

**UNIVERSITY OF KWAZULU-NATAL**

**Customer Service Quality at Durban University of Technology (DUT)  
Business Studies Unit (BSU)**

**By**

**Alex Mlungisi Jwara  
213544288**

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Graduate School of Business & Leadership**

**Supervisor: Mr. Peter Raap**

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## DECLARATION

I, Alex Mlungisi Jwara, 213544288, declare that:

- (i) The research reported in the dissertation/ thesis, except where otherwise indicated, is my original research.
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## ABSTRACT

The level of expectation and perceptions from students within South African universities has increased dramatically and therefore requires universities to plan ahead and provide quality service. On the other hand, sponsors for universities are shopping around for best universities that provides quality programmes for their students. Therefore, this suggests that universities must at all times satisfy students needs to be a leader in the market. This paper seek to establish the overall customer service quality at Durban University of Technology (DUT), Business Studies Unit (BSU). Using a quantitative research design and convenience sampling technique, SERVQUAL dimensions of service quality (tangibles, responsiveness, empathy, assurance and reliability) were introduced to establish the student perception and expectations towards the university. The data was collected from 106 students using Mann-Whitney and Kruskal Wallis test.

The results and discussion were presented and the findings were as follows; the students rating was on average in terms of responsiveness, suggesting that the university does not respond timeously to students. On the other hand, the university overall customer service quality has been positively well received by students. Students perception and expectations were found high in the assurance and empathy dimension. This suggests that most students at DUT, BSU are satisfied with the current conditions, however, the university must improve on attending student concerns. The study will benefit the university in improving efficiencies and reducing service quality gaps in the system. Further research can be conducted comparing students satisfaction level and student marks.

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## List of Acronyms

**SA – South Africa**

**KZN – KwaZulu Natal**

**DUT – Durban University of Technology**

**BSU – Business Studies Unit**

**ROI – Return on Investment**

**SD – Standard Deviation**

**SEM - Standard Error of the Mean**

# **CHAPTER ONE**

## **Introduction**

### **1.1 Introduction**

The increase in cost of living and the change in the environment suggest that companies must adapt to change to be profitable in business. Likewise within the education sector, students are becoming more demanding and knowledgeable about their rights and they can distinguish between good service and a bad service. Therefore, universities must adapt to change and at all times provide quality service within institutions.

This chapter discusses the rationale of this research including the research problem, objectives and the methodology in customer service quality. It also highlights the limitations of the study.

### **1.2 Motivation of the Study**

This study seeks to find strategies that will enhance customer service and customer satisfaction at DUT, BSU. In order to improve customer service, this involves the participation of students and employees within DUT, BSU to enhance the current conditions within the university (Kiran, 2010). In research conducted by (Gede Mahatma Yuda Bakti and Sumaedi, 2013:01), the findings revealed that service quality has a direct effect on customer satisfaction. Therefore, DUT, BSU must ensure quality service so that more students attend the university.

The recommended strategies would assist in changing the image of the university, management, staff and the students.

### **1.3 Focus of the Study**

The research focuses on DUT, specifically the university's BSU. This is because the unit competes amongst other universities and colleges within the province to be the best in business studies. This study measures the current student expectations and perceptions towards the institution and the overall customer service satisfaction.

### **1.4 Problem Statement**

In SA, universities are competing for top positions to attract new students to their institutions and to be regarded as the best university. To be competitive requires university management and staff to be ahead of the game and service students accordingly to make the university a better institution for students (Financial Mail, 2016:01).

Customer service and customer satisfaction in universities has been widely researched. A study conducted by Mang'anyi and Govender, (2014:2739) on "Students' Perceptions of Kenyan Private Universities", recommended that quality service improves customer satisfaction and university's competitiveness. Therefore, universities like DUT, BSU must ensure that they improve customer service to retain satisfied loyal students so that they can further their studies within the university and remove any negative impact that might affect the credibility of the university.

Regardless of the above, this research must determine if DUT, BSU customer service is sufficient enough to attract and retain more customers/students with the current existing conditions? And what strategies are in place to enhance the overall customer service quality within the institution?

### **1.5 The objectives of the Study**

The objectives of this study are as follows: -

- To determine customer/student perception towards DUT, BSU and;
- To establish the overall customer service quality within DUT, BSU.

## **1.6 Research Questions**

- 1.6.1 How do current students perceive the organization and what are the factors aligned to such?
- 1.6.2 What are students expectations from the university?
- 1.6.3 What is the current level of customer service quality at DUT, BSU?

## **1.7 Limitations of the Study**

This research was only limited to Durban University of Technology, Business Studies Unit customer service quality and further research can be conducted to compare student satisfaction level and student marks within the university.

## **1.8 Outline of the thesis**

### **Chapter One: Overview of the Study**

This chapter introduces the research topic and provides the research overview, research objectives and research problem and the research methodology. Chapter one also outline the layout of the research.

### **Chapter Two: Literature Review**

Chapter two discusses theoretical issues around the literature review regarding the research topic in detail. This includes key concepts and issues of a customer, customer service, expectation, perceived service, service quality, customer satisfaction and loyalty. The research will identify theories on customer service quality comparing with applicable models and past research to analyse the objective of the research.

### **Chapter Three: Research Methodology**

Chapter three outlines the research methodology of how the data have been collected and analyzed. This chapter provides the sampling method, the questionnaire and various research tools used in the research. It also discusses ethical issues of this research.

### **Chapter Four: Presentation of the Results**

This chapter analyses and presents the statistics on data collected.

### **Chapter Five: Recommendations**

Chapter five is the final chapter of this research. It discusses in detail the findings of chapter four, concludes and recommends the best strategies to be utilized.

## **1.9 Conclusion**

On high-level overview, this chapter introduces the importance and the need for service quality in universities and service industries to better manage customers and in return receive profits. Therefore, universities can no longer ignore customers' (students) need. There is a great need to improve customer service quality and to attract more students to the university.

## **CHAPTER TWO**

### **Review of Literature**

#### **2.1 Introduction**

Service quality defines an approach on how to manage day-to-day business operations to fulfil and ensure customer satisfaction. This suggests that service industry companies must create and make the means to make a customer feel at home for instance greeting customers, ensuring that they get what they need and giving post purchase service. DUT, BSU is an organization which is primarily a service institution which provides services to students. To ensure service quality, policies and strategies must be in place to measure performances and service quality.

Parasuraman, Berry and Zeithaml, (1985:44) introduced SERVQUAL as a service quality framework that can be utilized to determine good quality service in the workplace. This framework includes dimensions that look at: (a) the responsiveness (b) assurance (c) tangibles (d) empathy and (e) reliability.

Therefore, this research focuses on the current situation analysis at DUT, BSU followed by the discussion around customer service quality within the institution. The research will also identify and analyse existing theories and practices about the research topic. Furthermore, it is regarded as the key in identifying the most important issues clarifying the gaps to be covered using SERVQUAL.

#### **2.2 The overview of the Higher Education Industry**

The Financial Mail (2014:01) reveals that SA universities are competing to be the top university in the country while at the same time, trying to transform universities in line with South African democracy. Vasilevska and Rivza (2015:612) recognized the increasing cost of education in universities and suggested that universities must be customer-centric in terms of delivering training methods and note that the industry is much more competitive than before. The education sector is regarded as the most growing sector in the service business, (Singh and Anand, n.d.) so in order to survive, institutions must provide good quality education.

In today's world "customer is king" and customers are the vital issue for businesses, therefore, more satisfied customers have a better chance of returning for more services. Similar to DUT, BSU students, satisfied students bring stability in the business with long-term sustainable profits (Ansary, Jayashree and Malarvizhi, 2014:98). In addition, another research conducted by Ogunnaike, Borishade and Jeje, (2014:49) also recommends that universities must adopt customer relationship management strategies to enhance student satisfaction which include the engagement of parents in universities because they are key in final decision making for their children's education. In a different view, Mark (2013:02) suggested that businesses cannot restrict any sale of goods or services if it is in line with ethics. However, universities can refuse applicants based on admissions standards with no obligation to do business.

## **2.3 Customer**

### **2.3.1 Definition of a customer**

The Business Dictionary (2015) defines a customer as the party or someone that consumes and receives goods or utilizes services. Depending on the industry, some customers are known as clients or buyers hence they contribute a monetary value to an individual or an organization.

Furthermore, past research by (www.rpgroup.org, 2016) looks at a consumer as someone who uses the product or service, while the customer pays for the product or service. Both studies focus on someone using the product and a service; hence this usually happens in a profit organization where there are monetary transactions involved or in a non-profit organization without any monetary value but charity work.

The old saying "customer is always right" suggests that customers must be treated with care. When students pay for tuition fees, they become customers and they have high expectations for services to be received and therefore, they fit the profile of customers (Mark, 2013:02). However, a study conducted by Holdford (2014:02) on pharmacy students argues if pharmacy student is a customer or a product. The research analyses the pharmacy student in that they learn about medicinal products which will be consumed by patients.

Primarily, the customer in universities is a student, meaning, there is neither business nor service to provide if there are no students to lecture. This may result in institutions losing business and job losses. In the context of this research, the focus will be a student hence they are customers in higher learning institutions likewise with pharmacy students. By enhancing quality into lecturing process and showing more interests to student concerns, institutions have great potential to ensure satisfaction of their students and loyalty while improving quality (Ogunnaike et al., 2014:49).

### **2.3.2 Student/customer needs**

Customer needs differ from one customer to another. Students are customers in universities and they have basic needs to be satisfied. Harris (2010: 05) explains that “customers have similar needs” and they are as follows: -

**Service:** Customers differ from one another, however, they expect the great service that they perceive is appropriate and professional for the level of purchase they are making. This might differ from buying large quantities with high costs or spontaneous purchase of smaller quantities with lower costs. Nonetheless, customers may expect great service every time they make a purchase. Within universities, the service quality level by one university can lead to a potential student to register at the other university (Nell and Cant, 2014:63). Service received by a student goes a long way in the career development and results in student loyalty.

**Price:** The current economic conditions have made customers to be aware of the price when purchasing products. The rising cost of petrol increases the price of goods and services. Insurance firms have created education policies to cope with the increase in education. Customers have become more careful in using their financial resources. With more retailers / universities available, customers have a choice to choose the best product they want and at the right price. This in turn gives customers powers to negotiate the price they want and for retailers or universities to be more competitive in the market. On the other hand, “students are willing to pay more to lower the percent of classes with greater than 50 students” (Kench and Wallace, 2010:17).

**Quality:** Quality has been the key decider in a buying decision. Good quality brands last longer than non-quality brands. Likewise in education, good quality education gives students a greater opportunity in the labour market. Customers like durable products with strong quality. Service quality can make or break the company. However, if the company has a reputation of producing high quality products and good service, customers are much less likely to question the price. According to Chepchieng and Ochola (2015:01), quality must not be compromised to retain students in higher education. Institutions must formulate and implement policies and strategies to retain students and to create loyalty.

**Action:** To create reputation, companies or institution must respond to customer/student complaints. Action and responding in time, is what customers want. Some companies have return policies, toll free numbers and customer assistance lines and student helpdesk to assist students or customers in need. Like any other business, customers are king and they feel important when priority is given to them.

**Appreciation:** Being appreciated shows a sense of belonging and it builds trust within customers. Recognising excellence from students builds sense of appreciation and encouragement to do more. Customers need to feel that service provider appreciate doing business with them and saying “thank you” means a lot to a customer. In this case, customers or students become loyal to a brand and this portrays a positive image for future business to come.

### **2.3.3 Internal and external customers**

According to Pawar (2015), every business has internal and external customers. Internal customers are the departments within the company and colleagues (employees, shareholders). In universities, internal customers are regarded as employees within the university from top management including chancellors to lower level employees. Both customers contribute to a better university and they are inseparable.

Noel (2011:12) suggested that any business without preventive measures may find itself in downward trend and unable to save the business. In other words, future planning, proper management and risk assessment from internal customers (employees) within the university is critical.

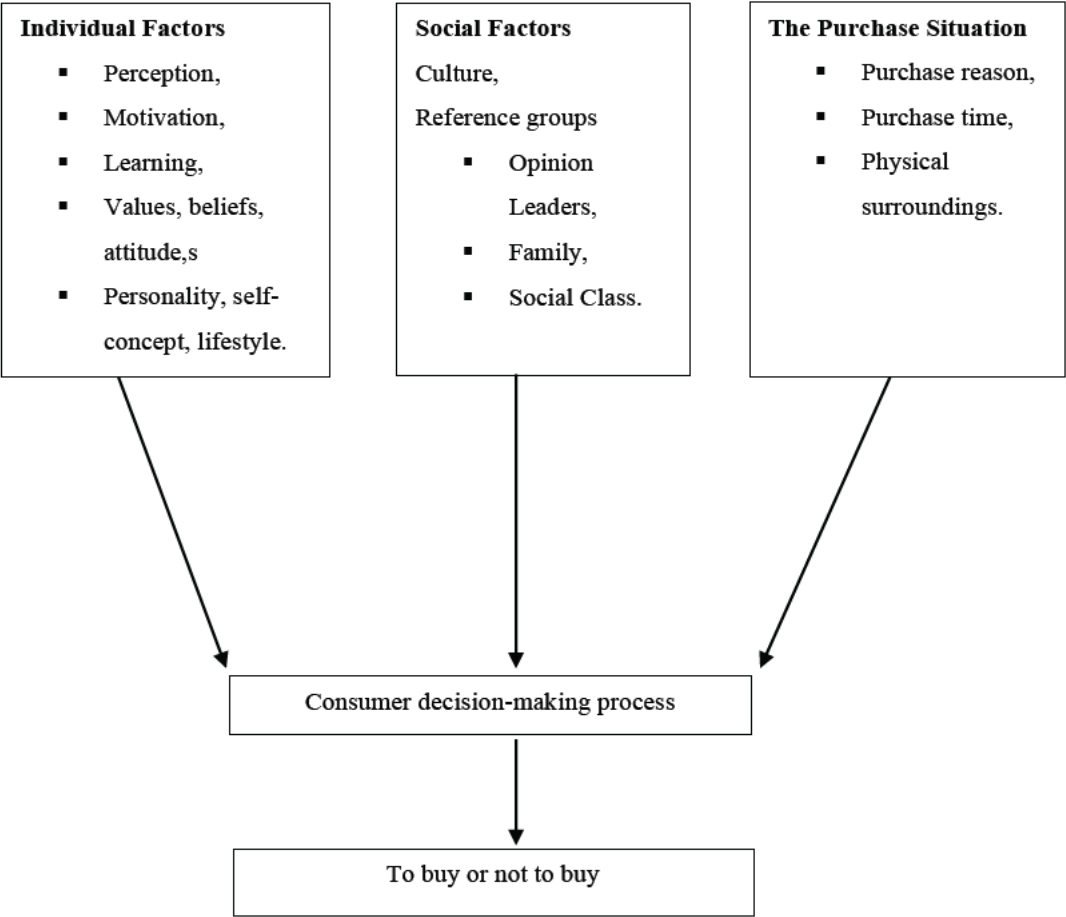
External customers involve doing business with outside companies. These include clients or suppliers and they have a power to enhance the firms' reputation and bring them new business. However, they are not only the customers that firms serve. In actual fact, internal customers should be as important to firms as external customers.

### **2.3.4 Customer Attributes**

Customers differ from one another because they are unique with different needs and wants. In other words, organizations must identify customer attributes to better understand their customers. Similar to universities, students are different and have different needs.

However, (Lamb Jr. et al., 2010:93) looks at "the importance of understanding consumer behaviour and ways of turning negative beliefs to positive about brand or product attributes while establishing and adding new beliefs". This is conducted by establishing consumer behaviour patterns through marketing research.

Customers can be classified according to the model below.



**Figure 2.1 A model of consumer behaviour**

Source: (Lamb Jr. et al., 2010:92-107)

## **2.4 Service**

“Service can be described and briefly summarized as any performance or action that can be offered by an individual to another, which is intangible and cannot result in being owned by offeror” (Kotler and Keller, 2012:378). Different companies offer different services to different industries. However, for these companies to be effective and competitive, they need to provide value added services (Kotler and Keller, 2012:378). Tabatabaie Hanzaie and Akhavan, (2010:01) defines service as an activity or benefit offered by one party to the other, which is essentially intangible.

### **2.4.1 Customer Service**

Customer service adds more value to service itself. Customer service is the ability to transform and develop any organization to analyse and ensure that all customers are satisfied in any purchasing decision (Ukessays, 2015). This is to ensure customer loyalty and improving processes to enhance sustainable long-term business. Nevertheless, customers differ from one customer to another, meaning, there must be newer strategic plans and thorough marketing research conducted to meet newer customer demands. Also to note, the new generation of students have new demands to be met therefore innovation is key. To survive in this competitive world, Singh (2014:01) suggests that companies must provide customer friendly services to survive the current challenges and to focus on customer-centric orientation.

### **2.4.2 Meaning of Service**

A service takes place between the customer and the organization. This can be a client from an organization to organizations or a student and DUT, BSU campus. However, Siddiqi (2011:12) analyses service as the process that consists of a series that is more or less intangibly than normal. This takes place between customers and service providers, which provide solutions to customer or client’s problems. Service is the fundamental basis of exchange (Edvardsson, Tronvoll and Gruber, 2011:335). This means the value is generally created for customers and customers assess the value on the basis of context. If the service is given to student with perceived value, students will appreciate the service. This differs from social forces when buying and evaluating service.

### **2.4.3 Distinctive characteristics of service**

Kotler and Keller (2012:380) found that, “there are four (4) distinctive characteristics of service”.

- **Intangibility**

Intangible means something that cannot be touched or seen. Likewise with service, you cannot taste, smell, touch or be heard before purchasing. Therefore, to reduce uncertainty, “customers will look for evidence to prove quality”. Furthermore to this, customers can always draw inferences from people, place, equipment, communication material, symbols and price just to prove quality” (Kotler and Keller, 2012:380). Other companies have Brand Ambassadors to market the company or brand. This suggests that marketers either from universities or not, must transform intangible service to add value to students or customers.

- **Inseparability**

Refers to someone giving service and consumed simultaneously, for example, a massage therapist giving a massage service. The provider is also part of the service. In universities, this will mean lecturers must provide high quality service when lecturing students. They are critical in ensuring that students receive high quality training and students are satisfied. Lecturers and lecturing cannot be separated. This is the reason why universities hire qualified and experienced lecturers to teach students and for management to monitor performance.

- **Variability**

Variability means random levels of service that customers receive when they patronize a service. The service received on business class air flight is not the same as the service received from the economy class flight. So, firms have noted the variability in service buying and to reassure customers, companies offering service must sign a performance agreement or service guarantees that service given will perform and work accordingly.

- **Perishability**

Perishability looks at the timing of service, market fluctuates and service cannot be stored. The quality service will serve as the competitive factor for the company. If DUT, BSU quality of service and education is excellent, *ceteris paribus*, more students will enrol at the university.

## **2.5 Managing service quality**

Managing service quality means that a business seeks to guarantee future business (Bogomolova, 2011). In South African (SA) government, most senior management positions are evaluated on performance and also evaluated on Batho Pele principles (service quality) of which is important. Tom (2015:01), stressed the importance of service quality and aligning service with customer satisfaction. Conducting periodical research on student satisfaction can assist management to implement findings for stimulating quality enhancement in universities (Stukalina, 2014).

For universities to be sustainable in the long-term, they need to manage a high level of service quality in their respective institutions. Students will remain in DUT, BSU if the quality of service given is excellent. Nonetheless, research conducted by Kouser (2012:15) gives a view of customer switching behaviour patterns and how the patterns can kill the market share; damage the brand and the Return on Investment. They look at the following factors;

- **Price:** Price play a significant factor in a customer buying decision and most of modern customers do compare prices hence the want value add products or service, similar with students or parents (Anuwichanont, 2011:37). Therefore, universities must implement the right price strategies that will cater for the target market.
- **Inconvenience:** Inconvenience involves factors around location of the university, hours and response time. For example, if DUT, BSU location is closer to Central Business District (CBD) areas, how likely will students get access to transport and other issues?
- **Core Service Failure:** The core service failures include service mistakes, billing errors and service catastrophe. This may lead to students switching to other institutions due to internal service mistakes within the institution.

- Employee Responses to Service Failure: The turnaround time taken by the university to respond to student needs is vital. When students receive either negative response or no response at all, they might switch to a university that will listen to student concerns.
- Attraction by competitors means that, there's a better service offered elsewhere.
- While involuntary switching and Seldom-Mentioned Incidents include movement of customers or service provider closed business.

