

**SERVICE QUALITY IN THE ACADEMIC LIBRARIES
IN KENYA**

UNIVERSITY OF ZULULAND

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BY

PAUL MBUA

STUDENT REG.NO.2008/13796

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Abstract

The subject of service quality has been widely researched in various sectors, and academic libraries are no exception. It has become imperative that university libraries in Africa, Kenya in particular, re-examine their existence in academia, in order to justify the need for their services.

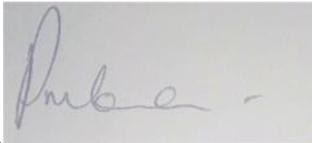
This study seeks to establish the level of service quality in Kenyan academic libraries by analysing, evaluating, and assessing the service delivery of the academic libraries. It was guided by the following specific objectives: To evaluate the influence that the service parameters (human resource practices, technology, the library environment and infrastructure, information resources, etc.) have on the service quality in academic libraries; assess the library customer service orientation and its influence on service quality in the academic libraries; assess how the range of services/products offered by academic libraries influence service quality in the academic libraries; and analyse the level of library customer retention/attraction strategies and service delivery approaches and their influence on service quality in the academic libraries. The Gap model adopted for the current study suggests that customer satisfaction is often not achieved as a result of gaps/shortfalls in the service delivery process. Descriptive survey research method was employed, guided by the study's research objectives. Mixed method approach was used to generate both the qualitative and quantitative data. From the entire list of accredited universities in Kenya, a sample of 10 (ten) institutions was selected. Systematic random sampling, random sampling, purposive methods were employed to identify the actual sample size for the different strata. In total seven hundred and fourteen (714) questionnaires were returned from the external library customers (55% males and 45% females); while for the internal library customers (librarians), 47 out of the 80 questionnaires administered were returned (43% males and 57% females). This gave an overall, 76% response rate. Purposive sampling procedure was used to identify the interview participants (who were the senior management of the academic libraries) using an interview schedule, in total 10 interviews were conducted; while observation was guided by an observation schedule that was obtrusively applied to capture information on the general state of each of the academic libraries, the facilities, and the service delivery processes. SPSS was used for data analysis, descriptive statistics, factor analysis and multiple regression.

Findings of the study revealed that academic libraries in Kenya are faced with a myriad of challenges such as a growing and divergent population, limited range of information resources and services, poor infrastructure, inadequate staff working areas and tools, limited budgets, heavy bureaucratic tendencies, lack of top institutional management support, poor leadership by the departmental heads, and lack of clear market orientation strategies. The above concerns notwithstanding, the study showed that the academic libraries are endowed with a rich pool of well-trained information professionals, large market for services, and customers' goodwill; all of which need to be fully exploited. Also noted was that the academic libraries are poorly equipped to cater for people with disabilities (PWDs). The study recommends the following: a radical shift in the management of the academic libraries; the creation of an enabling environment for optimal service delivery; greater supervision by the Commission for University Education (CUE), and a policy framework that will guide the overall operations of the academic libraries. This study has strong implications for the improvement of library and information services for customer satisfaction in Kenya, and perhaps, elsewhere.

Keywords: Service quality, customer satisfaction, academic libraries, Kenya

DECLARATION

I declare that this study, “Service quality in the academic libraries in Kenya”, unless specifically indicated otherwise, is my original work and has not been submitted to any other university for the award of any other degree.



.....
PAUL MBUA

3rd May 2021
DATE



.....
PROMOTER: PROF. B.J. MOSTERT

3 May 2021
DATE



.....
CO-PROMOTER: PROF. D.N. OCHOLLA

03/05/2021
DATE

DEDICATION

This thesis is dedicated to my loving parents, Muigai and Muthoni, my first teachers, and all my family members for their support during the course of my study. The thesis is also dedicated to those family members who never lived to see the finalisation of this work.

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ABBREVIATIONS/ACRONYMS

ACL- Academic Library

CUE- Commission for University Education

GOK-Government of Kenya

ICTs-Information Communication Technologies

IFLA/UNESCO- International Federation of Library Association / United Nations Educational Scientific & Cultural Organisation

I.T- Information technology

INASP- International Network for the Availability of Scientific Publications

KENET -Kenya Education Network

KLISC-Kenya Library &Information Services Consortium

KNBS - Kenya National Bureau of Statistics

OCLC-Online catalogue of the Library of Congress

OPACs- Online Public Access Catalogues

PLWDs- People Living with Disabilities

SERVQUAL-Service quality

SPSS- Statistical Package for the Social Sciences

CHAPTER 1: BACKGROUND TO THE STUDY

1.1 INTRODUCTION

Many countries have experienced a rapid expansion in the tertiary education that has brought a discrepancy between the quality and quantity of education (Malechwanz and Mbeke, 2016). The improvement of quality has subsequently emerged as one of the most important objectives in global higher education policy. Kenya is no exception. Tertiary education in Kenya has, grown greatly rapidly, both regarding the institutions and enrolments. Enrolments to state universities grew by 68% from 163,821 students in 2011/12 to 494,896 in 2017/18 (KNBS, 2018). This points to a rapid expansion of tertiary level education and growth in the demand for education leading to a vibrant debate with respect to the quality of education. According to the Kenya National Bureau of Statistics (KNBS, 2018), the combined student enrolment in public universities and private accredited universities in Kenya in the academic years of 2011/12–2017/2018 grew from 224,533 to 575,824, representing an impressive increase of 61%. There was only one degree-offering institution in 1970, namely the University of Nairobi (UON) (Sifuna, 2010). The Commission for University Education [CUE] (2017a) notes that, there are 70 degree-awarding institutions in the country. The high student enrolment in universities has definitely exerted more strain on the available facilities and services. The government has been keen to accredit universities (see ANNEX A on page 417, for a list of the accredited universities in Kenya), with a broad policy on higher education focusing on access and the provision of quality education. This expansion has brought new and diverse needs and aspirations to the fore. New technological developments have also radically changed the way knowledge and skills are delivered to the learner.

The situation in Kenya tends to confirm many observations (Aina, Okunnu, and Dapo-Asaju, 2018; Acheampong and Dei, 2020; Chaputula and Mutula (2018) that African universities are at a critical phase in their development and in need of re-vamping, with various factors generating pressure on academic libraries. These include new and overwhelming technological innovations; networks; intense competition; customer information demands; and the growing information needs and requirements of the digital age. All these emerging issues put pressure on library missions, goals, objectives, organisational structures. University libraries in Africa are thus called upon to re-examine their very existence in academia and to justify the need for their services. Based on this emerging trend, this study was concerned with identifying the difference between customers' expected and

perceived service levels and what human and technological factors impact on the overall performance expectations of service quality in academic libraries.

The current study opted to focus on service quality in academic libraries in Kenya. The study specifically addressed service practices and service parameters such as staff attitudes, availability of library resources, and the library environment, among others, and how they influence service quality in academic libraries in Kenya.

1.2 SERVICE QUALITY

The delivery of quality services to the public is now more critical than ever. The public, by virtue of being more informed and enlightened about their rights, are more candid in demanding excellent service. This poses a big challenge to service organizations, as failure to deliver excellent services means earning a bad reputation that in turn translates to poor business. There are different types of libraries, depending on their mandate, but what they all have in common is their function as repositories of knowledge. Yi (2016) observed that libraries are facing major challenges from the digital era and competition from relatively new information service providers. New technologies such as the Web 2.0, wifi and social media applications have also brought new challenges. A study on the assessment of quality in public and academic libraries in Croatia by Petr (2007:14) noted that “insufficient awareness of library service quality affects all library processes, and ultimately leads to deterioration of that service quality”. As a term and concept, ‘quality’ means different things to different people. Different cultural orientations or organisations may also provide different definitions of the term. Nevertheless, there is some consensus in management literature about a general definition of quality. The most commonly cited definition is that “quality is the fitness for purpose” (Poll and Boekhorst, 2007:13). In the ISO 9000 Standard (2015), quality is described as “the consistent conformance of a product or service to a given set of standards or expectations”, while the American Society Quality (ASQ) defines quality as “the totality of features and characteristics of a product or service that bears on its ability to satisfy given needs” (Evans, 2014). Quality is therefore vital and can be described as the lifeblood of any service institution.

Barron, Harris and Hilton (2008) claim that service usually consists of both tangible and intangible components, which is why attempts at defining service quality have made a distinction between objective measures of quality and those based on the more subjective perceptions of customers.

Tangibles are all the aspects of a service which can, in contrast to a service in general, or specifically the process part of a service, be perceived physically, such as the appearance of the physical facilities, equipment, personnel and communication materials (Parasuraman *et al.* 1988), as well as the atmosphere at the service location (Hoffman and Turley, 2002). Service tangibles are relevant to the

customers' perceptions in two ways. First, Bruhn and Georgi (2006) observed that consumers perceive and evaluate whether a tangible exists at all and also perceive missing tangibles negatively when they are lacking. The consumer is also concerned with how they are arranged. Secondly, the employees also experience the service tangibles. Employees are part of service interaction and perceive the service tangibles just as the customers do; as employees are also human beings and they too appreciate an appropriate service environment. Thus beside the customer facilities, employees evaluate facilities such as the restrooms, staffroom, cafeteria, etc. It is such tangible attributes of the working environment which influence the employees' psychological processes. Thus, a well-designed and clean office motivates employees more than a shabby and cluttered environment.

According to Bruhn and Georgi (2006), service tangibles will vary in terms of their occurrence, design, relevance and service types. Regardless of the differences, three general types of service tangibles can be distinguished: servicescape, service environment, and service materials. Kamau (2017) noted that servicescape is a blend of tangible and intangible elements. The tangible elements consist of the physical environment which may include architectural designs, ambient conditions, style of decor and equipment. Zeithaml *et al.* (2009) pointed out that physical evidence is an environment in which a service is delivered, where a company interacts with its customers and its tangible commodities that facilitate performance and communication of the service itself. According to Kamau (2017)) servicescape refers to the physical set up where the service is meted out. It has three attributes: servicescape design (attributes such as the furniture, technical equipment e.g. computers, printers, copiers in a library; staff who reflect several tangible attributes such as their dress, and or physical appearance; and the ambience of the servicescape which Hoffman and Turley (2002) stress strongly affects the service process in the perception of the customer. Secondly the service environment depicts the totality of the service location: factors such as the location, the exterior design, the appropriateness of the service location in terms of accessibility by the consumer; and thirdly, service materials which are used in the service encounter and mostly have a supportive function in the encounter for the employee or the customer. Bruhn and Georgi (2006) have identified the following quality dimensions as being crucial and which are attributable to service tangibles:

- Up-to-date equipment
- Appealing physical facilities;
- Well-dressed neat employees;
- Cleanliness of the offices, tables, working tools;
- Usability of the equipment etc.;
- Well organised equipment.

Quality of service can be understood as a comprehensive customer evaluation of a particular service and the extent to which it meets their expectations and provides satisfaction (Al-Jazzazi and Sultan, 2017). Mualla (2011) is of the view that organisations need to develop and create effective strategies to determine the different parameters influencing service quality. This is crucial if the organisation is to attract more customers based on the competitive market situation by evaluating customer satisfaction with respect to the various dimensions that influence service quality.

Parasuraman *et al.* (1988) first developed a gap analysis model to measure the influence of service quality based on the integrated view of consumer-company relationship. This model provides five generic dimensions of service quality, namely: tangible, reliability, responsiveness, assurance and empathy. For example, if customers perceive that the implementation of quality dimensions in executing their daily job will strongly fulfil their needs and expectations, this situation may lead to induced positive customer behaviour. The spirit of this theory has gained strong support from the service quality research literature. According to Parasuraman *et al.* (1988) service quality is a multidimensional concept, while Angelova and Jusuf (2011) view it as an indicator of how much the service delivered conforms to the customers' expectations. The service quality management gap denotes the difference between the customers' service expectations and the perceptions they have regarding the service (Parasuraman *et al.* 1988). Service quality therefore ought to be looked at from the total clients' assessment of the relative efficiency of the firm and its services.

The Gaps (SERVQUAL) model can be influenced directly by the service employees. The SERVQUAL model is mainly used as a multi-dimensional research instrument for customer satisfaction. For service-based companies, service quality translates into:

- Increased patronage;
- Competitive advantage;
- The long-term profitability of a firm (Clow and Vorhies, 1993); and
- Customer retention (Reichheld and Sasser, 1990).

From the research, it is evident that in a harsh and highly volatile business environment, service quality is crucial with regard to:

- Corporate success (Devlin and Dong, 1994);
- Customer satisfaction (Newman and Cowling, 1996); and
- Customer loyalty and goodwill (Gustafsson, Ekdahl and Bo, 1999).

This suggests that as service-based organisations, academic libraries need to re-evaluate their service delivery processes constantly with a view to ascertaining their level of service quality and thereby

establishing their ability to attract and retain their patronage. As the focal organ of a university, the library, alongside superior laboratories, teaching and research staff, serves as a yardstick of what constitutes an excellent university. The academic library is a good standard by which to measure the vibrancy of scholarship in an academic institution given that its core mandate is to facilitate and to support research, teaching, and learning. Kargbo (2002:412) underscores the fact that the academic library must fulfil these activities in the university by way of providing adequate, relevant and up-to-date information resources to its clientele. For Poll and Boekhorst (2007), a library is therefore judged on the basis of how well it performs these functions in addition to its other features.

Beside addressing customers' concerns, quality assessment in libraries would support the improvement of services and products, demonstrate the library's effectiveness to funding agencies and the public, and also point out what resources are needed to raise its level of quality. Brophy (2005:30-46) identified and adapted a set of quality attributes for the assessment of quality in libraries.

These are:

- Performance
- Speed of service delivery
- Variety/range of services offered
- Usability/accessibility
- Communication
- Staff attitude/appearance
- Currency
- Durability
- Communication, courtesy, and aesthetics

Poll and Boekhorst (2007:15) further note that perceptions of library quality will differ according to various stakeholder groups, which may include, among others:

- Users (actual and potential)
- Funding institutions

- Library staff
- Library managers, staff representatives, and the library board/committee

Users, for example, will judge a library based on their experiences as they exploit the services available. Clients may care less about the efficiency of backroom activities, and more about effective service delivery. The funding or parent body would be much more concerned with the library's benefit to the institution, its cost effectiveness, and output to the intended customers. Staff on the other hand would rate the library's quality according to their work environment, clear planning and straightforward processes, systematic staff development, and efficient organisation.

Poll and Boekhorst (2007:15) have also noted that quality in academic libraries may take different service approaches. Service quality assessment in academic libraries may be narrowed down to: information resources; the set-up and organisation of the service environment and resource delivery; staffing; and human resource management.

Ademodi (2015) also suggests that libraries need to step up the promotion and marketing campaigns of their library information resources. In order for librarians to remain relevant, Yi (2016) has argued that academic libraries need to re-direct their energies to not only building good customer relationships, but also engaging in serious outreach to their customers if they are to regain their position as the preferred centres of information acquisition by the students, faculty staff and other researchers. This calls for the provision of specialised information services to all its customers and the adoption of new IT technologies and marketing approaches. Popoola (2008) submits that it is necessary for academic libraries to aggressively promote/market their information products and services to their patrons to inform them about the available information resources and encourage their use. While The 2017 Customer Service Benchmark Report (Comm100, 2017) stresses the fact that customers are the lifeblood of any organisation, and they too want to feel valued and to know that their business is appreciated; The 2020 Customer Service Benchmark Report (Comm100, 2020) further notes that while customer expectations are as high as ever, unfortunately it seems that service quality is stagnating. Libraries must consciously reach out to their clientele, making them fully aware of the available resources and improve on the level of service quality. High customer expectation ought to spur further action not promote complacency.

Over time most institutions, particularly in the financial, travel, and retail sectors, have started to appreciate the role of technology in the service delivery process. Academic libraries, according to Ocholla *et al.* (2014), are no exception, and they too must create awareness of the services and products offered proposing the provision of top notch research services, equipment and a conducive

environment to the researchers such as the info cellar and research commons. They further stress that academic libraries, like other service institutions, need to be proactive in the promotion of both their products and services for optimal usage of the investment (s) made. In order for information professionals to remain relevant, Ocholla *et al.* (2014) emphasise the need to continuously obtain new knowledge, skills and attitudes to be competent as they perform their expanded role. Yi (2016) suggests that in order for academic libraries to survive in the digital age, which is equally challenging, they need to up their game. This calls for quick and timely market response, innovativeness, and adequate and relevant information and communication technology provision. Currently, an increasingly large number of users are accessing libraries virtually, and there has been a marked decline in the face-to-face provision of services. The emergence of the digital library implies the need for a strategy that incorporates and efficiently handles the different interactions with the customers through the various technologies that are available. In the assessment of quality in academic libraries, it is necessary to take into account all the views and expectations of the different stakeholders and customers. The majority of customers are faculty and non-faculty staff, and different groups of students and other stakeholders. According to Ocholla *et al.* (2014), there is need for a focused and concerted approach to work with all the library stakeholders for it to contribute positively to the improvement of the institutional research productivity and community impact.

As noted earlier, the library is under threat from other cost-effective information service providers. Libraries therefore need to improve their service quality (Yi, 2016) as this would improve not only their competitive status but that of their parent institutions (Ocholla *et al.* 2014). The library management team thus needs to critically assess and determine what their customers expect with regard to service delivery. Bennet, Djukic and Kapitzki (2018) point out that academic libraries need to embrace and tap into the opportunities availed by the new technologies in the promotion of their resources. These factors point to the need to improve service quality in the academic library.

1.2.1 NEED FOR SERVICE QUALITY

Service quality, though it has been a subject of discussion over the years its relevance today is still valid. Its idea is still relevant to help today's organisations gain competitive advantage in an era with aspects of a borderless world and globalisation (Fotaki, 2015). The multi-dimensional construct has been extensively researched on in management studies.

In an effort to understand the concept, both the service process inputs (Parasuraman *et al.* 1985) and the service deliverables (Lehtinen and Lehtinen, 1992) should be considered. In his model, Grönroos

(1984) proposes that a service has three dimensions: technical quality (what the consumer gets), functional quality (the process, i.e. how a consumer gets the service) and corporate image (how consumers perceive the firm and its services). Other models have been developed basing their inclinations on different parameters and approaches (these are discussed in detail in Chapter 2 of this thesis).

Service quality has been defined as total service evaluation by customers. Perceived service quality is the variance between customers' earlier expectations regarding a service and their perceptions upon experiencing the service (Asubonteng *et al.* 1996; Parasuraman *et al.* 1985). It has also been defined according to the key dimensions employed by clients in assessing the quality of services (Lewis and Booms, 1983).

Sangeetha and Mahalingam (2011:83) have suggested that the use of technology to scan the market environment is beneficial to any organisation seeking to achieve a vantage position over its rivals. Researchers and practitioners thrive on getting to understand more about service quality in their firms. This is because of its heavy implications on aspects such as customer satisfaction and increased profitability. In this context, models gain specific importance as they not only help in identifying the factors associated with service quality, but also in providing a direction for any improvement.

Owen (2001) argues that for long term sustainability of firms, provision of quality services is not an option. Kotler (2016) concurs, stating that companies must differentiate themselves by maintaining a high level of quality in their operations. Kandampully and Menguc (2000) stress that service leadership is confirmed by the consistent delivery of superior services, and sustaining service quality guides a company's strategy. At this juncture, it is worth noting that the primary development goal of any government/organisation is to improve the quality of life of its citizenry. The public service and civil service sectors play a crucial role in service delivery. Ineffective service delivery greatly interferes with citizens' quality of life and the country or organisation's developmental goals. According to Fatile and Adejuwon (2017), public sectors in African countries are facing challenges of improving performance and efficiency in service delivery. A number of these encompass employee factors such as inadequate manpower, lack of core competencies, poor attitude to work, socio-psychological and financial constraints.

Kobia and Mohammed (2006) in support of this statement concur that efforts to improve on service delivery in Kenya, for instance, have yielded little success. The continued lack of work ethic and accountability has greatly affected the delivery of public services to the citizenry. The end result has been the rampant wastage of public resources.

The central place of quality in relation to business success is now well documented in academia. Over the last few decades, service quality has been an area of focus among practitioners, professionals and scholars. This has been informed by the understanding that superior service leads to:

- Increased customer satisfaction and loyalty, more referrals, less complaints and better customer retention levels (Levesque and McDougall, 1996)
- Better stock value (Aaker and Jacobson, 1994)
- Enhanced organisational performance (Easton and Jarrell, 1998)
- Increased market share of the organisation (Hendricks and Singhal, 1997)
- Increased customer satisfaction that results in higher profits (Hallowell, 1996)
- Quality improvement initiatives yield specific improvement efforts that result in growing returns as costs go down (Deming, 1986); or increasing returns (Kordupleski, Rust and Zahorik 1993)
- The process by which service improvement initiatives produce more returns is more often tied to a chain of effects (Zeithaml *et al.* 1996)

With no exception therefore, and drawing lessons from the commercial sector, quality management practices have been incorporated into library services. The emphasis has been on service level improvement and on the enhancement of customer satisfaction levels. The push for quality in academic libraries also emanates from, among other factors:

- The widening expectations from customers pressurising libraries to boost the quality of their services.
- Faced with financial shortages, library managers are more compelled to fully utilise the available resources well for optimum results.

Studies such as Obeidat (2015) and Osinulu and Amusa (2010) on information technology and quality management practices in library management in Jordan and Nigeria respectively; Dube (2011) on quality management practices in South African university libraries; Egberongbe, Sen and Willett (2015) on quality management practices in the academic libraries in Nigeria; and Gathoni and Walt (2016) evaluating quality of library services in Kenya, have reiterated that the majority of the libraries and information services have embraced quality management approaches. The majority have

developed numerous initiatives all aimed at customer satisfaction. For the smooth implementation of service quality initiatives, a good understanding of the following is essential:

- The special features of library operations
- The relationship between information professionals and users
- Suggestions or recommendations on the usage of relevant quality management approaches.

1.3 ROLE OF THE SERVICE PARAMETERS IN SERVICE DELIVERY

While discussing library services, ACRL(2017b); Pantouvakis (2010), suggests that identifying and assessing the parameters of service quality that are important to customers is essential. A balanced evaluation of their relative importance is necessary for any proper utilisation of resources. Hernon and Altman (1998) stress that every interaction with customers while in the library allows for formation of new opinions about the service.

Kaur and Singh (2010) agree that customer views are important and need to be established and effectively addressed. Listening to and following up on customer views helps to retain and boost the image of the library in the eyes of clientele. Any experience instilled in the customer through the service process influences their behavioural intentions with regard to the service. Djagbletey (2011) further asserts that good customer service forms the basis for the success of any particular organisation. Focus is made on the influence different parameters on service delivery. These include: -human resource, technology adaptation, availability of information resources, library layout, library infrastructure, and library management practices among others. These will be looked at in depth in relation to the CUE set parameters for service quality standards in the academic libraries and will aid in analyzing the service quality levels alongside the GAP model. These parameters are discussed at length together with other factors in Chapter 3.

1.4 SERVICE DELIVERY: KENYAN CONTEXT

In its 2003 policy document, Economic Recovery Strategy for Wealth and Employment Creation (ERS), 2003-2007, the Kenyan government (GoK, 2003), underscores the factors negatively impacting on the performance of the public sector. These include: bureaucracy and red tape; political interference; outright mismanagement; and bloated staff establishment. The ERS policy document was initiated with priority and was accorded to economic recovery and public performance agencies in order to deliver results (quality service) to the citizenry. The focus of the ERS was to revitalise and equip the public service well enabling it to continue play its important role in nation building. This underscores the belief that well-trained human resources coupled with the right tools and equipment

will deliver exceptional services to the public. It also sought fundamental changes in the management of the sector and in the enactment of work ethics at the individual and collective levels for those serving in the sector.

The Kenyan government, alarmed by the poor level of service being meted out by its departments to its citizenry, initiated public sector reforms aimed at rightsizing initiatives and rationalising government functions and structures (GoK, 2004). Opiyo (2006) states that this was to establish relevant mechanisms and the appropriate civil service sizes in order for the government's critical roles to be tarry to the set budgets. Although there were staff cuts, productivity and performance in terms of the quality of service delivery in the public sector did not improve as expected.

Efforts to improve service delivery that have been initiated include the constitution of a policy steering committee on performance contracting to oversee the actual improvement of service delivery by the various government agencies and departments (GoK, 2011). Other measures include the enactment of an ethics and integrity policy (GoK, 2015) to guide the conduct of public officers and check on unethical work practices and other malpractices leading to poor service delivery. The objective of all these reforms has been to improve public service delivery.

While focusing on the education sector, Marwa (2014:72) acknowledges the need to entrench quality in Kenyan educational institutions. Gruber *et al.* (2010) likewise observe that there are many new developments taking place in the educational sector, especially within the last few years. Sultan and Wong (2010) assert that whereas the commercial sector has been studying service quality for decades, the increasing number of studies on service quality in the tertiary level education sector is a fairly recent phenomenon. Evidently, higher education should borrow from the research already done in the commercial sector and incorporate their quality approaches and their focus on customer satisfaction. Paswan and Ganesh (2009) take note of the fact that many tertiary institutions are now aggressively hunting for clients, both locally and on the global scene. This is driven by the urge to survive in a competitive environment.

With the rise of a variety of informal platforms (e.g. social media) that seek customers to give their feedback based on their interactions, the need for quality service has become critical. Academic institutions thus have to account for the quality of education and the services that they offer. Abdullah (2006b) agrees, asserting that achieving quality is an important goal for higher educational institutions and stressing that this needs to happen in all areas/departments. DeShields, Kara and Kaynak. (2005) proposed that the tertiary level education sector should incorporate high quality service approaches with a strong customer focus in order to meet customers' needs in a highly challenging service environment.

Abdullah (2006b) believes that it is necessary to assess the level of service quality along with the parameters that influence service quality. This enables higher education institutions to plan their service delivery processes and aids in identifying the factors at play in the provision of services, thus leading to better allocation of the available resources and resulting in improved services.

Sakthivel *et al.* (2007) note that quality in tertiary level education ought to be viewed as being multifaceted, encompassing: - teaching and academic programs; research and scholarship; staffing; buildings; equipment; services to society; and academia. Marwa (2014:72) suggests that there is a need to embrace an international outlook, meaning the sharing of knowledge, collaborative networking, and the movement of faculty and learners within the socio-cultural context. Kanyangi (2006) concurs that quality in education is what draws customers, which can be measured by overall interaction and delivery and whether their primary information needs have been met. Saitoti (2003) likewise agrees that for the assessment of quality in higher education, it is crucial to consider the infrastructural setup, i.e. equipment and instructional materials, information resources, physical facilities and quality of staff, among other factors. In summing it up, Marwa (2014:72) observes that the Kenyan tertiary level educational sector is grappling with an upsurge of stakeholder demands (scholars, academics, researchers, government, funding agencies, and the community) for superior academic experiences and offerings. Academic libraries have not been exempt from this.

1.5 STATEMENT OF THE PROBLEM

An academic library is an important agent in the pursuit of academic excellence in the university system. Its goal is to support the objectives of the university which is learning, teaching, and research and community services. Farah (2013) observes an academic library as a source of intellectual and knowledge coherence for the university. Libraries attempt to meet the needs of diverse and complex groups of users who have varieties of special interests and demands. One fundamental aim of an academic library is to formulate a philosophy of intellectual freedom, and to provide access to all sources of information to their users. Rehman, Haroon and Muhammad, (2020) points out that a library, being a service organization, lay its foundation on the quality services it offers to its users, thus argues that today's libraries need to redesign their roles and functions and focus on providing services according to the users' expectations. Service quality in today's libraries is an emerging topic worldwide and a key strategic issue in management. Salman (2015) agrees that libraries are facing a range of challenges that are also affecting their service delivery. Moropa (2010) echoed such sentiments concluding that, despite their important role, their survival is under threat, as they are fast being edged out of their position as academic power-houses in the university.

Earlier, Opaleke (2002:105) found that service delivery in most academic libraries has been below customers' expectations. Rehman, Haroon and Muhammad, (2020) further observe that though several books have been authored on service quality in libraries; and similarly, several studies conducted to find out the service quality of different types of libraries the question of the quality of service rendered is still pertinent. According to Emmanuel and Liu (2021) in this dynamic education environment, academic libraries need to be internationally innovative in resources and services provision enabling them to offer quality services and resources for teaching and research to meet the expectations of their international users. What then, is the actual quality of the services being offered to the clientele? With increased customer awareness, libraries have to be accountable to their clientele, parent organisations, and other accrediting bodies in terms of service delivery. They need to justify their existence and the very services they offer for any continued support. Rosenberg (1997:1) in an earlier study highlighted the plight of university libraries in Africa citing their inability to fully satisfy the information needs of users. Consequently, libraries have been marginalised by the university, leading to a widening use of alternative approaches and systems for accessing and acquiring information.

Acheampong and Dei (2020), have pointed out that academic libraries face many challenges in implementing technology-based services which impacting their service delivery. Farah (2013) echoing Aina (2004b) observes that ICT is heavily utilized in the storage, processing and dissemination of information radically transformed most of the services provided by a library. It has made the organization of information very efficient, the delivery of basic information services more effective and dissemination of information to users easier. It has eliminated a lot of routine and repetitive tasks in a library. The influence of Information and Communication Technology (ICT) on every discourse of human knowledge is an undisputed and is also considered all pervasive. The academic library of today must be technologically abreast as opposed to the past, hence the need for broad technological innovations in a bid to improve their position/status.

In support of this Acheampong and Dei (2020), further noted that mobile-technology integration in academic libraries also requires a lot of ICT facilities to support its integration. Several studies have identified that, most often, ICT facilities are inadequate (Rosengberg, 2005; Saxena and Dubey, 2014). Chaputula and Mutula (2018) in their Malawian study revealed that although most of the libraries though willing to offer mobile-technology based library services the cost and insufficient ICT infrastructure are major barriers. Further, Aina, Okunnu, and Dapo-Asaju, (2018) emphasize that inadequate funding of libraries is a major constraint to technology adoption. Thus, inadequate technology among other factors, to a large extent impacts on the academic library service delivery.

But according to Chandhok and Babbar (2011), with some service innovation, they could reach out to the hitherto unreached, and regain their status as power-houses within the academic institution. Among other things, the researcher in the current study is of the view that libraries need to update the quality of their services in order to gain a competitive edge over similar service providers and thus continue to remain relevant in the current era of technological revolution and advancement.

Several studies have been carried out on service quality and in many sectors, such as: Poon and Lee (2012) on e-service customer satisfaction; Anjum and Zargar (2018) on the hotel sector; Bharwana, Bshir and Mohsin (2013) on educational institutions; Watiki (2014) on service quality and customer satisfaction in hotels; Spathis, Petridou and Glaveli (2002) on banking; and Chandra (2018) on service quality and student satisfaction and loyalty. However, not much has been done on the topic of libraries. Even those few focusing on academic libraries such as Calvert (2008) in New Zealand, Miller (2008) in the US, Somaratna and Peiris (2011) in Sri Lanka, Dube (2011) in South Africa, Balog, Jelusic and Matosic (2015) in Croatia, Adam (2017) in Nigeria and Rehman (2013) in Pakistan, very seldom address Kenyan university libraries. This study aimed to shed light on the meaning of quality in terms of library services within the African context, and also provide an insight into the notion of an African culture of service delivery and its applicability to the survival of such an institution in the information age.

Williams (2020) Opaleke (2002:102) has identified possible parameters that could affect service delivery. Thus, it is evident that service quality assessment is a key and significant issue in library management since it gives criticism to libraries to enhance on services delivery to their users. The questions put forward in this study are: What ails service quality in the academic libraries? Is it the nature of the library practices, such as staff attitudes, communication mechanisms, gender stereotypes, customer orientation, and/or service parameters (such as the range of services offered, human resources' quality and numbers, technology use, and/or the state of the library infrastructure)? To what extent do these service practices/parameters/variables influence service quality levels and perceptions and consequently customer attraction and satisfaction levels in the academic library today?

1.5.1 AIM AND OBJECTIVES OF THE STUDY

The study sought to establish the level of service quality in Kenyan academic libraries. The general objective of the study was to analyse, evaluate and assess the level of service quality in academic libraries as it is influenced by service practices/attributes and variables/factors such as human resources, the availability of information resources,

the library environment, library infrastructure and accessibility, technology application, and library management, among others. This is important as each of these variables has a major role on overall service quality. Consequently, the nature of service quality has a bearing on the customers' satisfaction levels in the library.

The following specific objectives guided the study:

RO1: To evaluate the influence that the service parameters (human resource practices, technology, the library environment and infrastructure, information resources, etc.) have on the service quality in academic libraries.

RO2: To assess the library customer service orientation and its influence on service quality in the academic libraries.

RO3: To assess how the range of services/products offered by academic libraries influence service quality in the academic libraries.

RO4: To analyse the level of library customer retention/attraction strategies and service delivery approaches and their influence on service quality in the academic libraries.

1.5.2 RESEARCH QUESTIONS

The study sought to address the following questions corresponding to each of the objectives listed above:

RO1: To evaluate the influence that the service parameters (such as human resource practices, technology, the library environment and infrastructure, information resources, etc.) have on the service quality in academic libraries.

What is the overall service quality of Kenyan academic library systems from the customer's perspective?

What perceptions do the customers have of the academic libraries?

Does the level of technological applications in the libraries influence service quality?

What skills/attitudes/personal attributes must the staff have to enable them to satisfy the customers?

What factors determine the customers' evaluation of service quality in academic libraries?

Do human resource practices influence service quality?

RO2: To assess the library customer service orientation and its influence on service quality in the academic librariesHow is the library market orientated?

What are the communication strategies in place?

What innovations do the libraries engage in to improve service delivery?

RO3: To assess how the range of services/products offered and delivery approaches by academic libraries influence service quality in the academic libraries.

What kind of information resources /services are available?

What approaches are employed in delivering services to the customers?

RO4: To analyse the level of library service delivery, customer retention/attraction and their influence on service quality in the academic libraries.

What attracts customers to and discourages them from using the libraries?

What image does the library have? What is the growth of the library?

What is the nature of service delivery in the libraries?

What is the nature of customer satisfaction in the libraries? What problems do the libraries encounter in satisfying their customers?

1.5.3 SIGNIFICANCE OF THE STUDY

This study provides three major implications: theoretical contribution, robustness of research methodology, and practical contribution.

With respect to theoretical contribution, this study showed two important findings: first, that service quality does act as an important predictor of customer satisfaction. The study results have broadened the understanding of this construct and are consistent with previous studies in Iran, Uganda, and Jordan which equally show the importance of service quality in improving bank customer satisfaction (Shahraki, 2014; Kant and Jaiswal, 2017; Alshurideh *et al.* 2017). Second, the study has shown that service quality does act as an important predictor of customer loyalty affecting customer attraction and retention in the academic universities.

Little empirical research is available that examines drivers of service quality in academic libraries in Kenya. In response to the scarce empirical evidence and to bridge this gap, this study sought to investigate the drivers of service quality in academic libraries in Kenya, hence making a contribution to this debate.

The outcome of this study contributes to the existing methodological literature on service quality. The research is also expected to contribute to the body of knowledge in the growing area of service quality, providing a greater understanding of how the interplay between customers' and service providers' perceptions impact on service quality (and consequently on customer satisfaction). The study suggests ways to reduce the gaps in service quality by shedding light on areas of improvement. Previous studies focusing on service quality, such as Kwon and Lee (1994); Wang, Lo, and Hui (2003); and Kumari and Rani (2011) in the Malaysian banking sector and Tegambwage, (2017) an

empirical study in the Tanzanian higher education sector, used the SERVQUAL approach which consists of five dimensions namely: tangibles, empathy, reliability, assurance and responsiveness. Kumar, Fong and Manshor (2009:211) used the SERVQUAL model in research to determine the relative importance of critical factors in delivering the service quality of banks in Malaysia. Curry and Sinclair (2002:197), in an attempt to assess the quality of physiotherapy services, used the SERVQUAL model and three physiotherapy services in Dundee, Scotland. Similarly, Mosahab, Mahamad and Ramayah (2014) used the SERVQUAL model to determine the quality of bank services in Teheran in a study to establish the relationship between the service quality, satisfaction and loyalty; the results clearly show that the SERVQUAL model provides more evaluating information in relation with service quality gaps, than SERVPERF scale. Badri *et al.* (2005) made an assessment and application of the SERVQUAL model in measuring service quality in an information technology centre.

As stated earlier, globally and across all sectors, the demand for service quality is on the rise. The need for an assessment of how libraries are delivering services to their customers is now a matter of priority owing to the numerous resources being used to develop libraries. Although similar studies have been carried out elsewhere and involving other service providers, not much has been done on academic libraries in Africa, and in particular in Kenya. Furthermore, the heightened customer awareness and demands for transparency call for more accountability on the part of academic libraries in terms of service delivery.

In practical terms, this research is expected to provide a yardstick for measuring service quality and customer satisfaction in Kenyan academic libraries that could be beneficial to four bodies, namely policy-makers, library managers, scholars, and society as a whole. It is also significant because it should enhance our understanding of service quality in a library set-up, particularly in the Kenyan/African context. This service quality literature is largely available though based on studies from developed countries and on other types of service firms as earlier pointed out, providing great lessons for the academic library setting. Hence, this study contextualises the concept of service quality based on libraries in Kenya. To academia, the results of this study are significant and of interest since they should set a precedent for future and further research.

The managers in the library design and develop services for a number of reasons and for different clientele. It is hoped that the findings of this study will contribute valuable information to the body of knowledge on means to innovatively channel these efforts/resources more successfully using the

new emerging technologies and human resources to attract new customers and also retain existing customers.

The study has identified certain areas which are not given due attention in the delivery of services in academic libraries such as technology application and the services to particular user groups: the Persons Living with Disabilities (PLWDs), staff and postgraduates. The study's findings should also contribute to the development of a framework for relationships, which are exceptionally important in an applied discipline such as service quality and customer satisfaction. This is particularly crucial when the product on sale is not tangible. Results from the study will serve to provide ideas on the service mix to adopt in information centres, with added knowledge of a consistent approach on how to marry technology and the human aspects in the service model(s) adopted.

1.6. SCOPE AND LIMITATIONS

The primary objective of the study was to establish if significant relationships exist between the study's parameters, and the effect they have on service delivery, the level of service quality and customer satisfaction. To reiterate, this study was carried out in Kenya. According to the Commission for University Education [CUE] (2017a), there are 22 public universities, 9 public university colleges and over 30 recognized private universities offering university level education, with a population of over 500,000 students. The study was limited to a sample size selected from the sampling frame of a segment of the target population group that is users/customers who are members of the academic libraries in Kenyan universities. The findings thus may be generalised to give an indication of the service delivery in the academic libraries in Kenya.

There are many types of libraries, and since it was not possible to study all of them, the study was limited to the academic libraries in various universities (public and private, and including some of the constituent colleges) selected by the researcher mainly because it would be too expensive to carry out a nationwide study. This may have limited the generalisation of the findings of this study, but it did provide sufficient indication of the status of these facilities.

The study was limited to the SERVQUAL model in analysing the service quality construct. However, from the study it is evident that no one model could be applied wholly to establish the relationship between the present study's conceptualised variables. This is because of the inter-connectedness of the different variables and their impact on overall service delivery and consequently customer satisfaction. The characteristics that limited the scope of the research include the choice of the research question and variables of interest, since the study only investigated the relationships between variables and the findings used to answer the stated research question. Secondly, the study was

focused on investigating the factors that influence service parameters that impact on service delivery and consequently on service quality levels in the academic libraries.

Assumptions made were that the respondents would answer all the questions correctly and freely, and that they would respond within the given timeline. Furthermore, it was assumed that the academic institutions and library managers would be cooperative, allowing the study to be carried out on their premises. It was believed that the findings would answer the research questions, solve the research problem, and be generalisable onto the target population.

1.7 THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK

Service quality has become a major area of focus among practitioners, managers and researchers owing to its strong impact on business performance (Leonard and Sasser, 1982), lower costs (Cronin and Taylor, 1992), customer satisfaction (Silvestro and Cross (2000), customer loyalty (Sureshchandler Rajendran and Anatharaman ,2002), and profitability (Guru, (2003).

Metters (2006:21) notes that services differ from goods in a number of ways, such as:

- Services are intangible
- Services can be consumed simultaneously as they are produced
- Services often require closer proximity to the customer
- Services cannot be inventoried like goods

In this respect, therefore, various service quality models have been developed by various scholars; and each of these models focuses on different aspects/parameters in the entire service process.

Metters (2006:31) asserts that the service process system influences the physical layout and systems required for effective service delivery. Metters (2006:31) observes that the items of the service setup that must be in place include: job responsibilities, technology requirements, equipment requirements, facility layout, management policies and procedures, service process designs, operating capacity, and the quality of management systems.

The current study is based on the Gap model advanced by Parasuraman, Zeithaml and Berry (1985). The Gap model has not only been tested, but also widely used in the assessment of service quality in firms in diverse industries. It is therefore a more valid tool for measuring the level of service quality than some of the other models that have been advanced by different scholars. Some of the other models have not been fully tested, while the applicability of others has been found to be too narrow.

Parasuraman, Zeithaml and Berry (1985) are of the view that service quality is a function of the differences between expectation and performance along the quality dimension, i.e. What the customer expects or considers being quality service set against how it is delivered. The model posits that any variance between the service(s) offered in relation to the customers' expectation represents a service gap. This gap depicts the dissatisfaction with the service delivered; it is this Gap around which the Gap model is premised. Although the Gap model has been revised several times, the original idea/concept has remained.

1.7.1 WHY SERVQUAL?

The literature shows that no universally accepted tool available for measuring service quality in university libraries. Various tools have been reported in the selected studies. SERVQUAL (Parasuraman et al.16) tool was widely adopted tool by academic libraries. The SERVQUAL model is suitable for identifying Quality of Service from user perspective (Sahu,2007). Other popular tools were: LibQual+ (developed by Association of Research Libraries) and SERVPERF (Cronin and Taylor,1992) for evaluating the quality of services in libraries. The LibQual tool is commonly used in US, Canada and European countries (Lincoln,2002). Also, SERVPERF Instrument has also got great attention in the study of service quality (Nejati and Nejati,2008).

Emmanuel and Liu (2021) are emphatic that although there are many models for evaluating the service quality, the SERVQUAL model by Parasuraman, Zeithaml, and Berry, (1988) has received wide and adequate recognition from many researchers from different fields of study and it's a widely tested instrument for measuring service quality in many fields of study. The SERVQUAL instrument is a manifold item scale that consists of 22 statements which evaluates the gap between customers' expectations and perceptions established on five dimensions: Tangible, Responsiveness, Assurance, Empathy and Reliability. Many researchers have adapted the SERVQUAL instrument to assess service quality in the library sciences discipline ranging from public, special and university libraries (Tan and Foo, 1999; Zabed and Shoeb, 2009; Zakaria et al., 2011). This makes the SERVQUAL instrument to be highly recognized and effective in measuring service quality in this particular field of study. This study therefore adapted its gap analysis where users' expectations and perceptions are subtracted in every item to attain a service gap.

Use of an instrument such as SERVQUAL can also be justified because the most important aspect of quality service is identifying the expectations of the users (Bryslan and Curry, 2001: 393).

Using the tool also enables library assessment from the customers' point of view. Over the years' Kenyan academic libraries have used the input-based evaluation approaches such as the CUE

guidelines (and which they have to comply with) as opposed to the user-based assessment tools in the evaluation of service quality, hence the adoption of the SERVQUAL approach in this study. The tool maybe very useful tool in evaluating the quality of academic library services with a view to identifying the expectations and perceptions of academic library users as well as the gaps in the services provided by the libraries.

The SERVQUAL instrument as used in the GAP model was used to assess its five dimensions but in this case it was customised for the particular situation. In this case more questionnaire items were formulated seeking to gather more indepth information on each of these dimensions. This was done with a view of wanting to get to understand the impact of the earlier stated parameters(section1.3). The data collection instruments included questionnaires, content analysis, interviews, and observation. The external customers' data collection instrument consisted of a questionnaire that sought to understand their perceptions of library service delivery and their expectations. It was divided into background information (Part 1) and service quality items (Part 2) which were on a 5-point Likert scale. Service quality measures were adopted from the SERVQUAL instrument (the reasons for preferring the SERVQUAL over the others have been discussed elsewhere in the study), developed by Parasuraman, Zeithmal and Barry (1988). The instrument was modified with guidance from available literature. The service employees' data collection instrument consisted of questionnaire items on their perceptions of library services and their expectations (Part 1). They were also probed further about their perceptions and expectations of the library in relation to their working environment (particularly in relation to service environment, customer attraction, service range/services, technology and staff attributes) in Part 2 of their questionnaire. Content analysis of documents was also undertaken in order to gather more details so as to collaborate with what was gathered via other methods. Observation was adopted since this enabled the researcher to gather and capture certain details in the service delivery process. Interviews with the senior library management staff were also used to garner more in-depth knowledge about service delivery in the academic libraries. Each of the selected libraries had to be visited for familiarisation purposes.

A service quality model based on gap analysis depicts service quality as a fulfilment of certain conditions. Failure to meet these conditions means that there are shortfalls in the service delivery, otherwise referred to as gaps. These (shortfalls) have to be addressed for the service to be within the acceptable levels. The size of the gap serves as a pointer to the quality of the service provided, which in turn has a bearing on the customer's satisfaction level. The theoretical frameworks of the Gap and other service quality models are expounded in detail in Chapter 2 of this study.

1.8 RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

In assessing the quality of service in academic libraries from the customers' point of view, this study used questionnaire-based survey method alongside observation and interview approaches which were conducted at ten academic libraries in Kenya. Therefore, to better evaluate and gain understanding of service quality in an academic library, this study seeks to examine customers' expectations and perceptions of library services rendered by the Kenyan academic libraries as at 2016. The methodology that was applied in this study is discussed in detail in Chapter 4, but a brief summary is provided in this section. The study adopted both qualitative and quantitative research designs, primarily using the survey approach. Survey research provides an insight into studying the relationship(s) between sociological and psychological variables (Kerlinger and Lee, 2000).

The study targeted the academic libraries in universities, which were duly registered and authorised to operate as tertiary institutions (of higher learning) in Kenya. The study population consisted of the customers (both internal-service employees and external customers) of the main university libraries. A sample of 1000 respondents was selected. This figure was chosen based on Gay's (in Leedy and Ormrod, 2002:221) assertion that when the sample size exceeds 5000, the population size becomes irrelevant. The stratified sampling technique was also used to determine the actual sample size (number from the different customer groups). The other non-probability techniques, mainly purposive, convenience sampling and snowball sampling, were used to draw the final sample from each of the identified number of each group.

Before the study, a pilot study was conducted with 5% of the sample population to test the validity and reliability of the research instruments. At least two research assistants were recruited and trained prior to embarking on the pilot phase of the study. The results from the pilot study enabled the researcher to make appropriate adjustments to the research instruments. Where necessary, the research instruments were also revised on the basis of observation and on the data collection itinerary. Upon pre-testing the research instruments, the actual data collection process was carried out.

Ethical considerations were met before the study was carried out and clearance sought from the relevant authorities. The overall focus of the study was made clear to the target population and their consent sought for inclusion in the research. The respondents were also assured of strict confidentiality with regard to how their responses would be dealt with. Data was analysed using both quantitative and qualitative methods. The quantitative data was analysed using the Statistical Package of Social Science (SPSS) to determine the frequencies, percentages and means, standard deviations, etc. and their relationships. Qualitative data was coded into themes, following which the findings were discussed. The content analysis of documents formed part of the qualitative data analysis.

1.9 STRUCTURE OF THE THESIS

Chapter 1: Introduction

Highlighting the constructs of service quality in the light of the service parameters such as human resources, technology, the library environment and their impact on the service delivery process, the study's parameters are introduced and the guiding objectives of the study highlighted. The significance of the study is also discussed.

Chapter 2: Conceptual framework

This section discusses the various quality initiatives in higher education and in academic libraries. This is followed by a close examination of service quality and customer satisfaction theories as advanced by various scholars. The researcher develops, describes and elaborates on the relationships between the variables that have been deemed relevant to the study area. The section concludes with an overview of the relevance of the service quality models in academic libraries within Kenyan higher education institutions.

Chapter 3: Literature review

This section discusses the general literature related to service quality (factors affecting service quality) and customer satisfaction, but more specifically pertaining to academic libraries. Focus is placed on the service parameters (human resources, information resources, and technological impact on the service delivery process) and the influence they have on service quality through the service delivery process.

Chapter 4: Research methodology & Data collection process

This is a discussion of the various methods and instruments employed to gather data in the field and the methods of analysis that were used. It also provides a justification for the data collection instruments employed, while describing the analytical tools in detail.

Chapter 5 : Data analysis, interprétation & presentation : Research questionnaires

This section provides a detailed presentation of the study's findings upon analysis of the questionnaires.

Chapter 6: Data analysis, interpretation & presentation: Observation &interview data

Observation &interview data /findings constitute the sixth chapter of this report.

Chapter 7: Discussion of findings

The findings of the study are discussed in depth in this chapter. This is also done in relation to the findings of previous studies in order to establish any similarities, differences and relationships.

Chapter 8: Summary, conclusion, and recommendations

The researcher provides a summary of the study's findings and highlights their implications. The researcher also draws the study to its conclusion and makes some recommendations in a bid to improve service delivery and thereby boost service quality levels in academic libraries in Kenya.

1.10 WORKING DEFINITION OF TERMS USED IN THE STUDY

| Term | Definition |
|----------------------------|--|
| Academic Libraries | Refers to libraries attached to higher institutions of learning above the secondary level, which are responsible for providing information resources and services to support teaching, learning and research needs of students, staff and other clientele of their institutions. |
| Library | Used to denote a collection of different types of information resources which have been stored and arranged in an organised format for easy retrieval. An academic library is meant to foster academic pursuits in an institution of higher learning, preferably at university level. |
| Technology | Used to refer to the means by which the service employees/customers are able to deliver/access services either manually or through the use of machines. |
| Human Resource | The human factor component of production in any organisation. In this case, it denotes all levels of employees working in an academic organization |
| Library customers | Used to denote those who seek services from an academic library. They may also be referred to as clients, users or patrons. |
| Service tangibles | Tangibles include the physical facilities, equipment and the appearance of the personnel. <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Reliability: The ability of a service provider to provide the given service in a dependable and accurate manner.• Responsiveness is the will and the promptness with which a service provider provides the service. |
| Library service parameters | Refers to all those aspects/attributes that influence the delivery of services, such as infrastructure, furniture, the library building, forms and nature of technology available, and human factors like staff attitudes, communication, etc. |
| Customer satisfaction | The extent/degree to which users' queries are met by the service provider(s) i.e. library as per the customer's specifications or the clients' pleasurable fulfilment; that is, consumption that fulfils customers' desirable goals and needs in a pleasurable manner. |

| | |
|--------------------|---|
| Product definition | A tangible product is a physical object that can be perceived by touch such as a building, vehicle, or gadget. Most goods are tangible products. For example, a soccer ball is a tangible product. ... Services or ideas are intangible. |
| Service quality | Correspondence of services offered with customers' expectations, satisfaction of needs, and requirements. |
| Web 2.0 Technology | A collective term for certain applications of the <i>Internet</i> and the World Wide <i>Web</i> , including blogs, wikis, video sharing services, and social media websites such as Facebook and MySpace, which focus on interactive sharing and participatory collaboration rather than simple content delivery. |

1.11 CHAPTER SUMMARY

In this chapter, the key parameters of the study were introduced, in particular the role and place of the library in the university and the service delivery process. Also highlighted and discussed were some of the service parameters and how they influence service quality. A brief mention was also made regarding the research methodology employed, data collection processes and analysis. The study problem was articulated together with the study's aims and objectives, and the significance of the study to the industry. The chapter also highlighted the scope, assumptions and limitations of the study. The chapter concluded by briefly highlighting the theoretical framework of the study (which is discussed in detail in Chapter 2), outlining the structure of the entire thesis, and providing the contextual meaning of some of the terminology as used in the study. Following is the detailed study as earlier outlined in Section 1.9.

CHAPTER 2:

THEORETICAL (CONCEPTUAL) FRAMEWORK

2.1 INTRODUCTION

This chapter reviews the quality initiatives that have been undertaken generally and in higher education in particular, and the different service quality models that have been advanced by various scholars to measure quality. The chapter focuses on how these models could be used to enhance and

improve service delivery in academic libraries. The chapter expounds on the theoretical frameworks of service quality.

Neuman (2006:74) defines a theoretical framework, which he also refers to as a theoretical system or paradigm, as a “... *general theoretical system with assumptions, concepts and specific social theories...*” According to Nachmias and Nachmias (1996:39), a theoretical system is comprised of propositions that are interrelated in a way that permits some propositions to be derived from others. Hence the different approaches or theories which have been advanced by various scholars to examine the subject of service quality.

2.2. BACKGROUND

Mbua and Ocholla (2012) observe that service quality is an essential parameter in any service organization and cannot be wished away at all. Service quality models have therefore gained considerable traction as they not only help to shed light on the attributes of the service process, but also on areas of improvement. According to Ghobadian *et al.* (1994), service quality models enable the management team to identify problems experienced in the service process. They assist the management team, particularly in the initiation of quality improvement programs, thereby enhancing the efficiency, profitability and the overall performance of the organisation in the service delivery arena. With factors such as the application of information technology (IT), and growing customer knowledge and awareness, it has become imperative for organisations to offer their services in a much better way than their competitors at a set price.

The subject of service quality thus requires a fresh approach in the current competitive and rapidly evolving environment. Thus, business organisations need to re-evaluate their service delivery approaches and re-focus on how services are offered (i.e. the *how* of the service-process). Unlike in the services sector, quality management has been a common phenomenon in the manufacturing sector. However, it is increasingly receiving attention in the services sector as well. The public sector has also put forward major initiatives aimed at improving quality to boost their performance and better serve their clients. According to Mbua and Ocholla (2012), this adds credence to the need to evaluate service quality in academic libraries, since they too are facing the challenges mentioned earlier, such as growing numbers of IT applications, competition from other information brokers/providers, and heightened customer awareness.

In the sections that follow, various service quality models are discussed and analysed at length, all with the sole aim of highlighting the major variables in the service process. This is done under the following sub-headings:

- Evolution of quality
- Service quality in higher education
- Emergence of the quality debate in higher education
- Quality in academic libraries
- Review of service models in the business sector
- Relevance of the models to service quality and customer satisfaction in academic libraries

2.3. THE EVOLUTION OF QUALITY: AN OVERVIEW

The concept of quality was first introduced by W. Edwards Deming in the 1950s. Deming (1986) developed an approach to total quality management (TQM) based on fourteen (14) key steps where he endeavoured to add a human face to the process instead of merely focusing on the product/ service quality and more efficient business practices. It is a result of his work that the coveted Total Quality Deming prize was created in Japan in 1965, and has been adopted by most organizations.

Juran (1988), building on Deming's earlier philosophies, defined quality as fitness for use in terms of design, conformance, availability, safety and field use. But deviating from Deming, Juran focused on the top-down management and technical approaches instead of workers' pride and satisfaction. His approach revolved around 10 points that developed the idea that quality control is a critical aspect of management. This led to the development of '*quality circles*' by Ishikawa, a practice where quality improvement meetings are held at all levels within the organisation. Ishikawa (1985, also known as the 'father of quality circles', further expounded on these ideas to come up with the 'fish bone' concept or the Ishikawa diagram as a management problem-solving tool. This has been widely applied globally by quality circles and quality improvement teams. His contribution is seven basic tools that he viewed as indispensable for quality control:

- Pareto analysis,
- Fishbone diagrams,
- Stratification,
- Tally charts,
- Histograms,
- Scatter diagrams, and
- Control charts.

Crosby (1979) popularised 'total quality' in his book "Quality is Free". Having built on the previous works, he introduced the thought that quality is "conformance to requirement". His notion of a zero defects goal as something practical to aim for was based on the fact that poor quality, on average, was

costing companies about 20% of their revenue. Crosby cited four new essentials of quality management that he termed 'the absolutes', and also introduced his own 14 points for success. Crosby (1979) stressed that motivation and planning were key factors in quality maintenance rather than mere statistical process control.

Although these experts have differing opinions in certain areas, a number of key themes can be observed, namely:

- Inspection is never the answer to quality improvement
- Involvement of, and leadership by, top management are essential to the culture of commitment to quality
- A program for quality requires organisation-wide efforts and long term commitment, accompanied by the necessary investment in training
- Quality is first and schedules are secondary

Building on the works of his predecessors, Oakland (2003) was able to expound on the theory of TQM, demonstrating its applicability and its integration into a company's strategy. Oakland's (2003) five-point model defines total quality management as "a comprehensive approach to improving competitiveness, effectiveness and flexibility through planning, organising, and understanding each activity, and involving each individual at each level". Arising from these developments in quality thinking, TQM is now a major force in quality improvement globally. By TQM being holistic in its approach, 14 participating companies, whose mission was to promote and encourage sustainable excellence in Europe, decided to form the European Foundation for Quality Management (EFQM). Sheffield Hallam University (2003) describe their goals as being "to stimulate and, where necessary, to assist management in adopting and applying the principles of Total Quality Management, and to improve the competitiveness of European industry". Taking into account research from across the world on other quality awards and systems, such as the Baldrige Award in America and the Deming Prize in Japan, EFQM launched the European Quality Award in 1991 to popularise and promote quality.

2.3.1 OVERVIEW OF QUALITY INITIATIVES IN HIGHER EDUCATION

Since the 1980's, the debate on the quality of higher education has been centered on two questions:

- The extent to which graduates learn the knowledge and skills necessary for a changing economy (improvement)

- The extent to which higher education institutions are utilising the allotted funds correctly (accountability) (Westerheijden, Stensaker and Rosa, 2007).

According to Williams (1993), the emergence of quality management approaches in higher education is the result of the market theories of the 1980s and the managerialism that was tied to it. Srikanthan and Dalrymple (2003) while in agreement, observed that management of quality became central to the new dispensation of the governance of higher education institutions, with many borrowing from the business world and adopting quality management models such as TQM, ISO 9001, EFQM and BPR. Over time, quality management in educational institutions has become a major point of interest to many different stakeholders, and consequently many different Quality Assurance (QA) models based on the Total Quality Management (TQM) philosophy have been developed and adopted in various countries such as the USA, UK, Malaysia and Japan (Kanji and Tambi, 1998; Chua, 2004). Having been introduced in 1951, the concept of TQM has grown into one of the most effective strategies used by different organisations (Zink and Vob, 2000). It was initially adopted for the measurement of quality within the higher education sector in 1993 (Clayton, 1993).

The EFQM's Business Excellence Model was established (Hides *et al.* 2004) in 1998, initially developed as a model to underpin the European Quality Award which has been adopted and is widely used by an increasing number of non-profit organisations and several European universities as the basis for the measurement of their activities (Spasos, *et al.* 2008). The EFQM model, although closely related to other quality measures, is mainly hinged on customer needs and the quality attributes embraced by the customers.

2.4 QUALITY INITIATIVES IN ACADEMIC LIBRARIES

Abdullah (2006a) is emphatic in stating that educational institutions need to improve their service delivery quality, thus changing the perceptions that their customers hold towards them. These perceptions are influenced by a variety of factors, such as reputation, access, and understanding. It is only through the assessment and understanding of how these factors influence service quality that tertiary level institutions can be efficiently able to design and implement good service delivery processes.

Alnaser and Almsafir (2014) highlight the fact that it is crucial to adequately meet the needs of students, who are the main users of university services. This is important as satisfied students will very easily pass the word to their associates and thereby bring in new 'customers', besides continuing their relationship with the service provider. It is therefore imperative that the libraries understand

what factors attract students and the influence of the service delivery process as a whole in a bid to effectively satisfy them.

Kulkarni (2014) notes that libraries in modern days are functioning in an economic environment as service-providing institutions with a focus on collections of documents to support knowledge and research. Again, it is worth noting that information has become a crucial input for any decision-making in the competitive economic environment. Katsirikou (2004) thus underscores the crucial role academic libraries must play in the fulfilment of this agenda. Many organisations, including academic libraries, now seek to have quality management systems within their setups by adopting approaches such as:

- Total Quality Management
- Malcolm National Baldrige Quality Award
- ISO 9000 standards (Johannsen, 1996)
- 5S movement (Taipei Municipal Library, 1996)
- Benchmarking (Zairi and Hutton, 1995; Garrod and Kinnell, 1997)

Thus through the adoption of quality management approaches it is possible to bring about some change in the way service delivery is carried out in the academic libraries; consequently, customer satisfaction is bound to move a notch higher, thereby enhancing customer attraction, retention and loyalty.

Quality is also tied to the value of the service/product, thus customers will seek the service/product from which it is presumed they will derive most value. Thus, services/products that are rated highly are regarded as being more valuable, and vice versa. Value, in this case, is the satisfaction derived from the said service/product; value becomes an important parameter in the assessment of the quality of service.

2.4.1 CHALLENGES IN QUALITY ATTAINMENT IN KENYAN ACADEMIC LIBRARIES

Mbirithi (2013) and Okwakol (2008) agree that the striking quantitative leaps in the number of universities in Africa (Kenya included) coupled with similar trends in student enrolment have caused great concern with respect to the quality of the services rendered. This is given that library infrastructure and study resources have failed to correspondingly match the quantitative growth, and this will undoubtedly have a monumental impact on the service quality that is meted out over time.

As Kenya's higher education sector has grown, so has the need to regulate its quality. The government originally established the Commission for Higher Education (CHE) in 1985 as a legal framework to regulate quality assurance in higher education, with its initial focus being the regulation of private universities to ensure that they meet academic quality standards. However, a comparable risk was later identified for public universities, and since the enactment of the Universities Act of 2012, all universities in Kenya must be chartered and their programmes accredited under the regulation of the Commission of University Education (CUE), which serves as an external quality assurance mechanism. Universities are also expected to institutionalise their own internal quality assurance mechanisms (CUE, 2008). However, Wanzala (2013) fears that despite the existence of regulatory agencies, quality control is still a pertinent subject in higher education circles in Kenya.

Libraries, by virtue of being so intrinsic to the academic pursuits of the university, have and must be able to provide quality information resources. In their quest to provide quality services, Kenyan academic libraries face a range of challenges like their parent higher educational institutions; these challenges greatly impede their drive (Mutula, 2002). Karshorda and Waema (2014); Tarus and Gichoya (2015), for example, assert that there is a gross shortage of faculty and e-learning infrastructure, particularly in the Kenyan public universities. In its report on Kenya's higher educational institutions' e-readiness, Karshorda and Waema (2014) confirms these views, suggesting that most institutions had low scores, implying laxity in the effective deployment of ICT to enhance teaching and learning. Mwiria *et al.* (2007) contend that past poor legislation has further compounded the delivery of quality academic offerings, while Kavulya (2003) points out that university libraries have faced stiff hurdles in providing information literacy programmes due to financial and human resource constraints. Marwa (2014) notes that while some of the challenges have been and /or are being addressed, others simply remain unresolved, as fresh ones emerge that negatively impact on the higher education institution's deliverables.

However, it is encouraging that nearly every university is pursuing some or other initiative aimed at embedding a culture of excellence. Unfortunately, the growth in enrolment in the academic years of 2009/10–2014/15 for both public and private universities (GOK, 2015) respectively, has not been matched by improvements in physical infrastructure or levels of expertise within the institutions (Marwa, 2014). This shortfall makes quality service delivery remain a mirage rather than a reality in Kenya's HEIs.

2.5 REVIEW OF SERVICE QUALITY MODELS

Practitioners and academics are eager to gauge service quality correctly in order to better grasp its key antecedents and consequences, and thereby be able to correctly determine ways through which quality can be enhanced (Abdullah, 2006a). Nevertheless, many areas of disagreement exist in the measurement of service quality (Abdullah, 2006a). The model was initially viewed as too complex in terms of definition, primarily due to the problems of conceptualising and measuring its different constructs (Parasuraman *et al.* 1985). The complexity of conceptualising and measuring service quality has been deemed to be one of the most debated and controversial topics in services' marketing (Brady, Cronin and Brand 2002). This is largely due to the intangible nature of services, which renders them far more difficult to model theoretically than goods (Palmer, 2011).

Over the last four decades, a host of conceptual frameworks and models have emerged attempting to measure service quality (see Abdullah, 2006a, 2006b; Cronin and Taylor, 1992, 1994; Grönroos, 1984; Parasuraman *et al.* 1985, 1988). The different models that have been developed each focus on different areas/aspects of the service process. Owing to this multiplicity of models and despite numerous attempts by scholars, there is still no generally accepted model of service quality (Clewes, 2003). A review of the current literature clearly shows that there is no agreement with regard to the assessment of service quality (Marzo-Navarro *et al.* 2005), giving further evidence that there is no universally accepted measurement scale.

Consequently, in this section focus is drawn to the GAP model which is used in this study. The other models are just mentioned citing reasons why they they were not adopted. This is done in a bid to establish some of the underlying factors that could affect service delivery in academic libraries.

2.5.1. GAP MODEL (Parasuraman et al. 1985)

The introduction of the perceived service quality model encouraged the development of the SERVQUAL or GAP model (Parasuraman *et al.* 1985, 1988). The GAP model is founded on the view that the customer's assessment holds the key to service quality. The suggestion is that service quality is a function of the difference between expectation and performance along the quality dimension (Parasuraman *et al.* 1985). In other words, it is the difference between what the customer expects or considers to be quality service compared to how it is delivered. The model posits that there is a gap when the two parameters are compared, and according to Parasuraman *et al.* (1988), the level of perceived service quality is dependent on the magnitude of the gap between expectations and perceptions; the smaller the gap, the higher the level of perceived service quality. Although the model has been revised several times, the original idea has remained.

This service quality model, based on gap analysis, depicts service quality as a fulfilment of certain conditions/criteria. Failure to meet these criteria leads to shortfalls in the service delivery process, and these shortfalls or gaps have to be addressed in order to improve the quality of the service. Parasuraman *et al.* (1985) identified these gaps as the major determinants of service quality. As the Gap concept emanated Parasuraman *et al.* (1988), developed the measuring tool, i.e. SERVQUAL. Parasuraman *et al.* (1988) further refined their research with their subsequent scale, SERVQUAL, for measuring customers' perceptions of service quality. Parasuraman *et al.* (1988:23) illustrate that the model incorporates five dimensions, having reduced the original ten dimensions of service quality:

- Reliability: The ability to perform the promised service dependably and accurately.
- Responsiveness: Willingness to help customers and provide prompt service.
- Empathy: The caring, individualised attention the firm provides to its customers.
- Assurance: The knowledge and courtesy of employees and their ability to inspire trust and confidence (communication, competence, credibility, courtesy and security).
- Tangibles: Physical facilities, equipment, and appearance of personnel.

Upon developing the SERVQUAL instrument, Parasuraman *et al.* (1988) were of the view that it could be applied to most service organisations. The use of the SERVQUAL instrument is particularly relevant in the context of higher education (e.g. Oldfield and Baron, 2000). Arguments relating to the validity and reliability of the SERVQUAL instrument are extremely well documented (Buttle, 1996; Carman, 1990; Cronin and Taylor, 1992, 1994).

Figure 2.2 below illustrates the gaps as follows:

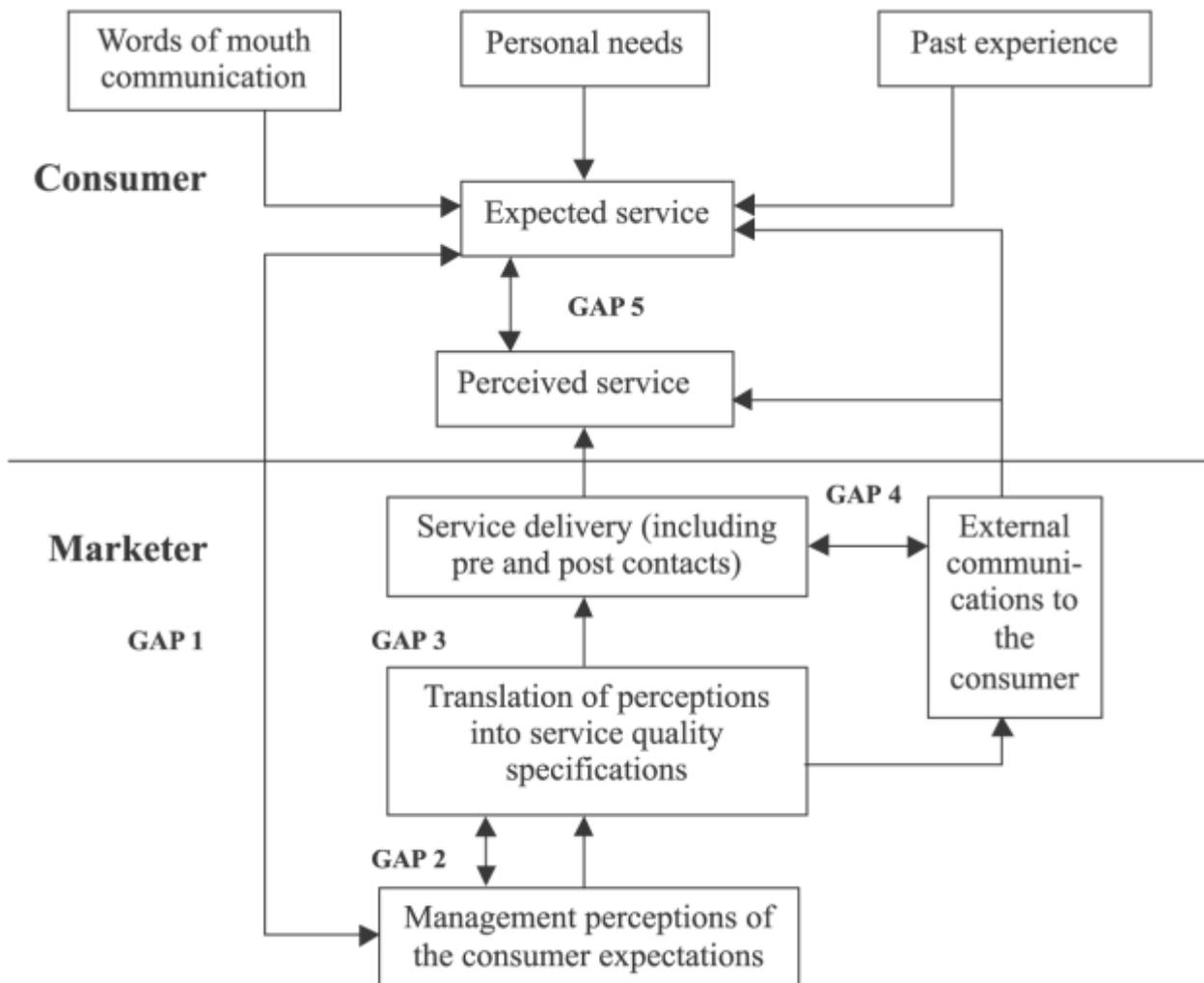
Gap 1: Difference between consumers' expectations and the management's perceptions of those expectations, i.e. the provider not knowing what consumers expect.

Gap 2: Differences between the management's perception of consumers' expectations and service quality specifications, i.e. improper service quality standards.

Gap 3: Difference between service quality specifications and the service actually delivered, i.e. the service gap (what was requested vis-a-vis what is offered).

Gap 4: Difference between service quality and the communication to consumers about service delivery, i.e. whether promises made to the consumers match the delivery.

Gap 5: Focus on the difference between the consumers' expectations and perceived service. This gap depends on the size and direction of the four other gaps associated with the delivery of service quality on the marketers' side.

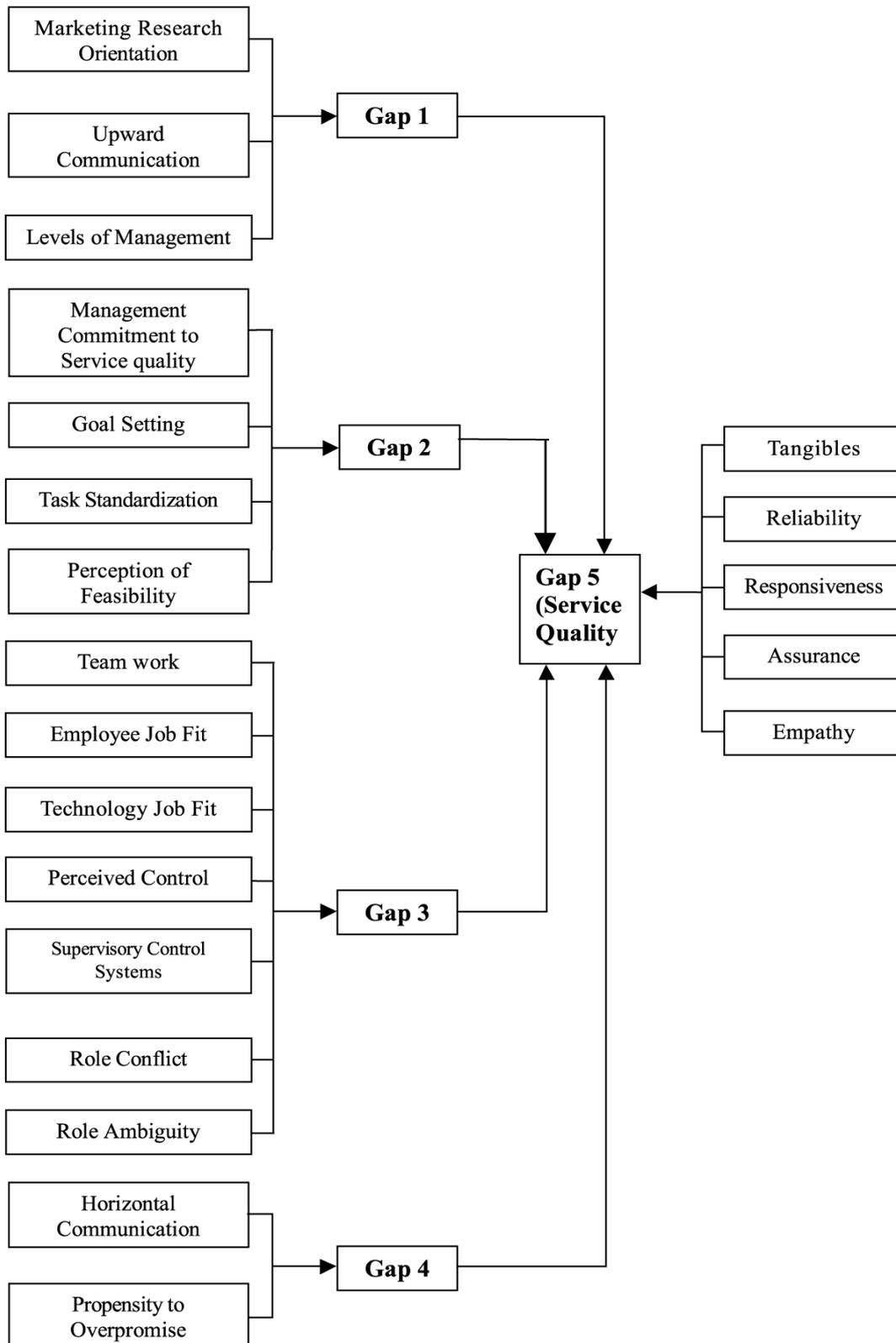


Source: Parasuraman *et al.* (1985)

Figure 2.2 Gap Model

The model has undergone several revisions that led to the extended service quality model (Figure 2.3). In the extended model, most factors involve the communication and control processes that are implemented in organisations to manage employees.

Figure 2.3 Extended service quality model



Source: Zeithaml *et al.* (1988)

which can be further explored in order to generate a more comprehensive interpretation of service quality.

model offers a
onitor perceived
service quality,

2.5.1.1 WHY AND HOW THE GAP WILL BE USED

Academic libraries, by being so different from other libraries and serving a rather specialised clientele, are faced with the daunting question: how well are they fulfilling their mandate? To fulfil their mandate, they require, among other provisions, quality human resources, appropriate technology application, and quality resources/facilities.

In this case the GAP model is customized and applied to the study focus in on its five main dimensions:

- **Reliability:** The ability to perform the promised service dependably and accurately.
- **Responsiveness:** Willingness to help customers and provide prompt service.
- **Empathy:** The caring, individualised attention the firm provides to its customers.
- **Assurance:** The knowledge and courtesy of employees and their ability to inspire trust and confidence (communication, competence, credibility, courtesy and security)
- **Tangibles:** Physical facilities, equipment, and appearance of personnel.

It seeks to understand the degree of reliability, responsiveness, empathy, level of assurance, and the nature of the tangibles in the service delivery processes. In doing so the above dimensions are further interrogated via questionnaire items touch in on different aspects of each. This is also guided by the set University standards in Kenya (see AnnexB) and thus the set guidelines set guiding on the quality issues to pay attention. These include:

- human resource (level of staffing, numbers, motivation, safety, service culture),
- technology (adaptability, quality of technology, intensity, user friendliness, speed),
- library building and infrastructure (nature of the building, furniture, working space),
- library management practices (staff training and development, user outreach, communication networks, work environment)
- library environment (state of the builing, accessibility, security, space,) and,
- information resources (quality, quantity, types/format).

Therefore, improved quality of service by the customers calls for a thorough analysis of the defects and corrective measures necessary to deal with the internal defects (Parasuraman, 2004). It is by addressing the quality failures (referred to as GAPS) that quality service can be attained. In conclusion, therefore, it is evident that service employees and HR practices facilitate the delivery of quality services.

2.5.2. OTHER SERVICE QUALITY MODELS

Grönroos (1984) was one of the earliest scholars to conceptualise service quality by creating the perceived service quality model. The model is rooted in the disconfirmation paradigm where consumer expectations and perceptions are compared, and the quality of the service is gauged by the resultant evaluation process. Grönroos' (1984) argument was that in order for a firm to compete effectively, it requires sound knowledge of the consumers' perception of quality and the way service quality affects them. Managing perceived service quality implies that an organisation has to relate the expected service to perceived service so that consumer satisfaction is attained. The model encompasses three components of service quality, namely: technical quality; functional quality; and usage.

Grönroos (2007) also observes that the gap between the expected service and perceived service is of great significance, and it is crucial for a service organisation to endeavour to reduce this gap as much as possible. It is also necessary for managers to know what determines the technical quality and functional quality of a service, and how customers perceive these quality dimensions (Grönroos, 2007) to ensure that the perceived service quality is maximised.

Technical quality being the quality of what the consumer actually receives as a result of his/her interaction with the service firm, and is important to him/her and to his/her evaluation of the quality of service given. This relates to what is provided during the service process (e.g. knowledge, tangibles and technical solutions). It refers to the relatively quantifiable aspects of the service, which the customer and supplier can easily measure (Grönroos, 1984). In the library setup, this is important as it relates to the front service operations. Functional quality on the otherhand is how he/she gets the technical outcome. It refers to how the service is provided and the interpersonal behaviours attributed to the service employee during the service encounter. It is more difficult to measure than technical quality (Grönroos, 1984). Image i.e. external appearance, is very important to service firms and Grönroos (1984) noted that this can be expected to be built up by the technical and functional quality of service in addition to other factors (tradition, ideology, word of mouth, pricing and public relations).

Cronin and Taylor (1992) advanced the Performance only model, and were some of the first authors to criticise the reliability and validity of the SERVQUAL model. In response to the limitations of the SERVQUAL model, Cronin and Taylor (1992) developed the SERVPERF scale, which was borne out of the inadequacies of SERVQUAL. The authors were of the view that service quality should be defined based on perceptions, and founded their model on the premise that it is difficult to conceptualise expectations. This led to the development of a more direct form of measurement that

utilises an attitudinal rather than a disconfirmation paradigm (Cronin and Taylor, 1992). The SERVPERF approach requires the customer to rate only the service provider's performance in a particular service encounter. Cronin and Taylor (1992) disputed and criticised Parasuraman *et al.*'s (1985) model with regard to conceptualisation and the measurement of service quality. With *SERVPERF*, they attempted to illustrate that service quality is a form of consumer attitude, and demonstrate that the performance only measure of service quality is a more enhanced means of measuring service quality than the *SERVQUAL* model.

Nash (1988) coined a model based on the "service journey" idea. The model depicts the typical phases of a "service journey". The experience at one particular point and the anticipated expectations before the purchase aid in the moulding of expectations about the next service stop.

Dabholkar (1996) developed two alternative models of service quality for technology-based self-service options. This arose from the growing demand for self-service as a delivery option due to the high labour costs involved in service provision. This approach has gained prominence, particularly within the finance sector and in some information service centres, including libraries which now have various self-service options. In the two models, expected service quality is likely to impact greatly on the intention to apply technology-based self-service alternatives.

Based on Parasuraman *et al.*'s (1985) GAP model, Frost and Kumar's (2000) internal service model lays more emphasis on the internal customers who are often ignored, even by other scholars. This model focuses on the dimensions and relationships influencing service quality among the internal customers (i.e. front-line staff) and internal suppliers (i.e. support staff) within an organisation. Any flaws in the service process are depicted as gaps (denoting the difference between the front line staff's expectations and perceptions of the support staff's view of service quality).

The Antecedents and Mediator model (Dabholkar *et al.*,2000) pre-supposes the existence of trigger factors that act as the antecedents of service. The focus is on selected conceptual elements associated with service quality. These make up the antecedents of service quality and include, among others, reliability, personal attention, comfort, and the general features in the service area/process. Focusing on the interdependence of the antecedents and customer satisfaction, the model seeks to establish whether there are any behavioural intentions in relation to service.

This IT-based model (Zhu, Wymer, Chen 2002) showcases the significance of information technology-based service options. Service providers opt to employ IT in a bid to cut costs and offer value-added services to their clients. The proposed model links customer-perceived IT-based service options to traditional service dimensions. The model sheds light on the relationship between IT-based services and customers' perceptions about service quality. This IT-based service construct is

measured by SERVQUAL (Parasuraman *et al.* 1988, 1991). They argue that different variables affect customers' views of IT-based services.

2.6 APPRAISAL OF THE CHAPTER

This section discusses the Gap model and the SERVQUAL tool, the criticisms levelled against it and gives a brief review of the evolution of the different models and how they relate to each other; then concludes with a focus on the relevance of service quality and customer satisfaction in academic libraries.

2.6.1 DISCUSSION

However, the SERVQUAL model has been the major generic model used to measure and manage service quality across different service settings and various cultural backgrounds (Buttle, 1996). The theory emanates from the pioneering works of Parasuraman, Zeithaml, and Berry (1988) on service quality; the SERVQUAL tool was developed to measure service quality. From this study it is evident that customers have both needs and expectations about a particular service offering, while the service providers too have perceptions of the customers' needs; and service delivery has processes and specifications. Broadly speaking, these factors interact and give rise to mismatches between the different perceptions (gaps). These gaps are subsequently assessed in the model and may arise from either the consumer or the service provider side. Despite the many criticisms levelled against the SERVQUAL, Coulthard (2018) notes that it still remains a popular approach to service quality assessment.

However, apart from its wide use (i.e. tool), a number of theoretical and empirical criticisms of the measurement model have been pointed out (Ladhari, 2009). The criticisms include:

- The validity of the SERVQUAL model as a generic instrument for measuring service quality across different service sectors has been raised.
- Also, there has been an argument that a simple revision of the SERVQUAL items is not enough for measuring service quality across different service settings.
- As a result, Ladhari (2009:68) stated that "It has been suggested that industry-specific measures of service quality might be more appropriate than a single generic scale". This argument is supported by Dabholkar *et al.* (1996:14) who noted that "... *it appears that a measure of service quality across industries is not feasible; therefore, future research on service quality should involve the development of industry-specific measures of service quality ...*"

Ladhari (2009) too observed that more attention was directed towards the development of an alternative industry-specific research instrument for measuring service quality by both scholars and researchers.

As a result, thus, a number of industry-specific research instruments have been developed over the years, by different scholars and with the aim of addressing different service settings, countries and even cultural backgrounds. It is against this that the models have been developed. Self-service technologies (SSTs) are defined as “... *technological interfaces that enable customers to produce a service independent of direct service employee involvement ...*” (Shamdasani, Mukherjee and Malhotra, 2008:117). These include the Automated Teller Machine (ATM), automated hotel checkout, electronic airplane ticketing, and Internet banking (Shamdasani, Mukherjee and Malhotra 2008). Shamdasani, Mukherjee and Malhotra. (2008) identified some potential benefits derived from SSTs employment such as, ease of access, improvement in efficiencies and competitiveness, savings in time, and improvement in the performance for customer satisfaction and customer loyalty. With a noticeable growing rate of the use of self-service technologies all over the world, more attention is needed to present more understanding about the service evaluation process in terms of exploring the key determinants and consequences of service quality which represents an important factor for the success of any organisation (Shamdasani, Mukherjee and Malhotra, 2008).

2.6.1.1 APPLICATIONS OF SERVQUAL

Parasuraman *et al.* (1988) identified a number of potential applications for the SERVQUAL model. It can be used:

- To track customer perceptions of the service quality of a particular firm compared to its competitors.
- It provides the opportunity for a firm to assess its service quality performance on the basis of each dimension individually as well as the overall dimensions and allows firms to classify its customers into different segments based on their individual SERVQUAL scores. Also, it allows multi-unit retail companies to assess the level of service quality offered by individual stores and to group them into different sectors with different quality images.
- The focus of the model is to serve as a generic instrument for measuring service quality across different service sectors. The SERVQUAL instrument is modified for use in various service settings and it provides a basic skeleton for adoption fitting the specific attributes of a particular organisation.

2.6.2 A GENERIC MEASURE OF SERVICE QUALITY: THE SERVQUAL SCALE

The SERVQUAL model has been theoretically and empirically studied, examined, and discussed in several academic studies. It has been adopted and used to measure and assess service quality across different service, industrial, commercial, and non-profit settings (Buttle,1996; Ladhari,2009), including, for example, the health-care sector (Teshnizi *et al.*2018; Dopeykar *et al.* 2018; Aghamolaei (2014);Babakus and Manigold,1992); dental services(Mohammadi and Mohammadi,2012); NGOs(Ahuja, Mahlawat, Masood, 2011); IT (Roses, Hoppen and Henrique, 2009); E-retailing (Siadat, Buyut and Selamat, 2008); police service (Donnelly *et al.* 2006); banks (Rushdin and Rushdin, 2018;Kumar, Fong and Manshor,2009);education (Akhlaghi, Amini, and Akhlaghi,2012);tourism(Chand,2010); telecommunications (Randhir,2018); information systems (Jiang *et al.* 2000); library services (Asogwa,2014). Another SERVQUAL-based study, in police traffic services, adapted a new scale known as POLQUAL using the five SERVQUAL dimensions with an extra 'promptitude' dimension where reliability and tangible dimensions emerged as the most negative gaps (Sarrico, Ferreira and Silva, 2013).

Its use in many different sectors is proof of its wide use and acceptability across the board by even international organisations. In addition, it has been employed to measure service quality across different countries and various cultural backgrounds (Ladhari, 2009) including, for example, in Iran (Teshnizi *et al.* 2018; Dopeykar *et al.* 2018); Kenya (Onyimbo,2015); Nigeria (Asogwa,2014); Bangladesh (Akter, Upal and Hani, 2008), Romania (Purcărea, Gheorghe and Petrescu, 2013), in Saudi Arabia (Al-Borie and Damanhour, 2013). Albassam and Alshawi (2010) state that in addition to the above studies there are many other unpublished empirical SERVQUAL works and they occur in various cultural contexts. Asogwa (2014) further, notes that performance measures are required in libraries to demonstrate value and to respond to changes in demand arising from the many new services, and which require flexibility to create self-recovery and accountability. Manjunatha and Shivalingaiah (2004) are more emphatic, claiming that "... in the 21st century, libraries need to go beyond the traditional modes of assessments and apply marketing strategies for understanding a user's perceptions and expectations ...", which implies that any improvement in library services today is largely dependent on the customers' assessment of the quality of services received.

2.6.3 SERVQUAL: AN OVERVIEW OF THE CRITICISMS

However, regardless of its extensive use of the SERVQUAL tool, numerous theoretical, operational, conceptual, and empirical criticisms of the measurement instrument have been leveled against it. Buttle (1996) identified several theoretical and operational criticisms of SERVQUAL, pointing out that:

- Theoretically, SERVQUAL tool is founded on the basis of an expectation-disconfirmation model instead of an attitudinal model. In addition, it is not based on a well-known established economic, statistical, psychological theory or background. In terms of the Gap analysis, there are some scholars who support the view that customers evaluate service quality on the basis of perception-minus-expectation scores.
- Furthermore, SERVQUAL stresses and emphasises the process of service delivery rather than the ends and the outcomes of the service encounter. From an operational perspective, he affirms that consumers evaluate service quality on the basis of standards other than expectations. Also, that it is not possible to capture the changeability of each service quality dimension by four or five items.
- Van Dyke *et al.* (1997, 1999) cited a number of conceptual and empirical criticisms of SERVQUAL tool. Conceptually, they criticised the use of two different instruments for measuring two different concepts (perceptions and expectations) to measure a third concept (perceived service quality). Instead, they argued that direct measurement of perceived service quality is more reliable. Moreover, they argued against the uncertainty of the expectations construct as different definitions and views of the concept resulted from uncertainly defined concepts.
- Empirically, they argued that SERVQUAL tool has a number of empirical problems including low reliability and unstable dimensionality.

