

**ASSESSMENT OF THE QUALITY OF INTERNATIONAL COURT
LIBRARIES: A STUDY OF THE AFRICAN UNION COURT ON
HUMAN AND PEOPLES' RIGHTS LIBRARY**

By

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DECLARATION

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I, the undersigned, do hereby declare that the work contained in this PhD thesis entitled
*“Assessment of the quality of international court libraries: a study of the African
Union Court on Human and Peoples’ Rights Library”*

is my own. This thesis contains no material that has been submitted previously, in whole or part, for the award of academic degree or diploma. All the sources that I have used or quoted have been indicated and acknowledged by means of complete references. I further declare that I have not previously submitted this work, or part of it, for examination at University of South Africa (Unisa) for another qualification or at any other higher education institution.

Signed: Date:

DEDICATION

*To my loving wife Angeline and the kids
With love and affection*

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Caesar and Didier, we can now go swimming in the deep sea again.

Kimberly, we can now go for that soda.

ABSTRACT

The study sought to assess the quality of library services by investigating the gaps between various service quality variables using the LibQUAL, SERVQUAL and SERVPERF models. The pragmatic paradigm formed the basis of this study while the mixed methods approach was adopted. The convergent parallel mixed methods design where both quantitative and qualitative data collection methods and data were integrated was adopted. Using the side-by-side comparison style, both sets of data were separately analysed and presented. The results were then compared to establish if they confirm or disconfirm each other. Questionnaires were administered to 94 users of the library. To calculate the level of service quality, the study measured the service adequacy gap (SAG), service superiority gap (SSG), zone of tolerance (ZoT), and D-M scores. Follow-up focus group discussions (FGDs) were conducted to validate, supplement and further explore the issues that arose from data collected using the questionnaires.

The findings revealed a gap between the users' expectations and perceptions of service quality and that library services were not meeting users' expectations. The users' expectations exceeded their perceptions since all service quality scores (SAG, SSG, ZoT and D-M scores) were either low or negative. Generally, the library performed well in the dimensions that touch on human aspects of the library but did poorly in the aspects that touch on information collections, library space and equipment. There were no significant differences between the protocols, with the overall gaps between perceptions and desires being all negative. The findings of the FGDs confirmed those of the questionnaires.

The study recommended that the Court should allocate resources in a way that ensures human aspects of the library remain at high levels of service quality, while the shortcomings on aspects of information control, library space and equipment addressed. However, while addressing the physical space aspects, the library should bear in mind that users did not rate them as important for their purposes. This means that the library will need to invest in electronic content that can be accessed remotely by users. In view of the findings, the study concluded by developing a service quality framework on quality improvement and its sustenance at the library and the Court at large.

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KEY TERMS DESCRIBING THE TOPIC OF THE THESIS

Quality assessment; service quality; LibQUAL; SERVQUAL; SERVPERF; African Union; African Court; law libraries; international court libraries; Tanzania

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CHAPTER ONE: INTRODUCTION AND BACKGROUND TO THE STUDY

1.1 INTRODUCTION

Libraries exist to collect the record of human experience and to provide intellectual and physical access to that record. However, rapidly rising costs and demands for accountability by parent organisations, combined with a management philosophy that favours cost effectiveness, have forced librarians to re-examine not only their management style but also the delivery of their services (Christopher & Vanaja, 1995:35). Library services have seen a tremendous transformation over the last few decades. From storehouses of information materials in the 20th century, libraries are now powerhouses of knowledge and information, touching every sphere of human activity (Tukharia, 2009). In the past two decades, a plethora of challenges and opportunities for libraries and information centres has emerged. At the heart of this transformation has been the rapid advancement and deployment of information and communication technologies (ICT). Today, unlike in the past, electronic resources, remote databases, networks and the Internet are part of library services, giving libraries and librarianship a totally new facet. Cullen (2001) notes that the global digital revolution is affecting both the traditional forms of the creation, organization and dissemination of knowledge, and the world of education itself:

Retaining and growing their customer base, and focusing more energy on meeting their customers' expectations is the only way for libraries to survive in this volatile environment (Cullen, 2001:662-663).

The increasing complexity of libraries has demanded better management practices while society has been demanding more accountability from organisations, and especially those that are publicly funded (Altman & Pratt, 1997:48-49). Increased pressure from funding authorities and the increasing demands from users for quality services have

encouraged institutions, and thus their libraries, to move towards more quality-based assessments (Hawkins 1998:149). The outcomes of these assessments show how well an organization serves its users while demonstrating an institution's efficiency and effectiveness (Blixrud, 2002:1). Despite this changing nature of libraries and their users, one immutable aspect about librarianship is its commitment to information service delivery (Miller, 2008:2). The overall goal of librarians is to provide high-quality services to enable their parent organisations achieve their mission. Libraries are in competition with other institutions and sources of information, especially the Internet and Internet-driven information services. As a result, librarians are constantly striving to ensure that they provide the best services and resources possible to their users. To this end, a variety of approaches and methods have been designed and used in an attempt to assess the quality of library services and resources with the aim of making necessary improvements. They include both qualitative and quantitative methods.

1.2 CONCEPTUAL SETTING

It has been observed that in the 1990s, there was an increasing concern with the quality of customer service, in both private and public sectors (Calvert, 2008:149). Institutions became concerned about the quality of service provided to their customers and started to take action to improve it (Hernon & Altman, 1998:17). One of the key goals in any organizations is to attain the best quality in services for its clients. It is the key to making profits and retaining satisfied customers (Smith & Wheeler, 2002: 77). The same applies to libraries. Libraries need to keep their customers and funding bodies satisfied. If this does not happen, they stand to lose both the funding and the users, who will drift to competing sources of information (Woodward, 2009:157-159). Assessment of the quality of services in libraries has become an important aspect in the profession. Another motive behind the improvement of service quality is the expectation of higher income generation as a result of the improved service. As for the public sector, service quality comes from a demand on government for more diligent accountability and better service delivery to customers, who in this case are taxpayers and voters (Calvert, 2008:149).

According to Oloomi (2000), assessment is the only way to measure the performance and capability of a system and provide assurance that it is being used optimally. This is equally important to both the management and the users of the services. Oloomi further states that the main reason for assessing the performance of the library is to reach the optimal goal, which is to satisfy customers all the time and to enhance the efficiency and effectiveness of the library's operations (Oloomi, 2000).

The concept of service quality relates to customer expectations (Hernon, Nitecki & Altman, 1999). According to Parasuraman and Zeithaml (2002:47), quality service is the result of the consumer's comparison of expected service with perceived service. In the library profession, service quality is typically defined in terms of gap analysis, or the gap between customers' expectations in general (of an ideal library and its services) and those perceptions relating to the particular library and its services (Hernon & Whitman, 2001:15). Service quality evaluation in libraries is achieved by examining the difference between the users' expectations and their perception of actual performance of the library (Calvert, 2001:739).

According to Calvert and Hernon (1997:199), the focus of service quality is the interaction between customers and service providers. Quality library services therefore, means satisfying the query of each and every user accurately, exhaustively and expeditiously (Sharma, 2001:169). The ultimate purpose of the quality assessment of a service is to improve the outcomes or effectiveness of the library (Roemer & Montoya-Aguilar, 1988). Quality assessment highlights the accomplishments and successes of a programme, measured against certain standards or compared to other similar programmes. In addition, it may suggest the areas of weakness that may need to be addressed. The exercise of service evaluation has a number of other benefits. For instance, where the library personnel are usually involved in the evaluation, the experience increases their appreciation of the factors that affect and contribute to quality generally and specifically in their library work (Grigoroudis & Siskos, 2009:1-3).

The assessment of the quality of service provides an important feedback for libraries to assess and improve their services to users (Filiz, 2007:1). Like all service-oriented organisations, libraries and information centres should expect that the quality of their service will be evaluated. According to Oloomi (2000), the main reason for assessing the performance of the library is to reach the optimal goal of satisfying customers all the time and enhancing the efficiency and effectiveness of the library operations. The increasing expectations of customers for better services have motivated libraries to view quality management as an effective means of incorporating quality improvement into their related services (Hsieh, Chang & Lu, 2000:1). The concept of service quality is closely related to that of customer care (Kiran, 2010:261-273). Although the two concepts have certain things in common, customer care is generally viewed as a broader concept than quality, whereas service quality focuses specifically on dimensions of service (Zeithaml, Bitner & Gremler, 2006). Based on this view, perceived service quality is a component of customer care. A detailed literature review on assessing the quality of services, more particularly those in libraries is provided in chapter two.

1.3 CONTEXTUAL SETTING

This section provides a description of the context in which the current study is situated. It covers a description of international courts, their structure and purpose.

1.3.1 International courts

This study deals with quality assessment of library services in the context of the African Court on Human and Peoples' Rights, an international human rights court that was set up by the African Union. The term 'international court' refers to courts whose jurisdiction covers more than one country (Mackenzie & Shany, 2010:184). International courts are established by treaties between nations, such as the Rome Treaty that established the International Criminal Court (Murphy, 2006:68) and Protocol Number 11 of the European Convention on Human Rights that established the European Court of Human Rights. There are various types of international courts. They include those that deal with

specific aspects of law such as human rights, criminal matters, and arbitration. Currently, there are three international human rights courts. These are the European Court of Human Rights, the Inter-American Court of Human Rights and the African Court on Human and Peoples' Rights. Each of these courts has a library that is instrumental in its activities. The current study will be limited to the library of the African Court on Human and Peoples' Rights. The courts have two main sections, namely:

- a) The Court: This includes all the judges elected to hear and decide on cases and applications brought before the court. Judges sit in the Court in their individual capacity and do not represent any State. The court is headed by a President.
- b) Registry: The Registry is responsible for the non-judicial aspects of the administration and servicing of the Court. This includes the day-to-day running and management of the court, the administration of legal aid matters, victims and witnesses matters, defence counsel, detention unit (where applicable), and the traditional services provided by administrations in international organisations, such as library, communication, information and communication technologies, finance, translation, building management, procurement and personnel. The Registry is headed by a registrar.

The clients of the international courts depend on their (courts) jurisdiction. Generally, clients of international courts are the states and citizens of the member states that ratified the establishment of these courts (*Institute du Droit Internationale*, 1959:2; Janis, 1992:22). Any state or citizen of such a state can file a case before the court, having fulfilled all the requirements as stipulated by that particular court (Janis, 1992:22). Libraries of international courts serve two main types of clients. The primary clients are the judges of the court and staff of their registries. Then there are guest users, who include parties before the courts, researchers, staff of other organs of the parent body, government agencies, NGOs, students and other approved users.

1.3.2 African Union Court on Human and Peoples' Rights (African Court)

The African Union Court on Human and Peoples' Rights (African Court) is a continental judiciary court that rules on the African Union member states' compliance with the African Charter on Human and Peoples' Rights (African Union, 1998). The Court complements the protective mandate of the African Commission on Human and Peoples' Rights and has the competence to take final and binding decisions on human rights violations on the continent (African Court on Human and Peoples' Rights, 2011:2). The Court was established by virtue of Article 1 of the Protocol to the African Charter on Human and Peoples' Rights on the Establishment of an African Court on Human and Peoples' Rights (African Union, 1998:3). The Protocol was adopted on 9 June 1998 in Burkina Faso and came into force on 25 January, 2004 (African Court on Human and Peoples' Rights, 2011:2). The headquarters of the Court is in the city of Arusha, United Republic of Tanzania. The African Charter on Human and Peoples' Rights is the main African human rights instrument that sets out the rights and duties relating to human and peoples' rights in Africa. The Charter establishes the African Commission on Human and Peoples' Rights, often referred to as the Banjul Commission, a quasi-judicial body charged with monitoring the implementation of the Charter (African Court on Human and Peoples' Rights, 2011: 2). Like other international courts, the African Court has two main sections;

- i) **Court:** This is composed of eleven (11) judges, nationals of member States of the African Union, elected in their individual capacity. The judges are elected by the Assembly of Heads of State and Government of the African Union for a period of six (6) years, and may be re-elected only once. Election is based on geographical representation of the five regions of Africa; Eastern, Southern, Western, Northern and Central. The Court is headed by a President (African Court on Human and Peoples' Rights, 2011:3). The President and Vice-President are elected for a period of two years and may be re-elected only once (African Court on Human and Peoples' Rights, 2010:9). All judges, except the President,

perform their functions on a part-time basis, attending court sessions every March, June, September and December.

- ii) **Registry:** This is responsible for the day-to-day running and administration of the Court. Its purpose is to assist the Court in the exercise of its judicial functions. It comprises the Registrar, Deputy Registrar, and other administrative staff required for the effective exercise of its functions (African Court on Human and Peoples' Rights, 2010:19). These are divided into five units, Legal, Administration, Finance, Library and Documentation, Information and Communication, Protocol and Languages. Registry staff is recruited on a professionally competitive basis. Citizens of all member states of the African Union are eligible.

The Court is a multicultural organisation consisting of staff from all corners of the African continent. The official languages of the Court are the same as those of the African Union, namely English, French, Arabic and Portuguese. English and French are the working languages of the Court (African Court on Human and Peoples' Rights, 2010:15).

In its support and service to the African Court, which represents 53 member states, the library serves at the international level. Therefore, by definition, the library of the African Court is an international judiciary library (IFLA, 2007). Like all other departments of the Court, the library was started in 2008. It was established with the general purpose of supporting the judicial activities and legal endeavours of the members and staff of the court but also serves external clients. The library exists to provide appropriate library and information services to the African Court on Human and Peoples' Rights together with its registry. By nature, it is a specialised library focusing mainly on works on human and peoples' rights and its subsidiary subjects. The role of the library therefore, is:

- To collect, record, evaluate and provide access to information in the subject of human rights and related areas;
- To offer different types of services to the primary audience (the Court and the Registry) and so essentially support the work of these bodies. It is the advisory and research functions for literature arising from the Court's judicial and publishing activities which comprise the most important service (Binder & Butz, 2009:6).

The Court has no branches and neither does the library. Everything is based at the same location in Arusha, the United Republic of Tanzania. A detailed description of the library's resources and services that will be investigated in the current study is discussed in the methodology section (3.3.7).

1.4 RESEARCH PROBLEM

Recent developments indicate that because of economic strain in many parts of the world, the concept that libraries are systems consuming and deploying capital and recurrent resources that can be optimized has come to the realization of librarians and institutional managers (Altman & Pratt, 1997). These developments have forced library managers to rethink their general direction and particularly to think in economic terms. They have been forced to justify their estimates in detail and to allocate their resources with great care (Powell, 2006:104). Such developments include accountability demands by parent organizations, donors, and governments, among others, changing demands by users, proliferation of publications, birth of new disciplines, and restrictions on funding. Organisations have generally started to demand greater accountability from various sections that comprise the organization, especially those receiving public funding (Himmel & Wilson, 1998). Libraries can no longer take for granted that they will automatically be part of any organisation. The requirement to be accountable to funding agencies demands that performance measures be used to demonstrate success. Results from quality surveys are an objective way of demonstrating accountability.

There has also been an increase in digital and online resources as opposed to traditional resources in print. This has given rise to other competing sources and services that offer library-like resources and services such as the Internet and its various applications (Stoffle, Renaud & Veldof, 1996: 13-225). This development has made librarians realise that they must improve the quality of their services in order to survive (Cullen, 2001:668). A need to improve quality has meant that librarians will have to first measure it so as to inform their decision-making processing regarding the improvement of services. Traditionally, the quality of a library has been described in terms of its collection and measured by the size of the library's holding and various counts of its use (Nitecki, 1996:184). This has changed and hence the need to continuously assess the many factors that have come to be known as the determinants of quality service. For instance, the traditional library user has evolved. The user is more literate, with complex information needs, demands, behaviour and expectations. This has not only increased the demand for information but also the complexity of the type of information needed has increased significantly. Library users have started to question the quality of library services and the functioning of the service delivery system. They make greater and more complex demands on libraries and information centres (Biblarz, Bosch & Sugnet, 2001:5-6). The increasing expectations of users have challenged libraries to improve the quality of their services. Stiff competition for users and resources has also demanded the improvement of existing resources and the creation of more innovative services for user satisfaction (Biblarz, Bosch & Sugnet, 2001:5).

As a result of the above issues, libraries and information services have been forced to adopt quality assessment practices (Hsieh, 2000:2). Libraries and those who manage them are under pressure to evaluate their activities just like any other organisation, with a view to service improvement (Matthews, 2002; Rowley, 2005). According to Bawden, Petuchovaite, & Vilar (2005), the pressure to evaluate has become international.

International court libraries are no exemption, although they are unique. They are sustained by contributions from member countries. The African Court library receives public funding from the African Union through the member states' contributions. Like other organs of the African Union, the court has seen the gradual reduction of its budgets in the last three years. On 8 March 2011, for instance, the African Union chairperson issued memo number BC/B10/414.11, directing all the organs to implement austerity measures. To the best of the researcher's knowledge, no study has been done to assess the quality of the African Court library services, as perceived by its clients, since the inception of the African Court library in 2008. The current study is the first to examine the quality of the library services. After five years of operation, the researcher believes that the time is ripe for the library to assess the quality of its services.

1.4.1 Purpose of the study

The purpose of the study was to assess the quality of services offered by the African Court library through determining user satisfaction, experiences, perceptions and expectations of library services using the LibQUAL, SERVQUAL and SERVPERF models of service quality. The study is guided by and is carried out within the framework of service quality models.

1.4.2 Objectives of the study

The objectives of the study were to:

- 1) Establish the minimum expectations of library users using the LibQUAL, SERVQUAL and SERVPERF models;
- 2) Establish the desired level of expectations of library users across the three models;
- 3) Establish the perceived level of service across the three models;
- 4) Establish the service quality of library services by investigating the gaps between the various service quality variables across the three models;

- 5) Establish the attributes of service quality that meet, or do not meet, library user expectations across the three models;
- 6) Compare results across the three models and focus group discussions to establish points of convergence or non-convergence;
- 7) Make recommendations on how to address service quality in order to meet the expectations of the users in accordance with the findings of the study.

1.4.3 Research questions

The study sought to answer the research questions presented in Table 1.

Table 1: Summary of research objectives research questions and sources of data

Objective	Research question	Possible source of data
1. Establish the minimum level of expectations of library users using the LibQUAL	What are the minimum expectations of library users in LibQUAL?	LibQUAL questionnaire Focus group discussion
2. Establish the desired level of expectations of library users	What are the expectations of the users in LibQUAL SERVQUAL tools?	1. LibQUAL and SERVQUAL Questionnaires 2. Focus group discussions
3. Establish the perceived level of service across the three models	What is the actual level of service the users perceive to have received in LibQUAL, SERVQUAL, SERVPERF models?	LibQUAL, SERVQUAL, SERVPERF questionnaires
4. Establish the attributes of service quality that meet or do not meet library user expectations across the three models	1. Which attributes of service quality meet user expectations? 2. Which attributes of service quality do not meet user expectations?	LibQUAL and SERVQUAL questionnaires
5. Establish the service quality of library services by investigating the gaps between the various service quality variables across the three models	What are the existing gaps in service quality level in the library in LibQUAL and SERVQUAL and protocols?	LibQUAL and SERVQUAL questionnaires
6. Compare results across the three models to establish points of	1. How do the results from the protocols compare with each other?	1. LibQUAL, SERVQUAL and SERVPERF questionnaires

convergence or non-convergence	2. How do the results from the protocols compare with those from the focus group discussions?	2. Focus group discussions
7. Make recommendations on how to change service delivery in accordance with the member's needs	From the conclusions, what can the library do in order to improve the quality of its services?	Data interpretation and conclusions

1.5 LITERATURE REVIEW

A literature review is an evaluative report of studies found in the literature related to a selected area (Boote & Beile 2005:3-15). The review describes, summarizes, evaluates and clarifies this literature. Furthermore, it provides a theoretical basis for the study in hand and determines the nature of the research. It also provides a background for larger studies, and analyses and synthesizes information on key themes and subject areas (Green, Johnson & Adams, 2001:102-103). The literature review involves searching for information and includes the identification and articulation of relationships between the literature and the field of research. According to Boote and Beile (2005:3-15) the basic objectives of a literature review are:

- a) Provide a context for the research
- b) Justify the research
- c) Ensure the research has not been done before (or that it is not just a "replication study")
- d) Show where the research fits into the existing body of knowledge
- e) Enable the researcher to learn from previous theory on the subject
- f) Illustrate how the subject has been studied previously
- g) Highlight flaws in previous research
- h) Outline gaps in previous research
- i) Show that the work is adding to the understanding and knowledge of the field
- j) Help refine, refocus or even change the topic.

This study examined literature relevant to this study and presented different theoretical models that informed the study. The main focus areas for the literature review included literature that has been published on the subject of service quality, service quality assessments, and the LibQUAL, SERVQUAL and SERVPERF tools as applied in the assessment of library services. Literature was reviewed from journal articles, books, theses and website content as well as other researches relevant to the study. The literature was reviewed under the following sub-headings:

- a) Service quality
- b) Quality perspectives and dimensions
- c) Assessment of service quality
- d) Service quality assessment tools
- e) Challenges in measuring service quality
- f) Related studies.

A detailed review of the literature can be found in chapter three of this work.

1.6 THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK

Theoretical frameworks provide a particular perspective, or lens, through which to examine a topic. They provide the organization for the study and guide the researcher in the interpretations of the results. The importance of theory is dependent on the degree of research-based evidence and level of its theory development (Swanson, 2013). There are various models used to measure service quality that can be classified in two main groups, namely: traditional models (Grönroos model, Gaps model, SERVQUAL LibQUAL and SERVPERF) and models addressing new technologies (E-SERVQUAL, WEBQUAL and DigiQUAL).

This study uses LibQUAL, SERVQUAL and SERVPERF models of service quality. These models were derived from the original Gaps model as developed by Parasuraman, Zeithaml and Berry (1985: 41-50). The model provides the theoretical guidance for this study. According to Herson (2002), the model measures customer perceptions of service

quality by identifying differences or gaps, between customers' expectations and perceptions of service. The model views customer expectations as dependent on the customers' views of how important an aspect is for good-quality service. A detailed presentation of the theoretical framework and models can be found in chapter two of this work.

1.7 SIGNIFICANCE AND JUSTIFICATION OF THE STUDY

Court libraries, and especially international court libraries, are relatively young in Africa and it is therefore important to assess their effectiveness in service delivery – to what extent they have met, or continue to meet, user expectations in the region. This would set a precedent to ensure that quality is continuously at the centre of their operations, thus benefiting both users and funding organisations as well as the general public. Since independence, the African continent has faced many gross abuses of human rights. The mission of the African Court is to address these abuses, by seeking justice, arbitration and promoting human rights in Africa. Like all international courts, the African Court relies on relevant information to deliver justice, and the onus of providing that information lies with the library. The findings of the study will therefore assist the African Court in meeting its objectives of ensuring and promoting human rights in Africa.

Measuring service quality is a trend that is gradually proving its importance in the field of library and information science. This study contributes to the growing body of knowledge on service quality measures in court libraries. The ultimate purpose of any quality assessment of a service is to improve its outcomes or effectiveness. Quality assessment will not only show the accomplishments of a programme, in relation to a set standard, or in comparison with equivalent programmes, but it will also suggest areas of difficulty. Corrective action or effort can then be focused on these areas (Roemer & Montoya, 1988). It is important for libraries to know how well they are performing by getting feedback from their users, a process that may determine their success or failure (Calvert, 2008:3). The study will therefore help to identify strengths and weaknesses of

the African Court library and provide information that will be used to improve the library service quality. In so doing the library will be in a stronger position to offer better quality services and assist the court in attaining its objectives of promoting and protecting human rights in Africa.

The library's vision is to be a centre of excellence in human rights on the African continent. The findings of the research should provide a solid basis for this by indicating the areas that need to be addressed in order to improve the quality of library services. Moreover, the study will be a model for the evaluation of other international court libraries and it is hoped that it will awaken a culture of library service assessment among international court libraries, and generally among other libraries in Tanzania. The library and the Court are organs of the African Union, which is funded by the 54 member states. The Library also has partners who fund it in various ways such as *Gesellschaft für Internationale Zusammenarbeit* (GIZ), United Nations Development Programme (UNDP), MacArthur Foundation and the European Union. The study will be an opportunity for these stakeholders to assess the quality of their inputs to the library and also to point out areas that need improvement. In addition, the research will also be a clear demonstration to these stakeholders that the library is committed to quality by continually looking for ways to increase efficiency and effectiveness in helping the Court meet its objectives.

1.8 ORIGINALITY OF THE STUDY

One of the key goals of research is to add to the existing body of knowledge (Bryman, 2012:5). To meet this criterion, the research must possess a degree of novelty (Corbin & Strauss, 2007:18). This novelty is called 'originality'. Originality is an important, essential, and widely stated requirement for research at all levels (Cryer, 2000:192). Analogies are a useful way to appreciate the scope of originality of research. According to Cryer (2000), originality can take different formats. These include originality in tools, techniques and procedures, originality in exploring the unknown, originality of the data

and in the capacity of the results to be published in a scholarly journal, among others. This research claims originality in various forms:

- Originality in exploring the unknown: This is the first quality assessment study to be done in the African Court library.
- Originality in tools and techniques and procedures: It is also the first to use the LibQUAL, SERVQUAL, and SERVPERF models in the context of the Court library.
- Originality in potential *publishability*: The researcher plans to derive a number of scholarly papers to be presented at library and information conferences, based on this research.
- African Court library services: It is also the first study to use LibQUAL, SERVQUAL, and SERVPREF protocols to assess the quality of the African Court library services.

The study is based on empirical work that has not been carried out before in international court libraries. It achieves originality by combining the use of three tools that have not been applied before in a single research, and especially on an international Court library (i.e. LibQUAL, SERVQUAL and SERVPREF), while using existing literature to assess the quality of international court libraries.

The study is informed by previous studies that focused on quality service and assessment of libraries. These include, but are not limited to, Jayasundara et al. (2009), Jayasundara (2009), Walters (2006), Hossain and Islam (2012), and Manaf and Rahman (2006). The findings of the study contribute knowledge to the field of library and information science in that it assesses the quality service of international court libraries; a study which has not been conducted before.

The study also claims originality through the use of triangulation in its data collection methods. Triangulation is a powerful technique that facilitates validation of data through

cross-verification from two or more sources (Rothbauer, 2008:892-894). The purpose of triangulation in qualitative research is to increase the credibility and validity of the results (Bogdan & Biklen, 2006). The triangulated methods are questionnaires, interviews, and focus groups. In addition, the study has triangulated the following three quality assessment tools in order to compare the results: LIBQUAL, SERVQUAL and SERVPREF. Through triangulation, data is collected and compared using different strategies, approaches and methods in a way that results in complementary strengths (Neuman, 2006:149-150). The study also reviewed several relevant published sources from other countries in order to draw lessons, which may be relevant to the situation at the African Court.

1.9 RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

This study is within the pragmatic approach. This paradigm allows for application of a practical approach by integrating different perspectives in the collection and interpretation of data. It allows for combination of more than one perspective in the research process. The study uses the mixed methods approach (MMR) as informed by its various advantages (Creswell, 2014: 4). First, the combinations used enable confirmation or corroboration of each other. Second, combinations enable or develop analysis in order to provide richer data. Third, combinations are used to initiate new modes of thinking by attending to paradoxes that emerge from the two data sources. It also overcomes and addresses the deficiencies of each of the single methods (Leech & Onwuegbuzie, 2009:273).

The study adopted the mixed methods design as outlined by Creswell (2014:14). According to Creswell, mixed methods design involves combining or integrating quantitative and qualitative designs and data in a single research study. Creswell (2003: 238) states that with the development and perceived legitimacy of both qualitative and quantitative research in the social sciences, MMR, employing data collection associated with both forms of data, is expanding and widely used. It brings together a convergence

of more than one research design, mostly qualitative and quantitative designs in a single research study (Creswell, 2014: 17; Leech & Onwuegbuzie, 2009:273). According to Creswell (2014:24), mixed methods design is useful to capture the best of both quantitative and qualitative approaches.

Creswell (2014:18-19) outlines four key types of mixed method designs. These are convergent parallel, explanatory sequential, exploratory sequential, transformative, and embedded mixed methods. This study used the convergent parallel type where the researcher converges or merges quantitative and qualitative data in order to provide a comprehensive analysis of the research problem (Creswell, 2014: 15). The researcher collected both forms of data (quantitative and qualitative) during the data collection stage and then integrated both in the interpretation of the overall results. Quantitative data was collected using questionnaires while qualitative data was collected using FGDs. The two sets of data were then separately analysed and the results compared to establish if they confirm or disconfirm each other.

The mixed methods design has been shown to provide comprehensiveness of overall findings, and breadth and depth of the investigation (Chow, Quine & Li, 2010: 491-8; Creswell, 2003: 210). Both qualitative and quantitative data were collected from all categories of users. Questionnaires were used to collect quantitative data and interviews to obtain qualitative data.

The data collection tools used were questionnaires based on LibQUAL, SERVQUAL, and SERVPERF service quality assessment tools. These were used to collect quantitative data, while FGDs were used to collect qualitative data. The questionnaire was used as the main data collection method, supported by FGDs. In terms of the population, the current study targeted users of the African Court library (both internal and external). The study also included other stakeholders, such as funding organisations and development partners.

Data was analysed using the side-by-side comparison style. First, both sets of data were analysed separately. The researcher first analysed and presented the quantitative statistical results from the LibQUAL, SERVQUAL and SERVPERF questionnaires. After that the qualitative findings from the FGDs were analysed and presented. Data gathered from questionnaires was tabulated and presented using descriptive statistics. Quantitative data was tabulated and presented using descriptive statistics and analysed using quantitative analysis methods while the qualitative data was analysed thematically and presented in a narrative manner. The two sets of data were then compared side-by-side. Findings from the analysis of each set of data are also presented separately. A detailed presentation of the methodology can be found in chapter four of this work.

1.10 SCOPE AND LIMITATIONS OF THE STUDY

The scope of a study refers to the parameters under which the study will be operating (Calmorin, 2007:37; Kothari, 2004). It is a general outline of what the study will cover (Calmorin, 2007:38) and implies what the researcher expects to achieve by the study. It is the problem the study seeks to resolve, and which will fit within certain parameters (Wiersma, 2000). It defines the boundaries and domain of the study and sets the parameters of the research undertaken (Jayasundara, 2009:31).

Limitations are matters and occurrences that arise in a study which are out of the researcher's control (Kothari, 2004). They limit the extent to which a study can go, and sometimes affect the end result and conclusions that can be drawn (Wiersma, 2000). Limitations can easily be understood as the various aspects of something that cannot be achieved and are inevitable in most research studies. They need to be identified and explained at the start of the research (Pickard, 2007: 55). They include among others challenges anticipated in the research, such as time and financial constraints that influenced the scope of the study and data inaccessibility among others (Kombo & Tromp, 2006:49).

This study was based on the African Court on Human and Peoples' Rights library in Arusha, United Republic of Tanzania. The study covered both internal and external users of the library. The external users posed a small challenge since they do not work for the Court and come from far and wide. This challenge was addressed by distributing questionnaires to them as they came to use the library. The exercise was carried out throughout the period of the research. It was feared that the fact that participants were informed that they would be taking part in a research project might affect their responses. However, the fact that most of the respondents are known to the researcher put them at ease and made them state their responses factually and confidently. The findings of the study can to some extent be informative of the other libraries of the African Union, and hold potential to be generalized to other international courts dealing with human rights, such as the European Court of Human Rights and the Inter-American Court of Human Rights.

1.11 ORGANISATION OF THE THESIS

The thesis is divided into six chapters as follows:

Chapter one provides a statement of the topic under study and provides the general context for the research by providing a general direction of the aims and objectives. It justifies the need for this research and describes the structure of the thesis. It includes background to the study; conceptual and contextual setting; statement of the problem; research questions; the purpose and significance of the study; its originality; scope and limitations; ethical issues and an outline of the thesis.

Chapter two presents the theoretical framework on which the study is based, including in-depth discussion of models relevant to the study.

Chapter three presents a critical review of the literature related to the study, including relevant previous studies in the research field. It shows knowledge build-up in the area

being studied and presents the achievements and limitations of previous studies. It also describes the theoretical framework and theories used in the study.

Chapter four describes the methodology adopted for the study, including the research approach, research methods and instruments, population, the sampling techniques applied, data collection methods, data presentation and analysis methods.

In Chapter five, the data is presented in view of the objectives and questions of the research.

Chapter six comprises the discussion and interpretation of the findings according to the objectives.

Chapter seven presents a summary of the study findings, conclusions and recommendations, and proposes a strategic framework for service quality in the Court and library.

1.12 DEFINITION OF TERMS

The following are the definitions of key terms as applied in this study:

Quality: This is the merit or excellence of something. It is the standard of something as measured against other things of a similar kind. In this study quality is the ability of the library to meet the needs of the users (Yu et al., 2008:521).

Quality assessment: This is a study into the excellence of a particular subject. In this study, it is applied as a defined system for evaluating the expectations of library users in terms of the quality of services (Calvert, 2008:1-2).

Service: A service is an intangible commodity. It is the intangible equivalent of goods. Library services are largely intangible (Muhammad & Alhamadani, 2011:61).

Service quality: This is merit or excellence of a service. It is the result of the consumer's comparison of expected service with perceived service. In this study, it represents a comparison between the expectations of library users and the actual services received (Muhammad & Alhamadani, 2011:61).

Customer/client: In this study, the term is used to represent the client or user of library services.

LibQUAL (library quality): It is a quality assessment instrument that libraries use to solicit, track, understand, and act upon users' opinions of service quality (Association of Research Libraries, 2010).

SERVQUAL: This is a quality management framework developed in the mid-1980s by Parasuraman, Zeithaml, and Berry (1988) to measure quality in the service sector.

SERVPERF: This is the performance component of the service quality scale (SERVQUAL), used to measure five underlying dimensions, corresponding to tangibles, reliability, responsiveness, assurance and empathy (Parasuraman et al., 1988).

1.13 SUMMARY OF THE CHAPTER

Chapter one has introduced the key research problem. It introduced and presented the general background and presented the contextual and conceptual setting of the study, the statement of the problem, objectives of the study and research questions. Furthermore, this chapter briefly introduced the theoretical framework of the study and discussed issues related to the significance and originality of the study. A brief outline of the methodology used and ethical issues have also been covered. What is covered in this chapter is therefore an overview of the context of the current study, which then leads to the next chapter, the theoretical framework used in the study.

CHAPTER TWO: THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK

2.1 INTRODUCTION

The previous chapter gave the introduction and background to the study. This chapter presents the theoretical framework used in the study. The chapter explains the models used in service quality, tracing their developmental stages, and analysing their strengths and weaknesses. It also discusses the guiding contextual and structural concepts of each. It goes on to discuss theoretical issues related to service quality.

2.2 CONCEPT OF THEORY

Theory is a set of rules and statements of inference, an architecture of ideas and interrelated concepts whose contemplation and application provides a model of the way that discourse and social systems work and can be worked upon (Anyon, 2009:3). It is the body of generalisations and principles developed in association with practice in a field of activity (such as medicine, music, etc.), and forming its content as an intellectual discipline. In short, it is a description or explanation of the nature of things (Punch, 2009:33). Therefore, to develop a theory is to develop a view, a description or a way of looking at things. To talk of a better theory is to talk of a better view or description. From this, it can be seen that theory is that department of a subject, which consists in the knowledge, or statement of the facts on which it depends, or its principles or methods, as distinguished from the practice of it (Silipigny & Powell, 2010:48). Consequently, it follows that a good description or way of looking at things not only depicts something but also explains and fosters understanding of it. According to Kombo & Kisilu (2010), theory is a reasoned statement or groups of statements, which are supported by evidence, meant to explain phenomena and relationships among phenomena (2010:56). Theory-building is important because it provides a framework for analysis, facilitates the efficient development of the field, and is needed for the applicability to practical real world problems (Wacker, 1998:361). Theories may be expressed and represented in written and graphical form. A good theory is one that matches well our perception of

what a theory is. The goodness of theory, therefore, is a matter of closeness of match between the mental construct and the perception of whatever the theory is about (McClure & Herson, 2001:86-87). A theory is useful in so far as it serves to assist and to guide the development of further understanding (whether called theory or not) of practical activities (Herbst, 2004:5). Research helps in the development of theory. Developing better ways to do something is also likely to increase one's understanding of whatever it is, to develop better theory (Tayie, 2005: 87).

2.3 THEORETICAL FRAMEWORKS ON ASSESSING QUALITY OF SERVICE IN LIBRARIES

A theoretical framework is defined as a collection of interrelated concepts that are designed to guide a researcher in determining the concepts that will be measured in a research study and the relationships to look for (Borgatti, 1999). According to Kombo and Kisilu (2010), a theoretical framework is a collection of interrelated ideas based on theories, a reasoned set of propositions which are derived from and supported by data or evidence (Kombo & Kisilu, 2010:56). It is similar to, but not as well defined as, 'theory'. The term theoretical framework is often used interchangeably with the term theory. It attempts to explain why things are the way they are, based on theories. As such it can be seen as a representation of reality, delineating those aspects of the real world considered by the research as relevant to the problem under investigation. It enables the researcher to formulate empirically testable propositions by bringing out the relationships among those aspects (Frankfort-Nachmias & Nachmias, 1996:44).

A theoretical framework is a guide for research. It determines the variables to measure, and the statistical relationships that researchers should look for. According to Trochim (2006), there are two facets involved in research, these are theory and observation. Theory subsists in the minds of scientists while observation happens in the real world. This includes measures and observations. Any research involves a constant interaction between these two facets. All aspects of research are guided by theory, right from the

formulation stage of the research question to the operationalization and discussion stages.

The theoretical framework of this study was guided by the following models of service quality:

- a) Traditional models: Grönroos model, Gaps model, SERVQUAL and SERVPERF;
- b) Models addressing new technologies: E-SERVQUAL, WEBQUAL and DigiQUAL.

These, and others that are considered relevant to this study, are discussed and analysed in the following section.

2.4 SERVICE QUALITY MODELS AND TOOLS TO EVALUATE/MEASURE THE QUALITY OF LIBRARY SERVICES

This section describes the existing models used in the evaluation of library services. Even though early quality models focused primarily on goods, the exponential growth of the service sector has resulted in a fast-growing body of literature on service quality (Jayasundara et al., 2009:179). With the growth of ICT, models have also been developed to address services offered electronically and through the Internet. The models can therefore be divided into two types. These are:

- a) Traditional models
 - i) Models based on the disconfirmation conceptualisation
 - ii) Models based on the performance-only conceptualisation
- b) Models that address new technologies.

2.4.1 Traditional models

Service quality models have been developed, adapted and designed by many scholars. Each development has been a move to define, refine and improve the dimensions of

service quality structure or to correct the inadequate attention paid to customers' expectations, perceptions, and satisfaction in previous models (Chaipooipirutana, 2008). There are two main conceptualizations of service quality. The first is based on the disconfirmation approach (Grönroos, 1984; Parasuraman et al., 1985, 1988) and the other on the performance-only approach (Cronin & Taylor, 1992). Under the disconfirmation approach fall the Grönroos model, Gaps model, LibQUAL, SERVQUAL and SERVPERF. Grönroos developed the original service quality model known by his name in 1982 (Green, 2006). However, according to Chaipooipirutana (2008), the most popular service quality models are SERVQUAL and SERVPERF. The two consist of a scale to measure five dimensions. A key shortcoming in both models is that they have not been definitively developed or adapted to fit all types of service industries. This has led to various researchers to test and adapt the models to fit their particular service sectors (Chaipooipirutana, 2008). This has in turn led to the development of other models as analysed in the following sections.

2.4.1.1 Models based on the disconfirmation conceptualisation

2.4.1.1.1 Grönroos model

Also known as the technical and functional quality model, this model is termed the original and first service quality model (Chaipooipirutana, 2008). Christiaan Grönroos is quoted as being the first author to contribute a service quality conceptual framework (Green, 2006). He developed the model in 1982, developing it further in 1983 and 1984. In developing the model, he applied the customer satisfaction/dissatisfaction approach to explain service quality. Gronroos (1984) proposed that customers compared their expectations to their experience of service quality in forming judgments. He defined service quality as:

... the perceived quality of a given service will be the outcome of an evaluation process, where the consumer compares his expectations with the service he perceives he has received, i.e. he puts the perceived service

against the expected service. The result of this process will be the perceived quality of the service (Grönroos, 1984:37).

The model defined the concept of perceived service quality as the outcome of an evaluation process, where the consumer compares his expectations with the service he perceives he has received (Zain & Othman, 2011). In order to compete successfully, a company must have an understanding of consumer perception of quality and the way service quality is influenced (Grönroos, 1990). To manage perceived service quality, the service provider has to match the expected service and perceived service in order to ensure that consumer satisfaction is achieved (Seth, Deshmukh & Vrat, 2005:915-916).

According to the model, total perceived service quality is the outcome of an evaluation process where the customer compares context-specific expectations of quality with the experienced quality (Rahman, Khan & Haque, 2012). Grönroos (1984) points out that the expectations of quality are not based on the whole class of service firms but are context specific to the service provider under consideration. Service is influenced by both the marketing strategies and activities of the service provider and also by external influences. Such influences include verbal word-of-mouth, corporate image and customer needs (Grönroos, 1984:36–44).

According to Grönroos (1982, 1990) and Lehtinen and Lehtinen (1982), there are three components of service quality: technical quality, functional quality, and image (Figure 2.1):

- a) **Technical quality:** This focuses on the outcome of the service, or what the customers received from their interactions with service providers to satisfy their needs. Service outcome and service delivery processes are both recognised as forming part of the experienced quality. Production and consumption of services are deemed inseparable and as such, the outcome of this production process is

that which consumers receive as the result of interaction with the service provider. This is important to them and to their evaluation of the quality of service. Grönroos expresses this outcome in the technical quality of the service, which can be assessed by the customer like the technical dimensions of a product. Other studies by Rust and Oliver (1994) have also shown that technical quality significantly affects customers' experience of service quality.

- b) **Functional quality:** Technical quality alone cannot account for the quality as perceived by customers. This is because services are produced in interaction between the consumer and the service provider. The outcome of a service process is not the only point of interest for customers. They are also interested in how the service is provided, which is the functional quality of the service. Functional quality is a process-related dimension representing the process which evaluates the manner of delivery of the service. It is a definition of customers' perceptions of the interactions during service delivery (Grönroos, 1984). This can be interpreted as the way in which they receive the technical outcome and it is important to them and to their views of the service they have received. Thus the model has been applied and adopted to measure consumer perceptions of service quality in different industries.

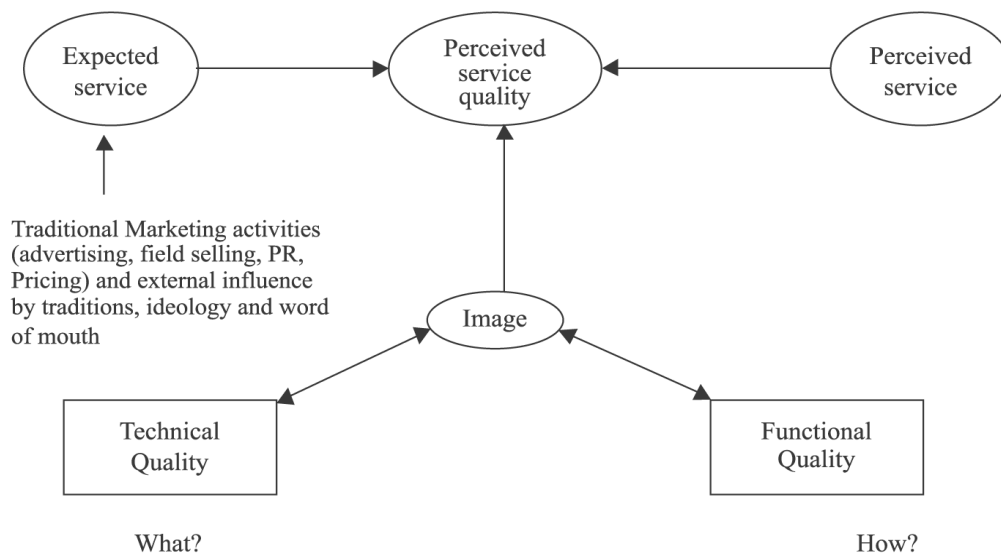
- c) **Image of the service provider:** This acts as a moderator for both the technical and the functional quality in order to arrive at a perceived level of service. The public image of a company appears in both sides of the total perceived quality equation because it is also considered to moderate quality expectations. According to Grönroos (1984), technical quality and functional quality are interrelated, but to customers, functional quality is more important to the quality of the service than the other factors. In addition, the performance of staff in direct contact with customers plays an important role in compensating for lower technical quality (Grönroos, 1984). Image can be expected to build up mainly

through the technical and functional quality of services including other factors such as corporate tradition, policies, word of mouth, pricing and public relations (Seth & Deshmukh, 915-916).

