

**UNIVERSITY OF KWAZULU-NATAL**

**Perceptions of student services offered  
by the University of KwaZulu-Natal**

**By:**  
**Nupur Suresh Warke**  
**213568806**

**A dissertation submitted in partial fulfilment of the requirements for the degree of  
Master of Business Administration**

**College of Law and Management Studies  
Graduate School of Business & Leadership**

**Supervisor: Professor Anesh Maniraj Singh**

**2015**

## DECLARATION

I, Nupur Suresh Warke, declare that:

- (i) This research reported in this dissertation, except where otherwise indicated, is my original work.
- (ii) This dissertation has not been submitted for any degree or examination at any other university.
- (iii) This dissertation does not contain other persons' data, pictures, graphs or other information, unless specifically acknowledged as being sourced from other persons.
- (iv) This dissertation does not contain other persons' writing, unless specifically acknowledged as being sourced from other researchers. Where other written sources have been quoted, then: a. their words have been re-written but the general information attributed to them has been referenced; b. where their exact words have been used, their writing has been placed inside quotation marks, and referenced.
- (v) Where I have reproduced a publication or which I am an author, co-author or editor, I have indicated in detail which part of the publication was actually written by myself alone and have fully referenced such publications.
- (vi) This dissertation does not contain text, graphics or tables copied and pasted from the internet, unless specifically acknowledged, and the source being detailed in the dissertation and in the references section.

Signed: \_\_\_\_\_

## **ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS**

This dissertation has been a long learning journey, one that demanded a sacrifice of numerous hours of family time and I wish to thank my husband and my family for their love, support and understanding.

Without the Almighty this journey would not have been possible and I wish to thank Lord Ganesha for providing me strength during these difficult times.

I wish to express my sincere gratitude to my supervisor, Professor Anesh Maniraj Singh, without whom this dissertation would not have been possible. Thank you for your guidance and support through all the years of my study and throughout my dissertation. You have been an inspirational philosopher and mentor to me.

I would also like to take this opportunity to thank my friends and colleagues who have shown tremendous support and always lent a helping hand in times of need.

Finally, thank you to all the respondents who took their time to respond to the questionnaire.

## **ABSTRACT**

Student services is a division of higher education institutions that provides care and support to students. Universities are competing globally to attract students. Therefore, provision of specialised services in the form of student support is one way in which universities can gain a competitive advantage in the higher education sector. Student satisfaction has gained importance in assessing student services. Results of these assessments can assist policy makers in the decision-making process and provide a basis for continuous improvement. Universities seek to identify key factors that influence overall service quality and student satisfaction levels. Meeting the varied needs of a diverse student body remains a major challenge for higher education institutions.

The aim of this study was to investigate the perceptions of students regarding student services offered at the University of KwaZulu-Natal. The purpose of this study was to establish if students were aware of the support services offered and how frequently the services were used. Furthermore, this study intended to investigate student satisfaction levels of the services offered. Since the study is descriptive in nature, a quantitative research approach was adopted. Generalisability was a key consideration which led to the adoption of a simple random probability sampling technique. The students across all five campuses of the university were invited to participate to ensure that student opinions gathered from the sample were representative of the population.

The results of this study highlighted that the students lacked awareness of the student services offered. It was evident from the study that students had not used the services to the extent the university desires demonstrating difficulty in accessing these services. Also, the overall satisfaction level of students who used the services was poor. The study also revealed poor student satisfaction level towards support staff at the Student Services Department. The data analysis highlighted some underlying causes for low satisfaction levels and identified key areas for improvement. The findings from the study presented recommendations for improvement of student services. Some of the key recommendations were improving access to the services through the provision of better signage and directions, effective advertising to promote awareness and training for improvement in staff competency. Discussion of the research findings have assisted in evaluating student perspectives regarding various sub-aspects of student services. The limitations of the study have been identified and have provided direction for future research.

# TABLE OF CONTENTS

<b>Description</b>	<b>Page</b>
DECLARATION	ii
ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS	iii
ABSTRACT	iv
LIST OF FIGURES	x
LIST OF TABLES	xii
LIST OF ACRONYMS AND ABBREVIATIONS	xiii
<b>CHAPTER 1    OVERVIEW OF STUDY</b>	<b>1</b>
1.1. INTRODUCTION	1
1.2. MOTIVATION FOR THE STUDY	1
1.3. FOCUS OF THE STUDY	2
1.4. PROBLEM STATEMENT	3
1.5. AIM AND OBJECTIVES	3
1.6. LIMITATIONS OF THE STUDY	4
1.7. OUTLINE OF THE STUDY	4
1.8. SUMMARY	5
<b>CHAPTER 2    LITERATURE REVIEW</b>	<b>6</b>
2.1. INTRODUCTION	6
2.2. LANDSCAPE OF HIGHER EDUCATION	6
2.3. EVOLUTION OF HIGHER EDUCATION IN AFRICA	6
2.4. LANDSCAPE OF HIGHER EDUCATION INSTITUTIONS IN SOUTH AFRICA	7
2.5. THE CONCEPT OF STUDENT EXPERIENCE	8
2.5.1. The student body spectrum: Multiculturalism	10
2.5.2. Holistic student success	11
2.6. BEHIND THE SCENES: STUDENT SERVICES	13
2.6.1. Addressing student needs	14

2.6.2. Role of student services	15
2.6.3. Student services as a universal concept	15
2.6.4. Transformation of student services in South Africa	16
2.6.5. The umbrella of student service	17
2.6.6. Beyond basic service provision	19
2.6.7. Professional student services bodies	20
2.7. CUSTOMER SATISFACTION	20
2.7.1. Higher education as a service	22
2.7.2. Customer expectations in higher education	23
2.7.3. Assessment of student services	24
2.7.4. Challenges in assessing student services	25
2.7.5. Linking service quality and customer satisfaction	266
2.8. SUMMARY	28
<b>CHAPTER 3 RESEARCH METHEDODOLOGY</b>	<b>29</b>
3.1. INTRODUCTION	29
3.2. ORGANISATIONAL BACKGROUND	29
3.3. AIM	30
3.4. OBJECTIVES	30
3.5. TYPE OF RESEARCH	31
3.6. RESEARCH APPROACH	33
3.7. SAMPLING	34
3.7.1. Need for sampling	34
3.7.2. Sampling design	34
3.7.3. Participants in the study	36
3.7.4. Sampling frame	37
3.7.5. Sample size	37
3.8. DATA COLLECTION	38
3.8.1. Description and purpose of instrument	39
3.8.2. Construction of the instrument	40
3.8.3. Validity and reliability	42
3.8.3.1. Validity	42

3.8.3.2. Reliability	43
3.8.3.3. Relationship between validity and reliability	44
3.8.4. Pretesting of questionnaire	44
3.8.5. Administration of questionnaire	45
3.9. DATA ANALYSIS	46
3.10. ETHICAL CONSIDERATIONS	46
3.11. SUMMARY	47
<b>CHAPTER 4 ANALYSIS AND DISCUSSION OF RESULTS</b>	<b>48</b>
4.1. INTRODUCTION	48
4.2. TREATMENT OF DATA	48
4.3. RELIABILITY OF THE QUESTIONNAIRE	48
4.4. DEMOGRAPHIC PROFILE OF RESPONDENTS	49
4.5. DATA ANALYSIS	50
4.5.1. Objective one: Knowledge of student services	50
4.5.1.1. Awareness of services offered	50
4.5.1.2. Source of knowledge of services offered	51
4.5.1.3. Awareness of specific services	52
4.5.1.4. Relationship between race and awareness of services	53
4.5.1.5. Relationship between campus of study and awareness of services	54
4.5.2. Objective two: Accessibility of student services department	55
4.5.2.1. Reasons for difficulty in accessing Student Services Department	55
4.5.2.2. Relationship between gender and accessibility of student services department	56
4.5.3. Objective three: Commonly used student services	56
4.5.3.1. Use of student services	57
4.5.3.2. Commonly used student services	57
4.5.3.3. Frequency of use of student services	58
4.5.3.4. Events organised by the Student Services Department	58

4.5.3.5. Continued use of student services	59
4.5.3.6. Value for money	60
4.5.3.7. Relationship between campus of study and of use of student services	60
4.5.4. Objective four: Level of satisfaction	62
4.5.4.1. Overall level of satisfaction	62
4.5.4.2. Rating quality and availability of student services	63
4.5.4.3. Rating the support staff	64
4.5.4.4. Relationship between gender and overall satisfaction	64
4.5.5. Objective five: Identifying preferences for improvements that could benefit the Student Services Department	65
4.5.5.1. Preferences relating to communication	65
4.5.5.2. Preferred medium of communication	66
4.5.5.3. Reasons for lack of interest in receiving communication	67
4.5.5.4. Ranking student services offered by the university	67
4.5.5.5. Extent to which UKZN is perceived to be the University of Choice	68
4.5.5.6. Recommendations to improve the student services	69
4.6. KEY FINDINGS	70
4.7. SUMMARY	71
<b>CHAPTER 5 CONCLUSIONS, LIMITATIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS</b>	<b>72</b>
5.1. INTRODUCTION	72
5.2. CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS	72
5.2.1. Raising awareness of student services	72
5.2.2. Making student services more accessible	73
5.2.3. Encouraging use of student services	73
5.2.4. Providing more value for money	74
5.2.5. Improving staff competency, availability of services and overall student satisfaction	74
5.2.6. Employing an effective digital communication strategy	74



5.3. LIMITATIONS OF THIS STUDY	75
5.4. RECOMMENDATIONS FOR FUTURE RESEARCH	75
5.5. CONCLUSION	76
REFERENCES	77
Appendix 1: Introductory Letter	93
Appendix 2: Consent Letter	94
Appendix 3: Questionnaire	95
Appendix 4: Ethical Clearance	101
Appendix 5: Certificate of Proof of Editing	102

## **LIST OF FIGURES**

<b>No.</b>	<b>Description</b>	<b>Page</b>
2.1	Factors contributing towards student experience in higher education	9
2.2	Major contributing factors for student success in higher education	11
2.3	The Kano model to measure customer satisfaction	22
3.1	Type and purpose of research	32
3.2	Choice of sampling design	35
3.3	The UKZN campuses	36
3.4	Types of questionnaires	40
3.5	Process of designing and validating a questionnaire	44
4.1	Awareness of services offered	51
4.2	Source of knowledge of services offered	51
4.3	Knowledge of types of services offered	52
4.4	Accessibility of Student Services Department	55
4.5	Reasons for difficulty in accessing Student Services Department	55
4.6	Usage of services offered by university	57
4.7	Commonly used services	57
4.8	Frequency of use of student services	58
4.9	Extent of attendance of events	59
4.10	Continued use of student services	59
4.11	Value for money	60
4.12	Overall level of satisfaction	62
4.13	Quality and availability of service	63
4.14	Preference for communication	65
4.15	Preferred medium of receiving communication	66

4.16	Reasons for lack of interest in receiving communication	67
4.17	Extent to which UKZN is perceived to be the University of Choice	68
4.18	Recommendations to improve student services	69

## LIST OF TABLES

No.	Description	Page
1.1	Structure of the research study	4
2.1	Key functions and activities of student services	18
3.1	Type of research approach	33
3.2	Primary data collection methods	38
3.3	Linking questions in the questionnaire to research objectives of the study	41
3.4	Types of scales used in the instrument	42
4.1	Demographic profile of the respondents	49
4.2	Cross tabulation between race and awareness of the services offered	53
4.3	Cross tabulation between campus of study and awareness of student services offered	54
4.4	Cross tabulation between gender and accessibility of Student Services Department	56
4.5	Cross tabulation between campus of study and use of Student Services Department	61
4.6	Rating student services support staff	64
4.7	Cross tabulation between gender and overall satisfaction	64
4.8	Ranking student services offered by the university	67
4.9	Summary of key findings	70

## **LIST OF ACRONYMS AND ABBREVIATIONS**

AHELO	Assessment of Higher Education Learning Outcomes
CHET	Centre for Higher Education Transformation
DHET	Department of Higher Education and Training
FAO	Food and Agricultural Organisation
IASAS	International Association of Student Affairs and Services
KZN	KwaZulu-Natal
NASDEV	National Association of Student Development Practitioners
NILOA	National Institute for Learning Outcomes Assessment
SAASSAP	South African Association of Senior Student Affairs Professionals
SAFSAS	Southern African Federation for Student Affairs and Services
SAHRC	South African Human Rights Commission
SASCO	South African Students Congress
SWICS	Swiss Index of Customer Satisfaction
UKZN	University of KwaZulu-Natal
UL	University of Limerick
USA	United States of America

# **CHAPTER 1**

## **OVERVIEW OF STUDY**

### **1.1. INTRODUCTION**

The soaring demand for higher education worldwide has resulted in a dramatic increase in the number of universities operating in a complex, competitive commercial environment (Altbach, Reisberg & Rumbley, 2009). Also, the diversity in the student body has led to universities concentrating on caring for needs of students from assorted social, economic and financial backgrounds. Student services refer broadly to student lives – personal, social and academic – and aim to enhance students' experiences and contribute to their development. It is one of the core functions of a university to facilitate a superior overall student experience.

With the shift of higher education towards becoming a business-like service industry, many universities often conduct some form of assessment of quality of services provided to students along with an assessment of student satisfaction (Seligman & Taylor, 2009). This has led to universities beginning to treat students as their "clients". These circumstances are becoming a local phenomenon as universities in South Africa begin to adopt the global norm of assessment of the provision of student services. The formation of discussion platforms like group and professional bodies has promoted dialogue about student affairs and practices.

This chapter presents an outline of the study. It motivates the need for the study and identifies the problem statement. The chapter presents the research questions for the study followed by research questions that aimed to gather information regarding the problem at hand. The limitations of the study are also explained. Furthermore, a summary of the choice of research design and sampling method undertaken, followed by the limitations of the study, are also highlighted in this chapter.

### **1.2. MOTIVATION FOR THE STUDY**

The practice of student services has gained the attention of many scholars. While there have been many international studies surrounding assessment in student affairs, there is insufficient literature relating to student satisfaction of student support services offered by universities. Moreover, student satisfaction surveys have normally been conducted among

students on the completion of their studies. Very seldom have students been asked for their opinion about service offerings whilst they are studying at a university. This study will therefore contribute to the field of student affairs by providing research that has concentrated on establishing student perceptions regarding the various aspects of student support services.

With the intention of becoming the University of Choice, the University of KwaZulu-Natal (UKZN) ensures it provides a holistic learning environment to students. This study has been undertaken using the UKZN as its location. Hence, the university will benefit directly from this study. The research undertaken will provide significant insights about student satisfaction levels of services offered by the university and how the university can improve their service offerings to benefit the students.

The participants of the study were all the students of the UKZN at the time of the study. The study will benefit the students as it has provided them with an opportunity to express their opinion about the student services offered by the university. Their participation will ensure that the suggestions made for improvement are driven by the majority stakeholders of the university. Other stakeholders will benefit from this study as student services will be a value-adding functional unit to the university.

The findings of this study could be used by other universities to draw comparison to their student services, and thus provide them with an opportunity to improve their student support services.

### **1.3. FOCUS OF THE STUDY**

The students of the UKZN pay fees for their degree courses. These fees include the provision of student support services. Hence, no additional payment has to be made by a student should he/she want to use any of the support services offered.

The focus of this study was confined to all the registered students of the UKZN as at 27 February 2015. This study will provide findings related to student satisfaction about the services offered and suggest improvements to the UKZN for their student support services. Teaching, restructuring and operational changes in the Student Services Department were not covered for this study.

This study is unique in that the university will gain insights on how the current students perceive the student support services, and may provide a starting point for other South African universities to explore the field of student services from the perspective of students as "clients" of the services.

#### **1.4. PROBLEM STATEMENT**

The UKZN is a pioneer in the South African higher education landscape. The University of Durban-Westville, founded in 1972, and the University of Natal, established in 1949, merged in 2004 to form the University of KwaZulu-Natal. Over these years, UKZN has seen many changes in management and organisational structure. With the aim of caring for student needs in a holistic manner, the Student Services Department was established at the inception of the university in 2004.

The literature reviewed in Chapter 2 highlights the need for provision of student support services to enhance the overall student experience. It also advises a university to satisfy the needs of their students holistically, acknowledging the demographic, cultural, economic and social diversity among students they serve. Harden (2012) argued that unless universities provide for the needs of their students, they will not be able to sustain the student numbers and will lose students to other institutions globally.

It is important that UKZN evaluates the student satisfaction regarding student services offered in order to determine if the services are successful in providing the required support to students. This study has sought to determine how UKZN could improve their student support services to encompass and care for diverse student needs. The question that arises is— ~~what~~ what are the student perceptions of the student services offered by the UKZN”.

#### **1.5. AIM AND OBJECTIVES**

The study aimed to establish the student perceptions of student services offered at UKZN. The following were the objectives to address the aim and the research questions for this study:

1. To establish the knowledge of current students regarding the student services offered at UKZN.
2. To determine if student services are accessible to all students at UKZN.



3. To determine which services are commonly used by the students at UKZN.
4. To determine the student satisfaction levels with the service provided by the student services department.
5. To identify improvements that could benefit the service offering of the student services department at UKZN.

## **1.6. LIMITATIONS OF THE STUDY**

A key limitation experienced was the scarcity of literature available on assessment of services evaluation in general. Although there have been some international studies investigating student services practice, very few of them focused on assessing student support services by evaluating student perspectives of the services offered. There is evidence of student satisfaction surveys conducted by many universities globally and in South Africa, however, the focal point in those surveys has been academic and university facilities with less attention given to the quality of student support. Also, no research could be found that documented the use of such evaluations and assessments to improvise the current services offered by a university. These limitations have been documented and are discussed in detail in Chapter 5.

## **1.7. OUTLINE OF THE STUDY**

The research process undertaken was conducted in a methodically and logically. The structure of the five chapters of this study is illustrated in Table 1.1.

**Table 1.1: Structure of the research study**

<b>Chapter</b>	<b>Content</b>
<b>Chapter 1</b>	This chapter provides an outline of the research study. It highlights the motivation of the study and establishes the problem statement, aim and objectives of the study. Finally, this chapter concludes by listing the limitations encountered while conducting the study.
<b>Chapter 2</b>	This chapter presents a literature review which introduces the student services practice in higher education. It explains the significance of student services in higher education and their direct relationship in enhancing the student experience.

Chapter	Content
<b>Chapter 3</b>	The purpose of this chapter is to discuss the research methods employed in obtaining the data for the study. This chapter highlights the key processes involved in conducting sound research using a suitable research methodology.
<b>Chapter 4</b>	This chapter presents the findings from the study. It analyses the demographic profile of the members who participated in the study and presents the findings in relation to the objectives of the study.
<b>Chapter 5</b>	This is the concluding chapter of this study. The purpose of this chapter is to present the conclusions that may be drawn from the findings of the study. It also provides recommendations based on these findings. Lastly, it provides a detail account of the limitations of the study and concludes with recommendations for further research.

## 1.8. SUMMARY

Higher education can benefit to a great extent from the student support services that are offered to students as a means of support. Aimed at satisfying the needs of students in today's globalised world, student support services often find it difficult to provide holistic care and support to enhance the overall student experience. This study aimed to assess the student services offered at the UKZN and to provide recommendations for improvement.

The problem statement, aim, and objectives based on the research questions, have been presented in this chapter. This chapter has also highlighted the focus and motivation of the study along with the limitations of the study. It has also provided an outline of the manner in which the study has been structured into various chapters. The next chapter will present a review of the literature in contemplation of providing a deeper understanding of the student services practice and student satisfaction in higher education services, and will thus provide the foundation for the empirical study to follow.

## **CHAPTER 2**

### **LITERATURE REVIEW**

#### **2.1. INTRODUCTION**

Higher education has become increasingly competitive commercially due to the development and expansion of global education markets (Nejati, 2013). Along with the consideration given to societal values, higher education institutions have expressed concern regarding the skills and competence of their graduates and the perceptions of students about their educational experience. In general, students need to be involved in or engaged with their programme of study and student life in order to have a positive student experience. Student services practitioners have traditionally defined their primary goals as having to enrich and enhance the development of students. If practitioners have a better understanding of how students find their true identity, they will be in a better position to add value to student learning and development at universities and other tertiary institutions. In this way they will gain “satisfied” customers (Torres, Jones & Ren, 2009).

This chapter discusses the analysis conducted on student services in the context of higher education. It provides insights on the importance of student services and how these services address the needs of students. In addition, this chapter explains student perceptions of student support services and their effect on student life.

#### **2.2. LANDSCAPE OF HIGHER EDUCATION**

Historically, higher education was seen as a means of providing special education to selected individuals in their fields of interest beyond mere basic education (Havery, 2011). With advancements in the centuries that followed, higher education transformed into a principal mechanism for coaching individuals in various field of study. In today's globalised world, higher education has evolved from a privilege enjoyed by few to a necessity of many. Advanced education is perceived as a focal component in society. In many nations, advanced higher education has turned into a substantial complex venture (Nkondo, 1976, Altbach, Reisberg & Rumbley, 2010).

#### **2.3. EVOLUTION OF HIGHER EDUCATION IN AFRICA**

Education is widely accepted as a significant mechanism to stimulate economic growth (Aghion, Boustan, Hoxby & Vandenbussche, 2009). Higher education, also called tertiary

education, comprises undergraduate education, and postgraduate education including doctoral degrees. The African continent has experienced a long history of evolution of higher education. In the early 1900s, higher education was widely neglected in Africa (Bloom, Canning & Chan, 2005). Such disregard was partially due to the lack of empirical evidence that higher education can foster economic growth and curb poverty. Instead, higher education was looked at as a possible cause of social unrest and political instability (Friedman & Friedman, 1980; King & Baxter-Magolda, 1996). According to Bloom, Canning, Chan and Luca (2014), after their independence in the early 1960s, the majority of new African states perceived higher education as a key to economic and social prosperity. McDonnell (2008) noted that consequently, policy makers decided to input monetary resources in widening the scope of universities in various states. Marmolejo (2011 cited in Schuh, 2014, p. 2) estimated that while ~~there~~ were only 120 000 students in African universities at independence (in the early 1960s), this number has dramatically grown to 9.3 million students in less than 50 years”. Rena (2010) argued that it is generally agreed that African higher education is very weak and does not meet standards. For these institutions to compete globally, massive injections of intellectual and financial resources are needed, as well as political will and commitment. To some extent this has been a legacy inherited by African states from their colonial past.

#### **2.4. LANDSCAPE OF HIGHER EDUCATION INSTITUTIONS IN SOUTH AFRICA**

In South Africa, the apartheid system saw the establishment of separate "homeland" or "bush" universities during the late 1950s (Ehrenreich, 2013). These then newly formed universities were deliberately denied resources as they were intended for ~~blacks~~, while the resource-abundant customarily ~~white~~ colleges constituted the opposite side of the coin of higher education during the apartheid era (Lumadi & Mampuru, 2010).

In 1979, Technikons were introduced in South Africa. The term technikon is exclusive to the South African higher education system and its closest theoretical and automatic comparable is the Polytechnic, created under the British arrangement of training and embraced in different nations, especially former British colonies (Mandew, 2003). Initially, technikons were limited to offering diplomas but the Higher Education Act of 1997 permitted technikons to offer degree programmes in technology. According to this new

education system, universities and technikons formed the third tier commonly known as higher education.

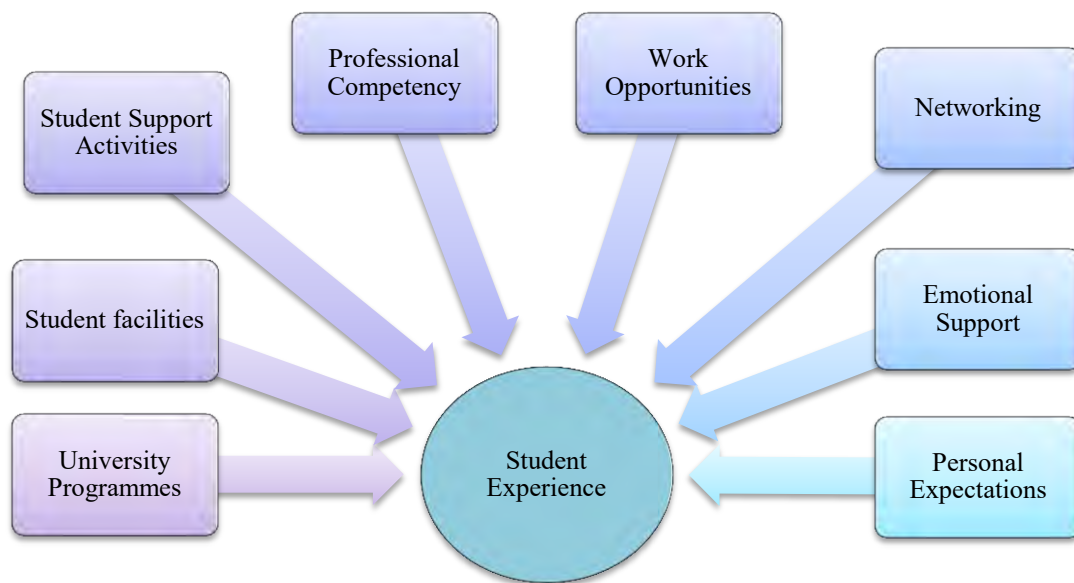
"All South Africans have the right to a basic education, including adult basic education and further education" according to the South African Human Rights Commission (2002). As declared in the Bill of Rights of the Constitution, "the state has an obligation, through reasonable measures, to progressively make this education available and accessible" (South Africa.info, 2013). Presently, South Africa has a dynamic higher education sector, with 23 state-funded higher education institutions: 11 universities, six universities of technology, and six comprehensive institutions (South Africa.info, 2013). These universities are expected to enrol 650 000 students in the following two decades (MacGregor, 2012). Private higher institutions have also emerged over the last few decades, after the apartheid era.

