

The Impact of Service Quality Dimensions on Students' Satisfaction

Govand Anwar¹ & Inji Shukur²

¹Department of Business and Management, Ishik University, Erbil, Iraq

²Department of Business and Management, Ishik University, Erbil, Iraq

Correspondence: Govand Anwar, Ishik University, Erbil, Iraq. E-mail: kofand_anwar@hotmail.com

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Abstract: Today in many industries service quality is widely used in different sectors. Every sector whether services sector or manufacturing can apply and implement five dimensions of service quality. The purpose of this study is to reveal the impact of service quality on student's satisfaction in education sectors. The findings of the study will show impact of different service quality dimensions on students' satisfaction in a private university in Erbil. This study is useful to see the significance of service quality to satisfy students. SERVQUAL model of service quality provided by (Parasuraman, et al., 1988) is implemented. It includes five dimensions tangible, reliability, responsiveness, assurance and empathy. Findings of this study showed that four of service quality dimensions (tangible, responsiveness, assurance and empathy) have positive association with student satisfaction, except reliability have negative association with student satisfaction.

Keywords: Service Quality, Student Satisfaction, SERVQUAL

1. Introduction

At the present time education sectors are very essential, because the fact is they considered as an essential source of income for country. Therefore, many countries are attempting to get the attention of local and international students to their destinations, as a result they will be able to grow and enhance their nation's life. University is considered a vital element of the education sectors, the reason is university satisfy the most essential students' needs which is education, learning material, library and accommodation. A great values and tool for enhancing service quality is essential in competitive market. Education sectors' service quality is the service providing to students expectations and almost all universities are able to gain students' satisfaction through providing a high quality of services. Students, in general, don't consider price when they are comparing services – their main objective is quality. Therefore, the universities should establish a certain level of quality that meets the needs of the students and demonstrate this quality in practice. Nowadays the students in education sectors became more sophisticated and more required. Also it is necessary to recognize students' location for instance where they came from, what are students' expectation in order to choose the right strategies for enhancing universities' service quality. Usually students are much demanded, but when it comes to education sectors the most important factor to be considerate is service quality provided from

the university. Since service quality will lead to students' satisfaction, therefore implementing a successful service quality will be needed. Poor service quality in education sectors will lead to dissatisfied students. Most of universities are seeking quality enhancement systems for competitive advantages. Each service that universities provide will add value and provide satisfaction to their students. Some universities are having a specific service department which assess students satisfaction and meet their needs and expectations. At the present time the key success of competitive market depends on delivering a high quality of service and this will lead to increase the level of students' satisfaction. Therefore, students' assessment for the quality of services in education sectors are very essential in developing the business. Universities should provide a competitive services to satisfy their students and gain students' loyalty. Students satisfaction has many advantages, such as creating a strong relationship between university and students and creating students loyalty. In this study, the researchers are going to use service quality dimensions as variables to measure students' satisfaction in education sectors. There are five aspects of service quality: empathy, assurance, reliability, responsiveness and tangible. These five dimensions play their role in the students' observations of service quality. In this study students satisfaction is dependent variable while five dimensions of service quality are independent variables along with sub independent variable such us empathy, reliability, responsiveness, assurance and tangible

2. Research Model and Hypothesis

This section explains research model and research hypothesis created by the researcher:

Research Model:

The following figure is the research model:

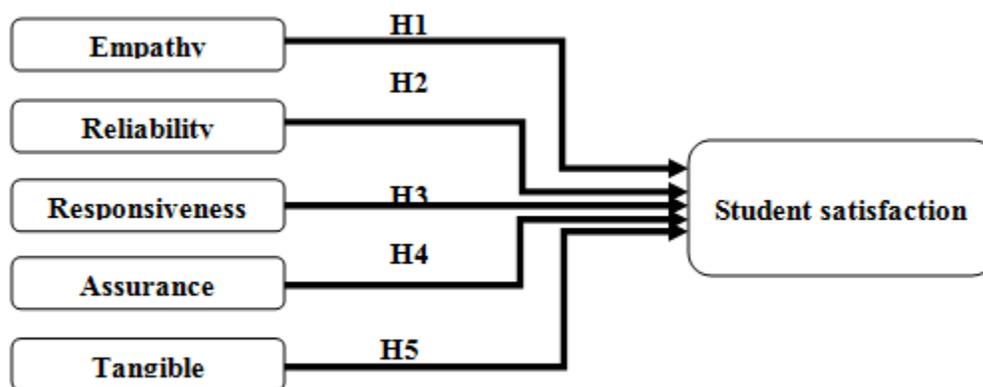


Figure 3- Research Model

Research Hypothesis:

