



**Students' expectations and perceptions of the services provided by the Law Library,
Pietermaritzburg Campus, University of KwaZulu-Natal, South Africa**

by

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Declaration

I, Mr Sizwe Richard Zulu, declare that:

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Dedication

This dissertation is dedicated to my lovely wife, Slindile Fihlela Zulu, and my two daughters Ziyacebisa Sibusisiwe Zulu and Princess Zithelo Zulu for their love, care, support and understanding. It is also dedicated to abantu BakaMweli kanye nabantu baseSankontshe-eHammersdale.

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- Above all, I thank Almighty God.

Abstract

The study aimed to investigate final (4th) year law students' expectations and perceptions as well as satisfaction with the services provided by the Law Library on the Pietermaritzburg (PMB) campus of the University of KwaZulu-Natal (UKZN). A law library can be seen as the “heart” of a law faculty in a university and it is imperative that the services provided by the library are constantly evaluated to ensure that they are meeting the needs of the students.

The study was underpinned by the SERVQUAL model developed by Parasuraman, Zeithaml and Berry (1985). The model is based on the idea of user-centred assessment and identifies five potential gaps between expectations and perceptions of service delivery. Gap 5 was the focus of this study which is the gap between the expected service offered to clients by an organisation and the perceived service delivered. In line with SERVQUAL use was made of the LibQUAL questionnaire the validity and reliability of which has been well established in the academic library context. LibQUAL-based studies done in academic libraries in South Africa were reviewed as well as a selection of LibQUAL studies done internationally (including Africa).

The study adopted a largely quantitative approach and all 174 final-year law students registered on the PMB campus in the first semester of 2021 were surveyed using an online questionnaire made available via Google Forms. Thus, no sampling was done and 103 students completed the questionnaire giving a response rate of 59.2%, which was considered “good” and thus adequate for analysis and reporting of results.

As to be expected and in line with the literature, expectations of library services in all instances exceeded perceptions of those services and there were thus gaps between the two. However, the size of the gaps between the different services varied. The most problematic services were “Staff who instil confidence in users”, “Staff who are consistently courteous”, “Easy-to-use access tools that allow me to find things on my own”, “Staff who give users individual attention”, and the library “Helps me distinguish between trustworthy and untrustworthy information”. In terms of satisfaction with library services, while a majority of respondents were satisfied with how they were treated in the library and with the overall quality of the services provided these were small majorities. Finally, slightly less than half of the respondents were satisfied with the library's support for their legal studies.

Recommendations stemming from the significant findings and conclusions and directed at library management were made and suggestions for further research were given.

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List of acronyms

ARL	Association of Research Libraries
CCL	Chancellor College Library
DFC	Doornfontein Campus
ICTs	Information and communication technologies
IL	Information literacy
IUCo	Iringa University College
LibQUAL	Library Quality
LIS	Library and information science
MMR	Mixed-methods research
NUL	National University of Lesotho
PMB	Pietermaritzburg
SERVQUAL	Service quality
UKZN	University of KwaZulu-Natal
Wi-Fi	Wireless fidelity

Chapter 1: Introduction to the study

1.0 Introduction

According to Proctor (2021: 1):

The contemporary academic library occupies a crucial role in the teaching and learning mission of universities. This centrality is perhaps best exemplified by the popular saying that the library is the heart of the university.

Given this crucial role, it is imperative that the library provides quality services that meet the needs of its users – both staff and students. To ensure that this is the case, it is important for the library to assess the quality of the services provided from the perspectives of its users. This study is one such assessment. It assessed the expectations and perceptions of final-year law students of the services provided by the Law Library on the Pietermaritzburg (PMB) campus of the University of KwaZulu-Natal (UKZN).

In this introductory chapter, the Law Library on the PMB campus is described. This is followed by the background to the study and the research problem. The rationale/justification for the study and research questions underpinning the study are provided as well as its delimitation. The study's theoretical framework and research methodology adopted are briefly outlined and the definitions of relevant terms are given. The chapter ends with an overview, by chapter, of the study and a summary.

1.1 Law Library (PMB campus)

The current Law Library on the PMB campus of the UKZN is housed in the Law Building on Golf Road. The building was established in 1972 and “a new branch library in ‘attractive and spacious quarters’ was also opened” (Buchanan, 2008: 201). The university newspaper in the same year noted that “The building incorporates a fine library with a gallery to house the faculty’s 8,000 volumes and reading carrells for 48 students” and Brown (the then university librarian) considered that it was becoming a very good law library and was “handsomely housed” (Buchanan, 2008: 201). The library is one of three on the PMB campus, with the other two being the Cecil Renaud Library (the main library) and the Life Sciences Library. While described above as a branch library, it can also be seen as a “professional school library”. According to Basefsky (2006: 16), this type of library “exists as a matter of

necessity (not choice) because it provides an essential element of professional training and certification without which the school [in this instance the School of Law] itself could not function.”

The Law Library provides computers, photocopying facilities, study space, academic/course reserves, inter-library loans and Wi-Fi (wireless fidelity). The collection serves the needs of the staff and students in the School of Law reflecting the courses taught and their research interests. It consists of books on local and foreign law, law reports, statutes, and journals in both print and electronic formats. Importantly, as the library website points out, “Most South African [law] resources and many foreign resources are now available electronically via Sabinet Legal, Juta, LexisNexis, Hein Online and Westlaw” (Law Library, N.d.) These can be accessed by bona fide staff and students off-campus – a crucial consideration, particularly given the Covid-19 pandemic and its associated lockdowns during which physically visiting the library to access resources was not possible. Under normal circumstances (pre-Covid-19), the library is open 24/7 during term time (Law Library, N.d.). At the time of writing this dissertation, the library is open to students and staff permitted to be on campus from 8.30 to 4.30 pm Monday to Friday. However, services are still being provided remotely as per lockdown regulations and librarians remain available to provide virtual support for teaching, learning and research (Library services during lockdown, N.d.)

In the preamble to the Library Code of Conduct (N.d.) which applies to all UKZN libraries, it is stated that

The UKZN Library exists to support the vision and mission of UKZN. Within this context, UKZN Library seeks to provide an environment conducive to teaching, learning and research.

The vision of UKZN is “To be the Premier University of African Scholarship”, while its mission is to be “A truly South African University of Choice that is academically excellent, innovative in research, entrepreneurial, and critically engaged with society” (Vision and Mission, N.d.).

It is thus evident that the library has a crucial role to play in the university realising both its vision and mission and, as pointed to in the introduction above, it can arguably be considered the “heart” of the university. In a similar vein, a law library can be seen as the heart of a law

faculty (or school or college) in a university, providing a venue and resources for students to access and use information for their studies and for lecturers to access information for their teaching and research purposes.

1.2 Background and research problem

As outlined above, the university library plays an integral role in the institution of which it is a part. However, for the university library (and the Law Library on the PMB campus more specifically) to play its role, it has to ensure that the services it provides are, as far as possible, meeting the needs of its users. To determine whether it is doing so or not, assessments of the quality of the services provided are needed. In this regard, Shi and Levy (2005: 266) point out that in the recent past both practitioners and academics in the library and information field have recognised the importance of assessing library services and such assessments have been encouraged. Two relatively recent developments have given impetus to such assessments.

The first is outlined by Quinn (2007: 1-2), who notes that:

Increasingly, libraries are being called upon by local, state and national governing bodies to justify their value to the public in a time of budgetary pressures, dwindling public funding, and growing competition from other public institutions ... As more people ask ‘what are libraries good for?’ libraries are subject to increasing scrutiny and accountability. Libraries are being called upon to demonstrate their contribution as never before.

While Quinn was referring to libraries in general, the academic library is, arguably, under similar scrutiny and pressure. It is common knowledge that universities in South Africa are under increasing budgetary and other pressure which extends to their libraries. A recent report by the Committee of Higher Education Libraries of South Africa (CHELSA) (2021: 21) noted that

... universities are faced with the stark reality of the huge cost to fund and maintain academic libraries. This is exacerbated by national underfunding, declining budgets, demand for increased enrolment growth from the government ... the impact of student protests, political and economic uncertainties, COVID-19, and the heightened demand for university accountability.

It is in this context that South African university libraries are having to “do more with less” and to “prove their worth”. The importance of providing and sustaining quality services in this context is underscored, which, in turn, underscores the importance of assessment and the need for studies such as the current one.

The second development giving impetus to the assessment of services is what Shi and Levy (2005: 267) refer to as the “rapid and erratic” development of information technologies. The authors argue that library services, as a consequence, have “to be evaluated constantly and changes to service orientations and service delivery mechanisms need to be made accordingly” (Shi and Levy 2005: 267). Giesler (2012: 1) similarly, and referring to law libraries specifically, states that given the advances in Internet technology, law libraries are in an environment that involves continual change. He points out that Internet technologies “have posed serious challenges to the traditional book-based library system by changing the expectations of law library users” and goes on to warn that

The ability of law libraries to continue to exist as viable institutions in the future will ultimately depend on their ability to meet the changing expectations of library users (Giesler, 2012: 1).

Given the above, the need for assessment of the services provided by the Law Library is an obvious one. While the assessment of the quality of the services provided by the UKZN Libraries has taken place on an annual basis, these assessments have largely been what Simba (2006: 49) refers to as “traditional”, that is, based on quantifiable aspects. These aspects are reflected in the annual reports of the university and include, among others, circulation statistics (both hard copy and digital materials), the number of staff and students reached in user education initiatives (such as training on the use of online databases), the number of inter-library loan (ILL) requests satisfied, the number of queries handled by library staff, expenditure on new materials purchased, and the number of hard copy materials converted to digital format (UKZN Annual Report, 2018, 2019, 2020). However, as Simba (2006: 5) observes, “this statistical approach, although it addresses the expectations of librarians, does not necessarily reflect the concerns of users.” Indeed, there has been a shift in the last two decades towards what is referred to as user- or “customer”-centred assessment of library service quality. This shift is discussed in more detail in Chapter 2, but in essence, it is based on the premise, emerging from the marketing literature, that ““only customers judge quality;

all other judgments are essentially irrelevant” (Zeithaml, Parasuraman and Berry in Nitecki. 1996: 183). As Simba (2006: 2) notes, the traditional approach is not the only way to measure service quality and that “Other measures such as assessing users’ perceptions of the quality of service through user-based surveys are also needed.”

Using a standardised survey instrument, namely, LibQUAL, based on the Gap theory of service quality (see below and Chapter 2), this study is an example of such an “other” measure. It needs to be seen in the light of the importance of assessing the service quality of academic libraries and, more specifically, the Law Library (as outlined above) and the absence of such assessments from the perspectives of the users of the Law Library, in the case of this study, final year law students. While a LibQUAL-based study has been done on postgraduate student users of the Cecil Renaud Library (the main library) on the PMB campus (Kekana, 2016), it did not address law students nor the Law Library itself, and this current study can be seen as addressing this gap. Thus, in line with the approach adopted by Simba (2006), the problem that this study sought to address focused on determining the quality of services provided by the Law Library from the users’ perspective.

1.3 Rationale for the study

The background and research problem above underscore the importance of the academic library in the university context. They also underscore the increasing pressure that the academic library is facing and the need for assessing its services. Also pointed to was the fact that no user-centred assessment of the services provided by the Law Library had been done and that in the light of this, the study could be seen as addressing a significant gap in the management of the library, thereby providing a further important reason for the study.

In the rationale for his study, Simba (2006: 28) points out that “Assessment can be precipitated by formal or informal complaints from the recipients of the library services.” The catalyst for this current study lay in informal conversations that the researcher had with UKZN law students in early 2020 just prior to the Covid-19 lockdown being instituted – a lockdown which resulted in university campuses across the country being closed and teaching, learning and research moving to online platforms. The UKZN was no exception and its library services were provided online with library staff working remotely from their homes (UKZN Annual Report, 2020). What emerged from these conversations was that there were

varying perceptions about the Law Library amongst the law students at UKZN. While some students prefer printed information or documents which they could physically access in the library itself, others were more open to the digital library framework. Those students who were antagonistic to the digital library mentioned how they tended to struggle to find information online and that this could be detrimental to their studies. The pandemic subsequently removed the option of physically visiting the library to access resources and has forced all students to access resources online irrespective of whether they were comfortable with doing so or not. It was these conversations that alerted the researcher to the possibility of focusing his study on the services provided by the Law Library. Subsequent preliminary reading on the topic of library service assessment and its importance indicated that it was an area worthy of investigation.

Further reading pointed to the need to adopt an assessment approach that considered the users' perspectives, namely, the LibQUAL survey instrument mentioned above. The reasons for adopting this instrument are given in Chapter 3. The Covid-19 pandemic and the unexpected and unprecedented lockdown and closure of university campuses (and their libraries) provided an interesting “backdrop” to the study. It was anticipated that problems experienced by the law students concerning the quality of library services as a result of the pandemic, while not explicitly asked about in the research instrument, would emerge in their responses.

As argued above, this study can thus be seen as a response to the need for a user-centred perspective of the quality of the services provided by the Law Library on the PMB campus of UKZN. As such, it addressed a gap that exists in that service quality assessments within UKZN Libraries have, in the main, been based on quantitative measures and the perspectives of the actual users of the library (both staff and students) in line with the recent approach to service quality assessment, have not been taken into consideration. The study can thus be considered a timely one, and the Covid-19 pandemic during which both libraries and their users moved online provided, as noted above, an interesting backdrop.

Sanaratna, Peiris and Jayasundara (2010: 3) note that “The assessment of service quality provides important feedback for libraries to assess and improve their service to users.” It is anticipated that the findings (or “feedback”) of the study will provide information to library staff and management on which dimensions (a LibQUAL term) of the services provided by

the UKZNP Law Library to final-year law students need improvement and, conversely, which dimensions or areas the library is excelling in and can be built on. Doing so would, as Ncwane (2016: 4) points out, “assist library management to achieve and maintain service excellence in the library.” Finally, the findings of this study will add to the ever-increasing literature on user-centred service quality assessment. It will also, importantly, and in line with Kekana (2016: 7), “provide a starting point for data and an outline for future surveys on users’ perceptions of the quality of library services” of the Law Library and possibly the other UKZN libraries as well.

1.4 Aim of the study

Given the discussion above, the study aimed to determine final-year law students’ expectations and perceptions of the quality of services provided by the Law Library on the PMB campus of the UKZN. In so doing, and in terms of the theoretical perspective adopted, it determined the gap between the student users’ expectations and perceptions of the quality of the services provided as well as their level of satisfaction with the services.

1.5 Research questions

To realise the aim of the study, the following research questions were posed:

- What are the law students’ expectations of the quality of services provided by the Law Library?
- What are the law students’ perceptions of the quality of services provided by the Law Library?
- What are the gaps between the students’ expectations and perceptions?
- What is the level of law students’ satisfaction with the services provided by the Law Library?

Based on the findings of the research questions above, the final research question was as follows:

- What recommendations can be made with regard to the law students’ use of and the services provided by the Law Library?

1.6 Delimitation of the study

The study only focused on the final-year law students (4th year LLB) registered in 2021 in the School of Law on the PMB campus of the UKZN. The reason for this focus is important in

that it is highly likely that students in their final year would have had the experience of the services (either online or through physical visits) provided by the library. They would thus be in a position to provide more informed comments and be better able to answer the questions posed on those services than, for example, first- or second-year students. There is also the possibility that the final year students may have attended library orientation or some of the user education programmes offered by the library during their course of studies. It is acknowledged that LibQUAL studies (such as this one) are normally done on a much broader scale, as indicated by the studies reviewed in Chapter 2.

Given that it was the perspectives of the final year students that were determined, the findings would apply to this category of students only and not, for example, to academic staff. However, it could be argued that they are an important group in terms of providing library services. Their concerns need to be acknowledged by library staff and management and could well reflect those of students in their earlier years of study. Finally, the narrow focus of the study was in keeping with the requirements of a short dissertation (such as this one).

1.7 Theoretical framework

The study utilised the LibQUAL Model, which is based on the SERVQUAL Model with both models being frequently used in assessing the quality of services in academic libraries (Simba, 2006). The SERVQUAL Model was developed in the 1980s to assess service quality in retail and service organisations (Parasuraman, Zeithaml and Berry, 1985). It is underpinned by a conceptual framework referred to as the Gaps Model of Service Quality, in which five gaps that could result in customers experiencing poor quality services are put forward. It is Gap 5 which was the focus of this study, namely “The discrepancy between customers’ expected services and perceived service delivered” (Nitecki, 1996: 182). The SERVQUAL instrument, which is based on Gap 5, has been widely used in service industries, including, as noted above, the academic and research library contexts. However, shortcomings in its use in academic libraries were increasingly identified and after a great deal of research and rigorous testing, the LibQUAL protocol was developed for the library context (Thompson, 2020a). The instrument was standardised in 2004 and now consists of 22 elements (statements) across three dimensions and, like SERVQUAL, is based on the Gaps Model of Service Quality mentioned above. Shi and Levy (2005: 271) point out that LibQUAL has emerged as a standard tool for measuring the quality of library services.

The theoretical framework (including the problems associated with LibQUAL) is described and discussed in more detail in Chapter 2. The LibQUAL instrument that this study utilised can be seen in Appendix 1.

1.8 Research methodology

In terms of the methodology adopted, the study used a mainly quantitative research design in the form of what Babbie and Mouton (2001: 92) refer to as a cross-sectional descriptive survey. The survey instrument in the form of a LibQUAL questionnaire was made available online using Google Forms. A positivist approach (or paradigm) was thus adopted (Thompson, 2015). There were various reasons for using a questionnaire-based online survey, including the Covid-19 pandemic in which personal contact (at the time) was actively discouraged. As noted above, the study population was delimited to final year law (4th year LLB) students on the PMB campus of UKZN. There were 174 final-year law students registered in the first semester of 2021, and given the relatively small size of the population, no sampling was done, and a census was conducted (Israel 2012: 2), that is, all the students were approached to take part in the study. In line with the quantitative research design, the LibQUAL questionnaire comprises largely closed questions but does provide for open questions as well. It also allows for the researcher (or organisation) to insert questions reflecting the local context. The questionnaire was pretested on seven postgraduate social science students as law students were not available at the time of the pretest. The questionnaire (see Appendix 1) was subsequently made available on the Web, and making use of class representatives, the final year law students were contacted via WhatsApp and invited to participate. The link to the online questionnaire was provided in the WhatsApp message. A response rate of 59.3% was achieved (103 of the final year students completed the questionnaire), which, according to Babbie and Mouton (2001: 261), could be considered “good”. Analysis of the quantitative data was done automatically through Google Forms, while the responses to the open questions were analysed using a content analysis technique outlined by Kumar (2011: 231). Finally, in doing the survey, all the necessary ethical considerations were adhered to.

The research methodology, including the LibQUAL questionnaire, is described and discussed in detail in Chapter 3.

1.9 Definition of terms

The following terms central to the study are defined. The terms “service quality” and “user satisfaction” are defined and discussed in more detail in Chapter 2.

Service quality

The definition of service quality used in this study is that provided by Simba (2006: 23):

Service quality refers to the degree to which the services provided by a library or library system meet the expectations of its users, usually assessed statistically and based on qualitative and quantitative feedback (user surveys, interviews, focus groups, suggestion boxes and so on).

As noted above, the term is further defined and discussed in Chapter 2.

Library users

The term “user” is one of several terms that are used to describe people who access library resources, with examples of others being “patron”, “customer”, “client”, “visitor”, and “member” (Pundsack, 2015). As will be seen in Chapter 2, the term “customer” is frequently used in the literature dealing with service quality assessment in libraries. However, as Holley (2020) points out, there are various reasons why it should not be used in an academic library context. Pundsack (2015) notes the term’s close association with the business world and the need to differentiate library services from this world. Hernon and Altman (1998: 3) refer to users as the “recipients of library services”, and for the purposes of this study, library users referred to the registered final year law students who use the Law Library resources and services either online via remote access or by physically visiting the library. It is acknowledged that the latter was not possible for students during the Covid-19 pandemic lockdowns.

User expectations

The *Merriam-Webster dictionary* (2020) defines expectations as “Something expected”, while the term expect is defined as “to consider reasonable, due, or necessary”. In this study, expectations will refer to what the student users would expect in terms of the services and resources provided by the library – what they consider “reasonable, due or necessary.” In the

questionnaire (see Appendix 1) used in this study it was stated that “*Expectations refers to what you personally want or expect of the services provided by the library*”.

User perceptions

According to LEXICO (2021), the meaning of perception is “The way in which something is regarded, understood, or interpreted”. Hornby, Wehmeier and Ashby (2000) define perception as “noticing things, especially with the senses; the ability to understand the true nature of something; an idea, a belief, or an image you have as a result of how someone sees or understands something”. In this study, perceptions referred to the views or opinions of the student users of the services provided by the library. These were based on their experience in interacting with library staff and using the services and resources provided (Ncwane 2016). In the questionnaire, it was stated that “*Perceptions refers to your actual experiences of services the library currently provides*”.

User satisfaction

As discussed in Chapter 2, the definition of user satisfaction used in this study links in with the concept of service quality. In this regard, Dalton (in Naidu, 2009: 13) defines user satisfaction as “a subjective output measure which reflects the quality dimension of the library ... [it is] the difference between a user’s expectation about an anticipated service and the actual performance of the service outputs as perceived by that user.” Thus, as pointed out by Ncwane (2016: 6), users would be satisfied when “the services rendered meet their expectations”, and this would be contingent on good quality services being provided. Also, as noted above, the term is further defined and discussed in Chapter 2.

1.10 Structure of the study

Chapter 1 introduces the study, providing, amongst other things, an overview of the Law Library, the research problem and its background, the aim of the study and its research questions, and the delimitation of the study.

Chapter 2 comprises the literature review in which various LibQUAL studies done in an academic library context both nationally and internationally are reported on. To begin with, the theoretical framework of the study is discussed, including two important concepts.

Chapter 3 describes and discusses the research methodology adopted.

Chapter 4 presents the findings of the study. The findings are presented in the form of tables as well as in narrative form.

Chapter 5 discusses the findings in light of the reviewed literature and

Chapter 6, the final chapter, presents the significant findings, conclusions, recommendations and suggestions for further research.

1.11 Summary

In this introductory chapter, a description of the Law Library on the PMB campus was given. This was followed by the background to the study and the research problem. The rationale/justification for the study and research questions posed were provided. The delimitation of the study, the theoretical framework, and the research methodology adopted were outlined. The chapter ended with definitions of relevant terms and an overview, by chapter, of the study.

Chapter 2, which follows, discusses the theoretical framework and two important concepts. LibQUAL-based studies are then reviewed.

Chapter 2: Literature review and theoretical framework

2.0 Introduction

Millar (2020) states that the literature review comprises a critical, analytical account of the existing research on a particular topic. There are various reasons for conducting a literature review, and Wiener, Saunders and Marabelli (2020) point out that it does not only assist one in understanding the current state of knowledge in a subject area but also identifies the knowledge gap, gives a foundation knowledge on a topic and identifies the relationship between works and their contribution to the topic. A literature review is thus important because it, amongst other purposes, identifies the need for additional research and helps one recognise where there is duplication of research efforts.

This chapter comprises a review of various LibQUAL studies done in an academic context both nationally and internationally. The studies are briefly described, and their significant findings are outlined. However, to begin with, two important concepts and the theoretical framework underpinning the study are discussed.

