

**Service quality delivery at the Pietermaritzburg Campus of the
University of
KwaZulu-Natal**

By

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DECLARATION

I, Shamladevi Naidoo, declare that

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I dedicate this thesis to my late brother and father; our time together was for only 20 short years, and whom I will always cherish and remember fondly.

ABSTRACT

With the five SERVQUAL dimensions, this study aims to determine the gap between students' expectations and perceptions of service quality at the Kwazulu-Natal Pietermaritzburg campus. Service quality in education is paramount, and therefore the different sections of the University must be equipped to relate to students professionally and meet their service needs. Higher education institutions must understand student expectations and perceptions to attract, retain and serve student needs. Higher education institutions must invariably adapt their processes similar to that of the business sector to continue to measure service quality to remain competitive. For businesses and organisations to succeed long-term, customer satisfaction has proven crucial.

Students are customers and stakeholders in a higher education context. They are paying customers and deserve excellent service delivery from the inception of application, enrollment, and the entire time at the institution until graduation. Therefore, it is essential to get their feedback on service delivery. This study collected data via questionnaires using a random sample of three hundred participants; it covers the service quality aspect at the University of KwaZulu-Natal PMB campus.

A university's core purpose is to deliver high-quality education programmes and do this; the several supporting services also need to be professionally equipped as an enabler. The findings revealed that students' expectations were high in the following dimensions reliability, responsiveness and empathy. Therefore, negative quality gaps exist. This study will guide management in reducing the service quality gaps and improving service quality on the Pietermaritzburg campus of the University of KwaZulu-Natal.

Keywords: Service Quality Delivery, SERVQUAL, Quality, Higher Education Institutions, Perceptions, Expectations

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CHAPTER ONE

INTRODUCTION AND BACKGROUND TO THE RESEARCH

1.1 INTRODUCTION

Service quality is fundamental for any organization, as it is a significant determinant of customer satisfaction and is an essential consideration across all industries, including the higher education sector. The subject of service quality measurement in higher education has recently attracted the attention of many researchers (Koni, 2013; Sultan & Wong, 2012; Jain, Sinha, & Sahney, 2011; Lee, 2010; Abu Hasan et al., 2008; Pereda et al., 2007; Peng & Samah, 2006; Petruzzellis et al., 2006). As a vital sector of the global economy, services concern practitioners and consumers alike. The concept of quality and its relationship with the service industries has also become a key concern within the higher education sector. Higher education has become much more competitive in attracting and retaining students due to several factors, including cuts to public sector funding, an increased supply of university places, and increased consumption of goods and services. Student retention will depend upon satisfaction and the student's perception of quality, just like any business enterprise.

Universities are no longer satisfied with focusing solely on the academic product but must now think about this issue from the student's perspective and improve both areas. Universities' ability to gain a competitive advantage may be negatively affected by the service quality provided (Naidoo and Mutinta, 2014). The level of service quality depends on how well it meets or exceeds the customer's expectations (Jain, Sinha, & De, 2010; Zeithaml, 2006; Nitecki & Hernon, 2000; Cronin & Taylor, 1992; Boltan & Drew, 1991; Lewis & Mitchell, 1990; Parasuraman, 2004).

The study's overall aim is to assess service quality on the Pietermaritzburg campus of the University of KwaZulu-Natal. The study focuses on students at the Pietermaritzburg campus of the University of KwaZulu-Natal. It seeks to determine whether the University of KwaZulu-Natal's Pietermaritzburg Campus offers quality service to find the gaps and improve service quality. Using the results of this study, the University of KwaZulu-Natal (Pietermaritzburg Campus) can enhance service quality.

1.2 BACKGROUND TO THE STUDY

The research took place at the University of KwaZulu-Natal Pietermaritzburg campus, a very established Higher education institution. Founded in 1910, the University is regarded as a top-rated institution. On 1 January 2004, the University of KwaZulu-Natal emerged out of the University of Natal and the University of Durban-Westville merger. The University is a multi-campus residential University spread over the cities of Durban and Pietermaritzburg. It has five campuses: Howard College, Medical School, Edgewood, Westville, and Pietermaritzburg. The University in Pietermaritzburg is an hour's drive from Durban and positioned in the Natal Midlands and a two-hour drive from the picturesque Drakensberg. The city is known for its rich heritage and beautiful Edwardian and Victorian buildings. Established jacaranda trees and rich flora surround the Pietermaritzburg campus grounds. It is a stunning picturesque campus that has been home to many students. The PMB campus offers various academic programs in Science & Agriculture, Law, Education, and Humanities. The disciplines of agriculture, fine art, and theology remain unique to the Pietermaritzburg campus (History – University of KwaZulu-Natal, 2018)

The University of KwaZulu- Natal is a state-funded university with a vision for being the premier University of African scholarship (Vision & Mission – University of KwaZulu-Natal, 2022). To achieve institutional goals, UKZN strives to establish a value-driven organisational culture. The guiding values are Respect, Excellence, Accountability, Client Orientation, Honesty, and Trust, abbreviated as R.E.A.C.H.T. These values form the most fundamental pillars of the institution's moral fabric.

“Respect: UKZN undertakes to promote mutual respect, courtesy, and inclusiveness”.

“Excellence: UKZN undertakes to display quality, leadership and energy in all that it does”.

“Accountability: UKZN promises to be responsible and accountable for all its stakeholders behaviour”.

“Client Orientation: UKZN undertakes to satisfy the needs of all its clients, stakeholders and partners consistently”.

“Honesty: UKZN promises to deliver with integrity – steadfastly and with adherence to good governance”.

“TrustT: The ‘T’ symbol after reacht refers to the principle of ‘trust’ that underpins all other institutional values. The implicit trust enjoyed by every member of UKZN and their well-defined actions that embrace the R.E.A.C.H.T values are the important ingredients of the moral fibre of the Institution” . (History – University of KwaZulu-Natal, 2019)

The University structure consists of a College Model which incorporates four Colleges and 19 Schools that offer approximately 2000 undergraduate and postgraduate programs. The University receives many applications and attracts many students from neighbouring African countries. The University is supported by academic, research, and support staff. It is a significant employer in KwaZulu-Natal, and teaching and learning is the core service offered at UKZN. Education is conducted through lectures, workshops, and seminars. UKZN does dictate excellence in teaching, professionalism, transparency, courtesy, and a caring approach to students. The Quality Promotions Assurance unit is responsible for quality assurance at UKZN (Policies | Procedures | Guidelines, 2022).

During lectures, practicals, and tutorials, lecturers are expected to maintain a professional relationship, treat the students fairly, be a good listener, assist them with their questions, and assist wherever they can. Teaching excellence is the responsibility of the academic Faculty. (Institutional Audit Portfolio of KwaZulu-Natal, 2008:74-131).

The support services of UKZN are essential for its existence and for delivering teaching and learning. UKZN's administrative and facilitating services include Student academic, administrative, financial, risk management, library, Quality Assurance, Information Communication, Technological Services, etc. (Institutional Audit Portfolio University of KwaZulu-Natal, 2008:188). Students encounter most of the support services staff daily. Due to the wide-ranging interactions with the administrative staff, this core group of staff play a critical role in producing customer satisfaction.

SUPPORT DEPARTMENTS AT THE PIETERMARITZBURG CAMPUS	
• Examinations	• Student Transport Services
• Student Registration	• Risk Management Services (RMS)
• Student Records	• International Student Offices
• Library Services	• Sports Amenities
• Student Cafeterias	• Student Housing
• Student Health Clinics	• HIV/AIDS Programme
• Student representative Council (SRC)	• Information Communication Services (ICS)
• Quality Promotions Assurance	

Table 1.2 Support Departments at the Pietermaritzburg Campus

Higher Education institutions rely on support staff for their professional expertise and input to aid teaching and learning (**Table 1.3**). Support staff must be skilled in work areas, and there should be ongoing training to keep them up to date.

The PMB campus has plus/minus 9600 enrolled students (II.ukzn.ac.za, 2022). The Department of Higher Education authorises student satisfaction surveys and program accreditation to evaluate service quality in higher education. Accreditation is calculated using the quality management system standards. The results will conclude whether the services offered abide by the standards approved by the Council of Higher Education. Student satisfaction surveys are usually conducted at the end of the semester, and these surveys evaluate course content and the lecturer's interaction or relationship with students.

Higher education institutions use various methods to measure service quality perceptions. The ever-increasing competition in the global economy makes educational institutions, businesses, and universities work extremely hard to attract new customers (Thomas, 2011). Therefore, universities must adhere to specific quality criteria. Educational excellence depends on the quality of service provided in educational institutions and higher education (Wisman, Malik, & Danish, 2010).

Excellent service quality sets organisations apart from the competition. Universities in South Africa are no exception to this. Customer loyalty is always related to customer

satisfaction; therefore, Universities must perform optimally. Universities compete for the best students. Students and parents also evaluate higher education institutions according to status. Current students at Higher Education Institutions are the ambassadors. Higher Education institutions are in genuine competition, continuously monitoring and improving their service quality.

1.3 AIM OF THE RESEARCH

The research aims to determine whether the quality of service provided to students is satisfactory and what improvements could be made. A study of service quality delivery on the Pietermaritzburg Campus has not yet been conducted. The objectives of Higher Education Institutions should be excellent service quality delivery, and ongoing reviews should motivate institutions towards renewed service quality delivery. The authors (Oldfield and Baron, 2000) argue that higher education has not paid much attention to service quality. Institutions should focus more on what students want since it is more crucial. The study evaluates service quality by analyzing gaps between students' expectations and experiences.

1.4 RESEARCH PROBLEM

There have been recurring violent student strikes throughout the University of KwaZulu-Natal campuses, and the students cite poor service delivery as one of the problems (Langley, 2018). Service Quality in higher education is gaining increasing attention over the years. Koni et al., 2013; Pereda et al., (2013); Jain, Sinha, & Sahney, 2011). Students are the priority customers in educational institutions. According to previous research, the service sector faces a challenging task to refine quality (Buyukozkara et al., 2011). No study has been conducted to assess service quality on the Pietermaritzburg campus; therefore, students' expectations and perceptions must be assessed to improve service quality. This study explores student perceptions of service quality on the Pietermaritzburg campus. This study was conducted among students at the University of KwaZulu-Natal's Pietermaritzburg campus to determine students' perceptions and expectations.

With the dwindling registration numbers and the past years of ongoing strikes at UKZN, the researcher hopes that the gaps identified on the Pietermaritzburg campus will be closed

as they move towards enhancing service quality delivery. Higher education institutions rely on students to survive, and without students, the institutions would cease to exist. It is essential to understand the students' views on service quality delivery and consider their suggestions to improve it. The institution is dependent on the funding that it acquires from its student base; without this income, the institution will fail to exist. Therefore, it is paramount for the institution's management to ensure that customers receive excellent service quality to grow the student intake. The survey amongst the students on the PMB campus could reveal the gaps in the quality variables, which will help the researcher and management understand why some student complaints may be valid.

1.5 RESEARCH QUESTIONS

1. What are students' perceptions regarding service quality on the PMB campus?
2. What are students' expectations regarding service quality on the PMB campus?
3. What are the gaps in the service quality delivery to students on the PMB campus?

1.6 RESEARCH OBJECTIVES

1. To identify the perceptions of service quality on the UKZN, PMB campus.
2. To identify the expectations of service quality on the UKZN, PMB campus.
3. To identify the gaps in the University service delivery on the UKZN, PMB campus and measure and compare students' perceptions and expectations.

1.7 LIMITATIONS OF THE STUDY

The researcher chose to limit the scope of this research to just the Pietermaritzburg Campus. It will benefit future researchers and the institution if studies are carried out on the other campuses. Due to time and budgetary constraints, the study was conducted at UKZN campuses and not extended to the other campuses. Due to the convenience sampling technique used, generalization to other universities cannot be drawn and applied. Due to the use of closed-ended questions in the questionnaire, no follow-ups can be carried out with respondents.

1.8 SUMMARY OF CHAPTER ONE AND OVERVIEW OF SUBSEQUENT CHAPTERS

CHAPTER ONE

This chapter comprises an introduction and overview of the study. It provided insight into the problems and subproblems of the study. In this study, the objectives, questions, and hypotheses were defined. The researcher outlined the methodology and limitations of the study.

CHAPTER TWO

This chapter investigates the pertinent literature on the research topic. Included here is an analysis of service quality, understanding service quality, student perceptions and expectations, service characteristics and dimensions of service quality, service quality models and service quality dimensions. The researcher also identifies the gaps which exist around research.

CHAPTER THREE

This chapter describes the research methodology used and discusses the research design, primary and secondary research methods, study site, population, sample size, data collection instruments, data quality control, validity, reliability, and data analysis. Participants were given a choice to participate in the survey, and therefore there is anonymity.

CHAPTER FOUR

This chapter aims to outline the contributions and findings from the researcher, which include analysis and presentation of the data. The results of this chapter are presented in bar and pie charts. An explanation is provided for each question, as well as a chart.

CHAPTER FIVE

In this chapter, the findings to answer the research questions and objectives are presented with a discussion of the results. Descriptive statistics and inferential statistics, including the SERVQUAL model variables, are explained.

CHAPTER SIX

In this final chapter, we outline the recommendations and conclusions. Future researchers are given recommendations based on the study's findings. Researchers will be able to effectively eliminate the limitations of this study with the recommendations provided.

1.9 SUMMARY OF THE CHAPTER

This chapter aims to provide the background and foundation for the study. The research objectives and research questions were identified together with the study's motivation. The study emphasized the motivation and need for such a study. This chapter also examined the methodology used for the study, and lastly, it indicated the study's limitations. The next chapter will set the theoretical foundation for the study. It will discuss the various aspects of service quality

CHAPTER TWO

LITERATURE REVIEW

2.1 INTRODUCTION

This chapter is the foundation of the study. The study examined several concepts and theories used in the study. The chapter included perspectives from different scholars on service quality to help improve service provision at the University of KwaZulu-Natal, Pietermaritzburg Campus. Several studies in service quality have enriched services marketing (Sultan & Wong, 2011).

The chapter reveals literature in service quality dimensions of service quality and defines quality. Approaches to managing quality, characteristics of services, service quality models, factors affecting service quality, gaps between service quality perception and expectation, customer satisfaction, service provision is discussed. The model underpinning the study is the SERVQUAL model.

The primary goal of universities has always been to pursue excellence, and most of them have managed to accomplish this. According to Rubin (2004), the quality approach is prevalent in the industry and a focal point in higher education.

According to (Owlia and Aspinwall, 1998), the student is the customer. According to (Svensson and Wood, 2007), students are not the customers in higher education.

A company's products and services must meet the highest customer satisfaction standards to ensure customer satisfaction Tsoukatos & Rand (2006). Higher education is always a topic of extensive public attention, debate and scrutiny. There are many positive reasons for ensuring service quality in any organization, and there are many benefits to excellent service quality. There are considerable benefits to organisations that focus on premier service quality. For businesses to succeed long term, customer satisfaction has proven crucial. This chapter investigates the pertinent literature on the research topic. The study covers service quality, understanding, student expectations and perceptions, service

characteristics and models, and service quality dimensions. The researcher also identifies the gaps which exist in the area of research.

2.2 SERVICE QUALITY

Service quality is defined as the overall rating given by the customers of a service (Eshghi, Roy and Ganguli, 2018). It refers to the extent to which a service meets the needs or expectations (Asubonteng, McCleary, & Swan, 2016). An institution's success depends on the quality of its service Landrum (2007). In most cases, measuring, counting, inventorying, testing, and verifying services is difficult (Chang & Lin, 2016). This literature has two dominant schools of thought: the "Nordic and North American schools model". Grönroos's (2005) two-dimensional model has been most prominent among the Nordic school of thought, while Parasuraman and colleagues' SERVQUAL model has been popular amongst North American colleagues. Some research streams propose that service quality encompasses service environment, service delivery, interaction quality, environmental quality, and outcome quality. (Karatepe, 2013). The researcher examines both schools of thought.

A service is something intangible that cannot be stored or owned, and it only exists at the place and time of consumption. Consumers' service quality assessment is called a service quality (Hinson, Mohammed & Mensah, 2017). According to Zeithaml (2006), service quality is how a service meets or exceeds the customers' expectations. Parasuraman et al. (1985) Argue that the notion of difference is the degree and direction of discrepancy or gap between customer expectations and perceptions of service. "Service quality" is a connotation of two words; "Service" and "Quality". Zeithaml and Bitner (2003) describe service quality as a full assessment reflecting customers' feelings. Customer service quality can be defined as how customers' normative expectations differ from their perceptions of customer service performance (Lau, Cheung, Lam & Chu, 2017). Iddrisua (2015) defines service quality as a subjective comparison between customers' expectations and what they receive.

There should be high levels of service quality throughout the academic and support sections of the University of KwaZulu-Natal, according to (Naidoo, 2011). According to

her, service quality is a significant factor in attracting students. Throughout the entire service delivery process, management must use this approach. The quality of service is the most contested topic in service to the extent that there is a lack of agreement Gupta and Chen (1995). There are two main themes on service quality that are not easy to evaluate compared to tangible goods Parasuraman et al., (1985).

- 1) Service quality is intangible
- 2) Service quality perceptions are resultant from the actual results of service performance vs consumer expectations

Kotler and Anderson (1995:541) define a service as "any action that a party may perform for the benefit of another." Barata (2003:9) defines a service as "providing certain services by the service provider to those served."

The financial performance is improved when the service quality is better. Although organisations recognise a need to provide a great experience, they may also find it difficult to measure that experience. Service quality is a qualitative measurement and not a quantitative measurement, and it can become difficult to assess. Although this may seem complicated, researchers continue to explore the service marketing area. Success and failure in a service organization may be attributed to quality. Customer satisfaction is crucial to service organisations and manufacturing companies Wang et al., (2004). Douglas and Fredenall (2004) state that services make up a significant portion of the world's economies.

For the University of KwaZulu-Natal to be an excellent institution, service excellence must be inculcated throughout Mutinta (2014). Mutinta says that management and staff need to understand the students' expectations and the services offered to deliver quality services. One of the key reasons we need to implement and improve service quality is competitive pressure. Another reason is that service quality is the key to business survival. Services exist with the expectations of customers. The results can be detrimental for an organization that fails at service quality (Zammuto, 1996).

The primary goal of universities has always been to pursue excellence, and most of them have managed to do this. The quality approach is prevalent among industries and a focal point in higher education. According to Rubin (2004), higher education is always a topic of extensive public attention, debate, and scrutiny.

Higher education institutions face many challenges and are not unique to a particular organization. Like other organisations, colleges and universities create products and services to meet specific needs. Higher education is also a service industry. This service's primary function is to generate, integrate, and communicate knowledge for several academic, professional, student, and public audiences. Besides the teaching, learning, and research universities offer, they also manage various other services. The other essential services they operate are housing facilities, transport services, student healthcare, campus security, maintenance, procurement, sports and recreational, library, ICT, Finance, and other administration services. There are plus-minus nine thousand six hundred registered students on the PMB campus who access these services.

Service quality and customer service practices are essential in any organization or business and will continue to be. It is also critical for tertiary institutions to align with service quality best practices. Universities must ensure quality service delivery, which could positively increase local and international students. Service quality is critical in achieving customer satisfaction Ruben (1995).

Notwithstanding the best staff efforts, there are always many opportunities to break down primary and secondary services in any higher education institution. These events lead to dissatisfaction, which are service gaps described as the gaps between the institution's performance and the needs and expectations of those we serve. Our customers in an HEI are students. Like any organization, many gaps are due to performance and communication failures.

In universities, satisfaction gaps are resident in academic, support, and operational services. Service gaps and customer dissatisfaction experiences is shared by the person affected, which leads to the organization's reputation being tarnished. These perceptions lead to the formation of individual decisions as to "attend or not, support or not, recommend or not, hire or not, contribute or not, and so on." An organization's long-term success needs to strive for excellence and continued value in its service delivery.

We all hear the word quality and service used much in all businesses and organisations. We also need to ask, "what is customer satisfaction? The customer sees customer service as the organisation's complete process to improve its products and services. Consumer satisfaction is measured by comparing the expected level of service with the actual result.

Service quality is an instrument of change that will move an institution from its present culture to a customer-focused culture and ongoing upgrading when implemented and followed through it. It is vital for companies to continually evaluate where they are regarding quality service, evaluate and then make the necessary changes to improve. Management is the critical driver for change and should be hands-on regarding service quality.

The research questions supporting this study will provide a framework through which literature will be examined, organized, summarized, synthesized, and presented. According to Brink (2005), customer service is everything an organization does to enhance its products and services. Quality can also be described as meeting the needs and expectations of the customer. Similarly, the UKZN PMB will be evaluated to determine if perceived benefits exceed expectations.

2.3 PERCEPTIONS AND EXPECTATIONS

Organizations must fulfil students' expectations and know specific conditions that ensure students' satisfaction Herdlein, R. and Zurner, E (2015). The study is on students and perceptions of the University of KwaZulu-Natal's Pietermaritzburg campus. Studies have investigated students' perceptions and service quality delivery (Wang, 2004). Many researchers continue to be attracted to this subject of service quality dimensions in tertiary institutions (Koni et al., 2013; Pereda et al., (2013); Jain, Sinha, & Sahney, 2011). According to Cant and Van Heerden (2013:60), a person's perception is how they interpret, select, and organize information. Universities that welcome students' perceptions are more likely to benefit than those that do not. (Masson, 2005) asserts that understanding students' expectations in higher education is crucial. Customers' assessments of a business's performance in meeting expectations are defined in various studies as satisfaction or dissatisfaction Ramachandran, 2012; Kheng et al., (2010). Satisfaction follows when expectations is met, while dissatisfaction follows when expectations are not met.

Furthermore, satisfied customers are more likely to make repeat purchases and have a higher quality perception. According to Elliott and Shin (2002), student satisfaction with service delivery can automatically encourage them to become more loyal. Therefore, the customer considers the quality of both products and services essential in obtaining and

retaining their loyalty. Students have a positive image of the quality of the service they receive, which leads to higher levels of satisfaction.

Service delivery processes and the resulting outcomes affect students both positively or negatively. Cuthbert (1996) describes this process as to how students are treated in the service process and how they are treated later. Students interact with higher education institutions' academic and support sectors, and their experiences vary. According to Khodayai and Khodayari (2011) and Mahadzirah and Wan, (2003), student perceptions are critical, and higher education institutions must become more student-centred. Providing customers with high-quality services allows for differentiation in a competitive environment.

Students' perceptions of higher education institutions remain a crucial element to enhancing service quality, and improving service cannot be accomplished without taking into account student perceptions Aghamolaei, Fazel (2010). Service quality delivery at higher institutions needs to be constantly measured to enhance quality. According to Oldfield and Barron (2000), service quality measurement has become global. Researchers systematically identify the gaps between what customers expect and perceive service delivery to estimate service quality Parasuraman et al., (1988). Naidoo (2016) Student perceptions are pivotal in deciding when students choose a university.

Students' expectations are closely connected to students' satisfaction. When a higher Education institution is knowledgeable about student perceptions, it will assist them in service delivery and creating value offerings. Sahney, Banwer, & Karunes (2004), Also, students must be listened to because their expectations and perceptions will affect the institution's sustainability. Better service delivery will result in positive student perceptions Dursan, Oskaybas & Gokmen (2013:1133-1151).

Tertiary institutions are always on the lookout to attract excellent students who will boost their academic profiles; consequently, they need to pay more attention to service quality. Universities design marketing drives to attract students, and therefore if they are aware of students' perceptions and expectations, the marketing strategies would be successful. Student perceptions play a critical role in students' choice of higher education institutions.

