Innovative Services During Pandemic at UIN Sunan Kalijaga Yogyakarta Library: a ServQual Analysis

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ABSTRACT

Academic library contributes much to the realization of the Three Pillars of Higher Education, which are education, research, and social services. During the pandemic, university libraries have to keep contributing to the development of education even when learning-teaching activities are virtually conducted. This research is aimed at identifying the sorts of services developed by UIN Sunan Kalijaga Yogyakarta library during the pandemic and at exploring the users’ responses to them by using the ServQual approach to evaluate three aspects of innovative services, namely the services being developed, the service supporting facility, and the human resources. This research uses a qualitative method. The data were collected through interviews with 17 qualified informants and documentation. The study showed that the library has made some innovative services to satisfy the users’ needs, particularly the students who were doing their last assignments. The users have
benefited much from the innovative services and declared their satisfaction. In terms of the facility, the library is completed with facilities and infrastructure that are in line with the health protocols. The library also used social media, like WhatsApp and Instagram, to support its services. In addition, the librarians have significantly helped the users access the services.

**Keywords**: Library innovative services; academic library; ServQual

1. **INTRODUCTION**

The University library has a function to support the Three Pillars of Higher Education; education, research, and social services. It is commonly known that libraries have been defining themselves as places of learning and research since the 20th century, and for this purpose, they have been developing their collections in various forms (Coyne, 2010). To support research activities, they also provide up-to-date collections by subscribing to scientific journals. Entering the 21st century, people are no more dependent on one particular place to study. The emergence of open-source technology, open-access technology, and open-community technology, has made information more accessible. Even, the birth of library 2.0 has changed the way people access the library, and this is because, as explained by Chad and miller in Coyne (2010), the library 2.0 adopts the principle of “library is everywhere”, which means that regardless of any condition a library will always be there, integrated with online service. The rise of industry revolution 4.0, which emphasizes artificial intelligence (Hussain, 2019) by making use of technology such as the internet of things (IoT), big data, and cloud computing, has also affected the way library performs their tasks and markets their products. In other words, a library has to keep servicing the community in any condition, even when the users are not able to come in person and make on-site access to the library collection and services. When a harmful situation makes on-site access impossible, online service can be an alternative. Society 5.0, with its principle of retaining the humanity aspect, has changed the principle of “knowing your collection” into “knowing your connection” (Hussain, 2019), and this is what underlies the need to always connect a library with its users by making use of the available technology. This is relevant to our condition today, as the world is facing the pandemic of Covid-19, which has significantly affected various fields of life, including the field of education. As the data from UNESCO show, during this pandemic time, several countries make different policies: partially open, closed due to Covid-19, fully open, and academic break (UNESCO, 2020). Indonesian government via the Minister of Education has stopped the face-to-face-learning-teaching activities and has instructed that learning-teaching activities be conducted virtually. As a result, the accessibility to the available information resources, particularly in universities, cannot be optimized. Either students or lecturers are not able to make on-site access to the library collections and services, while their learning activities keep going on and need to be supported with necessary library collections. The students who are writing their thesis also feel obstructed with the limited access to the library collections and services (Abdi, 2020). The situation is occurred to the lecturers as they also need to access the library for doing their researches.

The Library of UIN Sunan Kalijaga, during the pandemic, has tried its best to find innovative solutions to keep serving the faculty members and keep providing its users with information access. The library then made some policies on its services during this pandemic time: offering online services, encouraging the users to take as much benefit as possible from the available e-books and e-journals, and intensively using social media, like WhatsApp and Instagram, for library services (Perpustakaan UIN Sunan Kalijaga, 2020). These services involved
both the librarians and the users, even though some of them may not be prepared for this new condition. It is a demand that the librarians think and come out with creative ideas that will benefit all the users during this pandemic time. Technological skills are significantly needed for performing these (online) services. In this digital era, a professional librarian is, indeed, a librarian with some mastery of information and communication technology to catch up with the need of the users (Agava & Underwood, 2020). A university librarian has a combined mastery of traditional skills and 2.0 technology (Oyieke & Dick, 2017). On the other hand, library users must always try to get informed of the updated policies on library services that are published on social media. Otherwise, they will not access the library services effectively. The users’ ignorance of the updated library services and the needed technical skill will potentially increase the users’ anxieties about the library (Jan et al., 2016).