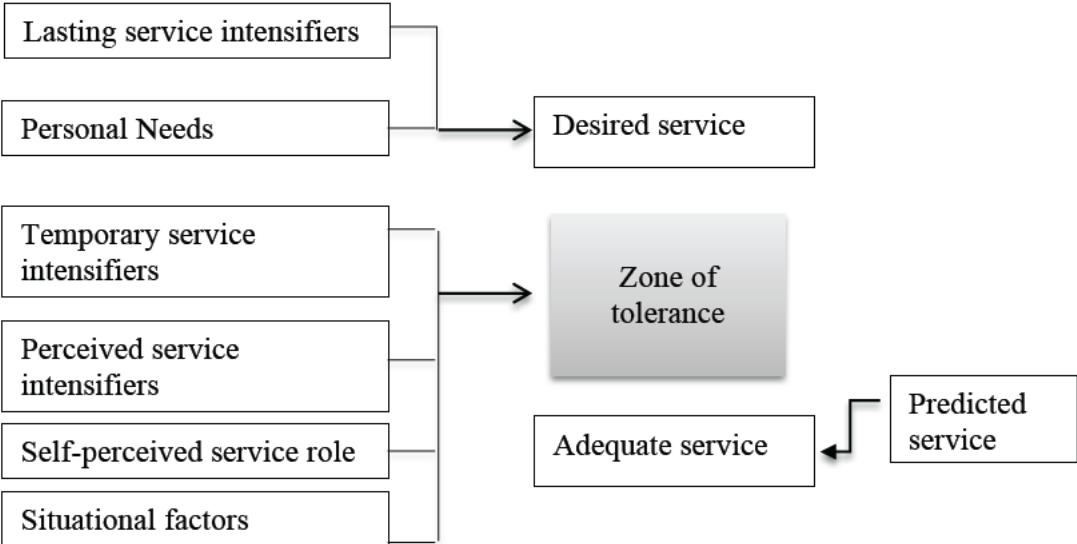
The above factors lead to customers switching service providers. Moreover, Kotler and Keller (2012:393) “included service encounter failures and ethical problems to customer switching behaviour”. Service encounter failures include uncaring, impolite employees, being unresponsive and unknowledgeable whilst ethical problems look at the number of cheating students in the university, safety of the university and conflict of interest. Therefore, any business must understand how to treat customers' right.

### **2.5.1 The benefits of quality**

Students will evaluate service quality at DUT, BSU through students perception and expectation received while are they within the campus (Siddiqui and Sharma, 2010:171). A good institution must ensure that continuous marketing research is conducted to find new customers and to measure customer satisfaction on existing customers so that it retains customers and continue to do business (Chang, 2013). This results in customer loyalty with the quality given and the company will have an advantage of being more competitive. Quality given lays a strong foundation for creating customer loyalty in the business and this may result in more students enrolling with DUT, BSU because of quality service (Regional Business News, 2015). The benefit of quality in a business includes but are not limited to:

- Increase customer satisfaction;
- Increase loyal customers;
- Reducing complaints;
- Reducing unwanted costs and increase Return on Investment (ROI),
- Increased system efficiencies.

It is evident that the benefits of quality will be important to DUT, as it gives direction towards achieving the ultimate vision on student satisfaction, loyalty, retention of students and future business.



**Figure 2.2 Factors influencing service**

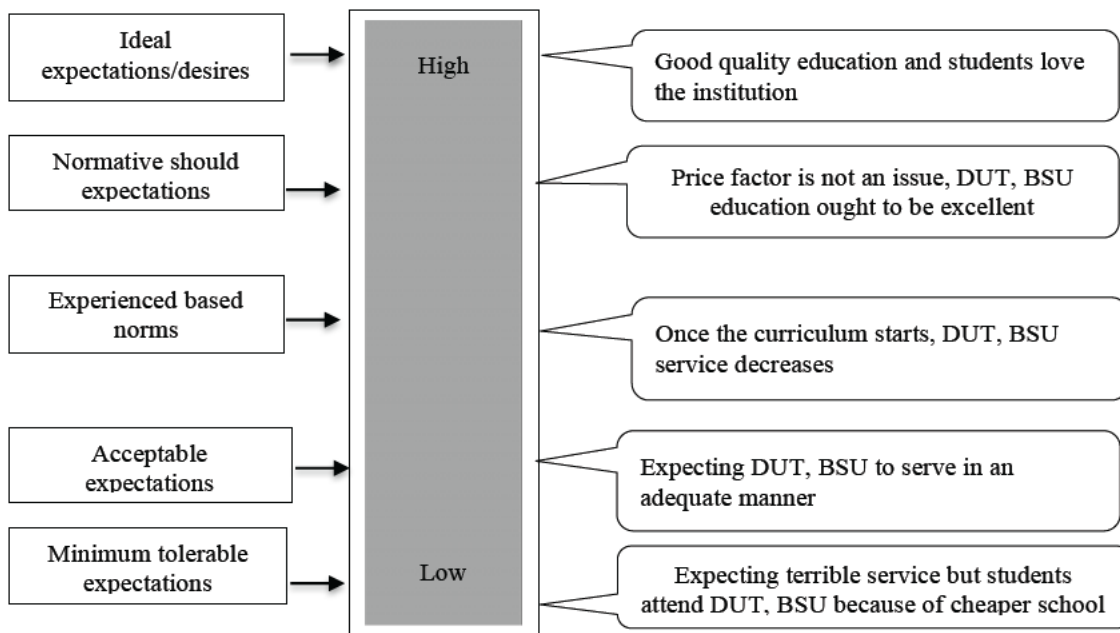
Source: Wilson & Zeithaml (2012)

**2.5.2 Managing customer expectation**

Customers do compare expected service with perceived service. If the perceived service is poor, customers are disappointed and there’s a possibility of customers switching to better service providers. Wilson et al., (2012) suggest that companies must manage customer expectation by under-promising customers and over-delivering promises. In this instance, companies must weigh options before delivering. This will improve customer satisfaction and loyalty in long term (Hyung Seok, 2010). To achieve the highest level of customer satisfaction, institutions must ensure provision of a total package (education) that includes service and support (Budic & Andrljic, 2011).

### 2.5.3 Levels of expectation

Customers have different types of expectations likewise with students. They (customers or students) perceived high hopes on service to be received that will improve their academic experience with high performance.



**Figure 2.3 Possible levels of customer expectation**

Source: Author created/compiled using Wilson & Zeithaml (2012)

### 2.5.4 Techniques for exceeding customer expectation

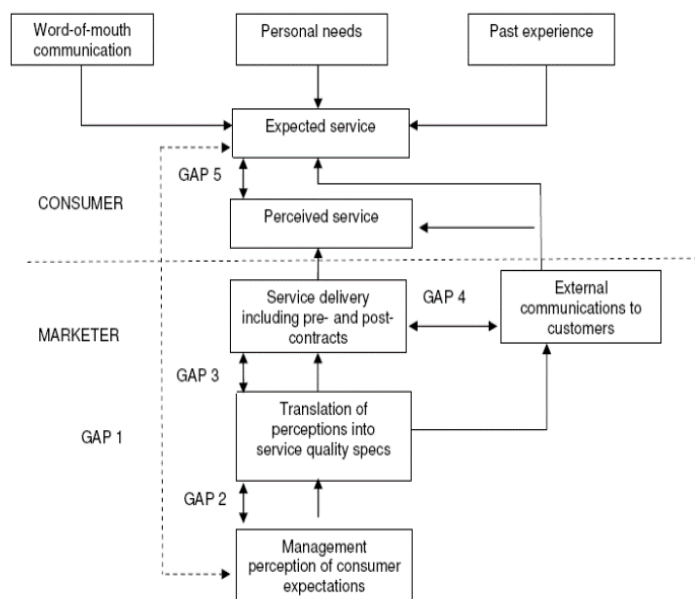
Businesses think of new ways to be competitive and to exceed customer expectation. Some companies give out corporate gifts to loyal clients/customers or offering holiday packages. Harris (2010:173) “looks at exceeding customer expectation in the following instances”, by;

- Know your customers. Through marketing research, DUT, BSU can be able to know and understand what students want and what they dislike.
- Find customer expectations. This can be done through having suggestion boxes around campus where students can write comments or what they would love within DUT.

- Through suggestion box, DUT, BSU can be able to respond to students, share the vision and engage students to show commitment.
- Live up to expectations by following goals set and achieving the vision.
- Maintain consistency and deliver service quality. To add, don't promise students what you cannot deliver.

### 2.5.5 Requirements for delivering high service

The objective of most companies including universities is to be sustainable and achieve economic survival and ensuring that customer needs are fulfilled and satisfied (Srivastava and Rai, 2013). This is conducted by analysing and evaluating customer quality dimensions to improve student satisfaction. Therefore, managing service quality means managing gaps between expectations and perceptions on the part of management, employees and customers (Kotler & Keller 2012).



**Figure 2.4 Conceptual Model of Service Quality**

Source: (Parasuraman, Berry and Zeithaml, 1985:44)

SERVQUAL outlines how service quality emerges. Expected service is a function of customers past experiences and personal needs and word-of-mouth communication. This is influenced by the market communication activities of the organization. The service experienced, which, in this model, is called perceived service, on the other hand, is the outcome of a series of internal decisions and activities.

Krishna Naik, Swapna Bhargavi Gantasala and Gantasala Prabhakar, (2010) researched on the concept of quality gaps and highlighted five (5) gaps in ensuring delivery of service which intends to improve and exceed customer expectation. Furthermore, SERVQUAL model has been researched and approved as one of the best models that contributed significantly to service quality (WANG et al., 2015:34).

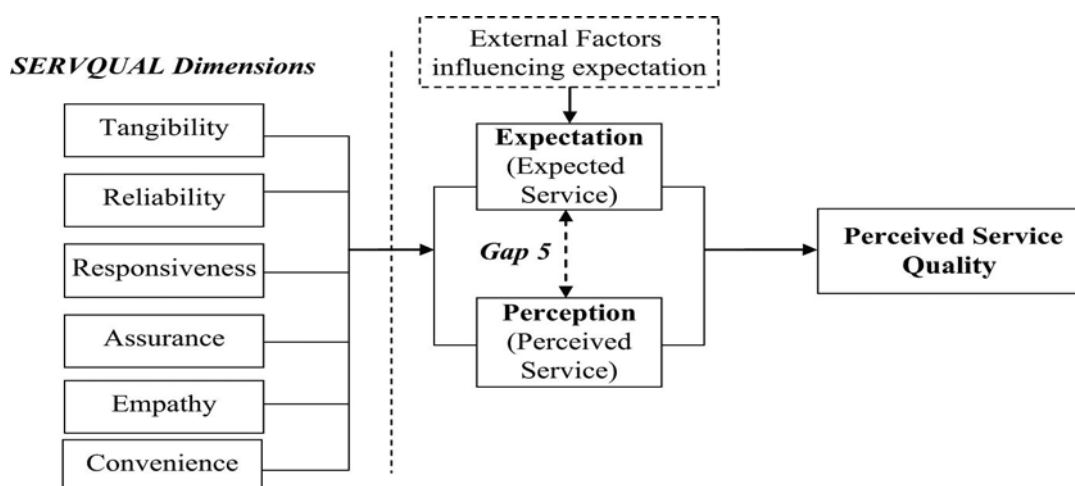
The gaps shown below by Kotler & Keller (2012:395) includes;

**Table: 2.1 Gaps Table**

Gap 1	Consumers' expectations and management's perception of these expectations;
Gap 2	The perceptions of service quality held by top management and the translation of these into quality specifications
Gap 3	These specifications and the service delivery at the front line;
Gap 4	What is promised in external communications and the actual service delivered and;
Gap 5	Perceived performance and expectations.

The notion of the service gap informs much of the work which has been undertaken to assess the satisfaction of service delivery against the expectations of the participating customer. In identifying where such gaps exist, one cannot only gauge the overall level of customer satisfaction but can also reveal specific areas where improvements can be made to raise the level of consumer satisfaction and therefore, the success of the service offering. Nevertheless, universities providing good quality education may obtain a competitive advantage in respect of enrolments, ROI, student loyalty and student retention (Untaru et al., 2015).

However, Gap 5 on the table above, has five (5) determinants of service quality and customer satisfaction. They include;



**Figure 2.5 SERVQUAL Dimensions**

Source: Awasthia et al., 2011

- Reliability - Reliability looks at the ability to respond to students promptly.
- Responsiveness – Dedication to assist students in time.
- Assurance – DUT, BSU employees showing confidence.
- Empathy – Employee dedication and showing full attention to students.
- Tangibles- This will include physical facilities, personnel and communication materials for DUT, BSU.

## 2.6 Perceived Service Quality

According to Abili, Narenji Thani and Afarinandehbin, (2012), “perceived service quality looks at the extent to which companies serve customers fully hence the perceived cognitive value is based on past experience”. Perceived service and productivity are both critical success factors for companies to succeed in the long-term (Calabrese and Spadoni, 2013).

## **2.7 Service Evaluation**

With the increased competition in universities, institutions are now realising that higher education is competitive and they need to run businesses like service industries with a strong focus on exceeding student expectations (Gruber et al., 2010:327). The competition amongst the best universities in SA is high, however, to be ahead of the competition, the services must bring value to students.

Brink and Berndt (2010: 60), suggests that “institutions with its employees must at all times try to understand customer/student problems and strive to resolve any issues within the turnaround time”.

In the service industry like DUT, the purchase can take place at any time before, during or after consumption. Therefore, the ‘post-purchase’ focus of consumer behaviour literature does not have a ready application to service consumers as it concentrates explicitly upon the outcome of the exchange rather than the exchange itself. Companies that will succeed are those that recognize today’s customer revolution and are fully prepared to meet the challenge of the highest standards of service.

### **2.7.1 The meaning of customer service**

According to Somerville and Elliott (2011:12), “strategies to improve customer service involve communication, effective leadership, flexibility, human resource practices and innovation in meeting client expectations”. If DUT, BSU lacks the above-mentioned strategies, it will be difficult to build student loyalty and student retention. Service can be defined as “taking action to create value for someone else”. The response time by the employee to a student contributes a lot in good customer service.

Therefore, “customer service can be defined as a system organized to provide a continuing link between the times that the order is placed and the goods are received with the objective of satisfying customer needs on a long-term basis” (Kaufman, 2015:33).

Similar to students, they have different expectations from an institution. Meaning, universities must therefore strive to provide excellent student service within campus. Again, in the old saying “Customer is King”, (Homburg, Müller and Klarmann, 2011) found “that the optimum level of customer orientation with regard to sales performance is higher for salespeople selling

individualized products, in firms pursuing a premium price strategy and in markets with a high degree of competitive intensity”. This suggests that DUT, BSU can also implement the same principle of “Customer is King” hence competing to be the best university in South Africa. Customer satisfaction is the goal to attain. Customer service can also suggest doing things differently by going out-of-the-way for a customer to be satisfied (Sposito, 2010). Providing extra classes will go a long way to students in need. The concept of customer service is applicable to all institutions and industries and to all working class. Customer service is equally applicable to personnel serving the line, to finance departments serving the organization and also to senior executives who have to service their companies with a high degree of leadership, support and direction. Customer service has been proven to assist and develop an efficient effective sales force and to promote better communication, more personalised products and customised services (Islam et al., 2012).

### **2.7.2 Reasons for the importance of customer service**

In business practice, it is common that the company will get complaints about service failure. However, implementing an efficient complaint handling system can restore customer satisfaction in any business industry. Nonetheless, this does not suggest that companies must apply unfair trade practice. Ethics must always be practiced (Chan and Ngai, 2010). The most common effective way to market and promote a business is through good customer service quality. In the modern days, customers are much more sophisticated than before. Likewise with the current students, they are not the same like before. Thus, DUT, BSU must be innovative and be competitive to succeed in today’s business world. Companies must always try to satisfy customers. In that regard, a study by Wen-Yu et al., (2011) found that new innovative ways to improve customer services results in increase in profits. In many proven cases, customer service is the effective element that retains business in the company. Therefore, good customer service can be critical to the future of the company.

### **2.7.3 Service at Universities**

A concept of customer service has been researched thoroughly by different authors in different disciplines and the assessment of service quality has been proven and accepted as a measurement tool available to improve customer service (Jayasundara, Ngulube and Minishi-Majanja, 2010). Customers in the retailing industry do not differ with DUT, BSU students hence they pay to get a product or service.

Customer service in universities involves students and employees of the institution, this means, if the employees are not happy, there will be poor quality of education and administration in that campus. In fact Arif and Ilyas (2012) argued that good quality education involves employees within the university to dedicate themselves in quality learning. They also illustrated the point of strong leadership in quality learning hence employees will teach students. In essence, customer service in universities is a process of reinforcing the on-going commitment from students to support the university and to assure students that they made a right decision by choosing DUT, BSU (Bayer and Llewellyn, 2011). In conclusion, marketing mix strategies, customer service plans and customer satisfaction form the integral part of ensuring sustainable long-term business in the university.

### **2.7.4 Rewards of providing excellent customer service**

The benefits of providing excellent customer service are generation of new businesses from word of mouth satisfied customers and create a close relationship with customers. The relationship then creates loyalty and long-term profits (Fazekas, 2013). After all, providing excellent services creates the element of trust and it opens other opportunities including getting support from the local citizens (Monk, 2011). Within the university context, proving excellent customer service means;

- Students enrolling to DUT, BSU expecting a positive experience;
- The DUT, BSU environment is more fulfilling;
- Students taking the initiative to develop and profile DUT, BSU;
- DUT, BSU success in value creation (blue ocean strategies);
- Student concerns are well recognized and attended timeously;

- Less or no problems at all;
- A winning culture shared by the employees and students including work ethics;
- DUT, BSU earning long-term sustainable profits and;
- Promoting DUT,BSU brand image.

The above benefits are not easy to achieve, however, leadership skills from management will shape the strategic direction of the institution and implementing blue ocean strategies to eliminate competitors within the industry of higher learning. Yang and Yang (2011) also confirmed that value creation enhances customer value, customer satisfaction and customer loyalty, which in turn make significant profits to a company. This in fact is the root cause of being innovative and providing excellent quality service in the workplace. Actually, Tanford and Malek (2015:314) agree on the fact that companies may reward customers that are loyal in the business. However, companies must be careful in conducting such. On the other hand, Hollensen (2013:01) recommends that institutions must constantly reformulate strategies through a dynamic creative process in order not to turn the Blue Oceans into a Red Oceans again. Meaning, companies or universities can implement great value added products at a right time but it won't last. Therefore, this suggests that on-going marketing research must be conducted to create value added products and to evaluate student satisfaction that will satisfy student needs in long term.

### **2.7.5 Managing Complaints and Service Recovery**

In the business world, companies receive complaints about the product or a service. The complaints received do not necessary mean that the company is bad, however, from business point of view, it gives an indication on how to eliminate waste and re-engineer processes to improve efficiencies and be effective. In general, service failure is perceived and leads to customer dissatisfaction. Hales, Walzer and Calvin, (2012), suggests that managing complaints and service recovery needs the engagement of students and management and all stakeholders involved to achieve good results and not to damage brand.

The response time taken to solve customer issues is key in customer recovery. Murphy et al., (2015:303) analyses service recovery in a different view. They looked at service recovery as an opportunity to strengthen relationships with customers and to satisfy the customer perceived value.

It is an opportunity to engage customers about the product or service and to develop recovery strategies. Moreover, they stressed the importance of leadership in effective service recovery. Communicating and updating the customer on progress made, improves the relationship and increases positive image to a customer and in addition, it has a positive impact on consumer evaluations (Komunda and Osarenkhoe, 2012).

Nevertheless, total quality management must be applied at all times to eliminate waste in the system. This will reduce time wasted on complaints with minimum or less complaints in the business. After all, customers complain because the product or the service did not meet their demands, so, it is a duty of the company to satisfy customers at all times and to ensure customer loyalty.

When receiving complaints, it is recommended that employees must not take complaints personally and respond on personal issues. This gives an employee the best way to respond and to feel at ease with the customer.

### **2.7.6 Customer Satisfaction**

Happy customers bring good business. Happy customers are more likely to buy again, and are less likely to switch to the competitors' product. According to Kotler and Keller (2012:150), customer satisfaction is a feeling of pleasure or an embarrassment resulting from comparing a product with another perceived top performing product in relation to expectation. Students as customers might prefer an institution based on their preference and needs when compared to other institutions. With this in mind, the process can be categorized as weighing better options for students.

On the other hand, some customers might prefer buying and enrolling on packages promoted by the university. This in turn creates a better relationship with the service provider hence the service provider caters for their needs (Suh, Rho and Greene, 2012:39). (Lamb Jr. et al., 2010:5) defines customer satisfaction as meeting customer demands and expectation of the product. Therefore, satisfaction is derived from being satisfied as a customer or a consumer.

In academic, a student can be disappointed by being unaccepted by one university and be satisfied with the other chosen university (Dissatisfied – satisfied – delighted). Customer satisfaction looks at and analyzes what the customer i.e. student holds valuable to make it easier to meet the expectation. Once the desired outcome is met, the student will be satisfied. (Kotler and Keller, 2012).

Nevertheless, all universities are therefore required to satisfy student needs and satisfied students have a greater opportunity of continuing with their studies (Jamelske, 2008). In actual fact, the more the students satisfied with the academic institution, the more they become loyal to a brand and the greater the chance of pursuing further studies within the same university. In the study by Watjatrakul & Boonlert (2014), they found that engaging a student as a customer leads to the improvement of service quality in universities and also improving the quality of lecturing and the engagement of students with lecturers. After all, students' perception and satisfaction when joining the university is more based on finishing the course on time, support and trust from university, available student residence and the overall academic performance of the university (Gbadamosi and De Jager, 2009:877).

In a nutshell, the improvement and the engagement of lecture/student relationship has a positive effect towards improving service quality and attracting more students into the university.