2.4 QUALITY DEFINED

Quality is a crucial business driver for increased profits, increased market share, and, most importantly, customer satisfaction Gilbert et al., (2004). The term "Quality" is familiar to all. The Oxford dictionary (Oxford Learners Dictionary, 2018) defines quality as a standard of something compared to other things like it; how good or bad something is. Quality is a term widely used in the services marketing literature, so it is essential that its meaning be clarified. Many authors define quality differently. Zeithaml (1988) describes quality as something inherently superior in its nature. To monitor service quality, we must explain what this term means. ISO 9000's definition of quality is "the degree to which a set of inherent characteristics fulfils requirement". (ISO 9000's definition of quality, 2022) Many industries adhere to the International Standardisation Organisation (ISO), which sets quality standards worldwide.

Joseph M Juran, Armand V Feigenbaum, Edward Deming, Philip Crosby, are referred to as the Quality Gurus. These gurus in quality have improved efficiency, effectiveness, and quality. Juran stated that quality control forms an essential part of management control, and quality does not just happen; it has to be planned, controlled, and improved Juran (1988). Crosby (1979) theorized that the customer's perception of quality determines the quality.

According to Edward Deming, ensuring the highest quality level rests with management. Students' first consideration when choosing a university is service quality, which gives them an edge over competitors Brady and Cronin (2001) argue that this generally creates an advantage for a University because higher education institutions are always in competition for students. Failure of leadership to plan for the future and foresee problems brings waste of human resources, supplies, and machine-time, which raises costs for the manufacturer and purchaser, leading to a loss of market. Deming believed in the transformation of management by introducing his 14 points to help people implement and understand change. He said that when management adopted the 14 points, they were interested in staying in business.

Armand V. Feigenbaum was also responsible for Total Quality Control, who believed that quality control is a business method somewhat than technically and insisted that quality is

the most important force that leads to the growth and success of an organization. Goetsch (2002) stated that quality is an operational condition that narrates people, products, services, processes, and environments that meet or exceed expectations. Solomon (2009) Quality is what the customer looks for in a service. According to Kotler (2002), quality can be defined as the entirety of characteristics and features of a service or product that can satisfy indirect needs. One of the primary roles and the most significant service organisation features are quality. Continuous quality improvements in services as per consumer expectations will satisfy the customer's perceptions of the organization. A positive effect on customers' quality expectations is significant and positive Anderson et al.,(1994). Today's highly competitive environment requires organisations to implement essential strategies to deliver high-quality service. Zeithaml et al. (1996) say the level of service quality determines whether a customer stays with a company or leaves. Management literature on marketing emphasizes the value of service quality. Researchers use the term service quality extensively Sureshchandar et al., (2002). Overall, studies show that excellent service quality most definitely results in customer loyalty and customer satisfaction.

Rubin (2004) identifies six values that transcend the various approaches to quality which are:

- **Service Orientation**

It considers the needs, expectations, and satisfaction levels of the people served by the organization.

- **Leadership**

A quality approach means that leaders are most effective when personally involved in developing, communicating, explaining, reinforcing, and exemplifying the university/unit's mission, vision, values, and service orientation.

- **Information**

Information acquisition, analysis, and use are essential for organizational well-being and service orientation. The benchmarking process should be ongoing with leaders in their fields.

- **Collaboration**

Organisations are viewed as complex systems with numerous departments that interact with and depend upon one another. The ability to meet internal and external constituencies' expectations depends on whether these internal interactions occur.

- **Communication**

Communication is the process of acquiring and disseminating information. Additionally, it is a process through which relationships are formed and developed. Relationships are crucial to creating and maintaining a service orientation, collaboration, and high levels of organization quality. Communication is the essential quality concept in higher education. Communication is a component of most university mission statements.

- **Continuous Improvement**

Continuous improvement and ongoing change are required to achieve quality, as it does not happen by accident. The philosophy behind the continuous improvement is to plan and test, improve, learn from failures, evaluate outcomes, implement and sustain success, plan, test improvements, etc.

2.5 UKZN'S APPROACHES TO MANAGING QUALITY

Three quality management areas at UKZN are devoted to academic quality, support quality, and quality promotion and assurance (QPA). All staff undergo a yearly performance appraisal. If this process is conducted correctly, it will produce valuable outcomes that will enhance service quality delivery at UKZN. Academic and support staff should provide efficient support services and ensure effective processes that benefit the student body.

2.6 SERVICE CHARACTERISTICS AND DIMENSIONS OF SERVICE QUALITY

Parasuraman et al. (2015) developed service quality dimensions, and a framework for measuring service quality was proposed. Service quality depends on several factors related to services and service firms and is therefore not independent. Ziethaml (1990) proposes five dimensions for evaluating service quality: reliability, assurance, tangibles, empathy and responsiveness. A measurement tool commonly used by researchers is SERVQUAL, an instrument that has been widely discovered.

This section will also highlight some of the researchers' service quality models to measure service quality. If tertiary institutions can get the five dimensions to work, this would lead to excellent service levels. The SERVQUAL technique enhances the measurement of service quality. The concern regarding SERVQUAL is that you need to have adequate knowledge when using the measures.

2.7 DESCRIPTION OF THE CHARACTERISTICS OF SERVICES

Defining quality is difficult due to its intangibility, heterogeneity, perishability, and inseparability characteristics (Parasuraman, 2015). Educational services form part of services marketing. We can characterize services in several ways. The terms which differentiate services from products are perishability, heterogeneity, inseparability and intangibility (Webber, 2001). According to Parasuraman (1986), it is challenging to measure service quality objectively. Literature on services focuses on perceived quality, which compares customer service expectations and perceptions (Zeithaml et al., 1990).

2.7.1 Intangibility

Refers to services that cannot be viewed or touched. These services are not tangible, making it difficult to determine the service before purchase. Several benefits cannot be consumed or experienced until the acquisition. Actual services can refer to the physical environment, such as the lecture room or equipment utilized in the venue.

2.7.2 Inseparability

Services are usually performed in the exact location and at the same time. With inseparability, the customers develop their expectations on how the service is rendered which sometimes leads to their expectations not being fulfilled. For example, a student calling at the college office needing detailed information, the student does not understand due to the re-organization of the University and centralization of some processes that person assisting may have to contact staff members on the other campus and they may or may not be there at the time of the query.

2.7.3 Perishability

Services are usually perishable, which means unused capacity cannot be kept away for use. Students who don't turn up for a lecture may forfeit that service due to them not being there at the designated time and place, and the lecture cannot be stored for them for a later time.

2.7.4 Heterogeneity

Different people perform services. Services received may not be uniform at all times. Service experiences will differ from time to time with different results. For example, a student calling at the student helpdesk for assistance will encounter various consultants on different days, and there won't be continuity or the same expertise received.

2.8 SERVICE QUALITY MODELS

We can better understand service quality by comparing different service quality models. It has been extensively studied over the years and will continue to be studied in the future. There have been numerous models that were created to measure service quality. The 1st model was attempted in 1984 by Gronroos. Gronroos described the expansion of service quality research as a three-phase development. This model is an initial foundational model. The first phase (1980-1985) consisted of a foundation to understand service quality. The static models included Total Perceived Quality Gronroos (1994) and the Gap Analysis Model Berry & Parasuraman (1991). These models define contexts and variables to understand and perceive service quality. During the second phase, which started a year later (1986-1992), they developed models to identify how a service fulfils customer expectations, measuring service quality, e.g., SERVQUAL and SERVPREF. These models build on the first phase to attempt a greater level of service quality to reduce the gaps between expected and perceived quality. The third phase (1993-onwards) aimed to develop more advanced and refined measurement models. In 1994 researchers Rust & Oliver improved on the model and added a new dimension called the service environment.

The service quality theory is constructed on the premise of customer satisfaction and product quality, and scholars believe Brady & Cronin (2001). Service marketing literature reveals several service quality models, but scientists' opinions differ on measurements. Measuring service quality allows managers to identify quality problems and improve

service quality. When managers act on enhancing services to exceed customer expectations, it will equate customer satisfaction.

2.8.1 EDVARDSSON'S SERVICE CONCEPT

There are primary and secondary needs to consider when discussing customer needs. Edvardsson (1996) developed a "Model of the service concept," which describes a service (see Figure 2.1). Using the concept, we can tell the customer's needs and how those needs should be met, either through the service's content or through the service package's design. The model comprises of two parts:

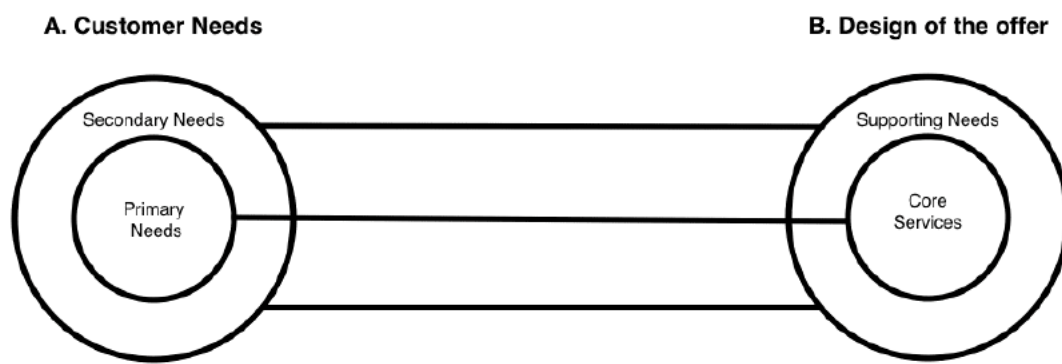


Figure 2.1 Model of the service concept (Edvardson 1996, p6)

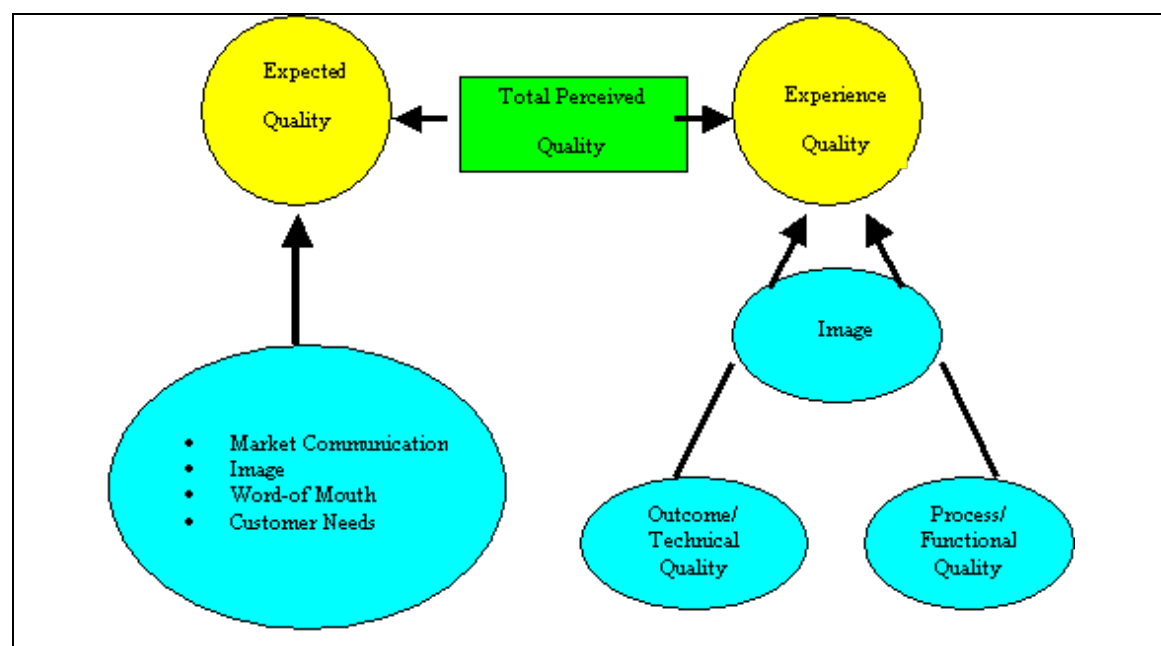
Edvardssons proposed this model to focus on customers' needs in the service package's service content or design. It is another good way to describe a service because it aptly reflects the needs of the customer that need to be satisfied. The model sights a service from a customer's viewpoint and categorizes the customer's needs into two parts: primary and secondary needs. The customer's needs will be met by a central service and a correspondingly supporting service, and the latter refers to the design of the offer. The primary needs are explicit, whereas the secondary needs are implied.

For a successful business, it is imperative to match the customer's need and service offer. It is essential that both primary and secondary customer needs are satisfied. It is a customer expectation, and they also perceive the relevant supporting services that will follow. UKZN also has to be aware of students' primary and secondary needs and to be able to meet the expectations and perceptions. Individual services are part of other services in the service concept, whether existing or new services.

2.8.2 The SERVQUAL instrument: determinants and measures of service quality

Grönroos (2005) cited Berry and two of his colleagues, Parasuraman (1985) and Zeithaml (1985), as being the first to study the determinants of service quality and how consumers view service quality in organisations. One of the determinants, competence, is related to the technical quality of the outcome, and another, creditability, is closely connected to the image aspect of perceived quality. It is interesting to observe that the rest of the determinants are related to the process dimension of perceived quality Grönroos (2005). For organisations to compete successfully, they must understand the perception of quality and how it influences service quality. The expectation of service and customer perception must be aligned in order for an organization to be successful at customer satisfaction Kotler (2003).

Figure 2.2 The Grönroos Service Quality Model



The Perceived Service Quality Model

Source: Gronroos, C. (1991). "Quality Comes to Service," in The Service Quality Handbook.

Initially developed at the Swedish School of Economics in Helsinki, Finland, the Perceived Quality Model was first presented in 1982 (see Fig. 2.8.3). A proper formulation of service quality should be customer-based, says Grönroos, who is considered to be a leader in

service. The customer's perceptions of service quality are central to this service quality model. Factors that affect service quality are incorporated. The model highlights the collaboration between the buyer and seller in a service setting, leading to the outcome. This model depicts that the service quality relies on contrasting two variables: customer service expectations and accurate service perception. Grönroos (1984:36). Perceptions of customers also depend on comparing prior quality. Customers' perceptions are also based on comparing prior quality. The gap model explains how expectations, perceptions, and the service received differ from the real service provided.

The Gap Model offers that customers' expectations are a function of disconfirmation. A customer compares their experience with pre-consumption expectations (before-service consumption) and post-consumption experience (after-service consumption). Based on this comparison, a state of dissatisfaction toward specific services is surmised Parasuraman et al. (1985).

Christian Gronroos identified three distinct aspects of service quality: technical quality, functional quality, and image.

2.8.3. Technical Quality

An important process for evaluating the quality of services is assessing customer satisfaction.

2.8.4 Functional Quality

Functional quality is the outcome of technical quality and is vital to the customer. It is also imperative to the customer; It is the view of the service received.

2.8.5 Image

Image is significant to service firms and is derived from service's technical and functional quality, including word of mouth, pricing, tradition, public relations, and ideology).

2.9 DIMENSIONS OF SERVICE QUALITY

As the service quality improved by Parasuraman et al. (1988), a variety of researchers recognized and applied a service quality measuring model. "Service quality" is defined by Parasuraman et al. (1988:15) as "a global judgment or attitude relating to the overall excellence or superiority of the service". According to Zeithaml, Parasuraman, and Berry, five dimensions are used by customers when evaluating service quality. The instrument they used is called SERVQUAL. It is a scale measuring what customers perceive versus what they expect. Many studies describe how industries measure service quality using the SERVQUAL model Nitecki & Hemon 2000; Mehenna & George, 2005; Khodayari & Khodayari, 2011; Heskett & Sasser (2010).

The SERVQUAL scale, which uses five dimensions, is the best tool to evaluate service quality. Customers would have received excellent service if organisations understood these dimensions and got them right. Service levels will improve when higher education institutions strive for perfection in these five dimensions. Management has a responsibility to ensure that service levels are of the highest standard. This study will consider the five dimensions:

2.10 THE FIVE SERVICE QUALITY DIMENSIONS OF SERVQUAL

2.10.1 Reliability

Customers rely on firms to keep their pledges; therefore, the service firms need to be aware of their reliability expectations. Reliability is the firm's capability to deliver services with accuracy and dependability (Lee, Choi, Kim and Hyun, 2014). Reliability is an essential dimension in service quality delivery Wilson et al., (2008:86).

According to Zeithaml et al. (1990:15), an organization is reliable when delivering service quality promises. Reliability is one of the 1st dimensions of SERVQUAL. Higher education institutions must perform services accurately and on time. Consistent and error-free services will lead to positive perceptions and enhance service quality amongst the student body. Service quality is determined partly by reliability, and customers tend to gravitate toward institutions that adhere to promises and terms of service. Reliability is critical to both the teaching & learning (academic) component and support sector (non-academic) at higher education institutions. Reliability is measured by using the five items of the

reliability dimensions of the 22-items in SERVQUAL. According to Zaim (2010), reliability is a substantial factor for customer satisfaction. Mengi (2009) noted that assurance and responsiveness are more important. The reliability of UKZN is measured by how they can execute their promised services as perceived by their customers, who are the students. SERVQUAL measures this element using five of the 22 items of the reliability dimension

2.10.2 Assurance

A firm's ability to respond effectively to the questions of its customers is referred to as assurance Kurtz (, 2014). Employee courtesy and knowledge are related to this dimension and inspire trust and confidence within the customers. It focuses on the skill, job knowledge, and courtesy that employees display. This dimension emphasizes four crucial components: attitude, effective communication, competence, and respect. Assurance will also impact the teaching and learning (academic) and support (non-academic sector) at higher education institutions. Recruiting staff requires ensuring they possess the necessary skills and are more than competent in their fields. There have to be high standards for recruiting staff with skills and experience. Skilled, experienced staff will inspire trust and confidence in their customers. Professionalism should be a critical factor in all their dealings with the student body. Tertiary institutions have their set of quality standards that they need to abide by, and they need to ensure that they comply with these standards. Both academic and non-academic staff should be the custodians of service quality delivery. It would benefit higher education institutions to include key areas of service quality in the performance contracts of staff. Staff will automatically excel in these areas if they know they will be assessed against these measures. According to Mann (1985:22), the staff's responsibility is to continually improve service quality in all institution areas; quality improvement also grows production.

2.10.3 Responsiveness

This dimension relates to the customer's attitude and fast delivery services Rasli et al., (2012). Provides prompt service and addresses complaints, questions, and requests, and is willing to help customers. It focuses on the commitment, professionalism, presence, and punctuality of staff or employees. Prompt service is critical to customers. Showing a sincere

interest to solve problems and providing services right the first time is critical in the service delivery process. It can be calculated by how long customers wait for help, responses to questions, etc.

Furthermore, it includes understanding the customer's needs and requirements, easy operation, personal attention provided by staff, attention to the problem, and customer safety. The responsiveness characteristics will improve if the firm continuously monitors service delivery and the staff attitude towards customers' requests Wilson et al., (2008:86). In South Africa, there is a significant lack of service delivery, and it is vital for higher education institutions not to lower standards but raise their standards. We live in a fast-paced, demanding society, and realistically customers expect prompt service and failing to do so will agitate them. Professionalism is key to any business. Therefore, staff must be trained in customer relationship skills and other skills they may require to represent the institution well. It is a significant disadvantage to any institution to have staff who are not skilled in their specific work area. Delays in responding to customers will cost an organisation. UKZN's responsiveness is defined as its ability to provide the students with timely services. Based on the 22-item SERVQUAL, the responsiveness dimension measures four items.

2.10.4 Tangibility

Tangibility is employees' appearance, equipment, and surroundings (Jones and Goodall, 2012). A tangible element refers to the physical infrastructure, the equipment, the communication materials, and the look of the personnel and can provide clues to the customer regarding the quality of service. This dimension enhances and adds value to the firm's image. Tangibility is very important to firms, and it is vital to capitalize wisely in physical facilities Wilson et al., (2008:86). The appearance of institutions needs to be neat, clean and presentable. Staff at higher education institutions represent the organization, and therefore first impressions are lasting impressions. It is essential to have standards for grooming and dress codes. Staff must ensure that they are appropriately attired and that the physical facilities are aesthetically pleasing. Management needs to ask the question is the place inviting? Both staff and the environment need to be clean and presentable. All equipment should be in working order. Negating on the tangibles will lead to customers having negative perceptions. How the employer treats staff will rub off on the customer, so

staff must be valued and hired for their professional skills. Finally, tangibles in the present study are facilities and services UKZN offers its customers, which is measured using four items of the 22-item SERVQUAL tangible dimension.

2.10.5 Empathy

Empathy delivers services with care to customers (Lovelock and Wirtz, 2011). The firm's customers receive caring, individualized attention. Individualized and personalized services foster empathy. Wilson et al., (2008:86). The firm must know the customer's preferences, wants, and personal needs. It can make them feel welcomed, especially by staff contacts.

The organization must be familiar with the expectations and perceptions to empathize with the students. Higher education institutions need to care for their students and understand their needs; taking the time to afford personal attention and understanding the specific needs is essential. Staff need to be approachable, sensitive, active listeners and ask the right questions. In this study, we use four of the 22 SERVQUAL empathy dimensions.

2.11 THE GAP MODEL

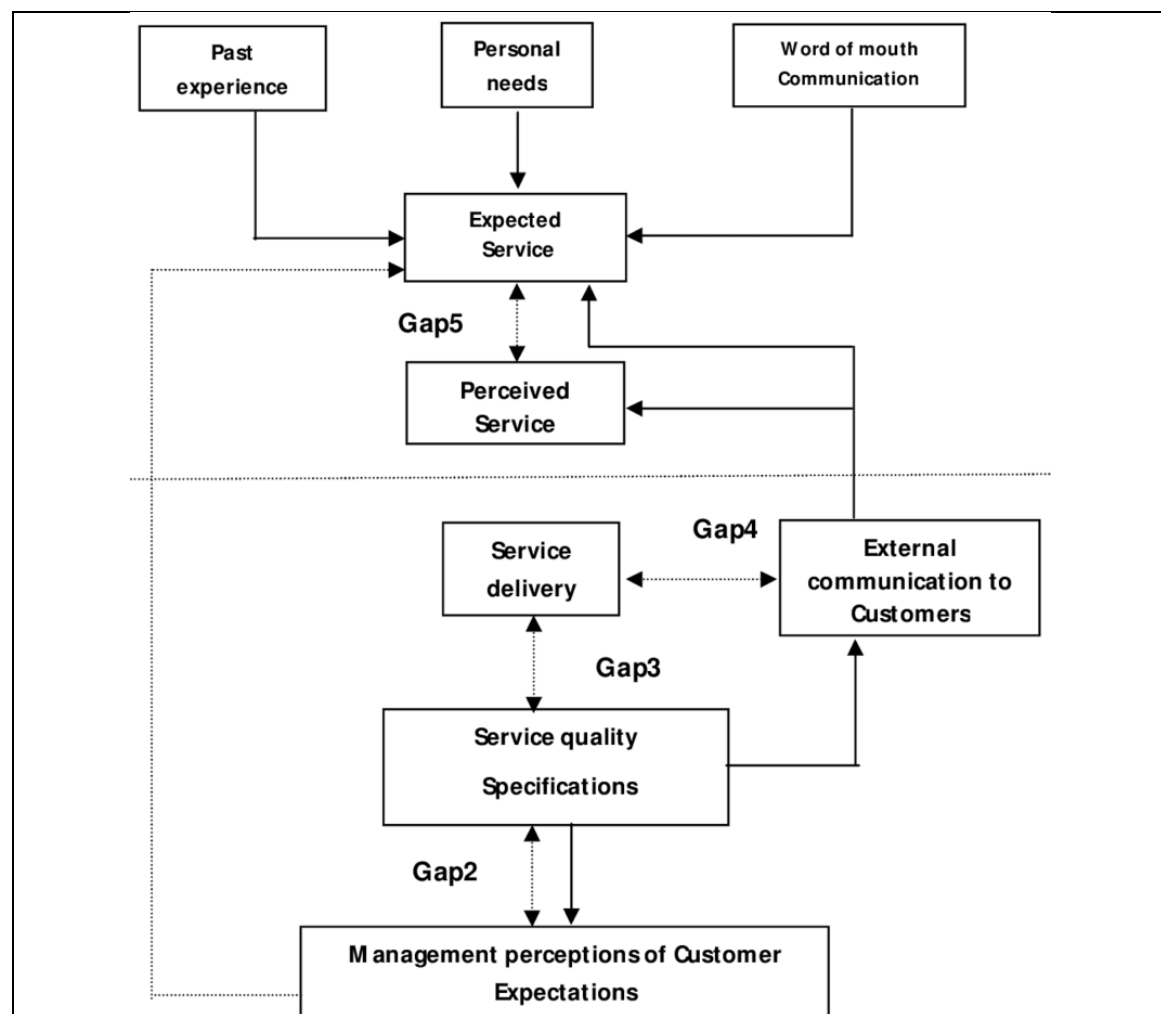
The Gap Model compares customers' expectations and perceptions in the service quality literature. In his study, Grönroos (2008) concludes that the perception of service quality as seen by customers arises from a comparison of what they think service organizations should offer (i.e., their expectations) and their perceptions of the performance of the service providers. Customer satisfaction literature refers to the disconfirmation paradigm as the difference between expectations and perceptions. The Figure illustrates the Gap as a measure of service quality. The Gap Model detects five gaps between expectations and perceptions of service quality. Miremadi et al. (2011) state that higher education institutions must understand their customers' expectations and manage service gaps accordingly. The five gaps are:

- Gap 1 is the difference in expectation between what a marketer thinks customers expect and what he perceives as customer expectations.
- Gap 2 represents the difference between the marketer's perception of customer expectations and how they translate into service quality specifications.
- Gap 3 is the difference between customer service quality stipulations and the proper level of customer service provided by the seller.
- Gap 4 is the gap between what the customer is told versus what is delivered.
- Gap 5 is the difference between the expected service and the customer's perception.