"As young people have moved in increasingly large numbers through primary and secondary levels of education, there has been a sustained increase in student enrolment in higher education since late 1994, following the uplifting of the laws enforced by the apartheid system" (HESA, 2014). South African higher education institutions serve a wide base of student consumers in the highly globalised education market. Statistics reveal that higher education is conclusively an essential need for students not only on the continent but also in the rainbow nation of South Africa (South Africa.info, 2013). Simultaneously, there has been a change in the perception of the paradigms of higher education.

## **2.5. THE CONCEPT OF STUDENT EXPERIENCE**

–Students constitute the most central stakeholder group in higher education around the world” (Altbach *et al.*, 2009, p.97). There have been various studies examining the various aspects of student experience. However, it is paradoxical that not many attempt to define it. While ‘student experience’ cannot be accurately defined, there are some scholarly explanations to what constitutes student experience. Wahr, Gray and Radloff (2009) noted that originally, student experience was largely attributed to a student’s ‘academic’ experience. Despite this primary view of higher education, there has been growing acceptance of student experience comprising many more attributes than merely a student’s academic journey (Thomas & Galambos, 2006 cited in Morgan, 2013).

As higher education progressively evolves into a highly competitive market and as students become more demanding and better informed, providing a better quality student experience is vital to organisational survival (MacBeath, 2012). According to Mokhtarian (2013), being focused on enhancing the student experience can enhance student retention, and thereby decrease student withdrawal rates. Thus, provision of a superior student experience has the potential of providing a higher education organisation a competitive advantage. Forest and Kinser (2002) stated that the term “student life” is used widely in higher education to describe the activities and services that target the care and education of students external to the conventional setting. “Student experience encompasses all aspects of student life (i.e. academic, social, welfare and support) with the academic imperative at the heart of it” (Seldin, 1999, p.1). Figure 2.1 illustrates the factors contributing towards student experience.



**Figure 2.1: Factors contributing towards student experience in higher education**

**Source:** Forest, J.J. and Kinser, K. 2002. *Higher Education in the United States*. Santa Barbara, CA: ABC-CLIO.

As shown in Figure 2.1, entrepreneurial higher education institutions increasingly aim to satisfy students with the intention of expanding education beyond mere gathering of knowledge (Forest & Kinser, 2002). Student facilities impact students' choice of university which in turn affects students' overall experience in higher education (Price, Matzdorf, Smith & Agahi, 2003). Student support activities form a university offering in addition to

the regular academic activities that students experience in the teaching and learning process. Komives and Woodard (2003) stated that professional competency of staff plays a major role in the teaching and learning process. Students are not satisfied by mere exposure to academic activities that cannot be translated into work opportunities. Many students spend a fortune on higher education and perceive work opportunities as a means of acquiring returns on their investment in education (Bembenutty, 2011). According to Baron and Corbin (2012), networking among students, staff and industry professionals fosters student development by creating a holistic learning environment. Apart from these contributing factors, Hall and Gotz (2013) stated that emotional wellbeing and personal expectations of students influence their student experience.

### **2.5.1. The student body spectrum: Multiculturalism**

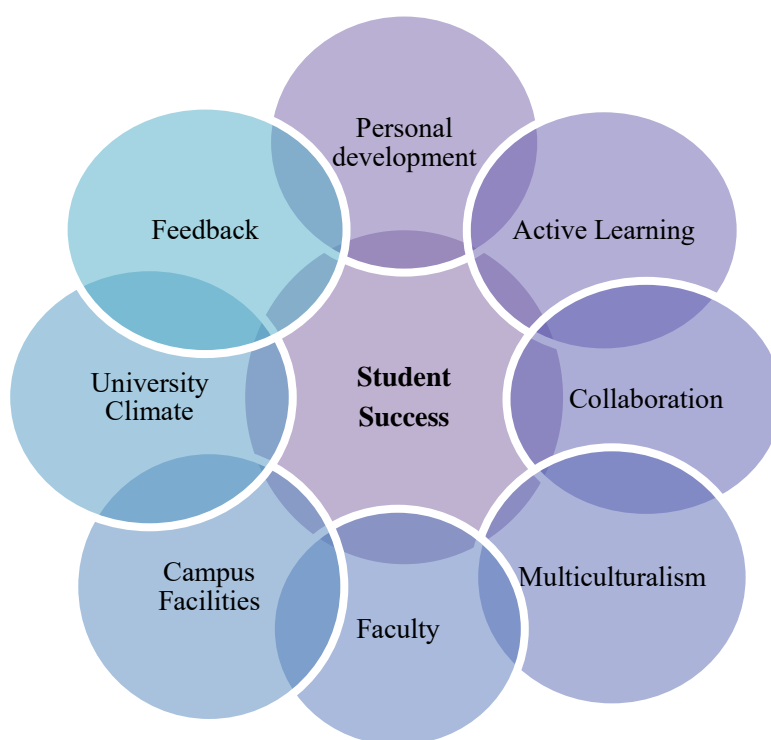
Altbach *et al.* (2009) observed that the student population in higher education institutions has changed dramatically in the 21<sup>st</sup> century. These include changes in size, demographics, needs, aspirations and expectations. These students have exerted additional pressure on the higher education institutions, forcing them to make changes to their operational structure and to reconsider policy. Moja, Schreiber and Luescher-Mamashela (2014) noted that in South Africa, segregated white-only Afrikaans universities now have integrated student bodies which reflect the dynamics of the student population. They explain that 20 years post apartheid, South Africa has commenced a distinct age of higher education, as students from distinguished racial backgrounds, who have never encountered racial segregation, interact within the higher education landscape. This has raised the need for ‘multiculturalism’.

Scholars define multiculturalism in different ways. One view is that multiculturalism is a process of establishing a contemporary world where people, regardless of their differences, are welcomed and celebrated (Reynolds, 2001 cited in Major & Mangope, 2014). Fowers and Richardson (1996) characterised multiculturalism from an intellectual viewpoint, expressing that it is a social, intellectual development that encourages the value of dissimilarity, demanding respectful and unbiased treatment. According to Verkuyten (2008), while overcoming obstacles of racial segregation and politics, South African universities endeavour to challenge racism, sexism and other forms of discrimination in order to advocate multiculturalism in higher education. These changes in policy and operations are also contributing to holistic student success.

### 2.5.2. Holistic student success

According to Jackson (2011, p.77), “learning is a complex, holistic, multi-centric activity that occurs throughout and across the student experience”. Simply put, student success can be defined as a favourable student outcome. The leaders in higher education normally refer to student success through “graduation and retention rates” (Latorre, 2007). Fortunately, there is strong research available to allow the stakeholders of education to think of student success as being something beyond success or failure of a student in academic tasks (Manning, Kinzie & Schuh, 2013).

Each higher education institution's definition of student success forms a principal component of its strategy formulation. Authors have consistently noted a number of key factors contributing to student success. Figure 2.2 shows some of the major contributing factors of student success in higher education.



**Figure 2.2: Major contributing factors for student success in higher education**

**Source:** Adapted from Hearn, J.C. 2006. *Student success: What research suggests for policy and practice*. [Online]. Available WWW: [https://nces.ed.gov/npec/pdf/synth\\_Hearn.pdf](https://nces.ed.gov/npec/pdf/synth_Hearn.pdf) [Accessed 22 February 2015].



It is evident from Figure 2.2 that student success is the aggregate product of various elements. It is an exhaustive, holistic exercise engaging every facet of an institution. The primary dependency of student success on the factors illustrated in Figure 2.2 can be explained as follows:

- *Active learning* – The challenges in supporting active involvement (engagement) have been a primary cause for higher education professionals referring to it as the “grand meta-principle” of student learning (Cross, 1993). The time and energy the student invests both inside and outside the classroom determine the probability of student success (Cuseo, 2009). A greater involvement in academic work leads to a greater engagement in the academic experience of college which in turn enhances knowledge and cognitive development (Pascarella, Terenzini & Feldman, 2005).
- *Collaboration* – Collaboration promotes human engagement, which in turn promotes interpersonal relationships between the different components of the university – peers, faculty, staff, and administrators (Barkley, Cross & Major, 2014). According to Vygotsky (2012), in accordance with epistemological theory of social constructivism, social interaction gives rise to conversations which aid in shaping thoughts.
- *Multiculturalism* – As explained in section 2.5.1, multiculturalism promotes diversification of the student body. This allows exchange of thoughts among students of different backgrounds and schools of thought, enhancing social integration.
- *Faculty* – According to Twale (2015), while the content and level of preparation of lecturers influence student attendance, the relationship between faculty and students is important to help in the successful completion of the degree or programme for which the student is enrolled. She explained that in order to encompass the emotional aspect of students, the faculty needs to adjust these relationships to assist students in bringing out their best not only academically but also intellectually and socially.
- *Campus facilities* – Temple (2008) noted that in higher education the association between the physical environment and learning is intricate. Kok, Mobach and Omta (2011) explained that the more facility services directly affect the educational process, the higher will be their potential contribution to educational achievement. McLaughlin and Faulkner (2012) stated that informal *ad hoc* spaces facilitated active

learning to a greater extent than the traditional classroom setting. The campus facilities' role is thus supporting and enabling learning, teaching and researching on the university campus (Kärnä & Julin, 2015).

- *University climate* – A welcoming university climate which creates a positive learning environment for students also creates an environment for sustained social interaction among the student population (Sleeter, La Vonne & Kumashiro, 2014). Such an environment is conducive to learning and creates a sense of “belonging” among the students. The university surroundings thus accommodate the different needs of students and promote learning and self-fulfilment (MacNeil, Prater & Busch, 2009).
- *Personal development* – Another key attribute of student success is that of personal development. Examples of indications of student success due to personal development include development of self-esteem, development of personal identity and development of self-identity (Paulsen & Smart, 2013).

Student success is therefore integrative and systematic. It means different things to different individuals and institutions. Student success is defined differently by scholars, faculty and institutions. An inappropriate way of defining student success based on quantitative statistical data from classical testing instruments is frequent in educational institutions (Hass, Fischman & Brewer, 2014).

## **2.6. BEHIND THE SCENES: STUDENT SERVICES**

Student services is sometimes referred to as "student affairs", "student development" or "student personnel" as the name is governed by its operational philosophies. According to Stringer and Swezey (2006), although some scholars have successfully traced the roots of student services back to Athenian education and to the Middle Age universities, the profession of student services primarily emerged in the 20<sup>th</sup> century. It is known that worldwide the colonial model of higher education only included students who could pay for their education. An influx in the number of higher education entrants was the principal motivation behind formulating the provision of student services in higher education institutions (Altbach *et al.*, 2009).

According to Schuh, Jones and Harper (2010), there has been significant growth in student services since its inception. As student bodies continued to become increasingly

diversified, an increasing need emerged for additional support services for students. To fulfil this need, hiring professional administrators and practitioners seemed to be the solution (Altbach *et al.*, 2010). Universities have therefore started to recognise the value of service provision to students and have started implementing steps that will learn to acquire knowledge of their diverse student population.

### **2.6.1. Addressing student needs**

As identified frequently by various researchers, universities have become broad multifarious organisations demanding critical planning of service provision to students. Student services attempt to recognise the distinctive issues presented by various subgroups of students and endeavour to meet their needs (Harper & Nichols, 2008). According to (Tull, Hirt & Saunders, 2009), the population of students who will access higher education in future is expected to be much more diverse than at any previous time in history. They explained that universities noted that they needed to employ student affairs practitioners who could develop cross-cultural competencies, community development skills and knowledge of under-represented cultures and philosophies. Further, they noted that this could be achieved by creating partnerships with students and academic staff. Such partnerships would foster holistic learning for students. Likewise, students would benefit from the different student affair programmes and support services offered, thus enhancing their experience (Xing & Hok Ka Ma, 2010).

Higher education challenges students in more ways than one: financially, academically and psychologically. Students therefore often require assistance and support not only from academic staff but also from their colleagues and non-academic staff. –The mission of student services is to enhance students' experience and facilitate development and growth” (Sharer, 2014, p.27). Looking at past frameworks, we are reminded that student services emerged out of the determination of faculty to ensure that these services were included in the –involved” part of students' university life (Wheeler, 2012). Student services are therefore required to advance the student as an entire individual, combining the different aspects of campus life and educational modules into a reliable and integral "whole" (Hurtado & Guillermo-Wann, 2013). According to Roper (2011), although a complete encompassment of various student activities seems a difficult task, it is a desire of many student affair professionals, providing a direction to measure the effectiveness of such

student activities. While student services focus on student affair programmes and support services, they also engage with the academic and administrative staff.

### **2.6.2. Role of student services**

According to Schreiber (2013, p.617), "fundamentally, student services aim to provide support, services and development to students, while engaging with academic and administrative staff on issues of policy and practice". Although student services concentrate on various intra- and inter-personal aspects of students' lives, according to Pascarella *et al.*(2005), they can help determine the degree to which students are embedded in the higher education institutions. The practice of student services strives to encompass the various aspects of "student experience", and includes establishing itself as mediator, should the need arise.

While discussing the role of student services, it is necessary to understand that it not just "what" services need to be offered but it is also crucial to investigate "how" these services are offered to students. "Student services is a key role-player in shaping and enabling complex learning within the many explicit and invisible curricula in higher education that are contributors to student success" (Ludeman, 2002). Student services straddle this pluralist intersection of the co-curricular and the curriculum, of faculty and student (King & Baxter-Magolda, 1996; Case, 2007; Scott, 2009). This concept of holistic learning reverberates far and wide within the literature of student services. The elementary meaning of learning lies in its application. Active application of student services in the various aspects of the university is therefore seen repeatedly in the distinguished literature of the service of student affairs.

### **2.6.3. Student services as a universal concept**

Although students are at the core of any academic establishment, numerous universities in the past have given very little consideration to their students. According to Altbach *et al.* (2009), such was the trend in traditional European universities. They noted that such higher education institutions failed to consider their students' overall experience as more important than just the provision of quality education. A greater part of the rest of the world followed the European scholarly tradition, either because it was forced by the pioneers of the principle (by the colonial rule) or, as in the instances of Japan and Thailand, where it was picked voluntarily (Altbach *et al.*, 2009).

According to Lazerson (2010), early higher education in America developed after the model of colleges and universities throughout Europe. He explained that in America the students usually remained at home or boarded with local families, unlike the students at the European universities who stayed on campus along with their professors. This led to the United States of America (USA) being an exception to the European pattern of higher education. From the very onset, the USA was concerned with the life of students beyond the classroom. Lee (2011) stated that at the heart of higher education in America is to believe that the university is *in loco parentis* and is therefore, responsible for its student well-being.

According to Kuh (2009), since their inception, American universities showed genuine concern for the extra-curricular life of students. He noted that students' well-being was initially the responsibility of professors, later taken over by student services professionals.

Colonisation by the English, French, Portuguese, Belgians, Germans and Dutch has hugely impacted Africa (Hrituleac, 2011). Models of higher education adapted from these nations have affected African colleges and student services to a great extent (Badat, 2010). No other continent has had such a large number of external influences as Africa (Altbach *et al.*, 2009).

#### **2.6.4. Transformation of student services in South Africa**

The idea of student services was superficial in South Africa until 1976. In its infancy, student services concerned itself with residences, sports and recreation and student government. Post-1976, black university campuses were called “laboratories of protest and crucibles of discontent” (Ludeman, 2002). Student services began emerging as a formal profession in South Africa in 1994 after the collapse of apartheid. Nkondo (1976) expressed the opinion that “education and politics in South Africa were inextricably entwined”. The organisational structure of student services in South Africa is handed down from British rule (Schreiber, 2014b). Nevertheless, in recent times, student affairs practitioners in South Africa have formulated their own processes while borrowing from events worldwide; the well-developed student services structures and programmes have been influenced by those of the USA.

Although there are formal undergraduate and postgraduate university programmes available nationwide, there is no stipulated qualification requirement for student services professionals to practise the profession in South Africa (Altbach *et al.*, 2009). According to Lumadi and Mampuru (2010), the executive management of student services was mainly chartered by the dean of student services in the early years. They explained that over the years, student services began to grow as an integral unit of the functional and organisational structure of universities in South Africa demanding dedicated leadership and management.

#### **2.6.5. The umbrella of student service**

Student services have always been regarded as a department that typically deals with specialised services (Dietz & Triponey, 1997). Student services professionals specialise in the provision of an array of services (Klein, 2010). According to Marandet and Wainwright (2010), though universities often struggle in understanding the needs and wants of their students, they choose to concentrate on the provision of selected services to their students. According to Myers (2013), classical models of student services in higher institutions collectively include all the administration functions (excluding curriculum decisions and teaching). Traditionally, student services have provided the services of admissions, student funding, orientation, student development, career support, recruitment, student activities and alumni affairs (Zhang, 2011). As a fundamental constituent of student experience, student services are required to provide three fundamental services to students (Kwong Caputo, 2013). According to Hoover (1997), these ~~three~~ primary service areas are (1) recruitment of students, (2) retention of students, and (3) creation of a campus-life environment that is welcoming and allows students to feel connected to the institution”.

Ease with the natural and dread of the diverse are profoundly engraved in all individuals. According to Deardorff (2009), since modern university campuses are home to students from various geographical locations with diverse cultural backgrounds, they could be centres for tension and conflict as diverse students have different opinions and distinguished behavioural characteristics. Hence, student services need to provide support in student health and well-being to maintain their aim of support for holistic student development during higher education. Such support services mainly include counselling, disability and chaplaincy (faith) services (Fry, Ketteridge & Marshall, 2008).

Some of the key functions and activities under the umbrella of student services are listed in Table 2.1.

**Table 2.1: Key functions and activities of student services**

<b>Service</b>	<b>Functions and activities</b>
<b>Disabled students' support</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Advise students with disability.</li> <li>• Provide increased academic and social support for disabled students.</li> <li>• Assist students in accessing various university facilities.</li> <li>• Develop awareness and acceptance for disabled students on campus.</li> </ul>
<b>Residences</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Provide accommodation to staff and students.</li> <li>• Ensure provision of residence facilities to international students.</li> <li>• Manage miscellaneous aspects of the residence programme.</li> </ul>
<b>Catering</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Provide affordable, hygienic and quality catering services.</li> <li>• Ensure catering services meet the needs of a diverse campus community.</li> </ul>
<b>Sports and recreation</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Develop recreation facilities for students (and staff) to ensure holistic development.</li> <li>• Promote sporting activities to enhance physical and mental fitness of staff and students.</li> </ul>
<b>Counselling</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Provide counselling to students experiencing psychosocial problems.</li> <li>• Equip students with the necessary life skills to cope with stress.</li> <li>• Resolve conflicts among students.</li> <li>• Offer assistance to students experiencing difficulty with academics.</li> </ul>
<b>Health</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Aim to prevent illness, promote health and manage diseases effectively.</li> <li>• Ensure the availability of emergency facilities for students on campus.</li> </ul>
<b>Judicial services</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Enforce student conduct standards to comply with legislation.</li> <li>• Issue disciplinary action against student code of conduct violations.</li> <li>• Conduct grievance hearings on campus.</li> </ul>
<b>Chaplaincy or multi-faith centres</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Promote religious tolerance through inter-faith events.</li> <li>• Ensure religious support to students.</li> </ul>
<b>Student funding</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Administer bursaries, scholarships and loans.</li> <li>• Provide financial information to students.</li> <li>• Advise students on alternative funding methods.</li> </ul>

**Source:** Adapted from Mandew, M. 2003. *A guide to student services in South Africa*. South Africa: Centre for Higher Education Transformation (CHET).

Globalisation has led to the student body being diverse in nationalities with most universities enrolling many international students (Banks, 2012). Hence, student services need to play an active role in supporting international students for internationalisation of universities. By providing settings to foster student interactions, student services can help promote social well-being of students (Ping, 1999).

#### **2.6.6. Beyond basic service provision**

According to Gambino (2009), student services professionals have made a concentrated effort to improve the standard of student affairs as they realise the importance of student services in higher education. Carolissen (2014) defined co-curricular activities as activities outside the prescribed curriculum. These are observed by universities as a crucial element of students' development as they have to survive in a highly competitive, globalised world. Co-curriculum embraces the non-traditional, lifelong learning issues related to student success. Scholars urge that "co-curriculum needs to be conceptualised much more widely to legitimise all learning, especially that of non-traditional students who make up the majority of students in Africa" (Jackson, 2010 cited in Schreiber, 2014a, p.77).

Santee (2011) explained the importance of effective advertising of services to promote knowledge about the services offered by an institution. In the modern world of higher education, the subject of co-curriculum has gained interest not only in South Africa but also in other parts of the world. For instance, the European Council of Student Affairs has used co-curriculum successfully to advertise university programmes as they hope to increase university attractiveness. Also, in European higher education, phrases like "student satisfaction" are introduced as part of the co-curriculum, and in this way they integrate the two and promote student satisfaction in making education "fun". Another concept which is gaining much attention is that of "meta-curriculum". Universities comply with a meta-curriculum as they "promote thinking and learning beyond subject matter" (Fogarty & Pete, 2009, p.82). Some universities consider co-curricular activities part of the holistic student success and continually strive to engage students in such activities within their formal curriculum. Student services support such co-curricular activities.



### **2.6.7. Professional student services bodies**

There are multiple professional bodies nationally and internationally that undertake the duty of overseeing the profession of student services. Such bodies promote dialogues on issues faced by students as well as student services practitioners with a view to advance the service provision of such functional units within higher education (Altbach *et al.*, 2009). The International Association of Student Affairs and Services (IASAS) has a vision of “advocating enhancement of the student affairs profession and student affairs professionals worldwide” (IASAS, 2014). The IASAS provides an international platform to network and share ideas to promote student services programmes worldwide.

For decades, various professional bodies have been providing an opportunity to student service professionals and universities within South Africa to discuss concerns and improvements in the practice of the profession. The National Association of Student Development Practitioners (NASDEV), South African Students Congress (SASCO) and South African Association of Senior Student Affairs Professionals (SAASSAP) are among many other professional associations for student services in South Africa (Altbach *et al.*, 2009). The youngest national South African association, Southern African Federation for Student Affairs and Services (SAFSAS), was formulated with support from the Department of Higher Education and Training (DHET) in 2012. The primary idea behind the formation of the SAFSAS was that of creating a national platform for promoting discussions on student affairs and services (UKZN, 2014). Dr Saloschini Pillay, president of SAFSAS and Manager of Student Support Services in College of Health Sciences at the University of KwaZulu-Natal, saw this platform as a means of “moving away from the silos in which student services operate and becoming a dynamic and cohesive voice for students in higher education in South Africa” (Hastebeer, 2014).

## **2.7. CUSTOMER SATISFACTION**

Tse and Wilton (1988) stated that satisfaction is a psychological experience which describes an emotional state that results when the customer's prior expectations are met by the actual performance of the product or service. Customer satisfaction usually takes place when the features of a service or product meet or exceed the customer's expectations thereof (Oliver, 1981 cited in Dodge Kelsey & Bond, 2001). Thus, customer satisfaction is often described from the customer's perspective, as all customer satisfaction projects must

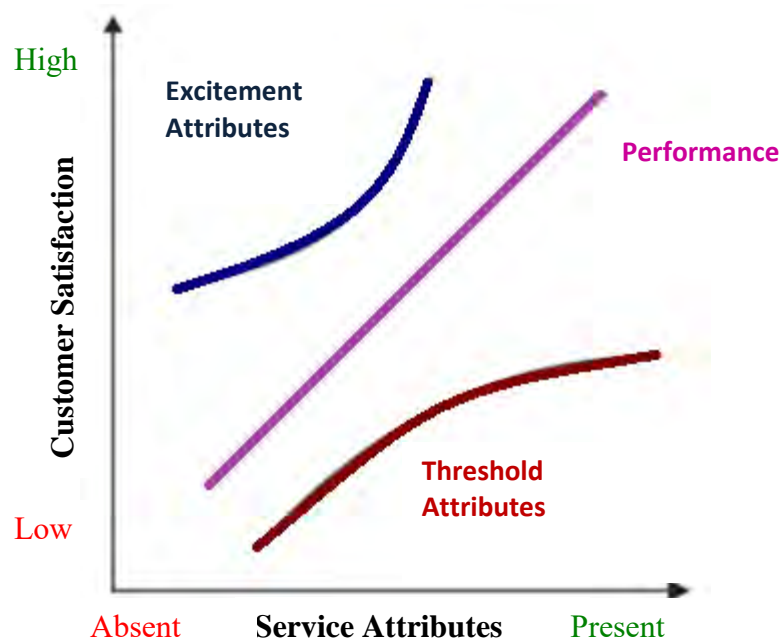
begin by identifying people's needs and expectations of a service provider (Thomson, 1998).

