PERCEPTION OF POSTGRADUATE STUDENTS TOWARDS THE QUALITY OF LIBRARY SERVICES PROVIDED AT MZUZU UNIVERSITY

MASTER OF LIBRARY AND INFORMATION SCIENCE THESIS

By

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6 June, 2022

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ABSTRACT

The purpose of this study was to examine the perception of postgraduate students towards the provision of quality library services by the Mzuzu University Library and Learning Resource Centre. The objectives of the study were to: find out postgraduate students' level of satisfaction with the services provided by the Mzuzu University Library and Learning Resource Centre; ascertain postgraduate students' perception of staff attitude towards library clients, and determine postgraduate students' expectations of the Mzuzu University Library and Learning Resource Centre environment.

The study was guided by positivism paradigm in which quantitative approaches were used. Data was collected using questionnaire. The data was analysed using Statistical Package for Social Science (SPSS) version 20.1. LIBQUAL+ instrument was employed as the guiding theory. LIBQUAL+ is one of the tools that libraries use to solicit, track, understand, and act upon users' opinion of service quality rendered.

Out of 128 postgraduate students, 81 responded, which generated an overall respondent rate of 62%. The questionnaire was pre-tested on 5 Polytechnic Postgraduate students. The pilot test helped to take note of some problems such as the average time it would have taken for one to complete the questionnaire.

From the findings of this study, it is evident that the Mzuni Library and Learning Resource Centre is providing quality services to a certain extent. However, while the majority of the postgraduate students indicated their satisfaction with the library services such as good printed material, and the provision of information skills, there was a small group of respondents that expressed dissatisfaction with the services, and this called for some improvements to be made. The services that need improvement included remote login and accessing of the electronic resources via the website. Relative to postgraduate students' perception of staff attitude towards library clients, the study found out that the postgraduate students had a positive perception because they were getting the desired attention from the library clients. Finally, the study also established that postgraduate students had varied levels of expectations regarding the Mzuni Library and Learning Resource Center environment. For example, sufficient lighting; a quiet library environment, and a secure library environment had higher expectations and postgraduate students were happy because the library met their expectations.

DEDICATION

I dedicate this dissertation to my wife Gertrude and my three kids: Comfort, Fortune and Laura for the love and support given to me during my studies.

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ABBREVIATIONS AND ACRONYMS

ARL: Association of Research Libraries

ICT: Information and Communication Technology

LIBQUAL: Library Quality

LIS: Library and Information Science

MZUNI: Mzuzu University

N: Number of Respondents

SERVQUAL: Service Quality

SPSS: Statistical package for the Social Sciences

TQM: Total Quality Management

UK: The United Kingdom

USA: The United States of America

CHAPTER ONE
INTRODUCTION AND BACKGROUND

1.1 Introduction

The purpose of this study was to examine the perception of postgraduate students towards the provision of quality library services by the Mzuzu University Library and Learning Resource Centre. "An academic library is the university's principle instrument in the conservation of knowledge through logical acquisition of all type of human communications records, which could take the form of published, unpublished, written or oral information" (Isibor, 2019, p.6). Academic libraries have the basic function of supporting teaching, learning and research activities that happen in the institution (Estall & Stephens, 2011; Isibor, 2019). Some of the services offered by academic libraries include information literacy, circulation, reference and electronic services (Estall & Stephens, 2011; Isibor, 2019). According to Kandie (2018), clients of an academic libraries include the faculty, postgraduate and undergraduate students and others.

Perception is the entire process by which an individual becomes aware of the environment and interprets it so that it will fit into their frame of reference (Kiriri, 2018). Perception in this case will be used in reference to how Mzuni postgraduate students regard, understand and interpret the services, resources and the general environment provide by the Mzuni Library and Learning Resource Centre. This is very important because when the user needs and expectations are met at the point of delivery of a service, then these actions go a long way in shaping the perception, attitude and practices of the users towards the library (Kiriri, 2018).

In an attempt to define quality, various scholars have come up with different definitions such as conforming to requirement (Crosby & Philip, 2010); the degree and direction of discrepancy between customers' service perception and expectations (Parasuraman et al., 1985); and customer's judgement of the degree to which their needs and expectations are met (Kiriri, 2018). Further, library service quality is also defined as "the one that fully meets the expectations and requirements of the users" (Reddy, 2017:, p. 145). If a library provides appropriate information to the right user at the right time and in the required form, then it could be argued to be maintaining quality (Hernon & Nitecki, 2001).

In the traditional days, before technology was developed to the current standards, libraries worked differently wherein quality was determined by the volume of their collection (Kekana,

2016). This is well supported by Sahu (2007) who states that the service quality of an academic library was described in terms of its collection, and measured by the size of the library holdings and statistics on its use. Today, this method is no longer fulfilling the goals for successfully measuring library service quality. Some scholars have argued that a measure of library service quality, based solely on library collections, has become obsolete and it is only the customer who can judge service quality because all other judgments are essentially irrelevant (Parasuraman et al., 1985; Reddy, 2017). Therefore, it has become necessary for university libraries to adopt a customer-oriented approach in order to know the users' perception since libraries exist to serve users, and are nothing without such users (Adam, 2017). Customer-oriented instruments are therefore tools that help assess quality from the perspective of the users (Asemi et al., 2010).

One of the customer-oriented instruments that was typically developed to assess library service quality is Library Quality (LIBQUAL). LIBQUAL is one of the tools that libraries have used to solicit, track, understand, and act upon users' opinion of service quality rendered (Adam, 2017; Lock & Town, 2005; Miller, 2008). This study adapted LIBQUAL and modified it to suit the Mzuni Library and Learning Resource Centre context.

LIBQUAL has got three dimensions of service quality; namely, affect of service, information control and library as a place. Affect of service mainly focuses on how well users are served and treated by library staff. This dimension aims to find out if library staff are knowledgeable, are willing to help users, are friendly and able to instil confidence in the users (Association of Research Libraries (ARL), 2013; Blixrud, 2002).

Information control, as a dimension of service quality, focuses on the ability to access information regardless of the location of the user and/or the resource in question. For example, some of the issues covered in this dimension are ease of access to information; accessing information regardless of location; accessing information in the preferred format, and the actual content and scope of information (Association of Research Libraries, 2013; Blixrud, 2002).

The third dimension which is Library as a place focuses on the physical environment, and how well the library meets the individuals' needs of the users. Issues of good lighting, comfortable chairs, safe and secure environment and space for group discussions are well addressed in this dimension (Association of Research Libraries, 2013; Blixrud, 2002).

1.2 Background

The study was conducted at Mzuzu University Library and learning Resource Centre in Mzuzu, Malawi. Mzuzu University (MZUNI) was established through an Act of Parliament in 1997, as the second public university, located in Mzuzu City, in the Northern Region of Malawi (Mzuzu University Strategic Plan, 2016). Having started with the Faculty of Education in 1998, Mzuni has since grown steadily in terms of the number of programmes and students' enrolment. The university now has six faculties offering different programmes at undergraduate and postgraduate levels. The six faculties include the Faculty of Education (FoE); the Faculty of Environmental Sciences (FoES); the Faculty of Health Sciences (FoHS); the Faculty of Tourism, Hospitality and Management (FoTHM); the Faculty of Science, Technology and Innovation (FoSTI) and the Faculty of Humanities and Social Sciences (FoHSS) (Mzuzu University Strategic Plan, 2016). The university also has got the following centres and institutes: Centre for Water and sanitation; the Centre for Open and Distance Learning (CODEL); the Centre for Security Studies; the Trust Fund; the Centre for Inclusive Education, and the Test and Training Centre for Renewable Energy Technology (TCRET) (Mzuzu University, 2020; 2016).

Mzuzu University has a library that provides both print and electronic information resources. The library supports teaching, learning and research activities of the university by providing current and relevant information (Mzuzu University Strategic Plan, 2016; Mzuni Annual Report, 2015; Mzuni, 2019). Furthermore, there is access to a growing number of electronic resources (e-resources). The core services offered by the library are circulation, information literacy, references and e-resources (Mzuni Website, 2020). As of 2020, the library had twenty members of staff (Mzuni Website, 2020). The library management consist of the University Librarian and five Assistant Librarians. There are fourteen Library Assistants (Mzuni Librarian's Office, 2020).

1.3 Problem statement

Naidu (2009) pointed out that a library is the heart of any academic institution and as such, it is expected to function as a service provider in terms of education, training and research. To this end, Mzuni Library and Learning Resource Centre is expected to provide similar services. Crucial in this regard is determining whether the role is being fulfilled or not, and this necessitates an investigation into the services it provides from the perspectives of the users of the services. The literature gathered so far indicates that there are many studies on library users' perception and expectations in terms of quality services as well as on general user satisfaction

with library service provision (Clee & Maguire, 1993; Kachoka & Hoskins, 2009; Kekana, 2016; Ncwane, 2016 & Simba, 2006).

For instance, a study by Hiller (2001) at the University of Washington Libraries established existing variations between and among groups of library users concerning library satisfaction and use. However, even though there were variations in expectations and perceptions, there was an overall satisfaction with the library services provided. Another study by Mohindra and Kumar (2015) in India found out that library environment and services significantly predict the users' satisfaction.

In Africa, studies by Ncwane (2016); Kekana (2016) in South Africa, and Simba (2006) in Tanzania found out that some existing gaps between users' expectations and users' perception of service quality delivered by the libraries. In Malawi, on the other hand, only one study (Kachoka and Hoskins 2009) has been documented about measuring the perception of library users using LibQUAL instrument, although that study focused on undergraduate students. Kachoka and Hoskins' (2009) study was done at the University of Malawi (Formally Chancellor College), and it established that the undergraduate students of the College had higher expectations of service quality than the perceived quality of services both for desired expectations and minimum expectations leading to negative adequacy and superiority gaps.

Despite the importance of evaluating the quality of library services, Mzuni Library and Learning Resource Centre has never assessed the quality of its services from the users' perspective using the LIBQUAL instrument because there is no literature or information to the contrary. This was noted through reading the literature and interacting with library staff. It could be speculated that either there is reluctance to involve users in assessing the quality of library service or other measurement approaches have been used. In other words, it is not known to what extent the library services, staff attitude, library environment satisfy the perception of the users in terms of the quality of services offered. It is against this backdrop that the study investigated the perception of postgraduate students towards the provision of quality library services by Mzuni Library and Learning Resource Centre.

1.4 Aim of the study

The main aim of this study was to examine postgraduate students' perceptions towards the quality of library services provided by the Mzuni Library and Learning Resource Centre with the view to coming up with some interventions should the findings reveal some issue and spots.

1.5 Study objectives

In order to fulfil the main aim of this study, the following were the objectives:

- To find out postgraduate students' level of satisfaction with the services provided by the Mzuzu University Library and Learning Resource Centre
- To ascertain postgraduate students' perception of staff attitude towards library clients
- To determine postgraduate students' expectations of the Mzuzu University Library and Learning Resource Centre environment

1.6 Research questions

In order to address the objectives of this study, the following research questions were posed:

- What is the level of postgraduate students' satisfaction with the quality of library services provided by Mzuzu University learning Resource Centre?
- What are postgraduate students' perception of library staff attitude towards the library clients?
- What are the postgraduate students' expectations of the Mzuzu University Library and Learning Resource Centre environment?

1.7 Justification of the study

Ncwane (2010) states that the survival of any library depends on the benefits it brings to its users. Therefore, it is important for the library to be aware of the changing user expectations, and to continually strive to provide quality services to its users. To do that, libraries need to assess quality using tools like LIBQUAL (Bhim, 2010; Kekana, 2016).

Although several studies have used LIBQUAL+™ in measuring perception of library users; for example, in the United States of America (USA) (Hubbard & Walter, 2005; Jankowska, Hertel, & Young, 2006; 2014; Miller, 2008; Thompson, Cook & Kyrillidou, 2006; Thompson, Kyrillidou, & Cook, 2009); in Malaysia (Noor &Yaacob, 2014); in Brazil (Brito & Vergueiro, 2013); in Pakistan (Rehman, 2012); in Iran (Pedramnia, Modiramani, & Ghanbarabadi et al., 2012); in India (Partap, 2017); in Nigeria (Oluwunm et al., 2016); in South Africa (Ncwane,

2016; Kekana, 2016; Bhim, 2010); in Tanzania (Simba, 2015), and in Malawi (Kachoka & Hoskins, 2009), little is known about perception of library users at Mzuzu University Library and Learning Resource Centre. Therefore, this study sought to measure the perception of postgraduate students at Mzuni Library and Learning Resource Centre using the LIBQUAL+™ model. As noted by Ncwane (2010), the assessment of service quality provides important bases for libraries to assess and improve their services to their users.

1.8 Significance of the study

It is expected that the outcomes of this study will help inform policy towards the improvement of library services, collection development and the overall library environment. It is also anticipated that the library may formulate some strategies for the improvement of the provision of its services. This study may also contribute towards theory and practice as well as contributing towards a body of knowledge in this field by publishing the results in a peer reviewed journal.

1.9 Scope and limitation of the study

This study focused on the perception of postgraduate students towards the provision of quality services at Mzuzu University Library and Learning Resource Centre. This means it only focussed on postgraduate students who are at the level that demands advanced services from the library given the rigorous nature of their studies. The study was also limited to Mzuzu University because the institution is convenient to the researcher. This means it left out other public universities as well as private ones which could have influence on the current results. Accordingly, these findings may be limited to a particular studentship level as well as a specific university of which location and funding is unique to its context hence there could be some possible limitations when generalising and using these results.

1.10 Chapter summary

In this chapter, various sections of the study have been outlined and discussed to some degree. These included the introduction and background, aim of the study, research problem, research objectives, research questions, justification of the study, scope and limitation of the study. The next chapter discusses literature review related to the study.

CHAPTER TWO

LITERATURE REVIEW

2.1 Introduction

This chapter provides a review of relevant literature on the concepts of satisfaction of library users; perception of library users towards staff and library users' expectation of the library environment. According to Rhoades and Avt, (2014) a literature review usually provides some account of what has been previously studied and published on a specific topic. Furthermore, Creswell (2004) avers that literature reviews assist in determining whether the topic is worthwhile studying, and do provide understanding into ways the researcher can limit the scope to a needed area of inquiry. Similarly, Ridley (2012) states that a literature review is the part of the thesis where there is extensive reference to related research and theory in the field being studied.

In general, there are three basic types of literature reviews which include narrative, systematic and meta-analytic reviews (Rhoades & Avt, 2014; Sadeghi, 2018). A narrative review, according to Hemingway and Brereton (2009) is sometimes referred to as standard or traditional reviews of literature. It critically appraises and summarises the literature relevant to the identified topic. While a systematic literature review is undertaken according to a clearly defined and systematic approach (Dunst, 2009). The meta-analytic reviews, sometimes known as quantitative reviews, provide a statistical approach to measuring the effect, size and impact of the aggregate studies relevant to the research questions (Rhoades & Avt, 2014; Sadeghi, 2018). This study will use a narrative literature review because it will narrate the related literature based on the research objectives.

2.2 Library users' satisfaction with quality of library

User satisfaction research matured into respectable research stream in the mid-1960s (Miller, 2008; Thompson et al., 2009). Several approaches to user satisfaction have emerged since then that have contributed to the conceptual model of service quality used in contemporary measurement efforts. Librarians began to recognise the need for a good library user satisfaction model that examines satisfaction of library users. This need was attributed to the introduction of LIBQUAL model which has also been adopted by this study.

One of the dimensions of LIBQUAL is 'Information Control' and it is directly related to the first objective of this study: the satisfaction levels of postgraduate students with the quality of

library services at Mzuzu University. The developers of LIBQUAL have defined Information Control as a way of making sure that users are able to find the required information in the library in the format of their choice, and in an independent and autonomous way (ARL, 2012). This involves having the right print and electronic materials in the collections, being able to access resources independently, and the extent to which access tools are modern and intuitive (Fagan, 2014). Enhancing library users' satisfaction is very integral to a successful library because satisfied users remain loyal, have positive feelings and recommend the service to others (Mairaj & Naseer, 2013; Miller, 2008).

The LIBQUAL dimension of 'Information Control' also involves the idea of a library having modern and intuitive access tools such as locating electronic information via the website for library users to be satisfied (Fagan, 2014). Having modern access tools and how they enhance satisfaction is well reflected in the survey results by De Rosa et al. (2011) at the selected libraries in United States of America (USA) established that a lot of library users (82%) were highly satisfied because they independently managed to locate and use electronic journals and online databases via the website.

Similarly, the results of an exploratory factor analysis by Hsu et al. (2014) with a focus on perception to library services found out that library users were satisfied with the library services because the library had adequate journal subscriptions, adequate library holdings (Books), adequate online resources, and kept library users informed when services were introduced. The findings of the two studies show that library users were satisfied with the library services provided. The results may be similar because all these libraries provided the services through modern platforms such as online databases and alike.

The issue of library user education has grown in importance as evidenced in the recent studies in Australia and New Zealand. A qualitative study by Sullivan-windle (2013) at the Queensland university of Technology with a focus of satisfaction with library services found out that library users were frustrated and dissatisfied because they were failing to understand the catalogue and it was not easy to use. Conversely, a mixed method study by Xia (2013) at the Victoria University of Wellington with a focus on satisfaction with digital library services established that library users were satisfied because the services provided by the library were easy to access and retrieve; library users were being trained on how to access the resources, and these e-resources were updated. Looking at the results from the two studies, one observes

that they are different may be because library users in New Zealand at the VUW were trained hence the satisfaction, while those at Queensland University in Australia were not well-trained on how to access the resources hence the dissatisfaction. This then justifies the need for user education in order to prepare them on how to use available services and in the process increasing their satisfaction levels.

In Asia, a survey design by Jiao et al. (2010) at the Wuhan and Beijing Universities with a focus on satisfaction to library services found out that library users (63%) were satisfied with library services because the library provided them with orientations that met the needs of the users; the circulation policies were flexible; the inter library loans were prompt; books were shelved regularly, and the library provided sufficient user education programmes. Similarly, a survey study by Liu (2016) on conducted amongst some selected university libraries in China with a focus on satisfaction with library services found out that over 60% library users were satisfied with the library services because the library opening hours were being extended during examination periods, and that the library websites were easy to navigate with several links to other e-resources databases. In these studies, orientations programmes were identified as the major contributing factor for library users to have the skills for accessing the resources resulting into satisfaction. From the outcomes of these two studies, it is clear that the libraries were providing top-notch library services which could have resulted into satisfaction of library users.