2.1 Concepts

Two important concepts underlying the study are service quality and user satisfaction. Definitions of the two concepts were provided in Chapter 1 and they are defined and discussed in more detail below.

2.1.1 Service quality

Quality is an elusive term and, in this regard, Nitecki (1996: 181) argued that “Although many agree that quality can be declared as absent or present, no single definition of quality is commonly accepted.” Also, as noted earlier, the *Merriam-Webster Dictionary* (2020) refers to it as “a degree of excellence” or a “degree of conformance to a standard”. Parasuraman, Zeithaml and Berry (1985: 42) pointed out that the term “service” is equally problematic. They state when purchasing a product or goods, there are tangible cues to judge quality, such as style, hardness, feel, colour and fit. However, when purchasing services, there are fewer tangible cues and tangible evidence is usually limited to the service provider’s physical facilities, equipment, and personnel. Because of the intangible nature of service, organisations find it difficult to understand how consumers perceive services and service

quality. What emerged and what has been developed over the subsequent years is the understanding that service quality “is a measure of how well the service level delivered matches customer expectations” and that providing quality service means consistently meeting customer expectations. In other words, and citing Gronroos (1982), “consumers compare the service they expect with perceptions of the service they receive in evaluating service quality” (Parasuraman, Zeithaml and Berry, 1985: 42). As shown below, this is central to both the SERVQUAL and LibQUAL models and underpins the approach to library service quality adopted in this study.

Thus, in light of the above and as noted in Chapter 1, the definition of service quality in this study is that provided by Simba (2006: 23), namely,

the degree to which the services provided by a library or library system meet the expectations of its users, usually assessed statistically and based on qualitative and quantitative feedback (user surveys, interviews, focus groups, suggestion boxes and so on).”

As will be shown in Chapter 3 feedback received from the users of the Law Library, namely, 4th-year law students, was done through an online survey and was largely quantitative.

2.1.1.1 Service quality assessment in libraries

According to Shi and Levy (2005: 67), library service assessments began with the collection of statistics, such as circulation counts, reference questions answered, and books ordered and catalogued. These collected statistics were frequently viewed as the end result and there was no further analysis or follow-up. The authors stated that this assessment approach was characterised by three features:

first, it is a perception of the service provider (e.g., the librarians or library staff); second, it is a description of phenomena (e.g., how many books are checked out on a given day); and third, it is a one-way application that ends at statistics collection (Shi and Levy, 2005: 267).

This assessment approach was also evident in law libraries. Zhang and Chen (2020: 99) point out that until the early 2000s, law libraries were assessed consistently, if not exclusively, based on what they refer to as an “input-based measuring model.” According to the authors:

An input-based model counts the resources available to the system: collecting quantified data on the law library's staff, budget and, most importantly, the size of its collection tied to a print paradigm (Zhang and Chen, 2020: 99)

It was acknowledged that while the approach may provide managers and librarians with valuable information, these statistics (often collected sporadically) did not “provide any meaningful guide for systematic service improvement” (Shi and Levy, 2005: 267). Citing Hernon and Altman (1998), Simba (2006: 26) makes the important point that “the traditional measures of quality of library service do not indicate whether the service is good, indifferent or bad.”

Shi and Levy (2005: 267) stated that to obtain valid results, library users had to be involved in the assessment process. Nitecki (1996: 181), pointing out that “A measure of library quality based solely on collections has become obsolete”, noted how there was now a trend by the services industry and higher education management to shift toward including customer perspectives in the planning and evaluation of services and the increasing need to develop tools for assessing library services (Nitecki, 1996: 182). One such tool was the SERVQUAL model developed by Parasuraman, Zeithaml and Berry (1985) in the marketing context (and, as noted, it will be discussed later below). Shi and Levy (2005: 267) concluded that library and information services along with other service industries, now recognised “that user perceptions of service quality, user expectations, and user satisfaction are essential elements of any service assessment activity.” As Simba (2006: 24) has pointed out above, it is arguably the users who know whether what is provided to them is good, bad or indifferent and no one should say on the users' behalf what the quality of the service is like. Similarly, Cook and Heath (2001: 548) state, “service marketing has identified the customer or user as the most critical voice in assessing service quality”.

A perusal of the literature will reveal that the amount of research in the field of service quality assessment in libraries has increased tremendously (and the literature review below only touches on a very small proportion of the research available). While the research (and practice) within the library and information science (LIS) field has reflected an interest in quality dimensions such as excellence, value and conformity to specifications, Hernon, Nitecki and Altman (1999: 11) believed that the “meeting and/or exceeding expectations” dimension was (and still is) the dimension most focused on in the library literature. While the

authors at the time contended that there “is no single, unequivocally accepted definition of service quality” (Hernon, Nitecki and Altman, 1999:10), Kyrillidou and Heath (2001: 546) a few years later observed that “Library service quality is a concept that is becoming less elusive and increasingly recognizable and actionable.” It is, arguably, an observation that will be even more applicable currently.

As evident from the above discussion, “The concept of service quality is somewhat elusive and resists easy definition, but essentially it emphasizes customer satisfaction as its primary objective” (Quinn, 2007: 1). It is the concept of customer or user satisfaction (along with expectations and perceptions, an essential element in assessing services) that is discussed below.

2.1.2 User satisfaction

A dictionary definition of “satisfaction” refers to “fulfilment” or “gratification”, and Nitecki and Franklin (1999: 484) point out that early studies of library user satisfaction were “based on this literal definition that sought to identify a binary state of whether or not the user was satisfied.” However, since the 1980s, the concept of user satisfaction in the library literature began to include a broader focus on the users’ perspective of the library and in terms of a library-related definition. Applegate (in Nitecki and Franklin, 1999: 484) defined user satisfaction as ““a personal, emotional reaction to a library service or product.”” What also emerged was the linking of user satisfaction to the concept of service quality, and in this regard, Dalton (in Naidu, 2009: 13) defines user satisfaction as “a subjective output measure which reflects the quality dimension of the library ... [it is] the difference between a user’s expectation about an anticipated service and the actual performance of the service outputs as perceived by that user”. As Nitecki (1996: 183) notes:

A frequently reported view of quality in libraries overlaps with approaches focusing on customer satisfaction. User satisfaction with library services is viewed as a goal to be met and, by implication, becomes the means to deliver quality services.

Begum (2003: 1) defines quality in terms of satisfaction, stating that “one meaning of quality is customer satisfaction through product or by service.” However, it is recognised that while service quality and satisfaction are related constructs, they are distinct (Altman and Hernon, 1998: 54) and, as pointed out by Cullen (2001: 665), the relationship that does exist between the two is a “complex” one with service quality being defined as a part of customer

satisfaction and vice versa. The author goes on to provide an example drawn from Hernon and Altman (1998), illustrating this complexity:

‘a customer can receive an answer to a query but be unsatisfied because of an upsetting or angry encounter. Conversely, although the query might remain unanswered, another customer might feel satisfied because the encounter was pleasant, and the helper interested and polite.’

Cullen (2001: 665), again citing Hernon and Altman (1998), suggests two useful perspectives for viewing satisfaction in relation to library service. The first is what is referred to as “service encounter satisfaction”, that is, customer satisfaction or dissatisfaction with a specific service encounter, while the second is “overall service satisfaction”, that is, customer satisfaction or dissatisfaction with an organisation “based on multiple encounters or experiences.” Thus, as Cullen (2001: 665) goes on to note, “Satisfaction, therefore, may involve long-term, as well as short-term, perceptions, and a personal reaction to service built up over a number of transactions of varying quality.” Nitecki and Franklin (1999: 484) acknowledge that while the concepts of service quality and satisfaction are related the latter offers an alternative way of assessing library performance. In line with Cullen (2001) above, the authors view satisfaction as often being a short-term measure while service quality “evolves over time and relates to the customer’s developed attitude towards a service” (Nitecki and Franklin, 1999: 484). As will be shown, the satisfaction “measure” used in this study concerned the latter more longer-term perspective.

Hernon, Nitecki and Altman (1999: 12) also point to the interrelationship between the concepts of service quality and satisfaction and go on to suggest that service quality serves “as the antecedent to satisfaction.” Mindful of the complexity noted above, their suggestion is, arguably, a “common sense” view and one which is borne out by recent research. Gyau, Liu and Kwakye (2021), in their study of international students at a Chinese university, concluded that, in line with previous studies, library users’ satisfaction has “a positive and significant relationship” with the general quality of the services that the academic library provides. Linking in with quality being the antecedent to satisfaction noted above, the authors went on to say:

This means that an increase in service quality will increase user satisfaction significantly, and a decrease in service quality will also significantly decrease user satisfaction. This is a scientific advantage and reference to academic libraries to

render better and quality services for maximum user satisfaction (Gyau, Liu and Kwakye, 2021).

Hernon, Nitecki and Altman (1999: 12) point out that libraries can ensure that services meet or exceed customer expectations by being attentive to both service quality and customer satisfaction. In so doing, they will not only increase customer retention but also have a positive impact on staff satisfaction and empowerment as well (Altman and Hernon, 1998: 54).

Nitecki and Franklin (1999: 485) caution against using satisfaction on its own as a measure of library performance because it does not provide managers with much, if any, insight into what contributes to dissatisfaction or what problems and services in the library need improvement. This view is probably mainly applicable if one adopts an “overall service satisfaction” approach as outlined above. This approach was adopted in the study and respondents were asked to indicate their satisfaction or dissatisfaction, in general, on a five-point Likert scale with three broad categories of library services, namely, how they were treated in the Law Library, the library’s support for their legal studies and thirdly, the overall quality of the services provided by the Law Library (see question 11 in the questionnaire). The more specific areas of library services that needed attention were identified by the questions relating to expectations and perceptions and the gap between the two.

2.2 Theoretical framework

Simba (2006) noted that there are several service quality assessment models that libraries have used. These models include “the EFQM Excellence Model, the Balanced Scorecard Model (BSC), the SERVPERF Model, The Library and Information Sector Improvement Model (LISIM), the Rodski Behavioural Research Group Framework and the LibQUAL+, based on the SERVQUAL Model” (Simba 2006: 32). Simba added that the latter two models have been (and are) widely used in assessing service quality in an academic library. A perusal of the literature will attest to their popularity and dominance in assessing the quality of services in the academic library sector and as a consequence, they are the two models described and discussed below. For brief overviews of some of the other models, see Simba (2006), Naidu (2009), Ncwane (2016) and Kekana (2016).

2.2.1 SERVQUAL Model

The Service Quality Model or SERVQUAL was developed by the researchers Parasuraman, Zeithaml and Berry in the 1980s. It was prompted by their recognition of the importance of service quality to both businesses (retail and service) and consumers and the lack of research in this area – the latter attributable to “the difficulties involved in delimiting and measuring the construct” (Parasuraman, Zeithaml and Berry, 1985: 41). Nitecki (1996: 182) points out that the major outcome of their research (based on both qualitative and quantitative studies), was a conceptual framework (the Gaps Model of Service Quality) and a measurement instrument (SERVQUAL) for assessing service quality. In their qualitative studies (interviews and focus groups), the researchers identified five gaps that could cause customers to experience services of poor quality. Nitecki (1996: 182) summarises the gaps as follows:

- Gap 1. The discrepancy between customers’ expectations and managements’ perceptions of these expectations; [also referred to as a knowledge gap (Mulder, 2016)]
- Gap 2. The discrepancy between managements’ perceptions of customers’ expectations and service-quality specifications; [standards gap]
- Gap 3. The discrepancy between service-quality specifications and actual service delivery; [delivery gap]
- Gap 4. The discrepancy between actual service delivery and what is communicated to customers about it; [communication gap] and
- Gap 5. The discrepancy between customers’ expected services and perceived service delivered. [satisfaction gap].

Figure 1 below illustrates the model.

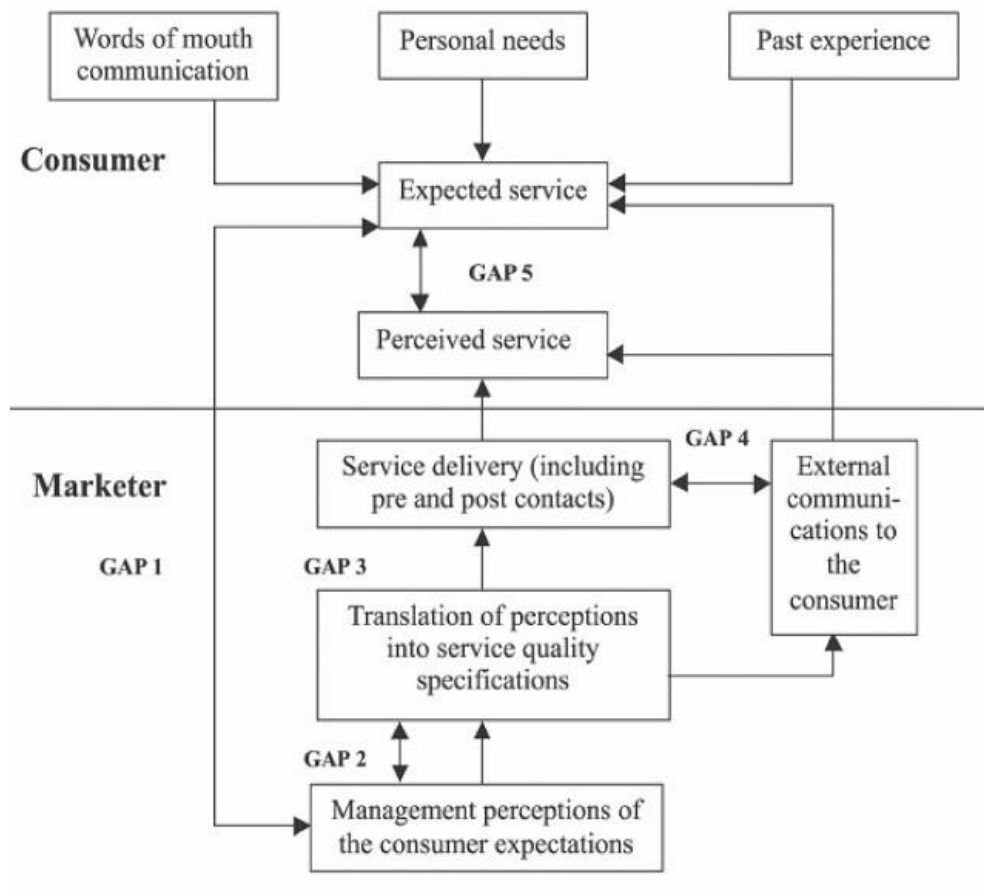


Figure 1: Service Quality Model

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

According to Nitecki (1996:182), the first four gaps are the main contributors to the service-quality gap that customers may perceive, while the fifth gap is

the basis of a customer-oriented definition of service quality: the discrepancy between customers' expectations for excellence, and their perceptions of actual service delivered. This discrepancy is the conceptual basis for the SERVQUAL instrument.

As noted in the introductory chapter, Gap 5 was the focus of this study and has been the main focus of library-related research (Cullen, 2001: 664).

The process for developing the SERVQUAL instrument is described by Parasuraman, Zeithaml and Berry (1988). What emerged from their work was a "multiple-item scale" (the instrument) comprising 22 items/statements and reflecting five dimensions. These dimensions "represent the core criteria by which customers evaluate service quality" (Nitecki, 1996: 182) and are described by Parasuraman, Zeithaml and Berry (1988: 23) as follows:

- Reliability: Ability to perform the promised service dependably and accurately
- Tangibles: Physical facilities, equipment, and appearance of personnel
- Responsiveness: Willingness to help customers and provide prompt service
- Assurance: Knowledge and courtesy of employees and their ability to inspire trust and confidence
- Empathy: Caring, individualized attention the firm provides its customers

According to Shi and Levy (2005: 270), the SERVQUAL Model has been widely tested and used across a wide range of service industries, including retail stores, banks, hospitals and Internet providers. As alluded to above, the model has also “had a wide acceptance in academic and research library contexts” (Simba, 2006: 39). However, as Quinn (2007: 6) contends, one cannot make the assumption

that the overall service quality model can be imported from the commercial environment of business to the non-commercial environment of the academic library without at least some adaptation.

The educational setting differs from the corporate one and Quinn (2007: 7), for example, points to the difficulty of defining the customer in a non-profit setting such as a library, noting that academic libraries have many customers including, amongst others, students, faculty and administrators. These different constituencies may be in competition for library services and make opposing demands on the library. He also points to the differences in goals – in a commercial context, the goal is to maximise profit, providing a relatively simple foundation for decision making. This is not the case in a non-profit organisation where “there may be many different goals that diverge from or even conflict with one another” (Quinn, 2007: 7). Consequently, “many researchers are forced to make minor modifications to the instrument as necessary for context-specific applications” (SERVQUAL, 2021). These revised instruments have been given original titles such as EDUQUAL (educational context), HEALTHQUAL (hospital context), ARTSQUAL (arts/museum context) and LibQUAL (library context) (SERVQUAL, 2021). It is the latter that is now discussed.

2.2.2 LibQUAL

According to Giesler (2012: 15), “LibQUAL+ is the most popularly accepted survey administration program in the library world.” Thompson (2020a) provides an overview of the

“birth” of LibQUAL. He notes that from the mid-to-late 1990s, there was the increasing realisation that the use of “‘input’ variables, such as collection or serials counts, were limited as measures of library service quality, especially as the Web and digital content became increasingly ubiquitous.” There was also the acknowledgement that using SERVQUAL protocol for quality assessment in academic libraries had shortcomings. It was noted (as pointed out above) that:

SERVQUAL was developed for use in the for-profit business sector, and (a) included items not considered relevant by some library users (e.g., the attire of service staff), and (b) did not include some items very important to library users (Thomson, 2020a).

The Texas A&M University, in conjunction with the Association of Research Libraries (ARL), began working on an alternative protocol that was subsequently named “LibQUAL®” and given to the ARL for non-profit use in improving libraries (Thompson, 2020a). The LibQUAL protocol was rigorously tested over a period of three years, going through various iterations and by 2004, it was standardised to include three dimensions and several key elements (these are described in Chapter 3 and are not going to be repeated here) (Thompson, 2020a). Importantly, as Giesler explains, LibQUAL, like SERVQUAL, assesses “outcomes by using a ‘gap’ model, which attempts to analyze the gap between respondents’ perceived and expected levels of service.” LibQUAL is now, as Shi and Levy (2005: 271) point out, “recognized as a standard tool for measuring library services.”

The goals of LibQUAL are to:

- Foster a culture of excellence in providing library service
- Help libraries better understand user perceptions of library service quality
- Collect and interpret library user feedback systematically over time
- Provide libraries with comparable assessment information from peer institutions
- Identify best practices in library service
- Enhance library staff members' analytical skills for interpreting and acting on data (ARL, 2020).

In essence, and as outlined by the ARL (2020), LibQUAL enables library managers to assess whether their “library services are meeting user expectations – and develop services that

better meet those expectations.” While LibQUAL and SERVQUAL are being extensively used in various contexts, they are not without their concerns and these are addressed below.

2.2.2.1 Concerns with SERVQUAL and LibQUAL

Despite being widely applied there are several criticisms of SERVQUAL and the Service Quality Model. These are both operational and theoretical and range from the length of the questionnaire to dimensional instability (SERVQUAL, 2021). The criticisms of the model are arguably applicable to LibQUAL as well. However, the inapplicability of the former in the library context has, as pointed out earlier, largely been resolved with the development of LibQUAL.

A concern which is pertinent to the present study (and which the researcher would like to discuss in some detail) centres on a central concept of both models, namely, “The only criteria that count in evaluating service quality are defined by customers ... Only customers judge quality; all other judgments are essentially irrelevant” (Parasuraman, Zeithaml and Berry In Zhang and Chen, 2020: 100). Zhang and Chen (2020: 100) point out that

From the early days when the Gaps Model and SERVQUAL were breaking ground in the field of library science, researchers have embraced the customer- or user-based approach.

This approach continues and is a central tenet on which LibQUAL is based. However, it has been questioned in the library context. Saunders (2007), for example, in his article “The LibQUAL+ phenomenon: Who judges quality?” is of the opinion that “All other judgments are not essentially irrelevant” and points out that librarians,

with their professional training, are in many ways better positioned than the customers to judge the overall quality of ‘what’ is delivered, that is, they can best judge the technical quality of a library. Undergraduate students would have a hard time putting an overall value on a library’s collection; even faculty members know only the collection in their areas of speciality. Librarians, however, are in a good position to judge the content of a library collection, the skill and ability of the reference staff, or the content of an instruction session (Saunders, 2007)

In a similar vein Walters (2003), while recognising LibQUAL as a valuable tool for determining users' perceptions and one that has several advantages over earlier assessment instruments argues that:

the idea that LibQUAL+ provides a valid measure of service quality is based on two questionable assumptions: that library users have the necessary expertise to make accurate assessments of quality, and that perceptions serve as valid indicators of objective conditions (Walters, 2003: 98).

Like Saunders (2007) above, Walters questions the central concept of both SERVQUAL and LibQUAL, that customers are the only judge of quality. Referring to the academic library context where students are users of the library services, Walters (2007: 98) states:

The assessment of library service quality requires both expertise and objectivity. Undergraduate students are neither expert nor objective, and assessment methods that rely heavily on students' perceptions are likely to be inadequate in several respects. Students' needs are not necessarily consistent with their preferences, for example, and the limited experiences of most undergraduates give them only a partial understanding of library collections and services. Although user surveys provide valuable information about patrons' perceptions, that information is no substitute for objective standards based on professional knowledge.

Walters (2007) acknowledges that there are indeed instances where the emphasis on users' perceptions is legitimate. For example, he points out that students' perceptions of quality are important "where the non-professional characteristics of the library and its staff are concerned". These would include aspects such as study space, hours of service, and the courtesy and willingness of staff to assist. However, Walters (2007: 99) believes that "many services can be evaluated authoritatively only by respondents with significant research experience or professional expertise." For example, he believes that few undergraduate students are qualified to make valid assessments on aspects such as whether library staff understand the needs of their users or whether the library website enables users to locate information on their own.

Students in the current study were undergraduate and, in terms of Walters and Saunders' perspectives above, were ill-suited to pronounce on the quality of the services provided. However, they were in their final year of studies (4th year) and "mature" as far as

undergraduate students are concerned. Thus, as mentioned in the introductory chapter, they were considered to have sufficient experience and expertise to provide valid responses to the questions posed. As has been repeatedly stressed above, the library user's perspective is an important one. As Kyrillidou (2002: 43) points out, the value of the library "needs to be articulated in relation to the value they provide to the users, for the user and by the user."

Finally, Giesler (2012: 17) notes that "LibQUAL+ cannot, alone, supplant other methods for judging quality and making changes to library services." This is an important point, and as Thompson (2020b) indicates, LibQUAL is but one of many methods that libraries can adopt in evaluating their services on a regular and systematic basis to confirm that they are meeting the needs of their users. In a similar vein, Saunders (2007) states that LibQUAL itself does not claim to be the end-all in terms of assessing library services. He goes on to say that "After seeing the results from the survey and pinpointing specific issues, libraries are advised to focus on specific questions by using smaller surveys, doing interviews, or having focus groups." Thus, the findings of the current study need to be seen in the light of the above and as Saunders (2007) points out "Assessment is an ongoing process, and many libraries now view it this way."