Ladhari (2009) summarised the theoretical and empirical criticisms of the model citing:

- That the use of gap scores is not the right method because of the lack of the support in literature to consumers evaluating service quality in terms of perception-minus-expectation. He stated that it has been recommended that service quality is more precisely and correctly evaluated by measuring only perceptions of quality.
- On the other hand, he mentioned that the concept “expectation” is not well defined and can be interpreted from different perspectives; as a result, the operationalisation of SERVQUAL tool may have different interpretations as well. In addition, he pointed out that previous research suggested using perception-only scores rather than gap scores for the overall assessment of service quality.
- Last but not least, he emphasised that previous research studies criticise SERVQUAL tool for its focus on the process of service delivery instead of the result and the outcome of service encounters. It appears that regardless of the extensive acceptance and adoption of SERVQUAL, there has been a marked hesitation concerning its future use as a tool for

measuring service quality. This argument is supported by Robinson (1999:21) who in support of this argument also stated that "... although it has probably been the best, and most popular approach available during the 1990s, it is becoming apparent that it has some significant shortcomings. It can be argued that SERVQUAL is applicable to contexts close to its original setting ..."

- In view of the criticisms mentioned, researchers (such as Babakus and Boller 1992; Van Dyke *et al.* 1997, Jabnoun and Khalifa 2005;) have queried the applicability of a single generic scale for measuring service quality across a range of service settings. Moreover, other researchers (such as Carman, 1990; Babakus and Boller, 1992; Brown *et al.* 1993; Van Dyke *et al.* 1997) have argued that a simple adaptation of the SERVQUAL dimensions is unsatisfactory for measuring service quality across a variety of service settings.

For these reasons, it has been proposed by scholars such as Babakus and Boller (1992); Van Dyke *et al.* (1997); Caro and Garcia (2007); Ekiz and Bavik (2008) that industry-specific scales for measuring service quality, and which can be more suitable than a single generic scale, be developed. Dabholkar *et al.* (1996:14) in support of this, observed that "... It appears that a measure of service quality across industries is not feasible; therefore, future research on service quality should involve the development of industry-specific measures of service quality ...". As a result, a number of specific-industry measures have been developed to measure service quality (Ladhari, 2009:78). These include restaurants (Stevens *et al.* 1995); retail banks (Rushdin and Rushdin, 2018; Nair *et al.* 2010; Aldlaign and Buttle, 2002; Sureshchandler Rajendran, and Anatharaman, 2002); career centres (Engelland *et al.* 2000); Internet retailing (Janda, Rocchia and Gwinner, 2002); hotels (Akbaba, 2006; Wilkins, Merrilees and Herington, 2007); hospitals (Asadi *et al.* 2011, Teshnizi *et al.* 2018); and higher education (Cerri, 2012). In addition, the scales have been developed in different countries and cultural backgrounds, for example Turkey (Akbaba, 2006); Australia (Wilkins, Merrilees and Herington, 2007); Canada (Saleh and Ryan, 1991); India (Sureshchandler, Rajendran and Anatharaman, 2002); the United States of America (Dabholkar *et al.*, 1996); Korea (Kang and James, 2004); Belgium (Vandamme and Leunis, 1993); and the United Arab Emirates (Jabnoun and Khalifa, 2005).

But very significant is the observation by Ladhari (2009) that all the research studies mentioned have described service quality as a multidimensional construct. Thus the construct cannot be seen otherwise. But, the number and nature of dimensions change on the basis of the service contexts. It is clear that evaluating and assessing service quality differs from one customer group to another and from one circumstance to another.

2.6.4 DEVELOPMENT OF THE SERVICE QUALITY MODELS

The different service quality models highlight the divergent views on and approaches to service quality. The sequential discussion and debates around service quality have allowed scholars to continuously update and learn from the findings and observations of previous scholarly models and studies. Frost and Kumar (2000), while focusing on the GAP model and the SERVQUAL tool by Parasuraman *et al.* (1985), later developed the “Internal service quality model ‘which narrowed its focus down to the internal staff (internal customers) in an organization, who are considered key to the delivery of a service. The role of the internal customer gains prominence in that it is only through a dedicated employee base (who also constitute the internal customers) that good quality service to the external customers can be realized. Based on these earlier studies, Brogowitz *et al.* (1990), advanced *the synthesized model of service quality*, integrating contributions by both Grönroos (1984) and Parasuraman *et al.* (1985).

The various models have been criticised by scholars and researchers. The measurement of service quality through the GAP model and SERVQUAL tool, for instance, has been heavily criticised by Cronin and Taylor (1992) in particular. In their criticisms of the GAP approach, the authors argued that service quality cannot be measured on the basis of mere perception (attitudes) as these are difficult to measure; rather it should be assessed on the basis of performance. As a result, the Performance only model was developed, and the accompanying measurement instrument named the SERVPERF (a service quality tool for measuring performance only) to counter Parasuraman *et al.*'s (1985) approach. Parasuraman *et al.* (1994) reacted to the criticisms, leading to further counter-arguments by Cronin and Taylor (1994).

Haywood-Farmer (1988), in contrast, argued that service quality can best be measured via the attributes of the service process. Thus, the Attribute service quality model, and later the Pivotal, core and peripheral (PCP) model by Philip and Hazlett (1997) were developed.

Still criticising the SERVQUAL approach by Parasuraman *et al.* (1985), Cronin and Taylor (1992) hinted that it is service quality that precedes consumer satisfaction, and that this has a great impact on the customer's purchase intentions. Spreng and Mackoy's (1996) Perceived service quality and satisfaction model and later Dabholkar *et al.*'s (2000) Antecedents and mediator model picked up on this and focused on the antecedents of good service and consequently customer satisfaction.

Cronin and Taylor (1992), again criticising SERVQUAL, argued that consumers will not necessarily purchase the best quality service, but will rather make purchases guided by their judgement of the *value* of the service received. Value becomes an important aspect since the customers do attach some perceived importance to the service /product sought. The emphasis is on “value”. This motivated

scholars and researchers to include this key attribute in future service quality models, such as: Matteson (1992), the ideal value model of service quality; Sweeney, Soutar and Johnson (1997), Retail service quality and perceived value model; and Oh (1999), Service quality, customer value and satisfaction model. By incorporating the value construct, these different models further add to the understanding of the subject of service quality.

Researchers and scholars, homing in on this new angle of service delivery have thus opted for more IT-based models, giving IT prominence primarily because of its well-documented benefits and seeing it as a panacea to all the ills facing service delivery. Such scholars include Berkley and Gupta (1994), IT alignment model; Dabholkar (1996), Attribute and overall affect model; Zhu, Wymer, Chen (2002), IT-based model; and Santos (2003), E-service quality model. All these models stress the application of technology in service delivery in a bid to enhance efficiency in the service “journey”. This has led to a better understanding of how clients judge IT-based services; clients’ assessment has a major bearing on their perceptions of overall service quality, which also serves as a pointer to the customers’ satisfaction levels.

From the above discussion, the following areas with regard to service quality come to the fore:

- Service quality as a gap between what is expected and what is delivered
- Attributes in the service quality process
- Focus on perceptions and performance in the service process
- Antecedents of service quality
- Value aspect in service delivery
- Application of technology in service delivery

In addition to these, there are sector-based models which focus on service quality assessment and improvement.

From the above discourse and to reiterate, it is also clear that there isn’t one wholly-accepted conceptual definition and model of service quality; nor is there any universally accepted operational definition of how to evaluate service. Arising from this analysis, the following parameters have been singled out as being central with regard to enhancing service quality:

- Clear market and customer focus
- A good human resource pool
- Clear mastery of service quality and its determinants
- A good feedback system
- Efficient customer care program

2.6.5 RELEVANCE OF THESE MODELS TO SERVICE AND CUSTOMER SATISFACTION IN ACADEMIC LIBRARIES

Having looked in detail at the SERVQUAL tool (Gaps model), it is necessary to briefly highlight the relevance of all these different service models and in the context of improving service delivery in the academic libraries. This is informed by the fact that different models lay emphasis on different parameters; thus highlighting them gives a more holistic picture of how service delivery ought to be performed, shedding light on all possible areas of improvement. Mbuja and Ocholla (2012) concur that this is critical, considering that the focus of the service provider is having a satisfied customer at the end of the continuum, this being the essence of good business. Thus in this section, an attempt is made to link the models to service quality and customer satisfaction with reference to academic libraries.

Mersha and Adlakha (1992) singled out the following as the top six parameters for superior service from the customers' perspective:

- Knowledge of the service;
- Thoroughness/accuracy;
- Consistency/reliability;
- Reasonable cost;
- Willingness to correct errors; and
- Timely/prompt service.

Similarly, Mersha and Adlakha (1992) have cited the following as the top indicators of poor service quality:

- Lack of knowledge about the service;
- Employee indifference or "I don't care" attitude;
- Reluctance to correct errors;
- Service inconsistency;
- Sloppy service; and
- High cost.

Haywood-Farmer and Stuart's Attribute model (1988) likewise advocates three basic attributes within the service line in order to fully satisfy the customer. These include:

- Physical facilities, processes and procedures: location, layout, size, decor, facility reliability, process flow and flexibility, capacity balance, control of flow, range of services.

- People's behaviour and conviviality: timeliness, speed, communication, warmth, friendliness, attitude, tone of voice, dress, neatness, politeness, anticipation, handling complaints, solving problems.
- Professional judgment: diagnosis, advice, guidance, innovation, honesty, confidentiality, discretion, knowledge, skill.

Borrowing from Nash's (1988) Journey model which depicts the service as one long journey with various stops and/or inter-connections, it is imperative that service delivery in academic libraries is made as smooth and as seamless as possible. The frontline staff, just like aircraft stewards, ought to be there to assist the user in his/her "service journey" to search for and find appropriate information resources. The academic library has a number of service points (e.g. the registration desk, inquiry desk, lending/return desk, reprographic section, bindery, e-resources, etc.) which the user may have to visit before the entire service process is completed. Zhu, Wymer, Chen (2002), in their IT-based model, stress that technology helps to add value to already existing services. These technologies should offer the user some measure of convenience. Technology could be used in some of these "stops", where the user can even serve himself or herself. Libraries need to embrace and adopt self-service options.

Using the Parasuraman *et al.*'s (1985) GAP theory as its basis, Avkiran (1994) conducted a banking study to come up with a utilitarian multi-focused tool to measure customer service quality. He identified four dimensions (areas) of concern in the service delivery process:

- Staff conduct – responsiveness, good etiquette of frontline staff, presenting a professional image to the customers.
- Credibility – promoting staff-customer confidence through the rectification of errors, and updating them about the conclusion in each case.
- Communication – attending to the banking needs of customers by giving sound financial advice and prompt issuance of notices.
- Access to teller services – ensuring reasonable staffing levels at all the service points and matching it with the customer flow.

Although Avkiran's (1994) study focused on bank customers, the findings are very applicable in an academic library setting with respect to staff conduct, credibility, good communication and access to frontline staff (information advisers in place of financial advisers). These attributes are essential for all service staff, irrespective of the sector.

Avkiran's (1994) study also agrees with Oh's (1999) Customer value and customer satisfaction model and Gronroos' (1984) Technical and functional model where external communication with the

customers and word-of-mouth are quite important. Customers need to be updated on any changes in the service hours or any delay in the service or delivery of an item (such as information regarding a prior information request). Parasuraman's *et al.*'s (1991) Extended model highlights that superb communication is critical in the service arena. It is essential to update clients promptly and in a concise and coherent manner to ease any anxiety. For example, a researcher who has placed a request for the acquisition or reservation of certain information should be regularly updated. Researchers and scholars using academic libraries will often require current and strategic information that is useful for an ongoing research activity, as speedily as possible. Welcoming feedback from customers is equally important.

In addition to all these arguments, the way customers perceive the service interaction and whether they feel recognised, appreciated and so forth is crucial. Thus, Oh's (1999) Customer value and customer satisfaction model seeks to promote the aspect of value. This would suggest that customers will make return visits, but only if they feel they are getting value for their time at the library.

From the ongoing discussion it is evident that service delivery is a rather complex affair and involves many parameters. Different customers look for different facets and depending on whether service is available or not, the service process is perceived either positively or negatively. Service providers thus need to enrich their service process, making it a seamless, friendly and convenient process to the customers.

2.7 SUMMARY

This chapter has provided a review of issues of quality, particularly in higher education and in academic libraries. Challenges facing libraries in the attainment of quality were also discussed and an overview of different service quality models helped to develop an understanding of the various factors at play in the service arena.

Customers are critical to the growth and sustenance of an organisation. This chapter revealed that it is exemplary service that will draw and retain them. In its efforts to grow an excellent service culture, the organisation is bound to face many challenges. Some of these stem from service intangibility; participation of the customer in service delivery; the heterogeneous nature of the process; lack of predictability and repeatability of the service process; the varied customer base using the same processing resources; the lack of visibility of quality shortfalls or challenges in pinpointing the origin of quality problems; and the time required to improve service quality. A focused management team, however, can intervene and deal with these obstacles. Hence the key ingredients of superior service quality enhancement include: market and customer orientation; motivated and well-trained frontline staff; well-designed service systems; delegation of tasks and the empowerment of frontline staff; and

a clear definition of quality. Consequently, organisations will need to initiate: up to date communications mechanisms; superb implementation, evaluation and feedback mechanisms; good customer care mechanisms; and efficient, trouble-free access to electronic channels.

Quality challenges in service set-ups arise due to dissatisfaction with the set expectations and perceived quality of service. Thus a quality service enterprise that fails to gauge the needs of its customers and translate them into suitable service products and delivery process specifications regularly and correctly will be poorly rated.

The chapter revealed that service quality is influenced by several variables that impact on service quality in different ways. Hence it is not possible to state that service quality can be wholly influenced by one or two factors. Therefore, different models/theories have emerged, but each focuses on a specific parameter such as human resources, technology, the service environment or even customer satisfaction. Suffice it to say that each of the models has its own strengths and weaknesses. It is also important to note that different service models are applicable to service quality.

Kargbo (2002:411) thus rightly concludes that African university libraries are at a crucial stage of their evolution. There is pressure and competition created by the overwhelming technological innovations, networks, user demands, and by the increased information requirements of the new age. These changes demand new missions, goals, objectives, organisational structure and managerial skills.

The next chapter reviews the related literature to this study.

CHAPTER THREE

REVIEW OF RELATED LITERATURE

3.1 INTRODUCTION

The present chapter reviews literature on pertinent issues that have an impact on the service delivery process. The literature suggests that quality management is gaining momentum in the management of library services, the main focus being service delivery enhancement. According to Houlihan (2005) an academic library, by definition, exists within the context of the larger academic institution. Each of these institutions i.e. the academic body and the academic library, exerts influence over the other, either positively or negatively, for the status quo. This section delves into the relationship between various service parameters, such as the quality of human resources, service equipment/furniture, etc., and their influence on the service delivery process and consequently the level of customer satisfaction in academic libraries.

The various parameters are discussed and reviewed under the following headings within the chapter:

- Place of university libraries
- Service quality in academic libraries
- Human resources in academic libraries
- Importance of service personnel
- Human resources and their role in service delivery
- The pressures on service providers
- Motivation of service providers

- Technology application in academic libraries
- Role of technology in service delivery
- Service delivery in cyberspace
- Library outreach
- Training and development of information professionals
- Library building and infrastructure
- Information resources available to users
- Forms and types
- Summary

3.2 UNIVERSITY AND THE ROLE OF UNIVERSITY LIBRARIES

Higham (1980:9, citing Karl Jaspers) views a university as a “community of scholars and students engaged in the task of seeking truth”. The purpose of a university is to promote academic excellence through scholarship and research. As the highest institution assigned the responsibility of teaching, advancing knowledge, the enrichment of minds and training, it must be well endowed with all the facilities that enable it to do so.

All university activities, as pointed out by the Presidential Working Party in Kenya on the establishment of a second university (GoK: 1988:65), are meant to address and find solutions to societal, developmental, and emerging social-economic needs. The Presidential Working Party singled out one of the university's objectives as “to provide, through research and consultancy, knowledge, skills and services to the community by helping to solve problems facing the society”.

The place of research is therefore highly prioritised as its primary role is to generate sound and credible solutions to the various societal challenges. This makes the university an integral organ of the very community that it serves.

With regard to the status of the university, Gelfand (1971:17) observed that:

“[the] university today cannot be an isolated institution - not an island inaccessible from man. If it is to be of maximum service, it must be an integral and functioning part of the society which maintains it. It must acquire knowledge for the use and benefit of the people. The society looks upon its university for social, economic, political and academic development in all generations. This reflects the critical and central role expected to be played by the university by its society. It represents a major investment in the development of human resources”.

3.2.1. UNIVERSITY LIBRARIES: DEFINITION AND THEIR PLACE IN THE UNIVERSITY

The academic library is therefore expected to collect, organise, store and disseminate relevant and representative information resources in order to meet the information needs of its user community.

Oldman (1977:155) observed that “the purpose of a library is to stimulate and assist the critical thought process, not just to provide a backup material”. The university library collection is highly dynamic due to the diversity of user demands and research interests. Gelfand (1971:25) underscored this, stating that a university library: “... should be taken as a dynamic instrument of education. It should feed the intellect of the student, encourage the researchers of the faculties and invite all who enter its house to partake fully of its intellectual and cultural fare”.

The library in the university occupies a central and primary position because it serves all the functions of the university, and in its everyday services strives to interpret the objectives of the university. As the heart of the university, the library stands as an information resource centre. Leupp (1924) described it as “the heart of the University”, sentiments that were echoed by the 2nd president of India – “Library is the heart of an institution” made the presence of a library inevitable in all institutions and playing a very vital role in the learning process of an academic institution (Misbah, 2016).

According to Itsekor and Nwanne (2017) the library is not only expected to support the curriculum of the day in the institution, but also the reading requirements of learners and university staff. This clearly indicates that a university library is part of the educational apparatus of the organisation. In the university, research constitutes the basic function. In an institution, the library offers services to different hierarchies of users. In its efforts, the library should therefore strive to design services that meet the needs of each of the hierarchies, and offer new services to these users as they move from one hierarchy to the next.

The success and efficiency of all libraries depends on how they are treated by the parent institutions which are responsible for their establishment, maintenance and administration. A positive attitude towards the university library will certainly help it serve its varied clientele more effectively. In addition to students and members of the academic staff, the university library’s services are often extended to professionals, civil servants, university graduates, bona fide researchers, school students and members of university staff and their families, among others. In order to meet the needs of such a diverse user community, the library needs total financial and material support. The dependence of the library on its parent institution is so strong that its inefficiency can, to a large extent, be attributed to negligence by the university.

3.3. UNIVERSITY EDUCATION IN KENYA

Kenya's future as a prosperous and internationally competitive nation will depend on the quality of her university education system. As a nation, Kenyans will rely on this system to create a sustainable pool of highly trained human resource capital that will underpin their national ambitions of fully transforming into a knowledge-based economy. According to the Kenya National Bureau of Statistics (KNBS, 2018), the combined student enrolment in public universities and private accredited universities in Kenya in the academic years 2011/12–2017/2018 grew from 224,533 to 575,824, representing an impressive increase of 61%. Of importance here is that Kenya's university education system must be focused, efficient and able to create knowledge and deliver accessible, equitable, relevant and quality training. Important also is that the university libraries will and must have a crucial role to play in this; hence the need for high service quality standards.

3.3. 1 STATUS OF THE UNIVERSITY LIBRARY IN KENYA

The functions of the library need to be congruent with those of the university in order to support teaching, learning and research activities of the university and at the same time promote the intellectual, emotional, socio-economic and cultural development of the university community and the nation as a whole.

For this reason, the library should not only exist to support instructional efforts, but also to perform a variety of functions by way of helping students with textbooks, reference books and periodicals, and by providing a large number of bibliographic tools and up-to-date literature on every subject and research activity that is carried out in the institution.

The regulatory body of university education in Kenya, the Commission for University Education (CUE) has sweeping powers to monitor and regulate the operations of universities as well as inspect their facilities. The Commission has outlined the guidelines for university libraries (see Annex B) with the sole purpose of improving the quality of resources and services that they offer. All these different parameters as outlined in detail by the CUE guidelines serve to aid the uniform attainment of service quality standards by all the academic libraries irrespective of their size and nature of the University. According to the Commission for University Education, the library's primary role is to assist its users in the process of transforming information into knowledge (CUE, 2017b). The CUE is categorical stating that university libraries should be well equipped with information resources and in diverse formats. Equally important is that they should be well staffed with trained personnel who will be charged with the task of evaluating and acquiring the resources for the various programmes. The university is also obliged to set aside adequate human and financial resources to ensure that

library services can be accessed by all faculty members and students, regardless of their geographical location or the mode of delivery of their education. At the bare minimum, university libraries in Kenya therefore require the following (CUE, 2017b):

- Varied, authoritative, and up-to-date information resources to support the university's mission.
- Current and relevant academic resources for all academic programmes, which should include a wide collection of textbooks, journals, and reference and bibliographic resources. These should be in print, non-print and electronic formats.
- A phased ICT development plan, including a system to adopt, upgrades and maintain ICTs.
- A full range of current ICT hardware and software to facilitate the processing and retrieval of information.
- A wide range of quality services which should be promoted and maintained to aid the university with its academic and research pursuits.
- A library building for use by the university community as a quiet and convenient place for study and research.
- Appropriate, qualified and adequate staff.
- A reasonable, recurrent budget.

The library is expected to bring all possible information resources together and make them accessible with ease to its users. Currently libraries, and more so academic libraries, are actively involved in incorporating electronic information resources in a networked environment in order to provide much-needed primary research information.

Brophy (2005:57) in agreement noted that academic libraries are assembling a wide range of information resources in both print and non-print formats to achieve these goals. These resources include the computer and its associated peripherals aimed at increasing access to accurate, relevant, and up-to-date information from both immediate and remote databases. Horo (2006) too, in a study on electronic resources usage, found out that universities in Kenya have been affected by the changes that have swept across the country in recent years, such as changes in the university curriculum, which have seen the introduction of new degree programmes. All these changes have led to an increase in student enrolment, hence also library customers. This increase in the student population has had an impact on the already inadequate information resources in the libraries, thus resulting in the use of electronic information resources to supplement the print sources. According to Mbotela, (2018);

Chepkwony (2012) the new and emerging technologies have been entrenched in Kenyan universities with libraries, too, adapting to new and emerging technologies, and most university libraries automating their service processes (but at different levels). Salamatu, Ibrahim and Grema ((2021) advocates the use of ICTs in bridging the gap in the promotion and marketing of library information resources, which deserves attention and/or is poorly coordinated. Edewor *et al.* (2016) echoes similar sentiments and observes that the marketing of library information resources is marred by the absence of marketing plans, not knowing what to market, shortage of facilities and budgetary constraints.

Zinyeredzi and Zinn (2016) point out that the application of modern technologies such as the Web 2.0 in libraries to harness information is inevitable. Web 2.0 is the terminology referring to a variety of web sites and applications which facilitate online sharing of information or material they have created. According to Matingwina (2014), Web 2.0 technologies have created both opportunities and challenges for academic libraries. These socio-technological innovations have enabled interactivity and gathering of knowledge through experience and practice on a global scale. According to Zinyeredzi and Zinn (2016), a key element of the Web 2.0 technology is that it allows people to create, share, collaborate and communicate with ease. Some scholars have viewed it as a set of philosophies and practices that provide Web users with a deep and rich experience. Similarly, it is viewed as a set of applications and technologies that facilitate location of information and enhance online communication. This is further corroborated by the University of Cape Town noting that the emerging knowledge society, information and knowledge are the basis of economic development, thus the flow of information is critical for innovation, invention and knowledge creation (University of Cape Town [UCT], 2013). Karshorda and Waema (2014) in their E-readiness survey of Kenyan Universities, established that OPAC usage in libraries was still limited – the off-campus students being largely disadvantaged.

Thus the academic libraries need to effectively prepare for the future besides positioning themselves in their respective environments, by indicating that they understand their evolving status in the current learning and research environment.

3.4 LIBRARY STANDARDS IN KENYA

The regulatory body overseeing university education in Kenya (The Commission of University Education - CUE) has made it clear that very high standards ought to be achieved by all the institutions authorised to operate as universities in the country. These standards also attest to the quality of services that should be offered by the libraries. The current study sought to explore and establish the level of service satisfaction as evidenced by the customers of the university libraries in Kenya. These

standards serve as a guide on the minimum standards to be observed by the academic libraries thereby offer a uniform approach to the customers regardless of where they located.

According to the CUE (2017b), the university library (see **Annex B** for a detailed overview of the library standards, page 419) has to develop guidelines, such as policies or guides, for the assessment and achievement of its mission and objectives. Each university library is expected to meet set standards with respect to: information resources, ICT resources, the organisation of the resources, staffing, library services on offer, the library building, and the equipment/furniture. Further in terms of the human resources aspect **Annex C** details the minimum guidelines for each cadre of staff. This is for the purpose of ensuring that quality staff are engaged in the manning of the academic libraries to ensure quality service. These guidelines do inform the service quality aspects to focus on in the study. These parameters are discussed in the subsequent section in the chapter and will also inform the service quality aspects to assess in the assessment of the different academic libraries.

3.4.1 SERVICE QUALITY IN LIBRARIES

Increasing expectations of users have challenged libraries to improve the quality of their services. However, libraries, as observed by Asante (2014), are increasingly hampered by financial constraints, with library managers feeling more pressure to fully utilize the available resources and satisfy the increasing information needs of a rapidly growing patron base.

Owing to their different characteristics, library services require special approaches of quality management that go beyond the simple adoption of manufacturing techniques for a product. Libraries have developed numerous programmes to fulfil user requirements. In general, libraries mainly concentrate on maintaining administrative activities, building the collections, and serving users. Quality management as it relates to library functions can be viewed in three phases: before service, during service and after service.

Library services ultimately focus on satisfying the information needs of customers. Before services are provided, the technical services department should have the required books and information resources collected and validated to enhance their value to the customers. Therefore, the customer-oriented library should regard technical services as a resource development system to ensure that every customer has resources that are properly acquired, organised, displayed and/or accessed.

Having direct contact with customers, the public services department should be regarded as an information service delivery system. The focus here changes to providing information to customers accurately, promptly, and responsively with a view to helping customers solve problems, build the customers' knowledge, and ultimately enhance their productivity.

Administrative management should be regarded as the service support system that is necessary to coordinate and allocate resources as well as provide support for technical services and public services to satisfy customers' needs, and to periodically evaluate service performance and continuously improve service quality.

The functions of a library can therefore be broadly categorised as administrative management, technical services and public services:

- Administrative management defines the objectives of the library, allocates the resources in order to achieve the objectives, co-ordinates related activities, and assesses the performance of related services.
- Technical services largely focus on building the collections and making the collections more accessible to users. The activities of technical services include acquisition, information organization, and preservation.
- Public services serve the customers most directly. Related activities consist of circulation, reference and access services (Hsieh, Chang and Lu, 2000:192).

Quality management in libraries and information services continues to receive considerable attention, with much of the literature describing quality concepts, quality management principles, related processes, and limitations. Several studies have been conducted on quality issues, such as the following. Nguyen *et al.* (2015) in a study to examine the relationship between service quality and customer satisfaction in Vietnamese hotels, based on GAP(SERVQUAL) model from 432 guests of 33 three-star hotels in Vietnam in 2013, concluded that service quality plays an important role as a driver

for higher customer satisfaction level in hotel service. Mhlanga (2018) in a South African study whose purpose was to identify factors influencing hotel experiences for 424 domestic millennial tourists staying in hotels in Gauteng, South Africa, revealed that three factors, namely, 'tangibles', 'reliability' and 'responsiveness', significantly impacted on hotel experiences. Gathoni and Van der Walt (2019) in Kenya assessed the effectiveness and quality of libraries, while Balog, Jelusic and Matosic (2015) reported on library quality assurance in Croatia. From the perspective of library services, adopting quality programmes increases the effectiveness of the library and satisfies increasingly higher customer expectations.

Effectively implementing quality management in libraries and information services requires an understanding of the following:

- The unique characteristics of library operations
- The nature of interaction between librarians and customers

- The making of recommendations on the application of appropriate quality management concepts and techniques

Research indicates that in many cases the actions aimed at improvement in the university libraries do not produce the expected results. Financial constraints hinder them from realizing their goals in terms of service provision (Adebola-Wilson (2017). Thus libraries have been relegated to the periphery, which greatly undermines their efforts to improve the services offered. This, the researcher notes, results in some hopelessness among the users, who, due to continued poor service delivery, give up on the libraries and opt to use alternative information brokers. The image of academic libraries as storehouses of knowledge continues to wane.

Quality becomes an issue when libraries try to expand the scope of, and improve, their services. Orr (1973) associates quality with how good a service is, and not necessarily how large or extensive. The recipients of a service therefore must experience quality, which may also be a property of the service itself and the client, and not necessarily of the provider.

In the library, quality may be recognised by the customers in terms of how prompt, error free, and timely the service is. In fact, there has to be a marked shift from technical to customer orientation in the delivery of services. All libraries may provide the same type of service, but the delivery of that service will differ from place to place depending on its uniqueness. Pindlowa (2002) notes that the quality of academic libraries is tied to product and services among others; the quality in the content of a library is often treated as the quality of service. Hernon, Nitechi and Altman (1999) point out that service quality includes three areas: resources (information sources/contents), organisation (service environment and resource delivery), and service delivered by staff. Further, each of them is related to five elements (dimensions) of service quality defined by Parasuraman, Zeithanl and Berry (2005), namely: reliability, assurance, tangibility, empathy, and responsiveness. Brophy (2004) identified ten quality attributes applicable to library and information services, namely: performance (a library service meets its most basic purpose), features (aspect of the service appealed to users), reliability (including availability of the service), conformance (the service meets the agreed standard, including standards and protocols), durability (sustainability over a period of time), currency of information, serviceability (the level of help available to users), aesthetics and image (physical and web-based services), perceived quality (users' view of the service), usability (particularly relevant to the electronic services).

Quality can also be seen as relating to the fitness of a service or product to its intended purpose or use, subject to the expectations of the customer, user or the public. Quality, therefore, must conform

to the customers' requirements or needs. Earlier, Armstrong (1991) contended that the criteria of quality that customers ascribe to service include:

- Accessibility
- Responsiveness or timeliness
- Reliability or accuracy
- Up-to-dateness
- Relevance
- Security or non-threatening behaviour
- Friendliness and helpfulness
- Communication or ease of use

Thapisa and Gamini (1999:373-83) note that quality is a continuous process and the client is a key stakeholder in the entire process. Libraries must strive to offer quality service their clients else they will move to where they can get quality service. The focus of the service departments ought to be the identification of opportunities for service excellence and possible areas for improvement.

In actuality, real service quality is attained whenever customer expectations are exceeded.

The primary goal of any library, therefore, should be to maximise customer satisfaction and to exceed expectations. Librarians therefore need to:

- Be aware of the changing needs of their clients;
- Understand the nature of such needs; and,
- Realign their services to keep up with the changing needs (Millson-Martula and Menon, 1995).

Balog, Jelusic and Matosic (2015) in the Croatian study have emphasised the need to enact quality assurance measures in the academic libraries in order for the University to fully realise its mission and goals.

3.5 HUMAN RESOURCES IN ACADEMIC LIBRARIES

Human resources are an important vehicle through which services are delivered to the public. It is therefore important to ensure that there are enabling mechanisms through which officials can be systematically supported and held accountable in the fulfilment of their responsibilities (Public service Commission, 2009). The role of people has also changed, and compared to all other resources the human resources are the most important; they constitute a fundamental asset, meaning that they are the source of profitability and the drivers of sustained viability (Ismajli, 2015). The behaviour of the

service staff largely moulds the customers' perception regarding the organisation, and this has great direct and indirect effects on the revenue of the service firm.

3.5.1 IMPORTANCE OF SERVICE PERSONNEL TO CUSTOMER SATISFACTION

According to Bruhn and Georgi (2006):

- Satisfied employees are more motivated and willing to act in a firm's interest in their interactions with customers. This increases customer satisfaction and consequently organisational value.
- The high motivation of satisfied employees also strengthens their efficiency in the service process, resulting in cost reductions.
- Loyal employees keep customers loyal. In some industries (such as banks and insurance companies), customers are linked to the employee rather than to the service firms. Thus the departure of such employees may result in significant customer loss/exit.
- Employee loyalty reduces costs, as a high employee turnover means increased recruitment and training costs for the service provider.
- Human resource activities help to increase employee satisfaction (Hartline and Ferrell, 1996).

The strategic importance of service employees to a firm's success has been earlier expounded. Thus, the C.E.O of the Barclays bank PLC UK, banking division, as reported by the Financial Times, summed it up: "We all felt [that] we needed to do more to get customers back in the focus of the business ... and customers have pointed out a lack of personal attention and a lack of feeling valued' (Croft, 2004). This is a common occurrence in many firms where superior products or services are offered, but the human resource component is completely ignored. This is then transmitted to the customers (current and potential), with unhappy results, of course.

According to Beardwell and Claydon (2010), a stable workforce is advantageous to an organization, particularly because it reduces the costs of labour turnover. These costs may be particularly high where skilled labour is scarce and replacements are hard to find, or where employers have invested considerable amounts in the training of workers. Contact personnel in the service firm also play a crucial role in the creation of customer satisfaction. They are the face of the organisation. According to Hoffman and Bateson (2006), strategically placed service personnel are an important source of product differentiation in any firm.

It is, however, often challenging for a service organisation to differentiate itself from other, similar organisations in the benefits bundle that it offers or its delivery system. The only hope of a competitive

advantage therefore stems from the service level, in other words the way things are done. Some of this differentiation can come from staffing levels or the physical systems designed to support staff. Where the service personnel are good, i.e. competent and articulate, there is a higher degree of customer satisfaction which in turn translates into higher customer volumes and retention. In the airline sub-sector, for example, Hoffman and Bateson, (2006) allude to the fact that the deciding factor that distinguishes one airline from the next is the poise and attitude of its service providers. Kotler (2016) further stresses that other firms may hold a differential advantage over their competitors based on the calibre and competence of the service personnel.

The significance of this is best exemplified in the “Wall Street Journal Survey”, as quoted by Hoffman and Bateson (2006), where over 1000 customers had to voice their main complaints about service personnel. Some of their complaints included the following:

- Service personnel who say that they will show up at a particular time and fail to show up at all (40%)
- Poorly informed personnel (37%)
- Contact personnel who continue with their personal phone calls while they wait on the customer (25%)
- Personnel who pass customers off by saying “it’s not my department” (25%)
- Personnel who can’t explain how products work (16%)

In the book, *At America’s Service*, as quoted by Hoffman and Bateson (2006), service personnel behaviour that annoyed customers the most echoed similar themes. The behaviour has been classified into seven categories as listed below:

- Apathy
- Brush-off: attempts to get rid of the customer by dismissing the customer completely, “The ‘I want you to go away’” syndrome.
- Coldness: indifferent service providers who could not care less about what the customer wants.
- Condescension: the “you are the client/patient, so you must be stupid” approach.
- “Robotism”: where the customers are treated simply as inputs into a system that must be processed.
- Rulebook: providers who live by the rules of the organisation even when those rules do not make good sense.
- Run-around: passing the customer off to another provider.

Service personnel, on the other hand, often experience their own pressures and tensions with respect to customers, particularly in their role as 'boundary spanners'. Thompson (1967) defined 'boundary spanners' as the category of employees who link an organisation to the outside world. According to Zeithmal, Bitner and Gremler (2006), they are often the frontline service employees because they operate at the organisations' 'boundary lines', linking the customer and external environment to the organisation. They scan the environment and interpret information and resources to and from the organisation and its external constituencies. As boundary spanners, they perform the dual functions of interacting with both the firm's external environment and its internal organisation and structure. As such, boundary-spanning personnel have two main functions: information transfer and representation. They collect information from the external environment and feed it back into the organisation, and also communicate with the external environment on behalf of the organisation. Individuals who occupy boundary-spanning roles, according to Hoffman and Bateson (2006), can be classified along a continuum that ranges from subordinate service roles on the one end to professional service roles on the other. Therefore, at the one end there are the subordinate service roles that traditionally exist at the bottom of an organisation where the customers' purchase decision is entirely discretionary. At the other end of the continuum are the professionals. In between are the boundary - spanning staff and those who more often than not interact with the customers seeking service in an organisation. According to Zeithmal, Bitner and Gremler (2006), boundary spanners' skills and experience cover the full spectrum of jobs and careers. In certain industries, such as fast food, hotel and retail, they are the least skilled and lowest paid employees in the organisation and include telephone operators, receptionists, messengers, drivers and cleaners, while in other industries they are well paid and highly educated professionals such as lawyers, accountants, doctors and teachers. No matter what the level of skill or pay, boundary spanning positions are often highly stressful, frequently demanding an ability to handle interpersonal and inter-organisational conflict and calling on the employee to make real-time trade-offs between quality and productivity on the job. This stress and these trade-offs result in failure to deliver services as specified, hence widening Gap 3 (the service performance gap, discussed further in Chapter 2) of the service quality model (Parasuraman, Zeithaml, and Berry, 1990).

3.5.2 ORGANIZATIONAL PRESSURES FACED BY SERVICE PROVIDERS

Delivering services may very well be a rewarding, fulfilling and enjoyable task for some, but it can also be a daily struggle and at worst a nightmare for others. Johnson and Clarke (2008) suggest that service providers face two distinct but often equally difficult pressures: pressure from their managers

(organisational pressure), and pressure from their clients (customer pressure - see Figure 3.1 on page 81). The nature of the service task will present challenges to the employee, and some of the tasks will inherently lead to more stress than others. For example, library staff who have to handle information queries from a large number of users with scanty working tools will often suffer more stress. This is further aggravated when the parent organisation does not have the interests of the service providers at heart.

The service design, the design of processes, and the use of operational resources can have a significant impact on service employees. For example, library users who work from their offices may find that their trips to the library are reduced, but with the trade-off that they miss out on the support that they might receive from colleagues working from a designated area within the library.

With the adoption of technology, it is possible for library users to be served in virtual space. However, this may create other conflicts, as the employee must make a decision as to who is the most important: the customer on the telephone, the customer waiting online, or the visitor in front of them.

Virtually all organisations are setting increasingly demanding performance targets for their staff. Since these targets are aimed at performance improvement, they frequently create conflict. For example, the cataloguing section may require every cataloguer to work on at least sixty (60) titles, while maintaining service quality and the targets of both accuracy and speed. This may not always be possible, particularly when the demand for the information resources outstrips capacity. In this case a lot of the users' information needs will go unmet, ushering the service organisation into a 'coping zone'. According to Clark, Graham and James (1997), this is the point at which demand outstrips the supply of service delivery. Customers may perceive a drop in quality, as the service staff will be under increased pressure and will be less likely to offer personalised attention. Customers may have to wait longer in queues, and feel rushed and under pressure not to ask too much of overly busy and stressed staff. Under such circumstances, there is also an increased likelihood of some items/services being removed from the service list.

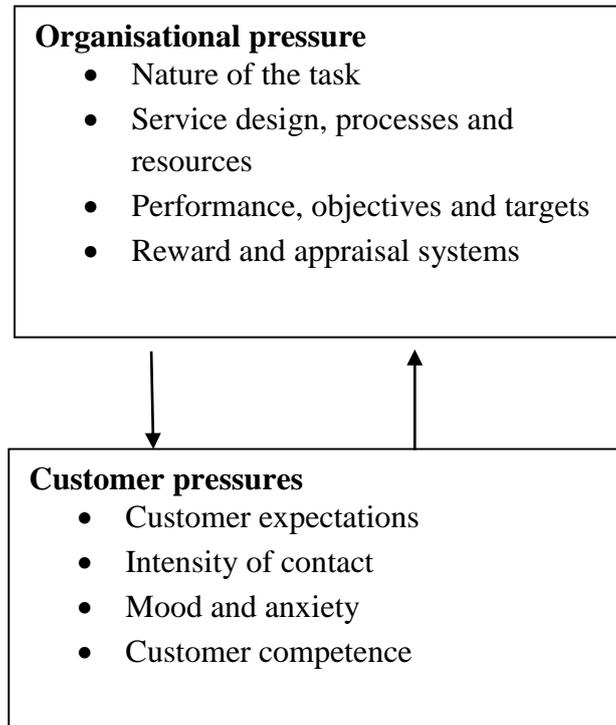


Fig.3.1 Organisational pressures faced by service providers

Since the 1980s, it has been argued that work pressure has been increasing on two fronts, the first being from the managers/supervisors who have been putting workers (and each other) under greater pressure to perform and work for longer hours, and the second being the intensification of work, meaning that workers are being made to work harder during their working hours (Beardwell and Claydon, 2010). These two fronts result in further organisational pressure on the service personnel.

In a UK survey, Green (2005:54) revealed that during the 1990s, workers had to work faster to cope with their workload and were also working under a great deal of tension. The proportion of workers reporting that they worked at very high speed all the time or almost all the time rose from 17.3% in

1992 to 26.5% in 2001, and the proportion agreeing or strongly agreeing that they worked under a great deal of tension rose from 48.4% to 58.4% over the same period. Green (2005:156) observed that the workers found it difficult to unwind after work, and that they kept worrying about work problems after work hours and felt “used up at the end of a workday”. This level of stress is likely to affect work performance. The situation in academic libraries is likely similar, especially in the light of the highlighted factors, i.e.: large number of clients, service design issues and technology, performance targets (which may at times be unrealistic), and work pressure (internal and external).

3.5.2.1 CUSTOMER PRESSURES

According to Johnson and Clark (2008), customers owing to their expectations may pressurize the service providers. This pressure may be arising from a multiplicity of factors. Key issues highlighted by Johnson and Clark (2008) for service employees are as a result of the following:

- Constant presence of customers in high contact services. Frontline staff are constantly on show and therefore cannot relax. In a library setup, staff in high contact areas (e.g. the information desk, circulation section or the multimedia section) who attend to a large number of users and assist users with access to online information, will certainly not have time to relax, owing to customer demands. This exerts pressure on the employee.
- Customers like to think that the service transaction they receive is especially for them. But for the service employee, it is likely to be just one of many that they offer to hundreds of clients. In a bid to make them (customers) feel special, the service providers often have to go the extra mile, which is bound to generate more pressure.
- Customers may have expectations of the service beyond the current design specification. This is often based on their experiences from other service providers elsewhere. The customers will thus demand equivalent, if not better services. The current service provider will be under great pressure to improve and/or provide such services, regardless of the work environment.
- Some customers may have totally unrealistic expectations of service delivery by, for instance, demanding items that cannot be found in that particular service point, such as e-books or e-journals when the Internet connectivity is poor, or request a multiplicity of services which may be limited by budgetary constraints.
- The intensity of the service encounter may contribute to pressure on the service personnel. It is likely that the average customer at the library check-out desk is less

demanding than one requiring training on information retrieval/search techniques. The mood of the customer is also clearly a major factor in the equation. Likewise, the competence of the customer may have a major impact on the service provider. While regular and older library patrons may know the various steps to take to locate the information resources they need, the new users will definitely slow up the process because they do not know what to do, and will definitely ask more questions to get more clarification.

- There is also a category of customers who pose yet more challenges to the service provider—the customers who think they know what to do but in reality do not and may cause significant disruption as a result. In a library set-up, there are users who will opt to go straight to the shelves and browse for what they need rather than first checking the catalogue to identify what they actually require. The resultant effect is the total disorganisation of the library's collections.

These pressures, if not checked, can and will have an adverse impact on the employees' performance, which in turn will impact on service delivery.

Customer pressures on the service provider may lead to feelings of frustration, de-motivation, lack of control and stress. These can have serious consequences for the organisation, the service provider and the customer. For the organisation, this can mean increased costs to cover for absenteeism, high attrition rates, and poor industrial relations. For the service provider, it can mean low morale, ill health, psychological damage, and of course, poor service delivery. Bowen and Johnson (1999) observed that one common manifestation of stress, whether organisation-induced and/or customer-induced, is when the service employee just sinks into "learned helplessness". The employees no longer care nor have concern for their clients. Johnson and Clark (2008) found that a poor working environment induces employees to display passive, maladaptive behaviors, for example to act immaturely, uncreatively and passively, and to be unhelpful to customers and managers. They conclude that this learned helplessness can be so deeply ingrained that the passive maladaptive behavior may continue even when changes are made much later. The outcome of this, from the customer's point of view, is poor service from unhelpful and uninterested staff.

3.5.3 MANAGING AND MOTIVATING SERVICE PROVIDERS

Service staff needs to be motivated in order to perform and to deliver optimum service. Ambani (2016) suggest that employee involvement is one approach towards improving quality and productivity. However, employee involvement is not a replacement for management, nor is it the final

word in quality and productivity across all levels of an organisation. While management teams assume that good pay is the number one factor in staff motivation, a survey by Kovach (1995) revealed that this usually ranked in the middle of a list of factors such as: involvement, sharing of goals, establishment of a positive attitude, celebrating individual employee success, and effective communication.

Staff motivation goes hand in hand with staff welfare. Staff welfare is a corporate attitude or commitment reflected in the expressed care for employees at all levels, underpinning their work and the environment in which it is performed (Chatterjee, Wadhwa and Patel, 2018). While there are some scholarly works on staff welfare and productivity (Daddie et al., 2018), these have mostly dwelt on the industrial sector to the neglect of service organisations typified in government ministries and parastatals. It can, however, be argued that poor performance is a function of both the ineptitude of the management team and depressed staff morale owing to neglected welfare of staff. In this regard, it is important to assess the level of staff welfare as they serve customers in the libraries.

Binsaeed, Unnisa and Rizvi (2017) also note that quality management has ‘hard’ and ‘soft’ sides that need to be addressed when motivating employees. The former may involve a range of tools, including basic quality management approaches. The soft side, on the other hand, lays emphasis on the management of human resources. As stated earlier, a well-trained and motivated ‘quality’ workforce is more likely to contribute to organisational success and to deliver exemplary service. Service operation managers must therefore employ a range of approaches to help service providers’ deal with the negative aspects of being between the opposing organisational and customer-generated pressures. These approaches for managing and motivating service providers, according to Dale, Wiele and Iwaarden (2009), include:

- Providing inspirational leadership
- Harnessing the power of teams and teamwork across the organisation
- Clarifying the roles of service providers
- Using scripts appropriately
- Defining and enabling appropriate levels of employee discretion
- Establishing effective communication to employees
- Involving employees in performance improvement
- Encouraging ownership of customers and process

Applying these approaches and protecting employees from some of the pressures can lead to:

- Inspired and involved employees
- Responsive and responsible employees

- Process and customer ownership by the employee
- Employee commitment and retention
- Enjoyable work by the employees
- Effective and efficient delivery systems and business environment

This ultimately translates into satisfied customers.

Employee involvement is optimised by the use of teams. While teams are not a panacea for solving all quality and productivity problems, in most instances they are effective. Teamwork should therefore be promoted. In this regard, Huq (2017) in support of empowering employees argues that this empowers them in decision-making; this is associated with higher satisfaction levels and may also lead to the adoption of better decisions. Hill and Huq (2004) stated that there is evidence that employees welcome the opportunity to have more discretion and responsibility for decision-making within their own service roles. This motivates them to perform their roles more diligently.

In summary therefore, Johnson and Clark (2008) observe that service employees constitute an integral component in the service delivery process because:

- *They are the service.* Investing in the employee improves the service, parallels making a direct investment in the improvement of a manufactured product
- *They are the organisation in the customers' eyes.* They represent the organisation, thus their actions have an impact on customers
- *They are the brand.* Customers view the service organisation as good if the employees that the customer interacts with are knowledgeable, understanding, and concerned about their welfare.
- *They are marketers.* They physically embody the product and are walking billboards from a promotional standpoint. They can perform this function to the firms' advantage or to its detriment.

Research shows that satisfied employees make for satisfied customers, and satisfied customers can, in turn, reinforce employees' sense of satisfaction in their jobs (Barween, Muhammad, and Ahmad, 2020). Furthermore, Schneider and Bowen (1993) have shown that employee satisfaction and a climate for well-being correlate highly with overall customer perceptions of service quality and employee satisfaction has a positive impact (Shmailan, 2016) on service delivery. Other studies (Unutmaz, 2014; Shmailan, 2016) suggest that if employees feel that they are treated fairly by their organization, they will treat customers better, resulting in greater satisfaction.

3.5.4. ATTRIBUTES OF GOOD SERVICE /PERSONNEL

Since the human element is so crucial in service delivery, it is important to identify the key personnel attributes that will attract customers. Thus, Sangeetha and Mahalingam's (2011:85) study on "Service quality attributes from customers' perspectives" based on five different service sectors, namely physician services, retail banking, auto maintenance, colleges/universities and fast food restaurants, identified the following as the top six attributes for good service quality:

- Knowledge of the service
- Thoroughness/accuracy
- Consistency/reliability
- Reasonable cost
- Willingness to correct errors
- Timely /prompt service

Customers will look for these attributes, and express dissatisfaction with the service delivery process if they are not provided. These have been dealt with in greater detail in Chapter 2 section 2.6.2.

3.6. TECHNOLOGY AND SERVICE QUALITY

There are many reasons organisations or individual workers may be reluctant to engage with technology. Fear of the unknown or a risk-averse organisational culture may lead to the lack of uptake of technology. Workers may feel they do not have the skills required to use the technology or may lack an understanding of how their clients use it (Stephens-Reicher, *et. al.* 2011). Knight and Hunter (2013) agree that organisations may fail to use technologies owing to a lack of awareness of what technologies are available and how they may best be used to improve services and client outcomes. Abubakar (2015, citing Blackwell, 2011) notes that technology has transformed communication, thereby making it more and more pervasive, with the advances in computer and telephone technology creating an explosion in the ways we can reach each other: by fax, cell phone, e-mail, text message, blog, LinkedIn and Facebook.

In their study, Meuter *et al.* (2000) while focusing on self-service technologies in the U.S.A sought to understand the customer satisfaction levels from their self-service encounters. It was evident that there were varying levels of dissatisfaction depending on the technology interface. Meuter *et al.* (2003) found that the willingness of the customers to use and adapt to newer technologies does affect their perceptions of service quality, and the level of technology anxiety.

Parasuraman (2000) used *the technology readiness index* to measure the service quality in technology-enabled services. He and others (Parasuraman *et al.* 2005) later developed a scale on the basis of four dimensions:

- Efficiency
- Fulfilment
- System availability
- Privacy to assess /gauge the electronic service quality (E-S-QUAL)

Parasuraman *et al.* (2005), taking into account responsiveness, compensation and contact, went on to develop a scale for electronic service recovery quality (E-RecS-QUAL). Parasuraman and Colby (2015) in support of technology application view it as a useful customer segmentation tool. Service recovery is critical since it affects the service quality perception of customers, especially in technology-based services. Curran and Meuter (2005), on the other hand, established that the customer's perception of service quality is dependent upon the type of self-service technology (SST) in place.

Breidbach and Maghio (2015) are of the view that the influence of ICT is enormous within the service industry. Seric, Saura and Pranicevi (2016) concur, observing that along with this increased interest in the latest technology solutions, the development of brand equity has received considerable attention within the field of services. Brand equity is considered to be the incremental value that customers add to a product because of its brand.

Other studies (Memia,2014) have indicated that new technologies have empowered customers to actively participate in service innovation. Thus, ICT adoption is found to have had a significant positive correlation with performance, measured in terms of operational productivity and customer satisfaction (Yogesh, K. D, et.al. ,2021) and other competitive factors, such as differentiation, quality, or image (Mihalič and Buhalis, 2013).

On the other hand, those who revealed insignificant or negative effects of ICT found that service companies were not implementing technology strategically, suggesting that it has become more of a necessity rather than something that provides a firm with a competitive advantage (Lee and Connolly, 2010). They conclude that these factors do affect the customers' decision to try out and adopt new technologies. Jafari (2014) established that there is a positive correlation between the level of implemented technology and profitability/cost savings, while Özbek (2015) also revealed that perceived risk has a negative impact on the behavioural intention to adopt technology, and trust has a negative impact on perceived risk.

According to Fatmir, et al. (2019), technological advancement is commonly accompanied by real cost reduction in the production process. With technological adoption comes: (a) A reduction in operational costs (the cost advantage); and (b) Facilitating more efficient transactions among customers, especially those within the same network (the network effect). Rajput and Gupta (2011) cite efficiency gains resulting from technological innovations and investment in IT in the banking sector.

3.6.1 TECHNOLOGY APPLICATION IN ACADEMIC LIBRARIES FOR SERVICE DELIVERY

The use of ICTs in the library is defined by the American Library Association (1993) as: “the application of computers and other technology in the acquisition, organisation, storage, retrieval and dissemination of information”. From one industry to another, competition is stimulating innovation, especially through the application of new and improved technologies. Competition occurs not only between firms within the same industry, but also among firms from other industries that can offer new solutions to customers through alternative approaches (Johnson and Gustafsson, 2003). Services are processes that are characterised by both simultaneity and intangibility. They are also rich in terms of information exchange. They are therefore highly affected by developments related to technology. Technology adoption at various levels in any organisation leads to enhanced customer service. It has become the core part of the functionality of most modern and successful enterprises. Having realised this, industries, in a bid to survive in the market, have tried to embrace technology in their innovation, creativity of products and services, as well as the channels by which to deliver them. According to Vandana and Neha (2015), the competitive challenges forced upon the banking and financial sectors have, for instance, led to a change in the delivery channels of their products and services. They point out that globally the rapid advancement in Information and Communication Technology (ICT) has been reflected in the banks’ business strategies, customer services, and organisational structures. Innovative adoption in the form of Internet banking, new generation ATMs, and mobile applications, has had a profound impact on the delivery channels of financial products and services. These innovative developments have also greatly affected the retail payment market by influencing users in their choice of payment instruments and by significantly reshaping the payment processes. IT has also helped in profoundly increasing the speed and efficiency of operations, thereby facilitating the emergence of even more innovative products and delivery channels. Technology now enables the customers to “help themselves”, for instance through PC/Internet banking, ATM banking, and

telephone banking. It also enables institutions to fine tune their marketing strategies to focus on the right targets for the right products at the right time.

In their study on internet use in library functions and services, Prayangi and Gopakumar (2019) reported that the Internet has revolutionized library operations and service delivery and at the same brought in efficiency. Oberiri and Iyendo (2018) found that it (the Internet) is used in meeting users' research needs. Like most service institutions, academic libraries therefore need to engage in the aggressive marketing of their products and services (Joshua and Daksiri, 2020). Provision of current awareness services to an ICT-driven target market requires dynamic, innovative, timely and adequate communication technologies. As more users access electronic resources through the library websites, the opportunities for in-house publicity, instruction guides, and person-to-person contact at the reference or issue desk are declining. The digital library that is evolving needs a philosophy that involves the proactive management of relationships with users through appropriate technologies.

From a marketing communications perspective, the challenge to most libraries is to attract users to the library, and more importantly, to retain them. Olayinka, (citing Ekpenyong, 2003) argues that if librarians wish to remain relevant, they must focus on the information provider/user relationship. Communication and interaction are generally an important component of the process of relationship building. Popoola (2008) agrees that the university library system must ensure a closer relationship with its library clientele. Yi (2016) point out that websites could be used to publicise and disseminate the library's services to users, and Online Public Access Catalogues (OPAC) is available to facilitate searching and identifying relevant material. These would serve to support all library-to-user, user-to-library and user-to-user online interaction. However, with the Internet connectivity constraints in most African states, these known communication options in online interaction are not easily deployed. Hence libraries, like many other institutions, have to look inwards at the already established facilities and infrastructure with a view to making libraries more attractive or accessible to their customers. This is now happening through technology adoption in their operations. Technologies such as the Web 2.0 are Internet based thus allowing sharing of information and more interaction among the different user groups. Bawack, (2019) submits that the emergence of and adoption of IT has put the academic libraries in Cameroon into a crisis, forcing them to move from one paradigm shift to another and cope with the digital information revolution. This technology has reshaped the tertiary educational practice in terms of improving academic learning (Apuke and Iyendo, 2017), academic libraries included, forcing them to adapt to their changing environments and to manage change effectively, largely through technology adoption and infusion. Lwoga (2014) notes that students preferred the adoption of Web 2.0 technologies in libraries, while in a Pakistani study on the

awareness and use of Web2.0 technologies, Hussein (2018) found that librarians were quite aware of the Web 2.0 technologies, using them for communication, teaching, entertainment and research but that extensive usage was hampered by a myriad of factors such as lack of professional skills, internet speed and contents for the users.

High awareness levels were also established among the library and information science (LIS) students in several LIS schools in Nigeria, having learnt them from friends and self-instruction and using them for communication with friends. Ilako and Ikoja-Odongo (2011) in a Ugandan study found that there has been gradual progress in technology adoption, with Makerere University taking the lead. In their study of Nigerian universities, Eze (2016) concluded that the effective adoption of ICT in academic libraries in Nigeria would accelerate the level of knowledge acquisition and consequently improve national development.

Makori and Mauti (2016) are of the view that these new technologies do provide seamless access to learning, information and knowledge globally; this partly explaining their increased penetration and usage in academic institutions and information organisations. They are useful in today's technological environment, offering lots of benefits to universities and academic libraries aspiring to broaden their frontiers in academic scholarship research, information and knowledge exchange but the process is hindered by the lack of physical facilities and resources.

Ani, Esin and Edem (2005:706), in their study on the "Adoption of information and communication technology (ICT) in academic libraries", found that among the major factors militating against the effective adoption of ICT in many African university libraries, were:

- Inadequate funds, hence lack of equipment
- Lack of trained personnel on IT
- Frequent power outages
- Lack of awareness of IT's potential by users
- Poor attitude of staff towards library automation
- Negative attitude of university management on IT, and these same factors are still valid today.

Onobrakpeya, Nana, Ekene (2018) in a Nigerian study observed that:

- Technical challenges in the use of ICTs centered on the lack of sustaining infrastructures such as an erratic electricity supply. Other identified setbacks that can have an effect on firms in the application of ICT can be grouped as psychological and behavioral, consisting of security, access to computers, consumer awareness, reluctance to change, the cost of adoption, and preference for personalised services.

- The setback that faces workers is how to manage their extents of ICT connectivity to avoid disruptions in workers' workflow and ensure high performance. Increased flexibility enabled by ICTs increases the productivity of employees; that flexibility facilitates long work hours and as a result, higher stress. ICT connectivity can create both positive and negative consequences, which in turn has an effect on an individual 's work productivity. However, high levels of information created by the use of ICTs can increase job burnout and stress and thus deter individual work productivity.

Studies on ICT usage revealed that such as (Afolabi and Abidoeye (2013; Anunobi and Edoka's,2010; Atulomah (2010); Anonubi and Ogbo (2011:1266; Islam and Islam (2007) there is generally low application of ICTs in library activities.

All this is happening in spite of the enormous gains of technology adoption. This state of inadequacy is prevalent in most African universities.

These findings are corroborated by the INASP/KLISC Survey on the use of e-resources carried out in Kenyan academic libraries. The survey (INASP/KLISC, 2011) found that major challenges in the usage of e-resources included:

- Lack of access to computers
- Poor connectivity
- Lack of awareness of the resources
- Poor Internet speeds
- Poor and/or inadequate searching skills
- Frequent power surges
- Off-campus access

Studies by Onunga (2021); Vera and Ufuoma (2021) points out that there is however an increasing application of ICT tools in academic libraries due to the development of technologies including the mobile telephony allowing virtual library access at any time anywhere.

Academic libraries need to keep abreast of the dynamically changing needs of their clientele and promote user-centred services. However, even with all the emphasis on technology in service delivery, it is important to note that new technology may not be readily accepted and effectively used unless there are consistent changes in work roles, attitudes, and skills levels.

New technologies have had a profound impact on the operation of libraries. The Internet, for example, is increasingly being used in library and information services for the acquisition, processing and dissemination of information, and is also facilitating communication online. Studies on Web 2.0

technologies application in libraries such as Williams (2020); Cao (2009), identified the following values to their libraries and their services:

- increased library's relevance to users;
- improved library's image;
- allowed rich, interactive, timely, convenient services so as to improve service level and quality, and broaden range of services;
- increased users' participation, and increased interactions and communication with users;
- broadened librarians' perspective, and facilitated obtaining users' feedback and following readers' interest trends;
- drew on collective knowledge to better serve users;
- improved librarians' inter-departmental communication and expedited information dissemination to the users;
- facilitated instant problem-solving with the benefit of traceable services; and
- Improved knowledge sharing and collaboration.

In summary therefore, technology is helping to boost innovation and competition. This is a pointer to the rising uptake of technological applications today unlike the yester years. It is also indicative of the changing nature of today's library users who are more technology savvy. This is healthy as it leads to improved service delivery.

3.6.2 BENEFITS OF TECHNOLOGY USE IN ACADEMIC LIBRARY SERVICE

The evolution, development and advances in modern ICTs have brought about a new, dramatic and unprecedented era in the library profession and practice. Libraries must prioritise ICT if they are to continue to providing information to the public and to remain the main point of access for researchers. On the application of technology, Rosenberg (1998:12) long ago made the following observation, which is still valid. She remarked that:

... Any library shunning the introduction of I.T. is imperiling its own survival; not to acquire the new technologies would only marginalise the {libraries} Africa even further from the mainstream of intellectual and scholarly life. But alone it cannot provide any solution to the current decline of the African university library. I.T. is not the whole answer (for) however good I.T. is, it can never replace the need for acquiring and maintaining a basic book and journal collection.

Even as libraries place emphasis on IT adoption, other factors, such as the calibre of human resources, the state of the library information resources, and the ambience of the library building,

cannot be wished away. All these factors impact on the quality of service delivery, and also have a major bearing on customer satisfaction. Williams (2020); Rasul and Sahu (2011) have reiterated the value of the modern technology, noting that it has greatly improved the capabilities of managing this explosive growth of information effectively. Information technologies today are characterised by their very dynamic development and increasing complexity. Information technology application in the library and information field has made remarkable progress in the world and it also affects not only the technical services of libraries but also greatly shapes the library services.

According to Onunga (2021), the application of technology in service delivery in the library may result in:

- Library management –encomapssing classification, cataloging, indexing, database creation, and database indexing activities.
- A digital library –This is an assembly of digital computing, storage and communication machinery together with the content and software needed to reproduce, emulate and extend the services provided by conventional libraries based on paper and other material means of colleting, cataloging, finding and disseminating information. A full-service digital library must accomplish all essential services of traditional libraries and also exploit the well-known advantage of digital storage, searching and communication. It provides access to part of or all its collection, such as plain texts, images, graphics, audio and video materials and other library items that have been electronically converted, via the Internet and www.
- Library automation (reducing the human intervention in all the library services so that any user can receive the desired information with the maximum comfort and at the lowest cost).
- Library networking (a group of libraries and information centers are interconnected for some common pattern or design for information exchange and communication with a view to improve efficiency).
- ICT-based user services (some library users are adopting electronic habits, making increasing use of the new ICT including computers, the Internet, the Web, Intranet, Extranet and other technologies. As a result, library users are placing new demands on their libraries). They require access to the latest information, updated information resources and access to ICT facilities that they could use in their work.
- Use of ICT in libraries enhances user satisfaction. It provides numerous benefits to library users.
- Provide speedy and easy access to information;
- Provides remote access to users;

- Provides round the clock access to users;
- Provides access to unlimited information from different sources;
- Provides information flexibility to be used by any individual according to his/her requirements provides increased flexibility;
- Facilitates the reformatting and combining of data from different sources.
- Opportunities for building brands as the customers get an impression of the organisation from its website.
- Giving perceived control to customers. Customers can browse the websites at their own discretion, deciding what goods/services to buy.
- Making information available to customers.
- Websites allow the organisation to make vast amounts of information available to both current and potential customers.

Libraries are on the otherhand striving to provide various ICT-based services to their users, including but not limited to the following:

- Provision of Web access to OPACs;
- Electronic document delivery especially to the remote users;
- Networked information resources;
- Delivery of information to user desktops;
- Online instructions;
- Online reader's advisory services.

3.7. INFORMATION RESOURCES

As previously stated, the aim of any university library is to support the teaching, learning and research activities of its parent institution. In this regard, Onifade, Ogbuiyi and Omeluzor (2013) in their study on the utilisation of library resources by postgraduate students in Nigerian universities, observed that the university library must therefore ensure that its resources are well and fully utilised as this is essential for the educational development of the students. Similarly, Olajide and Adio (2018) in a study on the effective utilisation of university library resources by undergraduate students in Nigeria, stressed that although libraries exist to enhance the acquisition of knowledge by their clientele, they suffer from a lack of many informational resources and are thus not well utilised.

In their Nigerian study on the availability of library facilities and the job performance of university library staff, Ajegbomogun and Diyaolu (2018) observed that there was poor access to information

resources due to a variety of factors, such as a lack of adequate library guides, administrative and physical barriers, and a lack of adequate retrieval tools to access information from electronic sources. Amir, Naveed, and Zia (2015); Tiemo and Ateboh (2016); Iwhiwhu and Okorodudu's (2012) studies on users' satisfaction with library information resources and services established areas of dissatisfaction with the resources and services offered including insufficient library facilities generally, ICT facilities such as the Internet, computers, photocopiers, fans, and air conditioners, which marred users' levels of satisfaction.

The International Federation of Library Associations (IFLA) (2001) suggested that academic librarians need to work assiduously to provide satisfactory information to their end users. The minimum standard of facilities that a library should provide, as first proposed by IFLA (2001), and reiterated by Kulkarni and Deshpande (2012) in their presentation to the 78th IFLA General Assembly Conference include:

- Adequate reading tables and chairs to accommodate the different types of users
- Bookshelves
- Library space
- Fans
- Lighting
- Ventilation, location of the exit points, notice board/bulletin
- Photocopy facilities
- Car parking spaces
- Computers
- Study carrels
- Periodical racks
- Circulation desks and other facilities that would ensure user comfort

Olajide and Adio (2018) rightly noted that adequate library resources and services for the academic programmes on offer should be readily available to support the intellectual, cultural, and technical development of the university community. With the growth of research in diverse fields becoming increasingly detailed and complicated, the university community has realised that the library plays a major part in the provision of requisite information. Thus, the value of the library collection is dependent not only on the quantity of information sources available but also on the quality of the same in terms of currency and the breadth of the subject coverage. In a study on the impact of digital technologies in Greece, Adamou and Ntoka (2017:17) observed that:

[Though] ... dissemination of knowledge has always been one of academic libraries primary goals as long as they have served as learning institutions, cultural repositories and research centers but in this digital age of knowledge, they have to expand these roles and stop being passive repositories for printed material. To the contrary, academic libraries should upgrade their services and providing education of high quality by storing resources in various forms and maintaining easily accessible for online use among academic community ...

In support of this, Quadri, Adetimirin and Idowu (2014) in a Nigerian study on the availability and utilisation of library electronic resources by undergraduate students observed that university undergraduates, for instance, need information to satisfy their social and psychological needs beside fulfilling their academic pursuits. This is in contrast to the postgraduate students whose ability to use the available resources is critical as Igun and Adogbeji (2007), revealed that their main purpose of using the library being to update their knowledge and skills. However, Agboola, Bamigboye, and Owolabi (2019) identified areas of dissatisfaction among postgraduate users with regard to the accessibility to electronic databases, handling of user information needs, timely and prompt provision of information to users and the packaging of information to the users. This underscores the need to understand the interests of the users and the users themselves (i.e user profiles) in order to serve them adequately.

According to Omotundes *et al.* (2014) in their study on the utilisation of library resources among postgraduate Nigerian scholars for effective research output, emphasised that universities need to generate new knowledge and also to encourage the transfer and adoption of innovations. According Maina,et.al (2017) the quality of information resources impacts on their usage while, according to Ugah (2011) the size of information sources affects the use of library services. Hence Daramola (2016), in her Nigerian study on the utilisation of electronic resources further observes that with the basic functions of any university being to conserve the existing knowledge, to transmit knowledge through teaching, and to create new knowledge through research, the university library then assumes the role of being the university's vital agency in the conservation of knowledge. It achieves this through its rational, systematic and comprehensive acquisition of all types of human communications and records, be they published or unpublished, written or oral, that embody the ideas of knowledge of the past, since each new idea or invention grows out of accumulated and conserved knowledge. This implies that academic libraries must be zealous in information acquisition as well. Cumaoglu, Saçici, Torun (2012) in a Turkish study advocated a balance in the acquisition of information resources (i.e. both print and e-resources), noting that there is a significant relationship between social environment and reading, as Szalacsi (2012) in a Hungarian study found that most university students

don't often read electronic books, as they prefer the printed versions. Similarly, Knight (2013), in a North Caribbean study, concurs that the provision of e-library resources has increased overall usage of library materials as patrons continue to use print resources in tandem with electronic versions; with Stoop and Kircz (2012) concluding that in a study situation, electronic reading can only beat reading from paper when it offers real added value.

3.7.1 LIBRARY'S ELECTRONIC RESOURCES

E-resources are information resources made available via electronic means, i.e. technology is applied to facilitate their acquisition, retrieval and usage. E-resources constitute an integral part of the library's resources. Yogesh,et.al. (2021; Habiba and Chowdhury (2012) assert that electronic resources have revolutionised library operations, and thus it is now possible to provide better and faster user services in a much more convenient way. According to Adamou and Ntoka (2017), e-resources are largely utilised for their learning purposes, but their usage is hampered by a range of challenges, most notably the lack of infrastructural facilities, lack of training programmes for users, inadequately trained professionals with ICT skills, limited budgets, and low Internet bandwidth. Despite these setbacks, libraries are keen to digitise their information resources. Osaheni, Abu and Ekeniyere (2018), in their study on library digitisation recognise the advantages of digitisation as:

- Preservation of endangered library resources
- Efficiency of information search mechanisms
- Improvement of access to library resources

Mauyra (2011) further cites the usefulness of digitised information resources in:

- Satisfying the new generation's needs
- Cost reduction, especially in terms of space
- The preservation of the of the environment

Pandey and Mishra (2014:137) conclude that "academic libraries are digitising materials because they know the continuing value of library resources for learning, teaching, research, scholarship, documentation, and public accountability". Digitisation, however, is a costly undertaking that requires massive capital investment. Yebowaah and Plockey (2017) suggest that the budget for e-resources ought to be adequate to facilitate subscription to more electronic resources. Without an adequate budget, the library will not be able to cover all subjects' content. Shabankareh et al. (2019) identifies technology such as Web 2.0 technology as one of the most important facilitators in higher education

and especially libraries and particularly to aid users in gaining access to lots of information sources as the libraries writhe under budget cuts.

3.8 UNIVERSITY LIBRARY BUILDINGS AND RELATED INFRASTRUCTURE

University libraries ought to be developed as the centres of intellectual activity. Efforts should therefore be made to equip the library with diverse resources and equipment in order to facilitate academic excellence. The university library's key role is to support the university in the realisation of its academic goals. For this purpose, the library should offer a conducive environment for intellectual activities. In terms of infrastructure, this requires a proper building, furniture, and equipment. Banerja (1964) in Kaula, (1971) emphasises that in the planning and construction of any new library building the librarians' should be consulted so as to capture their views as the users of the building, and that the library building should be planned from a functional point of view. In other words, the planning authorities ought to have a clear concept of the various functions of the library building.

The library is a growing organism that envelops all areas of service and resources, i.e. staff, collections, and buildings. The space requirement remains a primary construct of the library, and the space usage is largely dependent on the range of services on offer by the library. In the words of Canty (1963), in Kaula 1971):

*... The architect stands somewhere in the midst of a diamond. The four corners of the diamond are **aesthetics** (what the building should look and feel like), **technology** (how it can be built and its interior environment controlled), **economics** (the limitations of the budget), and **function** (what the building is to do). Each corner exerts a magnetic force on the architect, and his outlook depends largely on his response to the tugs of one over the other ...*

The famous Indian Librarian Professor P.N. Kaula (1971) outlined the guiding criteria for a good library building as discussed here below:

- **Function**

The library has its own nature, and the building will be dictated by its various functions; more functional activities lead to more efficient services.

- **Maximum service**

As the library strives to serve its customer base with better facilities and as this base grows in number, it is the library building that will enable it to realise its goals and give optimum service to its clientele.

Thus a well-planned library building should be equipped with all the appliances, equipment and furniture that are critical for the smooth delivery of library services.

- **Conserve reading material**

Libraries acquire information materials and house them systematically so that readers can get their books easily and without losing time. These materials are organised and made available for use according to the needs of the users.

- **Specialisation**

The information professionals assist customers with access to the special services available. The organisation of the library building also aids in the provision of special services, such that general services don't interfere with specialized activities.

- **Departmentalisation**

Quicker and more accurate provision of library work and services are enabled when the library is divided according to various departments. The library building becomes more helpful and effective if it is built with proper planning.

3.9 LIBRARY OUTREACH

Dennis (2012) defines outreach as "... reaching out to non-traditional library users, extending beyond borders of a physical library and promoting under-utilised or new library resources ...". According to the Online Dictionary of Library and Information Science (ODLIS) (Reitz, 2013), outreach refers to:

...library programs and services designed to meet the information needs of users who are unserved or underserved, for example, those who are visually impaired, homebound, institutionalized, not fluent in the national language, illiterate, or marginalized in some other ways ...

Today's advanced technology has greatly impacted on the library outreach activities. According to Kodikara, Seneviratne, and Punchihewa (2013), library outreach entails: marketing, promotions, public relations, special events, social responsibility, user education, and academic collaboration, to name a few. They further note that these activities are essential in the moulding of good relationships between the library professionals and the academicians. Outreach are vital in the promotion of value of library resources and services. Carter and Seaman (2011) notes that library services and their promotion, though distinct are well interconnected.

Libraries' support for outreach is important for several reasons:

- To reach out to their users
- To encourage the use of the library and its resources

- To promote a positive image on campus and often in the community

For some libraries, liaison work falls under the banner of outreach, while for others, liaison activities such as collection, development, and library instruction represent distinctive functions of libraries. Noorhidawati *et al.* (2015) pointed out that libraries do have an important task with regard to social inclusion via the outreach activities as instruments of delivery. The Internet and communication technologies represent a potentially convenient means of achieving this goal.

In their study in India, Hussaini, Vashistha, Jimah (2018) emphasized on the marketing of information resources to promote their usage else they remain largely underutilised. This highlights the need for well-trained library personnel (especially in marketing skills) to enlighten users about the available resources and the use of technology to facilitate wider access. This agrees with the findings of a ten year (1990-2000) library survey at Ibadan University by Ekpenyong (2003), where it was established that there had been a decline in library use, attributed to the library system's inability to reach out to its target users due to the low level of technology infusion in the libraries. The conclusion was that it is imperative, through the use of technology, for the library to reach out to the academic community, in order to both sensitise and alert them to the available resources in the library.

3.10 TRAINING AND DEVELOPMENT OF LIBRARY PROFESSIONALS

According to Cobblah (2015) in a Ghanaian study on the contribution of staff training to effective library and information services, describes training and development as “a systematic process through which the work-related knowledge, skills and expertise of the employees are developed for the purpose of enhancing job performance”. He further emphasises that training and development help and enable an organisation to fulfil its objectives and goals while contributing to the overall development of its workers. It allows employees qualify for higher positions. Abban (2018) writing about Ghanaian universities, alluded that staff and development is a critical aspect of human resources management in an organisation propelling it to success. The *Concise Oxford Dictionary* (2006) defines training as “bringing a person to a desired state of efficiency by instruction and practice”. Development is also defined by the *Longman Dictionary of Contemporary English* (2005) as “change that makes a product, plan, idea, and etc. better”.

The training and development of an employee is rightly regarded as one of the most important functions of effective resource management and service delivery. Vinesh (2014) singles out the role of training and career development as central to organisational excellence. This includes decision-making, thinking creatively and managing people.

Training and development are critical in:

- Addressing employee weaknesses
- Improvement in worker performance
- Consistency in duty performance
- Ensuring worker satisfaction
- Increased productivity
- Improved quality of service and products

It is the goal of all libraries to have well-trained staff who can provide efficient library services to their clientele. The importance of staff training is well captured by Adeniji, Babalola, and Adeniji (2012) in a Nigerian study with their observation that library buildings and large collections without skilled professionals can be described as nothing more than glorified warehouses. Lockhart and Majal (2012) in a study on the effect of library staff training and the user experience at the Cape Peninsula University of Technology (CPUT), South Africa, stressed that library training is crucial in ensuring that positive user experiences within libraries are realised.

Conner (2009:2) likewise observes that: "...an academic library's single most valuable resource is its workforce. Without educated, well trained, and motivated librarians and library staff, an academic library programme is ill-prepared to meet the needs of its clientele or the challenges that face institutions of higher education..."

Abban (2018) in a Ghanaian study advocates and identifies some of the reasons in support of the continuous training and development of library staff as follows:

- The introduction of Information Communication Technology (ICT) in libraries
- The sophisticated and complex nature of the library user/customer. Well trained staff are able to exploit all the facilities at their disposal, resulting in a more satisfied clientele at all levels. Customers feel confident when dealing with a knowledgeable member of staff. This confidence means that customers will return and ask for more information from the library staff member.
- The vast increase and growth of knowledge
- The era of information overload, hence the need for better retrieval techniques
- To help employees improve their performance (Mpofu and Hlatywayo, 2015) Khan, Khan and Khan (2011) contend that it boosts the efficiency and effectiveness of both employees and the organisation. Nassazi (2013) points out that training develops organisational intellectual property by building employees' competencies. The effectiveness organization thus is dependent on its employees.

Amoah and Akussah (2017) advocated the training and development of human capital in addressing clients' information needs, especially in view of an information overload and technological advancement. Further they note that library systems are dynamic, and new ideas and policy changes are constantly being debated and adopted; thus training should focus on keeping all staff abreast of the current library environment.

However, in order for any kind of training to be effective, the training needs ought to be well articulated beforehand. The Chartered Management Institute (CMI) of the UK (2013) defines 'training need' as a shortage of skills or abilities. Singh and Mohanty (2012) assert that in order for any productivity to be realised in an organisation, it is imperative that training focuses on these needs. Ondari-Okemwa's (2000:257) Kenyan study on librarians' training needs agrees that training needs analysis in libraries is urgently required due to the rapid changes within the library profession, which are greatly affecting the work environment. According to Cobblah (2015:110), such training enhances the professionals' knowledge, skills, and abilities that enable them to acquire, organise, and disseminate information according to the new and changing demands of the library users.

In conclusion, Cobblah (2015) notes that academic library staff are described as organisers, gate keepers and interpreters of knowledge, and they must therefore be trained in order to attain the requisite expertise in information management and research to be able to assist scholars.

Training has to be conscious, intentional and deliberate in order to have the desired effect.

3.11 CUSTOMER SATISFACTION

Khadka and Maharjan (2017) citing Rosenberg and Czepiel, (2017) note that customer loyalty and satisfaction are essential in the operations of business on account of two major factors. First, customers as a resource are rare: it is far easier to obtain business from an old customer than from a new one. Second, both customer loyalty and satisfaction are positively related to the (profitability) revenues of the company. Khadka and Maharjan (2017) further note that customer satisfaction is crucial in that it gives feedback to the business owners enabling them to improve their approaches.

Customer satisfaction serves as a good pointer of future business prospects. Thus, according to Krepapa *et al.* (2003), the customer's overall experience with a product or service provider is considered to result in a cumulative satisfaction perspective that also affects future consumer behaviour in relation to re-purchase intents of the service or product.

Service quality has been found to be a strong predictor of customer satisfaction. Cronin and Taylor (1992), Cronin, Brady and Hult, (2000), Dabholkar *et al.* (2000), Spreng and Mackoy (1996), and Thai (2015) with 175 respondents from Singapore Shipping Association and Singapore Logistics Association and confirming the positive relationship, all expound on this view in their service quality

models. Other studies have focussed on the effects of service quality in specific settings. In their study, Zhu et.al.(2021) reveal that service recovery strategies impacts on customer satisfaction.

Barween, Muhammad and Ahmad (2020) found that employee satisfaction greatly impacts on customer satisfaction levels. Thus any efforts towards improving customer satisfaction and retention levels needs to also focus on the welfare of the service providers.

The simultaneity of services leads to an inherent link between employees' behaviors, their motivation, competencies, satisfaction and commitment, and customers' perceptions of service quality and hence satisfaction. There is both psychological and physical closeness between service providers and consumers. These two parties frequently work together, observing and interacting with each other. Studies such as Barween, Muhammad and Ahmad (2020); Alshurideh, (2019); Alzoubi et al., (2020) have extensively documented the relationship between employees and customer satisfaction, concluding that satisfied employees will help to attract and retain customers in an organisation.

Heskett *et al.* (1994), in the "service profit chain model", stress the idea that the creation of superior value for the customer is a crucial driver of customer satisfaction and loyalty. In this model, profitability, customer loyalty, customer satisfaction, and employee satisfaction and loyalty are all inter-related. Thus, high employee satisfaction leads to higher employee retention and productivity, which in turn has a positive influence on the value of the external service meted out to customers, and which in turn helps to enhance customer satisfaction levels. In concurrence, Hoffman and Bateson (2006) further note that hiring, training and rewarding effective personnel are also key components to the internal service quality aspect of an organisation. Thus, while employee satisfaction is closely linked to improvements in a firm's overall productivity, employee satisfaction also helps in reducing recruitment and training costs, since a staff exodus is kept at bay. However, they also note that though some employees require people skills, others will require to be more task-oriented to process 'things' instead of people. These two components requiring good balancing.

Similarly, both customer satisfaction and customer loyalty have a direct relationship, and this is evidenced by the return purchases and positive word-of-mouth referrals resulting into increased customers. This resulting to increased customer retention, hence increased revenue and profitability for the firm.

3.11.1 CUSTOMER EXPECTATIONS

According to Rahman (2017) customer expectations are defined as the desires or wants of customers, i.e. what they feel a service provider should offer rather than would offer; while the Gladly 2018 Customer Service Expectations Survey (2018) defines it "as the strong belief that something will

happen, or be the case in the future". The survey further points out that these expectations are crucial as they influence a consumer's decisions; which in turn, influence their loyalty and revenue in the long run. Satisfaction is the result of customers' assessment of a service based on a comparison of their perceptions of service delivery with their earlier expectations. If the customers' perception of the service, the experience and outcomes matches their expectations then they should be satisfied (or at least satisfied). Thus expectations, and indeed perceptions, are key attributes in delivering a quality service. Thus, Johnson and Clark (2008) stressed the need for operation managers to well understand and also define expectations with a view to satisfying their customers and create detailed service specification in line with the service concept. It is important to try to rein in customers' expectations in order to keep them at the right level. The organisation (in this case the academic library) needs to have the customer focus and by extension customer orientation, in order to remain respected by its customers.

Having a strong customer focus has become very important in today's competitive environment. Customer focus has always been one of the basic elements of quality management. Increased attention to quality management has brought higher priority for the importance of customer satisfaction. Many authors recognise the importance of customer satisfaction, such as Hadi, Aslam and Gulzar (2019); Lee *et al.* (2016), Irfan, Shamsudin and Hadi (2016); Zeithaml, Parasuraman, and Berry (1990).

Zeithaml (1991) in a pioneering work on the subject observed that four elements must be addressed in order to exceed customer expectations; these are assurance; responsiveness; empathy; and communication. Real customer satisfaction, therefore, represents the difference between what customers actually expect to get and the actual service performance exceeding such expectations. Parasuraman, Zeithaml, and Berry (1990) identified four gaps in this regard:

- Actual customer expectations and management's perception of customer expectations.
- Service quality specifications and management's perception of customer expectations.
- Service delivery and service quality specifications.
- Service delivery and external communications relating to it.

In order to achieve real quality service, these gaps need to be closed by concentrating on the expectations and needs of the customer, and not on the administration or organisation. Organisations such as libraries are there to serve people, and not vice versa.

3.13 SUMMARY

The chapter reviewed literature on all aspects of service quality in general and in academic libraries in particular. The role of the university and the important role that the university library plays in the

fulfilment of the academic aspirations of the university community were highlighted. Special mention was made of the university sub-sector in Kenya and the academic library standards as they have been spelt out by the University Regulatory Body (CUE). These standards are used in the context of this study to as a guide to the quality aspects critical in improving service delivery in the academic libraries.

The nature and importance of service quality in the academic library were also discussed, as were service parameters that play a major role in the entire service delivery process. These include: human resources, technology, the university library building and related infrastructure, information resources and library management practices, such as training and development of information professionals; and library outreach. The focus was placed on how these relate to and influence customer satisfaction with regard to service delivery in academic libraries.

In summary, the chapter provided a literature review of different factors/parameters that influence service quality as it is perceived by library customers. All these parameters, albeit in varying proportions, influence customer satisfaction levels with regard to the service quality that they experience in academic libraries.

The next chapter discusses the research methodology approaches that were employed for the purposes of this study.

CHAPTER 4:

RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

4.1 INTRODUCTION

O’Leary (2004) cautions that there is no best type of research, and suggest that there are only questions matched with appropriate procedures for inquiry. This chapter therefore presents and expounds on the study’s research design and methodological approaches. It discusses the research instruments, the design of the study, the sampling procedures and the sample sizes applied, and the methods of data collection and analysis employed. A detailed research mapping also illustrates how each of the strategies was applied alongside each of the research objectives. The different research instruments used are explained at length, including why and how they were used, and the groups they targeted. The study was limited to academic libraries within the universities in Kenya. The data was

collected from both external customers (library users) as well as internal customers (the librarians), who besides being service providers, are also consumers of the same service.

According to Leedy and Ormrod (2010:2), research is a systematic process of collecting, analysing, and interpreting information (data) in order to increase our understanding of a phenomenon. Welman, Kruger and Mitchell (2005:2) define research as “*the process of obtaining scientific knowledge by means of various objective methods and procedures*”. ‘Objective’, in their definition, indicates that these methods and procedures do not rely on personal feelings or opinions, and that specific methods are used at each and every stage of the research process.

Leedy and Ormrod (2010:6) further assert that research methodology has two primary functions:

- i. To guide and direct the data collection processes
- ii. To organise data upon its collection and extract meaning from it

Welman, Kruger and Mitchell (2005:2) explain that although research methodology considers and explains the logic behind research methods and techniques, it has a much wider scope than research methods (such as opinion polls), which in turn have a wider scope than research techniques. Similarly, Creswell (2014) view methodology in relation to the philosophical framework and the fundamental assumptions of a research project that is a framework that relates to the entire process of a research project.

4.2 RESEARCH PARADIGM

Over the years, positivism, constructivism, and pragmatism are three research philosophies that have evolved. According to Rehman and Alharthi (2016), quality purists are positivists who not only believe that social observations need to be handled as entities in a similar manner to the way physical scientists treat physical phenomena, but also argue that the observer is separate from the entities that are subject to observation. Willis (2007) argues that while positivist research is conducted using objective methods, critical theory research is often subjective and cred with emotion and ideological bias in the “real world”.

According to Henning (2004), positivists support empiricism, the view that observation and measurement are the basis of scientific research. O’Leary (2004) argument is that positivists believe that the world is a fixed entity, one whose intricacies are not beyond human understanding, and that their findings are always quantitative, statistically significant, and generalizable. Welman, Kruger and Mitchell (2005) agree that positivism adopts a quantitative approach. Henning (2004) suggests that positivism takes into account how people make meaning or how culture influences

interpretation, while Cohen, Manion and Morrison (2007) argue that positivism provides the clearest possible ideal for knowledge. According to Gephart (1999), positivism assumes an objective world in which scientific methods can more or less readily represent and measure, and therefore predict and explain causal relations among key variables. Thus positivists seek to unravel underlying truths via experimental or survey methods, while interpretivists challenge this by arguing that these methods impose a view of the world on subjects rather than capturing, describing, and understanding their world views.

Post-positivists, on the other hand, believe and advocate for a scenario where interpretation can be allowed. Cameron (2009), agreeing with O'Leary (2004), argues that the world is ambiguous, variable and multiple in realities, hence findings are always inductive, dependable and auditable.

Post-positivism research therefore makes claim of the following:

- Determination – cause effect thinking
- Reductionism, narrowing and focusing on select variables to interrelate
- Detailed observations and measures to interrelate theories that are continually refined (Creswell and Plano, 2011).