The newly issued policies on library services during the pandemic time, along with their formats, which are different from their regular ones, may also result in the users’ confusion. It is, therefore, important to know and evaluate the users’ responses to these services. Evaluating the library services must be done to ensure that the services benefit the users, and as an internal control mechanism, by which the librarians know that the information resources they provide have been accessed efficiently and effectively (Crawford, 2003). This paper is aimed at evaluating the innovative services developed by the library during Covid-19, to ensure that the users access these services effectively.

2. PREVIOUS FINDINGS

Many researchers have conducted library service evaluation research using ServQual method but there are differences in the focus of the research. According to Griadhi (2018), ServQual method is a descriptive method that is developed to measure the quality of service offered by a customer. This method was developed by Parasuraman, Valerie A. Zeithaml, and Leonard L. Berry in 1985, and in 1998, having been revised and published in the Journal of Retailing, this method was claimed as a good method to measure the quality of service. From several existing studies, the researcher will describe several studies that are relevant to the topic of this research. Made Hery Wihardika Griadhi (2018) on his ServQual research identifying the quality and effectiveness of the services in UNDIKSHA library. This study showed that in general the quality of service at the library was good but still needed to be improved in several variables. Intangible variables, things need to be improved, especially concerning physical facilities, and library collections as well. For variable reliability, the aspect that needs to be improved is the accuracy of information. For the responsiveness variable, the friendliness of the librarian still needs to be improved. In variable assurance, indicators of knowledge and skills still also need to be improved.

Tobias and Blair (2015) studied the effectiveness of various service points and action plans to improve user experience in remote library services. Through various kinds of literature on library service evaluation methods, their study figured out that there were various methods to research library services such as extracting and behavior using separated patterns using web analytics, transaction log analysis, and transaction analysis of virtual reference services. In addition, in remote services, librarians can listen to and observe user behavior through this evaluation method. The effectiveness of university libraries generally refers to the library collection, staff performance, services, and facilities (Alam & Mezbah-ul-Islam, 2020). So that the quality of library service is retained, these four aspects need to be evaluated. As said by Green (Munde & Marks, 2009), the quality of library service normally refers to the availability
of distinctive and special services. Some methods, such as Libqual and ServQual, can be used to evaluate the library services.

Scupola and Nicolajsen (2010) in their study at Danish University Library found that the libraries apply several efforts to attract customers with innovative services and not only rely on management and employees. Innovation in library services, as said by Yeh and Walter (Lee, 2020), is a process in which library services are developed to meet the users’ changing needs, like offering new services, or modifying a service by using digital technology. In addition to innovation in library services, university libraries are also demanded to get informed of what is happening in the world of education, and to follow recent issues in the world of higher education, like what is happening to the faculty (lecturers), students, curriculum, governance, facility, funding, and society (Evans & Greenwell, 2018). University libraries must also redefine their physical structure, expertise, and intellect while understanding and promoting innovations in geography, psychology, and economy (Neal & Jaggars, 2010). Innovations in library services can be classified into some categories based on the sorts of services being innovated, so, there are innovations in physical service, human resources, and information service (Fagerberg et al., 2005). Therefore, as far as library service is concerned, university libraries are necessary to make facility innovation, human resources innovation, and information service innovation. In the context of the Covid-19 pandemic, libraries need to adapt in serving the needs of their users. Libraries need to provide and prepare services in crisis conditions (Jana & Rout, 2021).