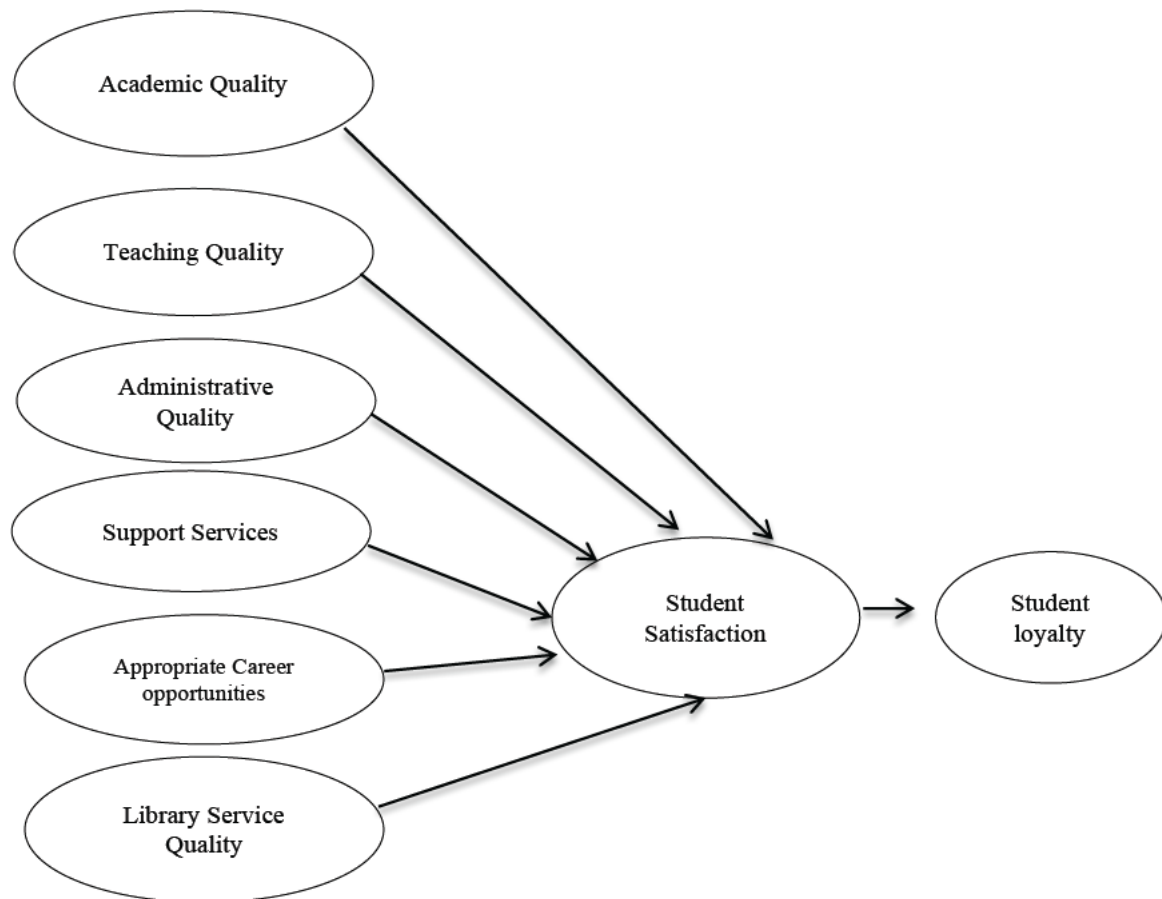
For DUT, BSU to be competitive and to achieve their objective, they must continuously conduct strategic marketing planning (Budic and Andrlík, 2011:61). This will ensure that DUT, BSU is in line with the new trends in the marketing industry and be ahead of the game. Students don't ask for too much information, however, they need employees within universities to provide them with clear information and the ability to respond to answers in a required turnaround time.

All in all, "customer satisfaction results from the realization of high levels of value compared to competitors while value is created by satisfied, committed, loyal, and productive employees" (Lovelock and Wirtz, 2010:278).

### 2.7.7 Customer Satisfaction and Loyalty

Customer satisfaction can have a powerful effect on sales and profitability (Islam et al., 2011). A satisfied customer is more likely to return for more business. However, customer satisfaction and loyalty are totally different, satisfaction is the results of a transaction that took place while; loyalty is an attitude (Gruber et al., 2010). Chang (2013:01) defines student loyalty as the emotional feeling for the campus including the staff and their services.

Kamil and Eti (2013:177) introduced new dimensions in student satisfaction and these involve:



**Figure 2.6 Student Needs**

Source: Kamil and Eti Icli (2013:177)

The common student satisfaction antecedents are;

- “Training or Lecturing – quality of lecturing, expertise and interest in subject, degree of caring, helpfulness, accessibility, and feedback provided;
- Curriculum – cleanliness, overall design and delivery, usefulness, scheduling, content, availability, class size/logistics, and level of difficulty;
- Support – accessibility, reliability, professionalism, helpfulness, responsiveness, and understanding;
- Skills developed by students – relationship skills, critical thinking, intellectual growth, and social/moral awareness;
- Preparation for future – preparation for or furthering career and expecting good job/quality of life;
- Services/facilities – availability, access, physical aspects, usefulness, and IT support
- Social integration – opportunities to socialize, campus safety, sense of belonging, enjoyable experience, and diversity of student body;
- Student centeredness/responsiveness – responsiveness to student concerns/suggestions, helpfulness, academic support, and financial aid and
- Pre-enrolment factors – accuracy of information provided, first, second, and third choice, admissions and orientation, and degree to which expectation are met” (Parahoo, Harvey and Tamim, 2013).

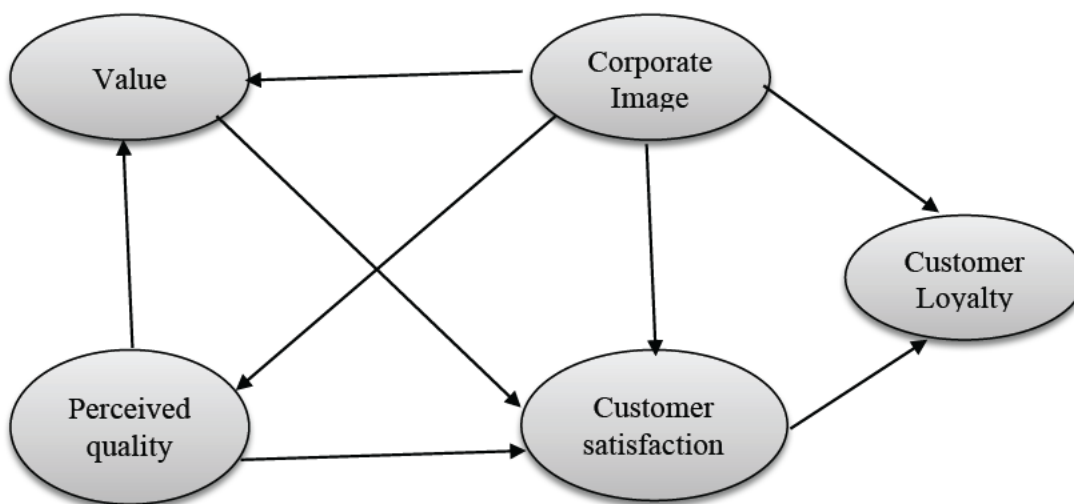
Research on students’ needs and student satisfaction antecedent has common important denominators that must be satisfied.

Given the points above, universities and companies at large must maintain their promises to customers. Building customer relationship provides great opportunities for business in gaining profits. A proper marketing research must be conducted to identify the target market. Students have different needs and the environment changes therefore, direct marketing and commitment to customers is of great importance. The level of customer satisfaction and loyalty must be accurate to the target market using a comprehensive approach (Aktepe, Ersöz and Toklu, 2015:95).

## 2.8 Customer Value

Krishnamurthy et al., (2010:117) suggest that service quality increases customer satisfaction and retains value customers. The more they buy, the longer they will continue to purchase. Customer satisfaction leads to customer loyalty. Likewise, institutions that build and retain customer value, customer satisfaction and brand loyalty have a greater opportunity in attracting and sustaining profitable business (Salegna and Fazel 2011:01).

However, customer value is more about appreciating the product or service received and results in trusting the brand with more repeat purchases. This is illustrated by the figure below.



**Figure 2.7 Conceptual Model**

Source: (Dagger and David, 2012:447)

In this regard, customer value looks at the perceived value and expectation from service or a product. If the service/product is good, customer value will be developed. In the study conducted by Serenko (2011:281), the results suggest that customer satisfaction has a strong significant relationship with the product quality. Furthermore, satisfied students' increases loyalty, positive word-of-mouth and decreases complaints in businesses.

In reality, when business provides good quality services there's less concern on price. In other words, money is a marginal factor when there is good quality education. Good quality education has more influence on loyalty (Casidy, 2014:142).

Customer satisfaction and loyalty have been widely researched in service marketing. Other research conducted reveals that customer service and student satisfaction do not really translate to loyalty, however, they develop an element of trust and commitment ((Rojas-Méndez et al., 2009). Gaining customer value is about gaining trust and commitment from customers hence they will buy more often. Sampaio et al., (2012:83) have proved the element of trust where they found that, trust in faculties and trust in employee's impact positively on perceived customer value and it creates an element of trust on student loyalty. While other findings acknowledge that service quality is positively related to customer value and customer satisfaction (Chou et al., 2014:917).

Customer or student service and loyalty research has been identified as the critical factor in establishing student satisfaction in universities. This is because universities have seriously increased the level of competition and to stay ahead of the game, more research must be conducted to improve and enhance business. The research conducted by Carvalho and De Oliveira Mota (2010:145), realized the fact that competition from private sector education has forced universities to align their programme to student loyalty hence student loyalty is the key for future.

## **2.9 Chapter Summary**

In conclusion, the chapter analysed the bases that influence good customer service, customer satisfaction and loyalty. It is believed that universities must prioritize their customers (students) and provide excellent customer service to satisfy them and to achieve loyalty. Various concepts relating to customer service have been identified in this chapter. Like any other business, the main aim of a business is to make profit. Therefore, a good customer service quality will mean achieving long-term profitability for the university. DUT, BSU must ensure at all times to include customer service in their strategy. Marketing is key in achieving university goals. This means being innovative every year because the market is ever changing. If DUT, BSU services are better than any other university, that will create trust in DUT, BSU brand and more students to believe in the university. Likewise, if DUT, BSU leadership including employees are satisfied with the institution, they will perform better and conduct themselves in a professional manner while ensuring the best service at all times.

DUT, BSU must focus on being customer oriented and strive to provide good quality education with a great service to be competitive amongst other universities in KZN. Satisfied students have a greater possibility of returning to DUT, BSU for further studies. In any business either universities (service industry) or product related, marketing plays an important role for a company to compete and be successful in achieving organizational goals.

Chapter three will outline the research methodology. This is followed by a description of the research process, in particular the administration of the questionnaire. The results and a report of the empirical study will be presented.

## **CHAPTER THREE**

### **Research Methodology**

#### **3.1 Introduction**

Customer service quality has been covered in the preceding chapter. This chapter gives guidance on how the research will be conducted. It addresses the issues of the sampling method, instrument design, questionnaire design, population, data collection, validity and reliability of the instrument. It also shows how the research is designed and how data will be analysed. Ethical issues will be considered in this research.

#### **3.2 Objectives of the Study**

The researcher seeks to find the current customer service quality within DUT, BSU. Furthermore, the research seeks to establish current levels of service quality within the university and to ensure student/management involvement in improving customer service at BSU. Once the objective is achieved, the research will therefore establish the right strategies to ensure the overall student satisfaction on customer service, which will in turn enhance the business and return on investment.

The aim of the research is:

- To determine customer/student perception towards DUT, BSU and;
- To establish the overall customer service quality within DUT, BSU.

### **3.3 Participants and Location of the Study**

The research will be conducted at DUT, BSU students. The sample population will be NQF 6 and NQF 7 students from the BSU. The objective of this research is to evaluate customer service quality of the institution from students. Therefore, a convenience sample will be selected during classroom lectures with permission from DUT, BSU management.

### **3.4 Research Approach**

The research approach describes the procedure step-by-step, plan from the broader perspective to detailed methods of how the data will be collected with analysis and interpretation thereof (Creswell, 2014:03). In fact, the research approach serves as a guideline in conducting the research design and methods to be used. It is also regarded as a strategy to be used in shaping the direction of the research. It is systematic. Furthermore, the research approach outlines the planning process of the research, data collection methods and challenges experienced in the research project.

Nevertheless, the design for this research will be quantitative using structured questionnaire. According to Muijs, (2004:01), “quantitative research is defined as phenomena of gathering and collecting numerical data that are analysed by using mathematical based methods”. In the context of this research, the population is students, using quantitative research will assist in proving critical important solutions in finding evidence that is critical to this research.

### **3.5 Research Methodology**

The following research methodology is deemed appropriate for this study.

#### **3.5.1 Research Instrument**

This research used a structured questionnaire with a five-point Likert rating scale. According to Curwin, Slater and Eadson, (2013:80) a rating scale is defined as “a set of ordered numbered categories commonly used to reflect the perceived quality of a product of choice”. The study seeks to obtain the overall customer service quality towards the university as a brand of their choice. Students were requested to mark with (X) on their appropriate answer on questionnaires.

**Section A** consists of five questions that looked at the information like gender, age, race, faculty and year of study. This was to ensure that the research reach the targeted population and to have a basic information about the respondents,

**Section B** uses a scale where respondents were tested on the responsiveness of DUT, BSU administration. This section included the respondent’s attitude towards the university,

**Section C** looks at the assurance and confidence students have towards DUT, BSU and, while

**Section D** looks at the overall customer/student service quality towards the university.

In addition, a covering letter was provided explaining the purpose to encourage a high response. The questionnaire consists of nineteen (19) questions. The questionnaires are structured and organized along with Gap 5 of SERVQUAL, which includes: -

1. Tangibles,
2. Reliability,
3. Responsiveness,
4. Assurance and,
5. Empathy.

### **3.5.2 Sampling**

According to Farrokhi and Mahmoudi-Hamidabad (2012), convenience sampling can be used when there is an identified individual who fit the criteria of the study. It is much easier to implement with available population. It is one of the least expensive with less complications and easily measurable. For the context of this research, there is a population of 234 students and 146 sample size will be utilized using a significance test level of 5%.

### **3.5.3 Population**

i. Target Population

The targeted population of 234 will be DUT, BSU students. The chosen population has far better experience and knowledge of university operations thus, they can be able to respond to questions.

ii. Access to target population

The permission to conduct this study was sought and granted by the Registrar of the University.

iii. Sampling Technique

A census is defined as “a complete enumeration of all those people, items or organizations interest whilst a sample is defined as a selection from all those people or items of interest” (Curwin et al., 2013:92). Hence the study was conducted at DUT, BSU NQF 6 and NQF 7 students using convenience sampling technique from a total population of 234 students, a significance test level of 5% with a sample size of 146 was therefore deemed appropriate (Mujis, 2004:78).

### **3.6 Data Collection**

The purpose of gathering data is to have an overall descriptive picture of how the process works. So, data collection in this research was the completion of questionnaires during lectures.

A study was conducted amongst BSU students at DUT using a structured questionnaire. The research was done during lectures, lecturers were used to monitor and administer the questionnaires. Students were notified of the research objective in order to clarify and answer any queries about the questionnaire completion. These questionnaires were distributed during lectures to students together with a covering letter and the letter of consent acknowledging confidentiality and collected once students completed.

The questions were as simple as possible to ensure the easy understanding by students. The data collected was therefore recorded and carefully analysed. This was to ensure examination of frequent occurrence of certain responses.

#### **3.6.1 Data Analysis**

After collecting data from respondents, the data was then captured by the researcher to Microsoft excel spreadsheet for analysis. To ensure that all questions were completed, the questionnaires were thoroughly checked. Coding of questionnaires refers to the process of grouping and assigning response to a particular question from various respondents.

The data was then analysed and processed using SPSS for the generation of the results. The findings and interpretation of data were presented using descriptive statistics. According to Christensen et al., (2014), “descriptive statistics involve the description and summary of data, while inferential statistics involve the inferences that are drawn from the results”.

The results of this research was represented by tables and graphs.

### **3.6.2 Descriptive Statistics**

“Descriptive statistics measure the aspect of different population or the distribution thereof” (Bickel and Lehmann, 2011:465). They can also be used to describe all demographic and research variables in a research. In other words, descriptive statistics can either be the representative of the entire population or sample hence they describe the data set measures of central tendency and dispersion.

### **3.6.4 Frequencies & Percentages**

According to Curwin et al., (2013:589), “frequencies refer to the number of times a particular item is recorded that can be calculated to a percentage while the percentage is a value that is expressed as out of 100. Frequencies were used to obtain a sample profile for this study.

### **3.6.5 Measures of Central Tendency and Dispersion**

Standard deviation (SD) measures how the numbers are spread out. They measure and quantify the amount of the variation from the set of data. According to Sedgwick (2015:01), the standard deviation (SD) and the estimated standard error of the mean (SEM) are used to present the characteristics of sample data and to explain statistical analysis results

For the context of this research, the data was analysed using the following;

- Mean: The mean is the simple average,
- Median: The median is the value in the middle when items are arranged,
- Mode: The mode is the most frequently occurring value,
- Variance: The variance is the average difference of values from the mean,
- Standard deviation: The standard deviation is the average difference of values from the mean (Curwin et al., 2013:200).

### **3.7 Validation and Reliability**

#### **i. Validity**

Validity is defined by Curwin et al., (2013:594) as the results representative of the population whilst reliability looks at the repetition of the results. In other words, validity refers to the extent to which the research findings accurately represent what is happening.

#### **ii. Reliability**

As stated, reliability measures the ability of data that can be repeated and give similar results on different occasions to have an accurate and consistent results (Curwin et al. 2013:85). The reliability measure used in conducting this research will be checked using Cronbach's Alpha that assists in analysing and evaluating a scale (Christensen et al., 2014). According to Karimi et al. (2014), "Relative reliability deals with the rank order of participants in a sample, whereas absolute reliability measures the closeness of scores to one other and to a hypothetical true score".

Since the research objective of this research is customer service quality at DUT, BSU the SERVQUAL questionnaire instrument was appropriate for this research. SERVQUAL was developed by Parasuraman, Berry and Zeithaml in 1985, and it has been proven and utilised in many research articles in service quality. SERVQUAL instrument is an appropriate instrument that can be used to test quality service. Furthermore, "service managers should be encouraged to test the dimensions in their own business environments rather than inevitably adopt the SERVQUAL factor structure" (Singh, 2015:01).

The SERVQUAL instrument has been widely used in customer service and this has been proven by Chand (2010) in his research that "SERVQUAL is a useful analytic instrument in evaluating and monitoring service quality".

### **3.8 Ethics**

In preparing for this research, ethical procedures were adhered to in all aspects before and after receiving data. Ethics can be referred to “norms for conduct that distinguish between acceptable and unacceptable behaviour” (David and Resnik, 2011). This is to ensure that the researcher understands the ethical implication of this research and “applying ethical thinking in a practical context” (Doyle and Buckley, 2014:153).

### **3.9 Chapter Summary**

This chapter explored the research methodology that is appropriate and relevant for this research. It was also discussed that a questionnaire was used to collect primary data *via* a distribution of questionnaires. And in addition, the study makes use of descriptive statistics.

Chapter four (4) represents the research findings and the interpretations thereof.

## CHAPTER FOUR

### Presentation of the results

#### 4.1 Introduction

This chapter represents data collected through the questionnaire including the interpretation of data analysis and the results thereof. Chapter four (4) is divided in 2 sections; (1) basic frequencies and percentages analysis of all of items while (2) dependent variables present the rating scale of all questionnaires. The objective of the research was to ascertain what students perceive about the institution and also to identify gaps between expectations and perceptions.

#### 4.2 Basic Frequencies & Percentage Analysis

#### 4.3 Section A

The demographics in this study describe the demographic profile of students. This includes field of study, race, age group and years of study (experience) within the institution. This was to ensure that the correct target receives the survey to guarantee reliable information.