–Literature on customer satisfaction identifies two types of customer satisfaction: namely transaction-specific satisfaction and overall satisfaction” (Sunder, 2011, p.43). According to Omachonu, Johnson and Onyeaso (2008), customer satisfaction preceding a unitary service encounter is called transaction-type customer satisfaction. On the other hand, he noted that a progressively amended aggregate satisfaction is referred to as overall satisfaction. Customers portray different satisfaction levels for different customer experiences. Additionally, customers may encounter different satisfaction levels for the same service encountered on multiple occasions (Tsotsou & Wirtz, 2014). According to Bruhn and Grund (2000), a relationship exists between customer satisfaction and gender of the customers. In their opinion, customer satisfaction experiences a gender effect. Siems (2010) explained that individuals of different gender show different satisfaction for the same service.

The Kano model of customer satisfaction, introduced in the 1980s, categorises attributes of product or services from the customer's perspective and their influence on customer satisfaction (Jacobs, 1999). The Kano model illustrates the consequences of customer satisfaction (Hill, Roche & Allen, 2007). Figure 2.3 illustrates the relationship between service attributes and customer satisfaction and product or making use of the Kano model.

Parvey (2014) noted that according to the Kano model, a service can have three types of attributes:

- *Threshold Attributes:* These are attributes customers expect to find in a service. If these attributes are not present, customers are dissatisfied.
- *Performance Attributes:* These are attributes which while not being absolutely essential, enhance the customers' enjoyment of the service.
- *Excitement Attributes:* These are attributes which are unexpected and still enhance customers' enjoyment. Even if only a few performance attributes are present, the presence of an excitement attribute will lead to high customer satisfaction.



**Figure 2.3: The Kano model to measure customer satisfaction**

**Source:** Adapted from Parvey, S. 2014. *Kano Model Analysis*. [Online]. Available WWW: [http://www.mindtools.com/pages/article/newCT\\_97.htm](http://www.mindtools.com/pages/article/newCT_97.htm) [Accessed 25 January 2015].

It is therefore evident that performance attributes influence customer satisfaction. The Kano model could be applied to higher education to determine student satisfaction.

### 2.7.1. Higher education as a service

Chavira (2013) said that service is a way in which value can be delivered to customers by enabling them to get what they require without carrying the risks associated with it. More and more institutions are regarding higher education as being similar to an organisation in the service industry. For this reason they are putting more effort into meeting and exceeding the needs of the students. Oldfield and Baron (2000, p.86) noted that, "higher education can be seen as a pure service" and according to Hennig-Thurau, Langer and Hansen (2001, p.332), "educational services fall into the field of services marketing". The intangible and assorted service of higher education is conjointly "produced" and "consumed" by staff as well as students as a part of the teaching-learning process. According to Shaun and Jerlando (2011), the higher education industry is complex and diverse. On account of such unique characteristics, it is very difficult to objectively

measure the service quality of higher education service (Parasuraman, Zeithaml & Berry, 1985 cited in Gruber, T., Fuß, S., Voss, R. & Gläser-Zikuda, M, 2010).

### **2.7.2. Customer expectations in higher education**

According to Oliver (2010b), the concept of expectation dates back thousands of years. He characterised an expectation as an apprehension of forthcoming occurrences based on preceding experience, prevailing circumstances, or other sources of information. According to Smith (2012), customer satisfaction reflects the customer's expectations of and experiences with a product or service. He noted that "expectations reflect both past and current product evaluation and use experiences. He added that customers hold both explicit and implicit performance expectations for attributes, features, and benefits of products and services".

Teaching is a core university service, and factors related to teaching have a strong impact on students' overall satisfaction. This fact corresponds with findings that argue that a university's most important services offered are its core services, such as lecturing (Hill, 1995; Douglas, Douglas & Barnes, 2006; Vidalakis, Sun & Papa, 2013; Kärnä & Julin, 2015). Noticeably, learning in higher education institutions occurs not only in classrooms and lectures but also in informal ad hoc spaces and through social interaction. Kok *et al.* (2011, p.252) argued that "the more the facility services directly affect the educational process, the higher their potential contribution to educational achievement".

Many scholars regard students as the primary customers of education and maintain that fee-paying students may expect "value for money" and behave more like consumers (Narasimhan, 2001; Gruber *et al.*, 2010). It is essential for higher education to recognise that what the university produces on campus, in the classroom, or online and then packages to create an output (a college degree) is only the starting point of a longer process that co-creates value (Lusch & Wu, 2012). Also, with increased higher education costs, parents and students expect enhanced customer services and enhanced problem solving regarding issues and concerns (Tull *et al.*, 2009). "As students are increasingly seen as consumers of higher education services, their satisfaction should be important to institutions that want to attract new students" (Thomas & Galambos, 2006, p.252). Similarly, Appleton-Knapp and Krentler (2006 cited in Gruber *et al.*, 2010) suggested that students' satisfaction with their educational experience should be a desired outcome in addition to learning.

### **2.7.3. Assessment of student services**

Tremblay, Lalancette and Roseveare (2012) noted that assessment of student services can be traced back to the early 20<sup>th</sup> century. The student services profession has experienced assessments in various forms. Arbuckle (1953) provided primary evidence of dialogue amongst various educators to improve student programmes and services. Although student services have not been the primary focus in the consideration of assessment in higher education, they have been tasked with greater accountability in supplementing the educational experience of the students. While some institutions enjoy the liberty of ignoring the pressure of demanded accountability, many others cannot afford to ignore the multidimensional contemporary press for accountability.

Higher education institutions have a responsibility to provide a range of support services adequate to ensure a safe, healthy and secure environment for students, and to contribute to their cultural, social, moral and physical development (Junio-Sabio, 2012). Schuh (2013) suggested that assessment should be considered a fundamental activity in student affairs. In his opinion, such a culture of assessment can be achieved only through the motivation and promotion of a culture of evaluation among the student services professionals; examining “how things are done”.

Assessment of student services has attracted distinguished scholastic views. One way of defining assessment of student services is that it is “a process of collecting and analyzing information to improve the conditions of student life, student learning, and the quality and efficiency of services and programs provided for students” (Blimling, 2013). Another way to define the assessment of student services is through the assessment of the performance capability of student services professionals by using personnel evaluation techniques (Angeli & Valanides, 2008). There are many more faces to assessment within the student services domain. However, these two views are commonly observed in the literature of student services assessment. But, assessment goes beyond mere data collection. It involves using the data collected to analyse limitations and implement quantifiable changes for improvement.

#### **2.7.4. Challenges in assessing student services**

According to Blimling (2013), student services are accustomed to assessments. He noted that student services in higher education are frequently compelled by regional accrediting agents to assess their services in some way in order to maintain the required standards. Reluctance of student services practitioners to perform assessments of service quality has been a fundamental challenge in assessment of student services globally (Altbach *et al.*, 2009). According to Stead (2005), literature on student affairs suggests that primarily such reluctance is a result of the time-consuming assessment procedures undertaken by universities. Student services professionals have often raised concerns about the effectiveness of such assessments (Bresciani, 2011). Furthermore, lack of clarity on the methods of conducting assessments and difficulty in the selection of proper assessment methods give rise to additional challenges in the assessment process.

Universities have always been keen on comparing performance results from assessments to benchmark their performance against other universities (Gansemer-Topf, 2014). Resource availability has been another major challenge in assessment of student services (Schuh & Gansemer-Topf, 2010). "As with all successful campus initiatives, assessment efforts need to be supported by adequate resources — including time, personnel, funding, and training. Assessment studies need not be tremendously resource intensive, but they do require staff time and adequate financial resources". Hiring private consultants and outsourcing such assessments could be a solution to this challenge. However, assessing student services through outsourced agents could be perceived as challenging the competence of student services staff at a university. The cost effectiveness of outsourced assessments has also been questioned (Schuh, 2009).

According to Blimling (2013, p.11), "survey fatigue, defined as students' tiring of completing questionnaires, quickly sets in and results in low response rates, which raise serious questions about response bias on many institutional assessment instruments". He noted that in view of survey fatigue, information should be collected from students in the least intrusive way possible, only when necessary, and primarily for the purpose of institutional decision making or analysis.

### **2.7.5. Linking service quality and customer satisfaction**

Customer service quality and customer satisfaction have long been perceived as significant requirements for success in any competitive market. Shemwell, Yavas and Bilgin (1998) noted that despite the conceptual difference between satisfaction and service quality, the two are tightly inter-related. Churchill and Suprenant (1982) were among the first researchers to determine the existence of a direct link between perceived service quality and customer satisfaction. Later, various other studies were conducted that provided evidence supporting this claim. Hu, Kandampully and Juwaheer (2009) noted that despite the success in linking service quality and perceived value of service, studies in the past failed to provide depth in the nature of the relationships that exist between these constructs. According to Al Karim and Chowdhury (2014, p.3), "it is vital to note that, service quality is assessed not only as the end result but also on how it is delivered during the service process and on its ultimate effect on consumer's perceptions". Hence, organisations belonging to the service sector industry often regard service quality as a crucial constituent of their marketing strategy.

According to Martinez (2013), the foundational principles and ideas that underline excellent service delivery are as applicable to those working in higher education as they are to any other business or organisation. He noted that while most people consider those delivering a service to require a minimal level of technical skills, it is realised that people skills also matter in the service delivery business. He added that it is not only necessary to record good service experiences but also to record bad service experiences in order to provide a good quality service.

According to Ismail, Abdullah and Francis (2009), "quality" of a service is not what an organisation puts in. It is the value that the customer perceives. They noted that quality in customer service requires awareness of the needs, problems, fears and aspirations of customers. They also noted that excellence in customer service should be the primary goal of an organisation as it is the quality of service that is the key to customer satisfaction. According to Warner (2013), employees at every level must be given a clear indication of what underscores superior service, and quality of service must become a priority to everyone in the organisation. He also noted that concrete standards of excellent service quality should be established and regularly measured.

Providing “quality service” means having the ability to gauge services from the customers' point of view and then meeting their expectations (Quinn, 1997 cited in Jayasundara, Ngulube & Minishi-Majanja, 2010). Higher education has gained the attention of scholars and researchers in the context of service quality (Parasuraman *et al.*, 1985; Aldridge, Reisberg & Rowley, 1998; O'Neill, 2003; Kärnä & Julin, 2015). According to Arena, Arnaboldi and Azzone (2010, p.941), “in the field of higher education, service quality research efforts have been focused on specific areas such as quality of research and teaching, while the quality of administrative and support services has been overlooked”. Typically, a university campus can be identified as a multifarious and multifaceted learning environment with its various facilities and related services (Den Heijer, 2011). Universities are the service providers in the higher education spectrum, and thus maintaining service quality will involve the universities primarily identifying the attributes of student satisfaction and student dissatisfaction.

According to Zeithaml, Berry and Parasuraman (1996 cited in Dubey, 2011), due to the intangible nature of services, it is difficult for firms to analyse how customers perceive and evaluate the service quality. As customers evaluate their level of satisfaction by experiencing service quality, satisfaction with services is related to conformation or disconfirmation of expectations (Dubey, 2011). As students are the primary customers of universities, student satisfaction is gaining importance amongst universities worldwide (Dominici & Palumbo, 2013). Many universities have been conducting surveys regularly to determine student satisfaction levels regarding student services provided on campus (Kayastha, 2011). These surveys focus on capturing student experiences about student support services. However, professional bodies and researchers have shown interest in conducting research about student engagement and overall student experience (Strydom & Menz, 2010).

According to Knapp (2011), effective communication with customers is a key element of superior service provision. Universities have often revised their methods of communicating with the various stakeholders. Djinis (2012) noted that advancements in technology have led to students preferring digital communication as opposed to traditional communication in written or telephonic form. It is important that universities understand the needs of the students and communicate to them in an effective manner using a suitable communication platform.



Gruber, Reppel and Voss (2010) stated that German universities have responded to the need to link service quality and customer satisfaction by escalating research initiatives undertaken to determine customer satisfaction in higher education since the 19<sup>th</sup> century. Most American universities carry out yearly student satisfaction surveys to analyse the performance of on-campus student services with the aim of maintaining a high quality of service offered (Hénard & Roseveare, 2012). South Africa is home to some prestigious and world-renowned universities (Murphy, 2012); however, there is very limited literature available on cross-university or nationwide university surveys specific to student services and their performance.

## **2.8. SUMMARY**

Students are central to all operations of a modern university. As a result, universities tend to be more service oriented and treat their students more as customers. This chapter has highlighted the importance of student services in higher education and their direct relationship in the enhancement of the student experience. Student satisfaction has always been a leading indicator of the performance of student services at universities. Many higher education institutions conduct some form of evaluation to determine student satisfaction. Student preferences are monitored and fed back into the system so that the institutions can continue to satisfy their customers – the students. However, these evaluations often encompass academic and non-academic issues with little focus on student services. It is evident from the literature presented that there is a scarcity of research focused on service quality and the satisfaction levels of students with regard to student services at universities within South Africa. Therefore, a study concentrating on student satisfaction will help UKZN and other universities to strengthen student learning and development in order to enhance the student experience. The next chapter presents the methodology used for conducting the research for this study.

## **CHAPTER 3**

### **RESEARCH METHEDODOLOGY**

#### **3.1. INTRODUCTION**

Research methods are the various techniques and procedures adopted by a researcher while conducting research. The science of studying how to carry out research is generally referred to as research methodology (Rajasekar, Philominatha& Chinnathambi, 2013). It is therefore necessary for the researcher to not only have knowledge about the research methods, but also the research methodology (Tonon, 2015).

The purpose of this chapter is to discuss the research methods employed in obtaining the results for the study at hand. This chapter highlights the key processes involved in conducting sound research using a suitable research methodology. It provides information along with a discussion of the various options available to a researcher while making decisions regarding sampling, data collection and data analysis.

#### **3.2. ORGANISATIONAL BACKGROUND**

UKZN is one of the first merged institutions in South Africa. The merger between the University of Durban-Westville and the University of Natal in 2004 led to the establishment of the UKZN. It is a premier University of African scholarship. With the intention of becoming the University of Choice, the UKZN ensures that it provides a holistic learning environment to students. The mission of the university is to be "a truly South African University that is academically excellent, innovative in research, critically engaged with society and demographically representative to redress the disadvantages, inequities and imbalances of the past" (UKZN, 2015c). The UKZN is rated as one of the top five universities in South Africa and is also one of only three African Universities rated among the top 500 universities of the world (UKZN, 2015c). The university is globally renowned for its outstanding teaching and research and the degrees from the UKZN are internationally recognised (UKZN, 2015b).

The university believes in the holistic development of their students and aims to care for the students' needs by the provision of various student support services. The Department of Student Services at the UKZN provides student counselling, student funding, student

residence and catering, career assistance, academic support, alumni support, disability support, legal assistance and health assistance through support groups (UKZN, 2015a). According to Suknandan (2013), "universities in South Africa should be moving more towards a research based type of strategy as a means of continuous improvement from a Student Affairs and Services perspective". The Department of Student Services at the UKZN conducts a Graduate Opinion Survey on an annual basis. This survey is aimed at the graduate students exiting the institution. There is no evidence of reporting the information obtained from opinions of the respondents of the survey to a wide audience. Also, no documentation has been published showing evidence that these student opinions have received consideration towards improving the teaching and learning experience. Furthermore, while a graduate opinion survey is conducted towards the end of the students' academic life, there is no evidence of a survey during the graduate years.

### **3.3. AIM**

The aim of this study was to establish student perceptions of the student services offered at the UKZN.

### **3.4. OBJECTIVES**

The following were the objectives of the research conducted:

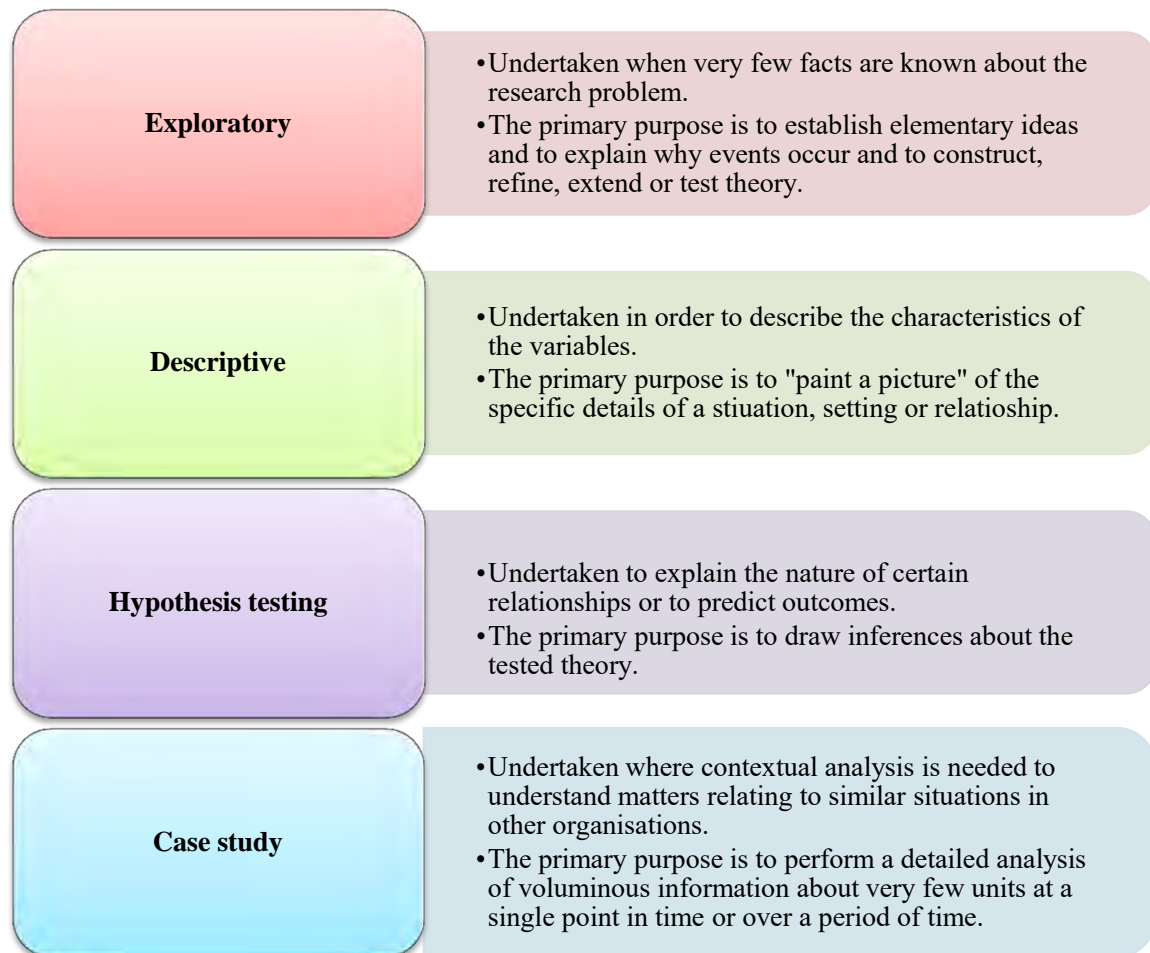
1. To establish the knowledge of current students regarding the student services offered at UKZN.
2. To determine if student services are accessible to all students at UKZN.
3. To determine which services are commonly used by the students at UKZN.
4. To determine the student satisfaction levels with the service provided by the student services department.
5. To identify improvements that could benefit the service offering of the student services department at UKZN.

### **3.5. TYPE OF RESEARCH**

Research can be conducted in different environments and under diverse settings. This gives rise to different types of research classified broadly into four categories by Zimkund, Babin, Carr and Griffin (2012):

1. Exploratory – attempts to clarify how and why there is a relationship between two or more objects in ambiguous situations and/or to discover potential business ideas.
2. Descriptive – attempts to describe systematically a situation, problems, objects, characteristics, and people or groups to portray the given situation.
3. Hypothesis testing– an inferential type of research also known as significance testing; involves testing a claim or hypothesis about a parameter.
4. Case study– seeks to study a particular person, group or organisation to perform an in-depth analysis.

The choice of undertaking a particular type of study is based on its purpose. Sekaran and Bougie (2013) analysed the type and purpose of research as shown in Figure 3.1.



**Figure 3.1: Type and purpose of research**

**Source:** Adapted from Sekaran, U. and Bougie, R. 2013. *Research Methods for Business: A Skill Building Approach*. 6<sup>th</sup> ed. West Sussex: Wiley and Sons Ltd; Saunders, M., Lewis, P. and Thornhill, A. 2009. *Research methods for business students*. 5<sup>th</sup> ed. UK: Pearson Education Ltd.

It is evident from Figure 3.1 that the purpose of research determines the type of research that needs to be undertaken. Based on the literature provided in Chapter 2, coupled with the aim and objectives, the characteristics to be studied are known to exist. The purpose of the researcher was to investigate customer satisfaction regarding student services offered at the university, and therefore as suggested by Sekaran and Bougie (2013), this study is descriptive in nature. The researcher focused on analysing the perceptions of the customers regarding satisfaction of the services offered under the umbrella of student services at the UKZN.

### 3.6. RESEARCH APPROACH

Creswell (2013) suggested that research approaches are plans and procedures that help a researcher to conduct research. He described two basic research approaches:

1. Qualitative — This research approach is used for exploring and understanding the meaning that individuals and groups ascribe to a social or human problem.
2. Quantitative — This research approach is used for testing objective theories by examining the relationship among variables.

Table 3.1 illustrates the contrast between the basic research methods.

**Table 3.1: Type of research approach**

Qualitative research	Research aspect	Quantitative research
Discover ideas, used in explanatory research with general research objects	Common Purpose	Test hypotheses or specific research questions
Observe and interpret	Approach	Measure and test
Design emerges as the study unfolds	Design	All aspects are carefully designed before study is conducted
Unstructured, free-form	Data collection approach	Structured response Categories provided
Words, pictures or objects	Form of data	Numbers and statistics
Researcher is intimately involved Results are subjective	Researcher independence	Researcher uninvolved Observer Results are objective
Small samples - often in natural settings producing less generalisable results (results that apply to other situations)	Samples	Large samples - produce generalisable results
Explanatory research designs	Most often used	Descriptive research designs

**Source:** Adapted from Zikmund, W., Babin, B., Carr, J. & Griffin, M. 2012. *Business Research Methods*.Canada: Cengage Learning.

As illustrated in Table 3.1, the qualitative and quantitative research methods contrast each other in various research aspects. The choice of either depends on the type of research study. This study is descriptive in nature. Hence, as justified in Section 3.6, a quantitative approach was used, as illustrated in Table 3.1.

### **3.7. SAMPLING**

Sekaran and Bougie (2013, p.264) described sampling as the "process of selecting the right individuals, objects, or events for a study". They defined a population as the entire group of people, events, or things of interest that the researcher wishes to investigate. In their opinion, sampling is a process of selecting a sample which is simply a subset of the population.

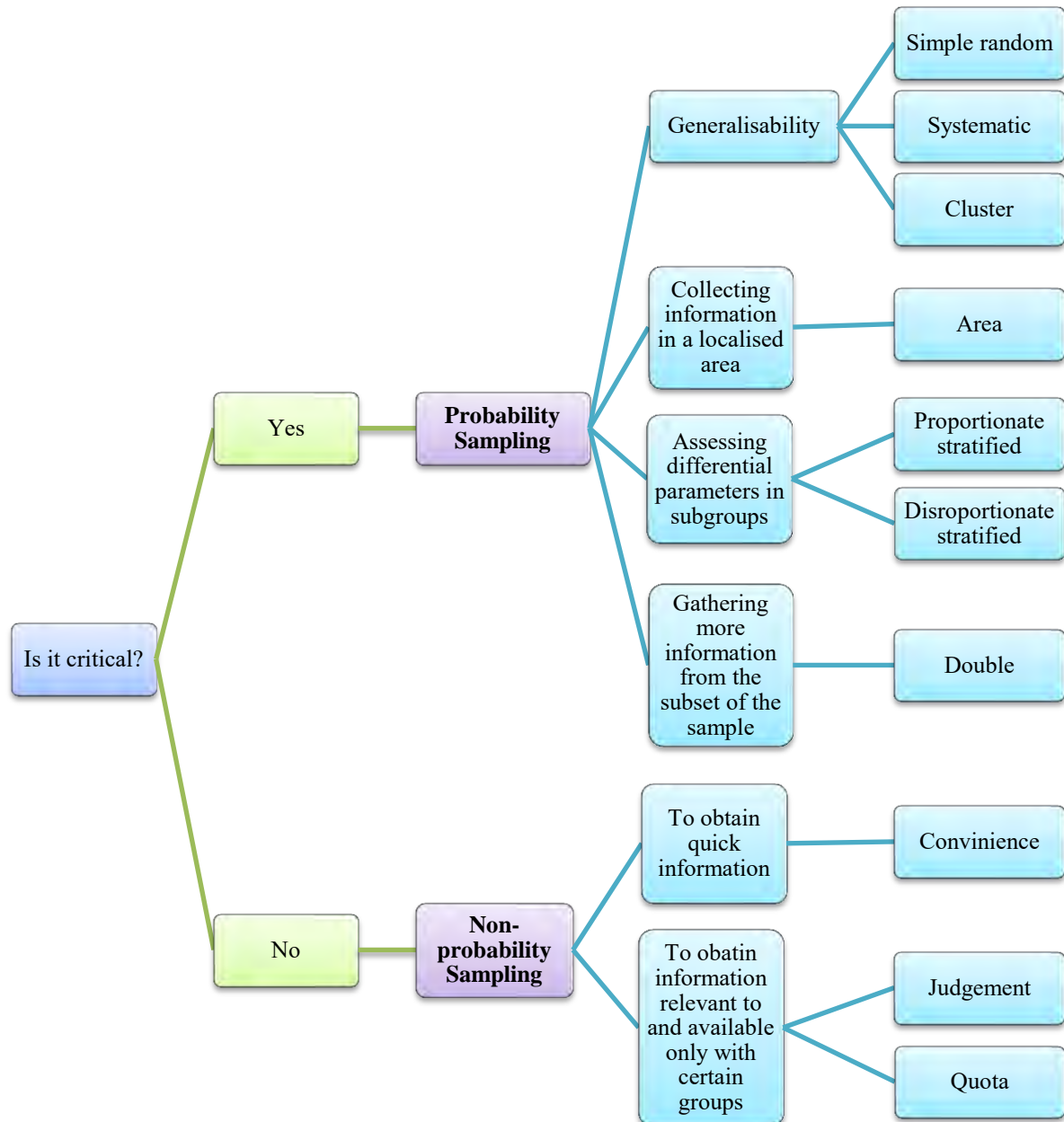
#### **3.7.1. Need for sampling**

Usually, it is difficult to gather data from the entire population due to factors such as large population size, time constraints to complete the research, geographical limitations of the study and many others (Ghuri & Gronhaug, 2005). According to Vishwanathan (2006), sampling sheds light on the population parameters which are of interest to the researcher. The primary need for sampling arises from the necessity to build a representative sample that nearly imitates or exhibits features of interest of the population (Neuman, 2011). Daniel (2012) explained that a sample is considered representative of the population to the extent that there is no difference between the sample and the population in terms of the variables of interest.