On the other hand, a mixed method study by Greenberg (2016) at the Bar-Ilan university with a focus on the role of academic libraries found out that library users were satisfied with the services because the library introduced 'Discovery tools' where a single point of entry that looks like Google was created to access all the library resources using a single interface. This innovation was convenient to the library users as they were no longer supposed to use the Online Public Access Catalogue (OPAC) to access the library catalogue, and there was no need to login separately to access the subscribed databases or visit the library website to access the e-resources.

Similarly, findings of a survey research by Pedramnia et al. (2012) at the Mashhad University of Medical Sciences with a focus on service quality in academic libraries revealed that library users were satisfied as the 'Information Control' LIBQUAL dimension received a good score. The library users were satisfied because the library provided an easy system for searching and

accessing resources, and the time for loaning resources was also appropriate to the users. What emerges from the studies by Greenberg (2016) and is that both findings agree on the fact that 'discovery tools' are very critical for enhancing user satisfaction; hence they have become trendy in modern librarianship. Importantly, discovery tools are the extension of the third generation of library catalogues (Greenberg, 2016). These tools do provide a single window approach to the segregated resources subscribed by the library.

In Africa, researchers have also shown an increased interest in the Library users' satisfaction studies. For instance, in West Africa, a survey by Ijirigho (2010) at Covenant University and the University of Lagos with a focus on faculty expectations of libraries services found out that 72% of library users of University of Lagos were satisfied with the services because the library provided them with excellent Information resources like access to journals and good lending services while 97% of library users from the Covenant University were satisfied with internet-related services.

Likewise, a survey done by Tiemo and Ateboh (2016) at Niger Delta University with a focus on users' satisfaction with library information found out that library users were satisfied with the lending services of the library, renewal of library materials and longer hours of internet services. The study also revealed that library users were dissatisfied with reference services, full access to subscribed databases, library catalogue to locate materials, document delivery services, weekend library services and notification of new arrival of library materials; library orientation, bindery services, inter-library loan and computer literacy skills services. Looking at the findings from the two studies by Ijirigho (2010); and Tiemo and Ateboh (2016), it can be concluded that users' satisfaction was achieved when users were provided with various types of information resources and services to fulfill their information needs. Therefore, the availability of quality information resources and services in libraries might have a significant influence on library users' satisfaction.

A mixed method research by Mugwisi (2014) at the agricultural researchers library with a focus on satisfaction with library services found out that the majority of library users (54.7%) were dissatisfied with the library services offered because they were not always accessing the materials they were looking for. The libraries were failing to provide the exact resources needed by the library users. In a similar manner, a study that used both qualitative and quantitative methods by Jagero et al. (2014) at the Africa University with a focus on usability of digital

resources found out that 71% of the library users were dissatisfied with the digital library services because the materials in the digital library were not much relevant, and the system did not have enough collection. A concern was also raised about the systems' slow response time. The findings from these two studies indicate that as the number of digital library users increases, issues pertaining to interaction with the interface and usefulness of its collection also arise. Therefore, libraries were urged to invest more in ICTs and user education programmes so as to enhance user satisfaction.

In Zambia, a study that used both quantitative and qualitative methods by Musonda-Mubanga and Chakanika (2018) at the University of Zambia with a focus on satisfaction with library services found out that 65% of library users were dissatisfied with the services because the library was not providing up-to-date materials. Majority of library users, who visited the main library at UNZA, said that the library was not reliable enough to provide relevant up-to-date research materials. Conversely, a quantitative study by Tamilenthi et al. (2012) at a Zambian central library with a focus on users' evaluation of service quality found out that 56% of library users were satisfied with the reference services together with the updated collections. These two studies complement the fact that any library, irrespective of its type, should be user oriented and the collection must be updated.

In the Republic of South Africa, there have been numerous studies regarding library users' satisfaction with library services. For example, a quantitative study by Bhim (2010) at Bessie head library with a focus on perception of library established that the satisfaction levels were very high (93%) because the library had an efficient reserve section, an efficient inter-library loan service and a comprehensive reference service. In the same vein, a quantitative study by Motiang et al., (2014) at university of Limpopo with a focus on evaluating user satisfaction found out that library users (59%) were satisfied with the library services because the opening hours were reasonable, registration process was easy to follow, and the loan period was also enough.

Contrary to the findings of the above studies, a quantitative study by Phukubje and Ngoepe (2017) at University of Limpopo with a focus on accessibility of library services for users with disability found out that even though the library had a purpose-built unit for students with disabilities that complies with international best practices, more students (91%) were not

adequately satisfied with the library services they received as very few library materials had been transcribed into accessible formats.

These studies together seem to suggest that there is need for policy-makers to include library users in the information access and collection development policies. In that way, it is suggested that dissatisfaction due to limited library opening hours, lending periods and collection formats for people with disabilities could be minimised.

Broadly, the studies reviewed this far have shown that there exist some literature in the area of library users' satisfaction with library services across the globe. In Malawi however, the only known study that used LIBQUAL is by Kachoka and Hoskins (2009) at University of Malawi whose focus was on undergraduate students. As a recap, the study found out that the undergraduate students at Chancellor College had higher expectations of service quality than the perceived quality of service hence were dissatisfied. The issue nevertheless is that studies that targeted postgraduate students in Malawi are either not there or not known. It is for this reason that the current study intends to address this gap by answering research objective number one: to find out postgraduate students' level of satisfaction with the services provided by the Mzuzu University Library and Learning Resource Centre.

2.3 Library users' perception towards library staff

A library is an integral part of an academic and research organisation, and users are key stakeholders who need to be treated well. The second objective of this study, perception of library staff relates very well with 'affect of service' construct which is one of the three dimensions of LibQUAL. The dimension of 'affect of service' concerns the human dimension of service quality and is all about library users' interaction with staff (ARL, 2012). Aspects of this dimension include user perception of staff helpfulness, competency, dependability, and care for library users (Fagan, 2014). Some authors have suggested that perceptions of users vary depending on staff attitude (de Jager, 2015; Mairaj & Naseer, 2013; Rehman, 2012; Simba, 2015). This means that different behaviours may contribute to library users' perception towards staff.

Surveying users to measure perception towards library staff has become common in academic libraries. For example, a student satisfaction survey done by Rysavy et al. (2017) at Goldey Beacom College with a focus on student satisfaction with library services found out that during

the eight-year period surveyed, on average, the majority of the students strongly agreed that library staff were available to help them and answer questions in a knowledgeable manner. Similarly, a descriptive-correlation method of research by Cristobal (2018) at University of Saint Louis with a focus on LibQUAL dimensions and customer satisfaction found out that library users perceived library staff as being helpful, knowledgeable and professional. These results mean that both libraries were very good in creating and harnessing a good rapport with the library users. The reason could be that library staffs were well trained in customer care services.

Recent trends in library customer service have led to development of more research studies in many developed countries. For example, a qualitative study by Sullivan-windle (2013) at Queensland University of Technology with a focus on effective use of library services found out that library users perceived library staff as not helpful and unprofessional. Negative comments relating to library staff, who were not professional, reflected badly on those librarians who were generally seen as competent as well as helpful. Similar dissatisfaction were also observed in a qualitative study by Lin and Boamah (2019) at Auckland libraries with a focus on immigrant library users' found out that although the library enhanced interactions from people across different cultural background, the some library staff were not understanding some of their needs due to cultural differences. It is evident that customer care plays a major role in the success of a library. However, the two studies above indicate that libraries did not do well in terms of customer care services. It is evident that these libraries failed to look after the library users to ensure a delightful interaction and satisfaction with the services.

In Asia, on the other hand, there have been increased rapid advances in the field of library customer care services. Surveys such as that conducted by Jiao et al., (2010) at the Wuhan and Beijing Universities with a focus on perception towards library staff found out that a lot of library users (99%) had a positive attitude towards library staff because they were readily available to provide assistance and respond in a timely manner; staff were knowledgeable, and were answering inquiries accurately and clearly. More equally so, excellent perception towards library staff was also established in a quantitative study by Xi et al., (2016) at Nanjing Agricultural University which focused on service quality offered by library staff found out that the perception of library users towards staff was excellent (83.7%) because the staff gave effective feedback on users' opinion and suggestions; the librarians met users' individual demands, and the staff also gave timely help. The two studies indicate that the libraries

understood the fact that good customer care means helping the library user in an efficient manner that goes beyond their expectations.

In the Middle East, similar studies to assess the perception of library users towards staff were also conducted. A quantitative study by Nejati (2008) at University of Tehran with a focus on library service quality found out that library users were happy with library staff because they were always available to answer their queries in a correct manner. Conversely, a descriptive survey study by Bahrainizadeh (2013) at Persian Gulf University with a focus on service quality dimensions revealed that library users perceived library staff as lacking personal politeness towards them. The differences in these results may suggest that library staff of Tehran Central library received proper training on how to handle and take care of library users as opposed to those library staff of Persian Gulf University. In practice, the manner in which library staff responds to users and the efficacy they resolve an issue speak volumes about the values such staff holds, and that is where library users make an impression and assumption about the library's service offerings.

In East Africa, a quantitative study by Onyancha (2020) at African union court on human and people's right with a focus on perceived level of service quality demonstrated that the LibQUAL dimension of 'affect of service' had a highest score as library users perceived staff to be well-knowledgeable to answer library questions; the staff were able to instil confidence in the users, and they were giving library users individual attention. Similar findings were also obtained in a study that used both qualitative and quantitative designs by Namaganda et al., (2013) at Makerere University with a focus on users' perceptions of library services showed that 75% of library users rated the library staff highly because they answered queries professionally, treated library users fairly, and were readily available to assist library users. The results of the two studies are consistent probably because both libraries were advanced; hence staff training, on the best way of handling library users, was usually high on their staff development agendas.

A study that utilised both qualitative and quantitative techniques by Mugwisi (2014) at the agricultural researchers with a focus on library satisfaction found out that 50% of library users perceived library staff to be helpful each time they sought assistance from them. Contrary to these results, a quantitative and qualitative study by Musonda-Mubanga and Chakanika (2018) at the University of Zambia with a focus on library staff found out that that 43% of library users

felt that library staff were not prompt and efficient when helping them. The results of the two studies may be different due to the different nature of the countries, libraries and even the users in question. For example, the dissatisfaction results at University of Zambia could be attributed to the fact that university students are always against time due to their tight academic schedules, and they thus loaf long queues at the library issuing counters. That is why they felt that library staffs were not prompt enough to their liking. On the other hand, the library users in Zimbabwe were agricultural research and extension workers are not fresh students per say. This then implies that the Zimbabwe users were not having huge amounts of assignments due on which is common of undergraduate and fresh students as that of the UNZA. To deal with such frustrations, the study urged university libraries to employ adequate staff especially on issuing counters so as to save time of the users.

A study which combined both qualitative and quantitative data by Becker et al., (2017) at Cape Peninsula University of Technology with a focus on quality found out that all the customer service statements received a very high rating indicating that library users had a high perception towards library staff. Moreover, library users indicated that staffs were knowledgeable, professional as they provided appropriate answers. Similarly, a quantitative study by Ncwane (2016) at University of Technology's Natural Sciences with a focus on levels of user found out that the perception was high (78.2%) because staff were willing to help and give each user individual attention.

On the other hand, some recent studies have offered contradictory findings about the attitude of library staff. For example, a quantitative study by Kekana and Kheswa (2020) at University of Kwazulu-Natal which focused on LibQUAL dimensions found out that the LibQUAL dimension of 'affect of service' received a fair score as the majority of library users felt that library staffs were not always available to help them. In a nutshell, findings from the South African studies demonstrate that overall, libraries are doing enough in creating a good rapport between library staff and the users as most of the users indicated positive perception towards library staff.

The studies reviewed this far show the availability of literature in the area of 'affect of service' at an international level. Nevertheless, in Malawi, the only known study that used LIBQUAL is the one by Kachoka and Hoskins (2009) at University of Malawi whose focus was on

undergraduate students. By way of a recap, the findings of that study revealed that the majority of undergraduate students seventy-seven (41.4%) were dissatisfied with the treatment they received from the library staff while as fifty-five (29.6%) were satisfied. The issue here is that there are no studies that targeted postgraduate students in Malawi until now. It is for this reason that the study intends to address this gap by answering research objective number two: to ascertain postgraduate students' perception of staff attitude towards library clients.

2.4 Library users' expectations of the library environment

One of the most significant debates in academic libraries is addressing user's expectations regarding the library environment. The last LIBQUAL dimension which is 'Library as a place' relates well with the third objective of this study that deals with 'Postgraduate students' expectation of the Mzuni Library and Learning Resource Centre environment.' LIBQUAL defines 'Library as a Place' as the physical environment of the library as a place for individual study, group work and inspiration (ARL, 2012). In this dimension, LIBQUAL assess the availability of quiet space, the comfort and welcoming feel of space, and the suitability of space for study, learning and research (Bronicki, 2017; Einasto, 2017).

A quantitative study by Donovan (2020) at university of Kentucky College of Law with a focus on library space as intrinsic facilitator of the reading experience found out that the environment of the library, merely by the presence of books on the shelves, provided an apparent benefit to the library users. Furthermore, the study showed that library users expected a quiet environment free from distractors thereby allowing for better engagement with texts, comprehension and retention of complex materials. Overall, library users were very happy because the library met their expectations. Similar results were also established in a quantitative study by Mangrum (2019) on 'Students and staff perceptions of University library usage: Comparing reality to interpretation of space usage' at the University of Southern Mississippi in the USA.' The findings revealed that users 69% of undergraduate students and 65% of graduate students preferred quiet environment for reading. The users were very happy because the library provided them with a quiet environment; soundproofed space for group discussions and a space that inspires study and learning. These two results bring in a very important aspect that there is multidimensional aspect to space preferences. In some studies library users have also included access to electrical sockets, chairs and desks as some of the facilities that ease and make their stay in the library.

In Asia, library environment continues to be an important topic in the field of librarianship as evidenced in a survey conducted by Field Service Specialist (2015) at selected libraries in Hong Kong with a focus on library environment on found out that 92.8% of library users expected the library to be well ventilated, quiet and neat. The results indicated that the users were very happy because the library met their expectations. Still in Hong Kong, an online survey by Ka et al. (2020) at university of Hong Kong libraries with a focus on users satisfaction with library environment found out that library users were happy because the library met their expectations in the provision of space for group discussions and social interaction. Comparing the results of the two studies in Hong Kong, it is clear to note that library users of university libraries prefer a space for group discussions unlike library users from public libraries. This is so because collaborative learning is now being encouraged in universities hence the need for group discussions unlike those users from public libraries whose needs are diverse and may not need discussions.

Recent trends in library environment have led to a proliferation of studies even in the Middle East. A quantitative study by Mardani et al., (2014) at Tahran University of medical Sciences with a focus on measuring library service quality found that library users expected a quiet library environment and space for group discussions. The library users were not happy because the library failed to meet these expectations. These results are in line with the results of a survey by Asemi et al., (2010) at academic libraries in Iran with a focus on LibQUAL dimensions found out that users were not happy because the library failed to meet their expectations in the areas of quiet space for individual study; a comfortable and inviting library location, and an adequate space for group study. As a result, library users were not happy because the library failed to meet their expectations.

In west Africa, a quantitative study by Olumunmi et al., (2016) at Nigerian private universities with a focus on perceived quality of library services found out that library users expected the library environment to have a good space per student, and a good number of toilets and water supply in the library. The library users were not happy because the library failed to meet their expectations. Still in Nigeria, a survey research by Adam (2017) at Yusufu Maitama Sule University with a focus on service quality satisfaction found out that the score was low (19%) as library users expected the library to have functional air conditioners and fans but the library failed to meet this expectations hence the users were frustrated.

In Ghana on the other hand, a qualitative study by Nyantakyi-Baah (2016) on 'User perception of academic library service quality and value: The case of the Ghana Institute of Journalism libraries,' established that a lot of library users expected the library to have enough space to accommodate individuals and group study. In this context, the users were happy because the library met all their expectations. The studies in West African countries cited above have common findings. For example, space for group discussion seems to be common in all these findings. Space for group discussions is thus very important, and libraries must provide such space because it promotes collaborative learning. Collaborative learning is a situation in which two or more people learn or attempt to learn something together and it is social experience.

A study that utilised both qualitative and quantitative techniques by Mugwisi (2014) at the agricultural researchers with a focus on adequate reading space established that library users (29.8%) expected adequate space for shelves and sitting space. However, the library spaces were not adequate as the library buildings were too small units attached to the main administration buildings. As such, the library failed to meet the users' expectations hence leaving them dejected. Similar studies were also done in Zambia to assess the expectation of users regarding the library environment. A study that used both quantitative and qualitative methods by Musonda-Mubanga and Chakanika (2018) at the University of Zambia with a focus on library environment on found out that users expected good sanitation in the library. However, the library failed to meet this expectation as 82% of the users felt that the library had poor sanitation hence creating a dissatisfied clients. Still in Zambia, almost similar findings were revealed in a quantitative study by Tamilenthi et al. (2012) at a central library in Zambia with a focus on library environment revealed that 56% of library users expected a clean environment, good ventilation, good furniture, appropriate space for reading, drinking water and toilets. However, the library failed to meet these expectations hence the users were left dejected and unsatisfied. These studies together show that users consider library environment as a place where they can actively engage themselves with the materials, and enhance their knowledge, and this eventually turns them into active library users.

In the Republic of South Africa, there have been some studies on promoting and providing better environment to the library users. A quantitative study by Kekana (2016) at university of KwaZulu-Natal which focused on postgraduate students' perception of the library environment established that an average of 41.1% library users expected the library to have sufficient space

for individuals and group study; sufficient lighting, and good ventilation in the library. The users were happy because the library met their expectations.

In the same vein, a quantitative study by Motiang et al. (2014) at university of Limpopo with a focus on evaluating user satisfaction found out that library users expected the library environment to be quiet, clean reading areas and the volume of the book detector siren must be lowered down. In this case, the library was said to have met users expectations. Another quantitative study by Ncwane (2016) University of Technology's Natural Sciences with a focus on users' level of satisfaction also found out that 63.8% of library users expected the library to provide quiet study places and soundproof discussion rooms. The library was said to have met these expectations and users were happy and satisfied. Similarly, a quantitative study by de Jager (2015) at the University of Cape Town with a focus on perception of library environment found out that library users expected the library to provide a quiet space for individual work; a comfortable and inviting location; space for group learning and group study and a secure and safe place which were of course provided for. In a nutshell, Library users in all the above studies expected almost similar library conditions for their studies. The various expectations from the library users reveal that users do view and perceive the library as a good place for their studies hence anything short of that might have negative implications on users perception and practice.

