

PROVIDING SERVICE QUALITY FOR COLLECTION DEVELOPMENT AND ITS RELATION TO JOB DESIGN

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Introduction to Service Quality and Job Design

a. Service Quality

As a non-for-profit organization, library is moving toward providing service rather than merely providing materials that can be accessed by everyone who needs them. It is a bit cliché and traditional to define library as a place of book collection. Rather, what basically was tried to collect in the library is information that is (or not) packaged in physical matter so that everybody can have access to it easily in such a way. As the basic function of library is realized, the role of the library as well as the librarians is changing. Along with the growth of information, there come the needs to package information in many media that are likely to be accessed by many different people.

Information is not only packaged in physical formats, such as books, periodicals, serials, CD-ROMs, video cassettes, etc., but there is also information that is not packaged such as internet. By the many different formats of information package and the many ways of accessing to information, there has been a need for the library to provide service to its users. The service provided in the library is not only limited to those units which are in contact with the users directly, but all of library units should be users-oriented.

Concerning the service, there are many ongoing discussions in librarianship literature that are trying to define what it really means. Many of those even try to offer new methods of evaluating the service quality. Following are

definitions of service quality found in some literature of librarianship. Danuta A. Nitecki defined quality service as 'the difference between customer perceptions and expectations of service.'¹ Along with Danuta, Peter Hernon has similar definition of service quality. According to him 'service quality is most typically defined as either excellence or reducing the gap between customer expectations and the service provider'.² He also maintained that 'any service transaction is both "process" and "outcome." The process is the way the customer is treated by the service provider, and includes factors such as courtesy, clear communication, and attention to the customer's requests.'³

By the definition mentioned, Hernon has brought a clear understanding of service quality that has long been discussed, yet still undefined. Years, the role of library and information managers has always been providing high quality service.⁴ Although there are many attempts to provide the quality service, who actually has the authority to judge the quality of service? Again, Hernon asserts that 'quality is in the eyes of beholder..... who has a better mental construct of service quality than customer?...'⁵ It is the customer who has the authority to judge whether or not service quality exists in the library. However, according to Annette Davies and Ian Kirkpatrick, "to play this role the user must be furnished with relevant information with which to make choices and judgment about the quality of services. This in turn is only possible if professional work, and perhaps the nature of professional knowledge and expertise itself, is increasingly standardized and opened up to user evaluation and scrutiny."⁶

The existence of service quality is also more widely determined by those whom the customer of the library has contact with. Can service quality still be defined as users' satisfaction merely as it used to be? If a user comes to a reference desk receiving incorrect answer of what he asked for, while he does not know that the answer is incorrect, he might, then, go away satisfied. However, does this illustration show a service quality? What happens if the customer knows that he got the wrong answer? Thus, customer satisfaction is only a part of quality service.

In addition to those definitions, Margaret Kinneel gives her definition of quality. In relation to library and information services which do not operate as profit-making enterprise, the principal concerns of quality are 'first, how can library and information managers deliver the best service to meet the needs and expectations of the users, potential users, suppliers, funders, and, indeed, all of their numerous stakeholders and, secondly, how should they demonstrate the benefit of their service?'

It is implied from this definition, that service quality should meet not only the user needs and expectation, but also those whom the library has direct contact with. Together with the users, they also take part to judge whether or not the library has the service quality.

b. Job Design

Tasks' allocation is the first thing to decide in hiring new subordinates. According to Hideshi Itoh there are two relevant questions in allocating the tasks.

'First, which of the tasks are delegated to the subordinates and which are left under the entrepreneur's control? The answer to this question determines the delegation of decision making in the organization. Second, how are those tasks delegated to the subordinates to be divided among them? The answer determines the division of labor among the subordinates'.⁸

From his statement there are two things we can derive as the definition of job design. First, job design is tasks' allocation or delegation between the staff and the manager, and, second, job design is also tasks' allocation among the staff. Job design affects both productivity and quality of work life. The characteristics that are designed into the staff's works determine how well people perform the job. Thus, the characteristics of jobs can be determinant factors of good job performance of the employees. Werther maintained that 'job design reflects organizational, environmental and behavioral demands placed on it'.⁹ By considering these three factors in designing the jobs, the organization can have better customer service, higher productivity of the employees, and overall improved worker morale. Conversely, poorly designed job can lead to poor productivity of the employees, employee turnover, absenteeism, complaints, sabotage, resignation and other problem.