#### **3.7.2. Sampling design**

The process of sampling requires the selection of a certain finite number of elements that can represent the entire population such that the researcher studies the sample and generalises the results to the population (Sekaran & Bougie, 2013). Zikmund *et al.*(2012) identified the two types of sampling designs as probability sampling and non-probability sampling. They explained that probability sampling results in every member of the population having a known non-zero chance of selection in the sample, giving rise to a truly random sample. Conversely, non-probability sampling results in a sample where the probability of a particular member from the population being chosen is unknown, giving rise to a sample being chosen by the researcher on the basis of personal judgement or convenience.

As shown in the decision tree in Figure 3.2, Sekaran and Bougie (2013) advise that the researcher should choose a sampling design based on the type and purpose of research along with the degree to which repetitiveness of the sample is important.



**Figure 3.2: Choice of sampling design**

**Source:** Adapted from Sekaran, U. and Bougie, R. 2013. *Research Methods for Business: A Skill Building Approach*. 6<sup>th</sup> ed. West Sussex: Wiley and Sons Ltd; Saunders, M., Lewis, P. & Thornhill, A. 2009. *Research Methods for Business Students*. 5<sup>th</sup> ed. UK: Pearson Education Ltd.

As this study is one of the first studies undertaken to evaluate customer perceptions regarding the student services offered at the UKZN, the representativeness of the data is

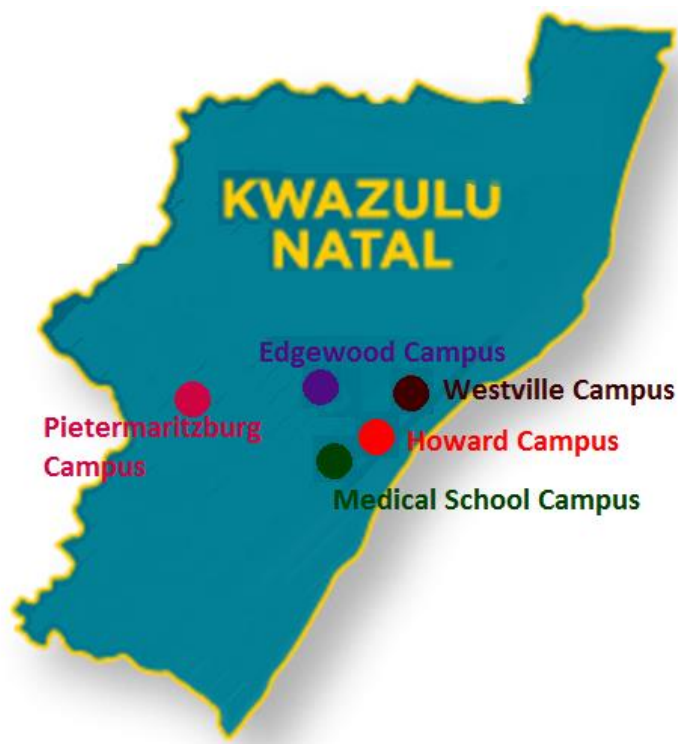


crucial for the research study undertaken. To allow the results from the study to be generalised to the entire population, a representative sample was required. Hence, based on the decision tree in Figure 3.3, a simple random sampling design was chosen for the study since it was the most convenient way in which each element of the population had an equal chance of being chosen as the subject (Sekaran & Bougie, 2013).

### 3.7.3. Participants in the study

Oliver (2010a) suggested that the unit of analysis be specified in the research design process. Sekaran and Bougie (2013) suggested that the unit of analysis impacts the selection of sample, collection of data and the type of inferences that can be made from the data acquired in the research.

The population of interest for this study included all the students of UKZN. The location of the study was determined by the nature of the organisation. UKZN has five campuses spread across the province of KwaZulu-Natal (KZN), as shown diagrammatically in Figure 3.3.



**Figure 3.3: The UKZN campuses**

#### **3.7.4. Sampling frame**

According to Groves, Fowler, Couper, Lepkowski, Singer and Tourangeau(2009), sampling frames basically comprise a list of population elements. They explained that sampling frames aim to identify the components of the population. A sampling frame can be defined as “the quasi list of elements from which a probability sample is selected” (Babbie, 2013, p.216). Monette, Sullivan and DeJong (2013) advised researchers to be cautious while assessing the sample frames to ensure that they include all elements of the population of interest.

The sampling frame for this study was the list of all students at the five campuses of the UKZN, as explained in Section 3.8.3, as at 27 February 2015, after the closing of the registration for 2015. This list was extracted from the student database of the UKZN. The information obtained was verified for accuracy and completeness.

#### **3.7.5. Sample size**

Mugo Fridah (2011, p.1) stated that "a sample is a finite part of a statistical population whose properties are studied to gain information about the whole". Desu (2012) defined sample size as the number of units in a sample. Sekaran and Bougie (2013) noted that reliability and validity of a sample facilitate the generalisability of the research findings from the sample to the population. Data reliability and validity will be explained later in this chapter. Saunders *et al.* (2009) suggested that the selection of the sample size is dependent on the four basic factors listed below:

1. The size of population from which the sample is drawn.
2. The confidence level required by the researcher in the study undertaken.
3. The margin of error the researcher is prepared to tolerate within the research study.
4. The type of analysis that the researcher will undertake.

The population of this study consisted of 42 740 elements as listed in the student database of the UKZN as at 27 February 2015. Each element is a student at the UKZN. Sekaran and Bougie (2013) provided a generalised scientific guideline for determination of appropriate sample size based on the size of the population. Based on the table, a sample size of 384 participants was determined appropriate for this study.

### 3.8. DATA COLLECTION

Lind, Marchal and Wathen (2010) explained the purpose of data collection strategies as that of facilitating systematic collection of data about people, objects and phenomena. A poor data collection strategy implies that the data collected for research analysis is of inferior quality and that the researcher cannot possibly analyse it in a useful manner (Norwood, 2010). According to Churchill, Suter and Brown (2010), data collected can be grouped into two basic categories – primary data and secondary data. Data collected first hand specifically for the purpose of the research study undertaken is called primary data and is new to the world, whereas data that has already been collected for some other purpose by an individual or organisation is known as secondary data (Churchill *et al.*, 2010). They explained that secondary data provides the researcher with the advantage of saving time and money, but in the absence of secondary data from internal or external sources, primary data needs to be collected.

Sekaran and Bougie (2013) identified focus groups, panels, interviews, administered questionnaires or observations as primary data sources, as opposed to company records, archives, government publications and industry analyses which are considered to be secondary data sources. They explained that “the choice of data collection methods depends on the facilities available, the degree of accuracy required, the expertise of the researcher, the time span of the study, and other costs and resources associated with and available for data gathering” (Sekaran & Bougie, 2013, p.224). Table 3.2 illustrates the various primary data collection methods along with their benefits and limitations.

**Table 3.2: Primary data collection methods**

<b>Data collection method</b>	<b>Nature of data obtained</b>	<b>Benefits</b>	<b>Limitations</b>
<b>Focus groups</b>	Qualitative	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Provide data specific to the research topic</li><li>• Provide the researcher an opportunity to obtain in-depth information</li><li>• All elements of the sample are interviewed one time</li></ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Can be expensive and time-consuming if sample size is large</li><li>• Responses can be influenced by a moderator or the researcher</li></ul>

<b>Data collection method</b>	<b>Nature of data obtained</b>	<b>Benefits</b>	<b>Limitations</b>
<b>Panels</b>	Qualitative	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Allow meeting elements of samples more than once to gather data</li> <li>• Certain interventions or changes can be examined over a period of time</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Generally expensive</li> <li>• Require time</li> </ul>
<b>Interviews</b>	Qualitative	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Provide rich data</li> <li>• Offer the researcher the opportunity to understand interviewees</li> <li>• Help to explore and understand complex issues</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Prone to interviewer bias</li> <li>• Can be expensive and time-consuming if sample size is large</li> </ul>
<b>Questionnaires</b>	Quantitative	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Can be conducted face to face or telephonically</li> <li>• Inexpensive</li> <li>• Require less effort</li> <li>• Versatile</li> <li>• Can easily be used when sample is geographically dispersed</li> <li>• Instant feedback can be obtained</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Low response and unmotivated responses for emailed questionnaires</li> <li>• Exclude respondents who don't have email</li> <li>• Not suitable to probe deeply if an issue arises</li> </ul>

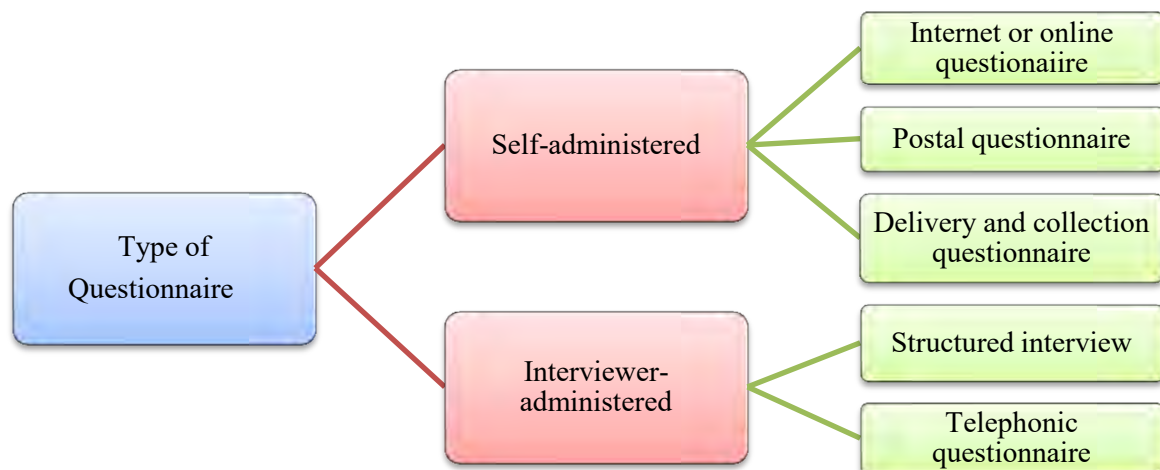
**Source:** Sekaran, U. & Bougie, R. 2013. *Research Methods For Business: A Skill Building Approach*. 6<sup>th</sup> ed. West Sussex: Wiley and Sons.

It is evident from Table 3.2 that administered questionnaires are suitable for large sample sizes; and since this study had the large sample size of 384, this method was considered to be the most appropriate method for collecting data for the survey. This data collection method allowed for inexpensive data collection.

### **3.8.1. Description and purpose of instrument**

Brown (2001 cited in Dornyei & Taguchi, 2010) defined questionnaires as any type of written instrument that offers respondents a series of questions to which they react and

provide their opinion either by writing out their own answers or by selecting from answers provided to them. According to Brace (2010, p.4), “asking the same questions to different people is the key to most research studies”. He noted that questionnaires provide the researcher an opportunity to ask standardised questions to conduct a survey and questionnaires are versatile as they can be used in various situations for various types of people in different research topics. Figure 3.4 shows the different types of questionnaires that may be administered.



**Figure 3.4: Types of questionnaires**

Source: Dornyei, Z. & Taguchi, T. 2010. Questionnaires In Second Language Research : Construction, Administration, And Processing. New York& London: Routledge.

Figure 3.4 shows that self-administered questionnaires can be conducted electronically. Since the current study needed to be self-administered, the online questionnaire was most suitable due to its cost effectiveness and ease of completion, as explained in Table 3.5. Postal and delivery and collection type of questionnaires are time consuming and expensive, and hence were considered inefficient for this survey.

### **3.8.2. Construction of the instrument**

Sekaran and Bougie (2013) explained the four fundamental areas for consideration in the construction of a questionnaire— firstly, the wording; secondly, the categories of the variables; thirdly, planning of issues; and fourthly, general appearance of the questionnaire. A well designed questionnaire should achieve the following:

1. Meet the research objectives.
2. Make it easy for the respondents to give the necessary information.

3. Obtain the most complete and accurate information possible (FAO, 2013).

The design of the questionnaire in this study was formulated taking into account the aim of the study. A copy of the questionnaire is provided in Appendix 3. Table 3.3 describes how the questions in the questionnaire were derived for the distinct research objectives of this study.

**Table 3.3: Linking questions in the questionnaire to research objectives of the study**

Section	Objective	Question number
1	Demographic details	2, 3,4,5,6
2	To establish the knowledge of current students regarding the student services offered at the UKZN.	7,8,9
3	To determine if student services are accessible to all students at the UKZN.	22,23,24
4	To determine which services are commonly used by the students at the UKZN.	10,11,12,17,18,20,21
5	To determine the customer satisfaction levels of the students at the UKZN with the service provided by the student services division.	13,14,15,16,17,19
6	To identify improvements that could benefit the service offering of the student services division at the UKZN.	25,26,27,28,29,30

As noted in Table 3.3, the range of questions adequately covered the research objectives to gather sufficient and necessary data for the study.

Zikmund *et al.* (2012) identified the four basic types of scales, namely the nominal scale, which represents the most elementary level of measurement; the ordinal scale, which allows things to be arranged in an order based on how much of some concept they possess and thus making it a ranking scale; the interval scale, which has both nominal and ordinal properties; and the ratio scale, which represents the highest form of measurement which has all properties of interval scales with the additional attribute of representing absolute quantities. Table 3.4 represents the types of scales used in the questionnaire design for this study.

**Table 3.4: Types of scales used in the instrument**

Scale	Type	Data type	Question number
<b>Rating</b>	Dichotomous	Nominal	2,7,10,22,25
	Multiple choice, single response	Nominal	3,4,5,6,8,12,19,20,21,22,23,26,28
	Multiple choice, multiple response	Nominal	9,11,16
	Likert Scale	Interval	13,14,15,16,17,18,24,29
<b>Ranking</b>	Forced choice	Ordinal	19,27

Table 3.4 categorises the questions in the instrument based on the type of scale used for the construction of each question.

### **3.8.3. Validity and reliability**

According to Wood and Kerr (2011, p.198), in the field of research, reliability and validity specifically relate to “the measurement of data as it will be used to answer the research questions”.

#### *3.8.3.1. Validity*

Sekaran and Bougie (2013) stated that validity determines the extent to which an instrument, method or process measures a specific concept. Neuman (2011) stated that validity is an indication of truthfulness. He explained that validity indicates the degree to which an idea relates to reality. According to him, “measurement validity” is how well an empirical indicator and the conceptual definition of the construct that the indicator is supposed to measure “fit” together. He noted the following four types of measurement validity:

1. Face validity – refers to the most basic and easiest type of validity a researcher can achieve. It determines how well the indicator really measures the construct. It addresses the question: On the face of it, do people believe that the definition and method of measurement fit?

2. Content validity – measures the extent to which the questionnaire adequately covers the investigation questions (Sekaran & Bougie, 2013). It addresses the question: Is the full content of the definition represented in a measure?
3. Criterion validity – measures the ability of the questions to make accurate predictions (Sekaran & Bougie, 2013). It uses some standard or criterion to indicate the construct accurately.
4. Construct validity – refers to the extent to which the researcher's questions actually measure the presence of the constructs that the researcher intends to measure (Sekaran & Bougie, 2013). It addresses the question: If the measure is valid, do the various indicators operate in a consistent manner?

#### 3.8.3.2. Reliability

Wood and Kerr (2011, p.209) stated that “reliability refers to the consistency, stability, and repeatability of a data collection instrument”. They explained that reliability of an instrument conveys no information about its validity. Zikmund *et al.* (2012) explained that a measure is understood to be reliable if the distinct experiments to measure a certain concept yield the same result. According to Neuman (2011), reliability can be increased in four basic ways:

1. *By clearly conceptualising all constructs.* Reliability can be improved by ensuring that each measure describes a single concept.
2. *By increasing the level of measurement.* Higher and accurate levels of indicators improve reliability; however, it is difficult for them to achieve such a precise level of measurement.
3. *By using multiple indicators of a variable.* Two indicators of a construct are better than one as they facilitate triangulation and measurements from a wider range of concepts, and thus increase reliability.
4. *By using pilot studies and replication.* This involves replicating results achieved previously by researchers. This method is time consuming; however, it can improve reliability over the time provided the same definitions of concepts have been used.



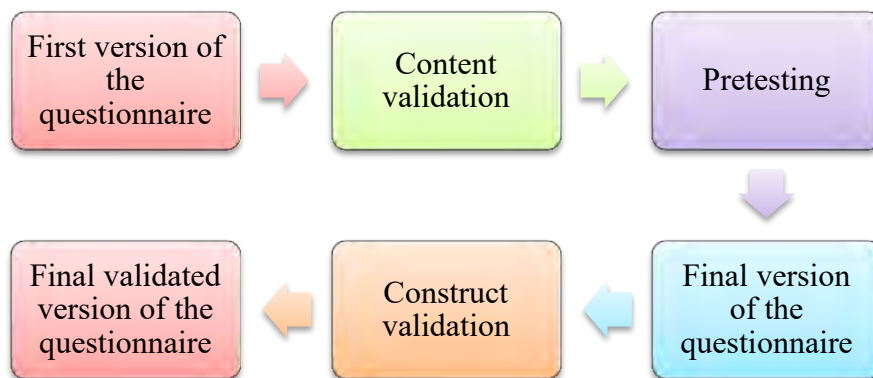
### 3.8.3.3. Relationship between validity and reliability

Neuman (2011) explained that although it is impossible to have perfect validity and perfect reliability, ideally a researcher strives towards their achievement. He noted that reliability is necessary for validity and is easier to achieve than validity. According to him, a measure can yield a result over and over (i.e. has reliability), but what it truly measures may not match a construct's definition (i.e. validity).

### 3.8.4. Pretesting of questionnaire

According to Bailey (2008), pretesting is the conclusive and most important stage in questionnaire development. Groves, Fowler, Couper, Lepkowski, Singer and Tourangeau (2011, p.265) defined pretests as “short rehearsals of data collection conducted before the main survey”. They explained that pretesting aims at assessing the survey instrument used as a data collection strategy along with the sampling procedure used for selection of the respondents.

Solinis, Zabalegui, Arce, Rodriguez and Polanco (2013) and Groves *et al.* (2011) explained the process of designing and validating a questionnaire as shown diagrammatically in Figure 3.5.



**Figure 3.5: Process of designing and validating a questionnaire**

**Source:** Solinis, R., Zabalegui, I.B., Arce, R.S., Rodriguez, L.S.M. & Polanco, N.T. 2013. Development of a questionnaire to assess interprofessional collaboration between two different care levels. *International Journal of Integrated Care (IJIC)*, vol. 13, no. 2, pp. 1-12.

As shown in Figure 3.5, once the initial draft of the questionnaire is prepared, it is checked for validity of its content, in order to ensure that it adequately covers the investigation

questions as explained in Section 3.9.3.1. Thereafter, pretests are conducted to limit the questionnaire to a few elements of the sample. This allows the fine-tuning of the questionnaire in order to develop a final version of the questionnaire that will be used in the actual study. The final questionnaire is then checked for validity of its construct, which validates the consistency with which the researcher's questions actually measure the construct, as explained in Section 3.9.3.1.

The process noted in Figure 3.9 was applied to the pilot test group of the present study. The pilot test group comprised of 20 students of the UKZN from the Westville campus from different colleges and in a different year of their course. The issues identified by the pilot group during the pretesting of the survey questionnaire were as follows:

1. The branching logic was not functioning properly due to show and hide options not set up correctly during the initial design of the questionnaire. Therefore, specific options were not displayed but all options were available to the respondents which was undesirable.
2. Spelling and grammatical errors were located.
3. Some members found the questionnaire to be too long due to some questions gathering data that would not be directly related to the research question at hand.
4. A question asking for the age of the respondent under the demographic content was found to be irrelevant.

All of the above-mentioned issues were rectified systematically and the questionnaire was fine-tuned to develop a final version to be used as a data collection instrument for the research study at hand.

### **3.8.5. Administration of questionnaire**

Questionnaire administration is the method of contacting respondents to obtain the required information (Neelankavil, 2007). According to Dornyei and Taguchi (2010), there is substantial evidence available in the literature on questionnaire administration to assert that this process plays a significant role in the quality of the responses obtained.

The administration of the questionnaire was done to ensure that an environment suitable for honest answering of the questions was followed. All administration was handled by the researcher. In this study, the administration of the questionnaire was done by using the

online survey tool on QuestionPro. The respondents were sent a direct email with a covering letter encouraging them to participate in the study. Two follow-up emails were also sent to the respondents as a reminder to participate in the survey over a period of two weeks.

### **3.9. DATA ANALYSIS**

Neelankavil (2007) defined data analysis as the procedure that generates meaning from the data collected by means of an instrument in order to create insights that can be useful to the researcher. Sekaran and Bougie (2013) noted that there are three basic objectives in data analysis: (1) getting a feel for the data, (2) testing the goodness of the data, and (3) testing the hypotheses developed for the research. According to Dornyei and Taguchi (2010), data saved on a computer file is most useful for the purpose of analysis. They explained how the use of user-friendly modern computer programs and online survey media has eased the job of the researcher in analysing the data collected. According to them, once the data has been obtained, it needs to be coded and entered into a computer file so that it can be edited easily.

The questionnaire used in the study at hand was hosted on QuestionPro. QuestionPro is an electronic data collection platform which collects data from the respondents when they click on the link emailed to them for the survey. The data from each respondent's completed survey is saved on an electronic database on a remote server over the internet. QuestionPro was selected amongst other online survey platforms due to its main advantage of versatility which allows assigning a numeric code to each variable in order to allow them to be exported to other software programs like Microsoft Excel or the Statistical Package for the Social Sciences (SPSS) for further analysis (QuestionPro, 2015).

### **3.10. ETHICAL CONSIDERATIONS**

Informed consent was requested and obtained electronically from each respondent in the covering letter of the questionnaire. Additionally, a gatekeeper's letter of consent seeking permission to conduct the study was obtained from the Director of Student Services at the UKZN. Ethical clearance was granted by the UKZN for conducting the study (Appendix 4). Further, a letter seeking respondent's consent (Appendix 2) has been provided and the participants were made aware of their right to withdraw from the survey at any time.

### **3.11. SUMMARY**

This chapter presented the concepts of research methodology by explaining the key concepts in the process of business research. It illustrated how the questions in the data collection instrument were formulated based on the research objectives. Further, the chapter explained the population of interest for the study along with the rationale behind the selection of the sampling design strategy to accommodate the necessary data collection for the research. A suitable sample size, based on the basic principles of research design, was obtained. After the collection of sufficient data from the survey, the analysis, presentation and discussion of the data were documented and are provided in the following chapter.

## **CHAPTER 4**

### **ANALYSIS AND DISCUSSION OF RESULTS**

#### **4.1. INTRODUCTION**

Chapter 3 explained the rationale behind the selection of a suitable research method and research instrument. The purpose of this chapter is to present the findings with the aim of examining and discussing the results obtained from the survey. The results obtained are exhibited in two sections. The first section analyses the demographic profile of the members who participated in the study. The second section investigates the findings in relation to the objectives of the study.

Prior research conducted is the point of departure for the discussion of the findings of this study. As explained in Chapter 3, simple random sampling was selected for the sampling design. Hence, the findings from the study can be generalised to the entire population.

Of the 465 respondents who commenced answering the questionnaire, 389 completed the entire questionnaire, resulting in a completion rate of 84% participation. The average time taken to complete a questionnaire was four minutes which was much lower than the estimated time of ten minutes.

#### **4.2. TREATMENT OF DATA**

A primary examination of the data revealed some incomplete questionnaires. The data obtained from these incomplete questionnaires was deleted before undertaking data analysis by the use of "started but not completed" data filter in QuestionPro. The data was then screened to ensure that the responses were from respondents based in KwaZulu-Natal as the five campuses of the University of KwaZulu-Natal are in this region. Through this screening, the responses obtained from other geographical regions were eliminated using a geographical filter provided by QuestionPro that captures the geographical location of each respondent. The findings are presented in tabular and graphical format to ensure easy understanding.