**Table 4.1 Percentage of respondents based on gender**

	Frequency	Percent
Valid Male	51	48.1
Female	55	51.9
Total	106	100.0

[Gender]

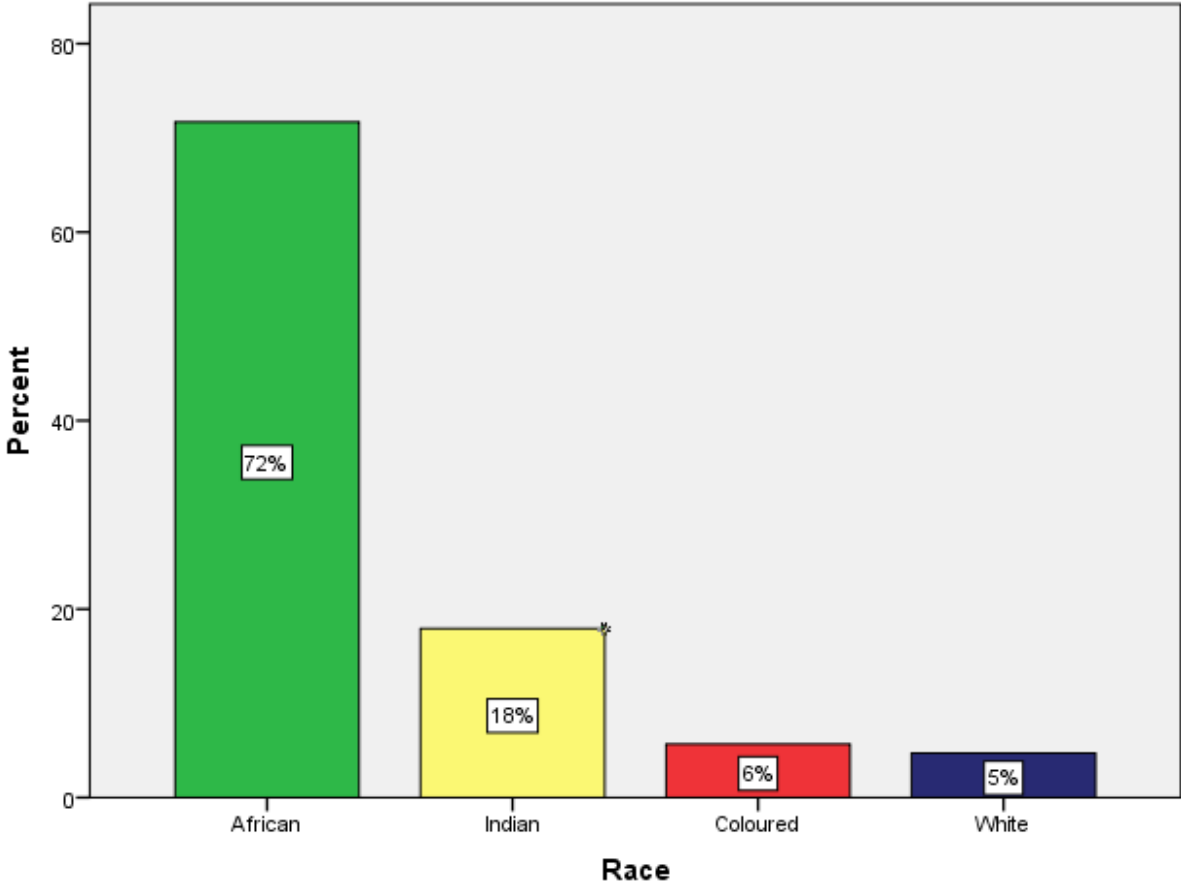
Table 4.1 represents 48.1 percent of males and 51.9 of females who completed the survey. This represents a fair proportion of the student sample.

**Table 4.2 Percentage of respondents based on race**

		Frequency	Percent
Valid	African	76	71.7
	Indian	19	17.9
	Coloured	6	5.7
	White	5	4.7
	Total	106	100.0

**[Race]**

Table 4.2 represents the race group survey of 71.7 percent Africans, 17.9 percent Indians, 5.7 percent Coloureds and 4.7 percent Whites.



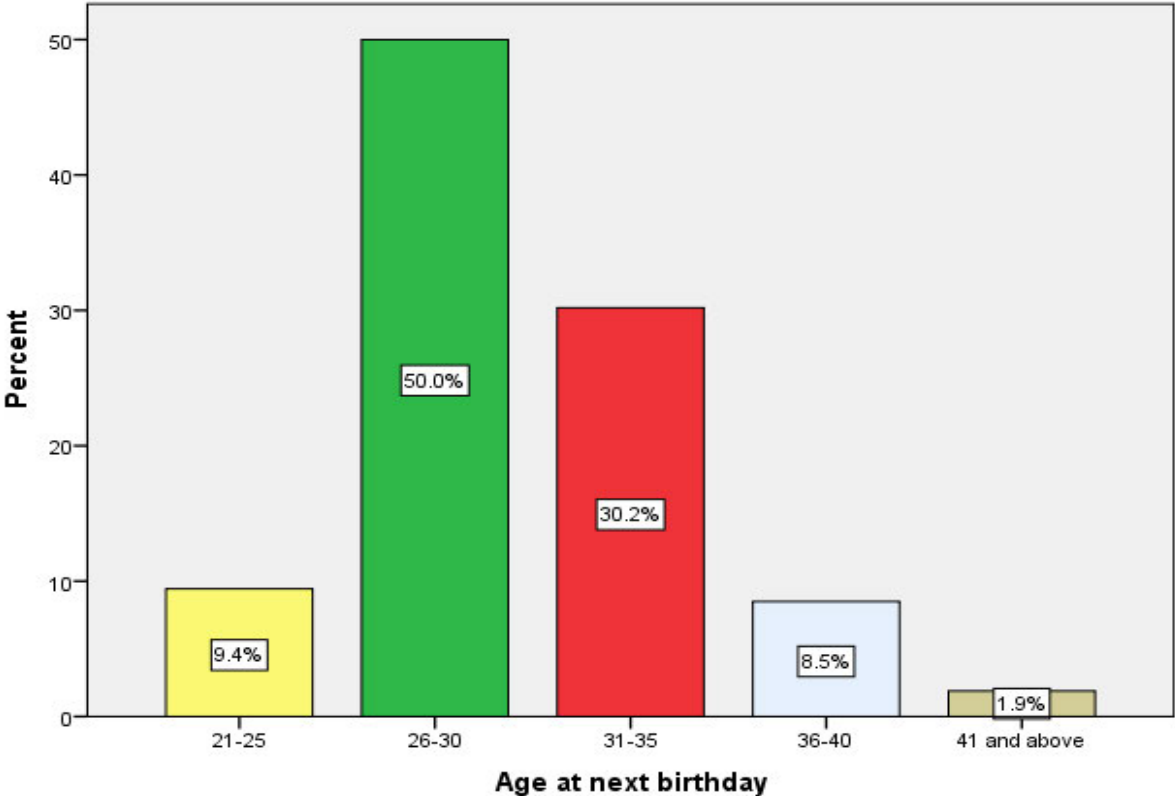
**Figure 4.1 Graph results on race**

**Table 4.3 Age group of respondents**

	Frequency	Percent
Valid 21-25	10	9.4
26-30	53	50.0
31-35	32	30.2
36-40	9	8.5
41 and above	2	1.9
Total	106	100.0

[Age at next birthday]

Table 4.3 respondents were as follows; 50 percent of students were between the ages of 26-30 years. 30.2 percent were between the ages of 31 and 35 years. The age groups of 21 to 25 years were 9.4 percent. The group between 36-40 were 8.5 percent each and 1.9 percent were the age group of 41 years and above.



**Figure 4.2 Age group graph**

**Table 4.4 Field of Study**

		Frequency	Percent
Valid	Faculty of Accounting & Informatics	2	1.9
	Faculty of Applied Sciences	1	.9
	Faculty of Engineering and the Built Environment	3	2.8
	Faculty of Management Sciences	100	94.3
	Total	106	100.0

[Field of study]

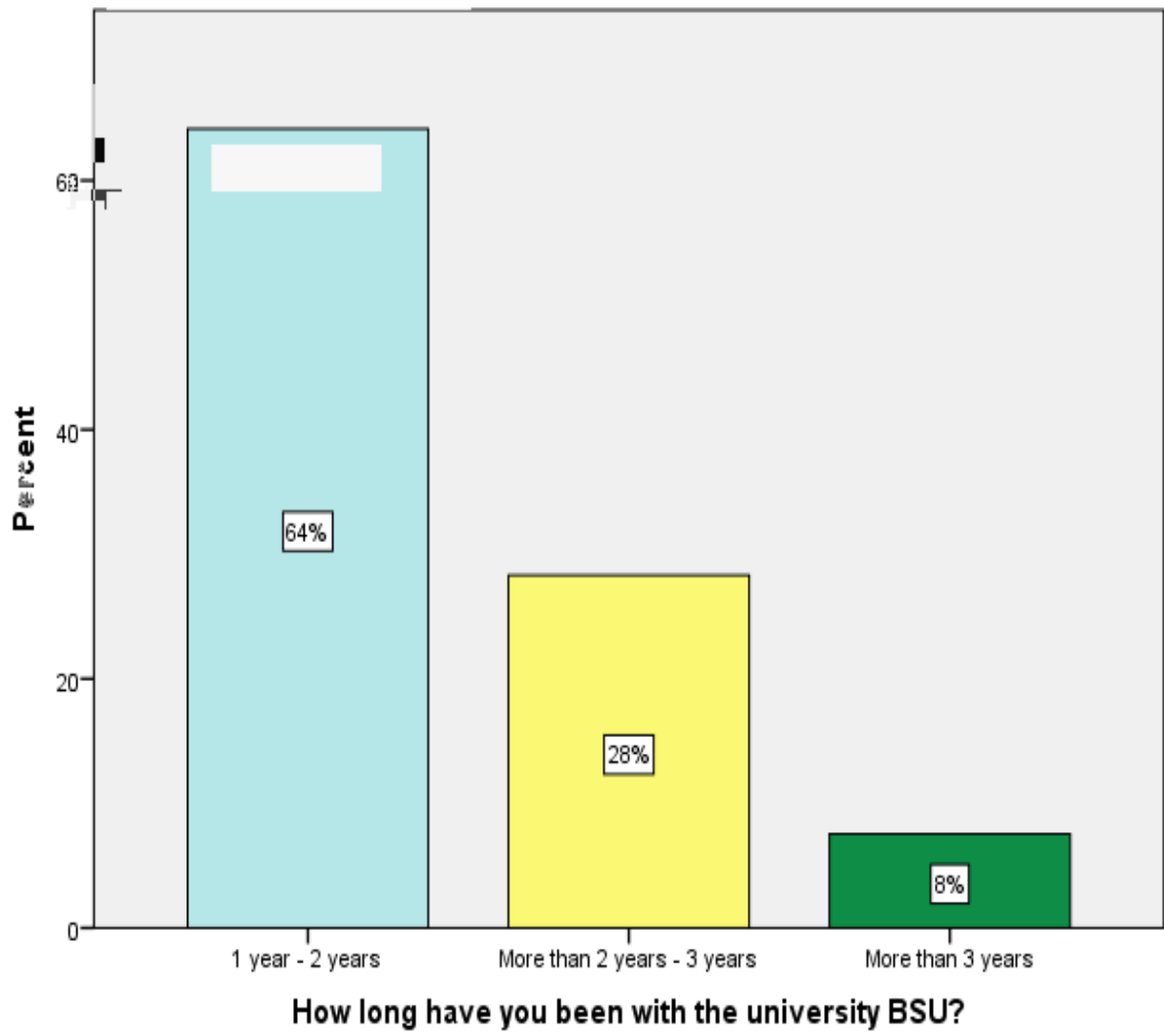
Table 4.4 represents the following; a total of 100 students from Faculty of Management Sciences dominated the research hence the study was based on BSU, which contributes 94.3 percent. There was 0.9 percent respondent from the Faculty of Applied Sciences, 2.8 percent response from Faculty of Engineering and the Build Environment and 2 percent from Faculty of Accounting and Informatics.

**Table 4.5 Years within the university**

		Frequency	Percent
Valid	1 year - 2 years	68	64.2
	More than 2 years - 3 years	30	28.3
	More than 3 years	8	7.5
	Total	106	100.0

[How long have you been with the university BSU?]

Table 4.5 represents 64.2 percent of students that have just enrolled in DUT, BSU within 2 years. There is 28.3 percent of students who are more than 2 years to 3 years, while 7.5 percent represents students who have been with the university for more than 3 years.



**Figure 4.3 Years within the university graph results**

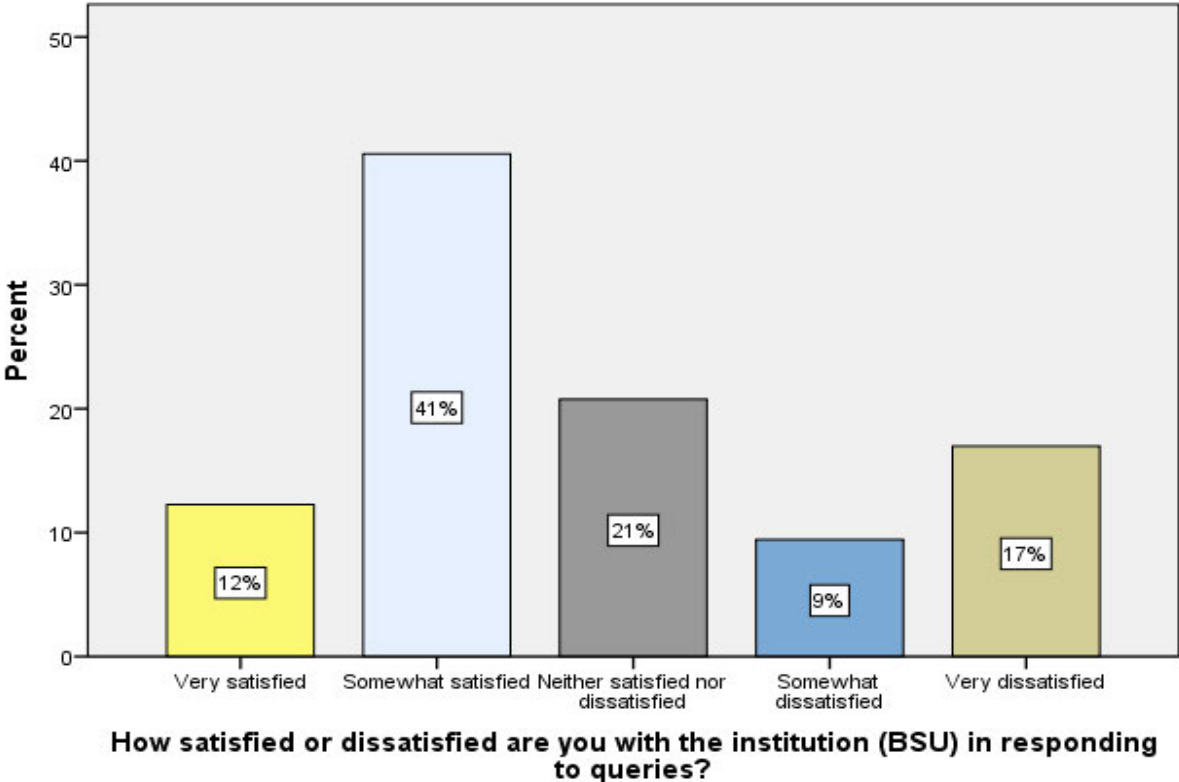
**4.4 Section B**

**Table 4.6 DUT, BSU Responsiveness towards students**

	Frequency	Percent
Valid Very satisfied	13	12.3
Somewhat satisfied	43	40.6
Neither satisfied nor dissatisfied	22	20.8
Somewhat dissatisfied	10	9.4
Very dissatisfied	18	17.0
Total	106	100.0

[How satisfied or dissatisfied are you with the institution BSU in responding to queries?]

The table above represents a majority of 40.6 percent of students that are somewhat satisfied. 20.8 percent are students that are neither satisfied nor dissatisfied. 12.3 percent are very satisfied with the institution whilst 9.4 percent students are somewhat dissatisfied and 17 percent are very dissatisfied.



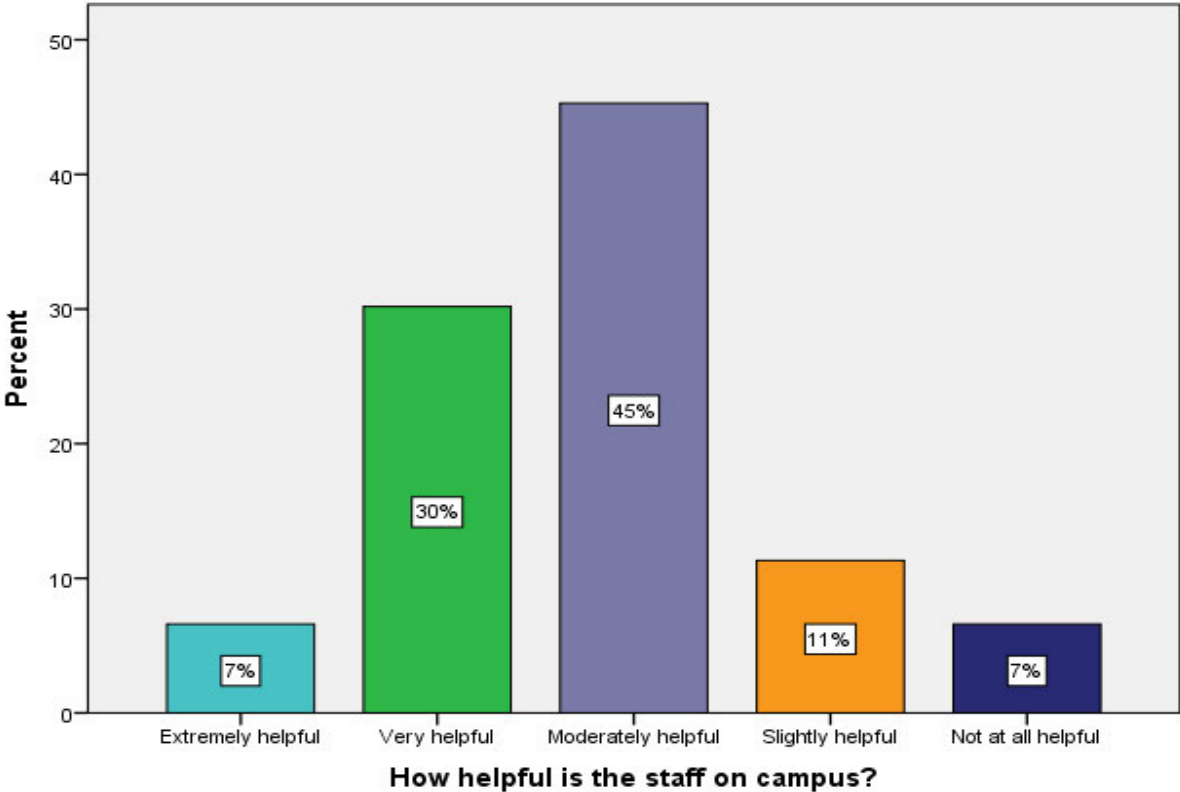
**Figure 4. 4 Graph results on DUT, BSU responsiveness**

**Table 4.7 Respondents perception towards DUT, BSU staff**

	Frequency	Percent
Valid Extremely helpful	7	6.6
Very helpful	32	30.2
Moderately helpful	48	45.3
Slightly helpful	12	11.3
Not at all helpful	7	6.6
Total	106	100.0

**[How helpful is the staff on campus?]**

The response from students were as follows; 6.6 percent are extremely helpful at DUT, BSU. 30.2 percent are very helpful. 45.3 percent of staff is moderately helpful. 11.3 percent of staff are slightly helpful while 6.6 percent of staff not at all helpful on campus.



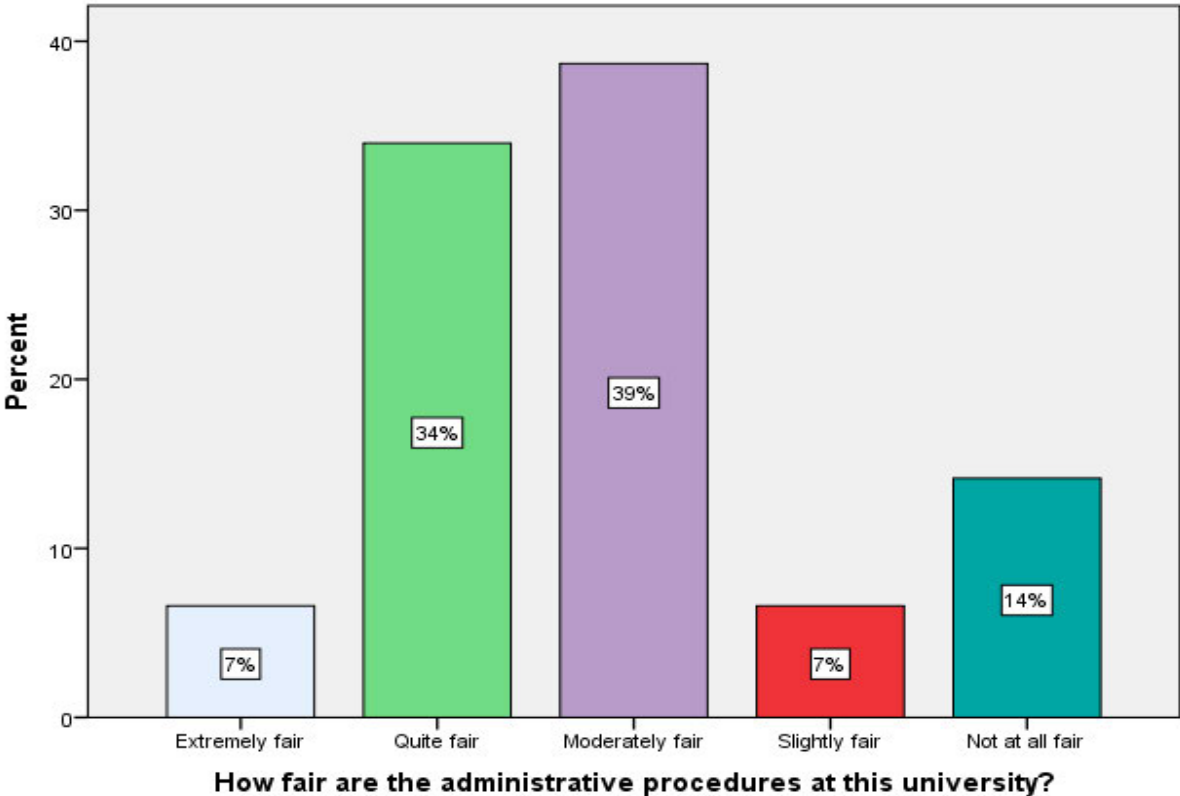
**Figure 4.5 Respondents perception towards DUT, BSU staff graph**

**Table 4.8 Response on administrative procedures within DUT**

	Frequency	Percent
Valid Extremely fair	7	6.6
Quite fair	36	34.0
Moderately fair	41	38.7
Slightly fair	7	6.6
Not at all fair	15	14.2
Total	106	100.0

[How fair are the administrative procedures at this university?]