The focus of this study is to assess Gap 5 service quality in a tertiary education context. Gap 5 is the discrepancy between the customer's actual expectations for service quality and their perceptions of the actual service received. According to Niteacki & Hernon (2000), this gap is based on a customer-oriented definition of service quality. The other gaps also contribute to the perceived service quality envisaged by customers. Parasuraman et al. (1988) Firstly came up with ten service quality dimensions. They then refined their research which led to the growth of the SERVQUAL Scale, which measures customers' perceptions of service quality. The researchers reduced the initial ten dimensions into five: reliability, assurance, responsiveness, tangibles, and empathy.

This study aims to ascertain any actual or perceived gaps between customer expectations and perceptions on the UKZN PMB campus. Higher education institutions face significant financial constraints; therefore, students' perceptions and expectations are met, and gaps in service quality are identified and rectified. When service quality gaps are closed, there will be service delivery improvement. The level of service quality is usually high when customers' perceptions are met. This study will utilise the SERVQUAL instrument.

Figure 2.12 The Gaps Model



Adapted from Gaps Model of Service Quality-PZB 85, by Parasuraman and Aldridge, 1985

The unique SERVQUAL scale comprises 22 items for customer expectations and customer perceptions. A comparison is then conducted of both lists to determine the level of service quality.

According to Ladhari (2008), when measuring customers' perceptions of service quality, the tool used most extensively is SERVQUAL. With a need to measure reliable and valid marketing constructs, the SERVQUAL scale was developed. It is broadly cited in all marketing and retailing literature Kasper *et al.*, (2006:188). Researchers carried out a study by Parasuraman *et al.* (1985); SERVQUAL was conceptualized as the gap between customers' expectations and perceptions. Parasuraman, Valarie Zeithaml and Leonard L. Berry were instrumental in proposing the gap model. The team conducted interviews with business officials from service industries. This concluded that there are gaps between what management perceives service quality to be compared to the customers' views.

SERVQUAL assists companies to understand the deviations that occur in service delivery. It helps management identify the inefficiencies. SERVQUAL is referred to as a map for the overall service delivery process. The researchers viewed these gaps as the key obstacles when delivering services that customers regard as high standards Parasuraman (1985).

Zeithaml (2006) Describes customer expectations as the customer's standards during the service experience, and customer perceptions are the authentic service experience. The Gap Model is the instrument in service quality literature used to compare customers' expectations and perceptions. Customers' perceptions and expectations differ due to what is known as the disconfirmation paradigm in customer satisfaction literature. The Figure illustrates the Gap model of service quality. The Gap Model detects five gaps between the expectations of service quality and the perception of the service received. According to Miremadi (2011), higher education institutions need to understand customer expectations and manage the service gaps accordingly.

2.12 SUMMARY OF CHAPTER

This chapter presents a comprehensive literature review on the concept of service quality. Various aspects of service quality, the definition of quality, how organisations view various quality issues, and the various service quality models organisations can use. It discussed how organisations could monitor and enhance service quality. For this study, the researcher used the SERVQUAL Model and Gaps Model.

CHAPTER THREE

RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

3.1 INTRODUCTION

The purpose of this chapter is to present the research design. The structure for collecting data for a research study is called a research methodology. There is a discussion of the research approaches, methodology, data collection and analysis procedures, concluding with a note on the ethical processes involved in research.

3.2 RESEARCH DESIGN

The study took place at the University of KwaZulu-Natal Pietermaritzburg campus. According to Burns and Grove (2003), the research design is the blueprint for conducting a study. The researcher employed an explanatory and descriptive design. Shukla (2010:45) explains that descriptive research is less time-consuming, less costly, and easier to use, so they are considered more popular. Therefore, an understanding of the research problem is enhanced by a research design (Creswell, 2014).

The focus of this study is a descriptive and explanatory investigation based on survey-based approaches to determine students' perceptions of quality services at the University of KwaZulu-Natal, Pietermaritzburg Campus. Among the most commonly used methods in social sciences, a descriptive study aims to gather information from a population sample at a given time. A descriptive research design carefully describes phenomena, events, and behaviour. According to Cooper and Schindler (2013), descriptive research provides the researcher with a description of a phenomenon or characteristic of a subject population. It describes the who, what, when, where, and how it occurred. By collecting data, research questions can be answered, and the study's objectives met.

The SERVQUAL instrument is more appropriate for this study to explore students' perceptions and expectations of the service quality offered. The SERVQUAL instrument is the most suitable instrument to examine students' perceptions and expectations of service quality delivery on the PMB campus of the University of KwaZulu-Natal.

The survey consists of two sections (validity and reliability) and (demographics and quality of services). The survey will examine the students' perceptions and expectations of

reliability, responsiveness, assurance, empathy and tangibility regarding the service delivered.

3.3 RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

Research methodology is a system that is applied to collect research data Sekaran (2010). The different research methods are qualitative, quantitative, and mixed, and the researcher preferred the quantitative research method with non-probability sampling Sekaran & Bougie (2010). Questionnaires were made available in hard copies and electronic platforms. The questionnaire comprised a preamble inviting the student to participate in the study, followed by a note advising them on confidentiality and anonymity of their responses. Kumar (2011) states that validation and reliability are easier to administer using the quantitative research method. The data analysis of the quantitative research method is also easily administered. Questionnaires have advantages because there is anonymity, and there is not much interaction between the respondents and researcher. It also allows for the researcher to cover a wider geographic area.

Quantitative research constitutes the central research framework in the social sciences. It is a method that analyzes numeric patterns to study socioeconomic and psychological processes Brydon-Miller, (2014). Researchers use the quantitative research methodology to understand the world and generate knowledge Allen (2017). A quantitative research methodology primarily collects numerical data. Essentially, the data collected is converted into statistics that can be used to measure behavior, beliefs, views, and opinions (Morgan.2007).

A range of numeric data is collected when using quantitative research. Researchers can conduct easy and more advanced statistical analyses. The researcher utilized the following two methods to collect data, both primary and secondary research methods. The methodologies used in quantitative research are questionnaires, experiments, structured observations, and qualitative research, and qualitative research uses techniques such as focus groups, interviews or ethnographies Brydon-Miller, (2014).

The researcher used a questionnaire to collect data. The researcher distributed the questionnaire on the conclusion of the reliability test and conducted a preliminary examination before moving ahead with the final data collection. Data quality is paramount with all data collections; therefore, the planning and execution phase is critical. According

to Calder (1994. P 98), The questionnaire must be designed and constructed with the utmost care to understand the questions asked. Good quality questionnaires will produce good responses, so questionnaires must be well structured and logical. The researcher ensured that she allowed more comprehensive feedback when designing the questionnaire to provide more detailed feedback.

In 1984 researchers Parasuraman, Berry and Zeithaml developed the SERVQUAL instrument and GAPS theory widely known and used in services marketing. The researcher used this instrument and GAPS theory for the study. The study measured the five variables of reliability, assurance, tangibles, empathy and responsiveness.

There are mainly three research methods qualitative, quantitative and mixed methods. The nature of the study required the use of a quantitative approach. The researcher used a questionnaire to collect data because questionnaires are a non-demanding method for validating and testing. The researcher distributed the questionnaire on the conclusion of the reliability test and conducted a preliminary examination before moving ahead with the final data collection. Data quality is paramount with all data collections; therefore, the planning and execution phase is critical. Good quality questionnaires will produce good responses, so questionnaires must be well structured and logical. The researcher ensured that she allowed more comprehensive feedback when designing the questionnaire to provide more detailed feedback. The researcher utilized both primary and secondary methods to collect data.

3.4 STUDY SITE

The study site is where the data are collected, and the results are discussed (Sekaran, 2010). The study site for this research took place at the University of KwaZulu-Natal's Pietermaritzburg campus, which is situated in the suburb of Scottsville. The campus is stretched over a wide area but within walking distance.

3.5 TARGET POPULATION

Researchers select the group, thing or events they intend to analyze, examine and draw conclusions Sekaran and Bougie (2013). Bell (2005) also confers with Sekaran and Bougie on the definition of the target population. The student population on the PMB campus of the University of KwaZulu-Natal is the study's target population which was 300 students.

3.6 SAMPLING METHODS

3.6.1 Sample

As a subset of the total sample population, a sample represents the people participating in a survey, as defined by Sekaran (2010). There are plus-minus 9600 students on the PMB campus. The undergrads and postgrads on the PMB campus are the study's sample or participants in this study.

3.6.2 Sampling method

The researcher utilized the non-probability sampling design, which was employed to select students for the sample inclusion. A non-probability sampling design, states Sekaran (2010), does not have any probabilities attached to the elements in the population selected for sampling. Non-probability sampling methods include convenience sampling, which has many advantages. It is an affordable way to gather data. As the name suggests, convenience sampling refers to the convenience in reaching people to be surveyed Sekaran (2010). This research method saves time when gathering data. Another benefit of convenience sampling includes accurate correlations. Our choice is made through convenience, which means that we contacted people that we found available. Convenience choice means that the respondents are chosen because they are available (Bryman & Bell, 2005).

3.6.3 Sample size

Sampling is a method of selecting a small population to represent the whole population, according to Yin (2009). This study used a non-probability sampling technique consisting of convenience sampling Battaglia (2008). The population of students on the PMB campus are 9600. Using the sample size table from Krejcie & Morgan (1970) for the study, the sample size was calculated as 300. Through sheer hard work, the researcher self-administered 300 questionnaires acquiring a 100% response rate.

3.6.4 Questionnaire design

The RATER Model was used to design a questionnaire. The questionnaire measured the gap between expectations and experiences of service quality. To achieve the main objectives of this study, service quality and students' expectations and perceptions were

measured using the SERVQUAL questionnaire (Appendix 1). The researcher opted to use the SERVQUAL questionnaire incorporating the five-point Likert scale. As Sekaran and Bougie (2013) state, the Likert scale is widely used for quantitative research, and each point has equal weight. Sekaran and Bougie (2013) state that the Likert scale is used widely for quantitative research, and each point in the measurement has equal value. The measure is categorized to determine the positive, negative and neutral positions Sekaran & Bougie (2010). Based on the Likert scale, respondents can decide whether or not they agree or disagree with the statements on the scale. The survey instrument was divided into three sections.

1. Twenty-two original SERVQUAL statements focused on student expectations and perceptions of service quality on the Pietermaritzburg campus of UKZN.
2. Demographic data consisted of the respondents (Age, College, Race, Sex, Year of Study).
3. A 3rd section comprises additional comments.

The Five-point Likert Scale was adopted with strongly disagree coded as one and strongly agree coded as five. The questionnaire was designed primarily to gather student opinions about the quality of service at PMB.

Students at PMB were asked to complete a questionnaire adapting SERVQUAL to evaluate service quality on campus. The questionnaire consisted of close-ended questions. The researcher compiled the questionnaires carefully to ensure that the students understood and could answer without difficulty. The questionnaire was well structured to ensure that good responses were forthcoming.

3.7 DATA COLLECTION INSTRUMENTS

3.7.1 Data collection method

The information gathered during the research process is known as data. The tool used to collect the data is an instrument (Rubin, 2004). The research instrument used was a questionnaire survey. According to Kumar (2011), the questions must be clear and concise to understand. The data collection was primarily achieved through a survey. The sample was relatively large in that of 300 students. Students were given verbal and written

instructions to complete the Informed Consent Form attached to the SERVQUAL questionnaire.

Permission was granted from the Academic staff to distribute the surveys at the beginning of the lecture. Students completed the questionnaires simultaneously, and the questionnaires were collected immediately to avoid any problems of retrieving questionnaires later. The questionnaires were pre-numbered to ensure all were accounted for.

3.7.2 Primary research methods

Data collection for primary studies is vital for all types of studies, and the data collection must be accurate so that the results will be valid. The preliminary data used in this research was gathered through a survey. According to Sekaran & Bougie (2013), primary data is collected directly through observation, focus groups, interviews and surveys. Surveys are methods of gathering information from respondents using either written or verbal questions and is known as the primary data collection method. Students at UKZN were surveyed to determine their perceptions of service quality. Surveys are also an accurate, efficient, inexpensive, quick medium of gathering information from the sample group.

3.7.3 Data quality control

Consistency, reliability and validity are critical when gathering data. When collecting data, you must ensure that the instruments utilized consistently perform their specific measuring function (Rubin, 2004).

3.8 RELIABILITY & VALIDITY OF THE STUDY

3.8.1 Validity

Kimberlin and Winterstein (2008) explain validity as how a measuring tool measures what it was intended to measure. A pilot study was initially conducted to confirm the data's validity. The research tool was then established on the outcomes of the pilot study. A triangulation test for improving the reliability and validity of research was engaged (Leung, 2015).

According to (Bougie and Serkaran, 2010), a validity scale measures how precise a measure is. Validity determines if the correct instrument was used to evaluate the research and

whether it was valid or not. According to Sekaran (2010), the reliability of a measure has to be without error-free bias; that is what validity checks. There has to be consistent measuring over time and through the many items in the tool.

3.8.2 Reliability

Reliability equals the steadiness and constancy that the instrument measures. The constructs were tested for reliability and consistency. According to the results, the sample size was above recommended levels, and the questionnaire was reliable. When researchers opt to use the Likert scale, Chronbach's alpha reliability analysis is the standard measure of internal consistency, namely "reliability."

3.9 DATA ANALYSIS

According to Rubin (2004), data analysis examines raw data to gather information. A quantitative research study was conducted with descriptive and inferential statistical analysis. The twenty-two service quality variables were analysed according to the underlying dimensions of service quality to establish which service quality dimensions appeared more important to students than others. Several software packages for quantitative data analysis, but the researcher chose SPSS. SPSS (Statistical Package for the Social Science), an academic software package offered by the University, analyses the data. It is the worlds leading statistical software that researchers have mastered and extensively used for data analysis. It encompasses a robust set of statistical features.

3.10 ETHICAL CONSIDERATIONS

According to Kumar (2011), being ethical is adhering to an expected social norm of behaviour or a code of conduct. Hoffman (2001) Describes ethics as the moral conduct governing an individual or group". The research proposal and the survey instrument were presented to the ethical clearance committee at the University of KwaZulu-Natal for approval, and it was duly approved. Participation in this study was voluntary, and by completing the questionnaire, they indicated that they were interested in participating.

The researcher obtained permission for this research from the University of KwaZulu-Natal's Ethics Committee and their Registrar's Office to conduct this study. To ensure that human dignity was upheld, the researcher sought informed consent from respondents and

decided to participate based on adequate knowledge of their given study. Privacy and confidentiality were maintained by reminding participants of their right to keep certain public information about themselves and agree to limit private information access. Respondents will remain anonymous, and no names except pseudonyms were used in this study.

3.11 SUMMARY OF CHAPTER

The methodology used for analysing and sorting the data is presented in this chapter. An overview of the study design, research approach, and ethical considerations is provided. The following chapter presents this study's results, data analysis, and inferential statistics.

CHAPTER 4

DATA ANALYSIS AND PRESENTATION OF FINDINGS

4.1 INTRODUCTION

This section aims to present and interpret the results of the research study. Reporting the outcomes of an investigation is debatably the most challenging, but it is also one of the most satisfying stages of the process. Chapter three describes the research methods of this study; this chapter will discuss the results derived from the statistical analysis of the questionnaire survey. Analyzing the findings entails understanding the procedures used within the hypothesis testing process and ensuring the data collected is reliable and valid. Within UKZN, five service quality dimensions was analysed: tangibles, reliability, responsiveness, empathy, and assurance. The current study uses descriptive and inferential statistics to discover how these factors relate to UKZN's PMB Campus service delivery.

The data for the study was from the questionnaires administered to the students on the UKZN PMB campus, and the questionnaire is the apparatus for the data analysis, presentation and findings. It is the relationship between the objectives, analysis and conclusions (McDaniel 2010:369). The results was presented in graphical form and tables. The SPSS version 27 (Statistical Package for Social Sciences) system was used to analyze the data and provide feedback in this chapter.

The Krejcie and Morgan's table guided the researcher for sample and population size. The sample size was 300 students. Through sheer hard work, the researcher was able to get the required number of respondents to complete the questionnaire, representing a 100% response rate. It is an excellent response rate, and the researcher was able to acquire meaningful results about the expectations and perceptions of service quality delivery on the PMB campus.

According to McDaniel (201:369), questionnaires require a certain amount of thinking, and students express themselves through the questionnaire. The researcher will convey the objectives of the study through tables and charts. Tables and charts carry information concisely, and tables effectively present frequencies Denscombe (2007:272). The

descriptive statistics are shown in the form of bar charts and tables. This chapter also focuses on inferential statistics. Students' perceptions, expectations, and relevant gap scores concerning the quality variables (reliability, assurance, tangibles, empathy and responsiveness) will be addressed and presented accordingly. The appropriate statistical tests will be conducted on the data collected from this study.

Firstly, a section on graphical and descriptive statistics will be carried out. Bar graphs and frequency tables will be processed using SPSS (version 27) to overview respondents' perceptions concerning students' perceptions of service quality delivery on the PMB campus. The descriptive statistics will also include the mean, mode, median and standard deviation. These statistics will confirm the results of the graphical statistics and frequency tables. The respondent's scores will be analyzed this way.

To test if the data comes from a Normal distribution or not, this is done using the Kolmogorov Smirnov test. Once we have established this fact, we can then proceed to the type of statistical tests that we are permitted to use. For example, we use the parametric tests such as the independent sample t-tests to check for differences between the mean scores of the males and females with respect to student's perceptions of service quality delivery on the PMB campus since this group has only two categories or we could use the Mann Whitney U test to check for significant differences between males and females concerning student's perceptions of service quality delivery on the PMB campus if the data on these variables are found via the Kolmogorov Smirnov test to be non-normal. Likewise, we can use the Kruskal Wallis test to check for differences in age and race regarding students' perceptions of service quality delivery on the PMB campus.

A range of statistical tests, including the Kruskal Wallis test, the Mann Whitney test and the GAP test, will be applied to test the research questions. In the case of a nonparametric rank test for ordinal variables, it determines whether statistically significant differences exist between two groups of an independent variable (Properly known as "on-rank ANOVA"). This non-parametric alternative to half-way ANOVA is an extension of the Mann-Whitney U test that allows comparisons of more than two independent groups.

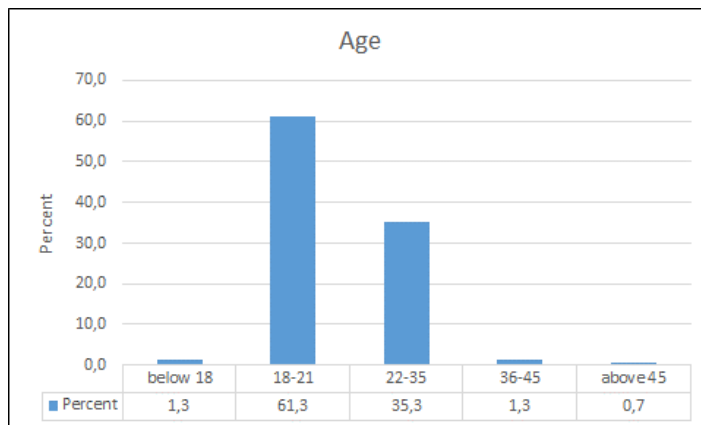
The data quality of the research methodology must have the following characteristics; validity and reliability. Cronbach's Alpha will be calculated for questions that have the

same scale. An internal consistency score of 0.7 or higher indicates a reasonable reliability rate among the questions.

4.2 DESCRIPTIVE ANALYSES

4.2.1 BIOGRAPHICAL INFORMATION

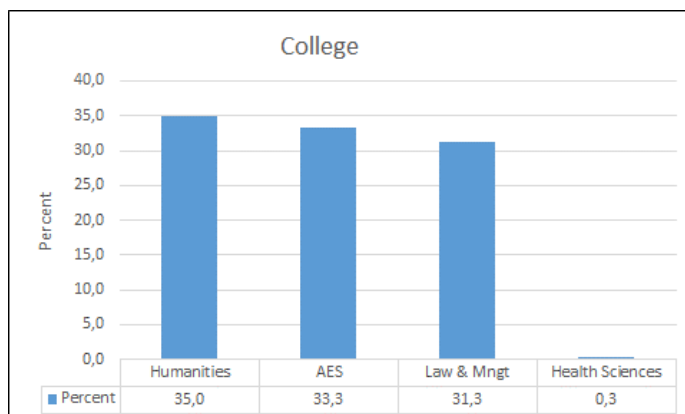
Figure 4.2.1 The age groups of respondents



The modal age group was 18-21 years (61.3%)

Figure 4.1 indicates that most of the respondents (61.3%) were in the age category 18-21 years. This was followed by respondents in the age categories 22-35 (35.5%), 36-45 (1.3%), below 18 (1.3%) and above 45 (0.7%). The findings show that most of the sample group is between 18-21 years (61.3%). The remaining 38.7% are between 22-35, 36-45, above 45 and <18.

Figure 4.2.2 Representation of respondents by College



Based on Figure 4.2 findings, the most representation came from AES (33.3%) and Law and Management (31.3%) Colleges. The students from these colleges were very keen on taking the survey compared to the other Colleges. The findings denote a good representation across the three colleges except for Health Sciences. The slight majority of students from Health Sciences reside on the Pietermaritzburg campus compared to the Medical School campus Durban. The survey was conducted on the PMB campus only.

