

**OUTSOURCING AT WALTER SISULU UNIVERSITY:  
STUDENTS' PERCEPTIONS OF AN OUTSOURCED  
CAMPUS-BASED CAFETERIA**

By

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A dissertation submitted in partial fulfilment of the requirements for  
the degree

Master of Education in Higher Education: Teaching & Learning

Higher Education Training and Development

School of Education: University of KwaZulu-Natal.

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January 2019

## **DECLARATION**

I hereby declare that the dissertation submitted for the degree Master of Education in Higher Education: Teaching and Learning, at the University of KwaZulu-Natal is my own work and has not previously been submitted to any other institution of higher education. I further declare that all sources cited or quoted are indicated and acknowledged by means of a comprehensive list of references.

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## **DEDICATION**

This study is dedicated to all my students, past and present. This is for you and I hope this study contributes, in some way or the other, to the advancement of your educational journey and development.

A special dedication to my late father, Samuel Malefetsane Mokoena. Bohlale, Koena entle ya Maiyane! Thank you for the gift of education. You are dearly missed, continue resting in peace.

## **ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS**

I would like to express my sincere gratitude and appreciation to my supervisor, Dr Ruth Searle, for her support, patience and tireless dedication throughout this journey; and to my classmates for the encouragement, motivation and support. A special word of gratitude to WSU's Centre for Teaching, Learning and Development and the Research directorate for the financial assistance granted during my studies.

I would also like to thank the special people in my life: my children, husband, mom and grandmother, for their continued support and prayers.

## **ABSTRACT**

Widened global access to higher education led to massification of the higher education system. However the funding allocated to institutions of higher education is not sufficient to cater for the high student numbers. Inadequate government subsidies have led to financial challenges for institutions of higher education. South African institutions have faced similar challenges, and universities such as Walter Sisulu University have sought strategies to operate and survive within the limited resources available. Outsourcing has been one of the strategies employed by universities to save costs.

A study was undertaken to determine the students' perceptions of outsourcing at the WSU Butterworth campus, particularly of the outsourced campus-based cafeteria. Other outsourced services included very briefly in the study are the outsourced campus security and cleaning services. The study used a quantitative research approach and a structured data collection process. Participation in the study was voluntary and involved a sample drawn from the Butterworth campus.

Results indicate that students in the study were not satisfied with food pricing or food quality and hygiene and were concerned about their general well-being and safety. Services offered, particularly the outsourced catering services, did not meet the needs of students and thus students' expectations and this may negatively affect students' experience of the campus. Food also provides for students' physical and cognitive developmental needs thus is important to students' academic performance and progress. Safety and security services are vital to an environment conducive to effective teaching and learning.

This study highlights an urgent need for the evaluation of the outsourced services. University management needs to put measures in place to redress the situation and ensure that students' best interests are served. The university should further prioritise students' experience of the university by ensuring that campus space promotes effective learning and development. This may be done by ensuring that outsourced companies adhere to the terms of the contract, failing which termination of the contract should result.

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## **LIST OF ACRONYMS**

CHE	Council on Higher Education
km	kilometre
NSFAS	National Students Financial Aid Scheme
R	South African Rand
UCT	University of Cape Town
UJ	University of Johannesburg
UKZN	University of KwaZulu-Natal
WITS	Witwatersrand University
WSU	Walter Sisulu University

## **CHAPTER 1: INTRODUCTION**

### **1.1 BACKGROUND**

Globally governments have placed higher education institutions under pressure to increase intake and open access to students. However, increasingly limited funding available to institutions of higher education has led to financial challenges (Ntshoe, 2003). The African context has seen similar challenges complicated by colonial legacies and decolonisation. Over time African higher education institutions have undergone massive changes such as massification and inadequate funding (Badat, 2016; Gray, 2017; Teferra, 2014). This massification was the direct cause of an increased intake in higher education institutions and open access to students (Ntshoe, 2003).

Many South African universities faced similar challenges. The high student intakes had an impact on funding at the very moment when governments have had to reduce funding to institutions (Badat, 2016; Ntshoe, 2003), despite the emphasis on higher education as a driver for the economy. These challenges have placed a great pressure on institutions of higher education to reduce costs (Pendlebury & Van der Walt, 2006), and one of the many cost reduction strategies employed is outsourcing (Badat, 2016; Jefferies, 1996).

Walter Sisulu University (WSU) is one of the institutions that has experienced financial difficulties. Maladministration and financial irregularities have led to the university being declared bankrupt, and in 2011 an administrator was appointed to remedy the situation and help get the university's financial position in order (Council on Higher Education (CHE), 2011). Outsourcing food services may be one of the many strategies employed by WSU to save costs. Some of the services that have already been outsourced are the bookshop, security, cleaning and photocopying services.

Ender and Mooney (1994) see outsourcing as a form of privatisation that refers to higher education institutions' decision to contract external companies to provide some of its services. According to Joy (2018) and Ilavska and Babiak (2007), outsourcing is when businesses employ an external person or other businesses to do work they wish not to do or cannot do themselves. This can be summed up as hiring someone to perform a service more effectively and at a lower cost than you can do yourself (Phipps & Merisotis, 2005).

Outsourcing not only reduces costs of rendering services but also shifts the responsibility of rendering the service away from the university (Ender & Mooney, 1994), allowing the university to shift its focus onto its core business. The core business of universities is teaching, learning and research, which all centre around students and the broader community. This means that a university's core function is servicing its student population, which suggests that ultimately outsourcing should benefit students.

Outsourcing services such as food, security and cleaning services may be some of the many cost-saving strategies employed by universities, but does leaving such crucial services to outsiders benefit students? The recent student protest actions across South African universities indicate otherwise. The #feesmustfall campaign called, amongst other things, for the reduction of outsourcing (Langa, 2017). Witwatersrand University (WITS) students showed solidarity with the outsourced workers and called for these workers to be insourced and absorbed within the university system. WITS management relented and the outsourced workers became employees of the university (Mokoena, 2017).

Outsourcing can have many benefits if managed properly (Ilavska & Babiak, 2007), however it can present a number of risks and challenges if not properly structured. Dixon and FitzGerald (2008) denounce outsourcing and label it a profit-driven approach which destroys communities and exploits the poor. The authors further state that outsourcing can serve its purpose by benefiting a company but has the potential of doing the opposite if not handled well: a badly managed outsourcing process can affect customers adversely, as well as the product offered and the level of service quality.

According to Lieb (2008) and Omondi, Ng'ang'a and Muraguri (2015), partnering with outsourced companies is one of the challenges experienced by outsourcing universities. Outsourcing is not always the best solution, particularly where students are concerned. In a study conducted by Sang (2010) on the opportunities and challenges of outsourcing in Kenyan universities, a deputy vice-chancellor of a Kenyan university suggested taking careful consideration when outsourcing crucial and sensitive services such as food services. He pointed out that service suppliers tend to increase prices and this often led to students' protests. Universities need to be involved in the running of essential services such as food services. The service provider may have the know-how of running the business but may not know the students as well as the university (Bartem & Manning, 2001).

Outsourcing was put in the spotlight during the South Africa's students' *#fees must fall* movement. In solidarity with outsourced employees who raised concerns about unsatisfactory working conditions, outsourcing became one of the issues raised during the massive *#fees must fall* protests. The protests led to instability within South African university campuses creating an environment not conducive to learning.

Moja and France (2014) state that integrating students' social and academic lives will provide students with a rich student life experience. The authors further explained how a New York university uses student residence halls to create intimate learning areas. Residence halls catered for both students and staff and allowed students and staff to interact on matters of interest, ensuring that learning continued beyond the classroom. This collaboration is reported to have improved students' academic performance.

## **1.2 PROBLEM STATEMENT**

Relinquishing a service to an external company requires the university management to manage the process properly to avoid problems that may occur. Ilavska and Babiak (2007) and Bartem and Manning (2001) assert that outsourcing does not guarantee service quality and thus it is important to evaluate services offered by outsourcing companies. Students' lives have been largely characterised by protests over living conditions, particularly food quality (Mogashoa, 2014). Studies indicated that, compared to the experiences of students based in United States of America, students in South Africa and other African countries complained of poor quality meals and services offered by outsourced catering companies (Ikeije & Nwaoma, 2015; Mogashoa, 2014; Sang, 2010). Given these concerns of quality, community and the effect that the environment has on student learning, this study is set up to explore some of these aspects within WSU's context.

WSU's Butterworth campus has a cafeteria conveniently available on campus, however, it is not as lively a space as expected and this creates an impression that students prefer external food service suppliers. The assumption is that students purchase most of their meals and essential supplies from vendors located outside the university campus. If this assumption is true, this may suggest that residential students spend time away from the campus, reducing time spent on studies and interacting on campus with peers, and they may likely be exposed to security risks and danger. Students' views and perceptions regarding services offered by the

outsourced suppliers, particularly the campus-based cafeteria, need to be investigated. A better understanding of what university students expect and perceive to be quality service from the contracted service providers will assist in providing the necessary measures needed to improve services offered to students.

### **1.3 MOTIVATION**

Transition from high school to university can be a daunting and quite overwhelming experience for many students (Stallman, 2010). Students, particularly those from rural areas, may find it hard to adapt to the new environment and this may lead to fears and anxiety over what is believed to be an opportunity for a better life. Zuker (1997) has notably found that many students have unrealistic expectations and these expectations are mainly based on a glimpse of tertiary life from sources such as television and movies. Therefore social interaction is an important aspect of a student's life as it assists in smoothing the transition process.

Social interaction amongst students is explored and explained in Astin's (1984) involvement theory. The amount of time a student spends on campus is important. A campus cafeteria is one of the many areas within campuses which can provide an ideal environment for peer interaction. The campus cafeteria supports positive social interaction and thus important to student well-being (Lugosi, 2018). The lack of a lively campus-based cafeteria deprives the students of an opportunity to interact with peers, and thus inhibits the social interaction process which in turn affects the learning opportunities students have (Lugosi, 2018; Temple, 2008).

As suggested by Pascarella and Terenzini (2005) and Tinto (1987), social interaction amongst students has a positive effect on persistence and cognitive development. Astin (1984) states that students who spend more time on campus identify themselves with the institution and feel more attachment to university life, and are therefore more likely to persist and succeed. A food service environment that caters to students' needs contributes to their rounded well-being, thus making a positive contribution to students' persistence and cognitive development.

Students require more from their higher education experience and food services is a vital part of that experience (Quigley & Pereira, 2011). Therefore students as customers and recipients of services offered (by the contracted supplier) should be given a role in the evaluation of the service supplied by the contracted food service suppliers.

## **1.4. OBJECTIVES**

The objectives of the study are to determine:

- how food services offered affect students' experiences of the campus;
- how the services meet the needs of the students;
- how the services offered affect students' behaviour or activity; and
- the benefits and challenges of the outsourced campus-based food services.

## **1.5 RESEARCH QUESTION**

To what extent do the campus-based outsourced food services meet the expectations and needs of students based at the Butterworth campus of WSU?

### **1.5.1 SUB-QUESTIONS**

The questions asked will be based on the following:

- How do students experience the food services at the Butterworth campus?
- How do the food services on offer meet the needs of the students?
- What are the students' responses to the outsourced services on offer at the Butterworth campus?
- What services do students most need and use?

## **1.6 DISSERTATION CHAPTER OUTLINE**

### **Chapter 1: Introduction**

An introduction to the study detailing information on the study's background, motivation, aims and objectives have been discussed in detail in this chapter.

### **Chapter 2: Literature Review**

Previous studies and projects will be discussed in this chapter. Results, recommendations and conclusions of these studies form part of the motivation for the present study.

### **Chapter 3: Research Design and Methodology**

Research tools and how the study will be carried out will be discussed in this chapter. This will encompass details on the study method, research design and population as well as research materials used to acquire data.

### **Chapter 4: Results and Discussion**

Results obtained from the data collected will be discussed in this chapter, including statistical analysis of data obtained from the survey questionnaire.

### **Chapter 5: Recommendations and Conclusion**

Recommendations based on data analysis will be made and discussed here. Conclusions made based on the proposed study will also be discussed in this chapter. This will include recommendations on future studies based on the results of the study.



## **CHAPTER 2:LITERATURE REVIEW**

### **2.1 INTRODUCTION**

This study focuses on outsourcing in higher education, particularly outsourced food services. The chapter profiles the global higher education landscape and introduces the reader to the emergence of outsourcing in higher education. This chapter highlights the importance of food services and other outsourced university functions, such as security and cleaning services, and provides an overview of literature based on students' perceptions of these aspects. The chapter further discusses the vital role these outsourced functions play in creating an environment that supports the holistic development of students.

Literature associated with students' attrition and success indicates that students' experience of the university affects their success. Factors which are thought to have an influence on the students' attrition and success are explored, including reports on how outsourced campus services, particularly the campus cafeteria as well as campus security and cleaning services, influence students' experience of the university.

### **2.2 HIGHER EDUCATION LANDSCAPE**

The number of students registered with higher education institutions across the world was estimated to reach 22 million by 2015 (Wolburg & Pokrywczynski, 2001). The number has rapidly increased due to widened access to higher education. This expansion is due to pressures for social justice and equity and thus to provide access to higher education (Jefferies, 1996; Teferra, 2014). Higher education institutions in South Africa have been tasked with widening access, most especially to previously under-represented groups, and thus to render services to a more diverse student population (Ntshoe, 2003; Teferra, 2014). Many of these institutions are not adequately resourced to deal with such an influx of students (Ntshoe, 2003). The call to widen access has not been adequately provided for and this has had a significant effect on the operation of universities (Pendlebury & Van der Walt, 2006), suggesting that the widened access does not match funding provided for by government (Gray, 2017). Therefore, government's call for open access to higher education is not on a par with the financial subsidies allocated to institutions of higher education. Universities, particularly universities in developing countries, are grappling with poor funding and inadequate resources, and the

increased student intake further cripples the already weakened financial status of these institutions (Ntshoe, 2003).