Table 4.8 shows that 38.7 percent of students found the administrative procedures moderately fair, 34.0 percent were quite fair and 6.6 percent of students were extremely fair with administrative procedures. However, 6.6 percent of students found procedures slightly fair while 14.2 percent felt administrative procedures were not at all fair.



**Figure 4.6 Administrative procedures graph**

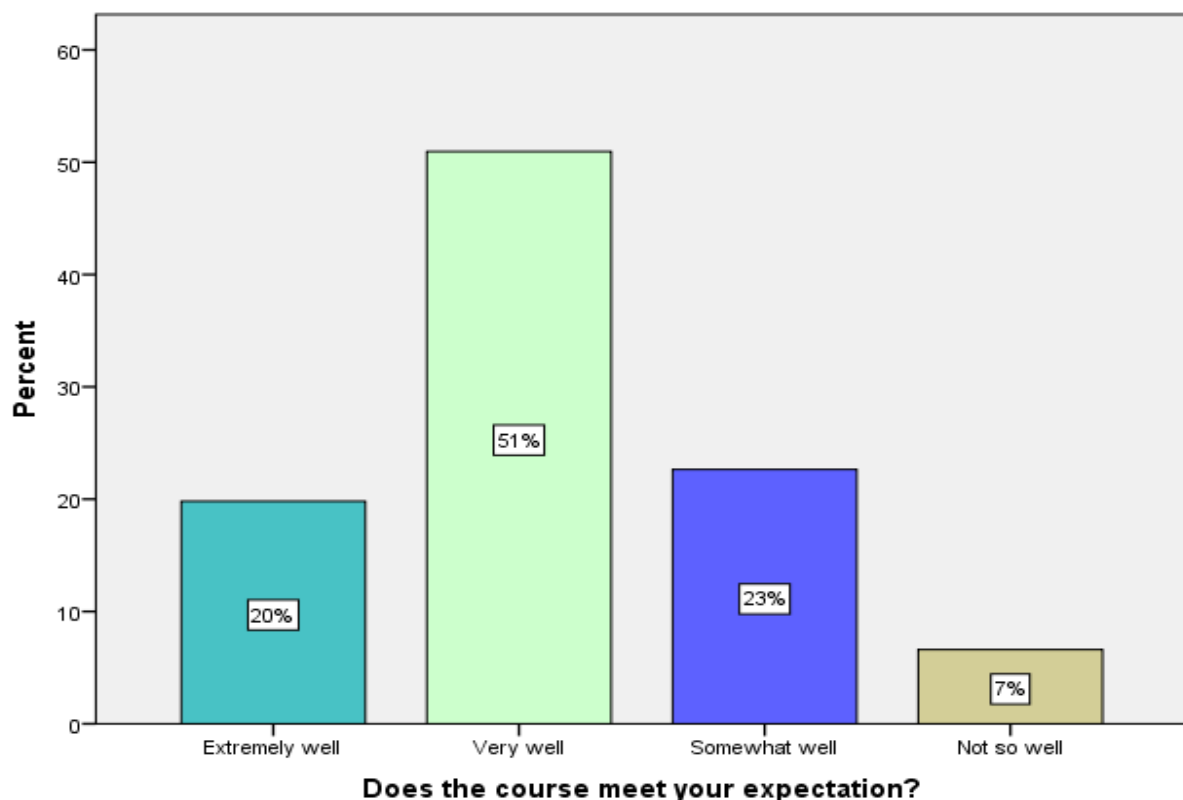
## 4.5 Section C

**Table 4.9 Response on expectation**

	Frequency	Percent
Valid Extremely well	21	19.8
Very well	54	50.9
Somewhat well	24	22.6
Not so well	7	6.6
Total	106	100.0

**[Does the course meet your expectation?]**

On the question of the course meeting the expectation, table 4.9 above shows 50.9 percent of students responded very well and 19.8 percent of students responded extremely well. 22.6 percent of students responded somewhat well while 6.6 percent of students responded not so well.



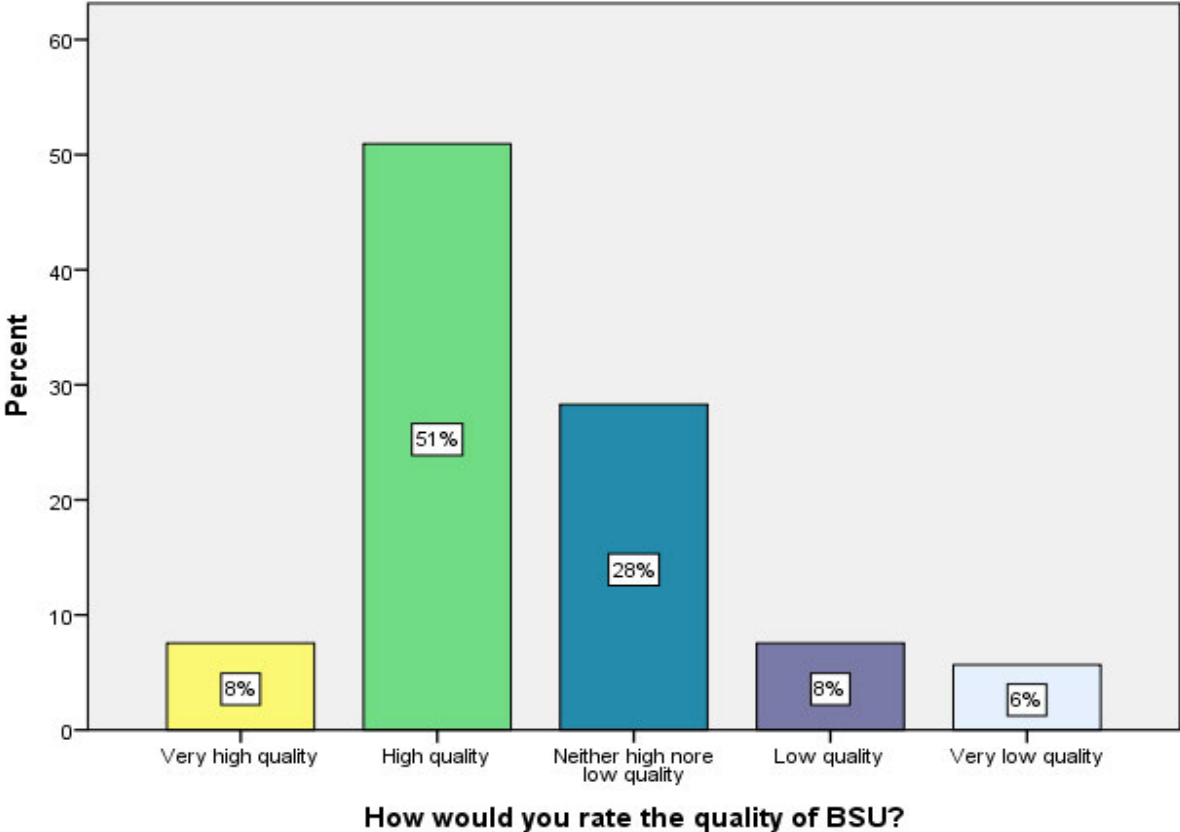
**Figure 4.7 Response on expectation graph**

**Table 4.10 Quality at DUT, BSU**

	Frequency	Percent
Valid Very high quality	8	7.5
High quality	54	50.9
Neither high nor low quality	30	28.3
Low quality	8	7.5
Very low quality	6	5.7
Total	106	100.0

[How would you rate the quality of BSU?]

On table 4.10 above, students rated high quality of DUT, BSU with 50.9 percent response. 7.5 percent rated very high quality. 28.3 percent of students rated neither high nor low quality, 7.5 percent rated low quality while 5.7 percent of students rated very low quality of DUT, BSU.



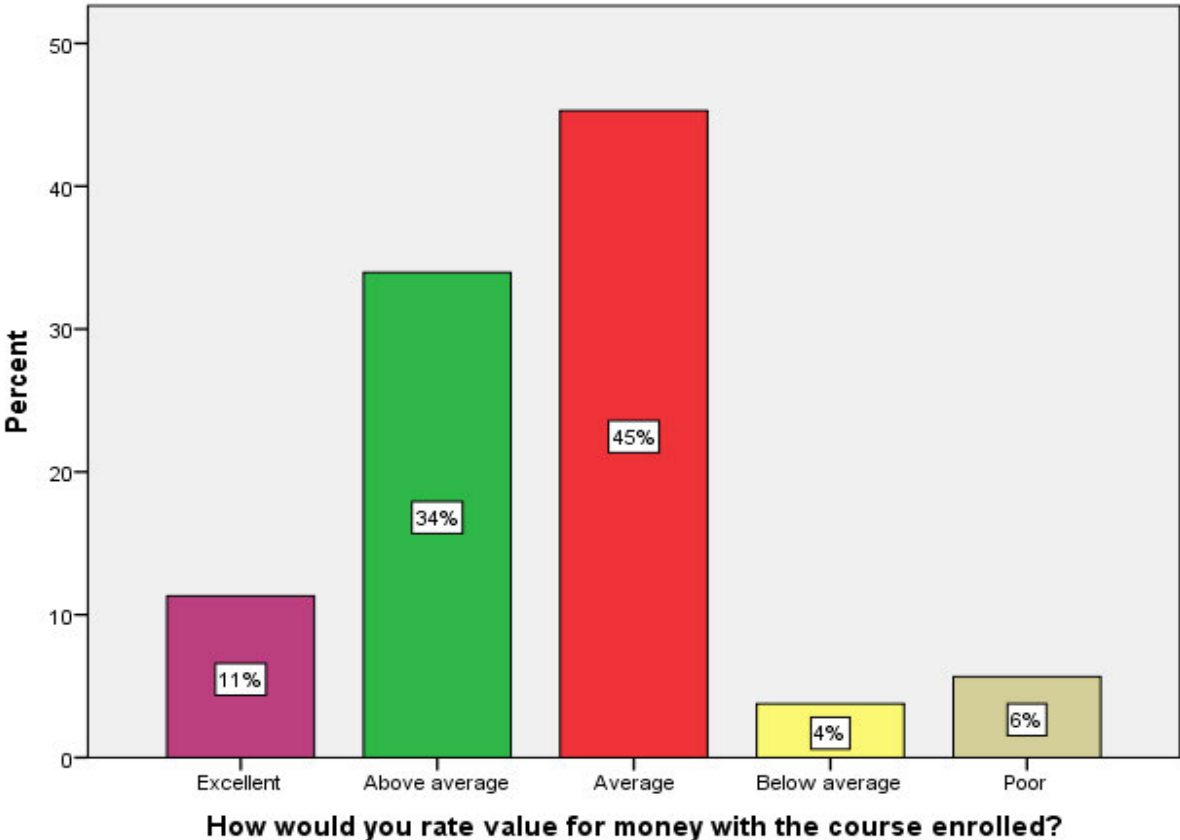
**Figure 4.8 Quality at BSU graph results**

**Table 4.11 Perceived value response**

	Frequency	Percent
Valid Excellent	12	11.3
Above average	36	34.0
Average	48	45.3
Below average	4	3.8
Poor	6	5.7
Total	106	100.0

[How would you rate value for money with the course enrolled?]

Table 4.11 shows that students response were 11.3 percent on excellent. 34 percent of students responded as above average. 45.3 percent of students responded average. 3.8 percent f students responded below average while 5.7 percent of students responded poor when rating value for money with the course enrolled.



**Figure 4.9 Perceived value graph results**

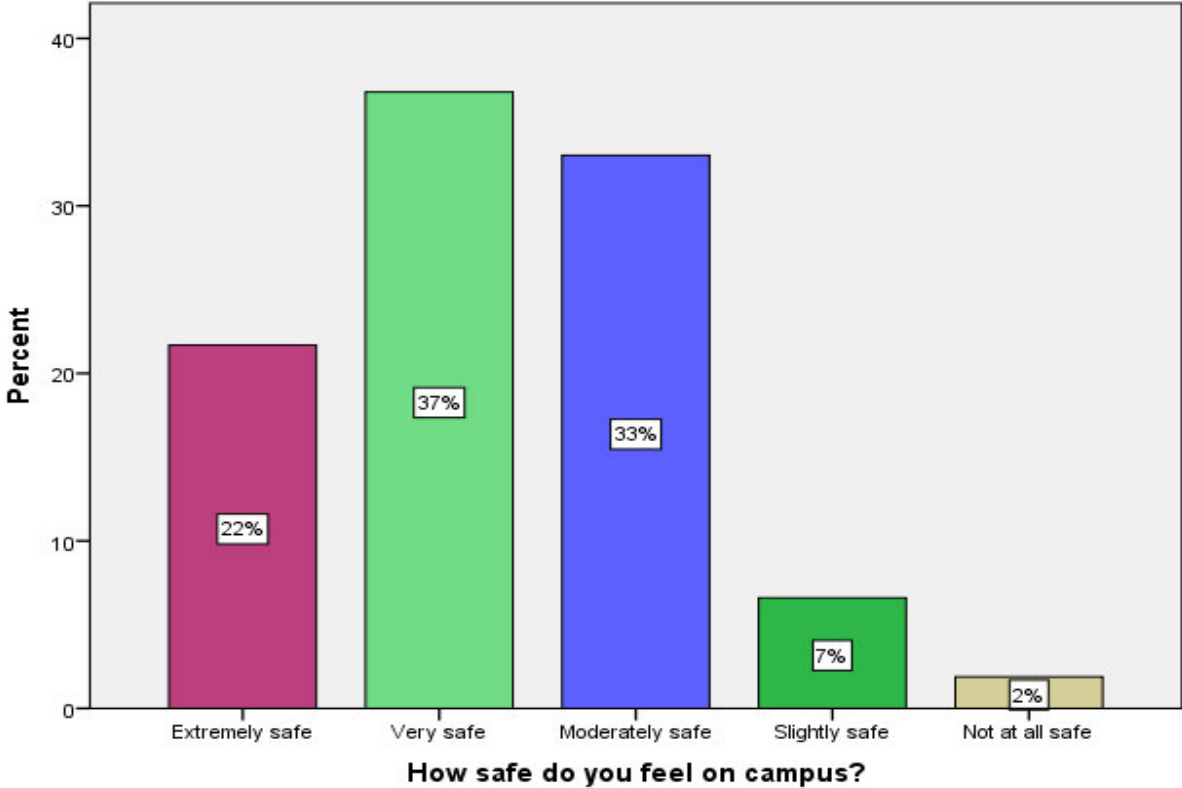
**4.6 Section D**

**Table 4.12 Safety on campus**

	Frequency	Percent
Valid Extremely safe	23	21.7
Very safe	39	36.8
Moderately safe	35	33.0
Slightly safe	7	6.6
Not at all safe	2	1.9
Total	106	100.0

**[How safe do you feel on campus?]**

36.8 percent of students felt very safe and 21.7 percent of students felt extremely safe on campus. 33.0 percent of students felt moderately safe, 6.6 percent felt slightly safe while 1.9 percent of students felt not safe at all on campus. This is indicated on table 4.12 above.



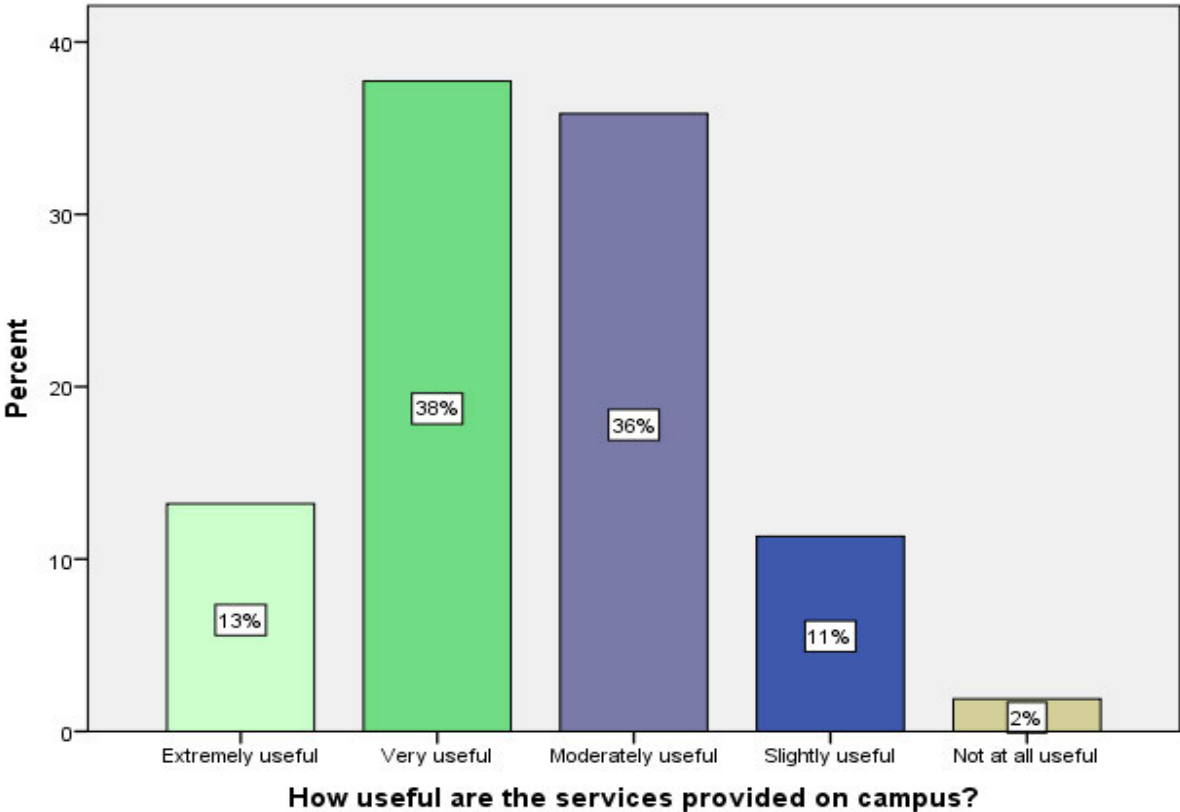
**Figure 4.10 Safety graph results**

**Table 4.13 Services provided on campus**

	Frequency	Percent
Valid Extremely useful	14	13.2
Very useful	40	37.7
Moderately useful	38	35.8
Slightly useful	12	11.3
Not at all useful	2	1.9
Total	106	100.0

[How useful are the services provided on campus?]

The table above shows 37.7 percent of students found the services provided on campus useful. 13.2 percent of students found the service extremely useful. 35.8 percent of students found the service moderately useful. 11.3 percent found the service slightly useful and 1.9 percent of students found the service provided on campus not at all useful.