2.3 Review of LibQUAL studies

Numerous LibQUAL studies have been conducted by, in the main, academic libraries around the world. According to the LibQUAL website (LibQUAL.org), as of 2020, more than 1 300 libraries in 35 countries have participated in LibQUAL, and in doing so, over 2.9 million library users have been surveyed. However, the findings of many of these studies have not been published and are "in-house", which often means that they are not readily available to those outside of the institutions in which they were conducted. The initial focus of this study (and this review) was to find LibQUAL and SERVQUAL studies done on academic law libraries from students' perspectives, but none were identified, reflecting Giesler's (2012: 16) observation that few law libraries have participated in LibQUAL initiatives. One can assume that those law libraries that have participated have not made their findings generally available. As a result of this, the researcher had to broaden his literature search to LibQUAL and academic libraries generally. However, as Ncwane (2016: 22) in his literature review pointed out, "Numerous studies have been done around the world using the LibQUAL+™ instrument devoted to users' perceptions of service quality and user satisfaction in academic

libraries.” Thus, it is not feasible to review all those studies which are available and, as a result, the focus of this review is on LibQUAL studies done in the South African context as well as those in other African countries. Being “local”, the findings of these studies would, arguably, be more relevant to the findings of this study. However, to provide an international perspective, four recent LibQUAL studies done outside the African context have been identified and are briefly reported on. While the focus of the study was on final year students, many of the LibQUAL studies reported on included academic as well as administrative staff, and their findings do not always make a distinction between students (postgraduate and undergraduate) and staff. This needs to be borne in mind in the review below.

2.3.1 LibQUAL studies done in South Africa

Several academic libraries in South Africa have used LibQUAL when evaluating the quality of their services from the perspectives of both students and staff. The amount of information on the various studies done varies – sources range from detailed theses (Masters level) to less detailed PowerPoint presentations available on the Web and the discussion below reflects this variation. The review is arranged chronologically, with the earlier studies being reported on first.

Rhodes University Library was the first academic library in South Africa to complete a Web-based LibQUAL survey, doing so in 2005 (Moon, 2007). The survey was directed at all students and staff of the university, and while the response rate of 10% was “low”, it was considered “generally representative of the different user groups and disciplines on campus” (Moon, 2007: 76). It was felt that such a study could assist in facilitating improvements in targeted services. Findings revealed that the most concerns related to the dimensions “Library as place” and “Affect of service”. (*Note: These and the two other dimensions are described in the chapter that follows under Section 3.3.1.*) In terms of the former, concerns with the physical library were anticipated as the building was over 46 years old and inadequate for accommodating the increase in library materials, students and computer work-stations. In terms of Affect of service, both undergraduate and postgraduate students perceived level of service was lower than their minimum acceptable level of service. A large number of negative comments were also received concerning issue desk staff and, as a response, “the entire circulation staff complement, including student assistants, attended a customer services training course...” (Moon, 2007: 86). Interestingly, contrary to the findings of other LibQUAL studies outlined below, the library performed very well in the dimension

“Information control” and this “emerged as an area of strength” (Moon, 2007: 80). The two areas which performed well in this regard were “A library website enabling me to locate information on my own” and “The electronic information resources I need”. Also achieving a high score was “Making electronic resources accessible from my home or office” (Moon, 2007: 82).

Also in 2005, the Ferdinand Postma Library at the University of the Free State conducted a LibQUAL study (LibQUAL Report, 2005). As stated in a report of the study, for the library to continue to improve its services to its users, “it was important to find out what our users expect from us with regard to service-delivery, how our service delivery is experienced at present and in which areas we could improve” (LibQUAL Report, 2005). Both staff and students were invited to participate in the online survey and 870 did so. Undergraduate students comprised the largest proportion of the sample with 560 (64%), followed by postgraduate students, 206 (24%) and staff 104 (12%). The undergraduate students were very satisfied with the location of the library and the library staff’s expertise and willingness to assist and moderately satisfied with information services (printed material or e-material). Concern was expressed regarding noise in the library and that the library website was not user-friendly. Postgraduate respondents were similarly satisfied with the library staff and the location and layout of the library. They also pointed to noise levels. However, as noted in the report, “With regard to information services [for postgraduates], the library touched red in places and performed below the minimum requirement. This mainly involved electronic availability of sources and convenient electronic access from the home or the office” (LibQUAL Report, 2005).

Naidu (2009) investigated “User perceptions of service quality and the level of user satisfaction at the Mangosuthu University of Technology [MUT] Library, Umlazi, Durban”. The sample of users surveyed numbered 1823 and comprised both students (undergraduate and postgraduate) and staff (academic and administrative). Users’ expectations of library services offered exceeded their perceptions in all instances, and findings indicated that there was, at times, a significant gap between the two. Services that had a big gap were “Adequate number of computer workstations” (a gap/difference of 1099 between agree expectations and agree perceptions); “Sufficient space for group learning and group studying” (1020); “Computers that work well in the library” (1010); “Adequate printed library materials (866); “Staff who are knowledgeable to answer users’ questions” (828); “Easy access to electronic

databases” (788); and “Staff who provide users with information skills needed for work or study (715) (Naidu, 2009: 131). It was found that the level of user satisfaction varied between the different groups of respondents. Interestingly, “The staff affirmed that the overall quality of services was good while the majority of students affirmed that their satisfaction with the overall quality of library services was poor” (Naidu, 2009: vi). Naidu (2009: 152) concluded that the library was “not excelling in the provision of all services rendered and there [were] many areas that still need attention or improvement.”

A LibQUAL study done at the University of Cape Town (Report on... 2014) provided “library users a chance to tell us where our services need improvement so that we can respond to and better manage their expectations.” Findings were presented from the perspectives of undergraduate students, postgraduate students, and academic staff. While the overall analysis of the results indicated increased user satisfaction with library services, facilities and resources amongst all user groups, shortcomings were identified. Amongst the students, services that elicited what is referred to as “negative adequacy gaps” included “A library Web site enabling me to locate information on my own” and “A quiet space for individual work” (Report on... 2014: 6-7) Interestingly, negative adequacy gaps for the academic staff centred on the Information control dimension and included the following ICT related services “Print and/or electronic journal collections I require for my work”, “Making electronic resources available from my home or office”, “A library Web site enabling me to locate information on my own” and “Collections of online full-text articles sufficient to meet my needs” (Report on ... 2014: 6). ICT-related issues also emerged in the comments which were made by respondents. The categories “Network/Plug points”, “Web/Portal/Linking/Navigation”, and “Computers/IT” were among the top 11 categories (out of 123) identified as needing attention (Report on... 2014: 9).

Marowa (2015) investigated the service quality of the Doornfontein Campus (DFC) Library of the University of Johannesburg from the perspectives of a sample of 285 industrial engineering students. Modified versions of the LibQUAL and SERVQUAL questionnaires were used to ascertain the students’ views and, in addition, a selection of students was interviewed. Unsurprisingly, and consistent with other studies, it was found that students’ expectations were higher than their perceptions across all the dimensions of service quality (Marowa, 2015: iii). It was concluded that “In this regard, the IE students are not satisfied with the quality of the services provided at the DFC Library” (Marowa, 2015: 55). The

biggest gap was evident in the dimension Library as place (the “DFC Library should have quiet space for individual activities”) and the smallest in Information control (the “DFC Library should have the printed materials needed for my work”). Responses to open questions on the problems encountered with library services echoed those outlined in other studies. These ranged from “inadequate quiet study space” and inconvenient library hours to “Insufficient books and computers in the DFC library” (Marowa, 2015: 58).

A second LibQUAL study at the MUT was done by Ncwane (2016) and investigated the quality of the service rendered by the Natural Science Library. In the study, 323 users of the library, comprising science students and academic staff at the MUT, were asked about their expectations and perceptions of the quality of the services provided by the library, as well as their level of satisfaction with the services. While respondents’ overall rating of library services was high, with a significant majority (86.2%) rating them as good or very good, there were, in certain instances, significant gaps between expectations and perceptions of the services. Issues identified as problematic (a large percentage gap between expectations and perceptions) included “Adequate number of computer workstations” (62.1%), “Sufficient space for group learning and group study” (62%), “Computers that work well in the library” (56.6%) and “Timeous interlibrary loans (28.9%). Interestingly there were two items relating to staff services where negative gap scores were recorded (perceptions exceeded expectations), and these were “Staff who are knowledgeable to answer users’ questions” (-0.4%) and “Staff who deal with users in a caring fashion” (-0.5%).

The University of Stellenbosch (LibQUAL 2016..., 2016) conducted a LibQUAL survey among 1 604 library users (students and staff) with the aims of determining the quality of library services and facilities and “To develop further understanding of the expectations of students and staff in order to improve services accordingly.” While expectations exceeded perceptions across all dimensions, what emerged as most important to respondents was “Modern equipment that lets me easily access needed information” and the most important need for improvement was “Making e-resources accessible from my home or office”. On a positive note, the highest perceived service score was given for library staff’s “Readiness to respond to users’ enquiries”.

Kekana (2016) used LibQUAL to investigate postgraduate social science students’ perceptions of the Cecil Renaud Library on the PMB campus of the UKZN “as an

environment for reading, studying and conducting research”. While the overall response of the 105 postgraduate students surveyed indicated that they were satisfied with most of the services, they unsurprisingly had higher expectations than perceptions in terms of what the library provided. Problem areas (that is, services that had relatively big gaps between expectations and perceptions) identified by the respondents were computers that work well (difference of 25.7%), an adequate number of computer workstations (23.8%), an efficient short loan service (23.8%), the library helping the user to stay abreast of developments in their field of interest (21.9%), a quiet library environment (20%), the library helping the students advance in their academic field (19%), and adequate printing facilities (18.1%) (Kekana, 2016: 71). Kekana (2016: 121) concluded that “it is vital for libraries to assess, track and understand users’ service needs and expectations and to react upon the users’ feedback to improve the quality of service in the library and to create new policies which will benefit the library.”

A LibQUAL survey conducted by the University of Pretoria in 2017 was completed by 5 766 respondents (both students and staff), with the majority (92%) being students (Olivier and Msweli, 2017). While there were concerns with all the dimensions, Information control was the most problematic in terms of what was referred to as “negative adequacy gaps”. Services of concern in this regard were “Making electronic resources accessible from my home or office”, “A library website enabling me to locate information on my own”, “Print and/or electronic journal collections I require for my work”, “An electronic catalogue where it’s easy to identify printed and electronic documents offered by my institution” and “Modern equipment that lets me easily access needed information”. Problematic in terms of the Affect of service dimension was “Library staff who are consistently courteous” and the for the Library as place dimension, “Library space that inspires study and learning”. In terms of the comments made by respondents, computers (broken, slow and insufficient in number) and electronic resources (access) were the most mentioned complaints (18.32% and 11.23% of respondents respectively). These were followed by library hours (10.04%), study space (6.92%), rude/incompetent staff (6.58%) and noise (5.10%).

Matiwane (2017) investigated education students’ perceptions of the quality of services provided by the Walter Sisulu University Library in Butterworth, Eastern Cape. Most of the 115 respondents (both undergraduates and postgraduates) rated the overall quality of the services provided by the library as good or very good (Matiwane, 2017: 132). However, as

with other LibQUAL studies reported on, expectations regarding the various dimensions of library services outweighed perceptions of those services. The services which reflected a significant gap (in this instance above 10%) between expectations and perceptions were:

- Prompt inter-library loan from other libraries (50.6%)
- Prompt action regarding missing books (39.6%)
- Easily available access to electronic databases (39%)
- Sufficient space for group learning and group study (38.2%)
- Adequate photocopying facilities (37.1%)
- Adequate number of computer workstations (35.2%) (Matiwane, 2017: 103).

These findings were also reflected in the comments provided by the respondents.

Interestingly, comments concerning “Access to information” pointed to the need for training in ICT-related areas, namely, using library online databases, the OPAC, and the Internet laboratories. A lack of referencing and research skills were also pointed to (Matiwane, 2017: 95).

Vos (2017) reports on a LibQUAL survey conducted at the North-West University Libraries in 2016 to assess and improve the services being offered. Survey respondents were undergraduates (1062), postgraduates (281) and academic staff (120). With regard to the undergraduates, it was found that the item “Library space that inspires study” needed attention while ensuring a “quiet space” needed urgent attention. Regarding the postgraduate respondents, various issues under the Information control dimension were identified as needing attention. These were “Sources available from home”, “Library website enabling me to locate information”, “Electronic information sources I need”, and “Print/e-journals I need for my work”. Aspects that the postgraduates were “extremely satisfied with” were staff “Giving users individual attention” and the library being a “Comfortable and inviting location” and a “Community space for group learning and group study”. Academic staff were extremely positive about some aspects under Affect of service (that is, the services provided by the library staff) while needing attention was “Print /e-journals I need for my work”, and urgent attention was a “Library web site enabling me to locate information”. Thus, items with the biggest gap differences were the level of noise in the library (undergraduates), the use and availability of information resources (postgraduates) and the library website (academic staff). Comments provided by the respondents “provided valuable information about where users feel improvements can be made”, and the categories that emerged reflect the findings above,

namely, level of noise, library hours, insufficient number of computer and printing facilities, the library website and e-resources.

Having briefly outlined the main findings of various LibQUAL studies done in academic libraries in South Africa, three studies were done outside of the country (but on the African continent) and are reviewed below.

2.3.2 LibQUAL studies done in Africa (outside South Africa)

Simba (2006) examined the quality of service provided by the Iringa University College (IUCo) Library in Tanzania. As with the above studies, this was done from the users' (of the library) perspective, and respondents numbered 264, comprising both students (undergraduate and postgraduate) and staff although undergraduates predominated. As stated by Simba (2006: iii), "The insights gained from this study indicate that there is a gap between user's expectations and perceptions of service quality at IUCo Library. The magnitude of the gap varies depending on individual services." Several services with gaps between expectations and perceptions above 30% (a gap of 25% and above was considered significant) were identified. These were: adequate photocopying facilities (61.4%), a quiet library environment (57.2%), a clear library website with useful information (54.3%), adequate electronic journals (53.6%), prompt interlibrary loan (48.3%), easily available access to electronic databases (47.6%), corrective action regarding missing resources (46%), library space for group learning and study (43.8%), knowledgeable staff (39.7%), an adequate number of computer workstations (38.6%), adequate printing facilities (36.7%), a safe and secure space (35.2%), clear catalogue with useful information (34.5%), staff who understand user needs (34%) and, finally, computers that work well (32.6%). (Simba, 2006: 91). In accounting for the failure of the library to not fully meet users' expectations regarding service quality, Simba (2006: 116) stated that the failure

may be attributed to a number of reasons. Included amongst these are financial constraints, staffing problems, theft of valuable items, non-use of modern technologies to facilitate efficiency and effective service delivery (automation of library functions), and library space problems, to mention a few.

In Malawi, Kachoka and Hoskins (2009) used the LibQUAL instrument to measure undergraduate students' (third and fourth years) expectations and perceptions of the quality of library service provided by the Chancellor College Library (CCL) of the University of

Malawi. Of the sample of 285 students, 186 participated, giving a response rate of 65.3%. Low usage of electronic resources was observed, but this was perhaps not surprising given that there was a lack of computers available, Internet access being both expensive and slow, and electronic resources being inadequate. Less than half (44.6%) of the respondents rated the overall quality of service as good, with 37.6% being dissatisfied with library services. Thus, also not surprising was the finding that expectations exceeded perceptions in all instances, particularly with the dimension of Information control, and wide gaps were observed. According to the authors, the findings indicated “that the following services at the CCL needed immediate attention: access to photocopy facilities, modern computers that let me easily access information, adequate electronic resources, adequate library material I require for my work, and reduced levels of noise” (Kachoka and Hoskins, 2009: 177). Recommendations, in the main, concerned improving access to electronic information resources including the Internet.

Khaola and Mabilikoane (2015) conducted a LibQUAL study of the library at the National University of Lesotho (NUL). One of the study’s aims was to “assess the perceived levels of service quality and satisfaction with the library”. A convenience sample of 400 NUL students was selected of which 384 returned usable questionnaires (Khaola and Mabilikoane, 2015: 46). In terms of the findings, the perceptions of the quality of the Library as place were above what the authors refer to as midpoint, “suggesting that among others, many participants felt that the library had a physical space that inspired learning and research; had a comfortable and inviting location; and had a quiet space conducive for learning.” Concerning information and personal control, participants scored around the midpoint “suggesting that on average, participants were neither impressed nor unimpressed about access of information on their own.” Of concern, however, was the quality of services provided by the library staff, with a majority of participants (56%) being unhappy in this regard. Nor were the participants satisfied with the overall service they received from the library, with 58% expressing dissatisfaction. A majority of participants hardly used the library’s resources, especially its website, to find digital resources (it needs to be pointed out that the website was described as dysfunctional and not user-friendly, which makes its non-use unsurprising) (Khaola and Mabilikoane, 2015: 49-50). An interesting finding of the authors (and as pointed to in Chapter 3) was that the LibQUAL questionnaire had an “acceptable validity” and “could successfully be applied in Lesotho to assess library service quality and satisfaction” (Khaola and Mabilikoane, 2015: 49-50).

2.3.3 International LibQUAL studies

As noted above, to provide an international perspective (in this instance outside the African continent), four very recent LibQUAL studies were identified and are reported below.

In Pakistan, Mahmood, Ahmad, Ur Rehman and Ashiq (2021) used the LibQUAL instrument to determine library service quality in 22 postgraduate colleges (which employed professional librarians) in the Punjab Province. A convenience sample of 1 100 participants (50 from each college) comprising both students and staff who had used the library services was drawn, and questionnaires were physically distributed to the participants (Mahmood et al., 2021: 4). Findings revealed a negative gap (desired score minus perceived score) across all three LibQUAL dimensions. However, the services which had the biggest gap were those concerning the Information control dimension: (a) “the library website enables me to locate information on my own” and (b) “electronic resources of the library are accessible from my home or office”; (c) “the library has print and/or electronic journal collections I require for my work”; (d) “the library has electronic information resources, I need”; and (e) “the library has modern equipment that lets me easily access the needed information” (Mahmood et al., 2021: 6). Less negatively perceived were the services under the Affect of service dimension, that is, the dimension dealing with staff-related services, followed by the Library as place dimension (physical environment and space of the library). The authors note that these findings are consistent with previous studies and conclude that “Despite the fast adoption of technologic tools by the users, most libraries, particularly the college libraries, have failed to keep pace with the technological revolution because of lack of funds, resources, and skilled staff” (Mahmood et al., 2021: 11). The authors, unsurprisingly, point to the need for the allocation of “proper college library funds for the improvement of the infrastructure, the services and the resources of the libraries ... [as well as the] ... Recruitment of knowledgeable staff” (Mahmood et al., 2021: 11).

In Canada, the University of Lethbridge Library used the LibQUAL instrument to determine users’ expectations and perceptions of the quality of services it (the library) provided (Scott, Duda and Stevens, 2020). Participants comprised undergraduates, postgraduates and academic staff and numbered 544, the majority of whom (75%) were undergraduates. According to the authors, “On average, survey respondents indicated that their perceived level of Library service (i.e., the level they believe the Library currently provides) fell

between their minimum service level (i.e., the minimum level they would find acceptable) and their desired service level (i.e., the level they personally want)” (Scott, Duda and Stevens, 2020: 1). However, the library performed strongest in the Affect of service dimension (staffing) and the most poorly in that of Information control (library collections and access to them)”. In terms of the latter, the service which had the largest gap between perceived service level and the desired service level was “A library website enabling me to locate information on my own” (Scott, Duda and Stevens, 2020: 6). Graduate students in particular also pointed to their perceived service level falling below the minimum acceptable service level for the services “Making electronic resources accessible from my home or office” and “Modern equipment that lets me easily access needed information” (Scott, Duda and Stevens, 2020: 7). Comments relating to the Library as place dimension pointed to opening hours (insufficient), space (overcrowding at peak times) and noise (Scott, Duda and Steven, 2020: 9-10). Apart from recommending that the survey be conducted again in 2023, the authors recommended that attention be given to acquisitions, the library website and making some study space available 24/7 (Scott, Duda and Stevens, 2020: 12-13).

In China, Gyau, Liu and Kwakye (2021) assessed the quality of service provided by the Jiangsu University Library from the perspective of 201 international students. Findings revealed that while the students had high expectations of service, their perceptions of services delivered were a mixture of both low and high across the three dimensions (Gyau, Liu and Kwakye, 2021: 538). The biggest gaps concerned the Information control dimension and, interestingly, Affect of service. Unusually (when compared with other studies reviewed), the dimension Library as place did in fact have positive differences for five of the service statements, while the differences relating to Information control and Affect of service were all negative. The three most positively rated services (positive gaps) were “A comfortable and inviting location”, “A library space that inspires study and learning”, and “A getaway for study, learning, or research”. The three most negatively rated services (negative gaps) were “Employees who understand the needs of their users”, “Employees who instil confidence in users”, and “Easy-to-use tools that allow me to find things on my own” (Gyau, Liu and Kwakye, 2021: 544). While the authors acknowledge that language may be an issue with some of the services, they do conclude that “The results showed there is the need for an immediate attention in those services having negative and wide gap scores” (Gyau, Liu and Kwakye, 2021: 545).

Finally, in their study entitled “Measuring user’s perception about library service quality in select university libraries of Haryana and Punjab of States, India: a libQUALtm study”, Partap and Rao (2020) surveyed 348 participants comprising undergraduates, postgraduates and academic staff of which the students comprised approximately 75% of the total. While the two libraries involved were found to be providing a satisfactory minimum level of service to the users (Partap and Rao, 2020: 66), there were, with the exception of one service (“Library has quiet space for individual activities”), negative gaps between the desired and perceived level of service across all three LibQUAL dimensions. The three library services in both libraries with the “widest” gaps were “Electronic resources of the library are accessible from my home or office”, “Library has community spaces for group learning, and group study”, and “Library staff instil confidence in users” (Partap and Rao, 2020: 67-68). Based on the findings, the authors, perhaps unsurprisingly, point out that “the users of both the university libraries were unhappy with the desired services and products provided to them” (Partap and Rao, 2020: 68). In their conclusion, they suggest that “the authority of concerned universities should be given financial support as well as moral support to the library so that better services would be provided to the users and ultimate satisfaction would be achieved” (Partap and Rao, 2020: 68).

2.3.4 Comments concerning the reviewed literature

Several common threads emerge from the review of the above studies. Firstly, with few exceptions, there are gaps between expectations and perceptions regarding the quality of services users (students and staff) receive from the academic library. The extent of those gaps varied significantly. A second common thread was findings relating to the dimension of Information control and, more specifically, access to information in digital format. In general, library resources and services were inadequate in this regard. For example, concerns were often expressed about the number of computers available and the inadequacy of the libraries’ websites and electronic resources. Remote access to the resources was also a common concern. Interestingly, despite the increasing move towards digital information over the last two decades, problems continue to be experienced in this regard. A fourth thread is that the services or items/statements under the dimension Affect of service (that is, issues to do with staff services) were usually, with some exceptions, seen as satisfactory. The study done in China (Gyau, Liu and Kwakye, 2021), however, is one such exception, as the library staff were seen in a negative light by students. The issue desk/circulation staff at Rhodes University Library (Moon, 2007) were another exception. Finally, the dimension Library as

place was often perceived as unsatisfactory, with issues of study space (both individual and group) and noise coming to the fore. Again, the study by Gyau, Liu and Kwakwe (2021) was an exception as various aspects of the library environment were seen in a positive light by the student users.

