
**Using the Critical Incident Techniques (CIT) to
Evaluate the Service Perceptions of Siddha
Medical College Library Users: An exploratory
Study**

R. Chellappa

Research scholar & Librarian,
Arignar Anna College, Aralvoimoli.
librariansellappa@gmail.com.

C. Martin Arockiasamy

Librarian,
St. Xavier's College, Palayamkottai.
martin37@gmail.com

Abstract

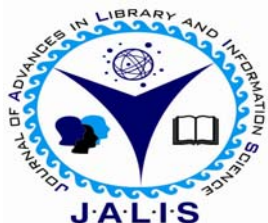
The purpose of this study is to explore the service quality of siddha medical college library users, particularly from undergraduate BSMS students and their viewpoints using the critical incident technique through unstructured interviews. The study is confined only in undergraduate BSMS (Bachelor of Siddha Medicine and Surgery) and their service expectations. Further the research would be expanded to postgraduates and other researchers..

Keywords

Critical Incident Technique – SERVQUAL – Siddha medical - Palm manuscript..

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INTRODUCTION

Libraries are indispensable part in academic institutions. Likewise, medical college libraries are indispensable part in the development of professional skills of budding health practitioners. Medical college library users use the library more for case studies, assignments and other professional related activities. To evaluate the quality perceptions of Siddha medical college library users, this survey was undertaken. Instead of using traditional approach of attitudes or behavior and the facilities of the library, this study gain insights of the library by using the critical incident technique for service perceptions of users. The Critical Incident Technique (CIT) relies upon actual activities which often viewpoints of the subjects

The Siddha system of medicine has been prevalent in the ancient Tamil land. This system is the foremost of all other medical system in the world. The roots of the ancient siddha system existed in the Tamil civilization. The uniqueness of siddha system is evidenced by its continuous service to the mankind for more than 5000 years. Siddha system includes alchemy, medicine, Kayakalpa (Rejuvenation therapy), astronomy, astrology, Varma etc. The practical siddha medicine knowledge is nurtured by generations in Tamil families. The literature of siddha is available in palm leaf as palm manuscripts in all over southern part of Tamilnadu and where Tamil speaking people lives. Siddha manuscripts are scribed with a iron stylus in palm leaf is called *olaichuvadi*. Reading and preserving palm manuscripts are tough task and it needs expertized assistance for reading. Unexplored palm leaf manuscripts are also present in Tamil families. By recognizing the importance of Siddha medicine the Tamilnadu state government has established a Siddha medical college in Palayamkottai in 1964. Thereafter many colleges started for promoting Siddha medicine across Tamilnadu. At present there are seven colleges and a national importance institution, National Institute of Siddha (NIS) in Chennai for the promotion of teaching and research. The Government siddha medical college of Palayamkottai is the oldest among the all other institutions provides education in both undergraduate and postgraduate level.

LITERATURE REVIEW

The Critical incident Technique is primarily used to study health services related topics as nursing care quality research. Shirey (1981) claimed that this

method was first used in studies conducted by Aviation psychology program of the US Army Air force in 1941. It was used extensively in studies to improve the performance of Aviation activities. In the library information study field, researchers used Critical incident Technique to users study such as information seeking. Challdhrya, A. Sagheerts, L (2011) studies proved that Critical incident Technique is an effective research for user-centered Studies. The SERVQUAL instrument has been used in various libraries for evaluating their quality services (Parasuraman, Zeithaml and Berry), (1988) Slater (1990) states that critical incident technique has the advantage of focusing the respondents mind and providing information on a specific occurrence. It is suited to studies of information seeking behavior with questions on behavior in general and then asking respondents to focus on a single critical incident technique.

CLASSIFICATION OF CRITICAL INCIDENTS:

Satoh and Nagata extracted SERVQUAL model into 5 factors as

- Effect Service (Personal)
- Effect of Service (Organization)
- Library as a place
- Reliability
- Collection and access

From consumer’s perspective SERVQUAL model suggests seven dimensions as tangibles, reliability, responsiveness, competence, courtesy, creditability and security etc.

In this study we use the modified SERVQUAL questionnaire with the following five dimensions only taken for study.