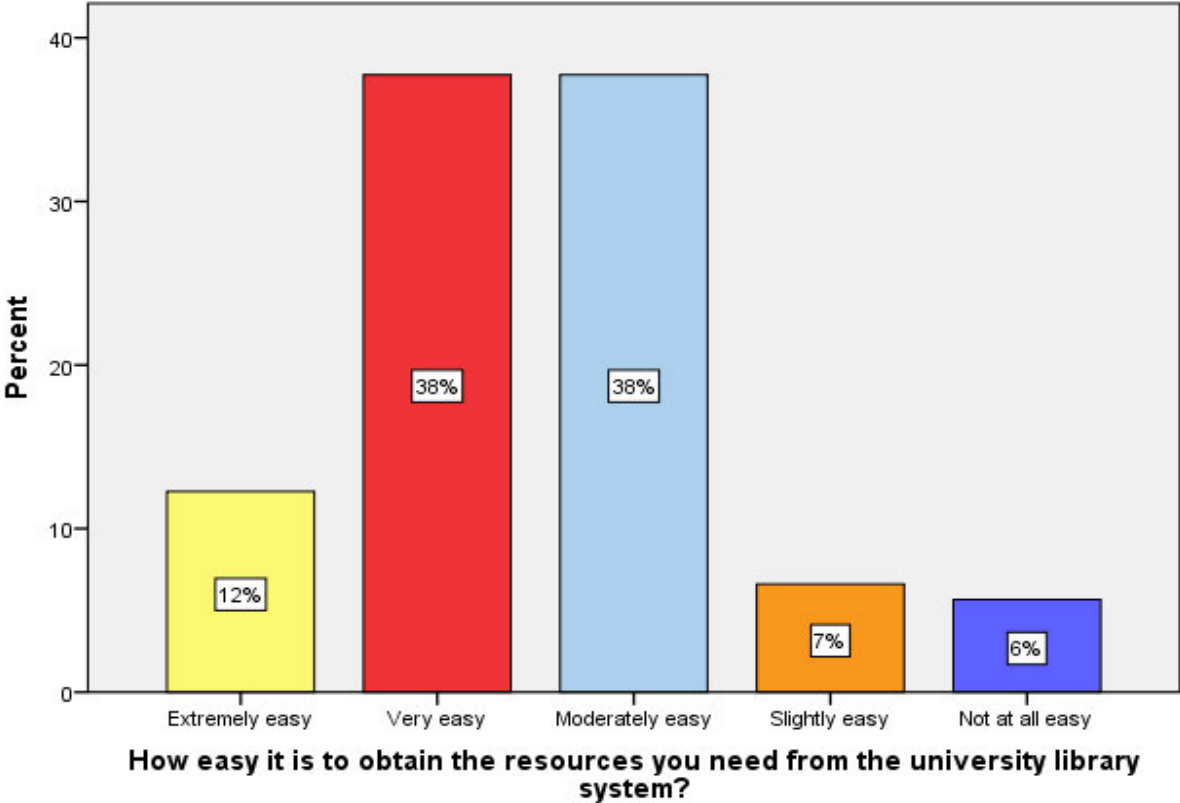
**Figure 4.11 Services provided on campus**

**Table 4.14 Availability of resources from university**

	Frequency	Percent
Valid Extremely easy	13	12.3
Very easy	40	37.7
Moderately easy	40	37.7
Slightly easy	7	6.6
Not at all easy	6	5.7
Total	106	100.0

**[How easy it is to obtain resources you need from the university library system?]**

Table 4.14 above shows that 12.3 percent response from students found extremely easy to find resources at the university. On very easy and moderately easy, students response were 37.7 percent equally. 6.6 percent found it slightly easy while 5.7 percent found it not easy at all to obtain resources from the university library.



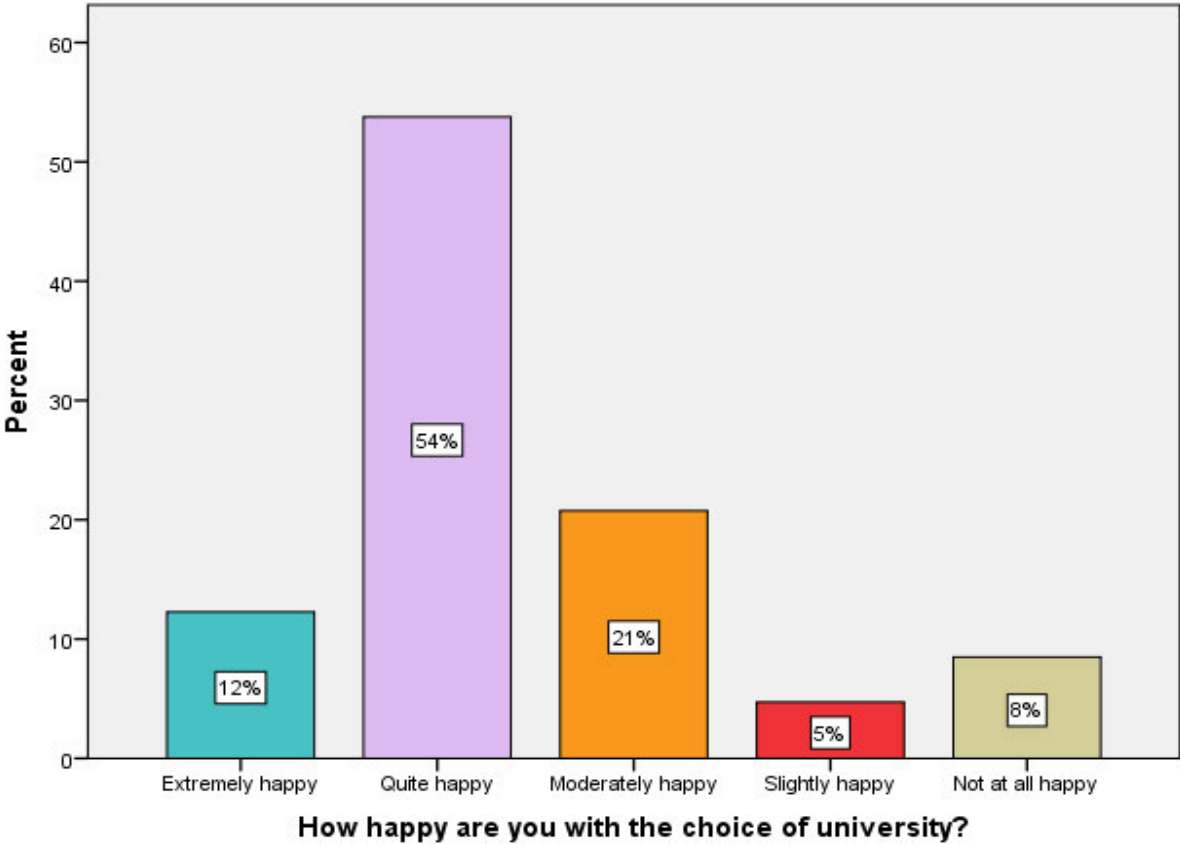
**Figure 4.12 Availability of resources graph**

**Table 4.15 DUT, BSU as choice of university**

	Frequency	Percent
Valid Extremely happy	13	12.3
Quite happy	57	53.8
Moderately happy	22	20.8
Slightly happy	5	4.7
Not at all happy	9	8.5
Total	106	100.0

**[How happy are you with the choice of university?]**

Students are quite happy with their choice of the university. Table 4.15 above shows the majority of 53.8 percent of students are happy with the university while 12.3 percent of students are extremely happy. 20.8 percent are moderately happy. 4.7 percent are slightly happy while 8.5 percent of students are not happy at all with their choice of university.



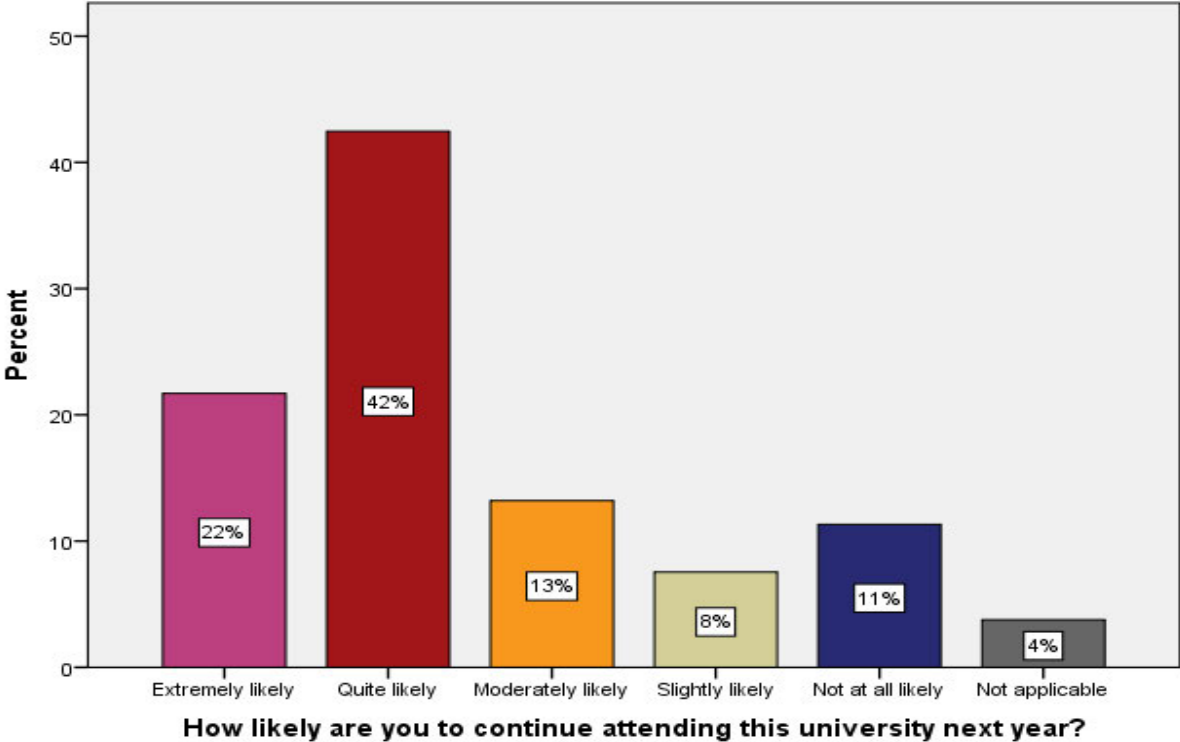
**Figure 4.13 DUT, BSU as choice of university graph results**

**Table 4.16 DUT, BSU as future choice of university**

	Frequency	Percent
Valid Extremely likely	23	21.7
Quite likely	45	42.5
Moderately likely	14	13.2
Slightly likely	8	7.5
Not at all likely	12	11.3
Not applicable	4	3.8
Total	106	100.0

[How likely are you to continue attending this university next year?]

Most of the students are likely to continue attending the university. 42.5 percent are quite likely to continue with the university. 21.7 percent of students are extremely likely to continue attending DUT, BSU. 13.2 percent of students are moderately likely. 7.5 percent of students are slightly likely, 11.3 percent are not at all likely to continue and 3.8 percent of the students did not respond.



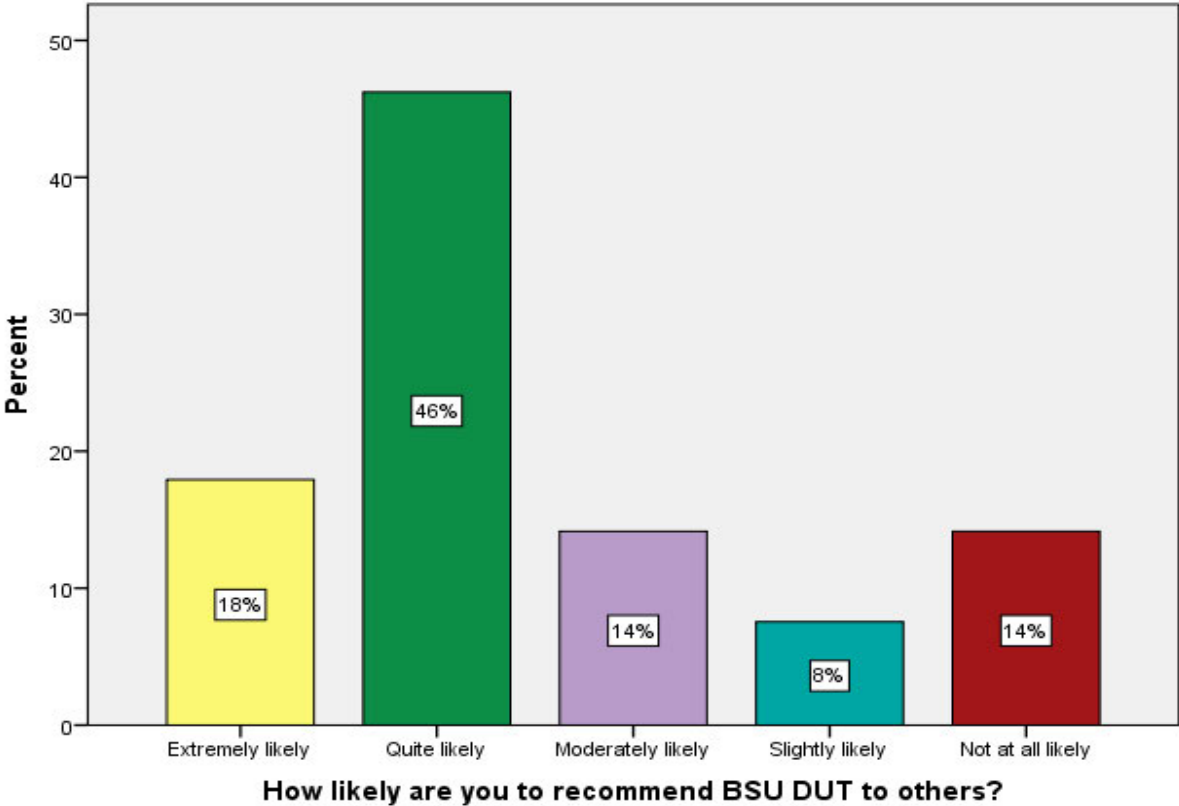
**Figure 4.14 DUT, BSU as future choice graph**

**Table 4.17 Recommending DUT, BSU to others response**

	Frequency	Percent
Valid Extremely likely	19	17.9
Quite likely	49	46.2
Moderately likely	15	14.2
Slightly likely	8	7.5
Not at all likely	15	14.2
Total	106	100.0

[How likely are you to recommend DUT, BSU to others?]

The above table indicates that 46.2 percent of students will likely recommend DUT, BSU to others. 17.9 percent will be extremely likely to recommend the university. 14.2 percent of students are moderately likely, 7.5 percent will be slightly likely to recommend DUT, BSU while 14.2 percent will not at all likely recommend DUT, BSU to others.



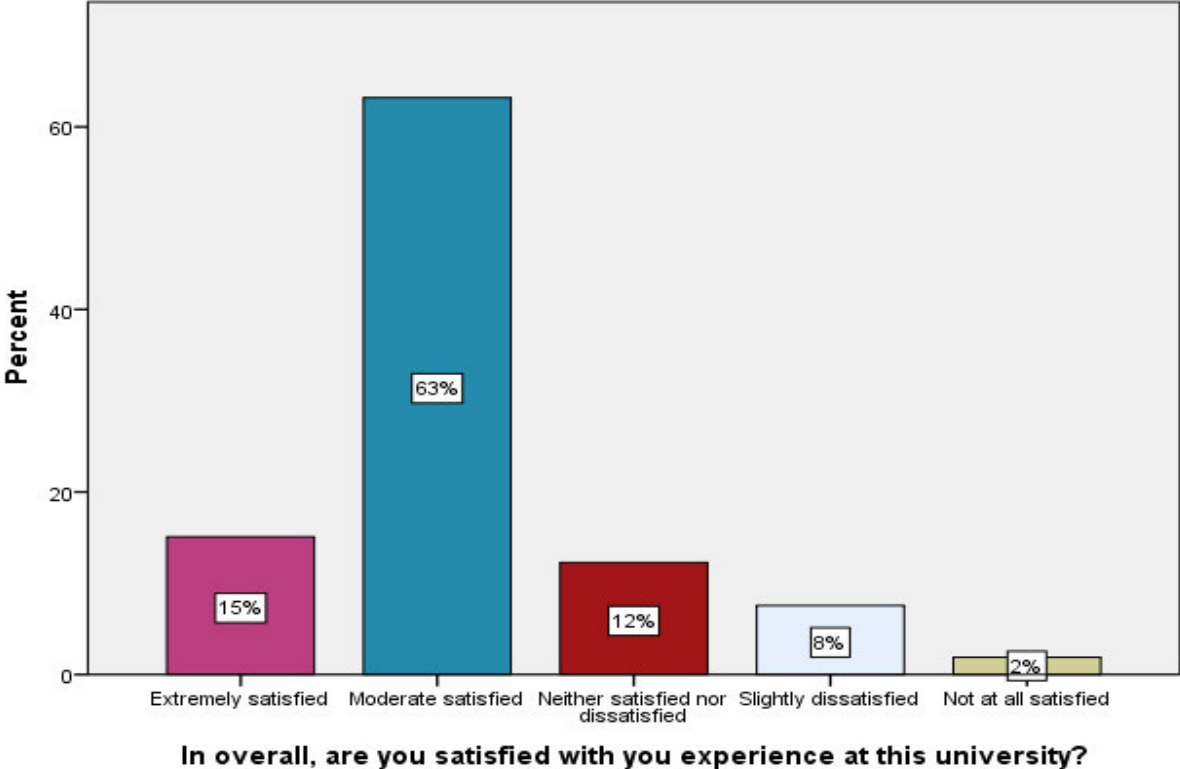
**Figure 4.15 Recommending DUT, BSU to others graph**

**Table 4.18 Overall student satisfaction response**

	Frequency	Percent
Valid Extremely satisfied	16	15.1
Moderate satisfied	67	63.2
Neither satisfied nor dissatisfied	13	12.3
Slightly dissatisfied	8	7.5
Not at all satisfied	2	1.9
Total	106	100.0

**[In overall, are you satisfied with you experience at this university?]**

Most of the students are moderately satisfied with the university. This is indicated on above table. 63.2 percent of students are moderately satisfied, 15.1 percent are extremely satisfied, 12.3 percent are neither satisfied nor dissatisfied, 7.5 percent students are slightly satisfied while 1.9 percent of students are not satisfied at all with the university.



**Figure 4.16 Overall student satisfaction response graph**

## 4.7 Dependant Variables Analysis

### 4.7.1 Introduction

In order to assess customer service quality at DUT, BSU customer service quality was categorized into three elements. These were Resource Based Serviced Services, Staff Based Services and Quality of Courses offered at DUT, BSU. A final analysis of testing overall satisfaction was also performed to draw conclusions in terms of customer service quality.

### 4.7.2 Student Support Services

In order to ascertain customer perception with regards to student support services offered by the institution to assist students, a rating scale ranging from 0 to 4 on 3 aspects (items) was used to determine participant's satisfaction levels with student support services offered by the institution. These amount to a minimum score of 0 and maximum score of 12. Descriptive Table 4.19 below illustrates an average score of 7.632 illustrating that customers are somewhere in between in terms of being happy with the student support services.

**Descriptive Table 4.19 Statistics**

	N	Minimum	Maximum	Mean	Std. Deviation
Resourcebased	106	2.00	12.00	7.6321	2.40367
Valid N (listwise)	106				

### 4.7.3 Test for Normality

To further understand the differences in the rating of the Resource Based Services, the researcher was concerned with differences between the ratings of different profiles (Independent variables). The two independent variables chosen were Gender and Years spent at DUT, BSU. Simply put, the researcher was interested in whether Gender or years spent at DUT, BSU had any effect in rating the student support services provided by the University.

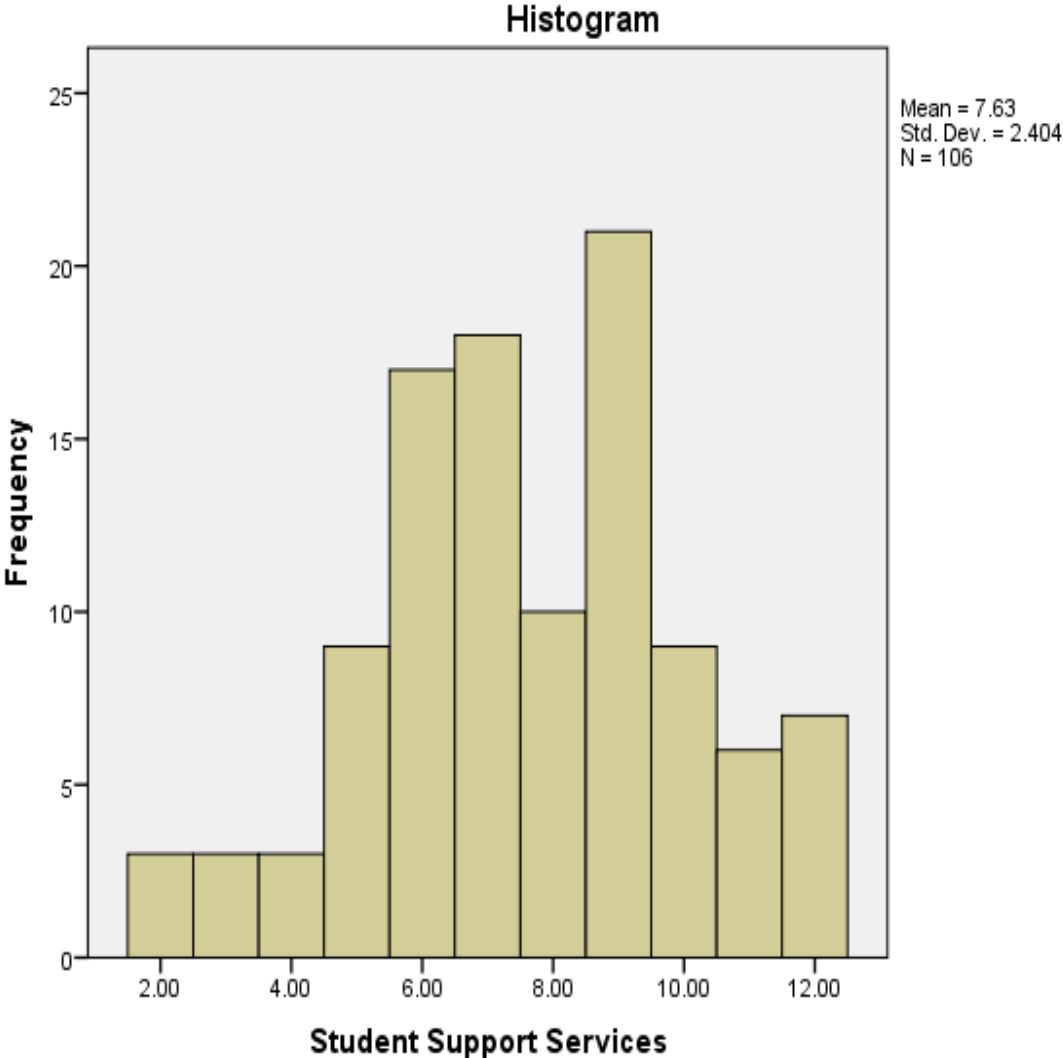
Therefore before generating inferential tests, tests for normality were run. According to Tredoux and Durrheim (2002), there are three important assumptions to be considered before running inferential or parametric tests. These are assumptions of normality i.e. all data analysed through inferential tests has to be normally distributed.