The challenging economic circumstances under which universities are operating has placed pressure on university management to strategise and put measures in place to ensure the institution's continuous operation and survival (Pendlebury & Van der Walt, 2006). Consequently universities have found themselves under pressure to reduce costs and operate within the limited funding allocated. Outsourcing is one of the cost-cutting measures employed by institutions of higher education to redress the situation (Pendlebury & Van der Walt, 2006) and has become a popular practice within higher education. Outsourcing is defined as the process of acquiring the services of an external supplier to supply services (Ikeije & Nwaoma, 2015).

### **2.3 OUTSOURCING IN HIGHER EDUCATION**

The business world has for decades embraced the practise of outsourcing (Patil & Patil, 2014). The outsourcing phenomenon has become an important operational strategy adopted by businesses all over the world (Gunasekaran, Irani, Choy, Filippi & Papadopoulos, 2015), with outside companies or persons tasked with performing functions traditionally performed internally (Gunasekaran et al., 2015; Ikeije & Nwaoma, 2015).

Functions and services mostly outsourced are those that companies regard as non-core, and this allows companies to focus on the core activities of the business (Patil & Patil, 2014). Outsourcing as a strategy in higher education has faced much criticism. The question to outsource or not to outsource became a focus of debates, conversations and studies (Dixon & FitzGerald, 2008; Sang, 2010; Shaw, 2013). Outsourcing has become a highly contested discourse in the higher education dialogues. University staff and students have disapproved of the practice, stating that outsourcing affects university experience and morale (Shaw, 2013). University staff members further indicate that outsourcing will affect employment.

However, advocates of outsourcing argue that outsourcing a private company to perform some of the university's functions reduces the university's labour costs, improves quality and efficiency, brings on board external expertise that further enhances operations of the

universities, and ultimately affords higher education institutions the opportunity to focus on their core competencies such as teaching, learning and research. (Ikejije & Nwaoma, 2015; Sang, 2010; Wood, 2000).

Opponents of the notion of outsourcing state their concerns, including that universities are becoming profit-orientated and operating more like private companies, and this may negatively influence the university's role and responsibility towards the community (Shaw, 2013). Shaw (2013) further states that some of the issues raised with regard to outsourcing relate to the fear that universities are operating like businesses and the impact this will have on the community.

Regardless of the opposition to outsourcing, outsourcing has continuously found its way into many academic institutions around the world (Sang, 2010). This phenomenon is what Ender and Mooney (1994) call privatisation, and is when universities outsource various functions traditionally performed internally by university personnel and may sometimes involve transferring university personnel and assets to the contracted service provider (Ikejije & Nwaoma, 2015).

Outsourcing has been successfully implemented in a number of higher education institutions. American institutions of higher learning have been outsourcing services such as food services for decades (Kim, Hertzman & Hwang, 2010). Universities in Kenya (Sang, 2010) and Nigeria (Ikejije & Nwaoma, 2015) have also adopted outsourcing. South African universities such as the University of Cape Town (UCT), University of Johannesburg (UJ), WITS, WSU and many others have outsourced one or more of its functions (Luckett & Mzobe, 2016).

### **2.3.1 Benefits of outsourcing for higher education**

Outsourcing presents a number of benefits. Businesses have reportedly saved money and focused on the important business functions, moving the risk associated with the operation of non-core functions to contracted companies and thus acquiring special skills and competencies which would not have been the case had the outsourced functions been carried out internally (Patil & Patil, 2014).

Ilavska and Babiak (2007) advocate outsourcing and assert that outsourcing is the best strategy that universities can employ to survive. The authors assert that outsourcing exposes universities to new trends, strengthens the universities' capabilities and helps institutions focus on activities such as teaching and learning. They further state that outsourcing has the potential to assist universities to reach their potential and to excel in the performance of their core competencies.

Sang (2010) reported that Kenyan universities outsourced mostly cleaning, food services and security. Cleaning and security services are the most outsourced services, with food services being the least outsourced service. University personnel of these universities were satisfied with the decision to outsource. It is reported that outsourcing saved time and money and improved security and cleanliness, suggesting that outsourcing had achieved its objectives (Sang, 2010).

### **2.3.2 Challenges of outsourcing in higher education**

While outsourcing has worked successfully for some organisations, in others it has not been successful (Freytag, Clarke & Evald, 2012). Some of the recent and prevalent discussions within the South African higher education field have been those of student fees and outsourcing (Luckett & Mzobe, 2016). Students took to the streets to protest about university fees and outsourcing. The protests termed *#feesmustfall* called for the abolishment of fees and outsourcing in higher education. This study looks into students' perceptions regarding university food services, particularly outsourced food services located on university campus.

Gunasekaran et al. (2015) also acknowledge that not all organisations support the notion of outsourcing. Integration challenges, and high transaction and procurement costs are some of the reasons some companies are reportedly against outsourcing. Outsourcing can save money but it may negatively affect the university (Ikejije & Nwaoma, 2015). Some of the challenges experienced by Kenyan universities included lack of co-operation from students, and this was due to the contracted service providers who were reported to have not taken cognisance of the nature of the customer they were dealing with and to staff attitudes due to the fear of job losses (Sang, 2010). Outsourced staff lack job security, which affects morale and attitude. Insourced staff relate better to the university and promote institutional culture (Mokoena, 2017).

Outsourcing also implies that the outsourcing university has no control over the operations of the outsourced service (Ikejije & Nwaoma, 2015), and thus the university loses control over

services that are offered to its students. Outsourcing creates a disconnection between outsourced workers and the campus life. The outsourced staff are likely to be less invested in the university environment (Ikeijie & Nwaoma, 2015).

Outsourcing has had undesirable effects on students. Students' lives, particularly students enrolled in African universities, have been characterised by protests. Students have protested about various issues including living conditions and the quality of food served on university campuses (Moja & France, 2014). Similarly students enrolled in a Nigerian university complained about poor quality meals and service delivery (Ikeije & Nwaoma, 2015).

#### **2.4 CREATING A HOLISTIC ENVIRONMENT FOR STUDENTS**

Many of the students entering the higher education system, particularly the previously disadvantaged institutions, are not academically prepared for higher education (Mohamedbhai, 2014). Mohamedbhai (2014) further states that the underprepared students generally come from rural areas which may have poor quality secondary schools, and this can affect the students' successful completion of their studies. Factors such as these play a role in the high dropout rates and low graduation rates in higher education. Each student carries different challenges that may affect successful completion of their studies. The university therefore needs to create an environment that will support the different areas of students' academic and social life.

The university's role should transcend ensuring proper and adequate teaching and learning facilities. Universities need to take greater responsibility for the student population they are entrusted with and create an environment that fosters holistic development. Holistic development can be defined as creating an environment that caters to both the student's academic and social lives (Ibrahim & Fadzil, 2013). Holistic student development is linked to student retention and success. These two areas of the student's life are important to successful student development. Universities need to understand the importance of creating an environment that fosters the holistic development of students.

An environment outside the students' classroom has an impact on the students' academic performance (Chekwa, Thomas & Jones, 2013; Ibrahim & Fadzil, 2013; Kuh, 1995). This is particularly important in addressing the low output rate affecting educational institutions. Problems associated with low input are institutional characteristics, individual characteristics and interaction within institutions (Paura & Arhipova, 2014). Moja and France (2014) support the intersection of the students' academic and social lives. Social integration is fundamental to students' retention and success. Participation in extracurricular activities, residing on campus and interacting with peers and facilitators within one's department has been associated with great satisfaction and desirable outcomes in students' academic results (Kuh, 1995). This theory and those of Ibrahim and Fadzil (2013) and Moja and France (2014) indicate that an environment that offers a holistic student support and allows integration of different areas of a student's life improves academic performance. It is therefore important for universities to create a nurturing, lively and safe environment for students. Such an environment promotes learning and enhances lifelong learning (Ibrahim & Fadzil, 2013).

Tinto's (1987) retention theory identifies key factors responsible for students' attrition. He states that challenges associated with adapting to a new environment, such as isolation and integration of new knowledge, plays a major role in student attrition. Academic departments and support services within institutions of higher education should therefore encourage active participation in social and academic activities that foster social integration. Student social integration is a critical component of student development and paramount in enhancing student learning and development (Astin, 1984).

## **2.5 UNIVERSITY FOOD SERVICES**

University students' food choices and habits have been of major concern. Global studies have indicated that students' eating habits are nutritionally inadequate, lack variety and put their health at risk of non-communicable diseases (Alibabić et al., 2014). Similar studies conducted in South African universities reported similar findings (Peltzer et al., 2014; Van den Berg, Okeyo, Dannhauser & Nel, 2012). The inadequate food choices and eating habits are largely due to the sudden change in students' living conditions. Moving away from home to live an independent life in university with limited experience of proving and preparing their own meals contributes to students' food choices (Kim, Lee & Yuan, 2012; Shahril, Wan Dali & Lua, 2013).



**Figure 2.1: Maslow's hierarchy of needs (McLeod, 2007, p. 3)**

In his original hierarchy of needs (Fig. 2.1), Maslow states that psychological needs such as food, shelter, water and warmth are the fundamental requirements needed for human survival. He further states that the human body cannot function properly if these needs are not met. Food services are therefore an integral part of a person's biological, cognitive and social well-being (Maslow, 1943). Maslow's theory of motivation suggests that a person's physiological needs should be met and satisfied before one is motivated to progress to other stages of the hierarchy. However Maslow later stated that his hierarchy is not as rigid as earlier indicated and that needs differ based on individual external circumstances (Maslow, 1989). However this does not supersede the fact that food and shelter remain fundamental needs of human survival. Food remains one of the vital basic human needs.

Food services are found in many areas of society, such as restaurants, hospitals, prisons and universities. Food services located within universities are often referred to as canteens, cafeteria or restaurants (Saglik, Gulluce, Kaya & Ozhan, 2014). Canteens are mandated with the responsibility of catering to and satisfying students' food and nutritional needs. These food services are usually organised by the student affairs division within universities. The food

services may either be managed internally by the university or contracted to external service providers, and the operation of the contracted catering service providers often falls within a scope of agreements entered into with the university (Saglik et al., 2014). Services offered are meant to cater not only for the student population but for the entire university community including university personnel.

Food services are one of the important areas within a university. Outsourcing crucial functions such as food services, cleaning and security may suggest that universities are predominantly concerned with their core functions such as teaching, learning and research but this ignores the fact that areas important to student social lives such as food services impact student learning and thus require as much attention (Ikeije & Nwaoma, 2015; Moja & France, 2014). Campus cafeterias are one of the many spaces referred to as informal learning spaces (Ibrahim & Fadzil, 2013). These spaces support what Ibrahim and Fadzil (2013) refer to as self-directed learning initiated by students outside the classroom environment.

Kim et al. (2012) suggests that universities are now coming back to understand and appreciate the importance of a notion of an all-inclusive education package that encompasses food services. This suggests that universities understand and appreciate the concept of providing to the needs of students, particularly in areas outside student academics. It is important that services offered to students meet customers' needs and expectations. Customers' needs and expectations may be measured through service quality and as such, universities have taken the initiative to involve students in assessing services offered (Kim et al., 2012).

Service quality is subjective and differs according to context. Several factors affect and influence a consumer's decision regarding the service offered. Factors such as ethnicity and religion are important in customer service. Kim et al. (2012) state that these are factors that should be considered when planning food services for university students. Failure to comply with the needs of the customer may lead to dissatisfaction. The authors further state that it is for this reason that many universities have begun seeking students' opinions regarding food services.



## **2.6 SERVICE QUALITY**

Service quality with regard to food services is described within a context of customers' expectation and perception about the level of service offered (Saglik et al., 2014). Service quality depends on the customer's perception. As customers of the outsourced service, students may generally not rate the level of service offered by an establishment the same way. What may be regarded or perceived as poor service by one customer may be perceived as good by another customer (Saglik et al., 2014). Nonetheless, provision of quality service is a priority for many educational institutions, and ignoring the importance of service quality may be detrimental to service providers within institutions of higher education (Ali, Zhou, Hussain, Nair & Ragavan, 2016). The demanding needs of university students increased with the high university enrolment rates and increased diversity within the student population. Customer needs have become more unique and complex (Kim et al., 2010), and customers rely on the campus food services to fulfil their immediate day-to-day nutritional needs (Nadzirah, Karim, Ghazali & Othman, 2013).

## **2.7 FOOD QUALITY**

Food quality is an important aspect of food preparation and service. Food quality characteristics are important in establishing a customer's food acceptance and satisfaction with food (Khaniki, Yavari, Foroushani, & Rezaei, 2016). A review of the literature suggests that characteristics important to food quality includes variety and taste of food, nutritional value, food presentation and appearance, the environment in which food is served, the price of food, and affordability (Choi, Wilson, Fowler, Yuan & Gosh, 2011; Ibrahim & Fadzil, 2013; Khaniki et al., 2016; Lee, Liaw, Lee & Rha, 2016; Nasir, Ahmed, Nazir, Zafar & Zahid, 2014).

