



Evaluation of Reference Service Quality in the Institut Seni Indonesia Library Surakarta Using TERRA Model

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ABSTRACT

This study aims to evaluate student satisfaction with reference services at the Library of Institut Seni Indonesia (ISI) Surakarta. An analysis based on the TERRA model was employed to measure five service quality dimensions, namely Tangibles, Empathy, Responsiveness, Reliability, and Assurance. A descriptive quantitative approach was applied using purposive sampling of 30 active students with actual experience in utilizing the reference services. Data were collected through a four-point Likert scale questionnaire and analyzed using frequency distribution assisted by IBM SPSS Statistics 27. The results indicate that the Assurance dimension achieved the highest satisfaction level, followed by Reliability and Responsiveness, while Tangibles and Empathy were categorized as good but require improvements in terms of collection completeness and interpersonal communication. These findings demonstrate that ISI Surakarta's reference services have effectively met the academic needs of students, although innovation remains necessary in developing art-based collections and optimizing reference spaces. The study confirms that reference services in arts education environments require service adaptations tailored to more complex user characteristics, including visual, creative, and collaborative preferences. This research contributes to the development of library service strategies that are more adaptive to the dynamic information needs of art students and expands the application of the TERRA model within non-conventional academic contexts. The findings also provide an empirical basis for integrating user-perception-based service evaluations into the management of academic libraries in the era of digital transformation.

Keywords: library; reference services; service quality; student satisfaction

1. INTRODUCTION

Higher education libraries have a strategic function in supporting the implementation of the Tri Dharma of Higher Education, which includes education, research, and community service (Sistarina, 2020). This function is carried out through providing access to quality information resources (Asemi et al., 2021). Reference service is one of the main forms of service in supporting this process because it provides a collection of references that are relevant for academic and research activities, such as encyclopedias, dictionaries, bibliographies, statistics, and other reference documents (Onuoha & Chukwueke, 2023). Digital transformation in the higher education environment requires libraries to develop services that are not only informative, but also responsive to user needs (Suharso, Arifiyana, & Wasdiana, 2020). The existence of reference services in physical and digital formats plays an important role in assisting students, especially at the stage of preparing the final project (Kang et al., 2022). The effectiveness of this service is determined by not only the availability of the collection, but also the quality of interaction between librarians and users in the process of retrieving academic information (Nurislaminingsih, Rachmawati, & Winoto, 2020).

Various studies have shown that reference services play an important role in supporting the academic productivity of users. Innovation in the provision of this service has been proven to improve the accessibility and quality of information interaction in the university environment (Putra & Irawati, 2018). Systematic evaluation of aspects of librarian services, reference collection adequacy, and service room facilities is an important basis for planning sustainable service development (Putriaurina, Syam, & Ruqayah, 2021). Nowadays, libraries should not only act as information providers, but also as strategic partners in the learning and creative process for students (Cox, 2021). This can be especially relevant in the context of higher education in the arts, where the process of creating work and research often requires unique and unconventional resources. Reference services, in this case, are not only required to provide access to valid and up-to-date information, but also to understand the characteristics of users who have different approaches to information search and utilization (Cassell & Hiremath, 2023).

The context of art higher education institutions presents its own challenges in the provision of reference services. Students from art and design backgrounds tend to require visual, multidisciplinary, and applicable types of references to support their creative and research processes (Dalal & Shane, 2023). These needs require service support that is not only adequate in terms of collections, but also thematically appropriate and service approaches (Chuaning & Iglesias, 2023). Studies that specifically highlight the level of satisfaction of art students with library reference services are still very limited. This situation shows the need to develop a more focused and user perception-based evaluation of reference services, especially in an art higher education environment such as Institut Seni Indonesia (ISI) Surakarta.

ISI Surakarta Library, as an integral part of an art higher education institution, needs to approach and adjust its services to the needs of certain unique users such as students of fine arts, design, performance, and crafts. User experience in accessing reference services can be influenced by several factors (Asemi et al., 2021), such as the ease of finding visual and multimedia resources, the ability of librarians to understand art terms and contexts, and the completeness of facilities that support creative exploration. This research focuses on the level of student satisfaction with reference services at ISI Surakarta Library. The research is directed at measuring student perceptions of service quality based on aspects of librarian services, reference collections, and service room facilities. The results of this evaluation are expected to provide a comprehensive picture of the performance of available reference services and become a basis for consideration in planning future service development.