According to the above researcher model, the researcher made the following research hypothesis:

H1: There is a positive impact of Empathy on students' satisfaction

H2: There is a positive impact of Reliability on students' satisfaction

H3: There is a positive impact of Responsiveness on students' satisfaction

H4: There is a positive impact of Assurance on students' satisfaction

H5: There is a positive impact of Tangible on students' satisfaction

3. Literature Review

3.1 Service Quality Concept

One of the most significant characteristics of services is that it is a process. Therefore service companies don't have any product, but they do have interactive processes. Services are invisible; therefore it is difficult for the supplier to measure (Mudassar, et al., 2013). As conveyance of services in the education sectors dependably includes human beings, it should concentrate on the management of people, and specifically on the collaborations between the students and academic instructors and administrators (Dursun, et al., 2013). There are several important service quality definitions, proposed by various researchers. Service quality is a divergence amongst client's anticipation of the service supplier and their assessment of the services (Edvardsson, 2005). Another definition has been proposed by (Markovic & Raspor, 2010, 197) argued that service quality is a dissimilarity amongst consumers' anticipation for service execution before the service encounter and their observations of the rendered services. Gefan 2002 as cited in (Muyeed, 2012), defined service quality as the particular appraisal made by consumers among the expected service quality and actually rendered services. Quality is a bit more difficult to characterize than consumers' gratification, because of the various statements, proposed by different researchers. Quality is focused to consumers' views, thus quality is characterized as whatever the buyer sees as a quality (Mola & Juson, 2011). According to (Ahmad, et al, 2014) there are two variables, which influence the perception of consumers, such as expectations and quality standards. Expectations means what is actually the students supposed to get from the service provider.

3.2 Service Quality Dimensions

Service quality has been the point of impressive concern via specialists lately. By taking a look at different meanings of service quality it can be seen that it is an after effect of the correlation which clients makes between their desires and what they really get from the related service

supplier (Ramseook-Munhurrin, et al., 2010). Various studies have been carried out in order to reveal dimensions of service quality that most essentially contribute to fundamental quality appraisals in the service encirclement. Service quality is crucial in light of the fact that it will help to measure, to control and afterward enhance client's service quality (Cheng, et al., 2011). There are ten service quality dimensions, which were determined by Parasuraman et al. (1985). These dimensions fit as a service quality field from which these items were obtain for the SERVQUAL model (Kleynhans and Zhou, 2012).

Later, after refinement, above mentioned dimensions were revised and five dimensions (three original and two combined), Parasuraman, et al., (1988) were developed in order to evaluate service quality (Berndt, 2009):

- Tangibles
- Reliability
- Responsiveness
- Assurance
- Empathy

Tangibles are defined “as the appearance of physical facilities, equipment, personnel, and communication materials” Physical appearance is the appearance of the equipment, appearance of the personnel, the look of building and renovation (Munusamy, et al., 2010).

Tangibles provides physical representation of image of the services that clients, will use to assess the quality. In spite of the fact that tangibles are frequently utilized by service providers to reinforce their reputation, give congruity, and sign quality to client, most organizations unite together tangibles with other in order to establish a service quality technique for the company (Yadav, 2013).

Reliability depicts whether a service supplier follows assured promises and how precious it is in the actions. The significant importance lies in fulfilling promptly the customer's requests (Dado, et al., 2011). Reliability “reflects the service provider's ability to perform service dependably and accurately”. It includes “doing it right the first time” and as for the students it is one of the most significant dimension Berry and Parasuraman, (1991) as cited in (Landrum, et al., 2009). In detail, reliability implies that the organization conveys on its guarantees - guarantees about conveyance, service supply, issue determination and pricing policy. Clients prefer to work with organizations that keep their guarantees about the service outcomes (AbuKhalifeh and Mat Som, 2012).