Qualitative purists, also called constructivists and interpretivists, reject what they call positivism and suggest that multiple construed realities exist, and that time and context-free generalizations are neither desirable nor possible (Cameron, 2009). They submit that research is value bound, and agree with scholars such as Cameron (2009) and Ngulube et al. (2009), that it is impossible to differentiate fully the causes and effects that emanate from specific to general, and the knower and known cannot be separated because the subjective knower is the only source of reality. The interpretive approach, according to Neuman (2011) in Kagondou (2015), emphasizes meaningful social action, socially constructed meaning, and value relativism. It assumes that the purpose of social science is to understand social meaning in context. Similarly, Gephart (1999) observes that 'interpretivists' assume that knowledge and meaning are acts of interpretation; hence there is no objective knowledge that is independent of thinking, reasoning humans. Research methods used in the interpretive approach include ethnography, observation, and interviews, among others.

According to Johnson et al. (2007), pragmatism offers an epistemological justification using different approaches/methods and ideas that help frame, address and provide a tentative solution to one's research question(s). According to Cooper and Schindler (2014), the mixed method approach is based on pragmatism, and Cameron (2009) presents it as a quiet revolution due to its focus on resolving the

tensions between the other two approaches, i.e. qualitative and quantitative. Fielzer (2010) is of the view that pragmatism sets aside both the qualitative and the quantitative approaches and poses the question: Has the researcher helped to determine what the research intended to establish? Onwuegbuzie and Turner (2009) contend that pragmatism can encompass both the qualitative and the quantitative approaches (i.e. descriptive and inferential analysis) as it seeks to fulfil the research purpose. Summing it up, Ngulube (2015) notes that this complementarity aims to amplify, illuminate and enhance the results from one research approach with the results from another approach.

Leedy and Ormrod (2010:94) observe that the quantitative (positivist school) and qualitative (interpretive school) approaches involve similar processes, such as the formation of one or more hypotheses, review of related literature, and collection and analysis of data. However, these processes are often combined and carried out in different ways, leading to distinctively different research methods. Neuman (2011) in Kagundu (2015) observes and agrees that in both approaches, data is an empirical representation of concepts while measurement links data to concepts. However, differences in the styles of research and the types of data mean that they approach the measurement process differently. In other words, according to Creswell and Plano (2011), both paradigms handle the same attributes in the process of research, but varying in the implementation by the researchers at each stage. They have argued these differences are not opposites, rather they need to be seen as differences on a continuum.

4.3 MAPPING RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

The current study sought to establish the level of service quality in Kenyan academic libraries. Service quality is influenced by various factors. It is some of these service factors that the study sought to investigate owing to their influence on overall library service quality. The study was guided by following specific objectives:

RO1: To evaluate the influence that the service parameters (human resource practices, technology, the library environment and infrastructure, information resources, etc.) have on the service quality in academic libraries.

RO2: To assess the library customer service orientation and its influence on service quality in the academic libraries.

RO3: To assess how the range of services/products offered by academic libraries influence service quality in the academic libraries.

RO4: To analyse the level of library customer retention/attraction strategies and service delivery approaches and their influence on service quality in the academic libraries.

Having identified the research design and the different approaches to be used in collecting data, a research matrix was developed as shown in Table 4.1. This depicts the application of each of the different data collection tools in relation to each of the research objectives.

Table 4.1 Mapping Research methodology

| RESEARCH MATRIX | | | | | | |
|--|--|----------------------|---|-----------|---|--|
| Aim | Objective | TM | RQ | RM | Target Population | Data Instruments |
| The study aims to establish the level of service quality and its impact on the Kenyan in the academic libraries | | | | | | |
| Establish the level of service quality in Kenyan academic libraries. | RO1- To evaluate the influence that the service parameters (human resource practices, technology, the library environment and infrastructure, information resources, etc.) have on the service quality in academic libraries | GAP MODEL (SERVQUAL) | - What library resources/services are available in your library? (App.1&2) - Question items on ideal behaviours/ practices of service delivery workers(App.1) - Question items on library customer attraction &retention (App.1) - Questionnaire items on the overall customer satisfaction from the users' perspective (App.1&2) - Questionnaire items on the general status of library service, | Survey | Service staff (librarians), Heads of sections in the libraries /senior library management, external customers | Questionnaires, interview schedules, observation schedules, content analysis |

| Aim | Objective | TM | RQ | RM | Target Population | Data Instruments |
|---|--|-----------------------------|---|---------------|--|---|
| <p>- Establish the level of service quality in Kenyan academic libraries.</p> | <p>RO2 - To assess the library customer service orientation and its influence on service quality in the academic libraries.</p> | <p>GAP MODEL (SERVQUAL)</p> | <p>resources, facilities (App.3&4)</p> <p>- Questionnaire items on how the library markets orientation? (App.1, 2, & 4) - Questionnaire items on what are the communication strategies in place? (App.1) - Questionnaire items on what innovations do the libraries engage in to improve service delivery? (App.1,) - Questionnaire items relating to behaviours/ practices of library staff pertaining to service delivery (App.2) - Questionnaire items relating problem faced by the users (App.3)</p> | <p>Survey</p> | <p>Service staff (librarians), Heads of sections in the libraries /senior library management, external customers</p> | <p>Questionnaires, interview schedules, observation schedules & photographs, content analysis</p> |

| Aim | Objective | TM | RQ | RM | Target Population | Data Instruments |
|---|--|----------------------|--|-----------|--|--|
| - Establish the level of service quality in Kenyan academic libraries. | RO3- To assess how the range of services/products offered by academic libraries influence service quality in the academic libraries. | GAP MODEL (SERVQUAL) | - Questionnaire items on what library resources/services are available in the library? (App.1 & 2, 4) - Questionnaire items on the status of library service, resources, facilities (App.3) - Questionnaire items on the approaches employed in delivering service to the customers? (App.1 & 2) | Survey | Service staff (librarians), external customers & Heads of sections in the libraries /senior library management | Questionnaires, interview schedules, observation schedules & photographs, content analysis |
| - Establish the level of service quality in Kenyan academic libraries. Service quality. | RO4- To analyse the level of library customer retention/attraction strategies and | GAP MODEL (SERVQUAL) | Questionnaire items on library customer attraction & retention (App.1) | Survey | Service staff (librarians), external customers & Heads of sections in the | Questionnaires, interview schedules, observation schedules, |

| | | | | | | |
|--|--|--|--|--|---|-------------------------|
| | <p>service delivery approaches and their influence on service quality in the academic libraries.</p> | | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Questionnaire items on ideal behaviours/ staff attitudes /practices of service delivery workers (App.1, 2 & 3) - Questionnaire items on library customer service orientation (App.1) - Questionnaire items on the library usage (App.2) - Questionnaire items on the library facilities, their status e.g. furniture (App.2) - Questionnaire items on the possibility of looking for another library facility (App.2) - Questionnaire items on the general status of library service, resources, facilities, customer | | <p>libraries /senior library management</p> | <p>content analysis</p> |
|--|--|--|--|--|---|-------------------------|

| | | | | | | |
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| | | | satisfaction levels (App.2&4) | | | |
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APP.1 - Questionnaire items on librarians (internal customers)
 APP.2 - Questionnaire items on external customers
 APP.3 - Library interview schedule for senior management/heads of sections

APP.4 - Library observation schedule
 RM - Research methodology
 RQ - Research questionnaire items
 TM -Theoretical framework

4.4 RESEARCH DESIGN

A research design comprises of blue print for the collection, measurement, and analysis of data (Kothari and Garg, 2014). The study employed the descriptive survey research method in order to collect data on the library performance and service quality levels experienced by the clients of academic libraries in Kenya. The argument by Saunders, Lewis, Thornbill (2016) on the survey's efficacy to collect large volumes of primary data proved helpful in this study. The survey was also selected because it is economical both in terms of time and resources, which was appropriate for this study owing to the large number of respondents targeted. Questionnaires, interviews, and observation were used as data collection tools. The responses were further analysed and examined to detect the patterns of relationships between the variables, as expounded by Bryman (2016).

Zikmund et al. (2012) advocate for the survey method as the most important data collection approach in the social sciences and related fields as it is used extensively to collect information on numerous subjects of research. In this study, for example, the survey touched on library performance with regard to service delivery, marketing, innovations and customer satisfaction. Survey approach according to Mugenda and Mugenda's (2003) argument, seeks to get explanations through the use of systematic and controlled methods to gather data from the library users from several universities.

According to Babbie and Benaquisto (2014), survey research is appropriate for descriptive, explanatory and exploratory purposes, especially where individuals are units of analysis. It is best suited to a social researcher who is interested in collecting original data in order to accurately describe and measure attitudes and orientations in a large population. Zikmund et al. (2012) explains that the method is quite handy in acquiring information about one or more groups of people (their characteristics, opinions, attitudes, previous experiences) by asking them questions and recording their answers. Other scholars, such as Kothari and Garg (2014) and Mugenda and Mugenda (2003), assert that survey research is a fact-finding research method that is mainly used to collect data from a sample in order to determine the status of that particular population with respect to one or more variables. It is therefore possible to describe record, analyze, and interpret existing conditions as they are based on a sample, as opposed to a census survey where every unit of the population is analysed.

Zikmund et al (2012) further observes that although most surveys are conducted to quantify certain factual information, certain aspects of surveys may also be qualitative. Thus according

to Taylor, Sinha and Ghoshal (2006:37), surveys are often classified as either analytical or descriptive; the focus of analytical surveys is to explore associations between variables, while descriptive surveys are concerned with fact finding.

In the current study, the researcher sought to gather data regarding the service delivery process, and the perceptions that customers have towards academic libraries. The survey approach was used to gather the factual information regarding the feelings, perceptions, and attitudes that the patrons/customers had towards the library service. Both analytical (in analysing relationships) and descriptive approaches were used to capture the academic library users' opinions, feelings, and attitudes.

Mixed methods approach has been advocated for, by Marutha (2020), Onwuegbuzie, Gerber and Abrams (2017), Ngulube, (2013) and was adopted owing to the richness of the data so obtained. Data was gathered from both the service employees (who are also internal customers) and the library clients (external customers) who are direct recipients of the service meted by the service personnel.

Triangulation, according to Ngulube (2015), is about the convergence and corroboration of findings. This study applied triangulation in the data collection and analysis processes. Triangulation may include multiple methods of data collection and data analysis. This is achieved by using more than one method to gather and analyse data about the same phenomenon in order to eliminate the inherent biases associated with using only one. Both the qualitative and quantitative research approaches were used in this study in the data collection process, also in the analysis and presentation of the data. This is achieved by using more than one method to gather and analyse data about the same phenomenon in order to eliminate the inherent biases associated with using only one. Observation, content analysis and interview were used as data collection methods for the qualitative data while the questionnaires gathered the quantitative data. Engaging multiple methods, such as, observation, interviews and recordings aided the realization to more valid, reliable and diverse construction of realities. Patton (2001:247) advocates the use of triangulation by stating "triangulation strengthens a study by combining methods. This can mean using several kinds of methods or data, including using both quantitative and qualitative approaches". Method triangulation was applied as the researcher carried out a series of interviews with the senior library staff about the service delivery in academic libraries and then observations were also made within the same institutions.

The use of quantitative methods was generally meant to ensure objectivity, generalizability and reliability, while the qualitative approaches helped to generate rich data for this study. Using these approaches, it was possible to gather detailed information on a variety of issues relating to library service for each particular institution and variable.

Triangulation is often used in studies that combine both quantitative and qualitative approaches and in this study both approaches were used to gather data and analyse the same, Concurrent triangulation is used in the sense that the research design involves qualitative and quantitative data collection which is conducted at the same time. The purpose of this being to validate the findings generated by each method through evidence produced by the other. This was done in this study whereby qualitative data was gotten via content analysis, interviews and observation apart from the questionnaires used. Conclusions made from the data were extrapolated about the state of affairs in the academic libraries in different institutions.

4.5 STUDY AREA AND POPULATION

Depoy and Gitlin (2011) define a population as the entire group of individuals, events, items or objects that share a common, observable trait that is of interest to the researcher. Fox and Bayat (2007:144) define the target population as the sum of all the respondents meeting the researcher's criteria, and they assert that the population must be carefully determined since the research sample will be drawn from it. For this study, the study population consisted of the academic libraries of the accredited institutions (see Annex A, page 417) which had the authority to operate as universities in Kenya as of 2017. This is also when the study was carried out.

4.5.1 TARGET POPULATION

Mugenda (2008) describes target population as comprising of all individuals, objects or things that the researcher can reasonably generalize his/her findings. In this study, the target population comprised of all library users(customers) of the 10 selected accredited Kenyan Universities. These comprised of the undergraduate students, postgraduates, the staff within the university and the library staff providing service in the academic libraries. The target population consisted of the users or customers of academic libraries in Kenya within the specific institutions under study. These customers were both internal (referring specifically to the employees of the respective libraries only) and external (members of the university community at large, mainly staff and students and who users of the libraries). The external users were selected because as the recipients of the library service, they were more likely to make an informed judgement about the facilities and the products they were using, including

their own perceptions about the service delivery process in the libraries. Internal customers (library staff), on the other hand, were selected because they are crucial in the service provision process. The library staff are also simultaneous consumers of the products, and thus it was felt that their feelings, perceptions and attitudes would, to a great extent, influence the quality of the service that they provided to the external clients. Additionally, these are trained information professionals, and thus it was assumed that they would be qualified to provide quality services. The study was anchored on the perception paradigm hence it was vital to target students who had at least more one year of exposure to the services of the university libraries. The research targeted fourth year students in the selected institutions because, they were presumed to have completed at least two years of their program in the institution and being finalists could therefore sufficiently evaluate the library services better. Other staff were purposely selected from the permanent university employees according to the sampling frame.

The target populations for this study were therefore identifiable as follows:

i) 9426 final undergraduates in session during April-November 2017 in the target institutions whose data was obtained from Registrar, Academic Affairs division. According to literature review, there are similar studies where researchers have used final year students as target population and which informed the basis upon which this study was developed. These include among others the following:

ii) 640 postgraduate students in session during the period April-December 2017

iii) 990 fulltime academic staff and non teaching staff in the targeted universities whose data was obtained from the respective Human resource offices

iv) 100 library staff working in the academic libraries whose data was obtained from the respective Human resource departments and the heads of the department.

In total target population was 11156.

4.6 SAMPLING PROCEDURE/TECHNIQUES

According to (Burns 2000:83), the major task in sampling is to draw a sample out of the defined population by employing appropriate technique(s) that ensures the sample is representative of the entire population and, as far as possible, not biased in any way. The sample selected enables generalizations about a population to be made. Bhattacharyya (2003:78) explains that generalisation is acceptable due to cost, time, labour and other constraints.

The study used purposive sampling based on the availability of the information, nature of the university, public or private, and the age of the university. According to Miller and Yang (2008) through purposive sampling, the researcher is able to select specific subjects that provide the most detailed information about the phenomenon being studied (Kombo and Trump,2009). The subject matter was excellence in service delivery.

4.6.1 SAMPLING FRAME

May, (2001) describes a sampling frame as the list of the population that exists. For the purpose of this study, the researcher sampled 10 universities in Kenya comprising of seven public and three private ones. From the entire list of accredited universities in Kenya as of 2017, the researcher purposively selected a total of 10 (ten) institutions out of the entire list on the basis of their year of establishment since independence and according to their status of accreditation to give the study population. The other considerations made in the selection of these institutions were:

- The age of the institution (i.e. date of establishment and charter award). Both old and newly established institutions were selected. The assumption here was that the older institutions may have developed a better or more efficient service delivery system compared to the newer, upcoming institutions, and it was also assumed that the older institutions have better library collections which have been built over time compared to the new ones. The size of the user population. It was assumed that with a smaller population, the services may be better and vice versa. Thus large and small institutions were selected.
- Institutions were selected to paint a true picture of both the private and public universities in terms of library resource acquisition and service delivery.

The ten institutions that were selected were: Kenyatta University, Jomo Kenyatta University, Egerton University, Cooperative University, Karatina University, Technical University of Kenya, Tangaza University College, St. Paul University, African International University, and Dedan Kimathi University of Technology. For confidentiality purposes, as was promised to all the respondents, the identities of the particular academic libraries were concealed. The different academic libraries are referred to as Academic Library 1, 2, 3...but not as listed the above etc. (i.e. ACL1, ACL2, ACL3...). Kenyatta University, Jomo Kenyatta University, Egerton University, Cooperative University, Karatina University, Technical University of Kenya and Dedan Kimathi University of Technology representing the public universities. The first (i.e.

Kenya University, Jomo Kenyatta University, Egerton University,) three (being among the oldest and also the largest while the last other four being among the newest chartered-thus at different levels in terms of infrastructural growth, enrolment and capital endowment. Tangaza University College, St. Paul University, African International University are among the older and well established privately chartered universities. Further, from each selected institution two schools were randomly selected for the purpose of the study. The students (both undergraduate and postgraduate) and the all faculty staff (including the teaching and non – teaching) were included for the purpose of the study.

In this study, the sampling frame consisted of the following:

- i) Undergraduate students: The population of the final year students in each of the sampled universities during the April-November 2017 period.
- ii) Postgraduate students: The population of the first year students in each of the sampled universities during the April-December 2017 period.
- iii) Academic and non academic staff in each of the sampled universities during the April-December 2017 period.

These three categories constitute the external library customers.

- iv) Library staff in each of the respective academic libraries in each of the sampled universities during the April-December 2017 period.

This last category constitutes the internal customers (these are both the providers and recipients of the service).

4.6.2 SAMPLE SIZE

Kumar (2011:194) defines the sample size as the number of individuals in a study from whom the required information is gathered. Kothari and Garg, (2014) point out that if the sample is too small, it may fail to realize its objectives, while a very large sample may be too expensive to handle leading to wastage of resources yet not necessarily improving on precision. The general rule of thumb on sample size is to attain an optimum size, one that is not too small and not excessively large. Neuman (2011) supports this as one of two methods (the other being the statistical method) that can be used to get a sample size where a conventional or a commonly accepted number of units is used. According to Gay and Diehl (1992), generally the number of respondents acceptable for a study depends on the type of research involved: descriptive,

correlational or experimental. For descriptive research the sample should be 10% of the population but if the population is small, then 20% is required. In correlational research 30 subjects are required to establish a relationship.

In this study the sampling units included all final year students (fourth year of study) in the period April-November 2017 in all the universities, all year one postgraduate students: The population of the final year students in each of the sampled universities during the April-December 2017 period, academic and non academic staff;) library staff in each of the respective academic libraries. To determine sample size in this study the following sample size determination formulae were applied.

- i) Undergraduate students-The total population of 9426 fourth year students was obtained from the respective admissions offices of the sampled universities. To obtain an acceptable sample size of the students, the sample size guide developed by Isaac and Micheal (1981) was applied which recommends a sample size of 384 at the 95% confidence level. For this study a total of 400 students were sampled proportionately in the universities. The Table 4.2 shows the final sample population for the study.

Table 4.2 Proportinate Study Sample Size (Undergraduates)

| S/N | INSTITUTION | TOTAL No.OF FOURTH YEAR STUDENTS | SAMPLE SELECTED | SAMPLE IN % |
|-----|--------------|----------------------------------|-----------------|-------------|
| 1 | ACL1 | 1245 | 51 | 11 |
| 2 | ACL2 | 998 | 40 | 9 |
| 3 | ACL3 | 773 | 38 | 9 |
| 4 | ACL4 | 1105 | 45 | 10 |
| 5 | ACL5 | 500 | 40 | 9 |
| 6 | ACL6 | 650 | 45 | 10 |
| 7 | ACL7 | 1200 | 50 | 11 |
| 8 | ACL8 | 700 | 33 | 7 |
| 9 | ACL9 | 1200 | 55 | 12 |
| 10 | ACL10 | 1080 | 48 | 11 |
| | TOTAL | 9426 | 445 | 100 |

- ii) Postgraduate students-The total population of 640 first year students was obtained from the respective admissions offices of each of the sampled universities. To obtain an acceptable sample size of the students, the sample size guide developed by Isaac and Micheal (1981) was applied which recommends a sample size of 222 at the 95% confidence level.

Table 4.3 Proportinate Study Sample Size (Postgraduates)

| S/N | INSTITUTION | TOTAL No.of POSTGRADUATE FIRST YEAR STUDENTS | SAMPLE SELECTED | SAMPLE IN % |
|-----|--------------|---|-----------------|-------------|
| 1 | ACL1 | 100 | 33 | 15 |
| 2 | ACL2 | 80 | 27 | 12 |
| 3 | ACL3 | 80 | 27 | 12 |
| 4 | ACL4 | 100 | 33 | 15 |
| 5 | ACL5 | 30 | 11 | 5 |
| 6 | ACL6 | 20 | 10 | 5 |
| 7 | ACL7 | 30 | 11 | 5 |
| 8 | ACL8 | 20 | 10 | 5 |
| 9 | ACL9 | 100 | 33 | 15 |
| 10 | ACL10 | 80 | 27 | 12 |
| | TOTAL | 640 | 222 | 100 |

- iii) For the academic an non academic staff-The total population of 990 was obtained for the sampled universities. To obtain an acceptable sample size of the staff, the sample size guide developed by Isaac and Micheal (1981) was applied which recommends a sample size of 286 at the 95% confidence level.

Table 4.4 Proportinate Sample Size of Academic and Non-Academic Staff

| S/N | INSTITUTION | TOTAL No.OF STAFF | SAMPLE SELECTED | SAMPLE IN % |
|-----|--------------|-------------------|-----------------|-------------|
| 1 | ACL1 | 173 | 58 | 20 |
| 2 | ACL2 | 75 | 25 | 9 |
| 3 | ACL3 | 53 | 14 | 5 |
| 4 | ACL4 | 160 | 55 | 19 |
| 5 | ACL5 | 47 | 12 | 4 |
| 6 | ACL6 | 45 | 12 | 4 |
| 7 | ACL7 | 75 | 20 | 7 |
| 8 | ACL8 | 42 | 13 | 5 |
| 9 | ACL9 | 200 | 52 | 18 |
| 10 | ACL10 | 120 | 25 | 9 |
| | TOTAL | 990 | 286 | 100 |

- iv) Library staff-The population of 100 was obtained from each of the sampled universities. This inTo obtain an acceptable sample size of the staff, the sample size guide developed by Isaac and Micheal (1981) was applied which recommends a sample size of 81 at the 95% confidence level.

Table 4.5 Proportinate Sample size of Library staff

| S/N | INSTITUTION | TOTAL No.OF LIBRARIANS | SAMPLE SELECTED | SAMPLE IN % |
|-----|--------------|------------------------|-----------------|-------------|
| 1 | ACL1 | 15 | 13 | 16 |
| 2 | ACL2 | 8 | 8 | 10 |
| 3 | ACL3 | 10 | 7 | 9 |
| 4 | ACL4 | 13 | 11 | 14 |
| 5 | ACL5 | 7 | 7 | 9 |
| 6 | ACL6 | 12 | 9 | 11 |
| 7 | ACL7 | 10 | 8 | 10 |
| 8 | ACL8 | 5 | 2 | 2 |
| 9 | ACL9 | 10 | 8 | 10 |
| 10 | ACL10 | 10 | 8 | 10 |
| | TOTAL | 100 | 81 | 100 |

4.6.3 SAMPLING PROCEDURE

The most common types of sampling techniques are probability and non-probability (purposive) sampling. Non-probability sampling techniques are used in qualitative studies while probability sampling techniques are used in quantitative oriented studies (Creswell and Clark,2007; Teddlie and Yu,2007). Teddlie and Yu (2007) introduced another sampling technique namely mixed method sampling which is defined as a sampling strategy that involves the selection of units or cases for a research study using both probability sampling (to increase external validity) and purposive sampling strategy (to increase transferability).

Fox and Bayat (2007) argue that probability sampling is used when every element of the population has a Known and not 'Zero' chance of being included in the sample whereas non-probability sampling is considered as a range of techniques where the probability of selecting each sampling unit is not known and the selection of sampling units is done according to the researcher's judgement. In quantitative study, the researcher wants the sample to reflect the characteristics of the population of interest and typically this calls for a sample of a certain

size relative to the population (O'Lary,2004 ;Creswell and Clark,2007) On the otherhand in qualitative study ,the researcher selects individuals /units purposefully that can provide the information that is necessary based on specific purposes and associated with answering the research study questions and phenomenon (Creswell and Clark,2007).

This study applied the following techniques from the respective target populations:

- i) Students –the researcher applied random sampling to select any two schools from the targeted universities. Systematic random sampling wa applied to select final year undergraduates in session from each of the departments in these schools. The researcher applied Systematic random sampling whereby every 5th student was selected during a class in session (Denzin and Lincoln, 2005).

The researcher obtained permission from the relevant lecturers through the respective Deans to visit the lecture rooms during the contact sessions to administer the questionnaire. The research was carried out at the main campuses of the respective universities because they are considerd representative of the entire population of students. Every 5th student (as they were seated in the lecture room) was handed a questionnaire to complete. The students were proportionately sampled from each of the participating university. Table 4.2 presents the data on the proportionate sample size of the 4th year undergraduate students in session during April –November 2017 in each of the participating universities.

Both snowballing and purposive sampling was used to identify the postgraduate students-this was convenient considering that their numbers were far less compared to the undergraduates and their classes were also not as regular as those of the undergraduates. A list of students' in each of the departments within a school was obtained from the Heads of departments and the Deans offices and there after the participating students purposively selected.

The snowballing and purposive sampling procedure was used to collect data from the interview participants. Purposive sampling is a sampling technique that allows a researcher to use cases that have the required information with respect to the objectives of the study (Mugenda and Mugenda 2003). This approach was also used to select the sample of librarians to whom questionnaires were also administered. The researcher identified potential interview respondents who were deemed to be fully conversant with the phenomena under investigation. Snowballing was used in those instances where the researcher was not very familiar with the particular

institution; it was done in order to get to know the key persons within the academic libraries. The sample selected in this study was of the top management in the academic library, such as the heads of departments or senior staff members who were familiar with or had access to the implementation of library policies.

- ii) Academic and non-academic staff-The researcher obtained a list of the staff in the respective schools from the Human resource departments. Systematic random sampling was used to select the participating staff from each school. Academic staff were randomly selected from the list of lecturers provided and with the help of a computer MS -Excel programme, every 2nd academic member of staff was sampled. The sampled academic included the chairmen of the departments, academic advisors, course co-ordinators and all the administrative assistants in the schools and technical personnel from which the 4th year students were drawn. Each of the academic staff was sought from their respective offices or through telephone calls and booking of appointments to seek permission directly from them to participate in the research. This was done also with help of the Deans of schools who were able to access most of the lecturers otherwise it was a very tedious exercise and the researcher learnt how difficult it is to access the academic staff in universities partly because of work overload and also because of the part-timing phenomenon prevalent in many institutions.

Those who were busy were requested for a scheduling of the appointment at their most convenient time which was later followed with researcher assistants. Table 4.4 presents the number of academic and non-academic staff who were sampled according to the population size in the participating institutions. The non-academic staff included the administrative staff in different cadres.

- iii) Library staff- The researcher obtained a list of the staff in the respective academic libraries from the Human resource departments. Further assistance was sought from the chief librarians in each of the participating academic libraries. Purposive sampling was to identify the staff most suitable for the exercise but included the heads of all sections, secretaries, cleaners and security staff.

Further, the researcher telephoned each of the chief librarians of the participating academic libraries to seek both their permission and that of their staff who work under them to participate in the study. Table 4.5 presents the proportionate numbers

of library staff who were purposively sampled in the participating academic libraries.

Interview sessions were scheduled with each of the senior management staff at their convenient time. Ten interviews were conducted, one per institution. The researcher had re-schedule most of these as it turned out they were busy in meeting and or engaged in administrative work.

4.7 DATA COLLECTION

Data collection tools refer to the instruments used to collect data in an effective manner for the purpose of the research (Mugenda and Mugenda, 2003). Some methodologies, such as the survey approach, are a popular choice for data collection since they allow for the use of a variety of data collection techniques that facilitate data triangulation (Johnson and Christensen, 2010).

Data collection in this particular study consisted of:

- Observation schedules
- Interview schedules
- Questionnaires

These are considered very handy tools for the systematic recording of information. In selecting the method of data collection, the researcher considered the ease with which the respondents were to be identified, the geographical coverage, the characteristics of the respondents, and the complexity and sensitivity of the desired survey data. Each of the data collection instruments served a specific purpose, as discussed in the sub-sections that follow.

4.7.1 THE OBSERVATION SCHEDULE

According to Sileyew (2019) observation is an important aspect of science with Kumar (2011:140) noting that it is a technique that involves systematically and purposefully selecting, watching, listening and recording an interaction or phenomenon as it takes place.

The observation technique can be part of both qualitative and quantitative research, and data can be collected by manual, mechanical, electrical or electronic means. Nieuwenhuis (in Maree,2007:84) warns that before one uses observation as a data gathering technique, the purpose and focus of the observation must be clearly defined in order to articulate what, exactly, will be observed.

Kumar (2014) further notes that “the selection of methods depends upon the purpose of the observation, and the way an observation is made determines whether it is a quantitative or qualitative study”.

In the current study, observation was used as a method to complement the data collected through the questionnaires and interviews. The researcher purposed to obtrusively observe the general state of each of the academic libraries, their facilities, and the service process (including how the service providers responded whenever a request was presented).

According to Bachiochi and Weiner in Mugwisi (2013) prior to the observation exercise in the field, a standardized, structured observation schedule needs to be developed. Cooper and Schindler (2014) stress that observation qualifies as scientific inquiry when it is conducted specifically to answer a research question, is systematically planned and executed, uses proper controls, and provides a reliable and valid account of what happened. They further emphasize that the versatility of observation makes it an indispensable primary source method supplementing other methods. For this purpose, a detailed observation schedule was developed to guide the observation of service delivery in the academic libraries. The schedule was in line with the research objectives of the study so that only those specific aspects relating to the study were observed. A checklist was used to record the information as it was observed for each of the libraries. This helped the researcher to focus on only the designated aspects of behaviour or the physical conditions so that data collection was restricted to only what is necessary. Observation was done on the different aspects listed below and was done from different strategic positions so as to capture the service as it was received and delivered. In this case photography was also used as method to capture, store and summarize information.

The observation schedule focused on the following areas of the library:

- a) Physical location
- b) Size of the building, lighting
- c) Exits/entry points
- d) Shelving and sitting space
- e) Office space
- f) Service points

- g) The facilities /information resources available
- h) Library guides/sign posting
- i) Availability of working tools/equipment, computers and other ICTs for service delivery
- j) The state of the furniture and its suitability
- k) Noise (both internal and external)
- l) Collection outlook and usage (browsed date stamps) - whether dirty, worn out, their currency, etc.

Following the observation, the data was summarized, recorded and filed pending further analysis. The observation findings are presented in Chapter 6, section 6.2 of this study and also summarised in Appendix 5, page 442.

4.7.2. THE INTERVIEW SCHEDULE

Interviews in a survey consist of one-on-one question and answer sessions between individuals, and can therefore be influenced by the natural social behavior of people (Cooper and Schindler, 2014). An interview survey is normally used to collect in-depth information. To realize the goal follow-up questions as guided by the literature review or the analysis of data gathered through questionnaires are presented. In this case, a semi-structured interview was conducted which consisted of a list of topics for discussion with the managers of the academic libraries was prepared that covered issues that affect the library, specifically:

- budgets;
- staffing levels (quality and quantity);
- service innovations and
- technology infusion/application;
- information resources available; and
- Challenges in getting the library equipped.

These topics were informed by the literature on service delivery and the status of the academic libraries. To ensure that the participants did not feel coerced to participate in the interview the researcher started by clarifying that this was mandatory, besides they were shown the self-

introduction letter (APP.6A) to read. For those who expressed no interest to participate this was granted and the researcher purposively identified other suitable but willing participants.

Adopting Engel and Schutt's (2012) suggestion, only one interview was conducted in each of the selected academic libraries in order to save time and also to cut down on expenses. A total of ten (10) interviews were conducted (details are discussed in section 4.8), one per institution guided by an interview schedule. As stated earlier, the interview schedule implemented in this study was designed for the top management in the academic library, targeting either department heads or senior staff members who were familiar with, or had access to the implementation of library policies. These individuals were purposively selected.

Iarossi (2006) notes that measurement errors are likely to occur in the wording of a questionnaire or an interview schedule. Cooper and Schindler, (2014) agrees that certain words easily strike a chord in respondents, particularly if the word appears to tilt the nature of response in favour of the respondent. In such cases, the respondents tend to provide answers that make them sound pleasant to the interviewer, or respond in a way that they perceive as defending their integrity. Care was taken to ensure that the wording and language used in the interview schedule was precise to reduce associated measurement error.

The interviews were used to confirm and compliment the research data gathered through observation and the questionnaire. The data was captured and recorded for further analysis later as the interview progressed. After collecting the data, this information was then recorded and filed pending further analysis. The findings and analysis of the interview data are provided in Chapter 6, section 6.3 of the study.

4.7.3 THE QUESTIONNAIRE

Most of the data for this study was collected using two questionnaires, one targeting internal customers (who constitute the service employees i.e. librarians), and the second targeting external customers (who constitute the library customers/users).

The researcher opted for the questionnaire because of the ease with which one can collect data from a large sample of respondents within a relatively short period of time. Other advantages of the questionnaire include the low cost of implementation, and the freedom of the respondent to choose when to complete the questionnaire, especially where their personal opinions regarding service quality were sought.

The questionnaire for the internal respondents consisted of a set of questionnaire items that were used to measure specific concepts, organized into five sections. The first section captured the particulars of the respondents and information regarding the library facility. This was followed by service quality in the library; library customer orientation; the library's service innovation; technology use in the libraries; and the library's overall performance with regard to customer attraction and retention, communication, market survey, and decision making.

The external respondents' questionnaire sought to capture their background information and their perceptions of the library service quality, and whether as customers and recipients of a service, they were satisfied or not.

The survey instrument in this study replicated the scales that have been used in previously validated studies such as Parasuram et. al. (1985, 1988); Akan, (1995:39-43) used the SERVQUAL model in the four stars hotels and found out that competence and courtesy combined with assurance were most important attributes influencing the perception of quality; Curry and Sinclair (2002) in an attempt to assess the quality of physiotherapy services used the SERVQUAL model and three physiotherapy services in Dundee, Scotland; Badri et al., (2003) made an assessment and application of the SERVQUAL model in measuring service quality in information technology centre. For their research gap they used a larger sample which also differs from other studies that addressed the dimensionality problem of the IT centre-adapted SERVQUAL instruments. The second gap was to identify the gaps in service quality in the IT centres in the three institutions of higher education in the United Arab Emirates; Kumar, Fong and Manshor (2009) used the SERVQUAL model in a research to determine the relative importance of critical factors in delivering service quality of banks in Malaysia and Negi (2009) used the model to determine customer satisfaction through perceived quality in the Telecommunication industry and found out that reliability, empathy and network quality proved to significantly effective in contributing to overall service quality and overall customer satisfaction with mobile services.

The Likert scale measures allowed the respondents to rate how strongly they agreed or disagreed with carefully constructed statements. The Likert scale is a widely used psychometric scale in questionnaires for measuring respondents' level of agreement with statements (Keeney, McKenna and Hasson, 2010). The most popular type of Likert measure is on a scale of 1 - 5, where anchors of 5 (strongly agree) and 1 (strongly disagree) and 5 (always) and 1 (never) are often used. The middle scale ordinate point gives the respondent a neutral position which states neither agreement nor disagreement with the statement. This study eliminated neutrality to condition the respondents to either agree or disagree with different

statements. One of the advantages of the Likert scale, according to Keeney, McKenna and Hasson (2010), is that it gives all the measurements equal weight. This was desired in this study because it made it easier to compare the level of customer satisfaction and service quality levels of each academic library.

4.7.4 OTHER DATA COLLECTION INSTRUMENTS

Content analysis was used to compliment the data gathered through the other approaches. In addition to available literature, the researcher was able to collect information bulletins about particular institutions (and specifically for the library department). In some of the departments, there was heavy use of social media tools where users freely commented about the library. However, caution was exercised in these instances to verify the information posted. The responses by the departments on these platforms also helped the researcher to judge the timeliness with which they corrected mistakes and the attitude that they had towards their customers.

Where possible, the researcher also flipped through the library customer complaints/compliments registers and the daily occurrence records that are available in some of library facilities to pick out relevant issues, which were later compared with the other already qualitative gathered data. This information on service delivery, quality issues in academic libraries was used to build up the literature review (Chapter 3) and also in the discussion of the findings (Chapter 7).

4.8 DATA COLLECTION PROCESS

The data collection process highlights the actual data gathering process for each of the research instruments, from the start to the end of the study.

The researcher engaged two research assistants primarily to assist with the distribution and collection of the questionnaires. The research assistants had to have university level education and be able to communicate in the English language. This was necessary since the medium of communication in the study was English and it also gave the research assistant an advantage when dealing with the sample population. They were also trained/inducted into the research process in order to understand what the research was all about. The questionnaires were hand-delivered to the respondents in their respective institutions by the researcher and research assistants from different strategic points, such as the main undergraduate lecture halls, seminar rooms for the postgraduate classes, and the library exits. These strategic points were chosen because they made it possible to access a large number of the target group. The information

professionals having been purposively identified were approached individually at their workstations and then requested to participate in the survey. A questionnaire was issued to them if they agreed.

The hand-delivery of questionnaires approach was used and proved to be very effective, in some cases with as much as 80% response rate, a fact that is also supported by Babbie (2010). The questionnaires were administered to the different clients upon explanation of what the exercise entailed. They were also only given out to those who expressed a willingness to be part of the study. For this purpose, a cover letter was attached to the questionnaire introducing the researcher and the purpose of the study to the respondents. They were also assured of confidentiality regarding the information that they provided. For this reason, they were reminded that they did not need to fill in their personal identification details (such as names).

The respondents were left with the questionnaire to complete at their own leisure. This ensured that they felt free to complete the questionnaire without feeling intimidated by the presence of the researcher or assistants, or feeling as though they were under any duress to comply. It was also made clear that they were free to withdraw from the study should they wish to do so; participation in the study was completely voluntary. A date was agreed upon on when to collect the completed questionnaire. In cases where the respondents felt they needed help, they were assisted by the researcher and assistants with how to answer the questionnaire items. The questionnaire results are discussed in Chapter 5.

The researcher administered the observation schedule personally. According to Sileyew (2019) observational research findings are considered strong in validity as they enable the researcher to collect a depth of information about a particular behavior. However, Cooper and Schindler (2014) many academics have a limited view of observation, thus relegating it to a minor technique of field data collection, thereby missing out on its potential for forging business decisions and denying its historic stature as a creative means of obtaining primary data.

The researcher visited each library and independently observed the true state of the facility, noting the findings for each on an observation sheet. This data was used to help compliment the information already gathered through the other research methods. The observation schedule was informed by a literature review on the service delivery challenges in academic libraries. In this particular study, the researcher took note of the physical facilities, beginning with the physical route leading to the academic library, the location of the library, the visible appearance of the facility's (external and internal) infrastructure, and the different service points. Some

aspects of the library facilities/services, e.g. general cleanliness, guiding, congestion, suitability of the building and furniture to different categories of users, etc., were easily observable as the researcher moved around the library facility.

From certain strategic positions, observations were made noting the events as they were unfolding on the ground (outlined in the observation guide in Appendix 4, page 440). In some cases and where possible, the researcher took photographs of the activities as they were happening to provide an accurate picture of the service process. During this exercise, the researcher avoided prolonged contact with the library users and the service providers to avoid distortion of the information presented. It is also important to note that the researcher made no prior appointments when doing the observation visits.

Observation entails listening to people, watching their behaviour and noticing the natural setting in a way that prompts an intellectual inquiry into the meaning and analytical interpretation of the observed behaviour. For this study, the method helped to verify, confirm, and compliment the facts gathered through the other methods and allowed information to be captured correctly without the distortion that often arises when people are asked to report their own behaviour. The results are discussed in Chapter 6, section 6.2, and summarized in Appendix 5 of the study.

The interviews were conducted by the researcher for consistency. A prior arrangement was made to meet with the intended respondent. In instances where the respondents wanted to know the nature of the interview, the interview schedule was made available to them beforehand to enable them go through the intended questions/themes. This proved helpful as it saved on the time spent in the interview with the different respondents.

The snowballing and purposive sampling methods were used to identify the interview respondents in this case. Snowballing was used in those instances where the researcher was not very familiar with the particular institution; it was done in order to get to know the key persons within the department and also understand the organizational hierarchy in place.

Where measurement error due to the wording in the interview schedule was noted, the interviewer quickly re-phrased the question to avoid any ambiguity. In instances where the interviewees restricted their answers or appeared not to provide specific answers, the researcher subjected them to further questioning by use of both probing and leading questions. The researcher engaged with the interviewees to avoid a situation where they would be passive

during the interview process. This helped to elicit satisfactory answers from each of the respondents. While the interview questions were standardized, probing could not be standardized because the investigator had no control over the interviewees' responses. However, variability in the context of probing was reduced and was controlled as the researcher himself conducted all the interviews.

In this study, both the researcher and the respondent systematically followed the questions as listed on the interview schedule. The researcher posed the questions, noting down the responses and limited further questions to only those instances where the responses were inadequate. This is because it is believed that more probing tends to increase variability in the context of the question. The respondents were also respected when they expressed the wish not to respond to certain questions. The results are discussed in Chapter 6, section 6.3.

4.9. DATA ANALYSIS

According to Saunders, Lewis, and Thornbill (2016), data analysis is a body of methods and approaches that are used to elicit facts in order to develop explanations about a given representation of a population. The appropriate data analysis techniques were applied to analyze the qualitative and quantitative data collected.

The interview schedule, observation schedule, literature review and content analysis were used to yield qualitative data. According to Mugenda and Mugenda (2003), qualitative data analysis involves the following: data organization; creating categories, themes and patterns; analysing and interpreting information; and writing a report. Data classification reduces data into homogeneous attributes that enable the researcher to identify meaningful relationships and correlations. In this study, qualitative data analysis was limited to content analysis using Microsoft Word 2007 as a tool.

Questionnaires were used to yield quantitative data. Data from the field was organized in order to facilitate analysis by coding quantitative data into numeric data. Data editing entailed examining the collected new data to detect errors and omissions for correction to ensure accuracy and consistency. This coded data was then classified and tabulated for efficient analysis. Data was tabulated using descriptive statistics. Measures of central tendency, the mean and the mode, were used to provide expected summary statistics of the variables being measured. Frequency distributions were also shown in tables, charts and percentages. This was done using the Statistical Package for the Social Sciences (SPSS), Version 2.0. Both descriptive and inferential statistics were used to analyze the data.

These findings were then discussed and explained to show the influence of the study's parameters. Other alternative explanations were noted and the research report and findings were compiled and written, ready for dissemination.

4.9.1 MEASURES OF SERVICE QUALITY

This consisted of 22 items on a five point Likert scale with anchors of 5 (strongly agree) and 1 (strongly disagree) for the internal users and 5 (always) and 1 (never) for external users. In the questionnaire, there were 5 items on reliability, 3 items on responsibility, 4 items on assurance, 4 items on empathy, and 6 items on tangibles.

4.9.2 MEASURES OF SERVICE INNOVATIVENESS

Innovativeness in this study was measured using 36 items, divided as follows: 6 items were on new products/services, 8 items were on changes to products and service processes, and 4 items were on changes in the application of the technology in service delivery. Respondents were asked to rate their library on a 5-point Likert scale.

4.9.3 MEASURES OF LIBRARY SERVICE PERFORMANCE

Performance measures can be either subjective or objective. Ngai and Ellis (1998) suggest an empirical relationship between the two measures. With this in mind, this study used subjective measures of performance. These are also amenable for easier collection of otherwise private data. Consequently, library performance was measured using 26 items: 13 items were on customer response (customer retention and customer satisfaction), 7 items were on customer attraction/retention, and 3 items were on market share. Respondents were asked to rate their library performance on a Likert scale.

4.9.4 MEASURES OF CUSTOMER SATISFACTION

The survey used a measurement scale that was developed and used by Smith and Wheeler (2002) and Cook, (2008) to measure customer experience when receiving a service. The scale was modified to suit the needs of the study, but consisted of a set of questions focusing on the attributes of service quality, that is the reliability, consistency, responsiveness, assurance, and the tangibles (such as the appearance of the physical facilities, equipment, personnel and communication materials). For this purpose, a questionnaire was developed for the external clients (library users) where they were to state their views regarding the library on these different parameters.

4.10 VALIDITY AND RELIABILITY

Reliability refers to dependability or consistency, while validity means truthfulness. Reliability and validity are necessary in order to get distinctive results. Neuman (2006) observes that while validity and reliability are usually complementary concepts, reliability is the easiest to achieve when the measure is precise and observable.

In the current study, both validity and reliability were attained through the following:

- To ensure validity, each of the questionnaire items was assessed to determine its contribution to the study's objectives.
- Validity was also determined by the supervisors to ensure that the researcher adhered to the topic and to check that what is intended to be measured would be measured.
- A pilot test was conducted to test the reliability of the study's instruments before use.
- This was carried out as detailed in section 4.9.2, which discusses the procedure followed and the corrective measures that were taken based on its results.

For the qualitative data, validity was ensured through the following strategies:

- For the interview sessions in order to ensure validity, these were conducted on a one-to-one basis. All the interviews were conducted by the researcher in person to ensure consistency of the questions fielded. The interview schedule was used at all times for consistency and avoid digressing.
- During the interview sessions the rich and thick verbatim descriptions of participants' accounts to support findings were captured
- Respondent validation whereby interview participants were invited to comment on the interview session adequately reflected the phenomena being investigated; this was done before the transcript, final themes and concepts created

4.10.1 RELIABILITY ANALYSIS RESULTS

In this study, reliability was analysed using reliability scores (Cooper and Schindler, 2014). To determine reliability, the instruments were analysed using Cronbach's Alpha, which measures internal consistency and how well a set of items measures a single construct. From the internal reliability analysis, the seven variables had matched the set minimum coefficient of 0.6 for internal reliability. There was a considerable high internal reliability for the data since the Cronbach's alpha coefficients for all the variables were above 0.6 as follows; service quality

(0.887); market survey (0.683); communication (0.637); Service innovation (0.62); Service range (0.92); Library performance (0.771); and customer attraction (0.792).

The value of the alpha coefficient ranges from 0 to 1. A higher value means greater reliability of the research instruments. The study had two questionnaires for library clients: one for external users, i.e. the general University community who constitute the library users) and the second for the internal users (librarians). This is as shown in Table 4.6.

Table 4.6 Reliability analysis

| Variable (Appendix1) | Cronbach alpha | No. of items |
|---------------------------------|-----------------------|---------------------|
| Service Quality combined | 0.887 | 26 |
| Market Survey Combined | 0.683 | 9 |
| Communication Combined | 0.637 | 9 |
| Service Innovation | 0.62 | 13 |
| Service Range combined | 0.92 | 34 |
| Library Performance combined | 0.771 | 9 |
| Customer Attraction combined | 0.792 | 20 |

| Variable (Appendix2) | Cronbach alpha |
|-----------------------------|-----------------------|
| Library assessment | 0.9 |

The librarians' questionnaire was divided into six parts, namely: service quality perceptions; library customer service orientation (library market survey, library communication, service innovation); library service range/provision; library performance (service delivery, customer attraction/retention). The reliability of the questionnaire was 93.9%. The external customers' questionnaire focused on library assessment, and produced a reliability score of 90%.

The results of the reliability are as summarised in Table 4.6. It was determined that the instruments had acceptable reliability coefficients and were appropriate for the study.

4.10.2 SAMPLE SIZES AND RESPONSE RATES BY THE INSTITUTIONS

Following the administration of the research instrument as detailed in Section 4.7, the results yielded were as shown in Table 4.7. According to Mugenda and Mugenda (2003), a 50% return rate of the research instrument is adequate, 60% is good, and above 70% is rated as very good.

According to Saunders, Lewis, and Thornbill (2016) a response rate of between 52 to 100% is considered adequate for organizations. Table 4.7, page 150 reveals that the study had an overall response rate of 71%. In terms of distribution, 47 questionnaires out of the 80 issued were received from the librarians (43% males and 57% females) as shown in Table 4.7. This translates to a 58.75% response rate. This questionnaire (see Appendix 1) targeted the internal library customers (librarians). Seven hundred and fourteen (714) questionnaires were received back from external users (55% males and 45% females) as shown in Table 4.7. This questionnaire (see Appendix 2, page 436) targeted the external library customers. This translated to a 71% response rate.

Based on the above and according to Saunders, Lewis, and Thornbill (2016) the overall 29% no response rate can be assumed to be of little significance in so far as influencing the results of the entire study. Possible reasons for the lack of response could be forgetfulness or no interest at all- this being seen from the view that there were customers not happy with the service at all - having totally given up on good library service. This is discussed in detail in other sections within the study.

Table 4.7 General response of all the respondents

| Overall response rate of external users | | |
|---|------------------|-------------------|
| | Frequency | Percentage |
| Response | 714 | 71 |
| Non-response | 286 | 29 |
| Total | 1000 | 100 |
| General Response of the external customers by gender | | |
| | Frequency | Percentage |
| Male | 393 | 55 |
| Female | 321 | 45 |
| Total | 714 | 100 |
| General Response of the librarians by gender | | |
| Gender | Frequency | Percentage |
| Male | 20 | 43 |
| Female | 27 | 57 |
| Total | 47 | 100 |

4.10.2 PILOT STUDY

According to Saunders, Lewis and Thornbill (2016) a pilot study is a small scale preliminary study conducted in order to assess and determine the feasibility, time, cost, adverse events, and affect size (statistical variability) in an attempt to test the research tools before a full scale research project. Cooper and Schindler (2014) likewise explain that as a mini-version, a pilot study allows alterations and changes to the research instruments to be made following the outcome of the pilot as it reveals to the investigator pertinent issues that are likely to be encountered during the full implementation of the project. Mugenda and Mugenda (2003) are of the view that pre-testing also enhances the reliability of the instruments as consistent measures of the concept are being studied.

Thus, in order to maximize the validity and reliability of the current study, a pilot study was carried out in order to test, verify, and refine the research instruments by minimizing inaccuracies and inconsistencies before the main study. A total of 30 questionnaires were administered in the pilot study for pre-testing. The pilot study targeted 5th year Civil Engineering students at the Dedan Kimathi of Technology University in Nyeri as its external customers. These students were chosen because they were senior students at the university. Owing to their participation in the pilot study they were disqualified for the actual study. They had also been in the institution the longest as their program takes five years compared to others which run for three, the assumption being that they had used the library facility the longest. For internal customers, the pilot targeted library staff within the same institution.

According to Rea and Parker (2005:31), a pre-test of the draft questionnaire assesses critical factors such as the following:

- Clarity of the questionnaire : How will the respondents perceive and understand the questions ? Are the response choices clear generating the desired information? Any ambiguities may confuse the respondents, leading to undesired information.
- Comprehensiveness of the questionnaire: Are the questions and response choices quite comprehensive to adequately cover a whole range of options? Are the questions irrelevant, repetitive or incomplete, requiring revision.
- Acceptability of the questionnaire: Excessive questionnaire length or undue consideration of ethical and moral standards, e.g. questions that are perceived to invade the privacy of respondents.

In this study, the pilot study played a key role in refining the data collection instruments. The responses in the pilot study also showed the respondents' capacity to answer the questions. The following challenges/weaknesses were noted during the piloting of the instruments:

- Vague answers to some of the questionnaires items
- Unanswered questions
- Suspicion regarding the exercise
- Long time in completing the questionnaires

The following measures were undertaken after the pilot study in order to address the noted challenges:

- Rephrasing of questions that were vague to enhance clarity. Unclear directions were also revealed and corrected accordingly.
- Improvements were effected on the research questions in order to convey the intended meanings. This helped to enhance the validity and reliability of the research instrument before carrying out the actual study.
- Both the researcher and research assistants assisted those who needed help in completing the questionnaires.
- The questionnaires were self-administered. This helped to avoid any biases. It also ensured that they were not misplaced or lost.
- The questionnaire included a cover letter explaining the purpose and importance of the study, as well as instructions on how to complete it and when it would be collected. This helped to build confidence among the respondents. For one, they understood the essence of the study and were therefore willing to help with the data collection. It also helped to dissolve any suspicion which would have been detrimental to the entire process.
- In order to manage the questionnaire administration, the research assistants were trained and familiarized with the questionnaire to ensure its uniform implementation. Efforts were made to establish a good rapport with the respondents in order to achieve a high response rate.

4.11 ETHICAL ISSUES

Minja (2009) points out that ethics, is very important in any research activity and the term is used to refer to the norms governing human conduct that have a significant impact on human welfare. Saunders, Lewis, and Thornbill (2016), agrees to this noting that it (good ethics) influences the acceptability of the researcher. Wells (1994) **in** Lewa (2014), defines ethics in terms of behaviour appropriate to academics and the conduct of research.

In carrying out this research study, efforts were made to avoid, as much as possible, the violation of ethical principles. Basic considerations guiding the study included: the privacy of the respondents; voluntary participation; consent and freedom to withdraw from the process; confidentiality of the information provided; anonymity; and the full disclosure of the aims of the study and what was to happen with the gathered information. Cooper and Schindler (2014) stresses the importance of protection of the respondents views. The researcher ensured that this was adhered to by training each of the assistants on how to approach the intended respondents and also to maintain their 'peace', even when not well received by the participants. The principle of freedom to participate or withdraw was adhered to by allowing the participants who wished to stop after completing only part of the questionnaire to do so, and in good faith. The intention of the research was explained to each of the respondents before the administration of the data collection instruments, and their consent sought regarding their willingness to participate. In this respect, the researcher only dealt with those who expressed an interest in participating.

The principle of objectivity was considered to be very critical to this study during data collection, as recommended by Saunders, Lewis, and Thornbill (2016). For this reason, assurances were made that the data collected from any particular institution will not be shared, and the identities of the participating members will not be disclosed. Upon data collection, the information was protected and privacy maintained to ensure no leakage to unauthorized parties. As a way of promoting the anonymity of the participants, they were not expected to write their names or provide any contact details in their responses.

The study was carried out among members of the university community who are the main users of academic library facilities. An introductory letter from the researcher (Appendix 6A clarifying to the respondents of both the questionnaires and the interview that their consent to participate in the exercise was attached to the research tools. Where consent was denied the researcher moved on to the next subject. And in cases where the questionnaire respondents

decided not to respond back, this was not pursued further but replacements were gotten) and the University of Zululand explaining the purpose of the research accompanied each of the questionnaires, stressing that the anonymity of the participants will be respected.

Clearance was also sought from the University of Zululand through the Postgraduate research and ethics committee, and an ethical clearance certificate was granted for the purpose of the research.

4.12 CHAPTER SUMMARY

This chapter discussed the research methodology. The survey research method was used to collect data from the academic libraries, targeting both external (library users) and internal (library staff) customers. The chapter detailed the population, study area, sample size and sampling approaches adopted. It also highlighted the data collection approaches that were used; how the data was gathered from the different respondents; the administration of the research instruments, i.e. questionnaires, interviews, and observation; and the steps undertaken to ensure that the data gathered was both reliable and valid.

The chapter concluded by highlighting the ethical considerations and concerns of the study. The next two chapters present the analysis and interpretation of the data, beginning with the questionnaire responses in Chapter 5, and the observation and interview results in Chapter 6. These results are then discussed in Chapter 7.

CHAPTER FIVE

DATA ANALYSIS AND PRESENTATION: QUESTIONNAIRE RESPONSES

5.1 INTRODUCTION

This chapter presents the findings of the study. The purpose of this section was to analyse the questionnaire results gathered from the respondents regarding the quality of service in academic libraries in Kenya. The data for the study was gathered via the use of questionnaires, observation and interviews. The study objectives are as listed in section 5.2. The results and discussion of the survey data on service quality in academic libraries are presented in this chapter. The current chapter deals with the questionnaire responses only. The data was gathered using questionnaires, which were administered to both the internal customers (library staff) and the external library customers. A total of 761 questionnaires were analysed. The study was carried out as discussed in Chapter 4 and the response rates are shown and discussed in section 4.10.2, indicating an overall response rate of 76%. Table 4.7, page 150 shows the details. The order of presentation starts with the demographic characteristics of the respondents. Section 5.1 to 5.12 provides the general analysis of the service quality for all the libraries. The analysis features the views of both the internal customers (librarians) and the external customers. The analysis has been done following each of the set objectives and the corresponding research questions.

5.2 OBJECTIVES OF THE STUDY

The study was guided by the following research objectives and the corresponding research questions.

RO1: To evaluate the impact that the service outlay factors (such as human resources, technology, library environment, information resources) have on the service quality in the libraries

- What is the overall service quality of Kenyan academic library systems from the customer's perspective?
- What perceptions do the customers have of the academic libraries?
- What skills/attitudes must the staff have to enable them to satisfy the customer?
- What factors determine the customers' evaluation of service quality in academic libraries?

RO2: To assess the library customer service orientation and its influence on service quality in the academic libraries

- How is the library market orientation?
- What are the communication strategies in place?
- What innovations do the libraries engage in to improve service delivery?

RO3: To assess how the range of services/products offered by the academic libraries influence service quality in the academic libraries

- What kinds of information resources/services are available?
- What approaches are employed in delivering service to the customers?

RO4: To analyse the degree of library customer retention/attraction and service delivery and the influence on service quality in the academic libraries.

- What attracts and discourages the customers to the libraries?
- What image does the library have? How strong is the growth of the library?
- What is the nature of service delivery in the libraries?
- What is the nature of customer satisfaction in the libraries? What problems do the libraries encounter in satisfying their customers?

5.3 DATA ANALYSIS: QUESTIONNAIRES

The following sections present the analyses of the general and specific findings touching on different service features. The analysis is presented using tables showing means, percentages, and frequencies, for comparison purposes. The questionnaire responses from the librarians (Appendix 1, page 427) and the external customers (Appendix 2, page 436) were each analysed and summarised to capture the key factors. Sections 5.4.1 – 5.4.1.5.6 give the summary of the external customers' responses, as captured in Appendix 2 from the general customer demographics (library usage, distribution of customers by level of education, nationality and gender); level of cleanliness; customer satisfaction; information resources/services available; and the perceptions concerning the library service quality. This is followed by sections 5.5.1– 5.10.5, with a summary of the librarians' demographics up to the perceptions about the library service quality.

5.3.1 PART 1: ANALYSIS OF THE EXTERNAL CUSTOMERS' QUESTIONNAIRE RESPONSES (APPENDIX 2)

The study was carried out in the academic libraries in ten (10) universities. The sample population consisted of one broad category of library users (clients); which was divided into two: the service providers (librarians) and the non-librarians. This section deals with data from Appendix 2 on the external customers who sought different forms of service. The details are shown in Table 4.7.

5.3.1.1 DEMOGRAPHICS

The demographic section describes the population under study in terms of age, nationality, gender, education levels, their library usage characteristics, the resources/services they get from the respective academic libraries, their rating of these facilities in terms of cleanliness and satisfaction of information needs; and finally, their perception of service delivery as provided to them by the academic libraries.

5.3.1.1.1 DISTRIBUTION OF THE LIBRARY CLIENTS BY NATIONALITY/GENDER

From Table 5.1 the results indicated that 663 (93%) of the respondents were Kenyans by nationality. Only 51 (7%) of the external customers were non-Kenyan by nationality (and similarly the gender aspect) was an important parameter, as it had a bearing on quality expectations and standards. 55% of the respondents were male, while 45% were female, where N=714. The gender parity helped in ensuring that the views of neither gender were suppressed. Also, there are gender stereotypes which may greatly impact on the service quality perceptions and expectations. From the empirical analysis (See Table 7.9 (c.) nationality is not so significant in the service quality ratings; but gender has a significant effect.

5.4.1.1.2 DISTRIBUTION OF THE LIBRARY EXTERNAL CUSTOMERS BY LEVEL OF EDUCATION

The study also sought to establish the clients' level of education in relation to their use of the library facility. Table 5.1 gives a summary of this information: the library users were of a reasonably good level of education; with the majority 509 (71%) having reached degree level, followed by diploma holders 125 (17%) and the postgraduate holders trailing behind at 50 (7%). From the empirical analysis (See Table 7. 9 (c) level of education is not so significant in the service quality ratings.

Table 5.1 Details of the external customers N=714

| Nationality by gender details of the external customers N=714 | | | | |
|---|--|------------|-----------|------------|
| Category | | | Frequency | Percentage |
| Nationality | Male (N=393) | Kenyan | 366 | 93 |
| | | Non-Kenyan | 27 | 7 |
| | Female (N=321) | Kenyan | 297 | 92 |
| | | Non-Kenyan | 24 | 8 |
| Distribution of the external library clients by level of education N=714 | | | | |
| Education Level | | | Frequency | % |
| Primary | | | 1 | 0.1 |
| Secondary | | | 28 | 4.0 |
| Vocational school | | | 1 | 0.1 |
| Diploma/certificate | | | 125 | 17.5 |
| Undergraduate University degree | | | 509 | 71.3 |
| Postgraduate degree | | | 50 | 7.0 |
| Library usage by the external customers N=714 | | | | |
| | | Response | Frequency | Percentage |
| Library Usage | An occasional user (once a week) | | 248 | 34.7 |
| | A regular user (daily for not more than 1hr) | | 114 | 16 |
| | An average user (daily for not less than 4hrs) | | 279 | 39.1 |
| | A heavy user (daily for not less than 6hrs) | | 51 | 7.1 |
| | Never at all | | 22 | 3.1 |
| Type of User | Undergraduate student | | 568 | 79.6 |
| | Postgraduate student | | 129 | 18.06 |
| | Staff | | 17 | 2.4 |

5.3.1.2 LIBRARY USAGE

In terms of library usage, 444 (62.2%) of the customers were daily/regular library users. Table 5.1 summarises this information; it is also inferred that about 248 (35%) of the users were not keen library customers, but only visited the library weekly, while 22 (3%) never visited the library at all.

279 (39%) of the respondents were regular users, making use of the library for an average of at least four hours daily. The heavy users, putting in not less than six hours daily in the library, comprised 51 (7.1%) of the respondents. This usage pattern however, has major implications on the resources available. From the regression analysis (See Table 7.9 (c) factor (frequency of use) is not so significant in the service quality ratings.

In terms of user type, while the majority of the library users were undergraduates, constituting 568 (80%), there were a small number of postgraduates, namely 129 (18%) approximately 17 (2%) overall staff users. From this, it can be deduced that the academic libraries' main clientele are undergraduates. It would, however, be important to try to understand why there were such

low numbers of postgraduates and staff. Library usage is important, as it may serve as a pointer to the level of satisfaction derived from the libraries and the service given.

5.3.1.3 INFORMATION RESOURCES AVAILABLE IN THE LIBRARIES

From the study, it was established that in the majority of the libraries, the following were readily available: books, e-resources, periodicals, and computers. The least available were materials and equipment for the PWDs and children's library section.

Table 5.2, page 152 gives a summary of the findings from the customers' views. Books, e-resources, computers, and periodicals were rated highly by the library customers, while the non-book materials, services for the PWDs, A/V materials and interlibrary services were rated as being least available.

5.3.1.4 LIBRARY CLEANLINESS

It was necessary to establish how the library customers perceived the level of library cleanliness, and whether as a variable it enhanced customer satisfaction. Table 5.3, page 154 summarises this information from the external library customers' questionnaire (Appendix 2, page 436), N=714, and 472 (66%) of the respondents rated their respective libraries as very clean. Another 226 (32%) of the respondents rated the respective library facilities as partially clean; while 14 (2%) of the respondents rated them as untidy and 2 (0.3%) rated them as being very untidy. Further the regression analysis empirically (See Table 7.9 (c) support this finding pointing out that this attribute was significant in service quality rating.

5.3.1.5 LIBRARY USER SATISFACTION

It was essential to establish the level of library customer satisfaction. This is as depicted by Table 5.3, whereby 692 (97 %) of the respondents responded that they are users of the library and 22 (3%) do not use the service at all.

However, 200 (28%) of the respondents of the library users were quite dissatisfied with the library service(s) delivery for one reason or another. The results are shown in Table 5.3, with 514 (72%) of the respondents indicating that they were satisfied with the services received from the library.

When asked to indicate whether they would be shopping for a new library facility within the next six months (See Table 5.3 on page 154), 158 (22%) of the customers were emphatic and indicated that they were determined to have their library needs met, thus implying that they

would shop for another library facility. Further the regression analysis empirically (See Table 7.9(c)) support this finding that dissatisfaction with the services rendered significantly influences the service quality rating. This on the otherhand, dissatisfaction has a significant effect on the decision to exit looking for another library facility offering superior services.

Table 5.2 Library resources and services available (external customers) (% of respondents agreeing on the availability of these resources) N=714

| EXTERNAL CUSTOMERS RESPONSES ON THE AVAILABLE LIBRARY RESOURCES AND SERVICES (% of respondents agreeing on the availability of these resources) | | | | | | | | | | |
|---|----------|----------|----------|----------|----------|----------|----------|----------|----------|-----------|
| | ACL 1 | ACL 2 | ACL 3 | ACL 4 | ACL 5 | ACL 6 | ACL 7 | ACL 8 | ACL 9 | ACL 10 |
| Books | 99 | 98 | 92 | 94 | 94 | 98 | 85 | 95 | 82 | 92 |
| Non book media (n.b.m) e.g. maps, portraits, e-resources | 21 | 13 | 7 | 14 | 33 | 11 | 15 | 16 | 10 | 1 |
| Computers | 63 | 72 | 45 | 61 | 89 | 95 | 92 | 54 | 71 | 16 |
| Children's section | 46 | 67 | 68 | 70 | 80 | 55 | 72 | 67 | 83 | 16 |
| Discussion rooms | 2 | 6 | 5 | 3 | 4 | 2 | 3 | 2 | 3 | 1 |
| Periodicals e.g. magazines, newspapers, journals | 11 | 0 | 1 | 2 | 67 | 11 | 12 | 11 | 1 | 0 |
| Facilities for the physically challenged | 12 | 58 | 42 | 47 | 80 | 33 | 72 | 66 | 44 | 16 |
| Projectors | 5 | 1 | 3 | 11 | 4 | 5 | 8 | 16 | 0 | 0 |
| Sound equipment e.g. headphones, music players | 4 | 0 | 3 | 0 | 31 | 4 | 15 | 5 | 0 | 0 |
| Audio-visual materials-music, films, photos etc. | 5 | 0 | 3 | 0 | 17 | 4 | 7 | 0 | 0 | 0 |
| General information reference materials e.g. business directories | 1 | 0 | 4 | 0 | 39 | 2 | 23 | 2 | 0 | 0 |
| Telephone services | 11 | 4 | 21 | 20 | 41 | 9 | 47 | 46 | 6 | 0 |
| Photocopying services | 0 | 0 | 3 | 0 | 13 | 4 | 10 | 7 | 0 | 0 |
| Printing services | 37 | 64 | 18 | 67 | 66 | 36 | 28 | 7 | 6 | 16 |
| Scanners | 13 | 46 | 11 | 44 | 40 | 15 | 17 | 7 | 4 | 9 |
| Binding services | 23 | 21 | 10 | 22 | 36 | 9 | 15 | 3 | 1 | 4 |
| Internet services | 33 | 16 | 8 | 23 | 73 | 20 | 18 | 7 | 4 | 8 |
| Cafeteria services | 13 | 13 | 42 | 50 | 66 | 60 | 67 | 77 | 14 | 0 |
| Textbook collection | 0 | 0 | 3 | 0 | 9 | 4 | 7 | 0 | 0 | 0 |
| Inter library services | 10 | 9 | 26 | 44 | 59 | 20 | 43 | 59 | 6 | 0 |
| | 2 | 0 | 5 | 19 | 36 | 15 | 15 | 13 | 1 | 0 |

Table 5.3 External library customer variables N=714

| Library cleanliness | | |
|----------------------------|-----------|------|
| Rating | Frequency | % |
| Very clean | 472 | 66.1 |
| Partially clean | 226 | 31.7 |
| Not clean | 14 | 1.96 |
| Very untidy | 2 | 0.3 |

| Library use | | |
|--------------------|-----------|-----|
| Response | Frequency | % |
| Yes | 692 | 97 |
| No | 22 | 3 |
| Total | 714 | 100 |

| Overall Library customer satisfaction | | |
|--|-----------|------------|
| Response | Frequency | Percentage |
| Yes | 200 | 28 |
| No | 514 | 72 |
| Total | 714 | 100 |

| Library customers looking for a new Library Facility | | |
|---|-----------|------------|
| Response | Frequency | Percentage |
| Yes | 158 | 22 |
| No | 556 | 78 |
| Total | 714 | 100 |

5.3.1.6 EXTERNAL CUSTOMERS PERCEPTIONS OF LIBRARY SERVICE QUALITY (Objective 1)

The academic library is the nerve centre or the hub around which scholarship revolves, thus it is a critical component with regard to intellectual development. A well-stocked academic library, thus is a repository of information, or a record of human experience, to which users may turn to for information. Jubb and Green (2007) emphasised that for centuries, academic libraries were instrumental in promoting research in all disciplines in the tertiary institutions. The current study sought to assess the performance of the library with regard to customer attraction and retention as a factor in service quality. This was done by asking questions related to customers' compliments/complaints, the growth of both the resources and the customer base, and the image of the external library customers. This was done by focusing on these different parameters within the library service delivery process and how these impacted on the service delivery (captured in the research, see Appendix 2). The study sought to evaluate the general performance of the library from the key informants (external customers). Table 5.4 shows the results of the overall general analysis. The rating was done based on the following scale on the mean: ($5 \geq M \geq 4.5$)- Excellent, ($4.5 > M \geq 3.0$)- Good, ($3.0 > M \geq 1.5$)- Poor, ($1.5 > M \geq 1$)- Very poor. The findings indicated that the performance was good with a mean score equivalent to 3.616. However, the general rating of the performance of the libraries differs significantly among the respondents, as reflected in the standard deviation of greater than one (Std. Dev. > 1.0). This variable's Cronbach's Alpha Coefficient was 0.939, showing high internal consistency, and therefore reliable for further analysis. Table 5.4 on page 157 shows the distribution of the library assessment responses for each particular item indicating the frequencies, mean, standard deviation and percentages.

The study used the SERVQUAL model among 714 external library customers seeking to assess the level of service quality against SERVQUAL's five dimensions, namely 1) Tangibles (the appearance of physical facilities, equipment, personnel, and communication materials); 2) Reliability (the ability to perform the promised service dependably and accurately); 3) Responsiveness (the willingness to help customers and provide prompt service); 4) Assurance (the competence of the system and its credibility in providing a courteous and secure service); and 5) Empathy (the approachability, ease of access and effort taken to understand customers' needs).

The findings for the individual institutions may vary with the general rating for all the institutions. When probed on specific aspects, the responses do reveal varying degrees of

discontent, which will need to be addressed for optimum satisfaction to be realised by the library customers.

5.3.1.6.1 RELIABILITY

70% of the respondents agreed that the customers should be informed beforehand of the range of services that are available and that this ought to happen always. On the statement responding to the question whether there is also a need for consistency in providing the service through honouring promises made to the customers, 62% of the respondents agreed that this happens always and 12% of the respondents indicated that it ought to be happening as often as possible. With regard to promptness, timeliness and reliability in service delivery, the customers were asked to respond to different statements. Thus when asked to respond to: “when the library promises to do something by a certain time it does so”, 17% of the respondents disagreed, 35% of the respondents were uncertain, 48% of the respondents agreed. On being asked whether the library “performs the service right the first time”, 15% of the respondents disagreed, 28% were uncertain and 56% of the respondents agreed that this happens. Regarding whether: the library provides its services at the time it promises to do so, 16% of the respondents disagreed, 28% were uncertain and 56 % agreed that this happens. From the responses, it is evident that the service delivery is not as smooth as expected; the libraries, for instance, fail to provide services as promise. This points to some lapses in the way the libraries deal with customer issues and it suggests a need for some improvements.

With regard to staff behaviour, in providing service, the customers’ responses to the statement: “employees in the library give me prompt service”, were: 14% disagreed, 18% were uncertain, while 68% agreed that this happens. Regarding their knowledgeability, the customers’ responses to the statement: “Employees of the library understand my specific needs”; were: 22%, disagreed, 37% were uncertain, 41% agreed. This still points to some level of dissatisfaction with regard to the librarians’ knowledge base. However, there was general satisfaction with regard to “the hours the library operates/opens”, with only 12% of the respondents disagreeing, but 74% indicating that they were satisfied with the library hours of operation.

Table 5.4 External customers' responses of the Library service quality Assessment

| Statements | | Strongly disagree | | Disagree | | Uncertain | | Agree | | Strongly agree | | Mean | Standard Deviation | Total | |
|-----------------------|---|-------------------|----|----------|----|-----------|----|-------|----|----------------|----|-------------|--------------------|------------|------------|
| ASSURANCE | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | |
| 1. | When the library promises to do something by a certain time it does so | 42 | 6 | 80 | 11 | 248 | 35 | 265 | 37 | 79 | 11 | 3.36 | 1.015 | 714 | 100 |
| 2. | When I have a problem, the library shows sincere interest in solving it | 34 | 5 | 70 | 10 | 158 | 22 | 302 | 42 | 150 | 21 | 3.65 | 1.064 | 714 | 100 |
| 3. | The library performs the service right the first time | 26 | 4 | 80 | 11 | 203 | 28 | 303 | 42 | 102 | 14 | 3.53 | 0.989 | 714 | 100 |
| 4. | The library provides its services at the time it promises to do so | 33 | 5 | 80 | 11 | 198 | 28 | 288 | 40 | 115 | 16 | 3.52 | 1.037 | 714 | 100 |
| 5. | I am informed about when certain services will be performed | 66 | 9 | 99 | 14 | 174 | 24 | 264 | 37 | 111 | 16 | 3.36 | 1.172 | 714 | 100 |
| RESPONSIVENESS | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | |
| 6. | Employees in the library give me prompt service | 35 | 5 | 66 | 9 | 129 | 18 | 327 | 46 | 157 | 22 | 3.71 | 1.062 | 714 | 100 |
| 7. | Employees in the library are always willing to help me | 30 | 4 | 38 | 5 | 105 | 15 | 343 | 48 | 198 | 28 | 3.90 | 1.003 | 714 | 100 |
| 8. | Employees in the library are never too busy to respond to my requests | 41 | 6 | 61 | 9 | 137 | 19 | 322 | 45 | 153 | 21 | 3.68 | 1.079 | 714 | 100 |
| 9. | The behaviour of employees in the library instils confidence in me | 28 | 4 | 71 | 10 | 150 | 21 | 305 | 43 | 160 | 22 | 3.70 | 1.046 | 714 | 100 |
| 10. | I feel safe in my transactions with the Library | 22 | 3 | 31 | 4 | 120 | 17 | 314 | 44 | 227 | 32 | 3.97 | 0.968 | 714 | 100 |
| 11. | Employees in the library are consistently courteous with me | 23 | 3 | 66 | 9 | 160 | 22 | 317 | 45 | 148 | 21 | 3.70 | 1.002 | 714 | 100 |
| EMPATHY | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | |
| 12. | Employees answer my questions with a lot of knowledge | 30 | 4 | 72 | 10 | 160 | 22 | 306 | 43 | 146 | 21 | 3.65 | 1.044 | 714 | 100 |
| 13. | The library gives me individualized attention | 79 | 11 | 112 | 16 | 149 | 21 | 230 | 32 | 144 | 20 | 3.35 | 1.269 | 714 | 100 |
| 14. | The library has employees who give me personal attention | 70 | 10 | 130 | 18 | 160 | 22 | 241 | 34 | 113 | 16 | 3.28 | 1.213 | 714 | 100 |

| | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | |
|--|---|-------------------|----------|-----|-----------|-----|-------|-----|----------------|------|--------------------|-------------|--------------|------------|------------|
| 15. | The library employees are knowledgeable in the work | 13 | 2 | 30 | 4 | 119 | 17 | 352 | 49 | 200 | 28 | 3.97 | 0.883 | 714 | 100 |
| <i>Table 5.4 External customers' responses of the Library service quality Assessment (cont.)</i> | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | |
| Statements | | Strongly disagree | Disagree | | Uncertain | | Agree | | Strongly agree | Mean | Standard Deviation | Total | | | |
| 16. | The library has my best interests at heart | 38 | 5 | 69 | 10 | 194 | 27 | 272 | 38 | 141 | 20 | 3.57 | 1.074 | 714 | 100 |
| 17. | Employees of the library understand my specific needs | 56 | 8 | 98 | 14 | 263 | 37 | 210 | 29 | 87 | 12 | 3.24 | 1.084 | 714 | 100 |
| TANGIBLES | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | |
| 18. | The library has modern-looking equipment | 93 | 13 | 114 | 16 | 159 | 22 | 243 | 34 | 105 | 15 | 3.21 | 1.251 | 714 | 100 |
| 19. | The library's physical facilities are visually appealing | 63 | 9 | 87 | 12 | 128 | 18 | 279 | 39 | 157 | 22 | 3.53 | 1.210 | 714 | 100 |
| 20. | The library's employees appear neat | 13 | 2 | 31 | 4 | 83 | 12 | 365 | 51 | 222 | 31 | 4.05 | 0.873 | 714 | 100 |
| 21. | Information materials in the library (such as books, maps, music, photos etc.) are visually appealing | 50 | 7 | 72 | 10 | 159 | 22 | 283 | 40 | 150 | 21 | 3.58 | 1.135 | 714 | 100 |
| 22. | I am satisfied with the hours the library operates/ opens | 42 | 6 | 45 | 6 | 95 | 14 | 273 | 38 | 259 | 36 | 3.93 | 1.129 | 714 | 100 |
| <i>Cronbach Alpha Coefficient = 0.939</i> <i>Composite Mean = 3.616; SD = 1.084</i> | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | |

5.3.1.6.2 TANGIBLES

With regard to the tangibles (the appearance of physical facilities, equipment, personnel, and communication materials), the responses to the following statements were:

I am informed about when certain services will be performed: 23% of the respondents disagreed, 24% were uncertain, while 53% agreed. This points to some level of miscommunication on the part of the librarians.

Employees in the library are always willing to help me; 9% of the respondents disagreed, 15% were uncertain, 76% agreed. This shows some level of willingness by the librarians to assist the customers in getting their needs met.

The library's employees appear neat; 6% of the respondents disagreed, 12% were uncertain, 82% agreed, hence indicating that there was a great degree of consciousness of the need to be neat among the librarians, which enhanced their professional outlook.

The library has modern-looking equipment; 29% disagreed, 22 % were uncertain, 49 % agreed, indicating a lack of appealing and good equipment and leading to some level of dissatisfaction on the part of the customers.

The library's physical facilities are visually appealing: 21% disagreed, 18% were uncertain, while 61% of the respondents agreed. This points to a lack of ambience in most of the libraries, making them unattractive to the very customers meant to patronise them.

Information materials in the library (such as books, maps, music, photos etc.) are visually appealing; 17% disagreed, 22% were uncertain, 61% agreed that this was the case. The number who agreed (i.e. 61%), though over half, is still a pointer to a lack of total satisfaction, considering that 39% of the respondents did not quite agree. This suggests the need for the libraries to re-visit the conservation and restoration practices of their information resources.

The library is well stocked with a variety of information resources: 28% of the respondents disagreed, 24% were uncertain and 69% agreed. The (%) who agreed, though over half, is still a pointer to a lack of total customer satisfaction, considering that about 40% of the respondents did not agree that there are a variety of information resources available to them. This calls for the libraries to appraise their collection development practices and make them comprehensive enough to meet customers' needs and aspirations.

I am satisfied with the physical location of the library; 11% of the respondents disagreed, 13% were uncertain, 76% agreed. This possibly suggests that the locations of the libraries were strategic; however, there is a degree of dissatisfaction from some of the customers as depicted by the 24% that did not agree to this.

Overall I am satisfied with the library's services: 17% disagreed, 16% of the respondents were uncertain, while 67% agreed.

5.3.1.6.3 RESPONSIVENESS

With regard to responsiveness (the willingness to help customers by providing prompt service), the respondents responded as follows to the following statements:

When I have a problem, the library shows sincere interest in solving it: 15% of the respondents disagreed, 22% were uncertain and 63% agreed. However, while a good number of the respondents indicated that there is a willingness by librarians to help, there are still some concern as 37% of the respondents are not well catered for. The possible explanation is that some of the librarians were not keen to help their customers when they needed help.

The library gives me individualised attention: 27% of the respondents disagreed, 21% were uncertain and 52% of the respondents agreed that this was extended to them. From this it is evident that only about half of the respondents are satisfied that they get individual attention, with another 50% not quite happy, and indeed about 30% indicating that they don't get this kind of attention from the department as an entity. The same kinds of responses were elicited when the question was asked of the employees themselves, as only 50% of the respondents agreed to the statement: *The library has employees who give me personal attention*, while 28% of the respondents disagreed, 22% were uncertain.

The library employees are knowledgeable in their work: 6% of the respondents disagreed, 17% were uncertain, 77% agreed to this. This is an indication that the respondents felt that their service providers were indeed knowledgeable, this possibly making them more confident to approach the library staff.

5.3.1.6.4 EMPATHY

With regard to empathy (the approachability, ease of access and effort taken to understand customers' needs), the responses were as follows to the following statements:

When I have a problem, the library shows sincere interest in solving it;
: 15% of the respondents disagreed, 23% were uncertain, 63% agreed.

Employees in the library are never too busy to respond to my requests: 15% of the respondents disagreed, 19% were uncertain, 66% agreed. This points to the availability of the service personnel to help customers and this behaviour draws more customers to the service providers (librarians) and the library, as shown by the responses to the next statement: *The behaviour of employees in the library instils confidence in me.* 14% of the respondents disagreed 21% were uncertain, and 65% agreed.

I feel safe in my transactions with the library: 7% of the respondents disagreed, 17% were uncertain, 76% agreed. Security is of great concern to all. The customers in particular are happy and feel secure making their visits to the library and particularly when operating within the library.

Employees in the library are consistently courteous with me: 12% of the respondents disagreed, 22% were uncertain, 66% agreed. The courtesy with which the customers are treated while in the library draws them more to the service providers (librarians) and the library.

5.3.1.6.5 ASSURANCE

With regard to responsiveness assurance (the competence of the system and its credibility in providing a courteous and secure service), the respondents responded as follows to the following statements:

I feel safe in my transactions with the Library: 7% of the respondents disagreed, 17% of them were uncertain, 76% o agreed. This not only encourages them, but also gives them the assurance that they are well taken care of.

Employees in the library are consistently courteous with me: 12% of the respondents disagreed 22% were uncertain, 76% agreed. This is particularly helpful in building a good rapport with the staff. The staff, equally, *show a lot of concern for their customers and are willing to help them out when in need.* This is well depicted, as 63% of the respondents alluded to this fact with only 15% of the respondents.

Employees answer my questions with a lot of knowledge: 14 % of the respondents disagreed, 22% were uncertain, while 64 % agreed. The fact that the employees are knowledgeable helps boost the customers' confidence in both the institution and the service staff (librarians).

*The library gives me individualised attention.*27% of the respondents disagreed, 21% were uncertain, 52% agreed. This one fact serves to assure them that they are in good hands.

The library has employees who give me personal attention 28% of the respondents disagreed, 22% of the respondents were uncertain, 50% agreed. This is important as it helps the customers to not only feel appreciated, but also serves to build their confidence in the service providers.

The library has my best interests at heart: 15% of the respondents disagreed, 27% o were uncertain, while 58 % agreed. The 58% is indicative of the fact that the service providers are keen to meet the needs of the customers, who in turn feel valued, boosting their degree of confidence in the system. However, there are a number of customers who feel that the librarians do not really care for them.

Employees of the library understand my specific needs; 22% o disagreed 37% were uncertain, 41% agreed. This indicates some mixed feelings, as less than half of the respondents are really uncertain that their specific needs are truly understood by the librarians. There is a higher degree of dissatisfaction (equivalent to 59% of the respondents).

The library employees are knowledgeable in their work: 6% of the respondents disagreed, 17% were uncertain, 77% agreed. This again is important as it enhances their confidence in the system, seeing the librarians as being reliable when it comes to handling their academic needs.

5.4.1 PART II: ANALYSIS OF THE LIBRARIANS' RESPONSES (APPENDIX 1)

The study was carried out among the academic libraries in ten (10) Universities. The sample population was drawn from both the internal and external customers (details of whom are discussed in Chapter 4 of the study). This section deals with data from Appendix 1, on the librarians who offered different forms of service in the academic libraries. The details are shown in Table 4.7.

5.4.1.1 DEMOGRAPHICS

Table 4.7 (see page 150) shows the general demographic characteristics of the librarians, as derived from the librarians' questionnaire (Appendix 1), indicating a 58.75% response rate. The demographic section describes the population under study in terms of age, nationality, gender, education levels, the resources/services available in the respective academic libraries, and their rating of these facilities in terms of service delivery by the academic libraries.

5.4.1.2 NATIONALITY BY GENDER STATUS OF THE LIBRARIANS

Nationality was an important parameter, as it had a bearing on quality expectations and standards. From Table 5.5 on page 163, the results indicated that 100% of the library staff are of Kenyan nationality. Gender was also considered important with regard to service delivery, and from the findings, there was some gender parity, as 43% and 57% of the respondents were male and female respectively.

5.4.1.3 AGE DISTRIBUTION OF THE LIBRARIANS

In terms of age distribution, the majority of the librarians, 80%, were between 31-50 years; only 4.2% are over 50 years. Table 5.5 shows the summarised results from the librarians' questionnaire (Appendix 1).

5.4.1.4 LEVEL OF EDUCATION OF THE LIBRARIANS

The study sought to establish the level of education of the librarians. The results from the librarians' questionnaire (Appendix 1) are shown in Table 5.5. With regard to educational

qualifications, 15% had a minimum of a diploma while 51% of the librarians had an undergraduate degree. In terms of postgraduate training, it was possessed by 34% librarians.

5.4.1.5 LIBRARIANS' EMPLOYMENT STATUS

In terms of employment, the findings were that 23.4% were on varying forms of contract terms and 76.6% on permanent terms. This is significant, in that almost a quarter of the library staff are on temporary terms. Table 5.5 shows the results from the librarians' questionnaire. The most prevalent type of employment was full-time engagement, accounting for 76.6 %.

Table 5.5 Librarians' data N=47

| Nationality/gender of the librarians | | | |
|---|--------|-----------|------|
| Nationality | | Frequency | % |
| Kenyan | Male | 20 | 43 |
| | Female | 27 | 57 |
| Non -Kenyan | Male | 0 | 0 |
| | Female | 0 | 0 |
| Age of the librarians | | | |
| Age group | | Frequency | % |
| Less Than 20 Yrs. | | 0 | 0 |
| 21-30 Yrs. | | 7 | 14.9 |
| 31-40 Yrs. | | 26 | 55.3 |
| 41-50 Yrs. | | 12 | 25.5 |
| Over 50 Yrs. | | 2 | 4.2 |
| Education level of the librarians | | | |
| Education level | | Frequency | % |
| Secondary | | 0 | 0 |
| Vocational School | | 0 | 0 |
| Diploma certificate | | 7 | 14.9 |
| University degree | | 24 | 51.1 |
| Postgraduate | | 16 | 34 |
| Employment status of the librarians | | | |
| Employment Status/Terms | | Frequency | % |
| Temporary Contract | | 11 | 23.4 |
| Permanent | | 36 | 76.6 |

5.4.1.6 INFORMATION RESOURCES AVAILABLE IN THE LIBRARIES

(Objective 3)

From the study responses, it was established that in the majority of the libraries, the following information resources were readily available: books, e-resources, periodicals, and computers, while the least available were: materials and equipment for the PWDs and the children's library

section. Books, e-resources, computers, and periodicals were rated highly by the library customers while the non-book materials, services for the PWDs, A/V materials and interlibrary services were least rated. Table 5.6 summarises the responses from the librarians.