What emerges from these discourses is that the modern library environment is a volatile one because different types of users expect different types of library environments. This means library environment may present some advantages and disadvantages to different groups and individual users. The studies reviewed have indeed shown that there is some literature out there in the area of library environment. In Malawi nevertheless, the only known study that used LIBQUAL is by Kachoka and Hoskins (2009) at the University of Malawi whose focus was on undergraduate students. As discussed several times, the study established that undergraduate students expected library space that inspires learning, and is quiet for individual and group work. However, the library in question failed to meet the library users expectations. Besides, studies that targeted postgraduate students in Malawi are limited and unknown. It is for this reason that the study intended to address this gap by answering research objective number three: to determine postgraduate students' expectations of the Mzuzu University Library and Learning Resource Centre environment

2.5 Chapter summary

This chapter examined relevant literature underlying this study based on the research questions and objectives. The next chapter discusses the theoretical framework used in this study.

CHAPTER THREE

THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK

3.1 Introduction

The library and information sector has been implementing various service quality assessment models. These include Service Quality (SERVQUAL), Library Quality (LIBQUAL) and Total Quality Management Model (TQM) model. The models are discussed below and a justification has been provided for the choice of one of them.

3.2 Total Quality Management (TQM) model

Total Quality Management (TQM) origins can be traced to 1949, when the Union of Japanese scientists and engineers formed a committee of scholars, engineers and government officials devoted to improving Japanese productivity and enhancing their post-war quality of life (Powell, 1995). The success of Japanese companies such as Toyota and SONY led many American companies to look at how the Japanese had become so successful. TQM requires every part of a company to be organised in terms of a single, integrated philosophy encompassing quality through teamwork, productivity, customer understanding and customer satisfaction (Miller, 2008). TQM got substantial attention in the library world since the early 1990s (Kekana, 2010). Dash (2008) explains that libraries can benefit from TQM in three ways: breaking down interdepartmental barriers; redefining the beneficiaries and library services as internal customers and external customers; and reaching a state of continuous improvement. For libraries to fully benefit from TQM, they need to have a good organisational ability and structure where the demanded information can be accessed and retrieved and made available efficiently in a timely manner to the library users (Dash, 2008).

The main advantage of TQM is that it aims for a long term success by enlisting members of an organisation at all levels to create customer satisfaction and make the best products possible (Arikkö, 2011). One of the main weaknesses of TQM is the need for a company-wide commitment to quality improvement, and the difficulty of achieving this commitment given the diversity of employees. This model was not used for this study because the current study assess library service quality only hence it needed a model that is water-tight and is specifically designed to assess quality.

3.3 Service Quality (SERVQUAL) Model

As the name suggest, SERVQUAL model is based on the concept of service quality model which originated from the marketing discipline (Jiang et al., 2012). The model was developed by Parasuraman et al., in 1988 as a means of assessing customer perceptions of service quality in retail, industrial and commercial business environments (Cook et al., 2003). Since then, it has been used as an instrument for assessing customer perception in retailing organisations (Podbrežnik, 2014). The SERVQUAL model views quality as the gap between perceived service and expected service (Ahmed & Shoeb, 2009; Banahene et al., 2017; Sultan & Yin Wong, 2010).

The SERVQUAL instrument was introduced explicitly to the library world through several empirical studies undertaken in public, special and academic libraries as well as descriptive articles and conference presentations (Bhim, 2010). SERVQUAL model evaluated service quality by using ten dimensions such as reliability, responsiveness, communication, tangibles, credibility, competence, security, courtesy, access and understanding customers (Dominici, Palumbo, & Basile, 2015; Jiang et al., 2012; Salarzadeh et al., 2015; Singh, Sirohi et al., 2014).

However, through numerous studies, the ten dimensions were refined and resulted in a set of five key dimensions which have been consistently rated by customers to be the most important for service quality regardless of the service industry (Bhim, 2010; Nitecki & Hernon, 2000). The five dimensions, in no order of relevance, include empathy which refers to providing customers with care and individual attention; Reliability which refers to the ability to perform the promised services dependably and accurately; Tangibles which refers to the appearance of physical facilities, equipment, personnel and communication materials; Assurance which is the knowledge and courtesy of employees and their ability to convey trust and confidence to customers; Responsiveness which refers to the willingness to assist customers and provide prompt service

The SERVQUAL model, based on the idea of user centered assessment, identifies five potential gaps between expectations and perceptions, both internal and external, of service delivery (Cook &Thompson, 2000; Zeithaml & Bitner, 2003). The following are the five gaps of the Gap theory of service quality:

Gap 1: The discrepancy between customers and management's perceptions of these expectations

Gap 2: The discrepancy between management's perceptions of customers' expectations and service quality specifications

Gap 3: The discrepancy between service quality specifications and actual service delivery

Gap 4: The discrepancy between actual service delivery and what is communicated to customers about it.

Gap 5: The discrepancy between customers' expected services and perceived service delivered.

The quality that a customer perceives in a service is a function of the magnitude and direction of the gap between expected service and perceived service (Cook and Heath 2001; Shahin, 2006)

For this study, SERVQUAL was not selected because this model is specific for the service quality measurement in the marketing sector, and does not address all the aspects in the typical library settings like the library environment (Association of Research Libraries, 2013; Blixrud, 2002; Pfohl, 2013).

3.4 LIBQUAL+™

LIBQUAL+™ (Library Quality) was developed in October 1999 by the Association of Research Libraries (Association of Research Librariris (ARL), 2013). The LIBQUAL instrument evolved from a conceptual model based on the SERVQUAL instrument. Since the adaptation of the SERVQUAL instrument to LIBQUAL instrument was foregrounded in the actual library users' perspectives (Jiang et al., 2012; Singh et al., 2014), this study was therefore underpinned by the LIBQUAL+™ instrument. The LIBQUAL+™ survey instrument is designed to specifically measure the quality of library services based on the perceptions of library users, and to identify the gaps that exist between users' expectations and users' perception (Heath, 2002). According to the ARL (2013), LIBQUAL intends to measure quality of service which is the customers' assessment of how good/bad or pleasant/unpleasant their experiences are. LIBQUAL+™ thus covers the following three dimensions: (i) affect of service, (ii) information control and (iii) library as a place.

(i) Affect of service

Affect of service focuses on how well users are served and treated by library staff (ARL, 2013). It is also concerned with the human dimension of service quality (ARL, 2013). The aspects of this dimension include user perceptions of staff helpfulness, competency, dependability and

care for library users (Fagan, 2014). The initial target of this dimension was on the Reference Librarians, however, the dimensions now targets many types of staff in the library who provide customer service (Fagan, 2014). The aim of this dimension is to find out if library staff are knowledgeable; are willing to help users; are friendly, and are able to instil confidence in the users. (Association of Research Libraries, 2013).

(ii) Information control

Information control focuses on the ability to access information regardless of the location of the user or the resource in question (Association of Research Libraries, 2013; Blixrud, 2002). According to the developers of LIBQUAL, information control strictly deals with how users are able to find the required information in the library; in a format of their choice, and in an independent and autonomous way (ARL, 2012). This involves having the right print and electronic materials in the collections; being able to access resources independently, and the extent to which access tools are modern and intuitive (Fagan, 2014). For example, some of the issues covered in this dimension are ease of access to information; accessing information regardless of location; accessing information in the preferred format, and the actual content and scope of information (Association of Research Libraries, 2013; Blixrud, 2002).

(iii) Library as a place

Library as a place focuses on the physical environment and how well the library meets the individual needs of the various users (Edgar, 2006; Roebuck, 2013; Town, 2016). In this dimension, LIBQUAL assess the availability of quiet space; the comfort and welcoming feel of space, and the suitability of space for study, learning and research. Issues of good lighting, comfortable chairs, safe and secure environment and space for group discussions are also covered under this dimension(Association of Research Libraries, 2013; Bayir & Simpson, 2007; Roebuck, 2013).

3.4.1 Related studies that have used LIBQUAL instrument

Literature has shown that many studies are concerned with users' perceptions of service quality and user satisfaction in academic libraries. The studies outlined below have used LIBQUAL+™ to prove that it is an inclusive model that measures both expectation and perception of library users.

A quantitative study by Hiller (2001) at the University of Washington libraries' used the LIBQUAL survey instrument to assess quality of library services. The results showed significant variations within and between groups concerning library satisfaction and use. Although there were variations in expectations and perceptions, there was an overall satisfaction with the services provided.

A quantitative study by Kachoka and Hoskins (2009) examined the quality of services at Chancellor College library and found out that students had higher expectations of service quality than the perceived quality of service both for desired expectations and minimum expectations leading to a negative adequacy and superiority gaps. Another quantitative study by Simba (2006) used LIBQUAL to examine user perceptions of the quality of library service at Iringa University in Tanzania. The study found out that there was a gap between user's expectations and perception of service quality. In South Africa, a quantitative study by Kekana (2016) also used LIBQUAL to investigate Postgraduate students' perception of the library as an environment for reading, studying and researching at the University of KwaZulu-Natal, Pietermaritzburg campus. The study found out that there were gaps between users' expectations and perception of service quality at the library.

3.4.2 Critique and strengths of LIBQUAL+™

Some researchers have raised some concerns about LIBQUAL+™. For example, Naidu (2009) states that even with adequate user feedback, it can sometimes be difficult to interpret data because customers' expectations and perceptions are inherently subjective, and can be contradictory and naive. Nevertheless, despite these criticisms, LIBQUAL has been used extensively and successfully (see above studies) and has demonstrated so many strengths. This is the very same reason the current study adopted this model. Moreover, the Association of Research Libraries (2013), observes that LIBQUAL fosters a culture of excellence in providing library service; helps libraries better understand users' perceptions of library service quality; collects and interprets library user feedback systematically over time; identifies best practices in library service, and enhances library staff members' analytical skills for interpreting and acting on data. Another reason for the adoption of LIBQUAL is that this model was solely designed to assess quality library services, and it allows libraries to understand how users perceive and evaluate their services (Edgar, 2006; Thompson et al., 2006). Table 3.1 maps the research questions to the variable of the Theoretical Framework.

Table 3.1: Mapping the research questions to the variables of the Theoretical Framework and Model

S/No	Research Questions	Variables Being Addressed	Sources Of Variables
1	What is the level of postgraduate students' satisfaction with the quality of library services provided by Mzuzu University Learning Resource Centre?	Easy access to information, availability of electronic resources (on campus and off campus) and updated print collection	LIBQUAL+™ and Literature
2	What are postgraduate students' perception of library staff attitude towards the library clients?	Staff friendliness, instilling confidence in library users; staff who are willing to help users; staff who understand information needs of users; staff who are knowledgeable	LIBQUAL+™ and Literature
3	What are the postgraduate students' expectations of the Mzuzu University Library and Learning Resource Centre environment?	Quiet library environment; sufficient lighting in the library; comfortable chairs and desks. Secure library environment, and library place for group discussions	LIBQUAL+™ and Literature

3.5 Chapter summary

The chapter has discussed the LIBQUAL instrument as a theoretical framework and also provided some background. The next discusses research methodology used in this study.

CHAPTER FOUR

RESEACH METHODOLOGY

4.1 Introduction

This chapter discusses and justifies the research methodology used in this study. The methodology is arranged in the following thematic subdivisions: research paradigm, research design, research methods, population of the study, sampling techniques, validity and reliability issues and ethical considerations.

Research methodology is the systematic theoretical analysis of the methods applied to a field of study (Creswell, 2014; Rammstedt & Bluemke, 2019). Jonker and Pennink (2010) states that a research methodology is the way researchers conduct research; choose to deal with particular questions; deal with people or organisations, and establish overall research approaches. The aim of research methodology is to give the work plan of the research (Jharotia, 2016; Rajasekar & Philominathan, 2019). Essentially, all the procedures by which researchers go about their work of describing, explaining and predicting phenomena is what research methodology is all about (Jharotia, 2016; Rajasekar & Philominathan, 2019). Abutabenjeh and Jaradat (2018) further added that research methodology enables researchers to understand why a research study has been taken; how the research problem has been defined; why certain techniques are adopted or rejected; what data is collected; which data collection methods are adopted, and what data analysis methods are used.

4.2. Research paradigm

The term paradigm originated from a Greek word "paradeigma" which means patterns, and was first introduced by Kuhn to denote a conceptual framework by a community of scientists, which provided them with a convenient model for examining problems and finding solutions (Antwi & Hamza, 2015). The term paradigm is perceived as "a way of seeing the world that frames a research topic, and influences the way the researchers think about the topic" (Abdullah Kamal, 2019, p. 1388). Antwi and Hamza (2015) add that research paradigms are characterised by three major dimensions which are ontology, epistemology and methodology. The assertion is that any research enquiry should be based on the way the researcher defines the truth and reality (ontology); the process in which the researcher comes to know the truth and reality (epistemology); and the methods used to conduct the research (methodology) (Antwi & Hamza, 2015).

A number of paradigms are discussed in the literature such as pragmatism, interpretivism and positivism (Creswell, 2014). Pragmatism paradigm is the process of investigation that places the focus on the research problem as a determinant factor for epistemology, ontology and axiology of the research rather than the method, and it is frequently linked to Mixed Method Research (MMR) (Morgan, 2014; Revez & Borges, 2018). This paradigm applies various methods, techniques and procedures associated with both qualitative and quantitative methods to better understand the problem (Mackenzie & Knipe, 2006). Mackenzie and Knipe (2006) added that pragmatism paradigm has no philosophical loyalty to any alternative paradigm. Creswell (2014) states that this paradigm does not see the world as an absolute unity, which is why they utilise various data collection and analysis approaches rather than subscribing to only one way such as either quantitative or qualitative. Thus, pragmatism paradigm gives an individual researcher much freedom to choose the methods, techniques and research procedures that best meet their needs and purposes (Creswell, 2014). However, this study did not adopt this paradigm because it did not call for mixed methods.

Interpretivism paradigm, which is predominantly connected to qualitative methods, hold the view that social realism is communally built, and that the objective of social researchers is to comprehend what interpretations people give to realism, not to control how realism works apart from those understandings (Creswell, 2009). This paradigm aims to understand phenomena from an individuals' perspective, investigating interactions amongst individuals and the historical and cultural contexts they inhabit (Baral, 2017; Jharotia, 2016). Interpretivism paradigm uses a small number of participants since they do not intend to generalise but to explore meanings placed by participants on social situations (Creswell, 2003). Although this paradigm is recommended for being sensitive to individual meanings that can often become buried within broader generalisation, nonetheless, it is critiqued for giving participants limited control, and making them vulnerable to researchers who can impose their own subjective interpretations on research participants (Scotland, 2012). It is also argued that research participants' autonomy and privacy can be compromised since interpretive methods are more intimate and open ended than scientific research, which might result in the unintended discovery of lies (Howe & Moses, 1999; Scotland, 2012). This paradigm was not adopted because this study developed and employed mathematical models that generate statistics through the use of survey research by using questionnaires and this can only be achieved through positivism and not interpretivism paradigm (Creswell, 2014).

Positivism paradigm is the conventional quantitative method to social and educational investigation, whose investigation approaches largely belong to several possible alternatives concerning natural phenomena, which is quantitative method, or empirical investigation, that regards realism as an existing construct (Creswell & Plano Clark, 2007; Ivankova, Creswell, & Stick, 2006). Positivism paradigm also strives to be objective, neutral and ensure that research findings are within the existing knowledge base (Creswell, 2014). This study falls within Positivism paradigm because it is a quantitative study and knowledge will be quantified (Creswell, 2014). According to Creswell (2003), a quantitative method research employs strategies of inquiry such as surveys and collect data on instruments that yield statistical data. The following are some of the similar studies that used positivism paradigm: A quantitative study by Mangrum (2019) on 'Student and staff perceptions of University library usage: Comparing reality to interpretation of space usage' at the University of Southern Mississipi in the USA; a quantitative study by Kekana (2016) on 'Postgraduate students' perception of the library as an environment for reading, studying and researching at the university of KwaZulu-Natal, Pietermaritzburg campus in South Africa; a quantitative study by Bhim (2010) on 'Adult user perceptions of library services provided by the Bessie head library' in South Africa, and a quantitative study by Ncwane (2016) on 'User perceptions of service quality and level of user satisfaction at the Mangosuthu University of Technology's Natural Sciences library, Umlazi, Durban' in South Africa.

4.3. Research design

Creswell (2014, p.11) defines research designs as "types of inquiry within qualitative, quantitative and mixed methods approaches that provide specific direction for procedures in a research design". A research design is regarded as a blueprint for conducting a study within maximum control over factors which may interfere with the validity of research findings (Burns & Grove, 2009).

A case study is one of the designs in qualitative studies in which a researcher explores a real-life, contemporary bounded system (a case) or multiple bounded systems (cases) over time, through detailed, in-depth data collection involving multiple sources of data for instance, observations, interviews, and documents (Creswell, 2014; Saunders et al., 2015). The case study design seeks to understand the research problem, and provides researchers with the opportunity to ask penetrating questions (Abutabenjeh & Jaradat, 2018; Baral, 2017). However, a case study was not adopted because this study needed a design that provided

numeric description of trends, attitudes or opinions of people and this cannot be achieved through a case study.

As for mixed method, Creswell (2009) listed the following as the main types of mixed method design namely: the triangulation design, the embedded design, the explanatory design and the exploratory design. Triangulation design is when a researcher collects and analyse quantitative and qualitative data separately on the same phenomenon and the different results are converged (by comparing and contrasting the different results) during the interpretation (Creswell & Plano Clark, 2007). The embedded design is a mixed methods design in which one data set provides a supportive, secondary role in a study based primarily on the other data type (Creswell & Plano Clark, 2007; Ivankova et al., 2006). Explanatory design consists of two distinct phases: Quantitative followed by qualitative. The researcher first collects and analyse the quantitative data. The qualitative data is collected and analysed second in the sequence and helps explain, or elaborate on, the quantitative results obtained in the first place (Creswell & Plano Clark, 2007; Ivankova et al., 2006). Finally, the exploratory sequential mixed methods design is characterised by an initial qualitative phase of data collection and analysis, followed by a phase of quantitative data collection and analysis, with a final phase of integration or linking of data from the two separate strands of data (Creswell & Plano Clark, 2007; Ivankova et al., 2006). However, mixed methods design was not adopted because this study did not merge qualitative and quantitative data.

Quantitative studies use survey designs which are characterised by the collection of data using standardised questionnaire forms in which same questions are asked to all respondents (Creswell, 2009). The survey design seeks to discover common relationships and provides generalised statements about the subject of the study (Abutabenjeh & Jaradat, 2018; Baral, 2017). A survey design was considered for this study because as Bertram (2014) states, it is economical because it allows the gathering of data on a once-off basis, and also allows for data gathering in a short space of time without sacrificing efficiency, accuracy and information adequacy in the research process.

