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Assessment of Customer Service in Academic Health Care Libraries (ACSAHL): an instrument for measuring customer service.

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OBJECTIVES: In a pilot study, the library had good results using SERVQUAL, a respected and often-used instrument for measuring customer satisfaction. The SERVQUAL instrument itself, however, received some serious and well-founded criticism from the respondents to our survey. The purpose of this study was to test the comparability of the results of SERVQUAL with a revised and shortened instrument modeled on SERVQUAL. The revised instrument, the Assessment of Customer Service in Academic Health Care Libraries (ACSAHL), was designed to better assess customer service in academic health care libraries. **METHODS:** Surveys were sent to clients who had used the document delivery services at three academic medical libraries in Texas over the previous twelve to eighteen months. ACSAHL surveys were sent exclusively to clients at University of Texas (UT) Southwestern, while the client pools at the two other institutions were randomly divided and provided either SERVQUAL or ACSAHL surveys. **RESULTS:** Results indicated that more respondents preferred the shorter ACSAHL instrument to the longer and more complex SERVQUAL instrument. Also, comparing the scores from both surveys indicated that ACSAHL elicited comparable results. **CONCLUSIONS:** ACSAHL appears to measure the same type of data in similar settings, but additional testing is recommended both to confirm the survey's results through data replication and to investigate whether the instrument applies to different service areas.

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APPENDIX A

Document delivery customer survey

Part one: expectations. This survey deals with your opinions about document delivery. Please show the extent to which you think document delivery services *should* possess the features described by each statement. The numbers 1 to 7 represent a continuum with 1 being strong disagreement and 7 being strong agreement. Circle the number that best reflects your opinions about the statement. There are no right or wrong answers—what we are interested in is a number that best shows your *expectations* about document delivery.

	Strongly disagree						Strongly agree
1. Document delivery services should have up-to-date equipment.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
2. Their physical facilities should be visually appealing.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
3. Their employees should appear neat.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
4. Materials associated with document delivery services (such as forms or statements) should be easy to understand.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
5. When employees promise to do something by a certain time, they should do so.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
6. When a customer has a problem, employees should show a sincere interest in solving it.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
7. Employees should perform document delivery services correctly the first time.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
8. They should provide their services at the time they promise to do so.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
9. They should keep accurate records.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
10. They should be expected to tell customers exactly when services will be performed.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
11. Customers should expect prompt service from employees.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
12. Employees should always be willing to help customers.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
13. Employees should never be too busy to respond to customer requests promptly.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
14. The behavior of employees should instill confidence in customers.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
15. Customers should expect their document delivery transactions to be confidential.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
16. Employees should be polite.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
17. They should have the knowledge to answer customers' questions.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
18. They should give customers individual attention.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
19. Document delivery services should have operating hours convenient to all their customers.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
20. Employees should give customers personal attention.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
21. Employees should know what their customers need.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
22. Document delivery services should have their customers' best interests at heart.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7

Part two: perceptions. The following set of statements relate to your opinions about the UT Southwestern library's document delivery services. For each statement, please show the extent to which you think the library's document delivery services *has* the feature described by the statement. Once again, the numbers 1 to 7 represent a continuum with 1 being strong disagreement and 7 being strong agreement. Circle the number that best reflects your opinions about the statement. There are no right or wrong answers—all we are interested in is a number that best shows your *perceptions* about the library's document delivery services.

	Strongly disagree					Strongly agree	
1. The library's document delivery services has up-to-date equipment.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
2. Their physical facilities are visually appealing.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
3. Their employees appear neat.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
4. Materials associated with the library's document delivery services (such as forms or statements) are easy to understand.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
5. When employees promise to do something by a certain time, they do so.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
6. When a customer has a problem, employees show a sincere interest in solving it.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
7. Employees perform document delivery services correctly the first time.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
8. They provide their services at the time they promise to do so.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
9. They keep accurate records.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
10. They tell customers exactly when services will be performed.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
11. Customers receive prompt service from employees.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
12. Employees are always willing to help customers.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
13. They are not too busy to respond to customer requests promptly.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
14. The behavior of employees instills confidence in customers.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
15. Customers' document delivery transactions remain confidential.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
16. Employees are polite.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
17. They have the knowledge to answer customers' questions.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
18. They give customers individual attention.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
19. The library's document delivery services have operating hours convenient to all their customers..	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
20. Employees give customers personal attention.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
21. Employees know what the needs of their customers are.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
22. The library's document delivery services have their customers' best interests at heart.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7

Part three. We value your opinion. If you have other comments about the library's document delivery services, we would like to hear them. _____

Thank you for your time and input.

**APPENDIX B
Document delivery customer service assessment**

This survey asks for your opinions about document delivery. Please circle the numbers, both for importance and performance, that best reflect your opinions about the statement.

Importance to you						Our performance				
Not important				Very important		Strongly disagree				Strongly agree
1	2	3	4	5	Materials (such as forms or statements) are easy to understand.	1	2	3	4	5
1	2	3	4	5	Equipment is up-to-date.	1	2	3	4	5
1	2	3	4	5	When employees promise to do something by a certain time, they do so.	1	2	3	4	5
1	2	3	4	5	When a customer has a problem, employees are committed to solving it.	1	2	3	4	5
1	2	3	4	5	Employees perform services correctly the first time.	1	2	3	4	5
1	2	3	4	5	Customers receive prompt service from employees.	1	2	3	4	5
1	2	3	4	5	Employees tell customers exactly when services will be performed.	1	2	3	4	5
1	2	3	4	5	The behavior of employees instills confidence in customers.	1	2	3	4	5
1	2	3	4	5	Employees have the knowledge to answer customers' questions.	1	2	3	4	5
1	2	3	4	5	Employees give customers personal attention.	1	2	3	4	5
1	2	3	4	5	Employees are polite.	1	2	3	4	5
1	2	3	4	5	Employees make customers feel welcome.	1	2	3	4	5

We value your opinion. If you have other comments about the library's document delivery services, we would like to hear them. _____

Thank you for your time and input.