Table 5.6. Library resources and services available N=47

| Resources/services | ACL 1 | | ACL 2 | | ACL 3 | | ACL 4 | | ACL 5 | | ACL 6 | | ACL 7 | | ACL 8 | | ACL 9 | | ACL 10 | |
|--|-------|-----|-------|-----|-------|-----|-------|-----|-------|-----|-------|-----|-------|-----|-------|-----|-------|-----|--------|-----|
| | N | % | N | % | N | % | N | % | N | % | N | % | N | % | N | % | N | % | N | % |
| Books | 5 | 100 | 4 | 100 | 4 | 75 | 6 | 67 | 4 | 80 | 1 | 14 | 1 | 100 | 3 | 100 | 5 | 100 | 4 | 100 |
| Non book media (nbm) e.g. maps, portraits, | 5 | 100 | 3 | 75 | 1 | 25 | 3 | 33 | 3 | 60 | 1 | 14 | 1 | 100 | 0 | 0 | 5 | 100 | 1 | 25 |
| e-resources | 5 | 100 | 4 | 100 | 4 | 100 | 9 | 100 | 5 | 100 | 1 | 14 | 1 | 100 | 3 | 100 | 5 | 100 | 4 | 100 |
| Computers | 4 | 80 | 4 | 100 | 3 | 75 | 9 | 100 | 4 | 80 | 1 | 14 | 1 | 100 | 1 | 33 | 5 | 100 | 2 | 50 |
| Children's section | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 1 | 100 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 |
| Discussion rooms | 4 | 80 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 5 | 100 | 1 | 14 | 1 | 100 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 |
| Periodicals e.g. magazines, journals | 4 | 80 | 4 | 100 | 2 | 50 | 9 | 100 | 4 | 80 | 7 | 100 | 1 | 100 | 1 | 33 | 5 | 100 | 1 | 25 |
| Facilities for the physically challenged | 5 | 100 | 1 | 25 | 1 | 25 | 6 | 67 | 1 | 20 | 2 | 29 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 1 | 20 | 0 | 0 |
| Projectors | 4 | 80 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 5 | 56 | 4 | 80 | 4 | 57 | 0 | 0 | 1 | 33 | 3 | 60 | 0 | 0 |
| Sound equipment e.g. headphones, music players | 4 | 80 | 0 | 0 | 1 | 25 | 0 | 0 | 4 | 80 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 |
| Audio-visual materials-music, films, photos etc. | 4 | 80 | 1 | 25 | 1 | 25 | 0 | 0 | 4 | 80 | 6 | 86 | 1 | 100 | 0 | 0 | 1 | 20 | 0 | 0 |
| General information reference materials | 4 | 80 | 4 | 100 | 2 | 50 | 9 | 100 | 4 | 80 | 5 | 71 | 1 | 100 | 1 | 33 | 2 | 40 | 0 | 0 |
| Telephone services | 2 | 40 | 1 | 25 | 2 | 50 | 2 | 22 | 4 | 80 | 1 | 14 | 0 | 0 | 2 | 67 | 3 | 60 | 3 | 75 |
| | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | |

Table 5.6 Library resources and services available (cont.)

| Resources/services | ACL 1 | | ACL 2 | | ACL 3 | | ACL 4 | | ACL 5 | | ACL 6 | | ACL 7 | | ACL 8 | | ACL 9 | | ACL 10 | |
|------------------------|-------|----|-------|-----|-------|----|-------|-----|-------|-----|-------|-----|-------|-----|-------|-----|-------|----|--------|-----|
| | N | % | N | % | N | % | N | % | N | % | N | % | N | % | N | % | N | % | N | % |
| Photocopying services | 4 | 80 | 4 | 100 | 3 | 75 | 9 | 100 | 5 | 100 | 7 | 100 | 0 | 0 | 1 | 33 | 2 | 40 | 3 | 75 |
| Printing services | 0 | 0 | 1 | 25 | 2 | 50 | 2 | 22 | 1 | 20 | 3 | 43 | 0 | 0 | 1 | 33 | 2 | 40 | 3 | 75 |
| Scanners | 3 | 60 | 2 | 50 | 2 | 50 | 1 | 1 | 4 | 80 | 3 | 43 | 0 | 0 | 1 | 33 | 2 | 40 | 3 | 75 |
| Binding services | 4 | 80 | 4 | 100 | 2 | 50 | 9 | 100 | 5 | 100 | 1 | 14 | 0 | 0 | 1 | 33 | 2 | 40 | 2 | 50 |
| Internet services | - | - | 4 | 100 | 3 | 75 | 9 | 90 | 4 | 80 | 7 | 100 | 1 | 100 | 3 | 100 | 4 | 80 | 4 | 100 |
| Cafeteria services | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 |
| Inter library services | 1 | 20 | 0 | 0 | 3 | 75 | 8 | 89 | 5 | 100 | 7 | 100 | 1 | 100 | 2 | 67 | 3 | 60 | 4 | 100 |

5.4.1.7 LIBRARIANS PERCEPTIONS OF SERVICE QUALITY (Objective 1)

Brax (2013) views services as offerings in which at least the core part of the market exchange between a provider and a customer is provided in the form of process-based components that are inseparable from their production resources and co-involve both parties. Kulkarni (2012) underscores service quality as one of the most crucial aspects of any business and service sectors. Quality is measured from customers' point of view are the greatest asset an organization can have. Of importance is customer focus which refers to meeting and exceeding customer requirements/expectations. As such it is critical for every organisation to have good communication channels which empowers customers to state their service expectations on the basis of which a library development plan could be prepared. Service issues are addressed to know the satisfaction level of the users and improve service delivery.

The study sought to assess the performance of the library with regard to customer attraction and retention as factors in service quality. This was done by asking questions related to customer compliments/complaints, growth of both the resources and the customer base, and the image of the library, within the library service delivery process and how these impacted on the library service delivery (captured via the research tool Appendix 1). Table 5.7, page 171 gives a summary of the findings.

The study also sought to evaluate the perceptions of the librarians about the service quality of the libraries. This was measured by asking them to comment on a set of statements touching on service delivery, service features, environment, and service staff's attitudes. The rating of the service quality was done based on the following scale on the mean: ($5 \geq M \geq 4.5$) - Excellent, ($4.5 > M \geq 3.0$) - Good, ($3.0 > M \geq 1.5$) - Poor, ($1.5 > M \geq 1$) - Very poor. The findings indicated that the service on average was good with mean score equivalent to 4.386. Moreover, the general rating of the service quality does not differ significantly among the respondents, as reflected in the standard deviation of less than one (Std. Dev. < 1.0). This variable's Cronbach's Alpha Coefficient was 0.887, showing high internal consistency and therefore being reliable for further analysis. The distribution of the responses is depicted in Table 5.8. In general, the staff seemed to be in agreement that it is important to maintain a high quality of service delivery in the libraries. This is as measured and depicted by the mean (both for the individual item and the composite mean). The standard deviation (SD) depicts a low variance in terms of the responses made.

The study used the SERVQUAL model among 47 internal customers (librarians). The model has five dimensions: 1) Tangibles (the appearance of physical facilities, equipment, personnel,

and communication materials); 2) Reliability (the ability to perform the promised service dependably and accurately); 3) Responsiveness (the willingness to help customers and provide prompt service); 4) Assurance (the competence of the system and its credibility in providing a courteous and secure service); and 5) Empathy (the approachability, ease of access and effort taken to understand customers' needs).

5.4.1.7.1 RELIABILITY

With regard to being reliable (the ability to perform the promised service dependably and accurately), the respondents agreed that the library service(s) need to be reliable. As such 70% of the respondents agreed that the *customers should be informed beforehand of the range of services that are available* and this ought to happen always. *Consistent service performance is important*; 90% of the respondents agreed that this need to be happening always.

On being asked *whether dependable service performance is important*, 53% of the respondents felt this should be happening always, 26% were of the view it was happening quite often and 21% were of the view that this only happened sometimes.

5.4.1.7.2 RESPONSIVENESS

The study sought to find the level/degree of responsiveness (the willingness to help customers and provide prompt service) with regard to the customer service delivery. On being asked to respond to the statement *prompt service from staff is stressed*, 51% of the respondents were of the view this happened always, 38% of the respondents felt it happened often, and for 11% of the respondents, it happened sometimes. From this, it is evident that the staff are quite conscious of the need to attend promptly to the customers seeking help in the library. Likewise, to the statement, *“employee honesty is stressed”*, the responses were: 64% were of the view that this happened always, 21 % indicated it happened often, and 13% felt it only happened sometimes. Some degree of helping the customers to use the library was noted from their responses, especially on the statement: *“the development of customer confidence in the service is stressed”*. Responses were: 62% of the respondents pointed out that this happened always, 30% were of the view that this happened often, and 8% of the respondents were of the view that this happened sometimes. With regard to giving *“individual customer attention”*, the responses were that 49% of the respondents felt this happened always, 21% felt it ought to be happening more often, and 28% felt it happened sometimes.

They too are in agreement that *“to maintain consistent service performance is important”* with 10% of the respondents feeling that this only happened sometimes, 45% felt it happened quite often, and 45% of the respondents felt it ought to happen always.

5.4.1.7.3 ASSURANCE

The study sought to assess the level of assurance (the competence of the system and its credibility in providing a courteous and secure service) given to the customers.

In this regard, when the librarians were asked to comment on the statement: *Customers should feel free to complain on the service given*, 11% responded that this does happen sometimes, 40% felt it does happen often, and 49% were of the view this happened always.

Customers desire to feel secure while in the library. This can be promoted by enhancing the confidentiality of the users. Thus, when the librarians were asked to comment on the statement that: *the confidentiality of the service is stressed*, the responses were divergent. 11% of the respondents were of the view that this never happened at all, 6% felt that it happened rarely, 15% of the respondents indicated it happened sometimes, and 43% felt it happened always. Still, it is important to ensure that the customers' confidence in the service is promoted. Thus when asked to respond to the statement: *the development of customer confidence in the service is stressed*, the responses were as follows: 8% felt this happened sometimes, 30% were of the view it happened quite often, and 62% felt this happened always.

5.4.1.7.4 TANGIBLES IN THE SERVICE ENVIRONMENT

The study sought to establish the level of satisfaction of service delivery with regard to the tangibles (the appearance of physical facilities, equipment, personnel, and communication materials). When asked to give their views regarding the service environment; their responses to the statement that: *A nice atmosphere for service is stressed*, the responses were as follows: 6% of the respondents felt that this was rarely encouraged, 9% of the respondents were sometimes encouraged, 85% were of the view that this was strongly emphasised.

Regarding the availability of good furniture, their responses to the statement: *Good and suitable furniture/working tools for service is stressed*, the responses were: 4% felt this never happened, 17% were uncertain, while 79% agreed that this is strongly encouraged. Good and suitable furniture does enable the library customers to work comfortably, while the working tools enhance service delivery by the providers.

Similarly, when asked to give their views on the need to have up-to-date working equipment, their responses to the statement: *It is important to have up-to-date equipment so as to provide good service* were: 9% of the respondents were uncertain and 91% agreed that this was important.

The general appearance/presentation of the librarians was of concern; thus the responses to the statement: *The appearance of the employee is important* were: 10% of the respondents felt this never happened, 37% of the respondents were uncertain, and 79% agreed that this was important and stressed. With regard to the location of the service locations, the responses to the statement *Convenient service locations are important* were: 25% of the respondents were not quite sure about this, while 75% of the respondents agreed that this very crucial to service delivery.

Training is crucial, hence views were sought regarding the statement: *It is important to have the staff well trained*. The responses were as follows: 13% of the respondents were uncertain on this, but 87% were in agreement that training is essential as it equips them with new skills. Further, they felt that it is important to regularly train the frontline staff in areas such as *customer service/relation*; from the responses, although 2% of the respondents indicated that this never happened, 32% were uncertain, while 66% agreed that this was crucial and needs to be encouraged.

Table 5.7: Librarians perception on library service quality N=47

| Statements | | Never | | Rarely | | Some times | | Often | | Always | | Mean | Standard Deviation | Total | |
|---|--|-------|---|--------|---|------------|----|-------|----|--------|----|-------------|--------------------|-----------|------------|
| | | F | % | F | % | F | % | F | % | F | % | | | F | % |
| EMPATHY | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | |
| Staff should use language which the customer can understand | | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 1 | 2 | 6 | 13 | 40 | 85 | 4.83 | 0.433 | 47 | 100 |
| Convenient service locations are important | | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 12 | 25 | 15 | 32 | 20 | 43 | 4.17 | 0.816 | 47 | 100 |
| Dependable service performance is important | | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 10 | 21 | 12 | 26 | 25 | 53 | 4.49 | 0.810 | 47 | 100 |
| A reputation for good service is emphasised | | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 8 | 17 | 8 | 17 | 31 | 66 | 4.49 | 0.777 | 47 | 100 |
| Employee honesty is stressed | | 1 | 2 | 0 | 0 | 6 | 13 | 10 | 21 | 30 | 64 | 4.45 | 0.880 | 47 | 100 |
| Individual customer attention is stressed | | 0 | 0 | 1 | 1 | 13 | 28 | 10 | 21 | 23 | 49 | 4.17 | 0.916 | 47 | 100 |
| A nice atmosphere for service is stressed | | 0 | 0 | 3 | 6 | 4 | 9 | 13 | 28 | 27 | 57 | 4.36 | 0.895 | 47 | 100 |
| RESPONSIVENESS & ASSURANCE | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | |
| Customer should be informed beforehand of the range of service available | | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 1 | 2 | 13 | 27 | 33 | 70 | 4.68 | 0.515 | 47 | 100 |
| Customers should be informed about what alternative(s) is/are available | | 0 | 0 | 1 | 2 | 4 | 8 | 12 | 26 | 30 | 64 | 4.51 | 0.748 | 47 | 100 |
| The training and preparation of employees is important | | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 5 | 11 | 17 | 36 | 25 | 53 | 4.43 | 0.683 | 47 | 100 |
| The development of customer confidence in the service is stressed | | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 4 | 8 | 14 | 30 | 29 | 62 | 4.53 | 0.654 | 47 | 100 |
| Consistent service performance is important | | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 5 | 10 | 21 | 45 | 21 | 45 | 4.34 | 0.668 | 47 | 100 |
| Employees and staff should be polite and friendly to customers | | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 3 | 6 | 9 | 19 | 35 | 75 | 4.68 | 0.594 | 47 | 100 |
| Staff should ensure that customers are trained on the usage of services offered | | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 9 | 19 | 10 | 21 | 28 | 60 | 4.40 | 0.798 | 47 | 100 |
| | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | |

| <i>Table 5.7 : Librarians perception on library service quality(cont.)</i> | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | |
|---|-------|---|--------|---|----|------------|----|-------|----|--------|-------------|--------------|--------------------|------------|--|
| Statements | Never | | Rarely | | | Some times | | Often | | Always | | Mean | Standard Deviation | Total | |
| | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | |
| Staff should ensure that customers understand the service(s) provided | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 1 | 2 | 6 | 13 | 40 | 85 | 4.83 | 0.433 | 47 | 100 | |
| RELIABILITY | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | |
| Employees and staff should be polite and friendly to customers | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 3 | 6 | 9 | 19 | 35 | 75 | 4.68 | 0.594 | 47 | 100 | |
| It is important to have the staff regularly trained on customer service/relations | 0 | 0 | 1 | 2 | 15 | 32 | 19 | 40 | 12 | 26 | 3.89 | 0.814 | 47 | 100 | |
| It is important to have up-to-date equipment so as to provide good service | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 4 | 9 | 12 | 25 | 31 | 66 | 4.57 | 0.651 | 47 | 100 | |
| It is important to keep the customers best interests at heart | 0 | 0 | 1 | 2 | 3 | 6 | 12 | 26 | 31 | 66 | 4.55 | 0.717 | 47 | 100 | |
| Prompt service from staff is stressed | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 5 | 11 | 18 | 38 | 24 | 51 | 4.40 | 0.681 | 47 | 100 | |
| TANGIBLES | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | |
| The appearance of the employee is important | 3 | 6 | 2 | 4 | 5 | 11 | 12 | 26 | 25 | 53 | 4.15 | 1.179 | 47 | 100 | |
| It is important to honour promises to the customer | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 6 | 13 | 12 | 25 | 29 | 62 | 4.49 | 0.718 | 47 | 100 | |
| It is important to have the staff well trained | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 6 | 13 | 6 | 13 | 35 | 74 | 4.62 | 0.709 | 47 | 100 | |
| It is important to have convenient working hours for the staff | 3 | 6 | 0 | 0 | 3 | 6 | 21 | 45 | 20 | 43 | 4.17 | 1.028 | 47 | 100 | |
| It is important to have the staff regularly trained on customer service/relations | 0 | 0 | 1 | 2 | 15 | 32 | 19 | 40 | 12 | 26 | 3.89 | 0.814 | 47 | 100 | |
| Customers should feel free to complain on the service given | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 5 | 11 | 19 | 40 | 23 | 49 | 4.38 | 0.677 | 47 | 100 | |
| Convenient service locations are important | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 12 | 25 | 15 | 32 | 23 | 43 | 4.17 | 0.816 | 47 | 100 | |
| <i>Cronbach Alpha Coefficient = 0.887; Composite Mean = 4.386; Standard deviation = 0.78</i> | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | |

5.4.1.7.5 EMPATHY

The study sought to establish the level of satisfaction of service delivery with regard to empathy (the approachability, ease of access and effort taken to understand customers' needs). Views were sought regarding the statement: *Employees and staff should be polite and friendly to customers*; the responses show that 6% of the respondents were uncertain about this, 19% felt that it happened often, while 75% agreed that this happened always, and that it is important and needs to be enhanced.

With regard to the hours of service, it is important that these are convenient to the service providers. Thus, with respect to the statement: *It is important to have convenient working hours for the staff*; the responses were: 6% felt this was never the case, 6% were uncertain, while 88% agreed that this was indeed an important consideration. It is also important to have a positive reputation for the service; hence, on the comment to the statement: *A reputation for good service is emphasised*, 17% felt this was done sometimes, 17% of the respondents felt this happened often, while 66% felt this always happened and thus ought to be encouraged and promoted. Similarly, it was established that it is necessary to have personal service. On *it is important to understand value and, keep the customers' best interests at heart*; 6% of the respondents felt that this was happening sometimes, 26% of the respondents indicated that it happened often, while 66% were of the view that this always happened. This finding does agree with Dempsey (2003) who found that library customers desire to have a relationship with the librarians based on trust and respect so that they can approach the librarian(s) when necessary and also that a knowledgeable librarian can enhance the value of the library by providing excellent service. The library too should strive to make services available to the users at the point in their research or learning activity when these are most needed. This implies that the libraries ought to be aggressive in their collection development activity, thereby ensuring that information materials are available as and when required by the users.

For this reason, therefore, Camilleri (2018) stressed that business entities ought to know and understand their customers' needs and wants, for them to thrive in a competitive market place. Academic libraries are no exception; it is imperative that they strive to identify their clients ascertaining what their specific needs are, through regular market surveys and evaluation of their performance in order to serve them more efficiently. From the findings of the current study, it is clear that there is some degree of emphasis on this. However, this needs to be enhanced so that the library customers' needs are fully met.

Similarly, on the statement that: *Individual customer attention is stressed*; the responses were: 28% felt this happened sometimes, 21% felt it happened quite often, while 49% felt it happened always and needs to be encouraged. Likewise, customers too need to be empowered to use the services available. Hence, on seeking to know their views on the statement: *Staff should ensure that customers are trained on the usage of services offered*, the responses were: 19% felt this was happening sometimes, 21% felt it was happening quite often, while 60% were of the view that it was happening always and needs to be enhanced. This echoes Kulkarni and Deshpande's (2012) observation that training is an important activity in every field, noting that the corporate, public sector units, and government organisations have recognised the importance of training for enhanced performance. There was a general consensus that there is a need to assist the customers to get to know and understand the resources/service being provided in the libraries. The librarians were of the strong view that customers need to be trained on how to use the available resources. Likewise, it was established that training should also be extended to the librarians, in order to enhance efficient customer service. Hence, on being asked to respond to the statement: *It is important to have the staff regularly trained on customer service/relations*; the responses were: 32% of the respondents felt this was happening sometimes, 40% of the respondents felt it was happening more often, 26% of the respondents were of the view that it is happening always. On being courteous to the customers, the respondents' views to the question: *Whether staff should use language which the customer can understand were*: 83% of the respondents agreed this should be happening always, while 15% indicated that it should happen as often as possible.

5. 5. LIBRARY CUSTOMER SERVICE ORIENTATION (Objective 2)

The study sought to understand how quality was understood and perceived in the library service context. This was done by focusing on the different parameters within the library service delivery process, which were captured using the research tool, Appendix 1, and how these impacted on the library service delivery. The libraries' customer service orientation was evaluated through an analysis of three key aspects: library market orientation, communication and service innovation. The results were as discussed below:

5.5.1 NATURE OF THE LIBRARY MARKET ORIENTATION

The study sought to evaluate the market orientation of the libraries. The study, through questionnaire items, sought to establish the user monitoring mechanisms that the libraries engaged; the process control evaluation; reaction to competitors and user information gathering and profiling. Market orientation is an approach to business that prioritises identifying the

needs and desires of consumers and creating products that satisfy them. This is largely about knowledge management, acquiring information about customers and competitors and sharing it with others within the same firm (Slater, Mohr and Sengupta, 2010). The distribution of the market orientation responses is depicted in Table 5.8, page 176.

The rating was done based on the following scale on the mean; ($5 \geq M \geq 4.5$) - Very Poor, ($4.5 > M \geq 3.0$) - Poor, ($3.0 > M \geq 1.5$) - Good, ($1.5 > M \geq 1$) - Very Good. The findings indicated that the market orientation in most of the libraries was generally good, with mean score equivalent to 2.638. However, the general rating of the market orientation does differ significantly among the respondents, as reflected in the standard deviation of greater than one (Std. Dev. > 1.0). The Cronbach Alpha Coefficient for this variable was 0.7, showing a high internal consistency, and therefore that it is reliable for further analysis.

Table 5.8: Library Market Survey N=47

| Statements | | Strongly agree | | Agree | | Uncertain | | Disagree | | Strongly disagree | | Total | % | Mean | Standard Deviation |
|--|--|----------------|----|-------|----|-----------|----|----------|----|-------------------|----|-------|-----|------|--------------------|
| | | F | % | F | % | F | % | F | % | F | % | F | % | Mean | SD |
| 1 | Customers and library employees hold meetings on a regular basis to find out the programmes/services they will need in future | 8 | 17 | 21 | 45 | 6 | 13 | 7 | 15 | 5 | 10 | 47 | 100 | 2.57 | 1.247 |
| 2 | Employees/customers interact freely and directly with customers to learn how to satisfy their needs | 13 | 13 | 23 | 49 | 3 | 23 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 47 | 100 | 1.96 | 0.721 |
| 3 | We conduct a lot of customer survey within the library | 7 | 15 | 20 | 42 | 13 | 28 | 6 | 13 | 1 | 2 | 47 | 100 | 2.45 | 0.974 |
| 4 | We slowly detect changes in the client usage preferences/habits | 3 | 7 | 18 | 38 | 17 | 36 | 9 | 19 | 0 | 0 | 47 | 100 | 2.68 | 0.862 |
| 5 | We slowly detect changes in the client usage preferences/habits | 7 | 15 | 15 | 32 | 17 | 36 | 7 | 15 | 1 | 2 | 47 | 100 | 2.57 | 0.994 |
| 6 | We collect industry information i.e. information service (like over lunch, with library friends and experts) | 2 | 4 | 17 | 36 | 15 | 32 | 8 | 17 | 5 | 11 | 47 | 100 | 2.94 | 1.071 |
| 7 | We conduct market research on our competitors (e.g. other information providers-universities, public libraries etc.)independently through individuals | 5 | 11 | 14 | 30 | 13 | 27 | 10 | 21 | 5 | 11 | 47 | 100 | 2.91 | 1.176 |
| 8 | We do not always detect shifts/new trends in the information industry (like competition, technology) | 1 | 2 | 16 | 34 | 6 | 13 | 14 | 30 | 10 | 21 | 47 | 100 | 3.34 | 1.221 |
| 9 | We periodically review the possible effects of changes in our business/service environment, such as technology, access and hours of service on customers | 5 | 10 | 27 | 57 | 11 | 23 | 3 | 6 | 1 | 4 | 47 | 100 | 2.32 | 0.837 |
| <i>Cronbach Alpha Coefficient = 0.7; Composite Mean = 2.638, SD = 1.011</i> | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | |

From Table 5.8 it is evident that the different libraries periodically review their activities by conducting market surveys in a bid to understand the customer needs better. Thus, on the statement “*We conduct a lot of customer survey within the library*”, 57% of the respondents agreed that this happens and only 15% of the respondents indicated that they did not engage in such customer surveys. Another 41% of the respondents also indicated that there was *benchmarking, independently through individuals, with other similar institutions through market research activities on their competitors (such as other information providers - universities, public libraries, etc.)*. While 27% of the respondents were uncertain on this, 32% of the respondents indicated that they did not engage in such benchmarking activities at all.

Regarding the statement: *Customers and library employees hold meetings on a regular basis to find out the programmes/services they will need in future*, seeking to establish whether the service providers endeavour to get to know customer needs, 62% of the respondents indicated that there were several such initiatives; however, 25% of the respondents indicated there were none. 77% of the respondents (with only 23% of the respondents being uncertain) indicated that there were free employees’/customers interaction sessions and direct engagement with customers in order to learn how to satisfy their needs. 47% of the respondents indicated that, in order to assess the quality of their services, they conducted process control evaluation of their service systems, 36% of the respondents were uncertain, while 17% of the respondents indicated that they never did any such evaluations.

Furthermore, 47% of the respondents indicated that the libraries engaged in periodic reviews of the possible effects of changes in the library service environment, by factors such as technology, access to the library and hours of service on customers. Only 10% of the respondents indicated that they did not carry out such reviews.

Regarding the question as to whether *the libraries were able to detect changes in the client usage*, the responses were: 36% of the respondents agreed that they do not always detect shifts/new trends in the information industry (like competition, technology), 13% of the respondents were uncertain and 52% of the respondents disagreed. This is further corroborated by the other finding that 45% of the respondents agreed with the statement that *the libraries slowly detect changes in the client usage preferences/habits*, on which 36% were uncertain while 19% disagreed. The study results also point to limited market research on their competitors. This is in response to the statement: *We conduct market research on our competitors (e.g. other information providers - universities, public libraries, etc.) independently through individuals e.g. other information brokers/providers*, where only 41%

agreed that there was market research on the competitors, 27% of the respondents were uncertain and 32% disagreed.

In conclusion, it can be stated that the service providers need to know and understand their customers well, as this would help in meeting their information needs in a more meaningful manner. These findings echo the sentiments put forth by Heinonen *et al.*, (2010), who indicated that there is need for the service providers to design a service, based on the new in-depth knowledge of their customers, rather than just the firm trying to persuade customers that their offerings, i.e. of the firm, are valuable to them. Organisations should embed service in customers' existing and future contexts, activities and experiences.

5.5.2 LIBRARY COMMUNICATION

The study sought to assess the performance of the library with regard to library communication to its customers. Communication within the marketing context involves informing, persuading, and influencing consumer behaviour. The study sought to evaluate the nature and extent of communication within the libraries. The rating was done based on the following scale on the mean; ($5 \geq M \geq 4.5$) - Very Poor, ($4.5 > M \geq 3.0$) - Poor, ($3.0 > M \geq 1.5$) - Good, ($1.5 > M \geq 1$) - Very Good. The findings indicated that communication was good, with mean score equivalent to 2.871. However, the general rating of communication within the libraries does differ significantly among the respondents, as reflected in the standard deviation of greater than one (Std. Dev. > 1.0). This variable's Cronbach's Alpha Coefficient was 0.7, showing high internal consistency, and therefore it is reliable for further analysis.

Table 5.9 on page 180 shows the distribution of the communication responses; the following observations were made and deductions were drawn.

5.5.2.1 COMMUNICATION STRATEGIES IN PLACE

Communication helps in fostering good relations. Different strategies/approaches may be applied, depending on the situation and the clientele.

5.5.2.2 LEVEL OF STAFF COMMUNICATION

The study sought to find the level of communication that existed/prevalled amongst the staff, between the staff and the library management, and the library staff and its management and with the university management. Thus, when asked to respond to the statement that: *A lot of the informal talk in the library concerns politics and life, not the new service strategies or the*

customer complaints, 6% of the respondents agreed, 11% of the respondents were uncertain, and 83% of the respondents disagreed. From this, it can be inferred that there was a lot of discussions (as represented by 83% of the respondents) amongst the staff pertaining to service improvement to their clients as a whole. Similarly, when asked to respond to the question as to *whether there are regular joint meetings between staff and the library management to discuss future information market trends*, the responses were as follows: 79% of the respondents agreed, 17% were uncertain and 4% of the respondents disagreed. This again points to the fact that *there was some degree of consultation and exchange of ideas regarding the future information market trends*, as 79% agreed that this was regularly happening.

On the contrary, there was *minimal communication between the library managers and employees concerning new service developments/customer complaints* as depicted by the results, as 30% of the respondents agreed that there was minimal communication, 21% were uncertain, and 49% of the respondents disagreed. Nakhoda and Rehimian (2015), in support of this, noted that an instructive style of management by the library managers works to hinder horizontal communication. Inflexibility of organisational management only helps to cement this, besides making the librarians inadequate. There is a need to have scenarios where information can freely flow, and particularly if this is on matters affecting services to the customers.

Table 5.9: Library Communication

| Statements | | Strongly agree | | Agree | | Uncertain | | Disagree | | Strongly disagree | | Total | % | Mean | Standard Deviation |
|--|---|----------------|----|-------|----|-----------|----|----------|----|-------------------|----|-------|-----|------|--------------------|
| | | F | % | F | % | F | % | F | % | F | % | F | % | M | SD |
| 1 | A lot of the informal talk in the library concerns politics and life not the new service strategies or the customer complaints | 0 | 0 | 3 | 6 | 5 | 11 | 13 | 28 | 26 | 55 | 47 | 100 | 4.2 | 1.093 |
| 2 | We meet as library staff and the managers regularly to discuss future information market trends | 11 | 24 | 26 | 55 | 8 | 17 | 1 | 2 | 1 | 2 | 47 | 100 | 2.04 | 0.833 |
| 3 | Library staff spend time prior to a semester's schedule discussing customer needs/interests | 16 | 34 | 18 | 38 | 4 | 9 | 7 | 15 | 2 | 4 | 47 | 100 | 2.17 | 1.185 |
| 4 | The library periodically circulates information/documents (like newsletters) that provide information on our customers, our services/products. | 10 | 21 | 24 | 51 | 4 | 9 | 5 | 10 | 4 | 9 | 47 | 100 | 2.34 | 1.185 |
| 5 | When something important happens to our royal customers the library knows about it within a short period (like sickness, death, accident ,marriage) | 7 | 15 | 13 | 27 | 17 | 36 | 5 | 11 | 5 | 11 | 47 | 100 | 2.74 | 1.170 |
| 6 | Data on client satisfaction is circulated to all employees regularly | 1 | 2 | 20 | 43 | 12 | 26 | 11 | 23 | 3 | 6 | 47 | 100 | 2.89 | 1.005 |
| 7 | There is minimal communication between the library managers and employees concerning new service developments/customer complaints | 6 | 13 | 8 | 17 | 5 | 11 | 16 | 34 | 11 | 23 | 47 | 100 | 3.21 | 1.267 |
| 8 | When the library managers find out something important about new innovations, it is slow to inform/alert employees | 7 | 15 | 8 | 17 | 5 | 11 | 16 | 34 | 11 | 23 | 47 | 100 | 3.34 | 1.403 |
| 9 | Library management and staff spend time together with the university management discussing customer needs/interests | 5 | 11 | 18 | 38 | 11 | 23 | 5 | 11 | 8 | 17 | 47 | 100 | 2.85 | 1.268 |
| <i>Cronbach Alpha Coefficient = 0.7; Composite Mean = 2.871, SD = 1.157</i> | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | |

5.5.2.3 NATURE OF ORGANISATIONAL COMMUNICATION

When probed further to establish the nature of communication that existed between the top university management and the library department, the responses to the statement: *Library management and staff spend time together with the university management discussing customer needs/interests* were that 49% of the respondents agreed, 23% were uncertain, 28% disagreed (see Table 5.9).

It was noted that there were joint meeting sessions amongst the library management, library staff and the university management, to possibly articulate the customer needs/interests and to lobby for library issues. However, this finding seems to suggest that the top university management was somewhat biased towards library issues and did not really take a strong position to solving its challenges and/or needs, or to defend the status of the library in the university; less than 50% view these joint meetings as being really productive.

Al Mutairi (2015) points out that brainstorming strategy is one of the most important strategies in provoking creativity and solving problems in different fields and, according to Kelly (2000), fostering more innovation. Besides, they serve as good avenues through which library service delivery may be enhanced. There is a need to encourage the free flow of information/ideas amongst the different cadres, and especially vertical communication. In support of this, Nakhoda and Rehimian (2015) have argued that access to information enhances staff empowerment and their ability to make informed service decisions. Hence, it will be encouraging for the library staff to serve their customers if they know that they have the support of the top university management in their endeavours to provide quality service.

5.5.2.4 PERIODIC CIRCULATION OF INFORMATION/DOCUMENTS TO USERS

On the question as to *whether the library periodically circulates information/documents (like newsletters) that provide information on their customers, and services/products*, 72% of the respondents agreed, 9% were uncertain, while 19% of the respondents disagreed (See Table 5.9). From the responses, it was established that, though there was a sharing of information, it was somewhat limited. The net result of this was that the service providers were giving service in a blurred environment. For good and quality service, it is important that there is openness in the sharing of such crucial information. Kaur and Singh (2010) stress that the library needs to make known to customers what is available and what is not. This is important as it helps them avoid having raised expectations, which will lead to dissatisfaction if not met. Other means

used to inform clients may include newsletters, posters and presentations to faculty. The library staff too, markets the new service to students.

5.5.2.4.1 INFORMATION SHARING OF DATA ON CLIENT SATISFACTION

From Table 5.9, *regarding regular information sharing of data on client satisfaction with all the employees*: 45% of the respondents agreed that this was happening, 26% were uncertain, while 29% of the respondents disagreed. It would be important for all service providers to have the accurate information of their clients, as this would help in channelling the best service to them. To find out how strong the bond was between the librarians and library clients, it was found that only 42% of the respondents agreed that *when something important happens to their royal customers, the library knows about it within a short period (like sickness, death, accident, marriage)*. 36% of the respondents were uncertain and 22% of the respondents disagreed. This stresses the fact that there is a need for a good relationship between the staff and the customers.

5.5.2.4.2 COMMUNICATION OF NEW SERVICE INNOVATIONS

However, it was noted that there is a lapse in *communication of new service innovations by the library management down to the staff*. From the findings, 32% of the respondents agreed but 57% disagreed that this was happening, and 11% were uncertain as to whether this was happening. There is also *minimal communication between the library managers and employees concerning new service developments/customer complaints*, as only 30% of the respondents agreed to this, 21% were uncertain and 49% disagreed that this was happening, which is quite disturbing. The high standard deviation value of greater than 1, of the responses, is possibly an indicator to the high variability in the management approaches of the library managers, and/or the nature of the existing staff/management relationship(s).

Only 32% of the respondents agreed that *when the library managers found out something important about new innovations, it was slow to inform/alert employees*; another 57% of the respondents disagreed with this assertion and 11% were uncertain. This is an indicator of the need to share information freely and in a transparent manner, so that all the service providers can benefit. It is a pointer on the skewed flow of information from the top library management to the frontline staff.

In conclusion, it is justified to say that although there is evidence of some form of communication, both vertical and horizontal, taking place in the different libraries, it is somewhat warped, however, and there is a dire need to improve the situation. This would help

the library staff, especially on the frontline, to get to know any new developments. Similarly, they (frontline staff) are more likely to give instant feedback regarding certain internal policy decisions with regard to service delivery. This will, in turn, help improve service delivery to customers.

5. 6 LIBRARY SERVICE INNOVATION

The study sought to establish the new service innovations adopted in service delivery and aimed towards meeting already identified customer needs. Specifically, the focus was on the innovations the libraries engage in, in order to improve service delivery, how customer complaints are handled and the response towards customer dissatisfaction.

Table 5.10 gives a summary of the responses/findings on service innovation. The study sought to evaluate the service innovation of the libraries. The rating was done based on the following scale on the mean: ($5 \geq M \geq 4.5$)-Very Poor, ($4.5 > M \geq 3.0$) - Poor, ($3.0 > M \geq 1.5$)- Good, ($1.5 > M \geq 1$)- Very Good. The findings indicated that service innovation was good, with mean score equivalent to 2.8. However, the general rating of service innovation of the libraries does differ significantly among the respondents, as reflected in the standard deviation of greater than one (Std. Dev. > 1.0). This variable's Cronbach's Alpha Coefficient was 0.5, showing low internal consistency.

Further from Table 5.10 on page 187 the following observations were made and deductions were drawn.

5.6.1 WHAT INNOVATIONS DO THE LIBRARIES ENGAGE IN, TO IMPROVE SERVICE DELIVERY?

With regard to service innovation, it was noted (See Table 5.10) in marketing that *there was an effort to use the principles of market segmentation to guide product/service developments*. The responses were: 50% of the respondents agreed, 26% were uncertain and 25% disagreed. Through segmentation of the user market, it is possible to reach out to the different user-clienteles in a much more focused manner.

On *whether there were any periodic reviews of the service offerings to ensure that the libraries meet customers' wants*, 81% of the respondents agreed that this was periodically happening, 13% of the respondents were uncertain, while 6% of the respondents disagreed with the assertion.

5. 6.2 MANAGING CUSTOMER COMPLAINTS

Similarly, as depicted in Table 5.10, 27% of the respondents agreed that *though they may develop a good library marketing plan, they might not be able to implement it in a timely manner*, but 56% of the respondents disagreed with this statement. The study sought to understand *the library's position on the subject of dealing with customer complaints*, and it was found that only 27% of the respondents agreed that these were not handled as seriously as they deserved, 56% disagreed (implying that they agree that appropriate actions are taken) and 17% were uncertain.

Regarding the question: *What happens when they find out that customers are unhappy with the quality of service*, 81% of the respondents agreed that action was taken speedily, 4% of the respondents were uncertain and 15% of the respondents disagreed.

On the question whether customer complaints were ignored, it was found that 17% of the librarian respondents pointed out that due to various reasons, they tend to ignore changes in the customers' service needs; 9% were uncertain and 74% disagreed.

Customers' requests come from the recognition of the need for information, and this is influenced by some degree of expectations from the library's ability to fulfil this need.

5.6.3 RESPONSE TO CUSTOMER DISSATISFACTION

When asked what happens when it is found that customers are unhappy with the quality of service, 81% of the respondents agreed that corrective action(s) is immediately taken, with only 15% of the respondents disagreeing (see Table 5.10 on page 187). Feedback from the customer is crucial as it helps the provider to align the service in a way that best meets the customers' needs. In support of this, Filip (2013) notes that customers who make complaints give the organisation an opportunity to solve certain operational malfunctions, thereby learning from negative situations and consequently to re-establish their satisfaction and trust. The library management ought to act on these findings. It is only by managing customer service in a satisfactory manner that the delivery of service and consumption of service would be on the path of continual improvement. There is, however, a delay when it comes to the implementation of service strategies, and especially on *how to respond to competitors' new service and technology innovations*, as only 45% of the respondents agreed that they would launch a response immediately, 40% of the respondents were undecided and 15% disagreed. With regard to sharing of crucial information pertaining to innovation, only 32% of the respondents agreed that *when the library managers found out something important about new innovations*,

it is slow to inform/alert employees; another 57% of the respondents disagreed with this assertion and 11% were uncertain. This emphasises the need to share information freely and in a transparent manner, so that all the service providers can benefit. The library managers need to be strategic in sharing information.

Regarding the degree of flexibility and accommodation, when it is found that customers would like the library to modify or change a programme/service routine, it was established that the library departments/sections involved made concerted efforts to do so; 76% of the respondents agreed that this would be accommodated, and only 10% of the respondents disagreed.

Table 5.10: Library Service Innovation N=47

| Statements | | Strongly agree | | Agree | | Uncertain | | Disagree | | Strongly disagree | | Total | % | Mean | Standard Deviation |
|------------|--|----------------|----|-------|----|-----------|----|----------|----|-------------------|----|-------|-----|------|--------------------|
| | | F | % | F | % | F | % | F | % | F | % | | | | |
| 1 | It takes us long to decide how to respond to our competitors' new service and technology innovations | 2 | 4 | 5 | 11 | 10 | 21 | 20 | 43 | 10 | 21 | 47 | 100 | 3.66 | 1.069 |
| 2 | In our library principles of market segmentation guide any new product/service developments | 2 | 4 | 21 | 45 | 12 | 26 | 3 | 6 | 9 | 19 | 47 | 100 | 2.91 | 1.213 |
| 3 | Due to varied reasons we ignore changes in customers' service needs | 1 | 2 | 7 | 15 | 4 | 9 | 25 | 53 | 10 | 21 | 47 | 100 | 3.77 | 1.026 |
| 4 | We periodically review our service offerings to ensure they meet customers wants | 12 | 26 | 26 | 55 | 6 | 13 | 3 | 6 | 0 | 0 | 47 | 100 | 2.00 | 0.808 |
| 5 | Our service business plans are guided more by technological advances than user needs | 3 | 6 | 13 | 28 | 16 | 34 | 11 | 23 | 4 | 9 | 47 | 100 | 3.00 | 1.063 |
| 6 | Employees get together to plan for responses to changes occurring in the business environment i.e. library | 11 | 24 | 21 | 44 | 11 | 24 | 2 | 4 | 2 | 4 | 47 | 100 | 2.21 | 0.999 |
| 7 | If a competitor (another service provider e.g. private/public library, information cyber)were to launch an intense campaign targeting at our customers, we would launch a response immediately | 7 | 15 | 14 | 30 | 19 | 40 | 6 | 13 | 1 | 2 | 47 | 100 | 2.57 | 0.972 |

Table 5.10 : Library Service Innovation (cont.)

| Statements | | Strongly agree | | Agree | | Uncertain | | Disagree | | Strongly disagree | | Total | % | Mean | Standard Deviation |
|--|--|----------------|----|-------|----|-----------|----|----------|----|-------------------|----|-------|-----|------|--------------------|
| | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | |
| 8 | The different services of the firm are well coordinated | 16 | 34 | 27 | 58 | 3 | 6 | 1 | 2 | 0 | 0 | 47 | 100 | 1.77 | 0.666 |
| 9 | Customers complaints are not considered seriously | 2 | 4 | 11 | 11 | 8 | 17 | 20 | 43 | 6 | 13 | 47 | 100 | 4.11 | 1.184 |
| 10 | Even if we develop a good library marketing plan we might not be able to implement it in a timely manner | 2 | 4 | 11 | 23 | 8 | 17 | 20 | 43 | 6 | 13 | 47 | 100 | 3.36 | 1.112 |
| 11 | We are quick to respond to significant changes in our competitors' new service/ product innovations and pricing | 4 | 9 | 19 | 40 | 16 | 34 | 3 | 6 | 5 | 11 | 47 | 100 | 2.70 | 1.082 |
| 12 | When we find out that customers are unhappy with our quality of service we take corrective action immediately | 12 | 26 | 26 | 55 | 2 | 4 | 4 | 9 | 3 | 6 | 47 | 100 | 2.15 | 1.103 |
| 13 | When we find that customers would like us to modify or change a programme/ service routine the departments/sections involved make concerted efforts to do so | 8 | 17 | 28 | 60 | 6 | 13 | 4 | 8 | 1 | 2 | 47 | 100 | 2.19 | 0.900 |
| <i>Cronbach Alpha Coefficient = 0.5; Composite Mean = 2.8, SD = 1.015</i> | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | |

5.7 LIBRARY SERVICE RANGE/PROVISION AND DELIVERY APPROACHES (Objective 3)

The study sought to explore the service range/provision available in the libraries. This was done by asking questions (using Appendix 1, page 427) related to the different services and/or products that were available, new services/products and method(s) of service; observance of service standards; staff involvement in decision-making and employee creativity. Table 5.11 gives a summary of the findings.

The study sought to evaluate the service range/provision of the libraries. The rating was done based on the following scale on the mean; ($5 \geq M \geq 4.5$) - Very Poor, ($4.5 > M \geq 3.0$) - Poor, ($3.0 > M \geq 1.5$) - Good, ($1.5 > M \geq 1$) - Very Good. The findings indicated that the service range/provision was good with mean score equivalent to 2.501 as shown in Table 5.11. However, the general rating of the service range/provision of the libraries does differ significantly among the respondents, as reflected in the standard deviation of greater than one (Std. Dev. > 1.0). The Cronbach's Alpha Coefficient for this variable was 0.920, showing high internal consistency, and therefore that it is reliable for further analysis.

Further from Table 5.11 the following observations were made and deductions were drawn.

5.7.1 KIND OF INFORMATION RESOURCES /SERVICES ARE AVAILABLE

Tables 5.2, page 152 and 5.6, page 165 give a summary of the informational services and resources available and offered; while the responses in Table 5.11 on page 193 also shed more light on this. These include:

- ✓ Diverse informational reading materials
- ✓ Online information services, e.g. e-journals and books
- ✓ Conducive reading areas- individual (reading carrels) and group (discussion rooms)
- ✓ Infrastructure to work with e.g. Internet, power, computers
- ✓ Specialised services targeting specific groups like the PWDs, faculty staff and postgraduates
- ✓ Training of users on the use of available technology and information resources
- ✓ Interlibrary loan service
- ✓ Printing, scanning and photocopy services
- ✓ Internet and computer services
- ✓ Bindery services

5. 7.2 LIBRARY SERVICE STRATEGIES

In the service delivery process, the library staff were involved in the decision-making processes. This is according to their responses on being asked *whether library staff service providers participated in decision making*. 77% of the respondents agreed to this, with only 23% of the respondents disagreeing (see Table 5.11 on page 193). The study sought to establish the extent to which the staff were involved in decision-making with regard to the planning and provision of services. Thus, on being asked *whether library staff service providers participated in decision-making*, 77% of the respondents affirmed, with only 23% of the respondents disagreeing. Further, 94% of the respondents agreed that *the library staff are aware of changes to be undertaken in the library*. This implies that there is some degree of participatory management/consultation when it comes to making some of the decisions in the provision of services. However, with regard to decisions on major changes, 75% of the respondents agreed that these are made by the library managers. They too ensure there is consistency in the service interactions; thus improving customer experiences with efficient, effective, and consistent service at every service interaction with the service provider. This implies that there is some degree of enforcement of and compliance with some set standards. Procedures are important in the performance of tasks, and it is only imperative that they follow this for a seamless service. Also, 94% of the respondents agreed that *the library staff are aware of changes to be undertaken in the library*. This implies that there is some degree of participatory management/consultation when it comes to making some of the decisions in the provision of services. However, with regard to major change decisions, 75% of the respondents agreed that these are made by the library managers.

They were also aware of threats posed by their competitors, but there was little action with regard to competitor threat, as only 43% of the respondents agreed to the statement that their *'competitors have forced them to change the range of services/ products in varying degrees'*, 36% of the respondents answered that this rarely happened, and 21% of the respondents said it had never occurred at all. On being asked *to what extent the competitors often forced them to change/purchase their machines/equipment*, 38% of the respondents agreed that there was some pressure due to competitors, 38% indicated *rarely does it happen* and 23% of the respondents responded that this never happened. From the findings, 43% of the respondents agreed that *competitors had forced them to change work methods/service delivery styles*, with 21% of the respondents pointing out that this never happened. From these findings, therefore, it is evident that the libraries were under stiff competition from other providers.

5.7.3 SUPPORT OF EMPLOYEE CREATIVITY

In delivering service, the study also found out that there was a lot of *emphasis on service growth through developing new ideas, innovations/new information resources/advanced training*, a view supported by 93% of the respondents. Another 60% of the respondents indicated that *they are allowed to vary the service delivery procedures, depending on the need/situation*. The fact that service staff are given some leeway to vary certain guidelines implies there is a move towards empowering the service staff.

As seen from Table 5.11, the study established that workplace creativity is encouraged. It is noteworthy that *employee creativity at work was greatly encouraged* as indicated and supported by 76% of the respondents, with only 23% disagreeing. From these findings, it is evident that in the different organisations, the librarians were given some latitude to exercise creativity as a way of boosting service delivery.

5.7.4 LIBRARY OUTREACH

In terms of outreach, *the libraries are keen to extend services to new clients previously not served by the library*, as 53% of the respondents agreed that there were ongoing outreach activities, 21% were uncertain, while 26% disagreed (see Table 5.11 on page 193). Duffus (2016) emphatically stresses that libraries have evolved as the information hub and, more recently, the cultural hub of the community. He sums it up noting that:

... It is crucial that libraries leverage their prominence and influence to consolidate resources with external entities and make a collective impact on student success and community advancement. This outreach initiative has established a blueprint for long-term collaborations among students, faculty, and staff. ... the return on investment is exponential, since it provides an opportunity to market library products and services, create strategic alliances or partnerships with stakeholders, advocate and expand the library's outreach efforts...

This then underscores the need for more and focused outreach engagements with the society.

5.7.5 LIBRARY MARKETING AND LINKAGES STRATEGIES

From Table 5.11 the study established that the libraries sought to market their services. This is evidenced by the responses to the statement "*we advertise/market our products/services*". Only 43% of the respondents agreed with the statement, 38% were uncertain and 19% of the respondents disagreed that there was any meaningful marketing of the library

services/resources. This is an indication that there was a low degree of marketing of the library services/products.

However, the aspect of outreach is further supported by the fact that there is some eagerness from the library *to create new services depending on the market needs*; with 57% of the respondents agreeing that they created new services depending on the market, though 28% of the respondents were uncertain and 15% of the respondents did not agree. From the study, it was also established that *there are external linkages with other similar institutions in the industry*, as 66% of the respondents agreed with the view, with 21% of them being uncertain and 13% of the respondents disagreeing.

Table 5. 11: Library Service Range/Provision N=47

| | Statements | Always | | Often | | Occasionally | | Rarely | | Never | | Total | % | Mean | Standard Deviation |
|----|---|--------|----|-------|----|--------------|----|--------|----|-------|----|-------|-----|------|--------------------|
| | | F | % | F | % | F | % | F | % | F | % | F | % | | |
| 1 | Our competitors forces us to change the range of our services/ products | 3 | 6 | 5 | 11 | 12 | 26 | 17 | 36 | 10 | 21 | 47 | 100 | 3.55 | 1.138 |
| 2 | Competitors often force us to change/ purchase our machines/ equipment | 0 | 0 | 7 | 15 | 11 | 23 | 18 | 38 | 11 | 23 | 47 | 100 | 3.70 | 0.998 |
| 3 | Competitors force us to change work methods/service delivery styles | 1 | 2 | 8 | 17 | 11 | 24 | 17 | 36 | 10 | 21 | 47 | 100 | 3.57 | 1.078 |
| 4 | Library staff service providers participate in decision making | 15 | 32 | 12 | 26 | 9 | 19 | 8 | 17 | 3 | 6 | 47 | 100 | 2.40 | 1.280 |
| 5 | Library staff are aware of changes to be undertaken in the library | 22 | 47 | 16 | 34 | 6 | 13 | 2 | 4 | 1 | 2 | 47 | 100 | 1.81 | 0.970 |
| 6 | Change decision are made by the library managers alone | 13 | 28 | 7 | 15 | 15 | 32 | 8 | 17 | 4 | 8 | 47 | 100 | 2.64 | 1.293 |
| 7 | Rules and procedures set must be followed strictly | 21 | 45 | 15 | 32 | 11 | 23 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 47 | 100 | 1.79 | 0.806 |
| 8 | Library employees are allowed to vary their service delivery procedures | 0 | 0 | 15 | 32 | 13 | 28 | 11 | 23 | 8 | 17 | 47 | 100 | 3.26 | 1.093 |
| 9 | Employee creativity is encouraged | 19 | 40 | 11 | 23 | 6 | 13 | 10 | 21 | 1 | 2 | 47 | 100 | 2.21 | 1.250 |
| 10 | The library provides resources for changes like additional/new requirements like ables, seats, computers, books | 15 | 32 | 20 | 43 | 10 | 21 | 0 | 0 | 2 | 4 | 47 | 100 | 2.02 | 0.967 |
| 11 | Employees suggestions are supported | 14 | 30 | 16 | 34 | 13 | 28 | 1 | 2 | 3 | 6 | 47 | 100 | 2.21 | 1.102 |
| 12 | The library facilities e.g. furniture, lighting system, windows etc. are repaired | 9 | 19 | 18 | 38 | 14 | 30 | 5 | 11 | 1 | 2 | 47 | 100 | 2.38 | 0.990 |
| 13 | Library staff are sponsored/allowed time off to take higher education or professional courses | 8 | 17 | 17 | 36 | 12 | 26 | 9 | 19 | 1 | 2 | 47 | 100 | 2.23 | 1.108 |
| 14 | We introduce new equipment in our library when the current facilities break down | 8 | 17 | 17 | 36 | 12 | 26 | 9 | 19 | 1 | 2 | 47 | 100 | 2.53 | 1.060 |
| 15 | We introduce new services in our library | 14 | 30 | 15 | 32 | 15 | 32 | 3 | 6 | 0 | 0 | 47 | 100 | 2.15 | 0.932 |
| 16 | Our information resources are the latest in the market and in the various disciplines | 9 | 19 | 17 | 36 | 13 | 27 | 4 | 9 | 4 | 9 | 47 | 100 | 2.51 | 1.159 |
| 17 | Our equipment is modern(bought in the last two years) | 9 | 19 | 6 | 17 | 20 | 43 | 7 | 15 | 3 | 6 | 47 | 100 | 2.72 | 1.136 |

Table 5.11: Library Service Range/Provision (cont.)

| | | Always | | Often | | Occasionally | | Rarely | | Never | | Total | % | Mean | Standard Deviation |
|----|--|--------|----|-------|----|--------------|----|--------|----|-------|----|-------|-----|------|--------------------|
| 18 | We train our customers on using the self-service technologies | 19 | 41 | 17 | 36 | 1 | 2 | 10 | 21 | 0 | 0 | 47 | 100 | 2.04 | 1.141 |
| 19 | We have the most current technology | 7 | 15 | 21 | 45 | 15 | 32 | 2 | 4 | 2 | 4 | 47 | 100 | 2.38 | 0.945 |
| 20 | We have changed our service delivery procedures in the last one year | 1 | 2 | 15 | 32 | 21 | 45 | 6 | 13 | 4 | 8 | 47 | 100 | 2.94 | 0.942 |
| 21 | My library emphasises service growth through developing new ideas innovations/ new information resources/advanced training | 16 | 34 | 18 | 38 | 10 | 21 | 0 | 0 | 3 | 6 | 47 | 100 | 2.06 | 1.071 |
| 22 | Library staff pay attention to procedures to get things done | 17 | 36 | 22 | 47 | 3 | 6 | 2 | 6 | 3 | 6 | 47 | 100 | 1.98 | 1.093 |
| 23 | My library emphasises outcomes and achievement very much | 18 | 38 | 20 | 43 | 5 | 11 | 4 | 9 | 0 | 0 | 47 | 100 | 1.89 | 0.914 |
| 24 | My library creates wholly new products/services for its various clients | 9 | 19 | 17 | 36 | 13 | 28 | 7 | 15 | 1 | 2 | 47 | 100 | 2.45 | 1.039 |
| 25 | My library extends services to new clients previously not served by us | 7 | 15 | 18 | 38 | 10 | 21 | 10 | 21 | 2 | 4 | 47 | 100 | 2.62 | 1.114 |
| 26 | My library incorporates new service delivery strategies into existing strategies | 15 | 32 | 17 | 36 | 12 | 26 | 3 | 6 | 0 | 0 | 47 | 100 | 2.06 | 0.919 |
| 27 | My library creates new services depending on the market | 9 | 19 | 18 | 38 | 13 | 28 | 4 | 9 | 3 | 6 | 47 | 100 | 2.45 | 1.100 |
| 28 | The library introduces new procedures to aid in the management of new services | 15 | 32 | 15 | 32 | 13 | 28 | 4 | 8 | 0 | 0 | 47 | 100 | 2.13 | 0.969 |
| 29 | The library links with other libraries in the industry | 11 | 23 | 20 | 43 | 10 | 21 | 4 | 9 | 2 | 4 | 47 | 100 | 2.28 | 1.057 |
| 30 | My library seeks to adopt service strategies/programmes /equipment used by competitors i.e. other information providers | 8 | 17 | 18 | 38 | 12 | 26 | 6 | 13 | 3 | 6 | 47 | 100 | 2.53 | 1.120 |
| 31 | Our service delivery strategies change | 6 | 13 | 14 | 30 | 21 | 44 | 6 | 13 | 3 | 6 | 47 | 100 | 2.57 | 0.878 |
| 32 | We advertise/market our products/services | 4 | 9 | 16 | 34 | 18 | 38 | 7 | 15 | 2 | 4 | 47 | 100 | 2.72 | 0.971 |
| 33 | Our user complaints have increased in the last six months | 6 | 13 | 1 | 2 | 14 | 30 | 17 | 36 | 9 | 19 | 47 | 100 | 3.47 | 1.213 |

| | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | |
|---|--|---|----|----|----|----|----|----|----|---|---|----|-----|------|-------|
| 34 | Our user compliments have dropped/stagnated in the last six months | 5 | 10 | 15 | 32 | 12 | 26 | 15 | 32 | 0 | 0 | 47 | 100 | 2.79 | 1.020 |
| <i>Cronbach Alpha Coefficient = 0.920; Composite Mean = 2.501, SD = 1.055</i> | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | |

5.7.6 NEW SERVICES/PRODUCTS

The libraries sought to provide new services/products for their customers as evidenced by the responses in Table 5.11. Thus, regarding the question *whether the library creates wholly new products/services for its various clients*, 55% of the respondents agreed, and 28% were uncertain and 17% disagreed with this. However, this is important, as it reveals the existence of different markets depending on the information needs of the library clientele, which as earlier noted is segmented according to gender, age and education levels.

Similarly, as new services were introduced, new procedures too were introduced. Thus *when asked whether the library introduces new procedures to aid in the management of new services*, 64% of the respondents agreed that the library effected new procedures every now and then to aid in the management of the new services, 28% of the respondents being uncertain and 8% of them disagreeing. It would be necessary for the libraries to come up with new procedures on the usage of such new products. This aids ensuring consistency in service delivery at all times. On being asked *whether the library incorporated new service delivery strategies into the existing strategies*, 68% of the respondents agreed that this was happening, 26% were uncertain and only 6% disagreed. This seems to suggest some level of innovation: new procedures/approaches to doing the same activity are introduced every now and then, or as the need arises. But there is a need to continuously improve on the service strategies in use.

Regarding the range of services on offer for the customers to use, the study focused on the acquisition of new equipment; new information resources; the provision of additional resources; repair of broken-down equipment; and introduction of new equipment to the library. This is supported by the ACRL (2005): that the library must strive to meet the full range of needs of all its customers, from the basic research instructional materials of the research process to the needs for basic source materials and the indepth research services. The library too should make available resources and instructional services primarily tailored to educate, equip and enable users to become more self-sufficient scholars and researchers.

Thus, from the study, it was clear that there were some efforts being made towards improving services, albeit at a *very slow pace through the acquisition of modern equipment/technology*, with only 36% of the respondents strongly agreeing with the statement *that new equipment has been bought in the last two years*, but 43% of the respondents were uncertain and 21% of the respondents disagreed with this. There is a need to upgrade the rate at which services are being improved. Further, 75% of the respondents agreed that *the library strives to provide resources for changes such as additional/new requirements like tables, seats, computers and books*; while

21% of the respondents were uncertain and 4% of the respondents disagreed. Similarly, 57% of the respondents were in agreement that *the library facilities, e.g. furniture, lighting system, windows, etc. are repaired in case of breakdown*, but 30% of the respondents were uncertain and 13% of the respondents disagreed. Likewise, on being asked *whether new equipment is introduced in the library when the current facilities break down*, 53% of the respondents agreed, 26% were uncertain and 21% disagreed. ACRL (2005) emphasised that the libraries ought to provide secure, convenient, well-illuminated, clean areas with sufficient and conducive study, research and discussion areas/facilities, which will also ensure effective use of the library's resources, including electronic resources. On the physical layout of the facilities libraries, should provide instructional and discussion rooms.

With regard to collection development, it was noted that 55% of the respondents were in agreement with the statement *that there has been acquisition of new information resources (i.e. latest in the market) and in the various disciplines* but 27% of the respondents were uncertain, while 18% disagreed. In support of well-equipped academic libraries, the ACRL (2005) library guidelines have emphasised that the library should provide diverse, authoritative and current information resources, which are in tandem with the library mission and the broad information needs. The library collections need to be broad and geared towards meeting the information and research needs of the target clientele as per the different programs on offer.

The same reports note that as information technology is not static, thus the need for continued upgrade of the ICT infrastructure including hardware and software to match the needs and expectations of the library clientele. Together with new resources was the acquisition *of new skills*: 53% of the respondents agreed to being supported to acquire new skills and training, among others, in order to improve their knowledge base and service delivery approaches. In support of skills acquisition, Kaur and Singh (2010) have aptly summed it up: University library information resources have to be well managed primarily to enhance good usage by their clientele. Based on their interactions with the service delivery process the customers do form their perceptions which more often than not influenced by their own encounters with the service frontline staff and the other service parameters. The library's role in this case is paramount and it greatly influences to a great deal the teaching, learning and research functions within the university. It is also an active partner in producing students and researchers who are information literate and lifelong learners.

Lastly, the libraries were keen to receive feedback; thus, it is interesting to note that *though user compliments have dropped/stagnated in the last six months*, according to 42% of the

respondents, user complaints had not; as only 15% of the respondents agreed with the statement that they had dropped in the last six months. In dealing with customer complainants, the Queensland Government (2019) has advocated a scenario where customer complaints are systematically and comprehensively dealt with to the satisfaction of the complainant. The staff must be responsive and act fast; and notifying the clients of the remedial measures undertaken.

5. 8 LIBRARY PERFORMANCE WITH REGARD TO SERVICE DELIVERY AND CUSTOMER ATTRACTION/RETENTION BY THE ACADEMIC LIBRARIES (Objective 4)

According to the University of Leicester Library report (2016), library performance can be assessed via usage, customer satisfaction and the financial resources available for the library. Stanley and Killick's (2009) performance measurement, or library assessment, will focus on: -

- (a) How they serve and "touch" their users' lives
- (b) How they provide access to information, and
- (c) Ways their physical buildings accommodate users' needs.

In this study, library performance focuses on two areas: service delivery and customer attraction/retention by the libraries.

5.8.1 LIBRARY SERVICE DELIVERY

The study sought to assess the performance of the library with regard to service delivery as a factor in service quality. This was done by asking questions related to the customer compliments/complaints, growth of both the resources and the customer base, and the image of the library. Table 5.12 on page 199 gives a summary of the findings.

The study sought to evaluate the performance of the libraries with regard to customer satisfaction. The rating was done based on the following scale on the mean: ($5 \geq M \geq 4.5$) - Excellent, ($4.5 > M \geq 3.0$) - Good, ($3.0 > M \geq 1.5$) - Poor, ($1.5 > M \geq 1$) - Very poor. The findings indicated that the performance was good, with mean score equivalent to 3.594. However, the general rating of the performance of the libraries does differ significantly among the respondents, as reflected in the standard deviation of greater than one (Std. Dev. > 1.0). This variable's Cronbach's Alpha Coefficient was 0.8 showing high internal consistency and therefore, reliable for further analysis. Further, from Table 5.12 the following observations were made and deductions were drawn.

On library service delivery the responses were as follows:

Table 5.12: Library service delivery N=47

| | Statements | Strongly agree | | Agree | | Uncertain | | Disagree | | Strongly disagree | | Total | | Mean | Standard deviation |
|--|---|----------------|----|-------|----|-----------|----|----------|----|-------------------|----|-------|-----|------|--------------------|
| | | F | % | F | % | F | % | F | % | F | % | F | % | M | SD |
| 1 | The level of customer satisfaction in this library is low | 3 | 6 | 4 | 9 | 2 | 4 | 28 | 60 | 10 | 21 | 47 | 100 | 3.81 | 1.076 |
| 2 | The level of customer complaints in this library is low | 2 | 4 | 30 | 64 | 3 | 6 | 9 | 19 | 3 | 6 | 47 | 100 | 2.60 | 1.056 |
| 3 | The level of customer base in this library is low | 0 | 0 | 10 | 21 | 5 | 11 | 25 | 28 | 7 | 15 | 47 | 100 | 3.62 | 0.990 |
| 4 | The level of customer retention in this library is low | 2 | 4 | 4 | 9 | 5 | 11 | 28 | 60 | 8 | 17 | 47 | 100 | 3.77 | 0.983 |
| 5 | The level of the customer compliments for this library is low | 1 | 2 | 14 | 30 | 5 | 11 | 19 | 40 | 8 | 17 | 47 | 100 | 3.40 | 1.155 |
| 6 | The growth of the information resources in the last three years was low | 5 | 11 | 7 | 15 | 6 | 13 | 21 | 45 | 8 | 17 | 47 | 100 | 3.43 | 1.247 |
| 7 | The level of return on this library's investment was poor in the last three years and hence it should be closed | 3 | 6 | 7 | 15 | 17 | 36 | 10 | 21 | 10 | 21 | 47 | 100 | 3.66 | 1.290 |
| 8 | This library's service delivery is lower than anticipated | 3 | 6 | 4 | 9 | 3 | 6 | 23 | 49 | 14 | 30 | 47 | 100 | 3.87 | 1.135 |
| 9 | This library's image is poor | 2 | 4 | 1 | 2 | 2 | 4 | 23 | 49 | 19 | 40 | 47 | 100 | 4.19 | 0.947 |
| Cronbach Alpha Coefficient = 0.8 Composite Mean = 3.594, SD = 1.098 | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | |

5.8.2 CUSTOMER SATISFACTION

With regard to *the level of customer satisfaction in the library*, 15% of the respondents were in consensus that it was low, but 81% of them disagreeing, meaning that the level of customer satisfaction was perceived to be high. 68% of the respondents agreed that *the level of the library customer complaints were low* and only 25% of the respondents disagreed with Table 5.12, which illustrated this. On being asked on their views *about the library customer base*, 21% of the respondents agreed that it was low, while 68% disagreed. Only 32% of the respondents agreed that *the level of the library customer compliments was low*, while 57% of the respondents disagreed with this and 11% were uncertain. These responses, as shown in Table 5.12, are an indication of mixed feelings with respect to the library customer satisfaction levels. When asked to comment on *the level of library customer retention*, 13% of the respondents agreed that the level of customer satisfaction was low, while another 11% of the respondents were uncertain but 77% of the respondents wholly disagreed; possibly implying that they felt that the customer retention was acceptable. From this observation, it is still important to emphasise the need to satisfy the customers. Satisfied customers automatically through word of mouth promote the service there winning more customers and indirectly help emphasise the value of the service to other non-customers. Gronroos (1994) emphasised that though not all needs and wants may be successfully met, the onus is on the library to manage its services in such a way that both parties mutually benefit. On this, Kaur and Singh (2010) lay emphasis on the training of all staff on excellent customer skills, and not just the customer service personnel.

5.8.3 LIBRARY CORPORATE IMAGE

There is growing concern by organizations on the management of the corporate image. Thus it is crucial, to establish the service attributes which are highly rated by the clientele, this is crucial so as to capitalize on customer satisfaction and enhance service quality. Thus, when the library customers were asked to comment about *the library's image*, only 6% of the respondents agreed that the image was poor as compared to 89% of the respondents who disagreed, which implies that the image was good (see Table 5.12). Though a good number noted that the image is good, yet it is important for the libraries to endeavour to deal with the dissenting voices for improved image. The image of an organisation is important and should be well guarded as it the very foundation of the business, yet, so many organisations miss the mark by not guarding the image. From these findings, it is essential that academic libraries work on boosting their images in the eyes of the public that they serve.

5.8.4 LIBRARY INVESTMENT

The level of return on the library's investment was poor in the last three years and hence it should be closed. 21% of the respondents agreed that the investment was poor, but 42% of the respondents wholly disagreed, while 36% were uncertain. With regard to the library's service delivery, 15% of the respondents agreed that the service delivery was lower than anticipated and 79% of the respondents disagreed with this statement (see Table 5.12).

The view that *the investment in libraries is worthwhile* is supported by the fact that 62% of the respondents agreed that *the library information resources had in the last three years grown* as compared to only 26% who felt that the growth in resources was low. In this regard, Filip (2013) observes that superior service is more of a measure of customer perception of the quality of the service. An academic library serves a community that is in need of authentic, current and scholarly information. It therefore becomes imperative that the academic library is valued as an entity that can help university customers in the areas of learning, teaching, research and professional development.

5.9 LIBRARY CUSTOMER ATTRACTION/RETENTION

The study sought to assess the performance of the library with regard to customer attraction/retention as a factor in service quality. This was done by asking questions related to the library market share and the customer base, outreach engagements, customer satisfaction/loyalty levels, employee welfare and workplace environment.

It is important to understand how the libraries are performing in terms of attracting new customers, but more importantly retaining them as loyal, satisfied customers. In this regard, Moropa (2010) observes that academic libraries have been, and still are, referred to as "*the heart of the university*", "it does appear that, in reality, they are being or have been dislodged from that position. The phrase "*our library is the heart of the university*" has become shallow. It does not carry as much weight as it did in the past. Table 5.13 on page 205 gives a summary of the findings and shows the distribution of the library attraction/retention responses. The study sought to evaluate the library customer attraction/retention. The rating of the quality was done based on the following scale on the mean: ($5 \geq M \geq 4.5$) - Very Poor, ($4.5 > M \geq 3.0$) - Poor, ($3.0 > M \geq 1.5$) - Good, ($1.5 > M \geq 1$) - Very Good. The findings indicated that the service was good with mean score equivalent to 2.639. Moreover, the general rating of the service quality does not differ significantly among the respondents, as reflected in the standard deviation of less

than one (Std. Dev.<1.0). This variable's Cronbach's Alpha Coefficient was 0.8, showing high internal consistency, and therefore, reliability for further analysis.

5.9.1 LIBRARY MARKET SHARE

With regard to *the library market share*, 79% of the respondents felt that this had increased within the last three years, while 19% of the respondents were uncertain about this (see Table 5.13). A growing market share is an indication that there is demand for services/goods. As the market share increased, there was also an improvement in the customer satisfaction within the same period, as 77% of the respondents affirmed that the library customer satisfaction had increased, 19% were uncertain and only 4% of the respondents disagreed. Similarly, on being asked to respond to the issue of competition from other service providers, but in relation to the customer base, only 36% of the respondents felt that their library customer base had exceeded that of their competitors; another 53% were uncertain, but 11% of the respondents disagreed with the assertion. The fact that only so few respondents were in agreement makes it evident that the libraries are under real threat from their competitors. This implies that there is still a lot of work to do in terms of wooing customers to use their services and retaining them as well.

5.9.2 LIBRARY CUSTOMER LOYALTY

In this case (referring to Table 5.13 on page 205), it was found that *customer loyalty had increased within the last three years*, according to 72% of the respondents who agreed with the statement; 15% were uncertain and disagreed. On the question as to *whether their library clients keep moving to other libraries/information centres*, only 11% agreed, 34% were uncertain and 55% disagreed. From this it can be concluded that there was some degree of loyalty among the customers; but the level of movement elsewhere though minimal was still in existence.

Within the same period, *77% of the respondent librarians were of the view that customer satisfaction had increased*. Indeed, 73% of the respondents indicated that their customers were happy with the service(s) rendered, but a proportion were not satisfied. Likewise, as the library customer complaints decreased, according to 69% of the respondents, there was a growing customer loyalty, which drastically increased (72% of the respondents) within the same period. Only 12% of the respondents disagreed with the statement that it had decrease.

The study also found *that 71% of the of the respondents agreed that the service providers were actively involved in collecting information on what customers wanted and expected in terms of service quality.*

Table 5.13: Library Customer attraction/retention N=47

| | Statements | Strongly agree | | Agree | | Uncertain | | Disagree | | Strongly disagree | | Total | | Mean | Standard deviation |
|-----------|--|----------------|----|-------|----|-----------|----|----------|----|-------------------|----|-------|-----|------|--------------------|
| | | f | % | f | % | f | % | F | % | f | % | f | % | | |
| ASSURANCE | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | |
| 1 | During the past three years our market share has increased | 14 | 30 | 23 | 49 | 9 | 19 | 1 | 2 | 0 | 0 | 47 | 100 | 1.94 | 0.763 |
| 2 | During the past three years, customer satisfaction has increased | 16 | 34 | 20 | 43 | 9 | 19 | 2 | 4 | 0 | 0 | 47 | 100 | 1.94 | .0845 |
| 3 | Over the past three years, our customer base has exceeded that of our competitors | 3 | 6 | 14 | 30 | 25 | 53 | 5 | 11 | 0 | 0 | 47 | 100 | 2.68 | 0.755 |
| 4 | During the past three years library customer complaints have decreased | 4 | 9 | 28 | 60 | 8 | 17 | 6 | 13 | 1 | 2 | 47 | 100 | 2.40 | 0.901 |
| 5 | During the past three years, our new products/services have been less attractive than those of the competitors | 0 | 0 | 9 | 19 | 13 | 28 | 22 | 47 | 3 | 6 | 47 | 100 | 3.40 | 0.876 |
| 6 | During the past three years customer loyalty has increased | 7 | 15 | 27 | 57 | 7 | 15 | 3 | 6 | 3 | 6 | 47 | 100 | 2.32 | 1.024 |
| 7 | Our customers are happy with the service(s) rendered | 19 | 40 | 20 | 43 | 7 | 15 | 0 | 0 | 1 | 2 | 47 | 100 | 1.81 | 0.851 |
| 8 | We have a shrinking market share | 3 | 6 | 9 | 19 | 17 | 36 | 14 | 30 | 4 | 9 | 47 | 100 | 3.15 | 1.042 |
| 9 | Our clients keep moving to other libraries/information centres | 1 | 2 | 4 | 9 | 16 | 34 | 19 | 40 | 7 | 15 | 47 | 100 | 3.57 | 0.927 |
| 10 | We collect information on what customers want and expect in terms of service quality | 5 | 11 | 28 | 60 | 9 | 19 | 4 | 9 | 1 | 2 | 47 | 100 | 2.32 | 0.862 |
| 11 | We collect information on what customers want and expect in terms information resources | 11 | 23 | 29 | 62 | 9 | 19 | 4 | 9 | 1 | 2 | 47 | 100 | 2.02 | 0.872 |
| 12 | We keep accurate data on customers and complaints | 13 | 28 | 22 | 47 | 8 | 17 | 0 | 0 | 4 | 9 | 47 | 100 | 2.15 | 1.103 |
| 13 | We keep accurate data on customer/client progress in literacy/outreach programmes | 10 | 21 | 20 | 43 | 12 | 26 | 4 | 9 | 1 | 2 | 47 | 100 | 2.28 | 0.971 |

Table 5.13: Library Customer attraction/retention responses(cont.)

| | Statements | Strongly agree | | Agree | | Uncertain | | Disagree | | Strongly disagree | | Total | | Mean | Standard deviation |
|---|---|----------------|----|-------|----|-----------|----|----------|----|-------------------|----|-------|-----|------|--------------------|
| | | f | % | f | % | f | % | F | % | f | % | f | % | | |
| 14 | I am satisfied with my salary | 1 | 2 | 2 | 4 | 8 | 17 | 12 | 26 | 24 | 51 | 47 | 100 | 4.19 | 1.014 |
| 15 | The library management cares about my welfare | 3 | 6 | 18 | 38 | 10 | 21 | 6 | 13 | 10 | 21 | 47 | 100 | 3.04 | 1.285 |
| 16 | I receive continuous job training | 3 | 6 | 15 | 32 | 16 | 34 | 5 | 11 | 8 | 17 | 47 | 100 | 3.00 | 1.180 |
| 17 | I have a secure job | 9 | 19 | 14 | 30 | 14 | 30 | 7 | 15 | 3 | 6 | 47 | 100 | 2.60 | 1.155 |
| 18 | My employer cares about my welfare | 2 | 4 | 15 | 32 | 15 | 32 | 3 | 6 | 12 | 26 | 47 | 100 | 3.17 | 1.257 |
| 19 | My contribution as an employee is valued | 4 | 9 | 27 | 57 | 7 | 15 | 7 | 15 | 2 | 4 | 47 | 100 | 2.49 | 0.997 |
| 20 | I am happy with my work environment | 8 | 17 | 24 | 51 | 9 | 19 | 5 | 11 | 1 | 2 | 47 | 100 | 2.30 | 0.954 |
| <p>Cronbach Alpha Coefficient = 0.8 Composite Mean = 2.639, SD = 0.982</p> | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | |

From the findings, 85% of the respondents agreed to gathering information on what customers want and expect in terms of information resources. This could imply that there was zeal from the librarians as the service providers in getting those resources that the customers actually required or needed. This is important since the academic libraries are there for use by the users; as such, they need to be well stocked with useful and relevant information resources for the pursuit of academic activities; thus supporting the university core business of promoting scholarship and research pursuits through the provision of quality information services.

This is well captured and articulated by the University of Pretoria Library Service (UPLS) mandate which states:

...The library is responsible for the management of academic information and knowledge, and for leading the university in information and knowledge innovation...

The vision of the UPLS is as follows:

...we strive to be a world-class twenty-first century academic research library enabling the University of Pretoria to be an internationally recognised research university.

This vision is inspired by the main strategic objective of the university, namely:

... to become an internationally recognised South African teaching and research university... (UPLS, 2009)

5.9.3 LIBRARY CUSTOMER OUTREACH PROGRAMMES

The study also found (see Table 5.13) that 64% of the respondents agreed that *accurate data on customer/client progress in literacy/outreach programmes* was kept. This possibly aided in the planning of how best to meet the information needs of the different groups. These findings are further supported by Hayes (2008), who stressed that an understanding of the client's needs requires excellent liaison at the strategic leadership level, combined with market influence. Recognising that library users have different requirements, based on research or teaching orientation, discipline, background or previous experience, market research is needed to ensure that services are assigned to user requirements within the broader context of departmental and institutional priorities.

5.9.4 LIBRARY STAFF WELFARE

With regard to welfare, several attributes were looked into. In respect of *training*, only 38% of the respondents indicated that they had benefited from continuous job training, implying that

69% of the respondents had not benefited in any way. Training is crucial in an organisation and needs to be supported by all possible means. There should be a strategic emphasis on training in hard and soft skills, and the acquisition of new skills based on the individual library's future needs. Deodhar and Powdwal (2017:119) in agreeing also note that most of the libraries do not have staff training and development policies in place. It is this that hampers any capacity-building initiatives.

In relation to customer satisfaction, the study also sought to establish the feelings the service providers (librarians) had towards their employer. *In this case, 44% of the respondents were of the view that the library management cares about their welfare and 36% agreed that their employer cared about their welfare* (See Table 5.13, page 205). Thus, it is evident that over 50% of the service providers were somewhat dissatisfied about how their welfare issues were handled. These findings on employee welfare are in agreement with Foldspang (2014) on employee wellness and work environment. The author states that employers need to value the employees' welfare and create a suitable working environment. This, no doubt, will impact on service delivery.

With regard to *being valued at the workplace*, 66% of the respondents indicated that they were happy that their contribution as an employee was valued. This is consistent with the human need of wanting to be appreciated, and it is the good-quality employee relationships, which also provide the basis for developing strong customer relationships, that foster customer loyalty. From the study, 49% of the respondents expressed that they felt they had job security, 30% of the respondents were uncertain and 21% of the respondents felt insecure. This is of concern: if over 50% of the respondents do not feel secure in their jobs, this is likely to affect their performance. This possibly indicates that the respondents felt they did not have a proper job and also that their perception was that there were a lot more threats than opportunities facing their work. It is also possible that the librarians perceive the challenges as being beyond their control. This finding may also be informed by the fact that not all the librarians were employed on permanent terms (see Table 5.13).

Thus, when the respondents were asked to express their feelings with regard to compensation, it was found out that there was general dissatisfaction with regard to the salaries they receive, as only 6% indicated that they were satisfied with their current salaries; while an overwhelming 90% of the respondents indicated that they were not. Lack of job security, coupled with a low salary, spells doom for any organisation, as its employees may not deliver quality service to customers (Obajimi, 2011).

5.9.5 EMPLOYEE WORK ENVIRONMENT

With regard to *the work environment*, 68% of the respondents indicated that they were happy, but 32% were not (see Table 5.13). This calls for further analysis to understand the disturbing work environment factors that act as dissatisfiers and hamper good service delivery. Expounding on this, Ollukkaran and Gunaseelan (2012) point out that work environment encompasses the processes, systems, structures, tools or conditions in the work place and influencing individual performance both negatively or positively. The work environment also includes policies, rules, culture, resources, working relationships, work location, and internal and external environmental factors, all of which influence the ways those employees perform their job functions. They stress that organisations need to create a work environment which motivates employees to be productive, thus spurring profits. In a nutshell it is evident that workplace is a core aspect of the work itself.

5. 10 CHAPTER SUMMARY

This chapter has analysed the responses from all the respondents, gathered through the research instruments, questionnaires both from the library customers (Appendix 2), and the librarians (Appendix 1). The research instruments used provided the relevant data for the study, which was then analysed under different themes. This data revealed pertinent issues regarding service quality in the academic libraries. Customer data was provided regarding the available services and information resources available, the perceptions concerning the services provided, and customer satisfaction. The findings reveal that majority of the library customers constitute undergraduate students; with only a small portion comprising postgraduates and the faculty staff. It was also revealed that the awareness of public library services was low, which affected access to, and the use of, the services provided. The services provided by the academic libraries were on average fair but insufficient, and in some areas did not meet the expectations of the clientele they serve. It is this that prompted some of the users to opt to seek service(s) elsewhere. The low use of the services indicated users' lack of awareness regarding the existence of the service(s) and was also partly due to their dissatisfaction. The library customer service orientation is also low, with an inappropriate market survey. The customers were happy that the librarians were able to articulate their information needs and satisfy them. However, they were unhappy and there were a few who were rude and unwilling to help.

On the other hand, the librarians' responses shed light on the different approaches used to deliver services: the market orientation nature of the libraries, organisational communication mechanisms in place, the resources available and strategies to enhance these, the working environment in relation to service delivery and the relationship with the department and the parent body. The data also highlighted some of the hurdles customers encounter in their bid to access the available resources. The handicaps encountered by the service providers were also identified. From the responses, librarians had mixed feelings regarding their work environment, with some expressing satisfaction but another lot quite unhappy, having the feeling that more needs to be done by both the department and the parent body. It was also clear that the degree of customer service orientation was low, as evidenced by low marketing, poor communication channels and service innovations. It was, however, interesting to note that as much as the librarians were aware of the need to engage in more marketing, little was being done. As a general observation, there was dissatisfaction with regard to remuneration, training opportunities and support by the parent body. It was also found that though informational resources are available, they are skewed towards books only, with undergraduates being the dominant user group. Also notable is the fact that there is an almost total neglect of certain user groups, such as the PWDs, the postgraduates and staff. The last two categories tend to shy away from the library. Similarly, it was found out that the libraries were making strides towards meeting the needs of virtual users (a new category of users, thanks to advances in technology). Overall, the customers' satisfaction levels were varying but the service delivery process was marred by several challenges which include:

- Lack of appropriate equipment/tools e.g. computers
- Low staff morale
- Limited floor space
- Lack of commitment by staff
- Limited informational resources, owing to inadequate funding, and
- Lack of targeted marketing of the resources available to specific user groups such as the postgraduates.

5.10.1 GAPS IN THE SERVICE.

From the results the following gaps have been identified in the service delivery process.

1. Resources shortfall both in terms of quantity and quality. Thus customers' information needs are not optimally met.
2. Low market orientation practices as depicted by inadequate marketing of both the services(s) and resources available, poor marketing skills, lack of market segmentation, thus some customer groups e.g. postgraduates ignored and poor customer relations.
3. Low levels of hygiene indicated by the lack of washrooms within the library, dirty washrooms, dusty reading areas, congested working areas.
4. Accessibility due to the location of the library facility; and also the accessibility of the information resources due to their location and/or lack of awareness of their availability.
5. Communication lapses, especially vertical communication
6. Low levels of service innovations
7. Low customer satisfaction with the service provided
8. Lack preparedness in dealing with the PWDs.

These current study results (Chapter 5) along with those in Chapter 6 (the interview and observation results) are discussed together in Chapter 7 so as to gain a better understanding of the service quality perceptions in the academic libraries.

CHAPTER SIX

DATA ANALYSIS AND PRESENTATION: INTERVIEW AND OBSERVATION RESPONSES

6.1 INTRODUCTION

This section presents the analysis and interpretation of the observation and interview results gathered from the research instruments used for the study on service quality in the academic libraries in Kenya. The data for the study was gathered using both observation and interview schedules, guided by the research objectives as outlined in Chapter 1 section 1.5.1.

This section is based on the analysis of the two datasets, obtained from the observations made in the libraries by the researcher, and from the interviews conducted from the key informants (senior librarians).

Section one presents a summary of the observations made (see section 6.2 and Appendix 4: observation schedule). The observation schedule in the sampled university libraries focused on gathering more information relating to service delivery.

Section two of this chapter presents the interview responses (see section 6.3 and Appendix 3: Interview Schedule). The identity of the ten institutions remains private; all the libraries under study were referred to by different acronyms: ACL1 (Academic library 1) ACL2, etc. The libraries where the photographs were taken/and or interview information obtained are referred to differently, as the confidentiality of the respondents was observed.

6.2 OBSERVATION RESULTS SUMMARY

The researcher undertook physical observation of the academic libraries under study in order to ascertain their status. In this regard, an observation schedule was used to gather data. This helped to supplement and beef up the information generated from the other methods used: interviews and questionnaires. An assessment of the libraries, based on their physical location, information resources, services, organisation and seating space, size, lighting, shelving, office and working space and general information resources/collection outlook and usage was done. The assessment focused on customer aid/support features, such as guides and posters, the availability of computers and other ICTs, as well as the collections' outlook and utilisation.

Observation findings were also captured via photographs which were taken to capture different service activities, such as the equipment available, the infrastructure in place, the staff work

areas, reading areas, organisation of the information resources, the library premises, and services available within. The photographs have been organised under different sub-headings. Appendix 5 summarises this information; for ease of usage, the information is summarised under the following subject themes: resources available, security and access, guiding, services and equipment available, and staff working areas. Silverman (2011:234) in support of the use photographs has pointed out that it is no longer possible to treat visual research as the marginalized speciality that it once was.

The observed findings are discussed under themes as generated from the observation schedule.

6.2.1 ACCESS TO AND APPLICATION OF TECHNOLOGY

From the observations made, it was found that in most of the libraries there was some degree of technology adoption. However, the modern technologies like computers and Internet access was not readily available to all the external library users. There was, however, near to full access to the technology for the staff. A few libraries gave full access to their technologies to their users. These technologies were mainly used for communication purposes, data and information storage, lending service and security. With regard to security, technology was used at the access control points for entry and exits checks, surveillance through the CCTV network, registration and clearance of users and issuing of informational materials. Most of these libraries had no self-service technologies through which users could easily get service without necessarily having to rely on the service staff for assistance. In most of these libraries, the services offered via modern technologies were partially automated, and were especially restricted to the security, lending, data storage, and processing of the information resources sections.

With the exception of ACL1, most of the other libraries lacked technology suitable for people with disabilities (PWDs). This means that this category of users was largely marginalised in terms of service delivery by the respective libraries.

6.2.2 AVAILABILITY OF COMPUTERS AND OTHER ICTs

Table 6.1 on page 216 shows the ICT facilities available. From the observations made, it was established that there were specifically designed ICT sections where the users could access the e-resources and also receive dedicated training and instruction on the use the library's e-resources. These sections were furnished with computers, but the number varied from one

institution to the other. Observation results indicate that the available computers and in good working condition were scarce and not proportional to number of users.

There were also some for staff use as they render service. Though there were computers available for use by the patrons, they were too few in relation to the number of users. As a result, most of the users except those with their own laptops could not use the online resources when they needed to. To a large number of users, having a laptop was a luxury they could not afford, hence the reliance on the institutional ones. This explains why there was overcrowding on the few available computers in the library and other places within the university. Owing to this, many users resorted to using their phones to access information. Some were seen struggling to read and download from their own mobile phones. This is quite a strenuous and time-consuming activity, but it was their only way out to tap into the available online resources. For those institutions that had special rooms fitted and furnished with ICT infrastructures, the clients, with the help of the staff therein, could access the required materials with ease. The online resources are also accessible outside the library but within the university premises or within a given range of distance. This, however, required the configuration of the personal computers/laptops to the university IP addresses. Appendix 5:42- 47 (see page 442) gives evidence of the availability of different ICT appliances for aiding information access.

From the observations made, these library ICT sections were heavily used, necessitating strict control to adequately serve the huge number of users seeking the service. Long queues at various service points/counters were not experienced in most of the libraries, and this varies according to seasons/institutions' academic calendars. Other technologies available in the libraries visited included: scanners, printing services, reprographic services, bindery services (See Appendix 5:45 & 46 showing some of the appliances).