As it is also maintained by Werther that the key element of job design is specialization,¹⁰ limiting the employees with the more specific tasks is one important consideration in assigning jobs to the employees. Moreover, the limitation of jobs given to the employees will result in better performance and productivity. There is an assumption that the more limited the jobs given to the employees the higher the outputs. This assumption is still applicable today. Another advantage of having job design is reducing the overlapping task assigned to the employee(s). Assigned with only specific tasks, the employees, then, are supposed to concentrate on performing their tasks that might be distinct from others, and are responsible for the result. Thus, no employee will do the same job as others do. By having job design, there will be a clear division of who is doing what and responsible for what.

c. The relationship between service quality and job design

Although they seem apart, job design and service quality have relationship that affects each other. Jobs that are designed based on the three factors mentioned, can lead to improving responsibility of the employees. This, in turn, affects on providing good service to the customer because the higher the sense of responsibility of the employee, the harder they work and the better the result received by the customer. Customers as direct receivers of the service, will have the benefit from job design of the organization. The benefit of job design, of course, will not be realized by the customers directly, but it reflects quality service that is received from the providers (the employees).

It can be understood that lack of job design or having bad job design will result in bad service. When an employee has to do two or more tasks that are not relevant, the employee might be stressed and frustrated because he is made

busy by them. Customers who have direct contact with him might be the first receivers of his anger or frustration. His anger can be manifested by many ways; he might provide slow work, working in non-timely manner, etc. which all of those lead to providing bad service and customer dissatisfaction. Werther in his book has tried to prove that a good job design will result in better customer satisfaction by providing an example of an organization.

In addition, jobs are designed by considering organizational, environmental and behavioral elements. The organizational element of job design is concerned with efficiency. Efficiently designed jobs allow a highly motivated and capable worker to achieve maximum output.¹¹ The environmental element of job design is concerned with the ability and availability of potential employee. Along with this concern, another concern that should be taken into account is social expectation.¹² Meanwhile, there is also a need to consider the employee needs and satisfaction as individuals.¹³ From these three elements of job design we can draw a line that links to service quality. The link is clear, because all of those elements lead to good performance of employees in doing their jobs.

Collection Development

Collection development is a term encompassing a variety of activities designed to ensure that a library includes in its holdings books, periodicals, and other materials required to support the instructional and research programs of the university.

It is useful to distinguish between fund allocation and item selection in analyzing collection – development activities in an academic library. Fund allocation is the process of deciding what proportion of the budget for materials will be assigned to various library units or expenditure categories. Funds can be allocated in two ways: by format of materials, that is, books or periodicals, or by substantive areas. Substantive areas may be designated by scholarly discipline. Item selection is more decentralized decision-making process. The responsibility to expend allocated fund is assigned to a number of materials selectors, that is reference librarian, academic department, or the director of library.

In addition to fund allocation and item selection, collection development encompasses a number of other activities, including evaluation, location, weeding, and preservation. Collection evaluation activities are designed to assess both the strengths and gaps in specific subject areas. Evaluation includes efforts to measure the levels of use of various portions of the library's holdings. Location refers to the decision-making processes that determine where holdings will be placed. Weeding is the process whereby librarians remove obsolete or unused holdings from the collection to be discarded. Finally, preservation refers to those activities designed to identify and repair items whose physical condition has deteriorated to a point which precludes further use. All these activities are usually implied by the term collection development.

Once the decision has been made to add an item to the library's holdings, the process of acquisitions, the second function common to academic library begins. Included in acquisitions are those clerical tasks associated with ordering materials, monitoring deliveries, and approving payments. "The terms collection

development and acquisitions are frequently used interchangeably, thus causing some confusion. But collection development usually refers to the intellectual aspects of deciding which materials will be added to the collection, while acquisitions connotes the clerical aspects of orders and deliveries.¹⁴

Collection development librarians are vitally involved in many aspects of the information business. They are responsible for building and managing the library's resource base, and their activities should be guided by a written collection development policy. A written collection development policy statement is intended "... to clarify objectives and to facilitate coordination and cooperation, both within a library or library system and among cooperating libraries... If it is well done, it should serve as a day to day working tool that provides the necessary guidelines for carrying out the majority of tasks within the area of collection building."¹⁵

"There are eighteen common features of selection policies in terms of content:

1. Objectives of the library
2. The community and its needs identified
3. The purpose of the selection process
4. The functions of the library
5. The context of selection: needs, quality, funding, cooperation
6. Authority for selection policy
7. Responsibility for implementation
8. Priorities: types of use and categories of material
9. Controversial issues
10. Censorship
11. Categories of exclusions
12. Statement on Freedom to Read
13. Selection criteria
14. Collection standards: quantity
15. Collection development targets
16. Selection methods: organisation
17. Acquisitions categories and coverage
18. Ordering methods"¹⁶