For Grönroos, corporate image is the dimension that moderates perceived and expected quality. The inclusion of corporate image indicates a higher-order construct, which is evident in later research.

According to Grönroos-

...if the image of the firm is good in the mind of a given customer, problems with the outcome, or the process, which this customer may have, are likely to some extent to be excused by the image perception. If the problems continue to occur, the image will eventually suffer. If the image is negative, quality problems are more likely to be perceived as worse than they in reality are (Gronroos, 1993:52).



Source: Grönroos (1984)

Figure 2.1: Grönroos model of service quality

The author is known for his consistency in defining service quality as an exchange process in which technical dimension is what is received by the customer, functional quality is how the service is provided, and image dimension is how the customer perceives the service provider (Akhtar, 2011:2). Gronroos (1988) went ahead to derive six dimensions (criteria) for experienced service quality. These are close to those of SERVQUAL:

- a) Professionalism/skills: ability to solve customer problems in a professional way;
- b) Attitudes and behaviour: extent and dedication by service providers in solving problems in an amicable way;
- c) Accessibility and flexibility: ease of access and adjustability to customer demands;
- d) Reliability and trustworthiness: ability of the system to keep promises and perform in the best interest of customers;
- e) Recovery: taking appropriate and fast action to keep customers happy and satisfied whenever things go awry or when unpredictable events happen;
- f) Reputation and credibility: having trustworthy operations that give good value for money.

The above five dimension were derived from other available studies and were not empirically tested by Grönroos (Akhtar, 2011). Further refinements and adaptations on this model were done by various scholars including Rahman, Khan and Haque (2012), Lehtinen and Lehtinen (1991), and Kang and James (2004). The model has limitations in that it does not offer any techniques in measuring technical and functional quality, thus making it too general (Ghotbabadi, Baharun, & Feiz, 2012).

2.4.1.1.2 Gaps model

The Gap model of service quality was developed by Parasuraman et al. (1985), and more recently described in Zeithaml and Bitner (2003). It has served as a framework for research in the services sector over the years. The model was an improvement of

Grönroos' model of service quality and was developed as an attempt to address the shortcomings of that model. The key shortcoming of the Grönroos model was that the outcomes of the technical and functional quality may not be sufficient to identify what is perceived by the customer. This is because a combination of technical quality and functional quality comprise the construct of image (Chaipooirutana, 2008).

Parasuraman et al. (1985) expanded on Grönroos' work and developed the concept of expectation and perception of service quality, thereby creating the Gaps model of service quality. In defining the Gaps model, Parasuraman et al. (1985) focussed on the discrepancy between customers' expectation and perception. The original model comprised 10 dimensions of service quality, namely: tangible, reliability, responsiveness, competence, access, courtesy, communication, credibility, security and understanding/knowing the customer (Parasuraman et al., 1988: 17).

According to Herson (2002), the model measures customer perceptions of service quality by identifying differences, or gaps, between customers' expectations and perceptions of service. Customers compare the service they experience with what they expect and when it does not match expectations, a gap arises. The model identifies four specific gaps leading to a fifth overall gap between customers' expectations and perceived service. According to the model, customer expectations are dependent on the customers' views of how important an aspect is for a good quality service. Parasuraman (1985) proposed that service quality is a function of the differences between expectation and performance along the quality dimensions. It defines service quality as a function of the gap between customers' expectations of a service and their perceptions of the performance of actual service delivery by an organisation (Jayasundara et al., 2009:182). They further argue that customer expectations are not static; they are based on user experiences, which change over time. In studies based on the Gaps model, users are requested to describe three aspects:

- a) Minimum acceptable level of service

- b) Desired level of service
- c) Perceptions of the service provided.

In analysing the differences (gaps) between the perceived levels of performance and the expectations (desires) of customers, areas that need improvement will emerge (Parasuraman et al. 1985). The basis of the Gaps model is service quality, as opposed to product quality (Parasuraman et al., 1985). According to the model, customers have expectations prior to using a service. These expectations provide a barometer against which customers' experiences can be compared (Hernon, 2002:225). They form a basis against which to measure actual performance. Therefore, customer expectations become subjective judgments based on how far the customers believe a particular attribute is important for an excellent service (Hernon, 2002:227). According to the model (Seth & Deshmukh, 2004:916-917), the gaps that exist are described here.

Gap 1: Customer expectations of service and management's perspective on these expectations

This is the difference between the real expectations of the customer and what the management perceives as their expectations. This is a situation where the management is not aware of the customers' expectations. Service providers may lack an understanding of what features a service needs in order to meet the needs of consumers. They may also fail to understand what performance levels on those features are needed to deliver a high quality service. This in turn affects consumers' evaluation of quality service. It may be caused by inadequate research or lack of market research all together, poor upward communication or failure to have strong relationships with the customers. It is also known as the knowledge gap (Yarimoglu, 2014:82).

Gap 2: Specifications of service quality and management's perspective of customer expectations

This gap arises where companies identify the needs of consumers, but they lack the means to deliver to expectations. This gap could be a result of various factors such as resource constraints, poor service design, lack of customer-driven standards, market conditions and management indifference, and so on, resulting in a complete mismatch between services on offer and what customers expect. It is also known as the policy gap (Yarimoglu, 2014:82). It could affect service quality perception of the consumer.

Gap 3: Service quality specifications and service actually delivered (service performance gap)

Even though service providers could have guidelines for service performance, these do not automatically translate into high-service quality performance. Employees are vital in assuring good service quality perception and it may not be easy to standardise their performance. Thus this gap may be caused by failure to adhere to set service designs and standards, failure to match supply and demand, human resource deficiencies, and customers who do not fulfil their roles. It may also be caused by service intermediaries, where they exist. It is also known as the delivery gap (Yarimoglu, 2014:82).

Gap 4: Service delivery and external communication to customers about that delivery (i.e. whether promises match delivery)

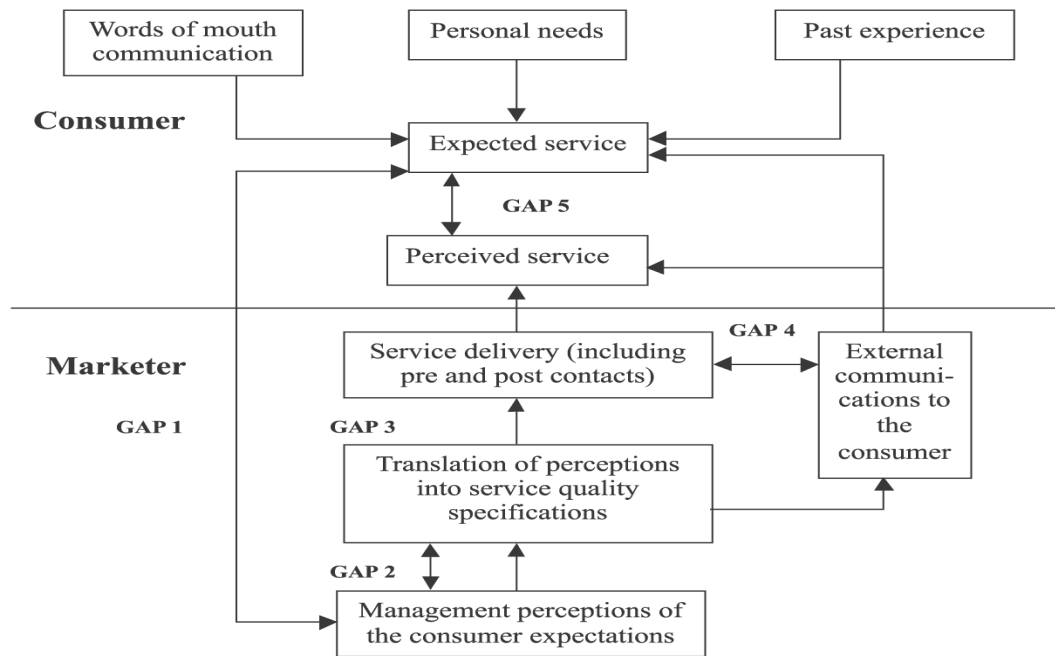
This is the failure to match performances to the promises that were given by the organisation. It happens when companies fail to inform customers of special efforts to assure quality that are not obvious or apparent to them. The causes include making big promises that cannot be met, poor horizontal communication, and poor management of customer expectations. It is also known as the communications gap (Yarimoglu, 2014:82). This can influence consumers' service quality perceptions. External communications affect both consumer expectations of service and consumer perceptions of the delivered service.

Gap 5: Customers' expectation of service and perceived service delivery

This gap depends on size and direction of the four gaps associated with the delivery of service quality on the marketer's side. The key to ensuring good service quality is meeting or exceeding consumers' expectations of the service. Secondly, judgment of service quality (high or low) depends on consumers' perception of the actual performance in the context of what they expected. It is also known as the service quality gap (Yarimoglu, 2014:82).

Gaps 1 to 4 contribute to the development of Gap 5, which is the difference between what customers expect to receive from the service, and what they believe they actually received. Customers' perceptions are influenced by many sources, which include word-of-mouth communications, personal needs, past experiences, and communications from the service organisation. This is the most important gap because if the perceived service falls short of the customers' expectations, they will become disappointed and dissatisfied. The model is also process-oriented because it identifies the gaps that may arise in various parts of the service process, which eventually affect the difference between the customers' expected and perceived quality.

According to the model, there are five key discrepancies (or gaps) that relate to managerial perceptions of service quality, and tasks associated with service delivery to customers. Gaps 1, 2, 3, and 4 are identified as functions of service delivery. Gap 5 relates to the customer; therefore, it is considered to be the real measure of service quality.



Source: Parasuraman *et al.* (1985)

Fig 2.2: Gaps model of service quality

The Gaps model is one of the best received and most heuristically valuable contributions to the services literature (Brown & Bond, 1995). It has been used by many researchers and has had a major impact on business and academic fields (Buttle, 1996). It is said to be insightful and remains a practical framework to be used in service evaluation (Christopher, Payne & Ballantyne, 2002). From the Gaps model other models and quality assessment instruments have been developed. The key ones include SERVQUAL, LibQUAL and SERVPERF.

2.4.1.1.3 SERVQUAL

SERVQUAL was as a result of further refinement and development of the GAP model by Parasuraman *et al.* (1988). Based on the disconfirmation paradigm of the Gap model, it was developed to measure customers' perceptions of service quality (Buttle, 1996; Parasuraman *et al.*, 1988). This concentrates on the same five gaps for measuring service quality and customer satisfaction as in the Gap model.

In developing SERVQUAL, Parasuraman et al. (1988) reduced the 10 dimensions of service quality in the Gaps model to five. These are *reliability*, *assurance*, *tangibles*, *empathy* and *responsiveness* (acronym RATER) (Parasuraman et al., 1988: 17). The SERVQUAL instrument confirmed Parasuraman et al.'s (1988) conceptual model of the Gaps model of service quality. The model is therefore founded on a set of four gaps with Gap 5 showing the discrepancy between consumers' expectation and perception.

The five dimensions are depicted by 22 attributes. *Assurance* captured communication, competence, credibility, courtesy and security. *Empathy* captured access and understanding the customers. Each item in the SERVQUAL instrument is of two types, one for measuring expectations about firms in general within an industry and the other to measure perceptions regarding the particular company whose service is being assessed (Mohd, Ghaswyneh, & Albkour, 2013:7).

The SERVQUAL instrument is divided into two sections. The first is created with the purpose of identifying the perceptions of customers regarding the performance of the 22 attributes, and the other for identifying the expectations of customers of the same attributes. According to Chen, Chang and Lai (2009), the questionnaire was developed through comprehensive empirical psychometric testing and trials. This made it applicable across a broad range of service industries, including library and information centres (Parasuraman et al., 1988). The generic nature of the model makes it applicable in the context of any service organization to measure service quality. All a researcher has to do is to modify its domain structure to fit the specific characteristics of any particular service setting.

The SERVQUAL model works by calculating the difference between the perception of the performance and the expectation scores for each of the 22 attributes/domains in the instrument (Parasuraman et al., 1988:23). If the gap between the expectations and perceptions of the performance is small, it is an indicator that a service is being

perceived as being higher in quality (Jayasundara, 2009:65). Negative gap scores are an indicator of weaknesses in a particular attribute or domain, but positive gap scores show that the company has managed to fulfil or exceed customer needs equivalent to expectations. Therefore, negative gap scores mean customer dissatisfaction; on the other hand, positive gap scores mean customer satisfaction regarding the service quality attributes or domains.

Therefore the SERVQUAL questionnaire measures customer expectations of service quality in terms of the five factors, and their perceptions of received service. Service quality is considered low when customer expectations are greater than their perceptions of received delivery. Thus calculating quality (Q), involves subtracting expectation (E) from the perception (P) value; thus $P - E = Q$. A summation of all the Q values provides an overall quality rating which is an indicator of relative importance of the service quality dimensions that influence customer's overall quality perceptions (Mohd et al, 2013:67). According to Parasuraman et al. (1985), SERVQUAL may be used to

- a) track service quality trends over time;
- b) compare branches within a bank or building society;
- c) compare an organization with its competitors; and
- d) categorise customers into perceived quality segments.

Definition of SERVQUAL dimensions

Table 2.4: Definition of SERVQUAL dimensions

Reliability	Ability to perform the promised service dependably and accurately
Assurance	Knowledge and courtesy of employees and their ability to convey trust and confidence
Tangibles	Appearance of physical facilities, equipment, personnel and communication materials
Empathy	Provision of caring, individualized attention to customers
Responsiveness	Willingness to help customers and to provide prompt service

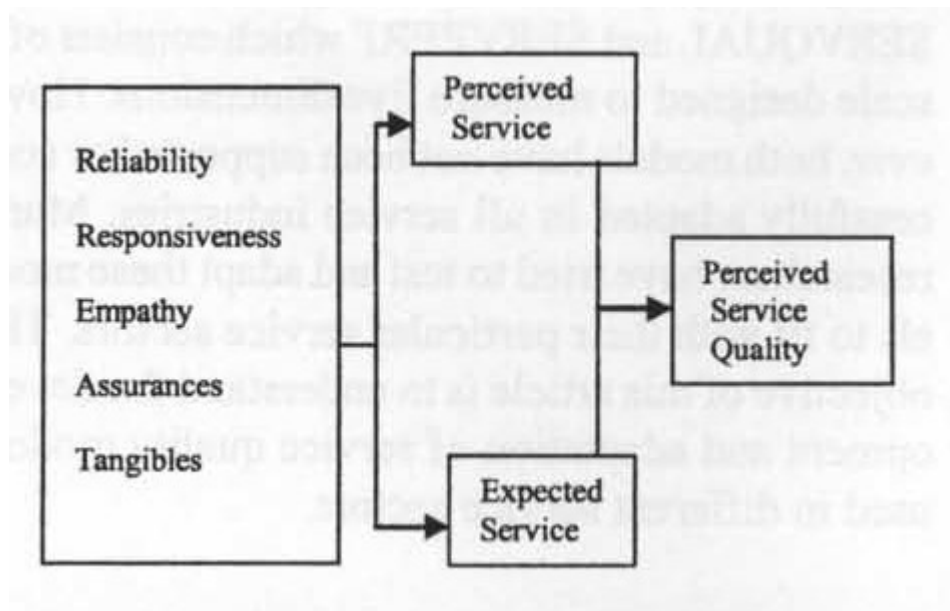


Figure 2.3: SERVQUAL model of service quality (Source: Parasuraman, Zeithaml & Berry 1985: 44)

A major contribution by SERVQUAL is that it has generated wide debate on the most appropriate ways to assess service quality (Brown, Churchill & Peter, 1993; Carman, 1990; Cronin & Taylor, 1992; Parasuraman, Berry & Zeithaml, 1991; Parasuraman, Zeithaml & Berry, 1993, 1994a; Teas, 1993).

SERVQUAL has seen recent applications in assessing service quality in university libraries. It was used by Hossain and Islam (2012) in measuring perceived service quality at Dhaka University Library in Bangladesh and by Kanguru (2014) in measuring service quality at Agha Khan University in Nairobi. Other scholars have used various versions of the original SERVQUAL to assess service quality in university libraries. Among others, these researchers are Filiz, 2007; Nimsomboon and Nagata, 2003; Sahu, 2007; Sinyenyeko-Sayo, 2007. SERVQUAL stands out from other models in that it describes one or more factors of a service quality experience (Brady & Cronin, 2001). It continues to remain the leading framework for research on service quality and is widely

applied in diverse settings (De Ruyter, Bloemer & Peeters, 1997:390; Liou & Chen, 2006:929; Vos, 2003:102).

SERVQUAL has been widely criticised by some scholars on various issues. According to Brown and Swartz (1989), service quality is abstract and difficult to measure. In a service quality study of a tyre store, dental clinic and placement centre, Carman (1990) concluded that the SERVQUAL scale fails to demonstrate the 5-dimensional structure of service quality. The SERVQUAL formula of calculating service quality by identifying the difference between expectations and perceptions for each item has attracted criticism. Some scholars claim that there is no evidence supporting the expectation-performance gap as a predictive measure of service quality (Cronin & Taylor, 1992). According to Brown et al., (1993), poor reliability could arise as a result of the calculation of difference scores, especially if the expectations scale was truncated by ceiling effects. This could be caused by very high customer expectations. Studies by Cronin and Taylor (1992) also established that the performance component out-performed SERVQUAL when it came to reliability. This is evidence that supports these concerns. Parasuraman, Zeithaml, and Berry (1994b) agreed to the logic of the criticism. However, they pointed out that truncation had minimal effect on reliability.

Buttle (1996) has criticised it on theoretical, operational and methodological grounds (Buttle 1996: 10-23). Other scholars have found it wanting on multi co-relationships (or multicollinearity) - a phenomenon in which two or more predictor variables in a multiple regression model are highly correlated, meaning that one can be linearly predicted from the others with a substantial degree of accuracy (Chen, Gupta & Rom, 1994:26). Brown et al. have uncovered its psychometric problems (Brown et al., 1993:131). In an article, Buttle criticises SERVQUAL on theoretical and operational criteria (Buttle, 1996, 8-31). According to Nyeck, Morales, Ladhari, and Pons (2002), few researchers using SERVQUAL are concerned with the validation of the questionnaire.

Another key weakness in SERVQUAL has been identified as its focus on assessing service quality in specific given scenarios. Jayasundara et al., (2009) conclude that since SERVQUAL is a generic model applied in all kinds of organisations, it needs to be customised in order to be used in library and information settings. Thus, according to Jayasundara et al. (2009), SERVQUAL cannot claim to be the best model for assessing customer satisfaction in library and information services (Jayasundara et al., 2009). Further research has led to the development of other models to fill the deficiency gaps of SERVQUAL. The key ones are LibQUAL and SERVPERF.

2.4.1.1.4 LibQUAL model

According to its developer, the Association of Research Libraries, LibQUAL is a well-known and recognized instrument that libraries use to solicit, track, understand, and act upon users' opinions of service quality (Association of Research Libraries, 2010). The LibQUAL instrument is an attractive tool to easily identify service quality from the customer perspective (Rehman, 2012b).

LibQUAL is a modified version of SERVQUAL and their underlying theories appear to be the same, even though there are a few modifications in its domain structure. LibQUAL is based on the same conceptual framework as SERVQUAL, which measures service quality as the difference between customers' perceptions and expectations using the disconfirmation/confirmation theory (Rehman, 2012b). It was designed by library and information science researchers based on the underlying methodology of SERVQUAL (Cook, Heath & Thompson, 2001). As a library service quality assessment protocol, LibQUAL, has been used globally in various types of libraries (Cook et al., 2001). LibQUAL was developed into a tool for library service quality assessment in October 1999, by the Association of Research Libraries (ARL) of the USA. According to Kyrillidou and Cook (2008), the tool has undergone rigorous testing through web-based surveys and extensive training to help libraries assess and improve their services, change their organisational culture, and market their services. More than 1.5 million library

users from twelve hundred libraries have participated in LibQUAL since its inception (Rehman, 2012b). The goals of LibQUAL are stated by its developers (Association of Research Libraries, 2010) are to;

- a) Foster a culture of excellence in providing library services;
- b) Help libraries better understand customer perceptions of library service quality;
- c) Collect and interpret library customer feedback systematically over time;
- d) Provide libraries with comparable assessment information from peer institutions;
- e) Identify best library service practices; and
- f) Enhance library staff members' analytical skills for interpreting and acting on data (LibQUAL+ 2008).

The original LibQUAL was designed with 41 statements in a three-column rating format that has minimum service expectations, desired service expectations, and the perception of service performance of the library under review. According to Cook et al., (2001), the dimensions of LibQUAL better reflect the service quality domains of research libraries than the original SERVQUAL domains that were developed in service industries. But having been developed from the SERVQUAL model, the customers' perceived quality of library services in LibQUAL is the customers' judgment of their overall experience with the services (Jayasundara et al., 2009).

LibQUAL was intensively tested over three years after which it was standardised to include the following key elements (LibQUAL+ 2008):

- a) Twenty-two core items spanning three domains: effect of service, information control, and library as place;
- b) Eleven additional items covering information literacy outcomes, general satisfaction with library service and library usage trends;
- c) General demographic items; and

- d) A box for open-ended comments by customers.

Having undergone various refinements, the current LibQUAL tool now measures library service quality through 22 core questions on three dimensions: Affect of Service (AS), Information Control (IC) and Library as Place (LP). The AS dimension consists of nine questions related to courtesy, knowledge and helpfulness of library staff in delivering user services. The IC dimension addresses (through eight questions) the adequacy of print and electronic collection, easy-to-use access tools, modern equipment, library website and self-reliance in information access. The LP dimension focuses on user perceptions of quiet, comfortable, inviting and reflective study space that inspires study and learning. Users are required to rate all LibQUAL items on the three columns side by side on 1(*low*) to 9 (*high*) scales for ‘perception’, ‘desire’, and ‘minimum’ services.

Dimensions

Core Items

**Affect of Service
(AS)**

1. Employees who instil confidence in customers
 2. Employees who give customers individual attention
 3. Employees who are consistently courteous
 4. Employees who are always ready to respond to customers’ questions
 5. Employees who have the knowledge to answer customer questions
 6. Employees who deal with customers in a caring manner
 7. Employees who understand the needs of customers
 8. Employees who are always willing to help customers
 9. Employees who are dependable in handling customers’ service problems
-
1. Making electronic resources accessible from anywhere
 2. Imparting information skills

**Information Control
(IC)**

3. Relevant printed information resources
4. Relevant electronic information resources
5. Modern equipment for easy access to information
6. Easy-to-use information access tools
7. Making information easily accessible for independent use
8. Relevant print or electronic journal collections

**Library as a Place
(LP)**

1. Library space that inspires study and reading
2. Quiet space for individual activities
3. A comfortable and inviting location
4. Convenient space for study
5. Convenient hours of service

According to Walters (2003), LibQUAL has several advantages over the older service quality instruments:

- a) LibQUAL is designed to elicit responses from a random sample of both library customers and non-customers;
- b) It accounts for respondents' minimum and desired levels of performance, rather than relying solely on their perceptions of current conditions;
- c) It provides multiple benchmarks for the comparison of institutions;
- d) It meets established criteria for reliability and uses questions derived from in-depth interviews with library patrons; and
- e) It identifies the various facets of perceived quality and provides an overall rating for each.

Currently, LibQUAL can be found in 18 international languages (Kyrillidou, 2011). LibQUAL has emerged as a key tool in evaluating the quality of library and information services and has the distinctive advantage of being applicable to all types of libraries. It is generic and flexible enough to be applied and customised to specific libraries (Walters, 2003).

Scholars such as Yu et al. (2008) have warned against its over-reliance, stating that it requires further refinement. Other scholars have studied its conceptual deficiencies (Shi & Levy, 2005). Edgar (2006) faulted its fundamental assumption and research approach relating to user experiences. LibQUAL regards the score with the highest correlations to eight validity indicators as the superiority gap score. However, according to Roszkowski, Baky and Jones (2005:424), the perceived score is a better predictor of satisfaction than the superiority gap score.

According to Saunders (2007:24), there are practical problems in using LibQUAL. These arise from the need for local information specific to the library under study (e.g. clientele and local problems) and the standard type of information provided by the survey. Achieving this is difficult as it involves the removal of some of the standardised questions or making the survey too long.

Since LibQUAL has a similar conceptual formation to SERVQUAL, they also share the same criticisms. The modifications of LibQUAL over SERVQUAL do not make it epistemologically different from, nor immune to, the limitations of SERVQUAL (Jayasundara, Ngulube & Minishi-Majanja, 2009). Despite being a very popular and widely used service quality assessment tool in libraries, LibQUAL's theories and use in specialised library assessment needs further study. This researcher has not come across a service quality study on court libraries. This study should fill that gap.

2.4.1.2 Models based on the performance-only approach

2.4.1.2.1 SERVPERF model (Cronin & Taylor, 1992)

The developers of SERVQUAL researched the relationship between conceptualization and measurement of service quality and its relationship with consumer satisfaction and purchase intentions. Cronin and Taylor (1992) argued that the conceptualisation and operationalisation of service quality (SERVQUAL) are inadequate measures of the relationship between service quality, customers' satisfaction and purchase intentions. In

a series of studies, they concluded that *perceptions-only* is a better predictor of service quality. According to them, *Performance* and not *Performance-Expectation* is what determines service quality (Cronin & Taylor, 1992). Their studies on conceptualisation and measurement of service quality were based on the framework of Parasuraman et al. (1985). From these studies, they developed a performance only measurement of service quality which they named SERVPERF. To do this, they first illustrated that service quality is a form of consumer attitude. Secondly, they argued that performance only is a more advanced means of measuring service quality (Jayasundara, 2009: 68). They stated that service quality is comparable to an attitude and can be expressed by the adequacy-importance model.

SERVPERF is therefore the performance component of the service quality scale (SERVQUAL). It was developed by Cronin and Taylor (1992) initially to study four service sectors: fast food, banking, dry cleaning, and control of pests. In a comparative study, Cronin and Taylor (1992) established that SERVQUAL only had statistical significance in banking and fast food while SERVPERF effects fitted all four industries. According to Cronin and Taylor (1992), the reasons behind the development of SERVPERF were:

- (i) Assessment of customers expected service level, before service delivery is impossible;
- (ii) Assessment of expected service level after service delivery could be inaccurate because by then customers' expectations could have already been biased by the service.

To address these issues, Cronin and Taylor (1992), therefore developed another instrument (SERVPERF) that uses 22 questions that measure service quality by measuring only the perceptions of the respondents. This is different from SERVQUAL which only scores on disconfirmation. SERVQUAL measures five underlying

dimensions corresponding to tangibles, reliability, responsiveness, assurance, and empathy (Parasuraman et al., 1988). SERVPERF is a subset of SERVQUAL.

Thus SERVQUAL and SERVPERF are identical instruments, the only difference being that SERVPERF does not take into account customer expectations. SERVQUAL has 44 items (22 items for expectation of service quality and 22 items for performance of service quality), while SERVPERF has 22 items which address only actual performance. Its key concern is customer perceptions of service performance, which means that it does not have a disconfirmation scale (which is the gap between expectations and perceived performance of service). It has only one section, the perceived performance of service (Jayasundara, 2009: 67). In this instrument, customers rate their perceptions of performance on the same attributes as in the SERVQUAL model. The five domains of SERVQUAL (tangibles, reliability, responsiveness, assurance and empathy) are also used in the SERVPERF model.

SERVPERF provides managers with an overall service quality score. This can then be represented graphically in relation to time and specific customer segmentations related to consumer characteristics (Cronin & Taylor, 1994). SERVPERF thus makes it possible to measure overall service quality attitudes of service supervisors. But Cronin and Taylor advise that managers of service organisations should be careful in deriving more specific information from data collected through the SERVPERF scale for strategic decision-making (Cronin & Taylor, 1994).

Repeated studies by Brady, Cronin and Brand (2002) and Einasto (2009) with completely different datasets have proved that measures of performance only as a measurement of service quality are far superior. White, Abels and Nitecki (1994:40) have found SERVPERF to be less complicated, more accurate, more precise and easier to administer than SERVQUAL. However, they maintain that the SERVQUAL model is the preferable because of its comprehensive nature and provision of better diagnostic

information. On the other hand, SERVPER has the advantage in that it explains more of the variation in customer perceptions of service quality than SERVQUAL does, for example in the R2 statistics (Jayasundara, 2009: 68).

A weakness of the SERVPERF model is that its applications in library and information setting have not been widely researched (Jayasundara et al, 2009:71). However, its attributes are similar to SERVQUAL and can be considered appropriate for libraries (Jayasundara et al., 2009: 182), Both models are flexible, which allows for them to be modified for application in libraries (White, Abels & Nitecki, 1994). However, Seth and Deshmukh (2004: 933) find the performance-based SERVPERF more efficient when compared to SERVQUAL. This is because it reduces the number of items by 50 per cent and the results are of better quality (Seth & Deshmukh, 2004: 935). But Hernon and Nitecki (2001) conclude that the use of SERVPERF in libraries has been very rare and as such, many researchers prefer and do use SERVQUAL, owing to its features for broad application in service industries.

In summarising the traditional models, a common feature is that they are closely interrelated. Two dimensions of service quality were initially suggested by Grönroos (1982), five dimensions were developed by Parasuraman et al. (1988), known as the SERVQUAL model, which calculates service quality by measuring the discrepancy between customers' expectations and perception. SERVPERF was developed by dropping the expectations aspect of SERVQUAL. Finally, LibQUAL was derived from SERVQUAL.

A conclusion from the above traditional methods is that traditional quality assessment methods were generally quantitative in nature. As such their application is often used together with qualitative methods in order to obtain richer data. There are also other modern methods that are more qualitative in nature that have been developed. Qualitative methods have established criteria for reliability and measure various facets of

quality such as minimum and desired levels of performance, and user perception of quality. These developments have been accompanied by the emergence of other models that address the new technological developments. These are discussed in the following sections.

2.4.2 Models addressing new technologies

Research on traditional service quality has been extensively conducted during the past 20 years (Parasuraman & Zeithaml, 2002). Traditional service quality refers to the quality of all non-Internet-based customer interactions and experiences with companies. However, very little has been done on how customers assess electronic service quality. The onset of ICTs has had a huge impact on how people live and work, especially in library and information services. It has seen the automation of many library and information functions hitherto done manually and also the introduction of new services offered electronically and through the Web. These have come to be known as electronic services or e-services. A formal definition of e-service quality was first given by Zeithaml et al. (2001). They defined e-service quality as the extent to which a website facilitates efficient and effective shopping, purchasing, and delivery of products and services.

There are several well-known models of e-service quality that have been used to measure the quality of e-services in both library and non-library settings. Although they have strengths and weaknesses, various improvements have been made over the years. This section will describe these models.

2.4.2.1 E-SERVQUAL

SERVQUAL proved to be a successful instrument in measuring a company's service quality. As a result, its founders decided to extend it to the assessment of electronic services (Moon, 2013:90). Thus Parasuraman, Zeithaml, and Malhotra (2005) developed E-SERVQUAL to measure the quality of electronic services for websites and as a tool to

study how customers judge the quality of e-services. Its basis is that in the electronic medium there is minimal face-to-face contact. Based on SERVQUAL, E-SERVQUAL is defined as the extent to which a website facilitates efficient and effective shopping, purchasing, and delivery (Moon, 2013:92).

The E-SERVQUAL scale has 22 items that are comprised of four dimensions. The dimensions are *efficiency, fulfilment, system availability and privacy*. They then decided that it was important to measure any recovery service separately. So they derived the recovery scale consisting of three other dimensions: *responsiveness, compensation and contact*. The E-SERVQUAL scale also includes four items of perceived value and five items of loyalty intentions (Parasuraman et al., 2005).

Thus this makes a total of seven initial dimensions comprised of: efficiency, reliability, fulfillment, privacy, responsiveness, compensation and contact. The first four dimensions comprise the core service scale, and the other three dimensions are termed as a recovery scale. This is because they are only useful when online customers have questions or problems (Zeithaml, Parasuraman & Malhotra, 2001, 2002). The dimensions comprise the following:

a) Core service scale in e-SERVQUAL includes the following:

- i) **Efficiency:** ability of customers to access the website and find their desired service or product with minimum effort. This is best addressed by the user interface. It covers overall design, ease of navigation (Kaynama & Black, 2000), and overall ease of use (Dabholkar, 1996). Zeithaml, Parasuraman & Malhotra (2000) refer to it as *aesthetics*.
- ii) **Fulfilment:** relates to accuracy of service, availability of the product and delivery on time.
- iii) **Reliability/availability:** the technical performance/function of the site, its availability and functionality when required. Customers expect search

engines, catalogues, etc. to function reliably, and website information to be dependable. Reliability means correct technical aspects and functioning of the site. It also means accuracy of service promises, billing and product information (Cox & Dale, 2001).

- iv) **Privacy:** Security of users' information including shopping trends and behaviours, and especially security of sensitive data such as credit card information. This includes protection of personal and financial information and the degree of safety from intrusion (Yoo & Donthu, 2001).

b) Service recovery scale in e-SERVQUAL includes the following:

- i) **Responsiveness:** This includes the ability and timeliness of service providers to give e-users appropriate responses should a problem occur, putting in place systems to handle defective returns and offering online guarantees to customers (Van Riel et al., 2004).
- ii) **Compensation:** Refunds to customers in recognition of loss/defective items/service including freight expenditures.
- iii) **Contact:** Provision for customers to speak live to customer care and customer service either online or by phone.

E-SERVQUAL is therefore a website quality assessment scale that covers a customer's entire interaction with website shopping, purchasing, payment and delivery (Zeithaml et al., 2000). According to Zeithaml et al. (2000), customers' assessment of a website's quality is based on experiences both during their interaction with the site and also after the interaction. It can also be defined as the extent to which a website facilitates efficient and effective shopping, purchasing, and delivery (Zeithaml et al., 2000:5).

Some aspects such as availability and depth of information are important because users' ability to integrate, remember, and use information improves when they can control

content and product-relevant information (Ariely, 2000). Internet-based transactions are complex and intimidating to many customers, which makes *ease of use* very important and relevant. Studies by Montoya-Weiss, Voss and Dhruz (2003) have established that protection of personal information (privacy) and security, impact on effective use of online financial services.

Various studies (Hoffman & Novak, 1996; Hoque & Lohse, 1999; Schlosser & Kanfer, 1999) have shown that graphics (colour, layout, print size and type, animation) affect customer perceptions of online shopping. Scholars such as Palmer, Bailey and Faraj (1999) have cited reliability/fulfilment as an important facet of E-SERVQUAL. Other studies have ranked reliability/fulfilment as the strongest predictor of quality and customer satisfaction. They also ranked it as the second strongest predictor of whether a customer will return or buy again from a site.

Kiran (2011) identified some limitations in E-SERVQUAL. They cover only functional aspects of quality (process) and not the technical aspects (outcome). The model also does not offer a clear measurement method for measuring gaps at different levels and found that reliability and responsiveness are in quite similar dimensions (Kiran, 2011).

According to Parasuraman et al. (2005), there are many aspects involved in website design, such as in-depth information, level of personalization, selection, customer service and transaction speeds. These issues and others relevant to customer assessment of service quality in websites need further research and testing.

Although various extant studies have shed light on the criteria relevant for evaluating E-SERVQUAL, the resultant instruments developed from these studies present a number of important aspects that call for further research. Zeithaml et al. (2002) detailed five broad sets of criteria as relevant to E-SERVQUAL perceptions: information availability/content; ease of use or usability; privacy/security; graphic style; and

reliability/fulfilment. Aspects of these criteria are still undergoing research (Montoya-Weiss et al., 2003).

2.4.2.2 WebQUAL

With the development of Internet and other ICTs, websites have become a very important component of electronic commerce and services. There is therefore a critical need to know how consumers' perceptions of websites influence their behaviour. This is because it affects whether they will revisit or purchase from it again. Loiacono, Watson & Goodhue (2000) developed and validated WebQUAL as an instrument for consumer evaluation of website quality. The scale contains 36 questions on 12 characteristics/dimensions of a website, underlining strong measurement validity (Loiacono, Watson & Goodhue, 2002). The components were not only distinct, but were also well measured in order to reflect an overall effectiveness of a website and to impact on consumers' decision to purchase or revisit the site. It is thus designed to capture those aspects of a website that might have influence on the user's intention to revisit. It assesses the usability, information, and service interaction quality of Internet websites, particularly those offering e-commerce facilities (Loiacono et al., 2002).

Its development was based on several studies; Theory of Reasoned Action (Fishbein & Ajzen, 2005), the Technology Acceptance Model (Davis, 1989), and marketing literature. The 12 dimensions of WebQUAL are as follows: informational fit-to-task; tailored information; trust; response time; ease of understanding; intuitive operations; visual appeal; innovativeness; emotional appeal; consistent image; on-line completeness; relative advantage (Loiacono et al., 2002). Each dimension represents a critical distinct aspect of website quality and should be considered when building an effective website. There are 36 items in the instrument.

The instrument has four higher level variables. These are:

- a) **Ease of use:** This comprise a website’s ease of understanding and intuitive operations (Davis, 1989). This is the degree to which a person believes that using a website takes little effort.
- b) **Usefulness:** This refers to how useful the site is to users. This comprises aspects such as informational fit-to-task, tailored communications, trust, and response time.
- c) **Entertainment:** This comprises visual appeal, innovativeness, and emotional appeal of the site. It refers to the web consumers expectation that information will delivered in an entertaining manner (Ducoffe, 1995; Eighmey, 1997).
- d) **Complementary relationship:** This comprises aspects such as on-line completeness, relative advantage, and consistent image. It can be described as a higher variable that describes to what level a company provides services that can make it possible to transact business directly on the web (Seybold, 1998).

Table 2.5 depicts these variables, their dimensions and descriptions.

Table 2.5: WebQUAL variables

Initial higher level category	Dimension	Description
Ease of use	Ease of understanding; easy to read and understand	Easy to read and understand
	Intuitive operation easy to operate and navigate	Intuitive operation; easy to operate and navigate
Usefulness	Informational fit-to-task	Information provided meets task needs and improves performance
	Tailored communication	Tailored communication between consumers and the firm
	Trust	Secure communication and observance of information privacy
	Response time	Time to get a response after a request or an interaction with a site
Entertainment	Visual appeal	Aesthetics of a website
	Innovativeness	Creativity and uniqueness of site design
	Emotional appeal	Emotional effect of using the website and intensity of involvement
Complementary relationship	On-line completeness	Allowing all or most necessary transactions to be completed on-line (e.g., purchasing over the

		website)
	Relative advantage	Equivalent or better than other means of interacting with the company
	Consistent image	Website image compatible with the image projected by the firm through other media

However, it should be noted that no comprehensive instrument exists specifically designed to focus on the consumer's perception of website quality in the context of predicting the behaviour of reuse of the site (Loiacono et al., 2002). WebQUAL is widely used and adapted for numerous site evaluations but not for library service quality. Studies by Zeithaml et al. (2002) have shown that WebQUAL is more relevant to interface design than to service quality dimension. A study conducted by Loiacono, et al., (2002) revealed that though all of the components of WebQUAL are correlated with intent to reuse, when they were put together in a regression, *trust* and *ease of use* did not show up as significant predictors.

Ease of use has been identified as a necessary component of usefulness in a study by Davis (1989) and tends to affect intent to reuse through its impact on usefulness. Loiacono et al. (2002) discovered that there are some specific individual and personal issues that can affect a web user's perception of the quality of a website. They identified some of them as age, culture, expertise, gender and knowledge. Investigating them would be a significant addition to WebQUAL research and development. The model also has qualitative weaknesses given the fact that the sample used in its development was given researcher-specified categories. A study by Zeithaml et al. (2002) established that WebQUAL is more relevant to interface design rather than service quality assessment. The dimensions of WebQUAL have also been shown to reflect customer needs in a general manner only.

Another weakness in WebQual is that it was designed with the primary purpose of generating information for designers of websites as opposed to measuring levels of service quality experienced by users. The research on which WebQUAL was developed

has also been faulted. The research was conducted using students who were asked to visit and evaluate websites. It did not involve real users or customers evaluating their experiences (Parasuraman et al., 2005: 4). WebQual also leaves out the dimensions of customer service and fulfilment since the research methodology used in its development could not measure these particular dimensions.

In view of these weaknesses, Barnes and Vidgen (2002) developed a version of WebQual to measure e-commerce. It measures perceptions weighted by importance. It has five factors: *usability, design, information, trust, and empathy*. The instrument is not designed to be a comprehensive evaluation of the service quality of a site but rather assesses specific transactions in a website. This means that the respondents do not need to complete an entire purchasing process.

Though used widely in evaluating websites, WebQual is rarely used as tool for measuring service quality in libraries. This is because it did not address this aspect in its initial conceptualization. Even though academic researchers have developed several scales to evaluate websites, there is no general measure for evaluating websites and so far there is no consensus on what such an instrument would measure or evaluate (Loiacono et al., 2002).

2.4.2.3 DigiQUAL

DigiQUAL is a tool developed by Association of Research Libraries, Texas A&M University and University of Texas to evaluate the quality of digital libraries from a user perspective (Kyrillidou, 2005). Its developers modified the existing LibQUAL protocol to assess the services provided for the user communities of the National Science, Math, Engineering and Technology Education Digital Library (NSDL) program (Kyrillidou, 2005). The development of DigiQUAL is funded by the National Science Digital Library (NSDL), a programme of the National Science Foundation (NSF). The DigiQUAL protocol is built on the theoretical foundations of the Gaps theory of service quality, and

especially on the SERVQUAL measurement of the gap between customers' expectations and perceptions of service quality (Kyrillidou, 2005).

According to its developer's website (<http://www.digiqual.org/home>), DigiQUAL aims to:

- Define the dimensions of digital library service quality from the perspective of the users;
- Identify digital library “best practices” that permit generalizations across operations and development platforms;
- Enhance student learning by effectively managing user perceptions and expectations of digital library services;
- Institutionalize continuous product and process evaluation efforts directed toward positive and timely management of outcomes.

According to Kyrillidou and Cook (2008), DigiQUAL is based on the LibQUAL protocol and collects feedback on the site's service, functionality and content (Kyrillidou & Cook, 2008; 894). DigiQUAL has identified over 180 items around twelve themes related to digital library service quality (Lincoln, Cook & Kyrillidou, 2004). These form the basis of the DigiQUAL questionnaire. They are as follows: 1) Accessibility 2) Navigability 3) Interoperability 4) Collection building 5) Resource use 6) Evaluating collections 7) Digital library as community for users 8) Digital library as community for developers 9) Digital library as community for reviewers 10) Copyright 11) Role of federations 12) Digital library sustainability. Both qualitative and quantitative methods are used in the development of DigiQUAL (Zain & Othman, 2011).

Focus group sessions were held at Digital Library for Earth System Information (DLESE) and Multimedia Educational Resource for Learning and Online Teaching (MERLOT), following which a model was developed. According to the model, there are two major components in the digital library environment (Kyrillidou, 2009):

- a) Human/system interaction
- b) Technical component.

The first digital library to implement DigiQUAL was UTOPIA digital library (developed and supported by the University of Texas), together with other NSDL collections. Digital library service quality focuses on themes such as accessibility, navigability, copyright, sustainability, use of resources, among others (Zain & Othman, 2011). Despite being developed from a user perspective, it has imitations. Its dimensions are said to be broad and focused only on functionality. Also, its categorization of elements is said to be unclear, which leads to the presence of irrelevant elements in the judgment of e-service. Most users have a mentality that digital library is the content collected (Borgman, 1999:226).

2.4.2.4 SiteQUAL

SITEQUAL is another e-service quality measurement scale developed by Yoo and Donthu (2001). It was developed with the purpose of measuring the perceived quality of Internet shopping sites (Loiacono, Watson, & Goodhue, 2007). The scale originally consisted of 38 items and 9 factors of two sets (site quality and vendor-related). But the first set of factors was dropped in order to focus on site quality.