2.4 Summary

The chapter began with a discussion of two important concepts: service quality (in libraries) and user satisfaction. This was followed by a discussion of the theoretical framework underpinning the study: SERVQUAL and the Gap theory of service quality from which the LibQUAL survey instrument was derived. Concerns relating to both SERVQUAL and LibQUAL were outlined. The chapter ended with a review of the relevant literature, that is, LibQUAL-based studies done in an academic library context in South Africa and internationally.

Chapter 3 is next, in which the research methodology adopted for the study is outlined and discussed

Chapter 3: Research methodology

3.0 Introduction

According to Jansen and Warren (2020),

Research methodology simply refers to the practical ‘how’ of any given piece of research. More specifically, it’s about how a researcher systematically designs a study to ensure valid and reliable results that address the research aims and objectives.

In light of this definition, this chapter outlines and discusses the research methodology adopted for the study. In doing so, the design of the study, population and sampling, data collection instrument (the LibQUAL questionnaire), administration and distribution of the questionnaire, response rate, validity and reliability, and data analysis are described and discussed. The chapter ends with a brief discussion of the ethical issues involved in conducting the study.

3.1 Research design

The research design is defined as the

framework of research methods and techniques chosen by a researcher. The design allows researchers to hone in on research methods that are suitable for the subject matter and set up their studies for success.... The design phase of a study determines which tools to use and how they are used (QuestionPro, 2021).

This study used what can be referred to as a largely quantitative research design in the form of a cross-sectional descriptive survey (Babbie and Mouton, 2001: 92) in which the survey instrument (a questionnaire) comprising of mainly closed questions was distributed online (see 3.3.1 and 3.3.4 below). The survey is considered the “most widely used social science data-gathering technique” (Neuman, 2014: 316).

Ahmadin (2022) mentions that there are two types of approaches to research. Kothari (2004: 5) confirms this when mentioning that the two basic approaches to research are, namely, quantitative and qualitative. Watson (2015) believes that quantitative research incorporates a variety of approaches (including surveys) concerned with the systematic examination of social nature, using numerical or statistical information. In quantitative research, data are analysed using figures and numbers (Abulela and Harwell, 2020). Qualitative research,

however, “involves any research that uses data that do not indicate ordinal values... In short, qualitative research involves collecting and/or working with text, images, or sounds” (Guest, Namey and Mitchell, 2013: 3). Essentially, quantitative research falls under what is referred to as a positivist approach (or paradigm), while qualitative research is associated with an interpretivist approach (Thompson, 2015). Simply put,

Positivists prefer quantitative methods such as social surveys, structured questionnaires and official statistics because these have good reliability and representativeness ... [while]... An interpretivist approach to social research would be much more qualitative, using methods such as unstructured interviews or participant observation (Thompson, 2015).

Given the largely quantitative nature of this study, it can be considered positivist in its approach. A third research approach has emerged and is referred to as mixed methods research (MMR). As its name suggests MMR combines both qualitative and quantitative methods in the same study. Romm and Ngulube (2015), however, emphasise that MMR should not be confused with what they refer to as multi-method research or methodological triangulation. The authors point out that MMR, as a third methodological movement or paradigm

employs two methodologies and two paradigms (worldviews), while multi-method research may use two or more research methods within a single methodology or worldview, in the tradition of methodological triangulation ... In other words, MMR moves beyond techniques and methods, as it encompasses all the phases of the research process, including the philosophical assumptions and research question (Romm and Ngulube, 2015: 158-159).

While there are many types of surveys, this study as noted above, used a descriptive questionnaire-based survey. According to Gula (2022), a descriptive survey “accurately and systematically describes a population, situation or phenomenon which answers what, where, when and how questions, but not why questions.” Powell (1997: 64) considers the descriptive survey as the most straightforward type of survey research. It is designed to ensure that the sample is reasonably representative of the population to which the researcher wants to generalise and that the relevant characteristics of the population have been accurately measured. Maree (2016) states that in survey research, “researchers select samples of respondents before administering questionnaires or conducting interviews to collect

information about their attitudes, values, habits, ideas, demographics, feelings, opinions, perceptions, plans and beliefs.” It is acknowledged that while survey research is generally associated with quantitative research strategies, it can, as pointed out by Ponto (2015), be used in qualitative research strategies (for example, using open questions) or both strategies (that is, mixed methods). While the advantages (and disadvantages) of survey-based research are covered extensively in the research methodology literature, there were three main reasons for using the survey design in this study:

- Firstly, all the studies reviewed in Chapter 2 used the survey design. The use of the LibQUAL questionnaire necessitates such an approach, and the researcher is not aware of any LibQUAL-based study in which the survey design has not been used.
- Secondly, as pointed out by Simba (2006: 52)
the survey design is economical in that it allows gathering data on a once-off basis in order to describe the nature of existing conditions ... and the fact that it allow[s] for gathering data in a short span of time ... and with relatively little effort.

These were important considerations for the study as both time and financial support were lacking. That the questionnaire was distributed online meant significant savings in both time and money. As Walliman (2011: 97) points out, “Internet questionnaires are the cheapest and least time-consuming method of delivery.” Wright and Schwager (2008) define an online survey as “the use of the Internet and online methods for data collection.”

- Finally, also underscoring the importance of a questionnaire-based online survey was (and is) the Covid-19 pandemic. Given the necessity to avoid personal contact during the pandemic, it has been acknowledged that “Online surveys have become an important tool for Covid-19 research when conventional survey methods are not feasible” (Hlatshwako et al., 2021).

3.2 Population and sampling

Walliman (2011: 175) states that the population is “A collective term used to describe the total quantity of cases [also referred to as ‘units’] of the type which are the subject of the study. It can consist of objects, people and even events.” As noted in Chapter 1, the study population was delimited to final year law (4th year LLB) students registered for the first semester on the PMB campus of UKZN. The reasons for the delimitation were also given. In

essence, the researcher was of the opinion that students in their final year would have had experience of the services provided by the Law Library and would thus be in a position to provide informed comments on those services (as opposed to, for example, first-year students).

According to a staff member at UKZN's Institutional Intelligence, there were 174 final-year law students registered on the PMB campus in the first semester of 2021. In his discussion of strategies to determine sample size, Israel (2012: 2) mentions that one approach is to simply use the entire population. This is known as a census which is defined as "a study of every unit, everyone or everything, in a population. It is known as a complete enumeration, which means a complete count" (Australian Bureau ..., N.d.). According to Israel (2012: 2)

Although cost considerations make this [a census] impossible for large populations, a census is attractive for small populations (e.g., 200 or less). A census eliminates sampling error and provides data on all the individuals in the population. In addition, some costs such as questionnaire design and developing the sampling frame are 'fixed', that is, they will be the same for samples of 50 or 200.

Given that in the study no paper or postage were involved as the questionnaires were distributed (and completed) in digital format online and that the population was relatively small, it was decided to use the census approach rather than limiting the number of students through some form of sampling. Thus, no sampling was done, and all 174 final-year law students were approached to participate in the study. The administration and distribution of the questionnaires and the response rate are outlined in 3.3.4 and 3.4, respectively, below.

3.3 Data collection

Sekaran (2003: 223) notes that data collection methods are an essential part of research design. The author goes on to say that while "There are several data collection methods, each with its own advantages and disadvantages", the three main methods in survey research are interviewing, questionnaires and observation (Sekaran, 2003: 223). The study made use of a questionnaire as described below.

3.3.1 Questionnaire

In the study, use was made of a self-administered questionnaire (the respondents completed the questionnaire themselves without assistance from the researcher) as the data collection instrument. Pandey and Pandey (2015: 58) succinctly define a questionnaire as “a form prepared and distributed to secure responses to certain questions.” It is acknowledged (as pointed out by Sekaran (2003) above) that the use of a questionnaire has both advantages and disadvantages. The former, according to Neuman (2014: 345), include low cost, respondents being able to complete the questionnaire at a time convenient to them, the offering of anonymity and the avoidance of interviewer bias. Disadvantages include a low response rate, the lack of control over the conditions in which the questionnaire is completed (as well as who actually completes the questionnaire), and not being able to clarify questions and probe for more information when incomplete answers are given (Neuman, 2014: 345).

As pointed out earlier, the LibQUAL questionnaire/survey instrument was adopted for the study. Its usage, as mentioned in Chapter 2, is well-documented and has been applied in numerous studies worldwide, including a number of local studies as outlined in the literature review (see also 3.5 below). According to Green and Kyrillidou (2011: 11-12):

The LibQUAL+® survey evolved from a conceptual model based on the SERVQUAL instrument, a popular tool for assessing service quality in the private sector. Texas A&M University Libraries and other libraries used modified SERVQUAL instruments for several years; those applications revealed the need for an adapted tool that would serve the particular requirements of libraries. ARL [Association of Research Libraries], representing the largest research libraries in North America, partnered with Texas A&M University Libraries to develop, test, and refine LibQUAL+®.

The questionnaire went through several modifications and presently consists of “22 items and a box” (Green and Kyrillidou, 2011: 23). The questionnaire is largely quantitative in nature, and the “box” provides an opportunity for respondents to make open-ended comments and suggestions on issues of concern, thus allowing for a qualitative dimension as well. The instrument used in the study is described below:

The questionnaire comprised 13 questions. Questions 1 to 3 established the demographic characteristics of respondents (gender, age and whether full- or part-time). Questions 4 to 6 established respondents' usage of the Law Library (physical use, use of the University Library's website, and use of non-library gateways). Questions 7 and 9 concerned the 22 "core service items" (also referred to as "statements"), which measured the respondents' expectations and perceptions of service quality across three dimensions of service quality, namely, Affect of service, Information control and Library as place (Green and Kyrillidou, 2011: 23). Partap and Rao (2020: 57-58) briefly describe each dimension:

Affect of Service [eight items] represents the staff-related issues, i.e., to know how competent the library staff members are to handle the information-related queries or problems of users. On the other hand, Information Control dimension [nine items] is related to information resources and availability of tools based on modern technology to access the library resources, whereas, Library as Place dimension [five items] deals with space and other physical facilities available with and provided by the library.

In addition to the 22 items, LibQUAL makes provision for a further five "ancillary" items or statements drawn from a pool to address local library concerns (Kyrillidou, 2012). While including these items are optional, five were added to the questionnaire as a "fourth dimension", namely, "Local service statements", providing for a total of 27 items. Question 7 ascertained respondents' expectations regarding the items in the dimensions, while question 9 ascertained their perceptions of the same items. Respondents were asked to rate the items on a scale of 1 to 5, that is, strongly agree (1), agree (2), neutral (3), disagree (4) and strongly disagree (5). Questions 8 and 10 were open-ended questions asking respondents if they had any further comments to make about the services expected and received, while question 13 (the final question) was a similar open-ended question concerning any further comments regarding any aspect of the UKZN PMB Law Library. In line with the LibQUAL questionnaire, there were three statements concerning user satisfaction. These were addressed in question 11 of the study questionnaire. Finally, question 12, an open-ended question, asked respondents who either disagreed or strongly disagreed with any of the three satisfaction statements to indicate why they did so. Thus, the questionnaire used in the study differed from the official LibQUAL instrument by asking an additional three open-ended questions. As noted above, the LibQUAL questionnaire provides only one open-ended question. The questionnaire used as mentioned previously is available in Appendix 1, while the digital version, which differs slightly in format due to the limitations of Google Forms, is available

at

https://docs.google.com/forms/d/1dMoVpUpULdnpvaS7pS5R10H8lds0d_bWwbHftI3KSks/edit

The study questionnaire thus contained a mix of both closed- and open-ended questions. However, the former, in line with the LibQUAL instrument and quantitative nature of the study, predominated. The two forms or types of questions are briefly discussed below.

3.3.2 Forms of questions

Walliman (2011: 97) indicates that there are basically two types of questions. The first is what he refers to as open format questions, while the second he refers to as closed format questions. With the former

The respondent is free to answer in their own content and style. These tend to permit freedom of expression and allow the respondents to qualify their responses. This freedom leads to a lack of bias, but the answers are more open to researcher interpretation. They are also more demanding and time-consuming for respondents and more difficult to code (Walliman, 2011: 98).

With closed format questions

The respondent must choose from a set of given answers. These tend to be quick to answer, easy to code and require no special writing skills from the respondent. However, they do limit the range of possible answers (Walliman, 2011: 98).

Neuman (2014: 331-334) discusses the two types of questions, including providing a table reflecting, in detail, the numerous advantages and disadvantages of each. These are not going to be repeated here suffice to say that his list includes the issues about each pointed to in the quotes from Walliman (2011) above.

In terms of the present study, the ease of completion and coding of closed-ended questions were important considerations. The closed questions ensured that the questionnaires could be completed relatively quickly (each questionnaire took approximately 5 to 10 minutes to complete) and easily, and the questions were thus more likely to be answered by the final year law students. The disadvantages associated with open-ended questions (being more

demanding and time-consuming to answer) were reflected in the generally low number of responses received to these questions from the respondents (see Chapter 4).

3.3.3 Pretesting the questionnaire

Ruel, Wagner and Gillespie (2016: 101) refer to a pretest as “a critical examination of your survey instrument that will help determine if your survey will function properly as a valid and reliable social science research tool.” In a similar vein and more specifically, Sekaran (2003: 249) states that

it is important to pretest the instrument to ensure that the questions are understood by the respondents (i.e., there is no ambiguity in the questions) and that there are no problems with the wording or measurement. Pretesting involves the use of a small number of respondents to test the appropriateness of the questions and their comprehension. This helps to rectify any inadequacies, in time, before administering the instrument orally or through a questionnaire to respondents, and thus reduce biases.

It is suggested that as a general rule, one should do the pretest with at least five people drawn from the target group. However, where the latter is not possible, one should get people who are as close to the target group as possible (Tools4dev, 2021: 3). In the present study, the researcher, at the time the pretest needed to be done, was unable to make contact with any of the fourth-year law students. After consultation with his supervisor, a decision was made that the researcher approaches his student colleagues, that is, social science students who were in their fifth year of study, to do the pretest. While not users of the Law Library as such, they were all users of the Cecil Renaud Library (the main library) on the PMB campus. Seven students were subsequently approached via email, in which a link to the questionnaire on the Web was provided. They were asked to complete the questionnaire and make notes of any problems they encountered. The pretest participants reported that they experienced no difficulty in completing the questionnaire. Consequently, no changes or corrections were made to the instrument, and it was assumed that the final year law students would also have no difficulty. As noted above, the final version of the questionnaire is available on the Web and in Appendix 1.

As previously pointed out in this dissertation, the LibQUAL questionnaire has been used in many contexts around the world, including South Africa and as a consequence (and as will be

pointed out in 3.5 below), its validity and reliability have been well-established. Given this, one could question whether it is actually necessary to conduct a pretest. In this regard, Venette (2016) notes that one

might still choose to pretest instruments that have been used previously, even if items have not been changed. Why? Because some variance in the sample/population might affect the way that people interpret the items, and thus how they respond... I have used instruments that had previously been established as valid and reliable but just don't work very well in particular contexts.

It was in the light of this perspective and in the light of previous similar studies (for example, Simba, 2006; Naidu, 2009; Kachoka and Hoskins, 2009; Ncwane, 2016; Kekana, 2016; Matiwane, 2017) that also conducted pretests, that a pretest was conducted in this study.

3.3.4 Administration and distribution of the questionnaire

In March 2021, the researcher made contact with a lecturer in the School of Law on the PMB campus, who agreed to help facilitate getting the questionnaire to the fourth (final) year law students. Contact was also made with the two student representatives who, once the nature of the study was explained to them and after they consulted with their fellow law students, agreed to put the researcher on the students' WhatsApp group. Also in that month, the lecturer allowed the researcher to address the students during a class via Zoom on the nature of the study and to request them to participate. Unfortunately, attendance on that day was poor due to load shedding. Final written approval to conduct the study was received from the Dean of the School of Law at the beginning of April 2021. Once this was received, the questionnaire was made formally available to the law students via Google Forms on the Web. The students were informed of this through a WhatsApp message to the students' group. Included in the message was a description of the nature of the study and its importance and a request that they, the students, participate by completing the questionnaire. The Web link to the questionnaire was given at the end of the message.

The number of responses (completed questionnaires) received was continually monitored by the researcher and throughout April 2021 and the beginning of May, two further WhatsApp messages were sent to the group reminding them of the survey and the need for them to participate. Those students who had already completed the questionnaire were thanked as the message went out to them as well. At the end of the period, 103 responses had been received.

On the advice of the researcher's supervisor, no further reminders were sent and the Google Forms link was closed thus allowing no further responses. The analysis of the responses to the questionnaire was then begun. The response rate is discussed below.

3.4 Response rate

According to Punch (2003: 42), the response rate

means the proportion of the selected sample who complete the questionnaire. If questionnaires are distributed to 300 people and responses are received from 100 of these, the response rate is 33%. A low response rate raises the additional question of whether the responses received are representative of the sample chosen or are in some way biased. Clearly, higher response rates are better and researchers should strive for a response rate of at least 60%.

In the current study, 103 of the total of 174 students who were approached to participate in the survey completed the questionnaire, giving a response rate of 59.2%. This is just under the 60% mentioned as needed by Punch (2003) above. However, the research methodology literature differs in terms of what is an acceptable response rate. For example, Williams (2003) in Simba (2006: 59) argues that a response rate of 20% for a self-administered questionnaire-based survey is adequate for the reporting of results. Babbie and Mouton (2001: 261) believe that a response rate of 50% is "adequate" while rates of 60% and 70% are considered "good" and "very good", respectively. In light of the above perspectives, the response rate of 59.2% achieved in this study could be considered sufficient for data analysis and reporting.

It must be noted that the survey was conducted during a Covid-19 lockdown, and it was also a period, as mentioned above, that experienced load shedding. Furthermore, students had just completed writing exams which may well have influenced some of them not to participate in the survey.

3.5 Validity and reliability

According to Bell (1999: 104), validity is a complex concept with many variations and subdivisions and measuring its extent can be very involved. Sekeran (2003: 208), for example, lists and describes eight different types of validity ranging from content validity and

face validity to construct validity and convergent validity. The validity being referred to in terms of this study is that of the measuring instrument itself:

That is, when we ask a set of questions (i.e., develop a measuring instrument) with the hope that we are tapping the concept, how can we be reasonably certain that we are indeed measuring the concept we set out to do and not something else? This can be determined by applying certain validity tests (Sekeran, 2003: 2006).

One way to determine the validity of an instrument, as pointed out by Ruel, Wagner and Gillespie (2016: 101), is to conduct a pretest. Similarly, Babbie and Mouton (2001) state that no matter how carefully a questionnaire may be designed, there is always the possibility of error and the surest protection against such errors is to pretest the questionnaire in full and/or in part. The pretest conducted in this study has been discussed above and, as noted, the pretest participants reported no difficulties in completing the questionnaire.

Reliability in quantitative research

refers to the consistency, stability and repeatability of results, that is, the result of a researcher is considered reliable if consistent results have been obtained in identical situations but different circumstances (Mohajan, 2017: 10).

Consistency is thus a crucial consideration in reliability, and according to Bless and Higson-Smith (2000: 126), the greater the consistency in the results, the greater the reliability of the measuring instrument. The converse is equally true. According to Bertram and Christiansen (2014), the concept of reliability applies more in experimental research, when researchers would perform the same experiment repeatedly to ensure that the same results were achieved each time. Testing reliability (through, for example, the test/retest method) in social science studies, can be difficult and expensive. Also, one is dealing with people, and as Gutting (2017) notes:

For one thing, we are too complex: our behaviour depends on an enormous number of tightly interconnected variables that are extraordinarily difficult to distinguish and study separately. Also, moral considerations forbid manipulating humans the way we do inanimate objects. As a result, most social science research falls far short of the natural sciences' standard of controlled experiments.

One does perhaps need to bear Neuman's (2014: 211-212) point in mind when he states that "It is not possible to have perfect reliability and validity, but they are ideals toward which we strive". However, as has been mentioned above, the LibQUAL instrument has been tested for both reliability and validity. In the most significant study done in this regard, Thompson, Cook and Thompson (2002), conducted a survey comprising 20 416 participants (the majority of whom were students) from 43 universities in the United States who completed a Web-based LibQUAL questionnaire. When tested, it was found that the results demonstrated "very good reliability" and in terms of validity, "the results indicate[d] that the twenty-five items [did] measure the four intended constructs [dimensions] (Thompson, Cook and Thompson, 2002: 10). (An earlier version of the LibQUAL instrument comprising 25 items and four dimensions or constructs was used.) As noted by Thompson (2020b), the study "illustrates the numerous quantitative analyses conducted to support a conclusion that LibQUAL+ scores are reliable and valid." However, Kiriri (2019: 55) does make the important point that although LibQUAL has been extensively used in many institutions in many countries around the world,

there have been criticisms due to the fact that it was developed, tested and validated in the US which has a different environment and culture from most other parts of the world. Due to the cultural differences, it cannot be assumed that a tool can have a global application without any modifications as library services development may be dependent on the level of a country's economic growth.

Kariri (2019) found that a slightly modified version of LibQUAL was both reliable and valid in measuring the quality of library services in a private university in Kenya. The many LibQUAL-based surveys which have and continue to be conducted give credence to its global applicability and studies done in Lesotho (Khaola and Mabilikoane, 2015) and Pakistan (Rehman, Kyrillidou and Hameed, 2014), for example, attest to LibQUAL's validity and reliability in the context of developing countries.

3.6 Data analysis

According to Mouton (1996: 67), "Data analysis includes both qualitative analysis, which includes processes such as thematic and content analysis, and quantitative or statistical analysis." Given the largely quantitative nature of LibQUAL-based studies, the latter was mainly used in the study. Horne (2018: 30) contends that "Data analysis is the task of finding

meaningful patterns in our data. It's how we make sense of our data, how we derive meaning from it." The author goes on to say that, simply put, "quantitative data analysis helps us make sense of numeric data and qualitative data analysis helps us make sense of textual data ..."

(Horne, 2018: 30). Neuman (2014: 477) points out how computer technology has advanced over the last few decades and how, during this time, "statisticians and computer scientists have developed a large array of sophisticated software and widely available programs to assist in quantitative data analysis." In a similar vein, Sekaran (2003: 301) notes that

Data analysis is now routinely done with software programs such as SPSS, SAS, STATPAK, SYS-TAT, Excel, and the like. All are user-friendly and interactive and have the capability to seamlessly interface with different databases. Excellent graphs and charts can also be produced through most of these software programs.

As has been previously mentioned, the LibQUAL instrument was made available on the Web via Google Forms. Wikipedia (2021a) describes Google Forms as

a survey administration software included as part of the free, web-based Google Docs Editors suite offered by Google ... Google Forms is only available as a web application... [and] allows users to create and edit surveys online while collaborating with other users in real-time. The collected information can be automatically entered into a spreadsheet [such as Excel].

While Google Forms automatically generates charts and graphs to summarise the findings, these were not used as they only reflected the percentage of responses (and not the frequency/number) and were not able to adequately present the results in a meaningful way. The data were thus downloaded into Excel and tables were created to present the results (as can be seen in Chapter 4 that follows).