#### **4.3. RELIABILITY OF THE QUESTIONNAIRE**

The reliability (internal consistency) of the questionnaire was tested by attempting to calculate Cronbach's alpha. For this purpose, data was extracted from QuestionPro and put

into the statistical analysis package, SPSS, which returned a Cronbach's alpha value of 0,930 suggesting that the items have relatively high internal consistency.

#### 4.4. DEMOGRAPHIC PROFILE OF RESPONDENTS

The demographic profile of the respondents, as illustrated in Table 4.1, was established based on the attributes of gender, race, and degree of study, campus they study at and year of study. Since the respondents were university students, as explained in Chapter 3, establishing the age of the respondents was concluded to be irrelevant to the study.

**Table 4.1: Demographic profile of the respondents**

Demographic characteristics		Percentage	Frequency
Gender	Female	55%	213
	Male	45%	176
Race	Black	36%	140
	Indian	36%	140
	White	19%	74
	Coloured	9%	35
Campus of study	Westville	32%	125
	Howard	24%	93
	Edgewood	16%	63
	Medical School	15%	58
	Pietermaritzburg	13%	50
Degree of study	Undergraduate	42%	162
	Masters	35%	139
	Honours/Post Graduate Diploma	19%	73
	PhD	4%	15
Year of Study	Second Year	34%	133
	Third Year	27%	106
	First Year	21%	80
	Fourth Year	15%	57
	> Fourth Year	3%	13

The majority of the respondents were females (55%) as opposed to males (45%). As seen in Table 4.1, the majority of the respondents were Black (36%) and Indians (36%) followed by Whites (19%) and Coloureds (9%) and they collectively formed just above a quarter of the total respondents. The majority of respondents (32%) studied at the Westville campus followed by 24% of the respondents who studied at the Howard campus. Very few respondents studied at the Edgewood, Medical School and Pietermaritzburg campus. This is not in relation to the size of the campus or the number of students enrolled in a particular campus as each campus offers a distinguished set of degree courses having a different number of students enrolled.

It was observed that the majority of the respondents were undergraduates (34%) followed by students pursuing a master's degree (27%). Only 3% of the respondents were doctoral (PhD) students.

The largest group of respondents were noted to be in the second year of their study (34%) while the smallest group consisted of students studying for longer than four years.

#### **4.5. DATA ANALYSIS**

The data collected from the survey was analysed according to the objectives of the study. The data is presented using a simple visual representation followed by a discussion of the key findings. This section of the chapter also presents conclusions that resulted from the interpretation of the data.

##### **4.5.1. Objective one: Knowledge of student services**

###### *4.5.1.1. Awareness of services offered*

With the use of a nominal scale, the respondents' basic awareness of the services offered by the Student Services Department was investigated. The responses of the respondents are illustrated in Figure 4.1.

### Are you aware of the Student Services offered at the university?



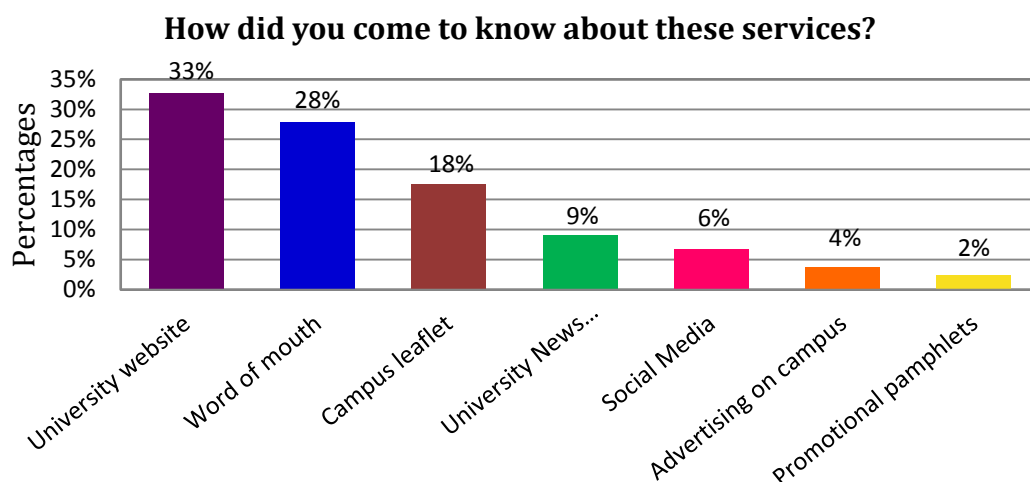
**Figure 4.1: Awareness of services offered**

According to Figure 4.1, 42% of the respondents were aware while 58% of the respondents were not aware of the services offered at the university. These findings demonstrate an issue of concern as the majority of the respondents had no knowledge about these services being offered to them.

The results shown in Figure 4.1 are similar to those from an online survey conducted by the Student Affairs Department of the University of Limerick, to test the awareness and knowledge of the Student Services Department. The test established that many students who did not directly use a service are often unaware of its existence (UL, 2013).

#### *4.5.1.2. Source of knowledge of services offered*

The respondents who were aware of the student services were probed to establish their source of awareness. The results are depicted in Figure 4.2.



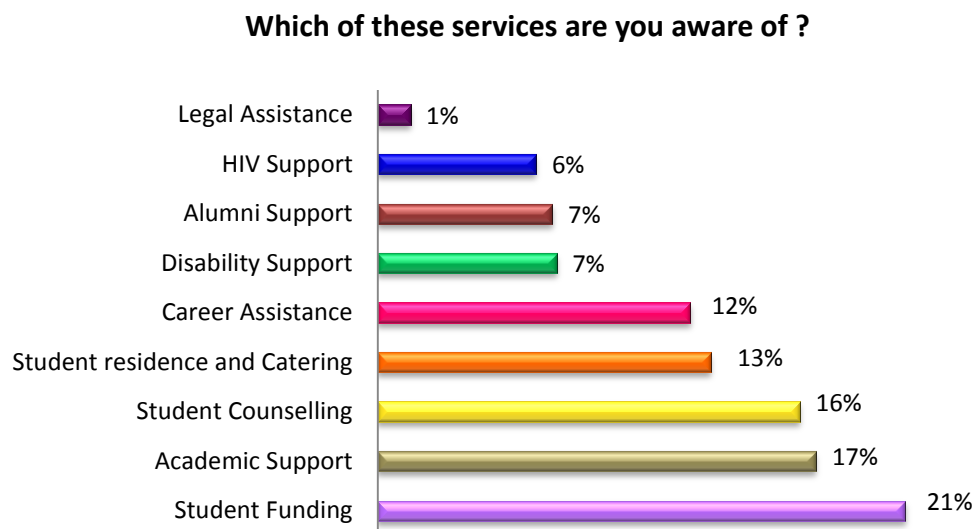
**Figure 4.2: Source of knowledge of services offered**



As seen in Figure 4.2, the university website was the respondents' most popular source of awareness. Hence, it can be inferred that the students prefer using the university website as a source of information about the university as opposed to social media. It can also be inferred that students spread awareness through speaking to others about their own knowledge of these services as 28% of the respondents were aware of services offered by the Student Services Department through word of mouth. Based on Figure 4.1, it can also be concluded that the University Bulletin (UKZN, 2014) and promotional pamphlets have not been effective in spreading awareness about student support services offered at the university. This could be a result of respondents' lack of interest in such advertising material or lack of circulation of the material.

#### 4.5.1.3. Awareness of specific services

In order to determine the respondents' awareness of specific services, they were presented with a list of the different student support services offered at the UKZN. Figure 4.3 illustrates the results.



**Figure 4.3: Knowledge of types of services offered**

An online survey conducted at the University of Limerick (UL, 2013) concluded that most students will only learn of a service offering when they need it for their own specific purposes. Figure 4.3 shows that the majority of the respondents were aware of Student Funding, while the service which the lowest percentage of respondents were aware of was Legal Assistance (1%). Redmond, Quin, Devitt and Archbold (2011) noted that due to the

financial challenges faced by most university students, it stands to reason that students will actively seek financial assistance.

#### 4.5.1.4. Relationship between race and awareness of services

The literature in Chapter 2 asserts that awareness of a service plays a significant role in a customer's decision to use the service. In order to determine if there was a relationship between the races of the respondents and their knowledge about the services offered, a cross tabulation of these two variables was conducted. The perceptions are that race has an influence on the awareness of the respondents regarding services offered at the university. The results of the cross tabulation are presented in Table 4.2.

**Table 4.2: Cross tabulation between race and awareness of the services offered**

		Are you aware of the student services offered at the university?		Total
		Yes	No	
Race	Indian	15%	21%	36%
	Black	17%	19%	36%
	White	6%	13%	19%
	Coloured	4%	5%	9%
	Total	42%	58%	100%
n = 389			Chi-square = 7.120	p = 0.07

From Table 4.2 it is evident that the Chi-square test revealed a p value of 0.07. A probability of 0.05 or smaller means one can be 95% certain that the relationship between two variables could not have occurred by chance alone. Hence, the results from Table 4.2 indicate that the race of the respondent and their awareness about the services offered by the university are not related. Therefore, it can be inferred that the awareness of student services offered at the university is not influenced by the race of a student.

However, Table 4.2 illustrates an important finding, namely that 58% of the total number of respondents were not aware of the student services offered at the university. This is concerning as these services are made available to all students. Another crucial point of consideration is that 21% Indian students and 19% Black students were unaware of these

services. The data in Table 4.2 indicates that more students in every race group were unaware than those who were aware of the student services offered at the university.

#### 4.5.1.5. Relationship between campus of study and awareness of services

As noted by Santee (2011), advertising can make students aware of the support services offered by the Student Services Department. Table 4.3 illustrates the results of the cross tabulation between the campus of study of the respondents and their awareness about the student services offered.

**Table 4.3: Cross tabulation between campus of study and awareness of student services offered**

		Are you aware of the student services offered at the university?		Total
		Yes	No	
Campus of study	Westville	15%	18%	33%
	Howard	8%	15%	23%
	Edgewood	4%	12%	16%
	Pietermaritzburg	5%	8%	13%
	Medical School	10%	5%	15%
	Total	42%	58%	100%
n = 389		Chi-square = 22.496	p = 0.00	

It is evident from Table 4.3 that the p value of 0.00 is significant and not due to chance. Hence, a strong relationship exists between the two variables. Most of the respondents studying at the Westville campus (18%) were not aware of the student services offered at the university. Another significant conclusion that can be made from Table 4.3 is that 15% of the respondents from the Westville campus and 12% of the respondents from the Edgewood campus were unaware of the student support services. This is a cause for concern as student support services have been made available to students across all campuses of the university. It is only at the Medical School campus that more students were aware of the student services than those who were unaware.

#### 4.5.2. Objective two: Accessibility of student services department

This objective aimed at determining if the student services are accessible to students across all campuses. The results are shown in Figure 4.4.

##### Is the Student Services Department easily accessible?



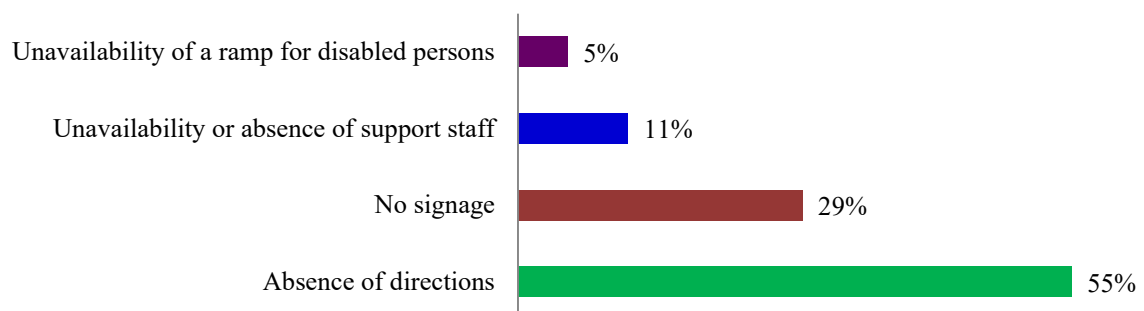
**Figure 4.4: Accessibility of Student Services Department**

Figure 4.4 illustrates that the majority (67%) of respondents stated that the Student Services Department is not easily accessible.

##### 4.5.2.1. Reasons for difficulty in accessing Student Services Department

Figure 4.5 shows the reasons behind the respondents' perceptions of difficulty in accessing the student services.

##### Why is the Student Services Department not accessible?



**Figure 4.5: Reasons for difficulty in accessing Student Services Department**

From Figure 4.5, it is clear that the majority of the respondents (55%) felt that absence of directions to the Student Services Department was the primary cause of the difficulty in accessing the services. This was followed by 29% of the respondents who felt that no signage was one of the reasons for inaccessibility of the Student Services Department.

#### 4.5.2.2. Relationship between gender and accessibility of student services department

In order to determine if a relationship existed between the gender of the respondents and their opinion about the accessibility of the Student Services Department, a cross tabulation was conducted on the two variables. Table 4.4 shows the results of the cross tabulation.

**Table 4.4: Cross tabulation between gender and accessibility of Student Services Department**

		Are you aware of the student services offered at the university?				Total
		Absence of directions	No signage	Unavailability or absence of support staff	Unavailability of a ramp for disabled persons	
Gender	Male	23%	15%	8%	2%	48%
	Female	32%	14%	3%	3%	52%
	Total	55%	29%	11%	5%	100%
n = 262				Chi-square = 8.813	p = 0.03	

The p value of 0.03, seen in Table 4.4, validates that the awareness of the student services offered at the university is significantly different for respondents of different gender. While 55% of the total respondents were of the opinion that student services were not easily accessible mainly due to absence of direction, it is important to note the majority of these respondents (32%) were females. In contrast to this, 8% of the males felt unavailability and absence of support staff was the reason for the difficulty in accessing the services while only 3% of the females were of this opinion. It can be inferred from the results illustrated in Table 4.4 that male and female students' opinions regarding accessibility of the Student Services Department vary considerably.

#### 4.5.3. Objective three: Commonly used student services

The purpose of this objective was to determine which student services were used most commonly by the respondents.

#### 4.5.3.1. Use of student services

The respondents who were aware of the student services offered at the university were asked if they used any of these services (Figure 4.6).

**Have you ever used any student support services offered by the university?**



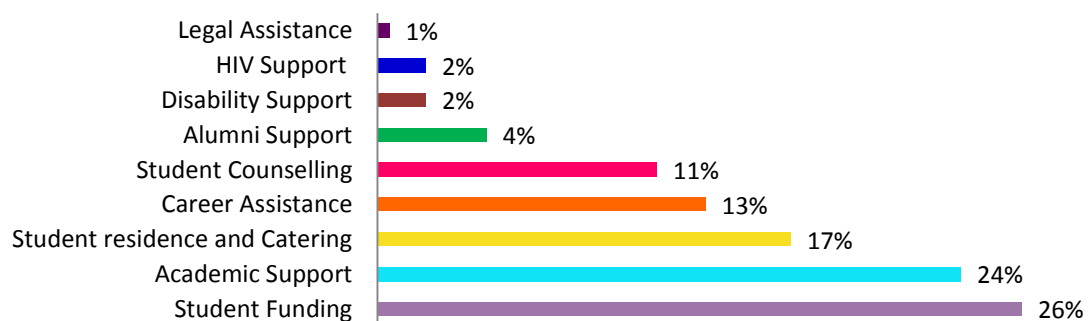
**Figure 4.6: Usage of services offered by university**

Figure 4.6 shows that the majority of the respondents (56%) who were aware of the student services offered by the university had used these services. This is in line with the argument that awareness of a service promotes its use, as discussed in Section 4.5.1.4.

#### 4.5.3.2. Commonly used student services

The findings regarding the commonly used student services are illustrated in Figure 4.7.

**Which of the services offered by the student services have you made use of ?**



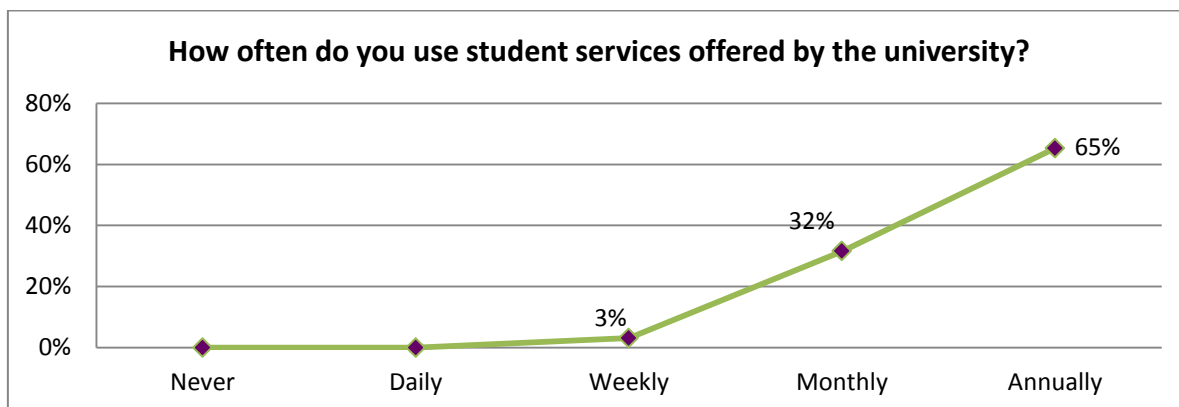
**Figure 4.7: Commonly used services**

Figure 4.7 shows that the majority of the respondents (26%) used the student funding service. This was followed by 24% of the respondents who used academic support. This finding confirms the perception that students often tend to give priority to academics over

other activities. The findings shown in Figure 4.7 correspond with the findings about respondents' awareness of the student services offered. Also, it is evident that legal assistance, HIV support, disability support and alumni support are among the less popular services used by the respondents.

#### 4.5.3.3. *Frequency of use of student services*

Figure 4.8 shows the frequency of use of student services by the respondents.

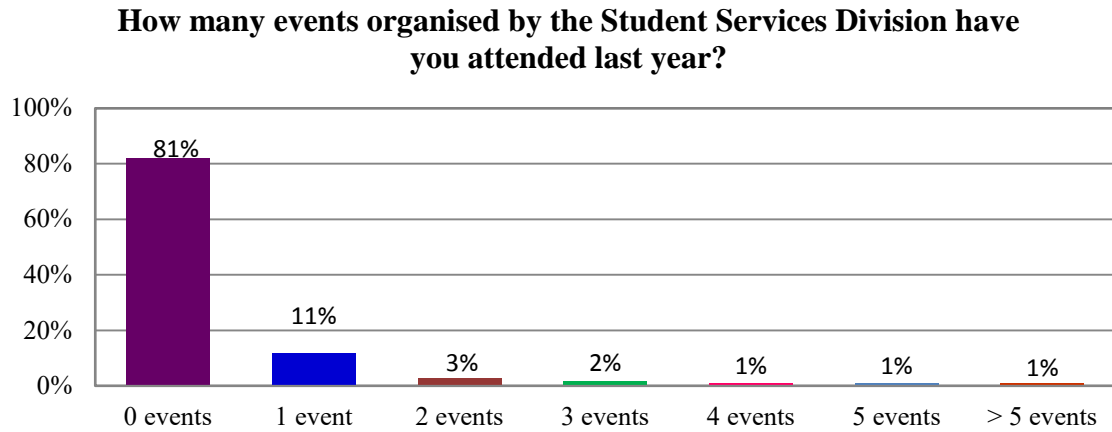


**Figure 4.8: Frequency of use of student services**

Figure 4.8 shows that the majority of the respondents (65%) have used the student services annually. About 32% of the respondents have used the services on a monthly basis, whereas only 3% of the respondents have used the services weekly. None of the respondents have used these services daily or monthly which explains that the student services offered are not frequently required.

#### 4.5.3.4. *Events organised by the Student Services Department*

Respondents were questioned on the number of events they had attended which were organised by the Student Services Department. Figure 4.9 illustrates the findings.

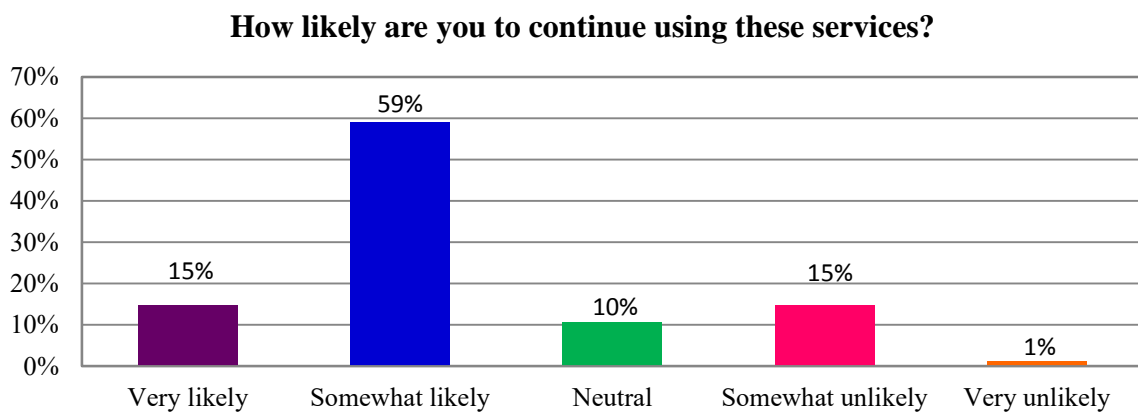


**Figure 4.9: Extent of attendance of events**

Figure 4.9 illustrates that the majority of the respondents (81%) had not attended even a single event, followed by 11% of the respondents who had attended one event organised by the Student Services Department. This finding is very concerning as these events are organised for the university students so that they can support the various functions of the Student Services Department.

#### 4.5.3.5. Continued use of student services

Figure 4.10 shows the results of the respondents' opinion of whether they would like to continue using the student services.



**Figure 4.10: Continued use of student services**

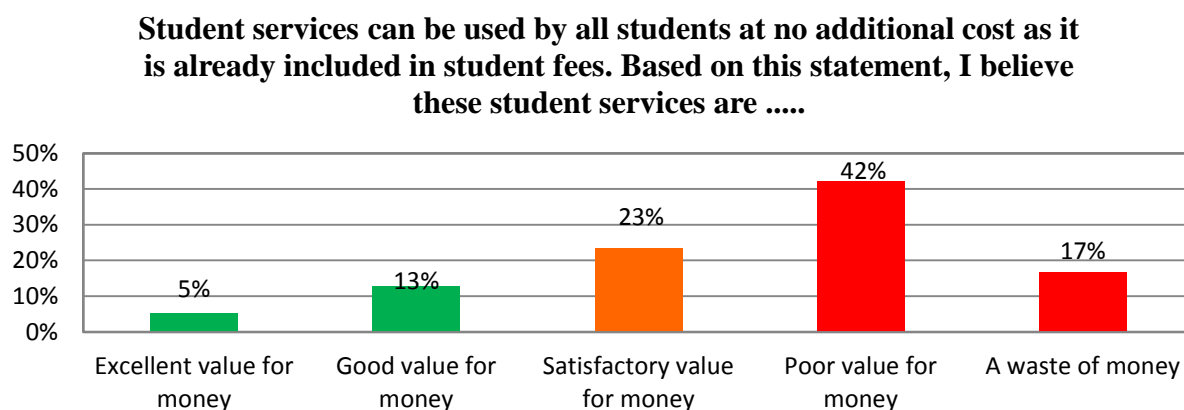
It is evident from Figure 4.10 that the majority of the respondents (59%) are somewhat likely to continue using these services, despite the difference in their levels of satisfaction



of the service. Cumulatively, 74% of the respondents indicated that they are likely to continue use of the services. This is a positive finding as it assures the Student Services Department that the students are willing to use the services they have to offer.

#### 4.5.3.6. *Value for money*

Figure 4.11 shows the student perceptions of student services regarding value for money.



**Figure 4.11: Value for money**

From Figure 4.11 it is evident that the majority of the students (59%) were of the opinion that student services are not good value for money. This is an important finding as student services aim to provide support to students, and a perceived low value shows that students don't believe that the use of these services adds value to their student experience.

#### 4.5.3.7. *Relationship between campus of study and of use of student services*

The general perception is that student services are used by students across all campuses of the university. To test if there is a relationship between the campus at which the respondents study and whether they use the student services offered by the university, a cross tabulation was performed between the two variables (Table 4.5).

**Table 4.5: Cross tabulation between campus of study and use of Student Services**  
**Department**

		Have you ever used any student support services offered by the university?		Total
		Yes	No	
Campus of study	Westville	11%	25%	36%
	Howard	11%	9%	20%
	Edgewood	6%	3%	9%
	Pietermaritzburg	7%	5%	12%
	Medical School	21%	2%	23%
	Total	56%	44%	100%
n = 165		Chi-square = 37.108	p = 0.00	

The p value of 0.00 shown in Table 4.5 provides assurance that the relationship between the campus of study and the use of student services is significant and not due to chance. Twenty-three percent of the respondents were studying at the Medical School campus, and the majority of them (21%) made use of the student services. This is a positive finding as use of student services is high at this campus. In contrast to this, 36% of all the respondents were studying at the Westville campus, and only a small proportion of them (11%) used the student services offered at the university. This is a cause for concern as these support services are meant to be available to all the students at the university irrespective of their campus of study.