### **2.7.1 Important food quality characteristics associated with satisfaction with food service**

#### **2.7.1.1 Taste of food**

Taste of food is an important element in a dining food choice. It is important for food service managers to accommodate students' taste preferences by offering a wide variety in their menus. Flavour and taste are important attributes of food services (Choi et al., 2011). Studies by Choi et al. (2011) and Khaniki et al. (2016) reported that university students prefer bold and global

flavours in their food. Students according to Choi et al. (2011) and Khaniki et al. (2016) reported that taste and flavour determined their satisfaction with food.

### **2.7.1.2 Variety in a menu**

Variety in choice is an important food service attribute (Choi et al., 2011; Lee et al., 2016). As the student body becomes more diverse, and also as students get a better sense of food, variety becomes important – it enhances the notion of not only diversity but of tolerance and of engagement across cultures. A study conducted at Stellenbosch University reported that students indicated that food offered at the campus cafeteria was not to their preferences and needs and this led to food wastage (Marais, Smit, Koen & Lötze, 2017).

A menu with great and extensive variety provides a sense of comfort and makes every student feel at home (Raman & Chinnias, 2011). The sense of belonging is important for student retention and recruitment of new students. Variety is important for the nutritional well-being of students. A diet that provides variety in selection is essential for the promotion of a varied diet. Students' nutritional needs are important to their physical and mental health (Khaniki et al., 2016).

### **2.7.1.3 Price**

Lamb, Hair and McDaniel (2011) define price as that which a customer is charged to acquire goods. This means that price is what a supplier charges a customer in an exchange to acquire goods or services. This medium of exchange is a significant factor in determining the transaction between the supplier and a customer. Such an exchange is likely to take place when the customer is satisfied with what is charged and considers it reasonable, affordable and good value for money (Campbell, DiPietro & Remar, 2014). Price is an important variable that universities can use to measure customer satisfaction (both students and staff) and expectation (Garg & Kumar, 2017). This highlights a correlation between price, value and customer satisfaction, suggesting that price is a significant factor in determining customer satisfaction. Customers generally match the pricing of food to quality: the higher the price the higher the expectation (Nasir et al., 2014).

#### **2.7.1.4 Environment/ambience**

Ambience may be defined as the general aesthetics that makes an environment appealing. A food service establishment's environment and ambience is one of the aspects that influence students' choice of a restaurant (Garg, 2014) and thus has an effect on satisfaction with food services (Donkoh, Quainoo, Cudjoe & Kaba, 2012). Ambience makes a food service environment attractive and appealing to its customers (Basera, Mutsikiwa & Dhliwayo, 2013). An attractive and appealing environment is conducive for peer interaction and socialisation which is an ideal learning space (Ibrahim & Fadzil, 2013).

Hygiene and a clean food service environment are important aspects of food preparation and service. Unhygienic and poor handling of food puts consumers at risk of food-borne diseases (Griffith, Jackson & Lues, 2017; Griffith, Worsfold & Mitchell, 1998). A study carried out by Khaniki et al. (2016) found that 7% of the students reported at least one incident of food poisoning due to consumption of food served in the university restaurant. Unhealthy and contaminated food is harmful to students. The effects of consumption of contaminated food puts the lives of students at risk and this affects physical and intellectual performance (Khaniki et al., 2016).

#### **2.7.1.5 Location of the food service and operating hours**

When deciding on a dining choice students look for variety, speed and convenience (Raman & Chinniah, 2011). Location is directly linked to speed and convenience. This suggests that the location of a food service outlet and the pace at which the service is offered has an effect on students' dining choice. Convenience is an important factor in determining food choices and thus location plays an important role as ease of access to food services becomes a priority (Choi et al., 2011). Studies on university food services have suggested that a majority (75%) of students preferred the on campus-based food services due to their proximity, these students cited convenience as the primary reason for sourcing food on campus, while 10% indicated that they would not purchase food from the campus cafeteria (Kim, Lee & Yuan, 2012). Other studies have shown that convenience is primarily the main influence on the decisions that students make regarding their food choices and habits (Tam, Yassa, Parker, O'Connor & Allman-Farinelli, 2017).

### **2.7.1.6 Service (cafeteria staff attitude)**

Staff employed at food service outlets serve as the representatives of the establishment. It is important for those responsible for interacting with students to understand the importance of such an interaction as this may affect students' satisfaction with the establishment (Raman & Chinniah, 2011). Previous studies have reported that students were not satisfied with the services provided by the staff in the cafeterias but reported that staff had bad attitudes and behaviour (Lee et al., 2016).

## **2.8 OUTSOURCED SECURITY SERVICES**

Students access food sources at various times. Some shopping may be done at different hours through the day and some may be done late at night and this raises safety concerns. Students may also go off campus to source food where there might be a security risk, making security services and what is on offer important. A male UJ student who had left campus to purchase food was attacked and shot on his way back to campus (News24, 2013). A university campus that is safe is paramount to students' overall university experience. University security services have a crucial role in ensuring that acquisition of this experience is done in a safe environment (Ngabaza, Bojarczuk, Masuku & Roelfse, 2015). Safety is particularly relevant to food provision and where students get food. In the interest of creating a nurturing and safe space for students and the overall university community, stringent measures should be put in place to create a safe environment for students.

University campuses should be viewed as a safe haven for the university community, however the safety of those residing and working in university campuses has over the years been a subject of concern. The campus security services have been a concern for students, university staff and the general community. The Higher Education HIV/AIDS Programme (2010) reported that the majority of South African students do not feel safe on their campuses. A study conducted at three South African universities indicated that 55.5% of Rhodes University, 71% of the University of the Free State and 70.2% of the University of Johannesburg students reported that "to be a victim of violent attack was a real risk in their lives" (Rau et al., 2014, p. 78). This suggests that the majority of students at these three universities were aware of violence around them and did not feel safe from harm.

Violence in university campuses is not only inflicted on female students. Although not of the same magnitude as female students, male students have been reported to suffer the same fate. Compared to their male counterparts, female students were particularly more concerned about their safety (Rau et al., 2014). The female students' concerns for their safety are not unwarranted. The prominence of violent attacks against female students has instilled a sense of fear and intimidation (Gordon & Collins, 2013; Rau et al., 2014). South African women are among the most attacked and violated in the world (Ngabaza et al., 2015). Studies conducted on the safety of university campuses suggest that university campuses and areas surrounding university campuses are not an entirely a safe environment for the university students (Gordon & Collins, 2013; Ngabaza et al., 2015; Rau et al., 2014).

The South African bill of rights states that people have the right to a safe and secure environment (Constitution of the Republic of South Africa, 1996). Provision of safety is thus not only an ethical and moral responsibility but a human rights obligation enforced by the human rights bill of rights and by the South African constitution. Failure to ensure a safer environment for students may have an impact on the overall students learning experience (Sanders, 2012).

## **2.9 OUTSOURCED CLEANING SERVICES**

Cleaning services are equally integral to student development. Students' sanitation should be provided for and maintained to standards acceptable to humans. Hygiene and sanitation in university campuses is not limited to hallways, toilets and bathrooms, lecture halls, cafeterias/canteens, library, sports areas and the general university environment. The environment in which food is served and consumed is important to students' well-being and health. Unhygienic environments risks exposure students' to food contamination and diseases (Khaniki et al., 2016).

Cleaning services is one of the functions sometimes outsourced by universities for reasons of efficiency and reduced labour costs services (Sang, 2010). Other studies have suggested that university students are largely not satisfied with hostel cleaning services. However, Assaf, Hassanain, Al-Hammad and Al-Nehmi (2011) have indicated that outsourced cleaning services improve the quality of the service, suggesting that outsourced cleaning companies provide a

better service, and this he attributes to the level of expertise and resource that cleaning services bring to the university.

Omondi et al. (2015), in a study titled *Effects of outsourcing cleaning functions on service quality in public universities in Kenya*, aimed at finding the differences between outsourced and in-house cleaning services in Kenyan universities. They found that outsourced companies offered a high level of service quality, and concluded that an outsourced cleaning company offered a better cleaning service than an in-house cleaning service.

## **2.10 CONCLUSION**

South Africa is a country with a diverse student population. The food service operators are expected to keep up with a very diverse student population confined within institutions of higher education (Nadzirah et al., 2013). The rising enrolment rates increases the demand for basic services such as accommodation, food, security and cleaning services. These services are expected to adequately cater for growing number of the student population. (Nadzirah et al., 2013). The environment created by the growing student numbers is considered to be vibrant and uncertain (Othman, Salehuddin, Karim & Ghazali, 2012) and, as stated by Kim et al. (2012), this creates more complexities for universities as catering for the needs of students is paramount to the university's retention of its student population

The benefits and disadvantages of outsourcing have been articulated by different authors. Arguments have been put forth but what remains important is the effect outsourcing has on students' success. Students enter higher education with the ultimate goal of completing their studies. The needs of the growing student numbers require that service providers stay abreast of student needs and perceptions. The increasing demand and needs of students enrolled in higher education provides an increase in business revenue for the food service sector. The increase in demand also creates very fierce competition amongst the service providers. Competition to retain customers is beneficial as it ensures a better level of service and continuous improvement in services offered (Abdullah, 2006). This suggests that business should put emphasis on the concept of quality as this will not only put a business ahead of its competitors but will also ensure survival and longevity (Saglik et al., 2014).

A holistic approach to student support and development is a pertinent and highly valuable intervention which can enable a smooth and successful transition to tertiary education (Box, Allan, Geddes, Kemp & Wojcieszek, 2012). Continuously providing students with support specific to their needs and circumstances will advance optimum growth and development (Box et al., 2012). Universities should take and show genuine interest in their students' needs outside the classroom. An atmosphere of support and care should be established: such an atmosphere promotes awareness, exploration and ultimately retention and success (Astin, 1999).

## **CHAPTER 3: RESEARCH DESIGN AND METHODOLOGY**

### **3.1 INTRODUCTION**

This chapter provides an in-depth discussion of the research design and methodology employed in the study. The discussion focuses on the research study and how it was carried out, including details of the research method, design and population as well as research materials used to acquire data.

### **3.2 RESEARCH DESIGN**

Mackenzie and Knipe (2006) define research as a methodical study in which a researcher gathers data, analyses it and provides an interpretation of the results. A research enquiry is done in an effort to investigate and understand a phenomenon (Mertens, 1998). Creswell (2009) describes research designs as plans and procedures used in research. A research design shows how the fundamental parts of a research project work together to address the research problem. A research design is therefore largely informed by the problem to be investigated, the population to be investigated, and the researcher's worldview and experiences (Creswell, 2009).

The study employed a quantitative research approach (Tavakol & Sandars, 2014). A quantitative research approach broadens the research scope and this allows the study of various factors. This approach measures the extent of a phenomenon and seeks to understand the *how many* and *how much* of a phenomenon (McCusker & Gunaydin, 2015). The research study was exploratory in nature and used descriptive data. An exploratory research design determines the extent of a phenomenon and descriptive data describes the phenomenon (Bless, Higson-Smith & Sithole, 2013; Punch, 2012).

#### **3.2.1 RESEARCH PARADIGM**

A research paradigm is defined as a belief system that guides a research investigation (Guba & Lincoln, 1994). A researcher's paradigm is important in understanding the process followed in undertaking the study. It is also important to understand the nature of reality that underpins a research study (Creswell, 2009). This understanding may be achieved through identifying a theoretical paradigm to which the researcher subscribes. There are a number of paradigms to



which researchers may subscribe, and which influence the process a researcher follows. The common research paradigms to which researchers subscribe are: positivist and postpositivist, constructivist, interpretivist, transformative, emancipatory, critical, pragmatist and deconstructivist (Creswell, 2009; Mackenzie & Knipe, 2006). The study adopted a quantitative approach which linked to a more empirical and rationalistic notion of research that relates to observation and measurement.

The researcher subscribed to a positivist paradigm. Positivist approach aims to test a theory through observation and measurement (MacKenzie & Knipe, 2006; Krauss, 2005). A positivist approach is based on what MacKenzie and Knipe (2006) describes as empirical and rationalistic. A positivist subscribes to a notion of “one absolute truth” which is described as reality that is not influenced by human perception (Sale, Lohen & Brazil, 2015; Takavol & Sanders, 2014; Mackenzie & Knipe, 2006). A positivist research approach employs quantitative methods of data collection and analysis. Positivists’ subscribes to the notion that relationships between variables can be measured and this knowledge can be acquired by using quantitative research approaches (Creswell, 2009; Mackenzie & Knipe, 2006).

### **3.3 SAMPLING**

One of the most important phases of a research process is deciding on the study sample (Patel, Doku & Tennakoon, 2003). A sample refers to the group of individuals chosen to participate in a study (Tavakol & Sandars, 2014). Sampling is a process used to identify participants of a research study from a study population and this process entails careful consideration of the study’s sample size, ethical principles, study design and the data collection procedure (Bezuidenhout & Cronje, 2014).

The study was conducted at WSU’s Butterworth campus. WSU has four campuses with 13 delivery sites. All the four campuses are in the Eastern Cape Province. The Butterworth campus is nestled between three other campuses (Mthatha, East London and Queenstown). Permission was granted (Appendix C) to conduct research at the Butterworth campus, situated in Ibika township of Butterworth.

The representative sample was drawn from the undergraduate students enrolled at the Butterworth campus. The study included full-time campus resident students only, because compared to non-resident students, they use the cafeteria and other campus outsourced services such as security and cleaning on a full-time basis therefore are more directly affected by services offered by outsourced suppliers. Both male and female students in all levels of undergraduate study formed part of the study.