1. Tangibles: effect of service, Library staff attitudes, Library collection and access
2. Reliability: the promised Service dependably and accurately.
3. Responsiveness: The Willingness to assist and provide prompt service to library Users.
4. Competence: Possession of the required skills & knowledge to perform the service.
5. Courtesy: Respect and consideration of contact personnel.

METHODOLOGY

To study the service quality perceptions of library users of Siddha medical college, unstructured interviews were conducted. Samples were selected as random and they are the regular users of the library. Twenty members were interviewed and the dimensions of SERVQUAL were used with slight modification for quality dimensions.

DATA COLLECTION

Data collected with prior to collection an explanation about the study were given with provided samples of incidents. The responses were collected and compiled. Then the incidents were categorized into various dimensions of SERVQUAL model. The Twenty undergraduate siddha medical college students within study comprised of eight in First professional BSMS, seven in Second professional BSMS and five in Final professional BSMS. The details are shown in the table.1

Table 1: Respondents

Course	Male	Female	Total
I BSMS	4	4	8
II BSMS	4	3	7
Final BSMS	2	3	5
Total	10	10	20

Table.1 indicates that gender wise total respondents are equal.

Table 2: Gender wise Positive Negative Response

S. No	Gender	Total Response in	
		Positive	Negative
1	Male	15(60%)	8(47%)
2	Female	10(40%)	9(53%)
	Total	25(100%)	17(100%)

Table 2 indicates that among the respondents 60% of the male and 40% of the female students responded positively..47% of male and 53% of Female responded negatively.

Table 3: Response on Critical Incidents

Dimen- sions	Critical incidents	No. of critical incidents	
		Positive	Negative
Tangibles.	a. Library system Easy access & convenient	2	0
	b. shelving arrangements are proper	2	0
	c. Un- approachable & adamant library Staff	0	2
	d. Inter library loan service is great	2	0
	e. Open access system followed	2	0
	f. Help for manuscript translation	1	1
	g. The library encourages the new comer	1	1
Re lia bil ity	a) Library staff unable to find out the misplaced books	0	2
	b) Library staff not able to guide for information from others source	0	2
Respon siveness	a) Librarian was resourceful in assisting for a specific topic and he redirect the user for resources	2	0
	b) Relay in Magazines/Books re-studying	2	0
	c) Librarian in helpful when enquiries about loss of library tickets/books etc.	2	0
	d) Library staff is unapproachable due to rush in circulation section	2	0
Competenc	a) Library staff renewed my library card quickly	2	0
	b) Timely charging & discharges of documents	1	1
	c) Librarians are very knowledge-able in Tamil language as Siddha scripts are in Tamil Verses	2	0
	d) Library staff assisted me to get a book in demand	2	0
	e) Library staff provides referral service	0	2
Courtesy	a) Library user did not respect library staff	0	2
	b) The librarian was welcoming & pleasing when approach him with colleagues	0	2
	c) Anyone speak louder in the reading hall the library staff should have asked them to use quiet voice	0	2
Total		25	17

Table:4 Responses on SERVQUAL dimensions

Categories	Positive (N=25)	Negative (N=17)
Tangibles	10(40%)	4(23.5%)
Reliability	0 (0%)	4(23.5%)
Responsiveness	8(32%)	0(0%)
Competence	7(28%)	3(18%)
Courtesy	0(0%)	6(35%)
Total	25(100%)	17(100%)

FINDINGS AND DISCUSSIONS

Out Of 22 recorded items regarding library resources access issues accounted. Approximately 60% responses had shown positive sign over 40% responses shown negative response on all the SERVQUAL dimensions.

Based on these responses, the reliability of the siddha medical college is rated as negative. There is no positive incident recorded in this category. The courtesy category recorded three incidents are rated as negative and it is suggested that using louder voices would affect the other User. So, users expect using quite voices in the reading hall if louder speaking people in the reading hall. And also when contacted the library staff with few colleagues the library staff should have welcoming tone. The data also suggested that male students have more positive experiences than female.

CONCLUSIONS

The study was conducted with twenty participants who are regular users of siddha medical college library. The data were collected directly in their convenient time by face to face interview. This exploratory demonstrates the strengths and

weaknesses of siddha medical college library services in general. So this result cannot make a generalization and further investigations needed. This study is very limited in scope and extensive study is further required.

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