Responsiveness – “being willing to help” - refers to the organization's readiness to settle happened issues and availability to provide fast service. It is important to respond to all students' requests, otherwise the request can turn into a complaint. Service suppliers' capability to ensure that they are providing with a service on time is a basic part of service quality for

major students. Responsiveness is conveyed to students by the length of time they need to wait for the reply for inquiries. Standards for promptness that indicates requirements in the internal policy of the company might be dissimilar to what the consumers require or expect (Ahmad, et al., 2014). Assurance indicates “the knowledge and courtesy of employees and their ability to inspire trust and confidence” (Janita and Miranda, 2013). This dimension is especially critical for services that consumers see as high hazard or for the services where the outcome seems uncertain for the students (Yousapronpaiboon, 2014). Assurance and empathy comprise originally developed seven dimensions, which are communication, security, credibility, competence, understanding/knowing students, courtesy, and access (AbuKhalifeh and Mat Som, 2012).

3.3 Student Satisfaction

It can be seen that today a lot of researchers are discussing the topic of satisfaction. Proposers of above mentioned tend to accentuate the significance of corresponding to specifications, satisfying requirements, providing consumers with the desirable quality of services (Angelova and Zekiri, 2011). Today, student satisfactions seriously count. If students are dissatisfied, they will not recommend the university to others and they might switch university to other. All the things which the university does in order to increase service quality can be counted as a zero if the student left the university without being satisfied. Nowadays, fulfilling students’ requests remains the greatest challenge (Fernandes, et al., 2011). According to (Akhtar and Zaheer, 2014) “satisfaction is an individual’s feeling of pleasure or disappointment resulting from comparing a product or service perceived performance or outcome in relation to his or her expectation”. In the other words, if service quality matches consumer’s expectation, the student will be satisfied. Nevertheless in the education sector to meet customer’s expectations is hard enough. In many industries speed has become the most valued and the new competitive advantage. Speed is shortening the product life cycle from years to weeks. Speed is what the education sector consumer wants. Those who can fulfill are going to win, those who can’t, will be passed by. When a manager knows the real needs of a client that help to focus on a major points for the encounter (Hasan and Ilias, 2008).

4. Methodology

The purpose of this study is to investigate the impact of service quality on students’ satisfaction in a private university in Erbil. A quantitative method used in order to analyse data gathered by the researchers. The researchers used questionnaire in order to be able to analyse the current study. A random sampling method used, where almost all students will have equal chances of being selected for the sample. The researchers gathered 133 questionnaires, however 22 questionnaires were invalid and 111 questionnaires were properly completed. The questionnaire structured in the form of multiple choice questions. The participants were asked to mark each item on five point scales ranging from definitely agree to do not agree at all. The questionnaire was adapted from (Palli and Mamilla, 2012) and (Fares, et al., 2013).

4.1 Data analysis

Table 1- Reliability test

Factor	Reliability Statistics Cronbach's Alpha	Nu. Of item
Tangible	.770	4
Empathy	.833	3
Reliability	.894	3
Assurance	.784	3
Responsiveness	.882	2

Table (1) shows Reliability test for five service quality dimensions. Concerning tangible the Statistics Cronbach's Alpha $\hat{\rho}$ =.770, concerning of empathy Reliability Statistics Cronbach's Alpha $\hat{\rho}$ =.833, concerning of reliability factor Reliability Statistics Cronbach's Alpha $\hat{\rho}$ =.894, concerning of assurance Reliability Statistics Cronbach's Alpha $\hat{\rho}$ =.784 and concerning of responsiveness factor Reliability Statistics Cronbach's Alpha $\hat{\rho}$ =.882.

Table 2-Correlation analysis

Factors	Pearson Correlation	Studentsatisfaction
Empathy	Pearson Correlation	.812(**)
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.000
	N	111
Reliability	Pearson Correlation	.675(**)
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.000
	N	111
Assurance	Pearson Correlation	.789(**)
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.000
	N	111
Responsiveness	Pearson Correlation	.252(**)
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.008
	N	111
Tangible	Pearson Correlation	-.265(**)
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.005
	N	111

** Correlation is significant at the 0.01 level (2-tailed).

According to correlation test as seen in table (2), the researchers found out that empathy has significant correlation ($r=.812^{**}$, $p<0.01$) with students satisfaction. The correlations between reliability as independent factor and student satisfaction as dependent factor. According to

correlation test, the researcher found out that assurance has significant correlation ($r=.675^{**}$, $p<0.01$) with student satisfaction. The correlations between assurance as independent factor and student satisfaction as dependent factor. According to correlation test, the researcher found out that assurance has significant correlation ($r=.789^{**}$, $p<0.01$) with student satisfaction. The correlations between responsiveness as independent factor and student satisfaction as dependent factor. According to correlation test, the researcher found out that responsiveness has significant correlation ($r=.252^{**}$, $p<0.01$) with student satisfaction, and the correlations between tangible as independent factor and student satisfaction as dependent factor. According to correlation test, the researcher found out that tangible has significant correlation ($r=-.265^{**}$, $p<0.01$) with student satisfaction.