Figure 4.2.3 Representation by race groups

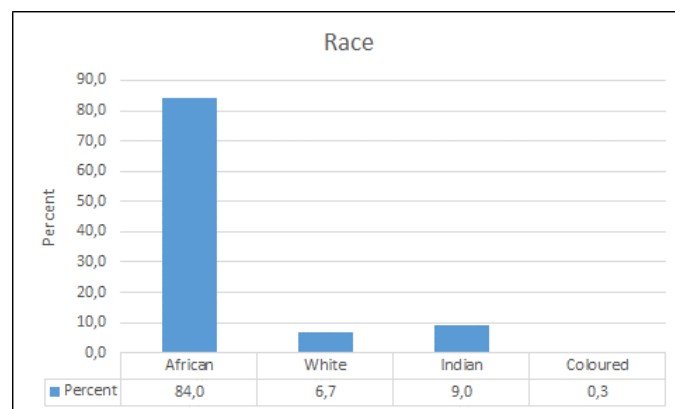


Figure 4.3 depicts the representation by race groups. The modal race group was Black (84%). The findings indicate a high representation of black students due to UKZN having a substantial intake of students from the African race group that is quintile 1 to 3 schools.

Figure 4.2.4 Representation by gender

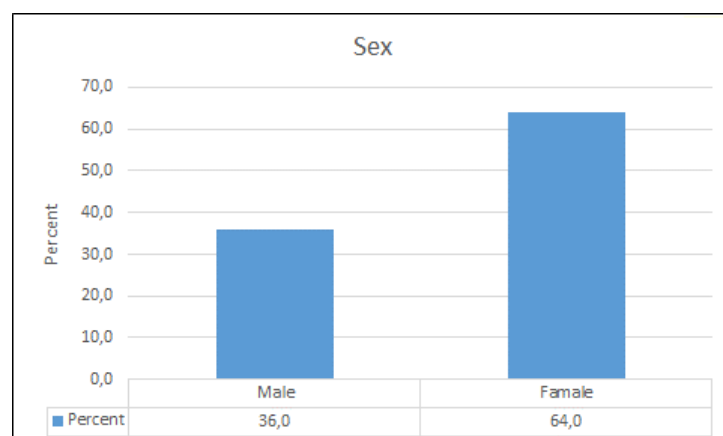


Figure 4.24 indicates that more women (64%) participated in the staff survey than men (36%). The sample used to collect data did not contain an adequate representation of females and males.

Figure 4.2.5 Year of study of respondents

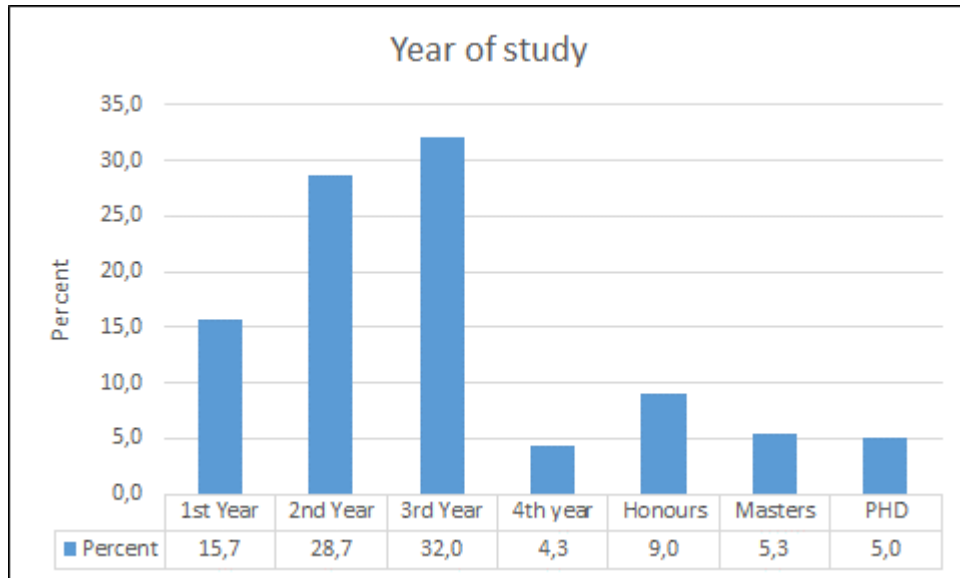
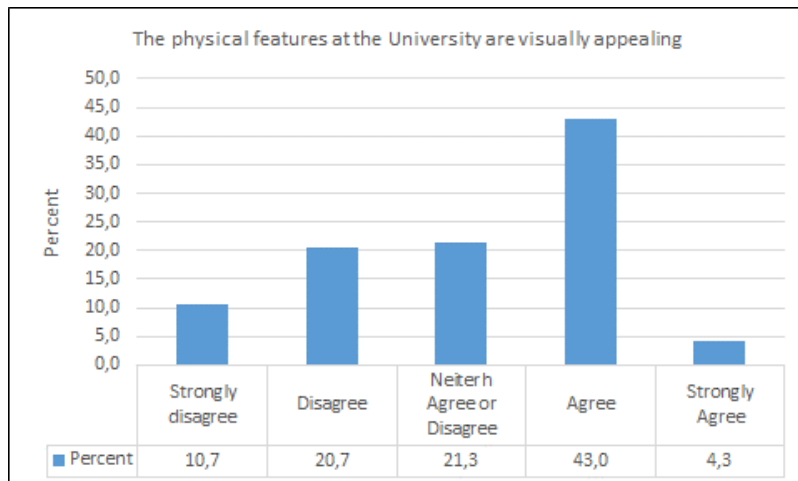


Figure 4.2.5 depicts the year of students from undergrad up onto PhD. The modal year of study was the 3rd year (32%), followed by the second year (28.7%). Figure 4.5 shows that the majority of the respondents, 32% are in their 3rd Year of study. 28.7 respondents are in the second year of study. Respondents in other years of the study constituted 15,7 % in 1st year, 4th year =4.3%, while the remaining 14.3% comprised postgrad students.

4.3 DESCRIPTIVE STATISTICS AND ANALYSES PERCEPTIONS

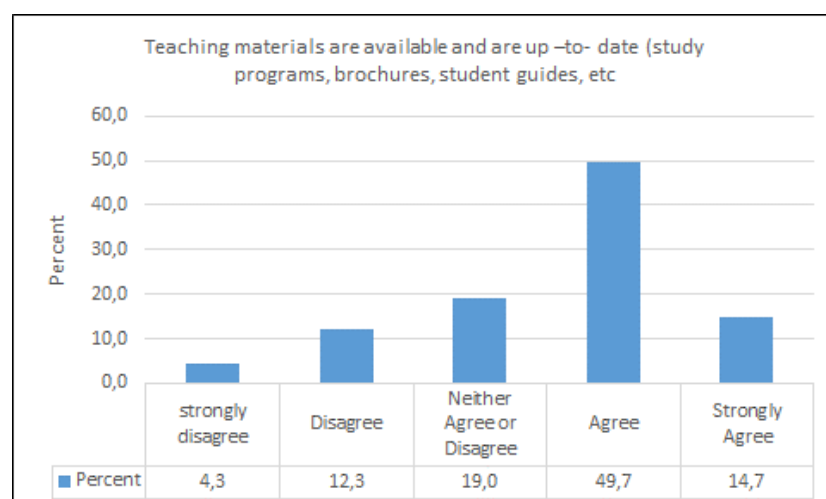
4.3.1 TANGIBLES

Figure 4.3.1 The physical features at the University are visually appealing



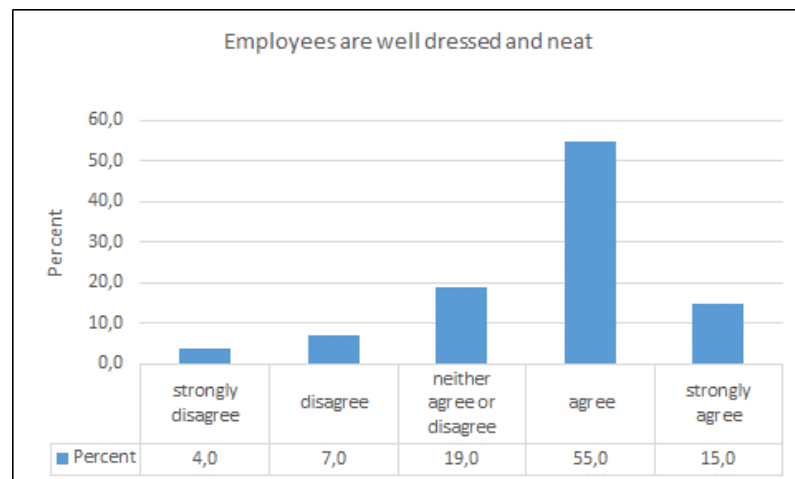
The modal response was agree (43%), whereas 31.4% disagreed and strongly is agreed with this assessment. 47.3% of respondents, 47.3% agreed that the University's physical features are visually appealing, whereas 31.4% disagreed and strongly disagreed with this assessment. We also find that 64.4% of the respondents agreed that teaching materials are available and up-to-date (study programs, brochures, student guides, etc).

Figure 4.3.2 Teaching materials are available and are up to date (study programs, brochures, student guides etc.)



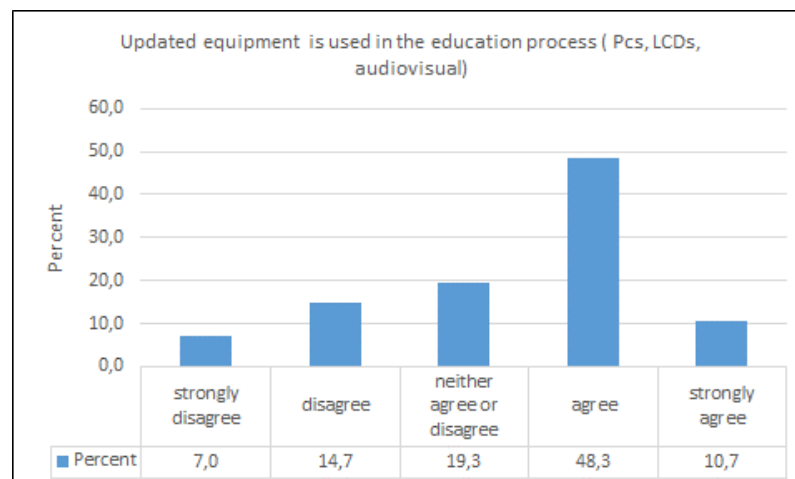
64.4 % students perceived that teaching materials are available and up to date. Additionally, 59% of respondents expressed agreement with and strong agreement with updating equipment.

Figure 4.3.3 Employees are well dressed and neat



As per Figure 4.63, 65%, which is the majority of the respondents, agreed that the employees are well dressed and neat at the institution, with 70% strongly agreeing with that statement. 11% felt that employees were not well dressed and neat. The modal response agree (55%) followed by strongly agree (15%)

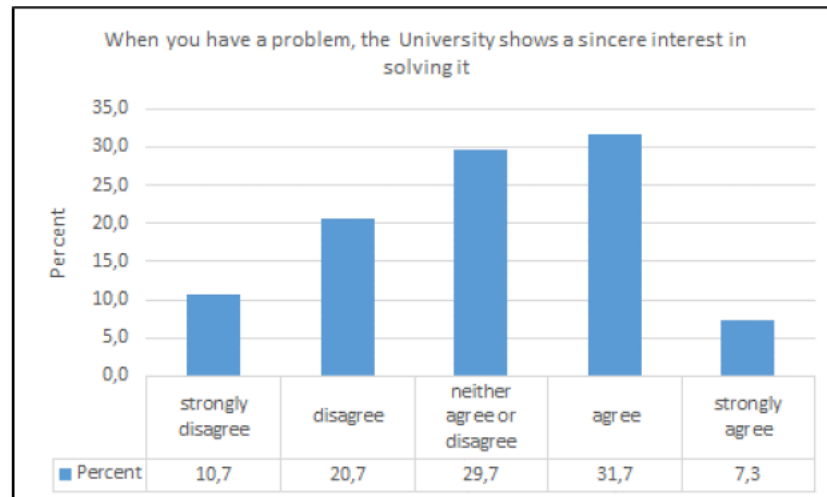
Figure 4.3.4 Updated equipment used in the education process (PCs', LCDs, audiovisual)



Additionally, 59% of respondents expressed agreement with and strong agreement with updating education equipment. 21,7 perceive that the equipment is not updated. The modal response is agree (48.3%), followed by strongly agree (10.7%).

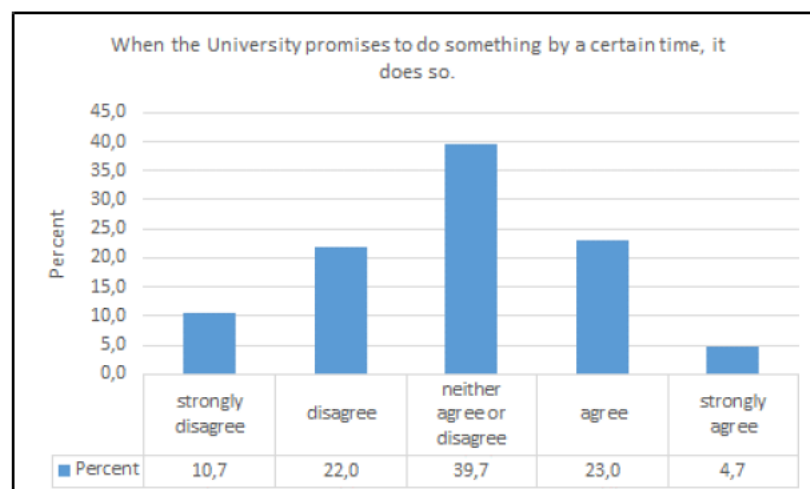
4.4 RELIABILITY

Figure 4.4.1 When you have a problem, the University shows a sincere interest in solving it”.



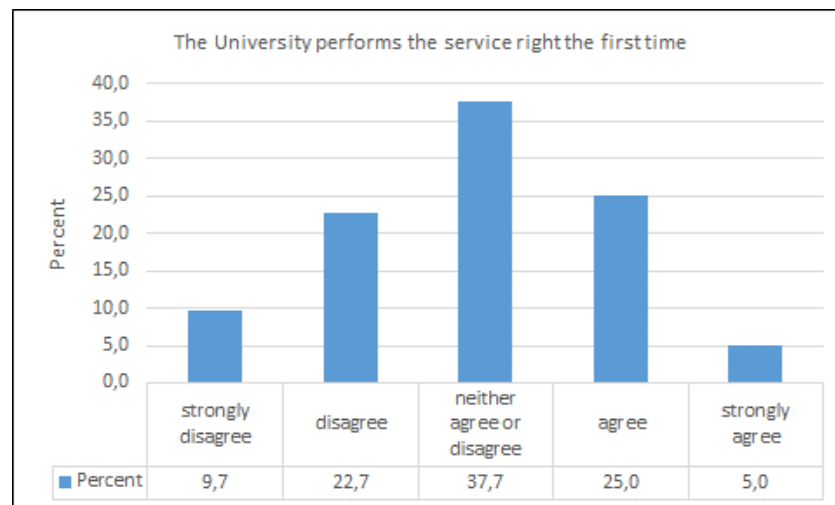
Approximately 39%, three-quarters of the respondents perceive that when you have a problem, the University shows sincere interest in solving it. The research shows that 39,7% of the sample were neutral.

Figure 4.4.2 When the University promises to do something by a specific time, it does so.



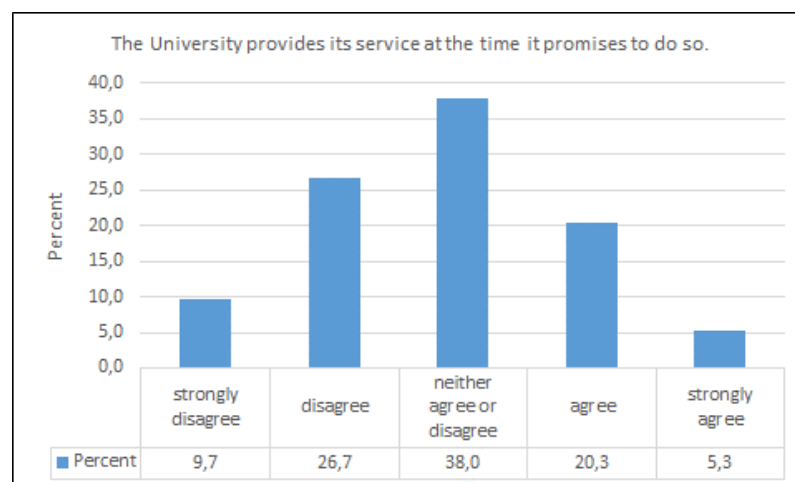
The research shows that 39.7% of the sample were neutral. If the University promises to do something by a specific time, it does so compared to 37.7% of the respondents who were also neutral about when the University performs the service right the first time. We also find that 38% of the sample were neutral when the University provides its service when it promises to do so.

Figure 4.4.3 The University performs the service right the first time.



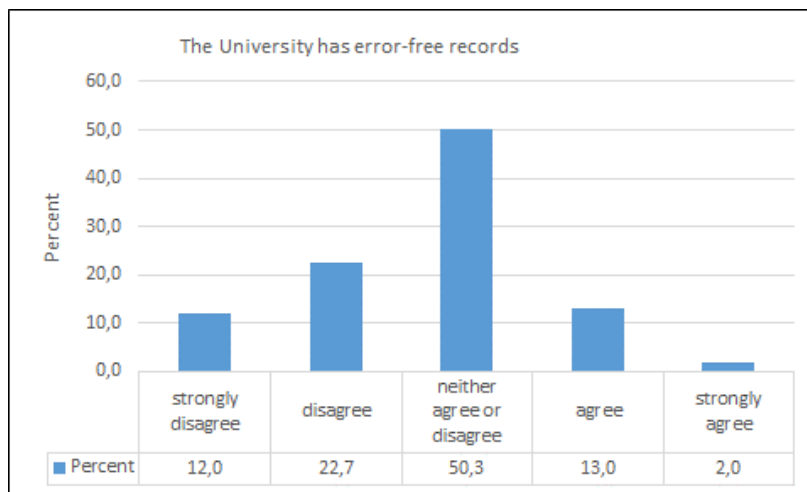
Almost 32.4 % of the students that participated in the survey indicated that the University did not perform the service right the first time. The modal response was neither agreed nor disagree (37.7%), followed by agree (25%). On a positive note, we find that 47% of the sample agreed and strongly agreed that the University tells you exactly when the services are performed. In comparison, 50% of the sample collectively agreed and strongly agreed that employees at the University give you prompt service.

Figure 4.4.4 “The University provides its service at the time it promises to do so”.



We also find that 38% of the sample were neutral when the University provides its service when it promises to do so. As a result, 31.4% of the sample didn't agree with this same perception.

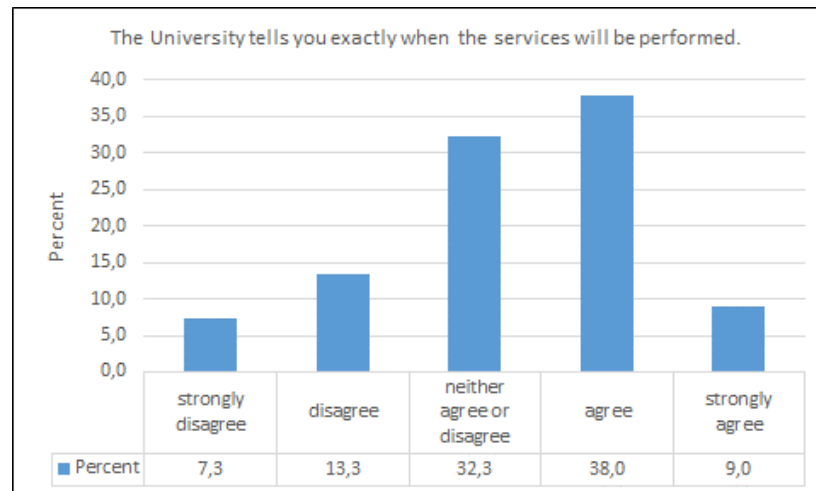
Figure 4.4.5 The University has error-free records



The research shows that 39.7% of the sample were neutral. The study shows that over half the sample, i.e., 50.3%, neither agreed nor disagreed that the University has error-free records.

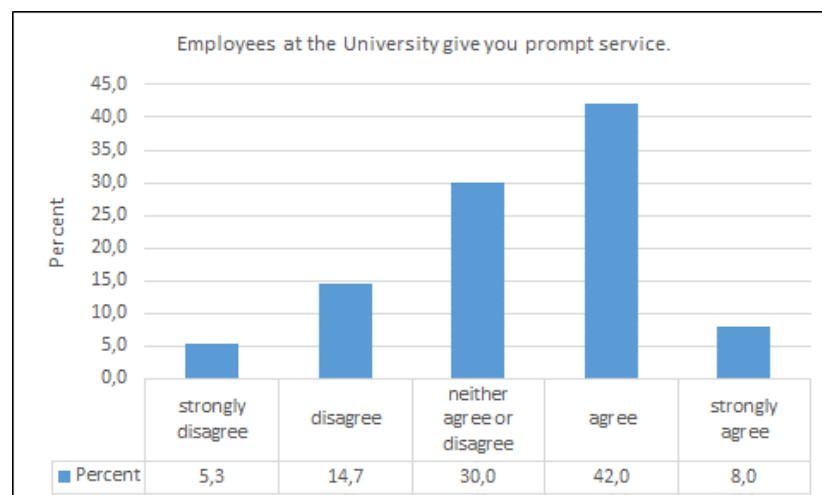
4. 5 RESPONSIVENESS

Figure 4.5.1 “The University tells you exactly when the services will be performed”.



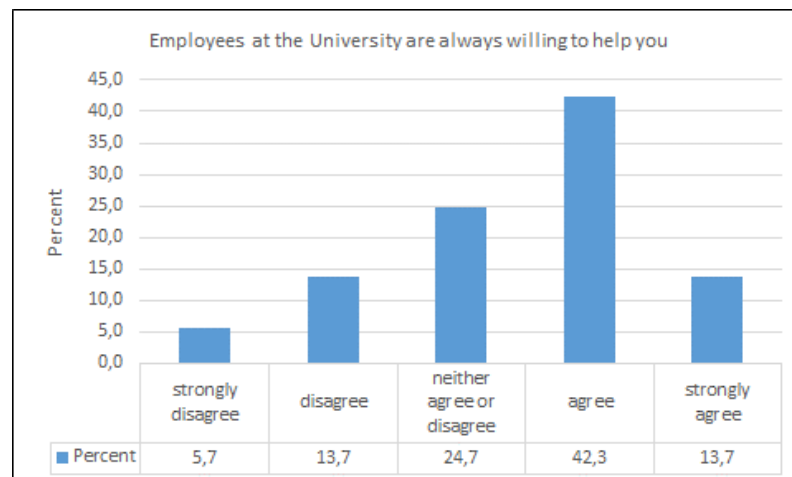
The modal response was agree (38%), and neither agreed nor disagreed (32.3%). 28% of the respondents disagree that the University tells you exactly when the services will be performed. 32,3 % neither agree nor disagree, whilst 38% agreed that the University tells you when the services will be performed.

Figure 4.5.2 Employees at the University give you prompt service.