The scale was developed a number of times and now contains nine items used for measuring site quality on four dimensions. These are ease of *use*, *aesthetic design*, *processing speed*, and *security*. A similarity with WebQUAL is that SiteQUAL was also developed from data gathered from convenience samples. Marketing students were asked to visit, interact with and evaluate Internet shopping. A shared weakness with WebQUAL is that SiteQUAL fails to capture all the aspects of the purchasing process. This makes it unsuitable for a comprehensive evaluation of a site's service quality. Moreover, according to Loiacono et al. (2007), SiteQUAL's original set of items was too narrowly based and only two items measure its final factor.

2.4.2.5 Library E-SERVQUAL

This is a model developed from E-SERVQUAL in order to address e-service quality assessment in libraries (Hernon & Calvert, 2005). It was developed from studies by Hernon and Calvert (2005) which focused on the quality of library electronic services at eight universities in New Zealand. Their study used early dimensions of SERVQUAL to measure service quality (Nitecki & Hernon, 2000). Using questionnaires, users are asked to judge the current library services on a 10 point scale ranging from 1 (of no importance) to 10 (of highest importance) against an ideal library. Of the 104 items in the pool, 22 were recommended for inclusion in the library E-SERVQUAL questionnaire (as in SERVQUAL).

The factors deduced from the analysis were Ease of use, Collection, Linkage, Flexibility, Customer Feedback, Customization/Personalization, Equipment, Empathy, and Efficiency. This model shares the same limitations that are discernible in instruments developed by the authors (Hernon & Calvert, 2005), i.e. they have only undergone face validity but not statistical reliability and validity. The model is still undergoing development.

2.4.2.6 Hierarchical model of web-based library e-service quality

While researching service quality at the University of Malaya, Kiran (2011) developed a model of web-based service quality to fit the library settings of research universities in Malaysia. He called it the Hierarchical Model of Web-Based Library E-Service Quality. Using a new approach in investigating key determinants of web-based library service quality, he focused his study on library customers' perception of service quality. He used the term *Web-based library services* to refer to services accessible through an academic library's website. This was in order to differentiate from specifically digital library services that may be delivered through a digital library. The sequence of the research was as follows:

Phase 1: Model development
Step 1: Articulate the meaning and domain of web-based library e-service quality based on insights from the extant literature
Step 2: Conduct focus group discussions to conceptualize and revise the key domains of web-based library e-service.
Step 3: Formulate a preliminary scale based on step 1 & 2 and present it to LIS experts for comments. Revise scale if necessary
Step 4: Administer revised scale
Step 5: Develop a scale through an iterative process
Phase 2: Model verification
Step 6: Administer the final scale - Survey II
Step 7: Scale purification & model testing

Figure 2.4: Research sequence of Kiran (Kiran & Diljit, 2012)

Using focus groups, he identified key determinants that were used to develop and empirically test a proposed conceptual model of service quality that included environment, delivery, and outcome quality. The research used the performance only measure. He used exploratory factor analysis and confirmatory factor analysis using structural equation modelling to develop and validate a measurement model for web-based service quality. From the study, a modified and tested model of web-based service quality was developed (Figure 2.5).

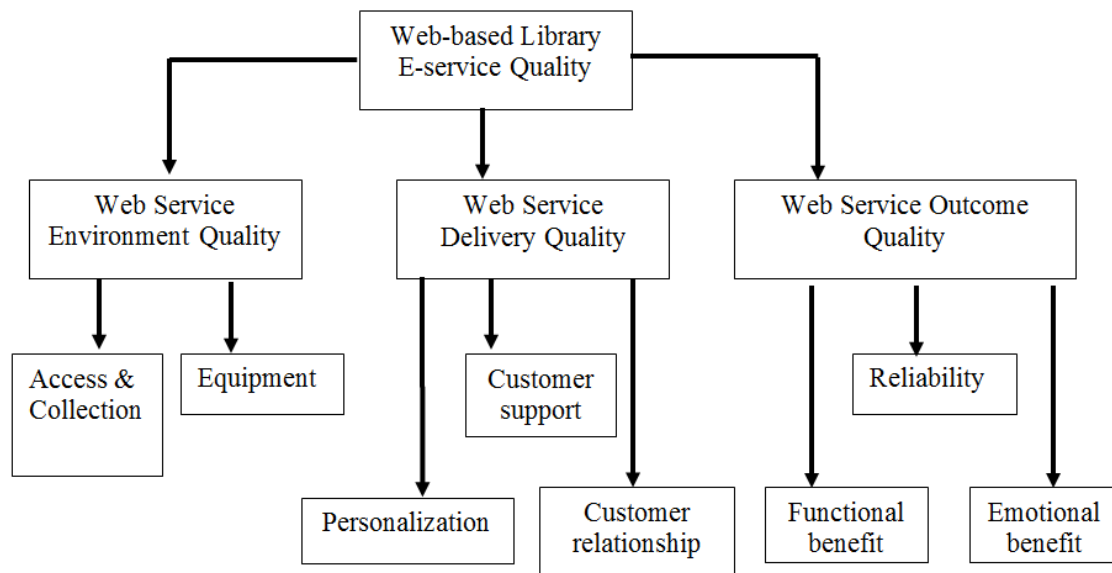


Figure 2.5: Web-based service quality model by Kiran (Kiran, 2011)

Kiran concluded that the hierarchical model gives a highly accurate and comprehensive measurement for service quality, e-service quality and library e-service quality (Kiran, 2011). His model has been tested statistically and can therefore be used in measuring service quality and e-service quality. The key advantage of the model is that it has been developed from and with the library setting in mind. The model is still undergoing further research and development (Kiran 2011).

2.4.2.7 Conclusion for models addressing new technologies

Given the central role that the Internet and electronic services have taken in modern times, more studies on e-service quality are still in progress (Wolfenbarger & Gilly, 2003). A study by Szymanski & Hise (2000) examined the role of customer perceptions in satisfaction assessments. The study looked at customer perceptions of online convenience, merchandising site design, and financial security. It measured satisfaction but omitted service quality. Another flaw in the study is that it only dealt with website aspects and did not assess customer service or fulfilment.

Wolfenbarger and Gilly (2003) argued that most studies focus only on customer interface with websites, yet for them, online shoppers are goal oriented and their behaviour differs when it comes to online purchasing. They therefore developed a 14 item e-service quality assessment tool called eTailQ using online and offline focus groups, a sorting task, and an online-customer-panel survey. The scale was created using the multi-method iterative process with a purpose of measuring Internet retailing quality. It had four factors/determinants of e-tailing quality: website design, reliability, privacy (security), and customer service. They concluded that judgement of online purchase experiences are strongly related to website design factors and fulfilment and less on security (Wolfenbarger & Gilly, 2003). The scale is comprehensive; two of the dimensions (security/privacy and reliability/fulfilment) show strong face validity and are highly descriptive. But the other two dimensions are less consistent and distinct. Another weakness in the scale was that the sample was made up of an online panel rather than a random sample. This online panel may have been more technologically advanced than the average user which might have affected the findings.

Studies by Mick and Fournier (1995) on customer interaction and evaluation of electronic-based products established the following:

- a) Customer satisfaction with e-products is highly complex.
- b) The interaction process varies with customer segments.
- c) Pre-consumption comparison standards do not always affect satisfaction.

The same authors also established that technology has the ability to trigger positive and negative feelings simultaneously. In another study, Parasuraman (2000) established that the ability of a customer to embrace new technology is related to their attitude and feelings about technology (Parasuraman, 2000). Cowles (1989) and Dabholkar (1996) have shown that beliefs and reactions to technology are unique and correlate with acceptance of the technology. Perceived usefulness and ease of use of technology is correlated significantly with self-reported usage of the technology (Szajna, 1996).

Studies have shown that customers use various criteria in evaluating e-services. These include information availability and content, ease of use, privacy, security, graphics and fulfilment (Babakus et al., 2003; Chang, Dillon, & Hussain, 2007; Chiu, Hsu & Sun, 2005; Zeithaml et al., 2002). According to Zeithaml, the quality of an e-service can be described as the judgement of a consumer on the overall excellence or superiority of the service (Zeithaml, 1988:13). Most studies in this area show that technology beliefs and predisposition affect the acceptance and usage of technologies among users. For example, readiness to accept technology (as opposed to resistance), will likely influence the features that a customer will prefer in a website and its levels of performance would indicate a superior e-service quality (Parasuraman, Zeithaml & Malhotra, 2005:4-5). It is therefore important to take these factors into account when evaluating e-service quality.

2.4.3 Critical review of existing service quality models

A critical analysis of the available literature was carried out in order to identify key weaknesses of popular service quality models, especially SERVQUAL, SERVPERF and LibQUAL. Studies have revealed two types of weakness in models used to measure service quality. These can be classified as conceptual weakness and contextual weakness.

2.4.3.1 Conceptual weakness

SERVQUAL and LibQUAL have used the expectancy disconfirmation theory which works by subtracting the expectation from the performance, that is, $P - E$. But in modelling customer satisfaction in relation to service quality, disconfirmation underscores quality and satisfaction. The disconfirmation paradigm has been criticised for its cognitive nature and algebraic formulation. It has been established that people generally have high expectations. As such, they are likely to rate their expectations higher than the highest performance of a service, which in itself is a vindication of the fact that the disconfirmation paradigm falls short when it comes to using the standards for expectations. On the other hand, service quality and customer satisfaction are

concepts based on attitudes. Based on the fact that attitudes are aspects of psychological constructs, Van Dyke, Prybutok and Kappelman (1999), cited in Ladhari (2008) argue that the disconfirmation (P - E) concept is a poor choice by which to measure psychological paradigms. This is because the performance minus expectation scores, provide little evidence of customers' actual assessments of service quality (Kilbourne et al., 2004, cited in Ladhari, 2008).

In their analysis of the P minus E concept of the disconfirmation paradigm, Cronin and Taylor (1992) questioned its reliability and concluded that as an indicator of service quality, it could be misleading. They instead suggest that service quality should be based on performance and measured with perceptions, not expectations (Brady & Cronin, 2001).

Fourthly, according to Buttle (1996:11), the P minus E concept is based on disconfirmation rather than customer attitudes. Disconfirmation is based on the concept that service quality depends on performance measured against expectations and not on exact performance levels. Based on this, Cronin and Taylor (1992) concluded that the concept is flawed and incoherent in measuring service quality in a given situation.

A fifth criticism of the expectation concept is that there is no standard definition of expectations (Ladhari, 2008). Although there are many varied definitions of the term "expectations," a widely accepted definition has remained elusive. According to Ladhari (2008), some of the terms used to define expectations are *desires*, *wants*, *adequate service*, *normative expectations* and *ideal standards*, etc. The effects of expectations on service quality levels are arguable, but studies have shown that there are various factors that affect expectations. A study by Thompson and Kaminski (1993) established several psychographic factors that can cause different service expectations. Studies by Clow and Vorhies (1993) have shown that passage of time before consumption of a service can slightly affect expectations to a certain degree. This is because time allows the consumer to alter his expectations depending on certain experiences or information received. But

expectations can change immediately after service consumption due to episodes that can be considered non-neutral, leading consumers to experience positive service consumption. It has been shown that consumers can overstate their prior expectations due to negative service consumption. This is consistent with studies by Cronin and Taylor (1992) and Schneider and White (2004) that have shown indirect support for this argument from various current studies on the applicability of expectations in the constructs of service quality and customer satisfaction.

A sixth criticism of the existing service quality models has been directed at their composition and number of domains. These models consist of pre-defined domain attributes that are common to most service organisations (especially SERVQUAL and SEVPERF). Studies have also shown that LibQUAL is also generic and applies cross all libraries (Schembri & Sandberg, 2002). They can therefore be said to be fixed and constant (generic), and not tailored for specific situations such as law/court libraries, special libraries, etc. This presents challenges because service quality may be complex and multi-dimensional in some organisations but may be uni-dimensional and straightforward in others. Thus applying the same measure in these different organisations may not produce fool proof results (Babakus & Boller, 1992). This is because the predefined domains and attributes are not universal and will therefore require contextualisation in order to be applied to the particular organisation under study (Buttle, 1996; Schneider & White, 2004:38). The models do not have a structure for comprehensive and total understanding of customer satisfaction and service quality in a given organisation. This makes the possibility of understating customer satisfaction very real.

Studies have shown that there is support for both paradigms (disconfirmation and performance-only). They include Buttle (1996), Cronin and Taylor (1992) and Oliver (1993). There are also other factors that are not easily controllable but need to be factored into the service quality assessment. They include, but are not limited to,

personal emotions, behaviour, physical environment, and service value (Brady, Cronin & Brand, 2002; Harris et al., 2006; Zhu, Sivakumar & Parasuraman, 2004).

Researchers are in agreement that there is no best model for measuring service quality or customer satisfaction (Jayasundara et al., 2009:184). No single model or paradigm can be applied across the board. This is because situations vary from company to company and from customer to customer (Schembri & Sandberg, 2002). Various researchers have questioned and pointed out weaknesses in the disconfirmation theory. Some of them include Brady, Cronin and Brand (2002), Cronin and Taylor (1992) and Dabholkar, Shepherd and Thrope (2000). These researchers have argued that the most suitable paradigm for measuring service quality and customer satisfaction is the performance-only method. But despite this, some studies have shown that the disconfirmation paradigm has recorded improved predictability compared to the performance only paradigm (Bolton & Drew, 1993, cited in Robinson, 1999). Jayasundara et al. (2009) have described SERVQUAL, LibQUAL and SERVPREF as myopic in outlook, which may lead to problems and inaccuracies in assessing service quality and customer satisfaction.

These authors instead propose that the ideal model to measure service quality should be developed from the specific company or environment that is being studied. This will lead to a greater holistic understanding of the problem under study. SERVQUAL, SERVPREF and LibQual models use single measures to assess customer satisfaction. Davis and Heineke (1998) have shown that this can lead to validity and reliability problems because customer satisfaction is a complex issue. To ensure higher reliability, they propose the use of multi-item approaches and composite attributes in models for measuring service quality.

2.4.3.2 Contextual weaknesses

Besides conceptual weaknesses, models have been identified that have contextual limitations, such as operational and functional deficiencies. SERVQUAL, SERVPERF and LibQual involve the use of pre-determined scales. Studies have shown that these scales are not asymmetrical (Allport, 1961; Cronin & Taylor 1992; DeSarbo et al., 1994). In some instances, the length of intervals within the scale may also be different. This may cause inaccuracies in the measurement of service quality.

Due to their static and linear nature, important information such as the history of the service being offered is not captured. This means that important factors such the dynamics or sequence of changing expectations of users are missed. Studies by Parasuraman, Zeithaml and Berry (1994a) have shown that respondents may have inherent inadequacies and may lack the skills to answer the SERVQUAL or SERVPERF items, leading to errors in the final analysis of the data. Even though SERVQUAL has an option for 'I don't know,' studies by Babakus and Mangold (1992) have shown that the rate of no-responses is high and common. The end effect is that analysis may not reflect the real score of customer expectations or perceptions.

SEVQUAL, SERVPERF and LibQUAL have also been criticised for their measurement scales of constructs. They use the Likert scale to measure service quality attributes and domains, and a semantic differential scale is used to measure satisfaction. Studies by Nanayakkara (2008) have shown that different scales of measurement could cause inconsistency which can lead to empirical errors. He further states that there is a possibility of respondents over-using the extreme end-points that have verbal labels because SERVQUAL does not have verbal scales for points 2 to 6. Bias is minimised by verbal labelling of all the scale points. This also makes it possible to capture most of the respondents' intended response. Nitecki and Herson (2000) have identified difficulties in applying SERVQUAL in service quality assessment in libraries. These difficulties arise

due to the use of different scores, applicability, dimensionality and lack of validity and inability to generalise.

According to Carman (1990:34), modern businesses are complex and multifaceted. As such, measuring service quality using the current models and instruments may not elicit the desired results. Their research also established the presence of more domains than those prescribed in SERVQUAL. In some specific services, such as dental units and wheel and tyre centres, SERVQUAL has been unable to emphasize the importance of all five factors (Carman, 1990:42). In several studies in information services these domains have not been confirmed at all (Andaleeb & Simmands, 1998). Due to this, in order to apply SERVQUAL in library and information situations, additional factors need to be included (Hernon & Nitecki, 2001:698). These authors developed a list of generic expectations that library and information units could use in determining statements that can be used as priorities. They emphasized that expectations under probe should come from both library staff and clients (Hernon & Nitecki, 2001:702). However, their study had weaknesses in that it did not measure statements across several institutions. It focussed only on the location of a service at a given time.

LibQUAL has emerged as the predominant tool in measuring service quality in library and information services. But its fundamental assumption and approach to user experiences has been criticised by researchers such as Edgar (2006). Other scholars have studied its conceptual weaknesses and advised against its overreliance (Shi & Levy 2005: Yu et al., 2008). When using the LibQUAL instrument, the superiority gap score is the score with the highest correlation to eight validity indicators. However, other scholars have determined that the perceived score is a better forecaster of customer satisfaction than the superiority gap score (Roszkowski et al., 2005:424).

LibQUAL has evolved to become the leading and most extensively used tool in service quality assessment in many libraries. But its theories are still undergoing further research

and testing. Having been adopted from SERVQUAL, perceptions of service quality are also based on the difference between the perceptions and expectations of customers. Although LibQUAL has some modifications in the structure of its domain, the basic theories of both SERVQUAL and LibQUAL are similar. With that in mind, scholars have stated that same conceptual and theoretical deficiencies associated with SERVQUAL also apply to LibQUAL (Yu et al., 2008: 547-556).

It has been shown that when using SERVQUAL, LibQUAL, and SERVPERF, it is not easy to interpret the results into actions that can be implemented by management. This is because results obtained from using these instruments do not manifest any link between customer satisfaction and organisational decision-making (Saunders, 2007:24-25). They do not provide management with guidance on what has to be changed, or any connection between the measures and changes or goals achieved. They also fall short on how to address customer expectations taking into considering that customers' perceptions change over time (Jayasundara et al., 2009:186).

In a review of service quality models, Seth et al. (2004) critically appraised various service quality models and identified issues for future research based on the critical analysis of literature. They critically examined 19 different service quality models with a view to derive linkage between them, and highlight areas for further research. The results showed that the service quality outcome and measurement are affected by various factors, such as the type of service setting, situation, time, and need. The review also established that expectations of customers towards particular services are also changing due to factors such as time, number of encounters with the service, and competitive environment. To these authors, these factors need further study.

From the conceptual, practical and methodological analysis of the various service quality instruments, it can be safely deduced that there is no best or ultimate instrument to conceptualise customer satisfaction in relation to service quality. It is important to note

that the theoretical and conceptual formation of these models have been criticised by many scholars and remain unsolved to date. It is therefore recommended that researchers should continue to experiment until an appropriate model is established.

2.5 MODELS ADOPTED FOR THE STUDY

Table 2.6 shows the models adopted for this study and the variables in each model that guided the study.

Table 2.6: Models adopted for the study

Model	Variables	Items in instruments of data collection
LIBQUAL	Minimum expectations of library users	Part 2 Appendix 2, column 1
	Desired expectations of library users	Part 2 Appendix 2, column 2
	Perceptions of library users	Part 2 Appendix 2, column 3
SERVQUAL	Expectations of library users	Part 1 Appendix 3
	Perceptions of library users	Part 2 Appendix 3
SERVPERF	Perceptions of library users	Appendix 4

2.6 SUMMARY OF THE CHAPTER

This chapter briefly reviewed several models used in the assessment of service quality. It also reviewed research studies relating to service quality in various sectors, including library and the information service sector. The chapter described various models and instruments used to evaluate service quality bringing out their strengths, shortcomings and applicability to the library and information sector.

The review showed that there is no universal or best model for measuring service quality or customer satisfaction. Considering that situations vary from company to company and

from customer to customer, no single model or paradigm can be applied across the board. According to the review, the ideal model to measure service quality would have to be developed from the specific company or environment that is being studied. The chapter also presented various theoretical and conceptual criticisms directed at these models.

The review showed that traditional methods have been used to measure service quality in library and information centres, but none of them were designed with libraries in mind. Therefore adaptations have had to be made here and there to make them useable in library settings. LibQUAL was developed from SERVQUAL and addressed this gap. Over the years, LibQUAL has evolved and emerged as the leading and most applicable tool in measuring service quality in library and information services.

The onset of the coming of the Internet era has brought a whole new aspect of service provision that has led to the development of electronic services including those of libraries. New models have been developed to assess the quality of these services. These include e-SERVQUAL, SiteQUAL, WebQUAL and DigiQUAL, among others. The review has revealed and reviewed new models that have arisen as a result of these developments.

The review has also shown that while there are various studies on service quality in library and information centres, no study was found to address service quality in international court/tribunal libraries. The current research study addresses this gap.

CHAPTER THREE: LITERATURE REVIEW

3.1 INTRODUCTION

This chapter examines literature and empirical studies relevant to this study. The main focus areas for the literature review presented in this section include the literature that has been published, and studies conducted in the areas of service quality, service quality assessments, and the various tools used in service quality assessment. Literature was reviewed from journal articles, books, thesis and website content as well as other research relevant to the study. According to Boote and Beile, (2005:3-15), a literature review aims to do the following:

- a) Evaluate previous research and problems that directly or indirectly relate to the study
- b) Acquaint the researcher with the latest information in the field to be studied
- c) Keep the researcher up-to-date on work done by other researchers
- d) Give the researcher an understanding of the research methodology
- e) Be cognisant of the tools and instruments proven useful in similar studies
- f) Show what is already known and what remains to be investigated.

The literature review takes into account all of the above.

3.2 NATURE OF LITERATURE REVIEW

As part of research, the literature review plays the essential role of sharpening and deepening the theoretical framework of research, familiarising the researcher with developments in the study area, identifying knowledge gaps, exploring research instruments and expounding on the definitions of key concepts in context. The literature review is an essential part of research as it enables researchers to sharpen and deepen the theoretical framework of the research, to familiarise themselves with developments in the research area, identify knowledge gaps, identify valid and reliable instruments and ascertain accepted definitions of key concepts (Bless & Higson-Smith, 2000:20; Babbie

& Mouton, 2001:87). According to Mouton (2001), a literature review should be a review of scholarship.

According to Henning, Rensburg and Smit (2004:27), a literature review is a body of text that seeks to critically examine the salient points of a current body of knowledge, including research findings and theoretical and methodological contributions to the topic under study. It is a methodical, explicit, and reproducible method for identifying, evaluating, and interpreting an existing body of completed and recorded work produced by researchers, scholars, and practitioners (Fink, 2010:3).

A literature review helps place information in perspective by providing the researcher with a wide, comprehensive and in-depth overview of the subject matter (Green, Johnson & Adams 2001:102). It also serves the following purposes as outlined by Johnson and Christensen (2008: 65) and Welman, Krueger and Mitchell (2005:38-39):

- a) Information from a literature review can help avoid duplication of past research
- b) It brings out inconsistencies and gaps that may require further research
- c) It reveals important facts and background information about the subject under study
- d) It is a good source of motivation for further research
- e) Relevant research questions can be formulated from a literature review
- f) It makes it easier to identify appropriate data-collection instruments.

Literature reviews are important to the field under study because they make extensive contributions to the knowledge base of that field (Torraco, 2005: 356). Analysis of existing literature on a study topic is important in guiding evidence-based decision-making (Tranfield, Denyer & Smart, 2003; Whitemore & Knafl, 2005). According to Booth et al. (2012), it also helps in pinpointing gaps and synergies in the existing literature of a body of knowledge. In the publishing industry, journals frequently publish

review articles, whose citations enhance the stature of the authors and the journal (Denyer & Pilbeam, 2013).

In this study, a combination of the thematic, methodological, theoretical, and empirical approaches were adopted. The literature review was therefore presented as follows:

- a) The literature review discussed various quality assessment models and instruments relating to quality assessment in libraries. This was with the purpose of building the theoretical foundation of the study.
- b) In the review, various research methods applied in previous similar studies were also identified.
- c) Literature that is closely related to the study was reviewed thematically. This was done by focussing the literature around different themes derived from the research questions and objectives.
- d) A review of various empirical studies relating to the current study was done.
- e) Several studies have been conducted on service quality in library and information centres. The discussion below presents literature and key empirical findings of some of the service quality studies.

3.3 SERVICE QUALITY

The library has been described as the heart of any institution (Somaratna & Peiris, 2011:171). This is because it provides a place for authors to share their ideas and for users to advance their knowledge and complete their work. Libraries provide many services to users, addressing diverse needs, characteristics and interests (Somaratna & Peiris, 2011:171). The library addresses users' needs by providing services that meet their needs, characteristics and interests. It is through the provision of quality services that libraries can distinguish their services through friendly, helpful knowledgeable advice, in tandem with the best technological resources available (Somaratna & Peiris, 2011:171).

In the 1980s consumerism took root in most Western countries. With the rise in consumerism, scholars started to take interest in the quality of services offered by providers. It was at this point that scholars made attempts to define service quality from the perspective of the customer, and thus the term service quality took root.

Scholars such as Kotler (1999), Grönroos (1988), Garvin (1987), Cronin (1992), Taylor (1994), Teas (1993), Rust (1994), Parasuraman et al., (1994) took a keen interest in the subject and carried out various studies. These studies have contributed significantly to the development of the subject and it is from them that various models have been developed to measure service quality. To get a clear understanding of *service quality*, it is important to first understand the components that make up the term. These are *service* and *quality*.

3.3.1 Service defined

It is to be noted that product quality differs from that of a service in that quality in a product is tangible, whereas quality in a service is intangible (Muhammad & Alhamadani, 2011:61). Service is also defined differently.

The term “service” can be defined as behaviour or act based on a contact between two parties: comprising a provider and a receiver, whereby the nature of the transaction is reciprocal and intangible (Kotler, 2003). Other scholars have viewed service as a set of economic activities that provide time, location, form and psychological benefits (Haksever & Render, 2013). According to Beer (2003), service is a set of characteristics and overall properties which aim to satisfy the clients and meet their needs. Lasser, Manolis, & Winsor (2000) viewed service as a set of characteristics designed to meet the needs of clients, and at the same time building links between the service providers while strengthening the value of the client.

A service is defined as any economic activity that produces an intangible product (Heizer & Render, 2014:10). It may, or may not, be intended for profit, thus a service may be an action, or effort performed to satisfy an implicit or explicit customer need or expectation. Examples of services provided to customers in libraries include reference, reading space, lending, reservations and customer awareness service, among others.

3.3.2 Characteristics of service

Despite the continued debate about the validity of the four characteristics in distinguishing between products and services, these have come to be widely accepted by scholars as constituting the key characteristics of services. These characteristics explained below form the basis of most scholarly work in the services industry (Zeithaml & Bitner, 1996; Zeithaml, Parasuraman & Berry, 1985).

3.3.2.1 Intangibility of services

Unlike physical products, one cannot feel, touch, weigh, look at, smell, or taste a service before deciding whether or not to buy. Thus for services, there is no need for transport, storage or stocking. It is possible for a service to be re(sold) or owned, but it cannot be turned over from the service provider to the consumer. This intangible nature of most services gives rise to special problems both for suppliers and consumers. This is because services are activities, benefits or satisfactions which are offered for sale, or are provided in connection with the sale of goods (Haksever & Render, 2013).

According to Zeithaml (1981), the degree of tangibility affects the ease with which consumers can evaluate services. Service is intangible, which makes it complex. This is because it begins with design and is present through the whole process of delivery and performance, with assessment during the delivery process (Somaratna, Peiris & Jayasundara, 2010:2).

3.3.2.2 Inseparability of services

A key feature of service is that the service provision and provider cannot be separated from the service consumption and consumer. For example, one cannot take a restaurant home for consumption. A service consumer must sit in the barber's shop or on a plane; the barber must be in his shop and the pilot on the plane to deliver the service. Neither can one take home the service offered at a library reference desk; one has to experience it in the library. In other words, one must make use of this service at the point where it is offered. Inseparability here implies the simultaneous delivery and consumption of services (Zeithaml et al., 1985). This enables consumers to affect or shape the performance and quality of the service (Zeithaml, 1981).

3.3.2.3 Heterogeneity of services

Heterogeneity of services reflects their high variability (Zeithaml et al., 1985). This means that each service is unique in its delivery and consumption and cannot be repeated in the exact manner, time location or conditions. This is chiefly caused by the fact that services are in most instances provided by different people at different times under different conditions, for example a librarian at the reference desk might be rotated to another section. There is also the issue of the unpredictability of human beings. A jovial service desk librarian today could be very moody the next day. The service rendered at the point of borrowing a book is completely different from the service rendered at its return. This is a particular problem for services with a high labour content, as the service performance is delivered by different people and the performance of people can vary from day to day (Onkvisit and Shaw, 2004; Zeithaml, 1985).

3.3.2.4 Perishability of services

This refers to the non-ownership of services. After purchase of a service, a customer does not acquire ownership of that service, unlike in the case of a physical product. This means that on purchase of a service, you cannot carry and store it for future use, chiefly because services have little or no tangible components. They are produced and consumed

during the same period of time. What the customer pays is to secure access and use of the service (Zeithaml et al., 1985). The perishability of services comes in two forms. First, the relevant resources needed for a service are allocated for it during a defined period of time. If the consumer does not request and consume the service within this time, the service cannot be performed. Secondly, when service is performed for a user, it vanishes irreversibly since it has been consumed. For example, a book that has been issued to a user, cannot be returned at the same particular point in time.

3.3.2.5 Involvement

Participation of the customer in the service delivery process is one of the most important characteristics of services. With this involvement, a customer is in a position to get the service modified to fit his specific requirements.

Each of these characteristics is retractable per se and their inevitable coincidence complicates the consistent service conception and makes service delivery a challenge in each and every case.

3.3.3 Quality of service in libraries

Quality is a much-studied subject in the manufacturing and service sectors, but scholars agree that there is no definition that can be termed as universally accepted (Al-Dararkah, 2002). Defining quality can be subjective, personal and subject to various changes depending on the situation, time or organisation (Feather & Sturges, 2003).

There are various definitions of *quality*. The term *quality* comes from the Latin word *qualitas*, which refers to the nature of a person or the nature of an object. In the past *quality* meant accuracy and perfection (Al-Dararkah, 2002). It has been defined as the extent to which products or services are able to satisfy users' needs (Besterfield et al., 2003:8; Tam, 2000:350). It is the extent to which a set of characteristics comply with a set of requirements (ISO 9000 standard, 2005).

Karim and Alan (1996) defined quality as anything that accords with the characteristics of the product to meet a client's needs. This definition agrees with that of Heizer and Render (2014:190), who defined quality as the ability of a product or service to meet customer needs, whether stated or implied. Such ability is inherent in its distinctive features (attributes). If these features meet customer needs, the service or product is rated by the customer as superior to others (Dash & Padhi, 2010:12).

The global apex body for library professionals, the International Federation of Library Associations and Institutions (IFLA), has defined quality as *fitness for purpose* whereby purpose is set and defined by the user (2007:2). Thus for library and information centres, *quality* is the ability to satisfy the customers' needs, requests and desires for information. For this study, the definition adopted for *quality* will be the ability of the library to meet the needs of the users (Yu et al., 2008:521). This will be measured by the gap between the users' expectations and their perceptions.

The empirical study of *quality* gained momentum in the late 1950s and early 1960s, when scholars started to view it with academic interest. This was a culmination of studies by various scholars such as Deming, Juran, Crosby, Taylor, Feigenbaum, and Peters (Brophy & Couling, 1997). At this stage, studies on quality were focussed on its application to products in the manufacturing sector.

Quality has emerged as a very important issue in today's world to the extent that it is now considered as an organizational weapon in the battle to win and retain customers (Muhammad & Alhamadani, 2011:60). In order to remain competitive, organisations need to continually develop and upgrade their services. To do so, they need the information that can only be acquired from measuring service quality. The results from this exercise form an empirical basis from which steps can be taken to improve the quality of services.

3.3.4 Quality perspectives

According to Heizer and Render (2014:190-194) and Bhattacharjee (2011:117-118), quality can be viewed from several viewpoints. They identify five key areas, as follows.

3.3.4.1 Transcendental approach

According to this view, quality can only be experienced, but not discussed or written about (documented). This particular aspect of quality makes its management practically unrealistic. There is a general assumption among customers that the more expensive the service, the better the quality. This is not always true.

3.3.4.2 Manufacturing approach

This approach asserts that quality conforms to standards and that service providers should make it right the first time. It approaches quality from the manufacturer's point of view whereby requisite specifications are set in advance and any departure from this is regarded as a sign of low quality. This approach removes the assessment of quality from the consumer and places it on the standards set by the provider.

3.3.4.3 Product approach

According to this approach, quality is a variable that is exact, quantifiable and can be determined objectively. The limitation of this approach is that it is largely based on personal preferences, which implies that the standard for measurement can be misleading.

3.3.4.4 Value-based approach

In this approach, quality is equated to value, asserting that service providers need to reach a balance between conformance and performance. This means that benefits and prices have to be carefully evaluated to reach customer satisfaction. It defines quality in terms of costs and prices, and holds that customers base their decision to purchase on quality at the best price.

3.3.4.5 Customer-based approach

In this approach, quality is seen as a personal matter and services that best satisfy customer needs and their perception of quality are those with the highest quality. Quality is equated to improvements such as appealing attributes and better performance. Though rational, this approach is faulted on the fact that preferences of consumers can vary widely making it hard to capture all in a service or product.

Studies have shown that the above approaches are applicable to libraries. The service-based approach is the focus of this research. This is primarily because it presents many opportunities that libraries can seize to improve service quality for their customers, while at the same time developing new services to target previously untapped users to the library.

3.3.5 Quality dimensions

Garvin (1987:10-109) further identifies eight dimensions of product quality which could serve as a useful framework to address quality issues in an organisation. These are:

- a) *Performance*: This is defined as the capacity of a product or service to deliver benefits to the customer. It refers to a service's or product's basic operating features and involves measurable characteristics. Performance is the assessment of a product or service as regards the functions to which it was designed to carry out and determining how well it performs these functions from the user's perspective.
- b) *Features*: This refers to value or what the product can actually do. Features are additional characteristics that enhance the appeal of the product or service to the user. It refers to the additional features or functions that users derive from using the product or service. Garvin (1987:67) has shown that customers prefer products or services with value-added features. In some cases, features may also be additional or secondary characteristics attached, and thereby supplement the

primary functions of a product. Thus, a CD player could be seen as an additional feature of a car, whose primary function is transportation.

- c) *Reliability*: Reliability is the capacity of a product or service to deliver as promised or stipulated. It is also the probability that a service or product will not fail within a specific period of application.
- d) *Conformance*: This is the capacity of the product or service to deliver quality that meets specified design standards with precision. It is the ability of meeting the standards as stipulated in the design phase after the product is manufactured. For a service, this applies while the service is being delivered.
- e) *Durability*: This is a measure of how long the product or service can last. It is the lifespan or effective longevity before it can be termed as unfit for use, or in some cases, repairs are needed. After this period, repair is considered impossible. Durability measures the length of a product's or service's life.
- f) *Serviceability*: This is the speed and ease with which a product can economically be repaired or maintained after it has broken down. It includes the behavioural dimension of service personnel like their politeness, competence, behaviour or speed of service. Serviceability influences customers' views on quality.
- g) *Aesthetics*: Aesthetics refers to the looks, design, touch and feel of a product's or service's environment. It refers to the visual appeal of a product in terms of style, colour, shape, packaging, tactile characteristics, and other sensory attributes. It is the subjective response of a user to a product or service, defining the user's personal preferences.
- h) *Perceived quality*: This is the customer's feeling about the product after the intended use. It is the impression of a customer after using the product and/or service. Perceived quality is the quality attributed to goods or a service, based on indirect measures. If a product's failures are highly visible to the public, or a customer is ill-treated, this directly influences perceived quality. This dimension is directly influenced by any failures of the product that are highly visible to the public or the way the customer is treated when a quality-related problem with a

product is addressed. Thus customer loyalty and chances of repeat business are directly related to perceived quality.

Most of the dimensions discussed here form an integral part of the theoretical framework adopted in this research, based on their relevance and applicability in library services. This will be clearly shown throughout the study.

From the above, it can therefore be stated that service quality is essentially about ensuring that the customer is satisfied. Service quality measures how well a service is delivered as compared to customer expectations. Institutions that meet or exceed expectations are considered to have high service quality.

According to Herson and Altman (1998:5), service quality is a global judgement relating to the superiority of a service as viewed in the context of statements that a library is willing to act on if the customers find them of great value. This means that satisfaction levels from a number of encounters with the library combine to form an impression of service quality for the customer. A combination of experiences of many customers is what creates a library's reputation for service quality (Mkhonta, 2015:12).

Service quality has been viewed by some scholars as achievement in customer service that is reflected at each service encounter (Shanka, 2012:173-180). Customers' service expectations are formed from past experiences, word of mouth and information received from activities such as advertisement and other publicity exercises. In assessing service quality, customers compare perceived service with expected service. If the former falls short of the latter the customers are disappointed (Uysal & Yildiz, 2013:21-48).

Generally, there has been significant interest in the measurement of service quality and libraries have not been an exception (Jayasundara, 2011:25). Libraries have come to appreciate the need to carry out periodic evaluations of service quality with the aim of providing services that meet the needs of users. This need has been caused by various

factors key of which are changes in user behaviour whereby users now demonstrate more sophisticated needs and demand far more complex services. Others are economic downturns that have seen a reduction in library budgets and advancements in technology that have seen the exponential growth of the Internet and its possibilities (Kavulya, 2006:29; Nitecki, 1996:181). This has been compounded by the increasing cost of information and rising expectations of users and parent institutions.

These factors have contributed to the need for libraries to assess whether the services they provide meet the needs of the users. Despite the fact that budgets have suffered reduction, the general costs of running libraries and providing services has seen a gradual increase over the years. Libraries are faced with the unenviable expectation to provide the same services and even introduce new ones (Awan, Azam & Asif, 2008:51; Shi & Levy, 2005:267). Libraries, therefore, have to remain relevant by continuing to ensure that they provide services that are of high quality.

For a considerable period of time, libraries have been using various statistical counts to measure quality. Some of these statistics include the number of visitors to the library, the number of books borrowed, and the number of reference questions asked, among many others. Scholars have established that these statistics are inadequate since they do not provide an empirical basis for a comprehensive improvement of library services (Nitecki, 1996:182; Shi & Levy, 2005:267). Because these statistics only report the frequency of occurrence of library services, they do not provide an objective approach to service quality evaluation. In order to fulfil user needs as well as show relevance, transparency and accountability, libraries have had to review these traditional methods of evaluating their services (Sahu, 2006:187). According to Sahu, these methods no longer fulfil the goals for successfully meeting users' demands for quality services and are thus deemed obsolete (Sahu, 2006:187). Scholars have shown that a comprehensive and empirical evaluation of library services must capture the user's perspective (Sahu,

2007:235). Without the involvement of the user, a service quality evaluation would be incomplete (Awam, Azam & Asif, 2008:52).

The literature reviewed so far has shown that service quality is best determined by the user. In other words, the customer perception of a service defines and measures service quality (Jayasundara, 2011:26). For satisfaction to be achieved, a service should meet the needs of the user for whom it was intended. It is therefore proper that users state whether their needs have been met by that service (Somaratna & Peiris, 2011:1). According to Parasuraman, et al. (1994), the expectation of a service quality has influenced how the service is perceived. This means that service quality can therefore be conceptualised as the discrepancy between the users' expectation and their perceptions. (Jayasundara, 2011:26; Somaratna & Peiris, 2011:1).

In view of these facts, it should be noted that the critical issue alluded to is the necessity to meet the needs of the users, which in turn leads to customer satisfaction. Therefore satisfaction is a very important factor in service quality.

3.4 Assessing the quality of library services

It is the goal of librarians to ensure that they provide the best services and resources possible to their users. For effective services, there is a need to clearly understand, among others, the expectations of library users in terms of the quality of services (Calvert, 2008:1-2). Various methods have been designed and employed in assessing the quality of library services. Since the 1990s, the quality of libraries was measured using quantitative and statistical aspects, such as the size of the collection (number of books, number of journals, etc.) and various counts of its use (Nitecki, 1996). Studies by Hernon and Altman (1998) have shown that most of the traditional statistical methods that have long been used by libraries have been rendered less useful by changes in the profession, such as competing sources of information, budget cuts, complexity of user needs, developments in ICT and rising operational costs. Hernon and Altman (1998)

further state that most of the traditional statistics gathered by libraries lack relevance and do not measure the library's performance in terms of elements that are important to customers. They do not really describe performance or indicate whether service quality is good, indifferent, or poor. Likewise, they do not indicate any corrective action that the management should implement to improve service (Saraf & Muhammad, 2002:82).

However the user/client remains the best assessor of quality (Padremnia, Modiramani, and Ghanibarabadi 2012:160). Personal experiences, perceptions, beliefs and motivations influence service expectation. There is, nevertheless, quite a difference in expectancy between the consumer and the service provider (Hunter, 2002). With the unreliability of traditional methods of quality assessment and the changing nature of libraries and library users, other methods have evolved to match the changing times. The need to understand what library customers expect in terms of service quality is now necessary for good library management; hence library managers should always make efforts to assess library service quality (Calvert, 2000).

3.4.1 Criteria for assessing service quality

In an attempt to define service quality and identify the criteria that customers use while evaluating it, Parasuraman et al. (1988:12-40) conducted a number of empirical studies. In the course of these studies, they developed a set of ten criteria and dimensions which can be used to assess service quality (Parasuraman et al., 1988:12-40). These are:

- a) *Reliability*: Organisations deliver services with precision, accuracy and within the time that they promised to customers.
- b) *Responsiveness*: This is the ability and will of a service provider to react quickly and satisfy the needs of clients, reply to any queries and promptly solve any problems that arise.
- c) *Competence*: This comprises ability, adequate skills and knowledge of service employees to do their work successfully and efficiently.

- d) *Accessibility*: Users should be in a position to reach and use services in terms of location, or through telephone, the Internet, or other means of communication;
- e) *Courtesy*: Organisations should show politeness in their attitude and behaviour toward clients, treat clients respectfully and in a friendly manner, understand their feelings, and gently respond to their verbal and telephonic requests.
- f) *Communication*: Service providers should carefully and keenly listen to customers and create communication channels between the provider, clients and organisational staff.
- g) *Credibility*: Service providers should be honest, trustworthy, and believable. They should earn user confidence.
- h) *Security*: Services should be free from risks, defects and doubts in order to provide safe use, financial security and privacy to the user.
- i) *Understanding the customer*: This means a clear knowledge of the customer. It can be achieved through clear understanding of individual customer needs and problems.
- j) *Tangibility*: These are the physical dimensions of a service, things that can be perceived by touch or observation, such as instruments, equipment, persons, buildings and even decorations at the point of service.

According to Parasuraman (1985:45), service quality is a function of the differences between expectation and performance along these quality dimensions. Service quality is defined as a function of the gap between customers' expectations of a service and their perceptions of the performance of actual service delivery by an organisation (Jayasundara et al., 2009:182).

The researchers later contracted these dimensions into five broad dimensions, which were validated as appropriate in revealing the customer expectation and perception equation (Parasuraman et al., 1988:17), as follows:

- a) *Reliability*: Ability to perform the promised service dependably and accurately according to given specifications and conditions;
- b) *Assurance*: Knowledge and courtesy of employees and their ability to convey feelings of trust and confidence in dealing with the organization and its customers; this is reflected in the workers' knowledge, experience and their ability to build in themselves and in the customers;
- c) *Tangibility*: Presence and appearance of physical facilities, equipment, communication materials, and the physical appearance of employees;
- d) *Empathy*: Understanding the customers' personal needs, taking care of them individually and showing them various levels of sympathy and affection, and the provision of caring, individualized attention to customers;
- e) *Responsiveness*: Willingness to help customers and to provide prompt service; employees always ready to serve customers quickly and efficiently.

Using these five dimensions Parasuraman et al. (1988) developed one of the first instruments for measuring service quality, SERVQUAL. Other instruments were developed from SERVQUAL. They include SERVPREF and LibQUAL. These three instruments are used in this study.

