

**Postgraduate Students' Perception of the Library as an Environment for Reading,  
Studying and Researching at the University of KwaZulu-Natal: Pietermaritzburg Campus**

By

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**POSTGRADUATE STUDENTS' PERCEPTION OF THE LIBRARY AS AN  
ENVIRONMENT FOR READING, STUDYING AND RESEARCHING AT THE  
UNIVERSITY OF KWAZULU-NATAL PIETERMARITZBURG CAMPUS**

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# DECLARATION

I, Mr. Matsobane Daniel Kekana declare that:

- i. The research reported in this dissertation, except where otherwise indicated is my original work.
- ii. This dissertation/thesis has not been submitted for any degree or examination at any other university.
- iii. This dissertation/thesis does not contain other persons' data, pictures, graphs, figures, tables or any other information, unless specifically acknowledge as being sourced from other persons.
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## Signatures

Researcher : \_\_\_\_\_ Supervisor : \_\_\_\_\_

Date : \_\_\_\_\_ Date : \_\_\_\_\_

# DEDICATION

This dissertation is dedicated to:

My Father, Mr. Victor Kekana

My Mother, Mrs. Thandi R. Kekana

My Grandmother, Pheladi Kekana

My aunt, Mary Mogano

My Sisters, Pheladi and Sarah Kekana

My Brothers, Victor Mnisi and Makapane Khutso Kekana

And all my family members

For their unconditional love, support, encouragement and understanding throughout my journey to the completion of this document.

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*To him who by means of his power working in us is able to do so much more than we can ever ask for, or even think of: to God be the glory in the church and in Christ Jesus for all time, forever and ever! Amen~Eph. 3: 20-21*

## **ABSTRACT**

The study investigated postgraduate students' perceptions of the library as an environment for reading, studying and conducting research at the Cecil Renaud Main (CRM) library in the University of Kwa-Zulu Natal: Pietermaritzburg campus. This study examined the quality of service provided by the library, by determining postgraduate students' perceptions and expectations and the gap between the two. It also investigated the level of satisfaction with the quality of service rendered to postgraduate students'.

A sample of 8 postgraduate diploma, 65 honours, 47 masters and 49 PhD students in the School of Social Sciences were surveyed. The adapted LibQUAL+ questionnaire was self-administered for data collection from the respondents, and SERVQUAL model (Gap 5) determined the gap. A total of 7 (87.5%) postgraduate diploma, 48 (73.8%) honours, 27 (57.4%) masters and 23 (46.9%) PhD students responded, which generated an overall response rate of 105 (62.13%). The results were analyzed using SPSS24 to determine the frequency of responses. The results are displayed in the form of tables and figures.

The results obtained from this study illustrate that there are gaps between users' expectations and perceptions of service quality at the CRM library. The gaps are different depending on the individual services which were mentioned in each section of the questionnaire. The LibQUAL+ instrument is used in many libraries globally to assess and improve the services in the library and to restructure the organization and the marketing of the library. The questionnaire was adapted in previous studies, and also modified and simplified to identify the gaps found in this study.

The findings of the survey that indicated the most problematic services were in sections involving Access to Information, Library Equipment, Library Staff and the Library as a Place. The individual services that had major gaps were adequate computer workstations, computers that work well, an efficient short loan service, a quiet library environment and the library not assisting students in staying abreast of developments in their academic field. Several understandings were gained from this study. It showed that the postgraduate students' perceptions were low on certain library services and that they had high expectations for almost every service. The satisfaction level differed amongst the various user categories. The

overall response of the postgraduate students indicated that they were satisfied with most of the services.

The study recommends that service quality be improved, an aspect which would increase the students' positive perceptions of the CRM Library at UKZN.



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## **LIST OF ABBREVIATIONS AND ACRONYMS**

ARL: Association of Research Libraries

BHL: Bessie Head Library

BSC: Balance Scorecard Model

CRM: Cecil Renaud Main Library

DUT: Durban University of Technology

EFA: Exploratory Factor Analysis

EFQM: European Foundation for Quality Management Model

FUPRE: Federal University of Petroleum Resources Library

HEQC: Higher Education Quality Committee

ICT: Information and Communication Technology

ID: Identity

IEDE: Institute for Educational Development and Extension

IFLA: International Federation of Library Associations and Institutions

IUCo: Iringa University College Library

LibQUAL+: Library Quality

LIS: Library and Information Services

MUT: Mangosuthu University of Technology

N: Number of Respondents

NUC: National Universities Commission

NR: Non-Responses

PC: Personal Computer

RMS: Risk Management Services

RU: Rhodes University

SERVQUAL: Service Quality

SPSS: Statistical Package for the Social Sciences

SU: Stellenbosch University

TQM: Total Quality Management

UCT: University of Cape Town

UK: United Kingdom

UKZN: University of KwaZulu-Natal

UP: University of Pretoria

USA: United States of America

# **CHAPTER 1: BACKGROUND AND INTRODUCTION**

## **1.1. Introduction**

A university library can be defined as the heart of the academic community, providing a venue for students, lecturers and researchers to conduct their research and advance their knowledge (Kiran, 2010: 261). The strategic objective of an academic library as a service organisation is to sustain the standard of service quality (Einasto, 2009). The standard of services rendered should be able to satisfy the library users, ensure the finance of activities which are satisfactory for the existence and development of the university. Adkins and Hussey (2006: 457) state that libraries are known by some to be a great tool for democracy, which is open to all regardless of race, gender or creed. These institutions are supposed to provide learning opportunities for all who choose to take advantage of them. The materials also in the library are for anyone to use. This is why the significance of university libraries is important.

McCarthy and Ortiz (2010: 507) assert that “academic libraries, whether they are centralised in unitary building or distributed across a range of faculties, are a core element of intellectual activity on a university campus. Their histories and ongoing development provides and index of intellectual culture for regions and states, in which they occupy; their service philosophies profile the nature of development and progress, which in itself characterises the learning and research objectives of the university community. Academic libraries can be conservative and progressive at the same time”.

A library is reflected as an important and essential component of any high quality research institute (Majid, Anwar and Eisenschitz, 2001: 176). Arshad and Ameen (2010: 313) state that the role of libraries has progressed merely from a storehouse of books and other physical artifacts to local and remotely held databases in the developed world. It has been emphasised by Quintal and Phau (2014: 90) that it is clear that the students are primary stakeholders in global education and their perceptions and behaviour towards the globalised learning environment in either a university’s home or offshore campus are important. To start with, their perceptions and attitude could assist the teaching staff of the university to identify and

put emphasis on specific attributes in the globalised learning environment that are unique to each campus.

Simba (2006:1) states that “the importance of academic libraries cannot be underestimated”. By saying this, Simba (2006) stressed that the reputation of a library has no measure. Academic libraries are not independent bodies of learning, they belong to in most cases universities or parent organisations and they play an important role in the learning process of that institution. One of the most competitive obstacles for academic libraries in the 21<sup>st</sup> century is reinstating themselves as the first destination where the users go to for assistance, in navigating their path through the varieties of information that is made accessible electronically or in print just to mention a few formats. Libraries should satisfy their users, with a proactive assessing of their needs and giving feedback by providing quality service that can intersect those needs. For academic libraries to add value to the learning process they need to be both effective and efficient (Simba, 2006:1). They must be well organised with a clear division of information, and also they must be managed well by the library staff.

In the traditional days, before technology was developed to the current standard the library worked differently. Sahu (2007: 234) states that the service “quality of an academic library has been described in terms of its collection and measured by the size of the library holdings and statistics on its use. Today, this method is no longer fulfilling the goals for successfully measuring the users’ demands for information”. According to Nitecki and Herson (2000: 259) researchers in Library and Information Science (LIS) have examined information needs, user needs, and user perceptions about the estimation of library administrations. They have likewise taken a glimpse at an elusive idea like "quality" as far as collections (electronic or print), and the "effectiveness" of library administrations. To measure quality of service, there are numerous approaches that emerge, two in particular are the SERVQUAL (Service Quality) and LibQUAL+ (Library Quality) which are discussed at length in chapter 2 (see 2.3.4 and 2.3.5).

Einasto (2009) states that it is important for every library to determine and measure its service quality; however this central task can become complex, with the conceptualisation and assessing of service quality having been considered as the most contested and controversial

topics in the literature of service marketing. Einasto (2009: 14) further states that for libraries to determine service quality, they should be aware of the dynamic and distinct characteristics of the library services and take into account the following:

- Library services are migrating to the web environment.
- It is challenging to predict which library services will be needed in the future.
- The mission of a library is not to acquire profits, rather satisfy users' information needs.
- Libraries are in competition with each other in the acquiring of financial resources.
- The degree of financing an academic library solely depends on the university community's satisfaction with their services.
- Library services holistically do not have a clear price, which is why libraries contest not on the basis of prices, but somewhat by the quality of their services.

Gutierrez and Wang (2015) mention that academic libraries are in a period of limited budgets and relatively free access to information online; they are also finding out that their central role in an institutional library is no longer a given. Their roles are now justified by their position with tangible evidence to their contributions in the library and the missions of the institution they are employed in.

Libraries evaluate performances as one way of rating their effectiveness (Kachoka, 2010:1). In a world that is going electronic, libraries are forced to develop and keep up with changing times. Academic libraries are trying by all means to satisfy their customers because it is essential and crucial for them to do so in today's global competition. Since the central business of an academic institution is to provide knowledge and a well-updated practice, its library plays an important role in aiding students' developments in the academic discipline (Dahan *et al*, 2016: 38). Internationally, libraries are dedicated to providing free and equitable access to information, be it written, electronic or audiovisual.

In acknowledging the importance of quality service to users in an academic library, this study has attempted to assess the postgraduate students' perceptions of the CRM library at UKZN: Pietermaritzburg campus as an environment for reading, studying and conducting research.

## 1.2. Research problem

According to Gannon-Leary, Bent and Webb (2008: 3) twenty years ago, working spaces in a university library comprised individual study carrels, possibly bookable and enclosed, discrete spaces to use technology, often in the form of catalogue terminals and a few computers, in addition to open reading room spaces. Some libraries also provide common rooms and cafes outside the study area. A research conducted through interviews by Gannon-Leary, Bent and Webb (2008) on the spaces in the library claim that the virtual presence of the library rendered its physical appearance less important.

The University of KwaZulu-Natal libraries aim to provide high quality information services to their users, and there should be statistics proving how the users perceive the library services. Not only that, but also getting the users' expectations of the services that should be rendered. This could be accomplished through assessment because according to McNicol (2002: 251) providing support for learners is increasingly shifting major attention for libraries, it is important that approaches are developed to assist the staff in assessing the learning needs of their users and in considering ways in which those concerns could be met.

The UKZN libraries code of conduct also states that the users have the right to a library environment suitable for reading, study and other activities in support of research and instructional programmes (University of KwaZulu- Natal, 2014). The library is known to be the centre of a university or institution and it is expected to fulfill the role as a service provider in instances like education, training and research. The University of KwaZulu-Natal has five campuses, and in those campuses are libraries which are available to the students registered to any of these campuses. Each campus has a main library and some special libraries and they are:

- The Edgewood Campus library is known as Edminson Library.
- Howard College has four libraries namely EG Malherbe Library, Barrie Biermann Architecture Library, Eleanor Bonnar Music library and GMJ Sweeney Law Library.
- The Medical School has two libraries which are the Medical Library, Victor Daitz Library of HIV/AIDS information gateway.



- Pietermaritzburg Campus has three libraries namely Cecil Renaud Main Library, Law Library and Life Sciences Library.
- Westville Campus has two libraries namely the Main Library and Joe Ryan Dentistry Library.

The university also has four special collections which are of interest to the region and the nation. They are:

- Killie Campbell Africana library located in Durban.
- Alan Paton Centre and Struggle Archives located in Pietermaritzburg.
- Gandhi- Luthuli Documentation Centre in Westville.
- The University Archives located in Pietermaritzburg.

Altogether these libraries contain more than 1.4 million volumes of collection in the form of journals, books, theses, reports and other print media. Furthermore, there is an audiovisual collection and access to a growing number of electronic resources (e-resources). These electronic collection can be accessed through the subscriptions made by the library in the form of journals and databases.

This research has focused on the Pietermaritzburg Campus libraries and the assessment of the users' perceptions and expectations was based on the quality of services offered by CRM library. There are several studies that were conducted about the users' perceptions and expectations of academic libraries internationally. In South Africa there are arguably six academic libraries which have studies that evaluated their users' perceptions and expectations. Academic libraries which are referred to belong to University of Cape Town (UCT), Mangosuthu University of Technology (MUT), Stellenbosch University (SU), University of Pretoria (UP), Rhodes University (RU) and Durban University of Technology (DUT). It could be hypothesized that there is an unwillingness to involve users in evaluating library services. In contradiction to this, the background that addresses the absence of research on user perceptions and expectations at the University of KwaZulu-Natal (Pietermaritzburg Campus or as a whole) asserts the hypothesis.

Normally, several students see the library as an environment where they might go to for reference or to look for assistance in conducting research, and they do not view it as a place

where in future they see themselves returning to. In this regard, the problem that this study seeks to understand is the perception of the end-user regarding the service quality and the level of satisfaction with the services provided by the library. This study has also attempted to link users' perceptions and expectations.

### **1.3. Purpose and research question**

This section outlines the description of the purpose, objectives and the research questions of the proposed study.

#### **1.3.1. Purpose of the study**

According to Johnson and Christenson (2010: 73) the statement of the purpose of the study is defined as a statement of the researcher's intent or the objectives of the study. "The purpose statement in a quantitative study is a declarative statement that identifies the type of relationship investigated between a set of variables" (Johnson and Christenson, 2010: 73). Since this is intended to be a quantitative study, there will be an investigation between a set of variables in the research question. The purpose of this study was to investigate School of Social Science postgraduate students' perceptions of the library as an environment for reading, studying and conducting research, and also to find out how far the CRM library has gone in delivering such services.

#### **1.3.2. Objectives of the study**

The objective of the study was to determine postgraduate students' expectations and perceptions of service quality. It also aimed to determine the gap between the existence of users' expectations and perceptions of quality service. This study also sought to find out the level of satisfaction of the postgraduate students with quality service provided at the library. Lastly, the study sought to determine if the library was perceived as an ideal environment for reading, studying and conducting research.

These objectives will be achieved through the following key research questions outlined below.

### **1.3.3. Research questions**

- What are the postgraduate students' expectations of service quality?
- What are the postgraduate students' perceptions of service quality?
- What is the gap between the existence of users' expectations and perception of quality service?
- Are the postgraduate students' satisfied with the service provided at CRM library?
- What are the postgraduate students' perceptions of the library as a reading, studying or conducting research environment?

### **1.4. Rationale of the study**

The library plays an important role in academia. It is believed that libraries are becoming exposed to increasing inspection and accountability, to ascertain if they meet the needs of the user. With the allocation of insufficient budgets situation in most academic libraries internationally, this research intends to find out the users' perceptions of the quality services rendered in the library and users' expectations of the services needed to be rendered to them. Since user based surveys of quality service have not been conducted in the CRM library before, it is expected that this study will provide a starting point for data and an outline for future surveys on users' perceptions of the quality of library services. This study has offered the CRM library users an opportunity to inform the library where their services need improvement, so that in future they can respond to and manage the users' expectations of proper service delivery. This study has also contributed in three ways which are: filling the gaps found in the literature, improving the policy of the library, and lastly influencing practices with regards to the research findings.

### **1.5. Scope of the study**

Even though the study of users' perception and expectation is normally done on a much broader scale, this study will be narrowed to the postgraduate students of the School of Social Sciences, within the College of Humanities at the University of Kwa-Zulu Natal: Pietermaritzburg Campus.

## **1.6. Limitations and delimitations of the study**

In this section, the limitations and delimitations of the study are discussed.

### **1.6.1. Limitations**

Limitations which this study has experienced relate to the response rate to the questionnaire and the unwillingness of participation on the part of postgraduate students. When focusing on Masters and PhD students, there is a chance that most might not be found or available to participate in this study, since they might be out in the field collecting data for their studies. In this study there were more honours and postgraduate diploma respondents than master's and PhD respondents. The study was confined to postgraduate students in the School of Social Sciences, which is a smaller group, because the period of this study was a year (full-time).

### **1.6.2. Delimitations**

As a delimitation, this study will be confined to the Pietermaritzburg campus and focus specifically on the postgraduate students in the School of Social Science in the College of Humanities. It will only focus on the postgraduate students registered for the academic year 2016. No undergraduates will be included in this study, reason being is that this study is focusing on the quality of information which can be provided for the postgraduate students who are at the level that requires them to conduct research. Also an assumption can be made that most postgraduate students are either first time CRM library users, or renewed library users. In other words, they might be first year postgraduate students or they were previously enrolled in the University of KwaZulu-Natal but because of personal reasons they left and have returned after some years to complete their postgraduate studies. This study has found out from these two categories of users how they perceive library services.

## **1.7. Definition of terms**

In this section, a brief meaning of every key term utilised as part of this study is given. These key terms include: service quality, library users, user perceptions, user expectations and user satisfaction.

### **1.7.1. Service quality**

Parasuraman and Zeithaml (2006) define service quality as the degree and course of disparity between clients' administration observations and desires. Along these lines if the perception is higher than expectation or desire, then the service is said to be of high quality. In like manner, when the expectation is higher than perception, the service is said to be of low quality. In this study, service quality can be known or determined through the gap between users' perceptions and expectations

### **1.7.2. Library users**

Simmonds and Andaleeb (2001) define library users as individuals that have access to library resources, whether or not they step into the library building. There's a dramatic increase in the services provided in the library that range from new technologies such as online indexes, abstracts, databases and catalogues. According to Ekere, Omekwu and Nwoha (2016) a library user is undisputedly, the most vital individual in any library setting. The library client is the point of convergence for the 21st century library and data administration, as the library essentially exists to fulfill the needs of the client. In this study, library users are individuals who are able to easily access library resources such as online catalogues and unrestricted access to academic databases without them entering the library.

### **1.7.3. User perceptions**

Simba (2006) cites Wehmeier (2000) who defines perceptions as “noticing things, especially with the senses; the ability to understand the true nature of something; and an idea, a belief or an image one has as a result of how someone sees or understands something”. In this study, user perception is utilised to mean the perspectives of users' of library services as they associate with these services. The perspectives or assessments are thought to be the consequence of how the users comprehend library services in view of their involvement in utilising them.

#### **1.7.4. User expectations**

User expectations can be defined as the convictions about service delivery that serve as models or reference focuses against which execution is judged. Expectations can only be made if the users have perceived a gap in the services provided by an organisation. Usually expectation projects the desires of individuals which would prompt them to frequently keep using the services. In this study, user expectations are vital because if the expectations outweigh the perceptions, it can be assumed that the library services provided have a huge gap.

#### **1.7.5. User satisfaction**

Motiang, Wallis and Karodia (2014) consider user satisfaction as a reliable criterion for determining library effectiveness. Furthermore, satisfying library users is very important because humans are forever communicating about their past experiences, be it good or bad so if they receive bad service delivery, their communication with other individuals might affect the use of the library. "Satisfaction may lead to users using the service of the library over and over again and even recommending it to others" (Motiang, Wallis and Karodia, 2014: 42). In this study, user satisfaction can be defined as the receiving of good quality services and the services received that meet users' expectations.

### **1.8. Summary**

In this chapter various sections of the study were outlined. The introduction, research problem, purpose and research questions, rationale, scope of the study, limitations and delimitations and theoretical framework were discussed. The purpose of this chapter was to demonstrate the importance of the library as a place and the service quality with regard to users' perceptions and expectations.

## **CHAPTER 2: LITERATURE REVIEW**

### **2.1. Introduction**

This chapter provides a review of relevant literature on the concepts of the library as a place, service quality, user satisfaction, and the existing gap between user expectation and perception in academic libraries. It also provides some insights on the two selected various models used to assess service quality including those which guide the study, LibQUAL+ and SERVQUAL.

According to Creswell (2014) the literature review assists in determining whether the topic is worth studying, and provides understanding into ways in which the researcher can limit the scope to a needed area of inquiry. The literature review “is the part of the thesis where there is extensive reference to related research and theory in your field; it is where connections are made between the source texts that you draw on and where you position yourself and your research among these sources” (Ridley, 2012).

Naidu (2009) notes that a library like any other service organization must have a motivated staff which is committed to providing excellent services and is empowered to work directly with customers to deliver such services on a continuous basis. The focus of most academic libraries is no longer on the collection that they possess, but rather the core activities of a library which should be centered on service provision and improvement and on building an ongoing relationship between users and library services.

#### **2.2.1. Library as a place**

Lumley (2014: 54) states that during the same period entrepreneurship education has been flourishing on college and university campuses, academic libraries have been struggling to reframe their identity for today’s college students. These students who have grown up reading and conducting research online and often do not understand or value the traditional role of academic libraries and librarians.

In research conducted by Gannon-Leary, Bent and Webb (2008) that looked at academic researchers who were based in the United Kingdom (UK), Turkey and United States of America (USA) institutions, the respondents claim “how thrilling they found the atmosphere of a big research library and how they valued the scholarly nature of the setting”. This is

evidence that the respondents perceived the library environment as being a conducive one for studying and conducting research. It is further stated by Gannon-Leary, Bent and Webb (2008) that of libraries and information services are to be considered user-oriented, a need to consider exactly the users of the future will be required. Johnson (2007: 139) states that in order to remain a vital part of a respective academic environment, many community college libraries should seek to improve customer service.

Dimarco and Van Dam (1998) stated that an academic library's staff know that the library serves many purposes which include the preserver of the human record and as gatekeeper to numerous information sources. Library users are aware of this, and to them they also view a library as a social club, refuge from the mad world (Dimarco and Van Dam, 1998). According to Nitecki (2011: 31) library spaces change slowly. However, such changes among campus libraries in general are evident and follow planning and design processes that are at their best when informed by conceptualisations that articulate not only what to place within the spaces but also what will happen there as a result of interactions between people and their environment.

Nitecki (2011) asserts that depending on the perspective of what the library intends to be, the approach to assessing the requirements or success of its space will be different. Academic libraries are not standardised but rather they are customised to embrace their role in their college or university's culture and enterprise of education, research, public service, and management of relations with the multitude of their stakeholders. Their uniqueness has one possible consequence and that it is difficult to uncover uniform or definitive conclusions about how space design supports libraries in their provision of services.

Clee and Maguire (1993) did a study on library environment and library usage of Liverpool's John Moores University in the UK. They started by interviewing a senior member of the library staff who provided background knowledge and statistical information to support the study. Students from different levels of study also participated in the study with the collection tool being an interview. When the students were asked about the layout and guiding, most of the students interviewed (66%) found the general layout of the library to be user-friendly, but a larger proportion (87%) found it difficult to locate specific books. When asked about the borrowing and returning material (check-in and check-out) system, 61% of the users



interviewed thought that the borrowing/returning system was efficient, the same number thought that the exit/entrance system was not user-friendly, the reason being the layout of the library as it involved a long walk round the library just to return a book. When asked about comfortable seating area, only 29% of users were in favour of a comfortable seating area elsewhere in the library, seeing no need for it. Some would have preferred the existing seating to be spread out more for an improved feeling of private space.

In this age of tightened budgets and relatively “free” access to information online, academic librarians are discovering that the central role of the library in their institutions is no longer a given (Gutierrez and Wang, 2015). A case study by Gutierrez and Wang (2015) looked at the positive changes that involved a series of assessments, with the support of university colleagues and the library administration. The study was conducted in the Richard Stockton College in New Jersey. The positive change that is referred to is about staff expertise and service attitudes which demonstrated that library users do value personal attention and the assistance capability they receive from library staff. Although the library participated in LibQUAL+ surveys and assessment of certain individual services, such as pre- and post-testing of student learning in information literacy sessions and analysis of periodical usage, an in-depth assessment of library services as a whole had never been undertaken. In the survey, the users expressed satisfaction with services provided by the library staff but had some negative views about information control and library as a place.

### **2.2.2. User perception of service quality**

It is understandable that libraries adjust with the current changing conditions and increase the level of service quality which makes them more successful (Pedramnia, Modiramani and Ghanbarabad, 2012: 60). According to Baker (1997: 177), most academic librarians support the development of information literacy skills for undergraduates, and equate the acquisition of these skills with more effective library use. A study conducted by Johnson (2007) in the Todd Library which was based in Waubonsee Community College in Illinois used LibQUAL+ surveys to collect data from students, faculty staff and library staff on LibQUAL's+ three dimensions: Affect of Services; Information Control and Library as a Place. In the section of Affect of Services, the students reported that their perceived level of service quality was not significantly different from their desired level of service quality in all

tested areas. The faculty staff on the Affect of Services reported that in the area of 'dependability in handling users' service problems the perceived level of service quality is below their minimum level of service quality. The library staff reported that they perceived the service quality as above their desired level commenting: 'Employees who are consistently courteous', 'employees who deal with users in a caring fashion', and their 'willingness to help users.