### **3.3.1 Population**

The Butterworth campus has 5,786 registered full time students, 898 of whom reside in the campus-based university residences. Those who are not housed in the campus-based residences are housed in private accommodation contracted to the university, or in privately sourced accommodation.

### **3.3.2 Sampling method**

The study aimed at recruiting as many residence students as possible. Questionnaires were handed out to all residence students who agreed to partake in the study. The study population consisted of 898 residence students.

The study employed a cross-sectional approach involving 270 participants from WSU Butterworth campus, and both male and female undergraduate students were selected. In recruiting participants for the study a convenience sampling technique, which is a non-random sampling technique, was employed. Convenience sampling depends on opportunity (Tavakol & Sandars, 2014). In an attempt to increase participants' response rate recruitment of participants was done through face-to-face interaction.

### **3.3.3 Sample size**

The sample size was based on those who responded. The study targeted a response rate of a minimum of 10% of the population. At the end of all the recruitment sessions, 30% (270) of the student population took part in the study. The number is considered to be representative of the campus-based undergraduate residence student population at the Butterworth campus.

### **3.3.4 Inclusion and exclusion criteria**

The study's inclusion and exclusion criteria was informed by the study's research question and objectives (Patel et al., 2003). The research question and objectives aimed at addressing a research problem affecting both male and female undergraduate students residing at the Butterworth campus university residences and these factors defined the inclusion criteria. For reasons pertaining to legal consent, students under 18 years of age required parental consent to partake in the study. Excluded from the study were students residing off campus as well as postgraduate students.

### **3.3.5 Recruitment of participants**

Creswell (2009) states that a recruitment strategy employed in a research study should take into consideration the characteristics of the target population. It is thus important for researchers to acquaint themselves with the targeted research population as this will ensure that the recruitment strategy employed is appropriate for the study population (Creswell, 2009; Zhu et al., 2000). After careful consideration of all the factors associated with effective recruitment of participants and matching these with the targeted population, a person-to-person recruitment approach was employed. Recruitment and the data collection process were conducted at the same time, and the details of the process are discussed in data collection section.

## **3.4 RESEARCH INSTRUMENT**

The study used a self-administered survey questionnaire (Appendix B). A self-administered questionnaire affords the participant the privacy needed and assists in ensuring anonymity. Surveys are cost-effective and easy to administer (Creswell, 2009; Kumar, 2014) hence they were the preferred instrument for data collection although it should be noted that surveys may present the researcher with data that lacks depth (Kelley, Clark, Brown & Sitzia, 2003). Surveys provide a numeric description of a phenomenon and, depending on the sampling strategy, the results thereof may be generalised (Creswell, 2009). However, given that this study was based on one institution and only one campus in that institution, it may not be possible to generalise results.

The research instrument was developed through literature from several studies that sought to determine university students' perceptions and satisfaction with university campus catering

services (Andaleeb & Caskey, 2007; Garg & Kumar, 2017; Kim et al., 2012; Kim et al., 2010; Lee et al., 2016; Mogashoa, 2014; Raman & Chinniah, 2011; Saglik et al., 2014; Shanka & Taylor, 2005). Variables relevant to the present study were adopted and modified to fit the objectives of the study.

The study sought to determine the students' perceptions of the campus-based food services in particular and related services. In an effort to address the research question the research instrument was divided into two sections, with each section categorised according to attributes addressed.

**Section A** sought to determine the socio-demographic information of respondents. Questions relating to the respondents' background, financial status and food choices were asked. These questions were important in understanding the students' background and food purchasing behaviour and choice.

**Section B** had 6 questions, each of which had from 7 to 12 sub-questions. The questions were based on students' satisfaction and expectations with food sold at the campus cafeteria as well as the services provided by outsourced security and cleaning companies.

Questions relating to the quality of food sold at the campus cafeteria are important to the health and developmental needs of students. Literature on the eating habits of students affirms that students' diet is nutritionally inadequate, lacks essential nutrients and puts the students' lives at risk of developing non-communicable diseases (Alibabić et al., 2014; Rossouw, Grant & Viljoen, 2012; Van den Berg et al., 2012). It was therefore important to ascertain the students' views on the nutritional content sold at the cafeteria. Affordability, serving times, and quantity of food served are important determinants of food intake. Studies have showed that large elements of the South African population suffer from malnutrition and hunger and this is largely due to poor financial status (Shisana et al., 2014). Service time and interval has an effect on the choice of service outlet, hence this aspect was included in the questionnaire (Raman & Chinniah, 2011).

Aspects addressed in this section are important in establishing the students' views and opinions regarding food sold at the campus cafeteria as well as the services provided by the outsourced security and cleaning services. Services offered on campus have a major influence on students'

experience of the campus. Security and cleaning services are essential to the students' lives on campus: Effective learning requires an environment that is clean and safe. Such an environment promotes a sense of a home environment and enhances learning and creates an environment conducive to holistic development of students (Ibrahim & Fadzil, 2013).

The questionnaire was divided into categories which were measured on different Likert scales because they measured different variables. However, for uniformity purposes and to avoid confusing the respondents, questions within the same category were rated on a similar Likert scale. Each category addressed the objectives of the study. Satisfaction influences perception, hence the service quality attributes included in the survey are important in determining the students' satisfaction with services offered by the outsourced campus cafeteria.

**Table 3.1: Number of questions per category**

<b>Questionnaire section</b>	<b>Number of questions asked</b>	
<b>Section A</b>		
Socio-demographic questions	11	
<b>Section B</b>		
	<b>Number of questions asked</b>	<b>Likert scale</b>
Attributes relating to quality of food sold at the cafeteria	9	4 point
Importance of food service attributes	7	5 point
Satisfaction with food service attributes	12	2 point
Questions relating to campus experience	9	5 point
Questions relating to satisfaction with campus outsourced services	9	4 point

**Attributes relating to quality of food sold at campus cafeteria**

Question asked were about the food's visual appeal, temperature, quantity, hygiene, serving times, taste, nutrition and affordability. Using a 4-point Likert scale, respondents were asked to indicate the extent to which they 1 = strongly agree, 2 = agree, 3 = disagree, 4 = strongly disagree with the statements relating to the food sold at the cafeteria.

### **Importance of food service attributes**

Questions asked were based on the importance of the following service attributes: price, variety in menu, location of food service, atmosphere/ambience, service with regard to short queues and menu advice, the cafeteria's operating hours and staff attitude. Respondents rated the importance of the service attributes on a 5 point Likert scale range of 1 = very important, 2 = important, 3 = moderately important, 4 = slightly important, 5 = not important.

### **Satisfaction with food service attributes**

Using a 4-point Likert scale, respondents were asked to indicate the extent to which they: 1. very satisfied, 2 = satisfied, 3 = dissatisfied, 4 = very dissatisfied with the following service attributes: taste, consistency of taste, menu variety, preferred food, presentation of food particularly the packaging of food, temperature of food, freshness of food, price, atmosphere/ambience, location of food service, the cafeteria's operating hours and staff attitude.

### **Questions relating to campus experience**

Respondents were asked to indicate their views and opinions on the services that have an impact on their campus experience. Questions asked were based on the services provided by the security and cleaning companies and these relating services were measured using a *yes* or *no* answer.

### **Questions relating to the importance of the outsourced campus services**

Questions asked were based on the importance of the outsourced campus-based food services, safety and security, and cleaning services. Respondents rated the importance of the service attribute on a 5 point Likert scale range of 1 = very important, 2 = important, 3 = moderately important, 4 = slightly important, 5 = not important.

### **Question relating to the outsourced services meeting the needs of students on campus**

Questions asked were based on the extent to which the outsourced campus-based food services, safety and security, and cleaning services met students' needs. Respondents rated the extent to which their needs were met on a 4 point Likert scale of: 1 = most of the time, 2 = some of the time, 3 = seldom, 4 = never.

### **Question relating to the quality of service rendered by the campus outsourced services**

Questions asked were based on the quality of service rendered by the campus-based food services, safety and security, and cleaning services. Respondents rate the quality of service on a 5 point Likert scale of: 1 = very good, 2 = good, 3 = acceptable, 4 = poor, 5 = very poor.

### **3.5 PILOT STUDY**

A pilot study was conducted to test the validity of the adopted questionnaire (Kumar, 2014). A survey was conducted on a sample with similar characteristics to that of the actual sample population. Pilot testing was conducted on a group of students who were later excluded from the main study. The students who participated in the pilot study were Hospitality Management 3<sup>rd</sup> year students who were scheduled to be away on experiential training when the actual study would be conducted. These particular students were selected on the basis that they would be away from campus during data collection. This was done to avoid contamination of data by conducting pilot testing and actual research on the same population. The results of the pilot test indicated that the questionnaires measured the objectives of the study and were therefore adopted.

### **3.6 RELIABILITY AND VALIDITY**

Reliability is the degree of a research instrument's accuracy and consistency over repeated application or use (Kumar, 2014). A pilot study was conducted and this tested the reliability and validity of the research instrument. Results of the pilot study indicated that the survey questionnaire measured what was projected and it was thus regarded as both reliable and valid. Validity refers to the extent to which the researcher measures what was intended or how a test measures the behaviour of which it is intended (Bless, Higson-Smith & Sithole, 2013).

#### **3.6.1 Content validity**

The research sample was collected through convenience sampling. Convenience sampling is a probability sampling technique, results of which may not be generalised. The study worked with numbers using a convenience sampling technique involving a sample of 270 respondents. Content validity ensures that the questionnaire measures what it is intended to and this was

achieved through the adoption and modification of questions from previously validated questionnaires used in similar studies (De Vos, Strydom, Fouché & Delpont, 2008).

### **3.6.2 Construct validity**

Construct validity refers to the quality of the research instrument to measure what it is intended (Kumar, 2014). To ensure construct validity, a thorough literature review was conducted and through this review questionnaires used in previous studies were adopted and modified to suit the study's research context.

### **3.6.3 Face validity**

The study used a standardised questionnaire for data collection. Face validity ensures that the questionnaire measures what it appears to be measuring (Kerlinger & Lee, 2000). Ensuring face validity of the questions was very important particularly for survey questions. The questionnaire had pre-determined answers that were linked to the objectives of the study (Kumar, 2014). The survey further provided respondents with multiple answers to choose from and an option for *other* answers was provided in cases where none of the answers provided matched the views of the respondents.

## **3.7 DATA COLLECTION**

A study's research design and questions largely influence data collection and analysis of a research study (Punch, 2012). Data was collected and analysed using both descriptive and explanatory research methods. Description focuses on the measurement of the extent of a phenomenon and the description thereof (Punch, 2012), while explanation focuses on explaining the why of a phenomenon (Punch, 2012; Reaves, 1992).

Punch (2012) emphasises the importance of a proper data collection process in ensuring quality data. As recommended by Punch (2012) three research assistants employed to assist with data collection were trained on data collection procedures. The research assistants employed were senior students residing off the university campus. Training sessions were done through role playing and simulation. It was important to use students as research assistants: familiarity with a person of the same background and status was important as it made students comfortable and



ensured that students were free to ask questions relating to the study in a language of their choice (Zhu et al., 2000).

Potential participants were approached with the assistance of the trained research assistants. Information and recruitment sessions were conducted in residences, lecture halls and computer centres, and survey questionnaires were handed out during these sessions. Important aspects pertaining to partaking in the study were clearly explained to potential participants.

Respondents were informed about the study including the study's aims and objectives. Participation in the study was voluntary and anonymity was emphasised. This important information was communicated to all potential participants during recruitment. All information pertaining to the study was also contained in an information leaflet (Appendix A) and this leaflet was handed out to potential participants during the recruitment process. Information contained in the leaflet included the title of the study, the aim and benefits of the study, what was expected of the participants and the researcher's contact details for further information. Confidentiality was also emphasised in the leaflet.

Students who agreed to participate in the study were asked to sign the informed consent form. Respondents were asked to complete the questionnaire and hand it back immediately to the researcher/research assistants. It was explained to the respondents that those below the age of 18 years would be asked to contact their parents for consent and return the research survey questionnaire after consent was granted by parents/legal guardian. However data collected indicated that no respondents were below the age of 18.

### **3.8 DATA ANALYSIS**

Quantitative research data is analysed through statistics (Punch, 2012). Data was analysed using Stata V15 statistical software. Frequencies and percentages were used to summarise the data. Descriptive statistics and inferential statistics were deployed. Data is presented in frequency tables and graphs.

### **3.9 ETHICAL CONSIDERATIONS**

Ethics are rules and principles of what is morally considered right and wrong (Reaves, 1992). Research ethics provide the researcher with a guideline for conducting research in a morally accepted manner (Struwig, Struwig & Stead, 2001). Ethical conduct was ensured through the following:

- A letter was sent to the WSU and University of KwaZulu-Natal (UKZN) Research and Ethics committees for permission to request students to participate in the study.
- Participants were given a consent letter (Appendix A) which contained detailed information about the study.
- Participants were made aware of their rights, and information pertaining to their rights was also contained in the consent letter.
- Students participating in the study were assured of confidentiality and that their participation was voluntary, and no compensation was provided.
- Participants' identities remained anonymous. The questionnaire did not include participants' personal details.
- All information collected from the participants during the study was for the sole use of this study.

### **3.10 CONCLUSION**

This chapter gives a detailed account of the study's research process. The study's sampling procedure, recruitment strategy, data collection and analysis are explained in detail. The chapter further provides details of ethical procedures and considerations adhered to during the study. The following chapter provides a descriptive analysis of the study findings.