The TERRA SERVQUAL model ([Parasuraman et al., 1988](#)) was used as an evaluative approach to systematically assess service quality. The five main dimensions analyzed include *Tangibles*, *Empathy*, *Responsiveness*, *Reliability*, and *Assurance*. This framework provides an analytical structure that allows measurement of user perceptions to be carried out objectively and measurably, and provides a strong basis for improvement and development of services based on library needs. In addition, this research is not only important as a form of internal evaluation, but also as a contribution to the development of literature on library services in the arts education environment. The findings of this study are expected to serve as a reference in improving reference services that are more contextualized, as well as encouraging the library's role as a collaborative space that supports the academic growth and creativity of art students.

2. RESEARCH METHOD

This study uses a descriptive quantitative approach to describe user perceptions of the quality of reference services. Data analysis was carried out in numerical form and processed using descriptive statistical techniques. This approach allows measurement of responses in the form of numbers presented in a frequency distribution table, according to the direction and focus of the research (Harianto et al., 2022). The research was conducted at the ISI Surakarta Library. The population in this study included all active students of ISI Surakarta who had used library reference services. The sampling technique used a *purposive sampling* approach, with inclusion criteria: (1) active students of ISI Surakarta, and (2) have actual experience using reference services. The number of samples used was 30 respondents, determined based on considerations of the relevance of experience and the time efficiency of conducting research ([Arain et al., 2010](#)).

The data collection instrument was a questionnaire with a four-level *Likert* scale, consisting of the options strongly agree (4), agree (3), disagree (2), and strongly disagree (1). Data were collected in October 2024. The preparation of the questionnaire items adapted the instrument that had been used by ([Mulyani, 2015](#)) in a similar study on library service quality. In addition, visual documentation was also carried out using a cell phone camera to record field conditions as complementary data. Measurement of variables in this study refers to the TERRA model ([Parasuraman et al., 1988](#)), which consists of five main dimensions of service quality: *Tangibles*, *Empathy*, *Responsiveness*, *Reliability*, and *Assurance*. Each dimension is translated into a number of indicators that are used as the basis for preparing items in the questionnaire. The elaboration of the operational definition of variables is presented in Table 1, which details the dimensions, indicators, and forms of measurement used in this study.

Table 1. Operational Definition of Variables

Dimension	Operational Definition	Indicator	Question Items (Questionnaire)
<i>Tangible</i>	The physical condition of the reference room and the completeness of the reference collection.	Room comfort; completeness of collection	1. I feel comfortable in the reference room. 2. I feel the reference collection is very complete.
<i>Reliability</i>	The librarian's ability to understand the references and	Librarian's understanding of reference and library needs.	3. Librarians understand things related to reference. 4. The librarian understands the collection I need.

	collections needed by the users.		
<i>Responsiveness</i>	Librarian's readiness to respond to complaints and help find books.	Providing solutions; directions for finding books	5. The librarian responded well to my mistake and gave directions. 6. The librarian was willing to provide solutions and show me where to find the book.
<i>Assurance</i>	Time discipline and conformity of librarian services to the rules.	Readiness to serve; service according to rules	7. I witnessed that the librarian was ready to serve the users at 08.00. 8. Librarian services are in accordance with the applicable rules.
<i>Empathy</i>	Librarian's attention to complaints and friendly and communicative communication style.	Attention to complaints; pleasant communication	9. The librarian paid attention to my complaints about having difficulty finding references. 10. The librarian intersperses the conversation with light and communicative jokes.

The collected data were analyzed using IBM SPSS Statistics 27 software, with descriptive statistical techniques in the form of frequency distribution. The results of the analysis were used to evaluate ISI Surakarta students' perceptions of the quality of library reference services based on the five variables in the TERRA model.

3. RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

Respondent demographics

Respondents in this study were active students of ISI Surakarta who had experience using library reference services. The gender distribution of respondents is presented in Table 2 as part of the demographic data.

Table 2: Gender of Respondents

Gender	Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent
Male	16	53,3	53,3
Female	14	46,7	46,7
Total	30	100,0	100,0

A total of 20 respondents or 66.7% were female students, while 10 respondents or 33.3% were male students. This composition shows the dominance of female student participation in this study. This imbalance in proportion is a factor that needs to be considered in interpreting the results, because it is likely that the perceptions captured in the analysis will better reflect the point of view of female students.

Analysis of User Perceptions of the Five Dimensions of Service Quality

This section presents the results of the analysis of ISI Surakarta students' perceptions of the quality of reference services provided by the library. The assessment is carried out based on the five

main dimensions in the TERRA model, consisting of *Tangibles*, *Empathy*, *Responsiveness*, *Reliability*, and *Assurance*. Each dimension is analyzed based on indicators that have been formulated in the operational definition of variables. The data is presented in the form of a frequency distribution to describe the level of respondents' agreement with the statement items in each dimension.