Table 3-Model summary

Model	R	R Square	Adjusted R Square	Std. Error of the Estimate
1	.901(a)	.811	.802	.550

a Predictors: (Constant), Tangible, Responsiveness, Empathy, Assurance, Reliability

Table 4-ANOVA

Model		Sum of Squares	Df	Mean Square	F	Sig.
1	Regression	136.564	5	27.313	90.296	.000(a)
	Residual	31.760	105	.302		
	Total	168.324	110			

a Predictors: (Constant), Tangible, Responsiveness, Empathy, Assurance, Reliability

Table 5- Coefficients

	Unstandardized Coefficients		Standardized Coefficients	t	Sig.
	B	Std. Error	Beta		
(Constant)	-4.185	.502		-8.339	.000
Empathy	1.421	.185	.949	7.684	.000
Reliability	-.407	.143	-.286	-2.848	.005

Assurance	.513	.169	.376	3.034	.003
Responsiveness	.373	.098	.164	3.797	.000
Tangible	.619	.085	.393	7.278	.000

a Dependent Variable: Satisfaction

Table (5) explains the results research hypothesis. The first hypotheses, empathy has significantly predicted students satisfaction (Beta is weight 0.949, $p < .001$) this indicates that empathy has a positive impact on students' satisfaction. Therefore, based on this result the first hypotheses was supported. The second hypotheses, reliability has not significantly predicted students' satisfaction (Beta is weight -0.286, $p < .001$) this indicates that reliability does not have a positive impact on students' satisfaction. Therefore, based on this result the second hypotheses was rejected. The third hypotheses, assurance has significantly predicted students satisfaction (Beta is weight 0.376, $p < .001$) this indicates that assurance has a positive impact on students satisfaction. Therefore, based on this result the third hypotheses was supported. The forth hypotheses, responsiveness has significantly predicted studentsatisfaction (Beta is weight 0.164, $p < .001$) this indicates that responsiveness has a positive impact on students satisfaction. Therefore, based on this result the forth hypotheses was supported. Finally, the fifth hypotheses, tangible has significantly predicted students satisfaction (Beta is weight 0.393, $p < .001$) this indicates that tangible have a positive impact on students satisfaction. Therefore, based on this results the fifth hypotheses was supported.

5. Discussion

In this section, the main research findings of this study are discussed. Also, the findings are discussed in relations to previous studies reviewed in literature review of this study. The reliability coefficients of five service quality dimensions of modified SERVQUAL were reliable with the original version developed by Parasurarnan et al. (1988). In order to measure the reliability of instruments used in this study, Cronbach's alpha is used. According to (Sekaran, 2005) an acceptable instrument in analyzing a research when Cronbach's alpha is greater than 0.6 and is within 0.8. Reliability test for five service quality dimensions were as follow: Reliability Statistics Cronbach's Alpha for tangible was Cronbach's Alpha $\hat{\rho} = .770$, for empathy Cronbach's Alpha $\hat{\rho} = .833$, for reliability Cronbach's Alpha was $\hat{\rho} = .894$, for assurance Cronbach's Alpha $\hat{\rho} = .784$ and for responsiveness Cronbach's Alpha was $\hat{\rho} = .882$. The results of reliability testing of five service quality dimensions in the research were all above 0.6; therefore, they are all acceptable for further analysis. According to the summary of the finding, it clarifies that, the current study has many to be discussed. University's students were satisfied more according to University's service quality except reliability dimension. According to the data analysis in this study, the current students gave distinctive meaning for University service quality which were linked to the SERVQUAL dimensions. This confirm the theory of service