Table 6.1: Observation summary on the availability of computers and other ICTs

| ICT facilities / Institution (university libraries) | ACL 1 | ACL 2 | ACL 3 | ACL 4 | ACL 5 | ACL 6 | ACL 7 | ACL 8 | ACL 9 | ACL 10 |
|--|-------|-------|-------|-------|-------|-------|-------|-------|-------|--------|
| Television, | √ | x | x | x | √ | √ | √ | X | √ | √ |
| Projectors | √ | x | x | x | √ | √ | √ | X | X | x |
| Internet facilities (like wireless router, LAN, WAN) | √ | √ | √ | √ | √ | √ | √ | √ | √ | √ |
| Computers | √ | √ | √ | √ | √ | √ | √ | √ | √ | x |
| Photocopier | √ | √ | x | √ | √ | √ | √ | X | √ | √ |
| Scanner, | √ | √ | x | √ | √ | √ | √ | X | √ | √ |
| Printer, | √ | √ | √ | √ | √ | √ | √ | √ | √ | √ |
| CCTV cameras | √ | √ | x | √ | √ | √ | √ | X | √ | x |
| DVD, CDs | √ | x | x | √ | √ | √ | √ | X | √ | √ |
| Telephones | √ | √ | √ | √ | √ | √ | √ | √ | √ | √ |
| Video camera | √ | x | x | x | x | x | x | X | X | x |
| Access to OPAC | √ | √ | √ | √ | √ | √ | √ | √ | √ | √ |

NB: √ Denotes availability; while x-non –availability

6.2.3 LIBRARY GUIDING

Library guides/signs assist customers providing directions regarding the location of the various facilities within the library. There were the general guides, such as those showing the days/hours of operation, and general information notices such as "silence", "no smoking", "no sleeping" and there were also some specific directional ones inside the library facility. Most of the libraries under study had fairly good guides within the library building to show the location of the different service points/areas and resources. The guides were also visibly placed so that the library buildings/premises could be easily identified/located from far, as was the case for the libraries ACL1, ACL7 and ACL5. Inside the library premises, the guides also show the specialised classification system of arranging materials. The guides also reinforced library rules and regulations, for example, no noise, use of phones, etc. Despite this, however, people in some of the libraries were seen and heard conversing very loudly, distracting other users. There were also guides indicating the location of the various facilities such as washrooms, lifts/staircase, baggage, exits and entry points; and those showing the location of the different service points such as lending and borrowing, special collections, the administrative offices

(See page 442: Appendix 5:10,17,19,33 & 36 for details of some of these features). A well labelled display section for new material was observed at the different libraries, which consisted mostly of pamphlets, exchange journals, and new books. Some of the library web pages had postings of "what is new", drawing the attention of the users to new items/services in the libraries. Other relevant information relating to the library, such as the rules and regulations and hours of operation were also posted there.

6.2.4 LIBRARY CLEANLINESS

From the observations made, it was found out that in most of the libraries, the level of cleanliness of the facilities like tables, washrooms, walls/floor and book stacks was fairly ok. The degree, however, varied from one institution to the other. It was also established that there was regular cleaning and /or dusting of the premises, including the information resources themselves, as the cleaners were visibly seen discharging their duties, noted in ACL5, ACL1 and ACL2. However, this was not done to the optimal levels, as on casual and random checks of the reading tables, bookshelves (books included) and some of the equipment dust was evident. It was observed that keeping some of the facilities clean was a challenge owing to their poor design (allowing a lot of dust and mud especially during the wet seasons), and there was human traffic vis-a-vis the small buildings, leading to overcrowding.

In some of the libraries there was evidence of book lice, which is a pointer to the humid/wet conditions within the building. In most of the facilities, like in ACL2, dustbins were strategically located both inside and outside the library facility; and waste paper baskets were also placed in the various staff working areas to facilitate litter collection (Appendix 5: 19 & 20 testify to this).

Some of the libraries had no washrooms within, which posed great inconvenience to the users. For those that had washrooms within, they were found to be reasonably clean though in certain instances leakages were observed. Where the washrooms were not within the library premises, as was the case with ACL8 and ACL3, it was also found that the general cleanliness of these external washrooms was wanting (Appendix 5: 8 & 9). Some of the institutions, like ACL1 and ACL2, had specially designed washroom facilities for the PWDs, which were also labelled, but in the majority of the other libraries, this category of users were largely ignored and they had to struggle to use the available facilities. This, it was noted, exposed them to lots of ridicule and discomfort. This particular finding on the state of the washrooms mirrors the earlier findings of Rintari (2015) on the exploration of the quality of the Kenyan University graduates,

which reiterated that a lack of well-maintained sanitation facilities is a common feature in Kenyan universities, and more so in the public ones.

6.2.5 PHYSICAL LOCATION, ACCESSIBILITY OF THE LIBRARIES

On physical location, the accessibility of most of the libraries was quite good; implying they could be reached from different directions within the institutions. The library was centrally located in close proximity to the other academic facilities, such as lecture rooms and offices. In some of the institutions, there were purpose-built facilities meant for library services; this was lacking in some of the other institutions. It is evident that Appendix 5:53 page442 shows a purpose-built stand-alone library building located in a quiet place, while Appendix 5:55-58 shows a library facility fragmented in different rooms, due to space constraints; for some of the rooms it is evident they are difficult to access, particularly by the physically challenged customers. This was the case for the libraries that were located upstairs and with no provision for lift services within the building(s) to ease their mobility. The staircases in such cases were also not friendly, being steep and narrow. These discourage the PWDs especially.

This is contrary to the other institutions, which had very magnificent purpose-built library buildings that were also well furnished with lifts and escalators. It is in such buildings that even the service points were well placed and the other facilities, such as lounges, baggage areas and washrooms were provided for. This finding is confirmed by the study of Rintari (2015), on the study of quality of the Kenyan University graduates, in which it was found that there was a serious challenge accessing the physical facilities in such buildings in most of the universities in Kenya; the challenge being more evident in the public universities in comparison to the private ones. This implies that there is some degree of negligence by the public officers, who ought to enforce government policies and agenda; the regulatory bodies are more stringent on the private institutions and quite complacent with the government owned ones.

6.2.6 LIGHTING

In terms of lighting, a general observation was made that libraries were fairly well lit (evidenced in Appendix 5:50- showing a room well-lit both artificially and by natural light, and Appendix 5:47 showing a room with good natural light). The inside too was well lit, though it was noted that the broken light bulbs were not replaced immediately, being left for some time; repairs were not speedily done. The majority of the library facilities nonetheless had good natural lighting. The surrounding areas were well lit to facilitate library visits at night, and the

alleys adjoining other facilities too were well lit. The flower beds were well trimmed, leaving no dark and bushy areas in the vicinity of the library buildings (Appendix 5:53 & 54).

6.2.7 SERVICES TO THE PEOPLE WITH DISABILITIES (PWDs)

With regard to accessing library services by the PWDs, it was found to be a major challenge. In some of the institutions like ACL1, there was a dedicated vehicular transport for the PWDs to ferry them to and from the library from their rooms. This, it was established, encouraged and motivated many in this category of users to use the libraries frequently. The PWDs were concerned about not only how to access the resources within the libraries, but also how to get back safely to their specific places of residence, since they are physically challenged. It was also noted that the stigma associated with their being handicapped tended to keep them away from the library, unless they had a dedicated friend(s) to assist them when required. Table 6.2, page 221 gives a summary of the various services and facilities available to the people with disabilities (PWDs). Apart from Library ACL1, majority of the other libraries lacked technology suitable for people with disabilities (PWDs). In ACL1, for instance, the library has computers specifically for use by the visually challenged, fitted with the appropriate software. The people with disabilities (PWDs) were able to access the library services, but with restrictions/challenges varying from one institution to the other. Some libraries excelled in this area and even had specific information materials for the PWDs, as well as specially designated areas where they would receive their services, as was the case in ACL 1. From the observation made at Library ACL1, it can be established that the PWDs could get all the library services they required just like any other library users. Owing to the good rapport between them and the staff attending to them, they enjoyed personalised service(s). As a matter of practice, their loan dates were adjusted according to their reading needs and to the set loan policy; still their loans could be extended at their request. They could also get literature searches done for them; information resources that they required would be retrieved and stored in advance for them to collect. The available furniture, as can be seen from Appendix 5:15 & 37, is generally not suitable for PWDs.

Upon collection of their library items, it was noted that they were escorted by the library staff manning the section to the library main exit where a specially assigned university driver with a vehicle was on standby waiting to ferry such users back to their halls of residence or to class. This was the case for any other PWDs in ACL1 wishing to use the library services: they only needed to communicate with the university department handling disability issues (for their

transport arrangements to the library to be organised) and to similarly inform the library staff of their information needs ahead of their visit.

The library staff would assist them to get the books they needed and facilitate their borrowing through extended loan periods. The disability section was furnished with suitable furniture, such as low tables and adjustable seats, and/or spaces large enough to accommodate the wheelchair-confined users. Specially designed washrooms were in close proximity for their use. These areas were also manned by specific staff, with whom the PWDs had good rapport. It was found that the profiles of the users were well kept and organised, services to them were customised to suit their needs. On the whole, the PWDs were happy with the services rendered to them. This kind of service was, however, lacking in majority of the other academic libraries. In several of the other libraries, they had to struggle on their own to meet their information and reading needs; they were largely dependent on the goodwill of their fellow students who could get the items that they required for them. It was noted that in the event that such a need arose (i.e. PWDs requiring library service), a member of staff could be arbitrarily requested to assist such clients, but the general unpreparedness of such staff was quite evident. This made their access to the library services not only challenging but also quite unpleasant. Heery (1996) acknowledged that students with disabilities "... need high quality services from colleges and universities. Inadequate physical access is ... not a reason for institutions or their libraries not to provide services to students with special needs". Irvall and Nielsen (2005) echoing the sentiments of IFLAI are emphatic that all persons regardless of their physical condition should be able to use the libraries within their location and the surroundings of the library: the entrance, restrooms, stairs, elevators and special rooms should be accessible for persons with different kinds of disabilities.

Table 6.2 Observation summary of the services to the people with disabilities (PWDs)

| University Libraries | Narrative/observation |
|----------------------|--|
| ACL1 | <p>Available is a specific place/room for the PWDs in the library Special information materials for the PWDs e.g. braille material wide exit & walkways to accommodate wheelchairs & crutches Available are special furniture for the PWDs There are specific staff to assist them while in the library Special furniture for the PWDs Available are equipment/tools-visual, hearing aids for use by the PWDs Available are clean, specially designed washrooms for the PWDs next to their room Available are braille machines and special computers with suitable software for their use Talking books/calculators for their use Student helpers who volunteer to read for them as and when needed. Available transport arrangement for them Located ground floor near the entrance</p> |
| ACL2 | <p>No specific place for the PWDs No special information materials for the PWDs No special furniture for the PWDs No equipment/tools for use by the PWDs Available is a specific washroom(one) for PWDs No transport arrangements No mobility aids within Floor too slippery Narrow walkways & exits. Located upstairs</p> |
| ACL3 | <p>No specific place for the PWDs and the Library located upstairs No special information materials for the PWDs No specially designed washroom for PWDs Narrow exit & walkways Room too congested to allow free movement of PWDs No specific staff to assist them No special furniture for the PWDs No equipment/tools-visual, hearing aids for use by the PWDs No transport arrangements</p> |

(cont.)Table 6.2 Observation of the services to the people with disabilities (PWDs)

| University Libraries | Narrative |
|----------------------|---|
| ACL4 | Available is a specific place for the PWDs in the library Special information materials for the PWDs e.g. braille material wide exit & walkways to accommodate wheelchairs & crutches No special furniture for the PWDs Staff willing to assist them while in the library No specially designed washroom for PWDs Special furniture for the PWDs No special transport arrangements available to them |
| ACL5 | Available is a place for the PWDs to sit/where they could be served from by staff No special information materials for the PWDs but there is a good music collection Specially designed washroom for PWDs Staff willing to assist them No special furniture for the PWDs No equipment/tools - visual, hearing aids for use by the PWDs No transport arrangements |
| ACL6 | Available is a place for the PWDs available No special information materials for the PWDs No specially designed washroom for PWDs No special furniture for the PWDs No equipment/tools - visual, hearing aids for use by the PWDs Staff to assist them available No transport arrangements, and/or mobility for them within. Located on ground floor but there are several steps |
| ACL7 | No specific place for the PWDs No special information materials for the PWDs Wide exit & walkways Staff available and willing to assist them No specially designed washroom for PWDs No special furniture for the PWDs No equipment/tools - visual, hearing aids for use by the PWDs No transport arrangements |

| | |
|-------|--|
| ACL8 | <p>No specific place for the PWDs No special information materials for the PWDs No specially designed washroom for PWDs No special furniture for the PWDs No equipment/tools-visual, hearing aids for use by the PWDs No transport arrangements, and or mobility aids for them within Located upstairs Narrow exit & walkways No specific staff to assist them</p> |
| ACL9 | <p>Available is a specific place/room for the PWDs in the library Special information materials for the PWDs e.g. braille material Wide exit & walkways to accommodate wheelchairs & crutches No specially designed washroom for PWDs No special furniture for the PWDs There are specific staff to assist them while in the library Student helpers who volunteer to read for them as and when needed. No transport arrangement for them</p> |
| ACL10 | <p>Available is a place for the PWDs to sit/where they could be served from by staff No special information materials for the PWDs No specially designed washroom for PWDs No specific staff to assist them No special furniture for the PWDs No equipment/tools - visual, hearing aids for use by the PWDs No transport arrangements</p> |

6.2.8 OFFICE AND WORKING SPACE

With regard to office and working space, these were available, but in some cases quite limited; staff had no proper working areas or had to work in congested areas as noted in ACL3, ACL8 and ACL2 (also see Appendix 5:21-25 showing workstations in different institutions, page 442). Sometimes the staff had to organise themselves informally to work in turns. This was found to greatly interrupt their work output. Office spaces were available for the university librarians and the deputies in ACL9, ACL1, ACL4, ACL6, ACL7 and ACL5. In some of the libraries, for instance at ACL1 and ACL9, office space was provided for the other senior staff and an open office concept design for staff in the other areas, such as the processing, acquisitions, bindery, etc.

The fact that staff in certain cases had to work from such a difficult environment, made them feel unwanted and that their roles were not appreciated at all. It is worth clarifying that the term, term work environment encompasses a friendly, well designed, safe physical space, with good equipment and effective communication, which in turn boosts productivity. Well designed and organised offices and work areas make significant differences to the way people feel about their work. This agrees with Armstrong and Murlis (2007), who in their study have pointed out that the work environment can give some discouraging signals messages about how much the organisation values employees and the values it expects from them. Foldspang *et al.* (2014) agrees that the physical working environment is an important, statistically significant predictor of productivity. Thus it cannot be left to chance. Table 6.3 (on page 228), gives a summary of the staff work environment.

6.2.9 READING AREAS AND SHELVING SPACE

From the observations, the different libraries were endowed differently in terms of library space. In some of the libraries, such as ACL1, ACL5, ACL6, ACL4, ACL7, ACL9 there were reasonable reading areas as compared to ACL2, ACL8 and ACL3. In some, there were even private reading carrels, as was noted in ACL1, ACL4, ACL9, ACL7 and ACL5, but in others, space was quite a luxury and the users were encouraged to just identify and borrow what they needed and take these out to use in other rooms available in the university, e.g. the lecture rooms. This, it was observed, was an intervention to ease congestion and was encouraged so as to create space for other users. While this may be acceptable and justifiable, it did discourage leisure reading in the library; it gives users the notion that the library is like a bank and you only go to pick what you need and immediately vacate to allow the next customer in.

Shelving space was quite limited in some of the libraries; the book stacks were squeezed together, making movement between the shelves rather difficult. This was the case at ACL2, ACL3 and ACL8. Movement within the shelves was difficult for the PWDs especially, who maybe using clutches or wheelchairs. It was also not possible for the users to browse freely among the shelves as can be seen in Appendix 5:29 & 50.

Table 6.3: Observation of the staff working environment

| Institution (university libraries) | Narrative/observation |
|------------------------------------|---|
| ACL1 | Nice administrative offices with secretaries for the top library management. Other support staff located at the sections/heads in the five-storey building Quiet, serene environment for study Adequate staff & facilities, Air conditioning Internet & telephone extension connectivity available CCTV monitoring Washrooms available within Staff room with a kitchenette |
| ACL2 | Small working room for staff Inadequate facilities such as computers and space No washrooms within for staff (only one for each gender at the exit for all library users & staff) Internet & telephone extension connectivity available Small office for the head librarian; no secretary/support staff No staffroom available |
| ACL3 | Small working room for staff No washrooms within for staff (only a common one outside for each gender) Fans to regulate room temperature Internet connectivity available No staffroom available Small office for the head librarian; no secretary/support staff |
| ACL4 | Spacious offices for the library management, with support staff Adequate staff working areas & facilities, Neat & clean environment, Washrooms available within Internet & telephone extension connectivity available Tea room with a kitchenette available Quiet environment for study |

Table 6.3: Observation of the staff working environment(cont.)

| Institution(university libraries) | Narrative/observation |
|-----------------------------------|---|
| ACL5 | Adequate staff working areas & facilities Neat, quiet & clean environment, Washrooms available within Small cosy office for the librarian Internet & telephone extension connectivity Tearoom with a kitchenette available |
| ACL6 | Large staff working rooms, Adequate facilities Neat, quiet & clean environment, Washrooms available within A cafeteria within close reach Small cosy office for the librarian Internet & telephone extension connectivity |
| ACL7 | Big offices for the library management, Adequate staff working areas & facilities, Neat, clean & quiet environment, Washrooms available within Tea room with a kitchenette Fans, Internet & telephone extension connectivity available |
| ACL8 | Small working room for staff No washrooms within for staff Fans to control room temperature Internet connectivity available Inadequate facilities No tea room for staff Small office for the head librarian; no secretary/support staff No staffroom available |

Table 6.3: Observation of the staff working environment(cont.)

| Institution(university libraries) | Narrative/observation |
|-----------------------------------|--|
| ACL9 | Nice administrative offices with secretaries for the top library management. Other supporting staff located at the sections/heads Adequate working areas &facilities, Air conditioning CCTV monitoring Internet & telephone extension connectivity available Staff washrooms available within Staff room with a kitchenette |
| ACL10 | A medium and spacious office with secretary attached. Adequate working areas for staff & facilities. Fans to regulate the room temperature Internet & telephone extension connectivity available Staff washrooms within Staff room available |

6.2.10 COLLECTION OUTLOOK AND USAGE

The large user populations in these universities imposed a strain on the resources/services available, and especially the space. This was further compounded by the fact that the buildings currently being used as libraries were not designed for that purpose, hence the haphazard location of different services for the different user groups.

On the collection outlook and usage, a majority of the libraries had limited and varied information resource collections. The collections were also widely and heavily used, leading to a high rate of wear and tear. The titles available in most of the libraries were those related to the programmes/courses offered by the university. Most of the books had been identified as core references texts for the different programmes; this essentially meant that the aspect of leisure reading was not given due attention. Book collections in some of the libraries (consisting of books, journals), for instance at ACL7, ACL6 and ACL5, were visibly old and worn out, as exhibited by the year of publication, but on further observation and inquiry it was established that these materials were quite useful and in great demand by scholars in programmes such as biblical studies, history, theology and divinity, being offered by these universities.

It was noted that information resources in some of the disciplines such as commerce and accounting, and which also had heavy enrolments, were heavily used in comparison to others, resulting in considerable wear and tear. This was particularly the case at ACL2, with the engineering and information technology materials being heavily used. The materials were few and so the usage was high; hence, the wear and tear was high. It was also observed that such materials were lent out from the reserve section of the library. The heavy usage was evidenced by perusing the dates on the book date slips. Usage for certain information resource formats, such as the electronic ones, was found to be quite low; thus suggesting that users could be having specific challenges using them. This calls for aggressive marketing to promote their usage.

6.2.11 LIBRARY BUILDINGS AND SERVICE DELIVERY

Most of the library buildings were well lit, fairly ventilated and well maintained, both from the inside and the outside. However, ventilation was an issue in some cases, especially where the room was small in relation to the human traffic. Windows in certain instances were either too small or not easy to open. From the observations made, most of the libraries were not as crowded, though the majority were small considering the space available vis-a-vis the user

population. Crowding was dependent on the academic season within the institutions. The library seating capacities in the different libraries visited varied from about 200 users to 2000 users. This is in contrast to the guidelines of the universities regulatory body (Commission for University Education), which stipulates that a library building should have seating space equivalent to at least a third of the total population (see Annexure B on page 419 for details). It was found that the library buildings' seating capacities were far less than the required capacity. This may partly explain the customer dissatisfaction noted in certain instances.

In some of the other institutions, there was a total unpreparedness, in terms of meeting the information needs of this category of library users. Table 6.4 on page 235, gives a summary of the activities and facilities available in the library, with Appendix 5:31 showing staff working with the computers and Internet connectivity cables in the background; while Appendix 5:32 & 33 show service delivery in process and Appendix 5:34 shows customers interacting with some of the IRs on display.

Although some of the libraries were not that crowded, yet they were not welcoming to the PWDs, as they could not easily negotiate their way in with crutches and/or in wheelchairs. The corridors and walkways were too narrow for their safe passage, the entry and exits points too were unsuitable for them, and the book stacks are too high for them. This was further demonstrated by the fact that, in a most of the libraries surveyed, there was no specific service area(s) from which such library clients could be served, and/or even read from. Information materials, such as braille for the visually challenged, and hearing aid devices for the hearing impaired, all suited to their specific needs, were lacking in virtually all the libraries except ACL1, which had a well-designed and designated section for use by the PWDs fully manned and within the main University library.

Service delivery for the other categories of users was fairly sufficient. However, queues were evident in different libraries at some of the service points, but varied depending on the time of the day. Staffing deficiencies were also noted in some cases and in some of the institutions – this was where there were only one or two staff members serving many users, who demanded attention in different areas. As a consequence, staff exhaustion and fatigue were evident in such cases. This, perhaps, explains various temperaments and attitudes towards service and customer requests.

From the findings, it is evident that the university libraries visited had different capacities in terms of users' needs, resourcefulness, adequacy of funds and staff strength, amongst others.

Interestingly, it was noticed that while they had varied sections/departments, a good number survived without very basic facilities like washrooms.

6.2.12 LIBRARY FURNITURE

Most of the library buildings were quiet, making them conducive learning environments for the users. The general ambience in most of the libraries was good; especially at: ACL1, ACL9, ACL5, ACL10, ACL4, ACL6 and ACL7, but lacking in some. The state of the furniture in most of the libraries, in terms of sufficiency and suitability, was also good (see Appendix 5:5-6; 36-37). The suitability, however, varied with user category, the PWDs being largely ignored in this respect. From the observations, the fitted furniture/fittings like reading tables, seats and even common utilities such as washrooms, were not done with this category of users (PWDs) in mind. This was evident in ACL2, ACL3 and ACL8. Indeed, in most of the surveyed libraries, facilities like washrooms specifically designed for PWDs were non-existent, and rooms labelled as washrooms for the PWDs were in fact ordinary facilities that were not customised to suit their specific needs.

Table 6.4: Observation of the activities and facilities available in the library sections/units

| Department(s)available/ Institution (university libraries) | ACL 1 | ACL 2 | ACL 3 | ACL 4 | ACL 5 | ACL 6 | ACL 7 | ACL 8 | ACL 9 | ACL 10 |
|---|----------|----------|----------|----------|----------|----------|----------|----------|----------|-----------|
| Systems unit /section | √ | x | x | √ | √ | x | x | x | √ | √ |
| Circulation section | √ | √ | √ | √ | √ | √ | √ | √ | √ | √ |
| Administration unit | √ | √ | √ | √ | √ | √ | √ | √ | √ | √ |
| Different sections as per the broad subject areas: Social sciences, Education, Science &Tech, Humanities, Health sciences on each floor | √ | x | x | √ | √ | √ | √ | x | √ | √ |
| Research &postgraduate section | √ | x | x | √ | √ | x | √ | x | √ | x |
| Several display areas on each floor | √ | x | x | √ | √ | √ | √ | x | √ | √ |
| Processing areas: Serials, acquisition, Cataloguing and classification | √ | √ | x | √ | √ | √ | √ | √ | √ | √ |
| Library maintenance /caretaker office. | √ | x | x | √ | x | x | x | x | √ | x |
| Staff common room | √ | x | x | √ | x | x | x | x | √ | x |
| Multimedia section | √ | x | x | √ | √ | √ | √ | x | √ | √ |
| Bindery area | √ | x | x | √ | x | x | x | x | √ | √ |
| Readers areas | √ | √ | √ | √ | √ | √ | √ | √ | √ | √ |
| Reading carrels on each floor | √ | x | x | √ | √ | √ | √ | x | √ | √ |
| Computer section/labs on each floor | √ | √ | √ | √ | √ | √ | √ | x | x | √ |
| Instruction rooms on each floor | √ | x | x | X | x | x | x | x | x | x |
| E-resources area | √ | x | x | √ | √ | √ | √ | x | √ | √ |
| Baggage area | √ | √ | x | √ | √ | x | √ | x | √ | √ |
| Security office in the library | √ | x | x | X | x | x | x | x | x | x |
| Several washrooms within | √ | √ | x | X | √ | √ | √ | x | √ | √ |
| Library acquisition store | √ | x | x | √ | x | x | x | x | √ | x |
| Library store for weeded out I.Rs | √ | x | x | X | x | x | x | x | x | x |
| Special users' room near the entrance e.g. PWDs | √ | x | x | X | x | x | x | x | x | x |
| Manned exit/entry points | √ | √ | √ | √ | √ | √ | √ | √ | √ | √ |
| Mechanically &electronically controlled exit/entry points | √ | √ | x | √ | √ | √ | √ | x | √ | √ |

NB: √ Denotes availability; while X-Non –availability

6.2.13 SECURITY ISSUES

Security issues were also not left to chance. All the libraries had some form of security measures in place, varying from basic and simple ones to highly sophisticated ones. Security focused on different areas such as the premises, the resources, and the users (see Appendix 5:10 on page 442 for the storage of customers' baggage, which is not allowed inside the library; Appendix 5:11, 18 for access control and surveillance). For the premises, it was noted that there were security patrols within the library areas, though there was a dedicated security team searching all the entrants, who were also required to identify themselves. The entry and exit points were controlled electronically (hence needing an access card/code) or manually, so all entrants/and those exiting were subjected to some inspection.

Other security measures included the use of CCTV. RFID technologies and the use of magnetic tapes on the information resources were noted at ACL1, ACL2, ACL9, ACL4, ACL7, ACL10 and ACL6. As a general measure, there were smoke detectors at ACL1, ACL2 and ACL4; fortified windows and reinforced doors were a common feature in virtually all the libraries. Also seen were general warning signs: no smoking, fire/emergency escapes, and firefighting appliances and evacuation guidelines in the event of fire outbreak as shown in Appendix 5:18 & 11.

However, conspicuously missing were first aid kits in all the libraries that were visited. This is a major omission, considering that these are high human traffic areas. It is not clear how accidents were dealt with in the event of such occurrences. The areas surrounding the library facilities were well-lit, and the flowers and trees well-trimmed, to avoid any dark zones/areas. Table 6.5 on page 237, gives a summary of the availability of security gadgets in the different libraries sampled.

6.2.14 VISUAL SUMMARY OF THE OBSERVATIONS

Appendix 5(page 442) gives a summary of some of the service activities as they were captured in different institutions at different times. This helped to corroborate the data gathered using other approaches, by presenting the actual happenings as the service process unfolds. The summary is presented according to the different themes that were captured in the observation schedule.

Table 6.5: Observation on the availability of ICT/Security gadgets

| Observation / Institution (university libraries) | ACL1 | ACL2 | ACL3 | ACL4 | ACL5 | ACL6 | ACL7 | ACL8 | ACL9 | ACL10 |
|--|------|------|------|------|------|------|------|------|------|-------|
| CCTV cameras & Television monitor | √ | √ | x | √ | √ | √ | √ | x | √ | √ |
| Telephones | √ | √ | √ | √ | √ | √ | √ | √ | √ | √ |
| Access control | √ | √ | x | √ | √ | √ | √ | x | √ | √ |
| Book detectors | √ | √ | x | √ | √ | √ | √ | x | √ | √ |
| Manned baggage area and tags used | √ | √ | x | √ | √ | x | √ | x | √ | x |
| Library management system | √ | √ | x | √ | √ | √ | √ | x | √ | √ |
| Fire extinguishers | √ | √ | √ | √ | √ | √ | √ | √ | √ | √ |
| Well labelled emergency exit | √ | √ | x | √ | x | x | x | x | x | x |
| Smoke detectors | √ | √ | x | √ | x | x | x | x | x | x |
| Physical surveillance | √ | √ | x | √ | √ | √ | √ | x | √ | √ |
| Manned entrance/exit point | √ | √ | √ | √ | √ | √ | √ | √ | x | √ |
| Manned baggage area with no tags | x | x | √ | x | x | x | x | √ | x | x |
| Enhanced windows | x | x | x | √ | √ | √ | √ | x | √ | √ |

NB: √ Denotes availability; while x-non -availability

6.3 INTERVIEW RESULTS SUMMARY

This part covers responses from interviews conducted with the senior librarians from the identified academic libraries. The interview findings were as directed by the interview schedule (Appendix 3 on page 439). The interviews aimed at capturing critical library information from the key informants: policy makers. The interviews conducted with the key informants (senior librarians) showed how the university libraries met the users' diverse information needs and the various approaches/methods the librarians employ to manage the service delivery process. The interview schedule was meant to reveal the pertinent issues facing the service delivery process in the libraries which were not well captured by the questionnaire. During the interviews, clarification was sought on some of the issues.

The information sought focused on the information services available to the respondents, the resources available, the challenges faced in performing their role of supporting teaching and research in the universities. Table 6.6 on page 252 gives a summary of the interview responses.

6.3.1 INTERVIEW RESPONSES

The librarians were interviewed to provide their opinions, concepts of service delivery, views and understanding on the status of the libraries and the information services in the university. The criteria for selecting the interviewees are as outlined in Chapter 3 section 4.7.2 of the study. An assessment of the libraries was done based on: their physical location, collection development, information resources organisation and the services provided, human resources, challenges faced and budget factors. In this regard, an interview schedule was used to gather data. From the interview the following were established.

6.3.1.1 MAJOR FUNCTIONS OF THE LIBRARY (Q1 & 2)

The respondents were drawn from among the senior library managers. On seeking to assess their understanding on the place of the library; the question, 'what were the major functions of the library department?' was posed. The responses by all the interviewees were captured and they revealed that the major functions of the library included: support of the university mission of academic excellence through the provision of information resources to support research and teaching; supporting the various academic programmes through the provision of information resources and also other general reading materials. In some of the cases, it was noted that the libraries had re-engineered themselves and were aiding the university in the management of

records created. At the ACL9, a specific unit/section had been established within the library to play an advisory role to other departments within the university on how to manage their records/registries in areas, such as records creation, control, developing retrieval systems and guiding on the eventual disposal. This important mandate was given in strict compliance to set standards and legal procedures as it pertains to records management. Likewise, an archival section exists for university records upon appraisal.

Further, the interview sought to understand how they were fulfilling the university's mandate.

The majority of the responses pointed out that the libraries were continuously working to adapt to the changing demands of the target market i.e. the university community. They were trying hard to re-engineer themselves in a bid to remain relevant to the scholars and researchers. It was clear that they were service departments in the sense that they intended to offer service to the academic clientele. For this reason, they had to keep abreast of new information and knowledge, and upgrade their technological applications. Hence, the majority of the libraries pointed out that they had made efforts to have staff keep abreast of new developments in the world of academic endeavour, despite several challenges they faced. This had to be done by engaging in the continuous acquisition of new information resources, equipment, continuous trainings, embracing technology and hiring more qualified staff. For the majority of the small university libraries, it was established that they had approximately ten staff; however, some of the big ones like: ACLI, ACL9, ACL10 and ACL4 had approximately one hundred staff each., which is mainly due to the large user population, the range of services offered and the complexity of the work schedules. Also, because they had been in existence for longer periods, they had more elaborate structures and services.

From the interviews, it was also found that most of these staff had different areas of subject specialisations/training, like information technology, humanities, languages, sciences and the social sciences. These librarians served as subject specialists in their areas, being stationed at the subject counters where they could use their expertise to assist users with related information needs. They also had several years of experience in library services, but were a mixture of the old and young. It was pointed out that a small portion had been engaged on a contract basis. For the few libraries that had special units for the PWDs, they were manned by staff with training in PWD, in related aspects, such as Braille, sign language and personal traits that made them suitable to handle this category of customers.

In terms of staff adequacy, the respondents expressed their disappointment that the university administrations were not very keen to hire more staff, noting that there was a misunderstanding regarding their duties. This was common to all the libraries.

6.3.1.2 APPLICATION OF NEW TECHNOLOGIES AND RESPONSIVENESS TO CUSTOMER NEEDS (Q4)

The interview sought to understand to what extent technology was applied in the library operations. Responses to this question further supported the view that technology was critical to the operations of the libraries, especially in the delivery of services. Technology application, however, varied from one institution to the other. At the majority of the libraries, the interviewees pointed to a high level of technology usage, for instance at ACL1, 4, 6, 9 and 10, in rendering their services. However, at ACL3 & 8 this was quite low. It was pointed out that some of the areas where technology was applied in service delivery included:

- library management (where KOHA, a library management system, was widely used, though other systems like the Mandarin and other in-house software were also used),
- lending,
- cataloguing,
- security,
- communication and current awareness,
- processing and provision of online services, among others,
- preservation,
- Restoration of information resources.

Advantages realised by most libraries as a result of embracing technology included:

- faster service delivery,
- faster communication with customers and other stakeholders,
- less staff fatigue,
- enhancing preservation of materials,

- decongestion of the library, and
- Overall improved service delivery, among others.

Some of the responses were:

“...the work is now much easier. We can now serve a much larger group of customers more efficiently and faster unlike before...” said a respondent at ACL1

“...the long unending queues in some of the areas like lending and borrowing is now a thing of the past” said another respondent at ACL1. The same was reported at ACL4, 9 and 10.

“...it is now possible to monitor the activities and movement of the many patrons in the library with ease from the office. ...security of the resources has been also enhanced, since in the past a user could just hide behind a book stack and mutilate book chapters but the fact that there is CCTV surveillance deters this” said other respondents at ACL1, 2, and 4.

Some of the major challenges highlighted by the respondents with regard to technology application included:

- breakdown of the equipment,
- few computers,
- limited library budget,
- lack of space,
- fast obsolescence of technology, and
- Vandalism by users, among others.

As evidenced from the observations, it was clear from the respondents that their libraries had both Internet connections and web pages that gave information to their off-campus/remote users.

From the interviews, it was noted by respondents that most of the libraries had very few computers; these were mainly available to the staff, to enable them discharge their services. Some of the libraries had separate computer laboratories and encouraged the users to visit them when accessing various resources such as the electronic resources. It was pointed out and observed that it is from here that different forms of training, such as the use of e-resources and other information literacy sessions, were conducted. Responses from the interviewees at ACL1, ACL9, ACL7 ACL5 and ACL4 were an affirmation of the data already gathered in the earlier findings through the observation and the questionnaires.

At ACL1 and ACL9, modern binding technologies were in use, as opposed to the older, manual binding methods still in use at ACL4 and 10. Newer technologies were also used in the preservation of information resources, for instance scanning of documents, while at ACL1 still technology was used to aid the visually impaired users in using the library, for instance by having computers with adaptive technology and software for the visually impaired. It was found that some of the books were recorded via narrations made by the volunteer narrators (and kept in audio format) and the provision of sound equipment for use in the library. Available also were talking calculators for use by visually impaired users. The PWDs still could get to any floor of the library via the lifts installed.

At the ACL7, it was reported that the library had laptops for lending to the users, but for a limited loan period this was helpful to those who wanted to sit in the library to do their own personal work and/or access research data from the many institutionally subscribed databases. This was found to be a pleasant and innovative way of promoting technology use. Reporting on this the interviewee stated:

“... we realised that there was a group of users, who inasmuch we encourage them to use their own laptops when accessing our resources, are really disadvantaged and cannot afford this precious item. As a library management, we decided to buy five laptops to start with and these are to be lent out to users for short term periods, to enable them enjoy the services offered ... the response has been so encouraging ... we intend to acquire a few more in the near future ...”

Most of the libraries provided current awareness services to users through the use of technology (e-mails, social media, web pages and phones), regular training for users, issuing of booklists to the users, posting of relevant updates on the library and university notice boards, among others. ACL8 library was found to be quite innovative in that a group of students were invited for regular training on information search skills, use of electronic resources and referencing techniques. After the training, they were requested to invite their friends to also attend the sessions. The respondent reported that eventually the students had gained so much knowledge in the library processes, particularly the electronic-based resources, that they had organised themselves into the *“Knowledge Ambassadors Club”*, with the University librarian as their patron. With respect to this, some of the responses were:

"...we have used our own students to reach out to the larger student population with great results
... Having gained so much-in terms of the vast information resources that the library can offer,
they had become the University library's goodwill ambassadors in the university and were
actively reaching out to the rest..."

It was indicated that through the *Knowledge Ambassadors Club*, many more students in the university had come to know what the library is capable of offering the scholars. They had also learned of the vast information resources available in their libraries.

The use of social media was also found to have gained prominence in the majority of the libraries surveyed. It is through such forums that the users were freely able to discuss a variety of library issues, and to also interact with the service providers (librarians) who responded to some of the queries.

Some of the responses to the question on how technology use had impacted on service delivery were:

"...through using some of these technologies, it is now possible to communicate easily with our clients..." said a respondent at ACL2; while at ACL1 and 7 the respondents said that "...it is now possible to give quick service..."; "...the application of technology has led to an influx of users..." respectively.

6.3.1.3 LIBRARIES' INFORMATION RESOURCES (Q5)

With regard to library resources, a question was posed to establish what resources were available and the challenges the libraries faced in acquiring them. This was to confirm the earlier findings on the resources available in the libraries. From the interview, it was evident that most of the libraries had books numbering in the thousands and also subscribed to several online journal/electronic book databases. Some of those mentioned were Emerald and AJOL. The respondents also reported that in most of the libraries, there were various collections consisting mainly of research reports, such as theses, staff publications and government reports. Also, in some of the libraries, for instance at ACL5 & 6, it was reported that there were various multimedia sections with vast collections and equipment like: televisions, a collection of tapes, audio items, CDs and DVDs. Most of the respondents were quick to point out that their collection was fairly current to be in line with the growth of knowledge in different disciplines.

With regard to library budgets, it was established from the informants that the majority of the libraries had an annual budget of at least five million Kenyan shillings, with the majority of them acquiring at least one thousand titles on average annually by utilising the budget allocated. Some of the libraries had huge budgets, running into tens of millions (Kenya shillings) and hence they were able to acquire considerable resources and in different formats. It was also reported that there were major challenges in the utilisation of the allocated library budget because of the various hurdles, such as approval bureaucracies, to procure even the very urgently needed basic reading texts. In some of the institutions, this simple process was found to drag on for a couple of months. In one such case, it was indicated that the reading materials intended for a first-year course/programme were purchased when the group was in their final year. And for some of courses, the book purchases were finalised long after the target user group(s) had completed their course and even exited from the university. Challenges were also encountered from the supplier side, arising from delays in payment for the delivery of the orders made. Several of the respondents pointed out that they quite often found themselves in an awkward position when confronted by the suppliers regarding their payment, as both the user departments and the liaison persons with these institutions. Yet the process is handled by the procurement and the finance departments in consultation with the top university managements. This, it was noted, didn't please the customers, who needed the information materials; of course, but ended up dissatisfied with the services rendered. Overall, this affected the image of the library and the general perceptions of the department.

Responses made by the respondents included:

"...the administration is always approving purchases for other things but when it comes to books the response is, "...let's discuss". Now what are we discussing when users cannot get reading materials...?" lamented a respondent at ACL2.

"...The administration does not care whether books are bought or not..." said respondents at ACL3, 4, and 8.

"...last year all the books request we forwarded for approval were never released for action, yet this year again we are being asked to go to the same departments and solicit for more book requests...what do I tell them (i.e. faculty staff) of their previous requests even...", said respondents at ACL2.

“...I cannot afford not to forward book request approvals; the big guys would even wonder if we are on strike...that we are not buying books...” said respondents at ACL 5 and 7.

“...our administration is keen to ensure books are bought...though not as many as would be required...we are happy” said respondents at ACL5, 6 and 7.

From the interviews conducted, it was noted that there was a general apathy by the respective university administrations when it came to allocating finances to the libraries. The majority of the respondents were quick to point out that if the set CUE guidelines in the management of the libraries (ich which stipulates that at least 10% of the annual budget should be used on building the library collection) were well observed by the parent bodies, the libraries would be able to improve on their collection development activities. Evidence gathered from the field attests to budgetary constraints. This finding echoes Popescu, Corneanu and Helerea (2009) who in their Romanian study concurred that the budgetary limitations facing universities and their libraries explain the delay in realizing the desired changes. The authors pointed out that management failures contributed to many problems faced in the university libraries, mainly due to failure in managing change.

6.3.1.4 TRAINING OF THE LIBRARY STAFF (Q6)

Regarding training of the staff, only a few of the libraries that were involved in this study had a clear training schedule for the various cadres of staff on various service aspects (customer service, customer skills, management of electronic resources, etc.). This was important to understand how prepared they were in customer relations, market orientation and service planning. However, it was reported that quite a number of the library staff were on different self-sponsored training programmes.

The respondents indicated that trainings were of two types: where one goes for formal classes for a higher certificate; and also the training courses offered by way of seminars, workshops, conference attendance, etc. It was indicated that a major hurdle facing the libraries is the lack of sufficient funds to cater for the training, noting that the few university sponsored programmes available were mainly reserved for and/or channelled to the faculty staff. This means that library staff were not considered a priority in matters pertaining to training by the university. As a result, the respondents intimated that the libraries, however, from time to time partnered with other bodies, such as publishers and other libraries, to provide some of the in-house training workshops to the librarians and in certain specific areas.

Their feelings were captured in the verbatim quotation:

“...library staff are never considered for any of the sponsored trainings by the university...”
said respondents at ACL2

“...the library staff are given a raw deal when it comes to staff trainings yet expected to deal with academicians...”, said respondents at ACL1, 4 and 9.

“...our library department has among the most hardworking staff...they have schooled themselves up to degree level even when their training requests are ignored by the university administrators...” said respondents at ACL1 and 2.

These sentiments mirror those of Cobblah (2015), who in a study on the role of staff training and development programmes to provide effective library and information services in selected university libraries, recommends the establishment of training units within the university libraries with adequate budgetary provisions to invest in library staff training and development programmes.

6.3.1.5 CUSTOMER COMPLAINTS LEVELLED AGAINST THE STAFF (Q7)

It was evident from the interviews that human resources are critical for any successful service delivery. The study revealed that some of the major complaints levelled against the staff by the users included:

- rudeness,
- lack of consistency in service delivery,
- not keeping their word, and
- Lack of commitment, among other factors.

Other challenges highlighted in service provision from the human resource angle include:

- negative attitude by the staff regarding their work,
- feeling unappreciated,
- low staff morale, due to comparatively low pay,
- delayed promotions,
- lack of and/or stagnation, in terms of career growth,

- apathy experienced from the university management,
- staff fatigue, as a result of overworking and long working hours while the work environment was not that appropriate (it was established that the library was open from morning up to late into the night, and this schedule run through the weekends as well), and
- Lack of university-sponsored training opportunities, among others.

While efforts to deal with these challenges included:

- lobbying for library issues,
- encouraging library staff to undertake studies on self-sponsorship internally,
- counselling staff on good work ethics,
- observance and enforcement of library rules and regulations,
- encouraging the library customers to report any cases of service dissatisfaction in the customer complaints/compliments registers for further action,
- encouraging staff to apply for external posts,

6.3.1.6 LIBRARY BUILDINGS (Q8)

The question sought to find out the space available, and how this impacted on service delivery. Majority of the respondents interviewed indicated that their current library building was not sufficient to accommodate the intended clientele. It was intimated that the library development somewhat stagnated in terms of space provision even when the respective universities had elaborate plans to expand the other academic facilities, such as the lecture rooms, workshops, laboratories and the provision of staff offices among others. Some of the responses made were:

In ACL1, majority of the respondents were happy with the current building,” *...at least our current facility is spacious enough, although the student population has drastically shot up in recent years*”

At ACL4, though the respondents were happy with the library building of over 15 years ago, as the college library then, they too remarked that, “*...the building is by far too small for our current student numbers....*”

The responses from ACL5 and 7 give an indication that they were satisfied but remarked that their space had been encroached into, “...*although the library building is big enough to cater for our current numbers, we have had to share it out with other university departments since the university is constrained in terms of office space...as these departments exit we will gradually occupy the vacant space expanding the range of services....*”

The situation was somewhat different at ACL2, whereby, helplessness was evident from the interviewee, “...*we have been promised to get more space in the coming financial year, and just hope this time round it will work... otherwise I have given up pressing for space....*”

At ACL8, the response was, “...*we would wish to render more services to our users but space is a big challenge...*” and so was the scenario at ACL2 and 3, where it was reported that, “*The current building is already far too small. We actually encourage users to borrow and go read from elsewhere...*” and “...*the management forgot about the library issues as soon as they got the university charter...they are busy putting new workshops, labs and offices...*”

6.3.1.7 PERCEPTION ON THE OVERALL CUSTOMER SATISFACTION (Q10, 11)

The respondents were asked to give their views regarding customer satisfaction. The perception on the overall customer satisfaction of the users was fairly good. Most of the respondents indicated that their library facilities fairly met the users’ expectations. Some of the respondents even indicated that some services like provision of online resources exceeded the users’ expectations- that is, they were able to get a lot more resources than had been expected. Some of the major recommendations made towards improving service delivery and customer satisfaction included:

- increased library book budget;
- inclusion of the library staff, just like the other university staff, in the university activities;
- regular training of library staff on service delivery;
- acquisition of more resources, especially equipment and computers;
- more trainings for users on how to use the available resources (this was not happening as it ought to since it was not considered to be core like other academic programmes; instances were noted whereby the libraries had wished to mount such programme but the top university management did not perceive it as being important at all);
- faster adoption of current technology (but the respondents also emphasised this should

be a continuous activity);

- Increase library space and increase of the internet band width, among others. It was noted that, though virtually all the libraries had subscribed to a host of online databases, their usage was being hampered by the low internet bandwidth, poor ICT infrastructure within the library buildings and universities, and lack of adequate and extensive training on their usage.

Some responses made were like:

“...our lecturers rarely visit the library and yet in the top management meetings they heap blame on the library for not getting them reading materials...” said some respondents at ACL4,

“...the library died long time ago...” said respondents at ACL2

“...surely the management needs to do something . . . how can we be getting materials from other libraries via interlibrary loan, yet we can afford to buy our own resources for use within a thing which is not happening...” said a respondent at ACL8.

In ACL1, 2, 4 and 9, it was reported that there were regular evaluation surveys, which took different approaches like gathering user feedback, customer satisfaction surveys, use of suggestion boxes and use of the compliments/complainants registers.

6.3.1.8 COLLABORATION, CHALLENGES AND RECOMMENDATIONS (Q7, 9)

The respondents were asked to respond to questions relating to service delivery and the challenges that they faced. This was important in order to know what marred good service delivery in the libraries. From the interviews carried out, the major challenges encountered by most of these libraries included:

- few books- and the collections available did not adequately cater for all the programmes being offered at the various levels of training;
- theft/loss of personal items;
- poor internet connectivity and low internet bandwidth;
- power fluctuation;
- deficient ICT infrastructure and services;
- lack of adequate floor space;
- few computers;
- unruly patrons;

- budgetary constraints;
- fast evolving technology;
- the enactment of new programmes by the universities, without due considerations to the library services- in terms of planning and provision of information resources to such new clients (which usually became a library problem; that is having to deal with the tempers of users who were interested in particular information resources that were not available) as it appears that the library has no say on the procurement of what it needs);
- staff shortage due to employment freeze for librarians and an ever growing user population;
- staff complaints about rude and unruly and difficult customers (who simply chose not to follow the set guidelines or rules on library usage);
- staff complaints about their unruly colleagues;
- Lastly, the challenge of apathy from the respective university administrations was quite appalling, going by the confession by a number of the respondents that “*libraries were viewed as money guzzlers*”. It is this lack of goodwill from the parent organisations that carried a lot of weight- the fact that the service offered is not really appreciated. However, in the institutions where there was support by the parent bodies (i.e. top university management) the libraries were found to be performing optimally.

These did mar the service delivery processes in the library and in varying degrees.

When asked to respond on any existing collaborations, it was evident that these did exist both informally (through a gentleman’s agreement to work together, especially on resource sharing) and also formally with local and regional bodies, such as the United Nations, International Centre for Research in Agroforestry (ICRAF), East African Community (EAC), World Health Organisation, professional bodies, government agencies/departments, and also with the other libraries.

Recommendations made to address these challenges include:

- mounting of regular training sessions for staff;
- mounting of a more continuous and structured information literacy and user programmes in the university;
- support by the top university management;

- equal treatment by the university management in matters of staff training, recruitments, promotions and general welfare;
- provision of more working tools and equipment;
- regular meeting sessions (staff and the management)- but these should be purposeful and not mere “rituals”;
- Advocating for teamwork and introducing mentorship programmes, among others.

Table 6.6: Summary of the interview responses on the challenges libraries face

| University libraries | Narrations |
|----------------------|---|
| ACL 1 | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The expanding open access services of electronic resources require a digitisation librarian • Inadequate professional staff as the older members retire • A growing and diverse user population • Expansion of the university not abreast of the growth of the library resources • The university management discriminates against library staff on issues of recruitment, training, promotion. • Poor treatment of library staff by the parent body, making them feel out of place • Mishandling of library staff by the library managers • Favouritism by the library management on issues of promotion, duty assignment & feelings of unethical behaviour • The university planning for, and making changes to, the department without involving the library staff • Has benefited greatly from both the internal & external “friends” who support the department |
| ACL 2 | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The library seen as demanding a lot of money for nothing by some of the university administrators; hence denial of support (goodwill) • Inadequate funding • The need for the use of cell phones to communicate with users through SMS. • The library budget viewed as being too comparatively large; hence opposed • Inadequate space and facilities for the librarians to work with • Seeking more linkages with external bodies for support • Lack of staff office space • Most of the university sponsored training programmes are meant for only the staff in other departments, ignoring the library |

| | |
|-------|---|
| | <p>staff</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • A growing user population (both in terms of numbers and programmes to be catered for) • Inadequate training programmes for undergraduates and post-graduates, on information literacy (in the areas of search skills, how to look for resources in the library, research writing, plagiarism, referencing), and lack of support by the university to mount such training • Slow promotion given to staff members in comparison to other departments • Comparative delays in considering recruitment needs for the library department • Lack of professionalism by some colleagues who are even rude to customers. This gives the library a bad image. • The respondents made mention of the unsteady nature of electricity supply, considering the library is not connected to a generator • Flouting of library rules by the library staff e.g. noise making • Favouritism of some staff on duty allocation, discipline issues and promotions • Limited floor space • Lack of motivation given to the library staff members by the university management • Lack of up-to-date working tools for the librarians, hence challenges in classification of the information resources • Resistance to change by staff • Delays in procuring the requested books. Whenever done, it takes very long for it to be delivered and the department has no control over this process |
| ACL 3 | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Inadequate working tools for staff members • Inadequate office space • Inadequate senior colleagues • Poor and old ICT infrastructural development |

| | |
|-------|--|
| | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Lack of up-to-date working tools for the librarians, hence challenges in classification of the information resource |
| ACL 4 | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Resistance to change by staff • Lack of motivation from bosses and fellow colleagues • The expanding open access services of electronic resources require a digitisation librarian • Lack of commitment to work • Increase in the number of users, with a static number of staff • Delay in promoting library staff to higher grades • The library building is too small for the user population • Whenever you place an order for something to use, for example smart screens, information resources, access gates, etc., it takes so long for it to be delivered • Inadequate information literacy training programmes for the library users in areas of search skills, how to look for resources in the library, research writing, plagiarism, referencing; and lack of support to the library by the university to mount such programmes |
| ACL 5 | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The university management has an interest in the library and want to grow it • Inadequate budget • Limited floor space for the library. This is because the library building is also being used for other administrative functions, owing to lack of space within the university • |
| | |

Table 6.6: Summary of the interview responses on the challenges libraries faced (cont.)

| University libraries | Narrations |
|-----------------------------|--|
| ACL 6 | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • One of the biggest challenges is when you rely on someone to do some work and the person is not committed • Whenever you place an order for something to use, for example smart screens, access gates, etc., it takes too long for it to be delivered • There are changes in the roles of librarians: this is supposed to be reflected in the organisational structure of the university library • The expanding open access services of electronic resources require a digitisation librarian. • A bigger computer laboratory is needed in order to accommodate the large number of users that we currently have in this institution. |
| ACL 7 | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Dwindling budgetary allocation • Staff willingness to upgrade their qualifications for improved service delivery • Inadequate facilities of ICTs in other areas • Inadequate professional staff • Availability of old books for some of the programmes, such as theology and divinity • The current expansion of the university putting a strain on the library staff • Limited floor space– this is because the library building has been used for other university activities due to lack of office space in the university • Misunderstanding with the university bosses as to why some particular books have to be retained on the shelves • We have tried to have links with other bodies for support |

| | |
|--------|---|
| ACL 8 | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Resistance to change by staff (to adopt new strategies) • Lack of professionalism and commitment to work by some staff, giving the library a bad image • Increase in the No. of users with a static staff number • Inadequate working tools e.g. classification tools for staff members, • Inadequate office space • The university management has an interest in the library and want to grow it |
| ACL 9 | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Inadequate staff in senior positions • Inadequate manpower (professionals) with required skills and knowledge • Inadequate budget • Limited floor space • A growing user population which is also demanding- this not proportional to the growth of library resources • Rapid expansion of the university in terms of campuses and programmes, putting a strain on the library staff who have to work long hours |
| ACL 10 | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Inadequate professional staff as the older members retire • A growing and diverse user population • Expansion of the university not in tune with the growth of the library resources • Inadequate budget • Limited floor space • A growing user population which is also demanding-this, not proportional to the growth of library resources |

6.4 ANALYSIS OF THE LIBRARIES' STRENGTHS, WEAKNESSES, OPPORTUNITIES AND THREATS (SWOT)

Following the above discussions, a SWOT analysis to determine the strength and weaknesses of the different libraries was done. This is important, considering that globally there are lots of literature on SWOT analysis within the different sectors. Gürel and Emet (2017) have argued that is useful in enabling an organization assess its capabilities thereby determining its source of competitive advantage and understand those that are likely to be sources of strength and or what advantages to adopt. Helms and Nixon (2010:215) note that, "SWOT analysis has been extended beyond companies to countries and industries and is used in virtually every published business case positioned for business student analysis." Helms and Nixon (2010) further stress that SWOT is primarily used to help an organisation plan its future strategies. Supporting this assertion, Panagiotou (2003:8) reports that as a management approach it aids in decision-making processes. The general summary per institution is shown in Table 6.7 on page 258.

Table 6.7 General SWOT analysis of each of the libraries

| Institution | Strengths | Weaknesses | Opportunities | Threats |
|-------------|--|--|---|--|
| ACL1 | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Educated & skilled service team - Large customer base (market) - A wide variety of information resources - Sizeable budget - Technology use in service delivery & for security enhancement - Customer loyalty - Good staff workstations/offices - Good & differentiated service to different customers - Good library building with décor and ambience - Availability of reading space - Availability of study carrel for private study - Excellent services to the PWDs in terms of resources, space & personnel - Extended opening hours (8 am – midnight every day, weekends included) - Ease of access to service by all users: there are lifts, escalators and the service to the PWDs conveniently located. | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - The expanding open access services of electronic resources require a digitisation librarian - Inadequate professional staff as the older members retire - A high number of staff working on temporary terms and on a casual basis - Insufficient time for outreach Activities - Limited and inconsistent efforts and strategies in marketing | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - A growing and diverse user population - Strategically located - Good networks with several scholars /bodies locally and abroad - Build positive staff attitudes - Involvement of volunteers - Building rapport with support organisations -Image of the Library will be enhanced among the university community - Can become leading advisor for information literacy - Expand markets for new library services | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Other information vendors competing for the same customers - Customer dissatisfaction & apathy - Apathy and negative attitude by the top management, resulting in a highly demoralised staff feeling they are in a dead end - Knowledge explosion resulting in lots of publications - Fast-paced institutional expansion in terms of many new programmes, different learning modes and huge enrolments at different levels within the past few years - Older members of staff retiring with no replacement leading to a loss of institutional memory and expertise. |

| | | | | |
|------|---|--|--|---|
| | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Involvement of volunteers to help the PWDs - Building rapport with support organisations (local and external) - Good investment in technology - Computer training labs/rooms - Well designed, maintained website - Provision of Internet/Wi-Fi to users | | | |
| ACL2 | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Small user population - Extended hours of operation (8 am-9pm during weekdays) - Well trained & skilled service team - Large customer base across several campuses - A wide variety of information resources - Sizeable budget - Technology use in service delivery & for security enhancement - Customer loyalty - Good staff workstations/offices - Good services to different customers - Good library building with décor and ambience - Availability of reading space | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - No services/resources for the PWDs - Access by the PWDs a challenge - Inadequate information resources - Inadequate funding - Limited reading space for the customers - Congestion inside - Limited staff working areas - Limited networks (internal & external) - Poor outreach - Lack of equipment to work with and for service delivery - Lacks a purpose-built library building - Need for additional equipment | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - A growing and diverse user population - Strategically located - Good networks with several scholars/bodies, locally and abroad | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Customer dissatisfaction & apathy - Apathy and negative attitude by the top management, resulting in a highly demoralised staff, who feel they are in a dead end - Knowledge explosion resulting into lots of publications - Fast-paced institutional expansion in terms of many new programmes, different learning modes and huge enrolments at different levels & campuses within the last few years |

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|------|--|--|---|---|
| | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Availability of study carrels for private study - Moderate investment in technology - Well designed, maintained website - Provision of Internet/Wi-Fi to users | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Insufficient time for outreach activities - Limited and inconsistent efforts and strategies in marketing | | |
| ACL3 | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Well trained & skilled service team - Medium customer base across several campuses - Sizeable budget - Limited staff workstations/offices - Availability of reading space - Availability of study carrels for private study | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - No services/resources for the PWDs - Limited technology use -Inadequate information resources - Inadequate funding - limited reading space - Lacks a purpose-built library building - Congestion within the library - Limited staff working areas | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - A growing and diverse user population - Networking opportunities | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Other information vendors competing for the same customers - Customer dissatisfaction & apathy - Knowledge explosion resulting in lots of publications - Fast-paced institutional expansion in terms of many new programmes, different learning modes and huge enrolments at different levels & campuses within the last few years |
| | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Well trained & skilled service team - Large customer base across several campuses - A wide variety of information resources - Sizeable budget - Technology use in service delivery & for security enhancement | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - No services/resources for the PWDs but help offered if there is need - Inadequate information resources - Inadequate funding - limited reading space - Insufficient time for outreach activities | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - networks - A growing and diverse user population - strategically located - Good networks with several scholars/bodies locally and abroad | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Customer dissatisfaction & apathy - Apathy and negative attitude by the top management resulting in a highly demoralised staff, who feel they are in a dead end street - Knowledge explosion resulting into lots of publications - Fast-paced institutional expansion in terms of many new programmes, different learning |

| | | | | |
|-------------|---|---|---|---|
| <p>ACL4</p> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Customer loyalty - Good staff workstations/offices - Good services to different customers - Good library building with décor and ambience - Extended opening hours (8 am – 10pm weekdays) - Availability of reading space - Availability of study carrels for private study - Ease of access by all - Provision of Internet/Wi-Fi to users | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Limited and inconsistent efforts and strategies in marketing | | <p>modes and huge enrolments at different levels & campuses within the last few years</p> |
| <p>ACL5</p> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Educated workforce - Skilled service team - Medium customer base - A wide variety of information resources - ease of access by all - Sizeable budget - Enjoys support & goodwill from the top management - Technology use in service delivery - strong customer loyalty - cosy staff working areas - Good and differentiated service to different customers, especially | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - limited services/resources for the PWDs - Inadequate information resources in some disciplines - Limited reading space with the growing population - Limited staff working areas | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - A growing and diverse user population - Strategically located - Good and thriving networks with several scholars /bodies locally and abroad | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Other information vendors competing for the same customers - Customer dissatisfaction - Knowledge explosion resulting in lots of publications - Fast-paced institutional expansion in terms of many new programmes, different learning modes and huge enrolments at different levels within the last few years |

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|------|---|--|--|---|
| | <p>the postgraduates and off campus learners</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Good library building with décor and ambience - Availability of reading space for customers - Availability of study carrels for private study by the postgraduate students - Extended opening hours (8 am – 11pm weekdays) - Good library brand: the department is highly rated by the students - Good leadership - Provision of Internet/Wi-Fi to users | | | |
| ACL6 | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Skilled service team - Large customer base - A wide variety of information resources - Sizeable budget - Enjoys support & goodwill from the top management - Technology use in service delivery - Strong customer loyalty - Cosy staff working areas - Good & differentiated services to different customers, the | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Inadequate information resources in some disciplines - Shrinking budget - Limited reading space as the institution grows | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - A growing and diverse user population - Strategically located - Good and thriving networks with several scholars/bodies locally and abroad | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Customer dissatisfaction - Knowledge explosion resulting in lots of publications - Fast-paced institutional expansion in terms of many new programmes, different learning modes and huge enrolments at different levels within the last few years |

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|------|---|---|--|---|
| | <p>postgraduates especially, and the off-campus learners</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Good library building with décor and ambience - Availability of reading space for customers - Availability of study carrels for private study by the postgraduate students - Good leadership - Good library advocacy - Good library brand: the department is highly rated by the students - Provision of Internet/Wi-Fi to users | | | |
| ACL7 | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Well trained & skilled service team - Ease of access by all - Large customer base spread in different centres - A wide variety of information resources - Sizeable budget - Technology use in service delivery - Strong customer loyalty - Modest staff areas | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - No services/resources for the PWDs though help is given on request - Inadequate information resources in some disciplines (but very strong in some) - Inadequate funding - Limited reading space - Limited but good staff working areas | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - A growing and diverse user population - Strategically located - Has good & growing networks with several scholars /bodies locally and abroad | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Other information vendors competing for the same customers - Customer dissatisfaction - Knowledge explosion resulting in lots of publications - Fast- paced institutional expansion in terms of many new programmes, different learning modes and huge enrolments at different levels within the last few years. |

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|------|--|---|---|--|
| | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Good & differentiated services to different customers, especially the off campus ones - Good library building with décor and ambience - Good leadership - Good library advocacy - Extended opening hours up to 10 pm - Availability of reading space - Availability of study carrels for private study by the faculty & postgraduates - Excellent services to the off-campus students - Good library brand: the department is highly rated by the students - Provision of Internet/Wi-Fi to users | | | |
| ACL8 | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Small customer base - Sizeable budget - Focused leadership - Service innovation - Good library advocacy - Provision of Internet/Wi-Fi to users | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - No services/resources for the PWDs - Inadequate information resources - Inadequate funding - Limited reading space - Congestion within - No library building - Small service staff and not well experienced | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - A growing and diverse user population - Strategically located - Growing networks with several scholars /bodies locally and abroad | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Customer dissatisfaction - Knowledge explosion resulting in lots of publications - Fast-paced institutional expansion in terms of many new programmes, different learning modes and huge enrolments at different levels and campuses within the last few years |

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|------|---|--|--|---|
| | | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Limited staff working areas - Lacks a purpose-built library building | | |
| ACL9 | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Educated workforce - Skilled service team - Large customer base spread across several campuses - A wide variety of information resources - Ease of access by all - Service innovation - Sizeable budget - Technology use in service delivery & for security enhancement - Customer loyalty - Good staff workstations/offices for senior staff - Good leadership - Good library advocacy - Extended opening hours up to 10 pm - Good & differentiated service to different customers - Good library building with décor and ambience - Availability of reading space - Availability of study carrels for private study | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - limited services/resources for the PWDs - Inadequate information resources in some disciplines - Inadequate funding - limited reading space - Congestion within the library - Limited staff working areas | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - A growing and diverse user population - Strategically located - Good networks with several scholars /bodies locally and abroad - Image of the library will be increased among the university community - Can become leading advisor for information and record management in the university - Expand markets for new library services especially as it does outreach to the school children | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Other information vendors competing for the same customers - Customer dissatisfaction & apathy - A highly demoralised staff feeling they are in a dead end street with no career growth - Knowledge explosion resulting in lots of publications - Fast-paced institutional expansion in terms of many new programmes, different learning modes and huge enrolments at different levels and campuses within the past few years likely to affect service delivery |

| | | | | |
|-------|--|---|---|--|
| | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Good staff mentorship & apprenticeship - Good library outreach to school children - Provision of Internet/Wi-Fi to users | | | |
| ACL10 | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Educated & skilled service team - Large customer base - A wide variety of information resources - Sizeable budget - Technology use in service delivery & for security enhancement - Customer loyalty - Availability of staff workstations - Good library building with décor and ambience - Availability of reading space - Availability of study carrels for private study - Provision of Internet/Wi-Fi to users | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - No services/resources for the PWDs - Inadequate information resources - Inadequate funding - Limited reading space - Congestion - Limited staff working areas - Limited services to the PWDs in terms of resources, space & personnel | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - A growing and diverse user population - Strategically located - Growing networks with several scholars /bodies locally and abroad | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Customer dissatisfaction & apathy - Knowledge explosion resulting in lots of publications - Fast-paced institutional expansion in terms of many new programmes, different learning modes and huge enrolments at different levels within the past few years impacting on service delivery |

Table 6.7 on page 258 gives an overview of the major conclusions of the SWOT analysis. Out of this, it is evident that some of the key strengths are in having well-trained and experienced human resources and large customer base for the different services and products on offer by the different academic libraries. These, if well utilised, could turn out to be valuable assets. A small population similarly is an asset (with strength in that it is possible to tailor services efficiently for a small group). The customers in this case are technology apt; hence, their uptake of new technological innovations is quite high. This coupled with the fact that the service staff too are young and technology affluent, making it easy to mount new technological innovations in the areas of information retrieval and service delivery. Such innovations are likely to be easily welcome and well utilised. Another notable strength is where the libraries have purpose-built buildings, which are well furnished giving the users the comfort they deserve and look for as they visit the libraries to read. The availability of information resources and Internet also constitute a strength that needs to be fully utilised.

The weaknesses are varied and cut across all areas and institutions. On human resources, there are challenges delivering services with a highly demotivated staff. This is due to the poor working environment, a lack of the necessary working tools/equipment, fatigue and work-related stress, disillusionment due to a lack of career mobility and the few numbers *vis-a-vis* the range of services and the user population. Then there were limited information resources, which are also old and worn out. This is further compounded by the fast pace at which the institutions are growing, in terms of new programmes, increased enrolment, several campuses and new learning modes, all of which put great pressure on the libraries' staff and available resources. The library facilities are constrained space-wise, hence congested. This again impacts on the range of services that can be mounted. On a general scale there is a low level of preparedness (in terms of information resources, staff training/allocation, infrastructure/resource provision) in the handling of the needs of PWDs. Budgets too are major challenges, limiting the range of resources that can be acquired. To thrive well, the academic libraries need a lot of support from the other organs/departments in the universities, but critical is the support by the top university management. The relationship with the top university management is somewhat opaque, with the latter not clearly understanding the needs of the libraries, hence suppressing and/or ignoring the requests as and when made. This no doubt impacts on the service delivery of the library to its customers. But where cordial relations exist, the service delivery is rated highly.

There exist several opportunities for growth. The stringent CUE requirements for the university libraries, though a tall order to fulfil, do provide a good and enviable opportunity to all the academic libraries to grow and become the drivers of quality research and academic scholarship in terms of information acquisition, provision, and delivery.

Threats exist and are diverse as the libraries do not exist in a vacuum. They are operating in a highly competitive environment in which the customers will watch out for alternative service providers in case of sloppy service. The slow pace at which the libraries (the university administrations) are adapting to external changes and with regard to bridging the information divide poses a major challenge: the libraries are likely to lag behind. At the same time, this may trigger customer exodus to other service providers.

Table 6.8 on page 268 gives a summary of SWOT analysis of the academic libraries.

Table 6.8 Overall SWOT analysis of the academic libraries (summary)

| Strengths | Weaknesses | Opportunities | Threats |
|---|--|---|--|
| <p>Human resources -Educated workforce -Skilled service team</p> <p>Resources &market -Large customer base -A wide variety of information resources -Sizeable budget -Marketing of resources - Good service -A small population -Young and technology savvy service staff able to connect with the equally technology savvy clientele</p> <p>Service innovation -Service innovation in reaching out to new customers and acquiring skills. -Technology use -Customer loyalty -Good hospitable service staff -Extended hours of operation</p> <p>Working environment -Good Staff workstations</p> | <p>Human resources -Low staff morale -Overworked staff -Poor compensation -Disillusioned staff -Staff shortfalls -Ageing service team -Skills shortfall among the librarians -Inadequate working resources -limited training opportunities</p> <p>Resources &market -Limited variety/formats of information resources -Old &worn out information resources -Poor marketing skills -Congestion within the library -Inaccessibility by all</p> <p>Service innovation -Poor outreach services -Poor library brand -Low levels of service innovation -Increasing customer dissatisfaction</p> <p>Working environment</p> | <p>-Networking amongst the libraries and with other bodies</p> <p>-Technology application in information acquisition, retrieval and sharing</p> <p>-Legal requirements have created an opportunity to build good library facilities</p> <p>-Large customer base</p> | <p>-Other information vendors</p> <p>-Customer dissatisfaction & apathy</p> <p>-Apathy and negative attitude by the top management</p> <p>-Knowledge explosion resulting in lots of publications</p> <p>-Fast-paced institutional expansion</p> <p>-Lack of library advocacy within the universities by the senior staff</p> <p>-Experienced staff retiring from the institution and leaving with lots of institutional knowledge, without having mentored</p> |

| | | | |
|--|--|--|--|
| <p>-Good management/leadership qualities</p> <p>Reading environment</p> <p>-Good library building with décor and ambience</p> <p>-Availability of reading space</p> <p>-Availability of study carrels for private study</p> <p>-Comfortable furniture</p> <p>-Easy access</p> | <p>-Unstable Internet connectivity& power supply</p> <p>-Lack of advocacy for the library</p> <p>-Lack of goodwill from various management organs</p> <p>-Fast and uncontrolled expansion in terms of enrolment, programmes and campuses</p> <p>-Lack of appropriate working tools/equipment</p> <p>-Delays in procurement approval requests for information resources</p> <p>-Tedious & bureaucratic procurement practices delaying resources acquisition which affects service delivery</p> <p>-Poor vertical communication systems within the department and the institution</p> <p>Reading environment</p> <p>-Old & worn out information resource</p> <p>-uncomfortable reading environment</p> <p>-Congestion within the library</p> <p>-Inaccessibility to all</p> <p>-Lack of adequate reading space</p> <p>-inadequate reading resources</p> | | <p>the new and younger employees</p> <p>-Staff exodus to other institutions to attain career growth especially the young</p> |
|--|--|--|--|

6.5 CHAPTER SUMMARY

This section focused on and analyzed the responses from all the respondents, gathered by means of the research instruments (observation and interview schedules).

Observation was deployed as a technique to gather information on the provision of, access to and use of services, satisfaction with them and difficulties in using them. The observation results and interview responses were thematically categorised in order to make adequate qualitative analyses, the service process, and the challenges faced when using the services, thereby identifying the various gaps in quality.

Data was gathered via interviews from the librarians regarding the different service delivery strategies, the challenges that the libraries faced and how they were coping with them.

The contribution made by the observations and interviews, as part of qualitative research used in the study, helped to give insight to the actual situation.

It is evident that the libraries are grappling with a myriad of challenges which in varying degrees impact the level of service delivery. The most crucial challenges faced by Kenyan university libraries are:

- inadequate funding,
- inadequate floor space,
- poor and old ICT facilities,
- organisational bureaucracies,
- staff-related issues (low numbers, negative attitude, low morale, etc.); it was however noted that the librarians are well schooled and possess the requisite academic and professional qualifications,
- marginalisation of the library by the respective university regimes, where they are relegated to the periphery, and
- A growing user population with diverse needs *vis-a-vis* the growth of the IRs.

It is also evident that the academic libraries are operating at different levels; hence the customers also enjoy varying levels of satisfaction. This is influenced by, among other factors, the relationship with the parent university managements, the level of funding, and of course the facilities available, first to the service staff to work with, and secondly to the customers in order to facilitate their quest for information mining and use. It was noted that though the regulatory organ, CUE, has set the university library guidelines, there are no minimum requirements set before the academic libraries can be allowed to operate. In addition, there were no regular inspections with regard to compliance. It is this loophole that the university administrators exploit, thus denying the libraries their rightful place in fulfilling their mandate.

The next section, Chapter 7, discusses the findings of the questionnaire responses shown in Chapter 5 and both the observation and interview results as presented in Chapter 6 of this study.

CHAPTER SEVEN

DISCUSSION OF STUDY FINDINGS

7.1 INTRODUCTION

Yusuf and Iwu (2011), in a Nigerian study on library use, observed that it would be important to establish regularly whether academic libraries are actually meeting their objectives, noting that the success and efficiency of the services rendered in academic libraries solely a function of the library users. This is important to determine ways in which to improve service delivery. The discussion that follows is based on the research objectives, research questions, and the corresponding findings of the study.

RO1: To evaluate the influence that the service parameters (human resource practices, technology, the library environment and infrastructure, information resources, etc.) have on the service quality in academic libraries.

- What is the overall service quality of Kenyan academic library systems from the customer's perspective?
- What perceptions do the customers have of the academic libraries?
- Does the level of technological application in the libraries influence service quality?
- What skills/ attitudes/ personal attributes must the staff have in order to satisfy the customer?
- What factors determine the customers' evaluation of service quality in academic libraries?
- Do human resources practices influence service quality?

RO2: To assess the library customer service orientation and its influence on service quality in the academic libraries

- What is the libraries' market orientation?
- What are the communication strategies in place?
- What innovations do the libraries effect to improve service delivery?

RO3: To assess how the range of services/products offered by academic libraries influence service quality in the academic libraries.

- What types of information resources/ services are available?
- What approaches are employed in delivering services to the customers?

RO4: To analyze the level of library service delivery, customer retention/attraction and their influence on service quality in the academic libraries.

- What attracts customers to and discourages them from using the libraries?
- What image does the library have? What is the growth of the library?
- What is the nature of service delivery in the libraries?
- What is the nature of customer satisfaction in the libraries? What problems do the libraries encounter in satisfying their customers?

7.2 LIBRARIANS AND EXTERNAL CUSTOMERS' PERCEPTIONS OF LIBRARY SERVICE QUALITY (Objective 1)

According to UNLV(2005) the central purpose of the University is "... to create an educational environment that encourages the full personal and professional development of those it serves and those who serve the university ..." and to "... assist students in learning about and meeting the intellectual and ethical challenges of responsible citizenship and a full and productive life through opportunities to acquire the knowledge and experiences that enhance critical thinking, leadership skills, aesthetic sensitivity, and social integrity ..." Great libraries are essential to meeting the central purpose of great universities. Guskin (1996) is of view that active learning is enhanced via the university libraries, hence contributing to the students' ability to think critically and take part in independent or group learning. The effectiveness and efficiency of the services provided in the academic libraries is mainly assessed by the library users. In confirmation, Behling and Cudd (1967) reiterated, library users are critical in determining the role that the library plays, and whether it is satisfactory or not. Perera (2005) agrees that meeting user needs is critical in the management of libraries, noting that the management staff of a library needs to keep abreast with the evolving user trends. These needs will obviously vary from one library to the next and from one time to the next.

Services are the consumables that are directly used by library clientele. The users interact with the library management directly through services. For the user, the design and delivery of

services is the most important factor. This is discussed under two sections, i.e. 7.2.1 (librarians' views) and 7.2.2 (external customers' views).

7.2.1 LIBRARIANS' (INTERNAL CUSTOMERS) PERCEPTIONS OF LIBRARY SERVICE QUALITY

From the study's findings, it is evident that the service providers attached a lot of significance to certain attributes, which were tested using Pearson's correlation coefficient to gauge their importance. These were empathy (0.917), responsiveness and assurance (0.898), reliability (0.851) and tangibles (0.838). The findings indicate that there was a strong positive correlation between each of these attributes and service quality, implying that they influenced the level of service delivery to a great extent. Table 7.1, page 277 summarises these results.

At the top of the list was empathy (approachability, ease of access and effort taken to understand customers' needs), meaning that librarians were keen to help their customers get what they want whenever they visited the library. They also believed that convenient locations are important and strongly emphasised the need to provide personalised attention to their customers in addition to providing a good service atmosphere. However, as is noted later, these aspirations did not really manifest in reality. Though this was the case it does not mean that the librarians were not aware of their importance, but it is suggestive that there were other external factors working against the service delivery process.

On the whole, it was agreed that well trained staff are important, as reflected in the responses to the statement '*It is important to have the staff well trained*'. 13% of the respondents felt this should happen sometimes, 13% felt this should happen often, and 74% felt that this should always happen and needs to be enhanced. The study also sought to understand how well the customer's needs were being met by way of providing alternative information sources in case what they required was not available. In response to the statement, '*Customers should be informed about what alternative(s) is/are available*', 8% of the respondents stated sometimes; 26% of the respondents felt this should happen often; and 64% of the respondents felt this should always happen. This points to the degree to which the librarians were able to empathise with the customers, and therefore attempt to meet their needs and inform them of the available information sources. Efforts were also being made to inform the customers about the diverse

resources available in the library. This is evidenced by the responses to the statement, '*Customers should be informed beforehand of the range of services available*', to which 2% of the respondents felt this should only happen sometimes; 27% felt this should happen often; and 70% felt this should always happen (see Table 5.3, p.154). Kulkarni and Deshpande (2012) allude to the fact that services need to be geared towards meeting customers' needs and expectations.

It is imperative for the staff to ensure that customers are fully aware of the service(s) provided. With a mean of 4.83, this implies that the librarians upheld '*The need to educate and inform the customers on the available service(s)*'. 85% of the respondents agreed that this always ought to happen, with 13% of the respondents indicating that it should happen often. Thus there is a general consensus that there is a need to assist customers in getting to know and understand the resources/services that are being provided in the libraries.

Responsiveness and assurance came in second. From the study results it was evident that the librarians made an effort to portray good behaviour to their customers, being ready and willing to help them when services were sought, and assuring them that they were safe while using the resources that are available in the library. Efforts were also made to ensure that reliable services were provided by stressing prompt service and showcasing a deep concern for the customers' interests, among other things. The study sought to assess the level of assurance (the competence of the system and its credibility in providing a courteous and secure service) that was being offered to the customers. It is also evident that much more is required to be done and to improve the assurance component of service quality, considering the fact that customers complained about rude staffers. When using a service, customers need to be assured that they are being accorded the best, with no reservations. Customers should be free to complain as and when the need arises. Commenting on feedback, Kaur and Singh (2010) suggest that there ought to be mechanisms in the library that promote the ability to communicate in an effortless manner, noting that this is important as it encourages further use of the library. Walters (1994, in Herson and Altman, 1998) reminds us that "every contact a customer makes within the library is an opportunity for the customer to form an opinion [...] when these moments of truth go unmanaged, the quality of service regresses to mediocrity".

In terms of the level of responsiveness (the willingness to help customers and provide prompt service) with regard to customer service delivery, the respondents were in agreement that it is important to have a conducive service environment, reasonable working hours for the staff, and the right tools and equipment for them to be able to deliver the necessary services. Consistency and good reputation in service delivery are important attributes and should be maintained and upheld in the library service delivery process. The responses stressed the following:

- A nice atmosphere for services (mean of 4.36)
- Convenient working hours for the staff (mean of 4.17)
- Good and suitable furniture/ working tools for services (mean of 4.17)
- Consistent service performance (mean of 4.34)
- A reputation for good service (mean of 4.49)
- Honouring promises to the customer (mean of 4.49)

Muhammad, Shamsudin and Ul Hadi (2016) observe that customer satisfaction is a major factor contributing to the success of any organisation. It influences customer loyalty, which in turn affects business performance. According to Gronroos (1994), customer contact experiences primarily determine the quality of the service. This points to the existence of a relationship between the two parties. The relationship between the service provider and user of the service is built on a solid understanding of customer's expectations, wants and needs.

Tangibles in this study refer to physical facilities, the general cleanliness of the facilities, and the materials in the library. The findings revealed that the state of these facilities influenced service delivery, demonstrated in the overall positive rating of service quality, as can be deduced from the strong positive correlation.

In terms of being reliable (the ability to perform the promised service dependably and accurately), the respondents agreed that the library service(s) needs to be reliable. On the statement '*There is also the need for consistency in providing the service through honouring promises made to the customer*', 62% of the respondents felt that this should always happen, and 12% of the respondents indicated that it should be happening as often as possible. Keeping a service promise is crucial as it helps a customer to build trust in the provider. Deloitte (2013) stresses that service providers should endeavour to deliver on their brand promises. Little *et al.* (2006) suggest that it is only through the lens of promise making, promise enabling, and promise realisation that firms can improve their ability to create and deliver value. With regard

to the statement, '*Consistent service performance is important*', 90% of the respondents agreed that this always needs to be happening.

Table 7.1 Karl Pearson's correlation coefficient of the service attributes by the librarians N=47

| | | SERVICE QUALITY | EMPATHY | RESPONSIVENESS AND ASSURANCE | RELIABILITY | TANGIBLES |
|------------------------------|---------------------|-----------------|---------|------------------------------|-------------|-----------|
| SERVICE QUALITY | Pearson Correlation | 1 | 0.917** | 0.898** | 0.851** | 0.838** |
| | Sig. (2-tailed) | | .000 | .000 | .000 | .000 |
| EMPATHY | Pearson Correlation | 0.917** | 1 | 0.743** | 0.667** | 0.712** |
| | Sig. (2-tailed) | .000 | | .000 | .000 | .000 |
| RESPONSIVENESS AND ASSURANCE | Pearson Correlation | 0.898** | 0.743** | 1 | 0.750** | 0.655** |
| | Sig. (2-tailed) | .000 | .000 | | .000 | .000 |
| RELIABILITY | Pearson Correlation | 0.851** | 0.667** | 0.750** | 1 | 0.649** |
| | Sig. (2-tailed) | .000 | .000 | .000 | | .000 |
| TANGIBLES | Pearson Correlation | 0.838** | 0.712** | 0.655** | 0.649** | 1 |
| | Sig. (2-tailed) | .000 | .000 | .000 | .000 | |

** . Correlation is significant at the 0.01 level (2-tailed).

In summary, therefore, it can be said that the librarians felt that there was some degree of reliability in the library system, although more still needs to be done to perfect it. According to Dubrova (2013), dependability is the ability of a system to deliver on its intended level of service to its customers. In order for the service to be reliable, training is critical. Thus 89% of the respondents agreed with the statement that, '*Training and preparation of employees is important*', with only 11% of the respondents differing.

7.2.2 REGRESSION FOR LIBRARIANS

From the bivariate analysis, where two variables are analyzed and compared, Market survey, Communication, Service innovation and library performance were not correlated with service quality. On the contrary, service range (0.001) and customer attraction (0.021) were correlated with service quality. The results are as shown in Table 7.2. From this finding it is important to note that service quality in the academic libraries is not and cannot be wholly influenced by just one variable, but it is a multi-faceted factor. This finding is important in that, the academic librarians ought to know and appreciate the fact that service quality enhancement calls for a pluralistic as opposed to a singular approach. There is need to enhance the service range, the cleanliness among other factors.

From the simple linear regression, it was established that market surveys, with a p-value of 0.029 (below that of alpha value 0.050, had significant influence on service quality at the library. Communication was found to significantly influence satisfaction with service quality as the p-value was 0.012. On the contrary, service innovation was not found to significantly influence service quality (p-value of 0.305). Service/product range was also significantly found to influence service quality as the p-value was 0.01. It was also established that Library performance did not significantly influence service quality as the p-value was 0.053, which was slightly above the alpha value 0.05. Customer attraction (p-value of 0.004) was a significant predictor of service quality among the librarians. From the regression analysis, four factors in this study had significant influence on service quality among the librarians. Further still from the regression analysis, only two variables: - service innovation and library performance, were not significant predictors of satisfaction with service quality.

Table 7.2. (a) Bivariate analysis

| | | Correlations | | | | | | |
|------------------------------|---------------------|--------------------------|------------------------|------------------------|--------------------|------------------------|------------------------------|------------------------------|
| | | Service Quality combined | Market Survey Combined | Communication Combined | Service Innovation | Service Range combined | Library Performance combined | Customer Attraction combined |
| Service Quality combined | Pearson Correlation | 1 | -.220 | .262 | .261 | -.485** | -.208 | .337* |
| | Sig. (2-tailed) | | .138 | .076 | .076 | .001 | .160 | .021 |
| | N | 47 | 47 | 47 | 47 | 47 | 47 | 47 |
| Market Survey Combined | Pearson Correlation | -.220 | 1 | -.090 | -.183 | .098 | -.119 | .123 |
| | Sig. (2-tailed) | .138 | | .547 | .219 | .511 | .424 | .411 |
| | N | 47 | 47 | 47 | 47 | 47 | 47 | 47 |
| Communication Combined | Pearson Correlation | .262 | -.090 | 1 | -.058 | -.095 | .128 | -.161 |
| | Sig. (2-tailed) | .076 | .547 | | .700 | .527 | .392 | .279 |
| | N | 47 | 47 | 47 | 47 | 47 | 47 | 47 |
| Service Innovation | Pearson Correlation | .261 | -.183 | -.058 | 1 | -.127 | .028 | .222 |
| | Sig. (2-tailed) | .076 | .219 | .700 | | .396 | .853 | .134 |
| | N | 47 | 47 | 47 | 47 | 47 | 47 | 47 |
| Service Range combined | Pearson Correlation | -.485** | .098 | -.095 | -.127 | 1 | .226 | -.114 |
| | Sig. (2-tailed) | .001 | .511 | .527 | .396 | | .127 | .444 |
| | N | 47 | 47 | 47 | 47 | 47 | 47 | 47 |
| Library Performance combined | Pearson Correlation | -.208 | -.119 | .128 | .028 | .226 | 1 | .097 |
| | Sig. (2-tailed) | .160 | .424 | .392 | .853 | .127 | | .515 |
| | N | 47 | 47 | 47 | 47 | 47 | 47 | 47 |
| Customer Attraction combined | Pearson Correlation | .337* | .123 | -.161 | .222 | -.114 | .097 | 1 |
| | Sig. (2-tailed) | .021 | .411 | .279 | .134 | .444 | .515 | |
| | N | 47 | 47 | 47 | 47 | 47 | 47 | 47 |

** . Correlation is significant at the 0.01 level (2-tailed).

* . Correlation is significant at the 0.05 level (2-tailed).

From the regression coefficients, it was observed that a unit increase in market surveying was associated with 0.326 times increase in service quality. Similarly, a unit increase in communication led to 0.3 times increase in satisfaction with service quality. Further, service/product range was associated with 0.389 times decrease in service quality. For a unit increase in customer attraction, there was 0.412 times positive change in service quality among the librarians.

From this it is evident that though each of the variables played a significant role with regard to service quality assessment the effects were marginal. In certain cases, marginal negative effects –this could be an indicator of saturation, whereby if the basic needs for the customer are met any additional increase in the resources and or services though appreciated is not really valued as a judgement has already been made. It would therefore be crucial for the service providers to concentrate in meeting the very basic even as efforts are made to make the services better for the customers. For the instances where there are marginal increases this is to imply that the required level of awareness to the customers has been attained. Table 7.2b) Regression coefficients clearly shows this.

Table 7.2(b) Regression coefficients

| | Unstandardized Coefficients | | Standardized Coefficients Beta | t | Sig. | 95.0% Confidence Interval for B | |
|---------------------|-----------------------------|------------|--------------------------------|-------|-------|---------------------------------|-------------|
| | B | Std. Error | | | | Lower Bound | Upper Bound |
| (Constant) | 4.374 | 1.039 | | 4.21 | 0 | 2.274 | 6.474 |
| Market Survey | 0.326 | 0.144 | -0.315 | 2.263 | 0.029 | 0.035 | 0.616 |
| Communication | 0.3 | 0.113 | 0.31 | 2.646 | 0.012 | 0.071 | 0.53 |
| Service Innovation | 0.129 | 0.125 | 0.124 | 1.039 | 0.305 | -0.122 | 0.381 |
| Service Range | -0.389 | 0.145 | -0.323 | 2.689 | 0.01 | -0.682 | -0.097 |
| Library Performance | -0.354 | 0.177 | -0.24 | 1.997 | 0.053 | -0.712 | 0.004 |
| Customer Attraction | 0.412 | 0.134 | 0.372 | 3.071 | 0.004 | 0.141 | 0.683 |

a Dependent Variable: Service Quality combined

7.2.2.1 A. MULTIVARIATE ANALYSIS

A multivariate analysis is to find patterns and correlations between several variables simultaneously to allow a deeper understanding of these variables and how they relate is as depicted in Table 7 (c).

