

Internalization of Smart Service Management in Improving Service Quality: The Case of Regional Library

Nikmatul Masruroh¹, Rini Fatika Sari², Indri Dwi Putri Novitasari³ & Anggi Amanda Septia Rini⁴

^{1,2,3 & 4} UIN Kiai Haji Achmad Siddiq Jember, Indonesia

Abstract

The primary aim of ensuring public satisfaction lies in service quality, particularly in institutions at the regional level like the Jember Regional Library, which has embraced digitalization in its operations over the past three years. This research is designed to achieve multiple objectives. Firstly, it seeks to assess the quality of services offered by the Jember Regional Library. Secondly, it aims to examine the implementation of smart services by the library. Thirdly, it intends to analyze the process of internalizing smart service management to enhance service quality at the Jember Regional Library. To accomplish these objectives, a qualitative descriptive approach is employed. Participants were selected using purposive sampling, resulting in six individuals being interviewed. Data collection methods include observation, interviews, and documentation. The findings of this research highlight several key points. Firstly, there has been a notable improvement in the quality and efficiency of library services following the digital transformation. Secondly, the adoption of smart services, such as the smart library concept, represents a novel innovation that harnesses digital transformation within the service delivery process. Thirdly, the internalization of smart service has been facilitated through a comprehensive management approach, encompassing planning, execution, and evaluation, thus establishing a benchmark for service delivery.

Keywords

Smart service; Smart library; service quality

Corresponding Author

Nikmatul Masruroh

UIN Kiai Haji Achmad Siddiq Jember, nikmatul.masruroh82@uinkhas.ac.id

1. INTRODUCTION

Service plays a pivotal role in not only attracting customers but also in fostering sustained engagement and facilitating transactions within an institution (Paputungan et al., 2023; Lebo et al., 2023). It serves as a fundamental measure of an institution's success, especially within the service sector (Kusumawati, 2023; Poluan et al., 2022). The landscape of public service continually evolves to adapt to the ever-changing needs and demands of customers (Rompas et al., 2023; Wulus et al., 2022). In this dynamic environment, institutions are compelled to continually innovate their services to not only meet but exceed public expectations (Salsabila & Apsari, 2021; Kelejan et al., 2022). This relentless pursuit of innovation is crucial for retaining public interest, enhancing customer satisfaction, and ultimately ensuring the long-term viability and competitiveness of the institution in the marketplace.

Communities universally aspire to receive optimal service, with excellence being the ultimate goal. This aspiration stems from the innate desire for efficiency, effectiveness, and satisfaction in all

interactions with service providers. Within the framework of excellence in service, organizations not only strive to meet but to consistently surpass customer or community expectations (Berry et al., 1988; Mandagi et al., 2023). This commitment goes beyond mere satisfaction; it encompasses the delivery of service that delights and exceeds expectations at every touchpoint. Institutions that excel in this endeavor cultivate a deep understanding of their customers' needs and preferences, anticipating their requirements and proactively addressing them (Rantung et al., 2023). They invest in ongoing training and development for their staff, fostering a culture of empathy, responsiveness, and innovation. By consistently exceeding customer expectations, these institutions forge lasting bonds of trust and loyalty, ensuring their customers' utmost satisfaction with the institution's offerings (Rondonuwu et al., 2023; Kainde et al., 2023). In essence, excellence in service becomes a cornerstone of their brand identity and a driving force behind their continued success in the competitive marketplace (Mandagi et al., 2021).

The commitment to excellent service is pervasive across all institutions, whether private or governmental (Zeithaml et al., 1993). Even local government agencies, such as the Library and Archives Service or Dinas Perpustakaan dan Kearsipan (DISPUSIP), are dedicated to providing public services. In the case of Jember District, DISPUSIP is instrumental in literacy promotion, providing reading materials, circulation services, reference assistance, educational programs, mobile library services, and inter-library cooperation. Additionally, it caters to the information needs of students and local communities.

Despite DISPUSIP's considerable collection of approximately 178,557 books in both monograph and digital formats, there remains a gap in meeting the literacy needs of Jember Regency's residents. To address this, DISPUSIP innovates its services by introducing smart library services, aimed at efficiently meeting public demands for literacy, information, and knowledge. Smart Library services represent a form of digital transformation in public service delivery.

Consequently, this research has three primary objectives: firstly, to assess the quality of services provided by DISPUSIP Jember Regency; secondly, to explore the implementation of smart services by DISPUSIP Jember Regency; and thirdly, to analyze the process of internalizing smart service management to enhance service quality at DISPUSIP Jember Regency.