On the dimension of 'Information control', the students and faculty staff reported that their perceived level of service quality was not significantly different than their desired level of service quality in all the tested areas. Whereas the library staff reported that their perceived level of service quality was above their desired level of service quality in areas like 'printed library materials the need for work', 'the electronic information resources they need', 'easy-to-use access tools that allow them to find things on their own', and 'making information easily accessible for independent use'. Lastly Johnson (2007) discusses the findings on the user perception of the 'Library as a place'. The students and faculty reported that their perceived level of service quality was not significantly different than their desired level of service quality in all the tested areas. Whilst the library staff reported that their perception level of service quality is below their minimum level of service quality in areas like 'library space that inspires study and learning', 'quiet space for individual activities', 'a comfortable and inviting location', and 'community space for group learning and studying'

A study conducted by Oyewole and Adetimirin (2015) looked at lecturers and postgraduates perception of academic libraries as promoters for learning, teaching and conducting research at the University of Ibadan, in Nigeria. A survey was administered to collect data and the results showed that the majority of the respondents consulted reference materials, journals, and theses for research. The study further revealed that perception of the lecturers and postgraduates on the library as a resource was not quite favourable. Most of the respondents were not satisfied with the available resources and facilities, with most of them noting that the resources were not relevant.

Jiao *et al.* (2009) investigated the perceptions of Chinese academic libraries by international students studying in China. When the respondents were asked why they visited the library, a large number of them indicated for "borrowing library items", as opposed to "attending a

library programme”. Other reasons were “to study”, have access to the “internet and databases”, and “asking a reference question”.

### **2.2.3. User expectations of service quality**

The LibQUAL+ survey, attempts to identify three dimensions which are ‘Affect of services’, ‘Information control’ and ‘Library as a place’ and they measure the gaps between expected service and perceived service (Johnson, 2007: 140). Adkins and Hussey (2006: 458) state that while librarians produce policies and guidelines in order to help provide a standard service to all patrons, these policies and guidelines do not always effectively reflect the needs of, nor the benefits of the public and academic communities they intend to provide the service to.

Hossain and Ahmed (2014: 26) state that library service quality is one of the most important factors that has significant influence on users’ overall satisfaction towards library services. Hossain and Ahmed (2014) investigated academic libraries in Bangladesh, and the study looked at the users’ expectations of service quality. The study adopted the SERVQUAL-based questionnaire to survey students’ opinion on the service quality of the academic libraries. The survey was conducted in ten major public and private university libraries across Bangladesh.

A large proportion of their respondents who participated in the study felt that expecting quality service was their right, which may have led to greater expectations on their part and may have resulted in lower rating for service quality on the part of the libraries. Bangladesh is known as a developing country, so according to Hossain and Ahmed (2014: 28), they do not have sufficient financial resources to develop library services to a satisfactory standard. The university students who participated in this study expected outstanding services from their respective libraries. Other findings of the study show that the majority of respondents did not have much experience in using the library. The university students in Bangladesh generally have high expectations for library services.

According to Bawden and Vilar (2006: 347) “our knowledge of user expectations of digital library services is largely based on anecdote and opinion”. A study by Bawden and Vilar (2006) looked at the managing of user expectations in a digital library. This study was based on a workshop conference in Dubrovnik and Mljet in Croatia and on issues related to analysis

of literature and it focused on empirical studies by bringing out main themes and issues. The findings of the study show that user expectations of digital libraries are often unrealistic, usually unrealistically high, this is due to the ubiquity of the search engine as an information environment. The expectations differ amongst user groups, but they both meet and manage expectations that have been promoted as a solution to the user groups. The conclusion to this study was that more empirical and conceptual studies are needed. Ways of making the nature of digital library collections and their organisations visible and embedded in a natural way within their interfaces should be found and developed.

#### **2.2.4. User satisfaction of service quality in academic libraries**

Cullen (2001) states that academic libraries are currently faced with one of the greatest challenges since the eruption in tertiary education and academic publishing. Cullen (2001) further argues that the challenge is the global digital revolution which is affecting both the traditional forms of creation, organisation, and dissemination of knowledge, and the world of tertiary education itself. Cullen goes on to point out that for academic libraries to survive in this volatile competitive environment, they must retain and grow their customer base and focus more energy on meeting the expectations of their users. There should also be alignment of businesses and universities to merge and create a paradigm for tertiary virtual learning by creating virtual libraries; doing so removes any question and assumptions about the role and security of academic libraries.

Motiang, Wallis and Karodia (2014: 41) define user satisfaction as “an evaluation of a product or service in terms of whether that product or service has met their needs and expectations”. The library plays a vital role for its users in the provision of information services and resources to assist them in their studies and conducting research. The information possessed by libraries differs in formats which can be presented in electronic media, audio-visual, books and periodicals. The library cannot exist without its users, so it is important for libraries to do an evaluation in testing the satisfaction of its users. This evaluation benefits both the user and the library staff, because the users are able to indicate in these evaluations the level of services provided by the libraries and which services need more attention or to be improved.

User satisfaction may lead to the users making use of the library continuously over periods of time. A study conducted by Motiang, Wallis and Karodia (2014) evaluated users' satisfaction of library services rendered at the Medunsa campus of the University of Limpopo. The users also judged and measured the quality of services and resources of the Medunsa campus library.

The population of this study was the library users of the campus, who included undergraduate and postgraduate students, the academic staff and the administrative staff of the campus. The findings of the study indicate that the main use of the library by its users was to find books. The most frequent use of the library by its users was weekly. In terms of user satisfaction with library services and resources, the findings show that the users were satisfied with the services in the general sections of the library, and they were also satisfied with the services provided in the circulation section.

In the rating of periodicals, interlibrary loans, information and photocopying services, the findings gave a neutral response to the availability and access to electronic journals. On the interlibrary loans sections, the findings were that the library users do not use them. On the information services, the findings show that the users do not make use of the postgraduate rooms and when it comes to accessing the databases, the library users are satisfied. Lastly, on the photocopying facilities, the findings show that the users were satisfied with the quality of their copy, and they were also satisfied with the machines that are made available to them.

A study conducted by Ijiekhuamhen, Aghojare and Ferdinand (2015) assessed the user satisfaction of academic library performance in the Federal University of Petroleum Resources (FUPRE) library in Nigeria. The study determined the clients' satisfaction with library services, the library's infrastructure, place, space and collection or information provided at FUPRE. The stratified random sampling technique was used to select students which were located in two colleges: technology and science and they were used as the sampled population.

A survey research method was used to carry out the study on the basis of its large population. The instrument used to collect the data was a questionnaire. The findings which are considered to be major in this study revealed that the respondents were very satisfied with the library services, the library's infrastructure, place, space and the library collection as a

whole. The study further revealed that many of the respondents visited the library for several reasons, in contrast to a much larger population that visited the library because they wanted Internet connectivity.

When the respondents were asked to suggest anything the library is not doing, their suggestions were that the library should extend their operational hours, an increase in the bandwidth of the Internet, the library should publish a guide on information searching skills, and update the library collection. Other suggestions were that the library should publish indexes and bibliographies, provide guidance when wanting to consult on their research projects, organizing workshops which may aid in the searching of information and lastly, their library staff should be friendly and have the knowledge to assist them in any queries they might have.

A study conducted by Kassim (2009) evaluated the performance of the library by measuring it on three dimensions which are the users' satisfaction on its library services; the library's infrastructure, place, space, and the collection or information which is provided by the Universiti Teknologi MARA, Puncak Perdana Campus, which is a public university library in Malaysia. A survey research method was adopted to address the research questions, and a questionnaire was distributed to final year undergraduate students of the public university in Malaysia. The sample was stratified to the actual number of student population of each faculty and the respondents were selected among the final year students. The findings of this study revealed that on average, the respondents were only satisfied with the library services, the infrastructure, place, space and the collection of the library as a whole. Although the respondents in this study were satisfied with the three dimensions, there were some sections the respondents were most satisfied with and these are: libraries infrastructure, place, space, followed by the library collection and then the library services to the users. The results have also showed that there was a significant difference on the satisfaction of services on the three dimensions which are library as a place; library collection and library services among the respondents from the three faculties.

Sriram and Rajev (2014: 140) state in their study that "the developing countries need to provide various services in the academic libraries in order to sustain development". In their study, Sriram and Rajev (2014) looked at the impact of academic library services on user

satisfaction. The research was conducted to identify the various services and facilities required by the academic library users of the Sur University College, at the Sultanate of Oman and their degrees of impact on their users' satisfaction. The population used in this study was students and staff (academic and administration) of the Sur University College. The instrument used to collect the data was a questionnaire. An impact model was adapted in this study. The findings which were related to the photocopying and printing facilities, personal computer (PC) provided by the Sur university college were found to have had a high impact on the institution's academic library users. The findings on the library catalogue and the study desk facilities had a low impact factor on the respondents compared to printing, photocopying facilities and provision of PC which had a high impact on the respondents. It can be deduced, therefore, that the library users were satisfied with the printing facilities, photocopying facilities and PC provisions sections of the academic library, and that they were dissatisfied with the library catalogue and study desk facilities.

Sivathaasan and Chandrasekar (2013) did a study focusing on factor analysis of user satisfaction at the University of Jaffna in Sri Lanka. The study investigated the factors determining satisfaction of users who use the academic library. The population for this study was the library users, and the instrument used to collect data was a questionnaire. An exploratory factor analysis was adopted in this study to examine factors determining user satisfaction relating to the library facilities and services. According to Sivathaasan and Chandrasekar (2013: 44) "Exploratory Factor Analysis (EFA) is a complex procedure with a few absolute guidelines and options, and it is a widely used and broadly applied statistical technique in the Social Science".

The results in Sivathaasana and Chandrasekar's (2013) study revealed that nine factors are considered important in determining user satisfaction. A few of the nine factors which were listed in this study are: printing facilities, periodicals, reading tables and chairs, opening hours and library orientation programme. These are considered important in determining user satisfaction. On the five extracted factors, their results were below average and it might be suggested that the library users were not satisfied with the library facilities, and as for the four remaining factors, their results were above average and it could be suggested that more than half of the respondents were satisfied with the library services as opposed to the library facilities.

A study by Larson and Owuso-Acheaw (2012) investigated undergraduate students' satisfaction of library services in a faculty library at the University of Education, in Winneba, Ghana. The study was trying to find out user satisfaction with services and resources at the Institute for Educational Development and Extension (IEDE) library in the stated institution. For this study, a descriptive survey design was employed, and the instrument that was used for collecting data was a questionnaire. The results of the study showed that most of the respondents were satisfied with the availability of Internet facilities and electronic databases. The results also showed that respondents who were above average were satisfied with the availability of materials. On the efficiency of library staff, most of the respondents were satisfied with the services provided by the library staff. With regard to the overall extent of users' satisfaction on the library services, the results show that a significant number of respondents were satisfied with the services provided by the library. It was suggested by a number of the respondents that the library should get more computers, make available photocopying and printing facilities and lastly that it should provide current books and reference materials.

### **2.3. Theories and challenges of library service quality assessment**

This section will focus on the models that have been used extensively in assessing service quality in academic and sometimes public libraries. Even though some of these models come from management studies, most researchers in the field of information sciences were able to modify and adapt them to be used in measuring quality services in libraries. These models are discussed below.

This section also discussed the two models which guide the study and they are SERVQUAL (Service Quality) and LibQUAL+ (Library Quality) and they best represented what the study seeks to accomplish. These two models have two characteristics in common: they measure the quality of service and aim to investigate the users' perception and their expectations of quality service. For this study, the focus was mostly on the LibQUAL+ model, while the SERVQUAL model provided "gap analysis" in the quality of service, with Gap 5 being the most important for the study.



### **2.3.1. European Foundation for Quality Management (EFQM) model**

According to Naidu (2009: 52), the EFQM is an excellence model and a practical evaluation tool that managers use to determine whether or not they are improving the areas of excellence. They also use the tool to determine areas that require improvement. Kim, Kumar and Murphy (2008) state that the EFQM was established in 1988, and its members are companies and other research institutes. As mentioned by Naidu (2009) the EFQM is a practical tool which indicates the position of business and other organisations on excellence paths and helps them to determine their shortcomings and encourages appropriate solutions. Naidu (2009) lists a few ways this model can be used as a practical tool. They are:

- Used as a tool for self-assessment.
- Used as a tool to benchmark with other organisations.
- Used as a guide to identify areas for improvement.
- Used as the basis for a common vocabulary and a way of thinking and
- As a structure for the organisation's management system.

Stavridis and Tsimpoglou (2012: 65) argued that it is also important to consider that academic libraries in nature are complicated, and some of these complications are:

- The fact that they are part of a wider organisation
- Their high level engagement with users
- Their broad range of stakeholders
- Their collaborations with other information centers and other partners, and
- The increasing shift towards electronic services

Again it becomes apparent that academic libraries must, with respect to the above:

- Be able to exercise effective lobbying when negotiating with higher administration
- Meet their users' increasing demands
- Have effective communication with all stakeholders
- Be reliable partners, and
- Be able to function in an environment that requires continuous improvement and development.

According to Naidu (2009: 55) the results yielded from this model “can be successfully applied for analysing the status quo as well as identifying the strengths and weaknesses of a library”. Furthermore, “this model facilitates the goal-oriented management of existing improvement potential, as well as formulating a flow-on action plan”.

### **2.3.2. Balance Scorecard (BSC) model**

The Balance Scorecard model was created by Robert Kaplan and David Norton in 1996, and it is one of the most successful tools which are used extensively in all types of organisations internationally. According to Self and Tolson (2008) the Balance Scorecard was originally developed for the private for-profit sector, in order to bring about financial success, and it was soon adapted by or adapted to the public sector organisations as a system to achieve and communicate their effectiveness in serving the public. However in 1999, Kaplan stated that the BSC was equally or even more appropriate for not-for-profit organisations.

Kaplan (2010) believes that measurement is as fundamental to managers as it is for scientists. If companies are to improve the management of their intangible assets, they have to integrate the measurement of intangible assets into their management systems. The barrier that exists in this model is its applicability in the academic context, in particular the assessment of library users’ perceptions and expectations of the service quality and therefore satisfying their needs.

### **2.3.3. Total Quality Management (TQM) model**

According to Dash (2008: 414) “the TQM model is a system of continuous improvement employing participative management and centred on the needs of customers. It is explained further by Dash (2008: 416) that libraries can benefit from TQM in three ways which are:

- Breaking down interdepartmental barriers
- Redefining the beneficiaries and library services as internal customers (staff) and external customers (patrons), and
- And reaching a state of continuous improvement

According to Wang (2006: 606), “TQM has got substantial attention in the library world since the early 1990s. Theoretical explorations and experimental implementations demonstrate that there is a widespread awareness that libraries are changing roles in today’s society, and their efforts to adjust to the change as a result of the rapid development of economy and

technology". A library should always focus on providing the best services to its users, and be willing to change its service to customers (Dash, 2008). This model is an approach taken by organisations to improve their performance on a systematic and continuous basis. This can be achieved through the involvement of all employees throughout the organisation in satisfying all requirements of every customer (user), regardless of that customer being an internal or external factor. The basis of library management is quality management.

According to Chauhan (2014) TQM has a customer-first orientation. The external customer, not the internal should come first. The customer (user) satisfaction is seen as the organisation's highest priority and the organisation believes that it will only be successful if its customers are satisfied (Chauhan, 2014: 3). To be successful in this, the organisation has to respond in a rapid manner to its customers. The reason why some libraries adopted the TQM and why all libraries should consider adopting TQM is because libraries are among the most ancient social and cultural institutions in existence (Dash, 2008). There is one thing in common between ancient and modern libraries, which is that they both have a body of information recorded on them and they have a body of information which could be retrieved when needed by the user. But for this to happen, the library needs to have a good organisational ability and structure where the demanded information can be accessed and retrieved and made available efficiently in a timely manner to the library users.

#### **2.3.4. Service Quality (SERVQUAL) model**

According to Asubonteng, McCleary and Swan (1996: 62) SERVQUAL is designed to measure service quality as perceived by the customer. It does however rely on information from focus groups, interviews and identified basic dimensions which reflect service attributes used by customers in evaluating the quality of service provided by service businesses. SERVQUAL model is usually used in management (retail to be precise) when they have to measure customers' expectations of service quality. Naik, Gantasala and Prabhakar (2010: 231) state that measuring service quality is difficult due to its unique characteristics which are: intangibility, heterogeneity, inseparability and perishability. It is linked to the concepts of perceptions and expectations. A customers' perception of service quality results from a comparison of their before-service expectation with their actual service experience. Keeping a customer satisfied is one of the main objectives of any organisation or institution. It is

believed by Naik, Gantasala and Prabhakar (2010) that organisations recognise that keeping current customers is more profitable than having to find and win over new ones to those lost.

SERVQUAL has seven major gaps in the service quality concept. These gaps have a direct relationship with the customer and they are explained by Shahin (2006: 2):

**Gap 1: Customers' expectations versus management perceptions:** as a result of the lack of a marketing research orientation, inadequate upward communication and too many layers of management.

**Gap 2: Management perceptions versus service specifications:** as a result of inadequate commitment to service quality, a perception of unfeasibility, inadequate task standardisation and an absence of goal setting.

**Gap 3: Service specifications versus service delivery:** as a result of role ambiguity and conflict, poor employee-job fit and poor technology-job fit, inappropriate supervisory control systems, lack of perceived control and lack of teamwork.

**Gap 4: Service delivery versus external communication:** as a result of inadequate horizontal communications and propensity to over-promise.

**Gap 5: The discrepancy between customer expectations and their perceptions of the service delivered:** as a result of the influences exerted from the customer side and the shortfalls (gaps) on the part of the service provider. In this case, customer expectations are influenced by the extent of personal needs, word of mouth recommendation and past service experiences.

**Gap 6: The discrepancy between customer expectations and employees' perceptions:** as a result of the differences in the understanding of customer expectations by front-line service providers.

**Gap 7: The discrepancy between employee's perceptions and management perceptions:** as a result of the differences in the understanding of customer expectations between managers and service providers.

These gaps aim to bridge a gap in the quality of service amongst customers, employers, and managers. The gap that is familiar to this study is gap 5 which addressed the discrepancy

between the expectation of the customer and their perception of the service delivered in the library.

### **2.3.5. Library Quality (LibQUAL+) model**

LibQUAL+ is a more modified model for the SERVQUAL, instead it was tailored to evaluate the quality of service in any library. According to Johnson (2007: 140) the LibQUAL model aims to investigate library patrons on three dimensions which are:

- **Quality of services by the staff**

This is when the patron or library user communicates with the library staff. The library staff must show confidence to the users as well as displaying, knowledge and expertise when assisting library users.

- **Information control**

This is the availability of needed resources by the users and the comfort to access them. The ability of users to locate information on their own and search using the library website without the help of any one.

- **Library as a place**

This refers to the physical environment of the library. Does the library look like a comfortable and inviting environment? Is it also a quiet area for one to study, and do research? These are the kind of questions asked in this dimension.

According to the Association of Research Libraries (ARL) (2013: 7) the objectives of LibQUAL+ are:

- Foster a culture of excellence in providing library services
- Help libraries better understand user perceptions of library service quality
- Collect and interpret library user feedback systematically over time
- Provide comparable assessment information from peer institutions
- Identify best practices in library service, and

- Enhance library staff members' analytical skills for interpreting, and acting on data

LibQUAL+ was developed by ARL in conjunction with several faculty members at the Texas A&M University. They wished to develop a survey that allowed local libraries discover their particular strengths and weaknesses although at the same time the whole model was standard across all libraries (Saunders, 2007: 22). LibQUAL+ is known as an important assessment tool which many libraries use. Bhim (2010: 8) states that LibQUAL+ is based on the Gap theory which constitutes the gaps or differences between the services that a customer expects to receive and what the customer actually receives. The gaps that are being referred to are discussed above.

LibQUAL+ allows libraries to understand how users perceive and evaluate their services. The framework it uses is on users' perceptions and expectations to improve libraries and it's a protocol that is ascendable and useful for decision making and local planning. This model is able to measure the users' perceptions towards the quality of library service. It is an inclusive measure because it measures the expectations and perceptions of the user, and there are research and, journal articles written to determine its service settings.

In order to understand and assess the perception of the library as an environment for academic work at the University of KwaZulu-Natal, this study adopts the LibQUAL+ model based on the Gap theory with gap 5 being the focus of the study. This instrument is to be adapted for use in an academic library similarly to other studies conducted using the SERVQUAL and LibQUAL+ model in academic and research libraries.

A concern might arise as to why these two models will be applied to this study instead of one. The SERVQUAL models is mostly used for a "gaps analysis" whereby it attempts to find out the gap of service quality in the perception of the customer. However, the LibQUAL+ model was created in order for it to assess "library performance which are based on actual users' perceptions about the library". Even though they are both designed to find out the same thing, without using them both in this study the objectives set would not have been fully investigated.

## **2.4. Existing gaps between users' perceptions and expectations in service quality and methodological approaches**

The literature gathered indicates that there are many studies which are concerned with users' perception and expectations of quality service and also determining how satisfied the users are in academic and public libraries. These studies are arranged from their earliest year of publications to the latest. These studies will also identify the gap between users' perception and users' expectations of quality service provided by the libraries they use.

### **2.4.1. University of Washington (2001)**

A study conducted by Hiller (2001) looked at assessing user needs, satisfaction and library performance at the University of Washington libraries. For the data collection instrument the web-based LibQUAL+ survey was employed. This was a survey design and methodology which was handled primarily by a team from Texas A&M where a SERVQUAL- based library survey had been used several times.

The questionnaire included the following standard dimensions of services: accountability, assurance, reliability, responsiveness and tangibles. An addition of questions were added to test two additional dimensions of service: access to collection and the library as a place. There were forty-one questions that used the SERVQUAL three-column response format of minimum, perceived, and desired services.

The survey was determined that it should be administered to a random sample to faculty, graduate and undergraduate students. The results showed variations within groups concerning library satisfaction and use. Even though there were variations in expectations and perceptions, there was an overall satisfaction with the services provided. Furthermore, the survey results show a shift towards remote use and increased importance of electronic resources and the proceeding importance of libraries as a place for the graduate and undergraduate students. Negative results of the survey study were on the areas of quiet study areas and inadequate full-text databases.

### **2.4.2. Iringa University College library (2006)**

Simba's (2006) study was based on the premise that the culture of library assessment from the users' perspective is of vital importance to determine users' needs and whether these

needs are being met. The study examined the quality of service at Iringa University College (IUCO) library from the users' perceptions. The population of the study used was undergraduate, postgraduate students and the academic staff. The insights gained from this study indicate that there was a gap between users' expectations and perceptions of service quality at IUCO library.

The magnitude of the gaps found varied depending on individual services. The findings show that the most problematic services for users were electronic journals, photocopying facilities, interlibrary loan, electronic databases, a quiet library environment and the library's webpage. The academic staff have higher expectations and lower perceptions compared to the postgraduate and undergraduate students.

### **2.4.3. Rhodes University library (2007)**

A study conducted by Moon (2007) looked at the implementation of LibQUAL+ in the first South African university which is Rhodes University library. Rhodes University was founded in 1904 and it had an enrolment of 6245 students, it is known as the smallest university in South Africa. The largest faculty in Rhodes is Humanities, followed by Commerce, Education, Science, Pharmacy, and Law. The reason for this university to embark on LibQUAL+ was influenced by the library's need to benchmark the quality of service provision against that of other university libraries in South Africa, to fulfil the requirements of the institutional audit which was conducted by the Higher Education Quality Committee (HEQC).

The LibQUAL+ survey was employed in this study to collect data. The population of the study was undergraduate and postgraduate students, and the academic staff. The findings on the library usage patterns, were that the undergraduates were the most frequent on-site users of the library resources. In contrast they were also the least frequent users of library's remote access facilities. The academic staff on the library usage patterns show that they were less responsive with regards to on-site usage, but high remote usage through the library website. On the overall satisfaction section of the study, the findings were higher for academic and support staff than for undergraduate and postgraduate students. Even though Rhodes ranked below the national average where service quality to undergraduate students was concerned, it ranked above average in some cases where all other user groups were concerned.



Other findings are on the three dimensions of LibQUAL+ which are: Affect of service; information control, and library as a place. In the dimension of 'Library as Place', Rhodes performed very poorly in this service dimension. A negative gap was noted between the minimum and perceived levels of service in the overall results; this can be attributed to the fact that it fell outside the zone of tolerance. On 'Information control', the findings show that the library performed very well. On the 'Affect of service', the findings show that the academic staff rated it higher than the undergraduate and postgraduate students.