4.4. Research methods

There are basically three research methods as explained by Creswell (2014). These are qualitative, mixed, and quantitative methods. "Qualitative method is the scientific method of observation to gather non-numerical data" (Baral, 2017, p.92). According to Creswell (2014), qualitative method aims at exploring and understanding the meanings ascribed by individuals or groups to social or human problems. Researchers in qualitative methods attempts to discover deeper meanings of human behaviours and beliefs, gaining a rich, in-depth and complex understanding of people's experiences and are not interested in obtaining information which can be generalised to other larger groups (Creswell, 2014). Qualitative method does not require many participants for purposes of statistical analysis or to generalise results and it involves a small number of participants (Daniel, 2016; Sönmez, 2013). Qualitative method does not base their research on a pre-determined hypothesis since it intend to learn what constitutes important questions from respondents (Abutabenjeh & Jaradat, 2018; Jharotia, 2016; Rammstedt & Bluemke, 2019). Therefore, even though qualitative studies may have a clearly defined research problem to be explored, and might be guided by a theoretical lens, this often changes once qualitative researchers get to the field and discover more intriguing questions about their study (Gretchen et al., 2012). Gretchen et al. (2012) further argue that qualitative methods provide detailed understanding of human experiences, and this enables qualitative researchers to look at social world holistically as interactive complex systems than regarding them as variables to be measured or statistically manipulated. This method was not selected because qualitative method presents data as descriptive narration with words contrary to numerical data that this study presented.

According to Creswell (2014), a mixed method is when the researcher merges quantitative and qualitative data in order to provide a comprehensive analysis of the research problem. Creswell (2014) added that this method assumes that the combination of both qualitative and quantitative methods provides a comprehensive understanding of a research problem than when either method is used. MMR has become popular amongst many researchers who believe that combining multiple forms of data within a single study is only legitimate (Creswell & Plano Clark, 2007; Ivankova et al., 2006). This method was not used because this study did not merge qualitative and quantitative methods.

 "Quantitative method is the systematic empirical investigation of observable phenomena via statistical, mathematical or computational techniques" (Bhawna & Gobind, 2015, p49). It

involves the collection and conversion of data into numerical form so that statistical calculations can be made and conclusions be drawn (Hyett et al., 2014). Quantitative methods generate numeric data that can be analysed using statistical procedures like descriptive statistics, such as mean, median, standard deviation, and inferential statistics such as t-tests, anovas or multiple regressions, (Creswell, 2014). According to Madrigal and McClain (2012), statistical analysis that is used in quantitative methods is critical as it enables researchers to derive important facts from research data. Objectivity is much essential in quantitative methods because it ensures that results are not affected by the researches opinions, and attitude (Abutabenjeh & Jaradat, 2018; Johnson, 2017; Katsirikou & Skiadas, 2015). This study used quantitative method because it measured the perception of Mzuni library users using an adaption of the standard LIBQUAL instrument which is largely quantitative in nature (ARL, 2013; Ncwane, 2016). Quantitative methods describe, predict and verify social phenomena (Tuli, 2010). Data collected through quantitative methods is often believed to yield more objectives and accurate information because it is collected using standardised mathematical and statistical tools (Tuli, 2010). Furthermore, quantitative information is much sorted for statistical and mathematical analysis, making it possible to illustrate it in the form of charts and graphs (Daniel, 2016; Ivankova et al., 2006).

4.5. Study population
Population refers to the larger group from which the sample is taken, and to which findings are to be generalised (Trochin, 2000). The population in this study consists of the Mzuni postgraduate students. The study only focused postgraduate students because they are the ones who are at the level that demands advanced services from the library because their nature of study is at an advanced level that also requires them to conduct advanced research projects. The respondents were selected from across all faculties. Mzuni has got six faculties namely: Faculty of Health Sciences; Faculty of Science, Technology and Innovation; Faculty of Environmental Sciences; Faculty of Humanities and Social sciences; Faculty of Education; and Faculty of Tourism and Hospitality Management (Mzuni Website, 2019). However, only the three faculties that offer postgraduate programmes were considered. The total population of the postgraduate students in the respective faculties is presented in Table 4.1 below.

Table 4.1: Population of Mzuni postgraduate students (**Source: Registrar's Office, 2020)**
(N=128)

Faculty	Number of Postgraduate Students
Humanities and Social Sciences	12
Environmental Sciences	85
Education	31
Total	**128**

4.6 Sampling strategies

"Sampling is the selection of a subset of individuals from within a statistical population to estimate characteristics of the whole population" (Taherdoost, 2017, p. 19). Oppong (2013) states that sampling is a process of selecting subjects to take part in a research investigation on the ground that they provide information considered relevant to the research problem. For this study, no any sampling strategy was used because the study used census and the whole population was reached.

4.7. Sample size

According to Punch (2005), a sample size is the actual group which is included in the study and from whom the data is collected. The entire population was 128. To get a proper sample size, a census of the entire population was reached for this study because the population was less than 200 (Apuke, 2017; Creswell & Plano Clark, 2007). According to Israel (2012), a census is suitable for a small population of 200 or less. Therefore, the sample size for this study was 128. The list of registered postgraduate students was employed as the sampling frame from which the units of analysis were drawn. The sample size of the postgraduate students in the respective faculties is presented in Table 4.2 below.

Table 4.2: Sample size of Mzuni postgraduate students (**Source: Registrar's Office, 2020)**
(N=128)

Faculty	**Number of Postgraduate Students**
Humanities and Social Sciences	12
Environmental Sciences	85
Education	31
Total	**128**

4.8. Research instruments/tools

Research instruments "are tools designed to obtain data in a study" (Katsirikou & Skiadas, 2015, p.5). According to Powell (1997), there are different instruments used in quantitative and qualitative studies. The most common instruments in qualitative studies are interviews, observational methods and document analysis (Creswell, 2014). For quantitative studies, the most commonly used research instrument in social sciences is the questionnaire (Abutabenjeh & Jaradat, 2018; Daniel, 2016; Sönmez, 2013). "A questionnaire is a research instrument consisting of a series of questions for the purpose of gathering information from the respondents" (Daniel, 2016, p.94.). This study used a questionnaire to collect data from postgraduate students. The items in the questionnaire were adapted from LibQUAL approved questions as well from the following LibQUAL studies: Kekana (2016); Bhim (2010); and Ncwane (2016). The first part of the questionnaire (section A) comprised of demographic data of the participants. The purpose of this section was to gather data that helped to correlate responses sets between different groups of respondents in order to see whether responses are consistent across groups (Ncwane, 2016). Section B addressed issues related to objective 1) to find out postgraduate students' level of satisfaction with services provided by the Mzuzu University Library and Learning Resource Centre. Section C questions addressed objective 2) to ascertain postgraduate students' perception of staff attitude towards library clients. Finally, section D addressed objective 3) to determine postgraduate students' expectations of the Mzuzu University Library and Learning Resource Centre environment. Table 4.3 below indicates the mapping of the research questions to the respondents, data sources and the data analysis strategy that was used.

Table 4.3: Mapping research questions to respondents, data sources and data analysis strategy

Research question	Respondents	Data sources	Data analysis strategy
What is the level of postgraduate students' satisfaction with the quality of library services provided by Mzuzu University Learning Resource Centre?	Postgraduate students	Appendix 1: Questionnaire	SPSS
What are postgraduate students' perception of library staff attitude towards the library clients?	Postgraduate Students	Appendix 1: Questionnaire	SPSS
What are the postgraduate expectations of the Mzuzu University library and learning Resource Centre environment?	Postgraduate Students	Appendix 1: Questionnaire	SPSS

4.9. Pilot testing of the questionnaire

Pretesting of the questionnaire which is also known as piloting is the process which is done to remove any uncertainty about the data collection instrument (Babbie & Mouton, 2001). The questionnaire was tested on 5 Polytechnic Postgraduate students who were not part of the study. The pilot test helped to take note of some problems that were overlooked like the average time taken to complete the questionnaire. Therefore, the average time allocated to complete the questionnaire was adjusted to 25 minutes from the 15 minutes that was allocated earlier on. Some questions that had some typical library technical terms were also rephrased. For example, 'reading carrels' was replaced with library chairs and desks. Likewise, the LIBQUAL dimensions like 'Affect of service' was well translated to mean the interactions between library staff and library users. Pilot testing also helped the researcher check the clarity of the questions, the layout of the questions, correct spellings, and omission of irrelevant questions. The respondents experienced no difficulties in completing the questionnaire. The exercise was thus far very successful.

4.10. Data analysis strategies

Data analysis is the process of cleaning, transforming and modelling data to discover useful information (Ngulube, 2005). Ngulube (2005) adds that data analysis enables researchers to

arrive at a better understanding of the operation of the social process. During data analysis, variables are investigated and relationships are drawn (Abutabenjeh & Jaradat, 2018; Baral, 2017; Rammstedt & Bluemke, 2019). The data was analysed using Statistical Package for Social Science (SPSS) version 20.0 to generate descriptive and inferential statistics. Descriptive statistics were used to obtain percentages and frequencies while inferential statistics were used to compare sample data to other samples or to the previous research (Apuke, 2017; Moseti, 2016; Posey, 2009; Trochim, 2006). Quantitative data analysis shows how the researcher can create a series of tally sheets to determine specific frequencies of relevant categories (Berg & Lune (2012). Before the process of analysing data, researchers need to clean their data (Ngulube, 2005; Rahm & Do, 2000). Therefore, the data collected was cleaned first before being analysed. The process of cleaning data involves detecting, removing errors as well as the inconsistencies from data in order to improve the quality of the obtained data (Abutabenjeh & Jaradat, 2018; Baral, 2017; Rammstedt & Bluemke, 2019). Ngulube (2005) further argues that preparing data for analysis includes cleaning the data, and evaluating it for any ambiguity, completeness, relevance and consistency.

4.11 Data collection procedures

The researcher personally self-administered the questionnaire to ensure that the target sample receives and return the questionnaire. The study had a population of 128. The questionnaire was handed to the respondents in their lecture halls, the library, in their residences and through emails. The researcher distributed 91 questionnaires physically while 29 questionnaires were sent through email. To achieve this, prior appointments were made to meet the lecturers who are responsible for postgraduate students and ask for a slot of 30 minutes to distribute to, and later collect the questionnaire from Postgraduate students. The researcher also requested the assistance of library staff to help distribute the questionnaire to the postgraduate students in the library. The researcher followed up the filled questionnaires given to library staff after two weeks. For those participants not on campus, the researcher requested for their email addresses from the programme coordinators and eventually, each one of them was sent a questionnaire through email. To ensure that there were no duplications of students answering twice, respondents were being informed each time when a questionnaire was being distributed that they must always answer once. The following chapter will elaborate more about the respondents.

4.12 Reliability of the questionnaire

Abutabenjeh and Jaradat (2018, p.2) define reliability as "the degree to which a test consistently measures what it sets out to measure while at the same time yielding the same results". To ensure reliability, this study adapted the existing LIBQUAL survey questionnaire as well as questions from similar LIBQUAL studies. The instrument has already been employed and acknowledged in academic and research library settings and their reliability is well established (Heath, 2002; Killick, 2012; Rehman, 2011; Thompson et al., 2006). Babbie and Mouton (2001) argue that no matter how carefully a questionnaire may be designed, there is always the possibility of error, and that the surest protection against such errors is to pre-test the questionnaire. Therefore, as the second way of ensuring reliability, the researcher pre-tested the questionnaire. More about pre-testing has been elaborated in section 4.8.

4.13. Ethical issues

In research, ethics is referred to as "doing what is morally and legally right in research" (Resnik, 2008, p.1). Permission to conduct this study at Mzuni was sought from Mzuzu University Research Ethical Committee. Anonymity, privacy and confidentiality of respondents were ensured during data collection and reporting of the results. To ensure anonymity, the respondents were not required to indicate their names, addresses and telephone numbers on the questionnaire. The researcher assured the respondents that even though the results of the study would be published, their names and any other personal information would not be disclosed. To adhere to privacy issues, the researcher protected personal information of the respondents by storing the data in a secure computer that is password protected. To adhere to confidentiality issues, the researcher attached an informed consent letter on the questionnaire. The consent letter acted as an agreement between the researcher and the respondents (Cooper & Schindle, 2003; Parveen & Showkat, 2017; Resnik 2008).

4.14. Chapter summary

This chapter has presented the research methodology that was used in the whole study. It also examined research paradigm, research design and research methods in general. The chosen research paradigm, research design and methods were also discussed and justified. The next chapter presents the results and data analysis.

CHAPTER FIVE

DATA PRESENTATION AND ANALYSIS

5.1 Introduction

The aim of this study was to examine postgraduate students' perceptions towards the quality of library services rendered by the Mzuni Library and Learning Resource. Data was collected at Mzuzu University using the questionnaire. The purpose of data analysis in research is to extract useful information from the raw data so that the derived knowledge can be used to make informed decisions. The collected data was analysed using Statistical Package for Social Science (SPSS) version 20.0.

In order to fulfil the aim of the study, the following objectives were formulated: To find out postgraduate students' level of satisfaction with services provided by the Mzuzu University Library and Learning Resource Centre; To ascertain postgraduate students' perception of staff attitude towards library clients; To determine postgraduate students' expectations of the Mzuzu University Library and Learning Resource Centre environment.

This section is organised into four sections. Section A provides demographic profile of respondents. Section B provides postgraduate students' level of satisfaction with services provided by Mzuzu University library and Learning Resource Centre. Section C provides postgraduate students' perception of staff attitude towards library clients. Finally, section D covers the postgraduate students' expectations of Mzuzu University Library and Learning Resource Centre environment.

This study targeted Masters and PhD students. The study population was 128 postgraduate students, and out of this figure, 81 postgraduate students responded to the questionnaire. Overall, the study achieved a response rate of 62%. Babbie and Mouton (2001) state that a response rate of 60% is acceptable and considered good. Therefore, based on this benchmark, the response rate attained in this study was considered adequate. The response rate is presented in table 5.1 below.

Table 5.1: Response rate   (N=81)

Faculty	Sample	Response rate
Environmental Science	85	43(50.58%)
Education	31	27(87.09%)
Humanities and Social Sciences	12	11(91.6)
Total	**128**	**81(62%)**

5.2 Section A: Demographic profile of respondents

Section A of the questionnaire sought to determine the demographic profile of respondents. The profiling included gender, age group, qualification, faculty and the name of the programme. Figure 5.1 below shows the gender of respondents.
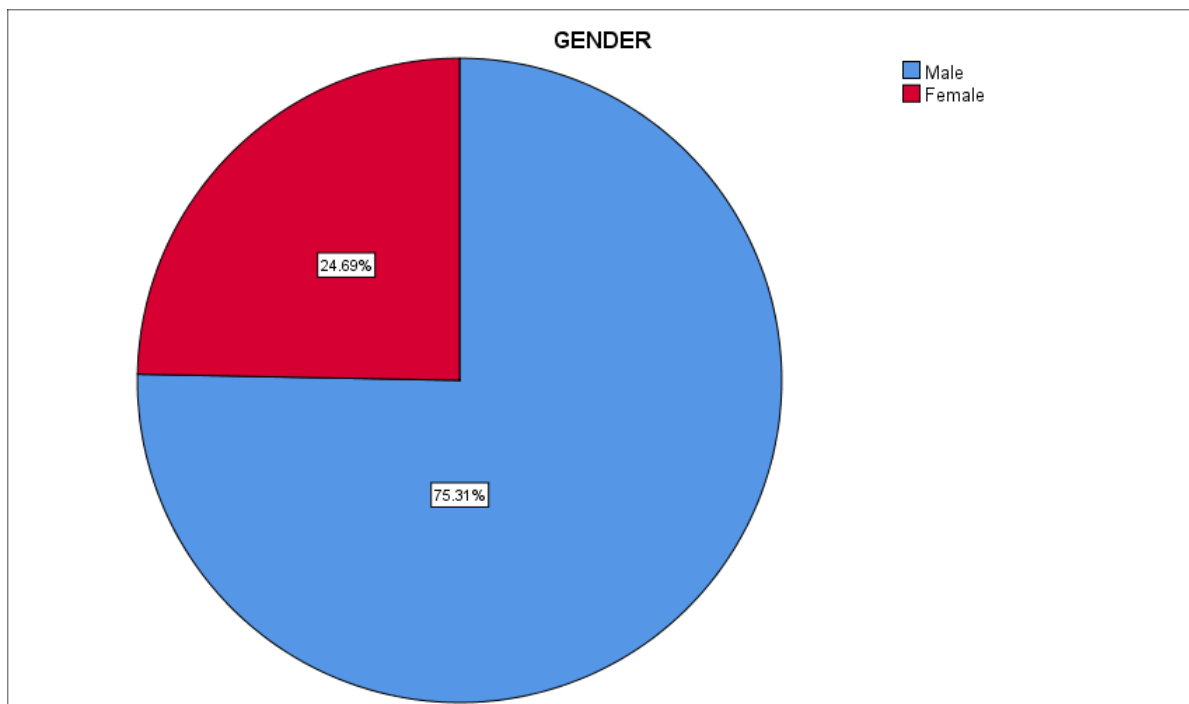
Figure 5.1: Gender of respondents (N=81)

Figure 5.1 shows that the number of male respondents was 61 (75.31%) while the number of female respondents was 20 (24.69%). These figures reflect the demographic composition of postgraduate students which is male dominated. Results pertaining to the age group of respondents are presented in Figure 5.2
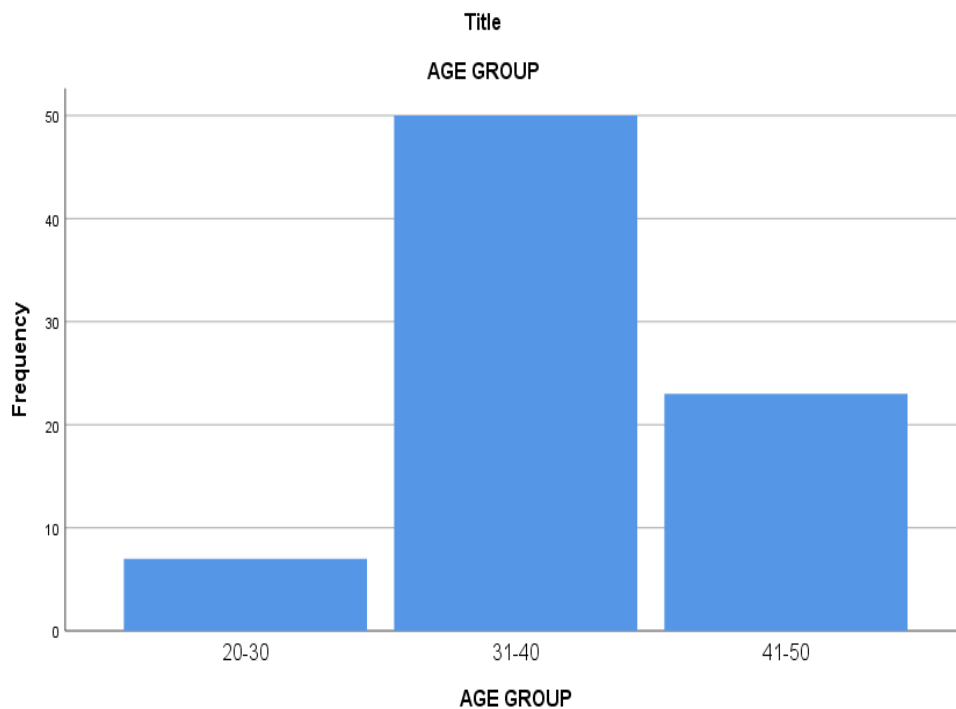
Figure 5.2: Age group of respondents   (N=81)

Results in Figure 5.2 shows that the majority, 51 (63%) of the respondents were within the age group of 31- 40, followed by 23 (28.4%) respondents in the age group of 41-50. There were only 7(8.6%) respondents who were within the age group of 20-30. The results entail that there were a lot of respondents within the age group of 30-40 because that is the age range when most people think of upgrading their qualifications after obtaining their first degrees.