Table 7.2 (c) Multivariate analysis

Model Summary

| Model | R | R Square | Adjusted R Square | Std. Error of the Estimate | Change Statistics | | | | Sig. F Change |
|-------|-------|----------|-------------------|----------------------------|-------------------|----------|-----|-----|---------------|
| | | | | | R Square Change | F Change | df1 | df2 | |
| 1 | .701a | 0.492 | 0.416 | 1.068 | 0.492 | 6.451 | 6 | 40 | 0 |

a Predictors: (Constant), Customer Attraction, Library Performance, Market Survey, Communication, Service Innovation, Service Range
 b Dependent Variable: Service Quality combined

From the model summary, the significance value was 0.00, indicating that there was a significant relationship between the dependent variable, service quality and the predictors, customer attraction, library performance, market survey, communication, service innovation and service range. Similarly, the variance on satisfaction on service quality as caused by the predictors (independent variables) was 41.6%. This means that all the six independent variables combined had a cause effect of 41.6% change in satisfaction with service quality change with other factors also influencing the service quality.

Further an ANOVA test helped to establish the associations between dependent variable (service quality) with the independent variables as shown in Table 7(d)

7.2.2.2 ANOVA

Table 7.2 (d) ANOVA test

| Model | | Sum of Squares | df | Mean Square | F | Sig. |
|-------|------------|----------------|----|-------------|-------|-------|
| 1 | Regression | 44.177 | 6 | 7.363 | 6.451 | .000b |
| | Residual | 45.653 | 40 | 1.141 | | |
| | Total | 89.83 | 46 | | | |

a Dependent Variable: Service Quality combined
 b Predictors: (Constant), Customer Attraction, Library Performance, Market Survey, Communication, Service Innovation, Service Range

From the model summary, it was established that it was significant, where the p-value was 0.000. The regression approach was therefore considered fit for the data. This was the test of goodness of fit, which was considered significant.

From the study findings thus it can be concluded that the variables being investigated do contribute to some extent in the determination of service quality in the academic universities. Thus the following equation was derived: -

Functional equation

$$Y = a + b_1 X_1 + b_2 X_2 + b_3 X_3 + b_4 X_4 + b_5 X_5 + b_6 X_6 + e$$

Where X1 is Market Survey; X2 is Communication, X3 is Service Innovation, X4 is Service Range, X5 is Library Performance and X6 is Customer Attraction. e is error term, a is the constant and Y is service quality.

From the regression analysis, four variables were significant hence the final equation is as follows;

$$\text{Service Quality} = a + b_1 X_1 + b_2 X_2 + b_3 X_3 + b_4 X_4 + e \text{ (error term)}$$

$$\text{Service Quality} = 4.374 + 0.326(\text{Market Survey}) + 0.3 (\text{communication}) - 0.389 (\text{service range}) + 0.412 (\text{customer attraction}) + \text{error term}$$

Library performance was slightly higher (0.057) than the required alpha value 0.05, thus left out of the equation model but still as will be discussed was a key factor.

7.2.2.3 EXPLORATORY FACTOR ANALYSIS

Exploratory Factor analysis (EFA) is a research tool that can be used to make sense of multiple variables which are thought to be related. This is useful in this case owing to the qualitative approaches used for collecting data or measures, but quantitative analysis enables better reporting. Fidell (2007) argued that EFA factor loading exceed 0.33 ought to be retained for further examination, but in most cases those with factor loadings exceeding 0.7 are deemed to be efficient. Principal component analysis was applied for extraction.

7.2.2.4 FACTOR ANALYSIS FOR SERVICE QUALITY

Through Principal component analysis with variance rotation 26 factors of market survey were assessed, all the factors had a communality over than 0.4 thus were retained for further analysis. Fig.7.2e displays the 26 items ranging from 0.499 (*staff should ensure that customers*

are trained on the usage of services offered) the lowest to 0. .927 (A nice atmosphere for service is stressed) the highest.

As shown in Table 7.2f the initial number of items for service quality were 26 and 8 factors were extracted with Eigen values of over one and accounted for 80% of the variance. As shown in Table 7.2f, the initial factors account for the highest variation and have the highest Eigen magnitude of 7.645 Subsequent attribute accounts for leftovers and is arranged in descending order. In this case 1.026 lowest. An extracted sum of squared loadings accounts for variance distribution upon varimax rotation. Varimax rotation aims at maximizing individual attribute variance.

The 8 factors are shown on the scree plot (Fig.7.2g).

Table 7.2(e) Communalities for service quality

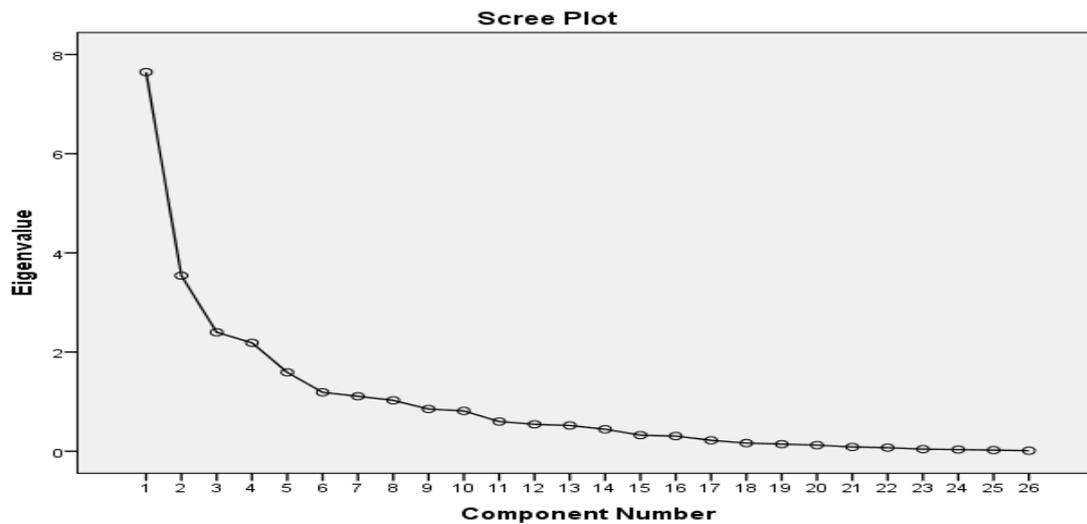
| | Initial | Extraction |
|---|---------|------------|
| staff should ensure that customers understand the service(s) provided | 1 | 0.846 |
| staff should ensure that customers are trained on the usage of services offered | 1 | 0.499 |
| Staff should use language which the customer can understand | 1 | 0.751 |
| Customer should be informed beforehand of the range of service available | 1 | 0.771 |
| It is important to honour promises to the customer | 1 | 0.761 |
| Customers should be informed about what alternative services are available | 1 | 0.71 |
| It is important to have convenient working hours for the staff | 1 | 0.865 |
| It is important to have the staff well trained | 1 | 0.854 |
| Employees and staff should be polite and friendly to customers | 1 | 0.808 |
| It is important to have the staff regularly trained on customer service/relations | 1 | 0.731 |
| It is important to have up to date equipment so as to provide good service | 1 | 0.819 |
| It is important to keep the customers best interests at heart | 1 | 0.714 |
| The training and preparation of employees is important | 1 | 0.779 |
| Dependable service performance is important | 1 | 0.88 |
| Consistent service performance is important | 1 | 0.842 |
| Prompt service from staff is stressed | 1 | 0.723 |
| Convenient service locations are important | 1 | 0.729 |
| The appearance of the employee is important | 1 | 0.865 |
| Employee honesty is stressed | 1 | 0.795 |
| A reputation for good service is emphasized | 1 | 0.846 |
| The development of customer confidence in the service is stressed | 1 | 0.883 |
| Individual customer attention is stressed | 1 | 0.773 |
| A nice atmosphere for service is stressed | 1 | 0.927 |
| Good and suitable furniture/working tools for service is stressed | 1 | 0.796 |
| Customers should feel free to complain on the service given/delivery | 1 | 0.851 |

Table 7.2(f) Total Variance Explained

| Component | Initial Eigenvalues | | | Extraction Sums of Squared Loadings | | |
|-----------|---------------------|---------------|--------------|-------------------------------------|---------------|--------------|
| | Total | % of Variance | Cumulative % | Total | % of Variance | Cumulative % |
| 1 | 7.645 | 29.402 | 29.402 | 7.645 | 29.402 | 29.402 |
| 2 | 3.54 | 13.617 | 43.019 | 3.54 | 13.617 | 43.019 |
| 3 | 2.398 | 9.224 | 52.244 | 2.398 | 9.224 | 52.244 |
| 4 | 2.187 | 8.41 | 60.654 | 2.187 | 8.41 | 60.654 |
| 5 | 1.59 | 6.117 | 66.771 | 1.59 | 6.117 | 66.771 |
| 6 | 1.187 | 4.566 | 71.338 | 1.187 | 4.566 | 71.338 |
| 7 | 1.108 | 4.263 | 75.601 | 1.108 | 4.263 | 75.601 |
| 8 | 1.026 | 3.947 | 79.548 | 1.026 | 3.947 | 79.548 |
| 9 | 0.851 | 3.273 | 82.821 | | | |
| 10 | 0.813 | 3.127 | 85.948 | | | |
| 11 | 0.599 | 2.304 | 88.252 | | | |
| 12 | 0.544 | 2.091 | 90.343 | | | |
| 13 | 0.52 | 1.998 | 92.341 | | | |
| 14 | 0.443 | 1.705 | 94.046 | | | |
| 15 | 0.324 | 1.248 | 95.294 | | | |
| 16 | 0.306 | 1.178 | 96.472 | | | |
| 17 | 0.22 | 0.845 | 97.316 | | | |
| 18 | 0.164 | 0.632 | 97.948 | | | |
| 19 | 0.143 | 0.549 | 98.497 | | | |
| 20 | 0.123 | 0.473 | 98.971 | | | |
| 21 | 0.086 | 0.329 | 99.3 | | | |
| 22 | 0.073 | 0.281 | 99.581 | | | |
| 23 | 0.042 | 0.16 | 99.741 | | | |
| 24 | 0.033 | 0.128 | 99.869 | | | |
| 25 | 0.023 | 0.087 | 99.957 | | | |
| 26 | 0.011 | 0.043 | 100 | | | |

Extraction Method: Principal Component Analysis.

Table 7.2(g) Scree plot for service quality



The scree plot generated visualizes the number of components to be retained. Based on the scree plot Fig.7.2(g) the curve flattens out after the 8th component where it elbows and a decline accompanied by smaller changes which showed that the other remaining attributes accounted for smaller variations.

7.2.2.5 FACTOR ANALYSIS FOR MARKET SURVEY

The communalities for market survey Table 7.3(a) shows the communalities after rotation which represents the relation between the variable and other variables. All the variables are retained for further analysis. All the communalities retained are above 0.4 as suggested by Costello and Osborne (2005).

Table 7.3(a) Communalities for market survey

| | Initial | Extraction |
|---|---------|------------|
| Customers and library employees hold meetings on a regular basis to find out the programs/services they will need in future | 1 | 0.693 |
| Employees/customers interact freely and directly with customers to learn how to satisfy their needs | 1 | 0.665 |
| We conduct a lot of customer survey within the library | 1 | 0.656 |
| We slowly detect changes in the client usage preferences/habits | 1 | 0.526 |
| To assess quality of our services we conduct process control evaluation | 1 | 0.775 |
| We collect industry information i.e. information service (like over lunch, with library friends and experts) | 1 | 0.447 |
| We conduct market research on our competitors (e.g. other information providers-universities, public libraries etc.)independently through individuals | 1 | 0.621 |
| We do not always detect shifts/new trends in the information industry (like competition, technology) | 1 | 0.765 |

We periodically review the possible effects of changes in our business/service environment, such as technology, access and hours of service on customers

1 0.706

Extraction Method: Principal Component Analysis.

Through Principal component analysis with variance rotation nine factors of market survey were assessed, the factors all had a communality over 0.4 and thus were retained for further analysis. Fig.7.3 (a) displays the nine items ranging from 0.447 (*We collect industry information i.e. information service (like over lunch, with library friends and experts)*) the lowest to 0.775 (*To assess quality of our services we conduct process control evaluation*) the highest.

As shown in Table 7.3(b) the initial number of items for market survey were nine and three factor were extracted with Eigen values of over one and accounted for 65% of the variance. As shown in Table 7.3 (b), the initial factors account for the highest variation and have the highest Eigen magnitude of 3.054. Subsequent attribute accounts for leftovers and is arranged in descending order. In this case 1.417 and 1.383 respectively. An extracted sum of squared loadings accounts for variance distribution upon varimax rotation. Varimax rotation aims at maximizing individual attribute variance. The 3 factors are shown on the scree plot (Fig.7.3(c)).

Table 7.3 (b) Total Variance Explained

| Component | Initial Eigenvalues | | | Extraction Sums of Squared Loadings | | | Rotation Sums of Squared Loadings | | |
|-----------|---------------------|---------------|--------------|-------------------------------------|---------------|--------------|-----------------------------------|---------------|--------------|
| | Total | % of Variance | Cumulative % | Total | % of Variance | Cumulative % | Total | % of Variance | Cumulative % |
| 1 | 3.054 | 33.93 | 33.93 | 3.054 | 33.93 | 33.93 | 2.211 | 24.569 | 24.569 |
| 2 | 1.417 | 15.747 | 49.677 | 1.417 | 15.747 | 49.677 | 2.119 | 23.547 | 48.116 |
| 3 | 1.383 | 15.369 | 65.046 | 1.383 | 15.369 | 65.046 | 1.524 | 16.93 | 65.046 |
| 4 | 0.985 | 10.94 | 75.986 | | | | | | |
| 5 | 0.625 | 6.947 | 82.933 | | | | | | |
| 6 | 0.571 | 6.344 | 89.277 | | | | | | |
| 7 | 0.362 | 4.023 | 93.3 | | | | | | |
| 8 | 0.331 | 3.678 | 96.978 | | | | | | |
| 9 | 0.272 | 3.022 | 100 | | | | | | |

Extraction Method: Principal Component Analysis.

The scree plot generated visualizes the number of components to be retained. Based on the scree plot Fig.7.3 (c) the curve flattens out after the 3rd component since there was a decline accompanied by smaller changes which showed that the other remaining attributes accounted for smaller variations.

Fig.7.3(c) Scree plot for market suvey



7.2.2.6 FACTOR ANALYSIS FOR COMMUNICATION

The communalities for communication Table 7.4 (a) shows the communalities after rotation which represents the relation between the variable and other variables. All the variables are retained for further analysis. All the communalities retained are above 0.4.

Table 7.4 (a) Communalities for communication

| | Initial | Extraction |
|---|---------|------------|
| A lot of the informal talk in the library concerns politics and life not the new service strategies or the customer complains | 1 | 0.464 |
| We meet as library staff and the managers regularly to discuss future information market trends | 1 | 0.623 |
| Library staff spend time prior to a semester's schedule discussing customer needs/interests | 1 | 0.712 |
| The library periodically circulates information/documents (like newsletters) that provide information on our customers, our services/products. | 1 | 0.673 |
| When something important happens to our royal customers the library knows about it within a short period (like sickness, death, accident ,marriage) | 1 | 0.774 |
| Data on client satisfaction is circulated to all employees regularly | 1 | 0.734 |
| There is minimal communication between the library managers and employees concerning new service developments/customer complains | 1 | 0.807 |
| When the library managers find out something important about new innovations, it is slow to inform/alert employees | 1 | 0.791 |
| Library management and staff spend time together with the university management discussing customer needs/interests | 1 | 0.756 |

Extraction Method: Principal Component Analysis.

Through Principal component analysis with variance rotation nine factors of communication were assessed, the factors all had a communality over 0.4 and thus were retained for further analysis. Fig. 7.4 (a) displays the nine items ranging from 0.464 (*A lot of the informal talk in the library concerns politics and life not the new service strategies or the customer complains*) the lowest to 0.807 (*There is minimal communication between the library managers and employees concerning new service developments/customer complains*) the highest.

As shown in Table 7.4 (b) the initial number of items for communication were nine and three factors were extracted with Eigen values of over one and accounted for 70% of the variance. As shown in Table 7.4 (b), the initial factors account for the highest variation and have the highest Eigen magnitude of 2.737. Subsequent attributes account for leftovers and are arranged in descending order. In this case 2.012 and 1.584 respectively. An extracted sum of squared loadings accounts for variance distribution upon varimax rotation. Varimax rotation aims at maximizing individual attribute variance.

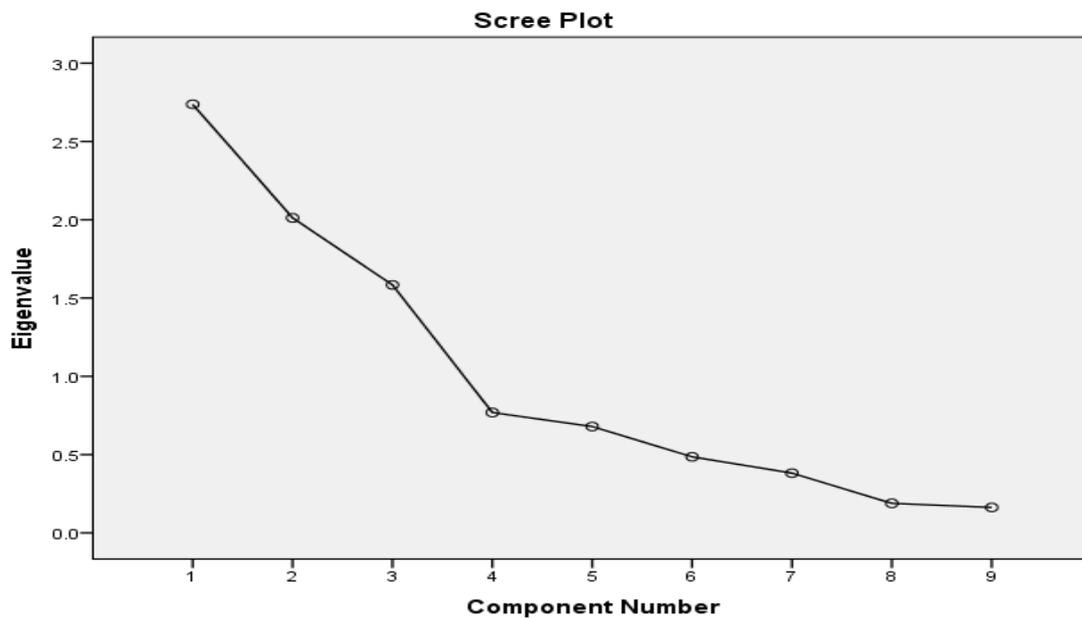
The distribution is as shown on the scree plot (Fig. 7.4 (c)).

Table 7.4 (b) Total Variance explained

| Component | Initial Eigenvalues | | | Extraction Sums of Squared Loadings | | | Rotation Sums of Squared Loadings | | |
|-----------|---------------------|---------------|--------------|-------------------------------------|---------------|--------------|-----------------------------------|---------------|--------------|
| | Total | % of Variance | Cumulative % | Total | % of Variance | Cumulative % | Total | % of Variance | Cumulative % |
| 1 | 2.737 | 30.414 | 30.414 | 2.737 | 30.414 | 30.414 | 2.223 | 24.703 | 24.703 |
| 2 | 2.012 | 22.354 | 52.768 | 2.012 | 22.354 | 52.768 | 2.151 | 23.897 | 48.6 |
| 3 | 1.584 | 17.597 | 70.366 | 1.584 | 17.597 | 70.366 | 1.959 | 21.766 | 70.366 |
| 4 | 0.769 | 8.544 | 78.91 | | | | | | |
| 5 | 0.679 | 7.548 | 86.458 | | | | | | |
| 6 | 0.486 | 5.399 | 91.858 | | | | | | |
| 7 | 0.382 | 4.24 | 96.097 | | | | | | |
| 8 | 0.189 | 2.097 | 98.195 | | | | | | |
| 9 | 0.162 | 1.805 | 100 | | | | | | |

Extraction Method: Principal Component Analysis.

Table 7.4 (c) Scree plot for communication



The scree plot generated visualizes the number of components to be retained. Based on the scree plot Fig.7.4 (c) the curve flattens out after the 4th component since there was a decline

accompanied by smaller changes which showed that the other remaining attributes accounted for smaller variations.

7.2.2.7 FACTOR ANALYSIS FOR SERVICE INNOVATION

Through Principal component analysis with variance rotation 13 factors of service innovation were assessed, all the factors except one had a communality over 0.4 and thus were retained for further analysis. Fig.7.5 (a) displays the nine items ranging from 0.533 (*If a competitor (another service provider e.g. private/public library, information cyber) were to launch an intense campaign targeting at our customers, we would launch a response immediately*) the lowest to 0.818 (*The different services of the firm are well coordinated*) the highest.

As shown in Table 7.5 (b) the initial number of items for service innovation were 13 and five factors were extracted with Eigen values of over one and accounted for 67% of the variance. As shown in Table 7.5 (b), the initial factors account for the highest variation and have the highest Eigen magnitude of 2.898. Subsequent attribute accounts for leftovers and is arranged in descending order. An extracted sum of squared loadings accounts for variance distribution upon varimax rotation. Varimax rotation aims at maximizing individual attribute variance.

The distribution is as shown on the scree plot (Fig.7.5 (c)).

Table 7.5 (a) Communalities for service innovation

| | Initial | Extraction |
|---|---------|------------|
| It takes us long to decide how to respond to our competitors' new service and technology innovations | 1 | 0.399 |
| In our library principles of market segmentation guide any new product/service developments | 1 | 0.601 |
| Due to varied reasons we ignore changes in customers' service needs | 1 | 0.671 |
| We periodically review our service offerings to ensure they meet customers wants | 1 | 0.764 |
| Our service business plans are guided more by technological advances than user needs | 1 | 0.723 |
| Employees get together to plan for responses to changes occurring in the business environment i.e. library | 1 | 0.538 |
| If a competitor (another service provider e.g. private/public library, information cyber) were to launch an intense campaign targeting at our customers, we would launch a response immediately | 1 | 0.533 |
| The different services of the firm are well coordinated | 1 | 0.818 |
| Customers complaints are not considered seriously | 1 | 0.604 |
| Even if we develop a good library marketing plan we might not be able to implement it in a timely manner | 1 | 0.729 |

| | | |
|--|---|-------|
| We are quick to respond to significant changes in our competitors' new service/ product innovations and pricing | 1 | 0.69 |
| When we find out that customers are unhappy with our quality of service we take corrective action immediately | 1 | 0.728 |
| When we find that customers would like us to modify or change a program/ service routine the departments/sections involved make concerted efforts to do so | 1 | 0.739 |

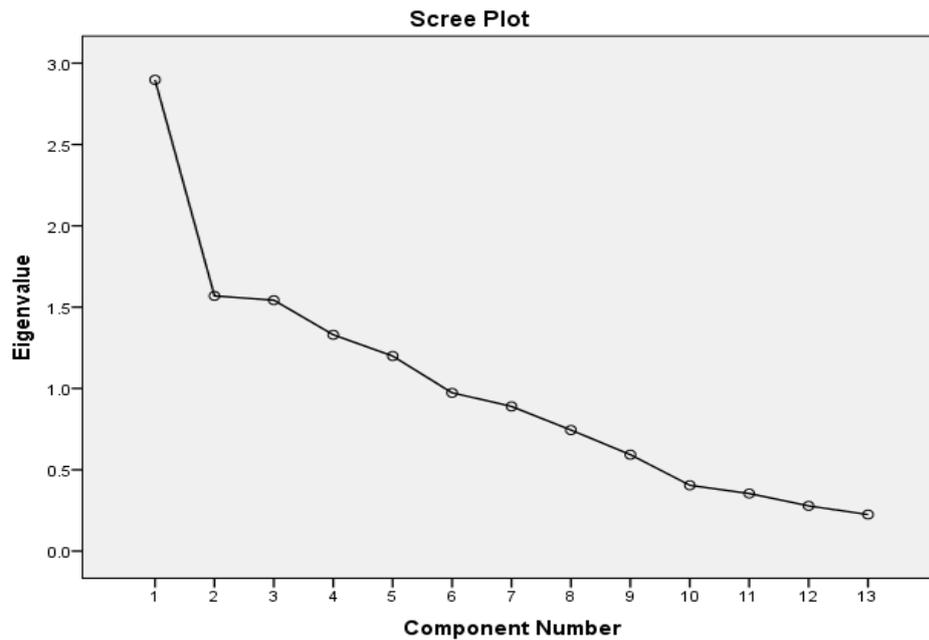
Extraction Method: Principal Component Analysis.

Table 7.5 (b) Total Variance Explained

| Component | Initial Eigenvalues | | | Extraction Sums of Squared Loadings | | | Rotation Sums of Squared Loadings | | |
|-----------|---------------------|---------------|--------------|-------------------------------------|---------------|--------------|-----------------------------------|---------------|--------------|
| | Total | % of Variance | Cumulative % | Total | % of Variance | Cumulative % | Total | % of Variance | Cumulative % |
| 1 | 2.898 | 22.289 | 22.289 | 2.898 | 22.289 | 22.289 | 2.275 | 17.498 | 17.498 |
| 2 | 1.569 | 12.071 | 34.361 | 1.569 | 12.071 | 34.361 | 1.67 | 12.844 | 30.342 |
| 3 | 1.543 | 11.867 | 46.227 | 1.543 | 11.867 | 46.227 | 1.668 | 12.833 | 43.175 |
| 4 | 1.33 | 10.23 | 56.457 | 1.33 | 10.23 | 56.457 | 1.573 | 12.1 | 55.275 |
| 5 | 1.199 | 9.226 | 65.684 | 1.199 | 9.226 | 65.684 | 1.353 | 10.409 | 65.684 |
| 6 | 0.973 | 7.485 | 73.169 | | | | | | |
| 7 | 0.89 | 6.842 | 80.012 | | | | | | |
| 8 | 0.744 | 5.724 | 85.735 | | | | | | |
| 9 | 0.593 | 4.561 | 90.296 | | | | | | |
| 10 | 0.405 | 3.114 | 93.41 | | | | | | |
| 11 | 0.354 | 2.723 | 96.133 | | | | | | |
| 12 | 0.278 | 2.138 | 98.271 | | | | | | |
| 13 | 0.225 | 1.729 | 100 | | | | | | |

Extraction Method: Principal Component Analysis.

Table 7.5 (c) Scree Plot for service innovation



7.2.2.8 FACTOR ANALYSIS FOR SERVICE RANGE

Through Principal component analysis with variance rotation 34 factors of service range were assessed, all the factors had a communality over 0.4 and thus were retained for further analysis. Fig.7.6 (a) displays the nine items ranging from 0.61 (*Library employees are allowed to vary their service delivery procedures*) the lowest to 0.924 (*The library provides resources for changes like additional/new requirements like tables, seats, computers, books*) the highest.

As shown in Table 7.6 (b) the initial number of items for service range were 34 and nine factors were extracted with Eigen values of over one and accounted for 84% of the variance. As shown in Table 7.6 (b), the initial factors account for the highest variation and have the highest Eigen magnitude of 10.67. Subsequent attribute accounts for leftovers and is arranged in descending order. An extracted sum of squared loadings accounts for variance distribution upon varimax rotation. Varimax rotation aims at maximizing individual attribute variance.

The distribution is as shown on the scree plot (Fig.7.6 (c)).

Table 7.6 (a)Communalities for service range

| | Initial | Extraction |
|--|---------|------------|
| Our competitors forces us to change the range of our services/ products | 1 | 0.92 |
| Competitors often force us to change/ purchase our machines/ equipment | 1 | 0.902 |
| Competitors force us to change work methods/service delivery styles | 1 | 0.852 |
| Library staff service providers participate in decision making | 1 | 0.769 |
| Library staff are aware of changes to be undertaken in the library | 1 | 0.598 |
| Change decision are made by the library managers alone | 1 | 0.909 |
| Rules and procedures set must be followed strictly | 1 | 0.805 |
| Library employees are allowed to vary their service delivery procedures | 1 | 0.61 |
| Employee creativity is encouraged | 1 | 0.857 |
| The library provides resources for changes like additional/new requirements like tables, seats, computers, books | 1 | 0.924 |
| Employees suggestions are supported | 1 | 0.86 |
| The library facilities e.g. furniture, lighting system, windows etc. are repaired | 1 | 0.865 |
| Library staff are sponsored/allowed time off to take higher education or professional courses | 1 | 0.808 |
| We introduce new equipment in our library when the current facilities break down | 1 | 0.868 |
| We introduce new services in our library | 1 | 0.866 |
| Our information resources are the latest in the market and in the various disciplines | 1 | 0.821 |
| Our equipment is modern(bought in the last two years) | 1 | 0.832 |
| We train our customers on using the self service technologies | 1 | 0.812 |
| We have the most current technology | 1 | 0.849 |
| We have changed our service delivery procedures in the last one year | 1 | 0.884 |
| My library emphasizes service growth through developing new ideas innovations/ new information resources/advanced training | 1 | 0.88 |
| Library staff pay attention to procedures to get things done | 1 | 0.91 |
| My library emphasizes outcomes and achievement very much | 1 | 0.86 |
| My library creates wholly new products/services for its various clients | 1 | 0.881 |
| My library extends services to new clients previously not served by us | 1 | 0.845 |
| My library incorporates new service delivery strategies into existing strategies | 1 | 0.863 |
| My library creates new services depending on the market | 1 | 0.811 |
| The library introduces new procedures to aid in the management of new services | 1 | 0.794 |
| The library links with other libraries in the industry | 1 | 0.722 |
| My library seeks to adopt service strategies/programs/equipment used by competitors i.e. other information providers | 1 | 0.876 |
| Our service delivery strategies change | 1 | 0.814 |
| We advertise/market our products/services | 1 | 0.918 |
| Our user complains have increased in the last six months | 1 | 0.887 |
| Our user compliments have dropped/stagnated in the last six months | 1 | 0.696 |

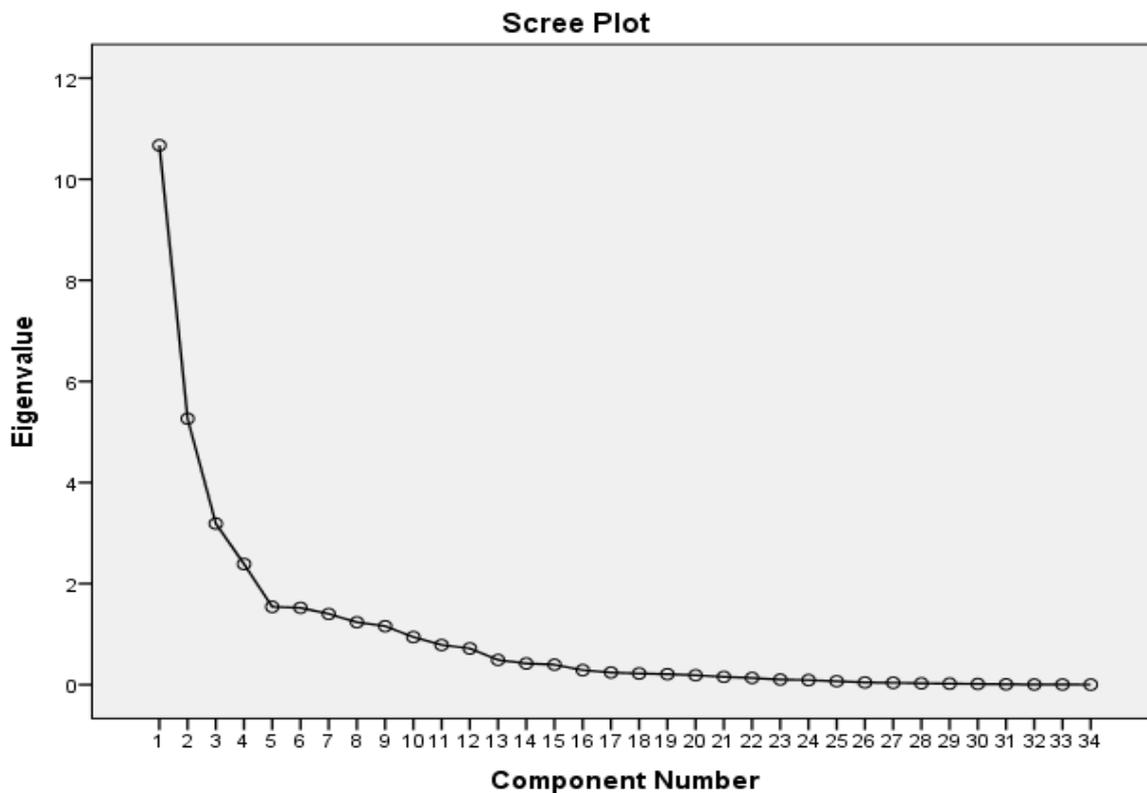
Extraction Method: Principal Component Analysis.

Table 7.6 (b) Total Variance Explained

| Component | Initial Eigenvalues | | | Extraction Sums of Squared Loadings | | | Rotation Sums of Squared Loadings | | |
|-----------|---------------------|---------------|--------------|-------------------------------------|---------------|--------------|-----------------------------------|---------------|--------------|
| | Total | % of Variance | Cumulative % | Total | % of Variance | Cumulative % | Total | % of Variance | Cumulative % |
| 1 | 10.67 | 31.383 | 31.383 | 10.67 | 31.383 | 31.383 | 4.643 | 13.657 | 13.657 |
| 2 | 5.263 | 15.478 | 46.862 | 5.263 | 15.478 | 46.862 | 4.355 | 12.809 | 26.466 |
| 3 | 3.187 | 9.375 | 56.236 | 3.187 | 9.375 | 56.236 | 3.905 | 11.484 | 37.951 |
| 4 | 2.388 | 7.024 | 63.261 | 2.388 | 7.024 | 63.261 | 3.1 | 9.118 | 47.068 |
| 5 | 1.541 | 4.533 | 67.793 | 1.541 | 4.533 | 67.793 | 3.07 | 9.028 | 56.097 |
| 6 | 1.523 | 4.479 | 72.273 | 1.523 | 4.479 | 72.273 | 2.953 | 8.684 | 64.781 |
| 7 | 1.4 | 4.119 | 76.391 | 1.4 | 4.119 | 76.391 | 2.661 | 7.825 | 72.606 |
| 8 | 1.236 | 3.635 | 80.026 | 1.236 | 3.635 | 80.026 | 2.099 | 6.173 | 78.779 |
| 9 | 1.159 | 3.41 | 83.436 | 1.159 | 3.41 | 83.436 | 1.584 | 4.657 | 83.436 |
| 10 | 0.943 | 2.773 | 86.209 | | | | | | |
| 11 | 0.787 | 2.315 | 88.524 | | | | | | |
| 12 | 0.719 | 2.114 | 90.638 | | | | | | |
| 13 | 0.491 | 1.444 | 92.082 | | | | | | |
| 14 | 0.42 | 1.237 | 93.318 | | | | | | |
| 15 | 0.396 | 1.165 | 94.483 | | | | | | |
| 16 | 0.289 | 0.849 | 95.332 | | | | | | |
| 17 | 0.242 | 0.711 | 96.043 | | | | | | |
| 18 | 0.224 | 0.658 | 96.701 | | | | | | |
| 19 | 0.21 | 0.616 | 97.317 | | | | | | |
| 20 | 0.188 | 0.552 | 97.869 | | | | | | |
| 21 | 0.156 | 0.459 | 98.329 | | | | | | |
| 22 | 0.134 | 0.395 | 98.724 | | | | | | |
| 23 | 0.103 | 0.304 | 99.027 | | | | | | |
| 24 | 0.093 | 0.273 | 99.3 | | | | | | |
| 25 | 0.069 | 0.202 | 99.501 | | | | | | |
| 26 | 0.044 | 0.131 | 99.632 | | | | | | |
| 27 | 0.039 | 0.115 | 99.747 | | | | | | |
| 28 | 0.028 | 0.081 | 99.828 | | | | | | |
| 29 | 0.023 | 0.067 | 99.895 | | | | | | |
| 30 | 0.015 | 0.045 | 99.94 | | | | | | |
| 31 | 0.009 | 0.026 | 99.967 | | | | | | |
| 32 | 0.005 | 0.016 | 99.983 | | | | | | |
| 33 | 0.004 | 0.013 | 99.996 | | | | | | |
| 34 | 0.001 | 0.004 | 100 | | | | | | |

Extraction Method: Principal Component Analysis.

Table 7.6 (c) Scree plot for service range



The scree plot generated visualizes the number of components to be retained. Based on the scree plot Fig.7.6 (c) the curve elbows out after the 5th component since there was a decline accompanied by smaller changes which showed that the other remaining attributes accounted for smaller variations.

7.2.2.9 FACTOR ANALYSIS FOR LIBRARY PERFORMANCE

Through Principal component analysis with variance rotation 9 factors of library performance were assessed, all the factors had a communality over 0.4 and thus were retained for further analysis. Fig.7.7 (a) displays the nine items ranging from 0.618 (*The level of customer complains in this library is low*) the lowest to 0.942 (*This library's service delivery is lower than anticipated*) the highest.

As shown in Table 7.7 (a) the initial number of items for library performance were 9 and three factors were extracted with Eigen values of over one and accounted for 77% of the variance. As shown in Table 7.7 (b), the initial factors account for the highest variation and have the highest Eigen magnitude of 4.11. Subsequent attribute accounts for leftovers and is arranged

in descending order. An extracted sum of squared loadings accounts for variance distribution upon varimax rotation. Varimax rotation aims at maximizing individual attribute variance. The distribution is as shown on the scree plot (Fig.7.7 (c)).

Table 7.7 (a) Communalities for library performance

| | Initial | Extraction |
|---|---------|------------|
| The level of customer satisfaction in this library is low | 1 | 0.697 |
| The level of customer complains in this library is low | 1 | 0.618 |
| The level of customer base in this library is low | 1 | 0.775 |
| The level of customer retention in this library is low | 1 | 0.658 |
| The level of the customer compliments for this library is low` | 1 | 0.726 |
| The growth of the information resources in the last three years was low | 1 | 0.855 |
| The level of return on this library's investment was poor in the last three years and hence it should be closed | 1 | 0.839 |
| This library's service delivery is lower than anticipated | 1 | 0.942 |
| This library's image is poor | 1 | 0.832 |

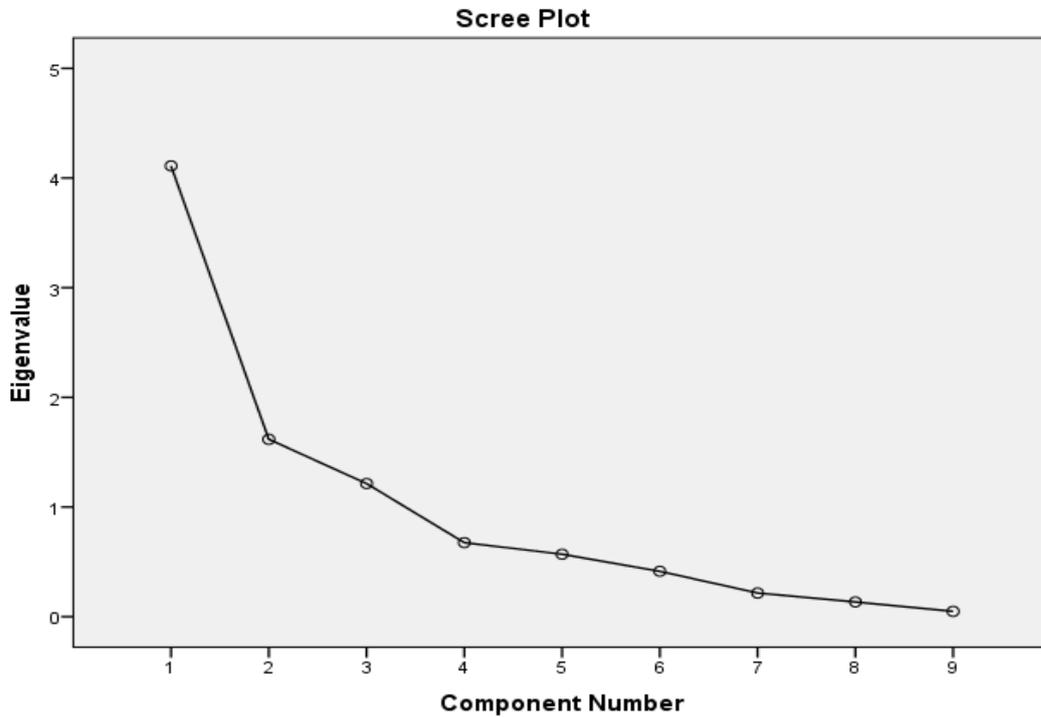
Extraction Method: Principal Component Analysis.

Table 7.7 (b) Total Variance Explained

| Component | Initial Eigenvalues | | | Extraction Sums of Squared Loadings | | |
|-----------|---------------------|---------------|--------------|-------------------------------------|---------------|--------------|
| | Total | % of Variance | Cumulative % | Total | % of Variance | Cumulative % |
| 1 | 4.11 | 45.671 | 45.671 | 4.11 | 45.671 | 45.671 |
| 2 | 1.617 | 17.97 | 63.641 | 1.617 | 17.97 | 63.641 |
| 3 | 1.214 | 13.489 | 77.13 | 1.214 | 13.489 | 77.13 |
| 4 | 0.675 | 7.505 | 84.635 | | | |
| 5 | 0.569 | 6.326 | 90.961 | | | |
| 6 | 0.414 | 4.601 | 95.562 | | | |
| 7 | 0.216 | 2.4 | 97.961 | | | |
| 8 | 0.135 | 1.5 | 99.461 | | | |
| 9 | 0.049 | 0.539 | 100 | | | |

Extraction Method: Principal Component Analysis.

Table 7.7 (c) Scree plot for service range



The scree plot generated visualizes the number of components to be retained. Based on the scree plot Fig.7.7(c) the curve elbows out after the 4th component since there was a decline accompanied by smaller changes which showed that the other remaining attributes accounted for smaller variations.

7.2.2.10 FACTOR ANALYSIS FOR CUSTOMER ATTRACTION

Through Principal component analysis with variance rotation 20 factors of customer attraction were assessed, thirteen of the factors had a communality over 0.4 and thus were retained for further analysis and seven dropped. Fig.7.8 (a) displays the twenty items ranging from 0.618 (*The level of customer complains in this library is low*) the lowest to 0.942 (*This library's service delivery is lower than anticipated*) the highest.

As shown in Table 7.8 (b) the initial number of items for customer attraction were 20 and five factors were extracted with Eigen values of over one and accounted for 72% of the variance. As shown in Table 7.8(b), the initial factors account for the highest variation and have the highest Eigen magnitude of 4.11. Subsequent attribute accounts for leftovers and is arranged in descending order. An extracted sum of squared loadings accounts for variance distribution upon varimax rotation. Varimax rotation aims at maximizing individual attribute variance.

The distribution is as shown on the scree plot (Fig.7. 8 (c)).

Table 7.8 (a) Communalities for customer attraction

| | Initial | Extraction |
|--|---------|------------|
| During the past three years our market share has increased | 1 | 0.7 |
| During the past three years, customer satisfaction has increased | 1 | 0.792 |
| Over the past three years, our customer base has exceeded that of our competitors | 1 | 0.719 |
| During the past three years library customer complaints have decreased | 1 | 0.427 |
| During the past three years, our new products/services have been less attractive than those of the competitors | 1 | 0.615 |
| During the past three years customer loyalty has increased | 1 | 0.647 |
| Our customers are happy with the service(s) rendered | 1 | 0.539 |
| We have a shrinking market share | 1 | 0.684 |
| Our clients keep moving to other libraries/ information centres | 1 | 0.452 |
| We collect information on what customers want and expect in terms of service quality | 1 | 0.835 |
| We collect information on what customers want and expect in terms information resources | 1 | 0.746 |
| We keep accurate data on customers and complaints | 1 | 0.927 |
| We keep accurate data on customer/client progress in literacy/outreach programs | 1 | 0.773 |
| I am satisfied with my salary | 1 | 0.711 |
| The library management cares about my welfare | 1 | 0.809 |
| I receive continuous job training | 1 | 0.75 |
| I have a secure job | 1 | 0.789 |
| My employer cares about my welfare | 1 | 0.827 |
| My contribution as an employee is valued | 1 | 0.885 |
| I am happy with my work environment | 1 | 0.76 |

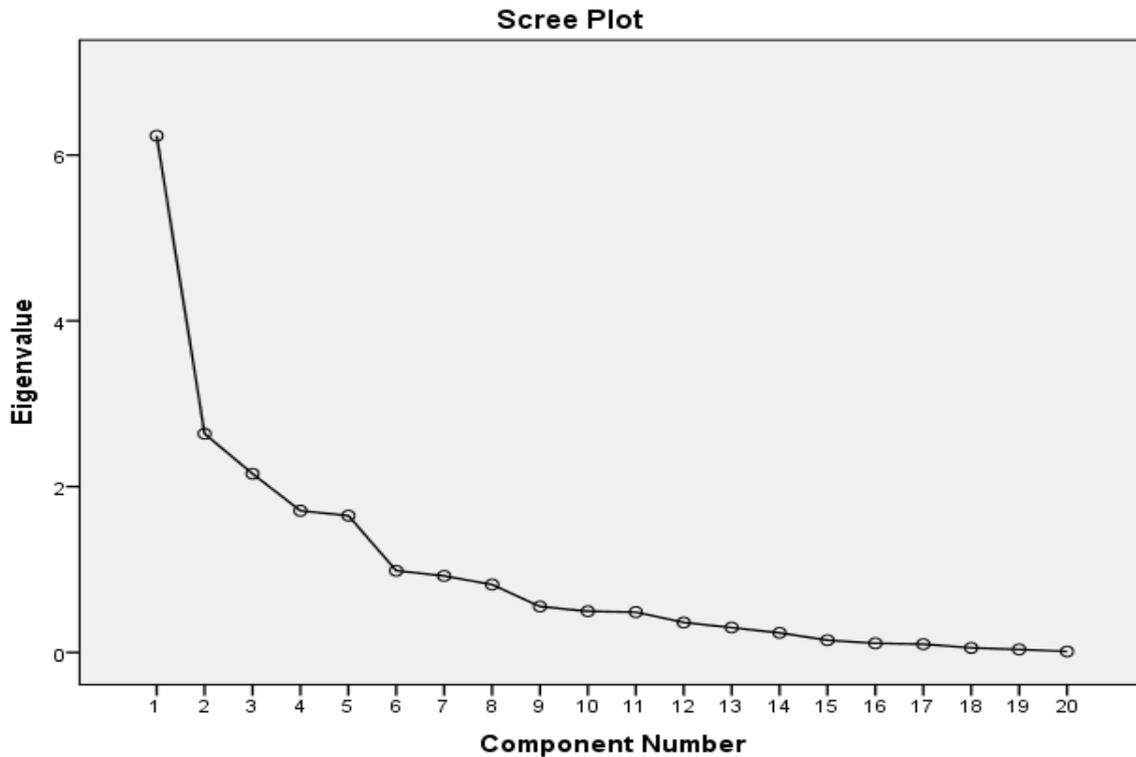
Extraction Method: Principal Component Analysis.

Table 7.8 (b) Total Variance Explained

| Component | Initial Eigenvalues | | | Extraction Sums of Squared Loadings | | | Rotation Sums of Squared Loadings | | |
|-----------|---------------------|---------------|--------------|-------------------------------------|---------------|--------------|-----------------------------------|---------------|--------------|
| | Total | % of Variance | Cumulative % | Total | % of Variance | Cumulative % | Total | % of Variance | Cumulative % |
| 1 | 6.234 | 31.168 | 31.168 | 6.234 | 31.168 | 31.168 | 3.468 | 17.338 | 17.338 |
| 2 | 2.638 | 13.191 | 44.358 | 2.638 | 13.191 | 44.358 | 3.198 | 15.989 | 33.327 |
| 3 | 2.155 | 10.776 | 55.135 | 2.155 | 10.776 | 55.135 | 2.819 | 14.096 | 47.423 |
| 4 | 1.708 | 8.541 | 63.676 | 1.708 | 8.541 | 63.676 | 2.677 | 13.385 | 60.808 |
| 5 | 1.65098 | 8.252 | 71.928 | 1.65098 | 8.252 | 71.928 | 2.224 | 11.12 | 71.928 |
| 6 | 0.925 | 4.927 | 76.854 | | | | | | |
| 7 | 0.812 | 4.61 | 81.464 | | | | | | |
| 8 | 0.558 | 4.09 | 85.555 | | | | | | |
| 9 | 0.494 | 2.772 | 88.327 | | | | | | |
| 10 | 0.486 | 2.48 | 90.807 | | | | | | |
| 11 | 0.366 | 2.428 | 93.235 | | | | | | |
| 12 | 0.31 | 1.804 | 95.039 | | | | | | |
| 13 | 0.230.3 | 1.498 | 96.537 | | | | | | |
| 14 | 0.145 | 1.176 | 97.713 | | | | | | |
| 15 | 0.097 | 0.736 | 98.449 | | | | | | |
| 16 | 0.090.11 | 0.551 | 98.999 | | | | | | |
| 17 | 0.059 | 0.494 | 99.494 | | | | | | |
| 18 | 0.035 | 0.273 | 99.766 | | | | | | |
| 19 | 0.016 | 0.179 | 99.945 | | | | | | |
| 20 | 0.011 | 0.055 | 100 | | | | | | |

Extraction Method: Principal Component Analysis.

Table 7.8 (c) Scree plot for customer attraction



The scree plot generated visualizes the number of components to be retained. Based on the scree plot Fig.7.8 (c) the curve elbows out after the 6th component since there was a decline accompanied by smaller changes which showed that the other remaining attributes accounted for smaller variations.

7.2.3 EXTERNAL CUSTOMERS' PERCEPTIONS OF LIBRARY SERVICE QUALITY

The external customers' responses with regard to service quality attributes were tested using Karl Pearson's correlation coefficient to gauge their importance. The strongest positive correlation was with empathy (0.895), tangibles (0.849), responsiveness (0.836), and assurance (0.829). This implies that these attributes influenced the level of service delivery and hence service quality to a great extent. As shown above and in the tables, the correlation is with the level of service quality, and hence service delivery, i.e. vice versa. Table 7.9 on page 303 summarises these results.

The customers expressed the need for empathy (approachability, ease of access and effort taken to understand customers' needs), citing the need for individual attention; convenient operating

hours; and the need for service personnel to understand their needs well. They indicated that the ease with which they can access library services coupled with the ease with which they can approach the librarians to make enquiries and the degree to which they feel that their individual research and information needs are addressed, is what motivates them to be avid library users. This is in agreement with Mason's (2010) suggestion that librarians ought to try and assist their clients being sympathetic in their approach on one hand, and on the other, the students in particular need to appreciate the role of the librarians and faculty members to instruct and encourage them in their intellectual pursuits seeing them as partners in the learning process, not hindrances.

Unlike the service providers, the customers were quite keen on tangibles (the appearance of physical facilities, equipment, personnel, and communication materials). In this respect, they were eager to have good quality and functional equipment to use. They were keen on the general cleanliness of the facilities (a core attribute to them), which was amplified further by the findings (discussed later) regarding the level of cleanliness in the libraries. They also expressed the need to improve on the appearance of the physical facilities (such as acquiring more modern equipment) and acquiring more library information resources, which should also be well maintained so that they are visually appealing to the customers at all times.

The customers also expected a place where the service provider would be quite responsive to their concerns. They indicated that they expected libraries to notify them when certain services would be performed, and also required the libraries to deliver prompt service as they were wary of wasting their time waiting for a service or for service promises to be fulfilled. They were also eager to have the libraries respond promptly to customer complaints and requests.

In terms of assurance (the competence of the system and its credibility in providing a courteous and secure service), the customers did express some degree of satisfaction with the libraries based on this aspect. Overall the customers were happy with the library services based on their responses to the statement, '*Overall I am satisfied with the library's services*'. 17% of the respondents disagreed with the statement, 16% were uncertain, and 67% agreed that they were satisfied.

With regard to reliability (the ability to perform the promised service dependably and accurately), customers did express some degree of satisfaction with the libraries' service, agreeing that the library services need to be reliable.

There is a need on the part of the library to keep promises made to the customers and strive to do things correctly the first time the service is rendered. This would help boost the image of the library and that of the librarians. On the whole, libraries need to exercise caution when dealing with their customers and avoid cases where they promise too much, as this raises the expectations of their customers which they may fail to meet.

With regard to responsiveness (librarians' willingness to help customers and provide prompt service), the customers expressed overall satisfaction with this aspect of using the libraries.

The willingness on the part of the librarians to assist the customers coupled with speedy delivery serves to boost morale and build users' confidence.

In conclusion, therefore, the experience of the customers upon visiting the library determines, to a large extent, whether they will make any return visits. When a customer receives or interacts with a service, it is an innate experience that influences their decision whether to stay or go elsewhere.

These findings align with Dabholkar *et al.*'s (2000) Antecedents' model of service quality which stresses certain service attributes, such as reliability and comfort, as enhancing service quality. In this case, these service attributes include the general cleanliness of the library; personal attention/service; convenient working hours; libraries keeping their word regarding service delivery; prompt service; instilling confidence in the customers; the assurance that they (customers) are safe when they perform business transactions in the library; and the librarians being knowledgeable in the handling of customers' queries.

Table 7.9: Karl Pearson’s correlation coefficient of the service attributes according to customers N=714

| | | ASSURANCE | RESPONSIVENESS | EMPATHY | TANGIBLES | SERVICE QUALITY |
|-----------------|---------------------|-----------|----------------|---------|-----------|-----------------|
| ASSURANCE | Pearson Correlation | 1 | 0.675** | 0.674** | 0.579** | 0.829** |
| | Sig. (2-tailed) | | .000 | .000 | .000 | .000 |
| RESPONSIVENESS | Pearson Correlation | 0.675** | 1 | 0.725** | 0.552** | 0.836** |
| | Sig. (2-tailed) | .000 | | .000 | .000 | .000 |
| EMPATHY | Pearson Correlation | 0.674** | 0.725** | 1 | 0.644** | 0.895** |
| | Sig. (2-tailed) | .000 | .000 | | .000 | .000 |
| TANGIBLES | Pearson Correlation | 0.579** | 0.552** | 0.644** | 1 | 0.849** |
| | Sig. (2-tailed) | .000 | .000 | .000 | | .000 |
| SERVICE QUALITY | Pearson Correlation | 0.829** | 0.836** | 0.895** | 0.849** | 1 |
| | Sig. (2-tailed) | .000 | .000 | .000 | .000 | |

***. Correlation is significant at the 0.01 level (2-tailed).*

Further from the regression analysis (see Section 5.3.2) the external customers’ perception of service quality is significantly influenced by the following variables- levels of satisfaction with the service meted out, type of user, usage, gender and level of cleanliness in varying degrees. The overall satisfaction levels significantly influencing their decision to stay and continue receiving inferior service or to look for other facilities where the service was rated as superior. Nationality, frequency of usage and the education levels attained not being very signcant in the rating of service quality. From this it important to note service quality is so much dependent on ones’ education levels, rather it is more influenced by the treatment one receives, the general outlook as determined by cleanliness among other factors. It is also

evident that a service will be used no matter what but the frequency of “buying”/seeking for that service is largely dependent on.

7.2.4. REGRESSION ANALYSIS FOR THE EXTERNAL LIBRARY CUSTOMERS

From the above discussion further tests were done on the data to determine which factors had more effect on service quality from the external customers’ perspective.

1. Model Summary

Model Summary^b

| Model | R | R Square | Adjusted R Square | Std. Error of the Estimate |
|-------|-------------------|----------|-------------------|----------------------------|
| 1 | .518 ^a | 0.269 | 0.259 | 0.73 |

^a Predictors: (Constant), Highest education level, rate your library usage, gender, nationality, I am dissatisfied with the services in my library facility, Rate the library’s level of cleanliness, Type of user, Do you use the library, I am likely to look for a new library facility in the next six months

^b Dependent Variable: satisfaction service quality combined

It was established that the model summary was significant, and the overall variables in the model contributed to 25.9% change in service quality (Adjusted R square) and further analysis could be carried out (as shown in the Model summary 1 above).

It confirms that education level, rate of library usage, gender, nationality, type of user, level of cleanliness in the library and satisfaction levels, had an effect on the perceptions of the customers in their service quality ratings of the academic libraries.

2. Model Summary

ANOVA^a

| Model | | Sum of Squares | df | Mean Square | F | Sig. |
|-------|------------|----------------|-----|-------------|--------|-------------------|
| 1 | Regression | 137.637 | 9 | 15.293 | 28.721 | .000 ^b |
| | Residual | 374.861 | 704 | 0.532 | | |
| | Total | 512.499 | 713 | | | |

^a Dependent Variable: job assessment combined

^b Predictors: (Constant), Highest education level, Rate your library usage, gender, nationality, I am dissatisfied with the services in my library facility, Rate the library’s level of

cleanliness, Type of user, Do you use the library, i am likely to look for a new library facility in the next six months

The model summary 2 above shows that the variables were significant with a p-value of 0.000. This therefore shows the goodness-of-fit was confirmed, since the alpha/p-value was below 0.05.

3. Regression coefficients

| Model | Unstandardized Coefficients | | Standardized Coefficients | t | Sig. | 95.0% Confidence Interval for B | |
|---|-----------------------------|------------|---------------------------|--------|-------|---------------------------------|-------------|
| | B | Std. Error | Beta | | | Lower Bound | Upper Bound |
| 1 (Constant) | 3.557 | 0.33 | | 10.772 | 0 | 2.909 | 4.205 |
| gender | -0.188 | 0.055 | -0.11 | -3.398 | 0.001 | -0.296 | -0.079 |
| nationality | 0.077 | 0.108 | 0.023 | 0.712 | 0.477 | -0.136 | 0.29 |
| Use the library | -0.719 | 0.18 | -0.147 | -3.987 | 0 | -1.073 | -0.365 |
| Frequency of library usage | 0.045 | 0.028 | 0.059 | 1.604 | 0.109 | -0.01 | 0.101 |
| Type of user | 0.19 | 0.062 | 0.106 | 3.051 | 0.002 | 0.068 | 0.313 |
| Library's level of cleanliness | -0.378 | 0.053 | -0.239 | -7.135 | 0 | -0.482 | -0.274 |
| Satisfactions with the services in library facility | 0.334 | 0.068 | 0.177 | 4.883 | 0 | 0.2 | 0.468 |
| Looking for new library facility in the next six months | 0.447 | 0.075 | 0.219 | 5.941 | 0 | 0.299 | 0.595 |
| Highest education level | -0.017 | 0.038 | -0.015 | -0.44 | 0.66 | -0.092 | 0.059 |

a Dependent Variable: Satisfaction with service quality

Table 7.9 (a) Regression coefficients

The simple linear regression (see Table 7.9(a)) was then performed on the data, with satisfaction with service quality as the dependent variable and other nine as independent variables. The regression was to identify which variables played significant role in influencing satisfaction with service quality among the external customers (students and other users). The following variables- gender, nationality, frequency of library usage, the type of user, library level of cleanliness, satisfaction with the services in the library facility, and

disatisfactionwith the library (whether one was looking for a new library) and the level of education was regressed against the satisfaction with service quality.

The following were the findings: level of education (p-value of 0.66), degree of library use (heavy, moderate, occasional) (p-value 0.109), and nationality (p-value of 0.477), these three variables did not have any significant effect on the customers' perception of the level of service quality.

However, the other four variables had significant effect on their perception of the academic service quality levels.

Gender (p-value 0.001) was significantly associated with satisfaction with service quality of library as its p-value was less than 0.05. Whether one or not used the library (usage of library) was significantly associated with higher levels of satisfaction with service quality (p-value of 0.00).

The type of user (undergraduate, postgraduate and staff) was also considered a significant predictor of satisfaction with service quality as the p-value was 0.002. Level of cleanliness of the library was also associated with the satisfaction with service quality, where the p-value was 0.00 (below the alpha value of 0.5). Level of the general (dis)satisfaction with the library service (whether satisfied or not) also significantly contributed to overall satisfaction with service quality (p-value 0.00). However, the general dis-satisfaction with the services delivery was also significantly associated with satisfaction levels of the quality of service (P-value 0.00) leading to the customers opting to look for new library facilities in the near future.

In terms of effects, increasing gender by a unit was associated with a decrease of 0.188 times in satisfaction with service quality. This points out that gender had a negative effect on overall customer satisfaction with the service quality. Increasing the use of library by one unit led to a decrease of dissatisfaction with service quality by 0.719 times. A unit increase in the level of cleanliness was associated with 0.378 times decrease in dissatisfaction with service quality.

7.3 LIBRARY CUSTOMER SERVICE ORIENTATION (Objective 2)

According to Thapisa and Gemini (1999), quality relates to the fitness of a service or product for its intended purpose or use, subject to the expectations of the customer, user or the public. Quality, therefore, must be in conformity with the customer's requirements or needs. Barnard (1993) thus explains that the quality of a service can be a definition of the customer's perception

of what is good or bad, acceptable or not acceptable. Armstrong (1991) contends that the criteria of quality, which customers ascribe to service, include:

- Accessibility
- Responsiveness or timeliness
- Reliability or accuracy
- Up-to-dateness
- Relevance
- Security or non-threatening behaviour
- Friendliness and helpfulness
- Assurance or reliability
- Consistency
- Affordability, tangibility or being within the price range
- Communication and/or ease of use

The 2017 Customer Service Benchmark Report (Comm100, 2017), lays emphasis on the fact that customers are the lifeblood of any organisation, and they want to feel valued and want to know that their business is appreciated. The 2020 Customer Service Benchmark Report (Comm100, 2020), further notes that "...customers are smarter than ever, understanding what good – even great – customer service looks and feels like. They no longer compare you to a competitor, but to the best experience they have had with anyone. Brands that deliver an excellent service experience set the bar higher for everyone...". This has implications for how the organization communicates and reaches out to its customers. Customer service orientation is important as it refers to how an organisation responds to customer needs, and how it seeks to satisfy them.

The libraries' customer service orientation was evaluated through the analysis of three parameters: library market orientation, communication, and service innovation. The results are as shown in Tables 5.8, 5.9 and 5.10 respectively (see pages 176,180,187 for details).

7.3.1. WHAT IS THE LIBRARIES' MARKET ORIENTATION?

Market orientation is largely about knowledge management, acquiring information about customers and competitors, and sharing it with others within the same firm (Slater, Mohr and Sengupta, 2010). Zebal (2003) explains that the antecedents of good market orientation include senior management characteristics, the suggestion being that in order to attain market

orientation, the chief executive officers (CEOs) needs to provide clear signals on how this is to be achieved.

According to Schlosser (2004), market orientation fosters an awareness of the external market, which requires responses at different and appropriate levels of the firm. Therefore, the value of market orientation lies in its ability to prompt the reconfiguration of resources. The value lies in the processing, use, and value of this market information: 1) In the information, or the recognition by employees of the information's value to the firm, 2) In the resulting information sharing and inter-functional coordination and finally, 3) In the employee/employer's use of the information to shape reactions. The value of market orientation as a dynamic capability rests in the combined effects of customer orientation and information sharing. The current study established that the degree of market orientation was moderate. While there was some level of awareness among the librarians that there is a need to market the resources and also to reach out to the customers, this was not fully harnessed. It is intriguing why such an important activity was not given a lot of attention considering its relative importance. The library market share, although not large, is under stiff competition from other providers. It is because of this that the libraries need to adopt a friendly market approach.

7.3.1.1 WHAT MARKETING TACTICS ARE LIBRARIES ENGAGING IN TO REACH OUT TO THEIR CUSTOMERS?

Based on the market orientation responses, as summarised in Table 5.8, page176, it was found that the different libraries periodically engaged in market surveys as a means of establishing their customer needs, as evidenced by 57% of the respondents i.e. librarians. Of concern here is the large number of libraries that didn't engage in any marketing tactics (43%). Scanning the market environment is highly critical for the operation of any firm, as it is possible to detect any changes in user trends. It also helps in selecting and using the right marketing tactics to reach an intended market segment. 47% of the libraries engaged in the periodic review of the possible effects of changes in the library service environment on customers by factors such as technology, access to the library, and hours of service. Only 10% of the respondents indicated that they did not carry out such reviews. Market scanning was important as it enabled the libraries to assess the impact that these factors had on service delivery. But again, it is worrying that less than half engaged in regular market surveys. The reason they may not be engaging in any market survey could be partly due to past academic 'tradition', the perception that the

university community will still visit the library anyway, as libraries have long enjoyed a monopoly status with no competition from other quarters as information providers. Owing to this past tradition, the library as an institution and the librarians in particular have not put in place any serious/credible marketing activities to woo more customers into using their resources. The librarians may also be shy about engaging in marketing due to the sheer lack of skills to do it.

With regard to benchmarking with similar institutions (such as other information providers like universities, public libraries, etc.), it was found that more than half of the libraries did not benchmark at all. While supporting benchmarking, Hong *et al.* (2012) emphasises its importance in that it aids in building competitive capabilities in terms of technology, quality, and service delivery for use against competitors and also allowing firms to adopt the best practices of other firms. Academic libraries thus could adopt benchmarking for the purpose of improving operational processes in terms of organisational capabilities. It is therefore a matter of concern as to why this important activity is ignored or not undertaken in most of the libraries. As illustrated by Table 5.8, it was established that only 41% did benchmark with other similar organisations, meaning that the majority of them operated in darkness, not knowing what their peers were doing. This may again be explained in the light of past traditions in universities, as with no competition, there was no need to benchmark. There is also the illusion that universities, as the highest centres of education, are also the best at everything they do. Through benchmarking, the institution would be better placed to identify its own mistakes with a view to adopting best practices in use elsewhere.

The current study determined that there were efforts to establish the customer needs through initiatives such as regular joint staff-customer meetings, free employee-customer interaction sessions, and direct engagement with the customers in order to learn how to satisfy their information needs. This is according to 62% of the respondents. However, it is of concern that about 40% of the respondents did not endeavour to determine what their customer needs were. 77% of the respondents (23% of the respondents were uncertain) indicated that there were free employee-customer interaction sessions and that there was direct engagement with the customers in order to learn how to meet their information needs. Customer surveys are crucial, as they lead to the informed provision of services. It is also of concern that although there were efforts to determine the customer needs, these failed to yield positive results, as there were still pockets of customer dissatisfaction with the services rendered. Ibeun (2017) stresses that through regular surveys and intervals on different library usage issues serves as an invaluable

guide to the library management in determining what they should be aware of and how the resources could be made available and accessible.

As a way of gauging the quality of their services, the libraries conducted the process control evaluation of their service systems, but only 47% of the respondents engaged in this. It would therefore be interesting to establish why over 50% never conducted any such evaluations on the quality of their processes or service systems. With regard to marketing, Singh (2009) points out that marketing is basically an attitude towards customer satisfaction. In his Finnish study involving thirty-three libraries, he also noted the lack of marketing knowledge among the library professionals, citing that the use of marketing techniques will put an extra burden on existing library and information services. Based on his findings, Singh (2009) further recommends the adoption of a positive marketing attitude by the library's leadership. This helps to inculcate market-oriented behaviour in the library.

The findings of the current study concur, in that the level of library marketing was found to be low, possibly due to the same reasons noted in Singh's study. It can be concluded that the limited marketing of library resources by the librarians in Kenyan university libraries has led to a poor library brand, and poor brands do not sell. They need to embark on creating a good brand name and which is easily pronounceable around the world. Thus, Hakala, Lätti and Sandberg (2011), rightly noted that competitiveness on a global scene is influenced by the organisations' brand heritage. Thus there is need to determine how markets differ culturally, and construct a marketing strategy accordingly. Similarly, both the brands and cultural heritage are influenced by the target country and need to be interlinked. Steinlein (2014) stressed that organizational culture is closely linked to employee commitment and performance, making it pivotal for consumers' evaluation of the brand identity and further observed that the employees' ability to deliver the content meeting the brand promises is what in the long run creates image and reputation.

Regarding the question as to whether the libraries were able detect changes in the client usage, 36% of the respondents agreed that they were able to detect any changes in the information industry (like competition, technology). This implies that the libraries were not well informed about the happenings outside their environments. This finding does compare with the earlier observation that there was very little benchmarking with similar institutions (more than half of the libraries did not benchmark at all).

This finding is further corroborated by the revelation that only 45% of the internal respondents agreed with the statement that the libraries are able to slowly detect any changes in the client usage preferences/habits. This is an indicator to a lack of user profiles, implying that the librarians are not well conversant with the needs of their customers, nor do they profile their information needs. It also implies that the staff did not quite know their customers well. This could also mean that the customer/staff sessions held were not as useful as expected as they did not reveal much of what was anticipated, that is getting to know the needs of the different customers. This is coupled with the limited market research on their competitors, such as other information brokers/providers (only 41% agreed that there was market research concerning the competitors, 27% of the respondents were uncertain, and 32% of the respondents disagreed that there was market research). The lack of adequate market research implies that the less required resources may be the ones being supplied. To expound on this, Ibeun (2017) advocates for the promotion of information sources which in turn accelerates their usage. Readers are prone to using information sources that require least effort to access. The principle of library services centres on information exploitation. This principle emphasises maximum utilisation of library resources and services and for a library worth its salt, the resources and services it renders must strive to meet and largely satisfy the needs of its users.

The librarians may not be engaging in market surveys partly because of their heavy workload, where it was also noted that they suffer work-related stress and fatigue. As an additional work responsibility, market research would easily be relegated to the periphery. In support of market research, Al-Shatanawi, Osman and Ab Halim (2014) claim it helps you as a firm to know your customers, competitors, market, and the industry trends. High-quality research reveals details about current customers and enables targeting new customers. Identifying and meeting customer needs was emphasised by Ramaswam (1996) as cited by Botha (2010), representing the voice of the customer, noting that methods such as listed below may be used to gather information on customer needs:

- Surveys and market research.
- Group interviews.
- One-on-one interviews.
- Observation.

It is these customer needs that the libraries ought to strive to meet fully.

From the study's findings, it is imperative that the libraries' managements should be aware of the current customer needs, and industry trends in general. These may vary from one library to

another, from one user group to another, as well as from time to time. Therefore, carrying out regular surveys on the customer needs and at regular intervals is crucial. Al-Shatanawi, Osman and Ab Halim (2014) note that timely gathered market and customer information reduces business risks and helps identify spot sales opportunities. This would serve as an invaluable guide in charting the future trends of the library growth.

The reason for dissatisfaction with the current library services may be linked to the failure to detect changes in client usage preferences/habits, poor library market orientation, lack of the required resources, and the congestion in some of the facilities, as can be seen in Appendix 5:5, for instance. These factors may be partly contributing to the dissatisfaction noted earlier and the users' migration to other information providers (see Table 5.3). The regression analysis in section 7.2.4 amplifies this finding and the high level of dissatisfaction with services offered acted as a trigger to exit and look for service elsewhere.

Table 5.1, page 152 shows the usage characteristics of the key (external) informants. It is evident that the majority of the users were undergraduates. This raises concerns as to why postgraduate users (only 14 %) were not visiting the library as regularly as would be expected. It is also noteworthy that there was no significant gender variation regarding the user population. With regard to nationality, 92% of the female external respondents and 8% female external respondents were Kenyan and non-Kenyans respectively (see Table 5.1). For the internal customers 100% of the library staff are of Kenyan nationality, while in terms of gender there were 43% male respondents and 57% female respondents (see Table 5.5

In this study, 55% of the external respondents were male, while 45% were female (N=714). The consideration of gender was an important attribute as it helped to ensure that the views of either gender were not suppressed. Another finding on library usage with respect to gender was significant, as both were good users. From Table 5.1, 393 (55%) of the external respondents were males while 321(45%) were females. This usage pattern, however, has implications for the available resources, suggesting the need to have a gender balanced collection so as to adequately cater for such informational needs as they arise. The regression analysis in section 7.2.4 amplifies this finding, and the gender (at 0.001) aspect cannot be wholly ignored.

This compares well with Ozoemelem's (2009) study on the postgraduates' usage of the library electronic resources in Nigeria: both men and women students were found to have a high frequency use of library resources. Clark and Hawkins (2011), also in their U.K study, indicate that both male and female users were equal in library usage.

However, this finding on gender equality is in contrast to a similar study on university library usage in which Oyesiku and Oduwole (2004); Daramola (2013) established that male students used the library more frequently than their female counterparts. The frequent visits of the men to the library might result from their quest for more information for career development and having less work at family level compared to women.

Also striking is that these user groups were of average education, having at least gone through secondary level and some even through college. Table 5.1 provides a summary of the library users' level of education where it is evident that they were relatively well educated, with the majority (291[74%] of the males and 218 [68%] of the females) having attained a degree. Furthermore, as shown in Table 5.1, it was established that the library users were literate; over 50% had been schooled at least up to the diploma level of education. This points to the need to have information resources that will appeal to the intellect of the said customers in terms of content. It is also indicative of the fact that as these users come to the library, they are aware of what they need. However, this raises the question as to why library usage was not optimal, with some indicating that they never used the library at all (See Table 5.1, page 152). The regression analysis in section 7.2.4 (that level of education was not as significant-0.66) presents an interesting finding that customer need not to be highly educated so as to be able to gauge service quality standards- this is more of an experiential rather than a learned process.

This implies that the libraries ought to be conscious of the quality of information resources in terms of content. Another striking finding is that university staff avoided the library, with only 14 (3%) frequenting the library to make use of the available information resources. These are issues to consider when developing library marketing tactics; bringing these groups on board is of vital importance. This suggests the need for segmented marketing, addressing the concerns of specific user groups.

In conclusion, it can be stated that the service providers need to know and understand their customers well in order to offer excellent services. The findings also made it evident that the librarians do not seem to be taking library marketing as a core task, hence the apathy. In other words, a more focused approach towards library information resource marketing is lacking. There is a need for the academic libraries to be more market oriented in their approach. Market orientation could help the libraries remain focused on their strategic objectives in a dynamic environment (Narver and Slater, 2004). However, Bruhn and Hesselroth (2018), citing (Jaworski and Kohli, 1993) note that market orientation could be affected by the environment,

implying that businesses which operate in more competitive environments may also need a higher degree of market orientation. Tuominen, Rajala and Möller (2004) note that market orientation consists of two market strategies; mainly market driven and market driving strategies. It is these strategies that libraries need to adopt to remain afloat in a highly volatile environment.

Academic libraries need a change of attitude, adopting a business approach as opposed to the current passive approach where they seem to assume/have the perception that those customers will always come anyway. There is a need for a more concerted and proactive approach in the activities/initiatives on the part of the library to woo more users to the library. This would possibly be the best way to justify continued investment in the library. Otherwise, heavy investment in information equipment/resources (which also go stale very fast) that are not optimally utilised does not make economic sense. The usage must justify the huge expenditure made.

Foldspang (2014) has hinted that employees may not feel obliged to develop strong customer relationships hence act productively if they perceive that the company does not fulfill its obligations. This stresses the need for the parent institutions to have a clear plan for the development of the academic libraries to enable them to perform optimally to the satisfaction of their clientele. Garzaniti, Pearce and Stanton (2011) emphasize on good communication skills and customers' relations. This may include investment in library buildings, ensuring adequate stock, and setting up good infrastructure. Zebal (2003), in his study on market orientation, opined that without a clear signal from top management regarding the importance of being responsive to customer needs, market-orientation as a goal may not be realised. The top management must play a facilitative role through appropriate communication besides encouraging and enhancing contributions from the employees.

7.3.2 LIBRARY COMMUNICATION

Kelvin-Iloafu (2016) observes that effective communication is the "lifeblood" of organisations, influencing them in achieving the organisational strategic goals. However, ineffective communication in an organisation results in uncertainty, apprehension and dissatisfaction, leading to poor productivity. Thus managers need to communicate effectively with employees and the customers, influencing them to make purchasing decisions much faster, and impacting on the choice of service firms for the customers who are not brand loyal. The customers need to see a friend in the service provider; one who can empathise. Expounding further on this, St

Clair (1993:3) adapted a working definition of customer service for information services: “Good customer relations [are] a continuing, mutually satisfying contract between the information service organisation and the users”. This relationship between the service provider and users of service builds on a strong understanding of customer expectations, wants and needs. Dimension Data (2019) in support, note that customer experiences help determine the quality of the service. In their 2019 Global customer experience benchmark report, they assert that customer experience is the perception that customers have of a brand throughout their journey with an organisation and that many executives recognise it as a competitive differentiator, thus adding up to one holistic customer experience.

From the simple linear regression (see section 7.2.2.2), it was established that market surveys, with a p-value of 0.029 (below that of alpha value 0.050, had significant influence on service quality at the library. Communication was found to significantly influence satisfaction with service quality as the p-value was 0.012. This finding is important since communication is an integral element of market orientation.

7.3.2.1 WHAT ARE THE COMMUNICATION STRATEGIES IN PLACE?

Good communication strategies help to propel an organisation to higher levels of performance. It is important to identify the content and approaches that can be used to reach the target clientele. From the findings, it was established that there was a lot of informal inter-staff communication, which sometimes involved or included the customers. These interactions brought customer complaints to the fore. This happened as they discussed their challenges in meeting the needs of their clients, sought to exchange views on how best to reach out, and what informational resources would best meet the informational requests on the table.

Key findings were:

- Among the members of staff, most of the informal discussions centered on service improvement to their clients as a whole.
- While there were regular joint meetings between staff and the library management to discuss future information market trends, as confirmed by 79% of the internal respondents, there were very few meetings focusing on areas such as new service development/customer complaints in the library, as shown in the results (only 30% of the respondents agreed that there were meetings focusing on new service development/ customer complaints). This suggests that the important task of brainstorming and planning ahead in the library to satisfy the customers was left to

chance. As a result, it may be possible to have long-standing and unresolved customer service related issues. Al Mutairi (2015) has argued that it is healthy to encourage brainstorming sessions in an organisation, as they enable the participants to deliver more value by fostering more innovation. Brainstorming also provides a free and open environment that encourages everyone to participate.

- From this finding it is recommended that these sessions need to be encouraged as they provide good opportunities for improving service delivery. This is enhanced via the warm interaction between the library and its customers. There is also the need to encourage the free flow of information/ideas amongst the different levels of staff, and especially with regard to the vertical communication within the department, as this seemed to be quite limited, especially with regard to new service developments.
- Joint forums for the library staff with its management and the top university management, where issues pertaining to customer needs/interests are discussed, were limited, as only 49% of the librarians indicated that this happens. It is through such forums that library information needs could possibly be well articulated. The library managers could also lobby for other library issues in such forums.
- In seven of the institutions (i.e.70%, see Table 6.6, page 252 on the challenges faced by libraries), it was established that the top university management was found to be somewhat biased towards library issues, not really taking a strong position with regard to solving the library's challenges and/or needs, nor being a defender of the status of the library in the university. This view was corroborated by the interview responses (see Section 6.3.9); the librarians interviewed confessed that there was a lack of goodwill from the university's top management, with the top management showing a lot of apathy towards the libraries. There were confessions by a number of the respondents that "libraries were viewed as money guzzlers". This greatly affected the library's standing in the university, owing to the vast ramifications that unfolded, such as delayed approval for information resources and/or arbitrary budget cuts. It is this lack of goodwill from the parent organization that carries a lot of weight—the fact that the service offered is not really appreciated. This explains the negative responses to the statement that joint meetings with the top university management were really productive. However, in the institutions where

there was support by the parent bodies, the libraries were found to be performing optimally.

By communicating correct and timely information to all the library stakeholders, customer needs would be addressed speedily, and customer satisfaction would therefore be enhanced. However, it was established that the regular sharing of information on client satisfaction with all the employees was not satisfactorily done, as only 45% of the internal respondents agreed that this happened, while 29% of the respondents disagreed with this assertion.

In conclusion, therefore, it is important for all service providers to have accurate information on their clients, as this would help with channelling the best possible services to them. Improving the communication channels therefore is not a choice but a necessity for optimal customer satisfaction. This is in agreement with Mugwisi's (2012) assertion that the correct communication structures, methodologies and tools result in the proper adoption of information by the target groups.

7.3.3 LIBRARY SERVICE INNOVATION

Schumpeter's (1934) classic definition of innovation described it as a "new combination" of existing knowledge and resources. According to Trott (2012), innovation is the application of knowledge, which lies at the heart of innovation. Although innovation is often associated with physical change(s) to a product, Trott (2012) argues that service innovation may also be the change(s) in service delivery resulting from new activities differently performed by individuals. Trott (2012), citing Christopher Freeman's (1982) famous study on the economics of innovation, "not to innovate is to die", further argues that corporations must be able to adapt and evolve if they wish to survive, and that innovation is the engine of growth. Verma *et al.* (2008); Fagerberg (2009) opine that service innovation can refer to newness in the delivery of a benefit, the service concept, the business model, operations, technology, employee behaviour, or the customer experience. According to Randhawa and Scerri (2015), it also encompasses newness in other dimensions, such as delivery systems, client interfaces, and the nature of the buyer-seller relationship. Radu, (2016) is emphatic that innovation requires investment both material and immaterial which proved to be very important for the growth and competitiveness of the company, because if it is not maintained in a dynamic process, the intangible asset will depreciate. Further, Evgeniya, Dancho, Sevdalina (2019) observation that high technology investments today are becoming a crucial factor for the development of national economies is

vaid. From this observation it is clear that, innovations will continue to be a driver for economic and social progress and it is by broadening their scope and raising the innovation activity which will bring about technological, process and product renovation and new service approaches in academic libraries. Innovations, though, are mostly associated with manufacturing, distribution and communications, but there is hardly any sphere that has not been affected by them. Academic libraries are no exception, and as noted earlier there is a dire need to focus on this so as to remain competitive in a highly technological world.

In summary, innovation is the cumulative building on existing knowledge, innovations and past inventions. This points to the need for libraries to apply knowledge and do things differently as they deliver services. Table 5.10, page 187 provides a summary of the findings on service innovation.

7.3.3.1 INNOVATIONS THE LIBRARIES USE TO IMPROVE SERVICE DELIVERY

It was established that market segmentation techniques are applied guiding in both the product and service development, with 50% of the internal respondents agreeing that this was taking place. From the interviews (see Chapter 6 Section 6.3), it was noted that there was a lot of innovation on the part of the libraries as they tried to reach out and extend library services to previously unreachable users. This category consists of non-conventional library users, mainly part-time and distance learners who are mostly off campus. Owing to geographical constraints, these users mainly accessed the library virtually, to identify and download documents from the library for self-study. When executing the needs of the different categories of users, for instance the organisation of special services targeting PWDs (see Section 6.2.12 & 13) efforts are made to innovate. But there is much more that needs to be done with regard to service to the PWDs. Adjei and Adoh-Mensah(2015) have observed that their access to and use of libraries is usually hampered by a host of challenges such as difficulties in locating shelves for informational materials, in contacting library staff for assistance, unavailability of equipment for use by them, lack of library informational materials, library buildings being disability unfriendly(lack of ramps for wheelchairs, lifts and the staircases to these libraries being too steep, hampering access and the utilization of the library),the surroundings of the library, the entrance, and restrooms. All these factors in one way or another negatively affecting their library use.

The libraries engaged in periodic reviews of their service offerings to ensure that they were meeting their customers' needs (81% of the respondents agreed that this was happening

periodically, see Table 5.10, page 187). This was supported in the observations (see Section 6.2), where it was noted that the libraries frequently kept changing the loan periods of some of the information resources depending on the demand and on the academic calendar. Concerning the latter, it was noted that in certain seasons, such as during the exam period, the demand for certain items would be abnormally high. Therefore, the loan periods of such items were adjusted from long to short loan periods in order to enable as many users as possible to gain access to these items. This practice is indicative of an initiative to respond to changing customer needs and a desire by the service provider to satisfy the information requests better.

Another area of service innovation that was observed was with regard to the application of modern technology (Internet, mobile telephony) and engagement with customers to deliver superior services to other customers. From the interviews (see Section 6.3) it was noted that some of the libraries were using students to reach out to other students. A notable case is that of ACL8 where technology savvy students/users were invited to participate in training sessions as a club, i.e. the Knowledge Ambassadors Club, with the university librarian as their patron.

Training mainly focused on how to access information from the library's E- resources portals.

Upon training and attaining some degree of proficiency, the trained and satisfied customers (students) were charged with the responsibility of reaching out to their fellow students and training them on the applicability of technology to tap into the vast informational materials that were available in the academic library. In this case, the customers were trained on using the new technological approaches and in turn engaged to market the library services and thereby enhance service delivery to other clients. It is thus evident that through training on the right application of technology, library customers could get access to the required information speedily, as seen in page 442, Appendix 5:38, 47, 42, 43, 44 and 47: it is possible for the customers to be trained into being avid users of the library information resources via technology. Training is critical as it helps in improving document accessibility.

Technology has also been used to facilitate information access, for instance via the E-resources mode, where users are able to read and download lots of useful informational material on a wide range of subjects. These resources are jointly sourced, for (see Section 7.4.3 and the Interview findings for a detailed discussion) ease of cost. These resources both supplement and also complement the already available print materials, are more current, and are easily accessed and concurrently used by multiple users. Through the adoption and integration of technology there has also been the skills transfer, and users are trained to interact with technology. From

the observations made it was found that technology has also been used in other service areas such as:

- data capture – used to capture the customers’ details for registration purposes and the same used for clearance,
- in the capturing of the informational material’s bibliographic details,
- the lending and receiving of loaned material,
- Security and access control
- in the storage of information
- restoration, preservation and archiving of information documents
- information dissemination and publicity, like via social media platforms
- Training and information literacy sessions.

Technology use, though good, has been met with several challenges (these have been highlighted elsewhere in the study). Makori (2012) emphasizes the need to invest in the modern technologies.

Service innovation was also noted and observed in the use of flexible and accommodative approaches (see Section 6.2.7 and 13), for instance when dealing with physically challenged library users. In such instances, new approaches to serve this category of users were employed, notwithstanding the general unpreparedness for dealing with this category of users in many of the libraries.

The Library and Documentation Division (L&DD) of the Indira Gandhi National Open University (IGNOU) gives a suitable illustration of innovation in service delivery in the midst of stiff competition, via developing suitable resources for different disciplines to meet the diverse informational queries of over twenty million clients. According to Chandhok and Babbar (2011), the Library and Documentation Division at IGNOU strives to reach out to the previously unreachable groups through different strategies of information delivery. It achieves this by providing an avenue of accessing all digital resources from the leading publishers and vendors’ world, to its distance education library stakeholders from anywhere at any time, using advanced technology to keep the quality of education on a par with the conventional education system (Chandhok and Babbar, 2011). Dlamini (2004) also suggests that in academic libraries a good customer care policy needs to be in place, in addition to having distinct customer care units/persons to specifically address customer concerns.

The knowledge of the importance of good marketing was noted, at least in the responses to the statement, '*Although they may develop a good library marketing plan they might not be able to implement it in a timely manner*'. 56% of the respondents disagreed with this statement, and 27% of the respondents replied in the affirmative (see Table 5.10). There is a need to investigate why this was the case. Although the librarians may be very much aware of the threats to quality library service delivery, there were other factors hindering any quick action to help counter these threats. These factors could possibly be managerial in nature within the libraries or institutions and require immediate attention. Salman (2015) agrees with this assertion and observes that some of the problems facing libraries appear to be emanating from within, as a combination of inefficient administration coupled with a lack of self-confidence among librarians. All this serves to cripple library service. It is evident that there is a need for innovation in managing modern day academic libraries.

This is further amplified by the finding from the internal respondents that there was a lapse in the communication of new service innovations by the library management down to the staff. From Table 5.9, only 32% of the respondents agreed that the top-down communication was effective, 57% disagreed, while 11% were uncertain about it. With regard to the sharing of crucial information pertaining to innovation, 32% of the respondents agreed that when the library managers came across about new innovations, they were not quick to inform employees. 57% of the respondents disagreed with this assertion, and 11% were uncertain. This points to the skewed flow of information from the top down to the staff, and suggests that the library managers need to be efficient at sharing information.