#### **2.4.4. Mangosuthu University of Technology library (2009)**

A study conducted by Naidu (2009) examined the quality of service provided by the Mangosuthu University of Technology (MUT) library from the perspectives of the users of the library. It determined the gaps between users' expectations and perceptions of service quality which indicated the level of user satisfaction at the library.

A LibQUAL+ survey was used in this study, which was modified and simplified to identify these gaps. The population of the study consisted of undergraduate and postgraduate students as well as academic and administration staff. The study found that there was a huge gap between users' perceptions of service quality at MUT library and the services provided by the library. The extent of the gap between user expectations and the actual service provided varied depending on the individual services like library spaces, library facilities, and the library collection and access to information.

#### **2.4.5. Public University libraries in Bangladesh (2009)**

A study by Ahmed and Shoeb (2009) focused on measuring the service quality of a public library in Bangladesh using SERVQUAL as their instrument of collecting data. The gap discrepancy between the perceived and expected services is the key to assessing the service quality, so the findings indicated that the library services did not meet the expectations of its users. The results showed that all actual or perceived services were negatively marked. This suggests that the gap differences between expected and perceived services are significant for the library services.

The largest gaps in this study were found from the faculty staff, which can be assumed that the staff members were not satisfied with the services provided by the library. The gaps which were found in the undergraduate and graduate (postgraduate) students were narrower than the

faculty staff, the reason being that the top five attributed gaps by the students was library collection, equipment, and staff-related problems.

#### **2.4.6. Bessie Head Library (2010)**

Bhim's (2010) study examined the quality of services provided by the Bessie Head Library (BHL) from the perspective of the adult users of the library. The study assessed the adult users' perception of the quality of service and determined the level of user satisfaction at the Bessie Head library. The population consisted of two hundred (200) registered adult library users and a LibQUAL+ survey instrument which was modified and adapted for use in a public library was used in this study.

The findings were that there was a gap between users' perceptions and expectations of service quality at BHL. Some users' expectations were not in keeping with the actual experience at the library like access to information, users experiencing problems with Internet access and the reference collections. Other findings revealed that the majority of adult users rated the overall quality of services as good and that the library was, to a large extent, excelling in service provision.

#### **2.4.7. Chancellor College library (2010)**

A study by Kachoka (2010) assessed undergraduate students' perceptions of the quality of service at Chancellor College library, at the University of Malawi. The LibQUAL+ instrument which was derived from the gap theory of service quality and the SERVQUAL instrument were adapted and used in this study.

The findings of the study show that the undergraduate students had higher expectations of service quality than the perceived quality of service. Furthermore, the results of the study indicated that the Chancellor College library was not meeting the minimum expectations of service quality of its users in all the three dimensions of service quality: affect of services, library as a place and information control.

#### **2.4.8. Vaal Triangle Campus library (2011)**

A study by Pretorius (2011) looks at the shifting focus on the role of academic libraries which may entail a better understanding, awareness and responsiveness to the needs of the library users. In an ever changing environment and an age of accountability, academic libraries have

to determine and demonstrate the impact of their resources and services. The researcher noted that service quality is not based exclusively on the perceptions of the librarians, but also it is dependent on the perceptions of the users.

The aim of conducting this study was to assess quality to determine the perceptions of the users of the Vaal Triangle Campus library as they relate to quality service and to develop a model to improve service quality. Another aim of the study was to determine library users' minimum expectations for services, their desired level of services and then to identify the extent of service they currently perceive on three dimensions which are: affect of service, library as place and access to information. Data was collected using focus groups as well as individual interviews and the LibQUAL+ instrument was adapted, modified and simplified to relate to the study. The findings indicated that there was a gap between the users' perception and expectations of service quality. The results also indicated that there were variations within the different user groups regarding the expectations and perceptions of service quality of the Vaal Triangle Campus library.

## **2.5. Summary**

This chapter discussed the concept of service quality in a detailed manner. The most important and relevant models that were commonly used in service quality assessment were also discussed including the two models which were adopted for this study. Also studies that are related to the present one were discussed at length.

## **CHAPTER 3: RESEARCH METHODOLOGY**

### **3.1. Research methodology and methods**

This chapter discusses the research method and the procedures of the study. It also discusses the research design, data collection instrument, validity and reliability, population, sampling techniques, data analysis and ethical considerations.

Intentions for undertaking research are associated with the types of research, for instance, whether it is basic or theory-oriented, or whether it is applied or policy oriented (Blaikie, 2010: 48). This study is applied and policy oriented. The study also falls largely within the positivism paradigm. According to Krauss (2005: 294) the positivism paradigm explores social reality which is based on observation and reasoning as the best means to understanding human behavior; whereby the true knowledge is based on experience of senses which can be obtained by observation and experiment. The positivists believe that the reality is objectively given and is measurable using properties which are independent of the researchers and their instrument. In other words knowledge is objective and quantifiable.

This study is a quantitative research, an investigation used primarily for the positivism paradigm. Positivists claim that in order to develop knowledge, the researcher must think of the cause and effect, reduce the research to specific variables, hypothesis and questions, the researcher must employ the use of measurement and observation, testing of theories, strategic inquiries such as experiments and surveys, and lastly the data collected on predetermined instruments should yield statistical data (Creswell, 2003).

The quantitative method can be used for producing descriptions, for establishing associations, and possibly, causal relationships between variables (Blaikie, 2010: 25). According to Creswell (2003: 19) a quantitative method is one which employs strategies of inquiry such as experiments and surveys, and collects data on predetermined instruments that yield statistical data. Quantitative research is a means for testing the objective theories by examining the relationships among variables (Creswell, 2014: 4). The objective of quantitative research is to develop and employ mathematical models, theories or hypotheses pertaining to a phenomenon. The quantitative method also generates statistics through the use of survey research, by using methods such as questionnaires or interviews (structured or unstructured).

### **3.1.1. Research design**

Creswell (2014: 11) defines research designs as types of inquiry within qualitative, quantitative, and mixed methods approaches that provide specific direction for procedures in a research design. The design of a study refers to the way a researcher guards, and tries to rule out, alternative interpretations of results (Punch, 2005: 63). Looking in another view, research design situates the researcher in the empirical world, and connects the research questions to data. A research design is the basic plan for a piece of research, and it includes four main ideas which are (Punch, 2005: 64):

- Strategy;
- Conceptual framework;
- The question of who or what will be studied, and
- The tools and procedures to be used for collecting and analyzing empirical materials.

In this study, the survey research design was chosen. Survey design involves the acquiring of information about one or more groups of people. This information can be opinions, characteristics, attitudes, or previous experiences. The information is collected through asking questions and tabulating their responses. According to Glasow (2005: 1), “in survey research, independent and dependent variables are used to define the scope of study, but cannot be explicitly controlled by the researcher. Before conducting the survey, the researcher must predicate a model that identifies the expected relationships among these variables”. The ultimate goal for a survey research is that the researcher learns about a large population by surveying a sample of that population.

It also provides quantitative or numeric description of trends, attitudes or opinions of a population by studying a sample of that population (Creswell, 2014: 11). In order to learn about a population, a researcher can survey a sample of that population. The survey design also examines the frequency and relationships between psychological and sociological variables and taps into constructs such as beliefs, attitudes, prejudices, preferences and opinions (Muchengetwa, 2016).

Since the study aimed to investigate perceptions of the library as an environment, a descriptive survey design, more specifically a LibQUAL+ survey instrument was used.

According to Frankfort-Nachmias and Nachmias (1992: 232), the survey methods is one of the chief data collection methods in the social sciences and is used widely to collect information on numerous subjects in research.

### **3.2. Population**

Punch (2005: 101) defines a population as “the total target group who would, in the ideal world, be the subject of the research, and about whom one is trying to say something”. Another definition by Babbie and Mouton (2001: 175) states that “a population is the theoretically specified aggregation of study elements from which the sample is actually selected”. It often occurs that some researchers decide to limit their study population more severely than indicated in their preliminary stages of their research. So a population can be known as the target group in which a study will be focusing on.

The population of this study included all registered postgraduate students in the School of Social Sciences, of the College of Humanities at the University of KwaZulu-Natal: Pietermaritzburg campus. The reason for choosing postgraduate students in the School of Social Science is that it can be assumed that most of the postgraduate students at UKZN are new comers, and therefore they might not be exposed to the service quality of the library. The other major reasons for choosing this group (postgraduate students) was that they are expected to conduct research as part of the requirements of their degrees hence they are most likely to visit or utilise the library’s services. The researcher intended to find out their perceptions of the Cecil Renaud main library as an environment of conducting research. By postgraduate students, the researcher refers to all students enrolled under the following qualifications/levels: postgraduate diploma, honours, Master’s (research and coursework) and PhD. The existing population is shown in Table 1: below.

**Table 1: Population of postgraduate students in the School of Social Sciences**

<b>Disciplines</b>	<b>P.Dip.</b>	<b>Honours</b>	<b>Masters</b>	<b>PhD</b>
Anthropology	0	2	2	1
Conflict transformation	0	0	1	10
Gender studies	0	3	7	7
History	0	2	6	0
Information studies	6	7	28	34
International relations	0	22	0	4
Policy and Developmental studies	0	77	7	13
Political sciences	0	2	26	18
Records and archival management	10	0	0	0
Sociology	0	4	10	4
<b>Total for each level</b>	<b>16</b>	<b>119</b>	<b>87</b>	<b>91</b>
<b>Total population size:</b>	<b>313</b>			

### **3.3. Sampling**

Punch (2005:101) defines a sample as “the actual group who are included in the study, and from whom the data are collected”. According to Naidu (2009:17), numerous basic issues need to be measured in determining sample size. The size depends on the purpose of the study, data collection methods, and the research style. This study aimed to use the postgraduate students of the School of Social Sciences within the College of Humanities. To get a proper sample for this study, a stratified random sampling was implemented. Stratified random sampling is a technique which tries to restrict the possible samples to those which are ‘less extreme’ by guaranteeing that all parts of the population are represented in the sample in order to increase efficiency.

Stratification is not an alternative, rather it represents a possible modification to be used (Babbie and Mouton, 2001: 191). Stratified sampling is a method for obtaining a greater degree of representativeness and it decreases probable sampling error. The population which

is shown above in Table 1, the participants within it were randomly sampled using Krejcie and Morgan's (1970) table for determining sample size from a given population. Each postgraduate qualification within the school was randomly sampled as shown in Table 2 below.

**Table 2: Sample size**

<b>Disciplines</b>	<b>Sample (P.Dip.)</b>	<b>Sample (Honours)</b>	<b>Sample (Masters)</b>	<b>Sample (PhD)</b>
Anthropology	0	1	1	1
Conflict transformation	0	0	1	5
Gender studies	0	2	4	4
History	0	1	3	0
Information studies	3	4	15	18
International relations	0	12	0	2
Policy and Developmental studies	0	42	4	7
Political sciences	0	1	14	10
Records and archival management	5	0	0	0
Sociology	0	2	5	2
<b>Total for each level</b>	<b>8</b>	<b>65</b>	<b>47</b>	<b>49</b>
<b>Total sample</b>	<b>169</b>			

### **3.4. Data collection instrument and procedures**

This section discusses the instrument that was used to collect data, the questionnaire, the administering of the questionnaire as well as the distribution, the forms of questions (closed-ended and open-ended) that are in the questionnaire and lastly the response rate.

#### **3.4.1. The instrument**

Powell cited in Naidu (2009: 83) states that there are three frequently used data collection techniques: the questionnaire, the interview and observation. These three are known as data collection instruments or techniques in a quantitative study. In this study, a specific questionnaire was adopted as a data collection instrument.



This study aimed to describe postgraduate students' perceptions of the library as an environment for reading, studying and conducting research. A specific survey was used in this pursuit, and that survey is known as a LibQUAL+ survey instrument. According to Green and Kyrillidou (2011: 11) LibQUAL+ is a suite of services that libraries use to solicit, track, understand, and act upon users' opinions of service quality.

### **3.4.2. The questionnaire**

This survey was in the form of a self-administered questionnaire. According to Muchengetwa (2016), a questionnaire is a self-report data collection instrument that is filled out by research participants. Furthermore, it is a set of structured, focused questions that employ a self-reporting paper and pencil format. According to Babbie and Mouton (2001: 239), the format of a questionnaire is just as important as the nature and wording of the questions asked. It is important to note that an improperly constructed questionnaire can lead respondents to miss questions, confuse them of the nature of the desired data, and even lead them to withdrawing from the study.

It is also known as a form of questions designed to obtain information on a subject from respondents. The questionnaire is the most widely used measurement instrument, and it is used to gather data in situations like interviews. Questionnaires also plays a central role in the data collection cycle and it has greater impact on the data quality. It also influences the image that the researcher projects to the public. This instrument was used as a source of survey data for service evaluation at the University of KwaZulu-Natal: Pietermaritzburg Campus main library.

### **3.4.3. Forms of questions**

This section discusses the forms of questions which are in the questionnaire. The type of questions asked in the questionnaire are factual questions, structured or closed-ended and open-ended questions. The factual questions address personal information of the participant, specifically, age and gender.

#### **3.4.3.1. Open-ended questions**

According to Babbie and Mouton (2001: 233) open-ended responses must be coded before they can be processed for computer analysis. The reason this is done is that when researchers

code responses, they open possibilities of misunderstanding and bias, so when researchers employ open-ended questions, it is required that they interpret the meaning of responses. There is also the danger that some respondents might give answers which can be deemed irrelevant to the intent of the study (Babbie and Mouton, 2001).

Naidu (2009) argues that open-ended questions are advantageous in the sense that they give the respondents the opportunity to answer in their own choice of words and also that they can provide beneficial and surprising suggestions. In contrast, Simba (2006) mentions that open-ended questions are disadvantageous because they require more thought process and time the respondent to answer. In the questionnaire used for this study, there are only two open-ended questions that the respondents have to answer.

### **3.4.3.2. Closed-ended questions**

With closed-ended questions, the respondents are asked to choose the answers provided in the list made by the researcher (Babbie and Mouton, 2001). Closed-ended questions are popular in research because they provide a greater uniformity of responses and they are also easy to process. These questions are transferred directly into a computer format. The chief shortcoming of closed-ended questions mentioned by Babbie and Mouton (2001:233) is the researchers' structuring of multiple responses.

It is however, important to note that when respondents are provided with relevant answers to a question, they become relatively clear, avoiding misunderstanding. Closed-ended questions explain that the scaled questions are useful for measuring attitudes and they can also capture opinions and perceptions (Naidu, 2009). In most cases, close-ended questions are considered to be easier to answer than open-ended questions. The questionnaire in this study consists of almost 98% close-ended questions.

### **3.5. Validity and reliability of the instrument**

According to van Gog *et al.* (2007: 769) the most crucial aspect of a test is its quality or validity. Simply put, an instrument is considered valid if it measures what it is supposed to measure. It is considered valid if the results it produces help the individuals administering it make accurate extrapolations about certain characteristics, attributes, or traits of the person who has participated in the test. Again, van Gog *et al.* (2007:769) define reliability as referring to the consistency with which a test harvests the same results for a respondent across

repeated administrations on different occasions. This, of course, is the focus of the test remains unchanged between test administrations for a given individual. Reliability removes any doubts about a test yielding the same score for an individual on different occasion.

### **3.5.1. Peer review and pre-testing the questionnaire**

Pre-testing of the questionnaire is also known as the pilot. This process is done to remove any uncertainty about the data collection instrument. Babbie and Mouton (2001: 244) mentions that no matter how carefully one designs a data collection instrument like a questionnaire, there is always the possibility or the certainty of error. Pre-testing is crucial in the case where more than one culture or language group is part of the study. In this case pre-testing of the instrument was not necessary since the LibQUAL+ survey questionnaire was adopted from a previous study and modified to suit this study in particular.

This instrument has been tested and its validity and reliability are well established. This means that the instrument was created in order for it to measure what it should measure.

### **3.5.2. Administration and distribution of the questionnaire**

Questionnaires come in two formats, the paper based questionnaire and the computerized questionnaire. The paper based one is printed and handed to the number of participants and they can be completed when the participant write down their responses, and the computerized one is mostly done on a website where the participants, in most cases, can complete the questionnaire online.

To ensure a smooth transition of data collection process, it is important that the questionnaires are systematically administered to the participants. The questionnaires in this study was numbered with a unique number (ID) to preserve anonymity and also keep track of the response rate of the study. Questionnaire can be distributed as self-administered questionnaires where the respondent will complete the questionnaire at their own pace in the form of a structured interview.

According to Babbie and Mouton (2001: 258) self-administered questionnaires are only appropriate when the population under study is adequately literate. Furthermore, even though the mail survey is the typical method used in self-administered studies, there are several ways one can go about self-administered a questionnaires. For instance, it may be appropriate for

the researcher to administer the instrument to a group at the same place at the same time (Babbie and Mouton, 2001: 258). In this study the questionnaire was administered to the above mentioned participants in either lecture halls, libraries or seminar rooms. The participants were given an appropriate amount of time to complete the questionnaire and when they were done, they handed it back to the researcher.

The researcher used four options to distribute the questionnaires and these options best suited the sample. The first was that the researcher handed out the questionnaires to the PhD students who completed it on the spot or the participants would request that the questionnaire be collected the following as they were engaged in their research activities.

The second option was that the researcher would approach lecturers who are responsible for honours and postgraduate diploma students and ask for a slot of 10 to 15 minutes to distribute the questionnaires to students. This is the option that yielded the most response rate outcomes. The third option was that the researcher would get in touch with the lecturers and request email addresses of certain masters and PhD students to send the questionnaire through email and this was the slowest, and to a certain extent, an ineffective option, the reason being that the participants would respond weeks after or not respond at all. The researcher also made attempts to remind the participants through their emails a number of times and regardless of this, some would still reply after weeks past or not at all. The last option was that the researcher would request the assistance of librarians working in the main library to help distribute the questionnaire to the students in the School of Social Science when they came for consultation or when they visited research commons.

A sample of 169 postgraduate student in the School of Social Science was relatively large and a challenging sample to work with because they are postgraduate students and they are always engaged in their academic activities. With regard to the administering of the questionnaire, the researcher worked alone in distributing these. Lecturers in the School of Social Sciences assisted in finding a slot where the researcher distributed the questionnaires.

The researcher also did briefing sessions with a few people who were kind enough to volunteer their assistance in locating specific people. The aim of this briefing was to clarify any misunderstanding the participants might encounter. For instance, when the researcher was administering the questionnaires, some of the participants thought the questionnaires had

an error (repetition) on Section C: User perceptions and Section D: User expectations. The participants thought the same questions were being repeated, not understanding that even though there are repetitions of questions, the response which will be yielded would be different. The researcher had to briefly explain that on one section it focused on their perceptions as postgraduate students and on another section it focused on their expectations.

### **3.5.3. Response rate**

A major challenge in research endeavours is gaining peoples cooperation so that they provide whatever data is needed. Which is why according to Monette *et al.* (2014: 171), the cooperation in research is measured in ‘response rates’ or the proportion of a sample that completes and returns a questionnaire. According to Babbie (2007: 288) an overall response rate is a guide to the representativeness of the sampled respondents. A high response rate means less chance of significant response bias than does a low rate. Simultaneously, a low response rate is a danger signal, the reason being that the non-respondents are likely to differ from the respondents in ways other than just their willingness to participate in the survey.

According to Babbie and Mouton (2001: 261) survey researchers would frequently ask questions of concerns with regard to an acceptable return rate which should be achieved in mail surveys. A 50 percent response rate is adequate for data analysis and reporting. A response rate of 60 percent is considered to be good and lastly a response rate that is 70 percent or above is considered very good. However, it should be noted that these are only rough guides, and that they have no statistical basis, and a demonstrated lack of response bias is far more important than a high response rate.

This study yielded a response rate of 105 (62.13%) from a sample of 169 postgraduate students in the School of Social Sciences. This according to Babbie and Mouton (2001) is a good response rate and also sufficient for data analysis and reporting.

### **3.6. Data analysis**

This section has to do with the analysis of the data which was collected. Since this was a quantitative study, the results were presented statistically in tables and figures (see chapter 4 and 5). A system known as the ‘Statistical Package for the Social Sciences’ (SPSS 24) was used to analyse the responses. Landau and Everitte (2004) define SPSS as a powerful, yet user-friendly package for the analysing, manipulation and presentation of statistical data. It

is a widely used package in social and behavioural sciences. The version of SPSS used to analyse data in this study was SPSS24.

According to Wetcher-Hendricks (2011: 3) statistical analysis follows a relatively structured plan that once recognised, it provides a basis for evaluating data in any form. In fact, at the point of statistical analysis, the topic of a researcher's study becomes in some instances irrelevant. This protocol and technique is synonymous to all data, regardless of the concern to which the data pertains or the method used to collect the data.

Nicols 1991 (in Naidu, 2009) mentions that there are four stages of processing and analyzing data and they are:

- Checking through the forms and correcting errors
- Coding
- Preparing data tables and
- Making sense of the data. This entails preparing summaries, measures, and using them to test ideas about the target population.

The two open-ended questions in the questionnaire were analyzed and interpreted using content analysis. According to Monette *et al.* (2014: 204) content analysis refers to a method of transforming the symbolic content of a document, such as words or other images, from a qualitative, unsystematic form. In other words, content analysis is a form of coding, a practice of transforming data in some surveys and observational research. Coding can be defined as categorising behaviours or elements into a limited number of categories. In surveys, the performing of coding on data the researcher collects firsthand for particular research purposes. The first step of coding entails the construction and developing of categories. The categories for this study included Comprehensive Collection, Access to Information, Library Equipment, Library Staff, Library as a Place and General.

### **3.7. Ethical issues**

According to Creswell (2003: 73) as researchers embark on data collection they need to respect the participants who are participating in it. The following ethical issues were observed in the data collection process:

### **3.7.1. Voluntary participation**

According to Babbie and Mouton (2001: 521) social research often requires people to reveal personal information about themselves, information that might be unknown to their friends and associates. In most cases, this information is revealed to strangers. All these requests are made to serve all of humanity. However, in social, medical or any other form of research, the participation should be voluntary and no one should be forced to participate. In this study, the participants were made aware that the study was voluntary and they could withdraw at any time (see Appendix 1).

### **3.7.2. No harm to the participants**

Babbie and Mouton (2001: 522) state that social research should never injure the people who are being studied, regardless of whether or not they volunteered for the study. This study did not cause harm to the participants because the information needed from them was related to their experiences and expectations of the CRM library.

### **3.7.3. Anonymity and confidentiality**

Babbie and Mouton (2001: 523) mention that the clearest concern in the protection of the subjects' interests and well-being is the protection of their identity, especially in survey research. The two methods to ensure no injury or harm to the participants are anonymity and confidentiality. Usually the two are often mistaken to be one and the same thing. A respondent is considered anonymous if the researcher cannot identify a given response with a given respondent, this means that a survey cannot be anonymous because the researcher collects the information from identifiable respondents. In this study, anonymity was achieved asking the participants not to provide their names on the questionnaire and the questionnaire were given unique identification (ID) numbers (Appendix 4). Confidentiality on the other hand, is where the researcher can identify a given person's responses, but not reveal them publicly. In this study, the participants filled out an informed consent document (Appendix 1) which outlined the researcher's intentions.

### **3.7.4. Ethics committees**

According to Babbie and Mouton (2001: 528) any researcher wishing to receive institutional research support must have his or her proposal approved by a research or ethics committee who review all research proposals which involve human subjects to insure that their rights

and interests are aligned to those of the institution. The present study was complied with ethical clearance guidelines of the University of KwaZulu-Natal.

### **3.8. Summary**

In this chapter the researcher outlined the research methods and procedures that were used in the study. The design of the study, chosen population, sampling, data collection instrument, data analysis and its methods were described and discussed.



# **CHAPTER 4: DATA ANALYSIS AND PRESENTATION OF RESULTS**

## **4.1. Introduction**

This chapter presents the results of the survey of the sampled population of the postgraduate students of the School of Social Sciences who are users of the UKZN Cecil Renaud Main (CRM) library. The survey was conducted through self-administered questionnaires. The validation of each section of the questionnaire is submitted and the results from the sections are discussed. The number of responses (N) and the number of non-responses (NR) are indicated. This study yielded a return rate of 105 (62.13%).

## **4.2. Questionnaire results**

The questionnaire was divided into five sections. Section A investigated the background information of the participants in this study; Section B sought out the library usage patterns of the postgraduate students; Section C investigated the users' perceptions or experiences of the CRM library; Section D investigated the users' expectations of the CRM library; and Section E looked at the level of the users' satisfaction.