To achieve these objectives, prior studies have been reviewed. Sabriyanti and Batubara (2023) examined service transformation through social inclusion, focusing on improving services. While Pratami et al. (2023) investigated communication and service user satisfaction as intervening variables in measuring service quality. Lastly, Wulandari et al. (2021) explored smart libraries with a focus on interior elements, primarily within university settings. However, this research differs by concentrating on smart service management, making it pertinent to understanding and describing DISPUSIP Jember Regency's implementation of smart services and its service management practices.

2. LITERATURE REVIEW

2.1 Smart Service Management

Management involves organizing and overseeing an organization to ensure it operates efficiently and achieves clear objectives (Oktaviani et al., 2023). The theoretical framework of management comprises four key elements: planning, organizing, actuating, and controlling. Planning, as articulated by Kotler et al., (2018), is crucial for laying out the initial groundwork of activities to prevent obstacles or hindrances during implementation (Husain et al., 2019). Organizing involves structuring and categorizing activities (Scannell & Gifford, 2010), while actuating entails executing these activities. Finally, controlling, or evaluation, is essential for consistently improving outcomes by gathering insights from the organization's implementation processes.

Smart service management, on the other hand, revolves around delivering swift and efficient services to the community (Beverungen et al., 2019). Smart services leverage digital transformation to streamline manual processes, ensuring prompt delivery of services. These innovations are particularly prevalent in developed nations, where they enhance public access to fast and efficient services (Berry et al., 1988). Implementing smart services necessitates both service innovation and adequate digital infrastructure to facilitate seamless execution.

2.2 Service Quality

The term "service quality" refers to the standard of service provided, a concept extensively explored within service theory. This theory, extensively developed by Parasuraman, Zeithamal, and Berry, identifies five key dimensions of service quality: tangibles, reliability, responsiveness, assurance, and empathy (Berry et al., 1988). These dimensions serve as metrics to evaluate the quality of services offered by institutions or organizations (Zeithaml et al., 1996; Jonathan et al., 2023).

Tangibles, the first dimension, pertain to the physical evidence of service, such as the presence of well-equipped offices, ample parking space, comfortable waiting areas, and adequate restroom facilities. Reliability, the second dimension, focuses on the proficiency and dependability of service providers in meeting customer needs. Responsiveness, the third dimension, involves the prompt and effective handling of customer complaints and issues.

Assurance, the fourth dimension, encompasses the provision of a sense of security and privacy during service delivery, ensuring customer trust and confidence. Finally, empathy, the fifth dimension, involves establishing an emotional connection between service providers and customers, fostering a sense of belonging and understanding.

In this service process, customers are considered paramount, and service providers are expected to treat them with utmost care and respect. However, it is also essential for customers to reciprocate this respect and consideration towards service providers (Firdausi et al., 2023). This reciprocal relationship fosters deep human connections within the service environment.

Service quality plays a pivotal role in shaping the perception of a brand and ultimately influencing consumer behavior (Mandagi et al., 2022; Walean et al., 2023). It serves as a crucial determinant of

customer satisfaction, loyalty, and retention (Warbung et al., 2022; Manggopa et al., 2023). High service quality not only meets but exceeds customer expectations, leading to positive word-of-mouth promotion and enhancing brand reputation (Pasuhuk et al., 2023; Sijabat et al., 2022). In today's competitive marketplace, where products and pricing strategies can often be replicated, service quality becomes a key differentiator for brands seeking to stand out. Consistently delivering exceptional service fosters trust and credibility, strengthening the bond between the brand and its customers (Mandagi, & Wuryaningrat, 2023; Waworuntu et al., 2022). Moreover, satisfied customers are more likely to become brand advocates, actively promoting the brand to others and contributing to its long-term success (Marhareita et al., 2022). Conversely, poor service quality can have detrimental effects, tarnishing the brand's image, driving customers away, and potentially leading to negative publicity. Therefore, investing in service quality is not only essential for meeting customer expectations but also for safeguarding the brand's reputation and maintaining its competitive edge in the market.

3. RESEARCH METHOD

To address the research objectives, this study adopts a qualitative approach, which delves into field phenomena in detail rather than relying on numerical data and statistics, thus allowing for a thorough exploration of the subject matter (Creswell & Creswell, 2018). This approach adopts an emic perspective, emphasizing that data should naturally emerge from the research subject, free from researcher bias or influence. Focusing on understanding the internalization of smart service management, the research employs a descriptive research design, aiming to provide a comprehensive explanation of the data to achieve the research objectives (Sugiyono, 2013).