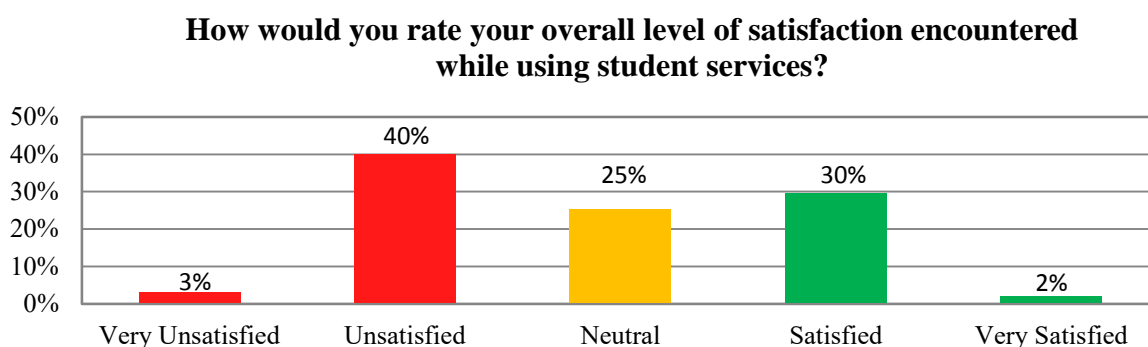
These findings are in line with the results obtained from a survey conducted by Kärnä and Julin(2015) where it was observed that there was a significant difference between the use of student support services across two campuses of the University of Tampere in Finland. They argued that this difference in student opinions was because the students perceived the facilities at one campus to be better than those at the other campus.

#### 4.5.4. Objective four: Level of satisfaction

With the use of a Likert scale, the aspects of satisfaction with the services provided were tested to determine how satisfied the respondents were while using the student services offered at the university. Firstly, the data collection instrument gathered information about the overall level of satisfaction of the respondents after using the services. Secondly, the respondents were asked to indicate their level of satisfaction with availability and quality of student services they had used. Finally, the respondents were asked to give their opinions about the availability, friendliness, professionalism and promptness of the support staff.

##### 4.5.4.1. Overall level of satisfaction

Figure 4.12 shows the results of the overall level of satisfaction which the respondents encountered while using the student services.



**Figure 4.12: Overall level of satisfaction**

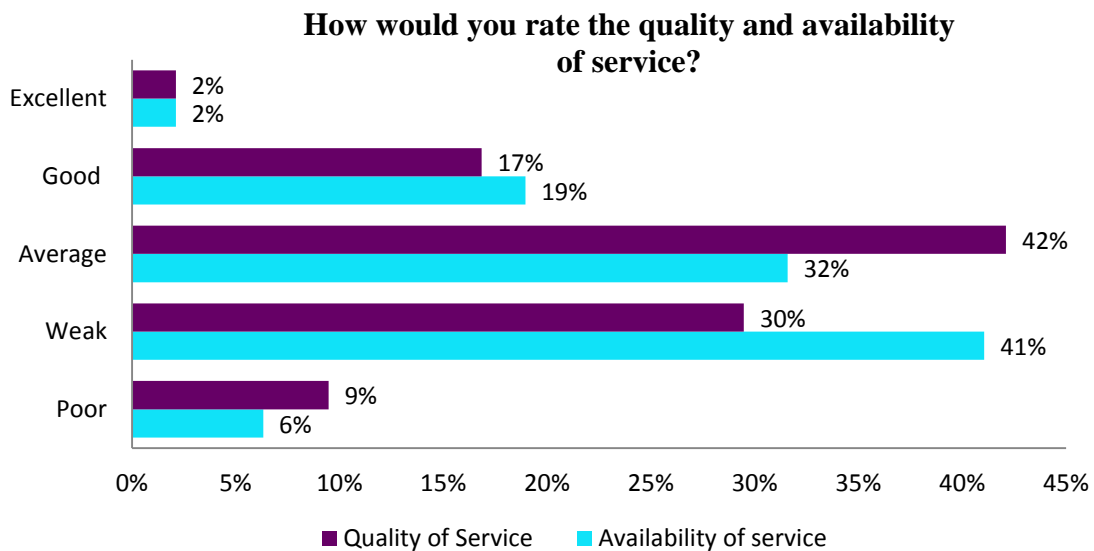
As shown in Figure 4.12, a significant proportion of the respondents (43%) were unsatisfied as opposed to 32% of the total respondents who were satisfied. Also, 25% of the respondents took a neutral stand. Overall satisfaction is based on all of a customer's encounters and experiences with a particular organisation (Kärnä & Julin, 2015). Hence, the findings reveal that respondents' opinions about the overall level of satisfaction could be from either a single service encounter or multiple service encounters.

In study conducted by Kärnä and Julin (2015) they established that accessibility to student services facilities at campus was an important satisfaction factor among the students. The findings shown in Figure 4.12 are in line with the findings of Kärnä and Julin (2015). It can therefore be concluded that the majority of the respondents, in this research study,

indicated a weak overall satisfaction because they felt that the Student Services Department (as shown in Figure 4.4) is not easily accessible.

#### 4.5.4.2. Rating quality and availability of student services

Figure 4.13 illustrates the opinions of the respondents regarding the availability and quality of the student services.



**Figure 4.13: Quality and availability of service**

As illustrated in Figure 4.13, the majority of the respondents (42%) rated the quality of service as average, followed by 30% of the respondents who rated it as weak. In addition to this, the majority of the respondents (41%) were of the opinion that the availability of service is weak, followed by 32% of the respondents who felt that it was average. Hence, cumulatively, approximately 50% of all the respondents felt that the quality and the availability of service were either average or weak.

Shemwell *et al.*(1998 cited inHu *et al.*, 2009) linked service quality to customer satisfaction. According to them, an increased level of service quality translates to an increased preference to continue using the service with the service provider. Cumulatively, 72% of the respondents (42% plus 30%) felt negatively about the service quality. Hence, it can be asserted that bad service quality is one of the causes for poor customer satisfaction levels of student services.

#### 4.5.4.3. Rating the support staff

Table 4.6 illustrates the results of the respondents' opinions about the student services support staff.

**Table 4.6: Rating student services support staff**

Attribute	Poor	Weak	Average	Good	Excellent	Frequency
Availability	15%	31%	36%	17%	1%	95
Friendliness	15%	30%	39%	12%	4%	95
Professionalism	9%	39%	35%	15%	2%	95
Promptness	8%	42%	38%	11%	1%	95
Helpfulness	14%	28%	40%	16%	2%	95
Overall	9%	32%	42%	17%	0%	95

Table 4.6 illustrates that the majority of the respondents rated the support staff as average in most attributes. It is evident from the results that the majority of the respondents felt that the support staff members were weak in promptness (42%) and professionalism (39%). It is also evident that the majority of the respondents rated helpfulness (40%), friendliness (39%) and availability (36%) of support staff as average.

#### 4.5.4.4. Relationship between gender and overall satisfaction

A common perception is that a relationship exists between the gender of the respondents and their overall level of satisfaction while using the service. Table 4.7 shows the results of the cross tabulation performed between gender and overall satisfaction of the respondents.

**Table 4.7: Cross tabulation between gender and overall satisfaction**

		Overall level of satisfaction encountered while using student services					
		Very Unsatisfied	Unsatisfied	Neutral	Satisfied	Very Satisfied	Total
Gender	Male	3%	26%	9%	5%	2%	45%
	Female	0%	15%	15%	25%	0%	55%
	Total	3%	41%	24%	30%	2%	100%
n = 95		Chi-square = 20.518			p = 0.00		

As shown in Table 4.7, the p value of 0.00 explains that the relationship between the gender and overall satisfaction encountered while using the service is significant and not by chance. The data in the table indicates that 45% of all the respondents were males and the majority (26%) of them were unsatisfied. In contrast to this finding, 55% of the respondents were females and 25% of them were more satisfied than the males regarding the overall level of satisfaction. From the data presented in Table 4.7 it can therefore be inferred that respondents of different genders experienced different overall levels of satisfaction.

These findings are in line with the results of a study conducted in Switzerland (Bruhn & Grund, 2000 cited in Siems, 2010) to investigate the gender effect on customer satisfaction levels. Siems (2010) explained that customer satisfaction is perceived differently by customers of different gender. However, the study failed to show a strong relationship. In this research study, the relationship between gender and overall satisfaction is significant.

#### **4.5.5. Objective five: Identifying preferences for improvements that could benefit the Student Services Department**

Considering that the respondents were dissatisfied with various elements of the services offered, the data was used to determine the preferences of respondents for changes to current student services offerings.

##### *4.5.5.1. Preferences relating to communication*

The respondents were asked whether they preferred to receive communication regarding the services offered by the Student Services Department at the university (Figure 4.14).

**Would you like to receive regular communication regarding student services?**

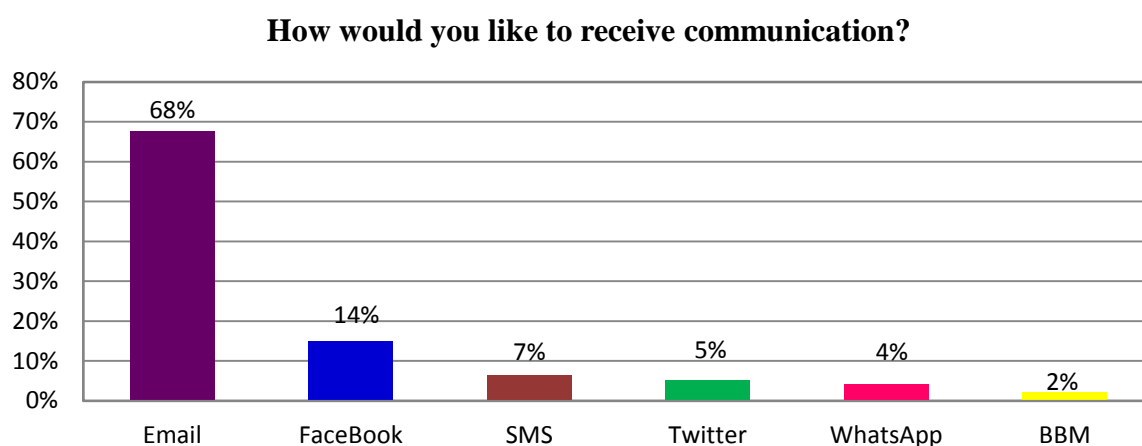


**Figure 4.14: Preference for communication**

As depicted in Figure 4.14, the majority of the respondents (64%) were interested in receiving regular communication regarding student services. This is a positive finding as it shows that irrespective of the difference in the level of awareness, as well as use of the student services and overall satisfaction levels encountered while using the service, a significant proportion of the respondents showed interest in these services and would like to receive further communication regarding these services.

#### 4.5.5.2. Preferred medium of communication

The respondents who were interested in receiving regular communication regarding student services were asked to choose their preferred medium of receiving the communication. The results are shown in Figure 4.15.



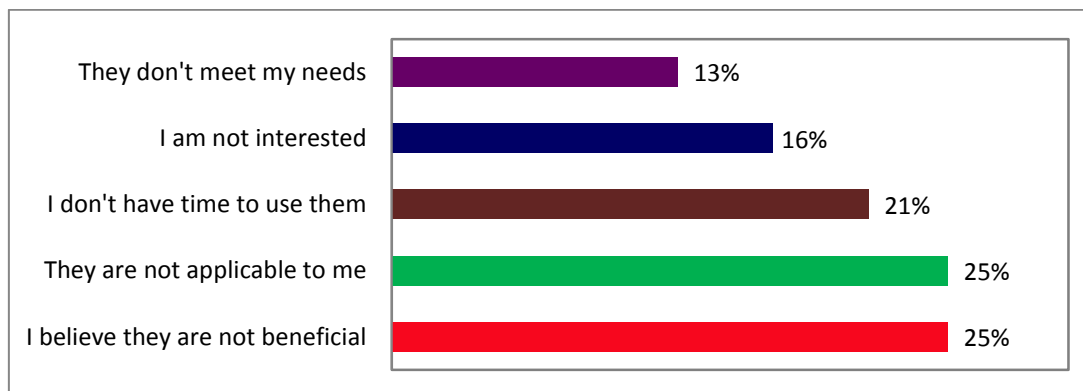
**Figure 4.15: Preferred medium of receiving communication**

From Figure 4.15 it is evident that most respondents (68%) find email the best way to receive regular communication regarding these services. This is in line with the university policy that all communication to students should preferably take place in the form of emails. The UKZN provides each student with a personal student email which makes it easy to facilitate this request. It was noted that there was no significant preference to use any form of social media.

An article regarding preferred method of communication of students at the Duke University in the USA stated that the students preferred email to social media to communicate with the university (Djinis, 2012).

#### 4.5.5.3. Reasons for lack of interest in receiving communication

The respondents who were not interested in receiving communication about student services were asked to select a reason for their lack of interest (Figure 4.16).



**Figure 4.16: Reasons for lack of interest in receiving communication**

From Figure 4.16 it is evident that the majority of respondents were not interested in receiving communication about student services because they felt that these services were not beneficial to them or that the services were not applicable to them.

#### 4.5.5.4. Ranking student services offered by the university

The respondents who were interested in receiving communication were presented with the various services offered by the Student Services Department and asked to rank the services in order of importance — from those they believed were most beneficial services to those they regarded as not beneficial (Table 4.8).

**Table 4.8: Ranking student services offered by the university**

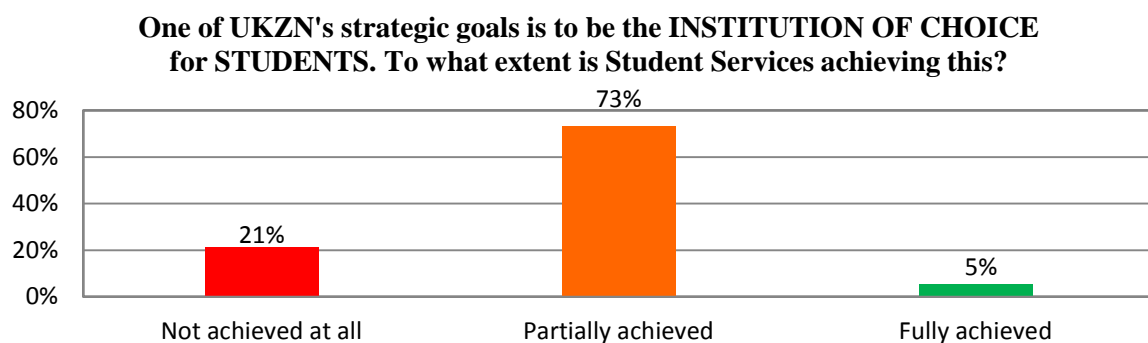
Rank	Services	Mean
1	Student Counselling	2.94
2	Academic Support	3.01
5	Career Assistance	3.46
4	Student Funding	3.48
5	Student Residence and Catering	4.69
6	Disability Support	5.88
7	Alumni Support	5.90
8	Legal Assistance	7.50
9	HIV Support	8.14



The data in Table 4.8 has been ranked in terms of the mean scores of each service, where the closer to 1 each service was rated, the more beneficial the service was thought to be by the respondent. It is evident that the respondents' highest preference was the student counselling service (with a mean score of 2.94), followed by the academic support service and career assistance service. A comparison of these results to those of respondents' awareness of student services and the most commonly used services by the respondents, it can be inferred that although the majority of the respondents were aware of and used student funding (from the data in Table 4.8), it is evident that student funding is not the most preferred service that the respondents want to receive communication about. The remaining services were ranked in the order quite similar to the order in which the respondents were aware of them as well as their choice of commonly used services.

#### 4.5.5.5. *Extent to which UKZN is perceived to be the University of Choice*

The respondents were asked to give their opinions on how well the Student Services Department has been able to achieve the strategic goal of making UKZN the University of Choice (Figure 4.17).



**Figure 4.17: Extent to which UKZN is perceived to be the University of Choice**

Figure 4.17 has demonstrated an important finding that while the majority of the respondents felt that the Student Services Department of UKZN has partially achieved its strategic goal of becoming the University of Choice, a mere 5% of the respondents felt that this goal has been fully achieved. This is concerning as it implies the university has not been completely successful in establishing its strategic goal.



order to determine whether this study has sufficiently answered each research objective, a summary is provided in Table 4.9.

**Table 4.9: Summary of key findings**

	<b>Objectives set</b>	<b>Key findings</b>	<b>Section</b>
<b>1</b>	To establish the knowledge of student services offered at the UKZN.	It was found that 42% of the respondents were aware while 58% of the respondents were not aware of the services offered at the university.	4.5.1
<b>2</b>	To determine if student services are accessible to all students at the UKZN.	It was found that 67% felt negatively about the accessibility of the Student Services Department, while 33% of the respondents felt that the Student Services Department is easily accessible.  Those respondents who were of the opinion that the Student Services Department is not easily accessible gave their reasons as absence of directions and signage.	4.5.2
<b>3</b>	To determine which services are commonly used by the students at the UKZN.	Only 56% of the respondents who were aware of the student services offered by the university had used these services. Student funding and academic support were established to be the two most popularly used services.	4.5.3
<b>4</b>	To determine the student levels of satisfaction with the services provided by the Student Services Department.	A significant proportion of the respondents (40%) were unsatisfied, as opposed to 30% of the total respondents who were satisfied. Also, 25% of the respondents took a neutral stand.	4.5.4
<b>5</b>	To identify improvements that could benefit the service offerings of the Student Services Department at the UKZN.	64% of the respondents were interested in receiving communication regarding student services. Email was established to be the most popular medium of communication. The popular recommendations made by the respondents were advertising to improve awareness of student services as well as improved communication regarding the services.	4.5.5

#### **4.7. SUMMARY**

This chapter presented the findings from the survey as well as an analysis and discussion of the results. Following the presentation of the demographic profile of the respondents, the findings from questions that respondents were asked about each objective of this research study were presented by means of visual representation and tables. Cross tabulation was performed to investigate the existence of relationships between variables.

The chapter demonstrated the key findings of the research objectives and provided a summary of the extent to which the research objectives were met. The following chapter will discuss the conclusions established from the findings of the survey along with the limitations of the study and recommendations for further research.

## **CHAPTER 5**

### **CONCLUSIONS, LIMITATIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS**

#### **5.1. INTRODUCTION**

Worldwide there is a growing consciousness in higher education that student services are a critical part in fulfilling support needs of students. This has led to these services forming an integral service unit of universities as the universities aim to provide effective student services that encompass diverse student needs. The extent to which students find these services effective depends on their expectations of the services. Student satisfaction of the student services offered by the university depends on an array of underlying factors. Ensuring consistency in student satisfaction determines the success of these support services offered to the students.

The data findings obtained from the survey were analysed and presented in Chapter 4. This final chapter discusses the results of the findings relative to the literature review in Chapter 2. It summarises the data and provides conclusions for the findings of the study. Additionally, the chapter presents recommendations that the UKZN could implement to improve its student support services. The limitations of this study are also documented in this chapter, and recommendations for further research are provided.

#### **5.2. CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS**

The data analysis presented in Chapter 4 highlighted the key findings of the study. Based on the key findings, conclusions and recommendations have been drawn for each objective set for the study and are presented here.

##### **5.2.1. Raising awareness of student services**

It is evident from this study that there is lack of awareness of the student support services offered at the university. Raising awareness about the services is one way in which the university can motivate the students to use these services. The UKZN Student Services Department has been organising events to promote student support services. It is evident from the data collected that these events have failed to connect with and attract the students as majority of the survey respondents had not attended any such organised event. It is therefore recommended that the Student Services Department at the UKZN should redesign these event offerings in order to attract students to attend them. Then at the events

they should create more awareness of the student services offered at the university to suit the needs of students.

Furthermore, lack in advertising these services was evident from the research data. Also, it is inferred from the findings that different campuses showed different levels of student awareness. Advertising helps to make consumers aware of a product or service offering and assists in creating an inclination towards the product or service. Additionally, advertising could be done in a cost-effective way using a combination of traditional and digital advertising techniques. Hence, the university would benefit from considering a small budget advertising campaign across each campus to spread the word about the student support services it has to offer.

### **5.2.2. Making student services more accessible**

Another key finding that deserves consideration is the issue of accessibility of the student services at UKZN. Inaccessible services are inefficient and often ignored by their target audience. The university can benefit from investing in attractive yet simple signage and directions that can easily guide students to these services. Displaying such signs and directions will also help students to identify the services offered by the Student Services Department. Another recommendation is to standardise the design of these services across the various campuses so that students can easily associate with such signage is the visual representation of the institution's ability to care for the needs of its students.

### **5.2.3. Encouraging use of student services**

As discussed in the earlier sections of the chapter, the research suggested that students at UKZN are not fully aware of the student services offered at the university. Additionally, they perceive these services to be difficult to access. This has been observed as one of the primary reasons for lack of use of these services. In order to boost the use of the services, firstly and as discussed, the awareness of these services and their accessibility should be improved.

Improving the satisfaction levels of students who have made use of these services will also help to boost the re-use of these services by such students. There is evidence from the data gathered in the study that students have shown a willingness to use these services despite low satisfaction levels. The university could use this to their advantage and ensure proper

mechanisms are in place to promote the use of student support services among students. Students have shown preference for digital communication.

#### **5.2.4. Providing more value for money**

It is evident from the research that students perceive student services as being low value for money. This could be improved by means of short customer experience surveys, using digital technology, which will help students voice their opinions about services encountered and the level of their effectiveness. Based on this input from students, and as these services become more effective, they will add value to the experience of their users. Also, by involving students and obtaining their input about the services would help the department to understand the student needs better and thus enable them to offer services that are more useful to those students.

#### **5.2.5. Improving staff competency, availability of services and overall student satisfaction**

Support staff members are the ambassadors of the Student Service Division. These are the first members that the students encounter when using the support services. This study has established low overall satisfaction levels of service and support staff at the Student Services Department of the UKZN. The department would have to ensure that it listens to and understands the expectations of the students it aims to please. Based on recommendations of the respondents of the survey, additional staff recruitment could be considered to increase the number of support staff in order to promote staff availability. Also, conducting regular staff evaluations will help the department identify underperforming staff members. Furthermore, the department can select an appropriate training programme that could help improve the competency of support staff; and professional development programmes can assist the support staff in offering these services in a more efficient and effective manner.

#### **5.2.6. Employing an effective digital communication strategy**

It is evident from this study that students have a strong preference for the use of email as an official communication platform to receive regular communication regarding student support services from the university. The Student Services Department could create an online strategy to use digital communication as a tool to market the student services they offer. The university could also look into increasing student engagement on social media

by the use of paid advertisements. However, care should be taken to ensure that students are not fatigued from all the information provided on digital media as this could have a negative effect on the promotion of student support service.

### **5.3. LIMITATIONS OF THIS STUDY**

Though a researcher aims to address the problem statement to the best of their ability, research cannot necessarily address all matters of the study adequately.

A major limitation encountered for this study was the lack of significant academic literature and research conducted on perceptions of students presently studying at universities. Most research encountered had been conducted on students about to exit their institutions. Also, not much research with the focus on student services is available, as opposed to the abundance of research available on the university as a whole. Since the majority of the prior research was conducted with an academic focus, it was difficult to compare those results with the results obtained from this research study.

This study aimed to evaluate student perceptions of the support services offered at the university. However, due to the absence of a study conducted on student services professionals, correlations and cross findings could not be established.

### **5.4. RECOMMENDATIONS FOR FUTURE RESEARCH**

The findings of this study, coupled with the limitations, provide guidance for future research. The recommendations for further research are as follows:

- The research could be repeated year on year to draw comparative results to previous findings.
- Further research can be conducted using a qualitative research design to investigate the perceptions of members in management positions regarding improvement in student support services at the UKZN.
- More research can be conducted at universities in other parts of the world. The results thereof, and the results of this study, could be used to suggest quality improvements to student services at universities.



- Research can be conducted from the perspective of the student services professionals (staff) so that the challenges encountered by staff could be used to improve the student support services offered by universities.
- This study adopted the simple random sampling technique. Future studies could be conducted using another type of probability sampling technique, like stratified random sampling to ensure generalisability while reducing the sampling error from the simple random sampling technique.

## **5.5. CONCLUSION**

The aim of this study has been met and the research objectives set for this study have been satisfied. This study has established the perceptions of students regarding student services offered at the UKZN and has provided relevant recommendations for improvement to them. However, from this research study it can be inferred that offering student support services successfully is a collaborative effort of the students, the support staff at the Student Services Department, and the University.