### **4.2.1. Demographics**

This section of the questionnaire asked the respondents for their background information. This section was essential for correlation of response sets between categories of library users with their demographic information. Also the information in this section was necessary to determine the consistency of responses across different categories. Question 1 to 4 determined the gender of the respondents, their age group, the academic discipline they were in, and the level of qualification they were pursuing. This information is illustrated in Table 3.

**Table 3: Gender**

**N=105**

<b>Gender</b>	<b>Count</b>	<b>Percentage (%)</b>
Male	42	40%
Female	63	60%
<b>Total</b>	<b>105</b>	<b>100%</b>

Table 3 illustrates that there were more female respondents than there were male. The number of male respondents' was 42 (40%) and the females were 63 (60%). Table 4 shows the respondents' age group.

**Table 4: Age group**

**N=105**

<b>Age group</b>	<b>Count</b>	<b>Percentage (%)</b>
21-30	70	66.7%
31-40	24	22.9%
41-50	9	8.6%
Over 50	2	1.9%
<b>Total</b>	<b>105</b>	<b>100%</b>

Table 4 shows that the “majority” 70 (66.7%) of respondents were within the age group of 21-30 years old, followed by 24 (22.9%) respondents who were at the 31-40 years age group. There were only 2 (1.9%) respondents who were over the age of 50 years. Table 5 shows the academic disciplines of the respondents.

**Table 5: Academic discipline**

N=105

<b>Discipline</b>	<b>Count</b>	<b>Percentage (%)</b>
History	2	1.9%
Anthropology	2	1.9%
Information Studies	28	26.7%
Policy and Development Studies	30	28.6%
Political Science	14	13.3%
Records and Archival Management	5	4.8%
Sociology	4	3.8%
Gender Studies	6	5.7%
International Relations	10	9.5%
Conflict Transformation	4	3.8%
<b>Total</b>	<b>105</b>	<b>100%</b>

Table 5 shows that in the School of Social Sciences there are 10 academic disciplines which are offered at the UKZN on the Pietermaritzburg Campus. The academic discipline from which the highest number of respondents belonged to was the Policy and Development Studies discipline with 30 (28.6%) students, followed by Information Studies which stood at 28 (26.7%) respondents. A small number of respondents were from History and Anthropology which both had 2 (1.9%) respondents each. Table 6 shows the respondents' registered qualifications.

**Table 6: Qualification**

**N=105**

<b>Qualification</b>	<b>Count</b>	<b>Percentage (%)</b>
Postgraduate diploma	7	6.7%
Honours	48	45.7%
Masters	27	25.7%
PhD	23	21.9%
<b>Total</b>	<b>105</b>	<b>100%</b>

The honours students formed the majority of the postgraduate students in the School of Social Sciences. Table 6 indicates that 48 (45.7%) respondents were honours students, followed by 27 (25.7%) masters' students. The least number of respondents were from the postgraduate diploma which had 7 (6.7%) students, this is because the diploma programme is only available in two academic disciplines, Information Studies and Records and Archival Management.

#### **4.2.2. Library usage patterns**

This section determined how often respondents used the resources in the library. It also examined the library usage patterns between the different categories of users in order to determine the value of the library between these categories in terms of the usage patterns. The results in this section are shown in table 7 to 9.

**Table 7: Overall frequency of library and its resources by user category**

N=105

User category	Daily		Weekly		Monthly		Quarterly		Total	
	Count	%	Count	%	Count	%	Count	%	Count	%
Postgraduate diploma	2	1.9%	5	4.8%	0	0%	0	0%	7	6.7%
Honours	8	7.6%	17	16.2%	15	14.3%	8	7.6%	48	45.7%
Masters	8	7.6%	9	8.6%	4	3.8%	6	5.7%	27	25.7%
PhD	8	7.6%	8	7.6%	6	5.7%	1	1.0%	23	21.9%
<b>Total</b>	<b>26</b>	<b>24.8%</b>	<b>39</b>	<b>37.1%</b>	<b>25</b>	<b>23.8%</b>	<b>15</b>	<b>14.3%</b>	<b>105</b>	<b>100%</b>

Generally, the library and its resources were mostly used on a weekly basis with 39 (37.1%) respondents being the most frequent, and they were followed by the 26 (24.8%) respondents who used it daily. Fifteen (14.3%) honours students used the library monthly while only one PhD student used it quarterly. Table 8 shows the results of the overall frequency of the use of non-library gateways for information by user category.

**Table 8: Overall frequency of Yahoo, Google or other non-library gateways for information by user category**

N=105

User category	Daily		Weekly		Monthly		Quarterly		Total	
	Count	%	Count	%	Count	%	Count	%	Count	%
Postgraduate diploma	6	5.7%	1	1.0%	0	0%	0	0%	7	6.7%
Honours	38	36.2%	9	8.6%	1	1.0%	0	0%	48	45.7%
Masters	22	21.0%	4	3.8%	1	1.0%	0	0%	27	25.7%
PhD	21	20.0%	1	1.0%	1	1%	0	0%	23	21.9%
<b>Total</b>	<b>87</b>	<b>82.9%</b>	<b>15</b>	<b>14.3%</b>	<b>3</b>	<b>2.9%</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>0%</b>	<b>105</b>	<b>100%</b>

In general, the frequency of non-library gateways use with the highest usage was “Daily” with a response of 87 (82.9%) students. Fifteen respondents, (14.3%) used the internet on a weekly basis followed by 3 (2.9%) respondents who used the internet on a monthly basis. There were 38 (36.2%) users within the honours qualification who used the internet more often than the other respondents in other qualifications. Table 9 illustrates the results of the overall frequency use of the library gateways for accessing information by user category.

**Table 9: Overall frequency use of library gateways (e.g. e-catalogue) for accessing information by user category**

N=105

User category	Daily		Weekly		Monthly		Quarterly		Total	
	Count	%	Count	%	Count	%	Count	%	Count	%
Postgraduate diploma	3	2.9%	3	2.9%	1	1.0%	0	0%	7	6.7%
Honours	3	2.9%	23	21.9%	15	14.3%	7	6.7%	48	45.7%
Masters	7	6.7%	7	6.7%	10	9.5%	3	2.9%	27	25.7%
PhD	10	9.5%	7	6.7%	2	1.9%	4	3.8%	23	21.9%
<b>Total</b>	<b>23</b>	<b>21.9%</b>	<b>40</b>	<b>38.1%</b>	<b>28</b>	<b>26.7%</b>	<b>14</b>	<b>13.3%</b>	<b>105</b>	<b>100%</b>

The results illustrated that 40 (38.1%) respondents used the library gateways on a weekly basis, and they are followed by 28 (26.7%) who use the gateways on a monthly basis. The majority of the students who use the library gateways on a weekly basis were the honours students with a response of 23 (21.9%). Only one student used the library gateways on a monthly basis.

#### **4.2.3. User expectations and perceptions of service quality**

Question 8 and 9 on the questionnaire had 30 statements each on service quality. The statements in question 8 measured students' expectations and question 9 measured students' perceptions. The respondents were asked to rate the statements (on a scale of **1=strongly agree; 2=Agree; 3=Neutral; 4=Disagree; and 5=strongly disagree**) by ticking or crossing the number that best described their perceptions and expectations of the service quality that the library provides or should provide. These statements were divided into six (6) categories which are: Comprehensive Collection; Access to Information; Library Equipment; Library Staff; Library as a Place and General.

### 4.2.3.1. User expectations of service quality

The questions in this section were asked in order to determine users' expectations of the quality library service. This section, like the section in 4.2.3.2 has 30 statements and the respondents are asked to rate the statement (on a scale of **1=strongly agree; 2=agree; 3=neutral; 4=disagree; and 5=strongly disagreed**) by indicating the number that best described their expectations of the service quality the library provides. The categories and respondents' expectations are reflected below.

**Table 10: User expectations of the comprehensive collection**

N=105

Statements	Strongly agree		Agree		Neutral		Disagree		Strongly disagree	
	Count	%	Count	%	Count	%	Count	%	Count	%
Adequate print collection (books) for my needs	29	27.6%	49	46.7%	24	22.9%	3	2.9%	0	0%
Adequate print journals for my work	26	24.8%	49	46.7%	22	21%	8	7.6%	0	0%
Adequate electronic journals for my work	40	38.1%	41	39%	18	17.1%	6	5.7%	0	0%

The majority of the respondents, 49 (46.7%) agree that they expect an adequate print collection (books) for their needs, 49 (46.7%) adequate print journals for their work, and 41 (39%) adequate electronic journals for their work. A minority of three (2.9%), eight (7.6%), and six (5.7%) disagreed that they expected adequate printed book; printed journals and



electronic journals for their work respectively. Table 11 shows the results of the users expectations of access to information.

**Table 11: User expectations of Access to Information**

N=105

Statements	Strongly agree		Agree		Neutral		Disagree		Strongly disagree	
	Count	%	Count	%	Count	%	Count	%	Count	%
Easily available access to electronic databases	42	40%	46	43.8%	13	12.4%	4	3.8%	0	0%
Prompt interlibrary loan (loan from other libraries) service	26	24.8%	47	44.8%	28	26.7%	4	3.8%	0	0%
An efficient short loan (special reserve collection) service	26	24.8%	50	47.6%	23	21.9%	6	5.7%	0	0%
Prompt re-shelving of books	29	27.6%	42	40%	24	22.9%	7	6.7%	3	2.9%

Prompt re-shelving of journals	27	25.7%	42	40%	31	29.5%	5	4.8%	0	0%
Catalogue that is clear and thus useful information	40	38.1%	44	41.9%	18	17.1%	3	2.9%	0	0%
Prompt corrective action regarding missing books and journals	30	28.6%	34	32.4%	31	29.5%	10	9.5%	0	0%
A webpage that is clear and useful information	43	41%	37	35.2%	16	15.2%	7	6.7%	2	1.9%

Generally, a few respondents either strongly disagreed or disagreed with the statements under Access to Information. There are higher expectations of an efficient short loan service 50 (47.6%), prompt interlibrary loan services, 47 (44.8%), easily available access to electronic databases 46 (43.8%), and 43 (41%) strongly agreed that they expect a webpage that is clear and has useful information. Twenty-four (22.9%) responded neutrally to prompt of re-shelving of books and 3 (2.9%) disagreed on a catalogue that is clear and has useful information. Also, 15.2% respondents responded neutrally to having a webpage that is clear and has useful information and 1.9% strongly disagreed. Table 12 illustrates the users' expectations of the library equipment.

**Table 12: User expectations of the Library Equipment**

N=105

Statements	Strongly agree		Agree		Neutral		Disagree		Strongly disagree	
	Count	%	Count	%	Count	%	Count	%	Count	%
An adequate number of computer workstations	31	29.5%	23	21.9%	25	23.8%	21	20%	5	4.8%
Computers that work well	35	33.3%	27	25.7%	18	17.1%	22	21%	3	2.9%
Adequate photocopying facilities	39	37.1%	31	29.5%	26	24.8%	8	7.6%	1	1%
Adequate printing facilities	39	37.1%	29	27.6%	25	23.8%	10	9.5%	2	1.9%

Generally, the majority of the respondents had higher expectations on the library equipment. An amount of 31 (29.5%) students strongly agreed that they expected an adequate number of computer workstations; 35 (33.3%) students strongly agreed that they expect computers that work well and; 39 (37.1%) strongly agreed that they expect adequate photocopying and printing facilities. Only an amount of 21 (20%) disagreed that they do not expect adequate number of computer workstations, and 22 (21%) disagreed that they do not expect computers that work well. Table 13 shows the users' expectations of staff services.

**Table 13: User expectations of staff services**

N=105

Statements	Strongly agree		Agree		Neutral		Disagree		Strongly disagree	
	Count	%	Count	%	Count	%	Count	%	Count	%
Staff who are friendly	53	50.5%	34	32.4%	10	9.5%	5	4.8%	3	2.9%
Staff who instill confidence in users	43	41%	37	35.2%	18	17.1%	3	2.9%	4	3.8%
Staff who are readily available to respond to my queries	42	40%	46	43.8%	11	10.5%	3	2.9%	3	2.9%
Staff who are willing to help me	46	43.8%	38	36.2%	14	13.3%	4	3.8%	3	2.9%
Staff who understand my library service needs	46	43.8%	37	35.2%	17	16.2%	3	2.9%	2	1.9%
Staff who have the knowledge to answer my questions	39	37.1%	45	42.9%	16	15.2%	3	2.9%	2	1.9%

Staff who provide users with the information skills needed for work or study	45	42.9%	39	37.1%	15	14.3%	5	4.8%	1	1%
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An average of 42.7% students, strongly agreed that they expected the library staff to be friendly; staff who instill confidence in users; staff who are readily available to respond to their queries; staff who are willing to help them; staff who understand their library needs; staff who have the knowledge of answering their service needs, and staff who provide users with the information skills they need for their studies. An average number of 17.1% respondents strongly disagreed with each service in this category, they had low expectations. Table 14 shows the users' expectations of the library as a place.

**Table 14: User expectations of the Library as a Place**

N=105

Statements	Strongly agree		Agree		Neutral		Disagree		Strongly disagree	
	Count	%	Count	%	Count	%	Count	%	Count	%
A quiet library environment	35	33.3%	40	38.1%	17	16.2%	10	9.5%	3	2.9%
A library space that inspires my own study and learning	38	36.2%	41	39%	20	19%	5	4.8%	1	1%
A library space for group learning and group study	31	29.5%	44	41.9%	22	21%	7	6.7%	1	1%
A library environment that has sufficient lighting	35	34.3%	50	47.6%	13	12.4%	5	4.8%	1	1%
A safe and a secure place for study	42	40%	41	39%	16	15.2%	6	5.7%	0	0%

An average of 43 (41.1%) respondents for each statement in this category agree that they expected the library to be a quiet environment with space that inspires their own study and learning; a space for group learning and study; an environment with sufficient lighting; and a safe and secure place for studying. An average of 5.9% respondents for each service

mentioned above in this category strongly disagreed. Table 15 illustrates the general expectations regarding the Academic Field and Research.

**Table 15: General expectations regarding Academic Field and Research**

N=105

Statements	Strongly agree		Agree		Neutral		Disagree		Strongly disagree	
	Count	%	Count	%	Count	%	Count	%	Count	%
Helps me stay abreast of developments in my field(s) of interest	33	31.4%	49	46.7%	22	21%	1	1%	0	0%
Helps me to advance in my academic field	35	33.3%	49	46.7%	20	19%	1	1%	0	0%
Helps me with my research needs	41	39%	46	43.8%	15	14.3%	2	1.9%	1	1%

In this category, an average of 45.7% respondents agreed that they expected the library to help them stay abreast of development in their field of interest; helping them advance in their academic field and helping with their research needs. However, 3.8% respondents for each statement in this category disagreed.

### 4.2.3.2. User perceptions of service quality

This section focuses on the postgraduate students' perceptions of the service quality. This section is divided into six categories and presented below.

**Table 16: User perceptions on comprehensive collection**

N=105

Statements	Strongly agree		Agree		Neutral		Disagree		Strongly disagree	
	Count	%	Count	%	Count	%	Count	%	Count	%
Adequate print collection (books) to my needs	25	23.8%	40	38.1%	28	26.7%	9	8.6%	3	2.9%
Adequate print journals for my work	20	19%	37	35.2%	36	34.3%	10	9.5%	2	1.9%
Adequate electronic journals for my work	38	36.2%	42	40%	15	14.3%	8	7.6%	2	1.9%

In general, many of the respondents indicated that they agreed in terms of their perception regarding the comprehensive collection. The highest proportion of respondents, 42 (40%) agreed that the library provided adequate electronic journals for their academic work, followed by 40 (38.1%) respondents agreeing that the library provided them with adequate print collections which met their needs. Three (2.9%) respondents strongly disagreed that they do not perceive the library having adequate print collection, and on the other hand, 2 (1.9%) strongly disagreed with both the statements that the library provided adequate print



and electronic journals for their work. Table 17 shows the users' perceptions of Access to Information.

**Table 17: User perceptions on Access to Information**

N=105

Statements	Strongly agree		Agree		Neutral		Disagree		Strongly disagree	
	Count	%	Count	%	Count	%	Count	%	Count	%
Easily available access to electronic databases	42	40%	34	32.4%	18	17.1%	9	8.6%	2	1.9%
Prompt interlibrary loan (loan from other libraries) service	18	17.1%	39	37.1%	38	36.2%	10	9.5%	0	0%
An efficient short loan (special reserve collection) service	20	19%	31	29.5%	41	39%	8	7.6%	5	4.8%
Prompt re-shelving of books	13	12.4%	42	40%	33	31.4%	11	10.5%	6	5.7%
Prompt re-shelving of journals	13	12.4%	37	35.2%	43	41%	9	8.6%	3	2.9%

Catalogue that is clear and thus useful information	24	22.9%	46	43.8%	28	26.7%	5	4.8%	2	1.9%
Prompt corrective action regarding missing books and journals	15	14.3%	31	29.5%	44	41.9%	12	11.4%	3	2.9%
A webpage that is clear and useful information	33	31.4%	50	47.6%	13	12.4%	9	8.6%	0	0%

In this table results show that the students had different experiences in this category. The statements that has the highest responses related to the webpage were 50 (46.6%) respondents agreed that the webpage is clear and has useful information. It was followed by 46 (43.8%) respondents who agreed that the catalogue is clear and thus it has useful information; a neutral response of 44 (41.9%) on the statement of the corrective action with regard to missing books and journals; 42 (40%) respondents strongly agreed on easily available access to electronic databases; 39 (37.1%) respondents agreed to a prompt interlibrary loan service; 39% responded neutrally to an efficient short loan service; 42 (40%) respondents agreed to a prompt re-shelving of books; and 43 (41%) responded neutrally to a prompt re-shelving of journals. Table 18 illustrates the users' perceptions of the library equipment.

**Table 18: User perceptions of the Library Equipment**

N=105

Statements	Strongly agree		Agree		Neutral		Disagree		Strongly disagree	
	Count	%	Count	%	Count	%	Count	%	Count	%
An adequate number of computer workstations	9	8.6%	20	19%	34	32.4%	26	24.8%	16	15.2%
Computers that work well	11	10.5%	25	23.8%	30	28.6%	28	26.7%	11	10.5%
Adequate photocopying facilities	19	18.1%	34	32.4%	32	30.5%	15	14.3%	5	4.8%
Adequate printing facilities	16	15.2%	33	31.4%	28	26.7%	21	20%	7	6.7%

Table 18 indicates that the students had different experiences in this category. Furthermore, the majority of the respondents 34 (32.4%) were neutral on the perception of the library having an adequate number of computer workstations; 34 (32.4%) agreeing that the library has adequate photocopying facilities; with 30 (28.6%) being neutral on the perception of computers that work well and 33 (31.4%) agreed on adequate printing facilities. Table 19 presents the results of the users' perceptions of the library staff.

**Table 19: User perceptions of the Library Staff**

N=105

Statements	Strongly agree		Agree		Neutral		Disagree		Strongly disagree	
	Count	%	Count	%	Count	%	Count	%	Count	%
Staff who are friendly	42	40%	35	33.3%	21	20%	6	5.7%	1	1%
Staff who instill confidence in users	32	30.5%	34	32.4%	28	26.7%	8	7.6%	3	2.9%
Staff who are readily available to respond to my queries	36	34.3%	35	33.3%	24	22.9%	5	4.8%	5	4.8%
Staff who are willing to help me	40	38.1%	41	39%	17	16.2%	5	4.8%	2	1.9%
Staff who understand my library service needs	35	33.3%	40	38.1%	20	19%	8	7.6%	2	1.9%
Staff who have the knowledge to answer my questions	34	32.4%	40	38.1%	19	18.1%	9	8.6%	3	2.9%

Staff who provide users with the information skills needed for work or study	34	32.4%	38	36.2%	22	21%	10	9.5%	1	1%
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Generally, many respondents agreed or strongly agreed with the statements related to the library staff. The highest response of 42 (40%) students strongly agreed that the staff were friendly, followed by a total of 41 (39%) who agreed that the library staff were always willing to help. Forty 38.1% students strongly agreed that the library staff were always willing to help and 40 (38.1%) agreed that the library staff understands students' library service needs and also agreed that the library staff has the knowledge to answer students' information needs questions. Table 20 shows the results of the users' perceptions of the library as a place.

**Table 20: User perceptions of the Library as a Place**

N=105

Statements	Strongly agree		Agree		Neutral		Disagree		Strongly disagree	
	Count	%	Count	%	Count	%	Count	%	Count	%
A quiet library environment	19	18.1%	35	33.3%	24	22.9%	21	20%	6	5.7%
Library space that inspires my own study and learning	21	20%	45	42.9%	26	24.8%	11	10.5%	2	1.9%
A library space for group learning and group study	22	21%	37	35.2%	35	33.3%	10	9.5%	1	1%
A library environment that has sufficient lighting	36	34.3%	47	44.8%	16	15.2%	4	3.8%	2	1.9%
A safe and a secure place for study	32	30.5%	41	39%	19	18.1%	9	8.6%	4	3.8%

Generally, the respondents had high perceptions than of the library as a place. Higher response of 47 (44.8%) students' agreed that the library environment had sufficient lighting followed by 45 (42.9%) respondents who agreed that the library space does inspire studying

and learning. Table 21 presents the results of the users' perceptions of the general perceptions regarding the academic field and research.

**Table 21: General perceptions regarding the Academic Field and Research**  
N=105

Statements	Strongly agree		Agree		Neutral		Disagree		Strongly disagree	
	Count	%	Count	%	Count	%	Count	%	Count	%
Helps me stay abreast of developments in my field(s) of interest	17	16.2%	42	40%	36	34.3%	6	5.7%	4	3.8%
Helps me to advance in my academic field	18	17.1%	46	43.8%	32	30.5%	6	5.7%	3	2.9%
Helps me with my research needs	29	27.6%	49	46.7%	24	22.9%	3	2.9%	0	0%

In general, the respondents had high perceptions towards the services in the academic field relating to research and studying. The highest response of 49 (46.7%) agreed that the library does help with their research needs, and followed by the second highest response of 46 (43.8%) students who agreed that the library does help in advancing in their academic fields. The small proportion of respondents, four (3.8%) strongly disagreed that the library helps

them stay abreast of developments in their fields of interest and six (5.7%) disagreed on the library not helping them advance in their academic fields.

#### **4.2.3.3. The gap between users' expectations and perceptions**

This study's aim was to establish the gap between users' perception and expectations of services quality which was provided to them by the CRM library and thereafter it should identify the strengths and weaknesses of the existing library services. Furthermore, in this section the user perceptions and expectations of service quality are numerically reported and compared.

The positive and negative responses which are *strongly agree and agree, disagree and strongly disagree*, are combined together respectively to form one positive (agree), negative (disagree) and also the neutral responses from both the expectations and perceptions were added together. This is done in order to allow easier tabulation, to guarantee clarity and show a clear comparison. In table 30 below the users' expectations and perceptions and the gap between them are indicated. In the agree column in the difference column, the larger the number the bigger the gap. Also in the neutral and disagree column in the difference column, the smaller the number the smaller the gap. The abbreviations appear in the following format: **Agree= A; Neutral=N; and Disagree=D.**



**Table 22: The gap between users' expectations and perceptions**

Services	Expectations			Perceptions			Difference		
	A	N	D	A	N	D	A	N	D
<b>Comprehensive collection</b>	<b>234</b>	<b>64</b>	<b>17</b>	<b>206</b>	<b>79</b>	<b>33</b>	<b>28</b>	<b>-15</b>	<b>-16</b>
Print collection	78	24	3	65	28	11	13	-4	-8
Print journals	75	22	8	57	36	12	18	14	4
Electronic journals	81	18	6	84	15	10	-3	3	-4
<b>Access to information</b>	<b>605</b>	<b>184</b>	<b>51</b>	<b>488</b>	<b>258</b>	<b>93</b>	<b>117</b>	<b>-74</b>	<b>-42</b>
Electronic databases	88	13	4	76	18	11	12	-5	-7
Interlibrary loan	73	28	4	57	38	10	16	-10	-6
Short loan	76	23	6	51	41	13	25	-18	-7
Re-shelving of books	71	24	10	55	33	17	16	-9	-7
Re-shelving of journals	69	31	5	50	43	11	19	-12	-6
Library catalogue	84	18	3	70	28	7	14	-10	-7
Corrective action	64	31	10	46	44	15	18	-13	-5
Library webpage	80	16	9	83	13	9	-3	3	0

<b>Library equipment</b>	<b>255</b>	<b>94</b>	<b>72</b>	<b>167</b>	<b>124</b>	<b>129</b>	<b>88</b>	<b>-30</b>	<b>-57</b>
Computer workstations	54	25	26	29	34	42	25	-9	-16
Computers that work well	63	18	25	36	30	39	27	-12	-14
Photocopying facilities	70	26	9	53	32	20	17	-6	-11
Printing facilities	68	25	12	49	28	28	19	-3	-16
<b>Library staff</b>	<b>590</b>	<b>101</b>	<b>44</b>	<b>516</b>	<b>150</b>	<b>68</b>	<b>74</b>	<b>-49</b>	<b>-24</b>
Friendly staff	87	10	8	77	21	7	10	-11	1
Instill confidence in users	80	18	7	66	28	11	14	-10	-4
Readily available	88	11	6	71	24	10	17	-13	-4
Willing to help	84	14	7	81	17	7	3	-3	0
Understand service needs	83	17	5	75	20	10	8	-3	-5
Knowledgeable staff	84	16	5	74	18	12	10	-2	-7
Information skills for study	84	15	6	72	22	11	14	-7	-5

<b>Library as place</b>	<b>397</b>	<b>88</b>	<b>39</b>	<b>335</b>	<b>120</b>	<b>70</b>	<b>62</b>	<b>-32</b>	<b>-31</b>
Quiet environment	75	17	13	54	24	27	21	-7	-14
Space that inspires users	79	20	6	66	26	13	13	-6	-8
Space for group study and learning	75	22	8	59	35	11	16	-13	-3
Sufficient lighting	85	13	6	83	16	6	2	-3	0
Safe and secure space	83	16	6	73	19	13	10	-3	-7
<b>General</b>	<b>253</b>	<b>57</b>	<b>5</b>	<b>198</b>	<b>92</b>	<b>22</b>	<b>55</b>	<b>-35</b>	<b>-17</b>
Abreast of developments	82	22	1	59	36	10	23	-14	-9
Advance in academic field	84	20	1	64	32	9	20	-12	-8
Help with research needs	87	15	3	75	24	3	12	-9	0
<b>Totals</b>	<b>2334</b>	<b>588</b>	<b>228</b>	<b>1910</b>	<b>823</b>	<b>415</b>	<b>424</b>	<b>-205</b>	<b>-155</b>

The services that have a relatively big gap (difference between agree for expectations and perceptions) are the computers that work well, difference 25.7%, adequate number of computer workstations and an efficient short loan service 23.8%, the library helping the user to stay abreast of developments in their field of interest 21.9%, a quiet library environment 20%, the library helping the students advance in their academic field 19%, and adequate printing facilities 18.1%.