3.4.2 Service quality assessment tools

With the passage of time different models have been evolved to measure service quality and today there are various service quality assessment tools in use. However, initial quality models focused primarily on goods. Then later, due to the rapid growth of the service sector, there came an expanding body of literature on service quality

(Jayasundara, Ngulube & Minishi-Majanja, 2009:179). The proliferation of information and communication technologies (ICT) has seen the emergence of service quality tools designed to measure the quality of services offered electronically and through the Internet. Service quality tools are therefore divided into two types. There are the earliest tools, also known as traditional models. They were designed to measure service quality in the non-library sector but were later adapted to library and information services. There are two types of traditional service quality tools, based on their approach. First, there are the tools that applied the customer satisfaction/dissatisfaction approach to explain service quality. These tools measure service quality as a gap between performance and expectations (Grönroos, 1984). The second type of traditional service quality tools are those that measure performance only. An example of tools in this group is SERVPERF.

The second type of service quality tools are those that have been designed to measure service quality in the new ICT environment. These were designed to measure the quality of services offered through Internet, such as e-shopping and e-banking. They have also been adapted to the library and information services offered through the Internet and include WebQUAL, DigiQUAL, E-SERVQUAL among others. Comprehensive coverage of these tools is presented under theoretical framework (chapter two, section 2.4).

3.4.2.1 SERVQUAL

Designed in 1985 and refined in 1991, SERVQUAL is a questionnaire consisting of 22 statements across five dimensions. These statements cover the key issues of service quality. It has two sets of similar statements. The first set collects the views of customers in an ideal environment (E). The second set requires customers to compare their expectations with the service delivery of a specific organisation (P). Thus the instrument measures service quality as the difference between performance (P) and expectations (E), thus $SQ = P - E$ (Jayasundara et al., 2009:182).

A negative measure of P minus E would indicate a gap in service performance from the customer's perspective, which means that the organisations would need to take action and address the issues. The instrument also has a section asking respondents to rank the five dimensions on their relative importance to them (customers). Having tested it in banking, hotel and bank services, its developers recommended it as reliable for application in any service industry by adopting suitable terminology (Chen et al., 2009; Manjunatha & Shivalingaiah, 2004:147).

SERVQUAL was criticised for its P minus E method of computation, on the basis that quality is subjective. These criticisms did not prevent it from emerging as a reliable and widely used tool to measure service quality. It has increasingly attracted the interest of researchers and service organizations. Starting in the mid-1990s, service quality assessments using SERVQUAL were being conducted in an expanded range of service organisations, including libraries. Other initial scholars who used SERVQUAL as the instrument of their empirical studies were Herbert (1993), White, Ables and Nitecki (1994), Nitecki (1995), Hernon (1996), Tan and Foo (1999), and Walters (2003).

The validity of this instrument to measure service quality in library and information settings has been verified by other studies, including those carried out by Cardiff University Libraries (1996), Sterling Evans Library (1997) and Virginia University Library (1998). These studies confirm the validity of the instrument to measure service quality in library settings. Pitt, Watson and Kavan (1997) used the instrument to measure service quality in an information systems environment.

Most of the above-mentioned studies accept the validity of the SERVQUAL instrument and suggest that it can be used in various environments with some modifications (Jayasundara et al., 2009:182). Within this context, it can be concluded that SERVQUAL as a service quality measurement tool is generic to all kinds of organisations. It therefore requires customisation for a more accurate and effective use in

specific environments, such as library settings. As a result of this generic nature other instruments have been developed to fill its deficiency gaps. Key instruments are LibQUAL and SERVPERF, both of which are used in this study.

3.4.2.2 LibQUAL

On the other hand, LibQUAL, which is also a modified version of SERVQUAL, is a service quality assessment instrument designed by the Association Research Libraries (ARL) (<http://www.arl.org>). Its main purpose is to identify service quality from the customer perspective. The tool was designed on the basis of the underlying methodology of SERVQUAL but with the purpose of serving the particular interests of libraries (Cook et al., 2001). Refined and tested several times over the years, it has evolved into a standardised tool to measure library service quality across various library contexts. It is widely used to identify, track, understand, and act on customers' opinions and experiences of service quality (Association of Research Libraries, 2015:1). LibQUAL has been globally used in different types of libraries (Cook et al., 2001). Since its introduction, more than 1.5 million library users from 1200 libraries have participated in its use. The instrument's development was a joint venture between ARL and Texas A&M University.

LibQUAL has undergone a number of changes and refinements which have resulted in the current model. The LibQUAL tool now measures library service quality through 22 core questions on three dimensions: (i) affect of service (AS); (ii) information control (IC); and library as place (LP). The AS dimension consists of nine questions related to the courtesy, knowledge and helpfulness of library staff in their delivery of user services. The IC dimension addresses (through eight questions) the adequacy of print and electronic collection, easy-to-use access tools, modern equipment, library website and self-reliance in information access. The LP dimension focuses on user perceptions of quiet, comfortable, inviting and reflective study space that inspires study and learning.

Users are required to rate all LibQUAL items in the three columns side-by-side on 1 (low) to 9 (high) scales for ‘perception’, ‘desire’, and ‘minimum’ services.

According to Miller (2008:37), various studies have confirmed the psychometric integrity of the LIBQUAL tool with different well-known approaches, such as structural equation modelling, reliability analysis, factor analysis, taxonomic analysis, and latent trait-item response theory. These authors are Cook et al., (2001); Thompson and Cook (2002); Thompson, Cook and Heath (2003); Thompson, Cook and Kyrillidou (2005); Thompson, Cook and Kyrillidou (2006) and Thompson, Kyrillidou and Cook (2008).

However, according to Jayasundara et al., (2009:182), the changing domain structures from one research project to another make it difficult to have a universally accepted instrument for the assessment of service quality in libraries.

3.4.2.3 SERVPERF

SERVPERF was derived from, and is therefore a subset of, SERVQUAL. SERVPERF was introduced by Cronin and Taylor (1992) on the rationale that customer preferences are more important to long-term service quality than differences in expectations and performance that are yet to come. Thus SERVPERF has a performance-only approach. SERVPERF reduces the number of items that must be measured from 44 to 22. According to Cronin and Taylor (1992), this makes it more efficient than the SERVQUAL. Thus perceived service quality becomes a reflection of the firm’s performance. When customers use a firm’s service, they form an attitude towards the quality of that performance. The SERVPERF instrument measures the performance of a firm (i.e. its service quality), collecting data by directly asking the customer through questionnaires.

A key weakness of SERVPERF is that expectations do not provide extra information in measuring service quality (Babakus & Boiler 1992; Brady, Cronin & Brand, 2002;

Cronin & Taylor, 1992, 1994). According to Cronin and Taylor (1992), there were two reasons behind the development of SERVPERF, namely

- (i) Assessment of customers expected service level, before service delivery is impossible;
- (ii) Assessment of expected service level after service delivery could be inaccurate because by then customers' expectations could have already been biased by the service.

SERVPERF provides managers with an overall service quality score. This can then be represented graphically in relation to time and specific customer segmentations related to consumer characteristics (Cronin & Taylor, 1994). SERVPERF thus makes it possible to measure overall service quality attitudes of service supervisors. But Cronin and Taylor (1994) advise that managers of service organisations should be careful in deriving more specific information from data collected through the SERVPERF scale for strategic decision-making.

However, in the contextual settings of libraries, the SERVPERF model is yet to be extensively researched (Jayasundara; 2009:71). Scholars have established that the features of both models are similar and appropriate for libraries (Jayasundara et al, 2009:182).

Both SERVQUAL and SERVPERF are flexible, and can be modified to suit special libraries (Jayasundara et al., 2009:182). However, according to Hernon and Nitecki (2001), SERVPERF is hardly used in libraries; SERVQUAL is more preferred by researchers because of its facility for broad application to service industries.

3.5 CHALLENGES IN MEASURING SERVICE QUALITY

According to Edvardsson, Thomasson and Ovretveit (1994), institutions are faced with a number of challenges when measuring service quality. First of all, those who design and

use service quality systems do not know much about what is to be measured, the overall goal of the exercise and how the results will be used. This is because many measurement systems are flawed and have a number of shortcomings (Edvardsson, Thomasson & Ovretveit, 1994:12).

Second, when measuring service quality, most researchers do not measure it across the whole service chain. Some may choose to focus on internal performance measures; others may choose to dwell on external customer measures. The best option is to balance the two. Quality assessment happens at the time of the research, (moment of truth), but the process of delivering quality starts well before then.

Third, expectations may significantly be increased by the very exercise of measuring customer expectations. It has been shown that bringing up the topic of quality improvement among customers can raise the expectations of the user to higher levels than before (Edvardsson et al., 1994:19).

Finally, quality assessment surveys are intensive, consuming time, money and energy. As such, frequent service quality surveys and measurement can create boredom and tire both staff and customers, leading to apathy and lethargy such exercises. The perfect balance should be sought to ensure that the exercise is not overdone (Edvardsson et al., 1994:23).

To mitigate these challenges, Edvardsson et al. (1994) advise that institutions identify what needs to be measured and design appropriate tools for gathering and analysing data. In identifying what to measure, Palmer (1998) advises institutions to ask themselves these questions:

- a) What do customers consider as the most important features of a service?
- b) What are the expected levels of those features?
- c) How do the customers perceive service quality?

When these questions are answered, organisations will be in a better position to determine clear benchmarks and objectives for improvement of quality. They will also be well positioned to offer the appropriate level of service quality to customers. The issue of how to measure will be dictated by what is to be measured. Today there is a wide variety of service quality measurement tools available to institutions. Consequently, the challenge for most researchers and institutions is to identify and deploy the most suitable and appropriate instruments for measuring service quality (Ford & Bach, 1997). In a study, McGlynn (1997) describes six such challenges researchers face in measuring service quality in the health sector. These are balancing perspectives, defining accountability, establishing criteria, identifying reporting requirements, minimizing conflict between financial and quality goals, and developing information systems. He goes on to propose ways in which the public and private sectors might collaborate to respond effectively to these challenges.

3.6 RELATED STUDIES ON ASSESSING QUALITY OF SERVICES IN LIBRARIES

This section reviews related studies that have been conducted in the last few years using the main tools used in this study, SERVQUAL and LibQUAL. All this is in view of identifying attributes of service quality relevant to the current study.

According to Hemon and Nitecki (2001), there are three main reasons why libraries should focus on service quality. First of all, information shared by library users about a service provides an avenue for the library to establish a close and useful personal contact with the user. Through this contact the library can provide services that better address the needs of the user. Using the information provided by the user, libraries can tailor services that directly address users' needs (Hemon & Nitecki, 2001:687-708).

Secondly, parent organisations, donors and benefactors are now exerting external pressure and calling for accountability on allocated resources and demanding that

libraries adopt business practices (Somaratna & Peiris, 2011:171). Thirdly, libraries need to compete with other sources of information such as other libraries and the Internet. Through service quality, libraries are able to cultivate a close partnership with their clients that in turn gives them a competitive advantage (Somaratna & Peiris, 2011:175).

3.6.1 Studies on SERVQUAL

A review of previous literature shows that most researchers of service quality in library and information services used the SERVQUAL protocol either in its original or modified versions. (Sinyenyeko-Sayo, 2007:22). Applications of SERVQUAL in assessing service quality in the library and information field started in the 1990s. It was used in a number of ways from testing one particular service to evaluating a whole range of library services. This has seen the application of the tool in several types of library services including public, academic and special libraries, such as the library under this study, the AFCHPR Library.

Hernon and Altman (1996) introduced a modified SERVQUAL model in assessing service quality in academic libraries. Their study was among the first to refine SERVQUAL for use in libraries. In doing so they used data collected from surveys and focus groups. The product of their work is a list of service quality questions that seek to measure various aspects of service quality in library and information centres. They also made suggestions on how these could be monitored.

A study by Hernon and Calvert (1996:9-7) outlined how academic libraries can implement a service quality programme using a survey instrument. They developed a flexible questionnaire that they used to measure user expectations. Its flexibility enabled it to be adapted to the specific needs of library and information centres (Somaratna & Peiris, 2011:172).

Using factor analysis on more than 100 variables, Herson, Nitecki and Altman (1999) established 12 dimensions of service quality. These were: guidance; waiting time; electronic services; library staff; equipment in good working conditions; library items arriving within time; condition of library building and environment; library furniture and other facilities; and course material.

Nitecki later tested SERVQUAL on a number of service quality aspects. These were reference service, interlibrary loan, and reserve service. He concluded that SERVQUAL could be used to measure how library services match user expectations. This was in a doctoral research project based on service quality (Nitecki, 1996:181-190). The study supported the reliability and validity of the SERVQUAL instrument, which was a strong indicator that it could be suitably applied in library and information settings. On analysis, the results can suggest which services or library aspects need to be addressed. This forms a good basis for librarians to better meet the expectations of customers and thereby improve the quality of library services (Somaratna & Peiris, 2011:172). Among the five dimensions of SERVQUAL, *reliability* was rated as the most important while *tangibles* was rated the least important (Nitecki, 1996:185). In a study at the university libraries of Usmangazi and Anadolu universities in Turkey, Filiz (2007) used a modified version of SERVQUAL to assess service quality. The study established that there were five dimensions related to service quality in Turkish academic libraries. These are quality of services, quality of information and library environment, reliability, confidence, and quality of the OPAC.

Kanguru (2014) conducted a SERVQUAL study on the application of total quality management (TQM) in evaluating the quality of library services at the Aga Khan University library in Kenya. The findings of the study established that the expectations of library users are higher than their perceptions. Through the gap analysis between the library users' perceptions and the expectations, she also established that there are service quality gaps in several of the library services offered by the library.

Landrum et al. (2009) investigated the service quality perceptions of professional information system users. He studied the relationship between the relative importance allocated by the system's users to each of the five SERVPERF dimensions (dimensions similar to those of the SERVQUAL instrument). He measured by the points allocated to each dimension and the ratings provided for the individual items of the dimension. He found that the highest-rated dimensions were system responsiveness and reliability above other service quality dimensions. The conclusions drawn from the study were that companies that provide client services, and designers of information systems that interface with users, would do well to emphasize responsiveness and reliability. Where there are limited user resources, these two dimensions should be emphasized over other SERVPERF performance dimensions.

A SERVQUAL study by Nimsomboon and Nagata (2003) established that there are three dimensions of service quality related to a university library. These are LP (organisational), IC (collection and access), and AS (personal). Their findings are similar to other SERVQUAL studies done by Srisa-Ard (1997) and Abdallah (2002), which established that the highest expectation for users was for reliability. The results of these studies were confirmed by a study carried out across university libraries in Finland to evaluate library services from the customer's point of view (Filiz, 2007) and a study at the University of Hong Kong library (Woo, 2005:115-135).

Thus it is evident that according to most findings, reliability is the most important quality when evaluating library services. It was also the key proposal by the developers of SERVQUAL.

3.6.2 Studies on LibQUAL

Using LibQUAL, Killick, van Weerden and van Weerden (2014:23) carried out a study on satisfaction among library users. They singled out common attributes of satisfaction and dissatisfaction that influence customer perceptions of libraries in the UK and the

Netherlands. They established that library staff, also referred to as the human element, is a critical aspect for attaining high-quality library services. They established that if customers are satisfied with the level of service under the IC aspect, they were satisfied with the overall library performance. This conclusion applied across the groups under study (university students and staff).

According to Killick et al. (2014:23), since the findings hold true for all the customer groups under study, taking action to improve service in the IC dimension will lead to overall satisfaction in library performance. Another significant finding of the study was that staff support and integration with customers was a key influence in the perception of customers on the library service. Thus a poor service will lead to a negative view of service in the entire library. Consequently, to meet customer needs, what is required is to improve the IC and AS elements. Scores for LP were low, but this did not have an impact on the overall scores, either negatively or positively (Killick et al., 2014:30). Their findings established that the LP dimension has least impact on overall satisfaction and dissatisfaction.

In a study on service quality in public and private sector university libraries of Pakistan, Rehman (2012a) used the LibQUAL questionnaire on 1,473 library users across 22 universities. The study revealed that private sector university libraries were generally meeting the minimum requirements of their users, except for the IC dimension, but public sector libraries were not meeting the minimum requirement in IC and AS dimensions. The study established that there existed significant differences in service quality between private and public sector university libraries. An interesting finding from the study was that a small collection creates small expectations, and that meeting and/or satisfying the needs of the users of a small collection is quite easy (Rehman, 2012 a:7).

Rehman's findings were close to those of another study that also used LibQUAL, by Cook, Heath and Thompson (2003), on private and public sector institutions. Their study established that the major concern of public community college library users was consistently courteous library staff, but this was rated low in other sector libraries (Cook et al., 2003:113-123).

In another study, Pedramnia, Modiramani and Ghanbarabadi (2012:164) used LibQUAL to assess quality of services in academic libraries in Iran and found that the AS dimension was rated highest while the LP was rated the lowest. The study also established that the specialized knowledge of library staff was a key factor in delivering quality services in the reference and circulation services. In the IC dimension agreeable working hours, classification system, information searching and access, and loan period for library resources were rated higher than LP. The largest gaps appeared in the areas of adequate number of computers and networks to access electronic resources (Pedramnia et al., 2012:164).

Studies have also shown that different users have different expectations of library services. The study by Cook et al. (2003) showed that the dimensions of IC (collection and access) and AS (staff-related services) are rated as more important to users across user groups than is the dimension of LP (library space, location and other physical facilities). The faculty also tended to have narrower ranges of tolerance than students. While the students expressed greater concern about library timings, the faculty did not. Giving individual attention was considered important by faculty while the students did not think so (Cook et al., 2003).

A LibQUAL study by Oyedum and Nwalo in Nigeria (2011:75), established a number of facts. First, libraries with current, relevant and adequate information resources are used more than those that do not have them. Secondly, the LP dimension (environmental factors) such as low noise, ventilation and illumination, were key factors in encouraging

increased use of the library. These results showed that the IC dimension is critical in encouraging use of libraries. A study by Opaleke (2002:100) established that when it comes to user expectations, most libraries in Nigeria score very low. They performed below the recommended 6% of the institutional budget. The study also found out that damage to collections, theft, noise and mutilations were as a result of lack of adequate seating in the library (Opaleke, 2002:105).

Thompson, Kyrillidou and Cook (2009) studied the use of item and matrix sampling to improve response rates and reduce the burden of responding to all the items on a service quality questionnaire. In their study they used the LibQual+ Lite. They established that greater completion rates were realised with the LibQual+ Lite than with any other version of LibQUAL.

Another study at the University of Malawi's Chancellor College Library showed a wide gap between user expectations and perceptions of service quality (Kachoka & Hoskins, 2009:177). While there were no major differences among the customer groups, there were higher expectations of library service quality among undergraduate students. However, minimum expectations and desired expectations exceeded perceptions, which was an indicator of a poor service in all three service dimensions and particularly the IC dimension. Thus adequacy gaps were negative while superiority gaps were very wide. Improvements were therefore needed in access to photocopy facilities, modern computers that let customers easily access information, adequate electronic resources, adequate library materials required by customers for their work, and reduced levels of noise.

Mehrerdi, Toranlo and Jamali (2009) used LibQUAL in a study on measuring the service quality of academic libraries service in fuzzy environment at Yazd University in Iran. In their study, LibQUAL was used to identify the gap between customer expectation and perceptions of the actual service received. It can be, and has been, modified to measure

various aspects of library services such as interlibrary loans (van Rooijen, 1998), library effectiveness (du Mont & du Mont, 2007), electronic services (Griffiths, 2005), library system suppliers (Fisher, 2000), and reference services (Head & Marcella, 1993).

About seven university libraries in South Africa have used LibQUAL in assessing their library services (Dube, 2011:28). Relevance and applicability of certain questions to certain user groups caused some initial problems with the tool. The results provided a good assessment of the quality of library services offered in the participating institutions. Moon (2007:80) undertook a study at Rhodes University that established that the library excelled in the IC dimension while it fell short in the AS dimension.

In a study on library quality in academic libraries, Miller (2008) considered the problem of assessing quality in academic libraries. He investigated whether service quality scores from LibQUAL were related to university characteristics, such as institutional type, student enrolment, and size of investment made in libraries. Data was collected for 159 college and university libraries that participated in LibQUAL in 2006. The study revealed several statistically significant relationships: negative correlations were found between each of the LibQUAL scores and total library expenditures. It was established that higher expectations among library users in large, research libraries led to slightly lower LibQUAL scores. This means that survey results should not be used as the only component of quality assessment strategy. The role of marketing of library and information services should be considered in efforts to influence user expectations.

Using the LibQUAL dimensions, Pedramnia et al. (2011), carried out a quality assessment of services provided by the Marshad University Medical Sciences libraries with an aim of determining member satisfaction and expectations of library services. The highest average score was AS with 6.39 and the lowest score 5.75 belonged to LP. Total results emphasised the importance of librarians' specialized knowledge level in the provision of efficient services in circulation and reference sections.

In a study on quality service perceptions and value among Canadian public library users using LibQUAL, Ladhari and Morales (2008) found that AS, LP and IC significantly explain perceived value. The results of the study show that there is a strong relationship between perceived service value and recommendation. The results also support the validity of the LibQUAL measure used in the study and its relevance in the public library service context. There is a strong relationship between perceived service value and recommendation. The results also support the validity of the LibQUAL measure used in this study and its relevance in the public library service context.

Wide gaps between user perceptions and expectation of service were observed in studies by Simba (2006:114) at the University of KwaZulu-Natal and by Naidu (2009:158) at Mangosuthu University of Technology, both in South Africa. Simba's study established that the library's performance was below par in service areas such as interlibrary loans, photocopiers, electronic journals, electronic databases, a quiet library environment and a library web page with useful information (Simba, 2006:116). In Naidu's study, areas that needed urgent redress fell under the LP dimension. These were inadequate and outdated book collections, library facilities (printing, photocopying and Internet access), and a quiet library environment (Naidu, 2009:159).

3.7 SUMMARY OF THE CHAPTER

Service quality is a practice that originated in the service industry. It is a multifaceted concept whose dimensions are now being fully appreciated. Early studies on service quality started in these service industries. These studies were conducted using instruments specifically developed for service industries. Such instruments include SERVQUAL and SERPERF. Since then many studies have been conducted on service quality in the service industry.

Interest with service quality later spread to library and information centres. But since service quality was still a new concept in the library field, there were no service quality

assessment tools specific to libraries. To address this, service quality tools that had been used in other service industries were modified to make them applicable to library and information centres. Such modifications resulted in tools applicable and specific to libraries. One of the most common of such tool is LibQUAL, which was derived from SERVQUAL.

The expectations of library users on library services are not static; they keep changing with factors such as time, frequency of interaction with service and other services that are now competing with libraries. Thus there is a need for continuous study and research on the various aspects of service quality. For library and information professionals, the results of the surveys should not be an end in themselves, but they should strive to use these results to make improvements in service quality and performance.

The literature review has revealed that there is so far no service quality study that has been done on international court libraries and especially the other two human rights courts (European Court of Human Rights and the Inter-American Court of Human Rights). Coming closer home, the review has also revealed that there is also no service quality study that has been carried out in the African Union Court library, and indeed in the other various African Union libraries.

In the African Court, service quality is an unfamiliar topic and regular practices of assessment of service quality do not exist, neither at the Court library nor other units. The usual practice is to measure library performance based on various regular statistics that are incorporated into annual reports to management and the judges of the Court. These statistics include the size of the collection, number of online subscriptions, library staff, number of borrowed books and visitors. This will be the first empirical study of the Court and indeed of African Union libraries using standardised modern instruments.

CHAPTER FOUR: RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

4.1 INTRODUCTION

Chapter three provided an overview of the research literature. This chapter describes the methodology that was applied in carrying out the research. It identifies and justifies the research paradigm, approach and design that were adopted for the study. Various strategies and processes that were employed to collect and analyse the data are also explained. Specifically, the chapter covers the research purpose, research paradigm, research approach, research design, target population, data collection methods, procedures and instruments, and data analysis procedures. Finally, the chapter presents a justification for the ethical considerations.

According to Somekh and Lewin (2005:346), research methodology is the collection of methods or rules by which a particular piece of research is undertaken, including the principles, theories and values that underpin a particular approach to research. Another scholar, Walter (2006:35) defines methodology as a frame of reference for research, which is influenced by the paradigm in which the theoretical perspective is placed or developed. Most common definitions agree that methodology is an overall approach to research, linked to the paradigm or theoretical framework while method refers to systematic modes, procedures or tools used for collection and analysis of data. The focus of research methodology is on the research process and the kind of tools and procedures to be used in the research (Babbie & Mouton, 2001:75).

4.2 RESEARCH PARADIGM

According to Creswell (2014:6-7), researchers start a project with certain assumptions about how they will learn and what they will learn during their inquiry. These claims are called *worldviews* or paradigms. Creswell defines a paradigm (worldview) as a ‘basic set of beliefs that guide action, or a general philosophical orientation about the world and the nature of research that a researcher brings to a study’ (2014:6). A research paradigm

is the perspective from which a researcher considers how data about a phenomenon should be gathered, analysed and used (Saunders, Lewis & Thornhill, 2009:83). According to Rossman and Rallis (2003), a paradigm is shared understandings of reality, a worldview or a set of assumptions about how things work. It refers to a set of philosophies and assumptions regarding the world and the nature of knowledge held by a community of scientists, which influences the type of problems they investigate and their way of conducting research (Babbie, 2004; Collis & Hussey, 2003). According to Creswell (2014:5-60), although paradigms remain largely hidden in research, they still influence the practice of research and need to be identified. This is because they will help explain why the researcher chose qualitative, quantitative or mixed methods approaches for the research. Quantitative and qualitative research methods involve very different assumptions (paradigms) about how research should be conducted and the role of the researcher.

According to Creswell (2014:6), there are four widely used paradigms in research. These are postpositivism, constructivism, transformative and pragmatism.

Table 4.2: Four research paradigms/worldviews (Creswell, 2014:6)

Postpositivism	Constructivism
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Determination • Reductionism • Empirical observation and measurement • Theory verification 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Understanding • Multiple participant meanings • Social and historical construction • Theory generation
Transformative	Pragmatism
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Political • Power and justice oriented • Collaborative • Change oriented 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Consequences of actions • Problem-centred • Pluralistic • Real-world practice oriented

4.2.1 Positivist paradigm

This paradigm is also sometimes known as the *postpositivist*, *scientific* or *empirical* paradigm. According to Creswell (2014:7), postpositivist assumptions have represented the traditional form of research, and these assumptions hold true more for quantitative than qualitative research. It is called postpositivist because it represents the thinking after positivism (Gray, 2012). It challenges the traditional idea of the absolute truth of knowledge and acknowledges that scholars cannot be positive about their claims of knowledge when studying human behaviour, which is ever-changing and difficult to predict (Phillips & Burbules, 2000). According to postpositivists, causes determine effects or responses. This is called a deterministic philosophy (Creswell, 2014:7). Postpositivists study problems that reflect a need to identify and investigate causes that influence outcomes (for example in experiments).

The purpose of this paradigm is to reduce ideas into a small discrete set that can be tested, for example the variables that comprise hypotheses and research questions, thus making the paradigm *reductionistic* (Alliyu et al., 2014:7). Postpositivism creates knowledge that is based on careful observation and measurement of the objective reality that exists in the world. For researchers following this paradigm, the development of numeric measures of observations and studying the behaviour of individuals is of the utmost importance (Bisman, 2010: 11). To understand the world, postpositivists test and verify the theories and laws that govern the world. Postpositivists usually apply the scientific method of research, whereby a researcher begins with a theory, collects data that either supports or refutes the theory, and then makes necessary revisions and conducts additional tests (Creswell, 2014:7). According to Phillips and Burbules, (2000), the key assumptions of this paradigm are as follows;

- a) Absolute truth can never be found because knowledge is conjectural (anti-foundational). Therefore evidence that is established in research is imperfect and fallible. It is due to this that postpositivist researchers always state that they do

not set out to prove a hypothesis, but rather they indicate a failure to reject the hypothesis.

- b) The aim of research is to develop relevant true statements that can serve to explain the situation or relationships under study. Researchers in quantitative studies seek to advance the relationship among variables and pose this in terms of questions or hypotheses.
- c) A competent inquiry is objective. Methods and conclusions should be examined thoroughly for any bias.
- d) Research is a process of making claims and then refining or dropping some of these claims for other claims that are more strongly warranted. It is because of this that most quantitative research begins with the test of a theory.
- e) Knowledge is shaped by data, evidence and rational considerations. The information is collected by the researcher on instruments based on measures that have been completed by participants or through observations recorded by the researcher.

4.2.2 Constructivist paradigm

Constructionists believe that individuals make deliberate efforts to understand the world in which they live and work (Fahy & Harrison, 2006:8). According to the constructivist view, people develop subjective meanings of their experiences, and these meanings are directed toward certain objects or things. The meanings are multiple and varied, which makes the researcher look complexity in views rather than narrowing meanings into a few categories or ideas (Creswell, 2014:8). The participant's views of the theme under study are critical to the study since study relies on these views. The researcher uses broad and general questions, allowing the participants to construct the meaning of a situation, within discussions and interactions with others. Open-ended questioning is preferred, allowing the researcher to carefully listen to what the participants do or say in their typical real-life settings (Roller & Layrakas, 2015:11). Subjective meanings are

developed through historical, social and cultural interaction with others over time (thus the term ‘constructivism’).

Therefore constructivist researchers usually investigate the processes of interaction among people, while focusing on the specific contexts in which people live and work in order to understand historical and cultural settings of the participants (Lincoln, Lynham & Guba, 2011). The researchers position themselves to acknowledge how their interpretation flows from their personal, cultural and historical experiences, based on recognising that their own backgrounds shape their interpretation (Andrews, 2012:8). From this position, the researchers’ goal is to interpret the meanings others have about the world. Unlike the postpositivists, the researchers in constructivism do not start with a theory, but they generate or inductively develop theories or patterns of meanings (Creswell, 2014: 8). Constructivism is generally seen as an approach to qualitative research. Crotty (1998) identified some key assumptions of constructivist paradigm:

- a) People construct meanings as they engage with the world they are interpreting. Thus researchers using qualitative methods use open-ended questions to enable participants to freely share their views.
- b) Meanings are generated within social contexts, emanating in and out of interaction with the human communities. Qualitative research processes are generally inductive, whereby researchers extract meanings from data collected in the field.
- c) Human engagement and understanding of the world is based on historical, cultural and social perspectives. Therefore, qualitative researchers set out to investigate the context or setting of the participants by gathering information personally. Then they interpret the findings using an interpretation shaped by their own experiences and historical background.

4.2.3 Transformative paradigm

According to Trevors et al. (2012: 13), this position rose from researchers who felt that the postpositivist paradigm and its assumptions placed structural laws and theories that did not fit marginalized persons in society or issues of power, social justice, discrimination and oppression that needed to be addressed. This paradigm is not characterized by a uniform body of literature, but includes groups of researchers who are critical theorists. These include participatory action researchers, racial and ethnic minorities, feminists, indigenous peoples and persons with disabilities. Researchers in this paradigm also felt that the constructivist paradigm did not advocate for marginalized persons nor any agenda to help them (Creswell, 2014: 9). According to the transformative paradigm, research needs to be combined with a political change agenda in order to confront social oppression and marginalization at all levels (Mertens, 2010).

The research is therefore designed with an action agenda for reform aimed at changing the lives of participants, their institutions and the researcher's life. The research also seeks to address important social issues, for example inequality, poverty, empowerment, oppression and alienation (Romm, 2015:6). The research starts with one or more of these issues as the key theme of the study, and proceeds in a collaborative manner so as not to further marginalize the participants. To achieve this, researchers often involve participants in the various stages of the research, such as designing questions, data collection and analysis. Thus transformative paradigm becomes a voice for the participants by raising their consciousness and advancing a reform and change agenda that improves their lives (Creswell, 2014:9). According to Mertens (2010:06), the key assumptions of the transformative paradigm are as follows:

- a) The key focus of the transformative paradigm is the study of lives and experiences of diverse groups and individuals in society that have traditionally been marginalized and disenfranchised, how their lives have been constrained by oppressors, and the strategies that they use to resist, challenge and overcome these constraints.

- b) The study of these diverse groups focuses on inequalities that are based on gender, race, ethnicity, disability, socioeconomic strata and others that bring about asymmetric power relationships.
- c) The transformative research paradigm seeks to connect political and social action to these inequalities.
- d) Transformative research uses a programme theory of beliefs about how a programme works and why social problems such oppression, discrimination, marginalization and power relationships exist.

4.2.4 Pragmatic paradigm

According to Creswell (2014:10), pragmatism as a world view arises out of actions, situations, and consequences rather than antecedent conditions (as in postpositivism). It focuses on problems, applications, what works and finding solutions to problems (Platton, 1990). According to the pragmatist paradigm, the most important determinant of the adopted research philosophy is the research problem or question. Rather than focusing on methods, researchers using this paradigm emphasize the research problem and use all available approaches to understand it (Rossman & Wilson, 1985). Scholars such as Morgan (2007) and Tashakkori and Teddlie (2010) have studied and pinpointed the importance of the pragmatic paradigm in focusing its attention on the research problem in research and then using pluralistic approaches to derive knowledge about that problem. Pragmatists argue that it is possible to work within both postpositivist and constructivist positions (Creswell, 2009). For them, both post positivism and constructivism have limitations and it is therefore unrealistic in practice to choose between them (Guba & Lincoln 1994; Ngulube, Mokwatlo & Ndwandwe, 2009). This paradigm applies a practical approach by integrating different perspectives in the collection and interpretation of data. Pragmatists are motivated by problems faced by society and seek to find out what works (Guba & Lincoln 1994; Ngulube et al., 2010). According to Howe (1988), qualitative and quantitative methods are compatible, and a good research design should involve mixed methods. This means that the decision about

whether to use qualitative or quantitative methods (or both) depends on the research question at hand and on the stage of the research cycle (for example, using inductive or deductive reasoning).

This study adopted the pragmatic paradigm based on the following reasons as outlined by Creswell (2014:11):

- a) Pragmatism is not committed to any one system of philosophy and reality. This aspect is ideal for MMR because it allows researchers to draw liberally from both quantitative and qualitative assumptions when undertaking studies.
- b) The paradigm provides individual researchers with freedom of choice in that they are free to choose the methods, techniques and procedures of research that they find suitable to their needs, objectives and purposes.
- c) Pragmatism does not look at the world as an absolute unity. Similarly, rather than subscribing to only one way (quantitative or qualitative), MMR researchers apply many approaches in collecting, analyzing and interpreting data.
- d) For pragmatists, truth is what works at a particular time. For them, truth is not based on a duality between reality independent of the mind or within it. Therefore, in MMR researchers use both quantitative and qualitative data. This allows them to provide the best understanding of a research problem.
- e) Based on the intended consequences, pragmatist researchers focus on *what* and *how* to research. Researchers using mixed methods usually establish an objective or purpose for their mixing, a kind of explanation of why quantitative and qualitative data need to be mixed.
- f) For pragmatist researchers, research always takes place in a context, for example social, historical or political. This allows MMR researchers to include aspects of social justice, inclusion and political aims.
- g) Pragmatists believe in an external world of knowledge which is independent of the mind and also that which is lodged in the mind. For them, asking questions about reality and the laws of nature is unnecessary (Cherryholmes, 1992).

In conclusion, for the mixed methods researcher, pragmatism opens the door to multiple methods, different worldviews, and different assumptions, as well as different forms of data collection and interpretation (Creswell, 2014:10). This makes it the most ideal for this study.

4.3 RESEARCH APPROACH

A research approach is the plan or proposal to conduct research, involving an intersection of philosophy, research designs and specific methods (Maxwell, 2013:55). According to Creswell (2014:3), there are three basic research approaches, namely quantitative research, qualitative research and MMR.

4.3.1 Quantitative approach

A quantitative approach is a research approach for testing objective theories by examining the relationships among variables (Creswell, 2014:4). The variables can be measured typically using instruments, so that numbered data can be analysed using statistical procedures. Final written reports from quantitative approaches have a set structure consisting of introduction, literature and theory, methods, results and discussions (Maxwell, 2013:29). Similar to qualitative approaches, researchers using this approach have assumptions about testing theories deductively, putting in place mitigations against biases, controlling for alternative explanations, and the ability to generalize and replicate the research findings (Creswell, 2014: 5).

In a quantitative approach, the investigator primarily uses postpositive claims for developing knowledge, i.e. cause and effect thinking, reduction to specific variables and hypotheses and questions, use of measurement and observation, and the test of theories (Sekerani & Bougie, 2013:19). It employs strategies of inquiry such as surveys, experiments, testing, structured content analysis, interviews, and observation to collect data on predetermined instruments that yield statistical data. It involves the generation of data in the form of numbers (Kombo & Tromp, 2006:10).

This data can then be subjected to thorough analysis in a systematic and rigid fashion (Kothari, 2009:5). It involves controlled observation and experimentation. Knowledge emerges from what can be proven by direct observation (Kombo & Tromp, 2006:11). It is outcome oriented and data can be generalised. Various types of quantitative research include exploratory, descriptive and explanatory. Quantitative research is objective, deductive and highly structured (Denzin & Lincoln, 1994:2).

4.3.2 Qualitative approach

According to Creswell (2014:4), a qualitative approach aims at exploring and understanding the meaning individuals or groups ascribe to a social or human problem. The research process involves emerging questions and procedures, data typically collected in the participants setting, data analysis inductively building from particulars to general themes, and the researcher making interpretations of the meaning of the data. The final written report has a flexible structure. Those who engage in this form of inquiry support a way of looking at research that honours an inductive style, a focus on individual meaning, and the importance of rendering the complexity of a situation (Teherani et al., 2015:674).

Creswell (2013:21) states that a qualitative approach is one in which the inquirer often makes knowledge claims based primarily on constructivist perspectives (i.e. the multiple meanings of individual experiences meanings socially and historically constructed, with an intent of developing a theory or pattern) or advocacy/participatory perspectives (i.e. political, issue-oriented, collaborative, or change oriented) or both (Bergold & Thomas, 2012). It uses strategies of inquiry such as narratives, phenomenologies, ethnographies, grounded theory studies, or case studies. The researcher collects open-ended, emerging data with the primary intent of developing themes from the data (Hogan, Dolan & Donnelly, 2009:12).

This is an approach that is concerned with the subjective assessment of attitudes, opinions and behaviour. The researcher uses his insights and impressions. The results generated by such research are in forms that are not in numerical form and that cannot be measured. They cannot be therefore subjected to rigorous quantitative analysis (Kothari, 2009:5). It involves uncontrolled observation in a natural setting. Findings can be generalised. It is descriptive, subjective, inductive and involves little structure and manipulation of objects. It uses unstructured interviews, observation, and content analysis (Denzin & Lincoln, 1994:2).

4.3.3 Mixed methods research (MMR)

According to Creswell (2014:4), MMR is an approach to inquiry that involves collecting both quantitative and qualitative data, integrating the two forms of data, and using distinct designs that may involve philosophical assumptions and theoretical frameworks. The core assumption of qualitative and quantitative approaches provides a more complete understanding of a research problem than either approach independently (Pearce, 2012:5).

The researcher bases knowledge claims on pragmatic grounds, e.g. consequence-oriented, problem-centred, and pluralistic (Creswell, 2013:203). The method involves collecting and analysing both forms of data, quantitative and qualitative, in a single study (Morgan, 2013: 17). The data collection involves gathering both numeric information (e.g. on instruments) as well as text information (e.g. in interviews) so that the final database represents both quantitative and qualitative information (Creamer, 2017:20-21). It uses strategies of inquiry that involve collecting data simultaneously or sequentially in order to best understand problems in research. According to Creswell (2003:38), MMR is expanding and widely used. Bryman (2012:628) views MMR as ‘a simple shorthand to stand for research that integrates quantitative and qualitative research within a single project’. Creswell (2013:203) notes that the ‘development and perceived legitimacy of both qualitative and quantitative research in the social and human sciences’ has resulted

in the emergence of MMR which employs the combination of quantitative and qualitative approaches. As a result, MMR has gained popularity among social science researchers because “research methodology continues to evolve and develop, and mixed methods is another step forward, utilizing the strengths of both qualitative and quantitative research” (Creswell, 2013:203).

Finally, an MMR approach is one in which the researcher tends to base knowledge claims on pragmatic grounds (e.g. consequence-oriented, problem-centred, and pluralistic). It employs strategies of inquiry that involve collecting data either simultaneously or sequentially to best understand research problems. The data collection also involves gathering both numeric information (e.g. on instruments) as well as text information (e.g. on interviews) so that the final database represents both quantitative and qualitative information (Creamer, 2017:20-21). This study adopted the MMR approach.

The current study used MMR strategy as a means of seeking convergence across qualitative and quantitative approaches (Azorin & Cameron, 2010). It used the data collection methods of questionnaires and FGDs. A quantitative study was first carried out using questionnaires to answer the research questions. The issues arising from the analysis of this data were then further investigated using qualitative FGDs. Thus MMR was used in this study to test for consistency, rather than simply getting the same result by different approaches. The study has followed the recommended way of combining qualitative and quantitative methods, which is to first start with the quantitative study, followed by a qualitative inquiry. The MMR approach used here was informed by its various advantages.

The MMR approach overcomes and addresses the deficiencies of each of the single methods (Leech & Onwuegbuzie 2009:273). A key motivator of using the approach was the desire to improve the quality of the study by neutralising or compensating for the

biases, limitations, and weaknesses of using a single-approach method and attain more accurate data with a higher degree of validity (McMurray, Pace & Scott 2004). By using a mixed methods approach in data collection, data analysis and interpretation of the findings, the study drew upon the strengths and perspectives of each method. Collins, Onwuegbuzie and Sutton (2006), and Azorin and Cameron (2010) listed three reasons for combining quantitative and qualitative research. First, the combinations used enable confirmation or corroboration of each. Second, combinations enable or develop analysis in order to provide richer data. Third, combinations are used to initiate new modes of thinking by attending to paradoxes that emerge from the two data sources.

The use of the MMR approach has also further been justified by several researchers such as Ngulube et al. (2009:109), Creswell (1995, 1998); Creswell and Plano Clark (2007); Onwuegbuzie, Slate and Leech (2004:786) and Creswell (2003:203). However, some scholars have raised concerns about MMR (Fidel, 2008:267), especially regarding issues of validity, sampling and merging of data. It has also been noted that there are no clear standards to guide actual application of the approach in research. But these concerns do not negate the fact that MMR remains one of the most suitable research approaches for this study (Fidel, 2008:267).

4.4 RESEARCH DESIGN

Creswell (2014:11-12) defined research design as a type of inquiry/study within qualitative, quantitative and mixed methods approaches that provide specific direction for procedures in a research design. They can also be defined as strategies of inquiry (Denzin & Lincoln, 2011). According to Wahyuni (2012:69), research design consists of a set of specific procedures, tools and techniques to gather and analyze data. It is a scheme of action for answering the research questions and systematically collecting and analysing the data (Monette, Sullivan and DeJong, 2011:3). They are procedures for collecting, analyzing, interpreting and reporting data in research studies (Creswell & Plano Clark, 2007:58). Research designs direct the researcher to the required information

needed for a chosen study, thereby making research as useful as possible. It indicates the way in which data will be collected and analysed in a logical and systematic way (Tharenou, Donohue & Cooper, 2007:317). It is also a detailed plan or map that outlines the way in which observations will be made (Monette et al., 2011:3). Decisions on research design are made based on the research purpose, and on what best matches the research problem under study (Saunders, Lewis & Thornhill, 2009).

As mentioned above, this study adopted a mixed methods approach. According to Creswell (2014:14), MMR designs involve the combination or integration of quantitative and qualitative research and data in a research study. MMR designs bring together more than one research method, mostly qualitative and quantitative designs in a single research study (Leech & Onwuegbuzie, 2009:273). Qualitative data is often open-ended without predetermined responses while quantitative data includes closed-ended responses like those found in questionnaires.

One of the most commonly used designs is the *convergent parallel mixed methods*. According to Creswell (2014:15), this is a type of mixed methods design in which the researcher converges or merges quantitative and qualitative data in order to provide a comprehensive analysis of the research problem (Creswell 2014:15). The researcher collects both forms of data at about the same time and then integrates the information in the interpretation of the overall results (Creswell 2014:15). The quantitative and qualitative data is analysed separately and the results compared to see if the findings confirm or disconfirm each other (Creswell 2014:19). This approach is based on the main assumption that both qualitative and quantitative data provide different types of information, which often details views of participants qualitatively, and scores on instruments quantitatively (Creswell, 2014:219). These two approaches should produce results that are similar. In the end, contradictions or incongruent findings are explained and any additional probing is done.