As described under 3.3.1, four open-ended questions were asked of respondents resulting in qualitative data, that is, data that "are generally expressed in words rather than numbers ... [and] are therefore descriptive in character" (Walliman, 2011: 72) and which need to be subject to qualitative analysis. Also, as noted above, not many responses were received to these open questions, and the results to three of them were simply summarised or reported verbatim (see Chapter 4). However, with one of the open-ended questions (question 8, which asked for any further comments relating to the library services expected), a total of 17

comments were received, and these were subject to content analysis as mentioned by Mouton (1996) above.

Neuman (2014: 49) describes content analysis as “a technique for examining the content or information and symbols contained in written documents or other communication media.” In doing a content analysis of the responses, the technique outlined by Kumar (2011: 231) was followed. It involves the close examination of each of the responses for similarities and differences (“in meaning though not necessarily in language”) and the creation of categories (or themes) that are exhaustive and under which the response can be placed. Seven categories emerged, and these are reflected in Table 10 in Chapter 4. Kumar (2011: 132) points out that “If you develop categories and quantify the categorisation as a part of the analysis of descriptive responses to an open-ended question, it becomes a quantitative analysis.” This was the case as described with regard to question 8 in the survey questionnaire.

3.7 Ethical considerations

According to Walliman (2011: 43), there are two aspects to ethical issues in research:

- 1 The individual values of the researcher relating to honesty and frankness and personal integrity.
- 2 The researcher’s treatment of other people involved in the research, relating to informed consent, confidentiality, anonymity and courtesy.

The first concerns issues such as plagiarism and citation of sources (and are covered by the signed declaration of the researcher following the title page of the dissertation). Regarding the second aspect, the University’s ethical guidelines were followed. This involved completing an ethical clearance form that had to be approved by the Humanities and Social Sciences Research Ethics Committee. The letter reflecting such ethical approval/clearance is contained in Appendix 2. Gatekeepers’ permission to conduct the research was obtained from the University Registrar (see Appendix 3) and the Dean of the School of Law on the Pietermaritzburg campus (see Appendix 4). Before participating in the study, respondents were presented with an informed consent document (see Appendix 5) in which the purpose of the research was explained, that their participation was entirely voluntary and that they had the right to withdraw their participation at any time without penalty. Also emphasised was that their participation was anonymous and confidential in that neither their names nor any

other forms of identity were asked for or mentioned in the study. Finally, the participants were informed of how the collected data would be stored and, after a certain time frame, disposed of. Walliman (2011) above, mentions the need for “courtesy”, and the researcher made every effort to be courteous in his communication with the participants, and this is reflected in the wording of the informed consent document as well as the research instrument.

3.8 Summary

This chapter outlined and discussed the research methodology employed in the study. In doing so, the design of the study (survey), population and sampling, the data collection instrument (the LibQUAL questionnaire) and its distribution were described and discussed. This was followed by a discussion of the response rate achieved and the validity and reliability of the research instrument. How the data were analysed was then described, and the chapter ended with a brief overview of the ethical issues involved in conducting the study.

In Chapter 4 the findings of the study are provided in tabular and narrative form.

Chapter 4: Research results

4.0 Introduction

This chapter presents the results of the questionnaire-based survey conducted on final year (4th year) law students registered for the 2021 academic year at the PMB campus of UKZN. As outlined in the previous chapter, the survey was administered online using Google Forms. Firstly, findings relating to the respondents' demographic data are given, and this is followed by findings relating to their usage of the Law Library and the Internet to access resources. Findings concerning respondents' expectations of library services across the four service dimensions are then provided, followed by their perceptions of the services. Fourthly, findings relating to the crux of the study, namely, the gap between expectations and perceptions are presented and finally, findings pertaining to user satisfaction are given.

4.1 Results

Each question is briefly described. The results for each question are presented using tables, and the significant results are highlighted below each table. Percentages are rounded off to one decimal place, and as a result, totals may not always add up to 100%.

4.1.1 Demographic data

Three questions about the respondents' background information were asked, namely, their gender, age and whether they were studying full-time or part-time. The latter two variables could arguably impact library use and the use of technology associated with such use.

4.1.1.1 Gender of respondents

Table 1 below presents the findings relating to the respondents' gender.

Table 1: Gender of respondents

N=103

Gender	Frequency	Percent
Male	38	36.8
Female	63	61.2
Prefer not to say	2	2
Total	103	100

As can be seen in Table 1 the majority of the respondents (61.2%) were female.

4.1.1.2 Age of respondents

The age range of respondents is reflected in Table 2 below.

Table 2: Age of respondents

N=103

Age	Frequency	Percent
18-24	83	80.6
25-34	14	13.6
35-44	3	3
45-54	1	1
Prefer not to say	1	1
No response	1	1
Total	103	100.2

A majority of respondents (80.6%) were between the ages of 18 and 24 years. Only three (3%) were 35 years or older. This links in with the findings below where the vast majority of students were full-time (and thus presumably not in formal employment).

4.1.1.3 Full- or part-time study

Respondents were asked whether they were registered for full- or part-time study. The vast majority, 96 (93.2%) indicated that they were registered as full-time students while seven (6.8%) indicated that they were part-time.

4.1.2 Usage of the Law Library and the Internet to access resources

The next set of questions (Section 4) pertained to respondents' usage of the Law Library on the PMB campus and their use of the Internet in accessing resources for their studies.

4.1.2.1 Frequency of physically visiting UKZN PMB Law Library to use resources

The first of these questions (question 4) asked how often, before the Covid-19 lockdown, the respondents visited the Law Library to use the resources there.

Table 3: Frequency of physically visiting Library

N= 103

Usage	Frequency	Percentage
Everyday	39	37.9
Once a week	33	32
Once in every two weeks	14	13.6
Once a month	7	6.8
Once every six months	5	4.9
Never	5	4.9
Total	103	100.1

The largest number of respondents, 39 (37.9%), indicated that, on average, they would physically visit the library to use the resources every day. In fact, the vast majority of respondents, 93 (90.3%) physically visited the library to use the resources at least once a month or more. Surprisingly, five (4.9%) respondents indicated that they had never physically visited the library.

4.1.2.2 Frequency of accessing library resources through the University Library's website

In question 5 respondents were asked how often, on average, they accessed library resources through the University Library's website using the Internet. The results are presented in Table 4 below.

Table 4: Frequency of accessing library resources through the University Library's website

N=103

Usage	Frequency	Percentage
Everyday	26	25.2
Once a week	41	39.2
Once in every two weeks	15	14.6
Once a month	12	11.7
Once in 6 months	4	3.9
Never	5	4.9
Total	103	100.0

Just over a quarter (25.2%) of respondents indicated that they accessed library resources through the University Library's website every day. The highest percentage of respondents (39.2%) did so once a week. The vast majority of respondents, 94 (91.2%) accessed library resources through the website at least once a month or more. Surprisingly, even though at the time of the study remote teaching and learning were in place (due to Covid-19) and students were thus unable to physically visit the library to access library resources, five (4.9%) respondents indicated that they never accessed resources through the University Library's website.

4.1.2.3 Frequency of using search engines to access study-related information

Question 6 determined the respondents' frequency of use of non-library gateways (search engines) to access information for their studies. The results are presented in Table 5 below.

Table 5: Frequency of use of search engines

N=103

Usage	Frequency	Percentage
Everyday	87	84.5
Once a week	8	7.8
Once in every two weeks	4	3.9
Once a month	3	2.9
Never	1	1
Total	103	100.1

Extensive use was made of search engines by the respondents with a significant majority (84.5%) indicating that they did so every day. The next highest percentage was the 7.8% of respondents who indicated that used search engines once a week to access study-related information. Only one (1%) respondent had never used search engines to access information for their studies.

4.1.3 Expectations of library services

Questions 7 and 9 were central to the questionnaire and the study. Question 7 ascertained the respondents' expectations (what the respondents personally wanted or expected) of the services provided by the Law Library while question 9 ascertained respondents' perceptions (actual experiences) of those services.

The findings are presented under the three "dimensions" of library services namely, Affect of service, Information control, and Library as place. A fourth dimension, namely, Local service statements is also provided. Each dimension comprises a series of core statements or items and respondents were asked whether they strongly agreed, agreed, neutral, disagreed or strongly disagreed with them. A "No response" column has also been added.

The findings relating to expectations are presented in Tables 6, 7, 8 and 9 below with each table reflecting a dimension.

Table 6: Respondents' expectations relating to Affect of service

N=103

Statements	Strongly agree		Agree		Neutral		Disagree		Strongly disagree		No response	
	No	%	No	%	No	%	No	%	No	%	No	%
<i>I expect the library to provide:</i>												
Staff who instil confidence in users	48	46.6	25	24.3	20	19.4	7	6.8	1	1	2	1.9
Staff who give users individual attention	33	32	37	36	22	21.4	7	6.8	2	1.9	2	1.9
Staff who are consistently courteous	42	40.8	25	24.3	25	24.3	8	7.8	1	1	2	1.9
Staff who are ready to respond to users' questions	50	48.5	19	18.4	20	19.4	9	8.7	2	1.9	3	2.9
Staff who have the knowledge to answer user questions	48	46.6	18	17.5	26	25.2	8	7.8	1	1	2	1.9
Staff who deal with users in a caring fashion	46	44.7	23	22.3	20	19.4	9	8.7	3	2.9	2	1.9
Staff who understand the needs of their users	45	43.7	23	22.3	23	22.3	7	6.8	1	1	4	3.9
Staff who are willing to help users	52	50.5	18	17.5	19	18.4	8	7.8	2	1.9	4	3.9
Staff who are dependable in handling users' service problems	41	39.8	29	28.2	20	19.4	9	8.7	1	1	3	2.9

As to be expected, respondents' expectations regarding matters relating to staff (Affect of service) were generally high, with a majority (over 60%) either agreeing or strongly agreeing with the various statements. The statement "Staff who are willing to help users" had the highest number of respondents strongly agreeing, namely, 52 (50.5%). Disagreement with the statements was correspondingly low, with a small minority (in most instances under 10%) either disagreeing or strongly disagreeing. Interestingly, the number of respondents who did

not commit themselves, that is, were neutral, was quite high ranging between 19 (18.4%) and 26 (25.2%) respondents.

Table 7: Respondents' expectations relating to Information control

N=103

Statements	Strongly agree		Agree		Neutral		Disagree		Strongly disagree		No response	
	No	%	No	%	No	%	No	%	No	%	No	%
<i>I expect the library to provide:</i>												
Electronic resources accessible from my home or residence	53	51.5	12	11.7	25	24.3	10	9.7	1	1	2	1.9
A library website enabling me to locate information on my own	55	53.4	15	14.6	17	16.5	12	11.7	2	1.9	2	1.9
Printed library materials I need for my studies	37	35.9	28	27.2	26	25.2	11	10.7	1	1	-	-
The electronic information resources I need for my studies	47	45.6	19	18.4	22	21.4	12	11.7	1	1	2	1.9
Modern equipment that lets me easily access needed information	50	48.5	19	18.4	20	19.4	11	10.7	2	1.9	1	1
Easy-to-use access tools that allow me to find things on my own	49	47.6	19	18.4	18	17.5	13	12.6	2	1.9	2	1.9
Information that is easily accessible for independent use	49	47.6	16	15.5	21	20.4	12	11.7	2	1.9	3	2.9
Print and/or electronic journal collections I require for my studies	46	44.7	21	20.4	23	22.3	9	8.7	2	1.9	2	1.9

The two statements with the most “Strongly agree” responses were “Electronic resources accessible from my home or residence” and “A library website enabling me to locate information on my own”, with 53 (51.5%) and 55 (53.4%) respondents respectively. As with the previous dimension and as expected, a majority of respondents either agreed or strongly agreed with the statements. The neutral responses could be considered high, and the disagreements low but slightly higher than with the Affect of the service dimension above.

Table 8: Respondents’ expectations relating to Library as a place

N=103

Statements	Strongly agree		Agree		Neutral		Disagree		Strongly disagree		No response	
	No	%	No	%	No	%	No	%	No	%	No	%
<i>I expect the library to provide:</i>												
A library space that inspires study and learning	55	53.3	12	11.6	20	19.4	11	10.6	1	1	4	3.9
A quiet space for individual activities	49	47.5	18	17.4	22	21.3	10	9.7	2	1.9	2	1.9
A comfortable and inviting location	43	41.7	24	23.3	20	19.4	10	9.7	2	1.9	4	3.9
A getaway for study, learning or research	37	35.9	25	24.2	26	25.2	11	10.6	1	1	3	2.9
A community space for group learning and group study	34	33	28	27.1	26	25.2	13	12.6	1	1	1	1

The only statement with which a majority of respondents, 55 (53.3%) strongly agreed was “A library space that inspires study and learning”. However, all the statements had a majority of respondents (60% and above) either agreeing or strongly agreeing. Neutral responses were again high and there were two instances where a quarter of respondents (25.2%) expressed their neutrality. The statement with which the highest number of respondents disagreed

(including strongly disagreed) was “A community space for group learning and group study” with 14 (13.6%) doing so.

LibQUAL, as pointed out, makes provision for institutions and researchers to include what is referred to as Local service statements in the questionnaire – these are five optional statements relating to the specific library under consideration and are in addition to the 22 standardised items reported on above. The results relating to these statements are reflected in Table 9 below.

Table 9: Respondents’ expectations relating to Local service statements

N=103

Statements	Strongly agree		Agree		Neutral		Disagree		Strongly disagree		No response	
	No	%	No	%	No	%	No	%	No	%	No	%
<i>I expect the library to:</i>												
Aid my advancement in the field of law	47	45.6	24	23.3	17	16.5	12	11.6	2	1.9	1	1
Enable me to be more efficient in my studies	41	39.8	26	25.2	20	19.4	14	13.5	1	0.9	1	1
Help me distinguish between trustworthy and untrustworthy information	47	45.6	23	22.3	19	18.4	11	10.6	1	0.9	2	1.9
Provide me with the information skills I need in my studies	46	44.6	22	21.3	19	18.4	12	11.6	1	0.9	3	2.9
Provide convenient hours of service	46	44.5	22	21.3	20	19.4	12	11.6	2	1.9	1	1

The pattern of results relating to the respondents’ expectations of the Local service statements was similar to the preceding dimensions: a majority of respondents (more than 60%) either agreed or strongly agreed with the various statements; a relatively high percentage (just under

20%) remaining neutral; and a minority (mostly under 13%) either disagreeing or strongly disagreeing with the statements.

4.1.3.1 Responses to open question concerning expectations

In question 8 respondents were given the opportunity to add any further comments concerning the services they expect from the Law Library. Fifteen respondents gave a total of 17 comments and these are summarised in Table 10 below.

Table 10: Respondents' comments concerning services expected from the library

N=15

Comment	No	Percentage
Need for more physical seating/study space in the library	5	33.3
Need for library materials need to be more accessible	4	26.7
Need for the Library to have longer opening hours	3	20
Need for Library staff to have expertise in certain areas	2	13.3
Need for more computers in the library	2	13.3
Need for staff to change approach to service	1	6.7
Need for security and verification of students to be improved	1	6.7

Interestingly, many of the comments related to the library as a physical entity, meaning that respondents still saw “physical use” of the library as important. Thus, the need for more seating/study space in the library (5 respondents), longer opening hours (3 respondents) and more computers (2 respondents). Accessibility of library materials included more physical copies of books, the need for more material to be made available digitally, accessibility of databases when off-campus, and the need for a backup generator during load shedding. One respondent pointed to the need for library staff to have knowledge of databases, and a second to staff needing to be better informed in matters relating to plagiarism and referencing. Finally, one respondent suggested that library staff need to take a more proactive approach to providing a service – “I expect the law librarians to walk around and engage with students whilst carrying out their duties.”

4.1.4 Perceptions of library services

As noted above, question 9 ascertained the perceptions of the respondents regarding the services the library provided. Perceptions refer to the respondents' actual experiences of the services. The findings concerning perceptions are presented under the same four dimensions of library services and the same core statements as contained in question 7 regarding expectations above.

The findings relating to perceptions are presented in Tables 10, 11, 12 and 13 below, with each table reflecting a dimension. Once again, a "No response" column has been added. To begin with, the findings relating to the dimension Affect of service are provided.

Table 11: Respondents' perceptions relating to Affect of service

N= 103

Statements	Strongly agree		Agree		Neutral		Disagree		Strongly disagree		No response	
	No	%	No	%	No	%	No	%	No	%	No	%
<i>The library currently provides:</i>												
Staff who instil confidence in users	16	15.5	32	31.1	29	28.2	20	19.4	3	2.9	3	2.9
Staff who give users individual attention	16	15.5	37	35.9	31	30.1	11	10.7	5	4.9	3	2.9
Staff who are consistently courteous	17	16.5	30	29.1	39	37.9	12	11.7	2	1.9	3	2.9
Staff who are ready to respond to users' questions	19	18.4	38	36.9	34	33	8	7.8	2	1.9	2	1.9
Staff who have the knowledge to answer user questions	19	18.4	36	34.9	31	30.1	10	9.7	2	1.9	5	4.9
Staff who deal with users in a caring fashion	19	18.4	38	36.9	26	25.2	15	14.6	2	1.9	3	2.9
Staff who understand the needs of their users	20	19.4	36	34.9	24	23.3	18	17.5	2	1.9	3	2.9
Staff who are willing to help users	21	20.4	42	40.8	26	25.2	9	8.7	2	1.9	3	2.9
Staff who are dependable in handling users' service problems	18	17.5	37	35.9	32	31.1	8	7.8	3	2.9	5	4.9

When asked to comment on their actual experiences of library services, the number of respondents who strongly agreed with the various statements declined considerably. The statements with which the least number of respondents strongly agreed were “Staff who instil confidence in users” with 16 (15.5%) respondents, “Staff who give users individual attention” with 16 (15.5%) respondents and “Staff who are consistently courteous” with 17 (16.5%) respondents. The two statements with which the greatest number of respondents disagreed

(including strongly disagree) were “Staff who instil confidence in users” and “Staff who understand the needs of users” with 23 (22.3%) and 20 (19.4%) respondents respectively. The number of neutral responses was high ranging between 23.3% and 37.9% of respondents. The latter percentage applied to the statement “Staff who are consistently courteous”.

Table 12: Respondents’ perceptions relating to Information control

N=103

Statements	Strongly agree		Agree		Neutral		Disagree		Strongly disagree		No response	
	No	%	No	%	No	%	No	%	No	%	No	%
<i>The library currently provides:</i>												
Electronic resources accessible from my home or residence	30	29.1	27	26.2	30	29.1	10	9.7	3	2.9	3	2.9
A library website enabling me to locate information on my own	34	33	28	27.1	26	25.2	9	8.7	3	2.9	3	2.9
Printed library materials I need for my studies	19	18.4	33	32	36	34.9	9	8.7	3	2.9	3	2.9
The electronic information resources I need for my studies	25	24.2	36	34.9	28	27.1	9	8.7	2	1.9	3	2.9
Modern equipment that lets me easily access needed information	22	21.3	36	34.9	26	25.2	13	12.6	3	2.9	3	2.9
Easy-to-use access tools that allow me to find things on my own	26	25.2	24	23.3	34	33	13	12.6	3	2.9	3	2.9
Information that is easily accessible for independent use	24	23.3	33	32	30	29.1	10	9.7	3	2.9	3	2.9
Print and/or electronic journal collections I require for my studies	27	26.2	32	30	29	28.1	10	9.7	2	1.9	3	2.9

In most instances, slightly more than half (50%) of the respondents either agreed or strongly agreed with the various statements falling under the Information control dimension. The one statement where less than 50% of respondents agreed was “Easy-to-use access tools that allow me to find things on my own”, with 50 (48.5%) respondents indicating this. The statements with which the highest number of respondents disagreed were “Modern equipment that lets me easily access needed information” and “Easy-to-use access tools that allow me to find things on my own”, each with 16 (15.5%) respondents. However, the percentage of respondents in disagreement with the other statements was 13% or less. The neutral responses were high, ranging between 24.2% and 34.9%.

Table 13: Respondents’ perceptions relating to Library as a place

N= 103

Statements	Strongly agree		Agree		Neutral		Disagree		Strongly disagree		No Response	
	No	%	No	%	No	%	No	%	No	%	No	%
<i>The library currently provides:</i>												
A library space that inspires study and learning	29	28.2	33	32.0	22	21.4	11	10.7	4	3.9	4	3.9
A quiet space for individual activities	31	30.1	32	31.1	25	24.3	8	7.8	4	3.9	3	2.9
A comfortable and inviting location	25	24.3	34	33.0	24	23.3	13	12.6	3	2.9	4	3.9
A getaway for study, learning or research	24	23.3	32	31.1	29	28.2	12	11.7	2	1.9	4	3.9
A community space for group learning and group study	21	20.4	27	26.2	33	32.0	14	13.6	5	4.9	3	2.9

As with the previous dimension, in most instances, more than half of the respondents agreed with the various statements. The one exception was the statement “A community space for

group learning and group study”, where 46.6% of respondents either agreed or strongly agreed. The statement most agreed with (61.2% of respondents) was the library providing “A quiet space for individual activities”. The percentage of respondents disagreeing with the statements was, with one exception, under 15%. The one exception was the aforementioned statement, “A community space for group learning and group study”, with 18.5% of respondents either disagreeing or strongly disagreeing. Once again, the percentage of respondents remaining neutral was quite high, ranging between 21.4% and 32%.

Table 14: Respondents’ perceptions relating to Local service statements

N=103

Statements	Strongly agree		Agree		Neutral		Disagree		Strongly disagree		No response	
	No	%	No	%	No	%	No	%	No	%	No	%
<i>The library currently:</i>												
Aids my advancement in the field of law	24	23.3	37	35.9	28	27.2	9	8.7	2	1.9	3	2.9
Enables me to be more efficient in my studies	19	18.4	42	40.8	31	30.1	7	6.8	1	1.0	3	2.9
Helps me distinguish between trustworthy and untrustworthy information	20	19.4	34	33.0	27	26.2	15	14.6	4	3.9	3	2.9
Provides me with the information skills I need in my studies	22	21.4	38	36.9	27	26.2	11	10.7	2	1.9	3	2.9
Provides convenient hours of service	28	27.2	27	26.2	26	25.2	13	12.6	5	4.9	4	3.9

The pattern of responses concerning the Local service statements largely followed those relating to the previous three dimensions. Respondents either agreeing or strongly agreeing with the statements were above 50% but less than 60%; neutral responses remained high, and the percentage of respondents either disagreeing or strongly disagreeing with the various

statements was generally low (under 13%). However, there were two exceptions, namely, 18.5% of respondents disagreed that the library “Helps me distinguish between trustworthy and untrustworthy information”, and 17.5% disagreed that the library “Provides convenient hours of service”.

4.1.4.1 Responses to open question concerning perceptions

In question 10, respondents were given the opportunity to add any further comments concerning their perceptions of the services they received from the Law Library. Three responses were received, and these are provided verbatim below:

“So far, I honestly cannot complain, overall, it’s good.”

“Moderate study environment”

“Library must be open 24/7”

4.1.5 User satisfaction

In question 11, respondents were asked the extent to which they agreed or disagreed with three statements concerning their satisfaction with library services. The findings are reflected in Table 15 below.