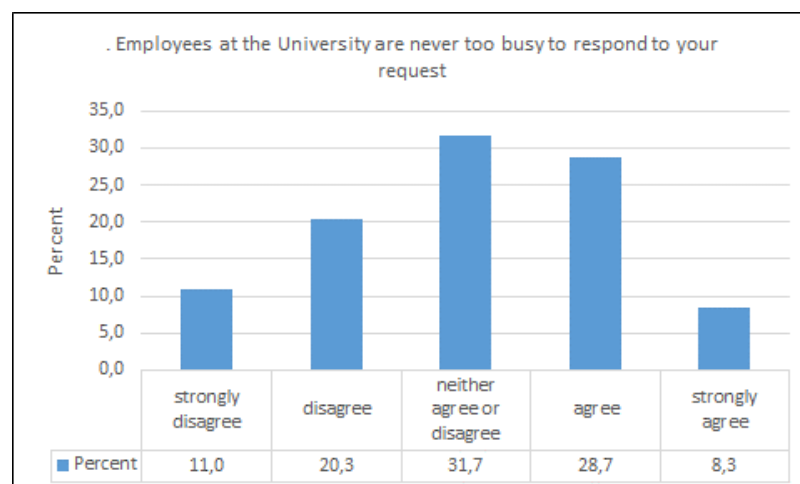
Respondents agreed (42%), followed by those who neither agreed nor disagreed (30%).

Figure 4.5.3 The University's employees are always willing to assist you



Modal response (42.3%) agreed, followed by neither agreeing nor disagreeing (24.7%). It is also seen that 56% of the sample agreed and strongly agreed that employees at the University are always willing to help you.

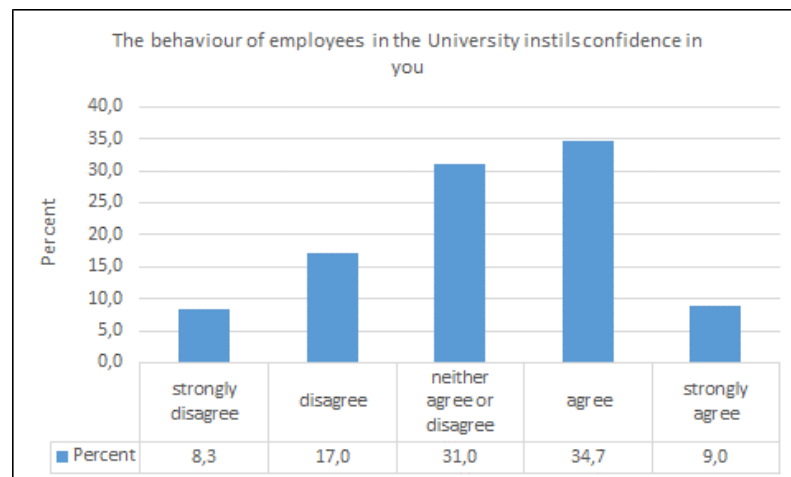
Figure 4.5.4 The University's employees are never too busy to answer your questions



It is also seen that 37% of the sample agreed and strongly agreed that employees at the University are never too busy to respond to your request. This is a point of concern for the university regarding service quality.

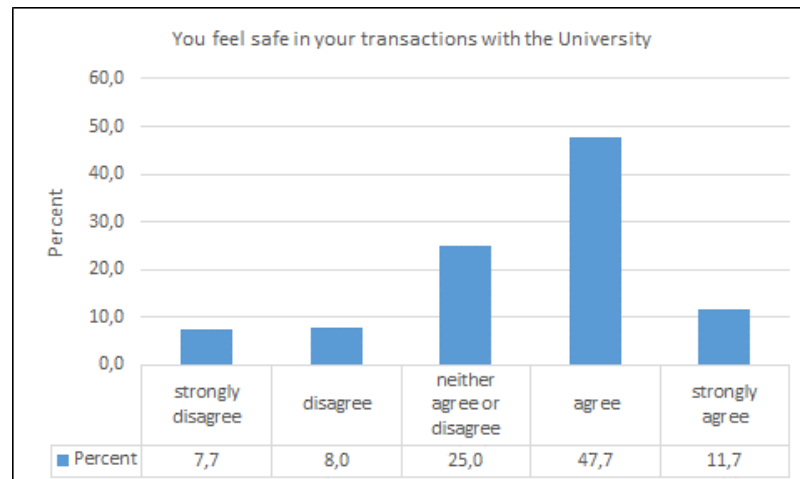
4. 6 ASSURANCE

Figure 4. 6.1 “The behaviour of employees in the University instils confidence in you”.



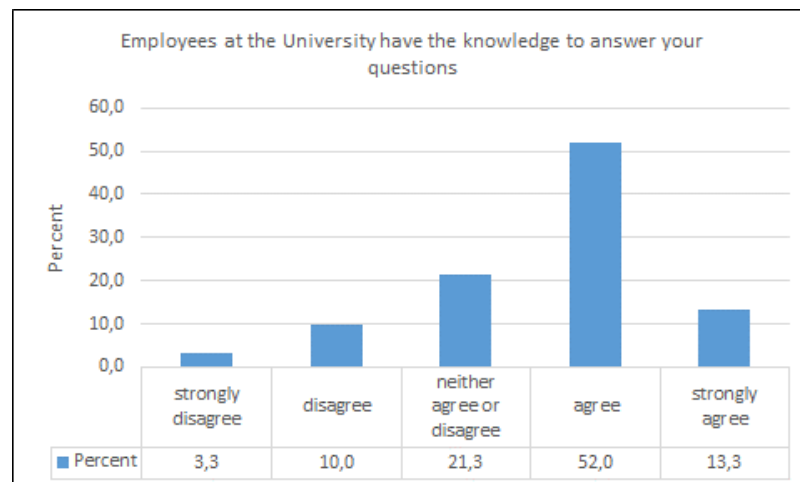
The findings reveal that 43.7% of the sample agreed and strongly agree that the behaviour of employees in the University instils confidence in you.

Figure 4.6.2 You feel safe transacting with the University



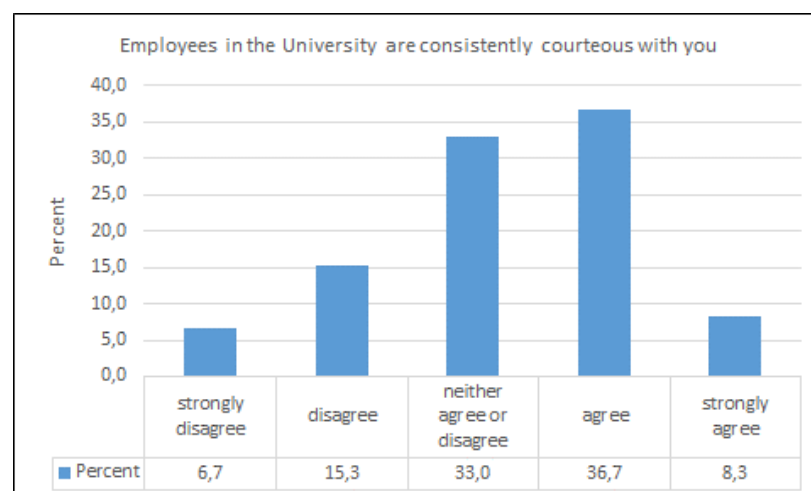
In comparison, 59.4% of the sample collectively agree and strongly agree that you feel safe in your transactions with the University.

Figure 4.6.3 The University has employees who can answer your questions.



The majority of the respondents, i.e.65.3%, agree and strongly agree that employees at the University know to answer your questions.

Figure 4.6.4 The University's employees are always courteous to you



45% of the sample agree and strongly agree that employees at the University are consistently courteous with you.

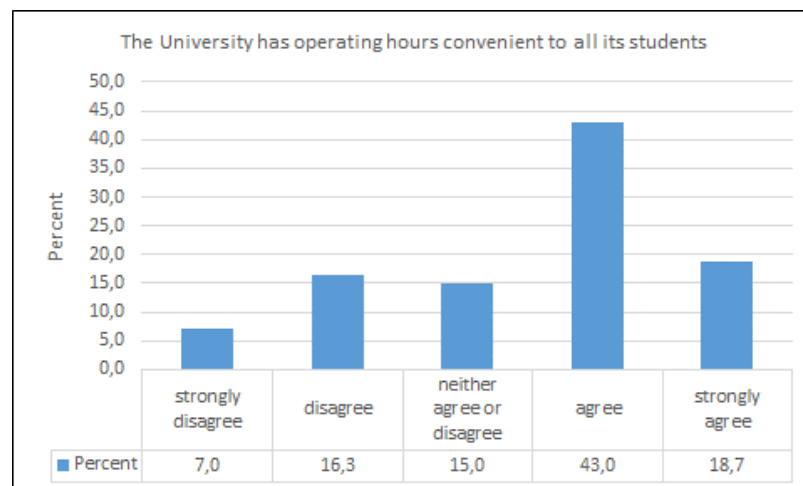
4.7 EMPATHY

Figure 4.7.1 “You are given individual attention by the staff”.



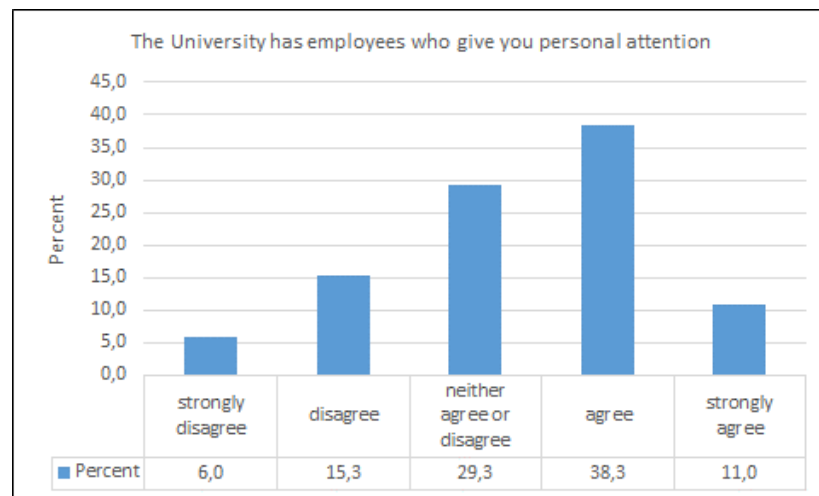
We also find that 54.3% of the sample agree and strongly agree that the staff gives you individual attention.

Figure 4.7.2 “The University has operating hours convenient to all its students”.



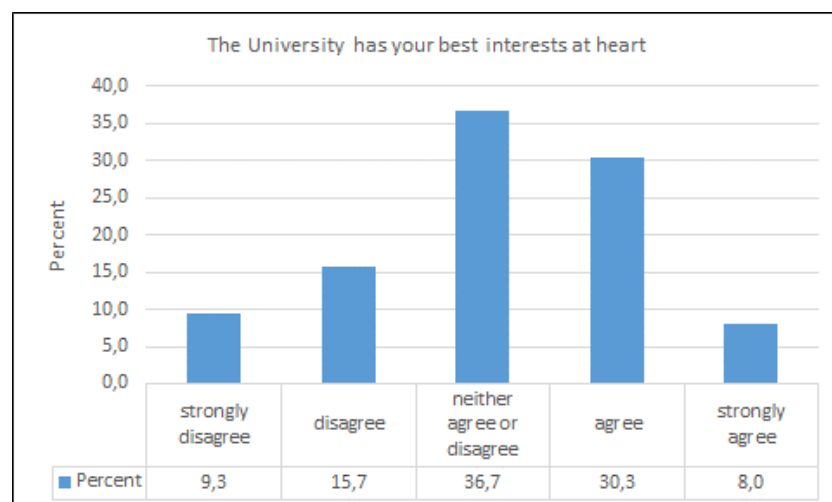
In comparison, 61.7% of the sample agree and strongly agree that the University has operating hours convenient to all its students. The research shows that approximately 40% of the sample agree and strongly agree that the University has employees who give you personal attention. It is a point of concern, which must be an issue that the University management will address.

Figure 4.7.3 “The University has employees who give you personal attention”.



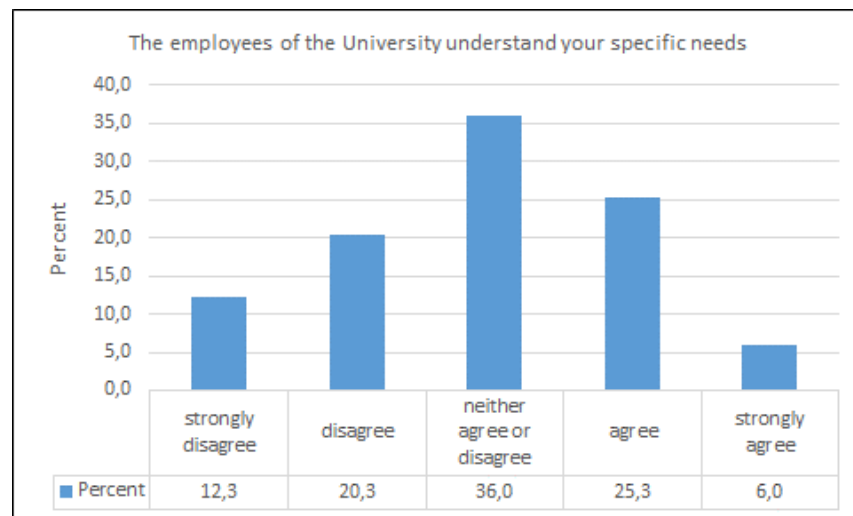
The research shows that 38.3% of the respondents agree and strongly agree compared to 36.7% of them who are neutral when it comes to the University having your best interests at heart.

Figure 4.7.4 The University has your best interests at heart



A similar trend emerges in that 36% of the sample is neutral, and 31.3% of the sample agree and strongly agree that the employees of the University understand your specific needs.

Figure 4.7.5 The University's employees understood your specific needs



The majority responses were agree (25.3%), followed by neither agree nor disagree (36%).

4.8 RELIABILITY

Several reliability coefficients are presented by Coakes and Steed (2003:140). Cronbach's alpha is used in most cases, calculated based on the average correlation of items within a test if the things are standardized. The average covariance between the items is used if the items are not standardized. The reliability test also included Cronbach's alpha calculations in determining if the results were consistent and would generalize with a larger sample size. If we carried out this survey with a larger sample of respondents, we would, in all likelihood, get the same results as we did with a value of 0.7 or higher.

Cronbach's alpha was calculated for all questions on the same scale across all three sections.

Variable	Construct	QUESTION	CRONBACH'S ALPHA
Perceptions	Tangibles	1-4	0.684
	Reliability	5-9	0.847
	Responsiveness	10-13	0.808
	Assurance	14-17	0.799
	Empathy	18-22	0.797
	Overall	1-22	0.923
Expectations	Tangibles	1-4	0.857
	Reliability	5-9	0.924
	Responsiveness	10-13	0.680
	Assurance	14-17	0.912
	Empathy	18-22	0.927
	Overall	1-22	0.935

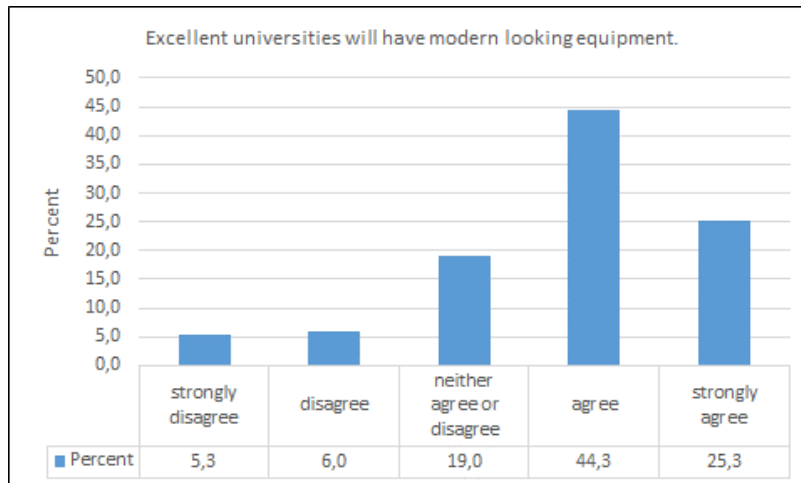
Table: 4.8 Cronbach's alpha calculation for same scale questions

The alpha values seem fine, indicating a good internal consistency.

4.9 DESCRIPTIVE STATISTICS AND ANALYSES EXPECTATIONS

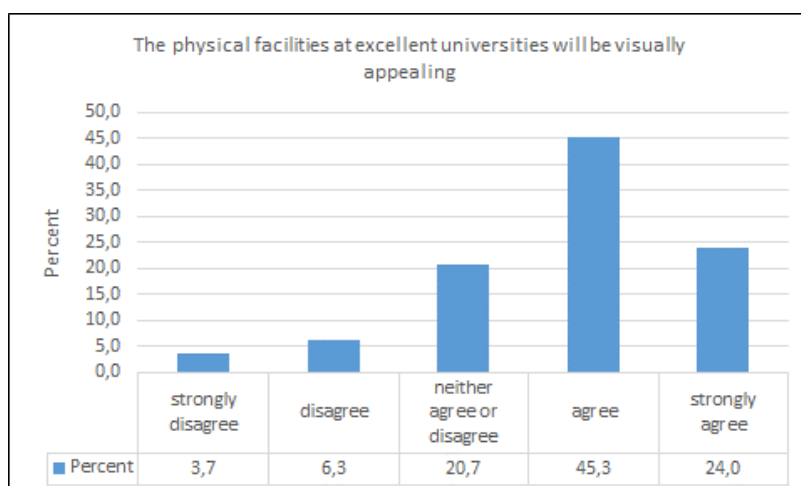
4.9.1 Tangibles

Figure 4.9.1 Excellent universities will have modern-looking equipment.



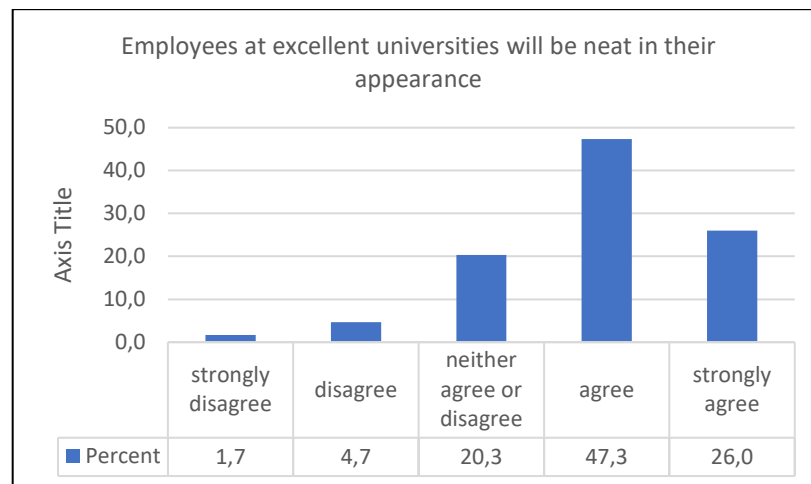
The research shows that 69.6% of the sample agree and strongly agree that excellent universities will have modern-looking equipment. In comparison, 69.3% of the sample agree and strongly agree that the physical facilities at excellent universities will be visually appealing.

Figure 4.9.2 The physical facilities at excellent universities will be visually appealing



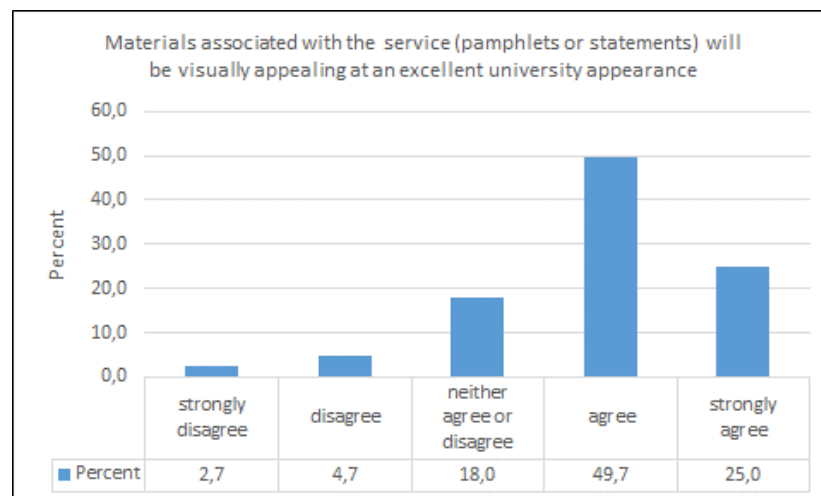
The modal response was agree (45.3%) followed by strongly agree (24%).

Figure 4. 9.3 “Employees at Universities will be neat in appearance”.



The modal response was agree (47.3%), followed by strongly agree (26%).

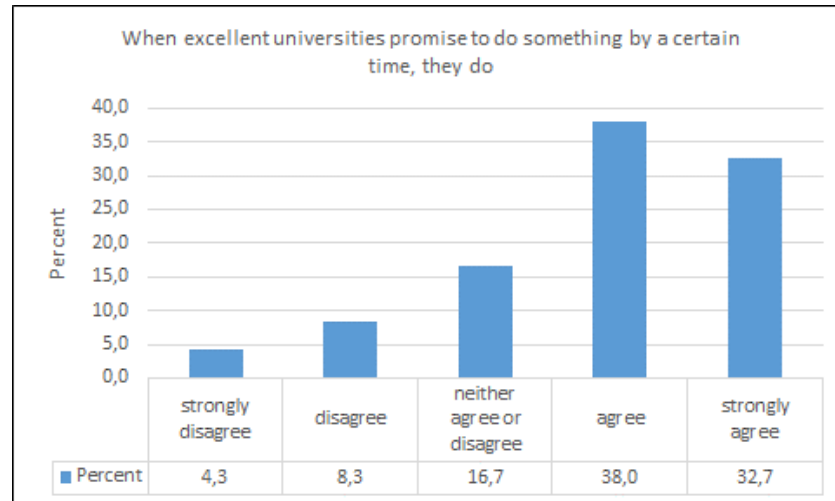
Figure 4.9.4 “Materials associated with the service (pamphlets or statements) will be visually appealing at an excellent university appearance”.



The sample reveals that just under $\frac{3}{4}$ of the sample, i.e., 73.3% agree and strongly agree that employees at excellent universities will be neat in their appearance. 74.7% of the respondents agreed and strongly agreed that materials associated with the service (pamphlets or statements) would visually appeal to an excellent university appearance.

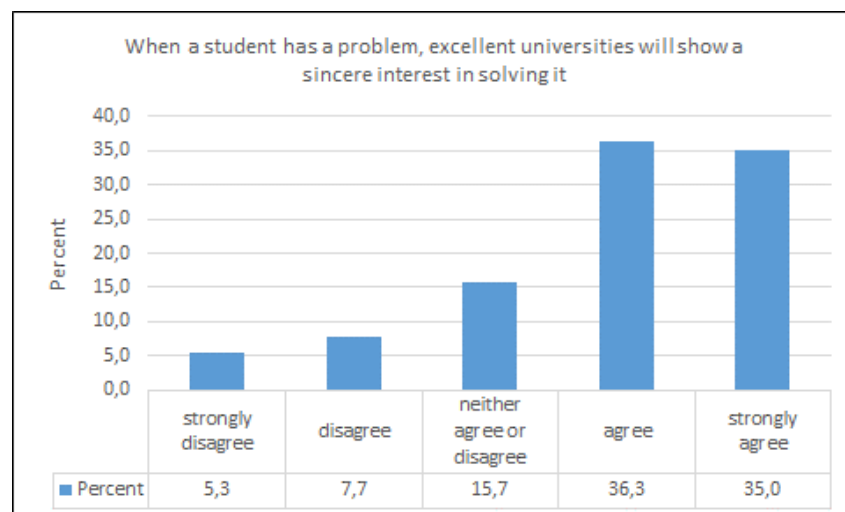
4.10 RELIABILITY

Figure 4.10.1 “When excellent universities promise to do something by a certain time, they do”.