Results pertaining to the qualifications of the respondents are presented in Table 5.2 below.

Table 5.2 Qualification   (N=81)

Qualification	Frequency	Percentage
Masters	76	93.8
PHD	5	6.2
Total	81	100

Results presented in Table 5.2 shows that the majority of the respondents which is seventy-six (93.8%) respondents were students studying for masters degrees while   five (6.2%) were students studying for PhD. Based on these results, it is clear that most of the respondents were

masters students because such as students are enrolled in large numbers as opposed to PhD students.

Results pertaining to the faculties respondents belonged to are presented in Table 5.3 below

Table 5.3: Faculties   **(N=81)**

Faculties	Frequency	Percentage
Environmental Sciences	43	53.1
Education	27	33.3
Humanities and Social Sciences	11	13.6
Total	81	100.

Results in Table 5.3 shows that most respondents forty-three (53.1%) belonged to the Faculty of Environmental Sciences, followed by twenty-seven (33.3%) respondents from the Faculty of Education, and the least eleven (13.6%) respondents belonged to the Faculty of Humanities and Social Sciences. The Faculty of Environmental Sciences offers more postgraduate programmes as compared to other Faculties hence that may have led to a lot of respondents from the same faculty.

The researcher also sought to establish programmes of study of the respondents. The results are presented in Table 5.4.

Table 5.4: Programme of study   **(N=81)**

Programme of study	Frequency	Percentage
Master of Science in Transformative Community Development	16	19.75
Master of Education (Leadership and Management)	14	17.3
Master of Education (Teacher Education)	13	16.0
Master of Library and Information Science	11	13.6
Master of Science in Water Resources Management	10	12.3
Master of Science in Forestry	6	7.4
Master of Science in Fisheries Science	3	3.7
Master of Science in Urban and Regional Planning	3	3.7
Doctor of Philosophy in Transformative and Community Development	3	3.7
Doctor of Philosophy in Water resources	2	2.5
Total	81	100.0

Results in Table 5.4 show that there were sixteen (19.75%) respondents doing Master of Science in Transformative Community Development; fourteen (17.3%) respondents doing Master of Education (Leadership and Management), and thirteen (16%) respondents doing Master of Education (Teacher Education). The results also show that there were eleven (13.6%)

respondents doing Master of Library and Information Science; ten (12.3%) respondents doing Master of Science in Water Resources Management, and six (7.4%) respondents doing Master of Science in Forestry. The results further show that there were three (3.7%) respondents doing Master of Science in Fisheries and three (3.7%) respondents doing Master of Science in Urban Regional Planning. As for respondents doing PhD, there were three (3.7%) respondents doing Doctor of Philosophy in Transformative and Community Development and only two (2.5%) respondents doing Doctor of Philosophy in Water Resources Management. The results show that there were more respondents doing Masters of Science in Transformative Community Development as compared to other programmes, and maybe the case because it enrols more students as compared to other programmes.

5.3 Postgraduate students' level of satisfaction with services provided by Mzuzu University Library and learning Resource Centre

The first objective of the study intended to find out the Postgraduate students' level of satisfaction with the services provided by the Mzuzu University Library and Learning Resource Centre. Questions addressing this research objective were outlined in section B of the questionnaire. The section had six statements and respondents were supposed to rate the statements on a Likert scale of 'very satisfied', 'satisfied' 'neutral', 'dissatisfied' and 'very dissatisfied'. A Cross tabulation was conducted to compare results across the faculties under study. The results are presented in Table 5.5 below.

Table 5.5 Cross tabulation of respondents' level of satisfaction with services provided by Mzuzu University Library and Learning Resource Centre (N=81)

Statements	Humanities and Social sciences (N=11)					Environmental Sciences (N=43)					Education (N=27)				
	VS	S	N	D	VD	VS	S	N	D	VD	VS	S	N	D	VD
Library provides me with the information skills I need	3(27.2%)	5(45.5%)	1(9.1%)	1(9.1%)	1(9.1%)	22(51.2%)	14(32.6%)	5(11.6%)	2(4.7%)	0(0%)	9(33.3%)	10(37%)	6(22.2%)	2(7.4%)	0(0%)
I can access library electronic resources from my home or hostel	2(18.2%)	3(27.2%)	2(18.2%)	1(9.1%)	3(27.2%)	2(4.7%)	6(14%)	1(2.3%)	19(44.2%)	15(34.9%)	2(7.4%)	1(3.7%)	3(11.1%)	7(25.9%)	14(51.9%)
Library has the printed materials I need for my work	2(18.2%)	6(54.5%)	2(18.2%)	0(0%)	1(9.1%)	20(46.5%)	16(37.2%)	5(11.6%)	1(2.3%)	1(2.3%)	9(33.3%)	8(29.6%)	8(29.6%)	1(3.7%)	1(3.7%)
Library has electronic information resources I need	4(36.3%)	5(45.5%)	2(18.2%)	0(0%)	0(0%)	22(51.2%)	16(37.2%)	5(11.6%)	0(0%)	0(0%)	10(37%)	8(29.6%)	8(29.6%)	0(0%)	1(3.7%)
Library website enables me to locate electronic resources on my own	4(36.3%)	1(9.1%)	1(9.1%)	2(18.2%)	3(27.2%)	2(4.7%)	2(4.7%)	8(18.6%)	13(30.2%)	18(41.9%)	0(0%)	4(14.8%)	7(25.9%)	6(22.2%)	10(37%)
It's easy to locate a textbook on the library shelves	6(54.5%)	2(18.2%)	2(18.2%)	1(9.1%)	0(0%)	12(27.9%)	22(51.2%)	8(18.6%)	1(2.3%)	0(0%)	8(29.6%)	10(37%)	6(22.2%)	3(11.1%)	0(0%)

The results of a Cross tabulation presented in table 5.5 above show that the statement on 'Library provides me with the information skills I need' had the following responses from the Faculty of Humanities and Social Sciences: three (27.2%) respondents were very satisfied; five (45.5%) respondents were satisfied; one (1(9.1%) respondent was neutral; one (9.1%) respondent was dissatisfied and one (9.1%) respondent was very dissatisfied. The Faculty of Environmental Sciences had the following responses: twenty-two (51.2%) respondents were very satisfied; fourteen (32.6%) respondents were satisfied; five (11.6%) respondents were neutral; two (4.7%) respondents were dissatisfied and none was very dissatisfied. On the other hand, the Faculty of Education had the following responses: nine (33.3%) respondents were very satisfied; ten (37%) respondents were satisfied; six (22.2%) respondents were neutral; two (7.4%) respondents were neutral and none was very dissatisfied.

The statement 'I can access library electronic resources from my home or hostel' had the following responses from the Faculty of Humanities and Social Sciences: two (18.2%) respondents were very satisfied; three (27.2%) respondents were satisfied; two (18.2%) respondents were neutral; one (9.1%) respondent was dissatisfied while three (27.2%) respondents were very dissatisfied. The Faculty of Environmental Sciences had the following responses: two (4.7%) respondents were very satisfied; six (14%) respondents were satisfied; one (2.3%) respondent was neutral; nineteen (44.2%) respondents were dissatisfied and fifteen (34.9%) respondents were very dissatisfied. The Faculty of Education had the following responses: two (7.4%) respondents were very satisfied; one (3.7%) respondent was satisfied; three (11.1%) respondents were neutral; seven (25.9%) respondents were dissatisfied while fourteen (51.9%) respondents were very dissatisfied.

The statement 'Library has the printed materials I need for my work' had the following responses from the Faculty of Humanities and Social Sciences: two (18.2%) respondents were very satisfied; six (54.5%) respondents were satisfied; two (18.2%) respondents were neutral; none was dissatisfied and one (9.1%) respondent was very dissatisfied. The Faculty of Environmental Sciences had the following responses: twenty (46.5%) respondents were very satisfied; sixteen (37.2%) respondents were satisfied; five (11.6%) respondents were neutral; one (2.3%) respondent was dissatisfied and one (2.3%) respondent was very dissatisfied. On the other hand, the Faculty of Education had the following responses: nine (33.3%) respondents were very satisfied; eight (29.6%) respondents were satisfied; another eight (29.6%) respondents were neutral; one (3.7%) respondent was dissatisfied while one (3.7%) respondent was very dissatisfied.

The statement 'Library has electronic information resources I need' had the following responses from the Faculty of Humanities and Social Sciences: four (36.3%) respondents were very satisfied; five (45.5%) respondents were satisfied, two (18.2%) respondents were neutral and none was dissatisfied nor very dissatisfied. The Faculty of Environmental Sciences had the following responses: twenty-two (51.2%) respondents were very satisfied, five (11.6%) respondents were satisfied, and none was dissatisfied nor very dissatisfied. The Faculty of Education had the following responses: ten (37%) respondents were very satisfied; eight (29.6%) respondents were satisfied; eight (29.6%) respondents were neutral; none was dissatisfied while one (3.7%) respondent was very dissatisfied.

The statement 'Library website enables me to locate electronic resources on my own' had the following responses from the Faculty of Humanities and Social Sciences: four (36.3%) respondents were very satisfied; one (9.1%) respondents was satisfied; one (9.1%) respondent was neutral; two (18.2%) respondents were dissatisfied, and three (27.2%) respondents were very dissatisfied. The Faculty of Environmental Sciences had the following responses: two (4.7%) respondents were very satisfied; two (4.7%) respondents were satisfied; eight (18.6%) respondents were neutral; thirteen (30.2%) respondents were dissatisfied while eighteen (41.9%) respondents were very dissatisfied. The Faculty of Education had the following responses: none was very satisfied; four (14.8%) respondents were satisfied; seven (25.9%) respondents were neutral; six (22.2%) respondents were dissatisfied and ten (37%) respondents were very dissatisfied.

Lastly, the statement 'It is easy to locate a textbook on the library shelves' had the following responses from the Faculty of Humanities and Social Sciences: six (54.5%) respondents were very satisfied; two (18.2%) respondents were satisfied; two (18.2%) respondents were neutral; one (9.1%) respondent was dissatisfied and none was very dissatisfied. The Faculty of Environmental Sciences had the following responses: twelve (27.9%) respondents were very satisfied; twenty-two (51.2%) respondents were satisfied; eight (18.6%) respondents were neutral; one (2.3%) respondent was dissatisfied and none was very dissatisfied. The Faculty of Education, on the other hand, had the following responses: eight (29.6%) respondents were very satisfied; ten (37%) respondents were satisfied; six (22.2%) respondents were neutral; three (11.1%) respondents were dissatisfied and none was very dissatisfied.

Overall, the findings clearly indicate that respondents across all the faculties were either strongly satisfied or satisfied with the library services such as provision of information skills

needed for studying, provision of electronic and printed resources. However, respondents were either strongly dissatisfied or dissatisfied with access to library electronic resources from the confines of their homes or hostels and inability to locate electronic resources on their own using the library website. This could have been due to poor ICT infrastructures to enable users' access library electronic resources remotely.

5.4 Postgraduate students' perception of staff attitude towards library clients

The second objective of the study was meant to ascertain postgraduate students' perception of staff attitude towards library clients. Questions addressing this research objective were outlined in section C of the questionnaire. The section had six statements and respondents were supposed to indicate the degree to which they strongly agreed, agreed, were neutral, disagreed or strongly disagreed with the statements. A cross tabulation was conducted to compare results across the faculties under study. Also a chi square test was conducted to compare results between the gender of respondents. The results are presented in table 5.6 below.

Table 5.6 Cross tabulation of respondents' perception of staff attitude towards library clients   (N=81)

Statements	Humanities and Social sciences (N=11)					Environmental Sciences (N=43)					Education (N=27)				
	SA	A	N	D	SD	SA	A	N	D	SD	SA	A	N	D	SD
Staff are friendly	5 (45.5%)	2 (18.2%)	4 (36.3%)	0 (0%)	0 (0%)	19 (44.2%)	22 (51.2%)	2 (4.7%)	0 (0%)	0 (0%)	15 (55.6%)	8 (29.6%)	4 (14.8%)	0 (0%)	0 (0%)
Staff instil confidence in users	3 (27.2%)	2 (18.2%)	5 (45.5%)	1(9.1%)	0 (0%)	27 (62.8%)	13 (30.2%)	7 (16.3%)	0 (0%)	0 (0%)	10 (37%)	7 (25.9 %)	7(25.9%)	3 (11.1%)	0(0%)
Staff are readily available to respond to my queries	3(27.2%)	7 (63.6%)	1(9.1%)	0(0%)	0 (0%)	25 (58.1%)	14 (32.6%)	4 (9.3%)	0 (0%)	0 (0%)	14 (51.9%)	9 (33.3%)	3(11.1%)	0 (0%)	1 (3.7%)
Staff are willing to help me	6 (54.5%)	3 (27.2%)	2(18.2%)	0 (0%)	0 (0%)	24 (55.8%)	15 (34.9%)	4 (9.3%)	0 (0%)	0(0%)	11 (40.7%)	12 (44.4%)	4 (14.8%)	0 (0%)	0 (0%)
Staff understand my information needs	2(18.2 %)	4(36.3%)	5 (45.5%)	0(0%)	0 (0%)	23 (53.5%)	15 (34.9%)	4 (9.3%)	1 (2.3%)	0(0%)	11(40.7%)	6(22.2%)	7(25.9%)	2 (7.4%)	0 (0%)
Staff have the knowledge to answer my questions	1(9.1%)	7 (63.6%)	3 (27.2%)	0 (0%)	0 (0%)	26 (60.4%)	11 (25.6%)	5 (11.6%)	1 (2.3%)	0 (0%)	8 (29.6%)	13(48.1%)	5 (18.5%)	1 (3.7%)	0 (0%)

Results of the Cross tabulation presented in Table 5.6 above shows that the statement on 'Staff are friendly' had the following responses from the Faculty of Humanities and Social Sciences: five (45.5%) respondents strongly agreed; two (18.2%) agreed; four (36.3%) respondents were neutral, and none disagreed nor strongly disagreed. The Faculty of Environmental Sciences had the following responses 19 (44.2%) respondents strongly agreed; twenty-two (51.2%) respondents agreed; two (4.7%) respondents were neutral, and none disagreed nor strongly disagreed. The Faculty of Education had the following responses: fifteen (55.6%) respondents strongly agreed; eight (29.6) respondents agreed; four (14.8%) respondents were neutral, and none disagreed nor strongly disagreed.

The statement 'Staff instil confidence in users', had the following responses from the faculty of Humanities and Social Sciences: three (27.2%) respondents strongly agreed; two (18.22%) respondents agreed; five (45.5%) respondents were neutral; one (9.1%) respondent disagreed, and none strongly disagreed. The Faculty of Environmental Sciences had the following responses: twenty-seven (62.8) respondents strongly agreed; thirteen (30.2%) respondents agreed; seven (16.3%) respondents were neutral, and none disagreed nor strongly disagreed. The Faculty of Education had the following responses: ten (37%) respondents strongly agreed; seven (25.9%) respondents agreed; seven (25.9%) respondents were neutral; three (11.1%) respondents disagreed and none strongly disagreed.

The statement 'Staff are readily available to respond to my queries' had the following responses from the Faculty of Humanities and social Sciences: three (27.2%) respondents strongly agreed; seven (63.6%) respondents agreed; one (9.1%) respondent was neutral and none disagreed nor strongly disagreed. The Faculty of Environmental Sciences had the following responses: twenty-five (58.1%) respondents strongly agreed; fourteen (32.6%) respondents agreed; four (9.3%) respondents were neutral and none disagreed nor strongly disagreed. The Faculty of Education had the following responses: fourteen (51.9%) respondents strongly agreed; nine (33.3%) respondents agreed; three (11.1%) respondents were neutral, none disagreed, and one (3.7%) respondent strongly disagreed.

The statement 'Staff are willing to help' had the following responses from the Faculty of Humanities and Social Sciences: six (54.5%) respondents strongly agreed; three (27.2%) respondents agreed; two (18.2%) respondents were neutral and none disagreed nor strongly disagreed. The faculty of Environmental Sciences had the following responses: twenty-four (55.8%) respondents strongly agreed; fifteen (34.9%) respondents agreed; four (9.3%) respondents were neutral and none disagreed nor strongly disagreed. The Faculty of Education

had the following responses: eleven (40.7%) respondents strongly agreed; twelve (44.4%) respondents agreed; four (14.8%) respondents were neutral and none disagreed nor strongly disagreed.

The statement 'Staff understand my information need' had the following responses from the Faculty of Humanities and Social Sciences: two (18.2%) respondents strongly agreed; four (36.3%) respondents agreed; five (45.5%) respondents were neutral and none disagreed nor strongly disagreed. The Faculty of Environmental Sciences had the following responses: twenty-three (53.5%) respondents strongly agreed; fifteen (34.9%) respondents agreed; four (9.3%) respondents were neutral; one (2.3%) respondent disagreed and none strongly agreed. The Faculty of Education had the following responses: eleven (40.7%) respondents strongly agreed, six (22.2%) respondents agreed; seven (25.9%) respondents were neutral, two (7.4%) respondents disagreed and none strongly disagreed.