This study uses the *convergent parallel mixed methods* design. In this study, the researcher merged quantitative and qualitative data in order to provide a comprehensive analysis of the research problem (Creswell, 2014:15). The researcher collected both forms of data (quantitative and qualitative) during the data collection stage and then integrated both in the interpretation of the overall results. Quantitative data was collected using questionnaires while qualitative data was collected using FGDs. The two sets of data were then separately analysed and the results compared to establish if they confirm or disconfirm each other.

Other designs within MMR are explanatory sequential mixed methods, exploratory sequential mixed methods, transformative mixed methods, embedded mixed methods and multiphase mixed methods.

4.5 STUDY AREA

An area of study is defined as the geographical demarcation for which data is collected and analysed. It is the geography or physical area for which data is analyzed in a report or study. The seat of the African Court on Human and Peoples' Rights is Arusha City, in the United Republic of Tanzania. The city is situated in the northern-eastern part of Tanzania and is the capital of Arusha Region, which has a population of 1,288,088 people, including 281,608 people in Arusha District (United Republic of Tanzania, 2003). Arusha is surrounded by some of Africa's most famous landscapes and national parks. As a major international diplomatic hub, the city has been the headquarters of the East African Community since 1994. It is also the seat of the United Nations International Criminal Tribunal for Rwanda (ICTR) and the East African Court of Justice.

4.5.1 Library of the African Court on Human and Peoples' Rights

The Court's library started with the recruitment of the first librarian in 2008. It was formed with a general purpose of supporting the judicial activities and legal endeavours

of the members of the Court (judges), and staff of the Registry. The Court also extends its services to external clients. From an empty room in 2008, the library has grown to over 3,512 volumes and subscribes to various external databases in the area of law, human rights and related subjects. It also subscribes to 25 legal journals and 20 general newspapers and magazines. The library automated its services right from inception through the installation of library management software. The software is fully loaded with all the requisite modules: acquisition, cataloguing, serials, circulation, online public access (OPAC) and web services. Automation of case law and internal court documents is currently underway. The Court has already installed a document management and a case management system. By nature, it is a specialised library focusing mainly on writings on human and peoples' rights. The vision of the library is to be a centre of excellence for information resources on the African Charter on Human and Peoples' Rights and all other applicable African and international human rights instruments. The library and the Court have no branches. They are based at the seat of the Court in Arusha.

4.5.2 Mission of the library

Founded on the central importance of knowledge and information to the practice of law, the library exists to provide efficient library and information services to the African Court on Human and Peoples' Rights and its registry. It supports the judicial activities and legal endeavours of the members and staff of the Court and approved external users. The library's key functions are as follows:

- a) Carry out surveys periodically to establish the information needs of members of the Court and staff of the registry and work closely with them to search, identify and select materials in all formats for possible purchase and integration into the library's collection;
- b) Develop the library collection through acquisition of relevant information resources in various formats to meet user needs;

- c) Organise the library collection through cataloguing, classification, indexing, creation and maintenance of electronic catalogues etc;
- d) Disseminate information resources to library users through quality user services (Current Awareness Services-CAS and Selective Dissemination of information-SDI), among others;
- e) Provide access to electronic resources such as e-journals and e-books, access to external databases, document servers, catalogues etc;
- f) Cultivate mutually beneficial partnerships with other libraries.

4.5.3 Library collection

As of September 2015, the library had 3,512 volumes of books. It subscribes to 20 general newspapers and various external databases in the areas of law, human rights and related subjects. The library has also subscribed to five online databases that specialize in law. The library stocks information materials in the four official languages of the African Union: English, French, Portuguese and Arabic. The collection includes several types of resources: professional texts and monographs, reference materials (biographies, bibliographies, dictionaries, encyclopaedias, catalogues, annual reports, etc.), journals, regional and international journals, legal reports and works, Court session reports, Court decisions, theses and other academic works in the area of human rights, electronic databases, audio visual materials (CD, DVD, CD-ROM, VCD and audio cassettes). The library collects resources in the following subject areas: African Charter on Human and Peoples' Rights; human rights and related areas; law in general; international human rights systems; international courts; international legislations of the African Union member States; case law; languages of the African Union; and relevant African Union documents. The library uses the Library of Congress Classification System (LoC) for classification and the Anglo-American Cataloguing Rules second edition for cataloguing. Currently the library has no branches.

4.6 TARGET POPULATION

A research population is a large collection of individuals or objects that is under consideration and forms the main focus of study (Kumar, 2008:14). It includes all members of a defined group that are under study or on whom information is being collected for data-driven purposes (Johnson & Christensen, 2010:218). It is an entire group of persons or elements that have at least one thing in common, and denotes the larger group from which a sample is taken (Kombo & Tromp, 2006:76). ‘Target population’ is used to refer to the whole group of persons or objects in which the researcher is interested in generalizing or extrapolating the conclusions (Levy & Lemeshow, 2011:11). For this research, the population of study was the users of the AfCHPR library, both internal and external.

4.6.1 Users of the library

The users of the library fall into two main categories; internal users and external users. Internal users comprise the staff of the registry and the Court. They fall into two groups.

4.6.1.1 Internal users

Staff of the registry

The registry comprises staff that manage the day-to-day activities of the Court. They are the key users of the court’s library. These are legal officers, court clerks, administrative staff, protocol officers, finance officers, communication officers, ICT officers and language staff. The registry is headed by the Registrar of the Court. The staffs of the registry are 65 in total of whom three are library staff.

Staff of the Court

The Court comprises judges, who are headed by the President of the Court. The judges, including the President, are 11 in total. These mostly work through the legal officers.

4.6.1.2 External users

These are guest users of the library. They work neither for the registry nor the Court. They include applicants and representatives of parties in cases before the Court, lawyers and judges of other courts, students from learning institutions, university lecturers, and staff of other organs of the African Union. Others are representatives of non-governmental and civil society organisations with interest in human rights, journalists, and authors of books. At any given time there are interns working at the Court. Since the library has no branches, there are no branch users.

For this research, sampling was not done as all the 65 staff members of the registry were included in the study. These were classified according to the key departments of the court. The departments of the Court are Legal, Administration and Finance, ICT, Languages and external users. The library has contacts of external users as these have to register whenever they visit the library. Currently the list has 29 consistent external users comprising mostly law students and lawyers based in Arusha. These were all included in the study.

4.7 Data Collection methods and instruments

Data collection refers to the gathering of specific information aimed at proving or refuting certain facts (Kombo, 2010:99). The key goal of data collection is to gather information for record keeping, to make decisions about specific issues, or to pass information on to others. Data is generally collected to provide information regarding a specific subject or topic. It therefore involves generating or bringing together information that has been systematically observed, recorded, organized, categorized, or defined in such a way that allows logical processing and inferences (Mellenberg, 2008:211-234). According to Kothari (2009:97-117), there are several data collection methods currently used in collecting research data. The following are the key data collection methods;

4.7.1 Questionnaires

A questionnaire is a research instrument consisting of a number of questions printed or typed in a definite order on a form for the purpose of gathering information from respondents (Kothari, 2009:100). It is administered to respondents who are expected to read the questions and write down the replies in the spaces provided in the form. According to Silipigni (2010: 146-147), the questionnaire offers several advantages over other techniques:

- a) It involves low cost as compared to interviews.
- b) Interviewer bias is minimised, since the respondent writes in his own words.
- c) Respondents have time to write down frank and well thought-out responses.
- d) The method can obtain responses from respondents who are not easily reachable.
- e) It allows for the collection of large amounts of data in a relatively short period.
- f) It can use large samples, thus results can be made more dependable and reliable.

According to Silipigni and Powell (2010:148), the advantages of the questionnaire outweigh the disadvantages, but there are several of the latter as highlighted below:

- a) There is the possibility of a low rate of return of completed questionnaires.
- b) It is only possible where respondents are literate, can read and write,
- c) Control over the questionnaire is lost once it is sent out.
- d) The method is slow compared to others.
- e) There is a possibility of ambiguous replies or omission of replies to certain questions.
- f) There is inbuilt inflexibility since the researcher cannot amend or explain questions once the questionnaire has been dispatched.

This study used the questionnaire as the main data collection method, supported by interviews with focus groups. The data collection instruments were the LibQUAL, SERVQUAL and SERVPERF tools.

The questionnaires consisted of 29 questions that were grouped into four sections. Section A part one had five structured questions which required respondents to provide their demographics data such as library user category, highest level of education, marital status, age group, and gender. Part two consisted of 22 service quality statements adapted from the LibQUAL protocol that the respondents were required to rate using the Likert scale of 1 (lowest) to 9 (highest). Each statement had to be rated three times (in order to obtain the minimum, desired and perceived service levels) or identified as not applicable. Section B consisted of 22 service quality statements adapted from the SERVQUAL protocol that the respondents were required to rate using a Likert scale of 1 (lowest) to 7 (highest). Each statement had to be rated twice (in order to obtain the desired and perceived service levels) or identified as not applicable. Section C consisted of 22 service quality statements adapted from the SERVPERF protocol that the respondents were required to rate using a Likert scale of 1 (lowest) to 7 (highest). Each statement had to be rated only once in order to assess the perceived service levels, or identified as not applicable.

From the ratings provided by respondents, gaps were calculated to assess the degree to which the African Court Library met the minimum expectations of customers (a detailed explanation is given under Section 4.11 below). SAG was calculated by subtracting the minimum from the perceived level of service. A negative SAG implied a need for improvement in that particular service area. At the other end, a service superiority gap was calculated by subtracting the desired service rating from the perceived level of service. A positive superiority gap indicated that the African Court Library exceeded expectations for that particular service area. Printed sets of the questionnaires were

administered to all staff members of the Court registry and external users of the library at once.

4.7.2 Focus group discussions (FGDs)

The researcher employed FGDs in this study to gather qualitative data. The questions were based on the LibQUAL, SERVQUAL and SERVPERF protocols and were considered important for this study, since participants shared their views and experiences of the library services and their quality.

A focus group session is a research method in which a group of people are asked about their perceptions and opinions towards a service or product (Henderson, 2009:28). It is a type of interview where the researcher (moderator) asks questions in an interactive group setting in which participants are free to talk about the topic at hand with other group members. Several articles have reported the applications and uses of LibQUAL and other service quality protocols in libraries. The vast majority of such articles report results by one or more service quality protocols and point to the need for additional investigation of findings through complementary methods such as focus groups (Miller, 2008:36).

Focus group sessions address research questions that require a depth of understanding that cannot be achieved through quantitative methods (Mallenberg, 2008). Focus group sessions provide richness and flexibility in data collection. This is not usually achieved when applying an instrument individually. At the same time, it permits spontaneity of interaction among the participants. They form an important tool for acquiring feedback regarding services and products (Freitas, Oliveira, Jenkins and Popjoy, 1998:3). The interviews are unstructured and generally have open-ended questions that are few in number and intended to elicit views and opinions from the participants (Creswell, 2014:190). The interview is conducted in a natural way where participants are free to give their views.

According to Krueger (2000), a focus group has several strengths. These are:

- a) It is comparatively easier to drive or conduct.
- b) It allows the researcher to explore topics and to generate hypotheses.

- c) It generates opportunity to collect data from the group interaction, which concentrates on the topic of the researcher's interest.
- d) Data from FGDs has high 'face validity' in that it takes advantage of the fact that people naturally interact and are influenced by others.
- e) It has low cost in relation to other methods.
- f) It gives speed to the supply of the results (in terms of evidence of the meeting of the group).
- g) It allows the researcher to increase the size of the sample of the qualitative studies.

An FGD also has drawbacks as observed by Krueger (2000). These are:

- a) It is not based on a natural atmosphere, but rather a social atmosphere.
- b) The researcher has less control over the data that is generated.
- c) It is not possible to know if the interaction in the group reflects the individual behaviour of the person in natural settings.
- d) Data analysis may be a challenge. The interaction of the group forms a social atmosphere and the comments should be interpreted within this context.
- e) It takes effort to assemble the groups and incentives may be required.
- f) The discussion should be conducted in an atmosphere that facilitates the dialogue.

To ensure that the disadvantages did not compromise the research, the researcher had a prepared guideline which he closely observed besides exercising firm control over the proceedings of the discussions. Data was interpreted only within the context of the social setting of the discussions. FGDs were held in the week after the session of the court. All staff of the court are available during court sessions, thus this ensured there were as many participants as possible. With the exception of the external users group, the other groups were made up of staff of the court, with each group comprising of participants selected from the same units of the court. These are largely known to each other and were thus very much at ease in the group. It was also easy to assemble them without

much incentive. The researcher made an effort to put participants at ease by explaining the purpose, objectives and benefits of the research, and also by assuring them of the confidentiality of data collected. This ensured that the FGDs were not highly unstructured or irrelevant.

Studies have shown that focus groups that are highly diverse are not always successful because they do not elicit as many points of view as would be needed in research (Krueger & Casey, 2000). A focus group with very diverse characteristics would decrease the quality of the data produced (Fern, 2001). This is because participants will be less forthcoming and may withhold or edit their contributions when in the presence of people who differ greatly from them in status, job position, power, education, income, physical appearance or personal characteristics (Morgan, 1993). To mitigate this possibility, researchers prefer groups of 6 to 10 people with similar characteristics. This makes them feel freer and open to contribute (Krueger & Casey, 2000). In order to get a cross-section of views from a diverse population using the focus group method, it may be necessary to conduct multiple sessions (Fern, 2001).

A small representative sample was used for the interviews. Participants were selected by the researcher using non-probability, purposeful sampling (Henning, Rensburg & Smit, 2007:71). The researcher selected homogenous groups that share common traits (Krueger & Casey, 2009:204). Participants with specific characteristics, according to user groups were selected, namely legal unit staff, finance and administration unit staff, ICT unit staff, language unit staff and external users.

4.8 DATA COLLECTION PROCEDURES

Since the study used the MMR design, it started with the administration of questionnaires, after which focus group interviews were conducted with a selected sample of respondents. The data collection exercise was timed at a time when the Court

was in session. During session periods, all members of staff are available, while external users are at a maximum.

4.8.1 Administration of questionnaires

Printed sets of the questionnaires were administered to all staff members of the Court registry and external users of the library at once. A set consisted of the LibQUAL, SERVQUAL and SERVPERF questionnaires. The purpose of the study was explained to the respondents over and above the covering letter (attached as Appendix 1). These questionnaires were administered to all 65 staff members of the registry simultaneously and respondent asked to complete them at once. The library has the names and contact details of external users as these have to register whenever they visit the library. Currently the library has 29 consistent external users. These were all included in the study and questionnaires distributed to them as they entered the library. Confidentiality was assured by not requiring respondents to provide any identifiable information on the questionnaire. Respondents were requested to complete the questionnaires on their own, but the researcher was available to provide any clarification that they may have needed and to ensure that all three questionnaires were completed. In order to improve the response rate, respondents were not allowed to take the questionnaire home.

4.8.2 Focus group discussions

After data from the questionnaires was analysed, FGDs were conducted with five selected groups representing the key users of the library. The discussions were aimed at validating, supplementing, and further exploring the issues that arose from data collected using the three questionnaires of LibQUAL, SERVQUAL and SERVPERF. Though the discussions eventually touched on most topics in the protocols, the focus group discussion was based on issues emanating from the findings of the three protocols. These issues were:

- a) In LibQUAL, the dimensions of *Information Control* and *Library as a Place* scored the least Perception mean scores.

- b) In LibQUAL, the dimensions of *Information Control* and *Library as a Place* had negative SSG mean scores.
- c) In SERVQUAL, the dimensions of *Tangibles* and *Reliability* had negative SSG mean scores.
- d) In SERVQUAL most negative SSG mean scores in were realised in the *Tangibles*, *Reliability* and *Empathy* dimensions.

In SERVQUAL and SERVPERF, the lowest Perception mean scores across the 5 dimensions were realised in the *Tangibles* and *Empathy* dimensions.

The focus groups were identified as per the departments of the Court:

- a) Legal staff (legal officers)
- b) Administration and Finance
- c) ICT
- d) Languages
- e) External users.

Each group comprised 6 to 8 randomly selected members with each session lasting about one hour. The interviews were unstructured and had open-ended questions that were few in number and intended to elicit the views and opinions of participants (appendix 5; Creswell, 2014:190). The interviews were conducted in a natural way where participants were made to feel at ease and free to give their views. This was possible since the participants in each group were selected from the same department as shown above.

4.8.2.1 Procedure followed for FGDs

The researcher followed a three-step procedure that covered activities before, during, and after the interview. The protocol before the FGD was as follows:

- a) The researcher first obtained permission from the Registrar of the Court to conduct interviews.

- b) For each group, a convenient time was agreed upon. The researcher then proceeded to book a convenient place, the VIP room of the court, isolated from noise and other distractions.
- c) Ethical considerations were taken into account to protect the privacy of participants, especially their wish not to be recorded.
- d) A FGD guide was constructed. This guide contained the topic and issues to be discussed. It provided the framework for the moderator to guide the discussions by asking questions and exploring issues.

Protocol during the FGDs

The moderator welcomed the participants. Rapport was established and the purpose and format of the discussion was explained at the beginning of the session. This was aimed at creating mutual interest and trust among participants. The researcher gave an overview of the study being undertaken and outlined the kind of information being sought. It was also emphasized that library users stand to highly benefit from the information gathered since it would be used to improve the quality of the library services.

- a) The researcher explained that the confidentiality of the interviews and the comments of participants will be treated confidentially.
- b) The researcher then encouraged spontaneous participation in a confidential environment.
- c) The researcher then guided the discussion by introducing each item and listened carefully to the participants, observing and asking for clarification where information was vague and unclear.
- d) At the end of each discussion, the researcher made a summary of the comments and then asked participants to verify them. This was to ensure accuracy.

Protocol after the FGDs

- a) At the end of each session, the interviewer thanked the participants.

- b) After each focus group discussion, while the discussion was still fresh in mind, the researcher went through the notes, organizing the data into major categories and made additional notes and comments.

4.9 DATA ANALYSIS AND INTERPRETATION APPROACH

According to Bogdan and Biklen (1992), data analysis is the process of arranging or organising data collected from research in order to increase the understanding of the researcher and enable a presentation of what has been discovered to the recipients. Data analysis is also a means of organising, providing structure and eliciting meanings. According to Mugenda and Mugenda (2003:150) and Creswell (2009:153), it is important not to undertake the data analysis process as merely a description of measurements and statistics but rather to ensure that the data collected is aligned to the objectives and the research questions of the study. In addition, the findings should be analysed within and integrated into the theoretical framework of the study (Bless & Higson-Smith 2000:140).

In this study, data was analysed using both quantitative and qualitative methods. Data analysis in MMR relates to the type of design chosen. However, analysis occurs both within the quantitative (descriptive and inferential numeric analysis) approach and the qualitative (description and thematic text or image analysis) approach, and often between the two approaches (Creswell, 2014:223). According to Creswell (2014:223), the challenge in a convergent mixed methods design is how to converge or to merge the data. Since the two types of data (quantitative and qualitative) are analysed separately and then brought together, there are several ways to merge them. These are as follows (Creswell, 2014:222).

4.9.1 Side-by-side comparison

Here the researcher first reports the quantitative statistical results and then discusses the qualitative findings that either confirm or disconfirm the statistical results. The

researcher may also choose to start with qualitative findings and then compare them to the quantitative results. It is referred to as ‘side-by-side’ because the researcher makes the comparison within a discussion by first presenting one set of findings and then the other (Creswell, 2014:222.)

4.9.2 Data transformation

In this style, the researcher merges the two types of data by changing qualitative codes or themes into quantitative variables and then combining the two quantitative databases (Onwuegbuzie & Leech, 2006). After that the researcher takes the qualitative themes or codes and counts and groups them to form quantitative measures (Creswell 2014:223). This quantification of qualitative data then enables a researcher to compare quantitative results with the qualitative data. For example, in a factor analysis of data from a scale on an instrument, the researcher may create factors or themes that can be compared with themes from the qualitative database.

4.9.3 Joint display of data

The two types of data are merged in a table or graph. This style takes several different forms. For example, it can be a table that has themes on the horizontal side and a certain variable on the vertical. It can also be a table that has key questions on the vertical side and then two columns on the horizontal side showing responses and quantitative results to the questions. According to Creswell (2014:223), the principal idea is that the researcher displays both forms of data on a single graph or table. By so doing he effectively merges them.

In analysing data, this study used the ‘side-by-side comparison’ style. First, both sets of data were analysed separately. The researcher first analysed and presented the quantitative statistical results from the LibQUAL, SERVQUAL and SERVPERF questionnaires. After that the qualitative findings from the FGDs were analysed and

presented. The findings from the analysis of each set of data are also presented separately.

4.10 DATA ANALYSIS PROCEDURES

The study had two sets of data, quantitative and qualitative. Consequently, two key analysis procedures were used, one for each set of data.

4.10.1 Data analysis procedures for quantitative data

Data gathered from questionnaires were tabulated and presented using descriptive statistics. In analysing quantitative data, data were entered and analysed using Microsoft Excel. This was done with an aim of summarizing and defining the relations among the variables in this study. For the LibQUAL questionnaire, the ratings of the 22 service quality variables were captured as numeric values ranging from 1 to 9 for all three levels of customer expectations (minimum, desired and perceived). For the SERVQUAL questionnaire the ratings of these 22 service quality variables were captured as numeric values ranging from 1 to 7 for the two levels of customer expectations (desired and perceived). For the SERVPERF questionnaire the ratings of the service quality variables were captured as numeric values ranging from 1 to 7 for the one level of customer expectations (perceived).

Descriptive statistics using frequencies and measures of central tendency were used in analysing the data. Service quality was assessed using a D-M score and a relative value system was used to rank service quality attributes that customers valued the most. Satisfaction was analysed using means, while demographic data, was analysed using frequencies. These methods are further explained below.

4.10.1.1 Frequencies

Frequency is a term that refers to the number of times various subcategories of a certain phenomenon occur. Frequencies were calculated for the variables in the study.

Percentages were then obtained based on the frequencies. Nominal variables such as membership category, gender, and age group were presented using tables.

4.10.2 Service quality

In determining the level of service quality from the customers' perspective, gap scores of 22 service quality attributes were calculated using the ratings of three levels of customer expectations (minimum, desired and perceived) and those of SERVQUAL (desired and perceived). To find the level of service quality, a process comprising 5 steps was used. These are explained here.

Step 1: Means

A mean refers to the arithmetical average of a collection of numbers. It is calculated by adding the numbers and dividing by their total number. Means were calculated for customers' minimum, desired, and perceived levels of service quality for each of the 22 items using the following formula:

$$\text{Mean} = \text{Sum of all observations} / \text{Total number of observations}$$

Tables were used to present the mean scores of the 22 service quality attributes and the attributes were grouped under the three service quality dimensions.

Step 2: Service adequacy gap (SAG)

Service adequacy is applied as an indicator of the extent to which the African Court library is meeting the minimum expectations of its users. This was calculated by subtracting the minimum mean score from the perceived mean score, both of which were obtained in Step 1, on any of the 22 statements. The formula that was used is as follows:

$$\text{SAG} = \text{perceived mean} - \text{minimum mean}$$

If the SAG is a negative score, it is an indicator that the customers' perceived level of service quality is below their minimum level of service quality.

Step 3: Service superiority gap (SSG)

The service superiority gap (SSG) score is an indicator of the extent to which the library is exceeding the expectations of its customers. The SSG score was calculated by subtracting the desired score from the perceived score on every one of the 22 service quality items. The formula applied is shown below:

$$\text{SSG} = \text{perceived mean} - \text{desired mean}$$

If the superiority gap score is positive, this is an indicator that the customers' perceived level of service quality is above their desired level of service quality.

Step 4: Zone of tolerance (ZoT)

The zone of tolerance (ZoT) is the range from the minimum service rating to the desired service rating. The perceived levels of service fall within this zone. The formula for calculating the ZoT is as follows:

$$\text{ZoT} = \text{desired mean} - \text{minimum mean}$$

Step 5: D-M score

According to Dennis and Bower (2007:11), the D-M score is a standardised score that is used to analyse LibQUAL data and to present information. It is computed by dividing the SAG (obtained in Step 2) by the ZoT (obtained in Step 4). The quotient is then multiplied by 100. This gives a score that will range from 0 to 100. The D-M score is therefore the location of the perceived level of service in relation to the minimum acceptable level of service (represented by "0") and the desired level of service (represented by "100").

$$\text{D-M score} = (\text{SAG}) / \text{ZOT} \times 100$$

The D-M score integrates all the above three scores. According to Dennis and Bower (2007:11), it enables librarians to place the customers' perceptions of service quality in the context of their expectations. For researchers, the D-M score is a vital tool in the analysis and presentation of findings because it allows for meaningful and well organised comparisons. The D-M score was used in this study to assess and present the

relative strengths and weaknesses inherent in the quality of services at the African Court library.

D-M score interpretation

The D-M score interpretation standard was adopted for interpreting the D-M scores on each of the 22 core items and the requisite corrective action required. This standard is shown in Table 4.10.

Table 4.10: D-M score interpretation standard

D-M Score	Evaluation	Action required
> 100	Exceeds expectations	Maintenance
71-100	Meets expectations	Maintenance
60-70	Not so problematic	Monitoring
51-59	Potentially problematic	Close monitoring
=50	Mid-point in ZoT	Requires improvement
40-49	Mildly problematic	Requires improvement
15-39	Problematic	Requires special improvement
0-14	Considerably problematic	Requires immediate improvement
< 0	Below minimum expectations	Dire need for immediate improvement

(Source: Adapted from Dennis and Bower (2007:11-12))

The D-M score lies in the zone of tolerance and usually has a score between 0 and 100. A higher D-M score indicates a perception of better service quality. A D-M score of 50 lies in the middle of the zone of tolerance. This means that the score is halfway between the minimum level of acceptable service and the desired level of service, which also means that the adequacy gap and superiority gap scores are of equal size. Therefore, a service item with a D-M score of 67.20 shows that the library is closer to the desired

level of service than to the minimum level of service. That means that the library is 67.20% of the way to meeting the customers' desired level of service.

Perceived scores that fall outside the zone of tolerance will result in scores that have values which are either less than 0 and more than 100. If the perceived score falls below minimum, the D-M score will be negative (the adequacy gap will also be negative). Scores below zero indicate that the library services do not meet the minimum service standards of customers. If a service item has a negative D-M score, this is an indicator that it is in urgent need of attention and should be immediately attended to. When the perceived value is greater than the desired value, the D-M score will be greater than 100 (there will be a positive superiority gap). If the scores exceed 100, it is an indication that the library is exceeding the level of service the patrons' desire. On the other hand, a D-M score of 200 does not indicate that the library is performing twice as well as users desire. Rather, it means that the service provided is being perceived at a level that exceeds the desired level of service by the size of the zone of tolerance (desired + zone). The items with D-M scores that fall beyond the zone of tolerance do not need improvement, but the scores may indicate that limited resources are being allocated inefficiently.

4.10.2 Data analysis procedures for focus group discussion data

During the data analysis process, participants remained anonymous and confidentiality was maintained. The following procedure was followed to analyse the data and to ensure the trustworthiness of the results. It is adopted from the guidelines proposed by Strauss and Corbin on data analysis (1998).

Step 1: Reading the transcriptions; this involved the reading and separation of the data into groups that are meaningful and significant. In order to gain a holistic view and a clear picture of the responses, the researcher carefully read the transcriptions, ensuring objectivity was maintained by focussing on the responses gleaned from the transcriptions and setting aside any preconceived ideas.

Step 2: Explication; the researcher read all the transcriptions for a second time, line by line underlining and listing the relevant responses.

Step 3: Labelling the phenomenon; data was grouped into small units of similar meanings and each unit was named (Henning, Rensburg, & Smit, 2004:102). During this action, the researcher conceptualized the data, giving each idea a label.

Step 4: Identification and description of categories and subcategories; the researcher grouped labels which belong together according to the dimensions of LibQUAL.

Step 5: Integration of categories; data from the interviews was integrated into categories and subcategories.

Step 6: Data was analysed by comparing ideas and concepts in order to draw meanings (Flick 2009:307). The results are presented in chapter five.

4.11 VALIDITY AND RELIABILITY

According to Gravetter and Forzano (2009:157), validity is the degree to which the study accurately answers the question it was intended to answer. On the other hand, reliability is the degree of consistency with which the instrument measures the attributes it is supposed to measure. For this study the researcher did not measure validity and reliability through repeated testing of the research instrument. This is because it adopted standard models of LibQUAL, SERVQUAL and SERVPERF. The validity and reliability of these models have been rigorously tested over the years. For example, the LibQUAL model has been tested in over one thousand libraries in the US, Canada, Europe and Africa since its inception in 2000 (Association of Research Libraries, 2015).

The 87 valid questionnaires out of 94 represent a validity rate of 92.55 %. From this we may conclude that the findings reported for the study are very high and have an excellent validity rate (Kothari, 2009). In addition, validity and reliability were further assured by the administration of three internationally approved models on the same respondents. This allowed for the results to be cross-checked for consistencies and/or inconsistencies, thus giving the study a high level of validity and reliability.

Interview results from FGDs were used to refine and supplement data collected from questionnaires. Written comments provided by the respondents on several questions were recorded, categorized, counted, and ranked respectively on a case-by-case basis. These comments provided descriptive and illustrative information that otherwise would not have been available. The comments also provide the researcher with a better sense and understanding of participant experiences.

According to Creswell (2014:223), interpretation in the convergent design is typically written into a discussion section of the study. In this study, the results from the analysis of the two sets of data were compared to establish if there was convergence or divergence between the two sources of information. It also sought to establish if the qualitative results confirmed or disconfirmed the statistical results. From this interpretation, relevant conclusions were drawn and suitable recommendations made.

4.12 ETHICAL CONSIDERATIONS

Ethics is important in research, especially when the research involves human beings as subjects (Silipigni, 2010:86). In her book on ethics in social research, Seiber (1992:5) states:

The ethical researcher creates a mutually respectful win-win relationship with the research population. This is a relationship in which the subjects are pleased to participate candidly, and the community at large regards the conclusions as constructive.

The key ethical issues that need to be considered in any research are informed consent, privacy and confidentiality, and protection from harm (Bailey, 2007:16; Johnson & Christensen, 2008:109). Informed consent protects the participants. This means that the researcher cannot include a person in the study without first getting their approval. Observing this protects the individual from any harm and also protects the researcher

from legal action and the possibility of having their research nullified or declared unethical. According to Bailey (2007:24), it is the researcher's responsibility to assure and enforce personal confidentiality for all the subject or respondents of the research. Since this study involved human subjects, the researcher took into consideration several ethical considerations. These are explained below.

4.12.1 Scientific honesty/integrity

To ensure integrity during the research, the researcher observed the required scientific processes and ensured that the results were reported accurately. To ensure objectivity in this, the researcher was guided by the research policy of UNISA (2013:9), which states that UNISA promotes the following internationally recognised moral principles of ethics as bases for research:

- a) Autonomy (research should respect the autonomy, rights and dignity of research participants);
- b) Beneficence (research should make a positive contribution towards the welfare of people);
- c) Non-maleficence (research should not cause harm to the research participant(s) in particular or to people in general);
- d) Justice (the benefits and risks of research should be fairly distributed among people).

In addition the researcher adhered to the following ten general ethical principles as required by the university (Unisa, 2013:9):

- a) **Essentiality and relevance:** Before undertaking research, adequate consideration should be given to existing literature on the subject or issue under study, and to alternatives available.
- b) **Maximisation of public interest and of social justice:** Research should be carried out for the benefit of society, and with the motive of maximising public interest and social justice.

- c) **Competence, ability and commitment to research:** Researchers should be professionally and personally qualified and committed for the research.
- d) **Respect for and protection of the rights and interests of participants and institutions:** Researchers should respect and protect the rights, dignity, privacy and confidentiality of participants and where relevant, institutions, and should never expose them to procedures or risks not directly attached to the research project or its methodology.
- e) **Informed and non-coerced consent:** Individuals' participation should be freely given, specific and based on informed consent. Direct or indirect coercion, as well as undue inducement of people in the name of research should be avoided.
- f) **Respect for cultural differences:** Researchers should treat research participants as unique human beings within the context of their community systems, and should respect what is sacred and secret by tradition.
- g) **Justice, fairness and objectivity:** Criteria for the selection of participants of research should be fair, besides being scientific.
- h) **Integrity, transparency and accountability:** The conduct of research should be honest, fair and transparent. Researchers should be honest about their own limitations, competence, belief systems, values and needs.
- i) **Risk minimization:** Researchers should ensure that the actual benefits to be derived by the participants or society from the research clearly outweigh possible risks, and that participants are subjected to only those risks that are clearly necessary for the conduct of the research.
- j) **Non-exploitation;** There may be no exploitation of research participants, researchers (including student and junior members), communities, institutions or vulnerable people. There should be benefit to a community in which research is conducted. As far as possible, communities should receive feedback on research carried out on them.

Other measures taken to ensure observance of ethical considerations include the following:

- a) Written authorization to carry out the research was provided by the institution under investigation, in this case the African Union Court on Human and Peoples' Rights.
- b) The purpose and procedure of the study were explained in the questionnaire that was administered to participants.
- c) The study ensured confidentiality and anonymity on the part of the participants.
- d) Accurate findings were presented (Unisa, 2013:9).

In ensuring that the study stayed within copyright rules and in avoidance of plagiarism, all sources consulted were duly acknowledged through relevant citations within the texts and also in the full list of references at the end of the work. During the research sessions proper, ethical considerations have been taken into account;

- a) The respondents were notified verbally and through email.
- b) The researcher fully revealed his identity background and purpose of the research to the respondents.
- c) The purpose and procedure of the research was clearly explained to the participants of each focus group before the commencement of the discussions.
- d) Evaluations were not made on irrelevant/sensitive grounds such as race, religion, gender, ethnicity or nationality.
- e) The dignity, privacy and interests of the participants were respected and protected during the research.
- f) Upon completion of the study, all confidential data was destroyed, including interview transcripts, lists of subject names, and observation notes.

4.12.2 Permission from the Office of the Registrar of the Court

Any research carried out at the African Court on Human and Peoples' Rights has to be authorized in writing by the Office of the Registrar. This was sought and granted in written form.

4.12.3 Confidentiality and anonymity

To observe confidentiality, identifiers such as names of respondents were not requested in the questionnaire. The questionnaire also contained a section informing respondents that the information collected from them would be handled with utmost confidentiality and that it will be used only for purposes of the study at hand and nowhere else.

4.13 SUMMARY OF THE CHAPTER

This chapter presented the methodology used for the study. It explained the research purpose of the study as descriptive in nature. Three research paradigms were discussed (post positivism, constructivism, transformative and pragmatic). The pragmatic approach was adopted in this study. Various research approaches were discussed and especially the one chosen for this study, the MMR approach, with a justification for its selection. The chapter also discussed various research design used in research and expounded on the mixed methods design, which is used in this study. The various types of design that fall under the mixed methods design were also explained, including the one applied to this study, the convergent parallel mixed methods design. The chapter also described the study area in detail, including the African Court library, its mission, mandate, and collection size.

The population in the study as well as a detailed description of the users of the library is given. The chapter also explained various data collection methods and instruments including the ones applied to this study; questionnaires and FGDs. Quantitative and qualitative analysis procedures have been described. Data analysis procedures used in mixed methods have been described in detail and especially the side-by-side comparison,

which is the one used in this study. Ethical guidelines that were observed in this study were presented. They include scientific integrity, research authorisation, and confidentiality of data. The research findings are now presented in the next chapter, chapter five.

CHAPTER FIVE: DATA PRESENTATION

5.1 INTRODUCTION

The previous chapter discussed the research methodology adopted in the study. This chapter presents the findings generated from the research through questionnaires, and focus groups discussions. The findings of each question are presented using mainly tables and figures. Mean scores for the minimum, desired, and perceived levels of service were calculated for each of the 22 core questions, the three service dimensions, and the five local questions. The outputs were generated using Microsoft Excel 2013 package. A nine-point Likert scale was used to measure service quality for LibQUAL protocol, while a 7-point Likert scale was used to measure service quality for the SERVQUAL and SERVPERF protocols. Mean scores were used to present the data, while service quality was measured using the service superiority gap (SSG), service adequacy gap (SAG), zone of tolerance (ZoT) and D-M scores.

Follow-up FGDs were held with five groups of individuals selected to represent the key users of the library. The purpose of the discussions was to validate, supplement and further explore the issues that arose from data collected using the three questionnaires of LibQUAL, SERVQUAL and SERVPERF. Findings are organized by the research objectives and summarized at the end of the chapter. The purpose of this research was to assess the quality of services offered by the African Court library through determining user satisfaction, experiences, perceptions and expectations of library services using the LibQUAL, SERVQUAL and SERVPERF protocols. In order to achieve this purpose, the following objectives guided the study:

- a) Determine the minimum expectations of library users using the LibQUAL, SERVQUAL and SERVPERF models.
- b) Study the desired level of expectations of library users across the three models.
- c) Investigate the perceived level of service across the three models.

- d) Assess the service quality of library services by determining the gaps between the various service quality variables across the three models.
- e) Discover the attributes of service quality that meet, or do not meet, library user expectations across the three models.
- f) Compare findings across the three models and FGDs to establish points of convergence or non-convergence.
- g) Make recommendations on how to improve service delivery in accordance with user needs.

5.2 RESPONSE RATE

Table 5.1 shows the number of respondents for each user category that responded to the survey. As mentioned in the research methodology, all 65 workers of the Court were included in the study. They comprised of staff from legal department (18), administration and finance (34), ICT (3), and, language (10). External users in the study numbered 29. The highest response rate was recorded by the legal unit which constituted 94.44 %, while the lowest response rate was recorded among the external users at 86.21 %. Although a total of 94 questionnaires were distributed, 87 were returned, placing the overall response rate at 92.55%. One staff member declined to complete the questionnaire for personal reasons, one was on maternity leave and one questionnaire was unusable. Of the 29 questionnaires distributed to external users, only 25 were returned. Two respondents declined returning the questionnaires while one set was unusable due to its defacement. One set of questionnaires had only 2 questions answered for each of the three questionnaires, making it unusable. In this study a completed questionnaire is considered to comprise all three questionnaires (LibQUAL, SERVQUAL and SERVPERF) duly completed. This was easy to follow-up since all respondents were within easy reach.

Table 5.1: Data collection response rate frequency

Department	Total number of staff	Number who responded	Response rate (%)
Legal	18	17	94.44
Admin	28	26	92.86
Finance	6	6	100
ICT	3	3	100
Language	10	10	100
External users	29	25	86.21
TOTALS	94	87	92.55 %

5.3 CHARACTERISTICS OF RESPONDENTS

This section provides the characteristics of the respondents who participated in the semi-structured questionnaires by library user category, highest level of education attained, marital status, gender and age.

5.3.1 Library user category

The study comprised two main categories of library users, namely internal and external as reflected in Table 5.2. Internal users were the staff members of the Court. External users were users who were not employed by the Court and were based elsewhere outside the Court. Since the Court is funded by taxes from member states of the African Union, it allows external users to use the library free of charge. These can only use items within the library. They are not allowed to borrow or take any library item away. Of the total valid 87 questionnaires that were returned, 62 (95.39%) were from internal library users while 25 (86.21%) were from external library users.

Table 5.2: Distribution of respondents by library user category

Category of user	Number	Response	Percentage
Internal	65	62	95.39 %
External	29	25	86.21%
TOTALS	94	87	100

5.3.2 Respondents' profile as per highest educational qualification

Table 5.3 provides the distribution of respondents by the highest academic qualifications. From the table, the largest percentage of library users has attained a master's degree (41.38 %), followed by bachelor's degree 22.99 %, and secondary school certificate (17.24 %). This is explained by the fact that most of the staff of the Court hold a master's degree, which is a mandatory requirement for all professional positions. Those with doctoral degrees were 5.75% while those with secondary school education were 17.24%.

Table 5.3: Highest education qualification of respondents

Highest qualifications	Frequency	Percentage
Secondary school	15	17.24
Diploma	11	12.64
Bachelor's	20	22.99
Master's	36	41.38
PhD	5	5.75
TOTALS	87	100

5.3.3 Distribution by age

Table 5.4 shows the age distribution of the respondents. The distribution of the respondents by age revealed that none of the registry staff were aged between 18 and 29 years of age. All were 30 years and above. A possible explanation of these figures is that the African recruits experienced staff, and usually experience comes with years. Those in the 30 to 39-years bracket numbered 27 (45.5%), while those within the 40 to 49 age bracket numbered 30 (48.4%). Among the external users, the majority fell within 20 to

29 years (10.35%) and 30 to 39 (28%) years of age. This range constitutes students and lawyers, both undergraduate and postgraduate, in the Arusha region. Users over 40 years constituted mostly university lecturers and professors from universities in the region.

Table 5.4: Age distribution of the respondents

Age	Internal users		External users		TOTAL	
	Frequency	Percentage	Frequency	Percentage	Frequency	Percentage
20–29	0	0	9	36	9	10.35
30–39	27	43.5	7	28	34	39.08
40–49	30	48.4	6	24	36	41.38
50 and above	5	8.1	3	12	8	9.19
TOTALS	62	100	25	100	87	100

5.3.4 Distribution by gender

Table 5.5 shows the distribution of the respondents by gender. The findings show that 59 (68%) respondents were male while 28 (32%) were female. Among internal users, 70% were male and 30% female. This corresponds to the Court’s actual staff ratios of 72% male and 28% female (African Court Human Resource Records, 2016). Among the external users, 46 % were female while 54% were male.

Table 5.5: Distribution of respondents by gender

Gender	Internal users		External users	
	Frequency	Percentage	Frequency	Percentage
Male	43	70	14	54
Female	19	30	11	46
TOTALS	62	100	25	100

5.3.5 Frequency of use of the library

The study also sought to establish the frequency of use of the library service as shown in Table 5.6. This question was asked in order to increase the possibility of obtaining a

valid and adequate assessment of services. Table 5.6 shows that all respondents use the library's services. A total of 36.78% use the library on a daily basis, while 51.73% visit it every week.

Table 5.6: Frequency of use of the library

Department	Daily	Weekly	Monthly	Never	TOTAL
Legal	13	4	0	0	17
Admin	9	14	3	0	26
Finance	0	3	3	0	6
ICT	1	2	0	0	3
Language	4	4	2	0	10
External users	5	18	2	0	25
Totals	32	45	10	0	87
Percentages	36.78	51.73	11.49	0	100

5.4 MINIMUM LEVEL OF SERVICE USERS FIND ACCEPTABLE

The study sought to establish the minimum level of service that users would find acceptable using LibQUAL as SERVQUAL and SERVPERF do not measure this aspect of quality of service. Table 5.7 shows the means for the minimum level of service that users would find acceptable in LibQUAL. The overall mean for minimum level of service was 5.52.

The mean for AS is 5.87. Elements of the AS that received the highest minimum expectations mean scores were *Employees who have the knowledge to answer user questions* (6.54); *Employees who understand the needs of their users* (6.29); and *Employees who instil confidence in users* (6.13). Other elements of the AS that received high mean scores include *Dependability in handling users' service problems* (5.93); *Willingness to help users* (5.87); *Readiness to respond to users' questions* 5.63; and *Employees who are consistently courteous* 5.55. The lowest means were recorded in

Giving users individual attention (5.48); and *Employees who deal with users in a caring fashion* (5.41).

The mean for the IC dimension was 5.47. Elements of IC that received the highest mean scores were *Making information easily accessible for independent use* (6.09); and *The electronic information resources I need* (5.79). Other elements of IC that received high mean scores include *Easy-to-use access tools that allow me to find things on my own* (5.78); and *The printed library materials I need for my work* (5.75). The lowest mean scores in IC were recorded in *A library Web site/page enabling me to locate information on my own* (5.09); and *Modern equipment that lets me easily access needed information* (4.92).

The mean for LP is 4.95. Elements of LP that received the highest mean scores were *A comfortable and inviting location* (5.77); and *Quiet space for individual activities* (5.23). The lowest mean scores were recorded in *Library space that inspires study and learning* (5.1); and *Community space for group learning and group study* (3.46).