The implication of the frontline staff not getting correct information in a timely manner is likely to lead to customer dissatisfaction. This finding is further amplified by the responses to the statement that there was limited communication between the library managers and the library staff regarding new service initiatives and customer complaints. 30% of the respondents agreed with this, 21% were uncertain, and 49% disagreed that this was the case. The high Standard Deviation value of 'greater than 1' among the responses was an indicator of the high variability in the management and communication approaches of the library managers and/or the nature of the existing staff/management relationships. This suggests that different management styles were being used in the respective libraries. In some cases, the management chose to be free and open with information regarding any new developments or concerns raised by the customers, but in others this free flow of information was constricted such that the staff only

got information in drips and drabs. This, of course, implies that the service staff is not able to quickly tailor their service products matching them to the customer requirements, resulting in some level of dissatisfaction. As a consequence, the libraries need to improve their communication channels with their clients when the new service innovations are made known to them.

On the need to improve the horizontal communication systems in organisations, Mangi *et al.*'s (2014) study on emotional exhaustion and turnover intentions and their influence on organisational commitment amongst the teaching staff of the universities suggests that the management of the universities should create clear and consistent communication channels with the faculty, and aim to enhance the organisational culture. This would help to improve the engagement and commitment of the staff to the organisation. Good (inter-, intra-) communication can help to enhance this organisational commitment, thereby helping to reduce staff burnout. Kaur and Singh (2010) have also stressed that feedback is a core component of customer service cycle; customers too like knowing that their views regarding the service metted out are being appreciated, and that the services are well managed and their best interests at heart. The authors also note that customer feedback is not synomous with complaints, but also focuses on suggestions and comments of appreciation from the customers (Kaur and Singh, 2010). This form of feedback is equally important to the library management for future planning. Of importance is the ability to communicate in an effortless manner and in a way that promotes further and continued use of the library by customers.

7.3.3.1.1 RESPONSE TO CUSTOMER DISSATISFACTION

The responses (see Table 5.10, page 187) revealed a balance between the level of technology adoption and user needs, with 34% of the respondents agreeing, 32% disagreeing, and 34% uncertain with regard to the statement that, '*The library service business plans are guided more by technological advances than user needs*'. This is important to avoid heavy technological investment that does meet the user needs. There are delays, however, when it comes to the implementation of new service strategies and especially on how to respond to competitors' new service and technology innovations, as only 45% of the respondents agreed that they would launch a response immediately. With this, it is evident that competitor threat remains a major challenge as competition is inevitable.

Earlier, it was noted that the library managers were slow in sharing important information about new innovations with the employees, as indicated by 32% of the respondents who agreed that this happens. Technology is an enabler and would aid the libraries in serving their users more efficiently. On the basis of the findings, evidence of technology being applied to solve some of the challenges encountered. There is, however, the challenge of how to apply the technology to solve service delivery challenges and thereby enable the library to compete against similar service providers. Malhan (2006) observed that educational institutions globally are under threat, forcing them to compete like business enterprises through, for example, the adoption of more friendly tactics and approaches.

From the foregoing every aspect of the university in general but more particularly of the library and information services is in a transition. In this study, it was found that when the library customers would like the library to alter or improve a program/service routine, concerted efforts were put in place to address this. This is evidenced by 77% of the librarian respondents who agreed that this was happening, with 10% disagreeing (Table 5.10). This suggests that the librarians have realised that they need to be more flexible and accommodative and have re-aligned themselves in order to deal adequately with customers' queries. This agrees with the responses to the statement, *'What happens when it was established from the library that customers are unhappy with the quality of service rendered?'* 81% of the respondents agreed that action is taken speedily and the corrective action(s) are instituted immediately.

However, the respondents also indicated that there is a tendency to ignore changes in customers' needs. 17% of the librarian respondents pointed out that for various reasons they tended to ignore changes in the customers' service needs. While this may be seen as inaction on the part of the libraries, it may also be due to the constraints under which the staff are working, such as a growing user population in the midst of dwindling resources, and not necessarily due to ignorance. But it would be prudent for the library to strive towards meeting all customers' needs.

From both the interviews and the observations, it was established that the libraries were engaging in various innovative approaches to deal with customer complaints, including the employment of different social media platforms to boost communication; responding to the customer complaints in the complaints/compliments' books available in the libraries; use of e-

mails; addressing questions about the library on the library's webpages in a more general manner through Frequently Asked Questions (FAQs); and addressing most of the concerns pertaining to access, location and the organisation of the available resources and the library itself. According to the Customer–Service Benchmark Global Report (2017), quick response time is one of the metrics of good customer service, but customers also prefer quality response rather than just a speedy response.

Further, 55% of the internal respondents agreed, 28% were uncertain, and 17% disagreed with the assertion that the library was really innovative, by creating wholly new products and services for its various clients. This is crucial as it is linked to the existence of different markets depending on the information needs of the library clientele who, as noted earlier, are divided according to gender, age and education levels. It was noted that there were more undergraduates, 568 (80%); there was a small number of postgraduates, which stood at 129 (18%) while the overall category of staff as users was approximately 17 (2%). This amplifies the need to have specific and tailor-made products for specific groups (see Table 5.1, page 152) i.e. staff, undergraduates and post-graduates.

Toluwani and Oluwadamilola (2017:126) argue that it is crucial for the library users to be enlightened of what resources are available and accessible. Ademodi (2015) suggests that the libraries need to enhance their promotion and marketing campaigns of library resources, while Toluwani and Oluwadamilola (2017) stress that the faculty members need to be made aware of what they stand to gain by frequently using the available library resources.

In summary therefore, there is a need to have all the needs/concerns of all the library customers addressed, and this performed in an amicable manner, cognisance of demographic aspects such as gender, age, education, background, etc. Stone and Collins' (2013) study at the University of Huddersfield, U.K., established that parameters such as age, gender, ethnicity and country of origin have an influence on undergraduate library utilization. In this study, the inability to meet information needs may partly explain the low patronage of academic libraries by both the postgraduate students and the staff, as it appears that the bulk of resources are directed to serving undergraduate students.

Although respondents earlier on indicated that corrective measures are speedily taken whenever there is a service complaint, there could possibly be a mismatch between the corrective actions taken and their suitability for dealing with customer complaints. This is going by the responses, where it was noted that some of the customer issues were ignored. It is

important to ensure that no customer complaint is ignored, as it represents an unsatisfied customer and an overlooked need. Service is so central to the libraries; likewise, library customers too are so central to the libraries service, it is necessary that libraries adopt and embrace superior standards of customer service (Hong and Mia, 2007).

7.4 LIBRARY SERVICE RANGE/ PROVISION AND DELIVERY APPROACHES (Objective 3)

The resources and services that are available play an important role in the kind of services that can be provided. They also influence and determine the calibre of customers. Ibeun (2017) and Adomi (2008 in concurrence observe that library resources aid the library in realizing its set objective. In so doing it has to continually and zealously collect resources with the sole purpose of satisfying the customers' information needs. These resources can be broadly grouped into two categories: print and non-print. The print encompasses the traditional texts while the non-print (referred to as electronic or non book materials) will require a vast range of equipment to facilitate their storage, retrieval, and usage. All these are essential if the academic libraries are to remain competitive; they have to aspire to provide a diverse range of resources to a wide range of customers. Jharotia (2018) challenged libraries to be innovative and introduce new services besides being trendsetters in the adoption and implementation of innovative technologies and services in libraries with a view of reaching a wider clientele. This, however, is a big challenge, especially in a resource-constrained environment. Similarly, today's library customers have become increasingly proficient consumers of information and are demanding much more of the services/products that libraries provide than the users of yesteryears. Ifijeh (2011) asserted that the academic productivity of any student depends on his access to quality information resources for learning. The central place of library in providing these resources cannot be overemphasized. Equally important is the approach through the service is provided. Table 5.11, page 193 gives a summary of the findings.

From the simple linear regression in section 7.2.2.2, it was established that, Service/product range also significantly influenced service quality as the p-value was 0.01. The implication of this academic libraries being that they must strive to both a wide range of products and services to their customers but also infuse superior delivery approaches.

7.4.1 TYPES OF INFORMATION RESOURCES/SERVICES AVAILABLE IN THE LIBRARIES

The study attempted to establish what information resources were readily available in the academic libraries. Tables 5.2 and 5.6, on the library and services by external users and librarians pages 152 and 165 respectively, provide a detailed conclusion of the findings, from the customers' and the librarians' points of view.

The information resources that were available in most of the libraries include:

- Books
- Non-book materials
- Computers
- E-resources
- Periodicals
- Audio-visual materials

This concurs with Saleh and Lasis' (2011) findings that monographs, particularly textbooks, comprise most of the library's resources. Yusuf and Iwu (2011) note that users visit the library for different reasons, such as to do photocopy, study for examinations, read journals, and use the available online resources.

From this study services rendered in the libraries include:

- Reading areas
- Internet services
- Interlibrary
- Binding
- Printing
- Photocopying
- Service to PWDs

Contradictions were, however, noted in the librarians and customers' responses. For instance, the users contradicted the librarians' claims that interlibrary, printing, binding and scanning services, and audio-visual materials existed in the libraries. The users rated them poorly, implying that they were not that readily available or accessible. This suggests that either the services did not exist, or more likely that the services may have existed, but the customers were not aware of them at all, possibly due to the lack of good marketing and publicity of the library services and resources on offer. According to Eiriemiokhale and Ibeun (2017), access to

information that provides and promotes quality academic presentations besides enriching the students' intellectual, aesthetic, cultural and emotional growth. Jamil, Tariq and Jamil (2013) argues that information resources aid in planning and implementation of learning suitable programs that will equip students with the requisite skills to succeed in a constantly changing social and economic environment. As such these available resources must be well marketed. In support of this statement, Kumar, Singh and Yadave (2011) agree that "access to the right information is a difficult task because information is abundant, but users do not know whether it is available and where to locate it". Thus, librarians have a duty and must ensure maximum utilisation of the few resources the library acquires to justify the cost of acquiring them.

It is also noted that the different academic libraries strived to provide suitable areas for private study to all the customers. Some, however, went a step further to provide reading cubicles and separate reading areas and instruction rooms for special groups such as PWDs, post-graduate students, and faculty staff.

Regarding children's services, it was established that they were not a common feature in the academic libraries. In fact, it appears that they were not prioritised at all. This is important considering that children's services could be viewed as an outreach activity, by the university libraries, that targets young minds within the campus neighbourhoods in a bid to improve their reading and learning skills. Salman (2015) made a similar finding in Nigeria: that although children's services were available in the public libraries, they were quite inadequate. This state of affairs is in sharp contrast to Celano and Neuman's (2001:4) views that children's services are critical in the promotion of literacy development at an early age. This view is also supported by IFLA/UNESCO (1994), which emphasises that this feature in libraries inculcates and strengthens reading habits in young children early, making them avid information users in later years. The academic libraries in this case have largely focused on meeting the needs of its senior scholars, completely ignoring the young minds in high school and middle level colleges. This is a service that needs to be incorporated in Kenya's academic libraries. The academic libraries, especially at the universities, need to incorporate sections where children can read. There are many resident university staff members whose children flock into the libraries in search of both good reading material and also a serene, quiet study environment.

From the interviews, it was also established that the library staff offered guidance/study counselling to the library users on good library use, conducting research, and reading. This also included training on information techniques, such as information search and retrieval, e-publishing, and the use of e-resources.

7.4.1.1 LIBRARY RESOURCES' GROWTH

It was found that the libraries placed emphasis on service growth by developing new ideas, innovations, new information resources and advanced training, a view that was supported by 93% of the librarian respondents (See Table 5.11, page 193, on the distribution of the librarians' responses on library service range/provision responses). This was supported by the interview findings, where it was noted that the libraries were also acquiring lots of information materials in e-format and braille, in addition to CDs and DVDs, and of course obtaining different media to facilitate their use. Indeed, in this respect it was noted that all the libraries had made subscriptions to a wide variety of e-resources. Hooley, Piercy and Nicouland (2008) point out that those successful innovators acquire as many of the required information resources as possible to enable them to forecast market size and determine potential demand for their new product(s).

As libraries keep introducing new services(see Table 5.11), they also introduce new procedures to aid in the management of new services. 64% of the internal respondents agreed that the library effected new procedures every now and then to aid in the management of the new services introduced, with 28% of the respondents being uncertain, and 8% disagreeing that this happens. These guidelines aid in ensuring that there is consistency in service delivery at all times and to all the customers who are seeking a service. From both the observations and interviews, it was noted that there were set guidelines such as policy documents and/or rules governing the usage of certain services or products.

Based on observation, it was noted that all the libraries had special collections, for instance reference and reserve materials, which could not be issued, but were available for use inside the library. Materials that were in high demand were lent out but only for shorter loan periods. The libraries also appeared to be incorporating new service delivery strategies into the already existing strategies, according to 68% of the librarian respondents who agreed that this was the case, 26% of the respondents who were uncertain, and 6% of the respondents who were in disagreement (see Table 5.11). This points to some level of service innovation, where new procedures or approaches to performing the same activity are introduced every now and then

or as the need arises. There is, however, the need to improve continuously on the service strategies that are currently in use.

From the interview results (see Section 6.3), it was also established that the different libraries regularly held joint meetings where issues affecting service delivery were discussed with a view to finding solutions to some of the recurring issues, for instance lack of Internet connectivity and access to e-resources. In this regard, it was noted that the libraries had organised themselves into a consortium (KLISC: Kenya Library & Information Services Consortium) through which they were able to negotiate with the publishers for better terms with regard to e-resources' acquisition and subscription. They had also established a relationship with KENET (Kenya Education Network) for better internet services.

In an effort to ensure continuity of quality services to the clientele, it was noted that the libraries were under a lot of pressure from the large numbers of customers with diverse information needs in different disciplines and levels of study (see Tables 5.1 and 5.6). There was also the suggestion that the library was under a lot of threat from external competitors. From the summary in Table 5.12, page 199, only 43% of the librarian respondents concurred with the statement that: *'Their competitors have forced them to change the range of services/ products in varying degrees'*. 36% of the librarian respondents indicated that this rarely happens, and 21% of the respondents stated 'never at all'. However, the librarians' responses to knowledge of the existence of such a threat didn't translate into any meaningful action, as less than 40% of them agreed that this forced them to change their machines or equipment, meaning that pressure was evident but with little counteraction.

7.4.1.2 LIBRARY COMPETITION AS A THREAT

The findings revealed that the libraries were under stiff competition from other information providers. It was also noted that there was rigidity by the libraries in adapting to the market needs, a factor that would need further investigation. The competition has elicited different reactions from the libraries, with some of the libraries re-positioning themselves and re-thinking their own operational strategies in order to face their competitors. Some did this by way of increasing the range of services and products on offer, while others acquired new equipment in order to provide superior services to their own customers. The libraries also admitted that in certain instances, they had to change their service delivery styles in order to

satisfy the needs of their own customers. With regard to collection development, it was noted that 55% of the librarian respondents (slightly more than half) were in agreement with the statement that, '*There has been acquisition of new information resources (i.e. latest in the market) and in the various disciplines*', with 27% who were uncertain and 18% who disagreed with the statement. This means that 45% of the librarian respondents were not quite satisfied with the libraries' collection development trends. The interview findings with the senior library management (Section 6.3.3) corroborate this, citing a variety of constraints in equipping the library to enable it to meet the diverse information needs of its customers. This is an indicator that the libraries are facing challenges with collection development.

This finding points to gaps within the service journey for the library customers, and as the Gaps theory (Parasuraman *et al.*, 1985, 1988) postulates, dissatisfaction is bound to occur as long as there are service gaps. The service process, according to Nash (1988), ought to be seamless and enjoyable (see Chapter 2, Section 2.5.2 for a detailed discussion). Salman (2015), in a Nigerian study on the provision and utilisation of library services, found that outdated and irrelevant information materials that were stacked in the library shelves discouraged library users from using the library services. This implies that in order for academic libraries to remain relevant and well patronised, it is paramount for them to acquire current and relevant material in the different disciplines and in many different formats. Tables 5.3, page 154 on the level of library customers' dissatisfaction with the delivery of services search for a new library facility, amplify this further since current customers were keen on getting new and better library facilities elsewhere, owing to the poor service experienced in their current setups. This is evidence by the 28% of users who were dissatisfied with the service and 22% users indicating that they were in the process of looking for alternative library facilities. These gaps in the form of the non-availability of current information resources act as antecedents to low library usage — they discourage further library usage, a finding consistent with Dabholkar *et al.*'s (2000) Antecedents and mediator model (Chapter 2 section 2.5.2).

In support of well-equipped academic libraries, the ACRL's (2005) library guidelines state that the library should make available diverse, authoritative and current information resources which are also supportive of its mission and the information requirements of its users. The same report notes that as information technology evolves, the library services must continually

upgrade their hardware, software and other IT resources to keep abreast with the needs and expectations of their customers.

A general observation was that the library growth (information resources and services) was not commensurate with the growth of clientele being served; the gaps are evident. The libraries, while having a huge potential market, enjoy neither 100% loyalty from their customers nor 100% market share. There are a number of factors (as discussed in section 7.5.1.3) that are contributing to this.

7.4.1.3 GAPS IN THE LIBRARY SERVICE DELIVERY

From Table 5.11, page 193, 75% of the librarian respondents agreed that *'The library strives to provide resources for changes like additional/new requirements like tables, seats, computers, books'*, while 21% of the respondents were uncertain and 4% disagreed with the statement. The resources made available here include conducive reading spaces, furniture, and the infrastructure and tools/equipment made available to customers to aid with reading, research and learning. Appendix 5:42- 47 , page 442 shows some of the suitable technological infrastructure.

Similarly, 57% of the librarian respondents were in agreement with the statement that *'The library facilities e.g. furniture, lighting system, windows, etc., are repaired in case of breakdown'*, with 30% indicating that they were uncertain, and 13% disagreeing with this statement. Likewise, on being asked whether new equipment was being introduced in the library when the current facilities broke down, 53% of the respondents agreed that it was, 26% of the librarian respondents were uncertain, and 21% of the respondents disagreed with this. From this, it is evident that only slightly more than half indicated that there is a quick response when it comes to the maintenance of broken down equipment and infrastructure. The implication here is that the libraries are struggling to deliver services with malfunctioning equipment, and both the frontline staff and the customers are therefore unable to use the available equipment.

Although it is evident that there are efforts to meet the customers' information needs through the existing collection development practices, the efforts seem to fall far short of the expectations of library customers. The market is very dynamic in terms of the clientele scope,

information needs, and the university's expanding academic disciplines and research interests.

This shortfall in the customers' expectations is no doubt having an effect on the customers' satisfaction levels, thereby discouraging them from using the library. This was evidenced by the customers who explicitly pointed out that they were dissatisfied with the library services (see Table 5.3, page154).

In their library guidelines, ACRL (2005) state that libraries ought to provide secure, comfortable, well-lit and clean spaces, and with sufficient and suitable study, research and discussion areas, which also ensure the proper utilisation of the available information materials, including electronic resources. Emphasis is also placed on the fact that when planning the physical library, undergraduate libraries should have group discussion rooms and instructional rooms. Kanguha (2016), in a Kenyan study on the Information literacy learning experiences of fourth-year psychology students in Kenyan universities, points to the shortage of facilities such as computers, teaching rooms, poor Internet connectivity, etc. to enable information literacy activities to grow, as Dadzie (2009), in a Ghanaian study on Information literacy in a higher education overview of initiatives at two Ghanaian universities, also hinted that poor technical infrastructure such Internet connectivity, low bandwidth, etc. affects service delivery, hampering information literacy activities in the academic libraries. The current study complements these previous studies which identified the lack of good and functional equipment in the libraries as a challenge, but notes that this was in varying levels in different institutions, and that repair and maintenance was a more significant challenge.

It is also crucial to note that the libraries were not thoroughly dealing with the compliments made and the complaints levelled against their respective facilities (Table 5.11). A variance in the compliments made is taken to be indicative of their appreciation of the services offered.

This is based on the responses to the statement: *'Library user/ customer compliments have dropped/stagnated in the last six months'*. From the observations only 15% of the respondents agreed with the statement: compliments had dropped in the last six months from which it may then be implied that an overwhelming 85% of the respondents were of the view that complaints were on the increase. This slow pace of responding to customer complaints is further amplified by the response on the statement: *My library seeks to adopt service strategies/programs/equipment used by competitors i.e. other information providers*; only 55% of the respondents were in agreement with this and 26% disagreed. This is a pointer to the slow

pace in taking corrective action with the intention of improving service delivery. This suggests that there is a need for the libraries to be more proactive and to also deal conclusively with any user complaints pertaining to service delivery. The library staff must also be responsive by acting in a timely manner, and informing the customers of the corrective action that was taken. Kaur and Singh (2010) propose a situation where all customer complaints are dealt with conclusively, adding that neither the customer complaints nor suggestions should be ignored. Dlamini's (2004) study on the customer care strategies in South African academic libraries suggests that the libraries need to have functional units within the department dealing with customer complaints.

The findings revealed that while technology application in the libraries is widespread, it is applied to varying degrees. It is mainly used in areas such as information search and retrieval; information processing; management of records; security; publicity; marketing activities; and the instruction of users. Some of these technologies allow the user the freedom to use them independently. The libraries may need to consider Dabholkar's (1996) Attribute and overall affect model (dealt with in detail in Chapter 2, Section 2.5.2 of the study), which incorporates various service options and features such as expected service delivery, ease of use and enjoyment. Important too, is considering the attitudes of the customers towards technology.

In general terms, the libraries were heavily used, and hence are in need of a lot of resources (see Table 5.1, page 152). The number of people served at the different libraries also confirms the pressure exerted on the available (infrastructural, human, information) resources. In terms of user type, the majority of the library user population consisted of undergraduates (80%), with a small number of post-graduates (17%) and staff (2.4%). The academic libraries' largest clientele therefore consists of undergraduates because the universities concentrate their efforts more on getting undergraduate students or handle the numbers assigned to the particular institution by the relevant government agency: undergraduate students are centrally selected and posted to the institution of their choice, but dependent on the availability of capacity among other factors. In my own view undergraduate studies are the main focus of the government with regard to university education and the growth of the post-graduates' arm is more of an initiative of the concerned department/faculty or school; at times the individual faculty staff wish to grow their research areas of interest where they may have to scout for interested persons. In short, the postgraduates will always be fewer; this however does not justify their non-use of library facilities.

The low usage rates by postgraduates is indicative of the need for further and specific interventions to determine why there is such a low usage by the two other user categories: staff and postgraduates. The libraries may need to set aside specific seating areas within the library for the two categories of users, who may find it difficult or inconvenient to visit the library only to scramble for the few seating places and resources available. It would be prudent for the libraries to acquire more information resources that suit the specialised and detailed research needs of the post-graduates and staff as opposed to the textbooks that are largely available for use by the undergraduates.

It needs to be appreciated that the information research needs at undergraduate level are not as detailed as those at the post-graduate level. Hence the need exists to specifically address the informational needs of this category of users, besides making the environment welcoming for them. Oseghale (2008) is thus emphatic that the library need to have an equilibrium between specific research and information needs and a usable collection of information materials to meet the need of the institution's academic programmes. Mason (2010), concurs that academic libraries' mission is to build and maintain good collections supportive the institution academic mandate besides facilitating access to all information resources.

This means that the academic libraries need to improve drastically on their information resources to adequately satisfy these two categories of users i.e. staff and post-graduates. The undergraduate programmes are diverse and have high enrolment rates as opposed to the post-graduates' programs. Again in the case of the latter the research focus of post-graduate studies is more intensive and detailed in specific areas as opposed to the undergraduates which may be more general/broad in approach. In this regard, Kenchakkanavar (2014); Andaleeb (2001) emphasised the need for the library to provide varied resources meeting diverse needs and interests. Similarly, Iyadave and Salawu (2006) stressed the role of the library in reaching out to its customers, seeing it as a public institution mandated to acquiring books, ensuring they are accessible to all, beside the task of converting every individual within its vicinity into vibrant library users and readers.

Other interventions could include market segmentation by these libraries when promoting and marketing their library services and resources, and also the setting aside of specific areas for use by post-graduates and staff. This was evident in the case of some of the libraries which had special research sections where research projects and theses are kept, mainly for use by post-

graduate students. This strategy was employed in a bid to woo this category to the library and to use specially housed materials. On the whole, there is a need to make the library more comfortable, appealing and attractive to post-graduate users and staff who seem to be shying away from the facility.

Several shortfalls were noted in the libraries regarding the status of the library infrastructure that customers use, including:

- Delays in the acquisition of new equipment;
- Lack of new information resources;
- Provision of additional resources;
- Lack of special facilities for use by the PWDs;
- Delays in the repair of broken-down equipment; and
- Delays in the introduction of new equipment to the library.

Based on the observations and interviews, there were discrepancies in the acquisition and provision of appropriate furniture and information resources (see also Sections 6.2 and 3). This was particularly the case with special user groups. The unpreparedness to serve the PWDs in particular needs to be addressed (see Section 6.2.7). Tables 5.2, page 152 and 5.6, page 165 are indicative of this in terms of stocking materials for the PWDs. The ACRL (2005) stresses that the library ought to meet the full spectrum of information needs of its users, from introductory study materials to highly specialised research services. The library also ought to offer services, resources, and instruction purposely modelled to educate as well as inform the users, thus equipping and enabling them to become more self-sufficient scholars and researchers.

It was noted that there were some deliberate efforts being made towards improving the library services, albeit at a very slow pace, through the acquisition of modern equipment/technology. Only 36% of the respondents strongly agreed with the statement that new equipment had been bought in the last two years, while 43% of the respondents were uncertain and 21% of the respondents disagreed.

From this finding, it is evident that there is a need to enhance the rate/pace at which library infrastructure is improved enabling the academic libraries to satisfy their customers' information needs and expectations. This should be in all areas, from collection development to infrastructural upgrade. This finding is corroborated by Kanguha (2016) who, in a study on

Kenyan university libraries, noted the dire lack of adequate facilities, especially computers; Dadzie (2009), in a study on Ghanaian universities, established that limited staffing, poor technical infrastructure, and a lack of collaboration with the faculty staff were core impediments to excellent library service delivery to their customers.

As a remedy, Dlamini's (2016) South African study on the use of ICTs reiterates their crucial role in acquiring and managing information, thus underscoring the need for libraries to fully tap into this resource (ICTs) as a way of boosting service delivery. This, however, stands in sharp contrast to the current study's findings, where it was noted that there was a dire lack of good quality and sufficient ICT amenities. From Table 5.6 ,page 165 on Library resources and services available (external customers), the responses by the external customers, attest to this – when requested to respond on the availability of computers, only 4 (i.e. 40%) of the institutions had a score of 70% and above; projectors were not available in 40% of the institutions; both telephone services and sound equipment e.g. headphones and music equipment, were only available in 50% of the institutions; this implies a lack of leisure/recreation services in the libraries; and photocopying services were available in 70% of the institutions. From the observations made, it was further established that though some of the equipment was available, they were not fully functional owing to non-service, besides being technologically outdated. Expounding on this, Adeoye and Popoola (2011) noted that facilities other than only classrooms would be needed in an academic setup to facilitate teaching and learning processes; the requisite informational resources need to be freely accessible to the library clientele.

They observed that the accessibility of information sources is core to their usage, emphasising that the more accessible information sources are, their usage catapults to higher levels. The library cliente will more often than not go for those resources that are easily accessible, observations that have been empirically validated such as Aguolu and Aguolu (2002), emphasising that the availability of an information source is not synonymous to its accessibility, because the source may be available but access to it hindered by a myriad of other factors.

It is this handicap that marred the libraries' service delivery endeavours to their customers. This claim agrees with Zhu, Wymer, Chen (2002) IT-based service quality model (discussed in Chapter 2, Section 2.5.8 of the study), which seeks to enhance customer satisfaction by improving service delivery through the application of ICTs.

In conclusion, the following can be identified as the factors that made the libraries unattractive to the customers:

- Lack of adequate information resources (see Appendix 5:27 and 29, page 442)
- Lack of modern and working equipment
- Inaction in dealing with user complaints
- Unpreparedness in serving special user groups, e.g. PWDs
- Delay in the repair of broken down equipment
- Slow response to competitor threats

7.4.2 APPROACHES ENGAGED IN DELIVERING SERVICES TO THE CUSTOMERS

Table 5.5, page 163 shows that the majority of the male librarians accounted for 90% of the respondents and were between 31-50 years of age, while females within the same age category accounted for 74% of the respondents. This suggests that most of the library staff join the profession while in their twenties and exit before they turn fifty. The staff over 50 years number only 4.2%. From the findings it may be inferred that in service delivery youthful staff are engaged by most of the academic libraries. Age is important, possibly because the service providers are able to interact with the customers more freely. With regard to the level of education of the librarians as shown in Table 5.12, page 199 the majority had at least a college level education, with a small number having undertaken postgraduate training. This indicates that they were well trained for the duties they were performing in the library and that they were able to interact with the library clients seeking help and who were also quite knowledgeable. This is an asset when it comes to dealing with library customers who, as evidenced in this study, were mostly young and informed. The staff then, if well motivated and supported, is capable of delivering incredible results. Hence it was expected that the users would receive quality service from the librarians since training has an impact on work performance. Amoah and Akussah (2017) support this assertion, noting that the training of human capital is crucial in the light of changing library operations and technological advancement. Cobblah (2015) is emphatic in stating that information professionals, owing to their important role of linking information seekers to the information sources, must be well trained, enabling them to execute their role in information management and research and in assisting scholars and researchers.

7.4.2 .1 TEAM SPIRIT

In providing services, libraries strive to embrace a teamwork approach by involving staff in decision making processes, and especially with regard to services' planning and the provision of information services. In this case, 77% of the librarian respondents agreed that the libraries strove to embrace a teamwork approach, with only 23% of the librarian respondents disagreeing. This approach is supported by Noah (2008), who notes that there is a significant relationship between employees' consultation (involvement) and their commitment to the organisation.

From the interview results, this was found to be important, as the front staff are critical in service provision. They too, facilitate the usage of resources in the libraries. However, with regard to 'major change decisions in the organisation', 75% of the librarian respondents agreed that these were made mainly by the library managers. Involving the staff in the functions and activities of the organisation enhances service delivery; increases the level of commitment and acceptance of the decisions made, thereby promoting stakeholder ownership, firm performance (Alsughayir2016); boosts the employees' morale, enhances staff satisfaction and retention (Dede, 2019); and allows employees to use their private information, leading to better decisions for the organisation (Williamson, 2008). Kuye and Sulaimon (2011) conclude that there is a significant relationship between employee involvement in decision making and the firm's overall performance. Based on the study's findings, it is therefore critical to promote staff involvement in all aspects of library management.

7.4.2.2 EMPLOYEE CREATIVITY

To promote service delivery, employee creativity at work seemed to be greatly encouraged in the libraries, as indicated by 76% of the respondents (see Table 5.11, page193), with only 23% of the respondents disagreeing with this assertion. In support of creativity, Yang and Choi (2009), citing Velthouse (1990), view creativity and empowerment as a complementary relationship and argue that it should be encouraged. According to Jain and Jain (2017), employee creativity is beneficial to both individuals and organisations.

60% of the respondents indicated that they were allowed to adapt or modify the service delivery procedures depending on the need or situation. A good example of this is with regard to extending services to physically challenged library users (see Section 6.2.7) where provisions

(relating to library access, loan periods, etc.) were made to accommodate them. But it would be prudent to see this employee creativity and staff empowerment also being used to deal with other library challenges, such as the stiff competition from other information brokers and the large and growing customer base that the libraries are facing. Oldham and Cummings (1996) are of the view that when employees are allowed to perform creatively, novel ideas and products, or procedures could come out of them forming a good basis for further developments by the organization. The fact that the service staff are given some leeway to modify certain set guidelines implies that there is a conscious move towards empowering the service staff. According to Nakhoda and Rahimian (2015), staff empowerment enhances their confidence. Drucker's (2002) view is that as managers face a greater drive or need for employee empowerment, requiring when to command and or collaborate with employees. This is primarily as result of the rapid changes in the work environment. Kirkman and Rosen (1997) have suggested that team members are more likely to feel intrinsically motivated when they believe that their team has a greater responsibility to deal with significant tasks and activities in their organisation. Kirkman and Rosen (1999) further add that when team members have a collective view of greater responsibility, their individual and joint actions will be more proactive and decisive than those of the members of a less empowered team.

7.4.2.3 SERVICE GUIDELINES

It was also established that services are provided in conformity with set guidelines. An overwhelming 77% of the librarian respondents (see Table 5.11) concurred with the view that the library's rules and procedures must be followed strictly in the provision of services to the clients, with 23% who were uncertain. Similarly, with regard to paying due attention to procedures to get things done, 83% of the librarian respondents were in agreement, and 6% were uncertain, while only 11% of the respondents disagreed with this assertion. The significance of this is that the library staff were conscious of the need to maintain certain service standards, and that these must be uniform to all users, and therefore rules must be strictly enforced when providing service. This helps with maintaining uniform standards of service delivery to all customers, which also helps to boost customer satisfaction among all clients.

The South African Public Service charter is emphatic on the observance of standards of service delivery, calling upon public servants to offer impartial, unbiased, and timely service according to the set service guidelines (RSA, 2013). It is equally important that every organisation adheres to the set service guidelines, hence the need for rules and procedures within the library

set-up. On the part of the service provider, consistency when delivering service does enhance employee satisfaction, because the employees are easily able to handle any customer situation; and are confident in their ability to find the right information; and have step by step procedures to follow for any customer interaction. The set out service guidelines help in minimising subjectivity on the part of the service staff. On the other hand, the customers are happy with the service(s) since there will be an element of fairness.

7.4.2.4 ADVERTISEMENT OF LIBRARY PRODUCTS/SERVICES

With regard to the statement '*We advertise/publicise our products/services*' only 43% of the librarian respondents agreed with the statement (See Table 5.11, page 193), 38 % of the respondents were uncertain, and 19% of the respondents disagreed that there was any meaningful advertisement/publicity of the library's services or resources. The fact that less than half of the librarian respondents agreed that some form of marketing is done is an indication that the marketing of library services or products is not taken seriously. This is troubling, since marketing is critical for the survival of any organisation. There is therefore a need to do more aggressive current awareness and promotion of library services. This finding also points to the lack of marketing skills among the librarians and/or apathy among the institutions in trying to reach out to customers. This finding agreeing with Kennedy's (2010) argument that librarians not only underate the importance of both marketing and public relations but also lack skills to do it. As a result, marketing is not a priority for the library, and hence it is treated as a subsidiary function. Therefore, the librarians do not engage in it or attempt to adopt it as a strategy. In support of marketing, Adams and Cassner (2000) had noted that academic libraries may have in the past enjoyed a monopoly in the provision of information resources and services to students and faculty, but the scenario is different today. This so because nowadays users have a variety of options available to meet their research needs. This suggests the need to incorporate marketing courses in the Library Information Studies program.

Toluwani and Oluwadamilola (2017) are also emphatic that the libraries must improve their promotion and marketing campaigns with the sole intention of ensuring that the available resources are optimally utilised. The ACRL (2015) states that libraries must actively use all avenues possible, including social media platforms, to communicate with students to promote the library services.

In his study, Calvert (2008) concluded that academics have different expectations of the library. Even amongst students, the postgraduates need more materials for research than the

undergraduate students. The stakeholders (in this case different categories of customers) have to be asked what it is that they expect from the library and hence can be included in the library marketing campaigns as well. As a consequence, therefore, as the academic libraries and librarians have to grapple with the dynamism of the tertiary level education, it is essential for them to market the library resources/services effectively and in a more focused manner. For this to happen, there has to be a complete paradigm shift; the marketing of the available library resources has to take centre stage, with the libraries being proactively involved as opposed to playing their earlier, passive role. Overall, library marketing in the libraries under study was not undertaken with the zeal that it deserves, resulting in many resources remaining unused.

7.4.3. LIBRARY EXTERNAL LINKAGES

With regard to library outreach, there is some eagerness to create new services depending on the market needs, with 57% of the librarian respondents agreeing that they created new services depending on the market, although 28% of the respondents were uncertain as to whether this happens, and 15% of the respondents did not agree that new services were being created. Regarding the question whether the library creates wholly new products/services for its various clients, 55% of the librarian respondents agreed that they did, 28% of the respondents were uncertain, and 17% of the respondents disagreed that this was taking place. Although the response is still low, it reveals the important finding that different markets for library services exist. These markets are dependent on the information needs of different library clientele. This is consistent with Calvert's (2008) conclusion that in an academic library, expectations for the library are high and diverse across the whole spectrum of users, where for instance the postgraduate students will require more materials for research than the undergraduate students. It is also evident that the market segmentation technique is being applied by the libraries, with services being differentiated according to the clientele.

Landrum (1987:15) stated that,

"...faculty attitudes are the most significant factor in affecting students' use of the library..."

It is imperative for the library to reach out to the faculty staff in a special way as they constitute a special group among the library stakeholders, and have a lot of influence. There is therefore a need for frequent joint faculty staff and academic librarian collaboration in promoting the utilisation of scholarly journals, books, and reference materials from the libraries' print or

electronic collections. The librarians will need to market resources appropriately to each specific user segment and create awareness about their existence.

An earlier INASP/KLISC (2011) survey established that Kenyan academic libraries, for instance, spent huge sums of money subscribing to e-resources whose usage was subsequently found to be relatively low. This low level of usage may be explained in terms of limited or even lack of access to the resources, which may be due to a variety of reasons. In concurrence Adeoye and Popoola (2011) suggests that a library user may encounter five possible types of inaccessible problems: namely

- conceptual,
- linguistic,
- critical,
- bibliographic and
- Physical inaccessibility.

Olowu (2004) further identified natural and artificial barriers to free information access, with Ibeun (2017) noting that the library's poor reputation is linked to lack of/and/or poor accessibility of information sources. A Nigerian study by Oyediran-Tidings (2004) found that low library usage was tied to accessibility issues.

This supports the earlier observation that some resources exist but are barely used, perhaps due to poor marketing and lack of publicity. In Tables 5.2, page152 and 5.6, page165 in this study (as noted earlier), it is evident that there is a mismatch in the views expressed by both the customers and the librarians on the available resources, in that librarians indicated certain services/products as being available, yet the customers expressly stated that they don't exist.

This also points to the lack of resource marketing. Indeed, the marketing of the information resources was left to chance. This is consistent with Popoola's (2008) argument that information availability does not necessarily imply information accessibility nor increased usage, hinting that resources which are unknown will remain heavily underutilised unless they are marketed appropriately to the clientele.

Pointon (2009) asserts that library outreach services are an important marketing tool for the library and generate invaluable goodwill within a community. It is through this that the non-users who find traditional library services to be inconvenient get converted into avid users. McCarty (2010) affirms that attracting additional, and especially new, customers to the library

is essential for its (the library's) continued growth and for maintaining its relevance in this digital age. Salman (2015), in a Nigerian study on the provision and utilisation of library services, similarly advocates the continued stocking of the library with relevant, up-to-date information materials, and enhanced current awareness activities through user education. Duffus (2016) is more emphatic on outreach services, observing that "it is important that libraries of all sorts continue to be innovative and resourceful amid the unrelenting budget constraints and rising inflation". Librarians must engage in cost-effective ways to raise their libraries' profile by publicizing their resources and services to a broad array of customers. It is thus important for the academic libraries to be more aggressive in their outreach agenda to academics, researchers and non-library users in order to keep afloat and remain relevant to clientele from every spectrum.

In summary, library marketing and promotion cannot be left to chance; it has to be purposively done by the library and the librarians themselves. Feng (2014) suggests that through advertising, strong brands can be built that are capable of reaching out to many consumers simultaneously. Libraries thus need to aim to build strong brands that are founded on excellent service delivery. None of the libraries surveyed had a brand or attempted to create one; the libraries were marketing themselves independent of the parent organisation based on their service and professionalism.

It was also established (Table 5.11, page 193) that there are external linkages with similar institutions in the industry, as 66% of the librarian respondents agreed with this statement, 21% were uncertain, and 13% disagreed with this assertion. Pors (2006) underscores the importance of such collaborative initiatives, noting that they could be sources of funding for specific projects within the library. He points out that through bodies, such as the library associations and central institutions, the landscape of the libraries has drastically changed in Denmark, mainly because they have been able to lobby the local politicians, leaders and the government into supporting the library agenda. The study recommends that the university libraries strengthen such linkages wherever they exist and even seek to have more linkages with the many different professional bodies/associations, the private sector, and the industry. From the interviews (see Chapter 6, Section 6.3), it was also established that the libraries regularly held joint meetings among themselves where issues affecting service delivery were discussed with a view to adopting a common approach or stand. All the libraries, as earlier discussed in this

study, had organised themselves into a consortium (KLISC-Kenya Library & Information Services Consortium) through which they were able to negotiate with the publishers for better terms with regard to the acquisition and subscription of e-resources, and with KENET for internet services.

In a study on information and knowledge sharing among academics, Fari (2015) likewise advocates that the universities have strong external linkages amongst themselves and also with other research organisations. This enhances the promotion of knowledge through resource sharing. Fari (2015), citing Gamble (2002), also postulates that these linkages and sharing help in shaping academic values, norms, and the general outlook on life, and thus need to be enhanced. As a consequence, the university libraries, by embracing resource and knowledge sharing, are bound to greatly influence the academic values and norms within their member institutions. Resource sharing positively impacts on user perceptions and the attitudes of their customers towards service received and the overall service delivery as new attitudes/values are acquired. They start seeing the libraries as resourceful and rich in information.

7.4.4. LIBRARY OUTREACH

In terms of outreach, the libraries appeared to be keen to reach out to the unreached clients previously not served by the library, as 53% of the librarian respondents agreed that there were ongoing outreach/extension activities, while 21% of the respondents were uncertain, and 26% of the respondents disagreed. This finding is complemented by the interviews (see Chapter 6, Section 6.3) which revealed that the libraries were keen on providing library services to the growing category of off-campus students and those taking part in distance/part-time modes of learning. For these groups, the electronic library resources came in handy, as they could be easily accessed in virtual space. McCarty (2010) aptly points out that although outreach means different things to different library patrons, but broadly refers to any service or activity that draws patrons or potential patrons interested in a library. However, all outreach is not just about bringing people to the library. Libraries have to consciously reach out to customers not getting to the library at all or have never imagined of the library as a place to be. This highlights the need for more and focused outreach engagements by the library with academia in a bid to re-capture and to maintain its revered position as an information hub. When the antecedents are right, the customers' behavioural intentions will be geared towards customer satisfaction.

Similarly, Hallmark, Schwartz and Roy, as quoted by Carter and Seaman (2011), stated that, "

... Gone are the days when libraries can simply open their doors and expect to be perceived as number one option for information services. With fierce competition for funding and more people assuming everything offered by a library can be found online, libraries are feeling the pressure to blow their own horn ... "This amplifies the need for more concerted outreach efforts. Siddike, Munshi and Mahamu (2013) Ebiwolate (2010) echo similar sentiment and reiterate that academic libraries must embrace the need to actively promote library resources through whatever means available.

In certain cases, outreach was noted where the libraries partnered with other bodies or agencies to reach out to certain specific user groups. For instance, at ACL9, there was collaboration with the National Book Development Council of Kenya (NCBDK) to provide outreach services to children, such as children's reading tents and holiday camps where children were exposed to activities such as reading, storytelling, and poem recitals. Hayes (2008) concluded that, though libraries are facing many challenges and operating in a harsh and competitive business environment, they need to adopt business practices in order to remain afloat.

7.4.5. STAFF SKILLS ENHANCEMENT

It is also worth noting that the libraries had varied skills enhancement activities for their staff. 53% of the respondents agreed that they were being supported by their respective libraries to acquire new skills, training, etc., in order to improve their knowledge base and service delivery approaches. This represents just slightly over half, meaning that for a large number of the staff, there was no support in terms of training. From the interview responses, it was noted that as a result of the skills enhancement, a direct benefit was that the staff had gained confidence in dealing with their customers, thereby enhancing service delivery. The interview analysis (see Chapter 6, Section 6.3) further showed that the libraries that did not have any specific training programmes (see Section 6.3.5) were supportive of their own staff who engaged in studies on a self-sponsorship basis. Since there was no organised training programme for the library staff, training was mainly through self-sponsorship. Acquiring higher education for the library staff is in line with CUE library staff criteria (see Annex C). This has put the library staff under pressure to meet the regulators' set standards.

The libraries also organised their own in-house training workshops and seminars for staff focusing on various service and target areas such as e-resource access, I.T. application, and customer service skills.

In support of skills acquisition, Khan (2010); Ramaiah and Moorthy (2002) are in agreement that training must be strategic and uptake of new skills should be based on firms' future needs, and training in hard and soft skills, in order to achieve enduring results. Career development, according to Khan (2010), has a positive psychological impact on the employees and therefore needs to be enhanced. This view of developing the service staff is in line with Frost and Kumar's (2000) Internal service model (Chapter 2, Section 2.5.2), which roots for the empowerment of internal customers (in this context staff), who are more often than not ignored when the organisation fails to consider the interests of its own service staff. From the interviews, it was evident that the library staff felt side-lined and unwanted. This is informed by the attitudes of the top university management towards the library as an institution, where it is viewed as an annex rather than as being a core department within the university (Chapter 6, Section 6.3.8.). Attitudes such as these are bound to create disharmony among the staff, and will no doubt be reflected in the quality of the services that are dispensed to the customers.

Wang (2008) warns that more and more loyal library customers will bypass the library if it does not deliberately seek to create and forge its relationship with them. These sentiments point to the need for the librarians to be well equipped with people/customer-oriented skills, marketing, and of course sound academic knowledge so that they can be able to academically interact with their users. Overall, it is noted that there is some effort towards improving the library services, but there is a need to hasten the pace at which this is taking place, especially with regard to training and skills upgrades.

In summary therefore, academic libraries, as public facilities and the key resource centres of academic institutions, should play an active role in the new academic communication service mode. Xiaobin and Jing (2009) stress the need for them to be more innovative in communicating new information to their customers. On the one hand, academic libraries should strive to be classrooms for lifelong learning by developing and maintaining an attractive learning environment. On the other hand, libraries should introduce internal innovation mechanisms; provide high-quality service sites and service content; provide a supporting platform for innovation; and provide information and service guarantees to their clients. In emphatic agreement, Duffus (2016) is emphatic that all libraries need to keep being innovative and resourceful as they strive to satisfy the needs of users. This is a clarion call for all libraries that they must heed to regardless of the unrelenting budget constraints and rising inflation. Akuoko, Dwumah, and Ansong (2012) further stress on the need to involve the staff in various decision making processes.

7.5 LIBRARY PERFORMANCE WITH REGARD TO CUSTOMER ATTRACTION/RETENTION AND SERVICE DELIVERY (Objective 4)

According to Tse and Wilton (1988), customer satisfaction could be as the customers' evaluation of the service encounter based on their expectations and actual performance. Customer satisfaction is core to any service quality measurement activity. According to Ueltschy *et al.* (2007), it will be expressed differently by the diverse customers who express different levels of satisfaction for the same or similar service encounters because customer satisfaction is evaluated based on individuals' perceptions, such as culture and past experience. According to Singh (2003), customer service is that desire by the organization to meet customer requests adequately, and as articulated by Ganguly and Gupta (2008), it seeks to maximise customer satisfaction. This is supported by Morgan, Anderson, and Mittal (2005), who opine that it comes from the strong belief that high customer satisfaction levels lead to high business performance. Kaur and Singh (2010), in their study on customer satisfaction in academic libraries, believe that customers' requests emanate from the realization that the need for information are influenced by some degree of expectations about the library's ability to fulfil this need. They further suggest and conclude that customer service in academic libraries is closely related to the quality management of these libraries and their images. Table 5.13 on the distribution of Library Customer attraction/retention responses, summarizes the findings that will be discussed under the headings that were generated from themes picked from Sections E and F of Appendix 1, page 427.

7.5.1 WHAT ATTRACTS AND DISCOURAGES THE CUSTOMERS FROM USING THE LIBRARIES?

According to Okibo and Ogwe (2013:108), customer dissatisfaction is a function of several factors, in particular the lack of the services that are the predictors of customer satisfaction. Salman (2015) outlines:

- outdated and irrelevant services,
- lack of awareness programmes,
- limited space,
- lack of current information materials, and
- The lack of ICT services as key contributors to customer dissatisfaction.

Dlamini (2004), in a study on the customer care strategies in South African academic libraries, noted that the library customers' dissatisfaction was also due to a myriad of factors, such as:

- The libraries' inability to acquire current information resources
- Library staff's reluctance to assist library users
- Meagre library budgets, hence limited library acquisitions
- Limited and/or non-availability of internet access

From the study findings there were pockets of customer dissatisfaction, and in Table 5.3 dealing with external library customers dissatisfied with the library service, 200 (28%) candidly indicated this reaction, with some keen on seeking library service(s) elsewhere (see Table 5.3). Table 5.12, page 199 on the Library service delivery responses from the librarians also points to examples of customer dissatisfaction in the libraries as evidenced by the responses to the statement: *The level of customer satisfaction in this library is low*: 15% agreed with the statement, while 81% disagreed. The level of library customer satisfaction in this case is taken to be a function of the service quality levels.

As earlier noted, there were also discrepancies noted regarding the range of services and products available in the libraries. This, itself may contribute to customer dissatisfaction. From this finding it can be inferred that some of the available resources were inaccessible for one reason or the other (reasons for inaccessibility are discussed elsewhere see Section 7.4.3). It may also be due to malfunctioning equipment as it has been pointed out in earlier sections that some of these are old, outdated and at times not in good working condition. It is this factor that may act as an impediment to optimal usage of the available resources besides brewing dissatisfaction from the service(s).

In this study, customer satisfaction, as noted earlier in another section of the study, was influenced by a number of factors that made the libraries unattractive to their own customers. These include:

- Lack of adequate information resources in general, and specifically for certain programmes/groups
- Lack of modern and functional equipment
- Inaction with regard to user complaints by the library management
- Lack of adequate and suitable reading areas
- Unpreparedness in serving special user groups, e.g. PWDs, post-graduates, staff
- Delay in the repair of broken equipment,

- Slow response by the libraries to competitor threats
- Apathy by the university management towards the library institution
- Low marketing and publicity of the available resources by the library's management
- Bureaucracy that hinders staff creativity and empowerment
- Dirty washrooms, and in certain cases, lack of these facilities within the library
- The lack of adequate floor space (hence in some cases fragmented location of the library facility i.e. several rooms in different building/locations being designated as the library (see Appendix 5:56 and 57)
- Congestion within the library facility (see Appendix 5:1-3 and 5-7)
- Inaccessibility of the library (Appendix 5:56).

It was necessary to establish what the library customers experienced the level of library cleanliness. The simple linear regression in (see section 7.2.4) performed on the data, with satisfaction with service quality as the dependent variable and other nine as independent variables. The regression was to identify which variables played significant role in influencing satisfaction with service quality among the external customers (students and other users) and the library level of cleanliness was a key factor in this.

Table 5.3, page 154 shows that while the library facilities were rated as very clean by 66% of the respondents, there were some misgivings by 30% of the customers who didn't feel this was the case. The group who were dissatisfied cannot be ignored, as this points to the fact that there were issues with the state of library cleanliness. Cleanliness, especially in the washrooms, is an antecedent to attraction to use and stay in the library. This finding on cleanliness is corroborated by Rintari (2015), who found that there was a challenge in keeping most of the facilities clean, but who also found that the challenge was more pronounced in public universities (60.9%) compared to private ones at (77.9%). This implies that the private universities possibly had more resources to take care of the sanitation facilities than the public ones, or they were keen to neaten their sanitation facilities, much more than their counterparts in the public universities. Further, Rintari (2015) established that with regard to the up-to-dateness of equipment, 66.6% of respondents agreed that these were better in the private universities when compared to the public ones at 50.5%; with regard to the adequacy of buildings 73.9% respondents indicated private universities had adequate buildings as opposed to 51.4% at the public universities. Earlier studies (Seefeldt *et al.*, 2002; Chad *et al.*, 2005;

Yanni *et al.*, 2005; Muigai, 2009), Truong *et al.* (2017) found that the perceived level of cleanliness of a service facility greatly impacts on the usage of said facilities and the perceived quality of service. In a study on the cultural impact of service quality, Lau *et al.* (2005) hinted that tangibles in the hospitality sector include both the cleanliness of the room as well as comfortable rooms. Cavner *et al.* (2004), studying the quality of recreation facilities, noted that the cleanliness of facilities, such as the restroom, equipment and amenities, and safety issues, are important in the customer's assessment of the facility. From Table 5.3, page 154, it is evident that the level of cleanliness of the library facilities was not satisfactory. Similarly, Olorunfemi (2014), focusing on Nigerian university law libraries, found that the provision of infrastructure, such as good Internet connectivity and adequate hardware, is not always in place. This not only contributes to the low utilisation of academic libraries, with users seeking other alternatives, but even discourages them from visiting the libraries. According to Nors and Johannsen (2002), it is dealing with these factors that would facilitate a change in customers' perceptions of libraries. From the ongoing discussion, image is of paramount importance to the customer, and therefore academic libraries have a duty to boost their images in order to attract customers. From these findings, it is imperative that libraries must strive to offer robust services to their customers in order to attract and retain them, the challenges in service delivery notwithstanding. Shah (2013) asserts that library customers' satisfaction is enhanced by the quality and quantity of the services provided by the library, because the robustness of the services serves as a catalyst to satisfaction. Rintari (2015) in her study compared the physical resources in both private and public universities and found that 68.7% of respondents agreed that there are more adequate university libraries services at the private universities, as opposed to 58.4% for the public universities.

7.5.1.1 LIBRARY CUSTOMER COMPLAINTS

The study's findings (see Table 5.12, page 199 on library service delivery for details) were that 68% of the librarian respondents agreed that with the statement: *the level of the library customer complaints was low*, and 25% of the respondents disagreed with this assertion. On being asked for their views on the statement *the library customer base is low*, 21% of the respondents agreed that it was low, while 68% disagreed. On the statement *the level of the library customer compliments was low*, 32% of the respondents agreed, while 57% of the

respondents disagreed, and 11% of the respondents were uncertain about this. These responses are an indication of mixed feelings with respect to the library customers' satisfaction levels. Earlier on, it was established that the customers were not happy with the way in which their complaints were handled. This is possibly an antecedent to dissatisfaction with the service rendered. Shammout and Haddad (2014), in an empirical study on the impact of complaint' handling on customer satisfaction in the banking sector in Jordan, statistically confirmed a significant impact of the overall dimensions of complaint handling (service recovery, service quality, switching cost, service failure, service guarantee, and perceived value) on customer satisfaction. Lovelock and Wirtz (2011) thus stress, that failures continuously occurring, and even due to factors external to the organizations cannot be ignored for whatever reason. But customer satisfaction must remain the core, with Aburoub, Hersh and Aladwan (2011) stressing that front-line employees need to remain alert in meeting customers' needs and addressing their complaints too. Kaur and Singh (2010) have stressed that customers need not only to be heard, and but also listened to, the basis of good customer service. Service providers need to determine what customers want/need, and then endeavour to offer the services fulfilling their needs, all while the delivery process is taking place. The whole service experience can leave a lasting opinion leading to a delighted customer who will return for more and also become a voice for the library. These findings concur with those of the Marriot Library User Satisfaction Survey (1999), that customers feel satisfied when the library staff demonstrate a genuine focus and interest in their (information) needs. This is in contrast to a scenario where customers are offered mere "*mechanical service*", with no emotional attachment on the part of the provider. They love to have a connection with the service provider(s) in a more personal way, with a genuine interest shown and being treated like persons and not machines. It is how they are handled that determines whether they will remain or opt to go out elsewhere for the same service /product. The libraries thus need to on high alert, else their customers switch to other service providers due to the persistent service failures (and with no satisfactory corrective measures) to where they perceive the service(s) on offer are superior and their patronage is highly appreciated, not taken for granted. Complaints with regard to the library service thus are too crucial to be wished away or ignored.

7.5.1.2 CUSTOMER RETENTION

In an attempt to assess the customer retention levels, the librarian respondents were asked to comment on the statement, '*The level of library customer retention was low*'. Only 13% of the respondents agreed that it was low, while another 11% of the respondents were uncertain, and 76% wholly disagreed with the statement, implying that the majority felt that the customer retention was satisfactory. While a sizable number do indicate that the customer retention was fairly good, there was a percentage who felt otherwise, which points to a bumpy service journey for some.

It is, however, difficult for the libraries to attract and retain customers who are not happy, but indeed eager to look for other facilities (see Tables 5.2 and 5.6, page 152 and 165 respectively), as discussed elsewhere in the study and the low and inadequate service range/resources (see Table 5.3, page 154). The study's interview findings (see Chapter 6, Section 6.3.3) amplify this finding too, since it was the happy and satisfied library customers who encouraged their own fellow students to come and try new approaches to accessing library information resources via technology. This also demonstrates the important role of training the clientele on how to use the available resources. When trained, users are empowered in information literacy skills, thus enabling them to explore new and exciting avenues to satisfy their needs. Satisfied customers become advocates of the library, indirectly helping to spread the value of its services to non-customers. From the study findings it's apparent that the poor customer experience is both person –related and also policy related. Poor customer experience comes from failing to meet evolving customer expectations. Whereas, in a customer-centric organization, the customer experience is not left to chance and is deliberately designed by examining the entire customer journey and removing all points all points of friction along the way-this does not seem to be the case in the academic libraries. The service personnel are ill equipped, and not well trained in customer service issues besides lacking proper guidance/support from the top library and university management. Organizational policies pursued relating to library status, financing and budgeting, equipping and so on too impact on the overall customer satisfaction levels. It is thus, an uphill task for the libraries to not only attract new customers but also retain their existing customers.

Kaur and Singh (2010) highlight the need to train all staff, and not just the customer service personnel, on excellent customer service skills. This is important as it equips the staff with the

right skills to deal with customer complaints, hence boosting their (customer) retention. This view is consistent with the premise of the EFQM model (discussed in Chapter 2, Section 2.3) on the need for organisations to have a strong customer focus. It is only by so doing that customers can be retained as loyal buyers of a service. It further agrees with Gronroos' (1984) Technical and functional quality model (discussed in detail in Chapter 2, Section 2.5.2), which lays emphasis on a good understanding of the customers' perceptions of quality in order to satisfy their needs. It is also necessary for the libraries if they are going to succeed in today's highly competitive environment.

7.5.2 WHAT IMAGE DOES THE LIBRARY HAVE? WHAT IS THE GROWTH OF THE LIBRARY?

Adeniji et al (2015) opine that there is growing concern among organisations in the management of their corporate image since there is a strong positive correlation between people's perceptions of a company and pro-corporate supportive behaviour. Ueltschy *et al.* (2007) observed that customers do exhibit varying levels of satisfaction for the same or similar service encountered due to the fact that customer satisfaction is judged on the basis of individuals' perceptions, such the experiences along the service journey and culture.

Library investment is considered to be an important parameter in relation to library customer satisfaction, and thus the customers were asked to comment on this. The image of the library is also tied to the budget, and this consequently influences the purchase of stock.

On being asked to gauge the growth of the resources the librarians' responses to the statement:

The growth of the information resources in the last three years was low, 26% agreed, 13% were uncertain and 62% disagreed. This implies that there was some growth in the library collection but not to the desired level(s). Hence with regard to the question: *'The level of return*

on the library's investment was poor in the last three years and hence it should be closed' (see

Table 5.12, page 199), 21% of the respondents agreed that the investment was poor and the facility should be closed, but 57% of the respondents wholly disagreed and 21% of the respondents were uncertain about this. Again from the responses it is evident that there are those who were not happy with the growth of the library collection, hence its ability to meet their information needs feeling it can as well be closed, but still some of the customers were of the view they would rather continue with the library as if they were hoping it was going to

improve with time. Iyandave and Salawu (2006) stressed that the merit of every library lies in its resources and range of information services to the people. Hence, a library will be adjudged good or otherwise by its ability to meet, to a large extent, the information needs of its clientele. In this regard, professional librarians must endeavour to collect, store, organise and disseminate all forms of recorded knowledge in order to satisfy both present and future information needs of users. Further, Ibeun (2017) notes that a well-stocked academic library is a storehouse of information, or a record of human experience to which users may turn for data or information. The effectiveness and efficiency of services provided in academic libraries are mainly determined by library users; not satisfying them thus paints a negative image and vice versa. In agreement, Perera (2005) submitted that effectively meeting customer needs is core to the management of libraries. With regard to the library's service delivery, the responses to the statement: *the library service delivery was lower than anticipated*, 15% of the librarian respondents agreed, and 79% of the respondents disagreed with this statement. This being an indicator that low investment levels have a major role on service delivery and consequently customers' satisfaction levels. Hayes (2008) is emphatic about this, stressing that no single library can be self-sufficient. Therefore, there is a need to establish strong library collaborations and networks which would not only promote resource sharing, but also enhance efficient resource use and better service delivery systems.

Hayes (2008:23) states that: "The greatest value from all information investments can only be achieved when relevant information that is held locally or elsewhere is exposed to the right person in the right context."

Academic libraries are obligated to offer the best information resources to their customers (see Chapter 5, Tables 5.2, page 152 and 5.6, page 165 on Library resources/services available). They should also be vigorously acquiring these resources with the goal of making their institutions the information centres of choice, comparable to none. In the current case this is important, considering the fact that the customers earlier outlined their dissatisfaction (see page 154, Table 5.3) with the libraries, pushing them to seek other alternatives. Dlamini (2016), in a different study, on the use of ICTs, underscores their crucial role in libraries in acquiring and managing information.

Prof. Kavulya (2017), in reference to Kenyan university libraries, concurs that the libraries' investment in ICT is still quite low, which explains the low usage of ICT-based services. This

fact was equally confirmed during the interview and observation sessions as well. Emanating from the findings of this study, ICT is a resource that libraries need to embrace fully and invest in, in order to tap into and fully exploit its potential in information management.

As noted earlier, African libraries are under a lot of pressure from different spheres/stakeholders, and are facing stiff competition from other information brokers, hence the need for more technological innovation and investment in a bid to improve on their service delivery (Kargbo, 2002:411). All these call for new changes in the mission statements, goals, objectives, organisational structure, and managerial skills. Academic libraries in Kenya thus need to re-look into themselves in a bid to improve their image. All these activities require heavy investment. This is particularly important considering that customers are now spoiled for choice on where to go in order to receive good service.

In support of this, Prof. Nyaigoti [the Chair, CUE] (2017) is categorical that the universities' management boards need to invest heavily in modern technology and books in equal measure, as well as ensure that the libraries provide a conducive environment for studying and reading. Salman (2015), in a study on the status of Nigerian public libraries, concurs that there is a paucity of both information resources and facilities in libraries, hence they remain unattractive to current and potential customers. The observations and interviews made during the study, too, confirmed the dire need for a high level of technological adoption and infusion in the delivery of services in the academic libraries. As earlier highlighted in other sections of this study, there are cases of customer dissatisfaction owing to the state of the library resources, and this no doubt suggests that there is a need for more concerted efforts to address investment in information resources. This is confirmed by the study findings (see section 7.2.4), with dissatisfaction being a trigger to look for alternatives. This poor/low level of investment in modern technology could partly explain the high incidences of dissatisfaction.

All these factors which have been discussed elsewhere (cleanliness, access, availability of information resources, accessibility of the library, human resource issues) are bound to influence the perceptions that customers have of the library, and thereby affect the image of the library, albeit in varying degrees. According to Nors and Johannsen (2002), it is dealing with these factors that would facilitate a change in customers' perceptions of libraries. From the ongoing discussion, image is of paramount importance to the customer, and therefore academic libraries have a duty to boost their images in order to attract customers.

7.5.2.1 LIBRARY BUDGET

With regard to library budgets, it was established from the interview informants that the majority of the libraries had an annual budget ranging from a few million to ten million Kenyan shillings. The full utilisation of this budget varied from one institution to another. The library budgetary allocation also varied from one institution to the next as a function of the institutions' financial strength, and more importantly, the goodwill that the library enjoyed from the top tier of university management. With the budget allocated, the majority of the libraries were able to acquire, on average, one thousand titles annually, and some were even able to acquire several thousand titles, besides acquiring other information resources in different formats. From the interviews, it was noted that the number of titles procured was again dependent on other factors, such as:

- The academic discipline/subject
- The publisher - some were known to be quite expensive compared to others
- Format of the information resource
- The procuring method used
- The cost

It was also noted that there were major challenges in the utilisation of the allocated library budgets due to various hurdles, such as a lengthy, cumbersome procurement process that delayed the procurement of very urgent and/or even basic reading texts. In some of the institutions, the procurement processes for the information resources were found to drag on for a couple of months before actualisation.

In such cases, the interview respondents intimated that the information materials intended for a certain course or programme would be purchased long after the target user group(s) had completed their course(s), and even exited from the university. In other cases, the materials purchased were too few to cater for the number of users. From the interviews, it was noted that the library had its influence regarding the quantities to be purchased curtailed, as the powers and authority on what to spend were vested elsewhere. The librarians' professional input was suppressed and/or ignored. This, it has to be stated, was a reason for the 'bad blood' between the faculty staff and the library department in certain cases, with each blaming the other. Conflicts emanated from the lack of information resources that were requested by the faculty

staff, who felt that the library was sabotaging their programmes/intentions by not making timely acquisitions as and when needed. The feeling of the faculty staff was that the library, as a professional department, ought to have money to meet the information requests of the researchers/academics soonest (which was not the case), before the materials get 'stale'. Yet on the other hand, from the interviews (see Section 6.3.4) the librarians felt frustrated since they expressed the idea that they only had a 'paper budget' but no money at their disposal to utilise at all. They also had no control over their own library budget in addition to being subjected to a lot of organisational bureaucracy.

From the interviews, it was also noted that there was a general apathy shown by some of the university administrations when it came to allocating finances to the libraries, and even in those instances when the allocation was made, there were a myriad of bottlenecks slowing or preventing the full budget utilisation by the respective library departments. For instance, it was intimated in one of the interviews that in one of the institutions, the library budget had been captured for two consecutive years, because the library department had not been fully facilitated to utilise the available budget, and it was used to fund other capital projects (workshops, offices blocks, internal access roads, etc.) within the institution. It needs to be reiterated that although these capital projects are good and welcome, they need not stand as a substitute for information resources, and nor should these '*good*' projects be allowed to eat into the library budget under the guise that the library does not utilise its budget appropriately. On a more serious note the, the library should be supported and facilitated in every way to utilise its budget fully as a strategy to promote good scholarship in the university.

The interviews also revealed that all this vying for funds happened despite pending book requests from the various teaching departments that were awaiting approval and authorisation by the respective university managements for purchase (see Section 6.3.4). The majority of the interview respondents were quick to point out that if the CUE's guidelines on the financing and equipping of libraries (where it stipulates that at least 10% of the annual university budget should be expended on boosting library collections) were well observed by the parent bodies, the academic libraries would be able to improve on their collection development activities to the satisfaction of their customers, and thereby redeem their image. From the study's findings, it was interesting to note that the private universities were keen on library growth, which can be explained by the fact that the regulatory body, CUE, is very strict, requiring them to have

all the required resources before they could be allowed to mount any new programme(s), unlike the public institutions. These CUE guidelines for academic libraries are provided in detail in Annex B, page 419.

This finding is in tandem with that of Popescu, Corneanu and Helerea (2009), whose study in Romania indicated that although the budgetary shortfalls experienced by the universities and their libraries are often blamed for the challenges faced in realising change, the management failures contributed to many more problems faced by the university libraries, mainly due to the failure in managing change.

7.5.2.2 LIBRARY INVESTMENT AND RESOURCE ACQUISITION

From the librarians' responses as depicted in Table 5.12, page 199 on the question whether the library resources had grown within the last three years, 62% of the respondents were not in agreement that the library information resources had grown, as compared to only 26% of the respondents who were in agreement. This suggests that the librarians and the library customers still value the library, and would love to see it thriving. However, there are several challenges to circumvent in order to realise this objective.

Based on both the interviews and observations, it was noted that there are serious gaps with respect to the library collection development practices and the growing user populations (see Table 5.6, page 165), and institutional growth (i.e. programmes on offer in the respective universities). The main challenge that was noted was the low budgetary allocation to the library department. This finding has been noted in a number of previous studies (e.g. Dlamini 2004; Saleh and Lasisi 2011; and Omotosho and Okiki 2012). Dadzie (2009), Ebiwolate (2010) and Okeke and Owoeye (2012) likewise note that libraries often have to contend with poor infrastructure, budgetary constraints, and inadequate staff.

On the basis of the interviews, it was also established that the libraries suffered apathy from the university administration and this, coupled with insufficient funds, greatly affected the libraries' operations and status within the universities. This worked towards denoting their image as a whole. According to Kanguha (2016), it is the lack of adequate facilities, especially computers, that greatly affects academic libraries' service delivery. St Clair (1993) and Kaur and Singh (2010) similarly determined that excellent service is most frequently a measure of the customer's perception of the quality of the service, thus helping to increase the visibility of an institution. An academic library serves a clientele in need of accurate, current, scholarly

information. Thus, the academic library need be recognized as core to the realization of the university mandate in learning, teaching, research, and professional development. High standards of customer service create greater visibility for the information service unit, and it is this enhanced visibility that will lead to better positioning within the parent organisation.

It is important, therefore, to identify the service attributes that customers deem most important in order to maximise customer satisfaction and to improve service quality. When the library customers were asked to comment about the library's image, only 6% of the respondents agreed that the image was poor, compared to 89% of the respondents who disagreed and stated that the image was good. Although a great number felt that the image is good, it is still important for the libraries to endeavour to deal with the dissenting voices in a bid to improve the library image. It is important for the academic libraries to work towards boosting their corporate image in the eyes of the public whom they serve. According to Mills and Bannister (2001), image is both a key motivator and de-motivator in the use or non-use of the library. They conclude that it is imperative for the library management to broaden their understanding regarding what may need to be implemented to enable the clients to be better library users. It is therefore imperative that the image of the library is guarded and upheld at all times, whatever the cost.

Fang (2019) confirms the importance of the need to build a strong brand and professional or corporate image. Gray and Balmer (1998) have observed that corporate image is the immediate mental picture that customers have of a given organisation. Corporate reputation thus serves as an indicator of the value judgement about the company's attributes. Cronin and Taylor (1992), as cited by Clow and Kurtz (2003), expound that satisfaction and dissatisfaction of a service relates to the last service experience, and that customers' perceived evaluation of service quality has a big influence on their satisfaction levels. This implies that customers can tolerate service failures which they may perceive as not too serious and even make return visits. This, however, does not mean that service failures should be overlooked, but, customers may choose to tolerate poor service delivery for some time with the hope that it is going to improve.

However, if the firm has failed to perform or if the service failure is too severe, then the customer will go to the next best alternative. The findings of this study (see Table 5.3, page 154) agree with this, with some of the library customers indicating that they were in the process of identifying new library facilities within the next six months due to poor service, even as some chose to hold on despite experiencing service failures. This is in agreement with the conclusions of the 2010 Customer Experience Impact Report, which found that 82% of

customers quit business relations with an organisation due to bad customer experience (Right Now Technologies, 2010); while 2011 Customer Experience Impact Report established that , 86% of consumers were ready to spend 25% more to get superior customer experience; and 89% of the customers start doing business with competitors following poor customer service (Right Now Technologies, 2011). For this reason, Nors and Johannsen (2002) suggest that institutions need to increase their visibility, which involves branding, good public relations, maintaining political contacts, and other activities that facilitate changes of perception. Therefore, it can be rightly stated that quality service delivery is an antecedent to customer satisfaction, which eventually leads to customer attraction and retention. It was also observed and noted that the location of the library was sometimes an issue. Some of the libraries are located in inconvenient locations, i.e. hidden where location and accessibility becomes a challenge. They are also not well guided, thus are less visible i.e. lacking good signage for the library building (see Chapter 6, Section 6.2 for details), the internal library layout is also poor, such that it is difficult for the customers to locate where certain services are located with ease. It is such attributes that discourage usage to a certain extent. In this case the mere fact that cleanliness is an issue then coupled with the other factors paints abad image of the library which is not attractive.

From the interviews (Section 6.3.6), it was also noted that human resource factors affecting library staff, such as stress, fatigue, rudeness and low work morale, are bound to impact on the quality of service delivery and hence the general image of the library.

7.5.3 THE NATURE OF SERVICE DELIVERY IN THE LIBRARIES

Kiunga (2010) rightly states that there is no business that can exist without customers. If customers do not exist or are too few to sustain a business, no miracle can turn that business around. Likewise, the core objective of any business is to offer goods and services to meet identified customer needs, and customers buy solely to satisfy those needs.

Wood (2007:3) commented that academic libraries have been edged out of the top spot as the 'go-to' place for learners and researchers due to the convenience and immediacy of the web. It therefore follows that if libraries do not have the goods and services that their customers require, they will easily be pushed out of business. It is obvious then that customers will not patronise academic libraries if their needs are not met, and rather seek other alternatives. It is imperative, therefore, for libraries to be serious in their operations. This is crucial if they are to remain at the heart of the university, especially in the light of the stiff competition they are

facing. Adoption of good management practices is a requirement, not an option. This is demonstrated by the fact that only 36% of the respondents felt that their library customer base had exceeded that of their competitors. It needs to be noted that failure to meet customer expectations results in a customer exodus. This amplifies the study's findings that the customer base is dwindling rather than growing due to poor customer experiences. Benedetti (2017) emphasises that libraries have to respond to new teaching and research practices in the twenty-first century, thus it is critical for them to consider and plan how to advertise library resources/services in order to regain their market share. Further, they note that users are often surprised to learn about the varied expertise of the library staff and the many varied resources/services the staff provides: this resource is likely to remain untapped if not advertised. Table 5.3 depicts the customer satisfaction levels of the libraries' customers. 97% of the respondents indicated that they were users of the library, with only 3% indicating that they were not. 28% of the library users were quite dissatisfied with the library service(s) delivery for one reason or another, with 72% of the respondents indicating that they were satisfied with the services that they received from the library (see Table 5.3, page 154). When asked to indicate whether they would be shopping for a new library facility within the next six months, 22% of the dissatisfied group (see Table 5.3) indicated that they were determined to have their library needs met, thus indicating that they would shop for another library facility. Khaola and Mabilikoane (2016), focusing on Lesotho, established there was a strong positive relationship between the perceptions of library service quality and user satisfaction, thus concluding that libraries must either upgrade their services in order to fulfil expectations of library users or perish. This finding mirrors the conclusions of the 2010 Customer Experience Impact Report, where it was revealed that although the majority of customers would quit doing business, there is still a percentage of customers that would be ready to pay premium rates for good service (Right Now Technologies, 2010).

Interestingly, an overwhelming 78% of those who were dissatisfied external users indicated that they did not intend to move on in search of better library services. This suggests that they had chosen to hang on, possibly hoping that service delivery will improve. To keep the library users hooked, the ACRL (2005) opine that libraries ought to offer a wide range of high quality and effective services to their clients, effective library services which do support the academic programmes of the institution. Abu-Alhaija (2018) concurs that customers can be lured back owing to good customer service.

The libraries also indicated that there was a growing market share overall (see Table 5.13, page 205 on library customer attraction/retention), as pointed out by 79% of the respondents, who felt that this had increased within the last three years. Table 5.6 supports this fact as the overall customer catchment was on an upward trajectory. A growing market share is an indication that there is a demand for the services/goods, but it is evident that the libraries had not been able to convert the entire customer base into being their loyal customers. As the market share increased, there was equally an improvement in customer satisfaction within the same period. This is demonstrated by 77% of the respondents who agreed that library customer satisfaction had increased.

According to Smith and Wheeler (2002), customer loyalty should be seen as a process and a growing service provider and customer interaction. Creating loyalty is about being intentional, consistent, creating value, and also being different. This is what the academic libraries should be aiming for: to create value for their customers. Libraries therefore should redirect their efforts to offering value enhanced products and services. This agrees with Mwangi (2018) who, in a study on value addition practices and sustainability in the coffee industry in Kenya, argued that it is value addition that leads to sustainability. In order for the academic libraries to remain relevant in view of the many other competitors (information brokers) and to be sustainable in the long run, the provision of value enhanced information services/products is not an option, but a requirement. This view is further supported by Nash (1998) in the Modified service journey model (see Chapter 2, Section 2.5.2), which presupposes a seamless yet an equally fulfilling journey in the service experience.

7.5.4. LIBRARY CUSTOMER LOYALTY

Jones (1997) had much earlier hinted on the three anchors of customer loyalty: customer retention; likeliness to return; and the likeliness of a customer referral. In this study it was found that customer loyalty had increased within the last three years, as 72% of the librarian respondents agreed, 15% of the respondents were uncertain, and 12% disagreed with this statement. As to whether their library clients keep moving to other libraries/ information centres, only 11% of the librarian respondents agreed with this, 34% were uncertain, with 55% disagreeing (see Table 5.13, page 205 for details). The findings suggest that the library customers were loyal, that the degree of migration was minimal, and that the customer complaints were also decreasing (69% of the respondents). This however points to some level of customer dissatisfaction. Customer loyalty is built when an organisation creates a benefit for

customers so that they will maintain increasingly repeat business with the organization (Ayodele and Esiti, 2016). Loyalty is linked to several factors. The study findings indicate that it's influenced by:

- sufficient and quality information resources
- cleanliness of the facility
- the attractiveness (i.e. ambience) of the facility
- good and hospitable service
- Good/suitable furniture (especially for the PWDs) and internet infrastructure.

Jiang and Zhang, (2016) reiterated that a customer's loyalty is considered a significant intangible asset for numerous companies. Antecedents of customer loyalty include brand attachment (Prentice and Wong, 2016), brand relationship (Haryanto *et al.*, 2016), positive emotions (Bilgihan *et al.*, 2016), delight, (Ali *et al.*, 2016), perceived enjoyment (Su *et al.*, 2016), empathy (Ansari and Riasi, 2016), customer commitment (Thaichon and Jebarajakirthy, 2016), customer engagement (Thakur, 2016) among others. Without customers, no organisation can exist for very long, while Djagbletey (2011) further emphasises that for business or organisation to succeed customer satisfaction and loyalty is very critical.

7.5.5. CHALLENGES LIBRARIES ENCOUNTER IN SATISFYING THEIR CUSTOMERS

From the interview results (see Chapter 6), it was noted that some of the major complaints levelled against the staff by the customers included:

- Rudeness;
- Lack of consistency in service delivery;
- Not keeping their word/service promises; and
- Lack of commitment, among others.

This suggests that the library services as delivered were not satisfactory, in spite of the efforts that have been made (and that are being made) to improve the services. This agrees with Kiran and Diljit (2012) who found that most library customers were dissatisfied with the services available in the library despite attempts by libraries to adopt new technologies. This also agrees with the findings of the 2010 Customer Experience Impact Report, that 73% of the customers will discontinue service due to rudeness by staff, while 55% of the customers cited other issues that were not resolved in a timely manner as the major reason for service discontinuation (Right Now Technologies, 2010). Cox and Brittain (2004) cited the major causes of complaints as the

non-availability of the product(s) when needed, unsatisfactory product performance or mediocre service, and the way that complaints are handled.

Dlamini (2004), in his study on customer service in academic libraries, recommended that academic libraries need to be at the forefront of dealing with customer care issues in their respective libraries in an attempt to deal with the mounting dissatisfaction of customers. Khaola and Mabilikoane's (2016) study in Lesotho established a strong positive relationship between the perceptions of library service quality and user satisfaction, thus concluding that libraries ought to either upgrade the range of products on offer in order to fulfil the library customer's expectations, or sink and perish altogether. In order to facilitate academic success, library services to the library clientele must provide access to a broad range of information resources. The libraries ought to strive to offer an avenue to all future library inquiries, mentoring undergraduate students for postgraduate studies and research, as well as training them on good and responsible information usage in all spheres of life.

Solomon *et al.* (2006) also reiterates that a loyal customer is a company's most valuable asset.

Djagbletey (2011), in his study on enhancing customer service through prompt service delivery, further emphasises that both customer satisfaction and loyalty are core to the growth and success of any enterprise. According to Timm (2008), is emphatic that good customer service no doubt encourages customers to return. When customers are happy, the customer/client progress in literacy/outreach programs will become a success. 64% of the respondents agreed that this was the case.

So as to enhance customer satisfaction, a vibrant and active market intelligence network is crucial to capture the needs and interests of the customers accurately, 41% of the of the respondents agreed that the service providers were actively involved in intelligence (market survey) gathering pertaining to what customers wanted or expected in terms of service quality and the information resources needed, 27% were uncertain and 31% did not engage in it (see Table 5.8,page 176 on market survey responses). There is also a need to engage in more benchmarking, process evaluation, and active marketing of the information resources and services. This finding relates to the previous finding in Chapter 5, Section 5.9.1, that it was necessary to do regular market surveys so as to meet customer needs well.

This implies that there was some zeal being demonstrated by the librarians in getting the information resources that the customers actually required or needed (as observed earlier in Section 7.3.1). This is important since the academic libraries are there in order to be used by the customers, and as such, they need to be well stocked with useful and relevant information

resources for the pursuit of academic activities and thus be able to support the university's core business of promoting scholarship and research pursuits.

7.5.6. LIBRARY STAFF: EMPLOYEE RECOGNITION AND WORK ENVIRONMENT

In relation to customer satisfaction, the study also sought to establish the feelings the service providers (librarians) had towards their employer (see Table 5.13, page 205). 44% of the librarian respondents agreed with the statement: *The library management cares about my welfare*, 21% were uncertain while 35% disagreed that the library management cares about their welfare. This means that at the departmental level there were some efforts being made by the library management to improve the welfare of their staff. Regarding the statement: *My employer cares about my welfare*, 36% of the respondents agreed that this was the case, 32% were uncertain and 32% disagreed. From this it is apparent that there are mixed feelings amongst the staff in relation to the handling of their welfare issues by the employers.

This is important, since the relationship between the employer and the employee can act as an antecedent to good customer satisfaction, or as a detractor. Dabholkar *et al.* (2000), in the Antecedents and mediator model (discussed in detail in Chapter 2, Section 2.5.2), presuppose the existence of trigger factors that act as the antecedents of service

With regard to staff training (in relation to customer relations), 38% of the respondents indicated that they had benefited from continuous on-the-job training (see Table 5.13). Training of staff is essential, enabling staff to perform better. From the interview results, it was established that quite a number of the library staff were on different self-sponsored training programs. A major hurdle facing the libraries was the lack of sufficient funds to cater for staff training. The lack/absence of a clear staff training schedule also sends a substantial message, thus though training(s) took place, this was purely on a self-sponsored basis. The few university-sponsored programmes available were mainly reserved for and/or channeled to the faculty staff. This means that library staff were not considered a priority in matters of university training, which probably affected their morale. It was also found that all the libraries, on their own initiative, sometimes partnered with other bodies, such as publishers, to facilitate some of the in-house training workshops for the librarians. Training is crucial in an organisation and needs to be supported by all means, and this was notably lacking. Libraries are not exempt

from the continuous upskilling of their employees. Sahoo and Pradhan (2013) view staff training as an investment positively impacting on organizational productivity.

Regarding the statement: *My contribution as an employee is valued*, 66% were in agreement that they felt valued and appreciated, 15% were undecided, while 19% disagreed. From this finding it is evident that the service providers (librarians) valued recognition by their employers and were glad for the small things the employers did for them to boost their welfare; however, much more still needs to be done. However, with regard to office and working space, although these were available, the observation results revealed some interesting discrepancies. In some cases, these spaces were quite limited, such that staff had no proper working areas, or had to work in congested areas, as noted in ACL3, ACL8, and ACL2. In certain instances, the staff had to organise themselves informally to work in turns. This was found to greatly interrupt their work output. The fact that staff in certain cases had to work in such a difficult work environment made them feel unwanted and unappreciated. Purpose built offices and working areas greatly impact on how employees feel about their work. This agrees with Armstrong and Murlis (2007) who point out that the working environment sends signals about how much an organisation values its employees, and the standards that it expects from them.

In the study, 49% of the respondents expressed that they felt they had job security, 30% of the respondents were uncertain, and 21% felt insecure. With regard to the terms of employment, it was noted that there were different terms of service, with some of the staff being on permanent terms (76.7%) and others on contract (see Table 5.5 on page 163). It was noted that this was not healthy at all, as it created feelings of job insecurity and also a lack of total commitment. Lack of job security destabilises a person to the extent that it interferes with their work performance. In this case it was established that a percentage of the staff were on temporary terms (23.4 %). Ahmed *et al.* (2017) point out that the frontline staff are committed to offer excellent service upon realizing that their employer is concerned about their job continuation. They too concur that job security is essential to employees' attachment with the organisation, while stability of employment in the workplace enhances employees' level of engagement with their work.

Regarding job certainty, Jandaghi, Mokhles and Bahrami (2011) are of the view that uncertainty about the next month and job creates a lot of anxiety. This makes employees feel they belong to a group or are a part of community but with divided loyalties. On this aspect, Chen *et al.* (2017) also note that due to the physical and psychological strain, employees are not able to invest enough energy in their jobs, which ultimately affects their performance and

reflects negatively on the organisation. Chovwen and Ivensor (2009), too point out that besides job security they need to be motivated.

When the respondents were asked to comment about their feelings in relation to compensation, it was found that overall there was dissatisfaction with regard to the salaries received, as only 6% of the respondents indicated that they were satisfied, and 92% were dissatisfied with their current salaries (see Table 5.13 on page 205). From these findings, it can be concluded that there are issues surrounding the work environment and related to compensation and job security, which may possibly, in one way or the other, be impacting on the service delivery/performance of the librarians in the academic libraries. There is a need to look into the compensation issues affecting the librarians as a way of boosting their commitment to the institutions.

In terms of the work environment, 68% of the respondents were happy and satisfied with their work environment, but 32 % of the respondents were not. From the observation results, it was found that this could stem from several sources, such as the lack of washrooms inside some of the libraries, which posed a great inconvenience to the users (details discussed elsewhere, see section 7.5.1). For those that had washrooms, they were found to be reasonably clean, although in certain instances unattended leakages were observed, thus denting the image of the library. Where the washrooms were not on the library's premises, as was the case with ACL8 and ACL3, it was also found that the general cleanliness of the external washrooms was not satisfactory. This particular finding on the state of the washrooms does mirror earlier findings by Rintari (2015) where the state of physical resources in Kenyan university was explored, which reiterated the lack of well-maintained sanitation facilities as being a common feature, and more so in Kenyan public universities.

Ornstein, Moreira and Ono (2009), quoting Ferreira and Mello (2006), stresses that library must comply with all the set general and technical standards and guidelines. In this case, it would be important for the respective university managements to adhere to CUE guidelines, which are very explicit about providing the required work space and equipment to the staff as well as a good reading environment for their customers. From the interview results, it was established that adequate library space was indeed a challenge for some of the libraries, and affected their library service delivery. This was also because of the large numbers of customers. From the findings of this study, service delivery to the customer was affected by several factors that made the libraries less attractive to the customers.

7.6 SUMMARY

This chapter discussed the findings of the study. It revealed that the academic libraries were heavily used by a youthful population, consisting mainly of undergraduates. The number of postgraduate and faculty staff users was comparatively low. The librarians who participated in the study had, on average, over ten years of working experience, with at least a diploma level of education. However, it was noted that they were engaged in a wide variety of skills/professional upgrading programs. The library facilities were found to be moderately clean, with the exception of a few. The libraries were offering a variety of resources/services to their clients, ranging from monographs to electronic resources. Other services include bindery, printing, and reprographic services. However, services aimed at PWDs and children were minimal, with the exception of just a few libraries.

With regard to customer service orientation, it was found that the level of market surveys was weak, and in need of more initiatives. This way it would be possible to reach more customers. These market surveys will need to be more focused in order to attain a better understanding of the customers' needs. In conclusion it can be stated that the service providers need to know and understand their customers well in order to meet their information needs in a more meaningful manner.

The main challenges experienced by the libraries that affected service delivery and its attractiveness include:

- Lack of adequate information resources
- Congestion in the library facilities
- Low staff morale
- Lack of modern and working equipment
- Poor library image
- Staff-related issues, such as negative attitudes
- Lack of adequate budgetary provisions and thus information resources
- Apathy by the university management towards the library institution
- Low publicity of the library in terms of what resources it is capable of offering, thus some remaining unutilised
- Poor handling of customers' complaints
- Organisational bureaucracy, thus affecting decision-making
- Poor staff working environment, such as lack of suitable office space
- Inappropriate equipment and/or furniture

- Lack of action-oriented support by the parent organisation
- Stiff external competition from other information brokers

Chapter 8 presents a summary of the study's findings, and the final conclusions and recommendations of the study as guided by the research objectives.

CHAPTER EIGHT

SUMMARY, CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

8.1 INTRODUCTION

This chapter provides a summary of the findings of the study, draws conclusions and provides recommendations for improving the service quality in academic libraries in Kenya, by addressing the service delivery mechanisms, service quality perceptions and the challenges involved. The purpose of this study was to investigate the issues pertaining to the quality of library services and challenges in the provision of quality service to the customers using the academic libraries in Kenya, in pursuance of the study objectives.