3. METHODS

This research used the qualitative method, in which the emphasis is given to the process and meaning to answer questions on the rise of social experience, as well as to find its meaning (Denzin & Lincoln, 2000). This research is aimed at evaluating the innovative, user-centered library services through ServQual approach, emphasizing the users’ experience in its natural condition. Three points to be analyzed are; the innovative services, the supporting facility, and the librarians. The scheme is seen below. Munde & Marks (2009) suggested three approaches that can be used to measure users’ satisfaction with a university library: unmediated survey, focus group discussion (FGD), and interview with the key informants. This study has chosen informants through purposive sampling, particularly those active users who access more than three sorts of services and working on their last assignments, for whom the innovative services are designed in this pandemic time. There were 17 informants were chosen. They consisted of 8 undergraduate students, 8 graduate students, and 1 lecturer.
4. RESULTS AND FINDINGS ANALYSIS

The Innovative Services

During the pandemic, in 2020, the library has been developing both online and on-site services. From March to May, the library mostly offered online services, and from June to August, it started offering limited on-site services. In October, on-site services (still limited, however) were offered under strict health protocol (wearing a mask, washing hands, checking body temperature, bringing own pen, uploading self data, and doing physical distancing). The service’s priority was for those who were working on their last assignment. The users had to show their Course Selection Sheet (KRS) declaring they were working on their last assignment (thesis). Here, the innovative library services developed during the pandemic as follows:

1) Circulation Service

A new procedure was set that made the circulation services quicker than usual. The steps in borrowing the collections during the pandemic are as follows:

✓ Seeking the needed book through library OPAC and capture it;
✓ Ordering through WhatsApp, showing the captured of the book title and KRS (to let the librarian knows that the student is working on the final assignment);
✓ Waiting for the ordered book to be available;
✓ Once the book is ready, the user is going to take the book to the library.

While for returning the books, especially those who were living at out of the city could send the books via currier. Due to the pandemic, the library did not take a fine, starting from March to September 2020.
2) Library Clearance Service. This service could be accessed either online or on-site.

3) Reference Service. To build good communication with the users, the library offers three links:
   a. *Si Carik*. This is a consultation service, to tell the users how many books they have to return, returning book procedure, and locker keys.
   b. *IMUM*. This is a consultation service, intended to consult about ordering the books, important information during the pandemic time, and some other matters of the library.
   c. Reference Consultation. This is for those who want to talk with the reference librarians for getting information about e-collection retrieval.

Social media is an effective medium to reach users. The library also posts important information about the services on social media such as Instagram, Twitter, Facebook, and WhatsApp, and on the library website. The library even had a weekly program on Instagram Live for promoting its activities and its collections and services available during the pandemic time.

**The Supporting Facilities**

During the pandemic time, the library facilities should be arranged in line with the health protocol. A connection between one service to another should be made so that the users stay in one place and meet fewer people and the risk of being infected by the coronavirus can be avoided. For the same reason, the library services are centralized on the first floor, covering such services as book borrowing and returning, and library clearance, and are supported with facilities, like a waiting room for those who are waiting for their turns to take the books, to return the books, or to get the library clearance letter. There is also a table for the librarian whose task is to check the body temperature of the users coming into the library.

The users feel convenient with these well-organized facilities. Some informants even mentioned that the interior design of the library and facilities has made the services more effective and efficient.

In addition, the library used social media, like Facebook, Instagram, WhatsApp, Twitter, and the website, as a means of communication. For example, how to access *Si Carik* service (book borrowing record), *IMUM* (book ordering service), and reference consultation service. Instagram is the most frequently used by the library to communicate more actively with the users, as well as to promote its innovative services. The use of social media, according to the informants, was really helpful for the users in accessing the library services.

**The Librarians**

1) Tangible (librarians’ performances)

The first aspect to be evaluated is the tangible elements. It includes the librarians’ performances in providing the services during the pandemic time. Dressing as suggested by health protocol is preferable as it makes the users accessing on-site services feel safe and convenient. Based on the interview, the librarians are dressed in the standard of health protocol. They wear mask, plastic gloves, and face shields for personal and other protective equipment. The library has created a policy that the returning books shall be quarantined for 5 days before they can be reserved.