The second assumption is homogeneity of variance and the third the assumption of independence. Therefore to test for normality, a Kolmogorov Smirnov test was run. The below results were obtained:

**Table 4.20 Tests of Normality**

	Kolmogorov-Smirnov <sup>a</sup>			Shapiro-Wilk		
	Statistic	df	Sig.	Statistic	df	Sig.
Resourcebased	.121	106	.001	.968	106	.012

a. Lilliefors Significance Correction



**Figure 4.17 Histogram on student support services**

The Kolmogorov Smirnov p value obtained is 0.01 (a value below our alpha value of 0.05) suggesting that our data is not normally distributed. This is also supported by the Histogram above which in shape does not form a bell shape. Based on the results, non-parametric tests will be executed to test the influence of Gender and Years spent at the institution on ratings of student support services.

**4.7.4 Gender vs. Student Support Service**

To test the differences of scores gender wise, a non-parametric tests known as the Mann Whitney Test was run. This test is used as a substitute for an independent samples t-test to test if an assumption of normality is violated. The following results were obtained:

**Table 4.21 Ranks**

Gender	N	Mean Rank	Sum of Ranks
Resourcebased Male	51	53.10	2708.00
Female	55	53.87	2963.00
Total	106		

**Table 4.22 Test Statistics**

	Resourcebased
Mann-Whitney U	1382.000
Wilcoxon W	2708.000
Z	-.131
Asymp. Sig. (2-tailed)	.896

a. Grouping Variable: Gender

The Mann Whitney p value obtained above (i.e. 0.896) is greater than our alpha level of 0.05 (two-tailed). This suggests that there are no significant differences in the rating of scores between the different genders in terms of the provision of student support services at the DUT,BSU. Judging on these results, this suggests that in terms of improving services, the institution needs to take both genders into consideration or has currently not reached a level where one can conclude that both genders are strongly satisfied with the regard of the provision of student support services.

#### 4.7.5 Years Spent at Institution vs. Student Support Services

Another Independent variable was tested to ascertain whether there were any differences in rating scores between students who have spent years at the institution. To test this, a Kruskal Wallis Test was run. A Kruskal Wallis test is a non-parametric test (substituting Anova) if Anova assumptions are violated. The following results were obtained:

**Table 4.23 Descriptive Statistics**

	N	Mean	Std. Deviation	Minimum	Maximum
Resourcebased	106	7.6321	2.40367	2.00	12.00
How long have you been with the university BSU?	106	1.4340	.63274	1.00	3.00

**Table 4.24 Ranks**

How long have you been with the university BSU?	N	Mean Rank
Resourcebased 1 year - 2 years	68	52.29
More than 2 years - 3 years	30	50.20
More than 3 years	8	76.19
Total	106	

**Table 4.25 Test Statistics<sup>a,b</sup>**

	Resourcebased
Chi-Square	4.903
df	2
Asymp. Sig.	.086

a. Kruskal Wallis Test

b. Grouping Variable: How long have you been with the university DUT, BSU?

The p value obtained in the Kruskal Wallis test is 0.086. This value is greater than our alpha level 0.05 (two-tailed) suggesting no significant difference in rating scores between the students of different years spent at the institution.

#### 4.7.6 Staff Based Services

The second independent variable of interest was the quality of service provided by the staff at the Business Study Unit of the Institution. In order to ascertain customer perception with regards to staff based services offered by the institution to assist students, a rating scale ranging from 0 to 4 on 3 aspects (items) was used to determine participant's satisfaction levels with staff based services offered by the institution. These amount to a minimum score of 0 and maximum score of 12. Descriptive Table 4.26 below shows that participants gave staff services a mean score of 6.37 (translating to a rating of 53%). This rating is bordering on poor service and suggests that, in order to better influence customer satisfaction, DUT BSU needs to greatly improve client and customer relations and dealings.

**Descriptive Table 4.26**

	N	Minimum	Maximum	Mean	Std. Deviation
Staffservice	106	1.00	12.00	6.3774	2.81307
Valid N (listwise)	106				

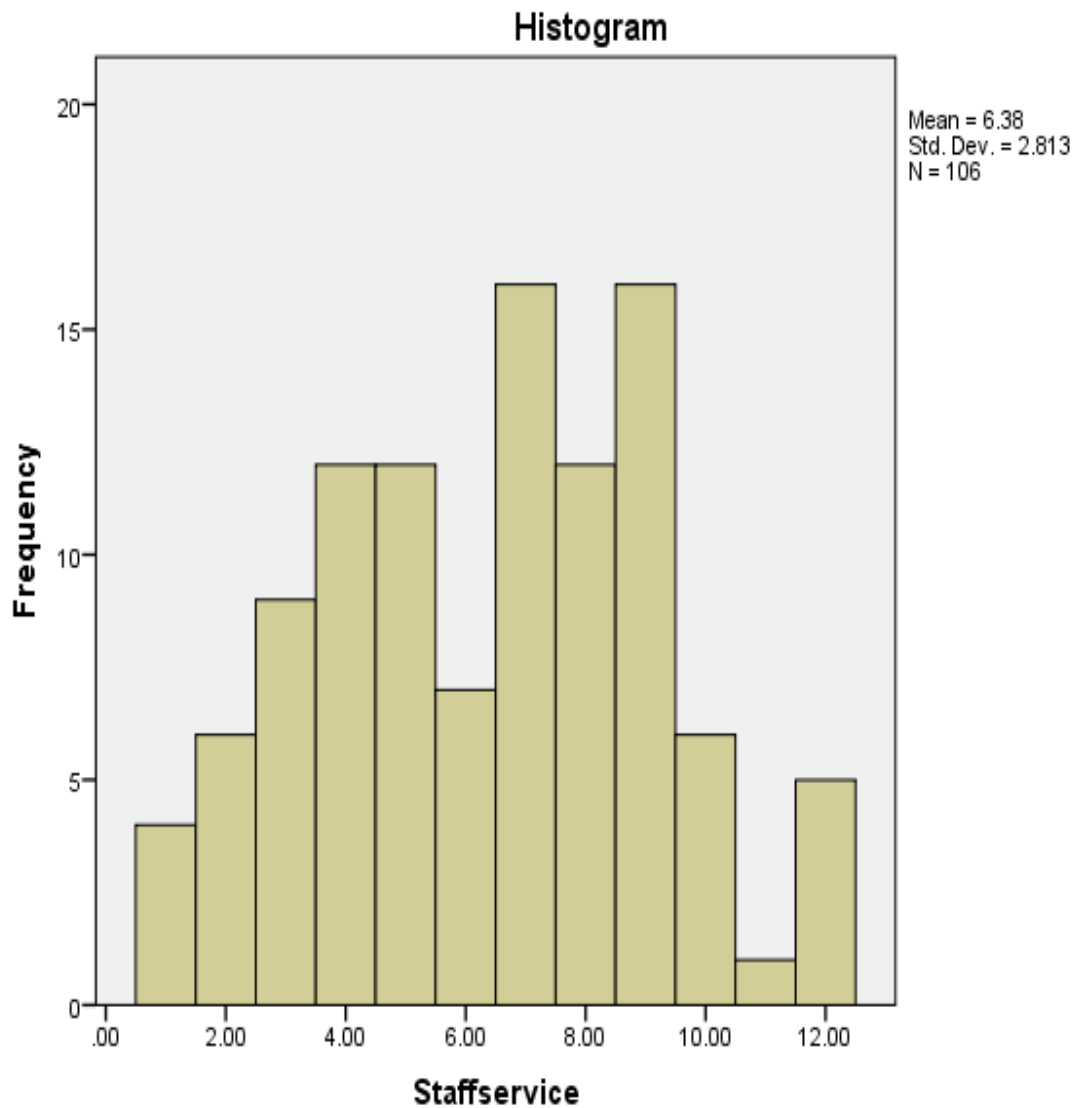
#### 4.8 Normality Test

To further understand the differences in the rating of Staff Based Services, the researcher was concerned with differences between the ratings of different profiles (Independent variables). The two independent variables chosen were Gender and Years spent at DUT, BSU. Simply put, the researcher was interested in whether Gender or years spent at DUT, BSU had any effect in rating the Staff services provided by the University. A Kolmogorov Smirnov Test was conducted and the following results were obtained:

**Table 4.27 Tests of Normality**

	Kolmogorov-Smirnov <sup>a</sup>			Shapiro-Wilk		
	Statistic	Df	Sig.	Statistic	df	Sig.
Staffservice	.116	106	.001	.967	106	.009

a. Lilliefors Significance Correction



**Figure 4.18 Staff service Histogram**

The results above illustrate the distribution of scores of Staff services is not normally distributed. This is derived on the basis of the Kolmogorov Smirnov p value of 0.001 and the shape of the histogram, which is not bell, curved. Based on the above non-parametric tests will be executed to test for differences between the groups (independent variables).

#### 4.8.1 Gender vs. Staff Services

To test the differences of scores gender wise, a non-parametric tests known as the Mann Whitney Test was run. This test is used as a substitute for an independent samples t-test if an assumption of normality is violated. The following results were obtained

**Table 4.28 Ranks**

Gender	N	Mean Rank	Sum of Ranks
Staffservice Male	51	52.39	2672.00
Female	55	54.53	2999.00
Total	106		

**Table 4.29 Test Statistics<sup>a</sup>**

	Staffservice
Mann-Whitney U	1346.000
Wilcoxon W	2672.000
Z	-.360
Asymp. Sig. (2-tailed)	.719

a. Grouping Variable: Gender

The Mann Whitney p value obtained above (i.e. 0.719) is greater than our alpha level of 0.05 (two-tailed). This suggests that there are no significant differences in the rating of scores between the different genders in the ratings of employee services at the DUT.

#### 4.8.2 Years Spent at Institution vs. Staff Services

Another Independent variable tested against the rating of staff services was to test whether there were any differences in rating scores between students who have spent differences in years at the institution. To test this, a Kruskal Wallis Test was run. A Kruskal Wallis test is a non-parametric test (substituting Anova) if Anova assumptions are violated. The following results were obtained

**Table 4.30 Ranks**

How long have you been with the university BSU?	N	Mean Rank
Staffservice 1 year - 2 years	68	52.06
More than 2 years - 3 years	30	48.60
More than 3 years	8	84.13
Total	106	

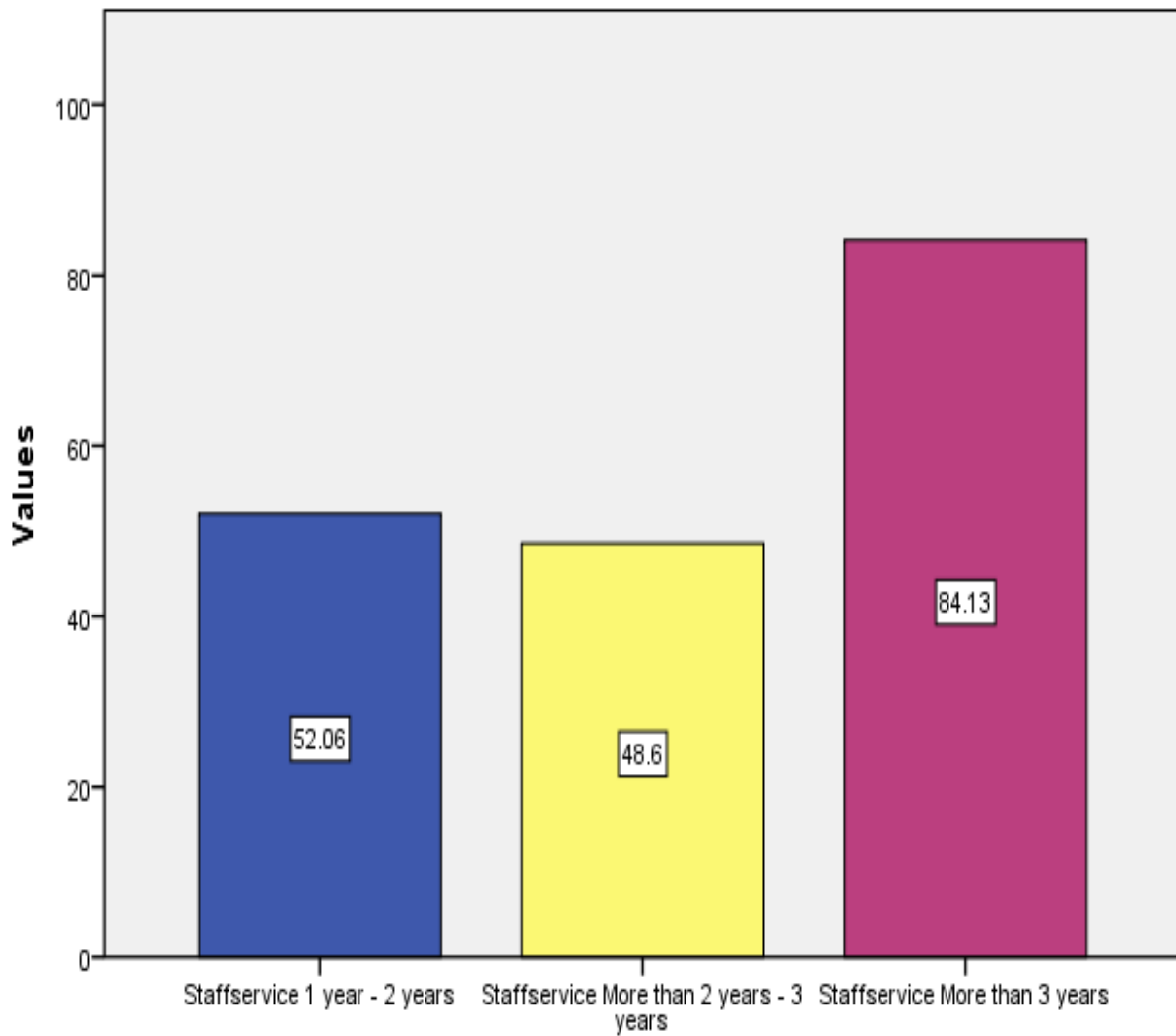
**Table 4.31 Test Statistics<sup>a,b</sup>**

	Staffservice
Chi-Square	8.963
df	2
Asymp. Sig.	.011

a. Kruskal Wallis Test

b. Grouping Variable: How long have you been with the university BSU?

### Mean Rank Scores of different years at institution



### How long have you been with the university BSU?

**Figure 4.19 Mean Scores**

The Kruskal Wallis test above (0,011) illustrates that there is a significant difference in customer perception in terms of the quality of services offered by staff at the BSU. This is supported by the mean rank scores attached above.

### 4.8.3 Rating of Quality of the DUT, BSU

The rating of the quality of the DUT, BSU was not just solely on the content covered but the perceived value of the content market wise. In order to ascertain customer perception with regards to the quality of the BSU, a rating scale ranging from 0 to 4 on 3 aspects (items) was used to determine participant's satisfaction levels. These amount to a minimum score of 0 and maximum score of 12.

Descriptive Table 4.32 below shows that participants gave the quality of the BSU a mean score of 7.15 (translating to a rating of 60%). Once again, this is not a bad score/rating but it suggests that there is room for improvement if the DUT, BSU aims to position itself as a market leader in terms of the content and curriculum it offers.

**Descriptive Statistics Table 4.32**

	N	Minimum	Maximum	Mean	Std. Deviation
BSU quality	106	1.00	12.00	7.1509	2.52150
Valid N (listwise)	106				

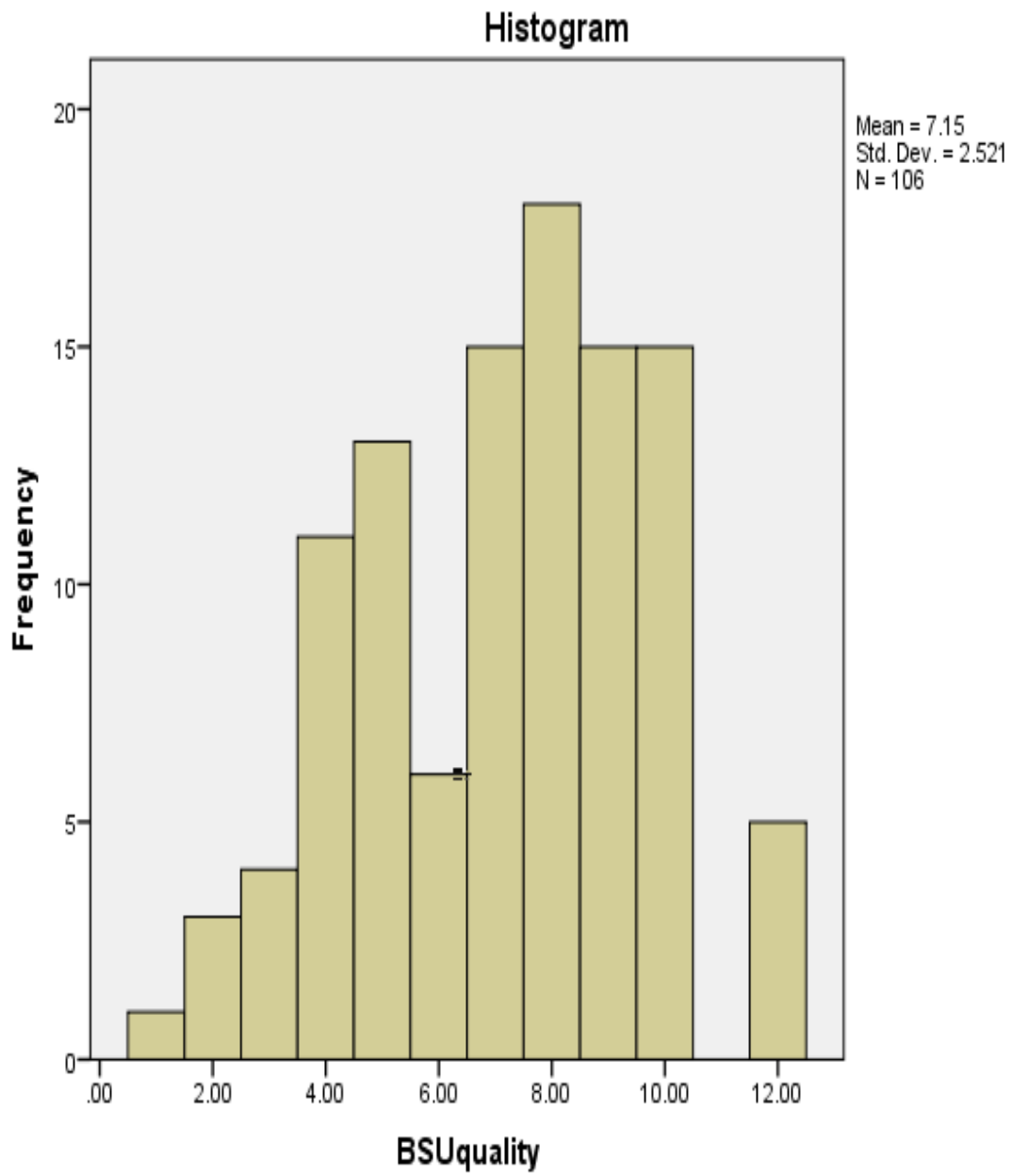
### 4.8.4 Tests for Normality

In terms of normality tests (Kolmogorov Smirnov test used) the distribution of scores of ratings of the DUT, BSU proved not normally distributed. This is illustrated by the p value obtained below i.e. 0.00 and the shape of the histogram. Therefore to test differences between groups non-parametric tests will be utilized.

**Table 4.33 Tests of Normality**

	Kolmogorov-Smirnov <sup>a</sup>			Shapiro-Wilk		
	Statistic	df	Sig.	Statistic	df	Sig.
BSUquality	.132	106	.000	.963	106	.005

a. Lilliefors Significance Correction



**Figure 4.20 DUT, BSU quality Histogram**

#### 4.8.5 Years spent at institution vs. DUT, BSU Quality

Years spent at the institution will be the only independent variable tested for this question. Based on the results of the normality test above a Kruskal Wallis test was utilized to test for differences.