One possible explanation for the absence of universal acceptance of the written policy, despite its near unanimous endorsement, is the lack of precise definition of what a written policy is as opposed to what it does. William A. Wortman illustrates this difficulty when he defines the written collection development policy as "a crystallisation of each library's understanding on how its collection can serve its mission."¹⁷ He calls the policy a "detailed profile of all the subjects in which the library will collect books, periodicals, and other materials or media."¹⁸ Then, like most writers on the subject, he strays into the realm of performance, noting that the policy "can guide selection of new materials and also can provide the framework for decisions about maintenance, renewal, preservation and weeding."¹⁹

The Relationship between Collection Development and Service Quality

The traditional model of assessing service quality was linked to collection development very much. According to Line "collecting as much as possible, after careful selection, cataloging it to high standards, binding it... and keeping it forever, are given priority. Service quality if directly assessed at all, is linked to professional expertise and collection maintenance and development."²⁰ Thus, service quality was measured by quantifying the collection, beside providing good catalog and binding. The greater the collection the better the service provided. In the service-led model, however, 'self-sufficient collections are no longer feasible or necessary to meet the user 'needs'.'²¹

The fact above is also supported by Danuta who says that "historically, the quality of an academic library has been described in terms of its collection and measured by the size of the library's holdings and various counts of its use."²² The size and the breadth of subject coverage of the collection were used to be two main points of evaluating service quality in library. This idea was changed into new concept of evaluating the service quality. In the same article, he further mentions that a measure of library quality based solely on collections has become obsolete.

Although collection is no longer used as the only way to measure service quality, but it is still a unit of library works that is supposed to provide the service quality. In other word, this paper is intended to investigate how collection development meets the user expectation.

In many articles, service quality is equivalent with user-centered service. Both terms are used interchangeably. This paper will use both terms because they have the same basic idea.

Concerning service quality in collection development, Evans wrote:

*"Knowledge of the service community is the key to effective collection development...the more the collection development officers know about the customer roles, general interests, education, information or communication behavior, values, and related characteristics, the more likely it is the collection will provide the desired information at the time the service population wants it."*²³

There are areas in the collection development affected by data about customers. The areas are policy formulation, selection, and evaluation. In the efforts of achieving the user satisfaction, any assessment of the collection should include a consideration of how well it meets the expectation and needs of the customers. Thus, community analysis is a good way to conduct by the library if it is to meet its user needs of its collection. Community analysis that is still recommended to conduct can be a way for the librarians to know user expectation of the collection which in turn can provide satisfactory service to the users. However, this is not to say that conducting community analysis is the only way of meeting user's satisfaction. Making materials available promptly in the library that are in need by the users is another way of achieving the goal. This can especially be done if the users request the materials while they are not available in the library yet.

The users may expect that the collection in the library can well cover their subject interests. When they come to the library seeking for particular information, they expect they can find it in the library easily.

Problems Commonly Faced in Collection Development:

Users

"Every library exists chiefly to serve the needs of its own community of users. It follows, then, that any overall evaluation of a library ought to be based chiefly on how well it does, in fact, serve those needs."²⁴

The goal of collection evaluation is to assess the quality of a collection or collections. Use and user studies provide the collection evaluator with techniques for quantifying qualitative judgements about library collections.

Collection evaluation techniques can be categorized as collection-centered and user-centered.

Collection-centered evaluation techniques measure "the size, scope, or depth of a collection, or segment thereof, often in comparison with an external standard... or the holdings of a library known to be comprehensive in the subject area being compared."²⁵ Techniques include examination by a subject expert, list checking, comparison with standards, and compilation of statistics.

Use and user studies approach collection evaluation from the perspective of the users for whom the collection has been and continues to be developed. Use studies focus upon the availability and accessibility of the materials in a collection. User studies ask: Who is using the collection, how, and with what degree of success and satisfaction?

In the use studies we have circulation studies, in-house use studies, document delivery tests, shelf availability studies, citation studies and interlibrary loan studies. In a circulation study the researcher analyzes circulation data. Manually compiled circulation statistics usually provide limited data about user categories - use by call number range or subject area and use of individual titles. Automated systems, on the other hand, frequently provide systematically a wider variety of data, including publication dates for circulating material, formats of circulating material, language of circulating material, and the last circulation date of particular titles.