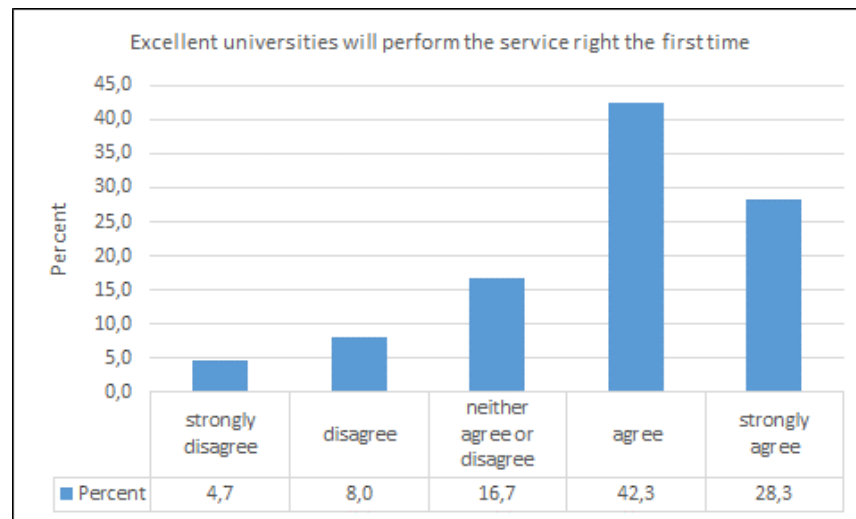
The results reveal that 70.7% of the sample collectively agreed and strongly agreed that when excellent universities promise to do something by a certain time, they do so. The findings show that 71.3% of the sample together agreed and strongly agreed that when a student has a problem, excellent universities will show a sincere interest in solving it, while 70.6% of the sample together agreed and strongly agreed that excellent universities would perform the service right the first time.

Figure 4.10.2 “When a student has a problem, excellent universities will show a sincere interest in solving it”.



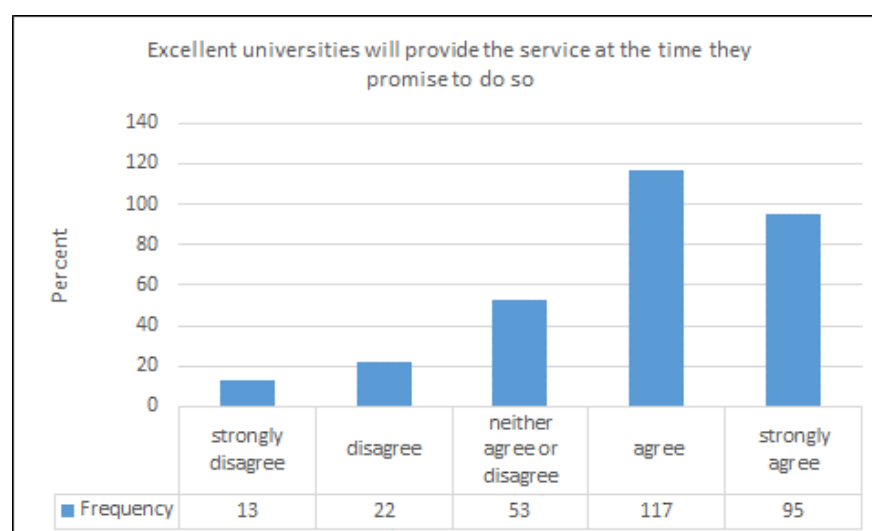
The modal response was agree (36.3%) followed by strongly agree (35%).

Figure 4.10.3 Excellent universities will perform the service right the first time.



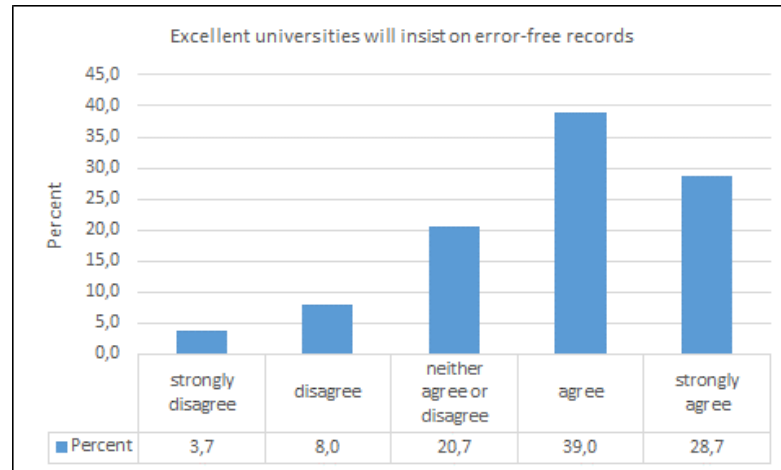
The results reveal that 70.7% of the sample collectively agreed and strongly agreed that when excellent universities promise to do something by a certain time, they do so. The findings show that 71.3% of the sample agreed and strongly agreed that when a student has a problem, excellent universities will show a sincere interest in solving it. In comparison, 70.6% of the sample agreed and strongly agreed that excellent universities would perform the service right the first time. There is a similar trend in that 70.7% of the sample agreed and strongly agreed that excellent universities would provide the service when they promised to do so.

Figure 4.10.4 “Excellent universities will provide the service when they promise to do so”.



The modal response was agree (39%) followed by strongly agree (31.7%).

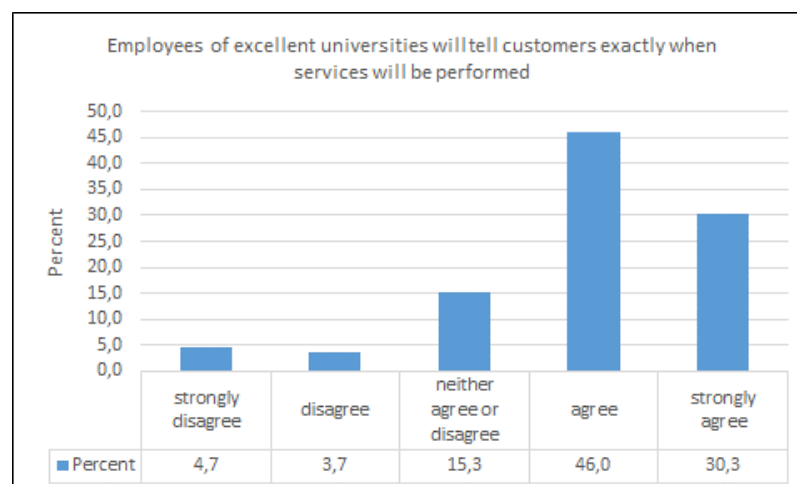
Figure 4.10.5 Excellent universities will insist on error-free records



The responses reveal that 67.7% of the sample agree and strongly agree that excellent universities will insist on error-free records, whereas 76.3% of the sample agreed and strongly agreed that employees of excellent universities would tell customers exactly when services will be performed.

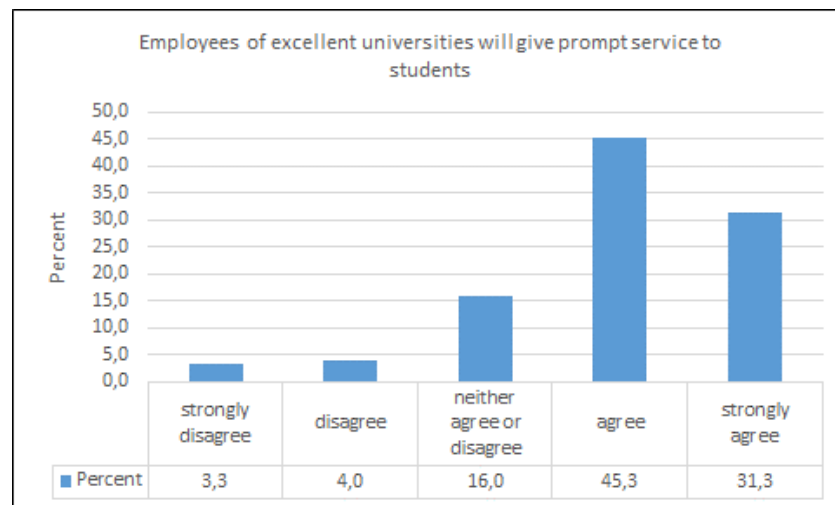
4.11 RESPONSIVENESS

Figure 4.11.1 “Employees of excellent universities will tell customers exactly when services will be performed”.



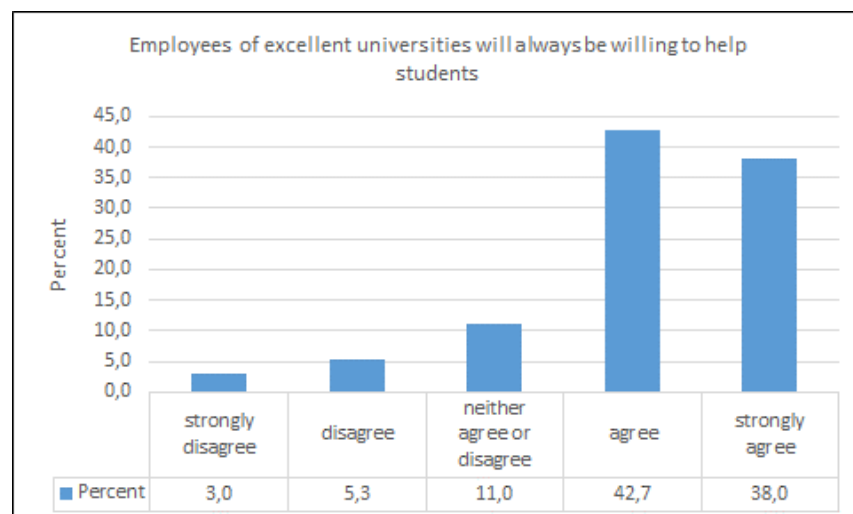
The modal response was agree (46%) followed by strongly agree (30.3%).

Figure 4.11.2 “Employees of excellent universities will give prompt service to students”.



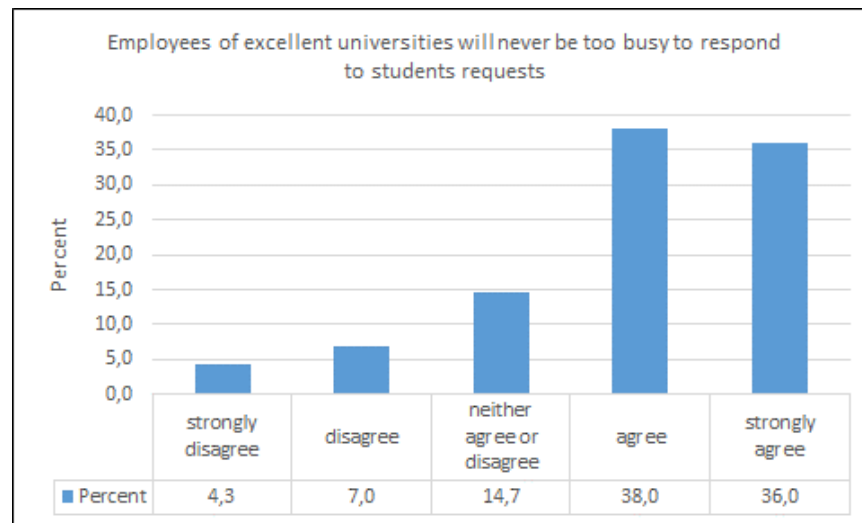
The modal response was agree (45.3%), followed by strongly agree (31.3%).

Figure 4.11.3 “Employees of excellent universities will always be willing to help students”.



The modal response was agree (42.7%) followed by strongly agree (38%).

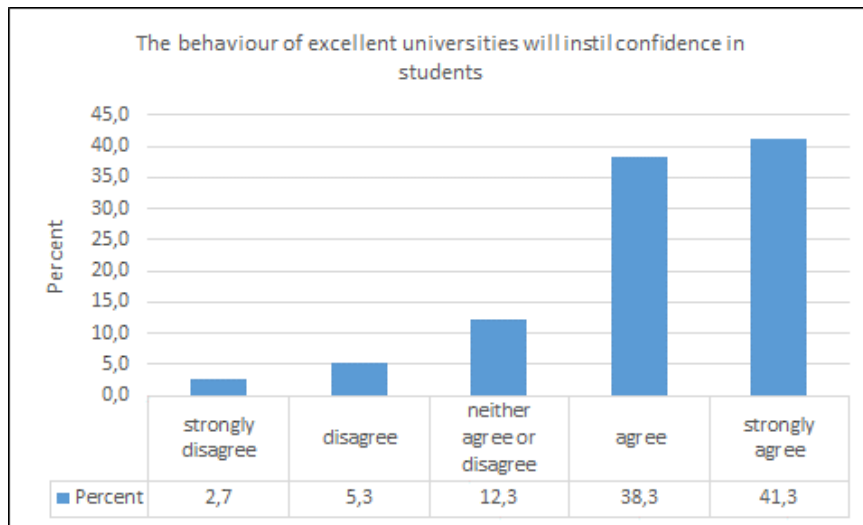
Figure 4.11.4 “Employees of excellent universities will never be too busy to respond to students' requests”.



The modal response was agree (38%) followed by strongly agree (36%).

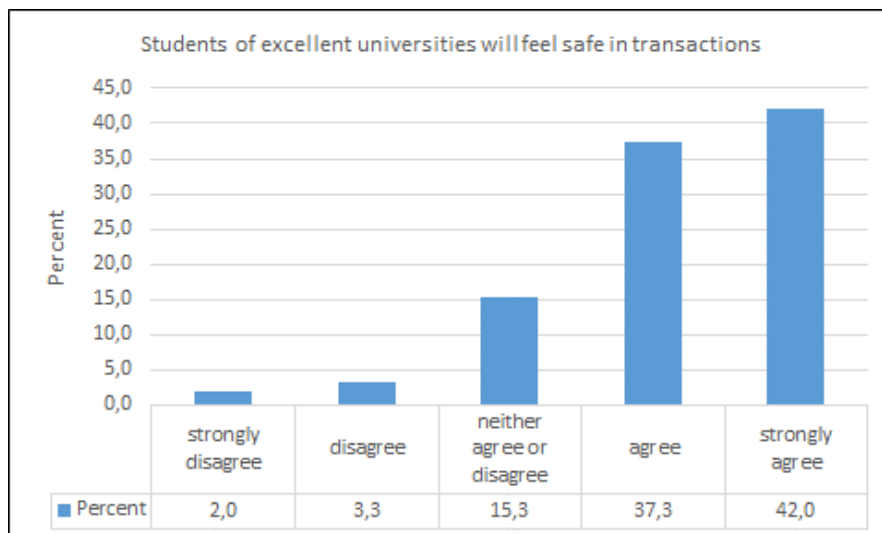
4.12 ASSURANCE

Figure 4.12.1 The behaviour of excellent universities will instil confidence in students.



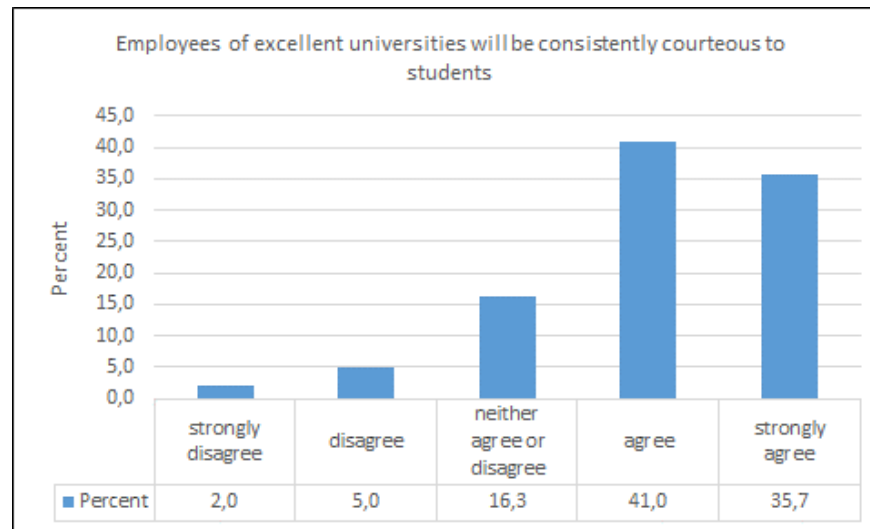
The modal response was agree (38.3%) followed by strongly agree (41.3%).

Figure 4.12.2 Students of excellent universities will feel safe in transactions



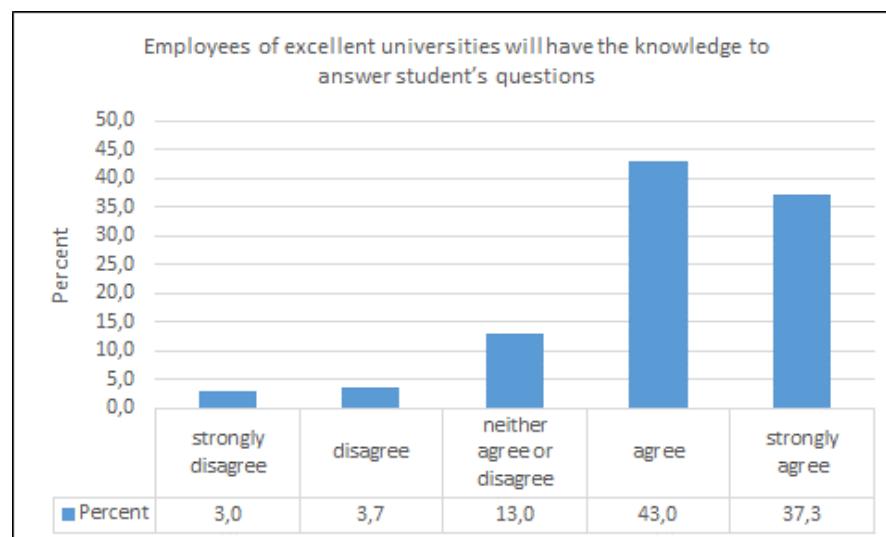
The modal response was agree (37.3%) followed by strongly agree (42%).

Figure 4.12.3 Employees of excellent universities will be consistently courteous to students.



The modal response was agree (41%) and strongly agree (35.7%).

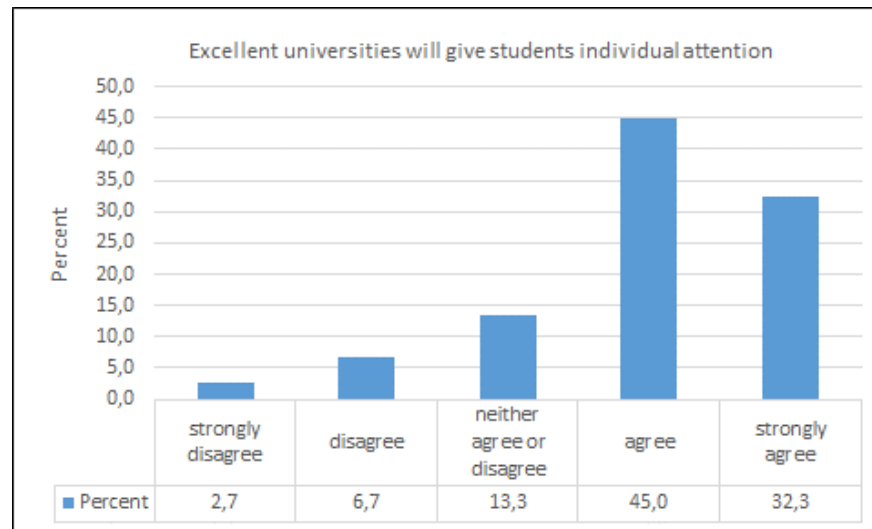
Figure 4.12.4 “Employees of excellent universities will know to answer student's questions”.



The modal response was agree (43%) followed by strongly agree (37.3%).

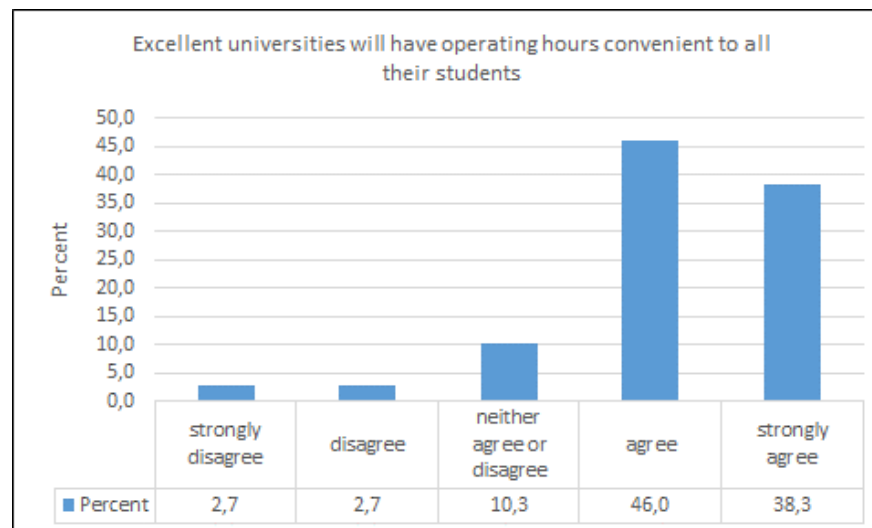
4.13 EMPATHY

Figure 4.13.1 Excellent universities will give students individual attention.



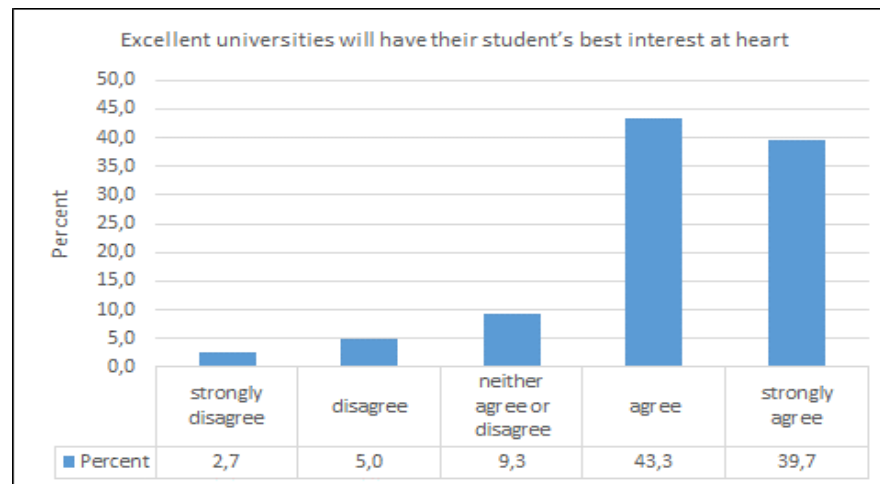
The research shows that 77.3% of the sample were collectively positive. Excellent universities will give students individual attention.

Figure 4.13.2 “Excellent universities will have operating hours convenient to all their students”.



The modal response was agree (46%) followed by strongly agree (38.3%). 84.3% of the respondents agreed and strongly agreed that excellent universities would have operating hours convenient to all their students.