The previous chapters presented the theoretical framework guiding the study, selected literature review related to the study parameters, the methodology employed, the data analysis from the survey results gathered through questionnaires administered to both the librarians and the external library customers, observations made within the academic libraries focusing on processes, physical resources/facilities, library infrastructure, accessibility of the services, and general cleanliness; and interviews with the senior librarians in the respective libraries.

8.2 SUMMARY OF FINDINGS

8.2.1 CHARACTERISTICS OF THE RESPONDENTS AND THE RESEARCH ENVIRONMENT

The respondents were drawn from ten different academic universities in Kenya. This was defined in the section on target population, with an overall response rate of 59% for the librarians and 77% for the external customers.

In terms of qualifications (see Table 5:1, page 152), (15%) had at least diploma level of education, over half of the respondents had a bachelor's degree (51%) and 34% had postgraduate qualifications. In terms of age distribution, the majority of the librarians, accounting for 80%, were between 31-50 years old; only 4% being over 50 years. In terms of employment status, 23.4% were on varying forms of contract terms, and 76.6% on permanent terms.

For the library users, it was established that they were of a reasonably good level of education, with the majority, 71%, having reached degree level. This was followed by diploma holders, at 18% and the post-graduate students trailing behind at 7%. Further, the results indicated that

93% of the respondents were Kenyans by nationality. Only a meagre 7% of the external customers were non-Kenyan.

In terms of cleanliness, 66% of the respondents rated their respective libraries as very clean. Another 33% rated the respective library facilities as partially clean; 2% of the respondents rated them as untidy and 0.3% rating them as being very untidy (see Table 5.1). From Table 5.5c the level of cleanliness significantly impacts on overall service quality perceptions.

With regard to library usage (see Table 5.1), 62% of the customers were daily/regular library users; 35% were not keen library customers but only visit the library weekly, while 3% never visited the library at all. Of the users, 39% were regular users, making use of the library for an average of not less than four hours daily. The heavy users, who put in not less than six hours daily in the library, comprised 7% of the respondents. In terms of user type, it is evident that the majority of the library user populations were undergraduates, constituting 80%; there were a small number of post-graduates which stood at 18%, while the overall category of staff as users represented approximately 2%. An overwhelming 97% of the respondents indicated that they were users of the library, with only 22 (3%) as non-users. However, 28% library users were quite dissatisfied with the library service(s) delivery for one reason or another; 72% of the respondents were satisfied with the services derived from the library. Empirical tests (section 5.3.2) revealed that the two variables: usage, user type that satisfaction levels significantly impact on service quality ratings and even determine the frequency of use (duration of use) of the service, besides influencing looking for other alternatives facilitates with superior service.

8.2.2 SUMMARY OF THE FINDINGS BY RESEARCH OBJECTIVE(S) AND CORRESPONDING RESEARCH QUESTION(S)

The findings of the study are summarised according to the research objectives and research questions as discussed below.

8.3 OBJECTIVE ONE: To evaluate the influence that the service parameters (human resource practices, technology, the library environment and infrastructure, information resources, etc.) have on the service quality in academic libraries.

- What is the overall service quality of Kenyan academic library systems from the customer's perspective?
- What perceptions do the customers have about the academic libraries?

- Does the level of technological applications in libraries influence service quality?
- What skills/attitudes/personal attributes must the staff have to enable them to satisfy the customers?
- What factors determine the customers' evaluation of service quality in academic libraries?
- Do human resources practices influence service quality?

8.3.1 LIBRARIANS' PERCEPTIONS OF LIBRARY SERVICE QUALITY

From the study findings, it is evident that the service providers were aware of good service delivery and the related contributing factors. It was also evident that, to a great extent, service was influenced by personal attributes such as empathy. It was also revealed that the ease with which the customers can approach the librarians, as well as the efforts made by the libraries to understand the needs of their customers, have a lot of positive influence on customer satisfaction. However, convenient locations of the libraries and personal attention to customers, though important, was not really fulfilled. But on the whole, it was noted that trained staff were considered to be assets, and efforts to enhance staff training were put in place at both corporate and the individual levels. Efforts, too, were made to understand and meet customer needs.

With regard to attributes such as responsiveness and assurance, it is worth noting that the librarians value a positive image, and are thus making efforts to show good behaviour to their customers, by being ready and willing to help the patrons who require their services. This way, the library customers also gain confidence with regard to making use of the resources available and their own safety while in the library. Assurance as regards (the competence of the system and its credibility in providing a courteous and secure service) is also taken seriously. This is demonstrated by the librarians' willingness to guide and instruct them on how to make use of the varied information resources and usage of the different media into which information is packaged, such as the audio-visual and electronic formats. However, there is more to do on issues of responsiveness and assurance, in view of the fact that customers sometimes complained about rude staff members and sloppy service.

Similarly, the level/degree of responsiveness (the willingness to help customers by rendering services promptly) in service delivery is important, and requires the creation of a conducive service environment, reasonable working/service hours for the staff/clients, and the right equipment for them to be able to work/deliver service.

Physical facilities, the general cleanliness of the facilities and the materials in the library make up the tangible attributes; hence, the state of these facilities greatly impacts on service delivery, so it becomes imperative that due attention is given to them.

With regard to being reliable (i.e. the ability to perform the promised service dependably and accurately), it is evident that the library service(s) need to be more reliable, when promises made to the customers are honoured regardless of the cost involved; and consistency maintained at all times in the service delivery process. For the service to be reliable, training is critical.

8.3.2 EXTERNAL CUSTOMERS' PERCEPTIONS OF SERVICE QUALITY.

Study findings by the external customers on service quality attributes were tested using Karl Pearson to gauge their importance. The results were: Empathy (0.895), tangibles (0.849), responsiveness (0.836), and assurance (0.829). These results showed a strong positive correlation between each of these attributes and service quality, implying that they influenced, to a great extent, the level of service delivery, and consequently service quality. Table 7.9 on page 280 summarises these results.

The customers expressed the need for empathy and sought individual attention, convenient operating hours, and the impression that the service personnel understand their needs. This mirrors the views of the service providers. Tangibles were rated highly by the customers, thus requiring good, clean and functional equipment for use. However, there is a need to improve on the general appearance of the physical facilities, acquire more library information resources, which should also be well maintained. The customers also sought a situation in which the service provider would be responsive to their needs/complaints in a time-saving manner.

With regard to being reliable (the ability to perform the promised service dependably and accurately), the respondents agreed that the library service(s) need to be reliable. Overall, the customers do have some degree of satisfaction in using the libraries, but the libraries will need to keep the promises made to the customers and strive to do things correctly when providing services. This will help to boost the image of the library, and that of the librarians.

With regard to responsiveness (the willingness to help customers and provide prompt service), while referring to the above statement on customer satisfaction levels, the findings are that overall, the customers do have some degree of satisfaction in using the libraries.

In reference to the customer satisfaction levels of the respondents, it was noted that with regard to empathy (the approachability, ease of access and effort taken to understand customers' needs), overall the customers were satisfied. The ease of access to the library services, coupled

with the ease with which they can approach the librarians to make enquiries, and the degree to which they feel that their individual research and information needs catered for encourage them to be good library users.

On assurance (the competence of the system and its credibility in providing a courteous and secure service), the customers do have some degree of satisfaction. In conclusion, it can be said that the experience the customers get upon visiting the libraries, to a large extent, influences their return visits.

8.4 OBJECTIVE TWO: To assess the library customer service orientation and its influence on service quality in the academic libraries.

- How is the library market orientation?
- What are the communication strategies in place?
- What innovations do the libraries engage in to improve service delivery?

8.4 .1 HOW IS THE LIBRARY MARKET ORIENTATION?

Market orientation was observed in various aspects of the library service; for instance, through periodic reviews of their activities, they conduct market surveys in a bid to understand customers' needs better. From the study finds market orientation needs to be enhanced as it significantly affects service quality. From Section 6.3.4, it is evident that they aspired to stock different formats of information resources to cater for customers' information needs. However, budgetary constraints limited this objective.

From Table 5.11 on page 193, it is evident that the different libraries conduct customer surveys (many customer surveys within the library are evident as 57% of the respondents agreed that this happens). Benchmarking with other, similar institutions is also prevalent, though this is independently carried out through individuals (supported by 41% of the respondents) who perform market research activities on their competitors, such as other information providers: universities and public libraries. Benchmarking in this case is not embraced as an official activity. This could possibly be due to business rivalry and competition and organisational bureaucracy; the approach used is more informal than formal. The study highlighted limited market research on competitors as only 41% agreed that there was market research on competitors. This may be due to a lack of understanding of its importance and the knowhow to conduct market research.

It was also established that there were regular consultative meetings (by 62% of the respondents) between customers and library employees, to identify the programmes/services

that would be needed in future, as well as getting to know the customer needs. Efforts were also made to reach out to customers, with the intention of learning how best to meet their needs (a fact that was supported by 77% of the respondents, with only 23% being uncertain). However, of concern is the fact that 45% of the librarian respondents intimated that they were able to detect slow changes in the client usage preferences/habits; while a further 36% of the librarians agreed that the libraries are able to detect shifts/new trends in the information industry (like competition, technology), with 52% of the respondents disagreeing. This indicates a gap in the marketing of the information resources. The implication is that the libraries may continue to lose their customers without being aware of it due to their lack of overall knowledge of the new frontiers in the information industry and the trending subjects. Also, the libraries did engage in periodic reviews of the possible effects of changes in the library service environment, by factors such as technology, access to the library and hours of service. Only 10% of the respondents indicated that they did not carry out such reviews, while 47% of the respondents indicated that they do.

Still, the different libraries looked inwards, assessing their own services by conducting process control evaluation of their service systems, a fact supported by 47% of the respondents who agreed that they were doing it, with 36% of the respondents being uncertain and 17% indicating that they never did any such evaluations. This is critical as it helps them identify failures and/or challenges in their own service delivery systems. This is consistent with the assertion of the TQM (discussed in detail in Section 2.3) on the need for continuous improvement and regular quality appraisal of the internal processes of an organisation in order to ensure that they deliver what is expected.

From these findings, it can be concluded that there is some awareness of market orientation with different approaches being used to realise this, but it is also evident that there are gaps in this. It needs to be entrenched into the management of the libraries.

8.4.2 LIBRARY COMMUNICATION

Organisational communication is very critical, and from the study it was established that there were several communication channels in existence among the staff, the staff and the library management, and between the library staff and its management together with the university management. A lot of the informal talk in the library focused on the new service strategies or the customer complaints (as represented by 83% of the respondents in Table 5.11, page 193). Similarly, regular joint consultative meetings between staff and the library management

focusing on future information market trends are prevalent. Such forums are important in that the goals to be set and /strategies to be used in realising these are well discussed. The service providers freely share information on customer interests, services/products available via different formats. However, and of concern, is that there was limited communication between the library managers and staff concerning new service developments/customer complaints (only 30% of the respondents agreed to there being minimal communication, while 21% of the respondents were uncertain, and 49% disagreed). With regard to communication with the top university management, the finding is that this is not fully embraced, as only about 50% of the respondents are agreeable that this really takes place effectively. In summary, it is evident that there is a flow of information, both vertically and horizontally, and also a lot of informal communication that takes place.

8.4.3 SERVICE INNOVATION

It was observed that several service innovations had been put in place in an effort to make service delivery better. In this regard, there are several service innovations in place. As a way of reaching out to customers, market segmentation was applied, differentiating services/products according to the user group(s). From Table 5.12 on page 199, 50% of the respondents indicated that this was in use. Likewise, there were periodic reviews of service to ensure that the libraries met the needs of customers, a view supported by 80% of the respondents. Likewise, efforts were made to deal with customer complaints, with corrective measures undertaken promptly (as affirmed by 81% of the respondents). However, there were challenges in dealing with these, and in certain cases, the complaints were just ignored. This was done to deal with customer dissatisfaction, but the quality of service was observed to be below par. It was also established that the librarians, though keen to promote good library service, for instance, through valid library marketing plans, were limited hence not speedily implemented. Also noted was a lapse in the implementation of service strategies, and especially on how to respond to competitors' new service offerings and technology innovations. Only 45% of the respondents agreed that they would launch a response immediately. Similarly, there was a limited flow of crucial information pertaining to innovation from the library managers to their juniors about new innovations: only 32% of the respondents confirmed this, while 57% of the respondents disagreed with this assertion and 11% were uncertain. Service innovation was noted, in cases where the libraries tried to be flexible and accommodative, particularly when it was established that the clients' preference was for the library to modify or change a programme/service routine. This view was supported by 76% of the respondents. In summary,

it is evident that there is an effort to be innovative in their service delivery processes. Furthermore, from Section 6.3.3, technology was applied to the different library operations in an effort to improve on efficiency in service delivery. Technology application is part of the business process re-engineering (discussed in section 2.3) and is bound to help the achievement of dramatic improvements in service delivery.

8.5. OBJECTIVE THREE: To assess how the range of services/products offered by the academic libraries influence service quality in the academic libraries.

- What kind of information resources/services are available?
- What approaches are employed in delivering service to the customers?

From the study, monographs and online materials were rated as the most readily available information resources (Tables 5.2 and 5.6, pages 152 and 165 respectively) and this is possibly because of the ease of usage and its availability. Others were a conducive reading environment and the infrastructure to work with, such as the Internet, computers, training/instruction on the usage of the available resources, reprographic and bindery services, etc. The observations made in Section 6.2.9 support this. However, in terms of catering for special needs, such as services to the faculty staff, and post-graduates, the rating was low. Services to the PWDs in particular was poorly done; almost being left to chance with the exception of two institutions that showed a satisfactory degree of preparedness in offering services to the PWDs. In the majority of the institutions, there was a general apathy to this category of customers, dire lack of suitable and appropriate resources for them, and lack of seating/working space, with the buildings being inaccessible to them in certain cases. This finding was also complemented by the observations as discussed in Section 6.2.7 that services to the PWDs were limited.

It was also established that several delivery strategies are employed, for instance, the library professionals were involved in service decision-making. From Table 5.13 on page 205, it is evident that 77% of the staff agreed to this while 94% of the respondents agreed that they were aware of the changes taking place in the department. However, the service staff were not involved in key strategic decisions as these were left to the library top management.

It is also evident that the staff were well aware of the threats of competition from other service providers (43% of the respondents revealed that they have had to change their range of services/products in varying degrees and that the competitors had forced them to change work methods/service delivery styles). As noted in Section 6.2.12, there were variations of the

service strategies from one institution to the other, as well as available activities and facilities (see Table 6.4 on page 235).

It is, therefore, obvious that the academic libraries are working in a very competitive terrain and the competition has to be dealt with through the adoption and enactment of strategic decisions, purchase of new machines/equipment, quality information resources, and change of work methods/service delivery styles.

From the study findings, it was found that employee creativity at work was greatly encouraged as indicated and supported by 76% of the respondents; another 60% indicated that they were allowed to vary the service delivery procedures, depending on the need/situation. It was also noted that 93% of the respondents laid a lot of emphasis on service growth through the development of new ideas and innovation/new information resources. It is thus clear that the staff were encouraged to be creative and were also given some degree of latitude to vary the service, depending on the circumstance.

With regard to library outreach services, it was established that though these existed, they were not at the desired level/standard. Hence, when asked to respond to the statement *the libraries are keen to extend services to new clients previously not served by the library*, only 53% of the respondents agreed that there were ongoing outreach activities; 26% of the respondents wholly disagreed. This indicates that this activity is not satisfactorily performed (see Table 5.13, page 205). This compares to the advertising/marketing of the available library products/services, which was being done, albeit on a low scale. This position is supported by 43% of the respondents who agreed that this happened, compared to 38%, who were uncertain and 19% who disagreed that this ever happened (see Table 5.13). Similarly, library linkages with other libraries in the industry were found to be low, as only 23% of the respondents strongly agreed. This finding is closely related to the earlier finding, on the resources/services available as interlibrary service, which is a product of the library. Cooperation was rated very low as well.

It is interesting that while not much was being done in the marketing of the library resources, there was some eagerness from the librarians to create new services to meet market needs, as 57% of the respondents agreed. Further, on the creation of new products/services for their various clients, 55% of the respondents agreed that this happened. Concerning the introduction of new procedures to aid in the management of new services, the study established that this was fairly handled, as 64% of the respondents agreed that the library effected new procedures every now and then. Likewise, on the question whether or not the libraries incorporated any

new library service delivery strategies into the existing strategies, it was found to be fairly accurate, with 68% of the respondents agreeing; indicating that there was some consciousness of the importance of new service strategies on the part of the libraries.

The study also underlined the fact that efforts are being made, through the acquisition of modern equipment/technology, towards the improvement of library services, albeit at a very slow pace, with only 36% of the respondents strongly agreeing. It was also noted that the academic libraries strived to provide resources for changes that occurred, such as tables, seats, computers, books (this is affirmed by the positive responses from 75% of the respondents). Regarding the maintenance of the equipment/facilities in the library, the study findings established that this indeed happened, but not as fast as was desired (only 57% of the respondents were in agreement with the statement *the library facilities e.g. furniture, lighting system, windows etc. are repaired in case of breakdown*). Likewise, on being asked whether new equipment is introduced in the library when the current facilities break down, 53% of the respondents agreed, making it easy to conclude that there is some degree of lethargy when it comes to the repair and maintenance of library equipment. But, a very distinct observation is the lack of suitable furniture for the PWDs.

Finally, with regard to collection development in the libraries, it was noted that this was happening, but at a slow pace (only 55% of the respondents were in agreement that there has been acquisition of new information resources (i.e. the latest in the market) and in the various disciplines). Together with new resources was the acquisition of new skills by the librarians, which was moderately rated (only 53% of the respondents agreed to being supported to acquire new skills, training, etc. in order to improve their knowledge base and service delivery). Observations made in Section 6.2.10 attest to the fact that there was heavy usage of some available information resources, like books, leading to wear and tear, while others, like e-resources, were underutilised.

8.6 OBJECTIVE FOUR: To analyse the level of library customer retention/attraction strategies and service delivery approaches and their influence on service quality in the academic libraries.

- What attracts and discourages the customers to the libraries?
- What image does the library have?
- How is the growth of the library?
- What is the nature of service delivery in the libraries?

- What is the nature of customer satisfaction in the libraries?
- What problems do the libraries encounter in satisfying their customers?

Customer satisfaction is critical to any organisation; Section 2.4 emphasises the need for libraries to design the service delivery process efficiently, so as to enhance customer satisfaction. Both the TQM, EFQM models (as discussed in Sections 2.3) on higher education, expound on the need for a clear customer focus in the higher education sector. Parasuraman *et al.*'s (1985) GAP model (discussed in Section 2.5.1) lays emphasis on eliminating any gaps in the service process as a way of boosting customer satisfaction and their perceptions about service. There are indications of a growing library service customer base, but at a slow pace (from Table 5.12, page 199). On respondents' views about the library customer base, 21% agreed that it was low while 68% disagreed. The reason for this is that the libraries are only able to reach out to a small portion of the target populations, which according to Table 4.2 on page 131 are large and growing. The libraries need to exploit fully the great asset of increasing their customer base. Customer satisfaction is a function of other parameters, for instance cleanliness of the facilities, the information resources available, and the washrooms (see Section 6.2.4). A lack of good and convenient washrooms, especially for PWDs, discouraged their usage by several patrons. Access to the library facilities, as noted in Sections 6.2.5 and 7, served as a deterrent to frequent usage, especially to the special user groups like the PWDs and particularly where the libraries are located on upper floors and the buildings have no elevators. The lack of suitable information resources (in terms of format, content, currency, etc.) and equipment discouraged them from optimally using the libraries. The lack of specialised services and suitable infrastructure for the PWDs also discouraged the latter from making optimal use of the libraries. Even as the academic libraries strive to incorporate technology in most of their applications, there is an obvious gap in serving the PWDs; the technology in use is not relevant to their specific needs.

From Table 5.12, it is noted that the library market share is on an upward trend, with 79% of the respondents agreeing to this. In conclusion, the growing market share (with regard to information needs) is an indication that there is a demand for the services/goods, and there is some degree of loyalty among the customers even though the exodus of some users/customers to other libraries is still prevalent. The loyalty may be explained by the fact that library users at this level look for highly specialised information, which may not be readily available elsewhere. Similarly, the exodus may be explained in terms of customer dissatisfaction with

the library services offered (Tables 5.3, page 154). This is further explained by the compliments received; only 32% of the respondents agreed that the level of the library customer compliments was low. These responses, as shown in Table 5.12 on page 199, are indications of mixed feelings in respect of the library customer satisfaction levels. Though some are satisfied, others are not, and there is the category that choose to remain and tolerate the poor services.

From the study, the library is still a valued institution and investment in it is considered worthwhile. Despite its low rate of growth, many customers would wish to see it growing so as to have their information needs met. This is evidenced by their responses to the question *The level of return on the library's investment was poor in the last three years and hence it should be closed*, to which 21% of the respondents agreed that the investment was poor and 57% wholly disagreed. But from the interviews, as outlined in Section 6.3.5, it is evident that though some investment(s) is/was done for the libraries to acquire different information resources and equipment(s), this was hampered by budgetary constraints and organisational bureaucracy, leading to delays in approval and purchase of the required items. On the whole, the level of library investment was low. It is such factors that gave the library a bad image in the eyes of its customers.

With regard to the library's service delivery, 15% of the respondents agreed that the service delivery was lower than anticipated, while 79% of the respondents disagreed with this statement. As a way of improving the service delivery, there were efforts to gather relevant customer information, for instance, the study findings were that 71% of the respondents were in agreement that the service providers were actively scanning the environment identifying what customers wanted and expected in terms of service quality; whereas 85% of the librarian-respondents agreed to be engaged in market intelligence activities with a view to identify customers wants and expectations in terms of information resources. This is positive and needs to be not only encouraged but also promoted. The conclusion drawn from this is that the libraries are involved in some form of market survey, although this is done on a small scale. Service delivery was also affected by factors such as the poor staff working environment as discussed in Section 6.2.8, which impacts on their feelings towards their work. Similarly, as discussed in Sections 6.2.12 and 13, the unfriendly nature of the service environment and furniture affected service delivery to the customers, and in certain cases, the service offered was below par.

There are efforts to apply technology (as discussed in Section 6.3.2) in a bid to improve on different areas of service delivery, such as security, information search, retrieval and dissemination. However, technological application was hampered by the shortage of equipment, equipment breakdown, poor equipment maintenance, and vandalism, among other challenges. Space constraints, as discussed in Section 6.3.7, also did impact on service delivery efforts/initiatives; and consequently on the library image.

Regarding customer outreach, the study established that there were traces of the existence of literacy/outreach programmes as evidenced by 64% of the respondents, who agreed that this was ongoing (see Table 5.13, page 205). As evidenced in Section 6.3.3, outreach was carried out via different current awareness activities and varied from one institution to another. Other strategies used are the engagement of the users to reach out to other users so as to draw them to the resources available in the libraries.

On staff welfare, the general feeling is of dissatisfaction to both the respective library managements and the employers as a whole. The study established that the feelings the service providers (librarians) had towards their employers were somewhat warped, as only 44% of the librarian respondents felt that their own library management cared about their welfare; and a further 36% of the librarian respondents were in agreement that their employer(s) cared about their (staff)welfare. Thus, it is evident that over half of the service providers were somewhat dissatisfied about how their welfare issues were handled, both at the departmental and corporate level.

The service providers (librarians) indicated that training opportunities were limited (from Table 5.13, only 38% of the respondents indicated that they had benefited from continuous job training); thus, for instance, from Section 6.3.5 it was noted that staff training was hampered by the budgetary allocations and lack of priority by the university management to provide training opportunities to the non-faculty staff. The libraries, as a result, employ other alternative approaches to organise training, such as in-house training.

While 66% of the respondents indicated that they were happy that their contribution as employees was valued, only 49% of the respondents felt they had job security. Over 50% of the respondents did not feel secure in their jobs and this is likely to affect their work performance. It was also revealed (Table 5.13) that not all the librarians were on permanent terms. Overall there is great discontent with regard to compensation and it was established that only 6% of the respondents were satisfied with their current salaries. The work environment too is not wholly appealing, as only 68% of the respondents indicated that they were happy.

8.7 CONCLUSIONS

From the study findings service gaps were identified and these will need to be addressed to give the customers seamless services, as proposed by Nash (1988) in Section 2.5.2 of the study. The “stages” in the service journey ought to be attractive to the customer.

The study fulfilled the research objectives and answered the research questions; it articulated the service delivery in the academic libraries and highlighted the challenges encountered in the service delivery process. The results have revealed that, though libraries had made strides in providing varied information resources to their customers, these are not sufficient. There is therefore a considerable gap/shortfall in sufficiently meeting the customers’ information needs. As Kenya’s higher education sector has grown over the years, in terms of the numbers enrolled and the programmes offered, the library resources have remained disparately low. Similarly, there is a serious shortage of e-library infrastructure.

The libraries too suffer from budget deficits. This, in turn, implies that they cannot adequately acquire the information resources as would be required/planned. A lack of adequate information resources and infrastructure is a major cause of customer dissatisfaction. This earns the library a bad image and poses a major challenge to customer attraction and retention. Customer attraction is function of many other attributes, such as the general cleanliness of the facility; the availability of utilities such as washrooms, baggage areas for safe custody of their personal effects; security while they use the library; and accessibility of the library itself (i.e. location) but also its information resources. Overall, the libraries, though they have a large potential market base, experience challenges with regard to customer attraction and retention. They are not aggressive in reaching out to their customers: some have expressed dissatisfaction with the services offered. Some of the customers move to other libraries presumed to be offering better services.

The library infrastructure is generally fair; however, it varies from one institution to the other. But as a general observation, services to special user groups, such as the PWDs, the postgraduates and faculty staff, are scanty. This marginalises these categories of users from the libraries. The unwritten script is that the libraries have concentrated largely on meeting the information needs of undergraduates only, disregarding the PWDs, postgraduates and staff. The user information needs of the PWDs clientele is in most cases being left to chance.

The results have also indicated that, though there is awareness of market orientation among the librarians, they have not fully embraced it. Further, though creativity is encouraged in the workplace, it was found to be limited, with the organisational bureaucracy playing a large role

in this. This needs to be encouraged and promoted to be able to tap into the innovativeness of the employees.

The internal customers (librarians) are discontented with their employer(s) with regard to the work environment, organisational communication, remuneration, training opportunities and job security. These factors affect their work morale, and consequently their overall service delivery.

From the empirical (regression) analysis (see section 7.2.2.1), four variables were significant hence the final equation is as follows;

Service Quality = a + b₁ X₁ + b₂ X₂ + b₃ X₃ + b₄ X₄ + e (error term)

Service Quality = 4.374 + 0.326(Market Survey) + 0.3 (communication) - 0.389 (service range) + 0.412 (customer attraction) + error term

Similarly, the variance on satisfaction on service quality as caused by the predictors (independent variables) was 41.6%. This means that all the six independent variables combined had a cause effect of 41.6% change in satisfaction with service quality change with other factors also influencing the service quality.

These factors need to be enhanced in addition to the other variables identified by the external customers (as discussed in section 7.2.4) such as level of cleanliness of the library was also associated with the satisfaction with service quality, where the p-value was 0.00 (below the alpha value of 0.5).

Gender (p-value 0.001) was significantly associated with satisfaction with service quality of library as its p-value was less than 0.05. It is important to consider such attributes in the provision of services.

8.8 RECOMMENDATIONS

The recommendations are derived from the respondents' suggestions for an improved library service delivery, empirical evidence, and from literature on the subject.

8.8.1 SERVICE GAPS

The study revealed some gaps in the service delivery process, which require attention. Training is crucial as it erases wrong perceptions and attitudes in both the service providers and the customers. Service staff will require training in customer service, service marketing, and the new emerging service technologies; similarly, the customers too require training pertaining to

utilisation of the different available resources and on good information search skills. The libraries will be expected to revamp their information resources collections, so as to adequately service all their customers. Adequate and relevant resources are also essential to disseminate correct and timely research information when needed. They should ensure that their facilities remain attractive to their customers by ensuring that they are clean, functional (in working condition) and contemporary.

Services to the PWDs were found wanting and it is thus recommended that the academic libraries make deliberate initiatives in offering services to PWDs through:

1. Having suitable and varied informational resources and infrastructure catering for the different categories of PWDs
2. Acquisition of appropriate assistive technology suitable for use by this category of users
3. Setting aside specific areas from where they could be able to work from besides having specific counters (and manned by staff who have been trained in the area of special needs) designated to offer help to them assisted
4. Have a customized service schedule specific to the needs/requirements of the different patrons in this category.

8.8.2 INFORMATION RESOURCES

In an effort to retain their relevance and competitiveness, the libraries ought to make drastic moves to boost their information resources. From the study, it is clear that the libraries are deficient in terms of quality, relevance, timeliness of information resources and relevant infrastructure that will aid usage. Resources apart, the libraries need to invest in good technology and related infrastructure, such as the Internet and computers, to aid access to available resources. It is evident that users will not visit the library if they cannot get the resources they are in need of. As discussed by Dabholkar *et al.* (2000), in his antecedents and mediator model discussed in section 2.5.2, the availability of resources acts as an antecedent for library usage and good patronage. The resources should be made available in different formats to cater for the learning abilities of the different customers, besides being acquired to cater for the many disciplines in the different institutions. Information resources for special user groups such as the PWDs need to be prioritised.

8.8.3 TRAINING OF THE CUSTOMERS

The findings point to the fact that training on library use is necessary. Resources may be available, but it should not be assumed that the customers know how to use them to get the required information. Some specific tailor-made training sessions are necessary on specific aspects; for instance, advanced information retrieval skills and use of online resources. More important still, training should also be geared towards meeting the information needs of various user groups, e.g. the freshers, postgraduates, PWDs, faculty staff, etc. on how to use the available resources. Training should be market-driven (what customers desire) and also need-driven (noting the emerging issues). The training of users needs to be a continuous activity, and formalised, unlike the current trend where it is done in an *ad hoc* manner.

The level of information literacy, from the study, was found to be low. It is strongly recommended that this be enhanced in order to equip the customers with the requisite information search and retrieval skills. This will stimulate the usage of the available resources, such as the e-resources, which were found to be really underutilised.

8.8.4 CUSTOMER SATISFACTION

From the study, it was established that there are gaps in satisfying customers' needs. It is of utmost importance that the libraries strive to meet their customers' reading and information needs-current reading materials, access to current journals in diverse disciplines, upto-date informational materials, etc. However, when customers' information needs are not met adequately, they will be discouraged from using the facility. They too need ambient and clean reading areas, comfortable furniture, access to clean washrooms within, access to the internet and working computers for information access among other needs. This is important as customer dissatisfaction was identified as having a significant impact on service quality rankings. It is recommended that customer satisfaction be enhanced across the board through enaction of customer-centric approaches.

This may include the personal comfort of the customers within the library, the personal attention accorded to the customers, the reliability of the systems and the frontline staff, and the features that are available within for the customer. The level of cleanliness, too needs to be enhanced.

8.8.5 CUSTOMER ATTRACTION & RETENTION

The study results show that the libraries' customer base is wide and growing. There are

however misgivings with regard to the service offered, with some customers even seeking services elsewhere (see Table 5.3 on page 154), while some have completely given up on the library being able to adequately meet their information needs. It is also evident that the libraries have for a long time been docile and not making great efforts to reach out to the customers. The library operating environment has changed over time and there is now stiff competition in the information brokerage arena. Libraries now compete with one another, and with other information brokers as well. It is therefore recommended that for them to operate and continue to remain relevant, they will need to be adequately stocked with the relevant information resources. They will also need to be aggressive in their awareness (outreach) campaigns to their clientele. This is in contrast to the past eras when library marketing was unheard of and customers still trooped into the library. In the current scenario, libraries will have to be more proactive in looking for customers, and alongside customer attraction should practise customer retention.

It is recommended that libraries change tact so as to remain and continue being attractive to all their clients. This calls for more innovative ways of retaining customers; for instance, by improving the library environment and making it more ambient, well stocked, having clean public utilities inside and good functional technological appliances/equipment. Special attention needs to be given to woo and retain the postgraduates, researchers and faculty staff categories, and of course the PWDs. The latter category, it was established from the study, even shied away from the library. The library needs to be made attractive and comfortable for them.

8.8.6 STAFF TRAINING

Service staff play the role of being “spanner boys” in a garage by linking up the information seekers with their desired information sources. They also link the top management to the customers, thereby endeavouring to market both the institutional information resources and the parent institution at large. The information landscape has drastically changed; hence the need for new skills to reach out to both future and current customers in an effort to wooing and retaining them as customers.

As a recommendation the training of information professionals need to be reviewed and upskilled-there is need for more focussed and intentional continuous training. It was established that for them to be effective in service delivery, they be retrained in different areas like customer care and relations, people skills, IT, advanced search and retrieval skills. These skills would assist them in reaching out to their customers, training them on efficient information

search and use, attracting and retaining them as loyal library customers. It is these satisfied customers who would then reach out to others, converting them to becoming loyal customers. This is consistent with the assertions of the Gap theory (discussed in Section 2.5.1) on the importance of word of mouth advertising in shaping people's perceptions. Training is also needed on how to deal with the PWDs and how best to assist them.

8.8.7 LIBRARY BUDGET

From the study, it is clear that the libraries largely depend on the parent organisation for financing. There are, however, challenges involved, partly due to the limited funding granted to the parent organisation by the government, but also due to failure by the parent organisation to prioritising library growth and development and apportioning a limited budget. The other challenge(s) arise(s) in executing the apportioned budget; for example, organisational bottlenecks make it impossible for the library to resourcefully utilise its budget. In this regard, the acquisition of information resources is not prioritised the way foodstuffs for the catering departments or chemical reagents for laboratories are treated with urgency. The end result of this is either delay in the procurement of information resources, or at times the non-purchase of the resources. This has a major effect on the image of the library and the overall customer satisfaction levels. The study, therefore, recommends the enhancement of the library budget to enable it to acquire the desired information resources. It would also be prudent to address the various bottlenecks affecting the procurement of library information resources as a whole. Furthermore, it would be recommended that the regulatory body (CUE) would need to do more in enforcing its guidelines, thereby ensuring the libraries live up to their mandates. This study indicates that despite having good library guidelines as outlined by CUE, these were being selectively applied, with the libraries being at the mercy of the "bullish", and at times, insensitive university managements. Indeed, the library budget was one of the very easy targets whenever there was a need to rationalise/cut down on overall institutional expenditure. The specific libraries too would need to adopt affirmative actions and apportion part of their budgets towards meeting specific user information needs, e.g. the PWDs.

8.8.8 LIBRARY INFRASTRUCTURE

On the whole, the library infrastructure will need to be greatly improved. This is with regard to having purpose-built library buildings suitable for providing the different services. The range of services that can be offered is linked to the floor space available, so there is a need for

increased floor space to accommodate and allow more customers to conveniently use the library. Indeed, in all the institutions studied, none had a library building that met the set CUE guidelines of offering seating space to at least 1/3 (a third) of the total user population (see Annexure B, page 419) Other considerations are to do with Internet access, the internal fittings meant to give comfort to the users (such as having appropriate furniture, adequate lighting, air conditioning) and library accessibility improvement (i.e. the library building and also within different service areas of the building itself, including a focus on the needs of PWDs (designated areas for them, specially designed washroom, assistive technology to allow them access the information resources). As part of the infrastructural development (identified above), it would be necessary for the libraries to invest more in different forms of technology, in order to enhance efficiency in service delivery, boost their competitiveness, and also be able to attract and retain the growing technology-savvy category of users such as 5G & Wi-Fi, Virtual Reality tools (VR), different social outreach apps, Cloud computing, Internet of Things, etc. These may be used in library outreach programs, Reference Management, Virtual/Digital Reference Services, Content Management, CAS/SDI services, Profiling System, Mobile based Library Services.

There is a need to invest in adaptive and suitable technology suited to the specific needs of the PWDs such as open book text reader—which helps those with low or no vision. It also scans printed text and verbalizes the text via synthetic speech. Duxbury Braille Translating Software—program that, like a word processor, allows users to type text, then translate it into Braille and braille embossers, adjustable workstations, alternative keyboards and mice, CCTV magnifiers, hearing devices etc.

8.8.9 MARKET ORIENTATION

From the findings, it is evident that the level of market orientation is rather low overall yet overall it was found to be a key player in service quality assessment. As such, the study recommends that the academic libraries embark on aggressive but focused marketing of their information resources besides engaging in more market research to establish the general trends in their environment and customer reading/research profiles/interests. Customer surveys, though done, are only carried out in an *ad hoc* manner in all the institutions studied; it is recommended that these be more intentional, regular and focused.

The recommendations by this study are that market research, customer surveys and benchmarking activities be made more regular, focused and formalised so that they become

more meaningful. These activities no longer need to be informal or *ad hoc*, as they are critical to the survival of the academic libraries.

With regard to the level of service innovation, the study recommends that the libraries: be much more innovative; embrace new technologies to enhance service delivery; tap into new strategies to reach the vast market; and develop new products to target specific market segments such the PWDs, the postgraduate group and the staff/researchers. Gender was found to have a significant influence on service quality, thus the need to have varied resources (such as informational materials, facilities etc) which are gender specific. New service innovation is necessary in the face of increasing competition and also for dealing with the much enlightened user clientele.

8.8.10 LEADERSHIP

The study highlighted gaps in leadership in virtually all institutions. As such, it would be recommended that the library managers be well equipped, with appropriate leadership skills. These are skills that will benefit them to tap into the creativity of the employees, their innovativeness and skills for the betterment of the services being offered. As a recommendation there is also a need to equip staff members with people skills, capturing both soft and hard skills, so that they are enabled to communicate effectively.

8.8.11 GOVERNMENT POLICY ON LIBRARIES

From the study, it is evident that there is a lack of policy guideline on libraries, and particularly in the higher institutions of learning, despite their critical role they play in both the academic and research pursuits of the scholars/researchers at the universities. The CUE nonetheless has issued sensible and clear guidelines on the development and management of the university libraries, but there are no penalties for not following the set guidelines. It was found from this study that these guidelines are not strictly adhered to by the university managements, which are charged with the primary responsibility of implementing them. The guidelines are ignored and/or flouted under the guise of all manner of excuses; the managements apparently choose what to comply with and what to defer. This was particularly the case on the issues of allocation and utilisation of budgets, equipping libraries, and staffing.

The study thus recommends that the national government enacts a clear policy (legal framework) on libraries and that the CUE should be aggressive in enforcing the policy directive(s); this will aid the growth and enhance the status of libraries.

8.9 SUGGESTIONS FOR FURTHER RESEARCH

This study has delved into service quality in the academic libraries in Kenya. Although some information was derived with respect to the latter, the researcher believes that it is necessary to carry out further research on the subject. Further study is recommended to establish what other factors influence service quality in the academic libraries other the variables identified to have a significant effect. As such, future studies may delve further into service quality, seeking to understand what other variables influence service quality in the academic libraries with the aim of improving service delivery. This is informed by the fact that though they are expected to be leading repositories of knowledge and information. From the study findings it is evident that their performance is far below customer expectations. Customers are dissatisfied, opting to have their information needs met elsewhere. But, against the interesting revelation that the academic libraries still do enjoy a lot of goodwill from the huge and growing customer base that they enjoy, more studies will be essential to focus on the relationship between service quality and customer satisfaction and to identify the antecedents for quality service in academic libraries.

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ANNEXURES & APPENDICES

ANNEXURE A: ACCREDITED UNIVERSITIES IN KENYA – MARCH 2017

| | ACCREDITED UNIVERSITIES | YEAR OF ESTABLISHMENT | YEAR OF AWARD OF CHARTER |
|--------------------------------------|---|-----------------------|--------------------------|
| Public Chartered Universities | | | |
| 1. | Chuka University | 2007 | 2013 |
| 2. | Dedan Kimathi University of Technology | 2007 | 2012 |
| 3. | Egerton University (EU) | 1987 | 2013 |
| 4. | University of Embu | 2011 | 2016 |
| 5. | Jaramogi Oginga Odinga University of Science and Technology | 2009 | 2013 |

| | | | |
|--|--|------|------|
| 6. | Jomo Kenyatta University of Agriculture and Technology | 1994 | 2013 |
| 7. | Karatina University | 2010 | 2013 |
| 8. | Kenyatta University (KU) | 1985 | 2013 |
| 9. | Kibabii University | 2011 | 2015 |
| 10. | Kirinyaga University | 2011 | 2016 |
| 11. | Kisii University | 2007 | 2013 |
| 12. | Laikipia University | 2009 | 2013 |
| 13. | Maasai Mara University | 2008 | 2013 |
| 14. | Machakos University | 2011 | 2016 |
| 15. | Maseno University (Maseno) | 2001 | 2013 |
| 16. | Masinde Muliro University of Science and Technology | 2007 | 2013 |
| 17. | Meru University of Science and Technology | 2008 | 2013 |
| 18. | Moi University (MU) | 1984 | 2013 |
| 19. | Multimedia University of Kenya | 2008 | 2013 |
| 20. | Murang'a University of Technology | 2011 | 2016 |
| 21. | Pwani University | 2007 | 2013 |
| 22. | Rongo University | 2011 | 2016 |
| 23. | South Eastern Kenya University | 2008 | 2013 |
| 24. | Taita Taveta University | 2011 | 2016 |
| 25. | Technical University of Kenya | 2007 | 2013 |
| 26. | Technical University of Mombasa | 2007 | 2013 |
| 27. | The Co-operative University of Kenya | 2011 | 2016 |
| 28. | University of Eldoret | 2010 | 2013 |
| 29. | University of Kabiana | 2009 | 2013 |
| 30. | University of Nairobi (UoN) | 1970 | 2013 |
| Public University Constituent Colleges | | | |
| 31. | Alupe University College (MU) | 2015 | |
| 32. | Garissa University College (MU) | 2011 | |
| 33. | Kaimosi Friends University College (MMUST) | 2015 | |
| 34. | Tom Mboya University College (Maseno) | 2016 | |
| 35. | Turkana University College (MMUST) | 2017 | |
| Private Chartered Universities | | | |
| 36. | Adventist University | | |
| 37. | University of Eastern Africa, Baraton | 1989 | 1991 |
| 38. | Catholic University of Eastern Africa (CUEA) | 1989 | 1992 |
| 39. | Daystar University | 1989 | 1994 |
| 40. | Scott Christian University | 1989 | 1997 |
| 41. | United States International University | 1989 | 1999 |
| 42. | St. Paul's University | 1989 | 2007 |
| 43. | Pan Africa Christian University | 1989 | 2008 |
| 44. | KAG - EAST University | 1989 | 2016 |
| 45. | Africa International University | 1989 | 2011 |
| 46. | Kenya Highlands Evangelical University | 1989 | 2011 |
| 47. | Africa Nazarene University | 1993 | 2002 |
| 48. | Kenya Methodist University | 1997 | 2006 |
| 49. | Strathmore University | 2002 | 2008 |
| 50. | Kabarak University | 2002 | 2008 |
| 51. | Great Lakes University of Kisumu | 2206 | 2012 |
| 52. | KCA University | 2007 | 2013 |
| 53. | Mount Kenya University | 2008 | 2011 |
| Private University Constituent Colleges | | | |

| | | | |
|--|--|------------------|--|
| 54. | Hekima University College (CUEA) | 1993 | |
| 55. | Marist International University College (CUEA) | 2002 | |
| 56. | Regina Pacis University College (CUEA) | 2010 | |
| 57. | Tangaza University College (CUEA) | 1997 | |
| 58. | Uzima University College (CUEA) | 2012 | |
| Institutions with Letter of Interim Authority (LIA) | | | |
| 59. | Aga Khan University | 2002 | |
| 60. | GRETSA University | 2006 | |
| 61. | International Leadership University | 1989, LIA (2014) | |
| 62. | Kiriri Women's University of Science and | 2002 | |
| 63. | Lukenya University | 2015 | |
| 64. | Management University of Africa | 2011 | |
| 65. | Pioneer International University | 2012 | |
| 66. | Presbyterian University of East Africa | 2007 | |
| 67. | RAF International University | 2016 | |
| 68. | Riara University | 2012 | |
| 69. | The East African University | 2010 | |
| 70. | UMMA University | 2013 | |
| 71. | Zetech University | 2014 | |

Source: Commission for University Education (CUE), 2017

ANNEXURE B: CUE GUIDELINES ON THE MANAGEMENT AND STATUS OF THE UNIVERSITY LIBRARIES

Following are some excerpts touching on various aspects of the library as stated in the CUE guidelines on the management and status of the university libraries.

LIBR/STD/02

“...A university library shall provide, for all academic programmes, varied, authoritative and up-to-date information resources, which facilitate teaching, learning, and research and community service for all categories of its users...”

To fulfil this, the CUE has spelt out the following guidelines,

- 1) *The information resources shall be relevant, adequate in quality and quantity;*
- 2) *The information resources shall include those that cater for users with special needs;*

- 3) *The library shall develop and implement a collection development policy which shall be reviewed within a period not exceeding five years;*
- 4) *The library shall subscribe, facilitate access and availability of electronic information resources;*
- 5) *The library shall establish and sustain institutional repositories;*
- 6) *The Library Advisory Committee shall be responsible for collection development.*

5.3.1 ICT Resources

LIBR/STD/03

“... A university library shall adopt and maintain Information Communication Technologies in information management and its operations...”

The Library shall embrace opportunities created by Information and Communication Technology (ICT) by following guidelines:

- 1) *Establishing ICT policies to guide adoption and maintenance;*
- 2) *Establishing library ICT infrastructure and systems that integrate with the university-wide ICT environment;*
- 3) *Installing Library Systems that support data exchange using standard protocols and formats;*
- 4) *Establishing disaster recovery and business continuity plans;*
- 5) *Providing ICT hardware and software that adequately facilitate the information management needs of the library;*
- 6) *Providing appropriate levels of internet bandwidth to facilitate downs and uploads;*
- 7) *Providing for the digitization of information resources;*
- 8) *Providing a competent library professional dedicated to the management of library ICT infrastructure.*

5.3.2 Organisation and access to information resources

LIBR/STD/04

“...The university library’s information resources shall be organized, for efficient access and retrieval, using internationally recognized conventions and standards ...”

To fulfil this, the CUE has spelt out the following guidelines;

- 1) *The resources shall be organized using appropriate international recognized classification systems;*
- 2) *The resources shall be accessed through a comprehensive catalogue of the library holdings;*
- 3) *Access and retrieval of resources shall take into consideration persons with special needs;*

4) *The library shall ensure reasonable and convenient access to information resources for the users; and*

1) *Establishing ICT policies to guide adoption and maintenance;*

2) *Establishing library ICT infrastructure and systems that integrate with the university-wide ICT environment;*

3) *Installing Library Systems that support data exchange using standard protocols and formats;*

4) *Establishing disaster recovery and business continuity plans;*

5) *Providing ICT hardware and software that adequately facilitate the information management needs of the library;*

6) *Providing appropriate levels of internet bandwidth to facilitate downs and uploads;*

7) *Providing for the digitization of information resources;*

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2) *The resources shall be accessed through a comprehensive catalogue of the library holdings;*

3) *Access and retrieval of resources shall take into consideration persons with special needs;*

4) *The library shall ensure reasonable and convenient access to information resources for the users; and*

5) *Adequate measures shall be put in place to ensure the availability of information resources.*

5.3.4 Library services

LIBR/STD/05

“...A university library shall establish, promote and sustain quality services that will facilitate teaching, learning and research...”

The following guidelines shall apply and the established services shall include:

1) *Reference and information services;*

2) *Information resources;*

3) *Circulation services;*

- 4) *Current awareness services;*
- 5) *Inter Library services;*
- 6) *Information Literacy services;*
- 7) *Reprographic services;*
- 8) *Multimedia services;*
- 9) *Knowledge management services;*
- 10) *Preservation services; and*
- 11) *Archiving services.*

5.3.5 Open, distance and e- learning library services

LIBR/STD/11

“...The University shall provide adequate resources to support open, distance and e- learning library services. The requirements for open and distance learning library services shall be the same as for the traditional libraries except for Standards on library building...”

The following guidelines shall apply

- 1) *The University shall provide facilities, equipment and communication links, sufficient in size, number, scope, accessibility to reach all users and to attain the objectives of the open and distance learning programmes;*
- 2) *The library services offered to the open and distance learning community shall be designed to ensure reliability and sustainability.*

5.3.6 Library facility

LIBR/STD/06

“...A university shall provide adequate facility for students, lecturers, staff and other authorized users as a convenient and conducive place for study and research...”

The following guidelines shall apply,

- 1) *The building and its furnishings shall create an ambience appropriate for scholarship and conducive to learning, access to information and the delivery of high quality services;*
- 2) *The building shall have in place mechanisms to minimize or avoid security risks associated with the users, the collection, the equipment and data;*
- 3) *The design of the building shall enable the library to develop, and provide services that are responsive to the changing library and information needs of learning and scholarship;*
- 4) *The building shall have a high degree of flexibility or adaptability so that the use of space can easily be changed by rearranging the furniture and equipment;*

- 5) *Sufficient doorways which are open able outwards to ensure rapid exit in case of an emergency shall be provided;*
- 6) *The building shall be convenient for all including users with special needs;*
- 7) *The building shall have adequate ventilation and conducive fenestration;*
- 8) *The building shall be provided with secure windows; the effective areas of which shall not be less than 20 per cent of the floor area of the room and 75 per cent of the windows should be open able to external air;*
- 9) *The library shall provide spaces for the collection, display, reading, meeting, space for electronic workstations, multimedia workstations, viewing rooms and listening rooms, open use seating, user instruction rooms, staff working areas including staff lounges and kitchenettes, space for special use, preservation and conservation such as bindery;*
- 10) *The building shall have adequate emergency and fire safety measures;*
- 11) *The library building shall be regularly maintained;*
- 12) *The building shall incorporate ICT needs and function as an integral part of the design concept including trunking, cabling and wireless connectivity*

5.3.7 Library facility

The following guidelines shall apply with regard to the building,

- 1) *A high standard of internal finish and furnishings is essential to create this quality, and to withstand heavy use over an extended period;*
- 2) *Stable environmental conditions are required not only for long-term preservation of library materials but also for operation of computers and other equipment;*
- 3) *Functionally, the space must be adequate for print and I.T based resources and to facilitate for the delivery of services. The design should recognize the crucial importance of people, books and information technology and information services;*
- 4) *The building design shall permit future growth with minimum disruption to the services being offered;*
- 5) *The building shall be designed for ease of movement of users, staff and library resources;*
- 6) *Access to all parts of the library, shall be as straightforward as possible, requiring minimum directional signs and guiding;*
- 7) *The entrance and exit points for users, which are essential for good security and safety, shall be clearly defined;*
- 8) *A separate door for delivery and dispatch shall be provided;*
- 9) *The building shall have controlled room temperature, humidity, dust and pollution levels;*
- 10) *Conducive fenestration is essential to bring more natural light and users can enjoy good surrounding views;*
- 11) *The building shall be built so as to enhance the psychological and social aspects of space;*

- 12) *The building must place a high priority on indoor air quality, electrical safety, fall protection, ergonomics, and accident prevention;*
- 13) *Emphasis shall be placed upon good systems of fire detection, use of sprinkles, fire extinguishers and other ways of fire suppression;*
- 14) *Visible fire and other emergency evacuation exits shall be provided with no obstruction to their access;*
- 15) *Keys to the emergency exit doors shall be stored at a location which is secure but easily accessible;*
- 16) *The building design shall also involve implementing countermeasures to detect, delay, deny and deter attacks from human aggressors;*
- 17) *Library stacks and records storage area shall typically be designed to bear full stack weight at all points;*
- 18) *Ambient lighting, whether natural or artificial, sufficient for shelving, circulation, reading and workrooms shall be provided;*
- 19) *Carrels and tables shall be sized to accommodate users with laptops.*

5.3.8 Office space

The following guidelines shall apply with regard to;

1) Staff offices

- a) *Library staff at managerial level (head of university library, deputy head of university library, senior librarian and equivalent heading department or branch library shall be allocated office space, separate for self and secretary (where relevant);*
- b) *Office space shall be either open plan or enclosed with minimum space in total 9 square meters;*
- c) *The office shall be furnished with office chair, table, computer workstation/terminal, and chairs for visitors and including file cabinet and shelving; and*
- d) *The office shall be supplied with power to enable installation of computer system that provides access to Intranet and Internet connectivity.*

2) Staff workrooms

- a) *Library staff shall be provided with office space to be used as workrooms for receiving, processing, storage, and dispatch of information materials such as books, periodical, media, and other (cultural) artefacts;*
- b) *The workrooms shall be open plan with minimum space of 4 square metres per individual staff (inclusive of space for materials being worked on and computer workstation/terminal);*
- c) *The workspace for each individual staff shall be furnished with office chair, table, and book trolley, and computer workstation/terminal;*
- d) *The staff workroom in general shall have shelves for storing materials awaiting processing or dispatch;*

e) The workroom in general shall be supplied with power to enable installation of computer system that provides access to Intranet and Internet connectivity.

5.3.9 Furniture and equipment

The following guidelines shall apply:

1) Furniture

- a) The library shall be furnished with appropriate furniture for public use;*
- b) There shall be provided a chair of acceptable quality for each individual reader;*
- c) There shall be provided a reading/writing table (shared or not) measuring 2 square feet for individual reader;*
- d) There shall be provided easy chairs and coffee table for use in the readers lounge one set for every 1000 readers; and the*
- e) Seminar/conference rooms shall be furnished with chairs, tables and white boards.*

2) Equipment

- a) The library shall be equipped with appropriate equipment for public use;*
- b) There shall be provided at least one photocopier and printer in the library building for public use;*
- c) The library shall provide basic communication equipment for public use;*
- d) The library shall provide equipment for preservation and conservation of information materials.*

3) Computer space

- a) The library shall provide space for installation of computers for users;*
- b) The computer workstation/terminal space shall be 2 square feet for single user;*
- c) The library shall have several dedicated computer terminals connected to Intranet and Internet for users and with relevant software for research;*
- d) There shall be adequate ICT personnel for computer maintenance;*
- e) There shall be provided a closed access server room with adequate air conditioning for managing library system and other ICT services.*

5.3.10 Staffing

Details of staff academic requirements are as shown in Annexure 3. However the numbers are to be determined by other factors such as the user population size, the number of campuses etc.

LIBR/STD/07

“...A university library shall have appropriate, qualified and adequate staff commensurate with the academic programmes offered, the institutional population, the number of service points, and the hours during which services are offered...”

The following guidelines shall apply,

- 1) *The university shall appoint a designated head of the university library;*

- 2) *The head of the university library shall be one of the chief officers of the university;*
- 3) *The library staff shall comprise of professional and technical staff. The professionals shall constitute at least 35% of the library staff;*
- 4) *Librarians shall have academic status and be on the same terms and conditions of service as teaching staff;*
- 5) *Library staff shall have access to different forms of ongoing/continuing education with a view of exposing them to the new developments in all areas of information work;*
- 6) *The library shall be adequately represented in the faculty senate or school boards and university senate or equivalent and other governing bodies;*
- 7) *Library staff shall be sufficient in quantity to meet the diverse teaching, learning and research needs of faculty and students.*

ANNEXURE C: ACADEMIC & PROFESSIONAL QUALIFICATIONS FOR UNIVERSITY LIBRARY STAFF

| Staff positions | Minimum qualifications |
|-----------------------------------|--|
| Head of University Library | Shall normally have a doctorate in Library and Information Science or related fields three years as Deputy Head of University Library and should have published a minimum of three articles in peer-reviewed journals. |
| Deputy Head of University Library | Shall normally have a doctorate in Library and Information Science or related fields with three years' experience as a Senior Librarian and two articles in peer-reviewed journals. |

| | |
|--------------------------------|---|
| Senior Librarian or equivalent | Master's degree in library and information science or related field, five years' experience as a librarian. A minimum of one article in a peer-reviewed journal. |
| Librarian or equivalent | Master's degree in Library and Information Science or related field with Master's degree with three years' experience as an Assistant librarian |
| Assistant Librarian | Master's degree in library and information science or related field as the entry level into the profession. |
| Senior Library Assistant | Bachelor's degree in library and information sciences or related field or higher National Diploma |
| Library Assistant | Diploma in Library and Information Studies |
| Library Attendant | Certificate in Library and Information Studies |

Source: CUE guidelines on university libraries, 2015

APPENDIX 1: QUESTIONNAIRE FOR (INTERNAL CUSTOMERS) LIBRARIANS ONLY

Dear client

This survey is academic and aims at establishing the extent of service quality and customer satisfaction in the Kenyan academic libraries. We kindly request you to consent and to fill in this questionnaire. Your input is very valuable and the information gathered from your responses remains confidential and shall be used for research purposes only.

Please indicate your answer by filling in your most appropriate and correct answer

SECTION A

(This section seeks some background information about you. It is important to obtain this information as it will have a bearing on the results of the survey. This information will be used

for study purposes only. Please indicate your answers by filling in the most appropriate answer).

1. Institution's name

Location.....

2. Personal details of respondent-(a) Gender (b) Nationality.....

(c) Age

| Age category <i>(Tick appropriately)</i> | |
|--|--|
| Less than 20 yrs | |
| 21-30 yrs | |
| 31-40 yrs | |
| 41-50 yrs | |
| Over 50 yrs | |
| | |

(d) Level of education?

| Highest education level <i>(Tick appropriately)</i> | |
|---|--|
| secondary | |
| Vocational school | |
| Diploma certificate | |
| University degree | |
| Post graduate | |
| | |

e) Employment status

| Type of employment status <i>(Tick appropriately)</i> | |
|---|--|
| Temporary contract | |
| Permanent | |
| Permanent & in the management team | |
| Researcher/academician | |

3. a) Do you use the library? **Yes /No**

b) Rate your library usage in the table below.

| Library usage <i>(Tick appropriately)</i> | |
|---|--|
| An occasional user(once a week) | |
| A regular user (daily for not more than 1hr) | |
| An average user (not less than 4hrs after every two days) | |
| A heavy user (not less than 6hrs after every two days) | |
| Never at all | |

4a) Which best describes the user population for your library?

| Library user population (Tick appropriately) | |
|--|--|
| Less than 1000 | |
| Over 1000 but less5000 | |
| Over 5000 but less10000 | |
| Over 10000 but less30000 | |
| Over 30000 | |

b) Which of these library resources/services are available in your library?

| Library resources available (Tick appropriately) | |
|--|--|
| Books | |
| Nbm's | |
| e-resources | |
| Computers | |
| photocopying services | |
| printing services | |
| Scanners | |
| Binding services | |
| Periodicals | |
| Others | |
| | |

SECTION B: Library service quality assessment

The following statements represent ideal behaviours/ practices of service delivery workers. Please indicate the extent you execute/ perform these behaviours in your library by circling or crossing the response **you most** agree with for instance... (1) (2) (3) (4) (5) to indicate "sometimes"

| | | Never | Rarely | sometimes | often | always |
|----|---|-------|--------|-----------|-------|--------|
| 1. | Staff should ensure that customers understand the service(s) provided | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 |
| 2 | Staff should ensure that customers are trained on the usage of services offered | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 |
| 3 | Staff should use language which the customer can understand | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 |
| 4. | Customer should be informed beforehand of the range of services available | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 |
| 5 | It is important to honour promises to the customer | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 |
| 6 | Customers should be informed about what alternative(s) is/are available | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 |
| 7. | It is important to have convenient working hours for the staff | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 |
| 8 | It is important to have the staff well trained | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 |
| 9 | Employees and staff should be polite and friendly to customers | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 |

| | | | | | | |
|-----|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| 10 | It is important to have the staff regularly trained on customer service/relations | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 |
| 11 | It is important to have up-to-date equipment so as to provide good service | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 |
| 12. | It is important to keep the customer's best interests at heart | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 |
| 13. | The training and preparation of employees is important | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 |
| 14 | Dependable service performance is important | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 |
| 15. | Consistent service performance is important | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 |
| 16. | Prompt service from staff is stressed | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 |
| 17. | Convenient service locations are important | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 |
| 18 | The appearance of the employee is important | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 |
| 19 | Employee honesty is stressed | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 |
| 20. | A reputation for good service is emphasised | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 |
| 21. | The development of customer confidence in the service is stressed | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 |
| 22. | Individual customer attention is stressed | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 |
| 23. | A nice atmosphere for service is stressed | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 |
| 24 | Good and suitable furniture/working tools for service is stressed | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 |
| 25. | Customers should feel free to complain about the service given | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 |
| 26. | The confidentiality of the service is stressed | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 |

SECTION C: Library customer service orientation.

Please circle the response that best describes how your library performs each of the following activities.

Part one market survey

| | | Strongly agree | agree | uncertain | disagree | Strongly agree |
|----|---|----------------|-------|-----------|----------|----------------|
| 1. | Customers and library employees hold meetings on a regular basis to plan the programmes/services they will need in future | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 |
| 2. | Employees/customers interact freely and directly with customers to learn how to satisfy their needs | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 |

| | | | | | | |
|----|--|---|---|---|---|---|
| 3. | We conduct a lot of customer surveys within the library | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 |
| 4. | We slowly detect changes in the client usage preferences/habits | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 |
| 5. | To assess quality of our services we conduct process control evaluation | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 |
| 6. | We collect industry information i.e. information service (like over lunch, with library friends and experts) | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 |
| 7. | We conduct market research on our competitors (e.g. other information providers-universities, public libraries etc.) independently through individuals | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 |
| 8. | We do always detect shifts/new trends in the information industry (like competition, technology) | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 |
| 9. | We periodically review the possible effects of changes in our business/service environment, such as technology, access and hours of service on customers | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 |

Part two. Library communication

| | | Strongly agree | agree | uncertain | disagree | Strongly disagree |
|----|---|----------------|-------|-----------|----------|-------------------|
| 10 | A lot of the informal talk in the library concerns politics and life not the new service strategies or the customer complaints | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 |
| 11 | We meet as library staff and the managers regularly to discuss future information market trends | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 |
| 12 | Library staff spend time prior to a semester's schedule discussing customer needs/interests | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 |
| 13 | The library periodically circulates information/documents (like newsletters) that provide information on our customers, our services/products. | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 |
| 14 | When something important happens to our royal customers the library knows about it within a short period (like sickness, death, accident ,marriage) | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 |
| 15 | Data on client satisfaction is circulated to all employees regularly | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 |
| 16 | There is minimal communication between the library managers and employees concerning new service developments/customer complaints | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 |
| 17 | When the library managers find out something important about new innovations, it is slow to inform/alert employees | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 |
| 18 | Library management and staff spend time together with the university management discussing customer needs/interests | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 |

Part three. Library service innovation

| | | Strongly agree | Agree | Uncertain | Disagree | Strongly disagree |
|----|---|----------------|-------|-----------|----------|-------------------|
| 19 | It takes us long to decide how to respond to our competitors' new service and technology innovations | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 |
| 20 | In our library principles of market segmentation guide any new product/service developments | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 |
| 21 | Due to varied reasons we ignore changes in customers' service needs | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 |
| 22 | We periodically review our service offerings to ensure they meet customers wants | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 |
| 23 | Our service business plans are guided more by technological advances than user needs | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 |
| 24 | Employees get together to plan for responses to changes occurring in the business environment i.e. library | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 |
| 25 | If a competitor (another service provider e.g. private/public library, information cyber) were to launch an intense campaign targeting at our customers, we would launch a response immediately | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 |
| 26 | The different services of the firm are well coordinated | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 |
| 27 | Customers complaints are <i>not</i> considered seriously | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 |
| 28 | Even if we develop a good library marketing plan we might <i>not</i> be able to implement it in a timely manner | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 |
| 29 | We are quick to respond to significant changes in our competitors' new service/ product innovations and pricing | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 |
| 30 | When we find out that customers are unhappy with our quality of service we take corrective action immediately | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 |
| 31 | When we find that customers would like us to modify or change a programme/ service routine the departments/sections involved make concerted efforts to do so | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 |

SECTION D: Library service delivery

Please circle the response that best describes how your firm performs each of the following activities

| | | Always | Often | Occasionally | Rarely | Never |
|---|--|--------|-------|--------------|--------|-------|
| 1 | Our competitors force us to change the range of our services/ products | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 |
| 2 | Competitors often force us to change/ purchase our machines/ equipment | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 |
| 3 | Competitors force us to change work methods/service delivery styles | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 |
| 4 | Library staff service providers participate in decision making | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 |

| | | | | | | |
|----|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| 5 | Library staff are aware of changes to be undertaken in the library | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 |
| 6 | Library staff are aware of changes to be undertaken in the library | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 |
| 7 | Change decision are made by the library managers alone | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 |
| 8 | Rules and procedures set must be followed strictly | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 |
| 9 | Library employees are allowed to vary their service delivery procedures | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 |
| 10 | Employee creativity is encouraged | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 |
| 11 | The library provides resources for changes like additional/new requirements like tables, seats, computers, books | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 |
| 12 | Employees suggestions are supported | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 |
| 13 | The library facilities e.g. furniture, lighting system, windows, etc. are repaired | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 |
| 14 | Library staff are sponsored/allowed time off to take higher education or professional courses | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 |
| 15 | We introduce new equipment in our library when the current facilities break down | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 |
| 16 | We introduce new services in our library | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 |
| 17 | Our information resources are the latest in the market and in the various disciplines | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 |
| 18 | Our equipment is modern (bought in the last two years) | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 |
| 19 | We train our customers on using the self-service technologies | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 |
| 20 | We have the most current technology | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 |
| 21 | We have changed our service delivery procedures in the last one year | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 |
| 22 | My library emphasises service growth through developing new ideas innovations/new information resources/advanced training | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 |
| 23 | Library staff pay attention to procedures to get things done | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 |
| 24 | My library emphasises outcomes and achievement very much | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 |
| 25 | My library creates wholly new products/services for its various clients | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 |
| 26 | My library extends services to new clients previously not served by us | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 |
| 27 | My library incorporates new service delivery strategies into existing strategies | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 |
| 28 | My library creates new services depending on the market | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 |
| 29 | The library introduces new procedures to aid in the management of new services | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 |
| 30 | The library links with other libraries in the industry | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 |
| 31 | My library seeks to adopt service strategies/programmes/equipment used by competitors i.e. other information providers | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 |
| 32 | Our service delivery strategies change | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 |
| 33 | We advertise/market our products/services | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 |
| 34 | Our user complaints have increased in the last six months | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 |

| | | | | | | |
|----|--|---|---|---|---|---|
| 35 | Our user compliments have dropped/stagnated in the last six months | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 |
|----|--|---|---|---|---|---|

SECTION E: Library Customer satisfaction

Please rate the library's performance on the following attributes by ticking the appropriate response

| | Particular item | Strongly agree | Agree | Uncertain | Disagree | Strongly disagree |
|----|---|----------------|-------|-----------|----------|-------------------|
| 1 | The level of customer satisfaction in this library is low | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 |
| 2 | The level of customer complaints in this library is low | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 |
| 3 | The level of customer base in this library is low | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 |
| 4 | The level of customer retention in this library is low | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 |
| 5 | The level of the customer compliments for this library is low` | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 |
| 7 | The growth of the information resources in the last three years was low | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 |
| 8 | The level of return on this library's investment was poor in the last three years and hence it should be closed | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 |
| 9 | This library's service delivery is lower than anticipated | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 |
| 10 | This library's image is poor | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 |

SECTION F: Customer attraction/retention

Please indicate what kind of results you think/perceive your library has for the moment by ticking the appropriate response

| | | Strongly agree | Agree | Uncertain | Disagree | Strongly agree |
|---|--|----------------|-------|-----------|----------|----------------|
| 1 | During the past three years our market share has increased | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 |
| 2 | During the past three years, customer satisfaction has increased | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 |
| 3 | Over the past three years, our customer base has exceeded that of our competitors | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 |
| 4 | During the past three years library customer complaints have decreased | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 |
| 5 | During the past three years, our new products/services have been less attractive than those of the competitors | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 |
| 6 | During the past three years customer loyalty has increased | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 |
| 7 | Our customers are happy with the service(s) rendered | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 |
| 8 | We have a shrinking market share | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 |
| 9 | Our clients keep moving to other libraries/ information centres | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 |

| | | | | | | |
|----|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| 10 | We collect information on what customers want and expect in terms of service quality | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 |
| 11 | We collect information on what customers want and expect in terms information resources | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 |
| 12 | We keep accurate data on customers and complaints | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 |
| 13 | We keep accurate data on customer/client progress in literacy/outreach programmes | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 |
| 14 | I am satisfied with my salary | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 |
| 15 | The library management cares about my welfare | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 |
| 16 | I receive continuous job training | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 |
| 17 | I have a secure job | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 |
| 18 | My employer cares about my welfare | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 |
| 19 | My contribution as an employee is valued | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 |
| 20 | I am happy with my work environment | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 |

THANK YOU FOR YOUR TIME AND EFFORT IN PARTICIPATING IN THIS SURVEY

APPENDIX 2: QUESTIONNAIRE FOR EXTERNAL LIBRARY CUSTOMERS ONLY

Dear client,

This survey is academic and aims at establishing the extent of service quality in the Kenyan academic libraries. We kindly request you to consent to fill in this questionnaire. Your input is very valuable and the information gathered from your responses remains confidential and shall be for research purposes only.

Please indicate your answer by filling in your most appropriate and correct answer

Please indicate your answer by filling in your most appropriate and correct answer

1. Personal details of the respondent-

(a) Gender _____ (b) Nationality _____

2. In the table please indicate the level of your education.

| | |
|---|--|
| Highest education level (Tick appropriately) | |
| Primary | |
| Secondary | |
| Vocational school | |
| Diploma/certificate | |
| Undergraduate university degree | |
| Other (indicate) | |

3. (a) Do you use the library? Yes /No

(b) Tick the category which describes you as a library user.

| | |
|-----------------------------------|--|
| Type of user (Tick appropriately) | |
| Undergraduate student | |
| Postgraduate student | |
| Staff | |
| Other (specify) | |

c) Rate your library usage in the table below.

| | |
|---|--|
| Library usage (Tick appropriately) | |
| An occasional user (once a week) | |
| A regular user (daily for <u>not more</u> than 1hr) | |
| An average user (daily for <u>not less</u> than 4hrs) | |
| A heavy user (daily for <u>not less</u> than 6hrs) | |
| Never at all | |

4. Which of these library resources/services are available in your library?

| | |
|--|--|
| Library resources available (Tick appropriately) | |
| Books | |
| Nbm's | |
| e-resources | |
| Computers | |
| photocopying services | |
| printing services | |
| Scanners | |
| Binding services | |
| Periodicals | |
| Others | |

5(a) Please rate the library's level of cleanliness in the table below?

| | |
|---|--|
| Library cleanliness(Tick appropriately) | |
| Very clean | |
| partially clean | |

| | |
|-------------|--|
| Not clean | |
| Very untidy | |

(b) I am dissatisfied with the services in my library facility

Yes ___

No ___

(c) I am likely to look for a new library facility in the next six months.

Yes ___

No ___

Section B: Perceptions of library Service quality (Library Assessment)

How do you feel about this center as a client? Circle the number which you must agree with in each statement for instance.....1, 2, 3, (4), 5 “agree”

| | | Strongly disagree | Disagree | Uncertain | Agree | Strongly agree |
|----|---|-------------------|----------|-----------|-------|----------------|
| 1 | When the library promises to do something by a certain time it does so | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 |
| 2 | When I have a problem, the library shows sincere interest in solving it | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 |
| 3 | The library performs the service right the first time | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 |
| 4 | The library provides its services at the time it promises to do so | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 |
| 5 | I am informed about when certain services will be performed | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 |
| 6 | Employees in the library give me prompt service | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 |
| 7 | Employees in the library are always willing to help me | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 |
| 8 | Employees in the library are never too busy to respond to my requests | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 |
| 9 | The behaviour of employees in the library instills confidence in me | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 |
| 10 | I feel safe in my transactions with the library | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 |
| 11 | Employees in the library are consistently courteous with me | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 |
| 12 | Employees answer my questions with a lot of knowledge | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 |
| 13 | The library gives me individualized attention | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 |
| 14 | The library has employees who give me personal attention | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 |
| 15 | The library employees are knowledgeable in the work | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 |
| 16 | The library has my best interests at heart | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 |
| 17 | Employees of the library understand my specific needs | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 |
| 18 | The library has modern-looking equipment | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 |
| 19 | The library’s physical facilities are visually appealing | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 |
| 20 | The library’s employees appear neat | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 |

| | | | | | | |
|----|--|---|---|---|---|---|
| 21 | Information materials in the library (such as books, maps, music, photos, etc.) are visually appealing | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 |
| 22 | I am satisfied with the hours the library operates/ is open | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 |
| 23 | I am satisfied with the physical location of the library | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 |
| 24 | The library is well stocked with a variety of information resources | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 |
| 25 | Overall I am satisfied with the library's services | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 |

THANK YOU FOR YOUR TIME AND EFFORT IN THIS SURVEY

APPENDIX 3: INTERVIEW SCHEDULE FOR SENIOR LIBRARIANS

1. What are the major functions of your department?
2. What are the staffing levels in your organisation?
 - Nos.
 - specializations
 - experience
3. What are the major, library -use related complaints received from users?
4. What is the level of technology application in your organisation?

5. What resources are available? How do you acquire these?
6. Does your library have a training schedule for the various cadres of staff on various service aspects such as customer relations?
7. What are the major complaints levelled against library staff by the users? What efforts are being made to address these?
8. Is the current library building sufficiently able to accommodate the intended clientele?
9. What challenges do you face in meeting the needs of the different library users?
10. What is your perception regarding the overall customer satisfaction of the users?
11. In your opinion, does the library facility meet the customers' expectations? Are there any areas which do exceed the expectations? Which are these?

xxxx End xxxx

APPENDIX 4: LIBRARY OBSERVATION SCHEDULE

1. a) What modern technologies are in use in the library for facilitating service delivery?
 - b) How accessible are they?
 - c) What is the level of their usage in the packaging, dissemination and delivery of service?
 - d) Are there:

| Technology | Y | N |
|-------------------|----------|----------|
| Phones | | |
| Scanners | | |
| Copiers | | |
| Computers | | |

| | | |
|------------------|--|--|
| Printers | | |
| Security devices | | |

e) Are there any self -service technologies? Y/N Which?

f) Are the services automated? Y/N .To what extent?

2. Are there long queues at the various service points/counter? Y/N. How fast is the service? What are the causes of the delays?

3. How accessible is the library building? Any facilities for PWDs? How are the entry /exit points?

4. Is there any guiding within the building? Y/N. Is it visible?

5. What is the general cleanliness of the library facility?

-Tables

-washrooms

-walls/floor

-Bookshelves

6. How good is the lighting of the facility? Y/N Explain how

7. Is the library building well ventilated? Y/N Explain how

8. Is the library building well maintained?

-inside

-outside

9. Is the library building crowded? Y/N Any congestion? Reading areas-how are they like-are they accommodative to all? Are walkways wide enough?

10. Is the library building quiet /noisy? Y/N

11. What is the general ambience of the library facility?

12. Any special areas for:

-Special user groups? E.g. postgraduates?

-PWDs

-children

13. What is the state of the furniture?

-Sufficient

-suitability

14. What is the degree of promptness in rendering service to the users? Slow, moderate, fast, excellent. Are there any long queues? Y/N

15. How suitable are the information resources? Are they worn out? Currency? Nos? Formats available?

XXXX XXX XXXX

APPENDIX5: PHOTOGRAPHS...

APPENDIX 5: PHOTOGRAPHS TAKEN SUMMARIZING & SHOWING THE DIFFERENT SERVICE ACTIVITIES/FEATURES IN THE ACADEMIC LIBRARIES

1A. Reading environment

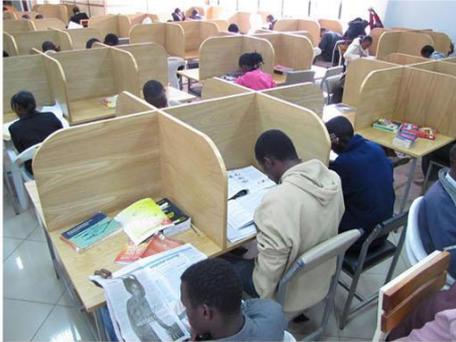


Photo1: Private study by users in the library reading areas



Photo3: Private study by users in the library reading areas

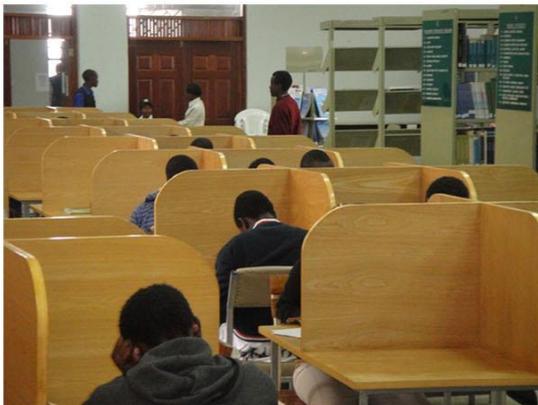


Photo2: Private study by users in the library reading areas



Photo 4: Serene environment conducive for private study in the library

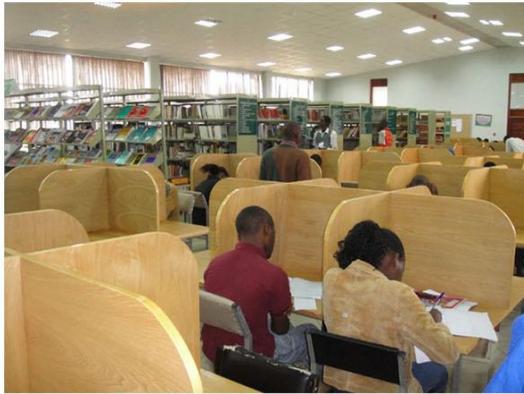


Photo5: Library customers in private study making use of the information resources available



Photo 7: Users in private study in the library



Photo 6: Library customers making use of the information resources available .Note the provision of power points in the foreground to facilitate usage of electronic appliances such as laptops

1B. Availability of Washrooms



Photo 8: Evidence of washrooms in some of the libraries. Note the provision of a washroom for the PWDs. This lacked in many of the libraries



Photo 9: Evidence of washrooms within some of the libraries

1C. Security of information resources & users



Photo 10: Evidence of manned baggage areas in some of the libraries to ensure security of personal items. This builds trust in the customers that their welfare is of utmost importance.



Photo 11: Firefighting appliances in case an emergency



Photo 12: Evidence of security measures at the entrance in some of the libraries to ensure security of the users and information resources. Access control deters library access by unauthorized persons.



Photo 14: Evidence of use of technology to boost security in some of the libraries to ensure security within the library premises –CCTV Cameras installed in different areas as seen in the centre foreground



Photo 13: Application of technology to enhance security in some of the libraries to ensure security of users and information resources-access control



Photo 15: Security enhancement in some of the libraries –manned exits.

NOTE: The congestion-the reading table just behind the security personnel and the exit/entrance just in front of the security personnel



Photo 16: Electronic access control to enhance security at the library exit. This also ensures unauthorized IRs do not leave the library as this triggers the security alarm



Photo 18: Evacuation procedures notice in case an emergency in one of the libraries



Photo 17: Note the lack of any access control measures at the entrance in one of the institution. This compromises on security.

1D. Library Cleanliness



Photo 19: Litter bins to enhance cleanliness strategically placed. Photo 20: Firefighting appliances in case an emergency
Note: the slippery floor (ceramic tiles) which is not very friendly to different categories of PWDs and those on crutches and or wheelchairs.

2. Working environment



Photo21: Library staff working areas- Information resources being processed in readiness for use



Photo22: Staff working areas- note the congestion. In the centre background is a heavy duty photocopier.



Photo23 .Staff work station –Information resources being processed in readiness for use .NB also note the congestion



Photo25 .Staff work station -an office doubling up as a storage place for some of the weeded out informational materials (stored in cartons in the rear background).

Note the congestion in the office due to lack of both an acquisition store for newly acquired IRs and a library store for the old and worn materials



Photo24 .Staff work station — note the congestion; limited working space .In the rear background are books on high demand being issued on short term basis.



Photo 26: Water dispensers for use by staff as they work

3. Information Resources & services



Photo 27: Information resources organization using the LCCS
NOTE the shelves are hardly full pointing out to few IRs



Photo 29: Information resources organization using the LCCS in one of the academic libraries



Photo 28: Staff organizing the information resources for ease of access and retrieval by customers using the LCCS



Photo 30: Library customers seeking services in the library



Photo31: Well guided library service points enhances usage of service



Photo33: Manned library service points



Photo32: Library service points in one of the libraries.



Photo34: Public display of new library information resources as part of the current awareness (marketing)

4. Application of technology in delivering services



Photo 35: Library service point in one of the libraries



Photo37: Library customers making use of the information resources available in one of the libraries .In the rear background are some computers for use by the library customers. Also available are the Daily Newspapers mainly for leisure and general reading

4. Application of technology in delivering services



Photo36: Application of technology to aid library customers to access & make use of the information resources available

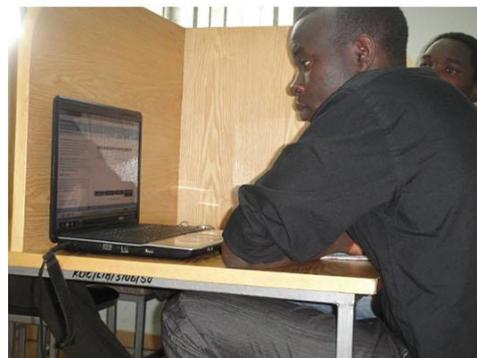


Photo 38: Library using their own laptops to access information. Note the lack of power points unlike in the earlier library in 5. (6)



Photo 39: Application of technology to enhance library access/security



Photo 41: Evidence of use of technology to boost security in some of the libraries to ensure security within the library premises – CCTV Cameras installed in different areas as seen in the centre foreground



Photo 40: Application of technology to enhance security in some of the libraries to ensure security of users and information resources-access control

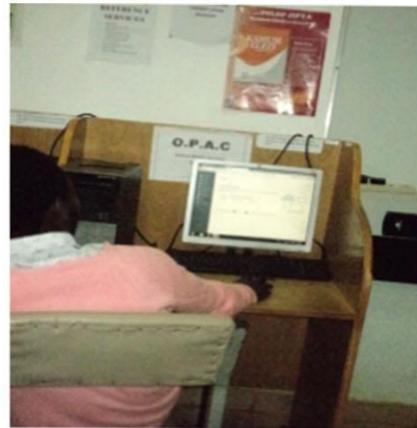


Photo 42: Users browsing through the library catalogue via OPAC



Photo 43: Users accessing information electronically via the library computers



Photo 44: Users doing private study accessing information through the library network

5. ICT Facilities available



Photo 45: Evidence of some of the ICT facilities /appliances available to offer service in the libraries



Photo 46: Evidence of some of the ICT facilities /appliances available to offer service in the libraries



Photo 47 Evidence of some of the ICT appliances available within the library aiding access to information in the e-resource room in one of the institutions



Photo 49: Users browsing through the library catalogue via OPAC



Photo 48: Evidence of internet connectivity available within the library to access information in some of the libraries. Note the poor maintenance of the building as evidenced by the cracks on the concrete wall in the foreground.

6. Library building



Photo 50: Library guiding
Note the squeezing of the shelves which hinders free movement in between. It is also a major challenge to the PWDs.



Photo52: Good library guiding facilitates optimal usage of resources and location of services. From the short loan section users can borrow materials on high demand but on a short term basis.



Photo51: Library guiding to the users for ease of locating resources. Note: (1) the congestion of the shelves and seats/tables due to space constraints (2) The good natural lighting



Photo 53. Library building in one of the universities

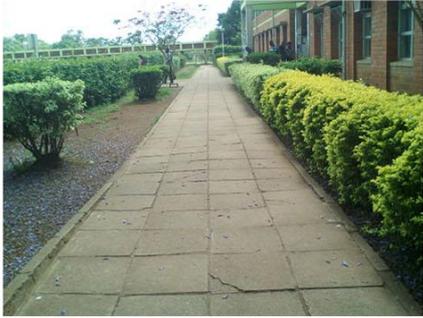


Photo 54. Note the well paved pathway and well-manicured hedge to the library building



Photo 56. Note the sharpness and the narrowness of the staircase leading to another library room. This disadvantages the PWDs. Owing to lack space the library facility is housed in different rooms and in different locations in this particular institution.



Photo 55. One of the rooms accommodating the library service in one of the institutions.
NB: Photo 13d&e showing a staircase to another room upstairs. This fragmentation of the library services is caused by space constraints, since there is no one library building to house all the library services.



Photo 57. On the foreground is one of the library rooms (E-resource section); the staircase leads to other rooms accommodating library services upstairs. This puts the PWDs at a disadvantage when accessing library services.



Photo 58: E-resource section of the library in one of the institutions

APPENDIX 6A: SELF INTRODUCTION TO THE RESPONDENTS

University of Zululand

Department of Information Studies

P. Bag X1001

KwaDlangezwa

3886

01/6/2015

Dear respondent,

RE: Interview/Research Questionnaire Assistance

My name is P.Mbua and I am a PhD student in the Department of Information Studies, University of Zululand. I am seeking your assistance in this survey. I am researching the subject: "SERVICE QUALITY AND CUSTOMER SATISFACTION IN ACADEMIC LIBRARIES IN KENYA."

The information you supply will be treated with the strictest of confidence. Data will only be presented in the aggregate, and responses will not be attributed to individuals. Please kindly assist by completing the attached questionnaire. It is compulsory that you participate-your consent on this important. Also note that: You are free to quit the exercise should you feel so.

Thanking you in advance.

Yours truly,

P.Mbua.

APPENDIX 6B: LETTER OF INTRODUCTION FROM UNIZUL



✉ P/Bag X1001, KwaDlangezwa,
3886
☎ (035) 902 6483
f (035) 902 6082
<http://www.lis.unizulu.ac.za>
mostertb@unizulu.ac.za

Department of Information Studies

REF: S/No. 200813796

June 13th, 2015

TO WHOM IT MAY CONCERN

Dear Sir/Madam,

RE: INTRODUCTORY LETTER FOR RESEARCH

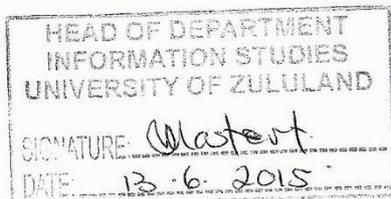
The bearer of this letter; PAUL MBUA is a bona fide student in the department of Library and Information Science (LIS), University of Zululand, South Africa. In fulfilling part of the requirements for a Doctorate Degree in LIS, he intends to conduct research in your University library.

The University requests for your assistance to the student with the necessary data which forms an integral part of the academic research. The information provided will be used only for this purpose and will be treated with utmost confidentiality. A final copy of the report will be made available to you upon request.

Thank you in advance.

PROF. B.J. MOSTERT

Acting HOD and Supervisor



APPENDIX 7: ETHICAL CLEARANCE FROM UNIVERSITY OF ZULULAND RESEARCH ETHICS COMMITTEE

**UNIVERSITY OF ZULULAND
RESEARCH ETHICS COMMITTEE**
(Reg No: UZREC 171110-030)



RESEARCH & INNOVATION

Website: <http://www.unizulu.ac.za>
Private Bag X1001
KwaDlangezwa 3886
Tel: 035 902 6273
Email: ViljoenD@unizulu.ac.za

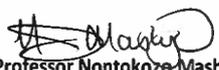
ETHICAL CLEARANCE CERTIFICATE

| | | | | |
|---|--|------------------|----------|--|
| Certificate Number | UZREC 171110-030 PGD 2015/96 | | | |
| Project Title | Service quality and customer satisfaction in academic libraries in Kenya | | | |
| Principal Researcher/ Investigator | P Mbuu | | | |
| Supervisor and Co-supervisor | Prof J Mostert | Prof D.N Ocholla | | |
| Department | Information Studies | | | |
| Faculty | Arts | | | |
| Type of Risk | Medium Risk – Data collection from people | | | |
| Nature of Project | Honours/4 th Year | Master's | Doctoral | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Departmental |

The University of Zululand's Research Ethics Committee (UZREC) hereby gives ethical approval in respect of the undertakings contained in the above-mentioned project. The Researcher may therefore commence with data collection as from the date of this Certificate, using the certificate number indicated above.

- Special conditions:**
- (1) This certificate is valid for 1 year from the date of issue.
 - (2) Principal researcher must provide an annual report to the UZREC in the prescribed format [due date-28 April 2022]
 - (3) Principal researcher must submit a report at the end of project in respect of ethical compliance.
 - (4) The UZREC must be informed immediately of any material change in the conditions or undertakings mentioned in the documents that were presented to the meeting.

The UZREC wishes the researcher well in conducting research.


Professor Nontokoze Mashiya
University Research Ethics Committee
Deputy Vice-Chancellor: Research & Innovation

28 April 2021

