utilize the services that they offer. Besides, the academic library at the Research University (RU) also is able to uphold its performance in giving the best service as a center of knowledge for the community of the Research University.

## II. METHODOLOGY

This research was conducted in four (4) Research Universities (UM, UKM, USM & UPM) and the total number of samples involved in this study were 385 library users of the academic libraries of the four (4) research universities. Out of 385 respondents chosen, only 246 completed and returned the questionnaires.

### a) Research Design

The purpose of this study is to examine the relationship between the SERVQUAL dimension and the performance of the academic library at the Research Universities (RUs) in Malaysia.

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### b) Data Analysis

The data used in this study are the primary data where the participants answer a series of questions regarding the data needed to describe the research libraries in today's environment.

The SERVQUAL instrument is a questionnaire that is distributed based on stratified random sampling to the four RUs in Malaysia. It consists of 48 statements. In addition, a set of demographic questions are included.

Statistical analysis such as the descriptive analysis, cross-tabulation and correlation are applied in

the analysis in order to test the hypotheses developed for the research.

### c) Results

#### i. Descriptive Analysis

Table 1 shows that the ratio of male to female respondents is 1:2 where 33.3% (82 respondents) were male and female respondents comprised of 66.7% (164 respondents) of the respondents. It shows that in the four RUs most of their communities are female students.

Table 1 : Gender Distribution

Gender	Frequency	%
Male	82	33.3
Female	164	66.7
<b>Total</b>	<b>246</b>	<b>100.0</b>

Table 2 illustrates the two modes of study which are full time and part time. Majority of the respondents were in the full time mode with 216 respondents or

87.8%. On the other hand, the part time mode only had 30 respondents or 12.2%.

Table 2 : Study Mode Distribution

Mode	Frequency	%
Full time	216	87.8
Part time	30	12.2
<b>Total</b>	<b>246</b>	<b>100</b>

Table 3 shows the school distribution among the respondents. In total, there were sixteen schools involved in this study. The biggest number of respondents was 131 respondents (53.3%) chose 'others' category (Islamic Studies, Environmental Studies, Aerospace Engineering, Civil Engineering, Law, Forestry, Agricultural, Veterinary Medicine, Food Science & Tech, Human Ecology, Health Science, Dentistry), followed by the School of Social Science (28 – 11.4%), School of Humanities (19 – 7.7%), School of Educational Studies (14 – 5.7%) and the School of Management (13 – 5.3%).

The School of Computer Sciences and the School of Mathematical Sciences with 7 respondents (2.8%) respectively, followed by the School of Language, Literacy and Translation and the School of Biological Sciences with 6 respondents (2.4%) respectively. In addition, the School of Arts (4 – 1.6%), followed by the School of Communication, the School of Physics, the School of Chemical Sciences (3-1.2%) respectively; and the School of Housing, Building and Planning and the School of Industrial Technology with 1 respondent (0.4%) each.

Table 3 : Distribution of School

School	Frequency	%
School of Communication	3	1.2
School of Language, Literacy and Translation	6	2.4
School of Physics	3	1.2
School of Humanities	19	7.7
School of Educational Studies	14	5.7

School of Management	13	5.3
School of Housing, Building and Planning	1	4
School of Biological Sciences	6	2.4
School of Social Sciences	28	11.4
School of Chemical Sciences	3	1.2
School of Computer Sciences	7	2.8
School of Mathematical Sciences	7	2.8
School of Art	4	1.6
School of Industrial Technology	1	0.4
Others (Islamic Studies, Environmental Studies, Aerospace Engineering, Civil Engineering, Law, Forestry, Agricultural, Veterinary Medicine, Food Science & Technology, Human Ecology, Health Science, Dentistry)	131	53.3
<b>Total</b>	<b>246</b>	<b>100</b>

Table 4 reveals the analysis of the Research University and frequency of library use. There are four (4) Research Universities involved in this study namely; Universiti Malaya (UM), Universiti Kebangsaan Malaysia (UKM), Universiti Sains Malaysia (USM) and Universiti Putra Malaysia (UPM). Besides that, there are five (5) levels of library usage identified; very often, often, sometimes, rarely and never.