This analysis aims to obtain a comprehensive picture of the strengths and weaknesses of reference services perceived by users. The findings from each dimension form the basis for in formulating strategic recommendations for future service improvement and development to better suit the needs and expectations of the users. The results of the data processing are shown in Table 3, which contains the percentage of Agree and Strongly Agree responses on each indicator, accompanied by narrative interpretation to provide an overall picture of user perceptions of the quality of library reference services.

Table 3. Analysis of User Perceptions of the Five Dimensions of Service Quality

Dimensions	Indicator	Percentage (%)	Brief Description
<i>Tangibles</i>	I feel comfortable in the reference room.	86.7	Most respondents agreed, reflecting a positive perception although it could still be improved.
	I feel the reference collection is very complete.	83.4	Most respondents agree, reflecting a positive perception although it can still be improved.
<i>Reliability</i>	Librarians understand things related to reference.	90.0	The majority of respondents strongly agreed, indicating a very high level of acceptance.
	Librarians understand the collection I need.	93.4	The majority of respondents strongly agreed, indicating a very high level of acceptance.
<i>Responsiveness</i>	The librarian responded well to my mistake and gave me direction on what to do.	93.4	The majority of respondents strongly agreed, indicating a very high level of acceptance.
	Librarians are willing to provide solutions and show me where to look for books.	90.0	The majority of respondents strongly agreed, indicating a very high level of acceptance.
<i>Assurance</i>	I witnessed that the librarian was ready to serve the users at 08.00 WIB.	96.6	The majority of respondents strongly agreed, indicating a very high level of acceptance.
	Librarian services are in accordance with the applicable rules.	96.6	The majority of respondents strongly agreed, indicating a very high level of acceptance.

<i>Empathy</i>	Librarians pay attention to my complaints in difficulty finding references.	93.3	The majority of respondents strongly agreed, indicating a very high level of acceptance.
	Librarians intersperse their conversations with light and communicative jokes.	83.3	Most respondents agreed, reflecting a positive perception although it can still be improved.

1. *Tangibles*

The *Tangibles* dimension in the reference service of ISI Surakarta Library reflects a high level of user satisfaction. The score of 86.7% on the indicator "I feel comfortable in the reference room" shows that most students consider the comfort of the room as an important factor in supporting learning activities. The indicator "I feel the reference collection is very complete" recorded 83.4%, which indicates that the completeness of the collection is considered to have met the needs, although there is room for further development. The TERRA model views *tangibles* as an important element that includes physical facilities, equipment, and service displays that form users' initial perceptions of service quality (Parasuraman, Zeithaml, & Berry, 1988). Scores above 80% on both indicators indicate adequate performance, although compared to other dimensions that exceed 90%, the *tangible* aspect still has opportunities to be improved.

According to (Rahman and Jumino, 2020) emphasized that the comfort of the reading room, adequate lighting, and the existence of individual and group work areas are crucial factors that support library user satisfaction in using library services. (Pebrian, Winoto, & Saefudin, 2019) suggest that perceptions of the completeness of the collection, especially those relevant to the user's study program, greatly affect the level of service satisfaction. The condition of facilities and collections at the ISI Surakarta Library has succeeded in meeting the expectations of the majority of students. However, continuous innovation in the development of creative learning spaces and the addition of multidisciplinary-based collections needs to be a priority. Efforts to optimize spatial layout, provide art-based thematic collections, and increase access to digital references are strategic steps to prevent stagnation of user satisfaction in the future.

2. *Reliability*

The *Reliability* dimension in the reference service of ISI Surakarta Library shows a very high level of satisfaction. The indicator "Librarians understand things related to reference" scored 90.0%, while "Librarians understand the collection I need" recorded a score of 93.4%. This data shows that librarians have sufficient competence in understanding users' specific needs accurately and consistently. The definition of *reliability* in TERRA refers to the service provider's ability to deliver the promised service reliably and accurately, in accordance with users' expectations (Parasuraman, Zeithaml, & Berry, 1988). A score above 90% indicates an excellent level of reference service reliability, thus building strong trust among students.

Oladokun and Mooko (2023) found that librarians' deep understanding of users' information needs has a significant influence on perceived service quality in an academic

library environment. (Mardhotillah and Irawati, 2024) emphasized that the reliability of librarians in identifying relevant references is the main foundation in building trust relationships between users and library institutions. The performance of reference services at ISI Surakarta which shows high reliability is an important asset in maintaining student satisfaction levels. Strengthening librarian training programs based on user needs, updating reference collections on an ongoing basis, and increasing service communication capacity are the main strategies that need to be implemented to maintain this advantage in the long term.