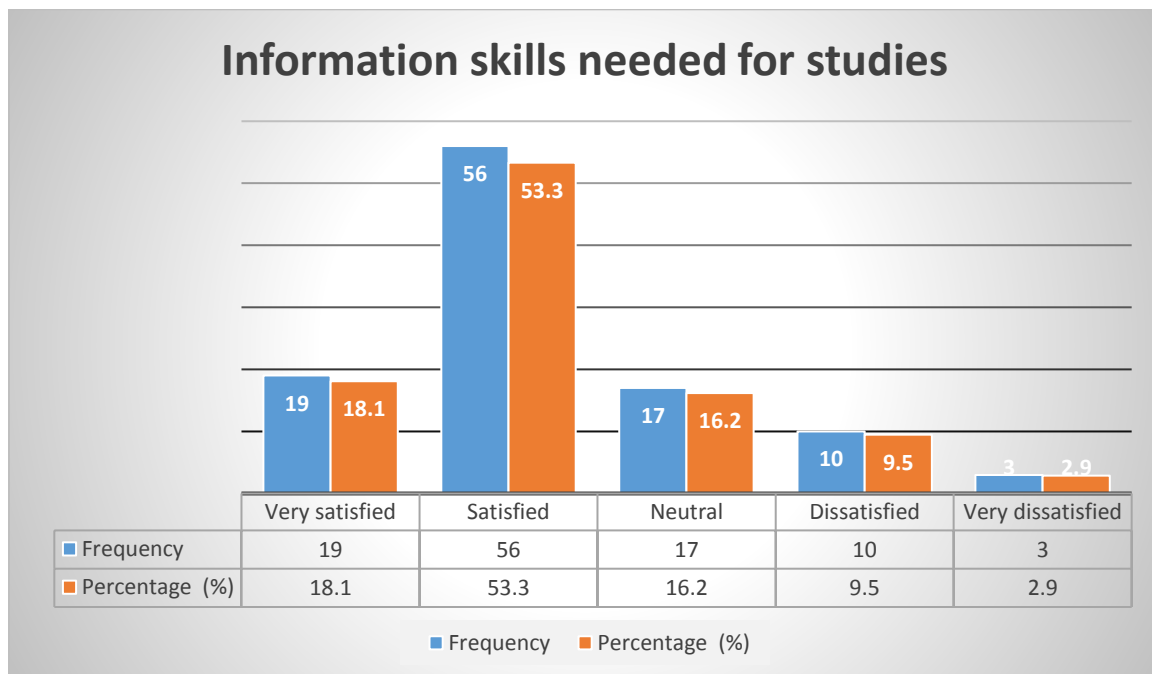
Services that have a small gap are: a library environment that has sufficient lighting, with a gap difference of 1.9%, followed by staff who are willing to help with a gap of three 2.9%, followed by staff who understand my library service needs 7.6%, followed by staff who have the knowledge to answer my question 9.7%, easily available access to electronic databases 11.4%, and adequate print collection to their needs 12.4%.

#### 4.2.4. Level of user satisfaction

This section consisted of six closed-ended questions which were asked in question 11 on the questionnaire which investigated the users’ satisfaction with the provision of information skills; the libraries support for reading, research and studying; staff services; access to information; library facilities; and the overall quality of the service provided by the library. The Figures show the number of respondents and the percentage next to them, and the tables indicate the level of user satisfaction by user category. Figure 1 shows the students’ satisfaction with information skills needed for studies.

**Figure 1: Satisfaction with information skills needed for studies**

N=105



The majority of the respondents, 53.3% indicated that they were satisfied with the library’s provision of information skills needed for their studies. These results were followed by 18.1%

respondents indicating that they were very satisfied with the information skills provided by the library and needed for their studies. There was a neutral response of 16.2% respondents' regarding provision of information skills. Only 2.9% students were very dissatisfied regarding the provision of information skills by the library. Table 22 indicates user satisfaction with information skills needed for studies by user category.

**Table 23: Satisfaction with information skills needed for studies by user category**

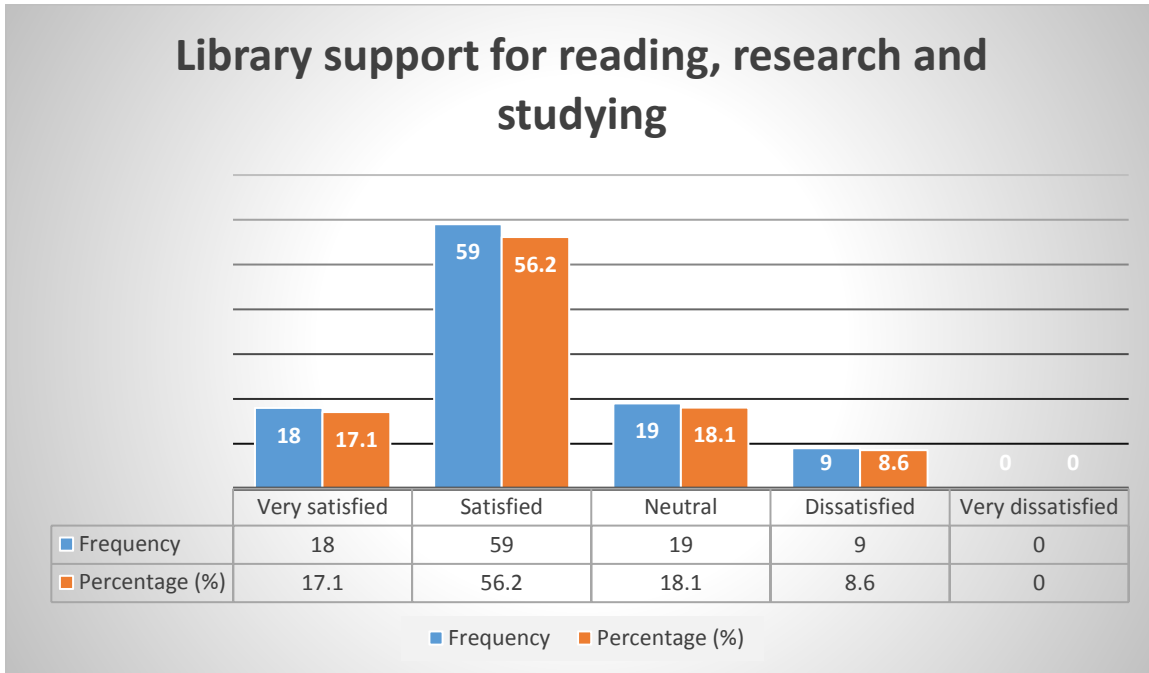
**N=105**

Description	Postgraduate diploma		Honours		Masters		PhD		Total	
	Count	%	Count	%	Count	%	Count	%	Count	%
Very satisfied	2	1.9%	9	8.6%	3	2.9%	5	4.8%	19	18.1%
Satisfied	3	2.9%	25	23.8%	13	12.4%	15	14.3%	56	53.3%
Neutral	2	1.9%	7	6.7%	6	5.7%	2	1.9%	17	16.2%
Dissatisfied	0	0%	4	3.8%	5	4.8%	1	1%	10	9.5%
Very dissatisfied	0	0%	3	2.9%	0	0%	0	0%	3	2.9%
<b>Total</b>	<b>7</b>	<b>6.7%</b>	<b>48</b>	<b>45.7%</b>	<b>27</b>	<b>25.7%</b>	<b>23</b>	<b>21.9%</b>	<b>105</b>	<b>100%</b>

In general, all the user categories show a majority of respondents who are satisfied with the library's provision of information skills needed for their studies. In postgraduate diploma 3 (2.9%), honours 25 (23.8%), Master's 13 (12.4%) and PhD 15 (14.3%) showed that they were satisfied. Only 4 (3.8%) respondents in honours, 5 (4.8%) in masters, and 15 (14.3%) in PhD indicated that they were dissatisfied with the information skills provided by the library for their studies.

Figure 2 presents the results of the user satisfaction with the library's support for reading, research and studying.

**Figure 2: Satisfaction with the library support for reading, research and studying**  
**N=105**



Eighteen (17.1%) of the respondents were very satisfied with the library’s support for reading research and studying, while the majority of the respondents 59 (56.2%) indicated that they were satisfied. This was followed by 19 (18.1%) respondents who indicated a neutral response, and a minority of 9 (8.6%) respondents indicated dissatisfaction with this service. Table 23 shows the user satisfaction of the library support for reading, research and studying by user category.

**Table 24: Satisfaction with the library support for reading, research and studying by user category**

N=105

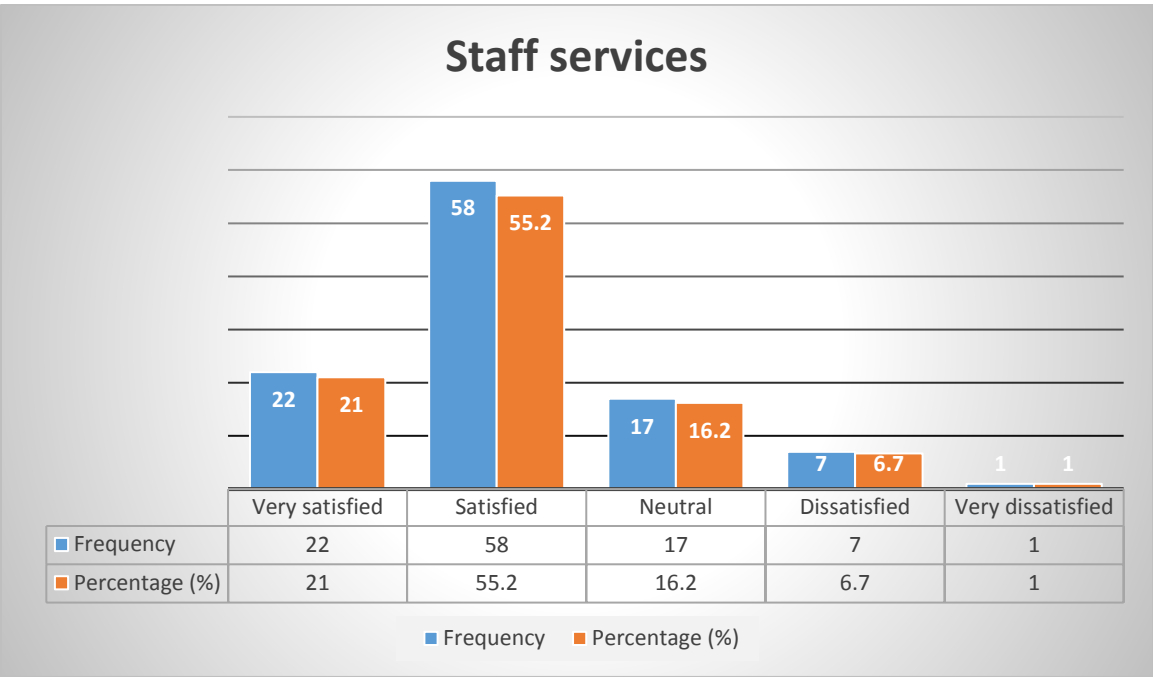
Description	Postgraduate diploma		Honours		Masters		PhD		Total	
	Count	%	Count	%	Count	%	Count	%	Count	%
Very satisfied	2	1.9%	4	3.8%	4	3.8%	8	7.6%	18	17.1%
Satisfied	4	3.8%	29	27.6%	13	12.4%	13	12.4%	59	56.2%
Neutral	1	1%	11	10.5%	5	4.8%	2	1.9%	19	18.1%
Dissatisfied	0	0%	4	3.8%	5	4.8%	0	0%	9	8.6%
Very dissatisfied	0	0%	0	0%	0	0%	0	0%	0	0%
<b>Total</b>	<b>7</b>	<b>6.7%</b>	<b>48</b>	<b>45.7%</b>	<b>27</b>	<b>25.7%</b>	<b>23</b>	<b>21.9%</b>	<b>105</b>	<b>100%</b>

Four (3.8%) of the honours students, and five (4.8%) masters students indicated that they were dissatisfied with library support for reading, research and studying. In contrast, the majority of postgraduate diploma students four (3.8%), honours 29 (27.6%), masters 13 (12.4%) and PhD (12.4%) indicated that they were satisfied with the library support for reading, research and studying.

Figure 3 shows the user satisfaction with services provided by the staff.

**Figure 3: Satisfaction with the staff services**

N=105



One respondent (1%) indicated dissatisfaction with the staff services. In contrast to this was, 80 (76.2%) respondents who were satisfied with the staff services, Seventeen (16.2%) respondents indicated a neutral response with regards to the staff services.

User satisfaction with regards to staff services by user category is shown in table 24.



**Table 25: Satisfaction with the staff services by user category**  
N=105

Description	Postgraduate diploma		Honours		Masters		PhD		Total	
	Count	%	Count	%	Count	%	Count	%	Count	%
Very satisfied	3	2.9%	8	7.6%	4	3.8%	7	6.7%	22	21%
Satisfied	4	3.8%	22	21%	16	15.2%	16	15.2%	58	55.2%
Neutral	0	0%	13	12.4%	4	3.8%	0	0%	17	16.2%
Dissatisfied	0	0%	5	4.8%	2	1.9%	0	0%	7	6.7%
Very dissatisfied	0	0%	0	0%	1	1%	0	0%	1	1%
<b>Total</b>	<b>7</b>	<b>6.7%</b>	<b>48</b>	<b>45.7%</b>	<b>27</b>	<b>25.7%</b>	<b>23</b>	<b>21.9%</b>	<b>105</b>	<b>100%</b>

Table 24 shows that only five (4.8%) honours and two (1.9%) master's respondents indicated that they were dissatisfied with the staff services. On the other hand, the majority of the respondents from the postgraduate diploma four (3.8%), 22 (21%) honours, 16 (15.2%) masters and 16 (15.2%) PhD indicated that they were satisfied with the staff services.

Figure 4 presents the results of user satisfaction with access to information.

**Figure 4: Satisfaction with access to information**

N=105

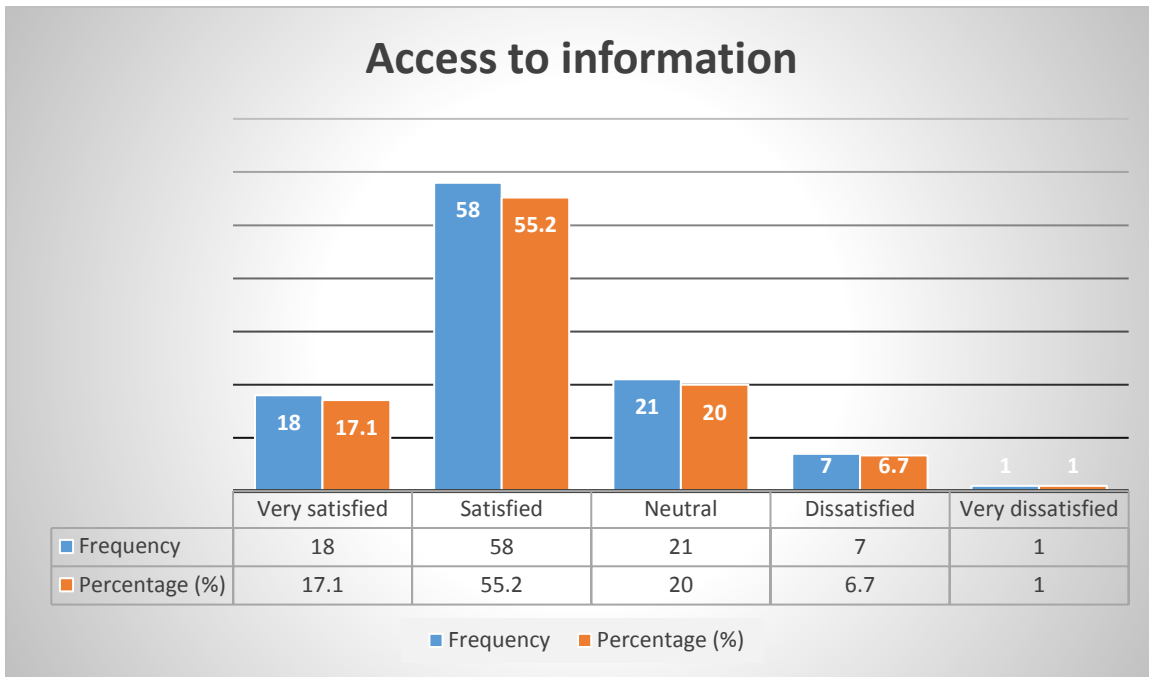


Figure 4 indicates that only one (1%) respondents was very dissatisfied with access to information. Although the majority of the respondents of 76 (72.3%) indicated that they were satisfied with the access to information, 7 (6.7%) of respondents were dissatisfied with it, only 21 (20%) of respondents indicated that they were neutral regarding access to information.

Table 25 indicates user satisfaction with access to information by user category.

**Table 26: Satisfaction with access to information by user category**

N=105

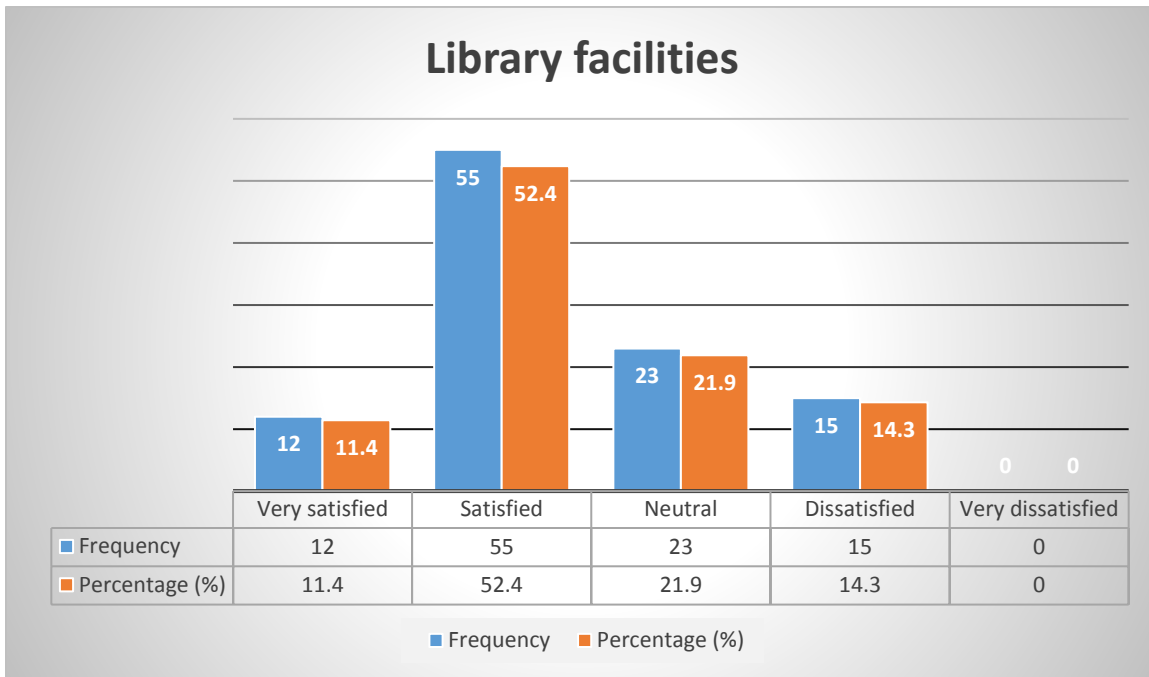
Description	Postgraduate diploma		Honours		Masters		PhD		Total	
	Count	%	Count	%	Count	%	Count	%	Count	%
Very satisfied	2	1.9%	4	3.8%	5	4.8%	7	6.7%	18	17.1%
Satisfied	4	3.8%	29	27.6%	10	9.5%	15	14.3%	58	55.2%
Neutral	1	1%	12	11.4%	8	7.6%	0	0%	21	20%
Dissatisfied	0	0%	2	1.9%	4	3.8%	1	1%	7	6.7%
Very dissatisfied	0	0%	1	1%	0	0%	0	0%	1	1%
<b>Total</b>	<b>7</b>	<b>6.7%</b>	<b>48</b>	<b>45.7%</b>	<b>27</b>	<b>25.7%</b>	<b>23</b>	<b>21.9%</b>	<b>105</b>	<b>100%</b>

Table 26 shows that 29 (27.6%) honours students who were satisfied. Fifteen (14.3%) PhD respondents indicated that they were satisfied with access to information while only one (1%) respondent showed dissatisfaction regarding access to information. Ten (9.5%) Masters Students' indicated that they were satisfied with access to information while four (3.8%) showed that they were dissatisfied. A small percentage (1.9%) of honours respondents indicated that they were dissatisfied with access to information.

Figure 5 presents the results of user satisfaction with the library facilities.

**Figure 5: Satisfaction with the library facilities**

N=105



The majority of the respondents 55 (52.4%) indicated that they were satisfied with the library facilities. Some respondents, 15 (14.3%) indicated dissatisfaction with the library facilities. A number of respondents 23 (21.9%) indicated that they were very satisfied with regard to library facilities while 12 (11.4%) were neutral. No respondents indicated that they were very dissatisfied with the library facilities.

In table 26, the user satisfaction with the library facilities is illustrated by user category.