In-house use studies analyse data about material that is used in the library and reshelfed by library staff. Although in-house use studies are often recommended as a means to validate the results of a circulation study, they are an essential element of any use study for noncirculating collections, such as a reference collection or periodical collection.

Document delivery tests assess the ability of a collection to provide materials from a list of selected citations. The test is conducted by library staff, who attempt to follow the procedures of users who come to the library to acquire the items on a bibliography.

Shelf availability studies monitor the failure of users to locate needed items. Document delivery tests and shelf availability studies are founded on the recognition that a list-checking test may indicate a high percentage of titles in the

collection, but if a high percentage of those items are checked out, at the bindery, in transit to shelves, misshelved, or missing, they are unavailable to the user.

Citation studies use data about the number of times documents are cited in notes, references, bibliographies, or indexing or abstracting tools in order to identify important journals in a subject area. Citation studies are most useful in evaluating collections that support research in journals - dependent fields of study.

Interlibrary loan statistics can indicate unmet user needs and can be used to identify deficiencies in the collection.

User surveys assess the ability of a collection to meet the needs of users by asking users to respond to evaluative questions about the collections. User surveys can be conducted by distributing questionnaires to the users in the library. The goal was to create a "snapshot" of our users. The objectives are to gather demographic and behavioral data to answer the following questions:

- Who is using this library?
- Why does each person use this library?
- How often does she/he use this library?
- Does he/she find the material he/she wants?

Despite the potential difficulties in planning and conducting use and user studies, they have become essential library evaluation techniques.

The techniques of discovering user needs in academic libraries are not highly developed, nor are they often used. The attitudes of most academic librarians on this matter are that those needs are already known, or, worse yet, that the librarians know what the users ought to need. Services are provided for needs that are seldom examined in many systematic or rigorous way.

User needs in an academic library express themselves in many ways. No single technique or instrument will serve to discover them. The traditional way of keeping alert is to pay attention to student and faculty requests at the reference desk, unfortunately only those users who come to the library and have the courage to state their needs openly to the reference librarian can be served and met all their needs. This is useful source of information, but it is very limited.

Student library committees and student representatives or faculty library committees sometimes offer useful insights into student needs. The chief difficulty with this technique is that the students who serve on these committees are already favorably inclined toward traditional library practices.

Librarians

The librarian should devote much of his time to this last but important responsibility. Evaluation, because of its difficulty, expense, and continuous nature, discourages writing a useful policy. Because there is an inadequate method of evaluation, there is no foundation on which to construct a written policy. The weakness of the written policy is inflexibility, its unresponsiveness to changes that occur in the library. In the academic libraries, for instance, the curriculum - something generally outside the control of the librarian - dictates the areas of the collection that require attention. The department rarely consults the librarian before hiring new professors. Fields of study may be added or

dropped with little warning. Yet, the librarian is expected to respond to these changes, and presumably, the collection development policy must be altered to reflect the new conditions. Such continuous revisions demand more time and money. Advocates of the written policy, such as Gorman and Howes recognize this drawback: "To the degree that policy statements are static, they do inhibit the librarian's response to such changes, and unfortunately many (policies) exist which, because of the time and effort involved in their preparation, have become inflexible codes."²⁶

Academic librarians have two clearly distinct responsibilities, which are often closely intertwined. First, there is participation in the educational process – teaching the techniques and substance of learning and bibliography and providing the resources for the pursuit of self-knowing. Secondly, librarians support writing, studying, and research by supplying factual items of information. In the informational function the librarian provides data that may or may not be of use to the patron; as a teacher, the librarian, works with the learning person.

Integration with classroom's colleagues has often been slow and difficult, but is an essential consideration in attaining academic recognition. Librarians know that academics participate in a modified hierarchical organization under a governing board, president, and departmental chair person. Faculty senate and committee membership permit participation in the consultative and governance activities of the campus. It has given librarians an opportunity to work on academic planning and deliberation, increasing the effectiveness and feasibility of library programs and services. Many studies have shown that personal contact between librarian and classroom instructor is one of the most effective ways to introduce bibliographical concerns.

The academic library has recently been confronted with an enormous growth in the volume of publication; increasing fragmentation of disciplines into narrow areas of specialization, and the growth of multidisciplinary programs that organize specialization in new ways. These factors present two major problems for the academic librarian. One is continually diminishing ability to acquire all the materials needed in all the disciplines served by the typical academic research library. The other is diminishing ability to organize and make materials accessible in an environment of consently changing intellectual orientation.