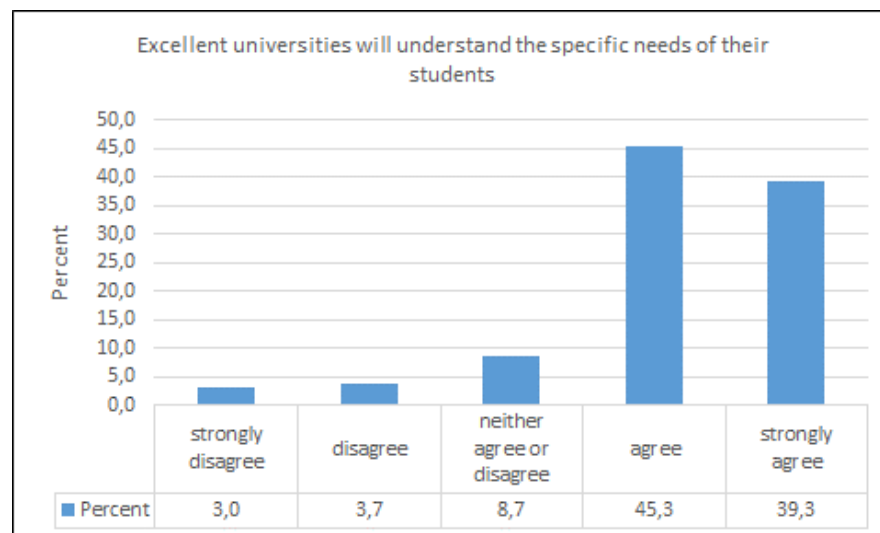
Figure 4.13.3 Excellent universities will have their student's best interests at heart.



The modal response was agreed (43.3%) followed by strongly agree (39.7%).

The findings show that 76.3% of the sample were adamant that excellent universities have employees who give students personal service. In comparison, 83% of the sample clearly stated that excellent universities would have their students' best interests at heart.

Figure 4.13.4 Excellent universities will understand the specific needs of their students.



The modal response was agree (45.3%) followed by strongly agree (39.3%). Finally, we find that 84.6% of the respondent agreed and strongly agreed that excellent universities understand the specific needs of their students.

4.14 DESCRIPTIVE STATISTICS

	Mean	Median	Mode	Std. Deviation	Variance
AGE	2.39	2.00	2	.576	.332
COLLEGE	1.970	2.000	1.0	.8234	.678
RACE	1.26	1.00	1	.626	.392
SEX	1.6400	2.0000	2.00	.48080	.231
YEAR_OF_STUDY	2.9833	3.0000	3.00	1.61402	2.605
T1	3.0967	3.0000	4.00	1.10970	1.231
T2	3.5800	4.0000	4.00	1.02327	1.047
T3	3.7000	4.0000	4.00	.94497	.893
T4	3.4100	4.0000	4.00	1.08281	1.172
R5	3.0433	3.0000	4.00	1.11607	1.246
R6	2.8900	3.0000	3.00	1.02701	1.055
R7	2.9300	3.0000	3.00	1.03052	1.062
R8	2.8500	3.0000	3.00	1.02518	1.051
R9	2.7033	3.0000	3.00	.91183	.831
RE10	3.2800	3.0000	4.00	1.04494	1.092
RE11	3.3267	3.5000	4.00	.99830	.997
RE12	3.4467	4.0000	4.00	1.06659	1.138
RE13	3.0300	3.0000	3.00	1.12546	1.267
A14	3.1900	3.0000	4.00	1.08528	1.178
A15	3.4767	4.0000	4.00	1.05189	1.106
A16	3.6200	4.0000	4.00	.95146	.905
A17	3.2467	3.0000	4.00	1.03087	1.063
E18	3.4233	4.0000	4.00	1.08384	1.175
E19	3.5000	4.0000	4.00	1.17243	1.375
E20	3.3300	3.0000	4.00	1.05426	1.111
E21	3.1200	3.0000	3.00	1.06899	1.143
E22	2.9233	3.0000	3.00	1.08999	1.188
EXT1	3.7833	4.0000	4.00	1.05836	1.120

EXT2	3.7967	4.0000	4.00	.99597	.992
EXT3	3.9133	4.0000	4.00	.89171	.795
EXT4	3.8967	4.0000	4.00	.92131	.849
EXR5	3.8633	4.0000	4.00	1.09636	1.202
EXR6	3.8800	4.0000	4.00	1.13279	1.283
EXR7	3.8167	4.0000	4.00	1.07715	1.160
EXR8	3.8633	4.0000	4.00	1.07790	1.162
EXR9	3.8100	4.0000	4.00	1.05401	1.111
EXRE10	3.9367	4.0000	4.00	1.01130	1.023
EXRE11	4.1400	4.0000	4.00	3.10039	9.612
EXRE12	4.0733	4.0000	4.00	.98549	.971
EXRE13	3.9433	4.0000	4.00	1.08507	1.177
EXA14	4.1033	4.0000	5.00	.99126	.983
EXA15	4.1400	4.0000	5.00	.93272	.870
EXA16	4.0333	4.0000	4.00	.94968	.902
EXA17	4.0800	4.0000	4.00	.95742	.917
EXE18	3.9767	4.0000	4.00	.98286	.966
EXE19	4.1467	4.0000	4.00	.90252	.815
EXE20	3.9800	4.0000	4.00	.96404	.929
EXE21	4.1233	4.0000	4.00	.95804	.918
EXE22	4.1433	4.0000	4.00	.93758	.879

Our considerations will include the sample mean, mode, median, variance, and standard deviation. Median and mode are the two most common responses respondents give when data are arranged (per variable/question) from highest to lowest. Observations vary from one another to a certain degree or quantity, which is called variance. As a result, the average deviation is the square root of the variance. Most of the questions in the table above have modes of "2" and "3", and they can be translated based on the responses provided in the scales of the questions. Because of the low variability among the observations, the standard deviations are consistently around '1', indicating good consistency between the observations. Medians and means are in agreement with modals. The descriptive statistics serve to confirm the graphical statistics.

4.15 HYPOTHESIS TESTING

Before we carry out any hypothesis testing, we test whether the questions/variables follow a Normal distribution or not. Normality implies that if the variables/questions are normally distributed, then parametric tests, for example, the independent sample t-test. Analysis of Variance (ANOVA) and certain parametric hypothesis tests will be permissible to use on the data; however, if the normality assumption is violated then nonparametric tests such as the Mann Whitney U test, Wilcoxon sign rank test and Friedman test, to name a few are allowed on the data to test certain hypotheses and infer results (Field and Miles, 2010). Hence we make use of the Kolmogorov Smirnov test to test for normality on the data:

4.16 KOLMOGOROV SMIRNOV TEST

Hypothesis 0: the variables are distributed normally

H1: the variables tested are not normally distributed

	Test Statistic	Asymp. Sig. (2-tailed)
AGE	.376	.000
COLLEGE	.231	.000
RACE	.499	.000
SEX	.413	.000
YEAR_OF_STUDY	.259	.000
T1	.266	.000
T2	.303	.000
T3	.325	.000
T4	.297	.000
R5	.194	.000
R6	.216	.000
R7	.204	.000
R8	.195	.000
R9	.281	.000
RE10	.225	.000
RE11	.250	.000
RE12	.258	.000
RE13	.176	.000
A14	.209	.000

A15	.284	.000
A16	.309	.000
A17	.218	.000
E18	.246	.000
E19	.282	.000
E20	.231	.000
E21	.205	.000
E22	.201	.000
EXT1	.278	.000
EXT2	.274	.000
EXT3	.272	.000
EXT4	.291	.000
EXR5	.256	.000
EXR6	.256	.000
EXR7	.274	.000
EXR8	.257	.000
EXR9	.248	.000
EXRE10	.288	.000
EXRE11	.387	.000
EXRE12	.277	.000
EXRE13	.261	.000
EXA14	.255	.000
EXA15	.242	.000
EXA16	.253	.000
EXA17	.270	.000
EXE18	.283	.000
EXE19	.279	.000
EXE20	.272	.000
EXE21	.279	.000
EXE22	.286	.000

The data with p-values less than 0.05 are rejected at the 5% significance level as not representing a Normal distribution. The implication for this is that we are required to use as far as the scores are concerned. Whenever necessary, non-parametric statistics tests will be used, such as the Mann-Whitney U test, the chi-square test, and the Kruskal Wallis test. Since we have p-values of less than 0.05 on all these questions, we reject H0 and will use non-parametric tests to analyze them further.

4.17 MANN WHITNEY U TEST

The Mann Whitney test is often called the Wilcoxon rank-sum test. The test aims to check for differences in locations in an independent variable with only two levels, gender, with males and females concerning many separate variables Field and Miles, pg. 467-468, (2010).

H₀: There is no difference in gender concerning the perceptions and expectations of service quality delivery on the PMB campus

H₁: There is a difference in gender concerning the perceptions and expectations of service quality delivery on the PMB campus.

	Z	Asymp. Sig. (2-tailed)
T1	-.638	.523
T2	-1.043	.297
T3	-.002	.998
T4	-.925	.355
R5	-1.278	.201
R6	-2.471	.013
R7	-2.136	.033
R8	-2.496	.013
R9	-2.086	.037
RE10	-1.879	.060
RE11	-.787	.431
RE12	-.932	.351
RE13	-1.898	.058
A14	-1.549	.121
A15	-.833	.405
A16	-.657	.511
A17	-1.549	.121
E18	-.237	.813
E19	-1.702	.089
E20	-.236	.814

E21	-1.055	.291
E22	-1.095	.273
EXT1	-1.481	.139
EXT2	-1.981	.048
EXT3	-1.645	.100
EXT4	-.706	.480
EXR5	-1.205	.228
EXR6	-.496	.620
EXR7	-1.365	.172
EXR8	-1.123	.262
EXR9	-.829	.407
EXRE10	-.865	.387
EXRE11	-1.965	.049
EXRE12	-1.146	.252
EXRE13	-.986	.324
EXA14	-.170	.865
EXA15	-.670	.503
EXA16	-1.793	.073
EXA17	-.824	.410
EXE18	-1.630	.103
EXE19	-.614	.539
EXE20	-1.834	.067
EXE21	-1.379	.168
EXE22	-.219	.827

At the 5% significance level, we will reject H_0 only for p-values less than 0.05 (shaded above) and conclude that for these questions only that there is a difference in gender concerning the perceptions and expectations of service quality delivery on the PMB campus. For the rest of the questions where the p-values are more significant than 0.05, we will accept H_0 . We conclude that there is no difference in gender concerning the perceptions and expectations of service quality delivery on the PMB campus for these questions.

4.18 KRUSKAL WALLIS TEST

The Kruskal Wallis test is a non-parametric test to check for differences in data locations across more than two levels of a variable concerning several other independent variables. It could be thought of as the non-parametric ANOVA Field and Miles (2010). We make use of the Kruskal Wallis test to perform the following hypotheses:

H₀: There is no difference in the age group concerning the perceptions and expectations of service quality delivery on the PMB campus.

H₁: There is a difference in the age group concerning the perceptions and expectations of service quality delivery on the PMB campus.

Test Statistics^b

	Kruskal-Wallis H	df	Asymp. Sig.
T1	10.942	3	.012
T2	3.226	3	.358
T3	7.706	3	.052
T4	5.450	3	.142
R5	7.306	3	.063
R6	4.969	3	.174
R7	1.454	3	.693
R8	2.482	3	.479
R9	.806	3	.848
RE10	.975	3	.807
RE11	2.088	3	.554
RE12	2.122	3	.548
RE13	.298	3	.960
A14	.628	3	.890
A15	2.720	3	.437
A16	.815	3	.846
A17	3.096	3	.377
E18	8.124	3	.044
E19	1.210	3	.751
E20	3.952	3	.267

E21	1.286	3	.733
E22	1.414	3	.702
EXT1	.258	3	.968
EXT2	.907	3	.824
EXT3	.795	3	.851
EXT4	.789	3	.852
EXR5	4.472	3	.215
EXR6	1.796	3	.616
EXR7	2.808	3	.422
EXR8	2.597	3	.458
EXR9	1.293	3	.731
EXRE10	1.614	3	.656
EXRE11	1.699	3	.637
EXRE12	1.693	3	.638
EXRE13	.388	3	.943
EXA14	.121	3	.989
EXA15	.247	3	.970
EXA16	1.697	3	.638
EXA17	1.191	3	.755
EXE18	.570	3	.903
EXE19	.706	3	.872
EXE20	.047	3	.997
EXE21	.977	3	.807
EXE22	2.474	3	.480

Table: 4.18.1

a. Kruskal Wallis Test

b. Grouping Variable: AGE

At the 5% significance level, we will reject H_0 only for p-values less than 0.05 (shaded above) and conclude that for these questions only that there is a difference in the age group concerning the perceptions and expectations of service quality delivery on the PMB campus whilst for the rest of the questions where the p-values are greater than 0.05. We will accept H_0 , we conclude that there is no difference in the age group concerning the perceptions and expectations of service quality delivery on the PMB campus.

H₀: There is no difference in the college group concerning the perceptions and expectations of service quality delivery on the PMB campus

H₁: There is a difference in the college group concerning the perceptions and expectations of service quality delivery on the PMB campus

Test Statistics^b

	Kruskal-Wallis H	df	Asymp. Sig.
T1	10.046	3	.018
T2	2.640	3	.451
T3	2.675	3	.444
T4	7.291	3	.063
R5	14.723	3	.002
R6	9.363	3	.025
R7	3.490	3	.322
R8	4.608	3	.203
R9	4.934	3	.177
RE10	7.640	3	.054
RE11	3.298	3	.348
RE12	4.908	3	.179
RE13	4.915	3	.178
A14	6.607	3	.086
A15	10.251	3	.017
A16	3.867	3	.276
A17	1.195	3	.754
E18	.334	3	.954
E19	5.189	3	.158
E20	.575	3	.902
E21	13.151	3	.004
E22	3.861	3	.277
EXT 1	2.827	3	.419

EXT 2	7.385	3	.061
EXT 3	13.854	3	.003
EXT 4	4.193	3	.241
EXR 5	13.868	3	.003
EXR 6	8.540	3	.036
EXR 7	5.508	3	.138
EXR 8	11.373	3	.010
EXR 9	9.825	3	.020
EXR E10	6.316	3	.097
EXR E11	12.363	3	.006
EXR E12	5.711	3	.127
EXR E13	6.007	3	.111
EXA 14	11.745	3	.008
EXA 15	11.142	3	.011
EXA 16	7.308	3	.063
EXA 17	11.795	3	.008

EXE 18	8.625	3	.035
EXE 19	9.316	3	.025
EXE 20	5.978	3	.113
EXE 21	9.213	3	.027
EXE 22	7.600	3	.055

Table: 4.18.2

a. Kruskal Wallis Test

b. Grouping Variable: COLLEGE

At the 5% significance level, we will reject H_0 only for p-values less than 0.05 (shaded above) and conclude that for these questions only that there is a difference in the college group concerning the perceptions and expectations of service quality delivery on the PMB campus. For the rest of the questions where the p-values are more significant than 0.05, we will accept H_0 . We conclude that there is no difference in the college group concerning the perceptions and expectations of service quality delivery PMB campus for these questions.

H_0 : There is no difference in the race group concerning the perceptions and expectations of service quality delivery on the PMB campus

H_1 : There is a difference in the race group concerning the perceptions and expectations of service quality delivery on the PMB campus

Test Statistics^b

	Kruskal-Wallis H	df	Asymp. Sig.
T1	2.297	3	.513
T2	3.504	3	.320
T3	5.250	3	.154
T4	3.257	3	.354

R5	3.988	3	.263
R6	4.034	3	.258
R7	4.014	3	.260
R8	.673	3	.880
R9	7.437	3	.059
RE10	1.672	3	.643
RE11	9.516	3	.023
RE12	5.637	3	.131
RE13	8.101	3	.044
A14	4.378	3	.223
A15	.416	3	.937
A16	6.715	3	.082
A17	1.617	3	.656
E18	8.328	3	.040
E19	4.248	3	.236
E20	5.302	3	.151
E21	1.233	3	.745
E22	2.918	3	.404
EXT 1	3.246	3	.355
EXT 2	4.007	3	.261
EXT 3	5.241	3	.155
EXT 4	2.061	3	.560
EXR 5	3.103	3	.376
EXR 6	3.808	3	.283
EXR 7	4.032	3	.258

EXR 8	1.743	3	.627
EXR 9	3.041	3	.385
EXR E10	4.245	3	.236
EXR E11	4.103	3	.251
EXR E12	.810	3	.847
EXR E13	2.338	3	.505
EXA 14	.643	3	.886
EXA 15	2.810	3	.422
EXA 16	.984	3	.805
EXA 17	2.003	3	.572
EXE 18	4.074	3	.254
EXE 19	.769	3	.857
EXE 20	5.343	3	.148
EXE 21	3.348	3	.341
EXE 22	3.419	3	.331

Table: 4.18.3

a. Kruskal Wallis Test

b. Grouping Variable: RACE

At the 5% significance level, we will reject H_0 only for p-values less than 0.05 (shaded above) and conclude that for these questions only that there is a difference in the race group concerning the perceptions and expectations of service quality delivery on the PMB campus whilst for the rest of the questions where the p-values are greater than 0.05, we will accept H_0 , and we conclude that for these questions that is no difference in the race group concerning the perceptions and expectations of service quality delivery on the PMB campus.

H_0 : There is no difference in the year of the study group concerning the perceptions and expectations of service quality delivery on the PMB campus.

H_1 : There is a difference in the year of the study group concerning the perceptions and expectations of service quality delivery on the PMB campus.

Test Statistics^b

	Kruskal-Wallis H	df	Asymp. Sig.
T1	23.598	6	.001
T2	9.603	6	.142
T3	5.585	6	.471
T4	21.330	6	.002
R5	24.108	6	.000
R6	34.296	6	.000
R7	15.043	6	.020
R8	17.970	6	.006
R9	10.246	6	.115
RE10	10.259	6	.114
RE11	11.588	6	.072
RE12	11.657	6	.070
RE13	8.747	6	.188
A14	18.261	6	.006
A15	14.212	6	.027

A16	8.427	6	.208
A17	11.379	6	.077
E18	14.438	6	.025
E19	15.230	6	.019
E20	8.838	6	.183
E21	14.994	6	.020
E22	9.247	6	.160
EXT 1	4.560	6	.601
EXT 2	8.351	6	.213
EXT 3	10.095	6	.121
EXT 4	4.001	6	.677
EXR 5	10.440	6	.107
EXR 6	8.158	6	.227
EXR 7	9.311	6	.157
EXR 8	5.849	6	.440
EXR 9	7.669	6	.263
EXR E10	8.637	6	.195
EXR E11	10.956	6	.090
EXR E12	7.872	6	.248
EXR E13	5.108	6	.530

EXA 14	5.282	6	.508
EXA 15	6.015	6	.421
EXA 16	5.724	6	.455
EXA 17	9.025	6	.172
EXE 18	4.141	6	.658
EXE 19	4.993	6	.545
EXE 20	5.236	6	.514
EXE 21	1.740	6	.942
EXE 22	1.805	6	.937

Table: 4.18.4

a. Kruskal Wallis Test

b. Grouping Variable: YEAR_OF_STUDY

At the 5% significance level, we will reject H_0 only for p-values less than 0.05 (shaded above) and conclude that for these questions only that there is a difference in the year of the study group with respect to the perceptions and expectations of service quality delivery on the PMB campus whilst for the rest of the questions where the p-values are greater than 0.05, we will accept H_0 , and we conclude that for these questions that is no difference in the year of the study group with respect to the perceptions and expectations of service quality delivery on the PMB campus.

4.19 GAP ANALYSIS BETWEEN EXPECTATIONS AND PERCEPTIONS OF SERVICE QUALITY

The GAP analysis is the difference between the mean Perception scores and the mean Expectation scores. The tables below highlight the results:

Table: 4.19

Factor	Question	Perception means	Expectation mean	The difference in mean scores	GAP analysis
Tangibles	1	3.0967	3.7833	-0,687	
	2	3.5800	3.7967	-0,217	
	3	3.7000	3.9133	-0,213	
	4	3.4100	3.8967	-0,487	-0.401
Reliability	5	3.0433	3.8633	-0,820	
	6	2.8900	3.8800	-0,990	
	7	2.9300	3.8167	-0,887	
	8	2.8500	3.8633	-1,013	
	9	2.7033	3.8100	-1,107	-0.963
Responsiveness	10	3.2800	3.9367	-0,657	
	11	3.3267	4.1400	-0,813	
	12	3.4467	4.0733	-0,627	
	13	3.0300	3.9433	-0,913	-0.752
Assurance	14	3.1900	4.1033	-0,913	
	15	3.4767	4.1400	-0,663	
	16	3.6200	4.0333	-0,413	
	17	3.2467	4.0800	-0,833	-0.706
Empathy	18	3.4233	3.9767	-0,553	
	19	3.5000	4.1467	-0,647	
	20	3.3300	3.9800	-0,650	
	21	3.1200	4.1233	-1,003	
	22	2.9233	4.1433	-1,220	-0.815

Factor	Score	p-value
Tangibles	-0,401	.000
Reliability	-0,963	.000
Responsiveness	-0,752	.000
Assurance	-0,706	.000
Empathy	-0,815	.000

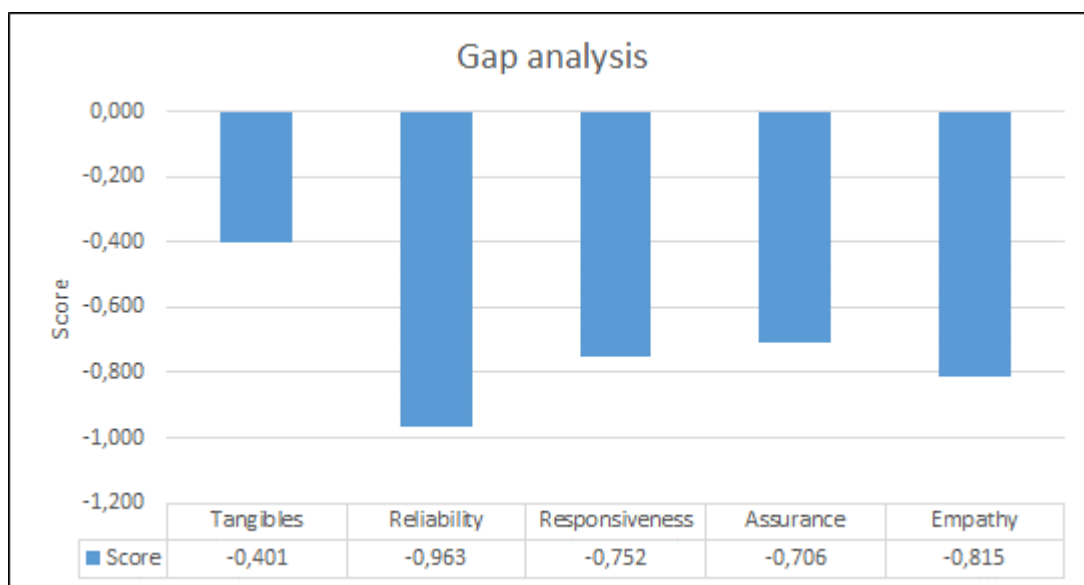


Table 4.19.5

The gap analysis shows that the areas of attention are:

1. Reliability
2. Empathy
3. Responsiveness

This will serve as an area of attention. It is recommended that UKZN focus on these areas to improve its customers' service quality. The one-sample t-test was also carried out to test if the mean scores are different from 0, and since the p-values are all less than 0.05, we

reject H_0 and conclude that the mean score is not equal to zero gap between the perceptions and expectations.

4.19 SUMMARY OF CHAPTER FOUR

This chapter presents the responses extracted from the UKZN students using the primary data summary. In this section, we describe in detail the results of the statistical analysis of the survey questionnaire. Descriptive and inferential statistics were used to answer the critical research questions and hypotheses. A range of statistical tests, including the Kruskal Wallis test, the Mann Whitney test and the GAP test, was applied to test the research questions. To verify the objectives of this study, chapter five discusses the results.