Twelve respondents (36.4%) from Universiti Kebangsaan Malaysia used the library 'very often' followed by Universiti Putra Malaysia (7 - 11.7%), Universiti Malaya (6 - 5.2%) and lastly Universiti Sains Malaysia (4 - 10.8%).

As for using the library 'often', the highest number of respondents were from UPM (36 - 60%), followed by UM (32 - 27.6%), UKM (14 - 42.4 %) and lastly USM.

Sixty one respondents (52.6%) from UM recorded using the library 'sometimes' followed by USM (18 - 48.6%), UPM (16 - 26.6%) and UKM (5 - 15.1%).

The highest number of respondents from UM (15 - 12.9%) used the library 'rarely' followed by UKM (2 - 6%), USM (2 - 5.4%) and UPM (1 - 1.7%).

As for 'never' using the library, two respondents were from UM (1.7%), followed by USM (1- 2.7%).

In the nutshell, the data showed that 100 respondents claimed using the academic library 'sometimes'.

With that we can assume that the academic libraries in RUs are fully utilized by their students in dealing with any kind of activities i.e. group discussion, study, research or any activities that support their learning environment. It also supports that the library is really important among the students and able to meet their needs as a center of knowledge repository and information.

Table 4 : Cross – Tabulation of Research University and Frequency of Library Use

		Universiti Malaya	Universiti Kebangsaan Malaysia	Universiti Sains Malaysia	Universiti Putra Malaysia	Total
Frequency of Library Use	Very Often	6 (5.2%)	12 (36.4%)	4 (10.8%)	7 (11.7%)	29 (11.8%)
	Often	32 (27.6%)	14 (42.4%)	12 (32.4%)	36 (60%)	94 (38.2%)
	Sometimes	61 (52.6%)	5 (15.1%)	18 (48.6%)	16 (26.6%)	100 (40.6%)
	Rarely	15 (12.9%)	2 (6.1%)	2 (5.4%)	1 (1.7%)	20 (8.1%)
	Never	2 (1.7%)	0 (.0%)	1 (2.7%)	0 (.0%)	3 (1.2%)
<b>Total</b>		<b>116 (100.0%)</b>	<b>33 (100.0%)</b>	<b>37 (100.0%)</b>	<b>60 (100.0%)</b>	<b>246 (100.0%)</b>

ii. *Correlation Analysis*

Table 5 shows the values of the Pearson's Correlation Co-efficient for all dimensions, against the dependent variable, Service Quality. The value of the empathy dimension co-efficient was non-zero, indicating there is a relationship between each of the dependent variable and the dependent variable.

The strength of the relationship between the empathy dimension and the library performance was 0.724 co-efficient.

Since the sign of each of the co-efficient is positive, the relationship between the independent and dependent variables is a positive one. Thus, all the Null hypotheses identifies are rejected.

This result contradicts with the results of the previous research conducted by Junaida *et al.* (2009) in one of the Research Universities; USM showed the influence of the reliability dimension is the strongest compared to other dimensions of SERVQUAL in determining the performance of the academic library.

Table 5 : Inferential Analysis

Dimension	Service Quality Performance
Place	<i>Pearson Correlation</i> .538**
	<i>Sig. (2-tailed)</i> .000
	<i>N</i> 246
Collection	<i>Pearson Correlation</i> .684**
	<i>Sig. (2-tailed)</i> .000
	<i>N</i> 246
Accessibility	<i>Pearson Correlation</i> .624**
	<i>Sig. (2-tailed)</i> .000
	<i>N</i> 246
Reliability	<i>Pearson Correlation</i> .703**
	<i>Sig. (2-tailed)</i> .000
	<i>N</i> 246
Empathy	<i>Pearson Correlation</i> .724**
	<i>Sig. (2-tailed)</i> .000
	<i>N</i> 246

### III. CONCLUSION

The general conclusion that can be derived from this study is all five (5) SERVQUAL dimensions are important in determining the performance of an academic library especially in a Research University. However, out of the five (5) dimensions the empathy dimension has the most influence. Hence, all the five (5) SERVQUAL dimensions should be incorporated in the daily routines of all academic libraries in Malaysia.

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