Table 5.7: Minimum level of service users find acceptable

Service quality statement	Service Effect	Minimum expectations mean (M)
AS-5	Employees who have the knowledge to answer user questions	6.54
AS-7	Employees who understand the needs of their users	6.29
AS-1	Employees who instil confidence in users	6.13
IC-7	Making information easily accessible for independent use	6.09
AS-9	Dependability in handling users' service problems	5.93
AS-8	Willingness to help users	5.87
IC-4	The electronic information resources I need	5.79
IC-6	Easy-to-use access tools that allow me to find things on my own	5.78
LP-3	A comfortable and inviting location	5.77
IC-3	The printed library materials I need for my work	5.75
AS-2	Giving users individual attention	5.48
AS-3	Employees who are consistently courteous	5.55
AS-4	Readiness to respond to users' questions	5.63
AS-6	Employees who deal with users in a caring fashion	5.41

IC-1	Making electronic resources accessible from my home or office	5.24
LP-2	Quiet space for individual activities	5.23
LP-4	A place for study, learning, or research	5.17
IC-8	Print and/or electronic journal collections I require for my work	5.1
LP-1	Library space that inspires study and learning	5.1
IC-2	A library website/page enabling me to locate information on my own	5.09
IC-4	Modern equipment that lets me easily access needed information	4.92
LP-5	Community space for group learning and group study	3.46

From Table 5.7, it is clear that the users expect the highest minimum levels of service for *Employees who have the knowledge to answer user questions* (6.54); *Employees who understand the needs of their users* (6.29); *Employees who instil confidence in users* (6.13); *Making information easily accessible for independent use* (6.09); and *Dependability in handling users' service problems* (5.93). These are statements that cover AS and IC. The service quality statements with the lowest means for minimum expectations were *Community space for group learning and group study* (3.46); *Modern equipment that lets me easily access needed information* (4.92); *A library website/page enabling me to locate information on my own* (5.09); *Library space that inspires study and learning* (5.1); *Print and/or electronic journal collections I require for my work* (5.1); and *A place for study, learning, or research*. These are statements that cover IC and LP. Of particular note is the very low mean for *Community space for group learning and study* (3.46), which is far below the nearest quality statement: *Modern equipment that lets me easily access needed information* (4.92).

5.5 DESIRED EXPECTATIONS OF LIBRARY USERS

The study sought to establish the desired expectations of users. Of the three protocols deployed, it is LibQUAL and SERVQUAL that have a provision for this measurement.

5.5.1 Desired expectations of library users in LibQUAL

Table 5.8 shows the *Desired expectations* of library users in LibQUAL. The overall mean for this was 6.12.

The mean for AS is 6.27. Elements of AS that scored highest means in desired expectations were *Employees who deal with users in a caring fashion* (6.89); *Employees who instil confidence in users* (6.69); and *Employees who are consistently courteous* (6.45). With the exception of *Readiness to respond to users' questions* and *Employees who have the knowledge to answer user questions*, all quality statements under AS had means over 6.0.

The mean for IC is 6.03. Elements of *Desired expectations* that received the highest mean scores were *The printed library materials I need for my work* (6.9); *The electronic information resources I need* (6.49); and *Making information easily accessible for independent use* (6.32). Other elements of IC that received high mean scores include *Making electronic resources accessible from my home or office* (6.25); *Easy-to-use access tools that allow me to find things on my own* (6.15); and *Print and/or electronic journal collections I require for my work* (5.68). The lowest means were recorded in *Modern equipment that lets me easily access needed information* (5.56) and *A library website/page enabling me to locate information on my own* (4.91).

The mean for LP is 5.95. Elements of LP that received the highest mean scores were *Quiet space for individual activities* (6.64); and *A place for study, learning, or research* (6.45). The lowest mean scores were recorded in *A comfortable and inviting location* (6.02) and *Community space for group learning and group study* (4.2).

Table 5.8: Desired expectations of library users in LibQUAL

Service quality statement	Service effect	Desired expectations mean (E)
IC-3	The printed library materials I need for my work	6.9
AS-5	Employees who have the knowledge to answer user questions	6.89
AS-1	Employees who instil confidence in users	6.69
LP-2	Quiet space for individual activities	6.64
IC-4	The electronic information resources I need	6.49

AS-3	Employees who are consistently courteous	6.45
LP-4	A place for study, learning, or research	6.45
LP-1	Library space that inspires study and learning	6.44
AS-9	Dependability in handling users' service problems	6.38
AS-7	Employees who understand the needs of their users	6.36
IC-7	Making information easily accessible for independent use	6.32
AS-8	Willingness to help users	6.29
IC-1	Making electronic resources accessible from my home or office	6.25
IC-6	Easy-to-use access tools that allow me to find things on my own	6.15
LP-3	A comfortable and inviting location	6.02
AS-2	Giving users individual attention	6.01
AS-4	Readiness to respond to users' questions	5.78
IC-8	Print and/or electronic journal collections I require for my work	5.68
IC-5	Modern equipment that lets me easily access needed information	5.56
AS-6	Employees who deal with users in a caring fashion	5.53
IC-2	A library website/page enabling me to locate information on my own	4.91
LP-5	Community space for group learning and group study	4.2

From Table 5.8, individual quality statements that had the highest means were *The printed library materials I need for my work* (6.9); *Employees who have the knowledge to answer user questions* (6.89); *Employees who instil confidence in users* (6.69); *Quiet space for individual activities* (6.64); and *The electronic information resources I need* (6.49). It is apparent that these are quality statements that cover information resources in both printed and electronic format, staff knowledge and library space. Quality statements with the least means were *Community space for group learning and group study* (4.2); *A library website/page enabling me to locate information on my own* (4.91); *Modern equipment that lets me easily access needed information* (5.56); and *Print and/or electronic journal collections I require for my work* (5.68). These are statements that cover community space, website, library equipment and collections.

In conformity with the minimum expectations test, there is a very low mean score for *Community space for group learning and group study* (4.2), again with a large margin from the nearest quality statement. It can also be noted that quality statements under IC appear at both extreme ends of the table, among the top and among the bottom.

5.5.2 Desired expectations of library users in SERVQUAL

Table 5.9 shows the desired expectations of library users in SERVQUAL. The overall mean for *Desired Expectations* in SERVQUAL is 5.2.

The mean for *Assurance* is 5.22. Elements of *Desires (expectations)* that received the highest mean scores were *Library staff is knowledgeable to answer users' queries and questions* (5.28) and *Library staff are always courteous* (5.24). The lowest means were recorded in *Library users feel safe when transacting with the library* (5.21) and *Behaviour of Library staff instils confidence in users* (5.17). The mean for *Empathy* is 5.08. Elements of *Empathy* that received the highest mean scores were *Library staff give personal attention to the users* (5.22), *Library has the users' best interests at heart* (5.12) and *Library gives users individual attention* (5.08). The lowest means were recorded in *Library staff understands the specific needs of the users* (5.06) and *Convenient opening hours for the Library* (4.94).

The mean for *Reliability* is 5.26. Elements of *Reliability* that received the highest mean scores were *The library provides services at the promised time* (5.54); *The Library shows sincere interest in solving users' problems* (5.29); and *When the library promises to do something at a certain time, it is done* (5.21). The lowest means were recorded in *Library staff provide services as promised* (5.15); and *Library has error-free records* (5.09).

The mean for *Responsiveness* is 5.28. Elements of *Responsiveness* that received the highest mean scores were *Library staff keep users informed of when services will be*

performed; and *Library staff are never too busy to respond to user's questions*. The lowest means were recorded in *Library staff are willing to help user*; and *Library staff serve users promptly* (5.18).

The mean for *Tangibles* is 5.18. Elements of *Tangibles* that received the highest mean scores were *Materials associated with the services are visually appealing* and *Equipment is modern and in good condition* (5.21). The lowest means were recorded in *Facilities are visually appealing* (5.15) and *Library staff will be neat in appearance at all times* (4.93).

Of the five SERVQUAL service quality dimensions, the highest mean was realized in the *Responsiveness* dimension (5.28), followed by *Reliability* at 5.26 and *Assurance* (5.26) while the lowest was realized in *Empathy* (5.08), and followed by *Tangibles* at 5.18. It is therefore apparent that the users had the highest desired expectations in the dimensions that address the ability to perform promised services (*Reliability*), and willingness of staff to help customers through provision of prompt service (*Responsiveness*). However, they had low expectations on physical aspects of the library (such as building, facilities and staff appearance).

Table 5.9: Desired expectations of library users in SERVQUAL

	Assurance	Mean
RL-4	Library provides services at the promised time	5.54
RS-2	Library staff keep users informed about when services will be performed	5.45
TA-3	Materials (such as brochures, statements or signs) associated with the services are visually appealing	5.44
RL-1	Library shows sincere interest in solving users' problems.	5.29
AS-4	Library staff is knowledgeable to answer users' queries	5.28
RS-4	Library staff are never too busy to respond to user's questions	5.27
RS-1	Library staff are willing to help user	5.23
AS-3	Library staff are always courteous	5.24
EM-3	Library staff give personal attention to the users	5.22
AS-2	Library users feel safe when transacting with the library	5.21
RL-2	When the library promises to do something at a certain time, it is	5.21

	done	
TA-1	Equipment is modern and in good condition	5.21
RS-3	Library staff serve users promptly	5.18
AS-1	Behaviour of library staff instils confidence in users	5.17
RL-3	Library staff provide services as promised	5.15
TA-2	Facilities are visually appealing (such as computer, audio-visual, shelves, tables, chairs etc)	5.15
EM-4	Library has users' best interests at heart	5.12
RL-5	Library has error-free records (users' list, library database, accessions list, etc.)	5.09
EM-1	Library gives users individual attention	5.08
EM-5	Library staff understands the specific needs of the users	5.06
EM-2	Convenient opening and closing hours for the library	4.94
TA-4	Library staff are neat in appearance at all times	4.93

From Table 5.9, individual quality statements with the highest means were *Library provides services at the promised time* (5.54); *Library staff keep users informed about when services will be performed* (5.45); *Materials associated with the services are visually appealing* (5.44); *Library shows sincere interest in solving users' problems* (5.29); *Library staff is knowledgeable to answer users' queries* (5.28); *Library staff are never too busy to respond to user's questions* (5.27); and *Library staff are willing to help user* (5.23). The lowest-rated individual quality statements were *Library staff are neat in appearance at all times* (4.93); *Convenient opening hours for the library* (4.94); *Library staff understand the specific needs of the users* (5.06); *Library gives users individual attention* (5.08); *Library has error-free records* (5.09); and *Library has the users' best interests at heart* (5.12). It can be seen that only two service quality statements (*Convenient opening hours for the library* and *Library staff are neat in appearance at all times*) had means below 5. All the rest were over 5.

5.6 PERCEIVED LEVEL OF SERVICE BY USERS

The study sought to investigate the perceived levels of service by users as provided for in LibQUAL, SERVQUAL and SERVPERF.

5.6.1 Perceived level of service by users in LibQUAL

Table 5.10 shows the perceptions of library users in LibQUAL. The overall mean for perceived level of service in LibQUAL is 5.74.

The mean for AS under perceived levels of service is 6.44. Elements of perceived level of service that received the highest mean scores were *Employees who have the knowledge to answer user questions* (7.16); *Employees who instil confidence in users* (6.77); and *Readiness to respond to users' questions* (6.63). Other elements of perceived level of service that received high mean scores were AS-7: *Employees who understand the needs of their users* (6.62); *Employees who deal with users in a caring fashion* (6.49); and *Employees who are consistently courteous* (6.47). The lowest means were recorded in *Willingness to help users* (6.31); *Dependability in handling users' service problems* (5.38); and, *Giving users individual attention* (4.56).

The mean for IC under perceived levels of service is 5.32. Elements of IC that received the highest mean scores were: *Making information easily accessible for independent use* (6.36); *Easy-to-use access tools that allow me to find things on my own* (5.67); and *Modern equipment that lets me easily access needed information* (5.62). Other elements of perceived level of service that received high mean scores were: *Making electronic resources accessible from my home or office* (5.44); *A library website/page enabling me to locate information on my own* (5.2); and *Print and/or electronic journal collections I require for my work* (4.92). The lowest means were recorded in *Printed library materials I need for my work* (4.82); and *Electronic information resources I need* (4.52).

The mean for LP is 5.14. Elements of LP that received the highest mean scores were *A comfortable and inviting location* (6.17); *A place for study, learning, or research* (6.0); and *Library space that inspires study and learning* (5.47). The lowest mean scores were recorded in *Quiet space for individual activities* (4.1) and *Community space for group learning and group study* (3.93).

Table 5.10: Perceptions of library users in LibQUAL

Rank	Quality statement	Perceptions (performance) mean (P)
AS-5	Employees who have the knowledge to answer user questions	7.16
AS-1	Employees who instil confidence in users	6.77
AS-4	Readiness to respond to users' questions	6.63
AS-7	Employees who understand the needs of their users	6.62
AS-2	Giving users individual attention	4.56
AS-6	Employees who deal with users in a caring fashion	6.49
AS-3	Employees who are consistently courteous	6.47
IC-7	Making information easily accessible for independent use	6.36
AS-8	Willingness to help users	6.31
LP-3	A comfortable and inviting location	6.17
LP-4	A place for study, learning, or research	6
IC-6	Easy-to-use access tools that allow me to find things on my own	5.67
IC-5	Modern equipment that lets me easily access needed information	5.62
LP-1	Library space that inspires study and learning	5.47
IC-1	Making electronic resources accessible from my home or office	5.44
AS-9	Dependability in handling users' service problems	5.38
IC-2	A library website/page enabling me to locate information on my own	5.2
IC-8	Print and/or electronic journal collections I require for my work	4.92
IC-3	The printed library materials I need for my work	4.82
IC-4	The electronic information resources I need	4.52
LP-2	Quiet space for individual activities	4.1
LP-5	Community space for group learning and group study	3.93

The top 7 highest scores came from the AS dimension. These were: *Employees who have the knowledge to answer user questions*; *Employees who instil confidence in users*; *Readiness to respond to users' questions*; *Employees who understand the needs of their users*; *Giving users individual attention*; *Employees who deal with users in a caring fashion*; and *Employees who are consistently courteous*. Of the 6 lowest-rated individual

quality statements 4 came from the IC dimension. These were *Library website/page enabling me to locate information on my own*; *Print and/or electronic journal collections I require for my work*; *Printed library materials I need for my work*; and *Electronic information resources I need*. The lowest scores were *Quiet space for individual activities* and *Community space for group learning and group study*. Users had very low perceptions of these. Interestingly, this is the same quality statement that scored lowest in the minimum expectations and desired expectations tests.

5.6.2 Perceived level of service by users in SERVQUAL

Table 5.11 shows the *Perceived level of service* by library users in SERVQUAL. The overall mean for *Perceived level of service* in SERVQUAL is 5.16.

The mean for *Assurance* is 5.29. Elements of *Assurance* that received the highest mean scores were: *Library staff are always courteous* (5.33) and *Library staff are knowledgeable to answer users' queries and questions* (5.33). The lowest means were recorded in *Library users feel safe when transacting with the library* (5.22) and *Behaviour of library staff instils confidence in users* (5.25).

The mean for *Empathy* is 5.16. Elements of *Empathy* that received the highest mean scores were *Library gives users individual attention* (5.35); *Library staff give personal attention to the users* (5.23); and *Library staff understands the specific needs of the users* (5.2). The lowest means in *Empathy* were recorded in *Library has the users' best interests at heart* (5.14) and *Convenient opening hours for the Library* (4.98).

The mean for *Reliability* is 5.12. Elements of *Reliability* that received the highest mean scores were *Library staff provides services as promised* (5.4); *Library provides services at the promised time* (5.34); and *Library shows sincere interest in solving users' problems* (5.09). The lowest means in *Reliability* were recorded in *Library has error-*

free records (4.93) and *RL-2 When the library promises to do something at a certain time, it is done* (4.79).

The mean for *Responsiveness* was 5.29. Elements of *Responsiveness* that received the highest mean scores were *Library staff is never too busy to respond to user's questions* (5.41) and *Library staff are willing to help user* (5.33). The lowest means in *Responsiveness* were recorded in *Library staff serves users promptly* (5.25) and *Library staff keeps users informed about when services will be performed* (5.15).

The mean for *Tangibles* was 4.98. Elements of *Tangibles* that received the highest mean scores were *Facilities are visually appealing* (5.21); *Materials are visually appealing*; and *Library staff are neat in appearance at all times* (4.97). The lowest mean in *Tangibles* was recorded in *Equipment is modern and in good condition* (4.79).

The overall mean for Perceptions of users in SERVQUAL is 5.16 which can be considered as an average performance since it is slightly above the half point mark. Of the 5 SERVQUAL service quality dimensions, the highest mean was realized in the *Assurance*, *Responsiveness* and *Empathy* dimensions (each with 5.29), followed by *Empathy* at 5.16. The lowest was realized in *Tangibles* (4.98). Though the expectations test showed that reliability was highly valued by users, they had a low perception of the library performance on this aspect.

Table 5.11: Perceptions of library users in SERVQUAL

Service quality statement	Assurance	Mean
RS-4	Library staff are never too busy to respond to users' questions	5.41
RL-3	Library staff provide services as promised	5.4
EM-1	Library gives users individual attention	5.35
RL-4	Library provides services at the promised time	5.34
RS-1	Library staff are willing to help user	5.33
AS-3	Library staff are always courteous	5.33

AS-4	Library staff are knowledgeable to answer users' queries	5.33
RS-3	Library staff serve users promptly	5.25
AS-2	Library users feel safe when transacting with the library	5.25
AS-1	Behaviour of library staff instils confidence in users	5.22
EM-3	Library staff give personal attention to the users	5.23
TA-2	Facilities are visually appealing (such as computer, audio-visual, shelves, tables, chairs etc)	5.21
EM-5	Library staff understand the specific needs of the users	5.2
RS-2	Library staff keeps users informed about when services will be performed	5.15
EM-4	Library has the users' best interests at heart	5.14
RL-1	Library shows sincere interest in solving users' problems	5.09
TA-3	Materials (such as brochures, statements or signs) associated with the services are visually appealing	4.97
TA-4	Library staff are neat in appearance at all times	4.97
RL-5	Library has error-free records (users list, library database, accessions list etc)	4.93
EM-2	Convenient opening and closing hours for the library	4.89
TA-1	Equipment is modern and in good condition	4.79
RL-2	When the library promises to do something at a certain time, it is done	4.79

The highest means were recorded in *Library staff are never too busy to respond to user's questions; Library staff provide services as promised; Library gives users individual attention; Library provides services at the promised time and Library staff are willing to help user.* The lowest means were recorded in *When the library promises to do something at a certain time; it is done; Equipment is modern and in good condition; Convenient opening hours for the Library; Library has error-free records Users list; Library database; Accessions list; Library staff are neat in appearance at all times and Materials associated with the services are visually appealing.*

5.6.3 Perceived level of service by users in SERVPERF

Table 5.12 shows the means for *Perceived level of service* of library users in SERVPERF. The overall mean for *Perceived level of service* in SERVPERF is 5.18.

The mean for *Assurance* is 5.29. Elements of *Assurance* that received the highest mean scores were *Library users feel safe when transacting with the library* (5.31); *Library staff are knowledgeable to answer users' queries and questions* (5.31); and *Library staff are always courteous* (5.3). The lowest mean was recorded in *Behaviour of library staff instils confidence in users* (5.25). The mean for *Empathy* is 5.15. Elements of *Empathy* that received the highest mean scores were *Library staff understands the specific needs of users* (5.3); *Library staff give personal attention to the users* (5.25); and *Library gives users individual attention* (5.18). The lowest mean was recorded in *Convenient opening hours* (4.81).

The mean for *Reliability* is 5.15. Elements of *Reliability* that received the highest mean scores were *Library provides services at the promised time* (5.45); *Library staff serve users promptly*; (5.38) and *Library shows sincere interest in solving users' problems* (5.1). The lowest means were recorded in *Library has error-free records* (5.0); and *When the library promises to do something at a certain time, it is done* (4.83).

The mean for *Responsiveness* was 5.30. Elements of *Responsiveness* that received the highest mean scores were *Library staff are never too busy to respond to user's questions* (5.37) and *Library staff are willing to help users* (5.35). The lowest means in *Responsiveness* were recorded in *Library staff serve users promptly* (5.32) and *Library staff keep users informed about when services will be performed* (5.17).

The mean for *Tangibles* was 5.01. Elements of *Tangibles* that received the highest mean scores were *Facilities are visually appealing* (5.22) and *Library staff are neat in appearance at all times* (5.0). The lowest mean in *Tangibles* was recorded in *Equipment is modern and in good condition* (4.99) and *Materials associated with the services are visually appealing* (4.84).

The means for the various dimensions under Perceptions were as follows: *Assurance* (5.29), *Empathy* (5.15), *Reliability* (5.15), *Responsiveness* (5.30) and *Tangibles* (5.01). Of the 5 SERVQUAL service quality dimensions, the highest mean was realized in the dimensions of *Responsiveness* (5.3) and *Assurance* (5.29), followed by *Empathy* and *Reliability*, both at 5.16 while the lowest was realized in *Tangibles* (5.01). This reflects the findings of the SERVQUAL perceptions test. It can also be seen that the *Tangibles* dimension again scored the least mean.

Table 5.12: Perceptions of library users in SERVPERF

Service quality statement	Assurance	Mean
RL-4	The library provides services at the promised time.	5.45
RL-3	Library staff provide services as promised	5.38
RS-4	Library staff are never too busy to respond to user's questions	5.37
RS-1	Library staff are willing to help user	5.35
RS-3	Library staff serve users promptly	5.32
AS-3	Library staff are always courteous	5.3
EM-5	Library staff understand the specific needs of the users	5.3
AS-2	Library users feel safe when transacting with the library	5.31
AS-4	Library staff are knowledgeable to answer users' queries and questions	5.31
AS-1	Behaviour of library staff instils confidence in users	5.25
EM-3	Library staff give personal attention to the users	5.25
TA-2	Facilities are visually appealing (such as computer, audio-visual, shelves, tables, chairs etc)	5.22
EM-4	Library has the users' best interests at heart	5.2
EM-1	Library gives users individual attention	5.18
RS-2	Library staff keep users informed about when services will be performed	5.17
RL-1	Library shows sincere interest in solving users' problems	5.1
RL-5	Library has error-free records (users list, library database, accessions list etc)	5
TA-4	Library staff are neat in appearance at all times	5
TA-1	Equipment is modern and in good condition	4.99
TA-3	Materials (such as brochures, statements or signs) associated with the services are visually appealing	4.84
RL-2	When the library promises to do something at a certain time, it is done	4.83
EM-2	Convenient opening and closing hours for the library	4.81

From Table 5.12, the highest overall service quality statements were in the RL and RS dimensions. The highest statement was *Library provides services at the promised time*, followed by *Library staff are never too busy to respond to user's questions*, *Library staff are willing to help user* and *Library staff serve users promptly*. The lowest scores were realised in *Convenient opening hours for the library* (4.81); *When the library promises to do something at a certain time, it is done*; *Appealing materials* (4.84); *Equipment is modern and in good condition* (4.99); *Library staff are neat in appearance at all times* (5.0); *Library has error-free records* (5.0) and *The Library shows sincere interest in solving users' problems* (5.1).

5.7 GAPS BETWEEN USERS' PERCEPTIONS AND EXPECTATIONS

The study sought to establish the level of service quality of library services by investigating the gaps between various service quality variables in the protocols. To determine the level of service quality from the customers' perspective, gap scores of 22 service quality attributes were calculated using the ratings of three levels of customer expectations, i.e minimum, desired, and perceived. The following gaps and measures were calculated:

- a) Extent of users' acceptance of service (ZoT)
- b) Extent to which performance exceeds desired expectations (SSG)
- c) Extent to which library is meeting minimum expectations (SAG)
- d) Relative strengths and weaknesses of library service quality (D-M score).

Table 5.13 presents the scores obtained using 5 service quality measures in LibQUAL. The first column shows the identifier for each of the 22 service quality attributes. The next three columns are the mean scores calculated, based on user ratings for minimum expectations (M), desired expectations (D) and perceptions (P). Since all five methods use mean scores, the minimum mean (M), desired mean (D), and perceived mean (P) are computed first. The rest of the columns present the scores for each method each service

quality measures (SAG, SSG, ZOT, and D-M score). Each of these five measures is discussed in turn in chapter six.

Table 5.13: Various service quality measures in LibQUAL

ID	Minimum mean (M)	Desired mean (D)	Perceptions mean (P)	ZOT (D-M)	SAG (P-M)	SSG (P-D)	D-M Score (SAG/ZOT x 100)
Affect of service (AS)							
AS-1	6.13	6.69	6.77	0.56	0.64	0.08	114.29
AS-2	5.48	6.01	4.56	0.53	-0.92	-1.45	-173.59
AS-3	5.55	6.45	6.47	0.9	0.92	0.02	102.22
AS-4	5.63	5.78	6.63	0.15	1	0.85	666.67
AS-5	6.54	6.89	7.16	0.35	0.62	0.27	177.14
AS-6	5.41	5.53	6.49	0.12	1.08	0.96	900
AS-7	6.29	6.36	6.62	0.07	0.33	0.26	471.43
AS-8	5.87	6.29	6.31	0.42	0.44	0.02	104.76
AS-9	5.93	6.38	5.38	0.45	-0.55	-1	-122.22
Means	5.87	6.27	6.44	0.39	0.4	0.17	102.56
Information control (IC)							
IC-1	5.24	6.25	5.44	1.01	0.2	-0.81	19.8
IC-2	5.09	4.91	5.2	-0.18	0.11	0.29	61.11
IC-3	5.75	6.9	4.82	1.15	-0.93	-2.08	-80.87
IC-4	5.79	6.49	4.52	0.7	-1.27	-1.97	-181.43
IC-5	4.92	5.56	5.62	0.64	0.7	0.06	109.38
IC-6	5.78	6.15	5.67	0.37	-0.11	-0.48	-29.73
IC-7	6.09	6.32	6.36	0.23	0.27	0.04	117.39
IC-8	5.1	5.68	4.92	0.58	-0.18	-0.76	-31.04
Means	5.47	6.03	5.32	0.56	-0.15	-0.71	-26.79
Library as a place (LP)							
LP-1	5.1	6.44	5.47	1.34	0.37	-0.97	27.61
LP-2	5.23	6.64	4.1	1.41	-1.13	-2.54	-80.14
LP-3	5.77	6.02	6.17	0.25	0.4	0.15	16
LP-4	5.17	6.45	6	1.28	0.83	-0.45	64.84
LP-5	3.46	4.2	3.93	0.74	0.47	-0.27	63.51
Means	4.95	5.95	5.14	1.00	0.19	-0.82	19
Overall	5.52	6.12	5.67	0.59	0.15	-0.45	25.42

5.7.1 Extent of users' acceptance of service (ZoT: LibQUAL)

The ZoT is the difference between minimum expectations and desired expectations thus $ZoT = M - D$ (Rehman, 2012a:4). It measures the extent to which customers are willing to accept a variation in service delivery. In most studies, perceived levels of service can be found within this zone. Any performance falling below the ZoT is unsatisfactory for users (Berry & Parasuraman, 1991). From Table 5.13 column 5, the overall mean for ZoT in LibQUAL is 0.59. The score for ZoT in the AS dimension is 0.4; the same score for IC is 0.56 while the score for LP is 1. The scores show that customers are willing to accept a wider variation (1.0) in service quality in the LP dimension than in AS or IC.

5.7.2 Extent to which performance exceeds desired expectations (SSG)

The study sought to measure the extent to which performance exceeds desired expectations. This is known as SSG. This was done using LibQUAL and SERVQUAL. It is defined as the difference between *Perception* score (actual service delivered) and *Desire* (Rehman, 2012a:4). It is a measure of the extent to which the library performance exceeds the desired expectations of its users. The SSG is calculated by subtracting the desired score from the perceived score on each one of the 22 service quality items (thus the formula $SSG = P - E$). If perception score of any service is equal or above the desired level, then that service is considered as exceptionally well rendered. On the other hand, perception scores below the desired level show that libraries are not meeting users' needs.

5.7.2.1 SSGs in LibQUAL

From Table 5.13, column 7, the SSG means for the LibQUAL dimensions were as follows: AS (0.17), IC (-0.71) and LP (-0.81). Thus only the AS dimension had a positive score while the IC and LP had negative scores. Table 5.14 shows the SSG in LibQUAL arranged from the highest to the lowest, in order to identify the positive and negative gaps.

Table 5.14: Service superiority gaps in LibQUAL

Service quality statement	Minimum mean (M)	Desired mean (D)	Perception mean (P)	SSG (P-D)
AS-6	5.41	5.53	6.49	0.96
AS-4	5.63	5.78	6.63	0.85
IC-2	5.09	4.91	5.2	0.29
AS-5	6.54	6.89	7.16	0.27
AS-7	6.29	6.36	6.62	0.26
LP-3	5.77	6.02	6.17	0.15
AS-1	6.13	6.69	6.77	0.08
IC-5	4.92	5.56	5.62	0.06
IC-7	6.09	6.32	6.36	0.04
AS-8	5.87	6.29	6.31	0.02
AS-3	5.55	6.45	6.47	0.02
LP-5	3.46	4.2	3.93	-0.27
LP-4	5.17	6.45	6	-0.45
IC-6	5.78	6.15	5.67	-0.48
IC-8	5.1	5.68	4.92	-0.76
IC-1	5.24	6.25	5.44	-0.81
LP-1	5.1	6.44	5.47	-0.97
AS-9	5.93	6.38	5.38	-1
AS-2	5.48	6.01	4.56	-1.45
IC-4	5.79	6.49	4.52	-1.97
IC-3	5.75	6.9	4.82	-2.08
LP-2	5.23	6.64	4.1	-2.54

From Table 5.14, the number of quality statements with positive gaps and those with negative gaps was evenly matched. There were 11 quality statements with positive gaps and 11 with negative gaps. The highest SSG gaps in LibQUAL were realised in the AS-6, AS-4, IC-2, AS-5, and AS-7. The majority of these are in the AS dimension. The lowest SSG gaps in LibQUAL were realised in LP-2, IC-3, IC-4, AS-2 AS-9 and LP-1. The majority of these are in the LP and IC dimensions. The quality statement with the largest positive SSG was AS-6 *Employees who deal with users in a caring fashion* while the one with the largest negative SSG was LP-2 *Quiet space for individual study*.

5.7.2.2 SSGs in SERVQUAL

Table 5.15 shows the SSG in SERVQUAL. From the table, three dimensions have a positive SSG. These are *Assurance* (0.23), *Empathy* (0.39) and *Responsiveness* (0.01). Two dimensions have a negative SSG score. These are *Reliability* (-0.73) and *Tangibles* (-0.79).

Table 5.15: Service superiority gaps in SERVQUAL

ID	Service quality statement	Perceptions (performance) mean (P)	Expectations mean (E)	SSG (P-E)
EM-1	Library gives users individual attention	5.35	5.08	0.27
RL-3	Library staff provide services as promised	5.4	5.15	0.25
EM-5	Library staff understands the specific needs of the users	5.2	5.06	0.14
RS-4	Library staff is never too busy to respond to user's questions	5.41	5.27	0.14
AS-3	Library staff are always courteous	5.33	5.24	0.09
RS-3	Library staff serves promptly to the users	5.25	5.18	0.07
TA-2	Facilities are visually appealing (such as computer, audio-visual etc, shelves, tables, chairs etc).	5.21	5.15	0.06
AS-1	Behaviour of library staff instils confidence in users	5.22	5.17	0.05
AS-4	Library staff is knowledgeable to answer users' queries and questions	5.33	5.28	0.05
AS-2	Library users feel safe when transacting with the library	5.25	5.21	0.04
TA-4	Library staff are neat in appearance at all times	4.97	4.93	0.04
EM-4	Library has the users' best interests at heart	5.14	5.12	0.02
RS-1	Library staff are willing to help user	5.33	5.23	0.1
EM-3	Library staff give personal attention to the users	5.23	5.22	0.01

EM-2	Convenient opening and closing hours for the library	4.89	4.94	-0.05
RL-5	Library has error-free records (users list, library database, accessions list etc)	4.93	5.09	-0.16
RL-1	Library shows sincere interest in solving users' problems	5.09	5.29	-0.2
RL-4	Library provides services at the promised time	5.34	5.54	-0.2
RS-2	Library staff keeps users informed about when services will be performed	5.15	5.45	-0.3
RL-2	When the library promises to do something at a certain time, it is done	4.79	5.21	-0.42
TA-1	Equipment is modern and in good condition	4.79	5.21	-0.42
TA-3	Materials (such as brochures, statements or signs) associated with the services are visually appealing	4.97	5.44	-0.47

From Table 5.15 there are 14 service statement items that have a positive score, and 8 service quality statements with a negative score. Those with a positive mark indicate the service statements that meet or exceed the expectations of the respondents and hence higher service quality. The top 5 positive gaps were realized in the following service statements;

1. Library gives users individual attention (0.27);
2. Library staff provide services as promised (0.25);
3. Library staff understands the specific needs of the users (0.14);
4. Library staff are never too busy to respond to user's questions (0.14);
5. Library staff are always courteous (0.09).

Table 5.15 shows that there are eight (8) service quality statements with negative SSG gap scores. These are as follows:

1. Materials associated with services are visually appealing (-0.47).

2. Equipment is modern and in good condition (-0.42).
3. When the library promises to do something at a certain time, it is done (-0.42).
4. Library staff keep users informed of when services will be performed (-0.3).
5. The library provides services at the promised time (-0.02)
6. Library shows sincere interest in solving users' problems (-0.02).
7. Library has error-free records (-0.16).
8. There are convenient opening hours for the library (-0.05).

These findings provide an indication of service areas on which the African Court library needs to improve as these service areas had the largest negative scores, which is a clear indicator of low service quality.

5.7.3 Extent to which library is meeting minimum expectations (SAG -LibQUAL)

The difference between perception score (actual service delivered) and minimally acceptable score is known as the service adequacy gap (SAG). It is calculated by subtracting the minimum mean score from the perceived mean score on the 22 statements, thus its formula is $SAG = P - M$. It is a pointer to the extent to which the library is meeting the minimum expectations of users. A negative SAG score indicates that the users' perceived level of service quality is below their minimum level of service and can be used by libraries to identify areas needing improvement (Jones & Kayongo, 2008:495-496). A positive score indicates that the users perceived level of service quality is above their minimum level of expectations.

From Table 5.13 column 6, the overall service adequacy gap in LibQUAL is 0.15. The SAG gap for AS is 0.57, the same gap for IC is -0.15 while the gap for LP is 0.19. Thus the SAG for IC is the only one with a negative score.

5.7.4 Relative strengths and weaknesses of library service quality (D-M scores; LibQUAL)

The D-M score lies in the ZoT and usually has a score between 0 and 100. The higher the D-M score, the better the perception of service quality. Table 5.13 column 8 shows the D-M scores for the library services. The overall mean for the D-M Score in LibQUAL is 25. The mean for D-M Score in the AS dimension is 142.25. The same score for IC is -26.79 while the score for is 19. The scores show that the library exceeded expectations in the dimension of AS (scoring a D-M Score of 142), but performed below expectations in the dimensions of AS (scoring a D-M Score of 26.79) and IC (scoring a D-M Score of 19).

5.8 PRESENTATION OF DATA FROM FGDs

As indicated in the methodology (chapter four), focus group interviews were conducted after data from the questionnaires was analysed. The purpose of the discussions was to validate, supplement and further explore the issues that arose from the data collected using the three protocols of LibQUAL, SERVQUAL and SERVPERF. Though the discussions eventually touched on most topics in the protocols, the focus group discussion was based on issues emanating from the findings of the three protocols. These issues were:

1. In LibQUAL, the dimensions of IC had negative scores in all the service quality measurements (SAG, SSG and DM scores) and had one of the least perception means.
2. In LibQUAL, the dimensions of LP had a negative SSG score and had the least Perception mean of all the LibQUAL dimensions.
3. In SERVQUAL, the dimensions of *Tangibles* and *Reliability* had negative SSG mean scores.
4. In SERVQUAL most negative SSG mean scores were realised in the *Tangibles*, *Reliability* and *Empathy* dimensions.

5. In SERVQUAL and SERVPERF, the lowest perception mean scores across the 5 dimensions were realised in the *Tangibles* and *Empathy* dimensions.

These issues can be summarised into the following themes:

- 1) Information control
 - a) What are your views on the adequacy and relevance of printed and electronic information resources found in the library?
 - b) Describe the condition and adequacy of equipment for access needed to information (computers, charging ports, scanners, copiers, etc.)
 - c) How do you find the library website/page?
 - d) Comment on access tools in the library.

- 2) Library as a place
 - a) Does the library space encourage study and learning? What are your views?
 - b) Discuss the condition of the library in terms of comfort, quietness and conduciveness for study.
 - c) Does the library provide space for group learning and group study? Explain.

- 3) Tangibles
 - a) What are your views on the appeal of library facilities (computer, audio-visuals, shelves, tables, chairs etc.)?
 - b) Are materials (such as brochures, statements or signs) associated with the services visually appealing? Explain.

- 4) Reliability
 - a) What is your opinion of the library's service delivery (promptness, timeliness, quality, etc.)?
 - b) Assess the library in terms of solving your problems.
 - c) What is your assessment of the library records (library database, patrons list, accessions list etc.)?

5) Empathy/staff

- a) What are your views on the convenience of opening hours of the library (opening and closing times)?
- b) What is your assessment of staff neatness?
- c) Does the library pay attention to user needs? Kindly explain.

It is on these themes that the FGD was based. Five FGDs were conducted with participants of between 5 and 8 per group. The participants were selected purposively from the African Court library user population. The focus groups were identified as per the units (departments) of the Court. These are;

- a) Legal staff (legal officers).
- b) Administration and finance
- c) ICT
- d) Languages
- e) External users.

There are two general approaches to coding: open coding and focused coding:

- 1) Open coding: researchers remain as open as possible in their attempt to “uncover” what is in the data.
- 2) Focused coding: researchers identify themes and look for associated data fitting under categories of interest.

The researcher used a combination of the two. Because they are not mutually exclusive, researchers may work back and forth between them. Specific themes were identified from the findings of the analysis of data from the LibQUAL, SERVQUAL and SERVPERF Questionnaires. These themes formed the basis for the focus group discussion where the researcher looked for associated data fitting under these areas of interest. But at the same time the researcher remained open to information outside these themes which was relevant to the study.

5.8.1 Information control

The topics included for discussion were:

- a) Adequacy and relevance of printed and electronic information resources;
- b) Condition and adequacy of equipment for access needed information (computers, charging ports, scanners, copiers, etc);
- c) Library website/page;
- d) Comment on access tools of the library.

5.8.1.1 Information control: Legal staff

Below are representative statements from the discussion among legal staff on the theme *Information control*.

Table 5.16: Information control - Legal staff

- The collection meets my needs
- Books are adequate but get more recent editions
- Purchase process takes long
- Buy more items in Portuguese and Arabic
- We have no electronic databases in French, Portuguese and Arabic
- Collection is largely in print only, need more in digital format
- Subscribe to more electronic books so that we don't have to come to the library
- Electronic resources are only in English, ignores other African Union languages
- Create a special collection of African Union documents
- Link us with other African Union Libraries e.g. African Union Commission in Addis, African Human Rights Commission (Banjul), Pan African Parliament (Johannesburg etc).
- Allow us to take magazines and newspapers out of the library
- Buy DVDs on Court sessions, how to make submissions in court and other legal aspects
- The Library web page is down most of the time and I cannot access the OPAC
- Library web page needs improvement
- No need for a card catalogue, we have good electricity back-up
- Internet connection is good, but we need more ports to charge laptops and phones
- The photocopier is useful, but it is old and there is a need to get a newer one
- Get a scanner for the library

- Library computers are old and inadequate; I have to queue to use one. Get interns out of the library
- Create links with other libraries to allow for interlibrary loans (universities in the region,
- East African Community, UN bodies in Tanzania, other human rights bodies etc)

From the responses, the legal staff are generally satisfied with the library collections, but would like to see more recent editions of books and an increase in items in the other African Union languages of Arabic and Portuguese. They also would want more items in electronic format, more DVDs, a special collection of African Union documents, links with other libraries, especially other African Union Libraries, and being allowed to take magazines and newspapers out of the library. However, they were dissatisfied with the long purchase procedures. Dissatisfaction was also registered regarding the long downtimes of the library web page and OPAC, despite availability of good Internet connection and power supply. The legal officers also found the library computers and photocopier old and inadequate. The library needs newer and more equipment, including scanners.

5.8.1.2 Information control: Administration and Finance unit staff

Below are representative statements from the discussion among administration and finance staff on the theme *Information control*.

Table 5.17: Information control - Administration and Finance unit staff

- Library does not have adequate books for my profession, I prefer using the Internet
- The library would be a better place if it had a wide variety of books, not just law
- The library collection ignores other important sections of the Court such as finance, administration, security, protocol, human resources etc.
- Library discriminates non-legal staff, no finance and accounting books
- Library only concentrates on law books
- Library computers not enough (interns work from the library)
- I only come to the library to read newspapers and magazines, no books for me

- Include DVDs on aspects such as interviewing, training and presentations
- I only use the library to access Internet and read emails
- I only come to the library to use the computers
- No ports to charge laptops and phones
- Boring library web page, nothing new, no updates; always unavailable.

Participants from administration and finance group overwhelmingly felt that that the collection of the library did not address the needs for their profession. The collection was largely legal-based and thus was largely irrelevant to them. The library had no books on finance, human resources, security, protocol, administration, office management etc. They are therefore forced to use Internet or borrow from other libraries or friends. They felt that the library discriminates non-legal staff of the Court. They therefore only visit the library to read newspapers, use Internet and to read emails. They found the library equipment inadequate since they have to jostle for it with interns and other visitors to the library. According to them, the library web page is static, boring, unavailable most of the time and has no updates, thus they do not us visit it much, which means they do not get to use the only access tool available, the OPAC. They expressed dissatisfaction with the limited ports for charging laptops and phones.

5.8.1.3 Information control: ICT unit staff

Below are representative statements from the discussion among ICT Unit Staff on the theme *Information control*.

Table 5.18: Information control - ICT staff

- No ICT books, focuses only on law
- Our field is too fast moving for books, I get all I need on the Internet.
- No books on communication
- Get electronic books, this is the ICT era
- Your equipment (computers, copiers, TV etc) is old, replace
- Internet is good, we maintain it.
- Need to replace the library software, it is old
- Need a library security system.
- The library web page and the entire court website are currently undergoing a revamping; ordered by the Registrar

Participants in this group were dissatisfied by the lack of books in their areas of specialisation, information and communication technologies (ICT). Their complaints were that the books in the library are mainly law-oriented, hence largely irrelevant to ICT professionals. Also to note is that the participants mentioned that changes in the ICT field are too fast and ever-changing for any textbook. It is due to these factors that they rely on Internet for their information needs. The library therefore should consider subscribing to more electronic books and journals in the field of ICT rather than print formats. According to them, library Internet connection is good since they maintain it, but the library computers and library management software are old and need to be replaced. The library web page, OPAC and the entire Court website are of poor quality and are currently undergoing a revamping.

5.8.1.4 Language unit staff

Below are representative statements from the discussion among Language unit staff on the theme *Information control*.

Table 5.19: Information control - language unit staff

- | |
|---|
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Books on translation, interpretation and languages in general are inadequate • No adequate reference sources such as dictionaries • Inadequate thesauri and biographies • Transfer all language books to the Language unit so that we don't have to come to the library; we usually need them on short notice • Subscribe to online dictionaries • Buy DVDs and videos on interpretation and translation • Computers are old • Internet is good • Thanks for hosting our (Language unit) interns! • You mean there is a library web page? Never seen it. • The entire court website is not good • Library web page never updated |
|---|

This group consisted of court translators and interpreters. According to them, the library's collection of books on translation, interpretation and languages in general is limited and inadequate. They are also no adequate reference sources such as dictionaries,

thesauri, encyclopaedias and biographies. They wanted all language books transferred from the library to the Language unit so that they do not have to come to the library. Their explanation is that they need the books at short notice. They also wanted the library to subscribe to more online reference resources especially dictionaries, an increase in the number of DVDs and videos on interpretation and translation. Most of them do not visit the library web page since it is hardly ever updated and two of them claimed never to have seen it. They said that the entire court website is not good and needs a thorough overhaul.