2) Responsiveness

The librarians quickly responded to the users’ needs. Most users will get the books they have ordered through *Whattaps* in 5 to 30 minutes. Even though it was sometimes the librarians were slow responses. It occurred once they have to respond to many users at the
same time. However, the response is faster during working hours. From the librarians’ perspective, the slow response usually occurs when a user contact beyond the working hours. The limited number of librarians in charge of searching books that the users have ordered also contributed to the slow response.

From October forward, there were about 20 to 40 students ordering books per day meanwhile only two librarians were in charge during the service. Some users requested the services beyond the working hours but it was well responded to by the librarians even not as fast as during the working hours. Other urgent services were also asked for after hours, sometimes. For example, library clearance matters and accessing the last assignment collection, as these two services were required for their graduation. Therefore, the hospitality of a librarian can be seen through their expression. As described by the informants, the librarians’ expressions are mostly friendly and they keep calm despite being repeatedly questioned. They have good communication, smile while responding, and do not hesitate to greet the users when working for on-site services or in sending comments to the users through a direct message via Instagram.

3) Assurance

To develop an assurance dimension, a person needs to offer assertive services through communication skills. In the context of library service, this aspect refers to the librarians’ knowledge, competence, and credibility. The data showed that the librarians have known well about the innovative services offered by the library, including how these services should be accessed. They have known the borrowing procedure service, the fines, and the procedure of visiting the library. They paid more attention to every question given by the user. In addition, the library has firstly socialized the services to the librarians before they are launched.

Besides, they have given the users a good, clear, easy-to-understand explanation of the library services and products. They explained the products in detail as if the users knew nothing, and the users benefit much from this detailed explanation. The use of Instagram also helps the users get informed of the available library services; it becomes even more helpful as the librarians always try to answer the users’ questions on Instagram. Some informants stated that the librarians quickly respond on Instagram than on WhatsApp. Moreover, the librarians diligently post all the latest information about the library’s policies and services. This latest information is generally posted in detail with interesting, infographic and animation designs. In addition, the library also holds IG Live intended to inform the users of the new library services.

4) Empathy

The empathy aspect is concerned with how much an individual cares and pays attention to others (customers): being passionate to build a relationship with customers, having good communication with customers and listening to what customers say attentively, caring personally, positioning himself/herself as a customer, understanding customers’ personal need, responding effectively, and satisfying what customers want.

Online services are the potential to make users anxious about having library services. The users working on their thesis are always in need of fast services. On-site services, sometimes, for example, a user has a long queue in accessing the library service. During the pandemic time, the number of users to access the service of the reading room is limited to 20 persons for a maximum duration of 2 hours. The librarians’ empathy is then crucial both in the cases of online services and of on-site ones.

The librarians have developed a sense of care in doing the services. As stated by the informants, they patiently help the users seeking reference sources, and how they go step by
step guiding the users to access the service. It reflects the librarians’ empathy. The librarians’ empathy can also be seen in what they do for the users who are in urgent need of accessing the library services. In a state of emergency, the librarians take flexible attitudes, allowing the users with an urgent need to visit the library and access the last assignment documents unavailable on the university website. The librarians are also willing to do the services beyond the working hours, although their responses are not as fast as when they are in working time.

The Students’ Response to the Library Services during the Pandemic

1) The library services

a. Tangible

Three points are studied: types of service available; library collections; and accessibility to the collection and services. The types of services that the library offers during the pandemic; are book borrowing, book return, e-journal access, e-books access, theses collections access, and reading the thesis documents in the library. The service most accessed by the students is the circulation service, and they access it either online or on-site. As for those students who have finished their thesis, the most accessed services are those of book returning and of getting a library clearance which can be accessed either online or on-site. All of this shows that the users understand the procedure of the library services during the pandemic.