Alternative Solution

a. Alternative Courses of Action

1) Responding to user needs

After discovering needs, it is important to communicate immediately with those who have expressed them, even though the ways to meet those needs may not yet have been designed. Assure them that an effort will be made to serve them and invite further discussions to learn specially what is needed. It is essential that an honest effort be made to serve the needs. Not all needs can be met immediately, and it is important to explain the reasons for this inability, without resorting the bureaucratic rules of the library's own making. Complaints about the need for longer hours, fewer fines, more books, less noise,

comfortable chairs, smoking areas, and so forth, are common ones that can be handled with understanding and a flexible, helpful attitude. The emphasis should be upon serving the need and making it easy for the user.

In the area of Collection Development it is essential to remember that the user wants the item that he or she requests and that item only as well as at the time he or she needs it. He or she may accept a substitute, but is unimpressed by the great size of the collection if it does not provide the material wanted when it is wanted. It is, therefore, necessary to attempt to anticipate demand for a particular title and supply it in a sufficient number of copies so that one copy is always available. This is an impossible goal but one which must be attempted. It requires continual monitoring of the use of the collection and the fast acquisition of additional copies of material that are in demand.

2) Developing a new Collection Development Policy

The policy has four main purposes. Firstly, the policy as a planning tool and exists within the context of the overall goals and objectives of the library. Secondly, the policy is a management tool, and exists to provide a greater degree of consistency and continuity in the selection policies and practices in the library. Thirdly, the policy is a communication tool, and provide information to a number of groups other than staff involved in selection. Finally, the policy is intended to facilitate cooperation. Again, in academic library, the courses offered in the institution may change, the collection policy developed should reflect the new courses and their needs to the collection. Thus, collection policy is kept updated.

3) Conducting a Community Analysis

There are three avenues with which a library may take to realize the benefits of community analysis. First, it can hire a consultant. A second alternative is to conduct a self-study. Third, a library can participate in community analysis with other community agencies. The library involved in community analysis will realize both direct and indirect benefits.

1. Planning and goal setting will be based on total community needs from the widest perspective.

2. Change can be managed more responsibly; that is, the need for change can be better anticipated in time to make positive adjustments.

3. The library will acquire new advocates among librarians, faculty members and students in the process of the community analysis.

4. A broader understanding of financial needs will result

5. The library will also gain a better understanding of the activities and problems of the libraries. Cooperation will thus be more natural and practical.

This kind of study will also do the following:

- Relating the library service to the realities of the community being served
- Systematically collecting evidence about the community
- Establishing service priorities
- and Marketing the service.

b. Selected Alternative

The best alternative is to write the policy because it is the first thing a library would do, and everything else follows. The collection policy seeks to identify and develop an appropriate response to perceived user needs, both present and future. This ensures that the library establishes priorities for the allocation of funds and that it commits itself to serving all sections of the user community.

c. Recommendation for Action

The first step is to begin by forming a committee for the formulation of written policy. The general responsibility of this group is to oversee and direct the entire process, from staffing to promulgation of the final document.

The second step is to determine preliminary matters. There should be the establishment of the exact steps to be followed in formulating the draft policy and of a realistic timetable for completion of each step. In addition, tasks must be allocated to each staff member, with clear instruction on what is to be done by when. But before staff proceed with their tasks a common sense of purpose must be achieved.

The third step is the fulfillment of the committee's role. First, an attempt is made to draft the general policy statement. The second is to prepare the detailed statement of collection levels, and this must be derived from a collection analysis or evaluation.

The fourth step is for the draft policy to be reviewed and revised. The committee will go through the drafting stage of the policy and at the end will not be presented with document which seems totally foreign, and therefore will evaluate it more thoroughly. The committee has been constituted to represent the institution and its administration, professional staff, user groups and outside expertise. All of these interests must analyze the policy section by section from their particular viewpoints and offer critical guidance about necessary changes.

The fifth step is when policy is completed, it is ready for implementation. It should also be available for wide distribution. If the policy statement profiles the library, it should be given a high profile.

And the last step is to have some procedure to be established at the outset for ongoing review of the policy, for evaluation on regular basis and for revision as required.

Endnotes:

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- ²² Danuta A. Nitecki, *ibid.*, 181
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- ²⁴ *Collection Management for the 1990s*, ed. by Joseph J. Branin. Chicago: American Library Association, 1993, p. 91.
- ²⁵ *Ibid.*, p. 64.
- ²⁶ Richard Snow, *ibid.*, p. 193.