quality (SERVQUAL) developed by Parasuraman et al. (1988), which concentrated assessment that reflects perception of assurance, reliability, empathy, tangible and responsiveness. This study had empathy, reliability, assurance, responsiveness and tangible which were significantly correlated to students' satisfaction. Empathy factor was an attribute that was applicable in the University for this study. Empathy factor was found to be significantly correlated ($r=.812^{**}$, $p<0.01$) to students' satisfaction. Reliability factor was an attribute that was applicable in the University for this study. Reliability factor was found to be significantly correlated ($r=.675^{**}$, $p<0.01$) to students' satisfaction. Assurance factor was an attribute that was applicable in the University for this study. Assurance factor was found to be significantly correlated ($r=.789^{**}$, $p<0.01$) to students' satisfaction. Responsiveness factor was an attribute that was applicable in the the University for this study. Responsiveness factor was found to be significantly correlated ($r=.252^{**}$, $p<0.01$) to students' satisfaction and Tangible factor was an attribute that was applicable in the University for this study. Tangible factor was found to be significantly correlated ($r=-.265^{**}$, $p<0.01$) to students' satisfaction. According to the findings of this study, the study also suggests that SERVQUAL is an excellent instrument to measure University service quality. consequently, managers could apply this instrument to evaluate University service quality in University and also might be suitable in other education sectors. Service quality is to emphasize improving and maintain students satisfaction. The relationships of SERVQUAL and students' satisfaction were analyzed by regression analysis. Four SERVQUAL dimensions were significantly associated to students' satisfaction at the level of $p < 0.01$, except reliability. According to the multiple regression analysis, the first hypotheses, empathy has significantly predicted students' satisfaction (Beta is weight 0.949, $p<.001$) this indicates that empathy have a positive impact on students' satisfaction. Therefore, based on this results the first hypotheses was supported. Findings of this study shows that empathy is positively related to students' satisfaction, however students perceive a low degree of interaction with staff in University. Eempathy comprises originally developed seven dimensions, which are communication, credibility, competence, understanding/knowing students, courtesy, and access. The University reflects a capability to fulfill students' concerns in terms of their needs, for instance, individualized attention and having students' best interest at heart. The second hypotheses, reliability has not significantly predicted students' satisfaction (Beta is weight -0.286, $p<.001$) this indicates that reliability does not have a positive impact on students' satisfaction. Therefore, based on this results the second hypothesis was rejected. Although, Second hypothesis result which did not prove that reliability has a positive impact due to participants different educational background, age, gender and etc. But still reliability could be a factor that influence students' satisfaction positively in University. The third hypotheses, assurance has significantly predicted students' satisfaction (Beta is weight 0.376, $p<.001$) this indicates that assurance have a positive impact on students' satisfaction. Therefore, based on this result the third hypotheses was supported. Assurance is another service quality factor emphasized by students. The degree to which students are feel confidence and trust relies on the service quality provided by University staff. According to the finding of this study,

assurance has a positive impact on students' satisfaction. This finding could be clarified by the exceptional and capable services that the university provide. The fourth hypotheses, responsiveness has significantly predicted students' satisfaction (Beta is weight 0.164, $p < .001$) this indicates that responsiveness have a positive impact on students' satisfaction. Therefore, based on this result the forth hypotheses was supported. Responsiveness factor of service quality dimension is another key success factor in the University . The finding of this study showed that responsiveness has a positive impact on students' satisfaction in university . According to Ahmad, et al., (2014: 764) Responsiveness is refers to the university 's readiness to settle happened issues and availability to provide fast service. It is important to respond to all students' requests, otherwise the request can turn into a complaint. Service suppliers' capability to ensure that they are providing with a service on time is a basic part of service quality for major students. Finally, the fifth hypotheses, tangible has significantly predicted students satisfaction (Beta is weight 0.393, $p < .001$) this indicates that tangible have a positive impact on students' satisfaction. Therefore, based on this results the fifth hypotheses was supported. According to students impressions tangible can be explained as physical facilities, equipment and appearance of University building. Students might evaluate university facilities and designs, visibility of equipment.

6. Conclusions and Recommendations

The main purpose of this study was to investigate the impact of service quality dimensions on students' satisfaction. The findings seemed to be different in the two ways of analysis. The researchers proposed to study theoretical foundations on students' satisfaction and service quality dimensions, SERVQUAL to investigate the impact of service quality dimensions on students' satisfaction to meet the research objective. The association between service quality and student satisfaction will assist university management to clarify what these service quality dimensions mean to the students and to university itself. According to regression analysis, the researchers found out that four of service quality dimensions had positive impact on students' satisfaction, except reliability factor had negative impact on student's satisfaction. Administrators should constantly adjust on those factors in order to be able to provide its students with the best values and also state the significant dimensions to lay more emphasis on to enhance service quality leading increasing level of students' satisfaction. The latest or modern business strategy is student satisfaction through ensuring that students are provided with excellent quality of services. According to the research findings, the researcher recommended the followings;

1. Staff should always serve right at the first time, therefore employee should be provided with effective training program. Students should be provided with service as promised. This factor is important, because the fact it creates trust between students and employee or the university itself. If an employee will follow the standards of the university, means that university is able to provide services as promised. Therefore necessary training should be provided to all staff members.