The selection of research subjects follows a purposive approach, where researchers deliberately choose sources based on their knowledge and understanding of the services under study (Sugiyono, 2016). In this study, key informants included the secretary and head of DISPUSIP, as well as employees from the service section. Specifically, the researchers conducted interviews with Mr. Imam, the secretary, to gather insights into DISPUSIP's service system, its evolution, and its transformation into a smart library. Subsequently, interviews were also conducted with Mr. Prima, the head of DISPUSIP, and several employees from the service section to further enrich the data related to service transformation.

Data collection involved a combination of observation, interviews, and documentation. The collected data underwent descriptive analysis using the interactive analysis approach proposed by Miles and Huberman (Lisabella, 2013; Miles & Huberman, 2014). This analysis framework, depicted in the following section, guided the interpretation and understanding of the gathered data.

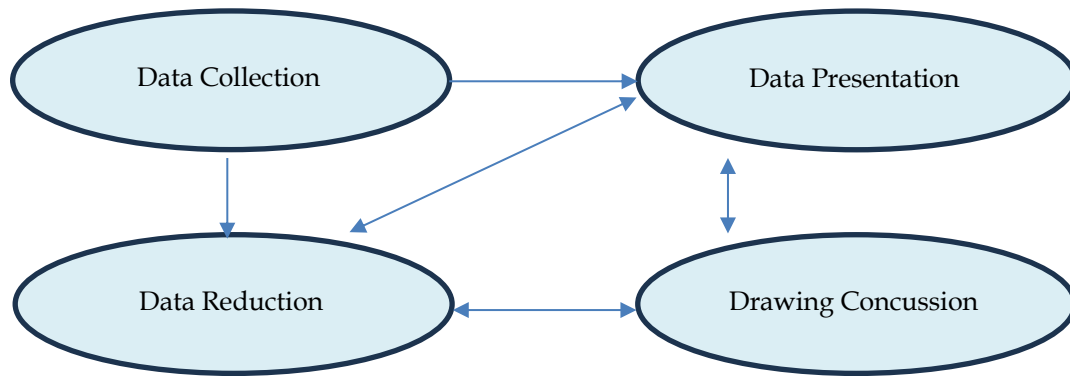


Figure 1.

Miles and Huberman interactive analysis

Source: Miles & Huberman (2014)

The picture illustrates the sequential steps taken by researchers to assess the quality of service and smart services provided by DISPUSIP Jember Regency. Initially, data collection regarding service quality and smart services is conducted. This phase also involves the analysis of gathered data. Following this, researchers proceed to data reduction, which involves categorizing and organizing the data to align with the research objectives. The grouping of interview results aids in streamlining the data presentation process. Notably, data reduction occurs concurrently with data collection. Subsequently, the data is presented in both descriptive and narrative formats, complemented by graphical representations to bolster comprehension and support the research objectives. The fourth step involves drawing conclusions based on the provided data, facilitating the extraction of research findings. These findings are further scrutinized and deliberated upon in the subsequent discussion. To ensure data validity, a thorough data checking process is implemented, utilizing techniques such as method triangulation. This technique, as proposed by Creswell (2003), validates the data by cross-referencing observations, interviews, and documentation, thereby enhancing the credibility and reliability of the findings.

4. RESULTS

4.1 Quality of Service of DISPUSIP Jember Regency

Service quality, as per Zeithamal's theory, encompasses several aspects. Firstly, tangibles refer to physical office facilities, computerized administration, waiting rooms, and information places. Secondly, reliability entails the ability to consistently provide dependable services. Thirdly, responsiveness involves promptly and accurately assisting and serving customers, addressing their needs. Fourthly, assurance is reflected in the friendliness and courtesy of employees, instilling consumer confidence. Lastly, empathy involves displaying a caring attitude towards consumers while maintaining firmness.

Regarding tangibles, the office offers various amenities to enhance customer experience, such as a well-equipped reading room with air conditioning, neatly organized book facilities, integrated digital services for quicker transactions, ample and secure parking, clean restroom facilities, and OPAC machines for efficient reference searches. These facilities aim to create a comfortable atmosphere for readers, aligning with research indicating that library facilities significantly influence reading interest, especially in the digital era.

In terms of reliability, the implementation of a smart library service streamlines processes like borrowing, returning books, and seat reservations, ensuring quick and efficient service delivery. This initiative not only reflects the commitment to service excellence but also acknowledges the importance of technological advancements in modernizing library services, catering to the needs of contemporary users, particularly Generation Z.