Lastly, the statement 'Staff have the knowledge to answer my questions' had the following responses from the Faculty of Humanities and Social Sciences: one (9.1%) respondent strongly agreed; seven (63.6%) respondents agreed; three (27.2%) respondents were neutral and none disagreed nor strongly disagreed. The Faculty of Environmental Sciences had the following responses: twenty-six (60.4%) respondents strongly agreed; eleven (25.6%) respondents agreed; five (11.6%) respondents were neutral; one (2.3%) respondent disagreed and none strongly disagreed. The Faculty of Education had the following responses: eight (29.6%) respondents strongly agreed; thirteen (48.1%) respondents agreed; five (18.5%) respondents were neutral; one (3.7%) respondent disagreed, and none strongly disagreed.

The study also conducted a 'Chi-square test' to find out if there were any differences between gender on perception of staff attitude towards library clients. The results are presented in Table 5.7.

Table 5.7 Chi-square test of gender on perception of staff attitude towards library clients
(N=81)

Statement	Gender		
	Chi-Square (X^2)	Degree of Freedom (*df*)	*P*-Value
Staff are friendly	0.721	2	0.697
Staff instil confidence in users	1.603	4	0.808
Staff are readily available to respond to my queries	13.316	3	0.004
Staff are willing to help me	5.627	2	0.060
Staff understand my information need	5.741	4	0.219
Staff have the knowledge to answer my questions	4.798	3	0.187

Chi-Square (X^2) Test

Level of significance ($\alpha = 5\% = 0.05$)

The chi-square test show (N=81, df= 2, X^2 =0.721, p=0.697) meaning that there is no significant difference between gender of respondents on the statement 'staff are friendly'. Similarly, the chi-square test show (N=81, df= 4, X^2 =1.603, p=0.808), indicating that there is no significant difference between gender of respondents on the statement 'staff instil confidence' in users. Also, the chi-square test show (N=81, df=3, X^2 =13.316, p=0.004) which entails that there is a significant difference between gender of respondents on the statement 'staff are readily available to respond to my queries'. The chi-square test show (N=81, df=2, X^2 =5.627, p=0.060) indicating that there is no significant difference between gender of respondents on the statement 'Staff are willing to help me'. Likewise, the chi-square test show (N=81, df=4, X^2 =5.741, p=0.219) meaning that there is no significant difference between gender of respondents on the statement 'Staff understand my information needs'. Lastly, the chi-square test show (N=81, df=3, X^2 =4.798, p=0.187), which indicates that there is no significant difference between gender of respondents on the statement 'Staff have the knowledge to answer my questions'.

Overall, the findings of the second objective of the study indicate that respondents strongly agreed and agreed to the various statements on library staff attitude towards clients. This could be attributed to most library staff having acquired a LIS qualification from diploma up to doctorate level. Many Mzuni library staff have been upgrading their qualifications at Mzuni, and this has helped them to understand the information needs of library users and become more professional. Results of the chi-square test on the difference between gender on perception of staff attitude towards library clients reveal there were no differences between gender on various statements except for 'staff are readily available to respond to my queries'. This implies that respondents' perception of library attitude towards clients was positive. Results of the cross

tabulation of respondents' perception of staff attitude towards library clients indicates that respondents from the faculties had positive perception of staff attitude towards library clients.

5.5 Postgraduate students' expectations of Mzuzu University Library and Learning Resource Centre environment

The third objective of the study intended to elicit responses from respondents pertaining to postgraduate students' expectations of the Mzuzu University Library and Learning Resource Centre environment. Questions addressing this research objective are outlined in section D of the questionnaire. The questions from the questionnaire provided six statements which the respondents had to either indicate whether they strongly agreed, agreed, were neutral or disagreed or strongly disagreed with the statements. A chi square test of gender of respondents' was also conducted to establish if there were any differences pertaining to their expectations of Mzuzu University Library and Learning Resource Centres Environment. The results of this section are presented in Table 5.8 and Table 5.9 below.

Table 5.8. Postgraduate students' expectations of Mzuzu University Library and Learning Resource Centre environment   (N =81)

Statements	Strongly agree	Agree	Neutral	Disagree	Strongly disagree
A quiet library environment	16(19.8%)	21(25.9%)	21(25.9%)	17(21%)	6(7.4%)
Space that inspires my own study and learning	37(45.7%)	25(30.9%)	9(11.1%)	6(7.4%)	4(4.9%)
Space for group discussions and learning	6(7.4%)	3(3.7%)	5(6.2%)	19(23.5%)	48(59.3%)
Environment that has sufficient lighting	55(67.9%)	18(22.2%)	2(2.5%)	1(1.2%)	4(4.9%)
A secure library environment	32(39.5%)	31(38.3%)	13(16%)	1(1.2%)	3(3.7%)
Comfortable chairs and desks	32(39.5%)	31(38.5%)	13(16%)	1(1.2%)	4(4.9%)
The library is an ideal place for study, learning or research	37(45.7%)	28(34.6%)	8(9.9%)	6(7.4%)	2(2.5%)

Results presented in Table 5.8 above shows that the statement on 'The library provides a quiet environment' had, twenty-one (25.9%) respondents agreed; twenty-one (25.9%) respondents were neutral; seventeen (21%) respondents disagreed; sixteen (19.8%) respondents strongly agreed and six (7.4%) strongly disagreed.

On the other hand, the statement 'The library provides space that inspires my own study and learning', demonstrated that thirty-seven (45.7%) respondents strongly agreed; twenty-five (30.9%) respondents agreed; nine (11.1%) respondents were neutral; six (7.4%) respondents disagreed and four (4.9%) respondents strongly disagreed.

On the statement 'The library provides 'space for group discussions and learning', forty-eight (59.3%) respondents strongly disagreed; nineteen (23.5%) respondents disagreed; six (7.4%) respondents strongly agreed; five (6.2%) respondents were neutral and three (3.7%) respondents agreed.

Regarding the statement 'The library provides an environment that has sufficient lighting', fifty-five (67.9%) respondents strongly agreed; eighteen (22.2%) respondents agreed; three (3.7%) respondents strongly disagreed; two (2.5%) respondents were neutral and one (1.2%) respondent disagreed.

On the statement 'The library provides a secure library environment', thirty-two (39.5%) respondents strongly agreed; thirty-one (38.3%) respondents agreed; thirteen (16%) respondents were neutral; three (3.7%) respondents strongly disagreed and one (1.0%) respondent disagreed.

On the statement 'The library provides comfortable chairs and desks', thirty-two (39.5%) respondents strongly agreed; thirty-one (38.3%) respondents agreed; thirteen (16%) respondents were neutral; one (12%) respondent disagreed and four (4.9%) respondents strongly disagreed. Similarly, on the statement 'The library is an ideal place for study, learning or research', thirty-seven (45.7%) respondents strongly agreed; twenty-eight (34.6%) respondents agreed; eight (9.9%) respondents were neutral; six (7.4%) respondents disagreed and two (2.5%) respondents strongly disagreed.

The study also conducted a Chi-square test to find out if there was any significant difference between gender on expectations of Mzuzu University Library and Learning Resource Centre environment. The results are presented in Tables 5.9 below.

Table 5.9 Chi-square test between gender on expectations of Mzuzu University Library and Learning Resource Centre environment   (N=81)

Statement	Gender		
	Chi-Square (X^2)	Degree of Freedom (*df*)	*P*-Value
A quiet library environment	9.307	4	0.540
Space that inspires my own study and learning	3.071	4	0.546
Space for group discussions and learning	1.804	4	0.772
Environment that has sufficient lighting	11.030	4	0.26
A secure library environment	13.618	4	0.009
Comfortable chairs and desks	9.124	4	0.058
An ideal place for study	13.248	4	0.010

Chi-**Square (X^2) Test**
Level of significance (α = 5% = 0.05)

The Chi-square test show (N=81, df= 4, X^2 =9.307, p=0.540). This result indicates that there is no significant difference between gender of respondents on the statement 'A quiet library environment'. Similarly, the Chi-square test show (N=81, df=4, X^2 =3.071,p=0.546), meaning that there is no significant difference between gender of respondents on the statement 'Space that inspires my own study and learning'. Likewise, the Chi-square test show (N=81, df=4, X^2 =1.804, p=0.772), indicating that there is no significant difference between gender of respondents on the statement 'Space for group discussions and learning'. In addition to above, a Chi-square test show (N=81, df=4, X^2 =11.030, p=0.26), indicating that there is no significant difference between gender of respondents on the statement 'Environment that has sufficient lighting'.

On the other hand, the chi-square test show (N=81, df=4, X^2 =13.618, p=0.009), meaning that there is a significant difference between gender of respondents on the statement 'A secure library environment'. Nevertheless, another Chi-square test show (N=81, df=4, X^2 =9.124, p=0.058) which indicates that there is no significant difference between gender of respondents on the statement 'Comfortable chairs and desks'.

Lastly, a Chi-square test show (N=81, df=4, X^2 =13.248, p=0.010) demonstrate that there is a significant difference between gender of respondents on the statement 'An ideal place for study'.

Overall results under the third objective of the study which intended to elicit responses from respondents pertaining to the Mzuzu University Library and Learning Resource Centre environment reveal that respondents were happy with the environment because their

expectations were met by the library. However, the library failed to meet respondents' expectation regarding the provision of space for group discussion. Respondents also commented on the need for special postgraduate reading rooms and the provision of drinking water and students toilets in the library. Results of the chi-square test between gender on respondents' expectations of the Mzuzu University Library and Learning Resource Centre environment reveal that there was no difference between gender on various statements except for 'A secure library environment' and 'An ideal place for study'.

5.5.1 Postgraduate students' opinions about Mzuzu University Library and Learning Resource Centre environment

This was a follow up question under section D in the questionnaire which was aimed at soliciting opinions from the respondents regarding the Mzuni Library and Learning Resource Centre environment. This part of the questionnaire gave the postgraduate students an opportunity to voice out their thoughts and views about the library environment. Out of 81 respondents, only 35 added their opinions regarding the environment. Table 5.10 below gives the summary of the respondents' opinions regarding the library environment.

Table 5.10: Summary of respondents' opinions and comments (N=35)

Comment	Frequency	Percentage
The library must provide special reading rooms for postgraduate students	13	37.1
The library is close to the porters lodge and tuck-shop and this attracts a lot of noise	8	22.9
The number of power sockets needs to be increased	6	17.1
Security of gadgets need to be enhanced	3	8.6
Need for a Water dispenser and students toilets inside the library	3	8.6
The library is always clean and neat. Good environment	2	5.7
Total	35	100

Table 5.10 above shows that the majority of respondents thirteen (37.1%) indicated the need for the library to provide special reading rooms for postgraduate students. At the same time, eight (22.9%) respondents lamented about the noise levels coming from the porters lodge and tuck-shop. Similarly, most respondents found the library not providing a quite environment for study. Six (17%) respondents suggested that the library must increase the number of sockets in the library, three (8.6%) respondents complained about lack of security for their gadgets and indicated. Also, three (8.6%) respondents commented on the need for a water dispenser and

students' toilets inside the library. On a positive note, two (5.7%) respondents said that the library is always neat and a clean.

5.6 Chapter summary

This chapter has presented the findings from this study. These results were obtained using questionnaires. The results of the respondents were tabulated, and an interpretation was provided below each table. The tables had a clear description, counts and percentages. The next is chapter six, which discusses the findings, present a summary of the findings, conclusions and recommendations of the study.

CHAPTER SIX

DISCUSSION, RECOMMENDATIONS AND CONCLUSION

6.1 Introduction

This chapter discusses the findings, of the data collected using a self-administered questionnaire. The chapter also present a summary of the findings, conclusions and recommendations of the study. The study was underpinned by LIBQUAL instrument. LIBQUAL is one of the customer-oriented instruments that was typically developed to assess library service quality. Descriptive statistics including frequency tables, graphs, percentages, cross tabulation and chi-square tests were used to analyse the data.

The following research questions were addressed: What is the level of postgraduate students' satisfaction with the quality of library services provided by Mzuzu University Learning Resource Centre? What are postgraduate students' perceptions of library staff attitude towards the library clients? And what are the postgraduate expectations of the Mzuzu University library and Learning Resource Centre environment?

6.2 Discussion

The essence of discussion and interpretation of results is to make something meaningful out of the results achieved through explaining what has been established by the researcher (Chipeta, 2018).

6.2.1 Demographic profile

This was not part of the research objectives however it is important to discuss the demographic profile of the respondents as it has an impact on their perceptions towards the library services offered. As regards to gender of respondents, the majority were males. The reasons for dominance of male students could be that a lot of males apply for postgraduate studies more than females in Malawi. This is well supported by a study by Mudege et al. (2017) which found that the perception of men as household heads and women as helpers often has implications on women's ability to access higher education in Malawi. Furthermore, the majority of the respondents were between the ages of 31-40. The largest group of respondents, with regard to faculty, were from the Faculty of Environmental Sciences followed by the Faculty of Education. Pertaining to the level of study, the majority were Masters' Students, most of whom were doing Masters of Science in Transformative Community Development followed by those doing the Master of Education (Leadership and Management). Doctor of Philosophy in Water Resources Management had the least respondents.

6.2.2 Section B: Postgraduate students' satisfaction with library services

The first objective of the study sought to find out postgraduate students' level of satisfaction with services provided by the Mzuzu University Library and Learning Resource Centre. One of the dimensions of LIBQUAL is 'Information Control'. The developers of LIBQUAL describe 'Information Control' as a way of making sure that users are able to find the required information in the library in the format of their choice, in an independent and autonomous way (Baada, Baayel, Bekoe, & Banbil, 2019; Killick, 2012). This involves having the right print and electronic materials in the collections; being able to access resources independently, and the extent to which access tools are modern and intuitive (Fagan, 2014). Some studies have also shown that having the right collections is central for library users to be satisfied with the library service quality (Fagan, 2014; Pedramnia et al., 2012).

The results presented in the previous chapter pertaining to respondents' satisfaction with library services reveal that satisfaction levels were high because the library provided them with information skills needed for their studies. The satisfaction maybe due to various orientation sessions the library provides to its users. The library conducts user trainings on how to evaluate sources of information, citation and use of data analysis tools. The results of the current study are similar to those of a mixed method study by Xia (2013) at the Victoria University of Wellington with a focus of perceptions and expectations of digital library content which found out that library users were satisfied with library services because the library provided them with information skills needed for their studies. The two results were comparable because both libraries provided the users with the information skills needed for their studies. The information skills were provided through user education trainings, workshops, and during orientation programmes. The findings of the current study are also similar to those of a survey design by Jiao et al., (2010) at the Wuhan and Beijin universities with a focus on international students' perception of the library services also found out that library users were satisfied because the library provided them with orientations that met the needs of the users. The results of the current study, and those of Beijing University library are comparable because both libraries provided the users with some orientation sessions that equipped them with the needed skills for their studies.

The results of the current study are also similar to those of a survey by Ijirigho (2010) at the University of Lagos with a focus faculty expectations of library services which also found out that library users from both universities were satisfied because the library provided them with

excellent information skills such as searching the information on the internet. The similarities with the current study could be because library users were provided with information searching skills. Likewise, the findings of the current study are similar with those of an exploratory case study research by Nunekpeku (2019) at University of Cape Coast library with a focus on establishing clients' satisfaction levels found out that library users were satisfied with the library's automation because they were able to access the materials. The similarities could also be due to the fact that both libraries were striving to provide richer information sources to their users to meet their information needs in the present environment in which information explosion is one of the major challenges. In the lenses of LIBQUAL, the findings of the present study also support LIBQUAL dimension of Information Control. The Information Control dimension strictly deals with how users are able to find the required information in the library, and in a format of their choice, and in an independent and autonomous way (Association of Research Libraries, 2013). This involves providing information skills needed by library users (Fagan, 2014).

Pertaining to accessing library electronic resources remotely as well as accessing resources through the library's website, the findings showed that the satisfaction levels were very low because respondents were failing to access electronic resources while at their homes or hostels. Respondents were also failing to locate electronic resources through the website. Failure to access the resources remotely and through the university website could be due to poor internet connectivity on the part of the users. This may have potentially prevented them from accessing library electronic resources remotely. The issue of poor internet connectivity in Malawi including in public universities is also well echoed in a mixed method study by Chaputula (2016) at public university libraries in Malawi with a focus on the use of mobile phones in the provision of library services. The study found out that public university libraries in Malawi were failing to adequately serve their clients due to, among other things, poor internet connectivity. Also, the findings of the current study are similar to those of a quantitative study by Gathoni and Van der Walt (2019) at the Aga Khan University with a focus on evaluating library service quality found out that library users were not satisfied because library users were failing to access the resources online, and most of the times, the required resources were not available on the website. The similarities could be that both libraries had poor ICT infrastructures, and the resources were not regularly uploaded and updated on the website.

On the other hand, the findings of the current study are in sharp contrast with those of a mixed method study by Greenberg (2016) at the Bar-Ilan university with a focus on academic information behaviour found out that library users were satisfied because the library introduced 'Discovery tools' where a single point of entry, that looks like Google, was created to access all the library resources using a single interface. This innovation was convenient to the library users as they were no longer supposed to use the OPAC to access the library catalogue, and there was no need to login separately to access the subscribed databases or visit the library website to access the e-resources. The dissimilarities with the findings of the current study could be because Mzuni Library and Learning Resource Centre had poor internet connectivity as compared to Bar-Ilan University library in Israel. The findings of the current study also differ from those of a survey by Liu (2016) at Chinese academic Library Services with a focus on user satisfaction which found out that library users were satisfied because the library websites was easy to navigate, and it had several links to other subscribed electronic-databases. The dissimilarities with the findings of the current study could be because China is well advanced in ICT, and therefore, the university libraries may have excellent ICT infrastructure. The findings of the current study are also in contrast to those of a quantitative study by Maina et al. (2017) at Kisii University library which focused on user satisfaction found out that library users were highly satisfied with accessing library's electronic resources remotely, because the library made available Information and Communication Technologies (ICTs) infrastructure to enable users' access library electronic resources both on campus and off campus. This is contrary to Mzuni Library which has poor internet connectivity and poor ICT infrastructures, hence the dissimilarities in the findings.

In the lens of LIBQUAL, the findings of the current study are in sharp contrast with LIBQUAL Information Control dimension which states that library users must access information resources regardless of location (Association of Research Libraries, 2013; Blixrud, 2002).