## CHAPTER 4: PRESENTATION OF RESULTS

### 4.1 INTRODUCTION

This study aimed at determining the satisfaction and perceptions of students regarding outsourcing in higher education, with a particular focus on the outsourced campus-based cafeteria. Many of the services related to campus and personal delivery are central to a rounded well-being and cognitive development of students. However, food in particular is a very social aspect. Cafeterias further provide space for peer interaction that contributes to students' social development and learning. It is therefore important to ensure that companies offering catering services to students meet students' expectations and create the requisite environment. This chapter discusses students' perceptions and satisfaction with the outsourced campus-based cafeteria in particular. The chapter further briefly discusses results related to other essential outsourced services such as security and cleaning services although this was not the main focus of the study, since they similarly touch on creating a positive learning environment,.

### 4.2 SOCIO-DEMOGRAPHIC FACTORS

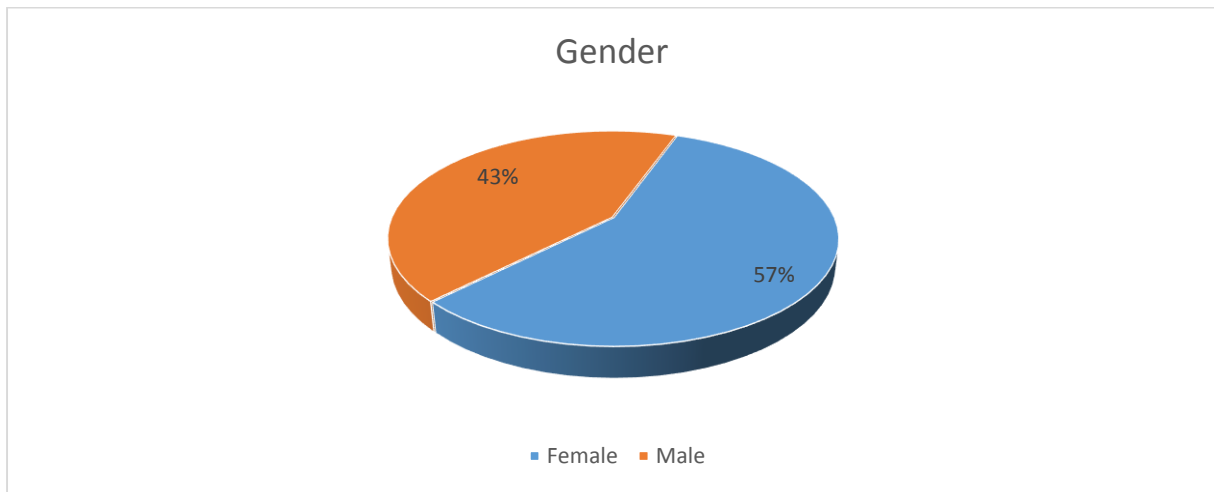
#### 4.2.1 Age of students

**Table 4.1 Age of students**

<u>Age</u>	<u>Frequency</u>	<u>Percentage</u>
18-21	128	47.41
>21	142	52.59

Table 4.1 indicates that 47% (128) of the participants are in the age group 18-21 while 53% (142) are older than 21 years. The results also indicate that no students under the age of 18 years of age participated in the study.

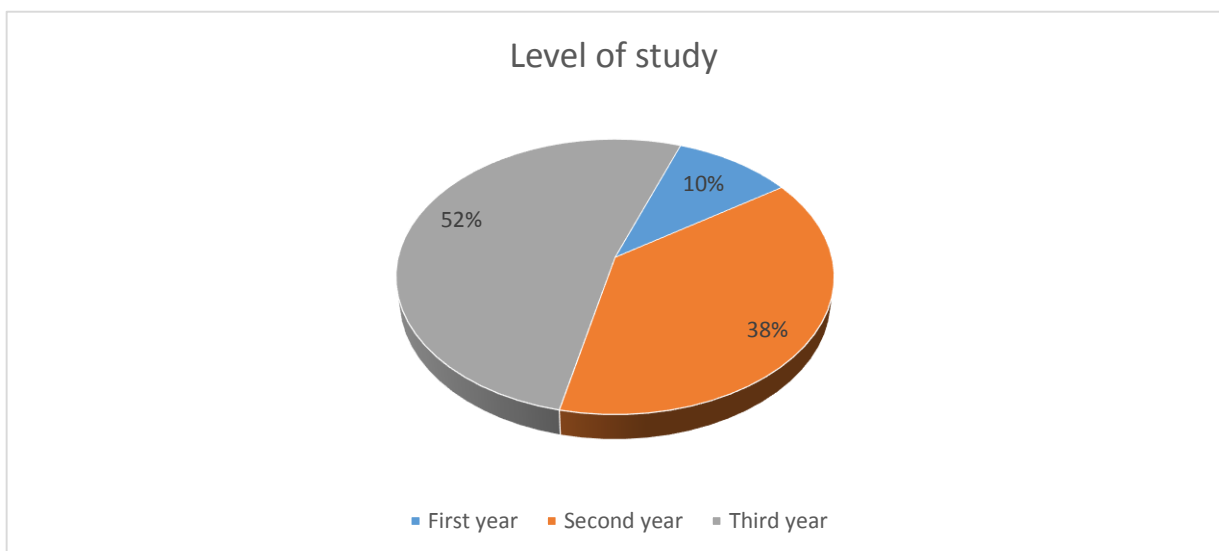
#### 4.2.2 Gender



**Figure 4.1: Gender of participants**

Figure 4.1 indicates that the majority (57%) of the students who participated in the study were female and 43% were male.

#### 4.2.3 Level of study



**Figure 4.2: Level of study**

Figure 4.2 indicates that the majority (52%) of students who participated in the study were third year students, followed by second year students (38%) and first year students (10%). This suggests that majority of the students who participated in the study had stayed at university

campus longer and their responses are based on long-term experiences with the outsourced services.

#### 4.2.4 Length of stay in university residence

**Table 4.2: Length of stay in university residence**

<u>Length of stay in university residence</u>	<u>Frequency</u>	<u>Percentage</u>
1-2 years	152	56
<1 year	21	8
>2 years	97	36

Of the 270 students who participated in the study, 56% had stayed in the university residences for a period of between 1-2 years, 8% had been there for less than 1 year and 36% had stayed in university residences for more than 2 years. The majority of the students who participated in the study had been staying at the residences for more than a year but less than two years. The majority of the respondents had been in the university environment longer than 1 year and their responses on the services offered by the outsourced companies are based on an experience that spans 12 months or more.

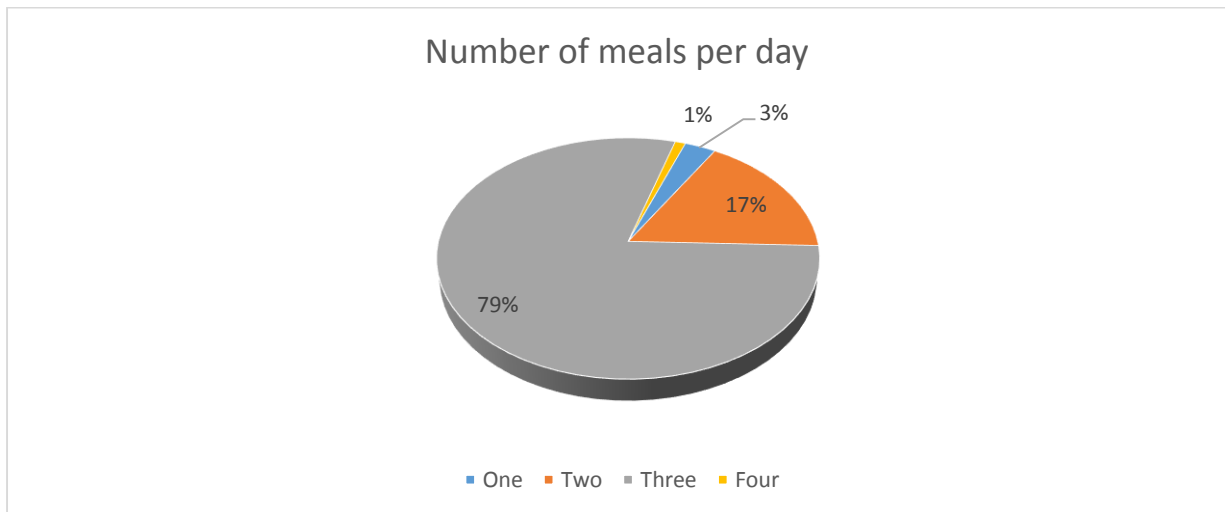
#### 4.2.5 Amount of money spent on food

**Table 4.3: Amount of money spent on food per month**

<u>Amount of money spent on food per month</u>	<u>Frequency</u>	<u>Percentage</u>
<R300	38	14
R300-R500	92	34
>R500	140	52

Table 4.3 indicates that the majority of students (52%) spent more than R500 a month on food; 34% of students spent an amount between R300 and R500 while 14% of students spent less than R300 on food per month. This indicates that the majority spent between R10 and R16.60 and more per day with 14% of the students spending less than R10 per day on meals.

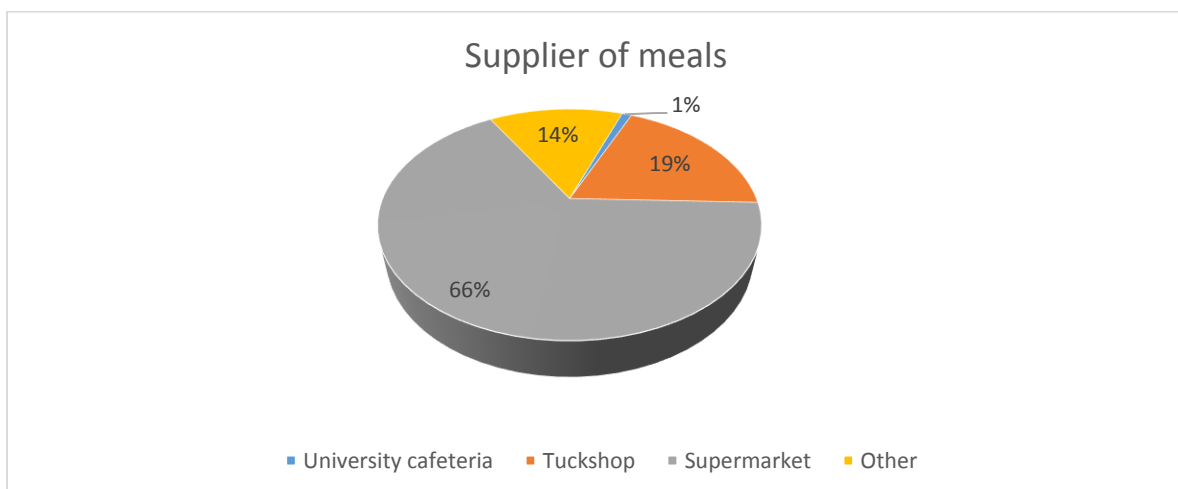
#### 4.2.6 Number of meals per day



**Figure 4.3: Number of meals per day**

Figure 4.3 indicates that the majority (79%) of students had three meals per day, 17% had two meals and 3% and 1% of the students had one and four meals per day respectively. This indicates that majority of students consumed an adequate number of meals per day. These results are similar to results of studies conducted on South African students in an Eastern Cape based university (Van den Berg et al., 2012) and one conducted in a Malawian university (Takomana & Kalimbira, 2012) but in contradiction with Lee and Yoon (2014) where the majority of a Chinese university students had two meals a day.

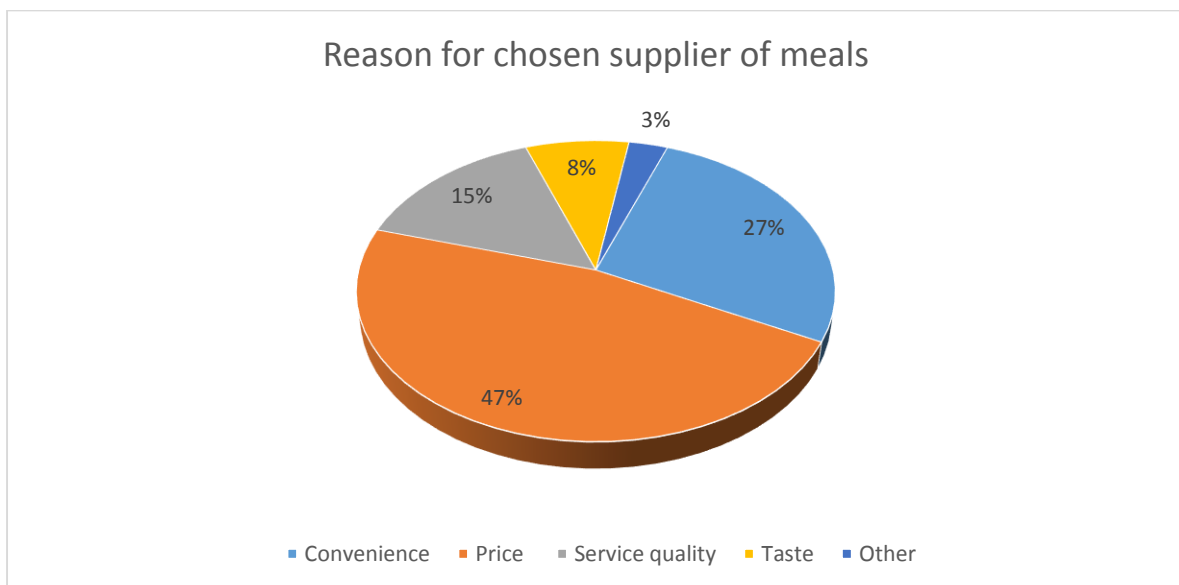
#### 4.2.7 Supplier of meals



**Figure 4.4: Supplier of meals**

Figure 4.4 indicates that the majority (66%) of students sourced their meals from a supermarket, 20% sourced from the campus-based food services (19% from the tuck-shop and 1% from the cafeteria) while 14% sourced their meals from other suppliers.