5.8.1.5 Information control: external users

Below are representative statements from the discussion among external users on the theme *Information control*.

Table 5.20: Information control - external users

- | |
|--|
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Collection is good, but only concentrates on human rights and international law, include other aspects of law • Include more books on Tanzanian and East African legal affairs • Buy more Swahili books • Why only law books? • Allow us to borrow books from the library • Give us passwords to the electronic databases • Internet access in the library is good • Find using the library web page difficult at first, now I can use the web page to find a lot of information • I use the web page to search the OPAC, but most times it is down • Have a card catalogue as back-up • Library computers are inadequate (interns work from the library) • Library computers are old, replace them • I see a TV and DVD player; are there DVDs, videos? • Thanks for the free copier and printer! • Library web page is Ok, serves my needs; but sometimes it is down |
|--|

The majority of participants were in agreement that the library collection is of good quality and relevant. This is explained by the fact that most external users of the library have a legal background. However, they noted that the collection concentrates on human

rights and international law, thus excluding other aspects of law such as family law, environmental law, property law, law of contract, etc. They also decried a lack of books on Tanzanian and East African legal affairs, and also Swahili books. They also wanted to be given passwords to electronic databases and be allowed to borrow books from the library. The majority said that they initially had difficulties navigating the library web page but they soon found their way around it. They said that they use the web page to search the OPAC, but most times it is down. They mentioned that library computers are old and insufficient, a situation made worse by the fact that court interns work from the library, and that they should be allowed to make use of the library audio-visual items, especially the TV, DVD player. They were thankful for being allowed to use the library copier and printer, free of charge.

5.8.2 Library as place

The items for discussion were:

- a) Does the library space encourage study and learning?
- b) Discuss the condition of the library in terms of comfort, quietness and conduciveness for study.
- c) Does the library provide space for group learning and group study?

5.8.2.1 Library as place: legal staff

Below are representative statements from the discussion among legal staff on the theme *Library as a place*.

Table 5.21: Library as a place - legal staff

<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Comfortable seats and tables• Well-lit and air-conditioned• There is dust, need better cleaning• Too much noise in the library (users talking, phones, etc)• Too many interns hosted there• Library should not be used for interviews (written) at all• Rear door to Documentation Unit creates lots of noise, close it• Sometimes there is noise from the grass cutters outside

- Reconsider cleaning times; either early before library opens or after closure; dust and movement creates noise and disturbance, spoils user concentration
- Noise from the Documentation Unit
- Clamp down on cell phones ringing inside the library
- There is no provision for a room to watch/listen to audio-visuals; one has to use headphones
- No room for group discussions

The legal officers were satisfied with the environment in the library and generally found it conducive to study and learning. They found it well-lit and air-conditioned but complained about the dust, stating that the cleaners needed to do a better job. They, however, complained about the noise in the library. For them the noise emanated from users talking to each other, cell phones, grass cutters on the outside and interns who work from the library. There were also disturbances caused by the door to the documentation unit. They felt that this door should be permanently locked. Written tests for recruitment interviews are usually conducted in the library, which means that the library is closed at those times. This also creates disturbances. There were also disturbances caused by the cleaners. They do their cleaning mid-morning, when library clients are seated and studying, thus the dust and movement create noise and disturbance, affecting user concentration. They propose that cleaning be done before the library opens or after closing hours. They were also dissatisfied about lack of a room to watch/listen to audio-visuals and provision for group discussions.

5.8.2.2 Library as a place: Administration and Finance unit staff

Below are representative statements from the discussion among Administration and Finance unit staff on the theme *Library as a place*.

Table 5.22: Library as a place Administration and Finance unit staff

- Tables are Ok, but we need more comfortable chairs
- Library has good lighting, natural and manmade
- Clean environment (we organise the cleaning)
- Staff complain of noise in and around the library
- Desk phones should be on reduced volume

- Some users discuss loudly in the library; they should be thrown out.
- Keep hosting the interns, we have no space elsewhere
- We know that closing the library for interviews is inconvenient, but for now we have no option
- We need a room for our written interviews and other meetings

This group was in agreement that the library encourages study and learning, was clean, with comfortable tables but the chairs are a little too hard for long hours of sitting. They noted that there is a great deal of noise in the library, especially from desk and cell phones. However, they felt that the library should continue to host interns and written tests for interviews since there was no other space to host them. They wanted the library to provide space for group learning, which they argue could also be used for written interview tests.

5.8.2.3 Library as a place: ICT unit staff

Below are representative statements from the discussion among ICT unit staff on the theme *Library as a place*.

Table 5.23: Library as a place ICT unit staff

- Good comfortable furniture
- Adequate natural and electric light
- Library is regularly cleaned
- Library should not be hosting interviews
- Library should not have a through door
- Cleaning is done when users are in the library; this should not happen
- Cell phones and desk phones of staff should be put on silent mode
- No facilities for groups (discussions, watching videos etc)
- Good CCTV cameras

Though this group admits that they do not use the library for study, they agree that it has a good environment that encourages study and learning. It has comfortable and attractive furniture and good lighting and even air conditioning. They also note that the library has well-placed CCTV cameras for enhanced security. These were installed by them (ICT unit). Cleaning is done regularly. But there is a problem with noise levels from phones,

both cell phones and desktop phones. They feel that these phones should be put on silent mode. There are also unwanted disturbances from cleaning in the middle of the day and the through door to the documentation unit. They also note that there is no facility for groups (discussions, watching videos, etc).

5.8.2.4 Library as a place: Language unit staff

Below are representative statements from the discussion among Language unit staff on the theme *Library as a place*.

Table 5.24: Library as a place - Language unit staff

- | |
|--|
| <ul style="list-style-type: none">• The library is conducive to research and study• Chairs and tables are modern• Spacious and adequate setting• Creates room for language staff to translate and transcribe• Need a room for meetings and group activities• There is too much noise around the library; can we make it soundproof?• The through door should be closed |
|--|

Although this group agreed that the library is conducive to research and study, chairs and tables are modern and that the library is spacious, they stated a desire for a meeting room and a special room for translation, interpretation and transcription. They noted that the library has no room for meetings and group activities. According to them there is too much noise around the library. So probably the management should consider soundproofing the library. The through door to the documentation unit should also be closed in order to reduce noise levels.

5.8.2.5 Library as a place: external users

Below are representative statements from the discussion among external users on the theme *Library as a place*.

Table 5.25: Library as a place - external users

- Furniture is Ok with me
- The library has superb quality lighting
- The cleaning is not good, there is still dust in many sections of the library
- Books are sometimes dusty
- A lot of noise from phones
- Cleaners create disturbance; they should clean before library opens
- I don't like it when they close the library for interviews
- We are congested inside the library
- Close the back door
- Where can I watch videos, which ones do you have?
- The library should provide discussion rooms for big groups
- Security checks at the main gate are too rigorous and intrusive

Participants generally found the library space conducive to study and learning. They were satisfied with the lighting, furniture and cleanliness of the floors, but unhappy with the dust on some sections of the collection. They expressed dissatisfaction with disturbances from cleaners, the open back door, closures for interview tests and lack of a place for group discussions and use of audio-visual collections. They group was also unhappy about the rigorous security checks at the main gate of the Court, which they found to be too intrusive.

5.8.3 Tangibles

The items for discussion were:

- Materials associated with library services (brochures, statements, signs) are visually appealing;
- Appeal of library facilities (computers, audio-visuals, shelves, tables, chairs etc).

5.8.3.1 Tangibles: Legal unit staff

Below are representative statements from the discussion among Legal unit staff on the theme *Tangibles*.

Table 5.26: Tangibles - Legal unit staff

- Library signs are old and out-dated
- Signage is not clear, faded, some have collected dirt
- I have not seen any library brochures or statements
- The shelf signage is incorrect and misleading
- Books on shelves are moved but signs are not changed to reflect the change
- Bibliographies are professional and useful; keep sending them

Participants were dissatisfied with the library signage which they found to be old and out-dated. Most of it was not clear, faded or had gathered dirt. They were in unison that they had not seen any library brochures or statements. They found the shelf signage incorrect and generally misleading. Books on the shelves are moved to new locations but the signs are not changed to reflect the change. They were satisfied with the regular bibliographies send that the library sends by email, finding them professional and useful.

5.8.3.2 Tangibles: Administration and Finance unit staff

Below are representative statements from the discussion among Administration and Finance unit staff on the theme *Tangibles*.

Table 5.27: Tangibles - Administration and Finance unit staff

- Ugly and poor library signage (printed on A4 paper)
- This paper has faded due to light and other elements
- Some have collected dead insects on the outside
- Library signs need to be revised
- The signage bearing names of library officers at the entrance is good; same should be done for inside
- We have not seen any library documents, brochures, statements etc.
- I have seen the bibliographies; they are good, but also include bibliographies on non-legal topics

Participants found the materials associated with library services signage to be ugly and unappealing. Most of them are produced on A4 paper that has faded and lost its appeal over time due to the elements. Signs also appear to have collected dirt and dead insects over time. They also noted that they have not seen any library documents, brochures, statements, etc. They were satisfied with the signage bearing names of library officers at

the main entrance of the library, which they said is professionally well done. They felt that the same should be done for inside signage. They expressed satisfaction with the regular library bibliographies, which they find useful as reference tools, but they would want to see bibliographies of non-legal topics.

5.8.3.3 Tangibles: ICT unit staff

Below are representative statements from the discussion among ICT unit staff on the theme *Tangibles*.

Table 5.28: Tangibles - ICT unit staff

- | |
|--|
| <ul style="list-style-type: none">• There is no signage at all• Need electronic boards and signage in the library• The library has no brochures for now, but they don't have to print them; simply make them available on the library web page or sent by email• Keep regular postings of information, e.g. new arrivals, rules etc on the web page• Thanks for the frequent notifications and bibliographies, but include more ICT-relevant content |
|--|

Participants were adamant that they do not see any signage worth talking about. They said that the library needs electronic boards and signage, in tandem with modern times. They mentioned that the library has no brochures for now, but when they start producing them, they do not have to print them. They should simply make them available on the library web page or send them by email. They felt that the library should make use of the library web page to post information about the library, such as new arrivals, services, general notifications, rules and other matters. They were satisfied with the frequent notifications and bibliographies from the library, but they wished it could contain books and other resources relevant to them.

5.8.3.4 Tangibles: Language unit staff

Below are representative statements from the discussion among Language unit staff on the theme *Tangibles*.

Table 5.29: Tangibles - Language unit staff

- | |
|---|
| <ul style="list-style-type: none">• What signage? There is none! I can't tell what is where in the library; the current signage should be changed• The library produces no brochures at all• Signage should be in all 4 Languages of the African Union (French, English, Portuguese and Arabic) |
|---|

Participants claimed not to have seen any signage and that if it existed at all, it must be non-effective. They called for a revamp of the library signage. Since they come from the Language department, they want the signage to be shown clearly in the official languages of the African Union (English, French, Arabic and Portuguese). They have not seen any library brochures or statements.

5.8.3.5 Tangibles: External users

Below are representative statements from the discussion among external users on the theme *Tangibles*.

Table 5.30: Tangibles - external users

- | |
|--|
| <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Materials are ugly and boring• Signage is on poor quality paper• I haven't seen any brochures or statements publicised• Signs, brochures, statements, etc should also be done in Swahili• Existing signs are old and bad looking |
|--|

According to external users, materials are of poor quality, ugly and boring. Signage is printed on poor quality paper, is old and unattractive. No brochures or statements have been made public. They feel that library signs, brochures, statements, etc should also be in Swahili, considering that it is the language of the host country and the region.

5.8.4 Reliability

The items for discussion were:

- a) What is your opinion on the library's service delivery (promptness, timeliness, quality etc)?
- b) Assess the library in terms of solving your problems.
- c) What is your assessment of the library records (library catalogue, database, patrons list, accessions list, etc.)?

5.8.4.1 Reliability: Legal unit staff

Below are representative statements from the discussion among Legal unit staff on the theme *Reliability*.

Table 5.31: Reliability - Legal unit staff

- | |
|---|
| <ul style="list-style-type: none">• The library solves my problems, sometimes it takes a while but they solve them eventually• They serve my information needs very well• They have the best quality collection in terms of human rights and related areas in the region• They keep us informed of new arrivals, appearance of relevant articles, films etc.• The library catalogue is detailed and well-referenced, but there are times you cannot access it• I have not used the accessions list• Staff are well qualified and really address my information needs• Staff go out of their way to help me solve my problems• Their frequent bibliographies are of high quality and very useful |
|---|

According to the legal officers, the library solves problems; it may take some time but they eventually solve them. Their information needs are well served and the library has a high quality collection in terms of human rights and related areas, probably the best in the region. The library keeps them well informed of new arrivals, appearance of relevant articles, films and other items in the legal area. The library catalogue is thorough, detailed and well referenced, but there are times you cannot access it due to frequent downtimes. Many of the participants had not seen or had to use the accessions list. They were appreciative of the frequent bibliographies produced by the library and said they

were of high quality. According to them, staff are well qualified and adequately address their information needs. They go out of their way to help solve problems.

5.8.4.2 Reliability: Administration and Finance unit staff

Below are representative statements from the discussion among Administration and Finance unit staff on the theme *Reliability*.

Table 5.32: Reliability - Administration and Finance unit staff

- | |
|--|
| <ul style="list-style-type: none">• I do not like the catalogue. Not meant for me. I have not seen the other records.• They have not solved any of my problems at all, no books in my field, etc.• They do not help me in any way.• My only contact with the library is the newspapers and Internet. Everything else does not help me.• They only solve problems of the legal staff. Not the other staff members.• But they are good in maintaining good records of purchases and procurement. We at Finance rely on them when we are stuck.• To solve my problems, buy more books on finance and admin subjects.• The library only cares about the legal unit and ignores other staff members. |
|--|

Participants in this group were not satisfied with the quality of the library's service delivery. For them, the library has not solved any of their problems at all because there are no books in their fields (accounting, office management, auditing, procurement, security, etc.). Many of them visit the library to read newspapers and magazines or to use Internet. Everything else does not help me. In order to solve their problems, they want the library to buy more books on finance and administrative subjects. There was also a feeling that the focus of the library and its staff is only on the legal staff, to the disadvantage of the other staff members. All participants have used the library catalogue but have not been impressed by its quality. They have also seen the accessions and patrons list during auditing sessions and are impressed by it. They agree that the library is good in maintaining records of purchases and procurement. They have first-hand experience of it since the finance and auditing units rely on them.

5.8.4.3 Reliability: ICT unit staff

Below are representative statements from the discussion among ICT unit staff on the theme *Reliability*.

Table 5.33: Reliability ICT unit staff

- | |
|--|
| <ul style="list-style-type: none">• The electronic records (catalogue, accessions list etc) are well made and of high quality. The ICT unit takes part in these.• We can make the library web page more vibrant.• We have upgraded the library software already. We are now working on the interface• I only use the library for newspapers and that is all I need.• No books for ICT and related areas. |
|--|

Participants were dissatisfied with the library's service delivery concerning availability of books in their field (ICT and related areas). For this reason, many of the participants in this group only use the library for newspapers and magazines. According to the participants, the electronic records (catalogue, accessions list etc) are of high quality. They said this is because they (ICT unit) take part in their preparation. The library web page and indeed the entire court library are not of the best quality at present, but it they are in the process of being revamped in order to be vibrant. The library software was of an out-dated version, but this has now been upgraded and the ICT unit is working on improving the interface.

5.8.4.4 Reliability: Language unit staff

Below are representative statements from the discussion among Language unit staff on the theme *Reliability*.

Table 5.34: Reliability - Language unit staff

They solve my newspaper problems but not anything else.

- I only use the dictionaries and thesaurus. Nothing else is relevant to me.
- Collection is mainly legal, only for lawyers.
- I have no idea about their records and their quality.
- They do not help me in my translation work.
- No items on interpretation in the library collection.
- Librarians only care about legal staff.

Participants were of the opinion that the library only solves their problems as far as reference sources (dictionaries, thesauri and others), newspapers and magazines are concerned. The collection is mainly legal and thus not very relevant to them. They were also dissatisfied by the fact the library has very few items on translation and interpretation in the library collection. Many of them have seen the library catalogue on the Court website but they do not use it. They also have no idea about the other library records (patrons list, accessions list etc.) or their quality. They said this is because they do not need them in their work. There was also a general feeling that library staff only care about legal officers and do not accord similar attention to staff from other departments of the Court.

5.8.4.5 Reliability: External Users

Below are representative statements from the discussion among external users on the theme *Reliability*.

Table 5.35: Reliability - external users

- Books are good and useful, meet my research problems.
- The books help me in my research and term papers.
- Good collection useful in preparing my court cases.
- The staff only pays attention to Court staff and only come to my assistance much later.
- Library staff solves my problems, but they take long.

- The catalogue is well done, but sometimes unreachable.
- I haven't seen the other records of the library.
- They are not open when I want to use the library, like after classes and weekends.

Most of the external users are legal professionals. For them the library is a blessing. They expressed satisfaction in that the library solves their problems since it gives them access to a huge collection of legal and human rights resources, all free. This access helps them in their work (lawyers and professors) and research assignments (students). On the other hand, they expressed dissatisfaction in that library staff give priority to court staff and only come to assist them later, thus service accorded to them is not prompt. They were satisfied with the quality of the library catalogue, which they termed as professional, but they were dissatisfied with the frequent downtimes. Being external users, they are not privy to other library records such as the patrons and accessions list. Another cause of dissatisfaction is the library's failure to be open when external users are free to use it, such as in the evenings and on weekends.

5.8.5 Empathy

The items for discussion were:

- a) What are your views on the convenience of opening hours of the library (opening and closing times)?
- b) What is your assessment of staff neatness?
- c) Does the library pay attention to user needs? Kindly explain.

5.8.5.1 Empathy: Legal unit staff

Below are representative statements from the discussion among legal unit staff on the theme *Empathy*.

Table 5.36: Empathy - Legal unit staff

- | |
|---|
| <ul style="list-style-type: none">• I am Ok with the opening and closing times• The staff are well versed in their work but they are overwhelmed• They give attention to my needs and do follow-ups• Staff try their best but are not trained in law librarianship |
|---|

The legal officers were satisfied with the library's opening and closing hours, saying that the library is open when they need to use it. They felt that the library staff are always neat and satisfactorily attend to their needs and even do follow-ups. However, they felt that they (library staff) are overwhelmed by the amount of work and huge number of clients that they have to attend to. They also noted that the library staff are mainly general librarians. They need to do regular training on law librarianship.

5.8.5.2 Empathy: Administration and Finance unit staff

Below are representative statements from the discussion among Administration and Finance unit staff on the theme *Empathy*.

Table 5.37: Empathy - Administration and Finance unit staff

- | |
|---|
| <ul style="list-style-type: none">• I don't use the book collection so I cannot tell.• They serve me well as far as newspapers, internet and photocopying are concerned.• They should open till 8pm and weekends so that I do my studies there.• Staff are very helpful and considerate. |
|---|

Participants felt that the library should open for longer hours to allow them to study, use the Internet and read newspapers and magazines. This is because there are staff who are studying accounting, auditing and languages, such as English, French, Arabic and Portuguese. They found staff to be neat, helpful and considerate, but the lack of books relevant to administration and finance was a disappointment.

5.8.5.3 Empathy: ICT unit staff

Below are representative statements from the discussion among ICT unit staff on the theme *Empathy*.

Table 5.38: Empathy - ICT unit staff

- | |
|---|
| <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Opening hours are convenient• Staff are good in what they do.• We are few so they should be able to attend to individual user needs• Staff do not understand my information needs. |
|---|

ICT staff were satisfied with the library opening hours and found them convenient. They found the library staff to be neat and qualified in their work and attentive to individual user needs. They however felt that they (staff) do not understand the information needs of ICT staff, which are unique, highly specialised and fast changing.

5.8.5.4 Empathy: Language unit staff

Below are representative statements from the discussion among Language unit staff on the theme *Empathy*.

Table 5.39: Empathy - Language Unit staff

- | |
|---|
| <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Library should open longer hours to allow our interns and translators to complete their work; also on weekends• Staff are good in what they do, but they are programmed to serve legal staff only• Library staff have no idea about the needs of interpreters and translators |
|---|

Language unit staff were not satisfied with the library closing hours and felt that the library should be open longer hours. But there was a twist to this. They were not requesting the longer hours for themselves, but for their interns, so that those interns could complete the assignments given to them by the language unit staff. They were

satisfied with staff neatness but felt that the library staff do not understand or pay attention to user needs of the language unit.

5.8.5.5 Empathy: External users

Below are representative statements from the discussion among external users on the theme *Empathy*.

Table 5.40: Empathy - External users

Library should open till 9 pm and on weekends for use by users coming from outside students, lawyers, lecturers etc.
Staff sometimes tend to ignore external users and concentrate only on Court legal officers.

External users were very disappointed with the opening and closing times of the library. Most of them felt that the library is open when they are not in a position to use it. Most would like the library to extend its opening hours to either 8 p.m. or 9 p.m. and also to open on Saturdays. They found the staff neat and helpful at all times, attending to their user needs adequately. However, most of them felt that library staff concentrate too much on court staff members and tend to ignore external users.

5.9 SUMMARY OF THE CHAPTER

This chapter presented the findings of the data collected by means of the service quality protocols of LibQUAL, SERVQUAL and SERVPERF and from FGDs. The various sections of the chapter have been guided by the structure of the protocols to capture the findings in tables and graphical illustrations and organized in a way that will answer the research questions as shown in chapter one, section 4.3. The findings in all the protocols and the FGDs show that the expectations of the respondents were higher than their perceptions in both LibQUAL and SERVQUAL. This indicates that the library services generally fall short of user expectations and thus service quality is low. It also means that

there are service gaps that should be addressed in order to meet the needs of the users. The major findings of the study are interpreted and discussed in the subsequent chapter.

CHAPTER SIX: DISCUSSION AND INTERPRETATION OF THE FINDINGS

6.1 INTRODUCTION

This chapter discusses and interprets the findings provided in chapter five as well as interpreting the findings of the research in line with the research objectives and questions. It discusses the data gathered from the LibQUAL, SERVQUAL and SERVPERF protocols. The findings discussed in this chapter relate to the internal and external users of the African Court library who responded to the questionnaire and attended focus group discussion sessions in order to supplement the findings from the questionnaire.

According to Kothari (2004:344-345), the importance of analysis and interpretation of research findings should reinforce the interaction between theoretical orientation and empirical observation. It should be done with due care and in an objective manner so as to provide opportunities for originality and creativity in the research being undertaken. As various authors have argued, it is important not to undertake the data analysis process as merely a description of measurements and statistics (Bless & Higson-Smith, 2000:140; Creswell 2009: 153; Mugenda & Mugenda, 2003:150). Therefore this chapter ensures that the data analysis is aligned to the objectives and the research questions of the study as stated in chapter one section 4.2. In addition, the findings have also been analysed within the theoretical perspectives of the research and integrated into the theoretical framework of the study as stated in section 2.4.1.1 of the theoretical framework.

The purpose of this research was to assess the quality of services offered by the African Court library through determining user satisfaction, experiences, perceptions and expectations of library services using the LibQUAL, SERVQUAL and SERVPERF protocols. To achieve this purpose, the following objectives guided the study:

- a) Determine the minimum expectations of library users using the LibQUAL, SERVQUAL and SERVPERF models;
- b) Study the desired level of expectations of library users across the three models;
- c) Investigate the perceived level of service across the three models;
- d) Assess the service quality of library services by determining the gaps between the various service quality variables across the three models;
- e) Find out the attributes of service quality that meet or do not meet library user expectations across the three models;
- f) Compare findings across the three models and FGDs to establish points of convergence or non-convergence;
- g) Make recommendations on how to improve service delivery in accordance with the user needs.

6.2 MINIMUM EXPECTATIONS OF USERS

Of the three protocols used in this study, only LibQUAL has a provision for measuring minimum expectations of users. Table 5.7 shows the means for the minimum level of service that the users would find acceptable. By *minimum*, it is meant the least or lowest level of service that the users would tolerate (Shoeb, 2012). This is the level of service that users consider as adequate and it represents the lowest level of service that users will tolerate or are willing to accept (Mkhonta, 2015). According to Table 5.7, the statements with the highest minimum expectations are those that users value most. Conversely, those with the lowest minimum expectations are the least valued by users. If services perform below users' minimum expectations, this could create disappointment, frustration and dissatisfaction as well as decrease their loyalty and reliability (Boykin, 2012). According to Wilson (2004), the minimum service expectations can be considered as an indicator of the importance of that type of service to the users (Wilson, 2004). Libraries can establish the most important aspects of service by identifying the items that were ranked highest by users on minimum service level (Tajer, 2013).

The findings indicate that users have the highest expectations in AS followed by IC. Users have their least expectations in LP. The statements with the highest minimum expectations were AS-5, AS-7, AS-1, IC-7 and AS-9. It is clear that these statements are in the AS and IC dimension. The statements with the lowest minimum expectations (least valued by users) were LP-5, IC-4, IC-2, LP-1, IC-8, LP-4 and LP-2. It is clear that these fall under the dimension of LP and the hardware (equipment) part of IC dimensions. This does not imply that the library should ignore these areas, but in situations where there are limited resources, priority can be given to those statements with the highest minimum requirements since those are the ones most important to users. This has been the observation in other LibQUAL studies by Pretorius (2011) in South Africa, Mkhonta (2015) in Swaziland and Tajer (2014) in Iran.

A possible explanation for the findings is that the library has no periodic user education programmes. The last user education activity was in 2010. A lack of user education means that most users do not know how to use the library and would therefore prefer to go through a librarian (human interface) in order to find their way in and about the library and to trace information resources. Secondly, the library is a research library and users expect to work more closely with the library staff in information searching and retrieval, compilation of bibliographies, production of abstracts, selective dissemination of information and current awareness service, thus the high expectations on AS. This is especially so with the key users of the library, the Court's legal officers. Also the primary users (legal officers and other staff of the court) prefer to pick items and use them in their offices or in court. Due to the nature of their work, they do not spend much time in the library, thus the low expectations on LP.

On the other hand, the primary reason why users visit libraries is the information collection. It is therefore natural for them to expect that the library should have a quality collection and other aspects of the library related to it. Studies by Jones and Kayongo

(2008), Haliso and Aina, (2012) and Kayongo and Helm (2012) have shown that issues of information collection are considered by users to be of primary importance.

However, the study revealed that the ICT part of Information control was also rated among the lowest. These are aspects of equipment that helps users to access information, such as computers and websites. A possible reason why this aspect was rated low is the fact that the volume of the library's collection that is in digital format is very minimal. This has been supported by studies by Asogwa in Africa (2014) and Hussain, Khan and Zaidi (2013) in India, who concluded that library collections in most developing countries are still in print format and that both users and librarians are yet to exploit the full potential of ICTs in libraries.

The findings of the study are consistent with those of Padremnia et al., (2012). Their study on service quality in academic libraries in Iran established that users had their highest minimum expectations in the same order of AS, IC, and LP. This could also be explained by the findings of a study by Anyira (2011) whose conclusion was that the 21st century library emphasizes access rather than ownership. This means that the modern library user tends to take greater responsibility in locating and retrieving information from the library's collections more than they have done in the traditional library enterprise due to the proliferation of information resources in electronic formats. But that is not the case with the African Court library. A large part of its collection is still in physical print format, and current ICT facilities to access remote information resources are inadequate for users. So the tendency to prefer human interface is inspired by the fact that the users need the library staff to locate items in the library, to compile bibliographies and other retrieval aids, and to identify resources in other libraries, rather than a preference to use ICT access tools.

The findings differ from those of a LIBQUAL-based study by Rehman (2012b) on expectations of Pakistani library users. In Rehman's study, the five services having

lowest minimum expectations were mostly related to the AS dimension. In his study, the service quality statements with the lowest mean scores demonstrated that users did not give high importance to services related to staff, unlike the current study. Also, unlike the current study, the five services having highest minimum expectations were mostly related to the LP dimension. This means that services related to library space were most important to users. This is the converse of the current study. A similarity with the current study was found to exist whereby the IC dimension was considered moderately important.

The difference between the current study and that of Rehman (2012b) could be explained by the fact that Rehman's study was done in a university library where users spend long hours in the library while conducting their research. On the other hand, the current study was done in the Court library where the majority of the users prefer to only stop briefly in the library to get what they want and return to their offices or courtroom.

The other protocols used in the study, SERVQUAL and SERVPERF have no provisions for measuring minimum expectations of users. That does not however make them less suitable for measuring service quality. According to some studies (Mohd et al., 2013), this aspect is actually a kind of advantage. SERVPERF is the performance component of SERVQUAL and measures performance only while SERVQUAL measures performance and expectations. According to Jain and Gupta (2004), SERVPERF provides managers with an overall service quality score. Studies by Brady, Cronin and Brand (2002) and Einasto (2013) with completely different datasets have proven that measures of performance only as a measurement of service quality are superior to those that measure performance and expectations. Besides, White, Abels and Nitecki (1994:40) have found SERVPERF to be less complicated, more accurate, more precise and easier to administer than SERVQUAL. SERVPERF, however, has the extra advantage in that it explains more of the variation in customer perceptions of service quality than SERVQUAL (Jayasundara, 2009:68). Data analyses show that the SERVPERF scale has slightly better

reliability while the SERVQUAL scale has an edge in validity (Lee, 2007). A study in India by Mohd et al. (2013) revealed that SERVPERF has outperformed SERVQUAL by reducing the number of variables, reducing the workload of customer surveys and helping in generating unbiased responses. Therefore, although SERVQUAL and SERVPERF do not measure minimum expectations and SERVPERF does not measure minimum and desired expectations and desired expectations, all aspects of service quality are covered by both protocols, in themselves and by combination.

6.3 DESIRED EXPECTATIONS OF LIBRARY USERS IN LIBQUAL AND SERVQUAL

The study further sought to establish the desired expectations of library users using LibQUAL and SERVQUAL protocols in terms of AS, IC and LP.

Desired expectations can be considered as an indicator of the importance of services to the library users (Wilson, 2004). Library administrators can determine the most important areas for users by identifying which service quality statements received a high mean score from users on desired expectations measurement.

Tables 5.8 and 5.9 show the *Desired expectations* of users as measured with LibQUAL and SERVQUAL protocols, respectively. From Table 5.8, the overall mean for *Desired expectations* in LibQUAL is 6.12. The mean for the dimensions was as follows; AS (6.27), IC 6.03, and LP (5.95). Thus the users had the highest expectations on aspects of AS followed by IC while the least desires were placed on aspects of LP. The findings on *Desired expectations* confirm the findings from the *Minimum* expectations test where the expectations were highest in the AS dimension, followed by IC, then LP. Thus the users had the highest desired expectations in the dimensions in which they had the highest minimum expectations.

Individual quality statements that had the highest means were IC-3, AS-5, AS-1, LP-2 and IC-4. These are quality statements that cover several aspects such as information resources, in both printed and electronic format, staff knowledge and library space. However, the majority fall under AS and IC dimensions. Desired expectations with the least means were LP-5, IC-2, AS-6, IC-5, and IC-8. These statements also cover several aspects such as cover community space, website, staff, library equipment and collections. The statement LP-5 *Community space for group learning and group study* was the least rated, meaning that users had the least expectations on this aspect.

An interesting finding is that individual statements for desired expectations are spread evenly across Tables 5.8 and 5.9. This is an indicator that the desired expectations of users on this dimension are varied. There are users who have high expectations, those who have moderate expectations and those who have low expectations on aspects of these dimensions. It is also a reflection of the variety of users of the library such as legal, external, administration and finance, ICT, and language among others. Studies by Karunanayake and Nagata (2014) and Griffiths and King (2008) have shown that in libraries with heterogeneous groups of users like the African court library, there will be varying expectations on the information collection.

Another notable finding is that the statements with the lowest means (LP-5, IC-2 and IC-5) in desired expectations also had the lowest means in the minimum expectations test. These are statements related to library physical aspects, website and equipment. This could be an indicator that the users do not attach much importance on them, which is in turn a reflection on the nature of usage by library clients. The key users of the library (staff of the Court), prefer to borrow items from the library then proceed to use them in their offices or in Court. They rarely spend much time in the library. Besides, very little of the library's collection is in digital format, rendering the need for equipment to access it less important. In addition, all the professional staff of the Court already have personal

or officially issued laptops with which they access the Internet. The Court has installed WiFi access everywhere in the compound.

These findings on expectations are concurrent with those of a study by Pedramnia, Modiramani and Ghanbarabadi (2012). In their study on service quality in academic libraries using the LibQUAL protocol at Mashhad University of Medical Sciences (MUMS), they found that users also had the highest expectations on AS, followed by IC while the lowest expectations were in LP.

The findings are in contrast to those of other similar studies (Boyd-Byrnes & Rosenthal, 2005; Cook, Heath, Thompson & Webster, 2003; Hubbard & Walter, 2005; Jaggars, Jaggars & Duffy, 2009; Kyrillidou & Persson, 2006; Lippincott & Kyrillidou, 2004; Shedlock & Walton, 2004; Wilson, 2004), all of which suggest that users in developed countries have highest expectations about IC followed by AS. A common feature with the current study is low expectations about LP dimension. However, these studies were conducted in Western Europe where users have ready access to ICT tools enabling them to access information in digital formats from remote sources. Conditions are different in the Third World where the African Court is situated.

The trends in these contrasting findings have been explained by other scholars (Arshad, 2009; Cook et al., 2008, 2009; Cook et al., 2010; Seay, Seaman & Cohen, 1996), who have argued that library users in developed countries have fewer expectations on the people aspects (AS) and physical facilities (LP), but place more expectations on collection aspects (IC). This is because collections in those countries and the ICT facilities to access them are developed. This is the opposite in developing countries where the quantity and the quality of collections are not as developed and users still need the human interface to find their way in libraries, and to locate and access information resources.

The findings differ from those of a LibQUAL study at North-West University, Vaal Triangle Campus library in South Africa by Pretorius (2011), whose findings showed that users had the highest desired expectations in *Information Control* followed by *Affect of service*, and *Library as Place*. Pretorius' study was in an academic library and studies elsewhere have shown that in such libraries, an in-depth and comprehensive collection contributes to a large extent, to service quality (Jankowska, Hertel & Young, 2006). In defining the quality of an academic library, Cook and Heath (2001) underlined the importance of ensuring continuous investment in collection development in order to ensure a rich collection that is necessary for research.

Table 5.9 shows that the overall mean for *Desired Expectations* of users in SERVQUAL is 5.2. The means for the various dimensions were as follows: *Assurance* (5.22), *Empathy* (5.08), *Reliability* (5.26), *Responsiveness* (5.28) and *Tangibles* (5.18). Of the 5 SERVQUAL service quality dimensions, the highest mean was realized in the *Responsiveness* dimension (5.28), followed by *Reliability* at 5.26 while the lowest was realized in *Empathy* (5.083) followed by *Tangibles* at 5.18. These figures mean that the highest expectations of the library users were on *Responsiveness*, *Reliability* and *Assurance* while the least desires were on *Tangibles* and *Empathy*.

According to Table 5.9, there are 20 service quality statements that have a mean score of between 5.00 and above. From this it can be deduced that the expectations of the library users are moderate since none of them is above 6.0. Of the individual quality statements, the highest desired expectations were RL-4, RS-2, TA-3, RL-1, AS-4, RS-4 and RS-1. It is clear that the majority of these expectations deal with the dimensions of *Responsiveness* and *Reliability*, but the majority are found in the *Reliability* dimension. According to the respondents' expectations, these statements have the highest means and hence can be considered as the most important services that the African Court library should possess.

The service statements with the lowest expectations were TA-4, EM-2, EM-5 and EM-1. These statements are under the *Empathy and Tangibles* dimensions. From these findings it may be interpreted that respondents do not consider these as very important to them. This can also imply that it may not be necessary for the African Court library to allocate too much time and resources on these services but should be keener on those that scored a higher mean rate as indicated above in order to meet users' expectations.

From the findings, it is clear that users have the highest expectations on the willingness of staff to help users and provide adequate services (*Responsiveness*), and the ability of staff to provide services dependably and accurately (*Reliability*). On the one hand, they place least expectations on the physical facilities, equipment, and appearance of personnel and communication materials (*Tangibles*), and to a lesser extent the provision of caring, individualized attention to customers. These SERVQUAL findings are consistent with those of the LibQUAL desired expectations test, where users placed the highest expectations on people aspects of the library and least expectations on the physical aspects.

Landrum et al. (2009:17) in a SERVQUAL study of information systems in the USA, found similar patterns whereby users rated system *Responsiveness* and *Reliability* above other service quality dimensions. The authors also concluded that in cases of limited user resources, designers of information systems that interface with users should emphasize *Responsiveness* and *Reliability* over other SERVQUAL and SERVPERF performance dimensions (Landrum, et al., 2009: 30).

The findings, however, differed with those of Arshad (2009) and Awan et al. (2008). Arshad (2009) investigated users' expectation with departmental libraries of Punjab University (PU) using SERVQUAL and found that users considered *Tangibles* (physical facilities, equipment, personnel and communication materials) the most important and *Empathy* the least important dimension. According to the study, the items with the

highest expectations were *Library staff has the knowledge to answer customer's questions; library staff who instill confidence in their users, and convenient library hours*. However, the Arshad study also established that the majority of the users of the library had no access to modern ICTs and that the library was the only area conducive to study in proximity to these users. For them the physical aspects of the library were of utmost importance. The study also did not measure users' minimum acceptable service level.

The findings of Arshad's study were similar to those of Awan, Azam and Asif (2008) who investigated users' highest expected services and found that users in their study also had their highest expectations in the physical aspects of the library (*Tangibles*). Individual service quality statements with highest expectations were *I feel safe in my transactions with library; library services are provided in the promised time; and Staff members of the library are always willing to help you*.

6.4 PERCEPTIONS OF LIBRARY USERS IN LIBQUAL, SERVQUAL AND SERVPERF

The study sought to establish the perceptions of library users using LibQUAL, SERVQUAL and SERVPERF protocols in terms of AS, IC and LP (LibQUAL) and *Assurance, Empathy, Reliability, Responsiveness and Tangibles* (SERVQUAL and SERVPERF). Table 5.10 shows the mean scores for perceived level of service in LibQUAL. From the table, the overall mean for perceived levels of service is 5.74. The mean for AS under perceived levels of service is 6.44. The mean for the IC is 5.32, while that for LP is 5.14.

From these figures, it is clear that in the perceptions of the users, the library scores highly in the AS dimension. All the top 7 service quality statements with the highest means also came from AS dimension. This is an indication that in the users' perceptions, the quality of library service in matters relating to staff is very high and satisfies their

needs and expectations. Users are satisfied with the staff aspects of library service and that the library is meeting the expectations of users in this dimension of library service.

The IC dimension was rated second with a mean of 5.32. Of the 6 service quality statements with the lowest means, four came from the IC dimension. These were IC-2, IC-8, IC-3, and IC-4. This is evidence of user dissatisfaction with the library collection and matters connected with it.

From Table 5.10, the lowest rated dimension was LP. Also, the two lowest-rated quality statements came from the LP dimension. These were LP-5 *Community space for group learning and group study* and LP-2 *Quiet space for individual activities*. This means that the users were very dissatisfied with the physical aspects of the library service or did not regard them as important in their pursuit of information in the library.

There are several possible causes of this. In the period 2015–2016, many complaints were recorded about the Court's website (on which the library web page lies) (IC-11), to an extent that the entire bench (judges) constituted a committee to look into the matter. The complaints came from within the Court and also from external visitors. The committee is yet to table its findings. As for the library collection, a huge percentage of the print collection, 95% (IC-12) and electronic subscriptions of the library (IC-13 and IC-17) is made up of legal information resources only. Thus the non-legal users of the library (who form the majority), could be feeling short-changed on these aspects since the information resources that meet their needs are minimal. Attention has till now been on building the legal collection. A study by Kim-Soon, Hasb and Rahman (2013), has shown that if customers are satisfied with the level of service in the *Information Control* dimension, they are more likely to be satisfied with the library overall service. This is true for the African Court because the study has shown that users were not satisfied with *Information Control* dimension, and were thus not satisfied with the overall library service.

Tables 5.11 and 5.12 show the perceptions of library users in SERVQUAL and SERVPERF protocols respectively. The overall mean for perceptions of users in SERVQUAL is 5.16, while in SERVPERF it is 5.18. The respective perception means for the various dimensions under SERVQUAL and SERVPERF were as follows: *Assurance* (5.29 and 5.29), *Empathy* (5.16 and 5.15), *Reliability* (5.12 and 5.15), *Responsiveness* (5.29 and 5.30) and *Tangibles* (4.98 and (5.01). In both SERVQUAL and SERVPERF, the highest perception means are realized in the *Responsiveness* and *Assurance* dimensions. These are aspects connected with library staff and their performance. The lowest perception means were realized in *Tangibles* and *Reliability* dimension. These are aspects to do with the physical aspects of the library.

The high perceptions on *Responsiveness* and *Assurance* show that in the users' perceptions, library staff have done well in helping users and providing adequate services. They also possess the necessary knowledge and courtesy to enhance confidence in the users. On the other hand, the low perceptions on *Tangibles* and *Reliability* dimensions are an indicator that the users are not impressed with the physical facilities, equipment and appearance of staff. They are also dissatisfied with the ability of the library to provide services dependably and accurately. In both SERVQUAL and SERVPERF, the highest means for individual service quality statements were recorded in the *Responsiveness* and *Reliability* dimensions. The findings also show that the lowest means for individual service quality statements were recorded in the same dimensions of *Tangibles* and *Reliability*.

An interesting finding is that in the SERVQUAL test on desired expectations, *Reliability* was highly valued by the users. But in the *Perceptions* test, users scored it among the lowest in both SERVQUAL and SERVPERF. This is an indicator that inasmuch as they valued aspects of this dimension, they found the library performance wanting. However, *Reliability* seems to have extremes of perceptions because some of the highest and lowest means are in this dimension. This means that there are some quality areas in this

dimension in which the library does very well and yet there are others that are a disappointment to users.

The findings show that one of the service quality statements that users were very dissatisfied with in both SERVQUAL and SERVPERF was *Convenient opening hours for the Library*. The users found the opening hours of the library inadequate and would like to see them extended. Majority of these users are external users who find it difficult to visit the library during working hours due to other commitments. This reflects the findings of a study by Mkhonta (2015) at the United States Embassy library in Mbabane, Swaziland, that also found great dissatisfaction with the library's opening hours among users. In both studies, users expressed a wish for extended opening hours which would make it more convenient for them.

Thus the findings from SERVQUAL and SERVPERF show that according to the users' perceptions, library staff has done well in helping users and providing adequate services. The staff is also knowledgeable, courteous and win the confidence of users. On the other hand, users are disappointed with the physical facilities, equipment and appearance of the personnel. This mirrors the findings of the LibQUAL findings in this study where users were satisfied with the human aspects but were not impressed with the facilities and physical aspects of the library. However, these findings on physical aspects of the library should be viewed with a rider. This is because in the SERVQUAL desired expectations test, users scored low in these physical aspects, which is a clear indication that they do not attach much value to them. To the users, these aspects are not important. This is an important aspect to note for the Court and library management as they allocate resources in the coming years.

It can be seen that in all three protocols of LibQUAL, SERVQUAL and SERVPERF, the users' perception is that the library does well in staff aspects, moderately in aspects of information collection and very poorly in the physical aspects of the library. There are

several possible explanations for these results. Over the last six years, the Court has invested heavily in training library staff in many aspects ranging from library management, customer care, library management software, foreign languages, strategic planning, resources management and ICTs. This has been facilitated by the African Union and other partners such as the European Union, the German *Gesellschaft für Internationale Zusammenarbeit* (GIZ), and the African Capacity Building Foundation (ACBF). It is apparent that this investment in staff has not been matched by similar investments in library resources and the physical aspects of the library, where budgets have been erratic and insufficient.