Regarding satisfaction with the printed materials needed for studies, the findings showed that the satisfaction levels were high because the library provided respondents with printed materials needed for their work. This is because the library has updated its print collection. The findings of the current study are similar to those of an exploratory factor analysis by Hsu et al. (2014) at Business colleges located in the Midwest regions of the United States of America with a focus on perception and satisfaction of library service quality found out that library users were satisfied with the provision of printed materials because the library had adequate library

holdings (printed books). Also, the findings of the current study are similar to those of a survey design by Jiao et al., (2010) the selected Chinese academic libraries from the perspective of international students in China found out that library users were satisfied because the library provided them with updated printed collection; the circulation policies were flexible; the inter library loans were prompt, and books were shelved regularly. Likewise, the findings of the present study are similar to those of a quantitative study by Bhim (2010) at the Bessie head library with a focus on adult user perceptions of library services which established that library users' were very satisfied with the library services, because it provided comprehensive printed materials needed for their work especially at the reserve section and reference sections. The similarities in the findings of studies by Hsu et al. (2014), Jiao et al. (2010) and Bhim (2010) with the current study could be because both libraries had adequate and updated printed materials needed for studies. The findings of the current study are in line with LIBQUAL dimension of 'Information Control' which deals with how users are able to find the required information in the library in a format of their choice. This involves having the right print materials in the collection (Association of Research Libraries, 2013; Blixrud, 2002).

Pertaining to satisfaction with provision of electronic information resources that students need, the findings showed that the satisfaction levels were high because the library provided the exact electronic resources that students needed. The satisfaction with provision of electronic information resources that students need could be attributed to the subscription by the library to credible electronic journals and databases. The results of the current study are similar to those of a mixed method study by Xia (2013) at Victoria University of Wellington with a focus on digital library services found out that users were satisfied with the library because the library provided them with updated electronic information resources which were easy to access and retrieve. In the same vein, the findings of a survey by Pedramnia et al. (2012) at the Mashhad University of Medical Sciences with a focus on service quality analysis revealed that library users were satisfied because the library provided them with an easy system for searching and accessing resources, and the time for loaning resources was also appropriate to the users. The results of the current study were also similar to those of a descriptive design study by Larson and Owusu-Acheaw (2012) at the University of Education which focused on undergraduate students' satisfaction levels which found out that library users were satisfied with the provision of electronic resources because the library subscribed to reputable databases. The similarities of the findings by Xia (2013), Pedramnia et al. (2012), and Larson and Owusu-Acheaw (2012) to the present study could be due to the provision of updated electronic resources which enabled

library users to access electronic resources from credible databases. In the lenses of LIBQUAL, the provision of electronic resources is highlighted as one of the important services that libraries provide. The LIBQUAL dimension of 'Information Control' deals with how users are able to find the required information in the library in a format of their choice. This involves having the right electronic materials and the extent to which access tools are modern and intuitive (Fagan, 2014).

Pertaining to respondents locating textbooks on the library shelves, the findings showed that the satisfaction level was high because respondents managed to locate textbooks on the shelves. This is because the cataloguing system used is user-friendly. This could also be attributed to the library orientation programmes that the library conducts. The findings of the current study however differs with the findings of a qualitative study by Sullivan-windle (2013) at Queensland university of Technology with a focus on factors influencing effective library use established that library users were frustrated and dissatisfied because they were failing to understand the library catalogue, and it was not easy to locate textbooks. Similarly, the findings of the current study also differed with those of a survey conducted in selected libraries in Korea by Bae and Cha (2015) at the selected public libraries in Korea with a focus of service quality analysis which found out that overall, the library failed to satisfy the library users because they were failing to access and locate library resources easily. The findings of the current study are nevertheless in contrast with those of a quantitative study by Phukubje and Ngoepe (2017) at the University of Limpop with a focus on accessibility of library services for users with disability found out that even though the library had a purpose-built unit for students with disabilities that complied with international best practices; still students with disabilities were failing to locate library textbooks. The dissimilarities of the present study, and the one by Sullivan-windle (2013) could be because at Mzuni Library and Learning Resource Centre books are regularly shelved for easy identification, and retrieval, and that the library regularly conducts library orientation sessions for its users, whereas at Queensland University of Technology library, this might not have been the case. The dissimilarities in the findings of the present study with those of Phukubje and Ngoepe (2017) could also be attributed to the fact that Mzuni Library and Learning Resource Centre has a disability friendly library which enables the physically challenged users to easily access the materials, unlike at the University of Limpopo in South Africa'. Through the lenses of LIBQUAL, library users must be knowledgeable enough to access materials in the library in an independent and autonomous

way (ARL, 2012). Therefore, the shelving code must be user-friendly to allow users access the resources without difficulties.

Furthermore, the study carried out a cross tabulation of respondents' level of satisfaction with services provided by Mzuzu University Library and Learning Resource Centre. The results clearly indicated that overall, respondents across all the faculties were either strongly satisfied or just satisfied with the library services. This was due to the fact that Mzuzu University Library and Learning Resource Centre was providing services that met users' expectations. The findings of the present study are comparable to a survey by Weng and Murray (2019) at the Indiana University and University of Pennsylvania with a focus on faculty perceptions of librarians and library services which found out that faculties were very satisfied with the library services provided by the two libraries. The similarities then could be due to subscription to various databases by the two libraries hence, the satisfaction to its users.

Likewise, the findings of the current study are similar to those of an exploratory study by Kaba (2018) at the AAU libraries with a focus on users' perception towards the quality of library resources which found out that the library achieved the highest level of satisfaction among the academic faculties. Similarly, the findings of the present study are also similar to those of a quantitative study by Bashorun et al. (2011) at the University of Ilorin with a focus on user perception of electronic resources established that library users across the faculties were satisfied with the library services because the library provided them with adequate access to a range of e-resources, and adequate level of bibliographic instruction and training that enabled users to use library services effectively. Likewise, the findings of the current study are similar to those of a qualitative study by Nyantakyi-Baah (2016) at the Ghana institute of Journalism and Ashesi University college libraries with a focus on user perception of academic library found out that respondents from across all the faculties were highly satisfied with the library services provided by the libraries. The similarities of the findings between these studies and the current study could be because of the provision of a range of electronic resources that met the needs of their users in both institutions.

6.2.3 Section C: Postgraduate students' perception of library staff attitude towards library clients

The second objective of the study sought to ascertain postgraduate students' perception of library staff attitude towards library clients. The second objective of this study relates very well with 'Affect of Service' which is one of the three dimensions of LIBQUAL. The dimension of

'Affect of service' is concerned with the human dimension of service quality (ARL, 2012). Aspects of this dimension include user perception of staff helpfulness, knowledge, competency, dependability, and care for library users (Fagan, 2014). Kekana (2016) highlights that a library is just a building with a lot of resources; however, with a committed and willing staff to assist the users, it becomes an information centre which is the hub of any information and knowledge generating institution.

The results presented in the previous chapter pertaining to staff members who are friendly, indicate that respondents had a positive perception of library staff attitude towards library clients because staff were friendly. This could be attributed to most library staff members who are either studying towards a diploma, bachelors' degree or higher or have had acquired either of them in Library and Information Science (LIS). As such, staff members are becoming increasingly professional when handling library clients. This study has established that the findings of the current study are similar to those of a survey done by Rysavy et al. (2017) at the Goldey Beacom College with a focus on students satisfaction with library which found out that on average, the majority of the students strongly agreed that library staff members were friendly. These similarities could be because both libraries had professional staff members who provided good customer service to the users. The findings of the current study are also similar to those of a quantitative study by Chen (2016) at the Taiwanese academic library with a focus on library service quality identification which found out that library users had positive attitude towards library staff because library staff members were friendly. The resemblance of these findings with the present study could be that library staff members from both libraries had good rapport with the library users. Likewise, the findings of the current study are similar to a quantitative study by Mkhonta (2016) at the American Embassy Swaziland Information Resource Centre with a focus on service quality assessment which found out that overall, the LIBQUAL dimension of 'Affect of Service' was rated better as users perceived the staff members as friendly and consistently courteous.

The similarities in those findings with the present study could be attributed to the courteousness displayed by the library staff members of the two libraries. Similarly, the findings of the current study are similar to a survey that was done in some selected universities in Botswana by Oladokun and Aina (2011) at Botswana libraries with a focus on the impact of digital divide to learners found out that Open and Distance Learners felt that library staff members were friendly and helpful because they were assisting them on how to access the e-resources. The

resemblance of the findings could be because library employees of both libraries were well educated and knowledgeable enough to help library access the resources. In the lenses of LIBQUAL, the findings of the current study are well supported by the LIBQUAL dimension of 'Affect of Service' which is concerned with the human dimension of service quality, specifically with some aspects of staff friendliness which are highlighted in the LIBQUAL dimension.

The study also revealed that respondents had a positive perception of library staff members' attitude towards library clients because they instilled confidence in the users. This may have been because library staff members were directing library users to locate the desirable materials in the library. The results of the present study are similar with those of a survey by Ka et al. (2020) at the university of Hong Kong which focused on the effectiveness of library services which found out that library users had a strong relationship with library staff members because library staff were instilling confidence in the users. There were also similarities between the findings of the current study and those of a quantitative study by Larson and Owusu-Acheaw (2012) at the University of Education on the satisfaction levels of library users found out that users had high perception towards library staff members because they were efficient in their operations, and they were instilling confidence in the users. The similarities of these findings with those of a present study could also be due to the efficient services offered by the library employees of both libraries, and that they instilled confidence in their users. Overall, the study has found out that the LIBQUAL dimension of 'Affect of Service' had a high score as library users perceived staff members positively because they instilled confidence in them. This shows that employees from both libraries instilled confidence in the users. Through the lenses of LIBQUAL, the dimension of 'Affect of Service' is aimed at instilling confidence in the library users (Fagan, 2014).

The study also found out that respondents had positive perception of library staff attitude towards library clients because they were knowledgeable, and were readily available to respond to queries. This may have been so, because most of the library staff at Mzuni have acquired or are studying towards acquiring a higher LIS qualification such as diplomas, degrees and PhDs. Therefore, the improved staff member capacity has helped staff members to appropriately answer queries from the users. Accordingly, the current study found out that these results resemble those of a descriptive-correlation research by Cristobal (2018) at the University of

Saint Louis with a focus on customer satisfaction based on LibQUAL dimensions established that library users had a positive perception towards library staff because staff members were knowledgeable, and were able to appropriately respond to their queries. Similar results were also recorded in a survey study by Jiao et al. (2010) at the Wuhan and Beijing universities from the perspective of international students in China established that library users had a positive attitude towards staff members because library staff members were knowledgeable, and were answering inquiries accurately and clearly. Similarly, a descriptive research by Musyoka (2013) at the selected universities in Kenya with a focus on user satisfaction with service quality found out that library users had positive perception towards library staff because the staff members were knowledgeable, and were available to respond to queries. Furthermore, a study that used both qualitative and quantitative research designs by Namaganda et al. (2013) at the Makerere university with a focus on library service quality satisfaction found out that library users rated the library staff highly because staff were knowledgeable and answered their queries professionally, and they were also readily available to assist library users.

The study further established that respondents had positive perception of library staff attitude towards library clients because staff were willing to help library users. This was possible because staff had the courtesy when helping users. The results of the present study resemble those of an exploratory case study approach by UK Research Information Network (RIN) (2011) at the selected libraries in the United Kingdom which focused on service quality measurements found out that library users had positive perception towards library staff members because they were willing to help them. Similarly, a quantitative study by Xi et al. (2016) at the Nanjing agricultural university with a focus on LIBQUAL dimensions found out that library users had positive perception towards library staff because they were willing to help library users. Likewise, the results of the present study are also similar to the results of a quantitative study by Ncwane (2016) at the Mangosuthu University of Technology's Natural Sciences with a focus on service level satisfaction with library services found out that the perception of library users towards library users was high because staff members were willing to help and each one of the users was receiving individual attention. The results of the studies by the UK Research Information Network (RIN) (2011), Xi et al. (2016) and Ncwane (2016), and those of the present study have shown some similarities in the sense that respondents had positive perception towards library staff members because such staff members were willing to help library users. Also, staff members had the courtesy when helping users. Staff willingness

to help library users is one of the most important aspects in the LIBQUAL dimension of 'Affect of Service' (ARL, 2012).

Equally, the study found out that respondents had positive perception of library staff attitude towards clients because they (staff) understood their information needs. This could also be attributed to the fact that most library staff members have had acquired a LIS qualification from diploma up to doctorate level. Factually, a lot of Mzuni library staff members have been upgrading their qualifications, and this has helped them to understand the information needs of library users. The findings of the present study are also similar to those of a descriptive study research by Atanda and Ekanem (2019) at the University of Uyo with a focus students perception of information resources found out that the respondents had positive perception of library staff attitudes towards clients because library staff understood their information needs. Similar findings were also discovered in a study that used both qualitative and quantitative designs by Namaganda et al. (2013) at Makerere university with a focus on users' perceptions of library services which found out that library users rated library staff members highly because they understood their information needs. In the lenses of LIBQUAL, it is very important for staff to understand the information needs of library users (ARL, 2012). Information needs vary in relation to the subject fields of users, and that is why all library staff must be highly trained to understand the needs of every library user.

Results from the chi-square test on gender's perception of library staff's attitude towards library clients revealed that there were no differences between gender on various statements except for 'staff are readily available to respond to my queries'. This implies that respondents' perception of library staff attitude towards clients was positive. The results of the present study are also similar with those of a descriptive-correlation study by Cristobal (2018) at the University of Saint Louis in Philippines with a focus on library service quality expectations established that there was no difference between gender on perception of library staff members attitude towards library clients. The resemblance of these findings could be because both libraries had dedicated staff members that were professional enough. The findings of the present study are also in line with those of a quantitative study by Khaola and Mabilikoane (2015) at the National University of Lesotho with a focus on perception of library service quality which found out that there was no difference between gender regarding their perception towards library staff members. Similarly, the findings of the present study resemble those of a survey research by Masinde et al. (2016) at Kenyatta University with a focus information

seeking behaviour of graduate found no differences between gender as regards perception towards library employees. The resemblance of the findings could also be influenced by the good customer care trainings that librarians have acquired.

6.2.4 Section D. Postgraduate students' expectations of Mzuzu University Library and Learning Resource Centre environment

The third objective of the study sought to determine postgraduate students' expectations of the Mzuzu University Library and Learning Resource Centre environment. The third LIBQUAL dimension which is 'Library as a place' relates well with the third objective of this study that deals with postgraduate students' expectation of the Mzuni Library and Learning Resource Centre environment. LIBQUAL defines 'Library as a place,' as the physical environment of the library and as a place for individual study, group work and inspiration (ARL, 2012). In this dimension, LIBQUAL assesses the availability of a quiet space, the comfort and ambiance, and the suitability of space for study, learning and research (Bronicki, 2017; Einasto, 2017).

The results presented in the previous chapter pertaining to a quiet environment, established that the library failed to meet users' expectations. Respondents complained that the library received background noise from the tuck-shop and the porters lodge. These two buildings are close to the library, and it is a concern to library users. Contrary results were established in a quantitative study conducted by Donovan (2020) at the university of Kentucky College of Law with a focus on library environment found the library to be a quiet environment free from distractions thereby allowing for better engagement with texts, comprehension and retention of complex materials.

The above differences could be attributed to the fact that Mzuni Library and Learning resource Centre Library is located close to the students' tuck-shop that attracts noise; while the University of Kentucky College of Law Library is not located close to the shops that can attract outside noise. The findings of the present study are also contrary to a quantitative study by Mardani, Alavi, and Zare (2014) at Tahran University of Medical Sciences on service quality measurement found out that the library met the expectation of library users by proving them with a quiet environment. The difference could again be attributed to the geographical location of the two libraries. Contrary findings were also established in a quantitative study by Motiang et al. (2014) University of Limpopo with a focus on user satisfaction with library services which found out that library users were happy because the library met their expectation of being a 'quiet library environment'. The difference could be because the University of Limpopo

Library is geographically located in a quiet place as opposed to Mzuni Library and Learning Resource Centre. The provision of a quiet environment is well supported by LIBQUAL's 'Library as a place' dimension which only focuses on the physical environment, and how well the library meets the individuals' needs. 'Library as a place' dimension states that the library must be quiet in order to enhance learning (Association of Research Libraries, 2013; Roebuck, 2013).

The results of the current study pertaining to provision of library space that inspires study and learning indicate that the library met library users' expectation. This is because the library provided the space that inspires learning and study and the users were happy. Similar results were also established in a quantitative study by Mangrum (2019) at the University of Southern Mississippi with a focus on satisfaction with library services which found out that library users were happy because the library met their expectations by providing an environment that inspired learning and study. The resemblance of the findings could be because both libraries had designs that provided comfortable space with limited distractions. Similarly, the results of the present study are also in line with a quantitative study by Xi et al. (2016) at the Nanjing Agricultural University with a focus on service quality assessment found out that the library met the users' expectation by proving library space that inspired learning, and study, and the library users were happy. The similarities of these findings could be because both libraries created an academically friendly environment that kept respondents focused. The findings of the present study are also similar to those of a qualitative study by Nyantakyi-Baah (2016) at the Ghana Institute of Journalism with a focus on user perception of library service quality established that a lot of library users expected the library to have enough space to inspire learning and study. Library users were happy with the library because it met their expectations. The similarities of the findings could be because both libraries met their users' expectations by providing library space that inspired learning and study. Similar results were also recorded in a quantitative study by Khaola and Mabilikoane (2015) at the National University of Lesotho with a focus on frequency of use of library resources found out that library users expected the library to provide space that inspired learning and study. The library users were very happy because the library fulfilled their expectations. According to LIBQUAL dimension of 'Library as a place', libraries must provide spaces that always inspire learning and study (ARL, 2013). Therefore, libraries should always provide suitable environment that attract the interest of the users. The library can solicit feedback from the users which can help library management to

come up with measures on how they can improve the environment so that it inspires study and learning.

Regarding space for group discussions and learning, the study found out that the library was not meeting users' expectations. This is because the library did not provide space for group discussions, and the users were not happy. The current library at Mzuni is an interim one (formally a university hall) because the actual library was destroyed by a fire in December 2015. To this end, the library building does not have discussion rooms to support collaborative learning. However, this problem will be rectified as soon as the new proposed library building is constructed. The findings of the present study are in line with the findings of a quantitative study by Mardani et al. (2014) at Tehran University of Medical Sciences with a focus on service quality measurements which found out that library users expected the library to provide them with space for group discussions. However, the library failed to meet that expectation, and the library users were not happy.