CHAPTER 5

DISCUSSION OF FINDINGS

5.1 INTRODUCTION

Chapter four provided in detail the research methodology. This chapter explains the results collected from the study. Three hundred students from the University of KwaZulu-Natal, Pietermaritzburg campus participated in the survey. The discussions in this chapter summarise the research study and put proposals forwards. The discussion will centre around the research objectives of the study. The researcher will begin with the student perceptions of the five service quality variables (“tangibles, reliability, responsiveness, assurance, and empathy”), then proceeds into the student expectations and focus on the gaps.

The discussion will then follow on how the study objectives were achieved.

5.2 RESEARCH OBJECTIVE ONE

TO IDENTIFY THE PERCEPTIONS OF SERVICE QUALITY ON THE UKZN PMB CAMPUS

After examining the wide range of instruments used to measure service quality per the literature review, the best instrument to use was the SERVQUAL instrument. The scale was used to test the five dimensions: tangibles, reliability; responsiveness; empathy; and assurance.

From the literature review, Chapter 2, perceptions: Knowing and understanding Customer perceptions are critical to any organisation's service delivery role. According to Cant and Van Heerden (2013:60), perception is how people perceive something; they interpret, select and organize information. They state that higher education institutions that keenly welcome student perceptions should gain much more than those that don't. Students' perceptions continue to be an essential element for enhancing service quality in higher education institutions, and it is not possible to improve services without considering student perceptions (Aghamolaei, Fazel, 2010).

As per the questionnaire on perceptions, Factor 1: Tangibles

The findings reveal that 47.3% (Fig. 4.3.1) agreed that the University's physical features are visually appealing, while 31.4% disagreed and strongly disagreed with this perception.

We also find that 64.4% (Fig. 4.3.2) of the respondents agreed that “teaching materials are available and up-to-date”(“study programs, brochures, student guides”) etc. In comparison, 70% of the sample agreed and strongly agreed that employees at the institution are well dressed and neat.

The sample also reveals that 59% (Fig. 4.3.4) of the respondents agreed and strongly agreed that updated equipment(PCs’, LCDs, audiovisual) is used in the education process.

In comparison, just under 40%, i.e., 39% (Fig. 4.10.2) collectively agreed and strongly agreed that the University shows a sincere interest in solving it if you have a problem. It is a cause for concern, as 31.4% (Fig. 4.10.2) of the sample collectively disagreed and strongly disagreed with this self-same perception. The research shows that 39.7% (Fig 4.10.2) of the sample were neutral.

As per the questionnaire Factor 2: Reliability

The findings reveal that if the University promises to do something by a specific time, it does so compared to 37.7% (Fig. 4.4.1) of the respondents who were also neutral about when the University performs the service right the first time. We also find that 38% (Fig. 4.44) of the sample were neutral when the University provides its service when it promises to do so.

The research shows that just over half the sample, i.e., 50.3% (Fig 4.4.5) , neither agreed nor disagreed that the University has error-free records.

As per the questionnaire Factor 3: Responsiveness

The findings reveal that on a positive note, we find that 47% (Fig. 4.4.5) of the sample agreed and strongly agreed that the University tells you exactly when the services will be performed, while 50% (Fig. 4.5.2) of the sample collectively agreed and strongly agreed that employees at the University give you prompt service.

56% (Fig 4.5.3) of the sample agreed and strongly agreed that employees at the University are always willing to help you. It is also seen that 37% (Fig. 4.53)of the sample agreed and

strongly agreed that employees at the University are never too busy to respond to your request. This is a point of concern for the University in terms of service quality.

As per the questionnaire Factor 4: Assurance

The findings reveal that 43.7% (Fig. 4.6.1) of the sample agreed and strongly agree that the behaviour of employees in the University instils confidence in you. In comparison, 59.4% (Fig. 4.6.2) of the sample collectively agree and strongly agree that you feel safe in your transactions with the University.

The majority of the respondents, i.e., 65.3% (Fig 4.6.3), agree and strongly agree that employees at the University have the knowledge to answer your questions and 45% (Fig 4.6.4) of the sample agree and strongly agree that employees at the University are consistently courteous with you.

We also find that 54.3% (Fig 4.7.1) of the sample agree and strongly agree that the staff gives you individual attention.

In comparison, 61.7% (Fig 4.7.2) of the sample agree and strongly agree that the University has operating hours convenient to all its students. The research shows that approximately 40% (Fig 4.7.3) of the sample agree and strongly agree that the University has employees who give you personal attention. This is a point of concern, which must be an issue that the University management will have to address.

The research shows that 38.3% (Fig 4.7.4) of the respondents agree and strongly agree compared to 36.7% of them who are neutral when it comes to the University having your best interests at heart. A similar trend emerges in that 36% of the sample is neutral, and 31.3% (Fig 4.7.5) of the sample agree and strongly agree that the employees of the University understand your specific needs.

5.3 RESEARCH OBJECTIVE TWO

TO MEASURE AND COMPARE STUDENTS' EXPECTATIONS AND PERCEPTIONS AT THE UKZN, PMB CAMPUS.

The literature review highlights the importance of student expectations and perceptions in the role of service quality delivery. Students' expectations and perceptions are closely connected to students' satisfaction. When a higher Education institution is knowledgeable

about student expectations and perceptions, it will assist them in service delivery and creating value offerings. Sahney, Banwer, & Karunes (2004), Also, students must be listened to because their expectations and perceptions will affect the institution's sustainability. Better service delivery will result in positive student perceptions Dursan, Oskaybas & Gokmen (2013:1133-1151).

SERVQUAL measured and identified five dimensions of quality: “tangibles, reliability, responsiveness, empathy, and assurance”. In order of highest to lowest scores, the following was revealed when the service quality dimensions were ranked (Table 4.19)

1. Tangibles came up on top (m=3,7000), which means that the students perceive that the University has exceptional facilities and a favourable learning environment.
2. Assurance followed with (m=3,6200), which means that students perceive that the University offers assurance.
3. Empathy followed with (m=3,5000), which means that students perceive that the University does offer empathy.
4. Responsiveness was next with (m=3.3276), which means that the students perceive that the University is meeting the responsiveness variable.
5. Reliability came up as number five (m=3,0433), which means that the students perceive that the University is meeting the reliability variable.

The tangibles and assurance variables were rated top of the list, and this tells us that students perceive this positively. Followed by empathy and responsiveness, Reliability came up as the lowest variable. Research by Zeithaml et al. (1995) concluded that the variable that impacted customers the most was reliability, which concurs with this study. According to the services marketing literature, this was the area that organisations failed in. it is evident that UKZN has been unable to deliver dependable and accurate services.

The mean scores for the service quality dimensions for expectations were arranged from highest to lowest revealed the following (Table: 4.19)

1. Empathy came up on top (m=4.1467), which means the students were empathetic.
2. Assurance was next with (m=4.1400), which means that students expect the University to offer more assurance.

3. Responsiveness followed with ($m=4.1400$), which means that students expect the University to be more responsive.
4. Tangibles were followed with ($m=3.9133$), which means that the students expect the university to have a more up to date, appealing campus.
5. Reliability came up as number five ($m=3.8800$), which means they expect the University to be more reliable in all their dealings with students.

5.4 RESEARCH OBJECTIVE THREE

To identify the gaps in the university's service delivery on the UKZN, Pmb Campus.

A literature review published by Zeithaml et al. (2006) notes that the customer's expectations are their standards during the service experience, while customer perceptions are their authentic experience. The Gap Model is the instrument in service quality literature used to compare customers' expectations and perceptions. The difference between expectations and perceptions in customer satisfaction literature is known as the disconfirmation paradigm. The SERVQUAL Gap Model detects five gaps between the expectations of service quality and the perception of the service received. According to Miremadi (2011), higher education institutions need to understand customer expectations and manage the service gaps accordingly. According to Niteacki & Hernon (2000), this gap arises from a customer-oriented measuring service quality. The other gaps also contribute to the perceived service quality envisaged by customers.

This study aims to ascertain any gaps between customer expectations and perceptions on the UKZN PMB campus. Higher education institutions face significant financial constraints; therefore, students' perceptions and expectations are met, and gaps in service quality are identified and rectified. When service quality gaps are closed, there will be service delivery improvement. The level of service quality is usually high when customers' perceptions is met. This study will utilise the SERVQUAL instrument.

The gap analysis shows that the areas of attention in this study are:

1. Reliability
2. Empathy
3. Responsiveness

This is an area of attention that UKZN must focus on these to improve its customers' service quality. The one-sample t-test was also carried out to test if the mean scores are different from 0, and since the p-values are all less than 0.05, we reject H_0 and conclude that the mean score is not equal to zero; there is a gap between the perceptions and expectations.

Reliability is a critical dimension to all organisations' service delivery process, and therefore, UKZN has to pay special attention to this. (Parasuraman et al., 1988) defines reliability as a significant factor to service delivery. Customer service-related matters must be performed correctly, and services must be offered on time; records should be error-free. UKZN has to deliver on service promises. According to Zeithaml et al. (1990 p.15), an organization is reliable when delivering service quality promises. Reliability is one of the 1st dimensions of SERVQUAL. Higher education institutions must perform services accurately and on time. Consistent and error-free services will lead to positive perceptions and enhance service quality amongst the student body. Customers will gravitate toward institutions that maintain their promises and fulfil their service terms. Reliability is one dimension of service quality. Reliability is critical to both the teaching & learning (academic) component and support sector (non-academic) at higher education institutions.

5.5 SUMMARY OF CHAPTER FIVE

Chapter five presented the findings related to the research questions and objectives. This chapter presents the goals, results, strategies, and recommendations related to the empirical data. A description of descriptive and inferential statistics is offered, including SERVQUAL model variables. Conclusions and recommendations are outlined in chapter six.

CHAPTER 6

RECOMMENDATIONS AND CONCLUSIONS

6.1 INTRODUCTION

This final chapter will discuss the recommendations and conclusions of this research study. The study's central research question measured the service quality delivery on the Kwazulu-Natal Pietermaritzburg campus.

This study aimed to determine what consumers expect and perceive about the service quality at the PMB campus. Students' complaints, and the researcher, as a student, also experienced poor service quality delivery, which was the motivation for this study. The organization's management and staff should also be aware of student expectations and perceptions regarding service quality delivery. Chapter five of the report explains in detail the research objectives. Those discussions will support the researcher in making reasonable recommendations and conclusions in this chapter. Herewith are the research objectives.

- To identify the perceptions of service quality on the UKZN, PMB campus
- To measure and compare the expectations and perceptions of students on the PMB campus groups of students at UKZN, PMB campus
- To identify the gaps in the University service delivery on the UKZN, PMB campus

6.2 RECOMMENDATIONS

The current study examined the impacts of service delivery gaps at the university and presented valuable findings.

It's recommended that the University of KwaZulu Pietermaritzburg campus prioritize reliability, empathy, and assurance in improving the quality of its services. The issue of service quality for any institution is pertinent and the engine room for any institution. Happy customers result in a profitable and viable institution. It is consistent with UKZN, where its customers are the students to achieve institutional goals; UKZN strives to establish a value-driven organisational culture. The guiding values are Respect, Excellence, Accountability, Client Orientation, Honesty, and Trust, abbreviated as R.E.A.C.H.T. These values form the most fundamental pillars of the institution's moral fabric.

“Respect: UKZN undertakes to promote mutual respect, courtesy, and inclusiveness”.

“Excellence: UKZN undertakes to display quality, leadership and energy in all that it does”.

“Accountability: UKZN promises to be responsible and accountable for all its stakeholders behaviour”.

“Client Orientation: UKZN undertakes to satisfy the needs of all its clients, stakeholders and partners consistently”.

“Honesty: UKZN promises to deliver with integrity – steadfastly and with adherence to good governance”.

“TrustT: The ‘T’ symbol after reacht refers to the principle of ‘trust’ that underpins all other institutional values. The implicit trust enjoyed by every member of UKZN and their well-defined actions that embrace the R.E.A.C.H.T values is the important ingredients of the moral fibre of the Institution”. (Vision & Mission – University of KwaZulu-Natal, 2022).

University management must ensure that the R.E.A.C.H.T values that encompass the institution's moral fibre is practised.

6.2.1 RELIABILITY

The dimension reliability shows the most significant gaps between respondents' perceptions and expectations where the expectations have exceeded the perceptions. It tells us that there is room for improvement to ensure that the institution delivers its promised services. Reliability is the firm's capability to provide services with accuracy and dependability (Lee, Choi, Kim and Hyun, 2014). Reliability is an essential dimension in service quality delivery Wilson et al., (2008:86).

The researcher recommends that the University reassess its relationship with its customers since trust needs to be re-built to instil confidence in the customers. This can only be done by ensuring every promise made to customers must be a promise that is fulfilled. The areas that need attention are problem-solving for customers and keeping timeous and reliable error-free records.

Thus, a recommendation to improve service delivery could be to allow for a "hot-seat" to address all manner of student problems by staff. It could also be done through a student "hotline" or an application to log and address these problems expeditiously. It is also recommended that there be an audit of all the university's records to ensure they are entirely error-free. Finally, the University needs to implement the promise delivery principle and bring swift answers to customers. It highlights the need for a paper trail and more effective communication with customers.

6.2.2 EMPATHY

Another area of attention is empathy. The dimension empathy shows the most significant gaps between respondents' perceptions and expectations where the expectations have exceeded the perceptions. It tells us that there is room for improvement to ensure that the institution delivers its promised services.

- The University needs to be more effective in understanding its customers' needs and more streamlined requirements to be outworked through more convenient operating hours.
- Another way of solving this issue could be to assign student mentors to undergraduates and note the customers' problems and issues. The mentors can then relay information to management to find relatively easy solutions. It also calls for more effective communication, conducted through roadshows, webinars, and student help facilities.

6.2.3 RESPONSIVENESS

The other factor which needs attention is that of responsiveness by the University.

The dimension responsiveness shows the most significant gaps between respondents' perceptions and expectations where the expectations have exceeded the perceptions.

It tells us that there is room for improvement to ensure that the institution delivers on the services they have promised to deliver.

- Responsiveness can be improved through more prompt reaction time and the removal of red tape was necessary to assist customers better. The most effective methods include a reference number to every query given and every promise made to create a culture of accountability and responsibility. There is no such thing as a query being too small to follow-up. Every query needs a proper response.
- The mentality of promise-keeping to customers needs to be taught to the staff of UKZN. Therefore, it is recommended that staff undergo re-training on executing service delivery properly. This can be done through service delivery education, short courses, seminars and webinars to staff. Similar principles such as UBUNTU and BATHOPELE can be re-branded so that UKZN has a matching set of service delivery principles. "Batho Pele" means "People First" in Sotho and is an initiative to get public servants to be service-oriented, strive for excellence in service delivery, and commit to continuous improvement.

6.2.4 TANGIBLES

The improvement of tangibles such as buildings, environment, equipment and learning technologies should be ongoing. First impressions are lasting; hundreds of students and staff move through campus through college and university campuses every day.

- Keeping buildings, floors, and facilities clean is essential for your institution's health and positive image. Universities are designed for teaching and learning. Clean, nice-looking facilities are a vital component of a learning environment.
- The appearance of staff and the appropriate dress code is important.

6.3 LIMITATIONS OF THE STUDY

The current study's limitations only focused on PMB, and the findings cannot be generalised to the university. These findings are unique to the PMB campus, one of five campuses. The study was limited to the PMB campus because it is here that the researcher observed the many student complaints.

6.4 RECOMMENDATIONS FOR FUTURE RESEARCH

- An avenue for further research is to carry out a GAP analysis on all five campuses at UKZN and possibly make this a longitudinal study to observe the improvement of service delivery over time. By obtaining data from a broader spectrum, a more cohesive analysis can be made (Lavrakas, Shuttles, Steeh, and Fienberg, 2007).
- As a measure of service quality, RATER is an essential tool and future researchers should consider using this tool.
- To gain a better understanding of service delivery on all five campuses, researchers should replicate this study.

6.5 CONCLUSION

The overall results indicate that student perceptions about service quality and satisfaction are not satisfactory. This study also confirms that SERVQUAL is suitable to measure and evaluate service quality. For the University of KwaZulu-Natal to attract the best students and become a university of choice, it must strategically provide the best quality service. When students seek out prospective institutions, they also consider the Universities' rankings. Overall excellent service quality will lead to superior rankings. Universities' strategies must include superior service quality. UKZN cannot afford to compromise on quality. Poor service quality has been found to affect the funding and viability of university institutions by reducing the institution's popularity and, therefore, the number and standard of applicants; however, the effect is indirect and relatively slow. Suppose student dissatisfaction becomes substantial in subsequent

years. It will result in fewer applications as the reputation for poor quality grows, even as existing students are likely to be restricted from reapplying.

(Heck, 2000) contends that higher education institutions are where people are qualified and trained, so it's important for the service quality to be satisfied, as it could affect other sectors. Higher education institutions should continually focus on maintaining and improving customer services. It tells us that service quality needs to be improved to gain a competitive edge over other institutions; UKZN needs to welcome new ways to enhance the quality of service. They need to be innovative, which will most certainly create value for the students and the employees. Better quality services will positively affect student perceptions and produce greater satisfaction levels. Continuous benchmarking against other leading Universities will lead to a competitive edge. Using all available opportunities to communicate and reinforce service standards such as meetings and training programs, desk signs, wall posters, and performance evaluation, appraisal, and reward systems is another way to clarify the service role.

Higher education institutions must invariably adapt their processes similar to that of the business sector to continue to measure service quality to remain competitive.

Students are the customers and stakeholders in a higher education context; they are paying customers and deserve excellent service delivery from the inception of application, enrollment, and the entire time at the institution until graduation.

6.6 SUMMARY OF CHAPTER SIX

Through this research, it was evident that there are gaps in service quality delivery on the University of KwaZulu Pietermaritzburg Campus. This study aimed to determine what consumers expect and perceive about the service quality at the PMB campus. Students' complaints, and the researcher, as a student, also experienced poor service quality delivery, which motivated her to carry out this study. The organization's management and staff should also be aware of student expectations and perceptions regarding service quality delivery. Recommendations are provided on how to address this problem.

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APPENDIX 1

QUESTIONNAIRE

This survey forms part of the Masters in Commerce in Management at UKZN

This survey deals with students' opinions towards service quality delivery on the University of KwaZulu-Natal Pietermaritzburg campus.

STUDENT'S PERCEPTIONS AND EXPECTATIONS OF SERVICE QUALITY DELIVERY ON THE KWAZULU-NATAL PMB CAMPUS

DEMOGRAPHIC INFORMATION

AGE

Below 18 ☐ 18-21 ☐ 22-35 ☐ 36-45 ☐ Above 45 ☐

COLLEGE

☐ Humanities ☐ Agriculture ☐ Law & Management ☐ Health Sciences
☐ Engineering

RACE

☐ African ☐ Coloured ☐ White ☐ Indian

SEX

☐ Male ☐ Female

YEAR OF STUDY

☐ 1st Yr ☐ 2nd Yr ☐ 3rd Yr ☐ 4th Yr ☐
☐ Honors ☐ Masters ☐ PHD

PERCEPTIONS

The following statements relate to your feelings about the University of KwaZulu-Natal Pietermaritzburg campus. Would you please show how you think PMB possesses the following features? I am interested in the number that best shows your perceptions about UKZN PMB's services. Please tick (x) the appropriate box.

Statement		Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Neither Agree or Disagree	Agree	Strongly Agree
Factor 1: Tangibles						
1	The physical features at the University are visually appealing					
2	Teaching materials are available and up to date (study programs, brochures, student guides, etc.)					
3	Employees are well dressed and neat					
4	Updated equipment is used in the education process (PCs', LCDs, audiovisual)					
Factor 2: Reliability						
5	When you have a problem, the University shows a sincere interest in solving it.					
6	When the University promises to do something by a certain time, it does so.					
7	The University performs the service right the first time.					

8	The University provides its service at the time it promises to do so.					
9	The University has error-free records					
Factor 3: Responsiveness						
10	The University tells you exactly when the services will be performed.					
11	Employees at the University give you prompt service.					
12	Employees at the University are always willing to help you.					
13	Employees at the University are never too busy to respond to your request.					
Factor 4: Assurance						
14	The behaviour of employees in the University instils confidence in you.					
15	You feel safe in your transactions with the University					
16	Employees at the University know to answer your questions.					

17	Employees in the University are consistently courteous with you					
Factor 5: Empathy						
18	The staff gives you individual attention					
19	The University has operating hours convenient to all its students					
20	The University has employees who give you personal attention.					
21	The University has your best interests at heart					
22	The employees of the University understand your specific needs.					

EXPECTATIONS

The following statements relate to your feelings about the University of KwaZulu-Natal Pietermaritzburg campus. Would you please show how you think PMB possesses the following features? I am interested in the number that best shows your perceptions about UKZN PMB's services. Please tick (x) the appropriate box.

Statement		Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Neither Agree or Disagree	Agree	Strongly Agree
Factor 1: Tangibles						
1	Excellent universities will have modern-looking equipment.					
2	The physical facilities at excellent universities will be visually appealing					
3	Employees at excellent Universities					

	will be neat in their appearance.					
4	Materials associated with the service (pamphlets or statements) will be visually appealing at an excellent university.					
Factor 2: Reliability						
5	When excellent universities promise to do something by a certain time, they do.					
6	When a student has a problem, excellent universities will show a sincere interest in solving it.					
7	Excellent universities will perform the service right the first time.					
8	Excellent universities will provide the service at the time they promise to do so.					
9	Excellent universities will insist on error-free records					
Factor 3: Responsiveness						
10	Employees of excellent universities will tell customers exactly when services will be performed.					
11	Employees of excellent universities will give prompt service to students.					
12	Employees of excellent universities will always be willing to help students.					
13	Employees of excellent universities will never be too busy to respond to students' requests.					

Factor 4: Assurance						
14	The behaviour of excellent universities will instil confidence in students.					
15	Students of excellent universities will feel safe in transactions					
16	Employees of excellent universities will be consistently courteous to students.					
17	Employees of excellent universities will have the knowledge to answer student's questions.					
Factor 5. Empathy						
18	Excellent universities will give students individual attention.					
19	Excellent universities will have operating hours convenient to all their students.					
20	Excellent universities will have employees who give students personal service.					
21	Excellent universities will have their student's best interest at heart.					
22	Excellent universities will understand the specific needs of their students.					
SUGGESTIONS:						

THANK YOU FOR TAKING THE TIME TO COMPLETE THIS SURVEY

APPENDIX 2



22 February 2022

Shamladevi Naidoo (992262280)
School of Management, IT & Governance
Pietermaritzburg Campus

Dear S Naidoo,

Protocol reference number: HSS/1821/018M

Project title: Service Quality Delivery: Student perceptions and expectations of service quality delivery on the PMB Campus of the University of KwaZulu-Natal

Amended title: Service quality delivery at the Pietermaritzburg campus of the University of KwaZulu-Natal

Approval Notification – Amendment Application

This letter serves to notify you that your application and request for an amendment received on 22 February 2022 has now been approved as follows:

- Change in title

Any alterations to the approved research protocol i.e. Questionnaire/Interview Schedule, Informed Consent Form; Title of the Project, Location of the Study must be reviewed and approved through an 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.

All research conducted during the COVID-19 period must adhere to the national and UKZN guidelines.

Best wishes for the successful completion of your research protocol.

Yours faithfully



Professor Dipane Hlalele (Chair)

/dd

Humanities & Social Sciences Research Ethics Committee
UKZN Research Ethics Office Westville Campus, Govan Mbeki Building
Postal Address: Private Bag X54001, Durban 4000
Tel: +27 31 260 8350 / 4557 / 3587

Website: <http://research.ukzn.ac.za/Research-Ethics/>

Founding Campus:

Edgewood

Howard College

Medical School

Pietermaritzburg

Westville

INSPIRING GREATNESS