Responsiveness, akin to reliability, emphasizes the importance of timely and efficient service delivery. Through smart libraries, users can access services promptly, minimizing wait times. Additionally, technology-enabled services expedite responses to user inquiries or complaints, enhancing overall customer satisfaction.

Assurance plays a pivotal role in public service delivery, offering certainty and security to library patrons. DISPUSIP Jember Regency ensures transparency regarding membership fees, borrowing policies, and operating hours, fostering trust and confidence among users. This guarantee is imperative for maintaining customer satisfaction and loyalty, as uncertainty can lead to dissatisfaction and discomfort.

Empathy, characterized by attentive and considerate interactions between staff and customers, fosters a sense of belonging and encourages repeat visits. Small gestures, such as personalized greetings and holiday acknowledgments, contribute to building rapport and cultivating a loyal customer base. Ultimately, by prioritizing service quality across these dimensions, DISPUSIP Jember Regency aims to fulfill its role as a community-oriented institution, serving the diverse needs of Jember Regency residents.

In summary, the quality of service at DISPUSIP Jember Regency reflects a comprehensive approach encompassing tangible facilities, reliable operations, responsive customer interactions, assured service delivery, and empathetic engagement. These efforts contribute to enhancing the overall customer experience and promoting the library as a valuable resource within the community.

Table 2.
Fulfilment of service quality at DISPUSIP Jember Regency

No	Aspect	Findings	Conclusions
1	Tangibles	Complete facilities are available, ranging from parking lots to OPAC reference searches.	Fulfilled
2	Reliability	Adopt and implement a smart library system.	Fulfilled
3	Responsiveness	Fast service is provided in accordance with standard operating procedures (SOP) and facilitated through our comprehensive smart library system.	Fulfilled
4	Assurance	Safe, convenient and free of charge.	Fulfilled
5	Empathy	Communication and customer care.	Fulfilled

Source: processed by authors

The data above demonstrates that DISPUSIP has met the criteria for service quality. This is further evidenced by the fluctuation in library visitors throughout 2023, with the peak exceeding 3000 visitors in October. These figures indicate a high demand for libraries in Jember Regency, particularly among the local populace.

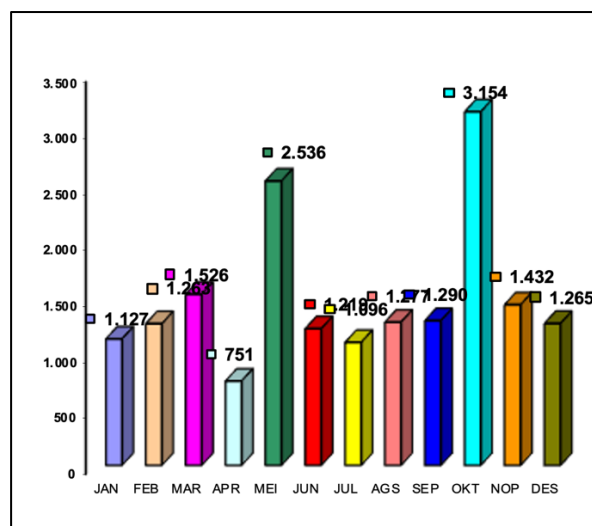


Figure 2.

Number of visitors of Jember Regency Libaru in 2023

Source: processed by authors

4.2 Smart Service by DISPUSIP Jember Regency

Digital transformation has compelled all institutions to adjust their systems to be adaptive to the needs of the community. In DISPUSIP Jember Regency, various manual services have been transformed into digital ones, collectively termed as the smart library. These services encompass consultation, online membership, library statistics, digital library access, and an online catalog. The smart library service

model implemented by DISPUSIP Jember Regency represents a novel technological transformation within the context of libraries.

While smart services have been widely adopted across government and private sectors, their integration into library services marks a new frontier. Recently, numerous companies and government agencies have embraced smart services to align with the preferences of today's smartphone-centric society. The implementation of smart services within libraries, as defined by Moon et al. (2014), constitutes an innovative approach leveraging the latest information technology and service systems. This evolution necessitates a shift towards a new library culture, impacting various aspects including the knowledge resource network, library social network, smart service network, and technology network.