**Table 4.34 Ranks**

How long have you been with the university BSU?	N	Mean Rank
BSU quality 1 year - 2 years	68	50.18
More than 2 years - 3 years	30	53.42
More than 3 years	8	82.00
Total	106	

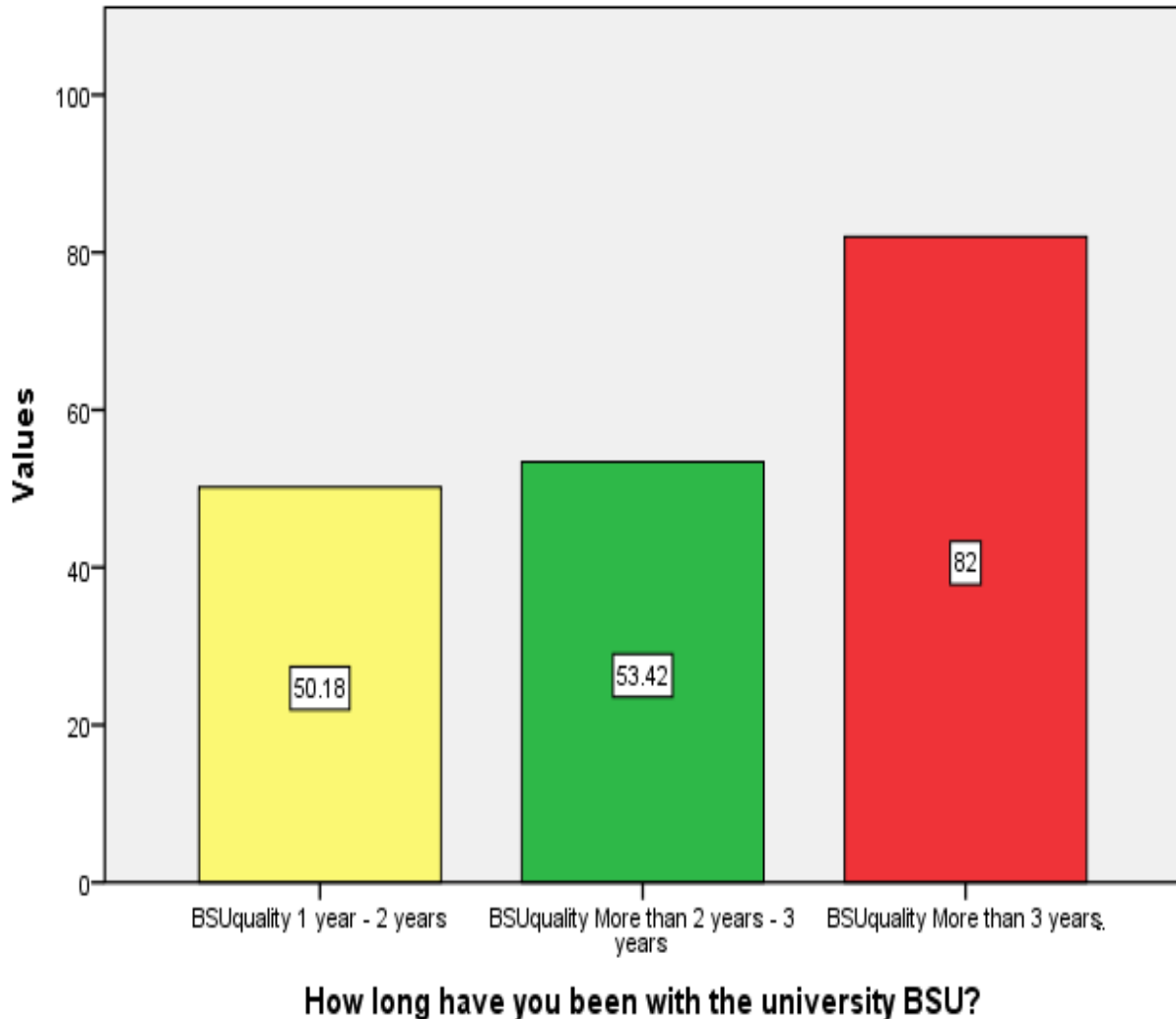
**Table 4.35 Test Statistics<sup>a,b</sup>**

	BSU quality
Chi-Square	7.796
df	2
Asymp. Sig.	.020

a. Kruskal Wallis Test

b. Grouping Variable: How long have you been with the university BSU?

### Mean Rank Scores of BSU Quality for participants with different longevity at the institution



**Figure 4.21 Mean scores of DUT, BSU quality vs. Years spent at University**

The Kruskal Wallis Test (p value of 0.02) shows that there is in fact a significant difference between participants who have been in different year categories at the institution. As shown by the mean rankings graph above, the difference seems to exist more in those who have been at the institution for longer. This could be more reason why DUT, BSU does not do very well in making first impression but gradually improves its customer satisfaction levels as the participants spend more years at the institution. Poor or average first impression has the possibility to affect enrolment levels and would have detrimental effects if the niversity aims to position itself as a market leader.

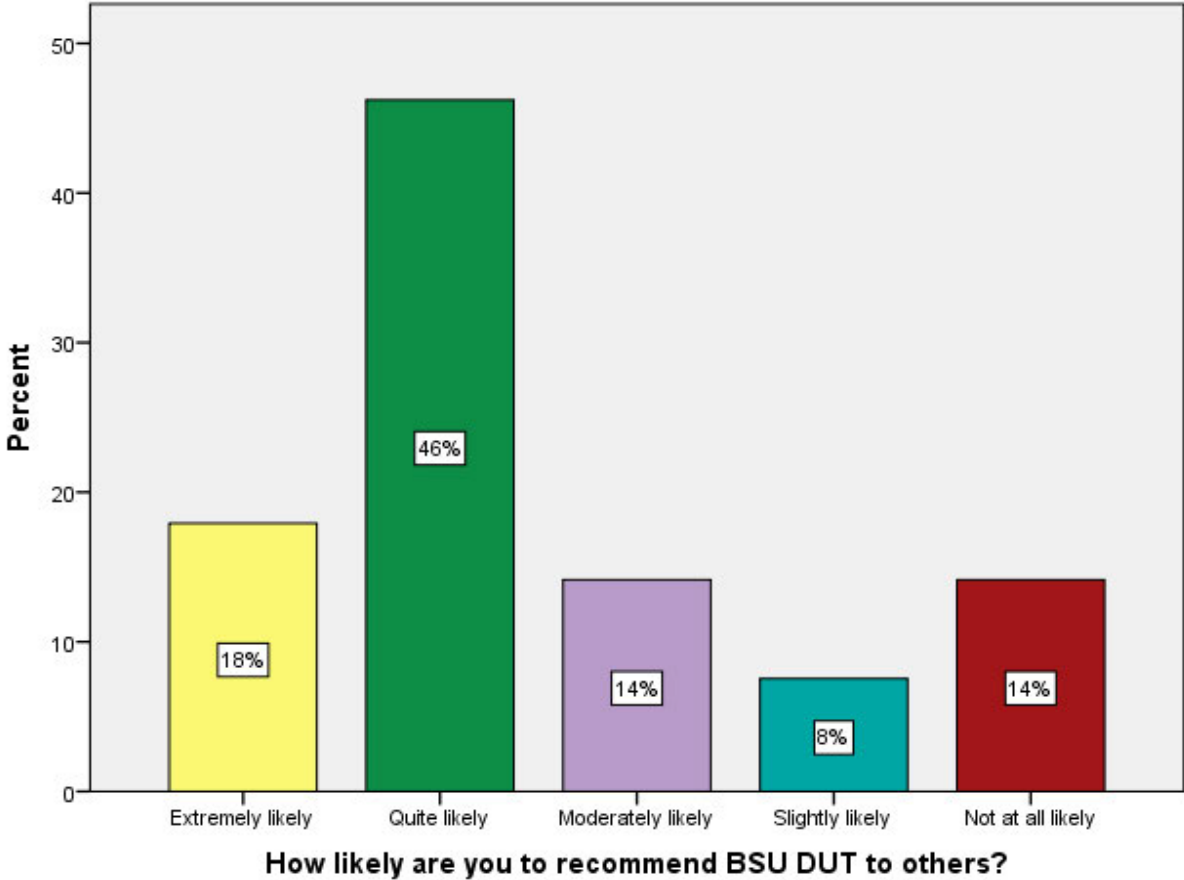
**4.9 Overall Satisfaction**

Despite the few differences from students indicated in the past sections, most participants seemed to be overall happy and optimistic about the university and the BSU. For example the table and graph below shows that 78% of participants are likely to recommend the DUT, BSU to others.

**Table 4.36**

	Frequency	Percent
Valid Extremely likely	19	17.9
Quite likely	49	46.2
Moderately likely	15	14.2
Slightly likely	8	7.5
Not at all likely	15	14.2
Total	106	100.0

[How likely are you to recommend DUT BSU to others?]



**Figure 4.22 Likely recommendation results graph**

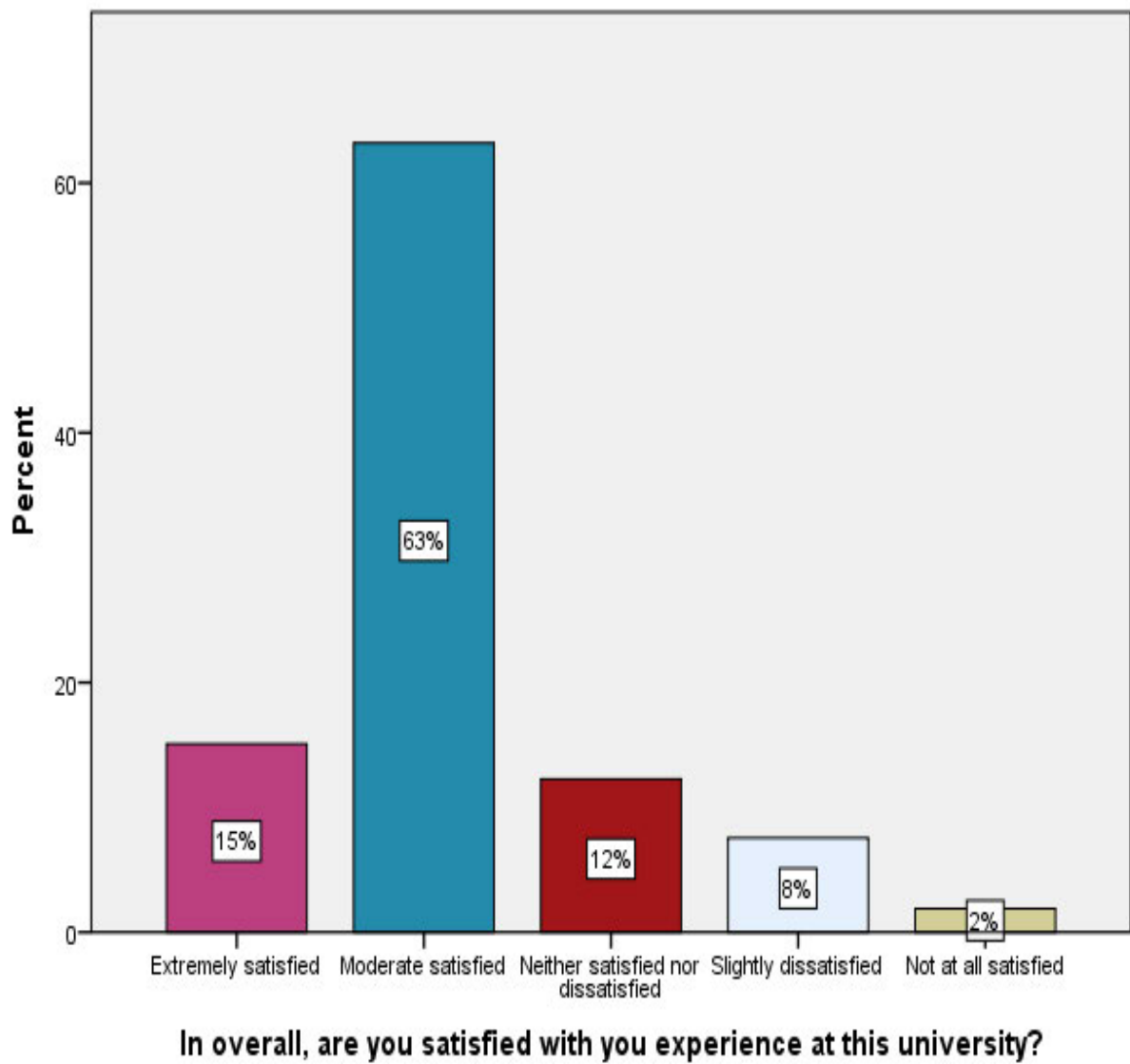
Furthermore, participants are satisfied with their experience at the University. As a recommendation though, scores generated for quality of services and quality of the course content should be taken into consideration to help the BSU as well as the DUT improvement.

**Table 4.37**

	Frequency	Percent
Valid Extremely satisfied	16	15.1
Moderately satisfied	67	63.2
Neither satisfied nor dissatisfied	13	12.3
Slightly dissatisfied	8	7.5
Not at all satisfied	2	1.9
Total	106	100.0

**[In overall, are you satisfied with your experience at this university?]**

Table 4.37 shows that the majority of students are satisfied with the university. 63.2 percent of students are moderately satisfied with their experience at the university while 15.1 percent are extremely satisfied. 12.3 percent of students are neither satisfied nor dissatisfied. 7.5 percent are slightly dissatisfied and 1.9 percent of students are not at all satisfied with the university.



**Figure 4.23 Overall Satisfaction**

#### 4.9.1 Chapter Summary

Chapter 4 (four) presented the analysis of data collected in the study. The first part of the results were basic frequencies and percentage analysis.

- Section A analysed few questions on gender, age, race, faculty and the year of study focusing on key tangible issues for the study and to ensure that the research has the right targeted population;
- Section B focused on responsiveness of the university looking at the turn around time taken to respond to student queries, student perception towards DUT, BSU staff and the response on administrative procedures within the university;
- Section C focused on expectations from students, rating the quality at DUT, BSU and also rating the value for money with the course enrolled. This was to determine the assurance and confidence the students have towards the university and lastly;
- Section D looked at the overall student satisfaction and the service quality within the university.

The second part of the analysis was to look at the dependant variable analysis focusing on customer service quality especially on resource based services, staff based services and the quality of courses offered at DUT, BSU. This was to compare the independent variables with dependent variables to test the hypothesis. Descriptive tests were carried out including tests for normality, histograms and tests for statistics to prove the null hypothesis.

The researcher presented the results in the form of charts and tables to provide a clear detailed report. The Gaps were identified where DUT, BSU must attend to. The following chapter will present the conclusions and recommendations of this study.

## **CHAPTER FIVE**

### **Conclusion and Recommendations**

#### **5.1 Introduction**

The previous chapter presented data and data analysis of this research. This chapter discusses detailed results, recommendations and conclusion in respect of the objectives of this study. Furthermore, this chapter will recommend any future strategies to be implemented by the institution.

#### **5.2 Summary**

##### **5.2.1 The findings on the objectives**

The overall objective of this study was to determine the current customer service quality and satisfaction at the DUT, BSU. To be customer focused requires DUT, BSU to adopt customer relationship strategies to enhance the current conditions within the university as suggested by Ansary and Jayashree (2014:98). Oluseye et al., (2014) also emphasized the point that by enhancing quality into lecturing process and responding timeously to student concerns, institutions have a great potential to ensure satisfaction of their students and loyalty while improving quality.

Therefore, to improve customer service quality Parasuraman et al., (1985:44) researched and introduced the conceptual model of service quality called SERVQUAL as a tool to determine customer service quality in a service industry. For the context of this research, gap 5 on SERVQUAL, which is expected service and perceived service will be tested hence the study seeks to determine consumer/customer service at DUT, BSU.

In doing so, the researcher analyzed the data presented on Chapter 4 on different aspects. SERVQUAL instrument was used as indicated to find gaps on expectation and perception using 5 (five) dimensions of Reliability, Responsiveness, Assurance, Empathy and Tangibles. The findings for the objectives are as follows: -

**Objective 1: To determine customer/student perception towards DUT, BSU.**

External forces influence the perceived or expected service. A good word of mouth can paint a good image of the university. However, a student can measure perceived or expected service by attending university. Therefore performance can be utilized as a measure of perceived and expected service (Parasuraman et al., 1985).

To measure student perception and expected service, few questions were posed to students to determine their perception towards DUT, BSU. Furthermore, student support service, staff based services and quality were tested to measure performance on perception and expected service.

- On gender vs. student support service, the results indicated that the university must take both genders into consideration to improve services within the university or the university has not reached a level where both genders are satisfied with the institution.
- To determine student perception with regards to staff based service, the results were poor and this strongly suggests that DUT, BSU must urgently improve customer/student relations and dealings to better influence customer satisfaction.
- On quality, the total score/rating was 60% which is not a bad score. However, DUT, BSU must always aim for a higher score to have a sustainable continuous customer satisfaction. This could be a reason why DUT, BSU does not do very well in making first impression and this suggests that there is a room for improvement if they want to be a market leader within KZN and SA universities.

In overall, the results for objective 1 (one) above suggests that DUT, BSU must improve on turn around time in response to students hence the results indicate an average performance from staff. This means that DUT, BSU employees must improve service and engage students so that, they better understand the customers they have. This will in addition, increase student loyalty to the institution and more students attending the university.

**Objective 2: To establish the overall customer service quality within DUT, BSU.**

To establish the overall customer/student quality within DUT, BSU, students had to respond to questions to establish the overall customer service quality and satisfaction within the university.

The response were as follows:

- The overall response from students seemed to be happy and optimistic about the institution.
- 92% of students found the campus safe,
- 87% of students found the services provided on campus useful,
- 88% of students responded easy to obtain the resources from the university library system,
- 87% of students were happy with the choice of university,
- 77% of students will likely continue attending the university.
- 78% of students will likely recommend BSU, DUT to others and,
- A total of 90% of students were satisfied with the overall experience at the university.

The results indicated that all Gap 5 aspects of SERVQUAL dimensions (assurance and empathy) within the institution have been positively well received by students. Most of students are satisfied with their experience at the university and the overall response was more that 70% which is good.

Furthermore, DUT, BSU including all employees must continue to improve service quality to be regarded as one of the best institutions in KZN and to stay ahead of the game. The service must at all times bring value to customers. Quality customer service in a university includes the management and the staff within the campus. Arif and Ilyas (2012), illustrated that all employees must provide quality service.

### 5.3 Recommendations

“A company that recognizes the current challenges in customer service have a better chance to succeed in the future hence they can plan earlier and reap the rewards” (Brink et al., 2010; 60). Nevertheless, the perceived service quality can be established by looking at strategies used by companies to fully serve clients (Markovic et al., 2010). There are so many different ways to serve a customer. Going an extra mile to assist a customer can be regarded as trying to fully serve a customer. Proving after hour lectures to assist students can be regarded as good customer service.

Customer satisfaction and customer service quality has been continuously researched. The reason behind this is that companies want to be ahead of the competition and create blue oceans (value-add) for the customers. Therefore, research of this nature is critical to DUT, BSU success, because students or customers are different to one another, the way of living has changed from before and also, the standard of living has increased demanding more attention from service providers. In this regard, customer service is important in order to build loyalty and customer satisfaction.

The following are recommendations: -

1. DUT, BSU must ensure that employees are well trained in customer service and product knowledge to improve the response time on attending to customer complaints;
2. Service quality must be the culture of DUT, BSU to gain more market share in KZN institutions. This means creating awareness campaigns (aggressive marketing), encouraging and empowering employees with adequate tools and equipment to respond to customer complaints timeously;
3. DUT, BSU must define roles and responsibilities so that protocols can be adhered to by staff and inform students of such protocols and;
4. DUT, BSU must keep ahead of new technologies and systems in place to boost customer service and lastly, senior management must support all employees in executing a perfect strategy on customer service quality.

#### **5.4 Recommendations for further study**

This research only focused on DUT, BSU service quality.

Further research can be undertaken to compare the actual students marks with the satisfaction level from DUT, BSU and;

Comparing the quality of service with the course content should be considered to help the university and continuous service improvement.

#### **5.5 Conclusion**

This study looked at customer service quality expectations and perceptions by students at DUT, BSU. The researcher covered the theory on customer service and customer satisfaction. Issues relating to service quality were discussed in detail for DUT, BSU to have more customers and to ensure sustainability with returns on investment.

The recommendations were discussed and these were critically analysed to improve the current conditions within the institution. The study has a positive impact on DUT, BSU management as it assists the institution to continuously improve customer service and retain loyal students year by year. And finally, the study indicated weaknesses for DUT, BSU to improve in order to effectively manage customer services quality at all times.

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26 February 2016

Mr Alex M Jwara 213544288  
Graduate School of Business and Leadership  
Westville Campus

Dear Mr Jwara

Protocol reference number: HSS/0176/016M

Project Title: "Customer service quality at Durban University of Technology (DUT) Business Studies Unit (BSU)"

**Full Approval – Expedited Application**

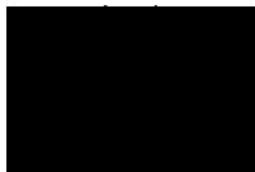
In response to your application received 23 February 2016, the Humanities & Social Sciences Research Ethics Committee has considered the abovementioned application and the protocol has been granted **FULL APPROVAL**.

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

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

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

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



.....  
Dr Shenuka Singh (Chair)  
Humanities & Social Sciences Research Ethics Committee

/pm

Cc Supervisor: Mr Peter Raap  
Cc Academic Leader Research: De M Hoque  
Cc School Administrator: Ms Zarina Bullyraj

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Humanities & Social Sciences Research Ethics Committee

Dr Shenuka Singh (Chair)

Westville Campus, Govan Mbeki Building

Postal Address: Private Bag X54001, Durban 4000

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

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