2. Administrators should always be visible and handling students' problem.

This is another significant factor, because students should feel that he or she is important and that management cares. That will show that university's management is involved in the operations and if it needed, the management team will solve the incident or problems immediately or even will prevent unpleasant situations.

3. Doing the best to avoid problem or issue that might occur. That should be controlled by departments, but in that case trust should be built up between manager and employee, that employee will inform his or her manager about all issues which have happened or may happen. Employee should not be afraid that he or she will be punished.
4. University's staff should be always neat and professional appearance. That creates the discipline and employees feel more responsible in front of management and the students. Professional appearance gives confidence to the employee.

7. Limitation and Future Research

Few issues related with the cost and limited time in this study needs further research considerations. Due to negative result of reliability dimension, the university disclosed their information. Even though this study dealt with the student's perception towards service quality and its relation with satisfaction, the sample size considered is very small. The findings might not be very suitable as having students with different background such as, educational background, age, and gender. Empirical studies should be conducted moderately with other Universities or other industries so that investigative the service quality dimensions and students' satisfaction across the various contexts or business could be measured and could be useful for future growth and enhancement. Also, future study should focus on a larger sample size.

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Concise and informative. Titles are often used in information-retrieval systems. Avoid abbreviations and formula where possible.

Author's names and affiliations

Please indicate the given name and family name clearly. Present the authors' affiliation addresses (where the actual work was done) below the names. Indicate all affiliations with a lower-case superscript letter immediately after the author's name and in front of the appropriate address. Provide the full postal address of each affiliation, including the country name, and, if available, the e-mail address, and telephone number of each author. Omit all titles (e.g., Dr., Professor) and degrees (e.g., PhD, PsyD, EdD).

Abstract

A concise and factual abstract is required (maximum length of 200 words). The abstract should state briefly the purpose of the research, the principal results and major conclusions.

Keywords

Immediately after the abstract, provide a maximum of 5 keywords, avoiding general and plural terms and multiple concepts (avoid, for example, 'and', 'of').

Headings

Top-level headings (Heading 1) are numbered 1, 2, 3,

Second-level headings (Heading 2) are numbered 1.1, 1.2, 1.3,

Third-level headings (Heading 3) are numbered 1.1.1, 1.1.2, 1.1.3,

4) References:

References should follow the APA Style 6th Edition

The following are examples of a journal article, a book, and a book chapter

Journals

One Author

Williams, J. H. (2008). Employee engagement: Improving participation in safety. *Professional Safety*, 53(12), 40-45.

Two to Seven Authors [List all authors]

Keller, T. E., Cusick, G. R., & Courtney, M. E. (2007). Approaching the transition to adulthood: Distinctive profiles of adolescents aging out of the child welfare system. *Social Services Review*, 81, 453-484.

Books

One Author

Alexie, S. (1992). *The business of fancydancing: Stories and poems*. Brooklyn, NY: Hang Loose Press.

Chapter in a Book

Booth-LaForce, C., & Kerns, K. A. (2009). Child-parent attachment relationships, peer relationships, and peer-group functioning. In K. H. Rubin, W. M. Bukowski, & B. Laursen (Eds.), *Handbook of peer interactions, relationships, and groups* (pp. 490-507). New York, NY: Guilford Press.

5) Reference Citations in Text

Indirect Quotation with Parenthetical Citation

Libraries historically highly value intellectual freedom and patron confidentiality (LaRue, 2007).

Indirect Quotation with Author as Part of the Narrative

LaRue (2007) identified intellectual freedom and patron confidentiality as two key values held historically by libraries.

Direct Quotation with Parenthetical Citation

Darwin used the metaphor of the tree of life "to express the other form of interconnectedness—geneological rather than ecological" (Gould & Brown, 1991, p. 14).

Direct Quotation with Author as Part of the Narrative

Gould and Brown (1991) explained that Darwin used the metaphor of the tree of life "to express the other form of interconnectedness—genealogical rather than ecological" (p. 14).