**Table 27: Satisfaction with the library facilities by user category**

N=105

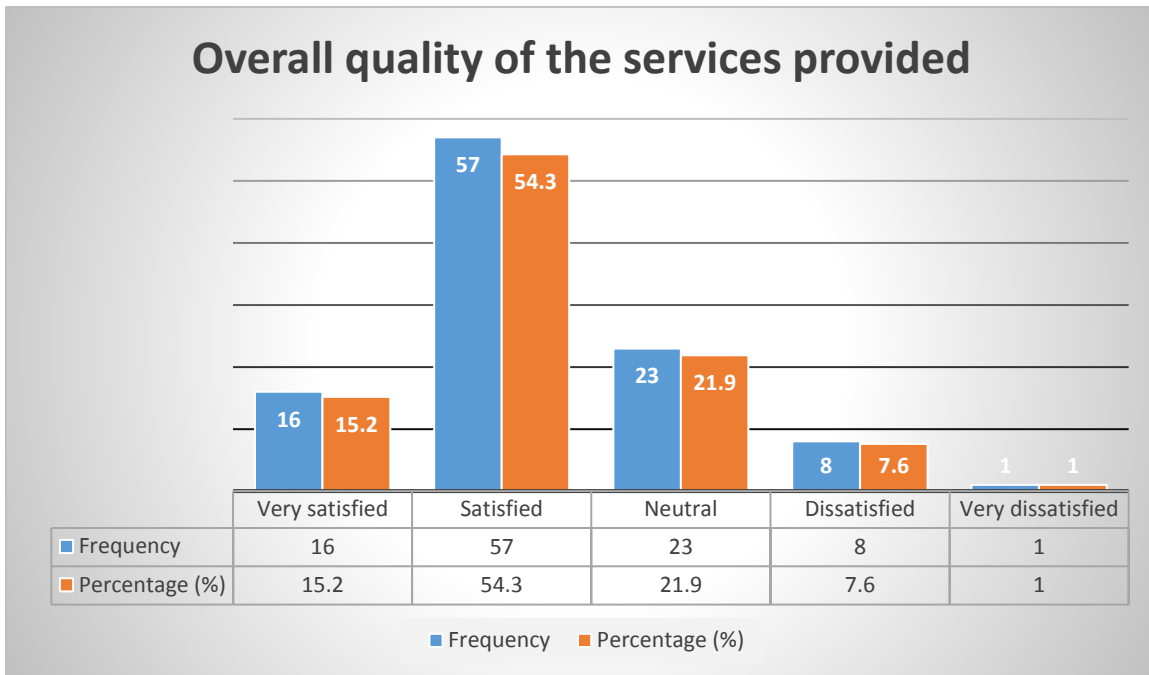
Description	Postgraduate diploma		Honours		Masters		PhD		Total	
	Count	%	Count	%	Count	%	Count	%	Count	%
Very satisfied	1	1%	2	1.9%	4	3.8%	5	4.8%	12	11.4%
Satisfied	4	3.8%	24	22.9%	11	10.5%	16	15.2%	55	52.4%
Neutral	2	1.9%	13	12.4%	6	5.7%	2	1.9%	23	21.9%
Dissatisfied	0	0%	9	8.6%	6	5.7%	0	0%	15	14.3%
Very dissatisfied	0	0%	0	0%	0	0%	0	0%	0	0%
<b>Total</b>	<b>7</b>	<b>6.7%</b>	<b>48</b>	<b>45.7%</b>	<b>27</b>	<b>25.7%</b>	<b>23</b>	<b>21.9%</b>	<b>105</b>	<b>100%</b>

Table 26 illustrates that five (4.8%) PhD students were very satisfied and 16 (15.2%) were satisfied while two (1.9%) were neutral with regard to the library facilities. None of the PhD students showed dissatisfaction regarding the library facility. The majority of honours respondents 24 (22.9%) showed satisfaction whilst nine (8.6%) showed dissatisfaction and 13 (12.4%) indicated neutrality regarding the library facilities. Eleven (10.5%) masters students indicated satisfaction whilst six (5.7%) indicated that they were neutral and dissatisfied respectively. The majority of postgraduate diploma respondents four (3.8%) indicated that they were satisfied and two (1.9%) indicated a neutral response with regard to library facilities.

Figure 6 shows the results of the user satisfaction with the overall quality of the services provided.

**Figure 6: Satisfaction with the overall quality of the services provided**

N=105



The majority of 57 (54.3%) students indicated that the overall quality of the services provided by the library was satisfactory, whilst 23 (21.9%) respondents indicated a neutral response on the overall quality of service provided by the library. A minority response of eight (7.6%) dissatisfied and one (1%) respondents indicated that they were very dissatisfied with the overall quality of services provided by the library.

Table 27 indicates the user satisfaction with the overall quality of the services provided by user category.

**Table 28: Satisfaction with the overall quality of the services provided by user category  
N=105**

Description	Postgraduate diploma		Honours		Masters		PhD		Total	
	Count	%	Count	%	Count	%	Count	%	Count	%
Very satisfied	1	1%	6	5.7%	5	4.8%	4	3.8%	16	15.2%
Satisfied	4	3.8%	24	22.9%	12	11.4%	17	16.2%	57	54.3%
Neutral	2	1.9%	12	11.4%	7	6.7%	2	1.9%	23	21.9%
Dissatisfied	0	0%	5	4.8%	3	2.9%	0	0%	8	7.6%
Very dissatisfied	0	0%	1	1%	0	0%	0	0%	1	1%
<b>Total</b>	<b>7</b>	<b>6.7%</b>	<b>48</b>	<b>45.7%</b>	<b>27</b>	<b>25.7%</b>	<b>23</b>	<b>21.9%</b>	<b>105</b>	<b>100%</b>

A majority of respondents in each category, four (3.8%) postgraduate diploma, 24 (22.9%) honours, 12 (11.4%) masters and 17 (16.2%) PhD indicated that they were satisfied with the overall quality of services provided by the library. Only five (4.8%) honours and three (2.9%) masters' respondents indicated that they were dissatisfied with the overall quality services provided by the library. Only two (1.9%) postgraduate diploma students, 12 (11.4%) honours, seven (6.7%), and two (1.9%) PhD students indicated a neutral (undecided) response on the overall service quality provided by the library.

#### **4.2.5. User comments about Cecil Renaud main library services**

There were two open-ended questions in the questionnaire which demanded qualitative data. The questions were aimed at soliciting more thought from the respondents on the quality of services which were rendered to the postgraduate students. These questions gave the postgraduate students the opportunity to voice their thoughts and views about the services of the library as a whole.

Question 10 on the questionnaire gave the respondents a platform to mention any services they could think of which were not included or mentioned in question 8 and 9 of the questionnaire. Another open-ended question was in question 12 of the questionnaire and it gave the respondents a platform to comment further about the CRM library services in the space which was provided to them. The results of these questions are combined together because the comments were related.

Out of 105 respondents, 54 (51.4%) added comments to at least one of the open-ended questions (question 12). Out of the seven postgraduate diploma respondents only three (42.9%) offered comments; of the 48 honours respondents only 27 (56.3%) offered comments; of the 27 masters respondents only 11 (40.7%) offered comments; and of the 23 PhD respondents only 13 (56.5%) offered comments.

Table 29 shows the summary of comments made by the respondents in their category and table 30a up until table 30f shows the full-text of respondents' comments, which are grouped in accordance to the broad categories of services which were under investigation. Most of the respondents chose to offer more than one comment in each broad category.

**Table 29: Summary of respondents' comments by user category**

**N=54**

User category	No. of comments	Percentage (%)
Postgraduate diploma	3	5.6%
Honours	27	50%
Masters	11	20.4%
PhD	13	24%
<b>Total</b>	<b>54</b>	<b>100%</b>



**Table 30a: Respondents' comments on library as a place**

N=20

Description: Library as a place	No. of respondents	Percentage (%)
A need to supply more postgraduate rooms for group discussions with extended hours.	7	35%
Enhancing security in the building and on every floor	3	15%
Routine checks of students bags to make sure they have not taken anything that does not belong to them.	2	10%
Students are noisy most of the times	6	30%
Facilities (workstations) for disabled students should be installed. Also installing hardware and software for the visually impaired. And books in braille for the visually impaired	1	5%
The library should get comfortable furniture (chairs, etc.)	1	5%
<b>Total</b>	<b>20</b>	<b>100%</b>

**Table 30b: Respondents' comments on access to information**

N=12

<b>Description: access to information</b>	<b>No. of respondents</b>	<b>Percentage (%)</b>
A ready available guide on how to reference (cite) at all times.	1	8.3%
Depending on the funding aspect, the library should short loan equipment like laptops and recorders to aid users in their studies	1	8.3%
Library catalogue is very useful and helpful	1	8.3%
The need to learn more about Endnote and training on improving search skills.	1	8.3%
A need to improve the shelving of books and journals	2	16.7%
Increasing of special collection to avoid a queue of a limited number of books	1	8.3%
Off-campus access to databases and catalogue and other services should be improved	3	25%
The issue of books being lost or not on their shelf needs to be addressed	2	16.7%
<b>Total</b>	<b>12</b>	<b>100%</b>

**Table 30c: Respondents' comments on library equipment**

N=20

<b>Description: library equipment</b>	<b>No. of respondents</b>	<b>Percentage (%)</b>
Work on improving the printing the printing and photocopying facilities, a lot of them malfunction yet there are very few of them and a lot of students.	7	35%
Some of the library computers have problems and they need to be maintained.	5	25%
There are not enough computers in the library	6	30%
The provide scanning facilities	2	10%
<b>Total</b>	<b>20</b>	<b>100%</b>

**Table 30d: Respondents' comments on staff services**

N=5

<b>Description: Library staff</b>	<b>No. of respondents</b>	<b>Percentage (%)</b>
As good as most of the staff are, some are unfriendly and not approachable.	2	40%
They have a good staff who are helpful and well informed	2	40%
Visibility of staff is necessary. They should not be in one place	1	20%
<b>Total</b>	<b>5</b>	<b>100%</b>

**Table 30e: Respondents' comments on the comprehensive collection**

**N=15**

<b>Description:</b>	<b>Library</b>	<b>No. of respondents</b>	<b>Percentage (%)</b>
A need for current and latest books in all disciplines		4	26.7%
Limited or lacking amount of current books purchased		3	20%
The outdated books are most inadequate in present collections.		2	13.3%
Making available more databases for access to academic journals		4	26.7%
Making current thesis/dissertations available electronically		1	6.7%
Providing multilingual books and also foreign books		1	6.7%
<b>Total</b>		<b>15</b>	<b>100%</b>

**Table 30f: Respondents' comments on other services**

N=15

Description: Other	No. of respondents	Percentage (%)
I think the library is well organised and resourced to allow proper learning and studying	10	66.7%
I'd too see the library is open 24 hours a day	1	6.7%
It provides adequate printed electronic books and journals.	2	13.3%
They offer good services for students and also cater for various research needs through the workshops they conduct.	1	6.7%
The staff is also friendly and supportive	1	6.7%
<b>Total</b>	<b>15</b>	<b>100%</b>

The majority of comments were offered on both the library as place and library equipment (Table 30a and 30c) with 20 (37%) comments, followed by comprehensive collection and comments on other services (Table 30e and 30f) with 15 (27.8%), comments on access to information (Table 30b) were 12 (22.2%). The area that had less comments was on the staff service (Table 30d) with five (9.3%).

An area that had most comments was on “I think the library is well organised and resourced to allow proper learning and studying” ten (66.7%), “A need to supply more postgraduate rooms for group discussions with extended hours” seven (35%) and “Work on improving the printing and photocopying facilities, a lot of them malfunction yet they are few of them and a lot of students”.

#### **4.4. Summary**

In this chapter the validation of each section of the questionnaire has been given and the results of the survey of the sample population of users of the CRM library, which was conducted by means of self-administered questionnaires. The results of the respondents were tabulated and further interpretations were expanded below each table. All the tables in this chapter had a clear description, counts and percentages.

The research results relating to library usage patterns; user expectations and perceptions of service quality; level of user satisfaction; user comments about the CRM library services; and the gap between user expectations and perceptions were presented.

## CHAPTER 5: DISCUSSION OF RESULTS

### 5.1. Introduction

This chapter discusses the results of the study in the light of the research problem, objectives and the reviewed literature. The purpose of this study was to determine postgraduate students' perceptions of the library at the University of KwaZulu-Natal as an environment for reading, studying and conducting research. There were five sections in the questionnaire which included demographic information, library usage, users' perceptions, users' expectations and user satisfaction. These sections mostly had closed-ended questions and there were only two open-ended questions, which relied on the research questions of the study. These research questions were to establish the perceptions of the library as an environment for reading, studying, and conducting research and they were:

- What are the postgraduate students' expectations of service quality?
- What are the postgraduate students' perception of service quality?
- What is the gap between the existence of users' expectations and perception of quality service?
- Are the postgraduate students' satisfied with the service provided at CRM library?
- What are the postgraduate students' perceptions of the library as a reading, studying or conducting research environment?

This chapter discusses the results of the data collected using a self-administered questionnaire that was presented in the previous chapter. The service in the library which encompasses the majority of questions about the library are grouped in to six categories. These categories include comprehensive collection, access to information, library staff, library equipment, library as a place and general. The gap between users' expectations and perceptions of service quality is discussed. According to Simba (2006: 93) the gap difference is considered significant if it is greater than 25% and insignificant if it is less than 25%. However, with regard to this study and response rate it has received, most of the gap differences will be less than 25%, so the focus will be on the largest gap difference in each category.

These six categories have been answered according to four questions which are the postgraduate students' perceptions and expectations, the gap between the existences of

expectations and perceptions of service quality, and the level of satisfaction of the postgraduate students with regards to the service provided at CRM library. Lastly, remarks are made on the importance of the instrument used and the suggested approach to service quality assessment. The results which are discussed in this section relate only to the postgraduate students responses to the questions.

## **5.2. Demographic data of respondents**

This section described the biographical information of the respondents in relation to the demographic characteristics like: gender; age group; academic discipline; and registered qualification.

### **5.2.1. Gender, age group, discipline and qualification**

There was a major distinction with the response on gender with 42 (40%) respondents being males and the females being the majority with 63 (60%). Furthermore, the majority of the respondents 70 (66.7%) were between the ages of 21 and 30. The largest group of respondents with regard to the qualification were the honours 48 (45.7%) in the academic discipline of policy and development studies 30 (28.6%). This is because of the fact that they had most student enrolment in the School of Social Sciences.

## **5.3. Library usage patterns**

This section discusses the results related to the frequency of usage of the library and its resources, the non-library gateways (Yahoo, Google, etc.) and the library gateways (e-catalogue). According to Fleming-May (2011: 298) “attempts have been made to directly confront and contemplate what is defined when one uses a library and its resources have not been especially robust, there have been some notable attempts at improving and understanding the library”. In the traditional days, libraries have relied on input and output measures like door counts, circulation of item statistics, and reference communications as a quantifiable dependent for library use (Fleming-May, 2011). However, in today’s world an individual that uses the library can be defined as someone who accesses the libraries resources anywhere.



### **5.3.1. Frequency of use of the library and its resources for reading, studying and research**

As stated in chapter one (page 1), a university library is defined as the heart of the academic community which provides a venue for students, lecturers and researchers to conduct their academic activities and advance their knowledge. The general response in this section stated that the library and its resources was used on a weekly basis 39 (37.1%) by honours students 17 (16.2%). It is interesting to note that there was a minority of ten masters (9.5%) and PhD students seven (6.7%) who mostly use the library either on a monthly or quarterly basis. This may be that honours students when they visit the library, they usually go there to study as opposed to masters and PhD students who in most cases use the library for research needs. Masters and PhD students in most cases use electronic journals which they find on databases and it can be assumed it is the reason why they mostly use the library monthly or quarterly.

It was stated by Tuamsuk, Kwiecien and Sarawanawong (2013) that the library should collaborate with academic instructors to provide learning resources which are deemed appropriate to the student's curriculum. Academic libraries should be well informed of all the programmes which are offered in the university, and should analyse how far the existing learning resources respond to the needs of the academic instructors and their students.

### **5.3.2. Frequency of use of non-gateways for information**

The majority of the respondents in each qualification use non-library gateways for information on a daily basis 87 (82.9%). The largest group that uses this service are the honours respondents 38 (36.2%) and 26 (24.8%) respondents between the ages of 31 and 50 collectively use the Internet daily. This probably shows that the Internet is more appealing to the "younger" respondents than it is to the "older" respondents. It can be assumed that postgraduate diploma and honours students are unable to utilise several databases to access information for their studies as opposed to masters and PhD students who are required to access databases of all kinds for access to information. Furthermore, masters and PhD students might be more knowledgeable about the different databases relevant to their respective fields compared to postgraduate diploma and honours students who have not been exposed to critical research.

### **5.3.3. Frequency of use of the library gateways for accessing information**

The major response to the frequent use of the library gateways was found on a weekly basis 39 (37.1%) and it came from the honours students 17 (16.2%) who were using it. The comparison of frequency use of library gateways is that 22 (21%) females use the library gateways more than the males (18 or 17.1%) on a weekly basis. It is significant to note that most of the masters 10 (9.5%) respondents use the library gateways on a monthly basis, compared with most of PhD 10 (9.5%) respondents who use them on a daily basis. With the majority of honours students using the library gateways on a weekly basis, it can be assumed that in their level of study requires them to consult academic books and search for information on the internet using Google or Yahoo as their search engine, as opposed to masters and PhD students who in most cases consult print and electronic journals.

### **5.4. Comprehensive collection**

Comprehensive collection refers to adequate books, journals (print) and electronic journals that address the needs of the postgraduate library users and fulfill the objectives of the parent institution, which is known to be research and learning.

According to Oyewole and Adetimiring (2015) African universities like those in Nigeria still find it difficult to provide efficient and effective resources. This is because of funding being a challenge facing university libraries resulting in a decrease in the acquisition of information resources like journals (print or electronic). This is because the different types of university libraries in Nigeria have a clearly defined policy on how they receive their funding. That policy comes from the National Universities Commission (NUC) whose statute states that the provision of funds that recur annually from parent institution, should allocate 10% of the budget to the library.

In relation to South Africa, a report by International Federation of Library Associations and Institutions (IFLA) published in (2015) states that academic and research libraries are increasingly playing a crucial role in the support of teaching, learning and research. They have emerged as intensely technologically enabled and driven environments. The UKZN libraries (2014) website on the code of conduct section states that the users have the right to expect a library environment suitable for reading, study, and other activities in support of research and instructional programmes; and access to library material. It should also be noted

that CRM is one of 12 libraries in UKZN and it can therefore be assumed that the funding which is received is divided centrally among these 12 libraries. In the current study, it was commented by four of the respondents that CRM library should “make available more databases for access to academic journals”. This is one concern among other concerns which the respondents had and they are discussed in 5.4.1 and 5.4.2.

#### **5.4.1. Discussion of closed-ended questions relating to the comprehensive collection**

The statement in this category refers to the adequate books and journals (print and electronic). The majority of the respondents 81 (77.1%) expect electronic journals for their relevant subject areas; 78 (77.3%) and 75 (71.4%) expect adequate print books and journals respectively. In regard to print book collection, two respondents commented that the CRM library “provides outdated books” and there is an inadequate collection of current or latest collection. Only a few respondents had a negative perceptions in relation to the comprehensive collection and they are as follow: 11 (10.5%) experienced inadequate print (books) collection; 12 (11.4%) inadequate print journals; and 10 (9.5%) experienced inadequate electronic journals. A majority response in the close ended questions regarding expectations of comprehensive collection came from the electronic journals which it can be assumed why it has a low negative experience. This could be that there are less active (did not renew subscriptions of other electronic resources) electronic databases in UKZN, as compared to the previous years.

#### **5.4.2. Discussion of open-ended questions relating to the comprehensive collection**

With regard to the library collection, only 15 respondents commented what they would like to see in CRM library. Four students (26.7%) stated that the library is in need of current and latest collection in all disciplines and provision of more databases for access to academic journals; three students (20%) commented that they “lack current books”; and two students (13.3%) stated that there were as many outdated books as there were current or latest books.

### **5.4.3. Gap difference relating to the comprehensive collection**

The gap difference between users' expectations and perceptions of service quality in this category was significantly low (-3) for adequate electronic journals. In light of the comments in 5.4.2, the major gap difference in this category is found in the print collection (books) 13 (12.4%) and 18 (17.1%) in print journals. The major gap in this category implies that the library has not met its users' expectation with regard to adequate print books and journals.

### **5.5. Access to information**

Access to information for this study refers to easily available access to electronic databases, prompt interlibrary loan, an efficient short loan, prompt re-shelving of books and journals, catalogue that is clear and has useful information, prompt corrective action regarding missing books and journals, and a webpage that is clear and has useful information that addresses the accessibility issues to library resources and information.

In chapter one, it is stated that the strategic objective of an academic library as a service organisation is to sustain the standard of service quality. However, this objective cannot be achieved if the resources and information required are not accessible. The major objective of the library is to ensure that an open range of the required resources and information are assimilated. The information and resources should be properly stored, preserved, and organised in such a way that there is easy accessibility.

Hoppenfeld and Arant-Kaspar (2010) mention that there have been cases in Texas A&M University and their academic libraries which access to information, more specifically the course reserves collection, are strictly controlled. The situation there was that the student could only check out the materials (books and journals) for four hours but they were not allowed to leave the building. What they were trying to emphasize was the security of these high demand items as opposed to student access to critical course information. The issue was not only on the print material, but also on the audiovisual collection (records or films), which were only accessible by physically visiting the library.

In the African context, Tanzania to be specific, Simba (2006) demonstrates that the users of IUCo library had higher expectations of what the library should offer to them, which were services that enabled them to have easy access to information. The services that were not operating as expected were a prompt interlibrary loan service and the library staff taking

corrective action regarding missing books and journals. Their experiences with the actual services provided by the library is that some were poorly provided and others were not. The services that were perceived to be provided poorly were interlibrary loan services, short loan services, adequate electronic databases and a catalogue that was clear and has useful information. In South Africa, Durban to be specific, Naidu (2009) demonstrates that the users of MUT library also had higher expectations and lower perceptions of services of easy access to electronic databases and adequate print library collection. In this study, the CRM library users were concerned with the short loan and the re-shelving of books and journals.

### **5.5.1. Discussion of closed-ended questions relating to access of information**

CRM library users expect these services to be available to them. For instance, 88 (83.8%) of students expected easy access to electronic databases while 73 (69.5%) students expected a prompt interlibrary loan services; 76 (72.4%) an efficient short loan services; 71 (67.6%) re-shelving of books; 69 (65.7%) re-shelving of journals; 84 (80%) a catalogue that is clear and has useful information; 64 (61%) a prompt corrective action regarding missing books and journals and 80 (76.2%) expect a webpage that is clear and has useful information. These responses validate the assertion that the users of CRM library have higher expectations of what it is the library should offer to them, which is the service that allows them to easily access information.

On the other hand, the results showed that users' perceptions of the actual library services provided to them illustrates that some of the services in this category are richly provided, for instance, 9 (8.6%) have a low perception for a webpage that is clear and has useful information; 10 (9.5%) for a prompt interlibrary loan service; 11 (10.5%) for easily available access to electronic databases and re-shelving of journals; 13 (12.4%) for an efficient short loan service; 15 (14.3%) for prompt corrective action regarding missing books and journals; and 17 (16.2%) for re-shelving of books. The most expected services with the least negative perceptions are the easily available access to electronic databases and with the most expectations and the least perceived service is a webpage that is clear and has useful information.

### **5.5.2. Discussion of open-ended questions relating to access to information**

The open-ended questions in this category are the third largest out of all the categories. There were 12 comments regarding access to information and the majority of the comments were on off-campus access to databases, catalogue and other services which need to be improved (3), followed by (2) comments being on a need to improve re-shelving of the collections (books and journals) and address the issue of books being lost or being shelved wrongly. A suggestive comment was made which stated that depending on the funding aspect, a consideration for the library to lend equipment like on short loan, laptops and recorders to the users who do not have them. As ambitious as this is, there are ways in which it can possibly work. According to Sharpe (2009: 337) the circulation of laptops in an academic library would be popular, this helps the users by providing them with a greater level of flexibility.

The willingness of libraries to respond to user demands, the loaning of laptops has become a popular service at many colleges and universities (Sharpe, 2009: 338). The author further states that the University of Houston (M.D Anderson library) after a very successful pilot programme provided this service. This is how it was carried out, several laptops were purchased by the library, and these devices were stored in a locking storage which was designed to house and recharge them. The circulation desk of the library dealt with the circulation of the laptops which were loaned to the users for three hours. This was a single service point in the Anderson library and it was staffed by staff members and students. The size of the library brought in the consideration of security. The storage carts were kept in a separate room behind the circulation desk which could only be accessed by the library staff. Each laptop was affixed with a barcode, and added to as an item on the integrated library system (ILS). A security strip was also attached to the laptops, in case a student attempted to remove the laptop from the library.

Due to the financial constraints which are faced by libraries in developing countries, this initiative might not be feasible. Libraries in Africa are struggling as it is to provide adequate computer workstations and the library space might be a barrier to achieving this.

### **5.5.3. Gap difference relating to access of information**

The study indicates that there is a gap between users' expectation and perceptions of service quality relating to access to information. The extent of gaps in this category vary from one service to another. The gap between the expectations and perceptions indicates a significant gap for an efficient short loan service 25 (23.8%); re-shelving of journals 19 (18.1%); prompt corrective action regarding missing books and journals 18 (17.1%); prompt interlibrary loan service and re-shelving of books 16 (15.2%); catalogue that is clear and has useful information 14 (13.3%); easily available access to electronic journals 12 (11.4%); and a webpage that is clear and has useful information -3 (2.9%). The service that has a big gap in this section is the efficient short loan service.

### **5.6. Library equipment**

This category was about an adequate number of computer workstations, computers that work well, adequate photocopying and printing facilities. The library equipment in this study plays a vital role in satisfying users' needs. Relevant resources are not all the library users expect to receive and do their work with but they also require good equipment and facilities as well. The absence of these resources and facilities means that the library is not well equipped to assist users and satisfying their information needs.