The second aspect of tangible service is the availability of library collections. As the users are demanded to access the e-collections, these collections will be a real help for them. E-journals subscribed by the library and institutional repository collections (downloadable thesis and thesis) are the most accessed, particularly by graduate students.

The third aspect is the easy access to library collections and services. It is shown that although the new procedure was set, it did not seem to discourage the students to come and access the services. The availability of e-collections is a big help for them during the time, particularly for students working on their thesis. The role of the reference librarians who helped them access the e-collections is important and undeniable. They helped the users from one to another reference when the collection they need is not available. Other things, Instagram is used to help the users get recent information about the free e-collections.

b. Reliability

The reliability aspect of the library services is concerned with the ability of the librarian to serve effectively and accurately, as well as with the accessibility of the services. It is much the relevance between the library services and the users’ needs and the accessibility of the services, including the accessibility of the services of book borrowing, book returning, and library clearance. The users were facilitated to get the full text, and when they were allowed to access the on-site book borrowing service. All this helped and encouraged them to finish their thesis.

The second aspect of reliability is concerned with the accessibility of library services. Since June 2020, the library has started offering a multiple-steps procedure for borrowing. However, the procedure was easy to follow. Through Instagram, everything is informed. With such a procedure of book borrowing, the process takes longer time than usual, and quick responses from the librarians are needed. Based on the interview, most informants stated that librarians’ response is quick enough.

Relating to collection availability, it happens sometimes that the content of the book is not as the users expect. It reflects the lack of services. Therefore, redesigning the feature of the library OPAC is needed. However, on some occasions, when the ordered books are not available on the shelf, the librarian will give another book with the same topic, and it helps.
5. DISCUSSION

On the aspect of tangible, the librarians need to be stricter in following the health protocol standard, to always wear masks and the other kinds of stuff for the users’ convenience and their benefit. In terms of responsiveness, some librarians need to do their best to quickly respond to the users. It is also important to develop a Standard Operating Procedure on how to respond to the users. Another thing about the librarians, as the number of book orders increases, the library should re-consider the number of librarians to search for the ordered books.

1) Procedure

To give the users assurance of how long they have to wait before they can access the service, it would be better if the library provides a standard procedure of the library service that explicitly explains how long users have to wait before they get the books they order.

2) Information, Communication, and Technology

The use of ICT, including social media, has significantly given a big help to the library during the pandemic. It is used for sharing information about library services and policies. Through, the librarians regularly update the information and the users get informed of the recent information. Besides, it is also used as a means of communication between the library and the users.

The library OPAC is also concerned as the search tool for the library users before they order the collections. Therefore, OPAC should provide more detailed information in bibliographic descriptions. It is important to add a field of book content to avoid a mistake in the book borrowing service since users have already known the contents of the book they order.

This paper could contribute to evaluating the innovative services developed by the library during this pandemic time. Several innovative library services such as circulation services, library clearance services, and reference services (last assignment and e-journal) could become an inspiration to other university libraries in developing the services. It needs the big passion of the librarians. They should give the best performances with the responsiveness, assurance, and empathy they could. This study advised that the library needs to have robust planning. Mostly, regarding the remote services during the pandemic. Several main aspects of library services such as supporting facilities, librarians, procedures, and information technologies need to be gently planned, monitored, and evaluated seriously.

6. CONCLUSION

Innovative services at the UIN Sunan Kalijaga Library are adaptive to the users’ needs. The service development process involves three important elements, namely: the services; the supporting facilities; and the librarians. The three synergize and reinforce each other. The library has in principle developed innovative services to satisfy the users’ needs, particularly those users working on their final assignments. The library adopted many remote services. The users have benefited from these innovative services and they were satisfied. In terms of supporting facilities, the library is completely provided facilities in line with the health protocol. The library has intensively made social media for supporting the services, like WhatsApp and Instagram. While the librarians have significantly helped the users access the services. Above all, the library should always try to be better and better, either in terms of its supporting facility or the librarians' skills.
REFERENCES