3. Responsiveness

The *Responsiveness* dimension in the reference service of ISI Surakarta Library shows a very good performance in meeting the information needs of students. The score of 93.4% on the indicator "The librarian responded well to my mistake and provided direction" and 90.0% on the indicator "The librarian provided a solution and showed me the place of the book" shows the level of speed and effectiveness of the librarian's response which is highly appreciated by users. TERRA defines *responsiveness* as the willingness and readiness of service staff to help users in a fast and timely manner, so that users feel cared for and valued (Parasuraman, Zeithaml, & Berry, 1988). The high score in this dimension shows that ISI Surakarta librarians have succeeded in showing a proactive attitude in responding to user needs and difficulties.

Wahyuni and Safri (2022) revealed that quick responses and providing appropriate solutions by librarians strengthen positive perceptions of library services, and increase user loyalty. Santi and Mardah (2023) found that the responsiveness dimension significantly contributed to the level of student satisfaction in college reference services. The *responsiveness* performance of ISI Surakarta librarians who have met user expectations needs to be maintained through increased training in effective communication techniques, management of dynamic information requests, and utilization of information technology to speed up and facilitate service interactions.

4. Assurance

The *Assurance* dimension in the reference service of ISI Surakarta Library recorded the highest level of satisfaction compared to all dimensions analyzed. The indicators "Librarians are ready to serve at 08.00 WIB" and "Librarian services according to applicable rules" each recorded a score of 96.6%, reflecting a very high level of professionalism and credibility of librarians in the eyes of users. *Assurance* in the TERRA framework includes the ability of service staff to foster user confidence through technical competence, courtesy, and credibility in carrying out services (Parasuraman, Zeithaml, & Berry, 1988). This almost perfect score shows that students believe in the quality of reference services they receive at the ISI Surakarta library.

Yuliana and Mardiyana (2021) identified that assurance is a major factor in building user trust in library services, especially in the university environment (Yuliana & Mardiyana, 2021). Oh (2020) emphasized that librarians' compliance with service procedures, as well as preparedness in helping users, contribute positively to user satisfaction and loyalty (Oh, 2020). The excellence of the *assurance* dimension at ISI Surakarta needs to be maintained and improved through regular training on service ethics, development of librarian information literacy, and updating standard operating procedures that are responsive to changing user needs.

5. *Empathy*

The *Empathy* dimension in the reference service of ISI Surakarta Library shows a high level of satisfaction, but also indicates that there is room for further development. The score of 93.3% on the indicator "Librarians pay attention to my complaints in difficulty finding references" indicates that librarians have shown high concern for user problems. In contrast, the score of 83.3% on the indicator "Librarians intersperse conversations with light and communicative jokes" shows that the aspect of casual interpersonal communication still needs strengthening. TERRA defines *empathy* as the individualized attention that service staff give to users, including an understanding of the special needs of each individual (Parasuraman, Zeithaml, & Berry, 1988). The relatively high scores on key indicators indicate success in building empathic relationships with users, although improvements in the informality aspect of communication are needed to make the librarian-user relationship more intimate and fluid.

Syafi'i and Masruri (2023) found that librarians' friendly and empathetic attitude towards users' unique needs directly increased satisfaction with library services (Syafi'i and Masruri, 2023). Ghani (2021) revealed that interpersonal communication skills are an important differentiation factor in user perceptions of information service quality. The performance of *empathy* at ISI Surakarta needs to be continuously developed through training in interpersonal communication skills, increasing the ability to build an adaptive personal approach, and integrating communication strategies that suit the characteristics of the younger generation as the main users of library services (Ghani, 2021).

4. CONCLUSION

The reference service of ISI Surakarta Library has met user expectations based on the evaluation of the five dimensions of TERRA. The *Assurance* dimension obtained the highest score, indicating user trust in the professionalism of librarians. The *Reliability* and *Responsiveness* dimensions also showed excellent performance in service accuracy and speed of responding to information needs. The *Tangibles* and *Empathy* dimensions were recorded as good, although aspects of collection completeness and interpersonal communication still require strengthening. The findings emphasize the importance of continuous innovation in the provision of art-based thematic collections, the development of reference room facilities, as well as the improvement of librarians' communication skills. The TERRA model proved effective in identifying areas of strength and opportunities for service development, so that it can be the basis for strategic planning to improve the quality of reference services in the future.

Further research is recommended to develop a reference service quality evaluation model based on TERRA integration with the *Expectation Confirmation Theory* (ECT) or *Unified Theory of Acceptance and Use of Technology* (UTAUT) framework to comprehensively map the relationship between service perception, satisfaction, and reuse intention. The use of advanced quantitative methods such as *Structural Equation Modeling* (SEM) is also recommended to examine the relationships between variables simultaneously. A multidisciplinary approach that combines aspects of user information behavior, technology adoption, and art studies is expected to enrich the findings and produce a reference service development framework that is more adaptive to the dynamics of academic needs in the digital era.

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