Table 15: Respondents' satisfaction with library services

N=103

Statements	Strongly agree		Agree		Neutral		Disagree		Strongly disagree	
	No	%	No	%	No	%	No	%	No	%
In general, I am satisfied with the way in which I am treated in the Law Library	17	16.5	44	42.7	24	23.3	14	13.5	4	3.8
In general, I am satisfied with the Law Library's support for my legal studies	16	15.5	35	33.9	32	31.0	16	15.5	4	3.8
In general, I am satisfied with the overall quality of the services provided by the Law Library	16	15.5	38	36.8	31	30.09	11	10.6	7	6.7

While a majority of respondents were satisfied with how they were treated in the library (59.2%) and with the overall quality of the services provided (52.4%), these were small majorities. Slightly less than half (49.5%) were satisfied with the library's support for their legal studies. Of concern was the relatively high percentage of respondents (in two instances, just under a third – 31.1% and 30.1%) who refused to commit themselves by remaining neutral. Twenty respondents (19.4%) were dissatisfied with the support they received from the library for their studies. In contrast, a slightly smaller percentage (17.5%) were dissatisfied with how they were treated in the library and the overall quality of the services provided.

Question 12, a follow-up question, asked those respondents who disagreed or strongly disagreed with any of the statements in Table 15 to indicate why they disagreed. Seven relevant comments were received. Four of the seven responses had to do with library staff. These included staff not being always easy to approach and seemingly unwilling or unable to assist students. One respondent pointed to the e-cataloguing system being “terrible” and that “Most of us cannot access the ebooks online”. A sixth respondent referred to not all the computers in the library being connected to the printer, and the final respondent opined that

the “closing time is very bad” and that the numbers allowed in the library “does not make sense”.

In question 13, the final question, respondents were asked if they had any further comments and/or suggestions regarding any aspect of the UKZN PMB Law Library.

Five responses were received, one of which was “Satisfactory”. Two respondents referred to the lack of space – one to space for “productive learning” and the other to space for “group studies”. A fourth respondent requested longer borrowing periods for items on short loan, while the final respondent stated that “There’s a disconnection between the needs of students and the services provided by the law library, moreover the stuff there is not helpful” but, unfortunately, did not elaborate.

4.1.6 Gap between respondents’ expectations and perceptions

One of the research questions underpinning the study and in line with the SERVQUAL Model and the Gap theory of service quality was to determine the gap between users’ expectations and perceptions of the quality of services offered by the Law Library. Doing so would assist in identifying the strengths and the weaknesses of the services provided. According to Ladhari and Morales (2008, in Naidu 2009), for each item, a so-called “gap score” is calculated as the difference between the raw “expectations score” and the raw “perceptions score”. In doing the calculation, the approach adopted by Simba (2006) was followed:

The positive and negative responses, namely, strongly agree and agree, disagree and strongly disagree, are combined together respectively to form one positive (agree) and negative (disagree) response. The reason for this is to enable easier tabulation and comparison and ensure clarity.

As noted by Naidu (2009: 127), the approach adopted by Simba “is a simplified method of measuring the gap in comparison to other studies, for example, Niagara University Library, TAMU Libraries, Rhodes University Library and the University of Washington Libraries.”

Tables 15 to 18 below depict the “gap findings” relating to the various items in each of the library service quality dimensions. Again, following Simba (2006), “In the *agree* column in the *difference* column, the larger the number the bigger the gap. In the *neutral* and *disagree*

column in the *difference* column, the smaller the number the bigger the gap.” The “Agree gap”, which is the focus and provides the basis for the gap discussion in Chapter 5, is also expressed as a percentage of the sample size.

Table 16: Gap between respondents’ expectations and perceptions for Affect of service

Affect of service Statements	Expectations			Perceptions			Difference		
	Agree	Neutral	Disagree	Agree	Neutral	Disagree	Agree	Neutral	Disagree
Staff who instil confidence in users	73	20	8	48	29	23	25 (24.3%)	-9	-15
Staff who give users individual attention	70	22	9	53	31	16	17 (16.5%)	-9	-7
Staff who are consistently courteous	67	25	9	47	39	14	20 (19.4%)	-14	-5
Staff who are ready to respond to users’ questions	69	20	11	57	34	10	12 (11.7%)	-14	1
Staff who have the knowledge to answer user questions	66	26	9	55	31	12	11 (10.7%)	-5	-3
Staff who deal with users in a caring fashion	69	20	12	57	26	17	12 (11.7%)	-6	-5
Staff who understand the needs of their users	68	23	8	56	24	20	12 (11.7%)	-1	-12
Staff who are willing to help users	70	19	10	63	26	11	7 (6.8%)	-7	-1
Staff who are dependable in handling users’ service problems	70	20	10	55	32	11	15 (14.6%)	-12	-1
Total	622	195	86	491	272	134	131	-77	-48

As evident under “Agree” in the “Difference” column in Table 16 above, expectations exceeded perceptions in all instances. The lowest percentage gap score (and thus the smallest difference between expectations and perceptions) was 6.8% with the statement “Staff who are willing to help users”, while the biggest gap score was 24.3% with the statement “Staff who instil confidence in users”. The next largest gap was 19.4% relating to the statement “Staff who are consistently courteous” followed by 16.5% with the statement “Staff who give users individual attention”.

Table 17: Gap between respondents' expectations and perceptions for Information control

Information control	Expectations			Perceptions			Difference		
Statements	Agree	Neutral	Disagree	Agree	Neutral	Disagree	Agree	Neutral	Disagree
Electronic resources accessible from my home or residence	65	25	11	57	30	13	8 (7.8%)	-5	-2
A library website enabling me to locate information on my own	70	17	14	62	26	12	8 (7.8%)	-9	2
Printed library materials I need for my studies	65	26	12	52	36	12	13 (12.6%)	-10	0
The electronic information resources I need for my studies	66	22	13	61	28	11	5 (4.9%)	-6	2
Modern equipment that lets me easily access needed information	69	20	13	58	26	16	11 (10.7%)	-6	-3
Easy-to-use access tools that allow me to find things on my own	68	18	15	50	34	16	18 (17.5%)	-16	-1
Information that is easily accessible for independent use	65	21	14	57	30	13	8 (7.8%)	-9	1
Print and/or electronic journal collections I require for my studies	67	23	11	59	29	12	8 (7.8%)	-6	-1
Total	535	172	103	456	239	105	79	-67	-2

With two exceptions the percentage gap scores were all under 11%. The two exceptions were with the statements “Easy-to-use access tools that allow me to find things on my own” and “Printed library materials I need for my studies” with percentages of 17.5% and 12.6% respectively.

Table 18: Gap between respondents' expectations and perceptions for Library as place

Library as place	Expectations			Perceptions			Difference		
Statements	Agree	Neutral	Disagree	Agree	Neutral	Disagree	Agree	Neutral	Disagree
A library space that inspires study and learning	67	20	12	62	22	15	5 (4.9%)	-2	-3
A quiet space for individual activities	67	22	12	63	25	12	4 (3.9%)	-3	0
A comfortable and inviting location	67	20	12	59	24	16	8 (7.8%)	-4	-4
A getaway for study, learning or research	62	26	12	56	29	14	6 (5.8%)	-3	-2
A community space for group learning and group study	62	26	14	48	33	19	14 (13.6%)	-7	-5
Total	325	114	62	288	133	76	37	-19	-14

Four of the five statements in the Library as place dimension received percentage gap scores of less than 8%. The statement with the biggest gap between expectations and perceptions was “A community space for group learning and group study with a gap score of 13.6%.

Table 19: Gap between respondents' expectations and perceptions for Local service statements

Local service statements	Expectations			Perceptions			Difference		
	Agree	Neutral	Disagree	Agree	Neutral	Disagree	Agree	Neutral	Disagree
Aids my advancement in the field of law	71	17	14	61	28	11	10 (9.7%)	-11	3
Enables me to be more efficient in my studies	67	20	15	61	31	8	6 (5.8%)	-11	7
Helps me distinguish between trustworthy and untrustworthy information	70	19	12	54	27	19	16 (15.5%)	-8	-7
Provides me with the information skills I need in my studies	68	19	13	60	27	13	8 (7.8%)	-8	0
Provides convenient hours of service	68	20	14	55	26	18	13 (12.6%)	-6	-4
Total	344	95	68	291	139	69	53	-44	-1

In the final dimension, that is, Local service statements, the statement with the largest percentage gap score was “Helps me distinguish between trustworthy and untrustworthy information”, with 15.5%. The statement with the lowest score was “Enables me to be more efficient in my studies”, with a score of 5.8%. The library providing “convenient hours of service” was also of concern, with a gap between expectations and perceptions of 13 (12.6%).

4.2 Summary

In this chapter, the results of each of the questions asked in the survey questionnaire were presented using tables and text. To begin with, the respondents' demographic data were given, and this was followed by findings relating to their usage of the Law Library, the University Library website and search engines. Findings concerning respondents' expectations of library services across the four service dimensions were then provided, followed by their perceptions of the services. Findings relating to the crux of the study, namely, the gap between expectations and perceptions were then presented. Finally, results pertaining to user satisfaction were given. As noted in the previous chapter, the data gathered

and reported on was largely quantitative in nature. However, there were some open-ended questions, and the qualitative findings to these were also presented.

Chapter 5 follows and comprises a discussion of the findings as presented above.

Chapter 5: Discussion of results

5.0 Introduction

As outlined in Chapter 1, the main aim of the study was to determine users' (that is, final year law students) expectations and perceptions of the services provided by the Law Library at the UKZN, PMB campus and their level of satisfaction regarding the services delivered.

This chapter discusses the significant findings as presented in the previous chapter taking into account, where appropriate, relevant findings from other LibQUAL-based studies in an academic context. As outlined in Chapter 3, data for the study was collected using a self-administered questionnaire (the LibQUAL instrument) and made available on the Web to respondents via Google Forms. In line with the questionnaire and with the research questions above, the discussion will be organised as follows: To begin with, findings relating to the demographic characteristics of the respondents will be discussed, followed by those relating to respondents' usage of the Law Library. The main thrust of the study, that is, significant findings relating to respondents' expectations and perceptions of the services provided by the library and the gap between the two will then be discussed. In doing so, the four dimensions of library service, namely, Affect of service, Information control, Library as place, and Local service statements provide the headings under which the discussion will take place. In line with the Gap theory which underpins the study and the third research question, emphasis will be placed on discussing the significant gaps between respondents' expectations and perceptions of the various services. Findings relating to respondents' (users) satisfaction with the library services will then be discussed and the chapter ends, as per previous chapters, with a summary.

5.1 Demographic characteristics of respondents

Of the 174 registered final year law students, 103 completed the questionnaire giving a "good" (see Chapter 3) response of 59.2%. Of the 103 respondents, the majority (61.2%) were female, and the remainder (36.9%) were male. The researcher was unable to get statistics relating to the gender of final year law students and thus is unable to say whether the distribution reflects the population as a whole. A majority of respondents (80.6%) were between the ages of 18 and 24 years, and only four (3.9%) were 35 years or older. As such, the majority of respondents could be classed as being part of "Generation Z", that is, born between the mid to late 1990s and 2010s. They are considered

As the first social generation to have grown up with access to the Internet and portable digital technology from a young age, members of Generation Z have been dubbed ‘digital natives’, even though they are not necessarily digitally literate (Wikipedia, 2021b).

Given this, one can assume that they would likely be more familiar with the use of information and communication technologies (ICTs) and their applications to library and information services than preceding generations. Thus, it is perhaps not surprising that no student reported a problem or difficulty in accessing and completing the questionnaire, which was made available online.

The majority of the respondents, 96 (93.2%), indicated that they were registered as full-time students, while the remaining seven (6.8%) were part-time. The fact that they were mainly full-time on-campus does increase the likelihood of them having spent time physically visiting the library, interacting with staff and using the information and ICT resources there. They were thus, arguably, well-placed to respond to the questions concerning the services offered by the library. As has been pointed out, physical access to the library was not possible during the time of the study due to Covid-19 restrictions.

5.2 Law Library usage

Three questions relating to the usage of the Law Library were asked, and the findings relating to each are discussed below.

5.2.1 Frequency of physically visiting the library

Question 4 asked respondents how often, before the Covid-19 lockdown, they physically visited the library to use its resources. While 39 (37.9%) respondents indicated that, on average, they would physically visit the library to use the resources every day, most of the respondents (90.3%) physically visited the library to use the resources at least once a month or more. This does suggest that despite the increasing trend toward digitisation of library resources and providing resources and services online, physical access to the library is still an important factor in students’ academic lives. The above findings are closely aligned with those of a LibQUAL survey done at the University of Pretoria. For example, it was found that

38.5% of undergraduate students at the university used the resources within the library on a daily basis (Olivier and Msweli, 2017). Interestingly, a small percentage (4.9%) of respondents indicated that they never physically visited the library, suggesting that their information needs relating to their studies were satisfied online.

5.2.2 Frequency of accessing library resources through the University Library's website

The era of Covid-19 illustrates how important it is for students to access information resources via the Internet since learning has been diverted from physical access to resources and contact with lecturing and other staff to online access and digital learning. The increasing trend towards digitisation has also been noted. The University Library's website is a platform through which students access information resources held and subscribed to by the UKZN libraries for reading, learning and research. Slightly more than a quarter (25.2%) of respondents indicated that they accessed library resources through the website every day, while 39.2% did so once a week. As with physically visiting the library, the vast majority of respondents, 94 (91.2%), accessed resources through the library website at least once a month or more. The comparative figure for undergraduates at the University of Pretoria was approximately 86% (Olivier and Msweli, 2017). Again, a small percentage (4.9%) of respondents indicated that they never accessed resources through the University Library's website – also a similar finding to that of the University of Pretoria (Olivier and Msweli, 2017). It must be noted that the latter study was done pre-Covid-19 and during a period when there was no “lockdown”. While the use of the University Library's website by respondents could arguably be more frequent, it is evident that the Internet does play a significant role in accessing information (as the next set of findings will attest).

5.2.3 Frequency of using non-library gateways to access study-related information

Question 6 determined the respondents' frequency of use of search engines (such as Google) to access information for their studies. A very high percentage of respondents (84.5%) indicated that they use search engines every day to access information for their studies. This is perhaps not surprising given that “93% of online experiences begin with a search engine” (Shelley, 2021). It was found that the University of Pretoria undergraduate students also made frequent use of search engines for information, with 73% specifying that they do so on a daily basis. A study by Kurniasih et al. (2018: 3) found that 91% of LIS students used search engines very often. The authors reported that search engines were “like necessities”,

and one student stated that he used search engines “as often as he saw the sun” (Kurniasih et al., 2018: 4).

5.3 Expectations and perceptions of library services

Questions 7 to 10 concerned users’ expectations and perceptions of the services provided by the Law Library, and the findings of these questions are discussed below. As noted previously (and in the questionnaire), “*Expectations refers to what you personally want or expect of the services provided by the library*” and “*Perceptions refers to your actual experiences of the services the library currently provides*”. The four dimensions of library service, namely, Affect of service, Information control, Library as place and Local service statements, serve as headings for the discussion. Also, as noted, emphasis is placed on the discussion of the gaps between expectations and perceptions.

5.3.1 Affect of service

The various statements under this dimension concern the quality of the services provided by the library staff. According to Simba (2006: 102), “An academic library needs competent, committed, honest and enthusiastic staff.” Saunders (2007) refers to a LibQUAL study done at the University of Pittsburgh Library in which it was found that “Users wanted not just assistance, but competent, professional assistance.” Library staff thus have a crucial role to play in the library by delivering a quality service.

5.3.1.1 Expectations relating to Affect of service

Respondents’ expectations concerning the library staff were relatively high, with between 64% and 71% either strongly agreeing or agreeing with the various statements. The statement with the highest combined agreement was “Staff who instil confidence in users”, with 71%. The statement with which the largest number of respondents strongly agreed was “Staff who are willing to help users”, with 50.5%. While the number of respondents who disagreed with the statements concerning library staff was generally low (less than 10%), it is surprising that these respondents answered the way they did – in effect, having low to no expectations concerning staff.

The term “relatively high” was used above because, when compared with other LibQUAL studies done in the South African context (see, for example, Matiwane’s (2017) study done at

the University of Fort Hare and Ncwane's (2016) study at the MUT), the combined agreement percentages regarding staff in these studies were in the 70% to 80% range – higher than the 60% to 70% range of the current study. The reason for this variation is not known. However, the number of respondents in the current study who did not commit themselves to either agreeing or disagreeing, that is, remained neutral, was high across all dimensions. This will be discussed later in the chapter.

5.3.1.2 Perceptions relating to Affect of service

Respondents' actual experiences concerning library staff were, as expected, lower than their expectations, with between 45.6% and 61.2% of respondents either agreeing or strongly agreeing with the various statements. The statement with the most agreement (61.2%) was "Staff who are willing to help users", and the least (45.6%) was "Staff who are consistently courteous". The number of neutral responses was again high in this instance ranging between 23.3% and 37.9% of respondents.

These findings contrast to some extent with other South African LibQUAL studies where perceptions relating to staff were higher. For example, in the aforementioned studies by Ncwane (2016) and Matiwane (2017), perceptions regarding library staff ranged between 67% at the lowest level (Matiwane, 2017) and 89% at the highest level (Ncwane, 2016) with the vast majority of responses being in the 70% and 80% ranges. The fact that respondents' perceptions regarding library staff are lower in comparison to other studies is borne out by an examination of the gap difference between their expectations and perceptions.

5.3.1.3 Gap difference between expectations and perceptions with regard to Affect of service

A crucial component of the study, as reflected in the third research question, was to determine the gaps between the students' expectations and perceptions of library services. The gap is expressed as a percentage (see Chapter 3), and, following the approach adopted by Matiwane (2017: 98), a gap was considered significant by the researcher if it was 10% or above and insignificant if less than 10%.

As can be seen in Table 16 of Chapter 4, except for one statement ("Staff who are willing to help users"), all the percentage gaps were above 10%, with "Staff who have the knowledge to answer user questions" the smallest in this regard (10.7%) and the three statements "Staff

who give users individual attention”, “Staff who are consistently courteous” and “Staff who instil confidence in users” reflecting quite significant gaps, namely, 16.5%, 19.4% and 24.3% respectively. Thus, while library staff are perceived as being “willing to help users” (a gap of 6.8% indicating that expectations and perceptions of respondents are fairly closely aligned) it is in other aspects of service, particularly concerning being able to instil confidence in users and being consistently courteous, that library staff are falling short and that improvements are needed.

The findings of this study with regard to Affect of service are, to some extent, at odds with the findings of other LibQUAL studies reviewed in Chapter 3 – both local and international. While gaps have been identified with some aspects of library staff services, they do not appear to be as widespread (across so many statements) as in the case of the current study. An exception in this regard was Rhodes University, where it was found that in terms of Affect of service, both undergraduate and postgraduate students perceived level of service was lower than their minimum acceptable level of service and that a large number of negative comments were received concerning the issue desk staff (Moon, 2007). Specific areas in staff services identified as problematic at the MUT Main Library were “Staff who are knowledgeable to answer users’ questions” and “Staff who provide users with information skills needed for work or study” (Naidu, 2009). At the University of Pretoria, “Library staff who are consistently courteous” was found to be problematic (Olivier and Msweli, 2017). At the international level, two of the three most negatively rated services at the Jiangsu University in China were “Employees who understand the needs of their users” and “Employees who instil confidence in users” (Gyau, Liu and Kwakye, 2021). However, as pointed to, this could be attributed to library staff and students having different first languages. On a more positive note, Ncwane (2016), in his study of the Life Sciences Library at MUT, found that there were two items relating to staff services where user perceptions exceeded expectations, namely, “Staff who are knowledgeable to answer users’ questions” and “Staff who deal with users in a caring fashion”. At the University of Stellenbosch Library, the highest perceived service score was given for library staffs’ “Readiness to respond to users’ enquiries” (LibQUAL 2016..., 2016), while at the North-West University Library, an aspect that students were extremely satisfied with were staff “Giving users individual attention” (Vos, 2017)

5.3.2 Information control

As pointed out by Partap and Rao (2020: 57), the “Information control dimension is related

to information resources and availability of tools based on modern technology to access the library resources.” In short, the various statements in this dimension concern the library collections and access to them (Scott, Duda and Stevens, 2020: 6) and, as Matiwane (2017: 113) notes, “Access to information is probably one of the most important aspects for the users of any library.” As alluded to by Partap and Rao (2020) above, access to information is increasingly being done online through “modern technology” and, as mentioned in the introductory chapter, the researcher’s perception that some law students were struggling to access information online, was one of the factors prompting this study. Also, as previously emphasised, the Covid-19 pandemic has underscored the crucial importance of online access to information as a library service.

5.3.2.1 Expectations relating to Information control

Two statements had “Strongly agree” responses from just over 50% of respondents. These were the library providing “Electronic resources accessible from my home or residence” (51.5% of respondents) and “A library website enabling me to locate information on my own” (53.4%). Both statements relate to the importance of information in digital format and off-campus online access to that information. Interestingly, expectations concerning the library providing “Printed library materials I need for my studies”, with 35.9% strongly agreeing, were not nearly as high, suggesting that respondents did not view printed library materials as important as those in digital format. As with the previous dimension, a majority of respondents either agreed or strongly agreed with the various statements, the neutral responses were again high, and the disagreements, while generally low (14.5% or less), were still higher than expected. Again, it is unclear why there were respondents’ who had low to no expectations regarding the statements in this dimension. In contrast to the findings in this study, the percentage of students in Ncwane’s (2016) study “Strongly agreeing” with the statements was significantly higher, ranging between 63.2% and 81.6%.

5.3.2.2 Perceptions relating to Information control

The percentage of respondents either agreeing or disagreeing with the various statements was, not unexpectedly, lower in terms of their perceptions as opposed to their expectations. The one statement where less than 50% of respondents agreed was “Easy-to-use access tools that allow me to find things on my own”, which does suggest that more could be done by the library in terms of either providing more access tools such as computers or in ensuring that training is given in their use (the assumption being that respondents are not finding the tools

and the associated software easy to use). Again, the percentage of respondents unwilling to commit themselves to agreeing or disagreeing, that is, remaining neutral, was high ranging between 24.2% and 34.9%.

The study findings regarding the law students' perceptions of the Information control dimension differ from those of Ncwane (2016: 47), where MUT life sciences students tended to have higher positive perceptions (either agreeing or strongly agreeing) with the various statements. However, Naidu's (2009) earlier study of the Main Library at MUT also had findings that differed from those of the present study. In most instances, agreement with the various statements comprising this dimension was generally lower than the current study's findings. For example, the statement concerning the library having "Adequate printed library materials" was perceived very negatively in that only 18.9% of the users agreed that this was the case.