When this study outlines library equipment, it refers to the Information and Communication Technologies (ICTs). This equipment includes photocopy and printing machines and computers and their services. These ICT facilities are vital in today's academic libraries. They assist in the access of information for the library users, for instance a computer which is linked to the World Wide Web (www) gives the user access to a wide range of information, most of which can be retrieved with no charge to the users and the library offering the services. Moore (2001) states that establishing a computer lab requires a healthy amount of funding, and priority should be afforded to the planning of the budget due to the high cost of equipment, installing of certain systems and having a staff to manage them. The issue of maintenance contracts may seem expensive, however achievable.

### **5.6.1. Discussion of closed-ended questions relating to the library equipment**

The study illustrated that the users of CRM library 54 (51.4%) expect an adequate number of computer workstations; 63 (60%) computers that work well; 70 (66.7%) photocopying facilities and 68 (64.8%) expect printing facilities services. These facilities are expected to be available in adequate numbers and perform as expected when needed. In this study, the respondents' perceptions of actual services provided in terms of this particular aspect showed that their experiences were generally negative.

For instance, about 42 (40%) respondents perceived computer workstations as adequate while 39 (37.1%) felt that computers worked well with 28 (26.7%) students of the view that there were adequate printing facilities; and 20 (19%) perceived that there were adequate photocopying facilities. The results show that the highest expectations and lowest experience in relation to the library equipment were adequate photocopying facilities.

### **5.6.2. Discussion of open-ended questions relating to the library equipment**

Library equipment plays a vital role in meeting users' expectations. This category of open-ended questions has one of the highest responses of 20 comments. The comments in this study were very insightful and offer valuable information about the library's equipment. Seven (35%) users indicated that the library needs to work on improving the printing and photocopying facilities. Some comments suggested that there were not enough computers in the library 6 (30%) and other comments suggest that the computers that are available in the library have problems and they need maintenance or replacement 5 (25%). Only two (10%) comments suggested that the library should provide scanning facilities.

### **5.6.3. Gap difference relating to library equipment**

The facilities in this category showed a large gap in all four statements. The first major gap of 27 (25.7%) was on the computers that work well followed by 25 (23.8%) which was on the adequate number of computer workstations while 19 (18.1%) was on the adequate printing facilities and 17 (16.2%) on the adequate number of photocopying facilities. This can be assumed that the services in this category were unsatisfactory for the respondents due



to the large gaps that were identified on each service. However, the service with the biggest gap in this category was on the computers that work well. This is because in CRM library at the research common room (workstation for master's and PhD students) the computers that are available are either not working or are not enough to accommodate the large numbers of students. On many occasions, the library staff could be seen attempting to service and maintain them. It can be suggested that the CRM library replace the computers with new ones or have a maintenance staff on standby to fix them.

## **5.7. Staff services**

In the library staff category, the study focused on staff who are friendly; staff who instill confidence in users; staff who are readily available to respond to queries; staff who are willing to help; staff who understand users library service needs; staff which have the knowledge to answer users questions; and staff who provide users with the information skills needed for work or study. Academic or any other library needs qualified, honest, committed and passionate staff members in order to fulfil the library's vision which is the provision of resources to meet users' information needs. It is important to take note that the library staff must provide numerous services to these users, and these services are supposed to address their diverse needs. A library is just a building with a lot of resources, however with a committed and willing staff to assist the users it becomes an information centre which is the hub of any information and knowledge generating institution.

Dimarco and Van Dam (1998) assert that an academic library staff know that the library serves alternative purposes other than that of preserver of the human record or gateway to information. It is believed that most students are aware of this and that they would define the library as a social hub.

### **5.7.1. Discussion of closed-ended questions relating to staff services**

The study revealed that the CRM library users have higher expectations concerning the library staff. In ascending order the services with higher expectations were the staff who are readily available to respond to queries, 88 (83.8%); staff who are friendly, 87 (82.9%); 84 (80%) for staff who are willing to help, staff who have the knowledge to answer questions and staff who provide users with information skills needed for work or study; 83 (79%) on the staff who understand users library needs; and 80 (76.2%) for staff who instill confident

in its users. In contrast, there were a few respondents who had a lower experience with the library staff.

For instance, 12 (11.4%) users perceived the library staff as knowledgeable enough to answer their questions; while 11 (10.5%) believed that library staff instilled confidence in users and provided users with information skills for work or studying and ten (9.5%) felt that staff were readily available to help the users and understand library users' needs; and seven (6.7%) students believed that staff were friendly and were willing to help. The services that had high expectations were the staff who are readily available to respond to queries and the services that had a low perceptions were the staff who are friendly and are willing to help.

The students' high expectation with regards to the library staff being readily available to attend to their queries calls for professional assistance for staff at the front desk services. The response regarding the CRM library were similar to those of Naidu's (2009) study on MUT library: the students' concern relating to library staff was in terms of availability, friendliness, helpfulness and willingness to help users in satisfying their information needs. In this study, a few respondents perceived the library staff as unfriendly and unwilling to help, but also perceived the library staff as knowledgeable enough to answer their questions. The library staff in CRM library just need to avail themselves to the users and respond to their queries in a friendly and helpful way.

### **5.7.2. Discussion of open-ended questions relating to staff services**

The study revealed that there were a few (5) comments given by the respondents with regard to staff services. Two (40%) of the comments were related to the friendliness of the staff: "as good as most of the staff are, some are unfriendly and not approachable"; two (40%) of the comments were actually positive and related to the statement of staff having the knowledge to answer users questions, "they have a good staff who are helpful and well informed"; and lastly one (20%) relates to the staff being readily available to respond to queries, and it states that "visibility of staff is necessary, they should not be in one place". These comments to a certain extent can be viewed as being helpful.

### **5.7.3. Gap difference relating to staff services**

This study revealed that in this category there was no huge gap difference relating to staff services as compared to other categories. The biggest gap in ascending order were 17 (16.2%)

comments on the staff who are readily available; 14 (13.3%) followed by those on the staff who instill confidence in users and staff who provide users with information skills for their work or study, while 10 (9.5%) were on the staff who are friendly and staff who have the knowledge to answer users questions with, 8 (7.6%) on staff who understand the users library service's needs, and lastly three (2.9%) were on staff who are willing to help. In this category the three services by staff that have the biggest gap were on the staff being readily available, staff who instill confidence in users and staff who provide users with information skills for their work or study.

## **5.8. Library as a place**

In this study, the library as a place investigated the critical areas and their contribution to the service quality of the library. These areas included: a quiet library environment; library space that inspires students' own study and learning; a library space for group learning and study; a library environment that has sufficient lighting; and a safe and secure place for study.

This category is critical to this study in the sense that it is the primary focus of the whole study. It is asserted by Nitecki (2011: 27) that the changing paradigms of the academic library as an accumulator and preserver of knowledge resources, service provider for accessing information, and facilitator of intentional learning and knowledge creation among its visitors. Furthermore, the spaces of the library, whether physical or virtual, have been constructed and adapted with the hope of improving capacity to contribute to the university. CRM library is a big building and most of the Pietermaritzburg Campus collection is housed in this library, however there are concerns with regard to not having enough discussion rooms and other concerns which will be brought to light in the following sections. Nitecki (2011) states that library spaces do change slowly, however these changes among campus libraries are evident and follow planning and design processes that can happen when informed by conceptualisations that articulate not only what to place within the space but also what will happen there as a result of interactions between the people and their environment.

Simba (2006) discussed the results of IUCo library as a place, and found that their library users not only expected to receive relevant resources for their work, but they also expected a suitable place to read; search for information; discuss with their colleagues or fellow students with matters relating to their academic work; a place to anticipate their academic activities;

and lastly a place to write their academic work. In this study, the services that had higher expectations were on their library environment having sufficient lighting and the library being a safe and secure environment. The services that had a high negative response were on the library not being a quiet environment and the library space not being conducive enough for group learning and studying. Simba (2006: 104) further asserts that IUCo library is relatively small as compared to the increasing number of its users. Naidu (2009) discusses the high expectations of the MUT library users. The results showed that a library space which inspires learning and a quiet library environment were the services that had high expectations. On the other hand, a library space for group learning and studying; and a library environment which inspires studying and learning had a high negative experience.

The library users do not only expect to receive relevant resources for their studies, they also expect a suitable environment, for which there's comfort and inspiration when they search for information, discuss with classmates the issues related to their academic work, an environment where they can examine academic affairs, and an environment where they can write and study. In order for the library to meet these expectations, the library needs to be well equipped with relevant resources to help various users satisfy their information needs.

### **5.8.1. Discussion of closed-ended questions relating to the library as a place**

The study revealed that postgraduate students have higher expectations of the CRM library in connection with the idea of the library as a place. The results of the study indicate that 75 (71.4%) students expected the library to be a quiet environment, while 79 (75.2%) students expected that the library space should inspire users studying and learning with and 75 (71.4%) students expecting the provision of library space for group studying and learning. Furthermore, 85 (81%) students expected that the library environment should have sufficient lighting; and 83 (79%) expected that the library should be a safe and secure place for study.

There were a few respondents who had a negative experience with the library as a place, for example 27 (25.7%) students had negative perceptions of the library as not being a quiet environment. Thirteen (12.4%) students were of the view that the library space does not inspire users studying and learning while 11 (10.5%) indicated that the library space is not accommodative for group studying and learning. Six (5.7%) students indicated that the library

environment does not have sufficient lighting; and 13 (12.4%) indicated that the library is not a safe and secure place for study. A category has a high expectation indicate that the library should be a safe and secure place for study and the service that has the lowest perception is that the library environment does not having sufficient lighting.

It is significant to note that the library as a place had much high expectations than perceptions. It is imperative, therefore, that the library should work on improving safety and security; it should provide a quiet environment; and it should provide enough space for group learning and studying. It can be assumed based on the findings that the users expect the library to extend hours in the discussion room because according to the students the hours prescribed are not enough for them. The library also needs to enhance its security measures in terms of the safety of the students' belongings since the results indicate that the students did not feel safe in the library. In order to ensure students' safety the library can develop a policy for students' personal belongings like laptops that these only be brought into the library if they have registered with the Risk Management Services (RMS) on campus. Also on assurance of safety and security in the library, the security personnel should be visible in the library on all floors which will also ensure that the library is a quiet environment conducive to reading, studying and conducting research.

### **5.8.2. Discussion of open-ended questions relating to the library as a place**

A total of 20 comments from the open-ended questions were offered for this category of services. Seven (35%) of the comments given were in relation to the library space that inspires users to learn and study "a need to supply more postgraduate rooms for group discussion with extended hours". Five (25%) comments were related to the library being a safe and secure place for studying "enhancing of security on every floor of the building" and "routine checks of students' bags to make sure they have not taken anything that does not belong to them". Six (30%) comments were related to a quiet library environment where one student stated that "students are noisy most of the times". Other comments included facilities for disabled students which should be installed and lastly the installation of hardware and software (including braille books) for visually impaired students; and the library providing comfortable furniture was also deemed necessary.

### **5.8.3. Gap difference relating to the library as a place**

The study revealed that there was a gap between expectations and perceptions regarding this service. The extent of the gap varied with the individual services. For example, the services that have a significant gap were a need for a quiet library environment which was a concern from 21 (20%) students, while 16 (15.2%) students said there was a need for more space for group study and learning with 13 (12.4%) students feeling a need for space that inspires studying and learning. The study further revealed that ten (9.5%) students expressed a need for a safe and secure place for studying and a service that had a small gap was a library space with sufficient lighting which was identified by 2 (1.9%) students. The service with the biggest gap is the library being a quiet environment. This gap is significantly accurate because CRM library is said to always be noisy, it can be assumed based on the findings that the students making a noise are those discussing their academic work, which can be aligned with the gap of the students' need for discussion rooms or extending the hours of the current operating timetable. This can be achieved through a careful administering of the service. Also the quietness in the library environment can be maintained through the enhancing of security personnel and a provision of sound proofed discussion rooms to control the noise level from disturbing those not in the discussion rooms.

### **5.9. Services consisting of research and academic fields**

Academic libraries in general play a critical role in fulfilling the research and academic needs of the students within a university. This is asserted by Majid, Anwar and Eisenschitz (2001) who argued that a library is reflected as an important and essential component of any high quality research institute.

#### **5.9.1. Discussion of closed-ended questions relating to research and academic fields**

The study revealed that the respondents had high expectations of the services in this category. For instance, 82 (78.1%) students expected that the library should assist with keeping them abreast of developments in their fields of interest while; 84 (80%) students expected the library to help them advance in their academic field; and 87 (82.9%) students expected the library to help in their research needs. The perceptions of the services in this category varied to a small extent only. Even though the expectations were higher than the experiences, it

initiates that the CRM library should implement, improvements to make sure that postgraduate students receive these services.

The services which had negative perceptions were lower than those which were positive, for instance the negative perceptions included 10 (9.5%) responses from students who indicated that the library did not help them stay abreast of any developments in their field of study and nine (8.6%) students' indicated that the library did not help in advancing their academic field. The lowest negative experience was three (2.9%) students who stated that the library did not help with their research needs. The service that has a high expectation and a low negative experience was that of the library helping in their research.

This is so significant, also in Naidu (2009) the MUT library users also stated that their research needs were not met by the library and contradicted with Simba's (2006) study on the IUCo library where users agreed that their library did provide for research needs. What the CRM library can attempt to implement in collaboration with the research office or academic staff, is to conduct research related workshops for postgraduate students most especially honours and masters students, because at those levels it is imperative that the students know how to draft a comprehensive research proposal and have a clear understanding of each section in a research proposal. The CRM library can also try to emphasise the literature and advance searching workshops for the postgraduate students and teach them how to use certain databases related to their studies.

### **5.9.2. Discussion of open-ended questions relating to research and academic fields**

Students did not have any comments or suggestions relating to the library's support towards their research or advancing their academic fields. The only comment that was made by one respondent was that the library offered good services for students and it also catered for various research needs through the workshops conducted.

### **5.9.3. Gap difference relating to research and academic fields**

The study revealed that there were gaps identified by students, which ranged from: 23 (21.9%) was the gap related to the library helping users stay abreast of developments in their field of interest and; 20 (19%) concerning the library helping users to advance in their

academic field. The study also showed that in this category the statement on the library helping users with their research needs had a small gap of 12 (11.4%). The service that showed the biggest gap was that of the library helping users stay abreast of development in their field of interest.

Subject librarians should be available for to the postgraduate students to assist and inform them of recent developments occurring in their field of study, this done can be through creating class alerts on the UKZN student emails for students in their different fields of study. This alert can aid the students on what is new, either in their field or in research and these subject librarians can form special workshops for the students in their specific fields on how to do advance searches and properly evaluate the journals and articles accessed by them. Contrary to this, Naidu (2009: 148) states that the postgraduate students in MUT library had communication barriers with the subject librarians because most of them were not available after hours due to postgraduate students having to attend evening classes. This posed a barrier for the students because they did not have access to professional expertise regarding skills for retrieving information.

#### **5.10. User satisfaction with the library services**

This section investigated the users' level of satisfaction with the information skills provided by the library for users' studies; the libraries support for reading, research, and studying; staff services; access to information; library facilities; and overall quality of the service provided by the library. In the literature review, Motiang, Wallis and Karodia (2014: 41) defined user satisfaction as an assessing of a product or service with regard to whether that product or service was able to satisfy the needs and expectations of the customer". When determining the level of satisfaction it requires the combination of the encounters that an individual has experienced and expects with a specific organisation to form a brand of service quality of those individuals.

Sivathaasan and Chandrasekar (2013) and Shika *et al.* (2012) concur that the aim of an academic library is to satisfy the needs of its users. Shika *et al.* (2012) further mentions that there are several methods which have been used to assess the satisfaction level of an academic library, it mandated to measure the satisfaction of the users in order for it to provide improved services. However, several studies which were conducted by Cullen (2001); Ijiekhuamhen,



Aghojare and Ferdinand (2015) and Kassim (2009), to mention a few identified that students would not be interested in physically visiting the library if there was not internet connection, the reason being that they are comfortable in accessing the information electronically from their places of comfort. Furthermore, Sivathaasan and Chandrasekar (2013) stated that some libraries internationally have reconfigured their physical space and redesigned their service to meet the new challenges by adopting the idea of having information commons or taking initiatives to provide library services like, integrating computers, increasing library resources in different formats and having staff to assist the students in these services.

### **5.10.1. User satisfaction with information skills needed for studies**

With regard to the information skills needed for studies, the study revealed that 75 (71.4%) students were satisfied while 13 (12.4%) students were dissatisfied with the information skills provided by the library for the users' studies. It should be noted that 17 (16.2%) students were undecided about the information skills provided by the library. When the results are observed from the in a user category perspective, the highest response in terms of satisfaction came from the in a user category perspective, the highest response in terms of satisfaction came from the honours students 25 (23.8%) who were satisfied; they were followed by 15 (14.3%) PhD students; and lastly the master's students had 13 (12.4%) responses regarding satisfaction with information skills provided by the library. A low response of dissatisfaction came from the five (4.8%) master's students followed by; four (3.8%) honours; and one (1%) PhD student. This could be because from the masters and PhD students' point of view that some of them are first year students on the UKZN campus and also they might have acquired their previous degree years ago, so they might not have been the center of attention because of the perception which is assumed by their qualification. It can be acknowledged that some of them do need to be trained in gaining information skills, and familiarising themselves with various electronic databases which are relevant to their studies.

### **5.10.2. User satisfaction with library support for reading, research and studying**

The study revealed that 77 (73.3%) of the respondents were satisfied and only nine (8.6%) were dissatisfied with the library support for reading, research and studying. Nineteen (18.1%) respondents were undecided with the library support for reading, research and studying. The dissatisfaction based on user category was on the honours with four (3.8%)

students and five (4.8%) masters' students being dissatisfied with the library support. Furthermore, the majority of satisfied respondents was from the honours 29 (27.6%) students followed by masters and PhD students with a response of 13 (12.4%). A low response of dissatisfaction came from the honours and masters students.

In the comment section (see table 29a) many respondents freely expressed their need to be supplied with more postgraduate rooms for group discussions with extended hours. Other comments on this category were a number on the students being noisy most of the time in the library. This can be viewed to be significant as discussed in 5.8.3 that the CRM library environment is not a quiet environment because the quiet study sections are viewed as discussion spaces due to the lack of discussion rooms.

### **5.10.3. User satisfaction with staff services**

The study revealed that 80 (76.2%) respondents were satisfied; while 17 (16.2%) respondents were neutral and eight (7.6%) were dissatisfied with the staff services. The satisfaction by user category came from the students in the order following postgraduate diploma four (3.8%); honours 22 (21%); masters and PhD 16 (15.2%) students. The low level of dissatisfaction on honours and masters students. The students who were undecided were the honours and masters students.

In the comments section (see table 29d) many respondents freely expressed their satisfaction and dissatisfaction with regards to the staff services. A dissatisfied comment made by the respondents "as good as most of the staff are, some are unfriendly and not approachable". However, a good comment was made that "the library has a good staff who are helpful and well informed".

This is significant because on the point of view of the postgraduate students' perception, the library staff is well informed and helpful, however some of them are unfriendly and unapproachable. In contrast to this study, Naidu (2009) found that most of the MUT library users were dissatisfied with their staff services but, some of the respondents expressed their gratitude towards the MUT library staff by stating that they provide fair services and they are trying their best to provide standard services.

#### **5.10.4. User satisfaction with access to information**

In general, the majority of postgraduate students were satisfied with the access to information. Seventy-six (72.3%) students were satisfied; followed by 21 (20%) students who were neutral; and eight (7.6%) students were dissatisfied with the access to information. It is shown that the dissatisfied students with the access to information were two (1.9%) honours students; followed by four (3.8%) masters' students; and one (1%) PhD student. The results show variations within user groups regarding satisfaction with access to information. The user category that expressed a high level of satisfaction was the honours 29 (27.6%); masters ten (9.5%); and 15 (14.3%) PhD students.

The comment section that had concerns where students were dissatisfied was that "off-campus access to databases and catalogue and other service should be improved". Other negative comments include the need to improve the shelving of books and journals and the issue of books being lost or not on their shelf which needs to be addressed. Sometimes when students go to the online catalogue to search for materials, it shows, for example, that a certain book is available, while on the shelf that is not the case. If a book is misplaced, the library staff should do daily shelf-reading to make sure that all the books are where they are supposed to be, and for those that are lost corrective action should be taken and the users should be alerted that the book in question is missing.

#### **5.10.5. User satisfaction with library facilities**

A number of respondents, 67 (63.8%) indicated that they were satisfied while 23 (21.9%) respondents were undecided and 15 (14.3%) respondents were dissatisfied with the library facilities. The results showed variations within user groups regarding satisfaction with library facilities. With regard to dissatisfaction, nine (8.6%) honours and six (5.7%) masters expressed their dissatisfaction. In regards to satisfaction, four (3.8%) postgraduate diploma; 24 (22.9%) honours; 11 (10.5%) masters; and 16 (15.2%) PhD students. The students who were undecided about the library facilities were two (1.9%) postgraduate diploma students, 13 (12.4%) honours, six (5.7%) and two (1.9%) PhD students.

The small percentage of dissatisfaction from the honours, masters and PhD students may have come from the need for computer workstations and those computers working well. In the CRM library, the only computer workstation is found in the research commons and the only

masters and PhD students are allowed to use that room. The honours students have indicated that the library does not have adequate computer workstations and the masters and PhD students indicated that in their research commons, there are adequate computers but most of the computers do not work well. The postgraduate students have also indicated that the printing and photocopying facilities are only few, and some machines are either old or not working properly. A suggestion was put forward by masters' students with regard to the library having a scanning machine. All these concerns and suggestion require maintenance staff that the library can hire to do a monthly check-up on the facilities. The sections dealing with adequate computer workstations and that those computers should operate well were the ones with the largest gap in the whole study so it can be assumed that the library should work on improving them.

#### **5.10.6. User satisfaction with overall quality of the services**

The results of the study revealed that the overall quality of the services provided revealed that the highest response was 73 (69.5%) who were satisfied with the overall quality of services. Twenty-three (21.9%) respondents gave a neutral response and nine (8.6%) were dissatisfied with the overall quality of services. The results showed variations within user categories regarding satisfaction with the overall quality of library services. The satisfaction with the overall quality of library services by user category showed that the users that expressed low levels of dissatisfactions were six (5.8%) honours students, and three (2.9%) masters' students. In contrast to this, five (4.8%) postgraduate diploma students, 30 (28.6%) honours students, 17 (16.2%) masters students, and 21 (20%) PhD students expressed their level of satisfaction.

In the comments section (table 30f) many respondents expressed their gratitude with the level of satisfaction with the overall quality of library services. For instance, "they think the library is well organised and resourced to allow proper learning and studying". The students who were dissatisfied with the overall quality of services of the CRM library were the honours and masters students, and it can possibly be deduced as to why they are dissatisfied. The study indicated that the honours and masters students had concerns with a lack of information skills needed for their studies, having access to information and the library facilities.

According to the results, the library still needs to improve in those areas because these services it is probably to receive that the students visit the library.

In Naidu's (2009) study, it was indicated that the category that had the highest satisfaction came from the academic staff and the category that had a low level of satisfaction with the overall quality service was the undergraduate students. In contrast to Naidu (2009), Simba's (2006) study revealed that users rated the overall quality service of IUCo library as fairly good. It also indicated that in the same study the undergraduate students rated the overall quality services higher than the academic staff and the postgraduate students. The final results revealed that the IUCo library was not excelling in the provision of service quality to all its users and improvement was recommended.

### **5.11. Assessment of the instrument in measuring service quality in academic libraries**

The data collection tool which was administered to postgraduate students was a survey, a LibQUAL+ survey questionnaire which was adapted from previous studies done by Simba (2006) and Naidu (2009). The outcomes of the study indicated that not all the respondents answered the two open-ended questions. Granted, those who answered the open-ended questions gave very helpful and practical comments for the improvement of the library. The closed-ended questions were all answered by the respondents.

The LibQUAL+ questionnaire used in this study was successful and instrumental in soliciting users' expectations and perceptions of the service quality at CRM library. The questionnaire was capable of determining the gap difference between expectations and perceptions of service quality as set forth by "gap 5" of the SERVQUAL model and their experiences of the actual service delivered to them by the library. As an outcome, the data collected were able to answer the research questions and objectives posed in chapter one. The LibQUAL+ questionnaire was extremely useful in investigating service quality in academic libraries where the focus is placed on users. The SERVQUAL model in most cases is used in management studies, retail to be precise. For the purpose of this study "Gap 5" was adapted to do a gap analysis in quality service.