Even then, the results of the current study contradicts a number of studies such as: those of a quantitative study by Mangrum (2019) at the University of Southern Mississippi with a focus on library environment which found out that library users expected the library to provide soundproofed space for group discussions. The library met the expectations of the users and library users were happy. The differences in these results could also be because Mzuni Library and Learning Resource Centre library is an interim library as opposed to the University of Southern Mississippi Library. Likewise, the findings of the current study are also in sharp contrast with those of an an online survey by Ka et al. (2020) at the university of Hong Kong with a focus on library environment which found out that users expected the library to provide them with space for group discussions and social interaction. The results indicated that library users were happy because the library met their expectations. The dissimilarity of the findings between the Ka et al. (2020) study, and the current study could be because university libraries in Hong Kong were well designed, and they had discussion rooms to enhance collaborative learning unlike the one at Mzuni.

Likewise, the findings of the current study differ from those of a cross-sectional descriptive study by Kiriri (2018) at the United States International University-Africa with a focus on maximising library service delivery found out that the majority of the library users expected the library environment to have space for group discussions. The users were happy because the library met their expectation. The differences of these findings could be because Mzuni interim

library is small, and there is no space for group discussion as opposed to the one done in Kenya. Similarly, the findings of the present study differs with those of a quantitative study by Kekana (2016) at the university of KwaZulu-Natal with a focus on postgraduate students' perception of the library which established that library users expected the library to have sufficient space for group learning and group study. The users were happy because the library met their expectation. The differences of the findings could be because University of KwaZulu-Natal Library is well designed to support group discussions as opposed to Mzuni Library and Learning Resource Centre which is just a makeshift library. According to LIBQUAL, libraries should provide space for group discussion and learning because it enhances collaborative learning (ARL, 2013).

Pertaining to the security of the library, the study found out that the library met respondents' expectations. This is because the library provided a safe environment for studying, and users were happy. Similar findings were also established in a qualitative study by Sullivan-windle and Sullivan-windle (2013) at the Queensland University with a focus on effective library use found out that the library users expected the library to provide them with a safe and secure environment. The library users were happy because it met their expectations. The similarities of these findings could also be because both libraries had surveillance cameras that attract any kind of theft inside the library. The results of the current study are similar with those of a quantitative study by Olumunmi et al. (2016) at the Nigerian private universities with a focus on perceived quality of library facilities and services which found out that library users were happy because the library met their expectation in the provision of a safe and secure environment. Similar findings were also recorded in a quantitative study by de Jager (2015) at the University of Cape Town with a focus on library found out that library users expected the library to provide a secure and safe environment. The library met this expectation, and library users were happy. In the same vein, LIBQUAL's library as a place dimension states that a library is supposed to meet the individual need of users by providing a secure library environment (ARL, 2013; Bayir & Simpson, 2007; Roebuck, 2013).

Respondents were also happy regarding the provision of sufficient lighting, comfortable chairs and desks because the library met their expectations. Similar findings were also recorded in a quantitative study by Mangrum (2019) at the University of Southern Mississippi with a focus on Library space usage which found out that library users were happy with the library environment because the library provided them with comfortable chairs, and desks as well as

sufficient lighting. The similarities in the findings could be because both libraries invested much in purchasing quality library furniture that met the expectation of the users. The findings of the present study are also similar with those of a survey by Field Service Specialist (2015) at selected libraries in Hong Kong with a focus on managing users' found out that library users in Hong Kong expected the library to be well ventilated, have sufficient lighting, and have comfortable seats. The results indicated that the users were very happy because the library met their expectations. The similarities of the findings of the study in Hong Kong with the current study could be because both libraries provided good ventilation, and library furniture was also up-to-standard. Similar findings were also recorded in Nigeria in a survey by Adam (2017) at Yusufu Maitama Sule University with a focus on undergraduate students' assessment of service quality which found out that library users expected the library to have sufficient reading tables and chairs; to have functional air conditioners and fans; and have adequate lighting and brightness suitable for reading. The library users were happy because the library met their expectations. Likewise, the findings of the current study are in line with the findings of a qualitative study by Namugera (2014) at Makerere university with a focus on users' perceptions and usage of library services which found out that library users expected the library to provide them with comfortable chairs and desks; conducive environment for reading and doing research. The similarities in these findings with the current study could be attributed to the fact that both libraries had comfortable chairs and desks that met users' expectations. LIBQUAL dimension of 'Library as a place' also supports the findings of the current study by highlighting the need for comfortable chairs in the library (ARL, 2013; Bayir & Simpson, 2007; Roebuck, 2013).

There was only one open-ended question under section D that dealt with postgraduate expectation of the library environment. This was a follow up question which was aimed at soliciting opinions from the respondents regarding the Mzuni Library and Learning Resource Centre environment. This part of the questionnaire gave the respondents an opportunity to indicate their thoughts and views about the library environment. The majority of the comments were in relation to the provision of special postgraduate rooms for study. Some comments regarding noise were also raised. Respondents complained that there was noise around the library area especially from the tuck-shop and the porters lodge. These two buildings mentioned are close to the library, and it is a concern to many library users. Other respondents requested the library to increase the power sockets in the reading areas. Respondents also

commented on the need for a water dispenser, and students' toilets in the library, though some respondents applauded the library for its cleanliness.

Through the lenses of the LIBQUAL, the findings from this open ended question are in line with the 'Library as a place' dimension which focuses on the physical environment, and how well the library meets individuals' needs of library users. In this dimension, LIBQUAL assess the availability of quiet space, the comfort and welcoming feel of space, the suitability of space for study, learning and research. Issues of safe and secure environment and clean environment are also covered under this dimension (Edgar, 2006; Roebuck, 2013).

The study further explored the impact of gender of the respondents on their expectations from the Mzuzu University Library and Learning Resource Centre environment. The results of the chi-square test between gender on respondents' expectation of the Mzuzu University Library and Learning Resource Centre environment revealed that overall, there was no difference between gender on various statements of the library environment. The results of the present study are also similar with those of a descriptive-correlation study by Cristobal (2018) at the University of Saint Louis with a focus on satisfying customers using LibQUAL dimensions which found out that there was no difference between gender on expectation of library environment. The resemblance of the findings could be because both libraries met the expectations of the respondents regarding the library environment. The findings of the current study are also similar to those of a quantitative study by Mahmood et al. (2021) at selected libraries in Pakistan with a focus on service quality evaluation which found out that there was no difference between gender on expectation of the library environment. The similarities could then be due to the fact that all library users irrespective of gender prefer a clean environment, well ventilated library, and good library space that can inspire learning.

The findings of the present study also relate to those of a quantitative study by Khaola and Mabilikoane (2015) at the National University of Lesotho with a focus on service quality satisfaction which found out that there was no difference between gender on expectations of the library's environment. The similarities could be because both libraries met the expectations of both gender pertaining to library environment cleanliness. Likewise, the findings of the present study are similar to those of a survey by Ejiro (2021) at the College of Education Warri with a focus on undergraduate use of library services which found out that there was no difference between gender on expectations of the library environment. The similarities could therefore be because both libraries met the expectations of their users by providing safe, secure and clean library environment.

6.3 Conclusion

The findings of this study revealed the strength as well as the weaknesses of Mzuni Library and Learning Resource Centre in terms of service delivery to the postgraduate students. Outlined below are the summary of the findings basing on the objectives of the study. The presentation is preceded by the summary of the demographic data of respondents.

6.3.1 Demographic profiles of respondents

There was a major distinction with the response on gender. The study found that there were more males respondents than females. Furthermore, the majority of the respondents were between the ages of 31-40. The largest group of respondents with regard to qualifications were Masters Students.

6.3.2 Postgraduate students' level of satisfaction with services provided by the Mzuzu University Library and Learning Resource Centre

Library user satisfaction is the means by which library management determine that a library service meets the required need. Basing on the findings of this study, it is evident that the Mzuni Library and Learning Resource Centre is providing quality services to a certain extent. However, while the majority of postgraduate students indicated satisfaction with the services like good printed material; availability of electronic resources, and the provision of information skills, there was a small group of respondents that expressed dissatisfaction with some of the services. Such services included remote login, accessing electronic resources via the website and this warrant the need for improvement.

6.3.3 Postgraduate students' perception of staff attitude towards library clients

Professional front-line customer care is a vital aspect for providing an acceptable level of library service. With regard to postgraduate students' perception of staff attitude towards library clients, the results of this study demonstrated that the respondents had a positive perception because they were getting the desired attention from the library staff. Respondents also perceived the library staff as helpful, instilling confidence in users and knowledgeable.

6.3.4 Postgraduate students' expectations of the Mzuzu University Library and Learning Resource Centre environment

In this study, postgraduate students had varied levels of expectations regarding the Mzuni Library and Learning Resource Centre environment. Many postgraduate students were happy because the library met their expectations such as sufficient lighting; an ideal place for studying, and a secure library environment. However, the library scored poorly in the areas of space for group discussions and quiet environment. This suggested that some postgraduate students were also not happy since the library failed to meet these expectations.

Responses from the open-ended questions about the library environment illustrated that postgraduate students did not only expect relevant facilities, but also expect adequate facilities. This study has shown that though there were reading places in the library, still postgraduate students expected the library to provide special reading rooms strictly for students of that level. Another area of concern was lack of students' toilets and ablutions inside the library. Postgraduate students also expected the library to provide drinking water by installing a water dispenser in the library.

6.4 Recommendations

In view of the research findings, the study recommends the following:

- Mzuni through its ICT directorate should provide adequate ICT infrastructure that would enable users to remotely access information resources.
- Mzuni library security personnel should be patrolling the library premises especially at the porters lodge and the tuck-shop to regulate noise.
- The library should provide drinking water and students' toilets and ablutions within its buildings.
- The Mzuni library should establish more discussion rooms to enhance collaborative learning.
- The Mzuni library should also establish special study rooms specifically for postgraduate students.
- Mzuni should increase the number of surveillance cameras inside and outside the library building as a security measure.

6.5 Suggestion for further research

The focus of this study has been the users (postgraduate students). Further studies should focus on library staff under this topic:

- The duties of library staff in order to increase the satisfaction and perception of library users
- Barriers to the provision of quality library services in academic libraries.

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APPENDICES
APPENDIX 1: Ethical clearance letter

MZUZU UNIVERSITY

DIRECTORATE OF RESEARCH

Mzuzu University
Private Bag 201
L u w i n g a
M z u z u   2
M A L A W I
TEL: 01 320 722
FAX: 01 320 648

MZUZU UNIVERSITY RESEARCH ETHICS COMMITTEE (MZUNIREC)

Ref No: MZUNIREC/DOR/20/05   23rd Oct, 2020.

Mr. Alex Molson,
The   Polytechnic,
P/Bag 303,
Chichiri,
Blantyre 3.

Email: amolson@poly.ac.mw

Dear Mr. Alex Molson,

RESEARCH ETHICS AND REGULATORY APPROVAL AND PERMIT FOR PROTOCOL REF NO: MZUNIREC/DOR/20/05: PERCEPTION OF POSTGRADUATE STUDENTS TOWARDS THE QUALITY OF LIBRARY SERVICES PROVIDED AT MZUZU UNIVERSITY.

Having satisfied all the relevant ethical and regulatory requirements, I am pleased to inform you that the above referred research protocol has officially been approved. You are now permitted to proceed with its implementation. Should there be any amendments to the approved protocol in the course of implementing it, you shall be required to seek approval of such amendments before implementation of the same.
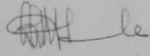
This approval is valid for one year from the date of issuance of this approval. If the study goes beyond one year, an annual approval for continuation shall be required to be sought from the Mzuzu University Research Ethics Committee (MZUNIREC) in a format that is available at the Secretariat. Once the study is finalised, you are required to furnish the Committee with a final report of the study. The Committee reserves the right to carry out compliance inspection of this approved protocol at any time as may be deemed by it. As such, you are expected to properly maintain all study documents including consent forms.

Wishing you a successful implementation of your study.

Committee Address:
Secretariat, Mzuzu University Research Ethics Committee, P/Bag 201, Luwinga, Mzuzu 2; E-mail address: mzunirec@mzuni.ac.mw

Yours Sincerely,

Gift Mbwele

MZUNIREC ADMINISTRATOR

For: CHAIRMAN OF MZUNIREC

Mzuzu University Research Ethics Committee (MZUNIREC)

Informed Consent Form for Research in Masters of Library and Information Science

Introduction

I am **Alex Molson** from **Mzuzu University**. I am doing research on **Perception of postgraduate students towards the quality of library services provided at Mzuzu University**. This consent form may contain words that you do not understand. Please ask me to stop as we go through the information and I will take time to explain. If you have questions later, you can ask them of me or of another researcher.

Purpose of the research

This research aims to find out the perception of postgraduate students towards the quality of library services provided at Mzuzu University.

Type of Research Intervention

This research will involve your participation in filling the questionnaire.

Participant Selection

You are being invited to take part in this research because your views will help Mzuni Library and Learning Resource Centre to get feedback regarding the services provided.

Voluntary Participation

Your participation in this research is entirely voluntary. You may skip any question and move on to the next question.

Duration

The research takes place for a period of four months. It will take you not more than 20 minutes to complete the questionnaire.

Risks

You do not have to answer any question if you feel the question(s) are too personal or if talking about them makes you uncomfortable.

Reimbursements

You will not be provided any incentive to take part in the research.

Sharing the Results

The knowledge that we get from this research will be shared in the malawiana section of Mzuni University library. Following, we will publish the results so other interested people may learn from the research.

Who to Contact

If you have any questions, you can ask them now or later. If you wish to ask questions later, you may contact: Dr George Chipeta on gchipeta5@gmail.com

This proposal has been reviewed and approved by Mzuzu University Research Ethics Committee (MZUNIREC) which is a committee whose task it is to make sure that research participants are protected from harm. If you wish to find about more about the Committee, contact Mr. Gift Mbwele, Mzuzu University Research Ethics (MZUNIREC) Administrator, Mzuzu University, P/Bag 201, Luwinga, Mzuzu 2, Phone: 0999404008/0888641486

Do you have any questions?

Part II: Certificate of Consent

I have been invited to participate in research about Perception of postgraduate students towards the quality of library services provided at Mzuzu University.

I have read the foregoing information, or it has been read to me. I have had the opportunity to ask questions about it and any questions I have been asked have been answered to my satisfaction. I consent voluntarily to be a participant in this study

……………………………………………………………………………………………

Statement by the researcher

I have accurately read out the information sheet to the potential participant, and to the best of my ability made sure that the participant understands the research project. I confirm the participant was given an opportunity to ask questions about the study, and all the questions asked by the participant have been answered correctly and to the best of my ability. I confirm that the individual has not been coerced into giving consent, and the consent has been given freely and voluntarily.

Signature of Researcher_____

Date _____

        Day/month/year

This questionnaire is about the '**Perception of postgraduate students towards the quality of library services provided at Mzuzu University'.**

Instructions:

Tick in the square bracket provided front of the most appropriate answer on the responses provided.

SECTION A: DEMOGRAPHIC INFORMATION

1. Please indicate your gender.
   - ☐ Male   [ ]
   - ☐ Female   [ ]

2. Please, indicate your age group
   - ☐ 20-30   [ ]
   - ☐ 31-40   [ ]
   - ☐ 41-50   [ ]
   - ☐ 51-60   [ ]

3. Please, indicate the qualification you are currently pursuing
   - ☐ Masters   [ ]
   - ☐ PHD   [ ]

4. Please indicate your faculty
   - ☐ Humanities and Social Sciences   [ ]
   - ☐ Environmental Sciences   [ ]
   - ☐ Education   [ ]
   - ☐ Others specify……………………..   [ ]

5. Please, indicate your program of study
   - ☐ Master of Education (Leadership and Management)   [ ]
   - ☐ Master of Library and Information Science   [ ]
   - ☐ Master of Theology and Religious Studies   [ ]
   - ☐ Master of Science (Construction Real Estates)   [ ]
   - ☐ Master of Science in Forestry   [ ]
   - ☐ Master of Science in Sanitation   [ ]
   - ☐ Master of Science in Fisheries Science   [ ]
   - ☐ Master of Science in Transformative Community Development   [ ]
   - ☐ Master of Science in Urban and Regional Planning   [ ]

□ Doctor of Philosophy in Transformative and Community Development   [ ]
□ Doctor of Urban and Regional Planning   [ ]
□ Doctor of Philosophy in Water and Sanitation   [ ]
□ Doctor of Philosophy in Environmental Forestry   [ ]
□ Doctor of Philosophy in Geographical Information Systems   [ ]
□ Doctor of Philosophy in Fisheries   [ ]
□ Doctor of Philosophy in Religious Studies   [ ]
□ Others specify…………………………………………………….

SECTION B: Postgraduate students' level of satisfaction with services provided by Mzuzu University Library and learning Resource Centre

INFORMATION CONTROL (Ability to access the information)

Please tick in an appropriate box to indicate the degree to which you either agree or disagree with the statement.

1=very satisfied 2==Satisfied 3=Neutral 4=Dissatisfied 5=Very dissatisfied

6	The library provides me with the information skills I need in my postgraduate studies	1	2	3	4	5
7	I can access library electronic resources from my home or hostel	1	2	3	4	5
8	Library has the printed materials I need for my work	1	2	3	4	5
9	Library has electronic information resources I need	1	2	3	4	5
10	Library website enables me to locate electronic resources on my own	1	2	3	4	5
11	It's easy to locate a textbook on the library shelves	1	2	3	4	5

SECTION C: Postgraduate students' perception of staff attitude towards library clients

EFFECT OF SERVICE (How well users are served and treated by library staff)

Please tick in an appropriate box to indicate the degree to which you either agree or disagree with the statement.

1=strongly agree 2=Agree 3=Neutral 4=Disagree 5=strongly disagree

12	Staff are friendly	1	2	3	4	5
13	Staff instil confidence in users	1	2	3	4	5
14	Staff are readily available to respond to my queries	1	2	3	4	5
15	Staff are willing to help me	1	2	3	4	5

16	Staff understand my information need	1	2	3	4	5
17	Staff have the knowledge to answer my questions	1	2	3	4	5

SECTION D: Postgraduate students' expectations of Mzuzu University Library and Learning Resource Centre environment

LIBRARY AS A PLACE (Library environment)

Please tick in an appropriate box to indicate whether you strongly agree or strongly disagree with the statements.

1=strongly agree 2=Agree 3=Natural 4=Disagree 5=strongly disagree

	I expect the library to provide…					
18	A quiet library environment	1	2	3	4	5
19	Space that inspires my own study and learning	1	2	3	4	5
20	Space for group discussions and learning	1	2	3	4	5
21	Environment that has sufficient lighting	1	2	3	4	5
22	A secure library environment	1	2	3	4	5
23	Comfortable chairs and desks	1	2	3	4	5
24	An ideal place for study, learning or research	1	2	3	4	5

25. Please state your opinion about the library environment…………………………………

End of Questions

Thank you for your participation