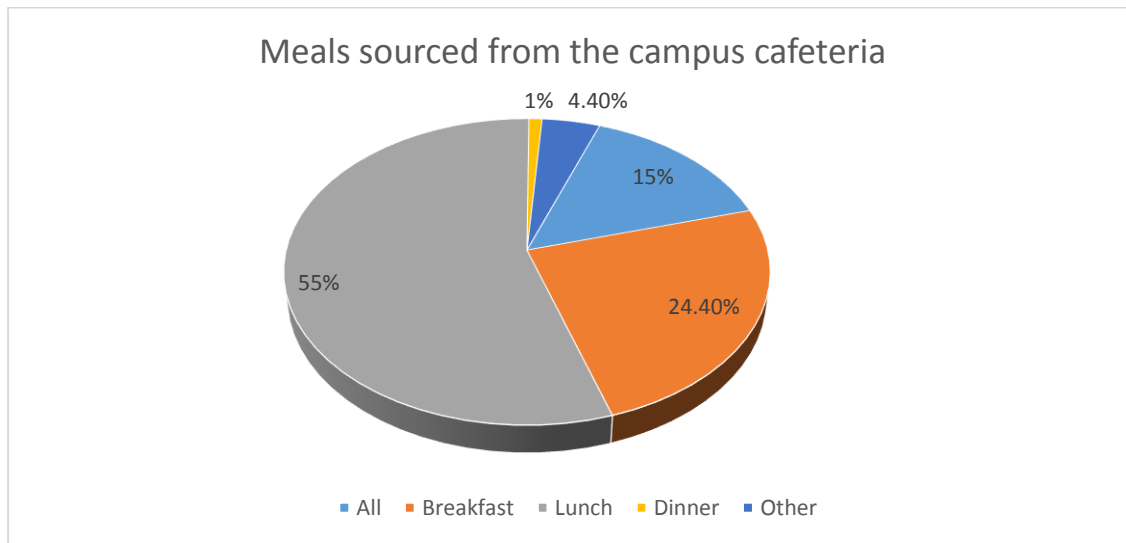
#### 4.2.8 Reason for chosen supplier of meals



**Figure 4.5: Reason for chosen supplier of meals**

When asked why they sourced food/meals from the chosen supplier, 47% of the students indicated that the supplier was chosen for price, 15% indicated that service quality was the reason for the chosen supplier, 8% and 3% indicated that taste and convenience were the factors and 27% of the students indicated that factors other than the predetermined ones were reasons for the chosen supplier.

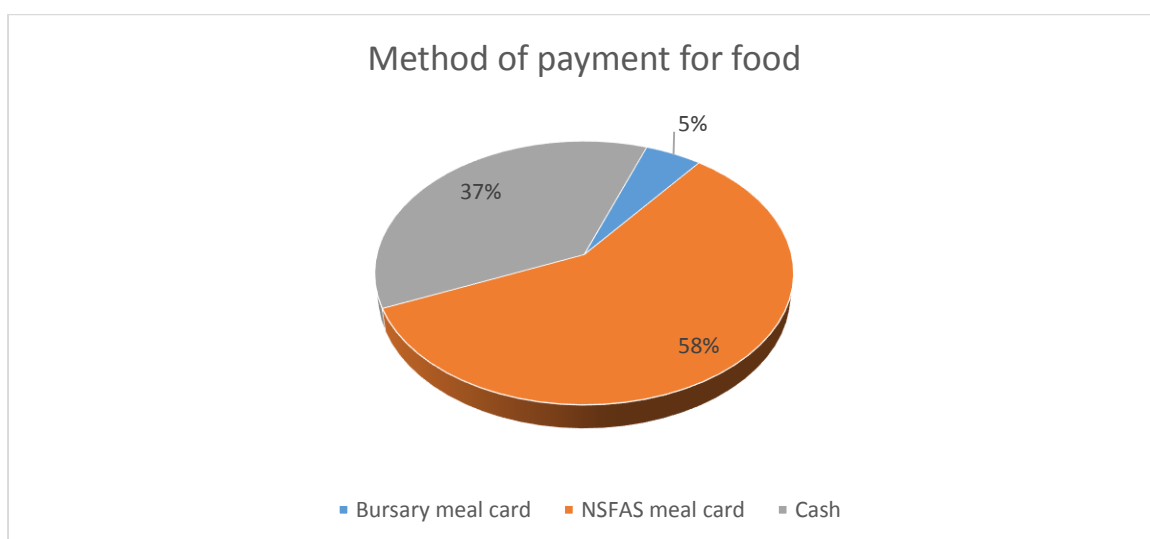
#### 4.2.9 Meals sourced from the campus cafeteria



**Figure 4.6: Meals sourced from the campus cafeteria**

Figure 4.6 indicates that more than half (55%) of the students sourced their lunch from the campus. Students need to access food close or within the university campus to enable interaction with students and staff. Social interaction is important for student attrition (Astin, 1984).

#### 4.2.10 Method of payment for food



**Figure 4.7: Method of payment for food**



As indicated in Figure 4.7, more than half (58%) of the students use a NSFAS meal card to pay for food, 5% use bursary-sponsored meal cards while 37% do not have meal cards and use cash to pay for food. Results of this study have shown that the majority of the students at WSU Butterworth campus are funded by the NSFAS, suggesting that students' financial backgrounds necessitated financial aid. To a certain extent this provides a picture of the students' financial standing and reflects on issues of affordability.

### **4.3 FOOD SERVICE ATTRIBUTES**

The following results show the responses of students regarding the quality of food sold at the campus cafeteria as well the importance and satisfaction with food service attributes and characteristics.

#### **4.3.1 Menu variety**

Results show that 54% of the students indicated that variety in menu is important, 17% indicated it was very important, 19% said it was slightly important while 4% indicated that it was not important. The majority (96%) of WSU Butterworth campus students believed to a certain extent that a menu that provides variety is important. The students' opinions about the importance of a variety in a menu are consistent with the findings in the study by Choi et al. (2011).

The majority of the respondents (77%) were dissatisfied with the variety in the menu. A further 8% indicated strong dissatisfaction with this aspect and only 7% and 8% of the respondents were satisfied and strongly satisfied with the variety in menu. This suggests that the majority (85%) of the students were of the opinion that the cafeteria menu offered a limited variety. Students want maximum choice and a diverse variety in a choice of meals offered (Raman & Chinniah, 2011; Shanka & Taylor, 2005). Variety in the form of food available and served to students is an important food service attribute which influences satisfaction with food services (Choi et al., 2011). Results of this study suggest that Butterworth students want a wide and diverse variety in a choice of meals offered, and as indicated in the literature students prefer bold and global flavours and a diverse menu which offers a variety of options (Choi et al., 2011; Raman & Chinniah, 2011).

The majority (73%) of the students were dissatisfied with the food items offered at the cafeteria, a further 14.5% were very dissatisfied while 8% and 4.5% of the students were satisfied and very satisfied with this aspect, indicating that the food service outlets sold food preferred by only 12.5% of the students. Results of this study are consistent with the results of a study conducted at Stellenbosch University. The majority (58.7%) of students at Stellenbosch University indicated that menus were not planned with their needs and preferences in consideration therefore it was not what they preferred (Marais et al., 2017).

#### **4.3.2 Nutritional content of food**

Results further indicate that food sold on campus did not meet the nutritional needs of the majority (79%) of students. A wide variety in menu items which includes healthy options is vital to students' health and well-being (Alibabić et al., 2014). Poor dietary intake deprives the body of nutrients essential for optimum brain development and functioning. Poor nutrition affects academic performance and this may impact students' academic progress and success (Alibabić et al., 2014). Good and optimal nutrition is essential for physical and cognitive well-being, and is therefore an important element of holistic development of students. WSU Butterworth campus results suggest that students' holistic well-being maybe greatly compromised, subsequently jeopardising successful completion of academic programmes. It is important for students' nutritional requirements to be met in order to contribute to the holistic development of students. It is important for food service outlets to offer healthy and nutritious meals.

#### **4.3.3 Taste of food**

The results indicate that 20% of the students stated that food tasted good, 5% strongly agreed with this statement. The results further indicate that 55% and 20% of the students respectively disagreed and strongly disagreed with the above statement, suggesting that the majority (75%) of the students indicated that food served did not taste good. With regard to consistency of taste of food sold at the cafeteria, half (50%) of the student population showed dissatisfaction with consistency of the taste of food served. A further 23% of the students were very dissatisfied with this aspect while 16% and 11% were satisfied and very satisfied respectively.

Results further show that only 26% of the WSU Butterworth campus students were satisfied with taste of the food served at campus food services with a further 11% of the students reporting to be very satisfied with this aspect. Dissatisfaction with the taste of food served was

indicated by 29% of the students with a further 34% very dissatisfied suggesting that the majority of the students were not content with the taste of food sold on campus. Results of this study are consistent with studies conducted by Khaniki et al. (2016) and Raman and Chinniah (2011) in which the majority of students were dissatisfied with taste of food served on campus. Raman and Chinniah (2011) further indicated that students did not frequent the campus cafeteria because food sold on campus was bad. Bad food drives students away from campus and this limits time spent on campus and exposes students to danger.

#### **4.3.4 Food presentation**

The results shown in Table 4.4 show that more than half (57%) of the participants disagree that the food served always looks attractive whereas 17% strongly disagree with this statement. Only 4% and 22% strongly agree and agree that the food served always looks attractive. These results are consistent with results of a study by Marais et al. (2017) in which the majority of students indicated that food served at the cafeteria did not look appetising.

Results indicate that more than half (57%) and a further 9% of the students were dissatisfied and very dissatisfied with the presentation of the food. This suggests that the majority of the students do not like or agree with the packaging that food is served in. However 25% and 9% of the students are reportedly satisfied and very satisfied respectively with this attribute. Appearance of food is one of the characteristics that affect students' satisfaction with food. If this aspect of food quality is not met students are likely to find the food unacceptable (Khaniki et al., 2016) and look for other alternatives, and in the case of WSU Butterworth campus alternatives are located 8km from the university campus.

#### **4.3.5 Freshness of food**

It is important that freshness of food is preserved. Preservation of food ensures that food served is harmless and free of food poisoning (Khaniki et al., 2016). Studies show that students expect fresh food from food service providers (Choi et al., 2011; Khaniki et al., 2016). Results indicate that 33% of the students were dissatisfied with the freshness of food, 32% of the students were very dissatisfied with this aspect while 26% and 9% of the students were satisfied and very satisfied respectively. This result suggests that the majority of students were not content with the freshness of food served on campus. Failure to meet this aspect risks students' health and well-being as students may be exposed to harmful food-borne diseases (Khaniki et al., 2016).

#### **4.3.6 Food temperature**

Results indicate that 31% of the students were dissatisfied with the temperature at which food was served, this was further emphasised by 38% of the students, however 26% were satisfied and a further 10% very satisfied with the temperature of food served. Results indicate that 24% of the students agree that food that was supposed to be served hot was served hot: 7% strongly agreed with this statement whereas the majority of the students (60%) disagreed and the statement further received a negative response from 9% of the students who strongly disagreed that food that was supposed to be served hot was served hot. The majority of the students (53%) disagreed with the above statement, suggesting that food that was supposed to be served cold was not served cold. 6% of the students strongly disagreed with this statement. However 34% and 7% of the students respectively agreed and strongly agreed that food that was supposed to be served cold was served cold.

#### **4.3.7 Food portion sizes**

The results shown in Table 4.4 indicate that 44% of the students disagreed that they were satisfied with the quantity of food served; 35% and 4% of the students respectively agreed and strongly agreed that they were satisfied with the quantity of food served, suggesting that 39% of the students who participated in the study positively affirmed the above statement. However 17% of the students strongly disagreed, suggesting that the majority of the students (61%) were not satisfied with the quantity of food served. Similar results were reported for Stellenbosch University students, who indicated that meals served at the university cafeteria were small (Marais et al., 2017). However WSU Butterworth campus results are in contrast to results reported for Tehran university students in Malaysia, the majority (69%) of whom were content with the quantity of food served (Khaniki et al., 2016).

#### **4.3.8 Food service environment**

Results indicate that 40% of the students agreed that food was always served in a clean environment, 42% of the students disagreed with the above statement, 10% strongly agreed while 8% strongly disagreed with this aspect. These results are in contrast with results of a study conducted by Khaniki et al. (2016) where the majority (78%) were satisfied with the environment food was served in and reported that food was served in a clean and hygienic environment. Hygiene and cleanliness of the food service environment contributes to the overall satisfaction with the cafeteria thus the highest level of expectation of students from the university canteen is about hygiene of the environment where food service is delivered

(Nadzirah et al., 2013). Results of WSU Butterworth campus indicate that food is not always served in a clean environment. An unhygienic food environment exposes students to potential harm and sickness caused by food-borne illness, and ill health affects studying and academic progress (Khaniki et al., 2016).