## REFERENCES

- Aghion, P., Boustan, L., Hoxby, C. & Vandenbussche, J. 2009. *The causal impact of education on economic growth: evidence from US*. [Online]. Available: [http://scholar.harvard.edu/files/aghion/files/causal\\_impact\\_of\\_education.pdf](http://scholar.harvard.edu/files/aghion/files/causal_impact_of_education.pdf) [Accessed 23 January 2015].
- Al Karim, R. & Chowdhury, T. 2014. Customer satisfaction on service quality in private commercial Banking sector in Bangladesh. *British Journal of Marketing Studies*, vol. 2, no. 2, pp. 1-11.
- Aldridge, S., Reisberg, & Rowley, J. 1998. Measuring customer satisfaction in higher education. *Quality Assurance in Education*, vol. 6 no. 1-4, pp. 197-204.
- Altbach, P.G., Reisberg, L. & Rumbley, L.E. 2010. Tracking a global academic revolution. *Change: The Magazine of Higher Learning*, vol. 42, no. 2, pp. 30-39.
- Altbach, P.G., Reisberg, L. & Rumbley, L.E. 2009. *Trends in global higher education: Tracking an academic revolution*. Chestnut Hill, MA: Boston College Center for International Higher Education.
- Angeli, C. & Valanides, N. 2008. *TPCK in pre-service teacher education: Preparing primary education students to teach with technology*. AERA Annual Conference, New York.
- Appleton-Knapp, S.L. & Krentler, K.A. 2006. Measuring student expectations and their effects on satisfaction: The importance of managing student expectations. *Journal of marketing education*, vol. 28, no. 3, pp. 254-264.
- Arbuckle, D.S. 1953. *Student personnel services in higher education*. New York: McGraw-Hill.
- Arena, M., Arnaboldi, M. & Azzone, G. 2010. Student perceptions and central administrative services: the case of higher education in Italy. *Studies in Higher Education*, vol. 35, no. 8, pp. 941-959.
- Babbie, E. 2013. *The Basics of Social Research*. Belmont, CA: Wadsworth.
- Badat, S. 2010. *The challenges of transformation in higher education and training institutions in South Africa*. Development Bank of Southern Africa. [Online]. Available WWW: <http://www.dbsa.org/Research/Higher%20Education%20and%20Training/The%20challenges%20of%20transformation%20in%20higher%20education%20and%20training,2> [Accessed 27 January 2015].

- Bailey, K.D. 2008. *Methods of Social Research*. New York: Free Press.
- Banks, J.A. 2012. *Encyclopedia of Diversity in Education*. Thousand Oaks, California: SAGE Publications, Inc.
- Barkley, E.F., Cross, K.P. & Major, C.H. 2014. *Collaborative learning techniques: A handbook for college faculty*. San Francisco, CA: John Wiley & Sons.
- Baron, P. & Corbin, L. 2012. Student engagement: rhetoric and reality. *Higher Education Research & Development*, vol. 31, no. 6, pp. 759-772.
- Bembenutty, H. 2011. *Self-Regulated Learning: New Directions for Teaching and Learning*. [Online]. Available WWW: <http://www.myilibrary.com?id=340113> [Accessed: 10 January 2015].
- Blimling, G.S. 2013. Challenges of assessment in student affairs. *New Directions for Student Services*, vol. 2013, no. 142, pp. 5-14.
- Bloom, D.E., Canning, D., Chan, K. & Luca, D.L. 2014. Higher Education and Economic Growth in Africa. *International Journal of African Higher Education*, vol. 1, no. 1, December, pp. 22-57.
- Bloom, D.E., Cannning, D. & Chan, K. 2005. *Higher Education and Economic Development in Africa*. Washington, DC: Harvard University.
- Brace, I. 2010. *Questionnaire design how to plan, structure and write survey material for effective market research*. London & Philadelphia: Kogan Page.
- Bresciani, M.J. 2011. *Making Assessment Meaningful: What New Student Affairs Professionals and Those New to Assessment Need to Know*. Champaign, IL: National Institute for Learning Outcomes Assessment (NILOA).
- Brown, J.D. 2001. *Using surveys in language programs*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.
- Bruhn, M. & Grund, M. 2000. Theory, Development and Implementation of National Customer Satisfaction Indices: The Swiss Index of Customer Satisfaction (SWICS). *Total Quality Management*, vol. 11, no. 7, pp. 1017-1028.
- Carolissen, R. 2014. A critical feminist approach to social inclusion and citizenship in the context of the co-curriculum. *Journal of Student Affairs in Africa*, vol. 2, no. 1, pp. 83-88.
- Case, J. 2007. Alienation and engagement: Exploring students' experiences of studying engineering. *Teaching in Higher Education*, vol. 12, no. 1, pp. 119-133.

- Chavira, R. 2013. What Is a Service? *Monday Morning News*, 16 December.
- Churchill, G.A. Jr. & Surprenant, C. 1982. An investigation into the determinants of customer satisfaction. *Journal of marketing research*, vol. 19, no. 4, pp. 491-504.
- Churchill, G.A., Suter, T.A. & Brown, T. 2010. *Basic marketing research*. 7<sup>th</sup> Edition, pp. 81-82. Mason, OH: South-Western Cengage Learning.
- Creswell, J.W. 2013. *Research design: Qualitative, quantitative, and mixed methods approaches*. London: SAGE Publications.
- Cross, P.K. 1993. Reaction to ‘Enhancing the productivity of learning’ by D.B. Johnson. *AAHE Bulletin*, vol. 46, no. 4, p. 7.
- Cuseo, J. 2009. *Student Success: Definition, Outcomes, Principles and Practices. The Big Picture*. [Online]. Available WWW: [http://www.fye.uconn.edu/12F\\_Wk\\_Digest/September/Weekly\\_2012\\_09\\_24/PDF's/Cuseo\\_Student\\_Success.pdf](http://www.fye.uconn.edu/12F_Wk_Digest/September/Weekly_2012_09_24/PDF's/Cuseo_Student_Success.pdf) [Accessed 10 January 2015].
- Daniel, J. 2012. *Sampling essentials: Practical guidelines for making sampling choices*. Thousand Oaks, California: SAGE.
- Davis, M. 1985. *Computability and unsolvability*. New York: Dover Publications.
- Deardorff, D.K. 2009. *The SAGE handbook of intercultural competence*. UK: SAGE Publications Inc.
- Den Heijer, A.C. 2011. *Managing the University Campus: Information to support real estate decisions*. Delft: Eburon Uitgeverij BV.
- Desu, M.M. 2012. *Sample Size Methodology*. Burlington: Elsevier Science.
- Dietz, L.H. & Triponey, V.L. 1997. *Serving students at metropolitan universities: The unique opportunities and challenges*. San Francisco, CA: Jossey-Bass Inc.
- Djinis, E. 2012. *Students prefer email despite admin social media push*. [Online]. Available WWW: <http://www.dukechronicle.com/articles/2012/09/26/students-prefer-email-despite-admin-social-media-push> [Accessed 20 February 2015].
- Dodge Kelsey, K. & Bond J.A. 2001. A model for measuring customer satisfaction within an academic center of excellence. *Managing Service Quality: An International Journal*, vol. 11, no. 5, pp. 359-368.
- Dominici, G. & Palumbo, F. 2013. How to build an e-learning product: Factors for student/customer satisfaction. *Business Horizons*, vol. 56, no. 1, pp. 87-96.

- Dornyei, Z. & Taguchi, T. 2010. *Questionnaires in second language research: Construction, administration, and processing*. New York & London: Routledge.
- Douglas, J., Douglas, A. & Barnes, B. 2006. Measuring student satisfaction at a UK university. *Quality Assurance in Education*, vol. 14, no. 3, pp. 251-267.
- Dubey, S. 2011. Service Quality Perceptions: A Case Study of Banking Services. *International Transactions in Applied Sciences*, vol. 3, no. 2, pp. 221-236.
- Ehrenreich, V. 2013. *The Effect of Apartheid's 'Tribal Authorities' on Chieftaincy and the Zulu People: Separate Development in Mtunzini District 195'21970*. [Online]. Available WWW: SSRN 2251641 [Accessed 15 January 2015].
- Fogarty, R.J. & Pete, B.M. 2009. *How to integrate the curricula*. Thousand Oaks, CA: Corwin Press.
- Food and Agricultural Organisation (FAO). 2013. *FAO corporate document repository*. [Online]. Available WWW: <http://www.fao.org/documents/index.asp?lang=en> [Accessed 12 January 2015].
- Forest, J.J. & Kinser, K. 2002. *Higher Education in the United States*. Santa Barbara, CA: ABC-CLIO.
- Fowers, B.J. & Richardson, F.C. 1996. Why is multiculturalism good? *American Psychologist*, vol. 51, no. 6, pp. 609-621.
- Friedman, M. & Friedman, R.D. 1980. *Free To Choose: A Personal Statement*. New York, NY: Harcourt, Inc.
- Fry, H., Ketteridge, S. & Marshall, S. 2008. *A handbook for teaching and learning in higher education: Enhancing academic practice*. London: Routledge.
- Gambino, B. 2009. Student Affairs for All Seasons and Reasons: Leading by Example. [Online]. Available WWW: <https://www.unf.edu/uploadedFiles/sa/ivcl/-student%20affairs%20book%20PDF.pdf> [Accessed 24 January 2015].
- Gansemer-Topf, A.M. 2014. Enhancing the professionalisation of student affairs through assessment. *Journal of Student Affairs in Africa*, vol. 1, no. 1-2, pp. 23-32.
- Ghuri, P.N. & Gronhaug, K. 2005. *Research methods in business studies: A practical guide*. Harlow: Pearson Education.
- Groves, R.M., Fowler, F.J., Couper, M.P., Lepkowski, J.M., Singer, E. & Tourangeau, R. 2011. *Survey Methodology*. [Online]. Available WWW: <http://nbn-resolving.de/urn:nbn:de:101:1-201412083236> [Accessed 15 February 2015].

- Groves, R.M., Fowler, F.J., Couper, M., Lepkowski, J.M., Singer, E. & Tourangeau, R. 2009. *Survey methodology*. [Online]. Available WWW: <http://search.ebscohost.com/login.aspx?direct=true&scope=site&db=nlebk&db=nlabk&AN=587983> [Accessed 24 January 2015].
- Gruber, T., Fuß, S., Voss, R. & Gläser-Zikuda, M. 2010. Examining student satisfaction with higher education services: Using a new measurement tool. *International Journal of Public Sector Management*, vol. 23, no. 2, pp. 105-123.
- Gruber, T., Reppel, A. & Voss, R. 2010. Understanding the characteristics of effective professors: The student's perspective. *Journal of Marketing for Higher Education*, vol. 20, no. 2, pp. 175-190.
- Hall, N.C. & Gotz, T. 2013. *Emotion, motivation, and self-regulation a handbook for teachers*. [Online]. Available WWW: [http://www.novanet.ebib.com/EBLWeb/patron/?target=patron&extendedid=P\\_1250103\\_0](http://www.novanet.ebib.com/EBLWeb/patron/?target=patron&extendedid=P_1250103_0) [Accessed 15 February 2015].
- Harden, N. 2012. *The End of the University as We Know It*. [Online]. Available WWW: <http://www.the-american-interest.com/2012/12/11/the-end-of-the-university-as-we-know-it/> [Accessed 15 February 2015].
- Harper, S.R. & Nichols, A.H. 2008. Are they not all the same?: Racial heterogeneity among black male undergraduates. *Journal of College Student Development*, vol. 49, no. 3, pp. 199-214.
- Hass, E.M., Fischman, G. E. & Brewer, J. 2014. *Dumb Ideas Won't Create Smart Kids: Straight Talk About Bad School Reform, Good Teaching, and Better Learning*. New York: Teachers College Press.
- Hastebeer, R. 2014. *History Made with Creation of National Platform for Student Affairs and Services*. [Online]. Available WWW: <http://ndabaonline.ukzn.ac.za/Ukzndaba-Story/NdabaOnline-Vol2-Issue49-Student-Services/History%20Made%20with-%20Creation%20of%20National%20Platform%20for%20Student%20Affairs%20and%20Services%20/> [Accessed 22 January 2015].
- Havery, W.B. 2011. Higher Education and Diversity: Ethical and Practical Responsibility in the Academy [Online]. Available WWW: [http://www.kirwaninstitute.osu.edu/-reports/2011/11\\_2011\\_HigherEducationandDiversity.pdf](http://www.kirwaninstitute.osu.edu/-reports/2011/11_2011_HigherEducationandDiversity.pdf) [Accessed 08 January 2015].
- Hearn, J.C. 2006. *Student success: What research suggests for policy and practice*. [Online]. Available WWW: [https://nces.ed.gov/npec/pdf/synth\\_Hearn.pdf](https://nces.ed.gov/npec/pdf/synth_Hearn.pdf) [Accessed 22 February 2015].

- Heger, M. 2012. *What is a theory?* [Online]. Available WWW: <http://www.mineweb.com/regions/africa/commodities-vs-shares-of-resource-companies/> [Accessed 05 March 2015].
- Hénard, F. & Roseveare, D. 2012. *Fostering quality teaching in higher education: Policies and Practices*. Institutional Management in Higher Education. [Online]. Available WWW: [oecd.org/edu/imhe](http://oecd.org/edu/imhe) [Accessed: 22 January 2015].
- Hennig-Thurau, T., Langer, M.F. & Hansen, U. 2001. Modeling and Managing Student Loyalty: An Approach Based on the Concept of Relationship Quality. *Journal of Service Research*, vol. 3, no. 4, pp. 331-344.
- Higher Education South Africa (HESA). 2014. *South African Education in the 20th year of Democracy: Context, Achievements and Key Challenges*. Cape Town: HESA.
- Hill, F.M. 1995. Managing service quality in higher education: the role of the student as primary consumer. *Quality assurance in education*, vol. 3, no. 3, pp. 10-21.
- Hill, N., Roche, G. & Allen, R. 2007. *Customer satisfaction: The customer experience through the customer's eyes*. London: Cogent.
- Hoover, R.E. 1997. The role of student affairs at metropolitan universities. *New Directions for Student Services*, vol. 79, pp. 15-25.
- Hrituleac, A. 2011. *The Effects of Colonialism on African Economic Development*. [Online]. Available WWW: [http://pure.au.dk/portal-asb-student/files/41656700/alexandra\\_hrituleac\\_thesis\\_1\\_dec.pdf](http://pure.au.dk/portal-asb-student/files/41656700/alexandra_hrituleac_thesis_1_dec.pdf) [Accessed 24 January 2015].
- Hu, H.-H., Kandampully, J. & Juwaheer, T.D. 2009. Relationships and impacts of service quality, perceived value, customer satisfaction, and image: an empirical study. *The Service Industries Journal*, vol. 29, no. 2, pp. 111-125.
- Hurtado, S. & Guillermo-Wann, C. 2013. *Diverse learning environments: Assessing and creating conditions for student success—Final report to the Ford Foundation*. Los Angeles: Higher Education Research Institute, 150.
- International Association of Student Affairs and Services (IASAS). 2014. *Vision, Mission, Values*. [Online]. Available WWW: <http://www.iasasonline.org/mission> [Accessed 8 January 2015].
- Ismail, A., Abdullah, M.M.B. & Francis, S.K. 2009. Exploring the relationships among service quality features, perceived value and customer satisfaction. *Journal of Industrial Engineering and Management*, vol. 2, no. 1, pp. 230-250.

- Jackson, N.J. 2011. *Learning for a Complex World*. Bloomington: Author House.
- Jackson, N.J. 2010. From a curriculum that integrates work to a curriculum that integrates life: Changing a university's conceptions of curriculum. *Higher Education Research & Development*, vol. 29, no. 5, pp. 491-505.
- Jacobs, R. 1999. Evaluating satisfaction with media products and services: an attribute based approach. *European Media Management Review*, Winter.
- Jayasundara, C., Ngulube, P. & Minishi-Majanja, M.K. 2010. Using focus groups to investigate service quality determinants for customer satisfaction in selected university libraries in Sri Lanka. *South African Journal of Libraries and Information Science*, vol. 76, no. 2, pp. 118-128.
- Junio-Sabio, C.D. 2012. Importance of Academic Support Services: An Assessment by the Students in Oman. *International Journal of Information Technology and Business Management*, vol. 3, no. 1, pp. 15-23.
- Kärnä, S. & Julin, P. 2015. A framework for measuring student and staff satisfaction with university campus facilities. *Quality Assurance in Education*, vol. 23, no. 1, pp. 47-66.
- Kayastha, A. 2011. *A study of graduate student satisfaction towards service quality of universities in Thailand*. Unpublished thesis. Thailand: Webster University.
- King, P.M. & Baxter-Magolda, M.B. 1996. A developmental perspective on learning. *Journal of College Student Development*, vol. 37, no. 2, pp. 163-173.
- Klein, J.I. 2010. *Special Education Services as Part of a Unified Service Delivery System*. New York City: Department of Education.
- Knapp, D. 2011. *A guide to customer service skills for the help desk professional*. Boston, MA: Course Technology Cengage Learning.
- Kok, H.B., Mobach, M.P. & Omta, O.S. 2011. The added value of facility management in the educational environment. *Journal of Facilities Management*, vol. 9, no. 4, pp. 249-265.
- Komives, S.R. & Woodard, D. 2003. *Student services a handbook for the profession*. [Online]. Available WWW: <http://public.eblib.com/choice/publicfullrecord.aspx?p=158014> [Accessed 24 January 2015].
- Kuh, G.D. 2009. What student affairs professionals need to know about student engagement. *Journal of College Student Development*, vol. 50, no. 6, pp. 683-706.



- Kwong Caputo, J.J. 2013. *Undergraduate Research and Metropolitan Commuter University Student Involvement: Exploring the Narratives of Five Female Undergraduate Students*. Dissertation. Portland, Oregon: Portland State University.
- Latorre, W. 2007. *Defining Student Success: The Starting Point to Institutional Planning*. [Online]. Available WWW: <https://hets.org/wp-content/uploads/2011/11/4.pdf> [Accessed 13 March 2015].
- Lazerson, M. 2010. *Higher education and the American dream: success and its discontents*. New York, NY: Central European University Press.
- Lee, P. 2011. The Curious Life of In Loco Parentis at American Universities. *Higher Education in Review*, vol. 8, pp. 65-90.
- Lind, D.A., Marchal, W.G. & Wathen, S.A. 2010. *Statistical techniques in business & economics*. Boston: McGraw-Hill Irwin.
- Linton, I. 2015. *How Does Advertising Affect Product Awareness & Use?* [Online]. Available WWW: <http://smallbusiness.chron.com/advertising-affect-product-awareness-use-36750.html> [Accessed 21 January 2015].
- Ludeman, R. 2002. *Professionalizing Higher Education Student Affairs and Services: An International Perspective*. Keynote Address at the Inaugural Conference of the Southern Africa Federation of Student Affairs and Services in Higher Education (SAFSAS), Durban, South Africa, 4 August, 2014
- Lumadi, T.E. & Mampuru, K.C. 2010. Managing change in the student affairs divisions of higher education institutions. *South African Journal of Higher Education*, vol. 24, no. 5, pp. 716-729.
- Lusch, R. & Wu, C. 2012. *A service science perspective on higher education—Linking service productivity theory and higher education reform*. Center for American Progress, August.
- MacBeath, J. 2012. *Future of teaching profession*. [Online]. Available WWW: <http://download.ei-ie.org/Docs/WebDepot/EI%20Study%20on%20the%20-Future%20of%20Teaching%20Profession.pdf> [Accessed 25 March 2015].
- MacGregor, K. 2012. *Plan for 1.5 million students by 2030*. Connecticut: University World News.
- MacNeil, A.J., Prater, D.L. & Busch, S. 2009. The effects of school culture and climate on student achievement. *International Journal of Leadership in Education*, vol. 12, no. 1, pp. 73-84.

- Major, T.E. & Mangope, B. 2014. Multicultural competence in student affairs: The case of the University of Botswana. *Journal of Student Affairs in Africa*, vol. 2, no. 1, pp. 23-34.
- Mandew, M. 2003. *A guide to student services in South Africa*. South Africa: Centre for Higher Education Transformation (CHET).
- Manning, K., Kinzie, J. & Schuh, J.H. 2013. *One size does not fit all: Traditional and innovative models of student affairs practice*. New York, NY: Routledge.
- Marandet, E. & Wainwright, E. 2010. Invisible experiences: Understanding the choices and needs of university students with dependent children. *British Educational Research Journal*, vol. 36, no. 5, pp. 787-805.
- Marmolejo, F. 2011. *The Chronicle of higher education*. [Online]. Available WWW: <http://chronicle.com/blogs/worldwise/african-higher-education-in-the-world-are-they-and-we-ready/28025> [Accessed 12 January 2015].
- Martinez, M. 2013. *Creating a service culture in higher education administration*. [Online]. Available WWW: <http://search.ebscohost.com/login.aspx?direct=true&scope=site&db=nlebk&db=nlabk&AN=662592> [Accessed 13 March 2015].
- McDonnell, L.M. 2008. *The changing nature of federalism in education: A paradox and some unanswered questions*. Paper prepared for the State's Impact on Federal Education Policy invitational conference, Washington, DC, 9 May.
- McLaughlin, P., Faulkner, J.D. 2012. Flexible spaces...what students expect from university facilities. *Journal of Facilities Management*, vol. 10, no. 2, pp. 140-149.
- Moja, T., Schreiber, B. & Luescher-Mamashela, T. 2014. Contextualising student affairs in Africa: The past, present and future. *Journal of Student Affairs in Africa*, vol. 2, no. 1, pp. 1-8.
- Mokhtarian, K. 2013. *The Value of Customer Relationship Management in Non-Traditional Higher Education*. [Online]. Available WWW: <http://www.evolllution.com/opinions/customer-relationship-management-non-traditional-higher-education-part-2/> [Accessed 11 January 2015].
- Monette, D., Sullivan, T. & DeJong, C. 2013. *Applied social research: A tool for the human services*. Thousand Oaks, CA: Cengage Learning.
- Morgan, M. 2013. *Improving the student experience: A practical guide for universities and colleges*. Oxon: Routledge.

- Mugo Fridah, W. 2011. *Sampling in research*. [Online]. Available WWW: [https://www.uonbi.ac.ke/fridah\\_mugo/files/mugo02sampling.pdf](https://www.uonbi.ac.ke/fridah_mugo/files/mugo02sampling.pdf) [Accessed 12 January 2015].
- Murphy, D.W. 2012. *The History and Development of Student Affairs in American Higher Education*. [Online]. Available WWW: [www.freewebs.com/danielwmurphy/COMP-%202.doc](http://www.freewebs.com/danielwmurphy/COMP-%202.doc) [Accessed 22 February 2015].
- Myers, M.A. 2013. *The Acquisition of New Student Affairs Professionals' Beliefs and Perceptions about Faculty*. Department of Educational Leadership, April.
- Narasimhan, K. 2001. Improving the climate of teaching sessions: the use of evaluations by students and instructors. *Quality in Higher Education*, vol. 7, no. 3, pp. 179-190.
- Neelankavil, J. P. 2007. *International business research*. Armonk, NY: M.E. Sharpe.
- Nejati, M. 2013. *Frontiers of business, management and economics: An Interdisciplinary Collection of Managerial Research Findings and Breakthroughs*. Boca Raton, Florida: Universal Publishers.
- Neuman, W.L. 2011. *Social research methods: Qualitative and quantitative approaches*. Boston: Pearson.
- Nkondo, G.M. 1976. *Turfloop Testimony: The Dilemma of a Black University in South Africa*. ERIC.
- Norwood, S.L. 2010. *Research essentials: Foundations for evidence-based practice*. Boston: Pearson.
- Oldfield, B.M. & Baron, S. 2000. Student perceptions of service quality in a UK university business and management faculty. *Quality Assurance in Education*, vol. 8, no. 2, pp. 85-95.
- Oliver, P. 2010a. *Understanding the research process*. London: Sage Publications Ltd.
- Oliver, R.L. 2010b. *Satisfaction : A behavioral perspective on the consumer*. Armonk, NY: M.E. Sharpe.
- Oliver, R.L. 1981. Measurement and evaluation of satisfaction processes in retail settings. *Journal of Retailing*, vol. 57, no. 3, pp. 25-48.
- Omachonu, V., Johnson, W.C. & Onyeaso, G. 2008. An empirical test of the drivers of overall customer satisfaction: Evidence from multivariate Granger causality. *Journal of Services Marketing*, vol. 22, no. 6, pp. 434-444.

- O'Neill, M. 2003. The influence of time on student perceptions of service quality: the need for longitudinal measures. *Journal of Educational Administration*, vol. 41, no. 3, pp. 310-325.
- Parasurama, A., Zeithaml, V. A. & Berry, L.L. 1985. A conceptual model of service quality and its implications for future research. *Journal of Marketing*, vol. 49, no. 4, pp. 41-50.
- Parvey, S. 2014. *Kano Model Analysis*. [Online]. Available WWW: [http://www.mindtools.com/pages/article/newCT\\_97.htm](http://www.mindtools.com/pages/article/newCT_97.htm) [Accessed 25 January 2015].
- Pascarella, E.T., Terenzini, P.T. & Feldma, K.A. 2005. *How college affects students*. San Francisco, CA: Jossey-Bass.
- Paulsen, M.B. & Smart, J.C. 2013. *Higher education: Handbook of theory and research*. Dordrecht, The Netherlands: Springer.
- Ping, C.J. 1999. An expanded international role for student affairs. *New Directions for Student Services*, vol. 1999, no. 86, 13-21.
- Price, I., Matzdorf, F., Smith, L. & Agahi, H. 2003. The impact of facilities on student choice of university. *Facilities*, vol. 21, no. 10, pp. 212-222.
- Questionpro. 2015. *How it works?* [Online]. Available WWW: <http://www.questionpro.com/> [Accessed 15 February 2015].
- Quinn, B. 1997. Adapting service quality concepts to academic libraries. *Journal of Academic Librarianship*, vol. 23, no. 5, pp. 359-369.
- Rajasekar, S., Philominatha, P. & Chinnathambi, V. 2013. *Research Methodology*. India: Tamil Nadu.
- Redmond, B., Quin, S., Devitt, C. & Archbold, J. 2011. *A qualitative investigation into the reasons why students exit from the first year of their programme and UCD*. [Online]. Available WWW: <http://www.ucd.ie/t4cms/Reasons%20Why%20Students%20Leave.pdf> [Accessed 21 March 2015].
- Rena, R. 2010. Higher Education in Africa: Trends and Challenges. *Journal of Education Economics and Development*.
- Reynolds, A. 2001. Embracing Multiculturalism: A Journey of Self-discovery. In J.G. Ponterotto, J.M. Casas, L.A. Suzuki & C.M. Alexander (Eds.), *Handbook of multicultural counseling*, pp.103-112. Thousand Oaks, CA: SAGE.