The questionnaire was a great success and important in identifying the level of satisfaction regarding the service quality at CRM library. The questionnaire was designed to evaluate the

gap between expectations and perceptions. In doing so, strengths and weaknesses were identified, also focusing on the excellent services the library aim to provide to successfully attempt to exceed the users' expectations and not meet them.

According to Simba (2006: 109) assessment of service quality with the focus on users of services alone in the African context, can be useful in understanding users' needs and expectations. This could ultimately guarantee service quality in academic libraries that are affected by infrequent resources, low budgets, and an inadequate number of qualified librarians. With a developing country like South Africa, a country burdened and incapacitated by poverty, various assessment approaches should be researched on to address the quality service in academic libraries.

## **5.12. Summary**

This chapter discussed the library usage patterns, user expectations and perceptions of library service quality. It also discussed the results of the level of user satisfaction regarding information skills, library support, staff services, access to information, library facilities, and overall quality of the services provided. It also discussed the assessment of the instrument in measuring service quality in an academic library.

# CHAPTER 6: SUMMARY, FINDINGS, CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

## 6.1. Introduction

In this chapter the summary, findings, conclusions and recommendations of the thesis are outlined. The recommendations were based on the findings which were presented in chapter four and discussed in chapter five. The study also provided suggestions of research topics that need to be researched in future.

The main aim of this study was to determine whether there is a gap between postgraduate students' expectations and perceptions of the service quality in the CRM library. It was also to establish the users' level of satisfaction with the services offered at UKZN's CRM library. To achieve this purpose, the following research questions which were specific to this outcome were asked:

- What are postgraduate students' expectations of service quality?
- What are postgraduate students' perceptions of service quality?
- What is the gap between the existence of users' expectations and perception of quality service?
- Are the postgraduate students' satisfied with the service provided at CRM library?
- What are the postgraduate students' perceptions of the library as a reading, studying or conducting research environment?

The study was expected to identify the strengths and weaknesses of the library services which are rendered to the users. The study was expected to also suggest some recommendations to the library based on the findings.

## 6.2. Summary of thesis

In chapter one, *background and introduction* the study began with some background information on the topic and also gave a brief introduction. The first chapter also outlined the research problem; the purpose, objectives and research questions of the study. The rationale and scope of the study were outlined in this chapter. The limitations and delimitations of the

study were discussed. The chapters ended by defining the concepts which were regularly used in the whole study and summarized what was discussed throughout the chapter.

The second chapter, *literature review* discussed in more detail the concepts of service quality and explored the relevant models commonly used to assess the service quality, together with the theoretical framework whereby two models (LibQUAL+ and SERVQUAL) which guided the study were also discussed. The related studies of service quality in an academic and public library context, the methodologies which were used in those studies and the findings of each of the studies. The chapter also discussed the studies which assessed the user satisfaction of service quality in academic libraries. Again the chapter provided a discussion on the existing gaps between users' perceptions and expectations in service quality and briefly outlined methodological approaches used by other related studies. The chapter concluded with a summary of what was discussed within the chapter.

*Research methodology*, the third chapter presented the research methods and procedures which were utilized in the study. It also presented the research design, population, sampling technique and size, the data collection instrument and procedures of the study. It also discussed the validity and reliability of the instrument. The analysis of data and the ethical issues of the study were discussed. The chapter concluded with a summary of what had been discussed within the chapter.

Chapter four, *data analysis and presentation of results* reported the results of the sampled population of users of CRM library, and this was conducted through the means of a self-administered questionnaire. This chapter has 30 tables and 5 figures which properly presented the results of the questionnaire.

The fifth chapter labelled *discussion of results* discussed the research results as they appeared in chapter four. They were library usage patterns, users' expectations and perceptions of the quality service of the CRM library and they are discussed in the categories as they appear in the questionnaire. The user satisfaction with the library services was discussed, followed by the assessment of the instrument in measuring service quality in academic libraries. The chapter concluded with a summary of the whole chapter.



### **6.3. Overview of the findings**

The results of the questionnaire presented and discussed in chapter four and five respectively, support the usefulness of the LibQUAL+ instrument used in this study and its significance in an academic library. In summation, the students' expectations were higher than their perceptions of what the library provided. A gap does exist between the users' expectations and perceptions. The perceptions they had of the library services were not in line with their expectations which resulted in a gap in quality service and service delivery.

The results indicated that CRM library is deficient in quality service, and the library staff should be encouraged to help users to define and satisfy the quality information needs and provide a standard library service quality. To persevere for total quality in the information services at the CRM library, it should provide easy access to information; update its library equipment; improve in terms of the staff services; and the library as a place should be improved.

### **6.4. Conclusions**

Based on the results of this research, it is evident that there is a significant gap between the users' expectations and perceptions of service quality at the CRM library. The results of the research also found that there were differences within the different user categories of students, (postgraduate diploma, honours, masters and PhD). The difference was in regards to the library usage and level of user satisfaction of service quality at the CRM library. The variations were as a result of the levels of study, the needs differed from one user group to another and the importance of the different users in relation to the satisfaction level and usage patterns within these groups.

The study also revealed that some services were not operating as they should be and this had a negative impact on users' evaluation of their experiences. The services that had problems were: computers that work well; adequate number of computer workstations; re-shelving of print (books and journals); short loan services; printing facilities; quiet library environment; the library assisting the user to stay abreast of any developments in their field of interest and the library's assistance in advancing students' academic work. The study further revealed the strengths and weaknesses of the library in terms of quality service offered to users, and

suggested areas that needed to be improved as well as the addition of new recommended services.

The library users had high expectations for most of the services in each category for instance, comprehensive collection, access to information, library staff, the library as a place and general services. However, their perceptions varied from their expectations in many instances. The students' perceptions were lower in comparison with their expectations of the service quality at CRM library.

#### **6.4.1. Users' expectations**

One of the study's objectives was to determine postgraduate students' expectations of service quality. The study revealed that the postgraduate students had high expectations of library service quality. These expectations included easily available access to electronic databases, staff who are readily available to respond to queries, staff who are friendly, a library that helps the students with their research needs, and a library environment that has sufficient lighting.

With regard to accessing information, it was also found that users further expected a library catalogue that was clear and has useful information, a webpage that was clear and has useful information. When it came to the staff services, the postgraduate students expected staff who are willing to help, are knowledgeable to answer questions and provide users with the information skills needed for work or study, a library staff who understand the students' service needs and a library staff that instill confidence in the users. On the library as a place, the students expected a library environment that is safe and secure for studying. As for comprehensive collection, the students expected a provision of adequate electronic journals. Other expectations included of a library that helps the students to stay abreast of developments in their fields of interest and a library which helps its users to advance in their academic field. In essence, the postgraduate students expected excellent services and facilities in order to fulfill their reading, studying and conducting research needs.

#### **6.4.2. Users' perceptions**

The second research question was to determine the postgraduate students' perceptions of the service quality of the library. The study showed that the CRM library users' perceptions were high for some services and low for others. The services with fairly high perceptions were:

adequate electronic journals for their work, a webpage that is clear and has useful information, a library environment that has sufficient lighting, library staff who are willing to help, staff which are friendly to users, easily available access to electronic databases and library staff who understand the users' library needs. On the other hand, the services that have low perceptions are an adequate number of computer workstations and computers that work well, prompt corrective action regarding missing books and journals, adequate printing facilities, an efficient short loan service, prompt re-shelving of journals and adequate photocopying facilities.

The majority of responses of actual users' experiences were extremely dissatisfied with the services and the library equipment. The students did not perceive the library having adequate computer workstations, computers that work well, adequate printing and photocopying facilities and the library not being a quiet environment.

The study found that most the perceptions of the student in each category were lower than the expectations. The services that had higher perceptions than expectations were in the category of comprehensive collection on the service of adequate electronic journals for their work and studies, and the category of access to information where the service of the webpage being clear and having useful information. The rest of the services that were investigated have higher expectations than the perceptions, which can be assumed that the postgraduate students do not perceive the CRM library as an environment for reading, studying and conducting research.

#### **6.4.3. Gap between users' expectations and perceptions**

The third research question was to establish whether there was a gap between the users' expectations and perceptions of quality service offered at the CRM library. The study found that there was a gap in almost all the services provided by the CRM library. For example, with regard to the comprehensive collection, the biggest gap was that there were not adequate print journals and print books. In relation to access to information, the major gaps were the library was not providing an efficient short loan service and re-shelving of journals. It was also found that the library did not take corrective action regarding missing books and journals, re-shelving of books and there was no prompt interlibrary loan service.

The study revealed that library equipment category had more the major gaps compared with all other library services. The study found that big gaps were on with computers that work well and not having adequate number of computer workstations. In regard to the library staff, the study found that there is a major gap in staff who are not readily available to respond to the users queries, staff who instill confidence in the users and lastly staff who do not provide users with the information skills needed for work or study. With the library as a place, the study found that the three major gaps were the library not being a quiet environment, the library not having sufficient space for group learning and group study and a library space that does not inspire users' studies and learning. With regard to the services concerning research and academic fields, the study found that there were only two big gaps and they were on the library helping the students' stay abreast of any developments in their field of interest and the library helping the students advance in their academic field.

#### **6.4.4. Level of satisfaction**

The fourth research question was to establish the level of satisfaction of users of the CRM library. The study found that the majority of the students were satisfied with the information skills which were needed for studies. However the study also found a few students in honours, masters and PhD who were dissatisfied. With the library support for reading, research and studying, the study found that there were high levels of satisfaction. A few students from honours and masters were unhappy about these services offered at the CRM library. In relation to staff services, the study found that majority of students were satisfied with the library staff at CRM library however, minor dissatisfaction came from a few honours and masters students.

With regard to access to information, the study found that the majority of students were satisfied with the access to information, with a few dissatisfied students from honours, masters and PhD level. The study found that with regard to the library facilities the majority of the students were satisfied with what was provided for them while a few students were dissatisfied especially the honours and masters students. With the overall quality of the services provided by CRM library, the study found that the students were satisfied with the overall quality while the dissatisfied students were a few from the honours and master's programmes.

## **6.5. Recommendations**

This section is aimed at making recommendations to the CRM library based on the findings of the study. In view of the research findings, the following recommendations are proposed to the library management:

The study has revealed that it is vital for libraries to assess, track and understand users' service needs and expectations and to react upon the users' feedback to improve the quality of service in the library and to create new policies which will benefit the library. With regard to this, the study recommends that the library introduce a regular assessment of the library in order to listen to the library users and the university community. This process will assist the library in being enlightened about the expectations and needs of the users and the university community at large. It is important that the librarians have instruments in place to implement the strategic and operational plans for the pursuit of improvement of the quality of library service as well as practicable instruments to observe and sustain improvements over time.

### **6.5.1. Library collection**

The study has revealed that a comprehensive collection is important in an academic library. The study has also revealed the need for appropriate and up-to-date books, journals and other reading materials to be provided to all students in their respective disciplines. A newly developed comprehensive collection development policy is recommended for the library which will address critical needs of the users and provide room for users, by awarding the academic staff an opportunity to select the resources for the library. Another concern from the students was the shelving of print material (books and journals). There are instances where the students could not locate printed material on the shelves as was indicated by the catalogue.

The students have also commented on their dissatisfaction about the old or outdated books which are in the library. A recommendation to this is that the collection development policy should be reviewed by relevant stakeholders and address the important needs of the users. For the collection development policy to succeed, it needs to be reviewed and renewed from time to time to keep up with the changing needs of users and new programmes which are established from time to time. It is acknowledged that libraries are going through financial

limitations, however through careful planning and budgeting it can be possible to maintain current and up to date collections.

### **6.5.2. Access to information**

This study has revealed that access to information is important to users and the library resources should be accessible to users for their convenience. The findings of the study indicated that the short loan service should be revisited and the re-shelving of the print collection should also be improved. Comments also suggested a service which is dependable on the funding aspect of the CRM library, the study recommends that the library should consider having laptops on a short loan services which could help the users conduct their information searches. Measures of assuring the safety of those laptops to prevent unauthorized use can be achieved by treating these equipment as reference resources which are not to be loaned out of the library.

The study recommends further that a prompt re-shelving of printed material daily would ease this problem at ease. The students have also expressed that the off-campus access to databases and catalogue and other services were not as efficient as they should be. This study recommends that the library explore options as to how they can go about improving the off-campus access to the library webpage.

### **6.5.3. Library equipment**

The study has shown that certain services like library equipment are in high demand but the library is having a challenge in meeting the expectations of the students. A major area of concern was on the computers that do not work well, an adequate number of computer workstations, maintaining and increasing printing and photocopying facilities. The study recommends that the library should have a computer maintenance staff which would maintain the computers and also increase the number of computers so that students are able to work without having the pressure from other waiting students.

The photocopying and printing facilities should also be maintained because they tend to malfunction while in use. The study also recommends that there should be a scanning machine for students to use, since there seems to be a high demand for this facility.

#### **6.5.4. Library staff**

The finding of the study indicated that students were concerned about the service provided by the library staff. The study revealed that some of the library staff members were not friendly. The study recommends that the library staff should attend communications skills workshops, customer care workshops and people skills workshops. The study revealed also that students believed that the staff at times were not readily available to assist them with their queries and did not provide students with information skills needed for their studies. By doing this, the library could deal with the issue of information skills for the students.

#### **6.5.5. Library as a place**

The study indicated that the library as a place was a concern, by revealing that the students believed that the library was not a quiet environment. The study also revealed that the library did not have enough room for group learning and studying. These two services are linked the reason being that there would not be any noise if there was enough space for group studying and learning. The study recommends that the library establish more discussion rooms and have extended hours for a groups to study.

The study further revealed that the students were not satisfied with the safety and security in the library and that, the library space did not inspire students for learning and studying. The students also expressed the need for materials and facilities for the disabled students. The study also recommends that the library purchase materials which would assist the disabled students in their studies.

The study recommends that the library management educate the users on the importance of every user to be a custodian of the resources available in the library and act responsibly in the library. In addition, the library could put surveillance cameras in each floor of the building as a security measure. Currently, there are cameras only at the entrance/exit of the library and this is not helpful in many ways because the administration will not have information from incidents where a user's belongings are stolen. The cameras will act as a security measure and will in turn create an inspiring environment.

## **6.6. Suggestions for further research**

There are different areas which are vital for further investigation.

- Tools for library evaluation that assess the users' perceptions of service quality and degree of satisfaction with the mission, policies, procedures, library staff, budget and processes of the libraries.
- Barriers to the provision of quality library services and end-user satisfaction in academic libraries in developing countries.
- The duties of library staff in order to increase the level of library users' satisfaction and to assist the new students who were from previous institutions.
- Research using focus groups and interviews to do an assessment of the new services which are introduced in an academic library.

There is an urgent need to improve the postgraduate students' perceptions of the library as an environment for learning, studying and conducting research. With regards to the services which were investigated, it was found that there are some which require attention and a need for improvement. The outlined recommendations were made in light of the availability of funding from the university to be properly implemented and remedied. For academic libraries to prosper they have a mission to not only meet the users expectations but also to predict their needs.



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## APPENDICES

### Appendix 1: Informed Consent Document

#### Informed Consent Document

Dear Participant,

My name is Matsobane Daniel Kekana (216041772). I am a Masters candidate studying at the University of KwaZulu-Natal, Howard College / Pietermaritzburg Campus. The title of my research is: **Postgraduate Students' Perception of the Library as an Environment for Reading, Studying and Researching at the University Of Kwazulu-Natal Pietermaritzburg Campus.** The aim of the study is to find out the postgraduates students' perception of the Cecil Renaud Main Library as a learning environment and also to find out expectations of the services that should be given by the library. I am interested in surveying you so as to share your experiences and observations on the library.

Please note that:

- The information that you provide will be used for scholarly research only.
- Your participation is entirely voluntary. You have a choice to participate, not to participate or stop participating in the research. You will not be penalised for taking such an action.
- Your views in this survey will be presented anonymously. Neither your name nor identity will be disclosed in any form in the study.
- The survey will take about 15-20 minutes or less to complete.
- The record as well as other items associated with the survey will be held in a password-protected file accessible only to myself and my supervisors. After a period of 5 years, in line with the rules of the university, it will be disposed by shredding and burning.
- If you agree to participate please sign the declaration attached to this statement (a separate sheet will be provided for signatures)

I can be contacted at: School of Social Sciences, University of KwaZulu-Natal, Pietermaritzburg Campus, Scottsville, Pietermaritzburg.

Email: [Matsobane.daniel0613@gmail.com](mailto:Matsobane.daniel0613@gmail.com) and [216041772@stu.ukzn.ac.za](mailto:216041772@stu.ukzn.ac.za)

Cell: 071 275 1812

My supervisor is **Mr. Siyanda Kheswa** who is located at the School of Social Sciences, Pietermaritzburg Campus, NAB Office no. 346.

Contact details:

E-mail address: [kheswas1@ukzn.ac.za](mailto:kheswas1@ukzn.ac.za)

Office telephone: 033-260 6987

**HSSREC Research office:** Ms. P. Ximba

**Institution:** University of KwaZulu-Natal

**Telephone number:** +27(0) 31 260 3587

**Email address:** [ximbap@ukzn.ac.za](mailto:ximbap@ukzn.ac.za)

Thank you for your contribution to this research.

## **DECLARATION**

I..... *(full names of participant)* hereby confirm that I understand the contents of this document and the nature of the research project, and I consent to participating in the research project.

I understand that I am at liberty to withdraw from the project at any time, should I so desire. I understand the intention of the research. I hereby agree to participate.

I consent / do not consent to have this interview recorded (if applicable)

SIGNATURE OF PARTICIPANT

DATE

.....

## Appendix 2: Editors letters

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### UNIVERSITY OF LIMPOPO TURFLOOP CAMPUS

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January 27, 2017

University of Limpopo  
Faculty of Humanities  
Department of Languages  
Email: Lukas.Mkuti@ul.ac.za  
Phone: (015) 268 3038

Mr Siyanda E. Kheswa  
University of KwaZulu-Natal  
Department of Information Studies  
Pietermaritzburg

Dear Mr Kheswa

#### LANGUAGE EDITING LETTER

This letter serves as proof that I edited the dissertation of Mr M.D. Kekana (Student No: 216041772) entitled: **Postgraduate Students' Perception of the Library as an Environment for Reading, Studying and Researching at the University of KwaZulu-Natal: Pietermaritzburg Campus.**

Regards

Dr. Lukas Mkuti



### **Appendix 3: Covering letter for the questionnaire**

Dear students,

My name is Daniel Kekana (std. no. 216041772), a Masters (coursework) student in Information Studies in the School of Social Sciences, College of Humanities at the University of KwaZulu-Natal, Pietermaritzburg.

As part of my master's studies I am undertaking research on the '**Postgraduate Students' Perception of the Library as an Environment for Reading, Studying and Researching at the University Of Kwazulu-Natal Pietermaritzburg Campus**' My supervisor is Mr. Siyanda Kheswa. The outcomes of this study will be beneficial to the UKZN libraries, most specifically the Cecil Renaud Main Library in identifying the gaps in their performance as a library, and also students' expectation of the service they want in the library. These questionnaires will also contribute to improving the policy of the library and influence practice in regards to the research findings.

It is however, important to note that you are not under any obligation to participate in this survey, but I would be very grateful if you could dedicate approximately 15 minutes or less of your time to complete the survey without revealing your identity. The data collected will be treated with confidentiality and anonymity. I shall be very grateful for your assistance and I appreciate your cooperation in advance.

Yours sincerely,  
Daniel Kekana (Mr.)  
071 275 1812

[Matsobane.daniel0613@gmail.com](mailto:Matsobane.daniel0613@gmail.com) and [216041772@stu.ukzn.ac.za](mailto:216041772@stu.ukzn.ac.za)

## Appendix 4: Questionnaire

ID: \_\_\_

**This questionnaire is about the perception of the library as an environment for reading, studying and research by postgraduate students of the University of Kwa-Zulu Natal: Pietermaritzburg campus.**

Its aim is collect data on the library as a place for reading, studying and research at the Cecil Renaud main library: Pietermaritzburg.

**Instructions:**

- Indicate the most appropriate answers by a tick (√) or a cross (×) in the box of the table provided.
- Please use a pen only.

<b>Section A: Demographic information</b>									
1. What is your gender?				Male		Female			
2. Indicate your age group.									
Under 20		21-30		31-40		41-50		Over 50	
3. Indicate your academic discipline.									
History		Information studies		Policy and development		Political Science		Records and Archival management	
Gender studies		International relations		Conflict transformation		Anthropology			
4. Indicate your qualification.									
Postgraduate diploma			Honours		Masters			PhD	
<b>Section B: Library usage</b>									
5. How often do you use the library and its resources?									
Daily		Weekly		Monthly		Quarterly			
6. How often do you use Yahoo, Google or other non-library gateways for information?									
Daily		Weekly		Monthly		Quarterly			
7. How often do you use the library gateways (e.g. e-catalogue) for accessing information?									

Daily		Weekly		Monthly		Quarterly	
<b>Section C: Users' expectations</b>							
8. I expect the library to provide ....							
<b>1= Strongly agree 2=Agree 3=Neutral 4=Disagree 5= Strongly disagree</b>							
<b>Comprehensive collection</b>							
			<b>1</b>	<b>2</b>	<b>3</b>	<b>4</b>	<b>5</b>
Adequate print collection (books) to my needs							
Adequate print journals for my work							
Adequate electronic journals for my work							
<b>Access to information</b>							
Easily available access to electronic databases							
Prompt interlibrary loan (loan from other libraries) service							
An efficient short loan (special reserve collection) service							
Prompt re-shelving of books							
Prompt re-shelving of journals							
Catalogue that is clear and thus useful information							
Prompt corrective action regarding missing books and journals							
A webpage that is clear and useful information							
<b>Library equipment</b>							
An adequate number of computer workstations							
Computers that work well							
Adequate photocopying facilities							
Adequate printing facilities							
<b>Library staff</b>							
Staff who are friendly							
Staff who instill confidence in users							
Staff who are readily available to respond to my queries							
Staff who are willing to help me							
Staff who understand my library service needs							
Staff who have the knowledge to answer my questions							

Staff who provide users with the information skills needed for work or study					
<b>Library as a place</b>					
A quiet library environment					
Library space that inspires my own study and learning					
A library space for group learning and group study					
A library environment that has sufficient lighting					
A safe and a secure place for study					
<b>General</b>					
Helps me stay abreast of developments in my field(s) of interest					
Helps me to advance in my academic field					
Helps me with my research needs					
<b>Section D: Users' perceptions</b>					
9. Please tick (√) or cross (×) in the table below the number that best describes your perceptions of the service in the library.					
<b>1= Strongly agree 2=Agree 3=Neutral 4=Disagree 5= Strongly disagree</b>					
<b>Comprehensive collection</b>					
	<b>1</b>	<b>2</b>	<b>3</b>	<b>4</b>	<b>5</b>
Adequate print collection (books) to my needs					
Adequate print journals for my work					
Adequate electronic journals for my work					
<b>Access to information</b>					
Easily available access to electronic databases					
Prompt interlibrary loan (loan from other libraries) service					
An efficient short loan (special reserve collection) service					
Prompt re-shelving of books					
Prompt re-shelving of journals					
Catalogue that is clear and thus useful information					
Prompt corrective action regarding missing books and journals					
A webpage that is clear and useful information					

<b>Library equipment</b>					
An adequate number of computer workstations					
Computers that work well					
Adequate photocopying facilities					
Adequate printing facilities					
<b>Library staff</b>					
Staff who are friendly					
Staff who instill confidence in users					
Staff who are readily available to respond to my queries					
Staff who are willing to help me					
Staff who understand my library service needs					
Staff who have the knowledge to answer my questions					
Staff who provide users with the information skills needed for work or study					
<b>Library as a place</b>					
A quiet library environment					
A library space that inspires my own study and learning					
A library space for group learning and group study					
A library environment that has sufficient lighting					
A safe and a secure place for study					
<b>General</b>					
Helps me stay abreast of developments in my field(s) of interest					
Helps me to advance in my academic field					
Helps me with my research needs					
10. If there are any services which are not mentioned above that you like to see in the library, you can comment on the space provided					



**Section E: User satisfaction**

11. Please indicate the degree to which you agree with the following statements

**1= Very satisfied 2=Satisfied 3=Neutral 4=Dissatisfied 5= Very dissatisfied**

	<b>1</b>	<b>2</b>	<b>3</b>	<b>4</b>	<b>5</b>
The library provides me with the information skills I need for my studies					
In general I am satisfied with the library support for reading, research, and studying					
How satisfied are you with the staff services offered by the library?					
How satisfied are you with access to information?					
How satisfied are you with the library facilities?					
How would you rate the overall quality of the service provided by the library					

12. Please give any further comments about the Cecil Renaud Main Library services in the space provided below.