The results show that 46% of the students indicated that a food service atmosphere/ambience was important, a further 37% indicated that atmosphere/ambience is very important, 7% moderately important and slightly important while 3% indicated that it was important. Results of this study further show that 49% of the students were dissatisfied with atmosphere/ambience, this was further emphasised by 21% of the students who were very dissatisfied with this aspect. Only 22% and 8% of students were satisfied and very satisfied respectively. This suggests that majority (70%) of students were not content with the atmosphere/ambience of the food service outlets.

Ambience is that which makes the dining experience better and enjoyable (Lee et al., 2016). Literature indicates that peer-to-peer socialisation allows learning to transcend beyond the classroom. Restaurants and cafeterias not only provide for students' nutritional needs but also provide spaces and allow opportunity for social interaction (Ibrahim & Fadzil, 2013). Social interaction requires a lively space. Cafeterias are ideal spaces for student interaction and socialisation (Ibrahim & Fadzil, 2013). Results indicate that the majority of the students were not satisfied with the ambience and this may suggest that the campus food services did not offer a social and lively space for these students. A study conducted by Raman and Chinniah (2011) reported that a bad food service environment influences how often clients frequent a university cafeteria, suggesting that a bad environment may deter students from frequenting the cafeteria.

The results further suggest that the ambience of food service outlet did not conform to the expectation of the majority of its customers. Results of this study are consistent with results reported by Lee et al. (2016), who found that the majority of students at a Malaysian university were not satisfied with the ambience of the university cafeteria. Dining areas are lively spaces that should foster social interaction amongst students. Kuh (1995) and Moja and France (2014) advocate creation of spaces that foster social interaction and suggest that such spaces allows holistic development of students and improves academic performance.

#### **4.3.9 Operating hours**

Results indicate that more than half (66%) of the students indicated that operating hours of a food service outlet are important, 21% indicated that it was very important, 5% of the students indicated that it is moderately important and 5% indicated that it is slightly important while 3% indicated that it was not important. The majority (67%) of the students indicated that they were dissatisfied with the food service outlets operating hours. This aspect further received a negative response from 17% of the students who indicated being very dissatisfied with operating hours. However this aspect received a positive response from 10% and 6% of the students who reported being satisfied and very satisfied respectively. Results further indicate that 43% of students were not satisfied with meal serving times with 11% strongly disagreeing to the aspect of satisfaction with meal serving times.

Cafeteria operating hours are important in the student experience. A study conducted by Choi et al. (2011) indicated that convenience was a significant factor in students' shopping. The study indicated that students mostly prefer late night shopping, suggesting that operating hours are a very significant aspect of satisfaction with dining choice. Students may want food when studying, particularly late in the evenings or as a snack during social interactions with peers. WSU Butterworth campus students may have similar preferences, suggesting that the shopping hours may be limited and not convenient to their schedules.

#### **4.3.10 Price**

Results indicate that more than half (57%) of the students reported that price is an important food service attribute, 3% reported that it is moderately important, 30% indicated that it was very important, 6% slightly important while 4% indicated that price was not important. With regard to the price of food sold on campus, the majority of the students (65% and 16%) were dissatisfied and very dissatisfied respectively while 13% were satisfied and 6% very satisfied with pricing of food.

WSU Butterworth campus is a rural-based university with the majority of its students dependent on financial aid for tuition, accommodation and food, and this explains the why more than half of the students are of the opinion that price is an important factor in students' dining choice.

Results of this study are similar to those reported by a study on a choice of dining restaurant at a Malaysian university (Nadzirah et al., 2013). More than half (55.8%) of the students indicated that the significant reason for eating at a particular restaurant on campus was due to price.

When asked if food sold at the cafeteria was affordable, 61% and 19% disagreed and strongly disagreed respectively, suggesting that the majority (80%) of students found food sold at the cafeteria unaffordable (see Table 4.4). However only 20% of the students indicated that food sold on campus was affordable. Compared to other restaurants located on campus, prices charged at this particular restaurant were regarded as reasonable (Garg & Kumar, 2017). Other studies reported similar results, indicating that price was a significant factor in students' dining choice (Campbell, DiPietro & Remar, 2014).

Dissatisfaction with the pricing of food is likely to drive customers away from the food service outlet and students will most probably seek cheaper food service outlets located outside the campus and this is clearly the case at WSU Butterworth campus as the majority of students have indicated that they purchase food outside the university campus. This suggests that the pricing of the food does not meet students' perceptions. Students may have expected more based on the pricing of the food. Students' financial status may generally mean that food sold above what they can afford may threaten food security (Gresse, Pietersen & Steenkamp, 2015). Students may therefore be left with no choice but resort to skipping lunch, having lunch in their rooms in residences, or sourcing lunch from food service outlets located outside the university campus. All these possible solutions may affect students in several ways. Time spent on campus with peers may be limited, skipping lunch may affect the students' dietary intake and affect concentration and attention, and some may arrive at lectures later than the scheduled time after lunch.

#### **4.3.11 Location of food service**

The majority (52%) of the students stated that the location of the food service establishment is important, with 35% stating that it was very important and 6% indicating that it is moderately important, thus the majority of the students regard the cafeteria location as important. There might not be enough time for food purchasing particularly between lectures therefore it is important for a cafeteria to be located in close proximity of the academic areas such as lecture halls and laboratories. An inconvenient location may cause some students not to dine at the cafeteria. Location and convenience is significant to students' dining choice.

Convenience is key to students' decision making (Raman & Chinniah, 2011). Results of this study indicate that 53% of the students showed dissatisfaction with the location of the food service outlets, 13% indicated they were very dissatisfied, 27% were satisfied and a further 7% were very satisfied with the location of the food service. These results are in contrast with results reported by Raman and Chinniah (2011) in which 2% of the students found the location of the cafeteria inconvenient causing them not to dine at the cafeteria.

#### **4.3.12 Attitude of cafeteria staff**

The majority of the students (80%) indicated that a complement of friendly staff in a food service outlet is very important, this is further emphasised by 14% who believe that friendly staff is a very important attribute of a food service outlet. A food service outlet should be in a position to offer efficient service to its customers.

More than half (58%) of the students reported that they were dissatisfied with the attitude of the staff, 14% was very dissatisfied while 23% and 5% of students respectively were satisfied and very satisfied with this aspect. These results are consistent with those of a study conducted by Lee et al. (2016) where the majority of the students indicated that they were not satisfied with the services provided by the staff in the cafeteria. These students indicated that staff had a bad attitude and behaviour.

## **4.4 QUESTIONS RELATING TO CAMPUS EXPERIENCE**

Respondents were briefly asked to indicate their views and opinions on other services that have an impact on their campus experience. Questions asked were based on the services provided by the security and cleaning companies and these services were measured using a *yes* or *no* answer.



**Table 4.4: Aspects important to students' campus experience**

<u>Variable</u>	<u>Yes</u>	<u>No</u>
Does the time spent away to source food affect time spent on studies?	78%	22%
Are you concerned with your safety outside the university campus?	55%	45%
Have you ever been robbed or threatened outside the university campus?	24%	76%
Do you always feel safe on campus?	26%	74%
Do you walk around the campus at night without any fear?	23%	77%
Is the university security always visible at night?	23%	77%
Is the campus environment free of dirt and litter?	58%	42%
Are the campus bathrooms always clean?	17%	83%
Are the lecture halls and labs always clean?	53%	47%

#### **4.4.1 Campus security**

The safety and security services at WSU Butterworth campus are outsourced from an external company. When asked whether the time spent away to source food affected time spent on studies, 78% of the students responded yes and 22% responded no. This indicates that the majority of students who spent time away from campus. Students indicated that time spent on their studies is compromised by trips to town to purchase food. Results show that 40% thought that safety and security was important, 52% thought it was very important, 3% moderately important, 3% slightly important and 2% indicated that safety and security services were not important.

In relation to student safety and security, results of this study show that 55% of the students indicated that they were concerned about their safety outside the university campus and 45% indicated that they were not concerned, 24% of the students reported that they had been robbed or threatened outside the university campus. A further 74% of students did not always feel safe on campus; the majority (77%) indicated that they do not walk around the campus without any fear; 77% of the students reported that the university security was not always visible at night with 23% reporting otherwise.

Safety is an important component of a holistic development approach (Baker & Boland, 2011). Results of this study have shown that the majority of students spent time away from campus to

source food. Given the high crime statistics in South Africa, it is clearly reasonable to deduce that students' safety outside the university campus is a concern. While the university's control over what happens outside the campus is restricted, data on how time outside and inside the university campus is important as this will show how time spent away from campus affects students' safety and security.

#### **4.4.2 Campus cleaning services**

50% of the students were of the view that cleaning services were important, 30% indicated that the cleaning services were very important, 7% and 8% indicated that the cleaning services were moderately and slightly important respectively while 5% were of the view that cleaning services were not important.

When asked if the campus environment was free of dirt and litter, 58% of the students responded yes and 42% responded no. 83% of the students indicated that the campus bathrooms were not always clean while 17% indicated that the bathrooms were always clean; 53% of the students indicated that the lecture halls and labs are always clean while 47% of the students did not agree with this aspect.

### **4.5 QUESTIONS RELATING TO OUTSOURCED SERVICES**

Questions asked were based on the extent to which the outsourced campus-based food services, safety and security and cleaning services met students' needs. Respondents rated the extent to which their needs were met on a 4 point Likert scale as follows: 1 = most of the time; 2 = some of the time; 3 = seldom; 4 = never.

#### **4.5.1 Food services on campus**

Results indicate that most of the time campus food services met the needs of 35% of the students, while the needs of 42% of students were met some of the time, the needs of 18% of the students seldom met and the needs of 5% of the students were never met. Results further indicate that 33% of the students regarded the quality of service offered by the food services as acceptable, 16% rated it good, 41% regarded the quality of service as poor, while 4% and 5% of students regarded the service as very good and very poor respectively.

#### **4.5.2 Safety and security services**

Results show that 19% of the students felt that most of the time the safety and security services met their needs, 49% indicated that safety and security services met their needs some of the time and 25% of the students reported that safety and security services seldom met their needs while 7% of the students indicated that safety and security services never met their needs. The quality of service rendered by the safety and security services was regarded as acceptable by more than half (55%) of the students, 10% regarded the service as good, 32% regarded the service as poor while 2% and 1% of the students regarded the service as very good and very poor respectively.

#### **4.5.3 Cleaning services**

Table 4.4 also indicates that 19% of the students reported that most of the time the cleaning services met their needs, 54% reported that some of the time the cleaning services met their needs, 16% reported that the cleaning services seldom met their needs while 11% reported that the cleaning services never met their needs. The quality of services offered by the cleaning services was rated acceptable by 55% of the students, 26% rated the services good, 28% of the students rated the quality of service poor, 6% rated the service very good and no students regarded the services as very poor. The services offered to students should be improved and maintained at standards acceptable to students. Hygiene and health aspects are important contributors to the development of health habits for life.

### **4.6 SUMMARY**

Results of this study show that 53% of the students were older than 21 years and 47% were between the ages of 18 and 21 years. The majority of the students spent more than R500 on food per month and this amount works out to R16.67 per day; 79% had three meals a day, sourced their meals from the supermarket, and pricing of food was the reason 47% of the students sourced their meals from a supermarket located 8 km outside the campus. The meal mostly sourced from the campus food services was lunch and more than half (58%) of the students were NSFAS beneficiaries and were provided with meal cards which suggests that this group of students had means to source food. The NSFAS meal cards allow purchases to a number of service providers including supermarkets and restaurants.

Results of this study show that the majority of WSU Butterworth campus students indicated that food served did not always look attractive; 69% respectively felt that food was not served at appropriate temperatures; 61% were not satisfied with the quantity of food served; more than half of the students indicated that food was not always served in a clean environment and the majority (75%) of the students indicated that the food served did not taste good. The majority (80%) of these students further indicated that they were not satisfied with the price of food and that food sold on campus was not affordable.

The majority of the Butterworth campus students indicated that they were not satisfied with the environment/ambience of the campus cafeteria, or with the cleanliness of the cafeteria. With other aspects relating to overall satisfaction with campus services, WSU Butterworth campus students indicated that the campus environment was free of litter, lecture halls and laboratories were always clean, toilets were clean but this was not always the case, and the majority did not feel safe on campus or walking alone at night. The presence of the campus security did not make them feel safe. However these safety and security aspects did not affect the satisfaction of students with the services offered by the outsourced campus security as more than half of the students were satisfied with the services offered by campus security.

## **CHAPTER 5: DISCUSSION AND IMPLICATION OF FINDINGS**

### **5.1 INTRODUCTION**

The study's aim was to determine WSU's students' perception regarding outsourcing and the outsourced campus-based cafeteria in particular. The main research question was: "*to what extent do the campus-based outsourced food services meet the expectations and needs of students based at the Butterworth campus of Walter Sisulu University?*". The previous chapter presented the findings of the study and this chapter focuses on the research objectives and how the study addressed the study's research question.

### **5.2 DISCUSSION OF THE FINDINGS**

The following is the discussion of the study research question. The results are based on the study's objectives which seek to determine the students' perception with the outsourced campus-based cafeteria and other outsourced services, namely security and cleaning services at WSU's Butterworth campus.

#### **5.2.1 Students' experience of food services at the Butterworth campus**

Results of this study show that the majority of students were not satisfied with the outsourced campus cafeteria. The students' responses suggest that the food sold did not meet their expectations. Results further show that the basis for student dissatisfaction was the negative experience with food quality and service. Students were not satisfied with all aspects of the quality of food sold at the campus-based cafeteria. Students did not like the taste of the food, the menu did not offer enough variety, and meals served were not to the students' preferences and did not meet their nutritional needs.