5.3.2.3 Gap difference between expectations and perceptions with regard to Information control

While generally speaking, the gaps between expectations and perceptions in terms of Information control were not significant (expectations and perceptions being under the 10% threshold), Table 17 reflects three areas or statements (out of a total of eight) where the percentage gap between expectations and perceptions could be seen as significant. These are "Printed library materials I need for my studies" (12.6%), "Modern equipment that lets me easily access needed information" (10.7%) and "Easy-to-use access tools that allow me to find things on my own" (17.5%). The first statement does point to the importance of the library having adequate print materials (despite the ever-increasing move towards information resources in digital format). It could also, however, point to the difficulty that students were having at the time of the study in getting access to hardcopies of material as the library was, in effect, closed to physical use. The latter two areas or statements could be seen as relating in the main to respondents' difficulties regarding access to digital information. The first ("Modern equipment ...") points to the need for more computers in the library and the second ("Easy-to-use access tools ...") to not only more computers but to the law students having difficulty in negotiating, for example, the OPAC, the library website, as well the various online databases available to access information on their own. While more user-friendly software is an option, with the exception of the library website, this is not something

under the control of the library or its staff and increased training of students and, if necessary, staff needs to be considered.

As far as the literature is concerned, except for one study, all the studies cited mentioned one or more aspects (statements) of the Information control dimension being problematic that is reflecting significant gaps. The exception was Rhodes University, where it was found that its library performed very well in this dimension, and it “emerged as an area of strength” (Moon, 2007: 80). The South African studies in which the specific statement “Modern equipment that lets me easily access needed information” was found to be an area of concern were those done at the universities of Stellenbosch (LibQUAL 2016..., 2016) and Pretoria (Olivier and Msweli, 2017). Outside of South Africa, the issue of modern equipment being unsatisfactory was identified at institutions in Malawi (Kachoka and Hoskins, 2009: 177), Pakistan (Mahmood et al., 2021: 6) and Canada (Scott, Duda and Stevens, 2020: 7).

As with the current study, the statement “Easy-to-use access tools that allow me to find things on my own” was found to be one of the biggest gaps in the Chinese LibQUAL study (Gyau, Liu and Kwakye, 2021: 544). Despite the advances which have been made regarding ICTs and digital information in the last two decades, it is evident that there are academic libraries both nationally and internationally that are falling short in terms of providing the necessary services and equipment needed to meet users’ needs associated with the various aspects of the Information control dimension and that student users of the libraries believe that more could be done in this regard. More technology (in the form of computers) and skills associated with using the technology are needed. In terms of the latter, the issue of increased and possibly more focused training in the use of the technology to access information could be considered. Finally, the gap between expectations and perceptions regarding “Adequate printed library materials” was also found to be significant at the MUT Library by Naidu (2009: 131), indicating that the need on the part of students for more print-based materials is not confined to the Law Library on the PMB campus.

5.3.3 Library as place

As previously noted, the Library as place dimension, consisting of five statements, refers to the space and other physical facilities provided by the library (Partap and Rao, 2020: 58). As Simba (2006: 104) points out,

Library users not only expect to get relevant resources for their work but also a suitable place to read, search for information, discuss with colleagues issues pertaining to academic work; a place to contemplate academic affairs; and a place to write their academic work.

Arguably, the library's physical environment becomes less important when learning and teaching (and information retrieval) are done wholly online, as was the case with the law students at the time the study was conducted. As has been previously noted, Covid-19-related restrictions were in place, and the Law Library was not physically accessible to the final year law students. Their responses were thus based on their experience of the library prior to the pandemic.

5.3.3.1 Expectations relating to Library as place

Findings relating to the expectations of respondents regarding the various statements comprising the Library as place dimension were similar to those of the previous two dimensions. Thus, agreement (both "Strongly agreed" and "Agreed") with the various statements was in the range of 60% to 65%, disagreements (both "Strongly disagree" and "Disagree") were generally low (14% and lower) and neutral responses relatively high (between 19.4% and 25.2%). There was only one statement with which a majority of respondents, 55 (53.3%), strongly agreed, namely, "A library space that inspires study and learning". The statement with which the highest number of respondents disagreed was "A community space for group learning and group study", with 14 (13.6%) respondents doing so. Expectations were thus reasonably high but not as high (as with the other dimensions) as found in other studies such as that of Naidu (2009: 105) and Ncwane (2016: 44) of the two libraries at the MUT.

5.3.3.2 Perceptions relating to Library as place

As with previous dimensions and as to be expected, perceptions of respondents concerning the Library as place were lower than their expectations but generally not substantially lower. The one statement where this was not the case was with the library providing "A community space for group learning and group study". Here, 46.6% of respondents in terms of perceptions agreed with the statement, while the percentage in terms of expectations was 60.1%. Just under a third of respondents (32%) remained neutral regarding this statement, while a relatively high 18.5% of respondents either disagreed or strongly disagreed. As will

be shown below, these findings were reflected in the gap difference for the statement. While the contrast between expectations and perceptions for this particular statement can be considered quite high, it differed quite markedly in terms of the studies by Naidu (2009) and Ncwane (2016) of the libraries at MUT, where the lack of group learning and study space was clearly a concern. Thus, for example, Naidu (2009: 110) found that in terms of perceptions, only 10.2% of respondents agreed with the statement while a substantial majority (69.5%) disagreed. A similar contrast was found in Ncwane's (2016: 48) study.

5.3.3.3 Gap difference between expectations and perceptions with regard to Library as place

As has been pointed out above, the only statement concerning Library as place where the gap between expectations and perceptions was found to be significant was "A community space for group learning and group study", with a gap of 13.6%. The gaps for the other four statements in this dimension were all less than 7.8%, suggesting that the respondents were largely satisfied with the other aspects of space at the Law Library, such as "A quiet space for individual activities" (a gap of 3.9%) and "A library space that inspires study and learning" (4.9%). One would think that any initiative to increase space for group learning and study in the Law Library would impact other aspects of space in the library, and it is unlikely that physical extensions could be considered due to cost. One could also argue that the increasing trend towards digitisation and online access to library resources is making such space in a library less important, and other spaces on campus could be utilised for this purpose. Nonetheless, such space was considered important by respondents, and the library does need to respond to this (see Chapter 6).

In terms of the literature, significant gaps between expectations and perceptions concerning the statement "A community space for group learning and group study" were not unsurprisingly, given the findings and discussion above, found to exist at the two libraries of the MUT (Naidu, 2009; Ncwane, 2016). Matiwane (2017: 103) found a similarly significant gap at the Walter Sisulu University Library in Butterworth. Outside of South Africa, Simba (2006) recorded a significant gap in terms of this statement at the Iringa University College Library (IUCo) in Tanzania, and Partap and Rao (2020: 68) similarly found a wide gap at the two university libraries in the Haryana and Punjab of States, India. In contrast, postgraduate students at the University of the North-West were extremely satisfied with the library not only being a "Comfortable and inviting location" but also a "Community space for group

learning and group study” (Vos, 2017). While noise levels in the Law Library, that is, it being “A quiet space for individual activities”, were not of concern to the respondents, the issue of noise often emerged as a problem at other academic libraries. Interestingly, undergraduate students at the University of the North-West above believed that the noise level in the library needed “urgent attention” (Vos, 2017). Other institutions where the noise levels in the library were highlighted included the Ferdinand Postma Library at the University of the Free State (LibQUAL Report, 2005); the University of Cape Town (Report on... 2014); the Doornfontein Campus Library of the University of Johannesburg (in fact, the “DFC Library should have quiet space for individual activities” was the biggest gap identified in the study) (Marowa, 2015); and the Cecil Renaud Library on the PMB campus of the UKZN (Kekana, 2016).

5.3.4 Local service statements

As noted in Chapter 3, the LibQUAL survey makes provision for five additional items. These are referred to as Local service statements and address local library concerns. Two of the statements in the current study concerned information literacy, one concerned hours of service, one with the library assisting in advancing in the field of law and the fifth concerned the libraries assisting with students being more efficient in their studies. The statements under this dimension thus differ from study to study, thereby limiting the ability to conduct a comparative discussion with findings from other studies.

5.3.4.1 Expectations relating to Local service statements

The pattern of results relating to the respondents’ expectations with the Local service statements followed a similar pattern to the preceding dimensions. Thus, a majority of respondents (more than 60%) agreed with the various statements, a relatively high percentage (just under 20%) remained neutral; and a minority (mostly under 13%) disagreed. Also, as with the other dimensions, it is surprising that respondents did not have higher expectations and that some (albeit a small minority) had no expectations at all.

5.3.4.2 Perceptions relating to Local service statements

Again, there was little variation in the findings relating to perceptions concerning the Local service statements when compared with the previous three dimensions, and the patterns are not going to be repeated here. However, there were two statements where the level of disagreement was quite high, namely, 18.5% of respondents disagreed that the library “Helps

me distinguish between trustworthy and untrustworthy information”, and 17.5% disagreed that the library “Provides convenient hours of service”. As will be shown below, these findings are reflected in the gap difference for the two statements.

5.3.4.3 Gap difference between expectations and perceptions for Local service statements

As alluded to above, the two statements with the largest percentage gaps were the library assisting in identifying trustworthy information (15.5%) and the library providing convenient open hours (12.6%). The first statement talks directly to the concept of information literacy (IL), and, interestingly, final-year law students considered the statement as a problem area. It underscores the contention that IL skills are of concern irrespective of the students’ level or field of study and points to the need for library staff to intervene in, for example, the form of providing training in some aspects of information literacy. While none of the studies reviewed appeared to have statements reflecting the evaluation of information or library opening hours, the issue of opening hours did emerge in some of the studies when findings to the open questions asked were reported on. Thus, libraries where inadequate hours of opening were identified as a problem, were those of the University of Pretoria (Olivier and Msweli, 2017), the University of Johannesburg (Marowa, 2015), and the North-West University (Vos, 2017). Outside of South Africa, insufficient opening hours were pointed to at the University of Lethbridge Library in Canada (Scott, Duda and Stevens, 2020). One of the advantages of the digital library is that it is open 24/7 and can be accessed from anywhere (as long as one has a connection to the Internet). There were respondents in the current study who did point to the need for the library to have increased opening hours, as discussed below.

5.3.5 Discussion of open questions on expectations and perceptions

Questions 8, 10 and 13 of the questionnaire were three of the four open questions in which respondents were asked if they had any further comments concerning the services they expect and receive from the Law Library. Question 13 asked if they had any further comments regarding any aspect of the library. As pointed out in Chapter 4, few responses were received. Nonetheless, they are discussed below, followed by comments made by respondents in the studies reviewed.

The most mentioned comment (5 respondents) related to one of the significant gaps discussed above, namely, insufficient space in the library for study purposes. There were two other

responses mentioned by more than two respondents, namely, the “Need for library materials to be more accessible” and the “Need for the library to have longer opening hours”, each mentioned by four and three respondents, respectively. The latter coincides with one of the significant gaps determined in the study while the former concerned, more specifically, accessing “certain pivotal websites” from off-campus, accessing library material when there is load shedding by having a backup generator, accessing books in digital format (“I would like the library to conduct a massive scanning of books”), and there being insufficient relevant books and acts “to borrow from the library”. Three of the four comments thus concerned digital resources underscoring the importance of this aspect of library services. The final two comments mentioned by more than one respondent concerned the need for more computers in the library (two respondents) and the need for staff, as pointed out by a further two respondents, to have expertise in certain areas, that is, “Knowledge about how to use databases such as LexisNexis should be ... known by the library assistants” and “Library staff should be able to explain such [referencing] and be able to provide understandable explanations when it comes to the style of reference used by law students...”

Comments reported here were similar to comments reported in other studies and, as in this study, tended to reinforce the “gap” findings. Thus ICT-related issues emerged strongly in the comments from library users at the University of Cape Town (Report on... 2014); an insufficient number of computers at the University of Johannesburg (Marowa 2005); broken, slow and insufficient number of computers, and inadequate access to electronic resources at the University of Pretoria (Olivier and Msweli, 2017); the lack of training in ICT-related areas (online databases, the OPAC and the Internet laboratories) at the Walter Sisulu University (Matiwane, 2017); and an insufficient number of computers, printing facilities and e-resources at the University of the North-West (Vos, 2017). Other comments or, more accurately, “complaints” also echoed the findings of the current study and included inadequate study space, inconvenient opening hours and noise in the various libraries. Rude/incompetent staff were mentioned by respondents in the University of Pretoria study (Olivier and Msweli, 2017), and a lack of referencing and research skills on the part of student respondents was pointed to in the study by Matiwane (2017) at the Butterworth campus of WSU.

5.3.6 User satisfaction

Wang and Shieh (2006: 197) cite various studies that show a strong relationship between customer satisfaction and service quality and that the latter, as pointed out in Chapter 2, can be considered an antecedent of customer satisfaction. The results of their own study confirmed this relationship by showing “a significantly positive relationship between overall service quality and user satisfaction” (Wang and Shieh, 2006: 207).

In question 11, respondents were asked the extent to which they agreed or disagreed with three statements – their satisfaction with how they were treated in the Law Library, their satisfaction with the library’s support for their legal studies, and their satisfaction with the overall quality of the services provided by the library. If they disagreed with any of the statements, the respondents were asked in question 12 to indicate why.

What is interesting in terms of the findings is that once again, what could be considered a high percentage of respondents (in two instances, just under a third – 31.1% and 30.1%) who, by remaining neutral, did not commit themselves to either agreeing or disagreeing. Also interesting but also of concern is that while a majority of respondents were satisfied with how they were treated in the library (59.2%) and with the overall quality of the services provided (52.4%) these were small majorities. Furthermore, less than half (49.5%) were satisfied with the library’s support for their legal studies. Twenty respondents (19.4%) were dissatisfied with the support they received for their studies from the library, while a slightly smaller percentage (17.5%) were dissatisfied with how they were treated in the library and the overall quality of the services provided. Seven respondents provided a reason for their disagreement, and four of the reasons concerned library staff, including staff not being always easy to approach and being unwilling or unable to assist students. These responses relating to staff align with the gap findings relating to the Affect of service dimension.

In terms of previous studies that asked similar questions the findings do, at times, differ markedly. Matiwane (2017: 123), in her study of the Butterworth Campus Library of WSU, found that only 27.8% of respondents were satisfied with the services offered by the library staff. In terms of the overall quality of library service, 71.4% of respondents were satisfied with this aspect. Both findings differ significantly from the findings of the current study. Ncwane (2016: 58), in his study of the Life Sciences Library at the MUT, found that a substantial majority (84.4%) of respondents were satisfied with staff services at the library

and even more (86.2%) were satisfied with the overall quality of services provided by the library. Again, these percentages differ markedly from the ones in the current study. Finally, Naidu (2009: 150), in her study of the MUT main library, found that only 34.3% of respondents were satisfied with the services provided by the staff of the library. In terms of the overall quality of the services provided by the library, less than half of the respondents (43.5%) were satisfied (Naidu, 2009: 152). Interestingly the percentages of neutral responses were high – higher than those in the current study. For example, with regard to staff services above, a very high, 40.4% of respondents remained neutral on the issue (Naidu, 2009: 150). It is difficult to ascertain any discernable patterns with the above findings, suffice to say that they all seem to vary quite significantly with each other and with the findings of the current study.

Question 12, a follow-up question (and the final open-ended question), asked those respondents who disagreed or strongly disagreed with any of the statements in Table 15 to indicate why they disagreed. Seven relevant comments were received, of which four had to do with library staff. These included staff not being always easy to approach and seemingly unwilling or unable to assist students. These responses again highlight concerns that students have with staff services and which were pointed to in the gap difference discussion of the Affect of the service dimension above. A fifth respondent referred to problems with the OPAC and not being able to access books online (the latter an issue already raised), while a sixth respondent expressed their displeasure with the closing time of the library – again an issue already identified as a problem

.

5.3.7 Brief discussion of neutral responses

What was considered a high number of neutral responses on the part of respondents was pointed to on numerous occasions in the discussion above. An online dictionary defines the term “neutral” as “Not aligned with, supporting, or favouring either side...” (TheFreeDictionary, 2021). Chyung (2019) outlines the various reasons why respondents may choose a midpoint in a questionnaire and these include not knowing enough about the content asked, not being motivated to complete the survey, and wanting “to select a more socially acceptable response when their true feelings are negative.” If the latter reason applied to the current study, it would mean a more significant gap between expectations and perceptions concerning the various items and, consequently, a reason for increasing concern on the part of the library. However, unless a future LibQUAL study interrogates (or

accommodates) this issue further, one has to accept the position taken by TalentMap (2021), that is, “that a neutral answer is a neutral answer. Period.”

5.4 Summary

In this chapter, the demographic information of the respondents was discussed, followed by their library usage patterns. The main focus of the study, that is, significant findings relating to respondents’ expectations and perceptions of the services provided by the library and the gap between the two, were then discussed with reference to the findings in the literature. The four dimensions of library service, namely, Affect of service, Information control, Library as place, and Local service statements, provided the headings under which the discussion took place. This was followed by a discussion of the respondents’ satisfaction with the services provided by the library, and the chapter ended with a brief discussion of neutral responses in survey research.

The final chapter of the study, Chapter 6, focuses on the study’s main findings, conclusions and recommendations and is next.

Chapter 6: Summary, main findings, conclusions and recommendations

6.0 Introduction

In this, the final chapter of the study, the main findings, conclusions relating to those findings and recommendations will be presented. The recommendations are based on the main findings and conclusions. The chapter will end with some suggestions for further research and a summary.

The main aim of the study was to determine final-year law students' expectations and perceptions of the quality of services provided by the Law Library on the PMB Campus of the UKZN. In doing so, it determined the gap between users' expectations and perceptions of the quality of the services as well as their level of satisfaction with the services.

The research questions asked were:

- What are the law students' expectations of the quality of services provided by the Law Library?
- What are the law students' perceptions of the quality of services provided by the Law Library?
- What are the gaps between the students' expectations and perceptions?
- What is the level of law students' satisfaction with the services provided by the Law Library?

Based on the findings to the research questions above,

- What recommendations can be made regarding the law students use of and the services provided by the Law Library?

To begin with, a summary of the first five chapters of the study is provided.

6.1 Summary of the study

Chapter 1 introduced the study. It provided a description of the Law Library on the PMB campus, outlined the research problem, the aim of this study and the research questions that the study addressed. The rationale and delimitation of the study were given, followed by a brief overview of the theoretical framework and research methodology adopted. The

definitions of key terms used were provided, and the chapter ended with a summary (as did all subsequent chapters).

Chapter 2 comprised the literature review. It focused on LibQUAL studies done in academic libraries both nationally and internationally. The chapter also discussed the theoretical framework of the study and two important concepts, namely, service quality and user satisfaction.

Chapter 3 focused on the research methodology adopted. Aspects discussed included the design of the study, the study population, the data collection instrument (the LibQUAL questionnaire) and its distribution (done online via Google Forms). The validity and reliability of the findings were discussed, and the analysis of the data collected was described.

Chapter 4 presented the findings of the study. Given the largely quantitative nature of the study, the results were mainly presented in tabular form.

Chapter 5 comprised the discussion of the significant findings of the study. The discussion took into account, where appropriate, relevant findings from other LibQUAL-based studies in academic libraries. The four dimensions of library service, namely, Affect of service, Information control, Library as place, and Local service statements, provided the headings under which the discussion took place.

6.2 Main findings and conclusions

To begin with, the main findings and conclusions relating to the demographic aspects of the respondents are given. This is then followed by those concerning the usage of the Law Library. Main findings and conclusions concerning expectations and perceptions of the quality of services provided by the Law Library and the gap between them are then provided. Here, the four dimensions of LibQUAL are used as headings. Finally, findings and conclusions relating to respondents' satisfaction with aspects of the library are put forward.

6.2.1 Demographics

The vast majority of respondents (93.2%) were registered as full-time students while a significant majority (80.6%) were between the ages of 18 and 24. Given that they were all in

their final year of study, one can safely assume that the vast majority of respondents were 20 years or older.

It can be concluded that being full-time, the respondents would have had ample time (prior to Covid-19) to make physical use of the library and its resources. In terms of age, the respondents could be classed, as pointed out in the previous chapter, as being part of “Generation Z”. This suggests that while not necessarily being digitally literate, the chances are good that many respondents would have been exposed to the Internet and portable digital technology from a young age.

6.2.2 Physically visiting the Law Library

While a fairly substantial minority (37.9%) of respondents indicated that pre-Covid-19 they physically visited the library to use the resources every day, a substantial majority (90.3%) did so at least once a month or more.

It can be concluded that despite the increasing move toward the digitisation of library resources and online access to those resources, physical access to the library (whether as a study space or to access resources) remains important for students in their studies.

6.2.3 Use of University Library website to access resources

Just over a quarter (25.2%) of respondents indicated that they accessed library resources through the University Library website every day while 39.2% did so once a week.

Given that the library website is the “gateway” to the resources held and subscribed to by the library and given that this study was done at a time when physical access to the library was not possible, it can be concluded that the frequency of use of the library’s website could be better. This is further underscored by the finding which follows.

6.2.4 Use of non-library gateways such as Google to access information

A substantial majority (84.5%) of respondents used search engines on a daily basis to access information for their studies.

It can be concluded that the frequency of use of search engines (and one would think Google in particular) far outweigh the use of the library website. It can also be concluded that search engines are and will continue to be an important resource in students' quest for information.

6.2.5 Expectations, perceptions and the gaps between them

As noted above, the four LibQUAL dimensions (including the Local service statements) provide the framework for presenting the main findings and conclusions. To begin with, however, two general findings concerning respondents' expectations and perceptions and the gaps between them as well as the related conclusions are given.

The first is that expectations exceeded perceptions across all the dimensions and their specific statements or items. This is not surprising given the nature of expectations and perceptions and is in line with the vast majority of LibQUAL studies reported on. It can be concluded that the findings of this study are no different in this regard.

The second concerns the gaps between expectations and perceptions across the various statements. The gaps, in the main and with the exception of the Affect of service dimension, were below 10% and above – the percentage considered as significant for this study and thus to be of concern. Again, it can be concluded that the findings of this study (except for Affect of service) are similar to those of other studies where “pockets” of concern were identified within a generally acceptable level of service quality on the part of the libraries. However, where the findings of this study do differ from other studies (for example, Simba, 2006; Naidu, 2009; and Ncwane, 2016) is in the size of the percentage gaps, with the gaps in these other studies at times being over 50%. In contrast, the largest percentage gap in this study concerned “Staff who instil confidence in users” at 24.3%. Furthermore, where gaps were recorded above the 10% threshold to be regarded as significant, the percentages were not substantially above that percentage.

The areas (or “pockets”) of concern for the Law Library will be identified below. The focus of the findings and conclusions is on the gap difference between expectations and perceptions in line with the Gap theory of service quality on which LibQUAL-based studies are premised.

6.2.5.1 Affect of service

This dimension concerns the quality of the service provided by the library staff.

Respondents' expectations concerning the library staff were relatively high, with between 64% and 71% either strongly agreeing or agreeing with the various statements. As expected, respondents' actual experiences (perceptions) concerning library staff were lower than their expectations, with between 45.6% and 61.2% of respondents either agreeing or strongly agreeing with the various statements.

As alluded to above, the Affect of service dimension was the only one in which the majority of statements had a difference gap of more than 10%. The main gap findings are as follows:

“Staff who have the knowledge to answer user questions” (10.7%),

“Staff who deal with users in a caring fashion” (11.7%)

“Staff who understand the needs of their users” (11.7%)

“Staff who are ready to respond to users' questions” (11.7%)

“Staff who are dependable in handling users' service problems” (14.6%)

“Staff who give users individual attention” (16.5%),

“Staff who are consistently courteous” (19.4%),

“Staff who instil confidence in users” (24.3%).