- Roper, L.D. 2011. Supporting and Supervising Mid-Level Professionals. *New Directions for Student Services*, no. 136, pp. 1-3.
- Santee, S. 2011. *The Four Keys to Advertising Success*. Bloomington, Indiana: Xlibris Corporation.
- Saunders, M., Lewis, P. & Thornhill, A. 2009. *Research methods for business students*. 5<sup>th</sup> Edition. UK: Pearson Education Limited.
- Schreiber, B. 2014a. The co-curriculum: Re-defining boundaries of academic spaces. *Journal of Student Affairs in Africa*, vol. 2, no. 1, v-vi.
- Schreiber, B. 2014b. The Role of Student Affairs in Promoting Social Justice in South Africa. *Journal of College and Character*, vol. 15, no. 4, pp. 211-218.
- Schreiber, B. 2013. Constructions of Students as Clients or Partners in Knowledge Creation. *Journal of Psychology in Africa*, vol. 23, no. 4, pp. 617-621.
- Schuh, J. 2014. Preface: Together in student success. *Journal of Student Affairs in Africa*, vol. 2, no. 1, pp. 2307-6267.
- Schuh, J. 2009. *Assessment Methods for Student Affairs*. San Francisco: Jossey-Bass.
- Schuh, J.H. & Gansemer-Topf, A.M. 2010. *The role of student affairs in student learning assessment*. NILOA Occasional Paper No. 7. Urbana, Illinois: University of Illinois and Urbana University, National Institute for Learning Outcomes Assessment.
- Schuh, J.H. 2013. Developing a Culture of Assessment in Student Affairs. *New Directions for Student Services*, vol. 2013, no. 142, pp. 89-98.
- Schuh, J.H., Jones, S.R. & Harper, S.R. 2010. *Student services: A handbook for the profession*. 5<sup>th</sup> Edition. San Francisco, CA: John Wiley & Sons.
- Scott, I. 2009. First-year experience as terrain of failure or platform for development? Critical choices for higher education. In B. Leibowitz, A. van der Merwe & S. van Schalkwyk (Eds.), *Focus on first-year success: Perspectives emerging from South Africa and beyond*, 17-35. Stellenbosch, RSA: Sun Media.
- Sekaran, U. & Bougie, R. 2013. *Research Methods for Business: A Skill Building Approach*. 6<sup>th</sup> Edition. West Sussex: Wiley and Sons.
- Seldin, P. 1999. *Changing practices in evaluating teaching: A practical guide to improved faculty performance and promotion/tenure decisions*. San Francisco: Jossey-Bass.
- Seligman, J. & Taylor, J. 2009. Customer Experience Management in UK Higher Education a Mixed Methods Study. [Online]. Available WWW:

<http://www.duplication.net.au/ANZMAC09/papers/ANZMAC2009-405.pdf>  
[Accessed 24 January 2015].

- Sharer, G. 2014. *Most Promising Places to Work in Student Affairs in 2014*. [Online]. Available WWW: <http://diverseeducation.com/article/62592/> [Accessed 24 February 2015].
- Shaun, R. & Jerlando, F. 2011. *Introduction to American Higher Education*. New York: Routledge.
- Shemwell, D.J., Yavas, U. & Bilgin, Z. 1998. Customer-service provider relationships: an empirical test of a model of service quality, satisfaction and relationship-oriented outcomes. *International Journal of Service Industry Management*, vol. 9, no. 2, pp. 155-168.
- Siems, F. 2010. Is customer satisfaction an issue of gender? The market research dilemma, empirical findings, and implications. *Journal of International Business and Economics*, vol. 10, no. 1.
- Sleeter, C.E., La Vonne, I.N. & Kumashiro, K.K. 2014. *Diversifying the Teacher Workforce: Preparing and Retaining Highly Effective Teachers*. New York: Routledge.
- Smith, S. 2012. *Customer Expectations: 7 Types all Exceptional Researchers Must Understand*. [Online]. Available WWW: <https://www.qualtrics.com/blog/customer-expectations/> [Accessed 15 January 2015].
- Solinis, R.N., Zabalegui, I.B., Arce, R.S., Rodriguez, L.S.M. & Polanco, N.T. 2013. Development of a questionnaire to assess interprofessional collaboration between two different care levels. *International Journal of Integrated Care (IJIC)*, vol. 13, no. 2, pp. 1-12.
- South Africa.info. 2013. *Education in South Africa*. [Online]. Available WWW: <http://www.southafrica.info/about/education/education.htm#ixzz3OzUcMDBv> [Accessed 10 January 2015].
- South African Human Rights Commission (SAHRC). 2002. *3<sup>rd</sup> Economic and Social Rights Report*. Johannesburg: South African Human Rights Commission.
- Stead, D.R. 2005. A review of the one-minute paper. *Active Learning in Higher Education*, vol. 6, no. 2, pp. 118-131.
- Stringer, J. & Swezey, E. 2006. The Purpose of a Students Affairs Program within Jesuit Higher Education. *Journal of Catholic Education*, vol. 10, no. 2, pp. 181-198.

- Strydom, J.F. & Menz, M. 2010. South African Survey of Student Engagement Preview [Online]. Available WWW: <http://www.jacana.co.za/custom-publishing-57450/52-jacana/custom/917-sasse-south-african-survey-of-student-engagement-preview> [Accessed 10 January 2014].
- Suknandan, S. 2013. *Models, Structures and Strategies in Student Affairs and Services*. [Online]. Available WWW: <http://slideplayer.com/slide/2727861/> [Accessed 21 March 2015].
- Sunder, V.K. 2011. *Outsourcing and Customer Satisfaction*. Bloomington, Indiana: Xlibris Corporation.
- Temple, P. 2008. Learning spaces in higher education: An under-researched topic. *London Review of Education*, vol. 6, no. 3, pp. 229-241.
- Thomas, E.H. & Galambos, N. 2006. What satisfies students? Mining student-opinion data with regression and decision tree analysis. *Research in Higher Education*, vol. 45, no. 3, pp. 251-269.
- Thomson, T.M. 1998. Management by objectives. *The Pfeiffer Library*, vol. 20. 2<sup>nd</sup> Edition. San Diego, CA: Jossey-Bass/Pfeiffer.
- Tonon, G. 2015. The Qualitative Researcher in the Quality of Life Field. *Qualitative Studies in Quality of Life*, pp.23-32. Springer.
- Torres, V., Jones, S.R. & Ren, K.A. 2009. Identity development theories in student affairs: Origins, current status, and new approaches. *Journal of College Student Development*, vol. 50, no. 6, pp. 577-596.
- Tremblay, K., Lalancette, D. & Roseveare, D. 2012. *Assessment of Higher Education Learning Outcomes (AHELO)*. Feasibility study report, 1. [Online]. Available WWW: <http://www.oecd.org/education/skills-beyond-school/AHELOFSReportVolume1.pdf> [Accessed 12 January 2015].
- Tse, D.K. & Wilton, P.C. 1988. Models of consumer satisfaction formation: An extension. *Journal of Marketing Research*, vol. 25, no. 2, pp. 204-212.
- Tsiotsou, R.H. & Wirtz, J. 2014. *The Three-Stage Model of Service Consumption*. [Online]. Available WWW: [http://bizfaculty.nus.edu/media\\_rp/publications/thLvX1431498457.pdf](http://bizfaculty.nus.edu/media_rp/publications/thLvX1431498457.pdf) [Accessed 13 March 2015].
- Tull, A., Hirt, J.B. & Saunders, S.A. 2009. *Becoming socialized in student affairs administration a guide for new professionals and their supervisors*. [Online]. Available WWW: <http://search.ebscohost.com/login.aspx?direct=true&scope=site&db=nlebk&db=nlabk&AN=275214> [Accessed 15 March 2015].

- Twale, D.J. 2015. *A Faculty Guide to Advising and Supervising Graduate Students*. Oxon: Routledge.
- University of KwaZulu-Natal (UKZN). 2015a. *Caring for Students' Needs*. [Online]. Available WWW: <http://www.ukzn.ac.za/students/caring-for-students-needs> [Accessed 16 February 2015].
- University of KwaZulu-Natal (UKZN) 2015b. *Undergraduate Prospectus 2015*. [Online]. Available WWW:<http://www.ukzn.ac.za/docs/general-docs/ukzn-undergraduate-prospectus-2015.pdf?sfvrsn=2> [Accessed 11 January 2015].
- University of KwaZulu-Natal (UKZN). 2015c. *Vision and Mission*. [Online]. Available WWW: <http://www.ukzn.ac.za/about-ukzn/vision-and-mission> [Accessed 16 February 2015].
- University of KwaZulu-Natal (UKZN). 2014. *History Made with Creation of National Platform for Student Affairs and Services 2*. [Online]. Available WWW: <http://ndabaonline.ukzn.ac.za/UkzndabaStory/NdabaOnline-Vol2-Issue49-Student-Services/History%20Made%20with%20Creation%20of%20National%20Platform%20for%20Student%20Affairs%20and%20Services%20/> [Accessed 20 January 2015].
- University of Limerick (UL). 2013. *Summary of Customer Survey*. Ireland: University of Limerick.
- Verkuyten, M. 2008. Multiculturalism and group evaluations among minority and majority groups. In S. Levy & M. Killen (eds.), *Intergroup relations: Intergroup attitudes and relations in childhood through adulthood*, 157-172. Oxford: Oxford University Press.
- Vidalakis, C., Sun, M. & Papa, A. 2013. The quality and value of higher education facilities: a comparative study. *Facilities*, vol. 31, no. 11-12, pp. 489-504.
- Vishwanathan, P.K. 2006. *Business Statistics: An Applied Orientation*. [Online]. Available: <http://lib.myilibrary.com?id=475838> [Accessed 2 February 2015].
- Vygotsky, L.S. 2012. *Thought and language*. Cambridge, MA: MIT Press.
- Wahr, F., Gray, K. & Radloff, A. 2009. *Improving student transition by working with academics' conceptions of the student experience: Academic development for organisational change*. The Student's Experience - Proceedings of the 32nd HERDSA Annual Conference, Milperra, NSW, 6-9 July, pp. 434-443.
- Warner, J.D. 2013. *Customer Service Excellence*. [Online]. Available WWW: <http://blog.readytomanage.com/customer-service-excellence/> [Accessed 17 January 2015].



- Wheeler, A. 2012. *From Inaction to Action: Recognizing the Language of Procrastination Categories*. [Online]. Available WWW: <https://www.nacada.ksu.edu/Resources/-Academic-Advising-Today/View-Articles/From-Inaction-to-Action-Recognizing-the-Language-of-Procrastination.aspx> [Accessed 12 February 2015].
- Wood, M.J. & Kerr, J.C. 2011. *Basic steps in planning nursing research from question to proposal*. [Online]. Available WWW: <http://ovidsp.ovid.com/ovidweb.cgi?T=JS&-NEWS=n&PAGE=booktext&D=books&SC=01437780> [Accessed 17 January 2015].
- Xing, J. & Hok Ka Ma, C. 2010. *Service-learning in Asia: Curricular models and practices*. Hong Kong: Hong Kong University Press.
- Zeithaml, V.A., Berry, L.L. & Parasuraman, A. 1996. The behavioral consequences of service quality. *Journal of Marketing*, vol. 60, no. 2, pp. 31-46.
- Zhang, N. 2011. *Rentz's Student Affairs Practice in Higher Education*. Springfield, IL: Charles C. Thomas Publisher Ltd.
- Zikmund, W., Babin, B., Carr, J. & Griffin, M. 2012. *Business research methods*. Canada: Cengage Learning.

**Appendix 1**  
**Introductory Letter**

**UNIVERSITY OF KWAZULU-NATAL**  
**GRADUATE SCHOOL OF BUSINESS AND LEADERSHIP**

Dear Respondent,

**MBA Research Project**

**Researcher:** Ms Nupur Suresh Warke (0835864416)

**Supervisor:** Prof. Anesh Maniraj Singh (031-260 2675)

**Research Office:** Ms P Ximba 031-2603587

I, **Ms Nupur Suresh Warke** an MBA student, at the Graduate School of Business and Leadership, of the University of KwaZulu-Natal. You are invited to participate in a research project entitled **Perceptions of Student Services offered by the University of KwaZulu-Natal**. The aim of this study is to establish the perceptions of current students regarding student services offered at the University of KwaZulu-Natal.

Through your participation I hope to understand the current students' satisfaction with the service offerings of the Student Services Division at the University of KwaZulu-Natal. The results of the focus group are intended to contribute to establishment the perceptions of the current student's regarding the student services and to identify improvement that could benefit the service offering of the Student Services Division at the university of KwaZulu-Natal.

Your participation in this project is voluntary. You may refuse to participate or withdraw from the project at any time with no negative consequence. There will be no monetary gain from participating in this survey. Confidentiality and anonymity of records identifying you as a participant will be maintained by the Graduate School of Business and Leadership, UKZN.

If you have any questions or concerns about completing the questionnaire or about participating in this study, you may contact me or my supervisor at the numbers listed above. The survey should take you about 10 minutes to complete. I hope you will take the time to complete this survey.

Sincerely

Investigators' Signature \_\_\_\_\_ Date \_\_\_\_\_

**Appendix 2**  
**Consent Letter**

**UNIVERSITY OF KWAZULU-NATAL**  
**GRADUATE SCHOOL OF BUSINESS AND LEADERSHIP**

**MBA Research Project**  
**Researcher:** Nupur Suresh Warke (0835864416)  
**Supervisor:** Prof. Anesh Maniraj Singh (031-260 2675)  
**Research Office:** Ms P Ximba 031-2603587

**CONSENT**

I, Nupur Suresh Warke, hereby confirm that I understand the contents of this document and the nature of the research project, and I consent to participating in the research project.

I understand that I am at liberty to withdraw from the project at any time, should I so desire.

**SIGNATURE OF PARTICIPANT**

**DATE**

.....

### **Appendix 3**

#### **Questionnaire**

#### **1. UNIVERSITY OF KWAZULU-NATAL GRADUATE SCHOOL OF BUSINESS AND LEADERSHIP**

Dear Respondent,

MBA Research Project

Researcher: Ms Nupur Suresh Warke (0835864416)

Supervisor: Prof. Anesh Maniraj Singh (031-260 2675)

Research Office: Ms P Ximba 031-2603587

I, Ms Nupur Suresh Warke an MBA student, at the Graduate School of Business and Leadership, of the University of KwaZulu-Natal. You are invited to participate in a research project entitled Perceptions of Student Services offered by the University of KwaZulu-Natal. The aim of this study is to establish the perceptions of current students regarding student services offered at the University of KwaZulu-Natal. Through your participation I hope to understand the current students satisfaction with the service offerings of the Student Services Division at the University of KwaZulu-Natal. The results of the focus group are intended to contribute to establishment the perceptions of the current students regarding the student services and to identify improvement that could benefit the service offering of the Student Services Division at the university of KwaZulu-Natal. Your participation in this project is voluntary. You may refuse to participate or withdraw from the project at any time with no negative consequence. There will be no monetary gain from participating in this survey. Confidentiality and anonymity of records identifying you as a participant will be maintained by the Graduate School of Business and Leadership, UKZN. If you have any questions or concerns about completing the questionnaire or about participating in this study, you may contact me or my supervisor at the numbers listed above. The survey should take you about 10 minutes to complete.

I hope you will take the time to complete this survey.

Regards,

Ms Nupur Suresh Warke

#### **2. Gender:**

- ☐ Male
- ☐ Female

#### **3. Race:**

- ☐ White
- ☐ Indian
- ☐ Black
- ☐ Coloured

4. Which campus are you studying at?
- ☐ Edgewood
  - ☐ Howard
  - ☐ Medical School
  - ☐ Westville
  - ☐ Pietermaritzburg
5. I am
- ☐ An Undergraduate student
  - ☐ An Honours/PG Dip student
  - ☐ A Masters student
  - ☐ A PhD student
6. I am currently in my my
- ☐ 1st year of study
  - ☐ 2nd year of study
  - ☐ 3rd year of study
  - ☐ 4th year of study
  - ☐ > 4th year of study
7. Are you aware of the Student Services offered at the university?
- ☐ Yes
  - ☐ No
8. Since you have answered YES to question 7, how did you come to know about these services?
- ☐ Word of mouth
  - ☐ Advertising on campus
  - ☐ Campus leaflet
  - ☐ Promotional pamphlets
  - ☐ Social Media
  - ☐ University website
  - ☐ University News Bulletin (UKZNDABA Online)
9. Since you have answered YES to question 7, which of these services are you aware of?
- ☐ Student Counselling
  - ☐ Student Funding
  - ☐ Student residence and Catering
  - ☐ Academic Support
  - ☐ Career Assistance
  - ☐ Disability Support
  - ☐ Alumni Support
  - ☐ Legal Assistance
  - ☐ HIV Support

10. Have you ever used any student support services offered by the university?

- ☐ Yes
- ☐ No

11. Since you have answered YES to question 10, which of the services offered by the student services have you made use of (Select ALL that apply)?

- ☐ Student Counselling
- ☐ Student Funding
- ☐ Student residence and Catering
- ☐ Academic Support
- ☐ Career Assistance
- ☐ Disability Support
- ☐ Alumni Support
- ☐ Legal Assistance
- ☐ HIV Support

12. How often do you use student services offered by the university?

- ☐ Never
- ☐ Daily
- ☐ Weekly
- ☐ Monthly
- ☐ Annually

13. How would you rate the following:

	Very Unsatisfied	Unsatisfied	Neutral	Satisfied	Very Satisfied
Overall level of satisfaction encountered while using student services	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

14. How would you rate these student services on the following attribute?

	Poor	Weak	Average	Good	Excellent
Availability of service	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

15. How would you rate these student services on the following attribute?

	Poor	Weak	Average	Good	Excellent
Quality of Service	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

16. How would you rate the support staff in their service to students on the following attributes?

	Poor	Weak	Average	Good	Excellent
Availability	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Friendliness	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Professionalism	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Promptness	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Helpfulness	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Overall	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

17. How likely are you to continue using these services?

- ☐ Very likely
- ☐ Somewhat likely
- ☐ Neutral
- ☐ Somewhat unlikely
- ☐ Very unlikely

18. How likely is it that you would recommend these services to another student at the university?

- ☐ Very likely
- ☐ Somewhat likely
- ☐ Neutral
- ☐ Somewhat unlikely
- ☐ Very unlikely

19. The following are the student support services offered at the university. Please drag and rank (1st to 9th ) in the order you believe are the most beneficial student services offered where 1 is most beneficial and 9 is least beneficial.

1. Student Counselling \_\_\_\_\_
2. Student Funding \_\_\_\_\_
3. Student residence and Catering \_\_\_\_\_
4. Academic Support \_\_\_\_\_
5. Career Assistance \_\_\_\_\_
6. Disability Support \_\_\_\_\_
7. Alumni Support \_\_\_\_\_
8. Legal Assistance \_\_\_\_\_
9. HIV Support \_\_\_\_\_

20. How many events organised by the Student Services Division have you attended last year?
- ☐ 0 events
  - ☐ 1 event
  - ☐ 2 events
  - ☐ 3 events
  - ☐ 4 events
  - ☐ 5 events
  - ☐ > 5 events
21. Which of these events have you attended (Select ALL that apply)?
- ☐ Alumnus Reunion
  - ☐ Career Counselling
  - ☐ Wellness Day
  - ☐ New Students Orientation
  - ☐ Womens Day
  - ☐ World AIDS Day
  - ☐ Right to Respect Campaign
  - ☐ Information and Awareness Session for Deaf and Hard of Hearing learners
  - ☐ Other
22. Is the student services department easily accessible?
- ☐ Yes
  - ☐ No
23. Since you answered NO to question 22, why is the student services department not accessible?
- ☐ absence of directions
  - ☐ no signage
  - ☐ unavailability of a ramp for disabled persons
  - ☐ unavailability or absence of support staff
24. Student services can be used by all students at no additional cost as it is already included in student fees. Based on this statement, I believe these student services are .....
- ☐ Excellent value for money
  - ☐ Good value for money
  - ☐ Satisfactory value for money
  - ☐ Poor value for money
  - ☐ A waste of money
25. Would you like to receive regular communication regarding student services?
- ☐ Yes
  - ☐ No



26. Since you have answered NO to question 25, why would you not like to receive regular communication regarding student services?
- ☐ I am not interested
  - ☐ I don't have time to use them
  - ☐ I believe they are not beneficial
  - ☐ They are not applicable to me
  - ☐ They don't meet my needs
27. Since you have answered YES to question 25, how often would you like of the receive communication for the following student services? Please drag and rank (1st to 9th) in the order where 1 is most often and 9 is least often.
1. Student Counselling \_\_\_\_\_
  2. Student Funding \_\_\_\_\_
  3. Student residence and Catering \_\_\_\_\_
  4. Academic Support \_\_\_\_\_
  5. Career Assistance \_\_\_\_\_
  6. Disability Support \_\_\_\_\_
  7. Alumni Support \_\_\_\_\_
  8. Legal Assistance \_\_\_\_\_
  9. HIV Support \_\_\_\_\_
28. How would you like to receive communication?
- ☐ Email
  - ☐ SMS
  - ☐ FaceBook
  - ☐ Twitter
  - ☐ WhatsApp
  - ☐ BBM
29. One of UKZNs strategic goals is to be the INSTITUTION OF CHOICE for STUDENTS. To what extent is Student Services achieving this?
- ☐ Not achieved at all
  - ☐ Partially achieved
  - ☐ Fully achieved
30. What suggestions do you have for improving the Student Services offered at the university?

## Appendix 4 Ethical Clearance



20 April 2015

**Ms Nupur Suresh Warke (213568806)**  
**Graduate School of Business & Leadership**  
**Westville Campus**

Dear Ms Warke,

**Protocol reference number: HSS/0342/015M**

**Project title: Perceptions of Student Services offered by the University of KwaZulu-Natal**

### **Full Approval – Expedited Application**

With regards to your application received on 15 April 2015. The documents submitted have been accepted by the Humanities & Social Sciences Research Ethics Committee and **FULL APPROVAL** for the protocol has been granted.

**Any alteration/s to the approved research protocol i.e. Questionnaire/Interview Schedule, Informed Consent Form, Title of the Project, Location of the Study, Research Approach and Methods must be reviewed and approved through the amendment/modification prior to its implementation. In case you have further queries, please quote the above reference number.**

**Please note: Research data should be securely stored in the discipline/department for a period of 5 years.**

**The ethical clearance certificate is only valid for a period of 3 years from the date of issue. Thereafter Recertification must be applied for on an annual basis.**

I take this opportunity of wishing you everything of the best with your study.

Yours faithfully

.....  
**Dr Shenuka Singh (Chair)**

/ms

Cc Supervisor: Professor Anesh Maniraj Singh  
Cc Academic Leader Research: Mr Muhammad Hoque  
Cc School Administrator: Ms Zarina Bullyraj / Ms Gina Mshengu

### **Humanities & Social Sciences Research Ethics Committee**

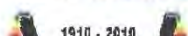
**Dr Shenuka Singh (Chair)**

**Westville Campus, Govan Mbeki Building**

**Postal Address: Private Bag X54001, Durban 4000**

**Telephone: +27 (0) 31 260 3587/8350/4557 Facsimile: +27 (0) 31 260 4609 Email: [ximbap@ukzn.ac.za](mailto:ximbap@ukzn.ac.za) / [snymanm@ukzn.ac.za](mailto:snymanm@ukzn.ac.za) / [mohunp@ukzn.ac.za](mailto:mohunp@ukzn.ac.za)**

**Website: [www.ukzn.ac.za](http://www.ukzn.ac.za)**



**100 YEARS OF ACADEMIC EXCELLENCE**

**Founding Campuses: Edgewood Howard College Medical School Pietermaritzburg Westville**

## **Appendix 5**

### **Certificate of Proof of Editing**

**Jeanne Enslin**  
**Freelance language practitioner**

17 York Close  
PARKLANDS  
7441

21 June 2015

### **Proof of language editing**

I, Jeanne Enslin, acknowledge that I did the language editing of **Nupur Warke's** dissertation submitted in partial fulfilment for the degree of Master of Business Administration.

The title of the dissertation is:

Perceptions of student services offered by the University of KwaZulu-Natal.

If any text changes are made to the electronic document which I sent to Nupur Warke on 21 June 2015, it needs to be returned to me to check the language of the changes. Technical editing, formatting and checking of references were done by a technical editor, Ronel Gallie.



**Jeanne Enslin**  
**082 696 1224**  
**Language editor**



**Ronel Gallie**  
**084 7780 292**  
**Technical editor**

J H Enslin BA (US); STD (US); Hons Translation Studies (UNISA)