The development of smart libraries aligns with the broader concept of Intelligence Library, comprising several components. First, smart technology entails the utilization of wireless devices, RFID, and mobile technologies within library services, alongside innovations such as smart TVs and e-money for fine payments. Mobile applications leveraging global networks, augmented reality, GPS locations, gamification, and artificial intelligence further augment library services. Second, the smart environment encompasses flexible management patterns and strategies that adapt to user behavior, fostering smart groups and habits. Third, smart services offer facilities to streamline user access, including loan notifications, fine alerts, service updates, book reservations, and personalized information, accessible through a single account from any location. Fourth, smart communities and librarians are integral to this ecosystem, collectively integrated into the smart library application. The Jember Regency Regional Library offers a range of services within this framework, including:

a) Mobile library

Mobile libraries are a valuable aspect of local library services. In addition to those operated by government agencies, there are also mobile libraries managed by individuals. These mobile libraries typically cater to readers and communities located in areas distant from fixed library locations. The process for accessing mobile library services is as follows: Applicants must submit their application letter directly to the Library and Archives Office through the library service counter no later than the day before the scheduled mobile library visit. The application letter is then received by a service officer, scheduled, and given a disposition sheet. It is subsequently submitted to the sub-division head, proceeds to the secretary for initialing, and is forwarded to the Head of Service for disposition. The Head of Office then forwards it to the Head of the Library Division for follow-up. Finally, the Head of the Library Division, who oversees the mobile library service, contacts the applicant (Principal) via telephone to arrange the technical visit.

b) E-Book Service

Libraries continually adapt to the changing times to maintain their relevance within the community. While traditional services like borrowing and returning collections are currently limited to offline interactions, the rise of digital platforms has enabled libraries to expand their reach. Despite

restrictions on on-site reading, users can still access library resources through digital services. One such example is the E-book Perpustakaan Kabupaten Jember, a digital library application accessible via various devices such as smartphones, tablets, laptops, and computers. This application can be easily downloaded from both the App Store and Google Play Store, providing users with convenient access to a wide range of literary materials anytime, anywhere.

c) Circulation Service

The circulation service encompasses various activities aimed at providing library collections to users efficiently. These activities include:

1. Establishing rules governing the use and borrowing of collections.
2. Collecting fees from borrowers who have not returned their loans.
3. Maintaining organized records of income generated from library member registration fees and late fees for overdue returns. Subsequently, these funds are deposited with the relevant authorities or library administrators.

4.3 The Internalization Process of Smart Service Management in Improving Service Quality at DISPUSIP Jember Regency.

Improving service quality necessitates internalizing smart service management efforts to cultivate an environment characterized by intelligence, efficiency, and superior service delivery. This internalization process entails four key stages.

Firstly, planning involves conceptualizing and formulating activities aligned with predetermined objectives. Program and activity plans are designed to target achievements over the next five years. These plans encompass various initiatives such as the Office Administration Service Program, Apparatus Infrastructure Improvement Program, Apparatus Discipline Improvement Program, and others, all aimed at enhancing performance and service delivery.

Secondly, organizing is essential for gathering and arranging the necessary resources, including human resources, to facilitate effective execution of planned activities.

Thirdly, implementation, or actuating, involves motivating team members to ensure program effectiveness. For instance, within the Library Service, the Community Interest and Reading Culture Development Program plays a pivotal role. This program includes activities like providing assistance for Village Library Development, enriching library collections, and conducting publications and socialization efforts to foster a culture of reading within the community.

Finally, controlling encompasses monthly meetings and service evaluations conducted to ensure smooth operation and application functionality. Utilizing a unified account system is instrumental in facilitating seamless application usage. By systematically progressing through these four stages, organizations can enhance service quality and achieve their strategic objectives effectively.

5. CONCLUSIONS

A library functions as a central hub for collecting, processing, and disseminating a wide array of information, serving as a cornerstone for fostering lifelong learning. Its pivotal role lies in cultivating a culture of continuous education while offering a diverse range of services to cater to various needs. These services span across circulation, reference, educational, mobile library, and inter-library cooperation services, each contributing to the enrichment of individuals and communities.

In addressing the evolving information landscape, local libraries must cater to the growing needs of students and communities alike. Public libraries, in particular, play a significant role in community transformation by facilitating access to information and knowledge. This access not only enables identity formation but also fosters community cohesion, elevates quality of life, and provides vital support for ongoing learning endeavors.

The concept of a smart library encompasses multifaceted dimensions, with smart services standing out as a critical component aimed at maximizing user satisfaction. These services are designed to streamline access to library resources in response to users' increasingly mobile lifestyles, offering personalized assistance tailored to individual needs. Smart library users enjoy a plethora of benefits, including the convenience of round-the-clock book borrowing and return facilities, as well as the ability to make online seat reservations. This dimension underscores the integration of digital technology to drive innovation and enhance service delivery, ultimately enriching the experience for library patrons

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