Thus, eight of the nine statements in this dimension had gaps that could be considered significant. Responses to open questions also pointed to problems related to library staff. It can be concluded that of all the dimensions comprising LibQUAL, it is aspects of library staff services where the Law Library staff are falling significantly short of respondents' expectations and where improvements are, as a consequence, needed.

6.2.5.2 Information control

This dimension concerns the quality of the library resources and access to them.

Two statements that respondents had high expectations (over 50% “Strongly agree” responses) were the library providing “Electronic resources accessible from my home or residence” and “A library website enabling me to locate information on my own”. Both statements relate to the importance of information in digital format and off-campus online access to that information. In terms of perceptions relating to information control, the one statement where less than 50% of respondents agreed was “Easy-to-use access tools that allow me to find things on my own”. This finding (also reflected in the gap difference below)

does suggest that more could be done by the library in terms of either providing more access tools such as computers or in ensuring that training is given in their use.

In terms of the gap findings, there were three areas or statements (out of a total of eight) where the percentage gap between expectations and perceptions could be seen as significant. These are:

“Modern equipment that lets me easily access needed information” (10.7%)

“Printed library materials I need for my studies” (12.6%),

“Easy-to-use access tools that allow me to find things on my own” (17.5%).

Given the above findings, it can be concluded that attention needs to be given to ensuring that the library has adequate equipment, for example, computers available for students to easily access information on their own. The latter underscores the importance of training in the use of the equipment/tools and points to the difficulty some of the respondents were having in negotiating, for example, the OPAC, the library website, as well the various online databases available to access information on their own. It can also be concluded that the library having adequate print materials (hardcopy) remains an important consideration despite the ever-increasing move towards information resources in digital format.

6.2.5.3 Library as place

This dimension consists of five statements and refers to the space and other physical facilities provided by the library.

As with the other dimensions, the expectations of respondents concerning the various statements exceeded their perceptions but with one exception, the differences were not substantial. The exception was the statement concerning the library providing “A community space for group learning and group study”. Here, 46.6% of respondents in terms of perceptions agreed with the statement, while the percentage in terms of expectations was 60.1%. These findings are reflected in the gap difference for the statement below.

As alluded to above, the only statement having a significant gap difference between expectations and perceptions was “A community space for group learning and group study”, with a gap of 13.6%. (A related response, that is, the need for more study space, was identified by respondents in the open questions.) It can be concluded that group learning and

group study are important considerations for the study respondents and that (once again) despite the increasing trends of digitisation and online access to resources, physical space remains an important part of quality library services provision and the library does need to take cognisance of and, if possible, respond to this.

6.2.5.4 Local service statements

This dimension comprises five statements that address local library concerns.

The findings relating to respondents' expectations and perceptions of the statements in this dimension reflect those of the other dimensions, that is, expectations exceeding perceptions, and it is only in two of the five where the difference, as reflected in the gaps, can be considered significant.

The two local service statements with percentage gaps that are significant were the library assisting in identifying trustworthy information (15.5%) and the library providing convenient opening hours of service (12.6%) (this latter finding also emerged in the responses to the open questions). It can be concluded that the first statement underscores the importance of information literacy and that despite being final year law students, some respondents still considered it a problem area. Regarding convenient opening hours, it can be concluded that despite digitisation and online access to library resources and information 24/7, physical access to the library and the associated convenient opening hours remain an area of concern for respondents. Both conclusions point to the need for library management to investigate these areas of concern.

6.2.6 User satisfaction

The quality of services provided would influence the degree of satisfaction users have with those services. Respondents were asked the extent to which they agreed or disagreed with three statements, and the main findings are outlined below.

59.2% of respondents were satisfied with how they were treated in the library, 52.4% with the overall quality of the services provided and 49.5% satisfied with the library's support for their legal studies. It can be concluded that while a majority of respondents were satisfied with the first two aspects, these were small majorities, and there is a substantial proportion of respondents who either were not satisfied or who did not commit themselves by remaining

neutral. This is of concern, as is the fact that only just under half of the respondents were satisfied with the support given by the library for their legal studies.

6.3 Recommendations

The last of the five research questions underpinning the study was as follows: “What recommendations can be made based on the findings of the study?” Various recommendations are proposed for library management to reflect on and, where appropriate, implement. These recommendations stem directly from the main findings and conclusions presented above.

As is evident from the findings, the gap differences were, with the exception of the Affect of service dimension, generally under or just over the 10% threshold. The quality of the services provided by the Law Library was, as a consequence, largely within what is referred to as the “zones of tolerance” (Cook, Heath and Thompson, 2003), that is, acceptable. This finding is supported by the finding that a majority (albeit a small majority) of respondents were satisfied with the overall quality of the services provided by the library based on the understanding, as discussed in Chapter 2, that satisfaction is contingent on the quality of services provided. However, it is apparent that there are aspects of library services that could be improved, and these “pockets” of concern are addressed in the recommendations below.

- Physical access to the Law Library remains an important consideration, and it is recommended that this aspect of library service continues to be a cornerstone of the services provided by the library. This is particularly important for full-time students who are on campus daily and use the library for both study and research purposes.
- Given that the University Library’s website is an important gateway to the resources held and subscribed to by the library, it is recommended that consideration be given to increasing the frequency of its usage by law students. Students need to be alerted to its presence and made aware of its usefulness in accessing information.
- It is evident in terms of the findings that library staff are, in most areas, falling short in providing quality services to final-year law students. Instilling confidence in users, being consistently courteous, and giving users individual attention are the areas that

could, in particular, be improved. In the first instance, and to start the process, it is recommended that informal discussions with the library staff be held to ascertain their perspectives on the situation. If the situation demands it, staff training in this regard could be organised.

- In terms of the information control dimension, equipment (computers) needed to access information and that are easy to use emerged as problem areas. It is recommended that consideration be given to increasing the number of computers available in the library and ensuring that students have the necessary skills to make efficient and effective use of them “to find things on their own”. Computer access to the OPAC via the library website and the ever-increasing number of resources offered in digital format, underscore the importance of this recommendation. It is also recommended that, despite the growing trend towards digitisation and online access to library resources, the need for print-based library materials is not forgotten as they remain important resources for students.
- While the quality of services associated with the library as a physical space was generally well-received, it is apparent that students perceive the lack of adequate space for group learning and study as a problem. It is recommended that thought be given to finding such space via reconfiguration of existing spaces and equipment in the library.
- In the light of students expressing their concern with being able to distinguish between trustworthy and untrustworthy information, it is recommended that emphasis be placed on the evaluation of information and information sources in any user education or library orientation initiatives irrespective of the student’s year of study.
- Finally, while a majority of respondents were satisfied with the way they were treated in the library and with the overall quality of the services provided, these, as has been pointed out, were small majorities. In addition, slightly less than half of the respondents were satisfied with the library’s support for their legal studies. This latter finding is of concern, and it is recommended that discussions be held between staff

and students (possibly student representatives) on how best to go about ensuring that support is consolidated and, if necessary, improved.

6.4 Suggestions for further research

As indicated in Chapter 1, this study was delimited to final-year law students and their expectations, perceptions and satisfaction with the quality of services provided by the Law Library. In the light of this, consideration could be given to replicating the study with law students in their first, second and third years of study. These students, particularly first years, would not have had much experience interacting with the staff and resources of the Law Library, and while this might negatively impact their ability to evaluate the services offered by the library, it could provide valuable insight into the problems being experienced in using the library. One thinks, for example, of the Information control dimension that incorporates online access to the resources and the students having the necessary skills to find information “on their own”.

Administering a LibQUAL survey online can be relatively easily and quickly done. Given this, it is suggested that this study is duplicated in other UKZN “branch” libraries. One thinks, for example, of the Life Sciences Library on the PMB campus. This would allow for “pockets” of concern that are possibly unique to these libraries to be identified and, if necessary, responded to.

Finally, the high number of neutral responses on the part of respondents was highlighted and briefly discussed in the previous chapters. It was pointed out that the findings could be affected (in the form of bigger gaps) if respondents, rather than having a negative opinion, were selecting a neutral response on the basis that it was more socially acceptable to do so. While this is strictly speaking beyond the scope of library service quality studies, it would be both useful and interesting if future LibQUAL-based studies could, in some way, explore this phenomenon.

6.5 Summary

This, the final chapter of the study, provided a brief overview of the preceding five chapters as well as the main findings and conclusions of the study. The recommendations, stemming

from the main findings and conclusions, were then provided. The chapter ended with some suggestions for further research.

This study attempted to determine the quality of the services provided by the Law Library on the PMB campus of UKZN from the perspectives of final-year law students. In doing so, it made use of a standardised and widely used instrument, namely, LibQUAL, which is based on the Gap theory of service quality. Findings revealed that students were, in the main, satisfied with the quality of services provided by the library despite the fact that at the time of the study, the library was closed to physical access due to Covid-19 restrictions. However, some areas of concern (a gap between expectations and perceptions considered significant) emerged and these need to be considered and, where necessary, resolved by library management.

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Appendices

Appendix 1: Questionnaire

QUESTIONNAIRE

Students' expectations and perceptions of the services provided by the Law Library, Pietermaritzburg Campus, University of KwaZulu-Natal

The aim of this study is to identify your (as a final year law student) expectations and perceptions of service delivery with reference to the Law Library on the Pmb Campus of UKZN. “**Expectations**” refers to what you *personally want or expect* in terms of services provided by the library and “**Perceptions**” refers to your *actual experience* of the services the library currently provides.

Please answer ALL the questions as truthfully as possible.

DEMOGRAPHIC QUESTIONS. Please put a cross [X] next to your choice.

1. Please indicate your gender.

Male ☐

Female ☐

Prefer not to say ☐

2. Please indicate your age.

18 – 24 ☐

45 – 54 ☐

25 – 34 ☐

55 and over ☐

35 – 44 ☐

Prefer not to say ☐

3. Please indicate whether you are a full-time or a part-time student.

Full-time ☐

Part-time ☐

UKZNP LAW LIBRARY USAGE

4. Before the Covid-19 lockdown how often, on average, did you physically visit the UKZN Law Library to use the resources there?

Everyday ☐

Once a month ☐

Once a week ☐

Once every six months ☐

Once in every two weeks ☐

Once every year ☐

Never ☐

5. How often, on average, do you access the library resources through the University Library's webpage using the internet?

Everyday	<input type="checkbox"/>	Once a month	<input type="checkbox"/>
Once a week	<input type="checkbox"/>	Once every six months	<input type="checkbox"/>
Once every two weeks	<input type="checkbox"/>	Once every year	<input type="checkbox"/>
Never	<input type="checkbox"/>		

6. How often, on average do you use Google, Yahoo or other non-library gateways to access information for your studies?

Everyday	<input type="checkbox"/>	Once a month	<input type="checkbox"/>
Once a week	<input type="checkbox"/>	Once every six months	<input type="checkbox"/>
Once every two weeks	<input type="checkbox"/>	Once every year	<input type="checkbox"/>
Never	<input type="checkbox"/>		

EXPECTATIONS OF LIBRARY SERVICES

7. Please place a cross [X] in the table below the number best describes your “EXPECTATIONS” of the services that the Law Library provides. (*Expectations refers to what you personally want or expect of the services provided by the library*)

1 = Strongly Agree; 2 = Agree; 3 = Neutral; 4 = Disagree; 5 = Strongly Disagree.

7.1 Affect of Service

	I expect the library to provide	1	2	3	4	5
7.1.1	Staff who instil confidence in users					
7.1.2	Staff who give users individual attention					
7.1.3	Staff who are consistently courteous					
7.1.4	Staff who are ready to respond to users' questions					
7.1.5	Staff who have the knowledge to answer user questions					
7.1.6	Staff who deal with users in a caring fashion					
7.1.7	Staff who understand the needs of their users					
7.1.8	Staff who are willing to help users					
7.1.9	Staff who are dependable in handling users' service problems					

7.2 Information Control

	I expect the library to provide	1	2	3	4	5
7.2.1	Electronic resources accessible from my home or residence					
7.2.2	A library website enabling me to locate information on my own					
7.2.3	Printed library materials I need for my studies					
7.2.4	The electronic information resources I need for my studies					
7.2.5	Modern equipment that lets me easily access needed information					

7.2.6	Easy-to-use access tools that allow me to find things on my own					
7.2.7	Information that is easily accessible for independent use					
7.2.8	Print and/or electronic journal collections I require for my studies					

7.3 Library as Place

	I expect the library to provide	1	2	3	4	5
7.3.1	A library space that inspires study and learning					
7.3.2	A quiet space for individual activities					
7.3.3	A comfortable and inviting location					
7.3.4	A getaway for study, learning or research					
7.3.5	A community space for group learning and group study					

7.4 Local Service Statements

	I expect the library to	1	2	3	4	5
7.4.1	Aid my advancement in the field of law					
7.4.2	Enable me to be more efficient in my studies					
7.4.3	Help me distinguish between trustworthy and untrustworthy information					
7.4.4	Provide me with the information skills I need in my studies					
7.4.5	Provide convenient hours of service					

8. If you would like to add any further comments about the services you expect from the UKZNP Law Library, please do so in the space provided.

PERCEPTIONS OF LIBRARY SERVICES

9. Please place a cross [X] in the table below the number that best describes your “PERCEPTIONS” of the services that your library provides.

(Perceptions refers to your actual experiences of services the library currently provides)

1 = Strongly Agree; 2 = Agree; 3 = Neutral; 4 = Disagree; 5 = Strongly Disagree.

9.1 Affect of Service

	The library currently provides	1	2	3	4	5
9.1.1	Staff who instil confidence in users					
9.1.2	Staff who give users individual attention					
9.1.3	Staff who are consistently courteous					
9.1.4	Staff who are ready to respond to users' questions					
9.1.5	Staff who have the knowledge to answer user questions					
9.1.6	Staff who deal with users in a caring fashion					
9.1.7	Staff who understand the needs of their users					
9.1.8	Staff who are willing to help users					
9.1.9	Staff who are dependable in handling users' service problems					

9.2 Information Control

	The library currently provides	1	2	3	4	5
9.2.1	Electronic resources accessible from my home or residence					
9.2.2	A library website enabling me to locate information on my own					
9.2.3	Printed library materials I need for my studies					
9.2.4	The electronic information resources I need for my studies					
9.2.5	Modern equipment that lets me easily access needed information					
9.2.6	Easy-to-use access tools that allow me to find things on my own					
9.2.7	Information that is easily accessible for independent use					
9.2.8	Print and/or electronic journal collections I require for my studies					

9.3 Library as Place

	The library currently provides	1	2	3	4	5
9.3.1	A library space that inspires study and learning					
9.3.2	A quiet space for individual activities					
9.3.3	A comfortable and inviting location					
9.3.4	A getaway for study, learning or research					
9.3.5	A community space for group learning and group study					

9.4 Local Service Statements

	The library currently	1	2	3	4	5
9.4.1	Aids my advancement in the field of law					
9.4.2	Enables me to be more efficient in my studies					
9.4.3	Helps me distinguish between trustworthy and untrustworthy information					
9.4.4	Provides me with the information skills I need in my studies					
9.4.5	Provides convenient hours of service					

10. If you would like to add any further comments about the services you currently receive from the UKZNP Law Library, please do so in the space provided.

USER SATISFACTION

11. Please indicate the extent to which you agree or disagree with the following statements

1 = Strongly Agree; 2 = Agree; 3 = Neutral; 4 = Disagree; 5 = Strongly disagree.

		1	2	3	4	5
11.1	In general, I am satisfied with how I am treated in the Law Library					
11.2	In general, I am satisfied with the Law Library's support for my legal studies					
11.3	In general, I am satisfied with the overall quality of the services provided by the Law Library					

12. If you disagree or strongly disagree with any of the above statements please indicate why.

13. If you have any further comments and/or suggestions regarding any aspect of the UKZNP Law Library, please do so in the space provided

THANK YOU SO MUCH FOR COMPLETING THIS QUESTIONNAIRE. IT IS MUCH APPRECIATED. GOOD LUCK WITH THE REMAINDER OF YOUR STUDIES. If you would like a summary of the major findings of this study please indicate your email address below.

Appendix 2: Ethical clearance approval



26 February 2021

Mr Sizwe Richard Zulu (200300279)
School Of Social Sciences
Pietermaritzburg Campus

Dear Mr Zulu,

Protocol reference number: HSSREC/00002327/2021

Project title: Students' expectations and perceptions of the services provided by the Law Library, Pietermaritzburg Campus, University of KwaZulu-Natal

Degree: Masters

Approval Notification – Expedited Application

This letter serves to notify you that your application received on 23 November 2020 in connection with the above project was reviewed by the Humanities and Social Sciences Research Ethics Committee (HSSREC) and the protocol has been granted **FULL APPROVAL**.

Any alteration/s to the approved research protocol i.e. Questionnaire/Interview Schedule, Informed Consent Form, Title of the Project, Location of the Study, Research Approach and Methods must be reviewed and approved through the amendment/modification prior to its implementation. In case you have further queries, please quote the above reference number. PLEASE NOTE: Research data should be securely stored in the discipline/department for a period of 5 years.

This approval is valid until 26 February 2022.

To ensure uninterrupted approval of this study beyond the approval expiry date, a progress report must be submitted to the Research Office on the appropriate form 2 - 3 months before the expiry date. A close-out report must be submitted when study is finished.

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

HSSREC is registered with the South African National Research Ethics Council (REC-040414-040).

Yours sincerely,



Professor Dipane Hlalele (Chair)

/dd

Humanities and Social Sciences Research Ethics Committee

Postal Address: Private Bag X54001, Durban, 4000, South Africa

Telephone: +27 (0)31 260 8350/4557/3587 Email: hssrec@ukzn.ac.za Web site: <http://research.ukzn.ac.za/Research-Ethics>

Founding Campuses:

Edgewood

Howards College

Medical School

Pietermaritzburg

Wah

INSPIRING GREATNESS

Appendix 3: Registrar's approval



19 October 2020

Mr Sizwe Zulu (SN 200300279)
School of Social Sciences
College of Humanities
Pietermaritzburg Campus
UKZN
Email: 200300279@stu.ukzn.ac.za

Dear Mr Zulu

RE: PERMISSION TO CONDUCT RESEARCH

Gatekeeper's permission is hereby granted for you to conduct research at the University of KwaZulu-Natal (UKZN) towards your postgraduate studies, provided Ethical clearance has been obtained. We note the title of your research project is:

"Students' Expectations and Perceptions of the Services provided by the Law Library, Pietermaritzburg Campus, and University of KwaZulu-Natal."

It is noted that you will be constituting your sample as follows:

- With a request for responses on the website. The questionnaire must be placed on the notice system <http://notices.ukzn.ac.za>. A copy of this letter (Gatekeeper's approval) must be simultaneously sent to (govenderlog@ukzn.ac.za) or (ramkissoob@ukzn.ac.za).

Please ensure that the following appears on your questionnaire/attached to your notice:

- Ethical clearance approval letter;
- Research title and details of the research, the researcher and the supervisor;
- Consent form is attached to the notice/questionnaire and to be signed by user before he/she fills in questionnaire;
- gatekeepers approval by the Registrar.

You are not authorized to contact staff and students using 'Microsoft Outlook' address book. Identity numbers and email addresses of individuals are not a matter of public record and are protected according to Section 14 of the South African Constitution, as well as the PAIA and POPI Act. For the release of such information over to yourself for research purposes, the University of KwaZulu-Natal will need express consent from the relevant data subjects. Data collected must be treated with due confidentiality and anonymity.

Yours sincerely



DR KE CLELAND: REGISTRAR (ACTING)

Office of the Registrar
Postal Address: Private Bag X54001, Durban, South Africa
Telephone: +27 (0) 31 260 8005/2206 Email: registrar@ukzn.ac.za
Website: www.ukzn.ac.za



Founding Campuses: Edgewood Howard College Medical School Pietermaritzburg Westville

INSPIRING GREATNESS

Appendix 4: Dean of Law School's approval

From: Michael Kidd <Kidd@ukzn.ac.za>
Sent: Wednesday, June 2, 2021 10:56 PM
To: Sizwe Zulu (200300279) <200300279@stu.ukzn.ac.za>
Cc: Darren Subramanien <SubramanienD@ukzn.ac.za>
Subject: RE: Dear Honorable Professor Kidd

Dear Mr Zulu

I have discussed this with Dr Subramanien and I think all your documentation is in order and we feel that your request is a reasonable one. Dr Subramanien (copied on this mail) is seeing (via Zoom) the final-year students tonight and is amenable to providing you with 5 minutes to address them. In addition, he is happy to forward your survey via email to the students – please liaise with him in relation to the logistics etc.

Good luck with your research.

Kind regards

Professor Michael Kidd
School of Law
University of KwaZulu-Natal
Private Bag X01
Scottsville
3209
Tel: +27-33-2605382
<http://law.ukzn.ac.za/Homepage.aspx>
Skype: Michael.anthony.kidd

Appendix 5: Informed consent

Informed Consent Document

Dear Participant,

My name is Sizwe Richard Zulu. I am a Masters (Information Studies) candidate studying at the University of KwaZulu-Natal, Pietermaritzburg Campus. The title of my research is: **“Students’ expectations and perceptions of the services provided by the Law Library, Pietermaritzburg Campus, University of KwaZulu-Natal”**. The aim of this study is to determine final-year law students’ expectations and perceptions of the quality of services provided by the Law Library on the PMB Campus of the UKZN. In doing so it will determine the gap between users’ expectations and perceptions of the quality of the service as well as their satisfaction and level of satisfaction with the services. I would be grateful if you, as a final-year law student, could complete the questionnaire in order to share your perspectives on the subject. Your doing so will assist in identifying areas of the law library services which work, and those areas where improvements are needed.

Please note that:

- The information that you provide will be used for scholarly research only.
- Your participation is entirely voluntary. You have a choice to participate, not to participate or stop participating in the research at any time. You will not be penalized for taking such an action.
- Your views in this study will be presented anonymously. Neither your name nor identity is asked for or will be disclosed in any form in the study.
- Completing the questionnaire should take approximately 10 to 15 minutes.
- The questionnaire as well as other items associated with the study will be held in a password-protected file accessible only to myself and my supervisor. After a period of 5 years, in line with the rules of the university, they will be disposed of by deletion and, in the case of hardcopy, by shredding.
- If you agree to participate please sign the declaration attached to this statement.

I can be contacted at: School of Social Sciences, University of KwaZulu-Natal, Pietermaritzburg Campus, Scottsville, Pietermaritzburg.

Email: 200300279@stu.ukzn.ac.za or sizwesamazulu@gmail.com

Phone number: [REDACTED]

My supervisor is Athol Leach who is located at the School of Social Sciences, Pietermaritzburg Campus of the University of KwaZulu-Natal.

Contact details: email: atholleach@gmail.com [REDACTED].

The College of Humanities Research Ethics Officer is Phumelele Ximba who is located at the Humanities Research Ethics Office, University of KwaZulu-Natal.

Contact details: email: ximbap@ukzn.ac.za Phone number +27312603587.

Thank you for your contribution to this research.

DECLARATION

I..... (full names of participant) hereby confirm that I understand the contents of this document and the nature of the research project, and I consent to participating in the research project.

I understand that I am at liberty to withdraw from the project at any time, should I so desire. I understand the intention of the research. I hereby agree to participate.

SIGNATURE OF PARTICIPANT

DATE