Food freshness and hygiene are important elements of food health and safety. Providing students with food of questionable quality may subject students to harmful bacteria and diseases. The food preparation and serving environment should be kept clean at all times to ensure that food prepared for students is safe and free of harmful micro-organisms (Khaniki et al., 2016). All these elements influence the customer's food dining experience. Insufficient quality of food causes low levels of satisfaction with food service and food is an important aspect of students' social lives and academic experience (Dollah, Mansor & Mohamed, 2012).

Results from this study are consistent with those of a study by Raman and Chinniah (2011) in which the majority of students were not happy with all attributes of food service and these attributes were considered important factors influencing their satisfaction with cafeteria food. Bad quality food drives students away, causing students to look outside the university campus for food (Raman & Chinniah, 2011) exposing them to danger and risk as well as interfering with the academic process. This interferes with the sense of belonging that students achieve by spending more time on campus (Astin, 1984; Tinto, 1987). The environmental and hygiene conditions of a food service outlet is an aspect considered important by university students (Kim et al., 2012). Dissatisfaction with catering services and failure to meet and maintain hygiene acceptable to students influences students' attitude towards the university and its environment leading to dissatisfaction with the campus and university (Kim et al., 2012) and this may, through word of mouth, affect university's reputation with potential students.

The price of food was also a source of discontent. Price affects customers' buying behaviour and choice, and results of this study suggest that pricing of food is one of the major attributes that drive students to source meals outside the campus. The food was sold at prices above students' affordability. Students spent a little over R16.67 per day on all their meals. If students sourced three meals a day from the cafeteria the amount for each meal would work out to R5.55 per meal and this shows that the money students spent on food matched with students' eating frequency was not enough to source decent and nutritious food on campus. This may explain why students prefer to purchase food from the supermarket. Supermarkets offer variety and their prices are generally affordable.

Lack of affordable, convenient, healthy food on campus is likely to propel students to seek food service outlets that will accommodate their food preferences, budget, dietary needs and expectations (Tam et al., 2017). WSU Butterworth students spent time away to source food and the time lost due to shopping limited the time these students spent on campus and spent on studies. Time lost during shopping trips could have been spent on social activities with other students or working on academic activities and programmes. Time is an important factor in academic performance and progress. The amount of student learning and personal development is equal to the amount of time a student dedicates to their learning (Astin, 1984). The more a student involves themselves with their environment, the more learning and development is likely to take place.

### **5.2.2 Students' responses to other outsourced services at the Butterworth campus**

The study found conflicting responses from students regarding safety on campus. Students seemed satisfied with the services offered by the security company, however the majority of students' indicated that they did not feel safe on campus and more than a quarter (27%) of students reported that they had been victims of crime. Results of this study show that WSU Butterworth campus did not offer a safe and crime-free environment for students. Safety is an important component of a holistic development approach. Results of this study are consistent with the results of studies conducted by Chekwa et al. (2013) and Owusu, Akoto and Abnory (2016): students in these studies reported that security on campus was inadequate, and these students also reported that they did not feel safe on campus.

Results of this study have shown that the majority of students spent time away from campus to source food. Given the high crime statistics in South Africa, it is clearly reasonable to deduce that students' safety outside the university campus is a concern. The UJ case of a student shot on his way back from purchasing food outside the campus shows that students' safety outside the university campus is a concern. While the university's control over what happens outside the campus is restricted, data on how time outside and inside the university campus is important as this will show how time spent away from campus affects students' safety and security.

Campus security services are an important factor when selecting which university to go to. This further suggests that university students are aware of their surroundings and the prevalence of crime in and around universities. It is important for universities to prioritise the safety of students. Safety concerns affect retention of students and have an influence on the recruitment of new students (Chekwa et al., 2013). Safety and security around campus not only affects students but affects the atmosphere on the campus and the reputation of the university (Chekwa et al., 2013). Providing a safe environment should be seen as part of support to learning that provides students with a wider learning environment (Temple, 2008).

The majority of WSU Butterworth campus students regard cleaning services as an important aspect of their university life. One may argue that outsourcing moderately does what it intends to do, particularly the cleaning services, however it should also be noted that as many as 58% of students report that the campus is free of dirt, the 42% of the students who did not agree with the aspect should not be ignored. A further 83% also reported that the campus bathrooms were not always clean, however the 27% of students who felt that the cleaning services did not

meet their needs should not be ignored. Hygiene is important for students' health and requires attention to prevent exposure to health hazards and risks (Khaniki et al., 2016).

Providing efficient and satisfactory services on campus will minimise time spent outside the university and this will inevitably minimise exposure to security risks outside the university campus. Self-directed learning that emanates from spending time on interactive campus facilities such as campus cafeterias enhances learning and supports retention (Kuh, 1995).

### **5.3 IMPLICATIONS OF THE FINDINGS**

Provision of food service outlets that cater to the growing needs of students remains a challenge for many institutions, including South African institutions of higher education (Chinomona, Maziriri & Moloi, 2014). Reports articulated above detail challenges similar to those experienced in South African universities. Outsourced services, particularly outsourced food services, have caused unrest and protests within SA universities (Lukhele, 2016).

WSU Butterworth campus is located in the province that is reported to have the highest malnutrition and food insecurity in South Africa (Shisana et al., 2014). This background necessitates careful consideration of students' needs, particularly food. Unaffordable food makes students vulnerable to food insecurity. Stale food that is prepared and served in unhygienic environments risks students' health. Unhealthy and contaminated food may have harmful effects on students and negatively affect academic performance (Khaniki et al., 2016). This will not only affect students' progress and success in university but will have a negative impact on the university's output rate (Paura & Arhipova, 2014). Exploration of this on other campuses and in other institution could contribute to understanding the effect and the role such university spaces play in student learning (Temple, 2008).

The whole university campus is a learning space. Food services, security and cleaning services are important elements of students' lives. The responsibility for students' wellness lies with the university. A lively, clean and safe university environment is essential to a holistic development of students. Time spent away affects time spent on campus, which reduces the time the students may spend with their peers on campus and increases exposure to safety and security risks. Frequent trips to supermarket compromise social interaction with peers and academic staff.



Students' nutrition is also an important aspect of students' physical and mental well-being. A compromised nutritional status will have an adverse effect on students' cognitive functioning (Alibabić et al., 2014). Campus canteens are important for the students in terms of socialisation and nutritional well-being and should not be ignored (Kim et al., 2012; Lugosi, 2018). Canteens and cafeterias are central to student development and outsourcing may create a disconnection between the university's vision and mission, creating a disjointed and disconnected environment which the university cannot always control. The services offered by the outsourced suppliers may not always subscribe to the vision and desires of the institution but only offer the suite of services deemed pertinent.

A university rector from a Ghanaian university warned against outsourcing crucial services such as food services, stating that the responsibility of students' nutritional well-being should lie with the university (Sang, 2010). This means that not all services within universities are good candidates for outsourcing. Some services, such as food services, should remain the university's responsibility, however, should the university decide to outsource food services, proper and stringent measures should be put in place to ensure that students' well-being is not compromised in the process.

## **CHAPTER 6:RECOMMENDATIONS AND CONCLUSION**

### **6.1 RECOMMENDATIONS**

If the university management is of the view that food services should remain outsourced, intervention strategies should be put in place to ensure that students receive the best possible service from these companies. Challenges and concerns associated with outsourcing can be addressed in several ways. The university management and/or the food service outlet managers may put measures in place to ensure that the needs and expectations of students are met. Service providers can be evaluated and such evaluation may be conducted by assessing students' expectations and satisfaction with the contracted service provider and sharing the results of the assessment with the service provider. The results can assist the food service managers to improve the service offered to students by developing a service strategy that will provide for the needs of the students (Kim et al., 2012; Kim et al., 2010). The university may, after analysing the results of the assessment, contract more food service providers on campus.

One of the measures put in place may be contracting more campus-based food service suppliers. Outsourcing multiple food service companies will create competition between the food service suppliers and thus improve service quality and reduce prices. Competition for customers has the potential to drive companies to evaluate and improve the service offered to customers in order to retain existing clientele and recruit more customers from the competitors (Glickman, Holm, Keating, Pannait & White, 2007).

Research has indicated that pricing perception differs by individual (Lee et al., 2016). Individual financial circumstances may affect customers' perception and satisfaction with pricing of food. However this does not negate the responsibility of price fairness away from the food service providers and the university. Students' constrained financial resources limit their buying power. It is therefore important for the university to consider pricing charged to students when outsourcing food services.

Safety and security services are important for all those who reside and work on university campuses. University management needs to put measures in place to improve campus safety and ensure that students' learning is not disturbed by safety fears. The university should also run its own programmes that will ensure that university students' needs are met. Chekwa et al. (2013) recommend the introduction of self-defence courses/classes. WSU can introduce self-

defence courses to provide students with the necessary skills to protect themselves, particularly at night. Student support services can conduct campaigns that emphasise the importance of enrolling in such courses. This may to some extent improve students' safety and students may feel free walking on campus.

Outsourcing literature (Ikeije & Nwaoma, 2015; Sang, 2010; Shaw, 2013) clearly indicates that business organisations are more concerned with profits than with students' well-being. Prices charged by these companies may not be in the interests of the students' financial background and affordability. Students' well-being may be compromised as those who are without financial aid and funding may not be able to afford to purchase food, risking poverty and hunger. Hunger deprives the body of essential nutrients, limits concentration and affects cognitive functioning and academic performance.

Outsourcing is further regarded as an intricate strategy that may exploit the poor if not managed properly. Workers employed by the outsourced companies may be treated poorly and unfairly. Literature on outsourcing shows that in comparison to insourced workers employed by the university, dissatisfied outsourced workers may have less loyalty to the university (Wood, 2000). Not identifying with the university may result in these workers not having the interests of the students at heart.

Outsourcing or not outsourcing, the university should be in control of the services offered to students. Outsourcing presents the university with both benefits and challenges. The expertise offered by the external company may benefit universities and students in numerous ways, however the university needs to state in the tender contracts the specifications that will ensure that students' rights and interests are protected. University management should constantly evaluate the services offered and assess adherence to tender specifications. It can be concluded that outsourcing should always be considered with the students' well-being in mind. Outsourcing should not be entirely viewed as a means to an end but as a strategy that aims to benefit both the university and its student population.

## **6.2 LIMITATIONS OF THE STUDY**

The study involved a sample drawn from one of 13 WSU delivery sites. Therefore results of this study cannot be generalised to the entire WSU student population. The study employed convenience sampling, which suggests that not all potential respondents were afforded an equal opportunity to participate in the study (Creswell, 2009). However this concern was addressed in part by the study's large sample population. The study was quantitative in nature, resulting in quantitative analysis and discussion of results. Data therefore lacks depth and insight that could have been achieved had the study been qualitative. This however does not negate the importance of the results discussed herein. A qualitative study involving students and university management could provide a deeper insight and understanding that could not be achieved in this study.

## **6.3 FUTURE RESEARCH**

As stated by Temple (2008: p239) a “we need better understanding of the role of space in the dynamics of creating more productive higher education communities and its connections with learning and research”. A study involving the whole WSU student population and all stakeholders affected by outsourcing is recommended. A further enquiry into the effects of outsourcing across the different functions of the university is required in order to ascertain the extent of the effects of outsourcing in a rural university such as WSU.

## **6.4 CONCLUSION**

Results from data collected from WSU Butterworth campus-based residence students clearly show that students had negative perceptions of the outsourced services. These results are consistent with previous research on challenges of outsourcing in higher education institutions.

It can be concluded that the Butterworth campus-based outsourced cafeteria did not meet the needs and expectations of WSU Butterworth students. Disregard of the students' well-being may have a negative effect on students' lives on campus. Holistic development of students requires that all aspects associated with the development of students are provided for. WSU Butterworth students have shown dissatisfaction with services most pertinent to their everyday campus lives and affecting successful development and academic success. Learning is a holistic process that requires the university and its staff to shape services to support the vision of

teaching and learning rather than allowing aspects important to effective teaching and learning to be governed too far by outsiders. Services pertinent to student development should complement one another: security goes a long way to creating an environment, and a clean environment also adds to a sense of pride and community.

WSU's Butterworth students have shown dissatisfaction with the attitude of cafeteria staff. The staff's hostility towards students greatly influences students' campus experience. Contracted workers may have no loyalty to the university and thus students are left to be served by workers who may not have the interest of the institutional culture at heart. Poor working conditions and dissatisfaction with employment benefits could be some of the reasons students do not receive proper service. The limitations placed on the institution by outsourcing may suggest that WSU management has limited powers regarding treatment of the outsourced workers and this limitation leaves students, as recipients of services offered by these workers, vulnerable to poor service. The case with WITS University outsourced workers gives clearly demonstrates that workers' grievances affect institutional culture and morale.

Universities have an obligation to ensure the safety of students and staff. A safe campus also serves for the betterment of the university. It is therefore important for the university to be in control of this crucial service. The results indicated that the outsourced safety and security company provides services that are acceptable to students. However the presence of security on campus does not make the majority of students feel safe. This seems contradictory but may also suggest that even though the security company offered acceptable services, their presence did not create a safe and crime-free campus environment. Outsourcing relinquishes the control of security measures to external companies. Universities may not have the necessary control of the management of the security company, however Omondi et al. (2015) state that outsourcing may benefit the university by offering services better than the university would have had the service been offered internally.

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