As for the low performance of physical aspects of the library, the study has revealed that the atmosphere in the library is probably not conducive to study for various reasons. There have been various complaints about noise and the use of cell phones in the library. Users have also complained of disturbances such as closures of the library for recruitment interviews and distractions from a door leading to the documentation unit. The library also lacks adequate ports for charging laptops and phones. In addition, currently, there is a general shortage of space in the organisation and the library has neither space nor arrangements for group activities (e.g. study, meetings or learning). Any group needing these services has to look elsewhere outside the library. It is therefore no surprise that the physical aspects of the library ranked lowest. Another possible cause of this situation and finding is that the premises in which the library (and indeed the entire court) is housed are temporary. It is a building owned by the Tanzania National Parks (TANAPA) and was not constructed to specifically house a library. The government of Tanzania has reached an agreement with the African Union to build a custom-made building for the Court in the near future. The librarian has already been consulted and the requirements in the design of the library in the new proposed building. Even though the findings of the minimum expectations test and those of the desired expectations test showed that the dimension of LP scored lowest, the library should not ignore this dimension. This is because studies elsewhere have revealed that favourable

environmental factors (LP dimension) such as good ventilation, low level of noise, and proper illumination encouraged clients to use the library more frequently (Oyedum & Nwalo, 2011:75).

A study by Khaola and Mabilikoane (2015:52) found that user dissatisfaction with the level of service in the AS dimension (human aspects), leads to dissatisfaction with the overall library service. The findings of the African Court study, however, diverge from this line of thought. While the users were very satisfied with the AS dimension, the users' satisfaction scores in IC and LP were very poor.

The findings of this study are consistent with those of a study on service quality in academic libraries using LibQUAL by Pedramnia et al. (2012:164). The study found that the dimension that was scored highest by users was the AS, followed by IC while the lowest mean score went to LP. The findings underlined the importance of specialised knowledge among librarians in providing quality services, especially in library circulation and reference sections.

The findings are similar to those of a study by Moses, Olaleke and Oluwafunmilayo (2016) at Covenant University Library in Ogun State, Nigeria, that also found that users had least perceptions on LP. They are also consistent to another LibQUAL study by Moon (2007) at Rhodes University Library that revealed that all groups of library users were very dissatisfied with the library building. Other similar findings are those of Asemi et al. (2010) which found that users were dissatisfied with their library building despite these libraries performing very well in the IC dimension. Furthermore, the examination of users' expectations showed that the service quality statement *Employees who are consistently courteous* was most important to users, and *Employees who instill confidence in users* had less importance. In a LibQUAL study at Mangosuthu University of Technology, Naidu (2009:159) revealed that the LP dimension, especially library facilities (printing, photocopying and Internet access), inadequate and outdated book

collections, and a quiet library environment were problematic areas for library service, findings similar to those of the current study.

The findings are consistent with those of Kontic (2014), who carried out a SERVPERF study on service quality in higher education institutional libraries in Serbia. The study revealed that the most important dimensions to users were *Assurance* followed by *Responsiveness* and *Empathy*. Another similarity between Kontic's study and this study is the finding that *Convenient opening hours for the library* was the service quality statement with the lowest mean. The findings mirror those of Abdelkrim and Salim (2015) who studied service quality at an Algerian School of Economics and established that users had their highest perceptions on *Assurance*, *Responsiveness* and *Empathy* dimensions. In the three studies, the users had their lowest perceptions on the *Tangibles* dimension.

Other studies that had similar findings are those of Phung and FitzGerald in Vietnam (2014) and Yao and Ding in China (2011). The findings of this study are consistent with those of a SERVPERF study by Khattab and Aldehayyat (2011) in Jordan that also established that users had their highest perceptions in the dimensions of *Responsiveness* and *Assurance* while their lowest perceptions were in *Tangibles* and *Empathy*. Other SERVPERF studies that found similar findings were Nadiri and Hussain (2005) who studied service quality in the Cypriot hospitality industry.

The findings are slightly different from those of Johari and Zainab (2011), who in a SERVPERF study of library performance in a Malaysian private university concluded that the library performs better on its peripheral services, which focused on the physical environment and facilities. However, it was to be noted that the university library building in Johari and Zainab's study was new, purposely built for a library and had just been commissioned and thus users were happy with it. On the other hand, the African Court building is old and was not built to house a library.

The findings are inconsistent with those of a study by Asogwa (2014), which used SERVQUAL to evaluate service quality of academic libraries in developing countries. Asogwa's study revealed that in developing countries, *Tangibles* was the highest perceived dimension while *Empathy* was the lowest perceived dimension. In developed countries, the findings were on the contrary; *Reliability* was highest perceived while *Tangibles* was the lowest perceived.

However, in their study at Dhaka University library, Hossain and Islam (2012) also had the opposite findings. They noted that library opening hours was the only service item which got exclusive acceptance and ensured optimum satisfaction of the users, while other items fell short of meeting the users' needs. This could be explained by that fact that university libraries are open late into the night and even on weekends, thus, according to their users, and optimum time to visit and use library services. This is not the case with the African Court library that only opens till 5 p.m. on weekdays and is closed at weekends. Studies conducted elsewhere by Nwezeh and Shabi (2011) in Nigeria, and Ali and King (2015) in Africa, have also shown that a large number of university students preferred to conduct their studies in the library.

6.5 QUALITY OF LIBRARY SERVICES

The study sought to establish the service quality of library services by investigating the gaps between various service quality variables in the LibQUAL and SERVQUAL models. As explained in the theoretical framework of this study (chapter 2), the gaps theory and model was used to establish the level of service quality of the library. In establishing the level of service quality of the African Court library, gap scores of 22 service quality attributes were calculated for LibQUAL and SERVQUAL protocols. This was done using the mean scores of the three dimensions of customer expectations in LibQUAL (*minimum*, *desired* and *perceived*) and the two dimensions of SERVQUAL (*desired* and *perceived*). To calculate the level of service quality, the following measures were calculated:

- a) Extent of users' acceptance of service (ZoT)
- b) Extent to which performance exceeds desired expectations (SSG)
- c) Extent to which library is meeting minimum expectations (SAG)
- d) Relative strengths and weaknesses of library service quality (D-M score).

6.5.1 Extent of users' acceptance of services (ZoT)

The extent of users' acceptance of services or ZoT, is the difference between minimum expectations and desired expectations, thus $ZoT = M - D$ (Rehman, 2012a:4). The ZoT measures the extent to which customers are willing to accept a variation in service delivery. It is the range from the minimum service rating to the desired service. Perceived levels of service fall within this zone. Services are within the ZoT if perception scores are above or equal to minimum scores. The ZoT exists for the range of service performance that users find satisfactory. Service performance that falls below the ZoT could create dissatisfaction among users. A performance level above the ZoT would impress users and thus strengthen their loyalty to the library (Berry & Parasuraman, 1991).

Table 5.13 Column 5 shows that the library users have an overall ZoT range of 0.59. This means that the African Court customers have a very small margin for error in service delivery and very high expectations (as evidenced by desired mean of 6.12). According to Nadiri and Mayboudi (2010:9), the inherent nature of services makes it difficult to ensure consistent service delivery from all employees in the same organisation, and even by the same service employee from day to day. The findings are consistent with those of a study by Nadiri and Mayboudi (2010:15), who established that users have a narrow ZoT with regard to the services provided by research libraries. They are also comparable to a study by Shoeb (2011) who studied the ZoT in a private university library in Bangladesh. The study also revealed that perceived services were lagging behind the desired services though the gaps were not much higher. Shoeb's

study established that the overall scenario of the tolerance zone was inside the tolerable level by all users and only one attribute was problematic.

The ZoT goes hand-in-hand with the D-M score measure. Perceived scores that fall outside the ZoT will result in scores that have D-M values which are either less than 0 and more than 100. From Table 5.13, the perceived scores that fall outside the ZoT are the entire AS dimension, IC-3, IC-4, IC to IC-8 and LP-2. It is important that perceived levels of service do not drop below the minimum level. This is because if this were to happen, customers would become dissatisfied and probably cease using the African Court library services. Should this happen, the Court would have to consider closing the library and moving the resources to other functions of the Court. Hence it can be stated that maintaining high-quality services in the perspectives of the customer is key to its continued survival; not an option. This is more so in view of the limited and ever-shrinking resources of the Union.

6.5.2 Extent to which performance exceeds desired expectations (SSG)

The study measured the SSG in LibQUAL and SERVQUAL.

6.5.2.1 SSG in LibQUAL

SSG is the difference between perception score (actual service delivered) and desire, thus $SSG = P - E$ (Rehman, 2012:4). It is an indicator of the extent to which the library performance exceeds the desired expectations of its users. The SSG is calculated by subtracting the desired score from the perceived score on each one of the 22 service quality items. To get the overall SSG score of the library, the overall mean score of the users' desires is subtracted from the overall mean score of perceptions. The LibQUAL and SERVQUAL protocols are based on the basic assumption that if a negative SSG score is obtained this would mean that the performance is below expectations, translating into a low service quality perception. If a positive score is obtained this would mean that the performance exceeds expectation, translating into high service quality (Awan, Azam

& Asif, 2008:54; Manjunatha & Shivalingaiah, 2004:146; Parasuraman et al., 1988; Robinson, 1999; Somaratna, et al., 2010:2). LibQUAL and SERVQUAL were therefore developed based on the notion that to deliver high quality service there should be no gap between the users' expectation and perceptions (Tuomi, 2001:4).

From Table 5.13 Column 6, the overall average SSG for the library in LibQUAL is -0.45. The score is negative, an indicator that overall the services provided by the library are inferior compared to users' desired expectations. The negative superiority gap shows that the library is not meeting the maximum expectations of its members (Hamzavi et al., 2014). Therefore, in line with the gap theory, since the respondents' expectations are higher than their perceptions, this is an indication that there is a service quality gap in the African Court library services (Lin et al., 2009:5).

The findings are similar to that of a LibQUAL study by Mkhonta (2015), which also established a negative overall SSG of -0.14. Thus for both libraries, the services provided are inferior when compared to customers' desired expectations. They do not meet or exceed the desired expectations of its customers. Other similar LibQUAL studies by Naidu (2009:158) at Mangosuthu University of Technology, and Simba (2006:114) at the University of Kwa-Zulu Natal, also established wide gaps between user perceptions and expectation of service, indicating that the libraries were not meeting the expectations of their users.

The SSG mean scores for the LibQUAL dimensions are as follows: AS (0.17), IC (-0.71) and LP (-0.81). According to these scores, only the AS dimension had a positive score and thus exceeds the expectations of users. The dimensions of IC and LP had negative SSG scores, which means that they fall below the expectations of users.

This has been confirmed by the perceptions scores in this study which have revealed high scores for AS and low scores for IC and LP. The individual service quality

statements that had the largest SSG are all in the AS dimension. These are AS-6, AS-4, AS-5 and AS-7. These statements exceed the expectations of users. The findings are consistent with a LibQUAL study by Hamzavi et al. (2014) at Kermanshah Medical University library that found out that the SSG scores for AS were positive while those for IC and LP were negative. The largest superiority gap in Hamzavi's study belonged to the LP dimension, which indicated the overall library space was far from meeting users' expectations. These findings are also similar to those of Mkhonta (2015) which reported that the dimension with the lowest SSG was LP followed by IC. In conformity with this study, both had negative SSG means. The findings are similar to those of a LibQUAL study in Nigeria by Opaleke (2002:100-105). The study observed that most libraries in Nigeria operated below the recommended 6% of the institutional budget. Hence it was not surprising that the study revealed inadequate physical facilities which may have led to adverse effects such as noise, dust, disturbances, mutilation and other damage to collections. Opaleke concluded that most libraries do not measure up to the expectations of their users, especially in the physical aspects of libraries.

From Table 5.14, it can be noted that the services are inferior in half of all the attributes because the SSG scores are negative. The service quality dimension with the most SSG scores is AS where 7 out of 9 attributes received positive SSG Scores. The worst perceived service quality dimension is LP since 4 out of 5 attributes got negative SSG scores. The IC dimension also got negative scores except for two attributes relating to information skills (IC-2) and easy-to-use access tools (IC-6) that allow customers to find information on their own.

The service quality statements with the lowest SSGs were LP-2, IC-3, IC-4, and AS-2. It can be seen that these fall under the dimensions of LP and IC. Of particular interest is LP-2 (*Quiet space for individual activities*). This variable scored an SSG of -2.54, making it the worst performer in meeting user expectations. Users found the library environment noisy, especially from conversations by clients and use of cell phones. These findings on

individual service quality statements are consistent with those of Simba (2006:116) who established that the library performed poorly in the following service quality statements: electronic journals, photocopiers, interlibrary loan, electronic databases, a quiet library environment and a library web page with useful information. A study by Porat (2016) at Israeli academic libraries also identified high levels of noise at the libraries, which adversely affected the service quality.

6.5.2.2 SSG in SERVQUAL

The study sought to determine the gaps between users' perceptions and expectations in SERVQUAL. From the Table 5.15, the overall expectations mean for users in SERVQUAL is 5.16, while the overall perceptions mean is 5.2. Calculating the SSG using the formula $SSG = P - E$ ($5.16 - 5.2$) gives a result of -0.04 which means that the library is performing far below the expectations of its users. Therefore, in line with the gap theory, since the respondents' expectations are higher than their perceptions, this is an indication that there is a service quality gap in the library services (Lin et al., 2009:5). The library services generally fall short of user expectations. This result confirms the SSG score of -0.45 in the LibQUAL test.

From Table 5.15, of the 5 SERVQUAL dimensions, 3 dimensions have a positive SSG while 2 dimensions have a negative SSG. Those with a positive SSG are *Assurance* (0.23), *Empathy* (0.39) and *Responsiveness* (0.01). This result indicates that the library has exceeded the expectations of its users in these dimensions. Those with a negative SSG are *Reliability* (-0.73) and *Tangibles* (-0.79). This means that the library has fallen short of user expectations in these dimensions. These findings exactly mirror those of a SERVQUAL study by Tan and Foo (1998), at the Singapore Statutory Board Library, which also established positive SSG gaps (though not in the same order) in *Assurance*, *Empathy*, and *Responsiveness*, and negative gaps in *Reliability* and *Tangibles*.

Table 5.16 shows the findings of the service quality gap score for each service quality statement, arranged from the largest to the smallest in order to easily identify the largest positive gap and largest negative gap. The data from this table shows 14 service statement items that have a positive score, and 8 service quality statements with a negative gap score. Those with a positive score are shown in Table 6.5.

Table 6.5: Service quality statements with a positive SSG gap

Rank	Service quality statement	Mean
1	Library gives users individual attention	0.27
2	Library staff provides services as promised	0.25
3	Library staff understands the specific needs of the users	0.14
4	Library staff is never too busy to respond to user's questions	0.14
5	Library staff are willing to help user	0.1
6	Library staff are always courteous	0.09
7	Library staff serves users promptly	0.07
8	Facilities are visually appealing	0.06
9	Behaviour of library staff instils confidence in users	0.05
10	Library staff is knowledgeable to answer users' queries	0.05
11	Library users feel safe when transacting with the library	0.04
12	Library staff are neat in appearance at all times	0.04
13	Library has the users' best interests at heart	0.02
14	Library staff give personal attention to the users	0.01

These statements with a positive SSG score indicate that the service quality statements meet or exceed the expectations of the respondents and hence higher service quality. It is important for any library to ensure that it meets the users' expectations by providing a high quality service. It can be seen that the majority of these quality statements with positive SSG scores come from the *Assurance* and *Responsiveness* dimensions. This has been confirmed by the LibQUAL and SERVQUAL perceptions findings of this study that have shown users to have high regard for the human aspects of the library. For the

past six years there have also been massive training programmes for library staff (and other staff) which have given them an edge in service provision and attending to user needs. These have been funded by the parent organisation, the African Union and by development partners such as the European Union, the German GIZ and the African Capacity Building Foundation (ACBF).

The study revealed eight service quality statements with negative SSG gaps. These are shown in Table 6.6.

Table 6.6: Service quality statements with negative SSG gap

Rank	Service quality statement	Mean
1	Materials (such as brochures, statements or signs) associated with services are visually appealing, i.e. Tangibles	-0.47
2	Equipment is modern and in good condition, i.e Tangibles	-0.42
3	When the library promises to do something at a certain time, it is done, i.e. Reliability	-0.42
4	Library staff keep users informed about when services will be performed, i.e. Responsiveness	-0.3
5	Library has error-free records (users' list, library database, accessions list etc), i.e. Reliability	-0.16
6	Library provides services at the promised time	-0.20
7	Library shows sincere interest in solving users' problems	-0.20
8	Convenient opening hours for the library (opening and closing times)	-0.05

It is apparent that all these service quality statements with negative SSG scores come from two dimensions, *Reliability* and *Tangibles*. These findings are confirmed by the SERVQUAL perceptions test of this study that also determined that users have low perceptions of *Tangibles* and *Reliability* dimensions. Possible reasons for this have been mentioned elsewhere in this study. They include cases of high noise levels in the library

emanating from users and cell phones, and various disturbances, such as the door leading to the documentation unit, and frequent closures for recruitment interviews. In addition, there is no space for group activities and use of audio-visual resources. The facilities housing the library are also temporary and were not constructed for this purpose.

The findings are similar to those of a study by Kanguru (2014) that evaluated the quality of library services at the Aga Khan University (AKU) library in Kenya. The findings of the study established that the expectations of AKU library users are higher than their perceptions. Kanguru's findings also established that there are service quality gaps in a number of library services offered by the AKU library. This is demonstrated through the gap analysis between the library users' perceptions and the users' expectations of AKU's library. The studies, however, differ in that Kanguru's study had more service quality statements that had a negative score than those with a positive gap score. This means that there are more service qualities at AKU library that do not meet the expectations of AKU library users. In contrast, the current study has more service quality statements with a positive gap score than those with a negative score.

The findings in the present study are consistent with those of a SERVQUAL study by Tan and Foo (2009), at the Singapore Statutory Board library which not only established that user expectations exceeded perceptions, but also had overall expectation and perceptions scores very close to those of this study. The findings also corroborate those of a study by Asogwa (2014), which used SERVQUAL to evaluate the service quality of academic libraries in developing countries. Asogwa's study revealed that overall, there is a significant difference between the perceptions and expectations of library users and that academic libraries do not satisfy users' expectations. In Asogwa's study (2014), factors such as a lack of modern facilities, poor funding, and weak e-leadership quality were found to be negatively affecting the quality of library services. Greater efforts should be channelled toward closing the gaps between the perceptions and the expectations of library users.

The findings are inconsistent with those of other researchers, such as Filiz (2007) in university libraries in Turkey whose findings of gap analysis indicated that the quality of service did not fall short of the user's expectations; users were generally satisfied with the service providers. The libraries in Filiz's study have had consistent and frequent service quality studies over the years, which has given them opportunities to identify and address shortcomings in their services. For the African Court this is the first service quality study.

6.5.3 Extent to which the library is meeting the minimum expectations of users (SAG)

SAG is the difference between perception score (actual service delivered) and minimally acceptable score. It is calculated by subtracting the minimum mean score from the perceived score on any of the 22 statements, thus $SAG = P - M$. SAG is an indication of the extent to which the library is meeting the minimum expectations of users. A negative SAG score indicates that the users' perceived level of service quality is below their minimum level of service and can be used by libraries to identify areas needing improvement (Jones & Kayongo, 2008:495-496). A positive score indicates that the users' perceived level of service quality is above their minimum level of expectations. The higher the service adequacy score, the better the library's performance. In general, the perceived scores tend to fall within the ZoT; in other words, they tend to be less than the desired scores, and greater than the minimum scores (Jones & Kayongo, 2008:495-496). It is within the ZoT that the perceived scores should drift if respondents view service as adequate.

As can be seen from Table 5.13, Column 6, the overall SAG for the African Court library is 0.15. The gap is positive and above zero, which means that the African Court Library is meeting the customers' minimum expectations, but barely. This means that there are areas in which the library is not meeting the minimum expectations of users. The implication of this score is that the African Court library needs to ensure that its

services do not fall below the customers' minimum level of expectation. The library can do this by working to ensure that this figure stays positive and that it does not drop to a negative. The findings are similar to that of a LibQUAL study by Mkhonta (2015), at the Information Resource Center of the US embassy in Mbabane, Swaziland, which also established positive overall SAG (0.66). Thus for both libraries, the services provided are meeting the minimum expectations of users.

From Table 5.13, Column 6 the mean SAG score for AS is 0.57, while that of IC is -0.15. The mean SAG for LP is 0.19. This shows that the library is meeting the minimum expectations in AS, and barely meeting them in LP. However, the library is falling below minimum expectations in IC. The library is not meeting minimum expectations in the IC dimension.

This finding has been reflected in the perceptions test where the IC dimension scored far below the AS dimension, although slightly higher than the LP dimension. A possible explanation for this is that the collection is largely made up of legal resources while the great majority of the users are not lawyers. The collection is also largely made up of items in French and English, which disadvantages users who speak other African languages, especially Arabic, Portuguese and the official language of the host nation, Swahili. Over the last two years, the number of new books in the library has dwindled due to budgetary reductions by the parent body. This has reduced the quality of the collection in the eyes of the legal officers.

It can also be seen that overall, the SAG scores are negative in 9 out of 22 statements. This means that the library is falling below the minimum expectations in these statements. Of the three LibQUAL dimensions, LP had 4 positive service quality statements out of 5, while AS had 6 out of 9, and IC had 3 out of 8.

The findings are consistent with those of a study by Rehman (2012a) on public and private sector university libraries using LibQUAL. Like the present study, the study revealed that private sector university libraries were generally meeting the minimum requirements of their users, except for the IC dimension. By contrast, in Mkhonta's study (2015) all groups had positive SAGs which means that the US government had invested resources into meeting the minimum expectations of its library users. The African Court should emulate this.

The African Court library findings on the SAG are slightly inconsistent with those of LibQUAL studies by Pretorius (2011) and Kachoka and Hoskins (2009), both of which indicated that all SAG gaps were negative, meaning that the library was not meeting the minimum expectations of users. According to the study, the cause of this was high minimum expectations by users, which also happens to be the case with the African Court library.

6.5.4 Relative strengths and weaknesses of library service quality (D-M score)

The literature review has revealed that in measuring service quality, researchers tend to use three scores, namely SAG, SSG and ZOT. However, according to Dennis and Bower (2007:10), these scores alone do not reflect a full picture of customers' assessment of library service quality. To mitigate this, they suggest an additional measure, which is the D-M score. The D-M score is a standardised measure used to analyse LibQUAL data and to present information in more clearly (Dennis & Bower, 2007:11; Haricombe & Boettcher, 2004). It further determines service quality by examining the multiple scores provided by customers from another angle (Haricombe & Boettcher, 2004).

The D-M score is calculated by dividing the SAG by the ZOT scores. Then the quotient is multiplied by 100 to have a score that will typically range from 0 to 100. The D-M score is the location of the perceived level of service in relation to the minimum acceptable level of service (represented by "0") and the desired level of service

(represented by “100”). It enables librarians to place the customers’ perceptions of service quality in the context of their expectations. For researchers, the D-M score is a vital tool in the analysis and presentation of LibQUAL findings because it allows for meaningful and well-organised comparisons. The D-M score was used in this study to assess and present the relative strengths and weaknesses of service quality at the African Court library.

The standard that this study adopted for interpreting the D-M scores on each of the 22 core items, and the action required are presented in Table 6.6. Table 5.13, Column 8 shows the D-M scores for the library services. From Table 5.13, the overall mean for the D-M score in LibQUAL was 25.42. The mean for the D-M score in the AS dimension is 142.25. The same score for IC is -26.79 while the score for LP is 19. The scores show that the library exceeded the minimum acceptable level of service in the dimension of AS (a D-M score of 102.56), barely met it in the LP dimension (a D-M score of 19), and fell below it in IC (a D-M score of -26.79).

Table 6.7: D-M score interpretation standard

D-M score	Evaluation	Action required
> 100	Exceeds expectations	Maintenance
71-100	Meets expectations	Maintenance
60-70	Not so problematic	Monitoring
51-59	Potentially problematic	Close monitoring
= 50	Mid-point of ZoT	Requires improvement
40-49	Mildly problematic	Requires improvement
15-39	Problematic	Requires special improvement
0-14	Considerably problematic	Requires immediate improvement
< 0	Below minimum expectations	Dire need for immediate improvement

Source: Adapted from Dennis and Bower (2007:11-12)

The D-M score lies in the ZoT and is usually between 0 and 100. The higher the D-M score, the better the perception of service quality. Thus from the D-M score interpretation standard in Table 6.7, the library's D-M score of 25.42 lies between 15 and 39, which implies that the quality of the library service is *Problematic* and requires special improvement. It meets the minimum acceptable level of service but is very far from meeting the users' desired level of service.

Perceived scores that fall outside the ZoT will result in scores that have values that are either less than 0 and more than 100. From Table 5.13, these include the entire AS, IC-3, IC-4, IC to IC-8 and LP-2. If the perceived score falls below minimum, the D-M score will be negative (the adequacy gap will also be negative). The negative D-M scores were realized in AS-2, AS-9, IC-3, IC-4, IC-6, IC-8, and LP-2. Negative scores occur when the perceived score falls below minimum. These indicate that the library is not doing what is required to meet the minimum service standards of patrons. Scores below zero indicate that the library services do not meet the minimum service standards of customers. A service item with a negative D-M score is in dire need of attention and should be urgently attended to.

The study also revealed 9 service quality statements with D-M scores that were over 100. These were AS-1, AS-3, AS-4 to AS-8, IC-5, and IC-7. When the perceived value is greater than the desired value, the D-M score will be greater than 100 (there will be a positive superiority gap). If the scores exceed 100, it is an indication that the library is exceeding the level of service the patrons' desire. On the other hand, a D-M score of 200 does not indicate that the library is performing twice as well as patrons desire. It means that the service provided is being perceived at a level that exceeds the desired level of service by the size of the ZoT (desired + zone). The items with D-M scores that fall beyond the ZoT do not need to be improved, but the scores may indicate that limited resources are being allocated inefficiently, which this study reveals to be the case with the African Court library. The Court has invested in continuous training and

development of staff in various areas ranging from customer service, foreign languages, customer service, strategic planning and ICT, among others. But resources input in library information resources and physical facilities have not been so generous.

Possible reasons for the low perceptions of the physical aspects are related to those explained in the section on perceptions. There have been recorded cases of high noise levels in the library emanating from users and cell phones, and various disturbances such as a door leading to the documentation unit and closures for interviews. In addition, the library has no space for group activities such as audio-visual usage. To make things worse, the buildings housing the court and the library are temporary and not custom-made for a court, least of all a library.

The D-M scores in this study differ from those of a LibQUAL study by Mkhonta (2015). Mkhonta's overall D-M score was 83%, while that of the African Court was 25%, which means that the US Embassy library has a higher relative service quality compared to the African Court library. The reason for this is that while annual budgets for the US Embassy library are consistent, those of the African Court are erratic and uncertain; one year they are given as requested, the following year only a fraction is approved. Secondly, the African Court library has been in existence for only eight years, while the US Embassy library in Mbabane has been there for decades and has had time and resources to improve the quality of its services. Studies have shown that time and sufficient resource inputs are directly related to the quality of an information collection.

6.6 SERVICE QUALITY VARIABLES THAT MEET OR EXCEED USERS' EXPECTATIONS IN LIBQUAL AND SERVQUAL

The study sought to establish the variables that represent service quality and which meet or exceed users' expectations. These can be identified from the gaps calculated in section 6.5.2 of this chapter in the LibQUAL and SERVQUAL protocols and reflected in Tables 5.14 (LibQUAL) and 5.15 (SERVQUAL). The gap that clearly represents these variables

is the SSG. The (SSG) is the difference between Perception score (actual service delivered) and Desire, thus $SSG = P - E$ (Rehman, 2012a:4).

Table 5.14 shows the service quality variables that exceeded or fell short of the users' expectations in LibQUAL. The overall average SSG for the library is -0.45. The score is negative, an indicator that overall the services provided by the library are inferior compared to users' desired expectations. The services are below expectations and therefore do not meet the expectations of users. The SSG mean scores for the LibQUAL are as follows: AS, 0.17; IC, -0.71; and LP, -0.81. Therefore, according to the gaps theory, only the AS dimension had a positive score and thus exceeds the expectations of users. The dimensions of IC and LP had negative SSG scores which means that they fall below zero and therefore do not meet the expectations of users.

From Table 5.14, the services of the library that are meeting or exceeding the expectations of the users are those with positive SSG scores. These are 11 out of 22 or 50% of the total service quality statements. They are shown in Table 6.8. It is clear that the majority of these are in the AS and IC dimensions.

Table 6.8: Service quality variables that exceeded users' expectations in LibQUAL

Rank	Service quality statement	SSG score
1	Employees who deal with users in a caring fashion	0.96
2	Readiness to respond to users' questions	0.85
3	A library website/page enabling me to locate information on my own	0.29
4	Employees who have the knowledge to answer user questions	0.27
5	Employees who understand the needs of their users	0.26
6	A comfortable and inviting location	0.15
7	Employees who instil confidence in users	0.08
8	Modern equipment that lets me easily access needed information	0.06
9	Making information easily accessible for independent use	0.04

10	Willingness to help users	0.02
11	Employees who are consistently courteous	0.02

On the other hand, there were 11 service quality statements that did not meet the expectations of users since they had negative SSG scores (below zero). These are shown in Table 6.9. A close look at these statements shows that majority of them are in the IC and LP dimensions.

Table 6.9: Service quality variables that fell short of users' expectations in LibQUAL

Rank	Service quality statement	SSG score
1	Community space for group learning and group study	-0.27
2	Place for study, learning, or research	-0.45
3	Easy-to-use access tools that allow me to find things on my own	-0.48
4	Print and/or electronic journal collections I require for my work	-0.76
5	Making electronic resources accessible from my home or office	-0.81
6	Library space that inspires study and learning	-0.97
7	Dependability in handling users' service problems	-1
8	Giving users individual attention	-1.45
9	Electronic information resources I need	-1.97
10	Printed library materials I need for my work	-2.08
11	Quiet space for individual activities	-2.54

Table 5.15 shows the service quality variables that exceed or fall short of the users' expectations in SERVQUAL. The overall average SSG for the library is -0.04. As in the LibQUAL test, the score is negative, which shows that the overall services provided by the library are inferior compared to users' desired expectations. They are below expectations and therefore not meeting the expectations of users.

Three out of five dimensions have a positive SSG while two have a negative SSG. Those with a positive SSG are *Assurance* (0.23), *Empathy* (0.39) and *Responsiveness* (0.01). From these scores, it can be seen that the library has exceeded the expectations of its users in these dimensions. Those with a negative SSG are *Reliability* (-0.73) and *Tangibles* (-0.79). These scores show that the library has fallen below the users' expectations in these dimensions and should put greater effort into their improvement.

The findings from Table 5.15 provide 14 service statement items that have a positive score, which means that these exceed user expectations. These are shown in Table 6.10.

Table 6.10: Service quality statements that exceed users' expectations in SERVQUAL

Rank	Service quality statement	Mean
1	Library gives users individual attention	0.27
2	Library staff provide services as promised	0.25
3	Library staff understand the specific needs of the users	0.14
4	Library staff is never too busy to respond to user's questions	0.14
5	Library staff are willing to help user	0.1
6	Library staffs are always courteous	0.09
7	Library staff serves promptly to the users	0.07
8	Facilities are visually appealing	0.06
9	Behaviour of library staff instils confidence in users	0.05
10	Library staff is knowledgeable to answer users' queries	0.05
11	Library users feel safe when transacting with the library	0.04
12	Library staff are neat in appearance at all times	0.04
13	Library has the users' best interests at heart	0.02
14	Library staff give personal attention to the users	0.01

According to Table 5.15, there were 8 service quality statements in SERVQUAL with a negative gap score. These were service quality statements that fell short of the users' expectations. These are shown in Table 6.11.

Table 6.11: Service quality statements that fall short of users' expectations in SERVQUAL

Rank	Service quality statement	Mean
1	Materials (such as brochures, statements or signs) associated with services are visually appealing, i.e. Tangibles	-0.47
2	Equipment is modern and in good condition, i.e. Tangibles	-0.42
3	When the Library promises to do something at a certain time, it is done, i.e. Reliability	-0.42
4	Library staff keep users informed about when services will be performed, i.e. Responsiveness	-0.3
5	Library has error-free records (users' list, library database, accessions list etc), i.e Reliability	-0.16
6	Library provides services at the promised time	-0.20
7	Library shows sincere interest in solving users' problems	-0.20
8	Convenient opening and closing hours of the library	-0.05

It is apparent that the service quality statements with negative SSG scores in SERVQUAL come from two dimensions, *Reliability* and *Tangibles*. These are dimensions that are related to the physical aspects of the library. The positive SSG scores in AS can be attributed to solid investments of the Court in staff training and development that has seen library staff benefit from a variety of training sessions such as management, customer care, library management software, foreign languages, strategic planning, resources management and ICT. Funding for this has come from various sources such as the parent organisation, the African Union and other partners such as the European Union, the German GIZ and the African Capacity Building Foundation. These findings have been supported by other scholars such as Cook et al. (2003), Pedramnia et al. (2012) that established high superiority scores in the dimensions of AS.

The negative scores for IC are attributable to various factors. The collection largely consists of only law and human rights items since the library was initially established only for the legal officers of the Court. This has alienated a large number of users who

are not lawyers but work at the court. Most items in the library are largely in either French or English, leaving out other languages of the African Union such as Arabic, Portuguese and Swahili. Among the legal officers, even though the collection largely serves them, there was a feeling that the library should acquire newer editions. Due to budgetary constraints, the library has not been able to subscribe to adequate online resources and this has also affected the legal officers, who are the core users. ICT equipment to access and manage information is not only inadequate but is now old and dilapidated. According to the ICT policy of the Court, they should be replaced every three years, but financial constraints have not allowed this.

In analyzing the service quality that meets or falls short of user expectations, it can be seen that in both LibQUAL and SERVQUAL, the services that meet user expectations are those that are linked to staff aspects of the library. These are AS in LibQUAL, and *Assurance, Empathy* and *Responsiveness* in SERVQUAL. On the other hand, the service quality variables that fall short of user expectations in both protocols are linked to physical and information aspects of the library. These are LP and IC in LibQUAL and *Tangibles* and *Reliability* in SERVQUAL.

The findings show consistency with those of a LibQUAL study by Mkhonta (2015) at the US Embassy library in Swaziland which established poor superiority scores for IC despite adequate support from the parent institution. In another study, Naidu (2009) found that library service quality is negatively affected by inadequate and outdated information collections. Other studies with similar findings include that by Chiweza (2000) in Malawi who established negative scores in all the dimensions, but had the largest gaps in IC and LP. In another study, Cook et al. (2003) established that the continually rising cost of information resources, combined with new and constantly changing ICTs, has led to low quality in aspects of information control (Paulos, 2008:252). The findings of another service quality study by Smart (2005:261) agreed with Chiweza's findings that African research libraries suffer from increasing financial

problems. This has led to most African universities having low-quality collections that have led to user dissatisfaction. Similar studies by Asghar (2012) and Miller (2008) also revealed that one of the key causes of user dissatisfaction with library services was lack of up-to-date material.

As for the negative SSG score in the LP dimension and statements under it, there are several possible explanations for this situation. Results elsewhere in this study have revealed that the atmosphere in the library has been rendered unsuitable for study for various reasons. These include high noise levels from users and use of cell phones, and frequent disturbances from use of a door leading to the documentation unit. The library has also seen frequent closures of the library for recruitment interviews, which has greatly inconvenienced users. Other causes are lack of adequate ports for charging laptops and phones and a general shortage of space in the organisation and the library that has ensured that there is no space for group activities (study, meetings or learning). In addition, the premises in which the library and the Court are housed are temporary and not designed for a court, least of all a library.

There are several studies that had similar findings. In a LibQUAL study at Rhodes University library, Moon (2007) also reported that all categories of users were very dissatisfied with their physical aspects and environment in the library building. Other similar findings are those of Asemi et al. (2010) that identified the fact that users were dissatisfied with their library building despite these libraries performing very well in the IC dimension. The findings are consistent with those of a LibQUAL study by Naidu (2009) at the Mangosuthu University in South Africa who reported that the physical and collection aspects of the library were inadequate, weak and of low quality.

Studies elsewhere have revealed that favourable physical factors such as good ventilation, low level of noise, and adequate lighting were critical in encouraging clients to increase library usage (Oyedum & Nwalo, 2011:75). A study by Hossain and Islam

(2012) at Dhaka University library that found out that apart from library opening hours, all other service quality items had negative scores. However, the findings are inconsistent with those of a study by Asogwa (2014), which used SERVQUAL to study service quality in academic libraries in developing countries. Asogwa noted that the dimension of *Tangibles* had the most positive SSG scores while *Empathy* had the least.

Therefore, in line with the gap theory, since the respondents' expectations are higher than their perceptions in both LibQUAL and SERVQUAL, this is an indication that there is a service quality gap in the African Court library services (Lin et al., 2009:5). The library services generally fall short of user expectations.

6.7 DISCUSSION OF FINDINGS FROM FOCUS GROUP SESSIONS

Focus group interviews were conducted after data from the three protocols (LibQUAL, SERVQUAL and SERVPERF) was analysed. The purpose of the discussions was to validate, supplement and/or further explore the issues that arose from the data collected from the three questionnaires. The discussions touched on the following topics, which essentially emerged in the protocols:

- a) *Information Control and Library as a Place.*
- b) *Tangibles and Reliability.*
- c) *Tangibles and Empathy.*

The focus group sessions delved deeper into the issues arising from the questionnaires. These issues are discussed below as per each theme.

6.7.1 Information control

From the responses received from the FGDs, it is clear that only the legal staff and external users, who are mostly law students and legal professionals, are satisfied with the library collection (both print and electronic). Staff from other units (Administration and Finance, ICT, Language and external users) are very dissatisfied with the collection.

From their responses, it fails entirely to address their needs. In their perceptions, the collection is intended only for the legal unit. As a result, library users from these units only visit the library to use the Internet, and read newspapers and emails by those who have no office computers, for example drivers and mail runners. These views do not come as a surprise since the library was started with the purpose of serving the judicial and legal needs of the legal officers and judges of the Court. Over the last seven years, all acquisitions have been made with a goal of meeting the needs of these officials. However, budgets have not been erratic or too inadequate to build a collection that satisfies all departments. Thus priority has been given to the legal division. This has made the collection irrelevant to the needs of the non-legal staff of the Court.

In addition, the legal officers themselves complained that the collection is biased towards French and English, thus ignoring the other African Union languages of Portuguese and Arabic. External users also expressed a disappointment with the lack of information resources in Swahili. Most external users are from the host country, whose official language is Swahili. Users also felt that there is a shortage of items in electronic format, saying that the collection is largely in print format. An explanation for this is that the working languages of the Court and its parent body, the African Union, are English and French, therefore, library resources in these two languages have over the years been given priority.

All groups felt that library public computers and the only photocopier are not only inadequate, but also old and need to be replaced. Users said that they sometimes have to queue to use library computers. This is correct as the replacement was supposed to take place three years ago but has been postponed for budgetary reasons. Respondents expressed satisfaction with the Internet connection in the library but felt let down by the lack of a scanner and very few ports to charge laptops and phones. This is consistent with the findings of a service quality study by Asghar and Shafique (2012) at three special libraries in Bahawalpur that found an acute shortage of adequate computers and

Internet facility in the libraries, which was severely affecting the overall service quality of the library. A quality study by Odongo (2011) on the adoption of ICT at the University of Nairobi libraries also observed that the libraries performed poorly in ICT service areas including adequacy of computers, photocopiers and printers, electronic journals and databases, leading to poor service quality. As most library users embrace the modern digital and ICT age, they expect to have more and more resources and facilities in the library.

The library online access catalogue (OPAC) was also a disappointment to many since it was down for long periods, making it difficult to find items in the library. The problem is complicated by the fact that library has no backup card catalogue. But they all respondents agreed that it was well managed and comprehensive. There is a library web page but most users felt that it is boring, static and needs improvement. This is true since the library database had crashed for a couple of weeks prior to the data collection period and the entire website of the Court is also currently undergoing a revamping exercise.

This confirms why the IC dimension scored one of the lowest Perception means in LibQUAL (5.32), only better than LP (5.14). The AS dimension had a mean of 6.44. It also had a negative SSG mean score.

The importance of a quality IC dimension cannot be overemphasised. For a quality library, Cook and Heath (2001) have stressed the importance of continuous investment in collection development to ensure a rich and deep collection that is necessary for research. A user satisfaction study by Iwhiwhu (2012) at the Edo State Central Library in Nigeria has shown that a quality collection has a significant impact on the assessment of library services by users. A quality collection will in all likelihood elicit positive perceptions while a poor collection will lead to negative perceptions. This is true for the African Court library because, for this dimension, the LibQUAL tests returned negative

means for SAG, SSG, and DM scores. Consequently, users were dissatisfied with the overall library service.

These findings are consistent with those of a LibQUAL study by Khan (2016) which reported that despite adequate support from the parent institution, users perceived the library's information resources (print and electronic formats) to be inadequate. Naidu's study (2009) also recorded that inadequate and out-dated book collections were adversely affecting library service quality. A comparative study between research libraries in South Africa and New Zealand by Zijl (2005) revealed that levels of funding for the acquisition of information resources in South Africa lag behind those found in similar libraries in New Zealand.

A similar study in Malawi by Chiweza (2000:138) also observed that it has been difficult for academic libraries to purchase adequate books and print journals due to fiscal constraints. Lack of sustainable and consistent funds has made it difficult to libraries to purchase books and journals, especially those coming from abroad. According to Cook et al. (2003), continually rising cost of information resources, combined with new and constantly changing ICTs has led to libraries not performing well in aspects of information control. The findings of another service quality study by Smart (2005:261) agreed with Chiweza's findings that African research libraries suffer from increasing financial problems. This has led to most African universities failing to meet the basic needs of their users (Paulos, 2008:252). Another study by Ugah (2013) at the Okpara University library in Nigeria also established a link between inadequate funding and poor quality of information resources. To mitigate this situation, most African institutions have turned to "donor support" to either replace or augment inadequate institutional library budgets (Paulos, 2008:255).

6.7.2 Library as a place

Respondents generally felt that the library furniture is comfortable for study and learning, and that the lighting and air conditioning are adequate. They were, however, disappointed by the high levels of dust on shelves and books. There were also high levels of noise emanating from various sources. According to respondents, these were:

- a) Cell phones and staff desktop phones constantly ring.
- b) Users hold discussions in the library.
- c) Movement to and from the area leading to the Documentation unit causes noise and distractions.
- d) Noise emanates from staff, photocopying and binding machines at the Documentation unit.
- e) Noise from grass-cutting machines around the library disturbs users.

Respondents also noted disturbances arising from the following:

- a) Frequent closures of the library for interviews; due to shortage of space, the Court uses the library for written tests for recruitment purposes.
- b) Sharing of furniture with the courtroom: The Court has no courtroom furniture. Therefore, during court sessions, library seats and tables are taken away to be used in the courtroom. This leaves the library with minimal furniture at a time when it is expecting many visitors.
- c) Interns of the Court (especially from the legal and language units) also work from the library due to shortage of space.
- d) Cleaners come to clean mid-morning, and may require users to move from one section to another, causing disturbance and noise.

The library has no room set aside for group discussions, watching videos and use of audio-visual items. Currently, one has to use headphones to listen to recordings or watch videos and DVDs from a corner of the library. The external users also felt that the security checks at the main gate to the Court compound are too rigorous and intrusive.

This is beyond the library's control as the Court is considered a security zone and is under 24-hour tight security.

This confirms why the LP dimension scored the lowest Perception mean in LibQUAL (5.14) and also recorded a negative SSG mean score. It also had the lowest mean scores of all the service quality statements, especially quality statement *Community space for group learning and group study*, which scored a low mean of 3.93 and *Quiet space for individual activities* which had a mean score of 4.1. A great number of improvements have to be made in order to address these glaring gaps in service quality.

These findings are consistent with those of a study by Honoré (2013) on user satisfaction at the University of Namibia library services which revealed that the high levels of noise and other disturbances were contributing to negative service quality in the library. A service quality and library user satisfaction study in Kenyan university libraries by Musyoka (2013) observed that most libraries were short of funds that could be invested in library physical facilities, thus negatively affecting service quality. Musyoka established that most of the libraries in the study had limited seating and space capacities which in turn led to noise and congestion. A similar study is that of Deo (2016) which established a need by users for a separate room to be allocated for group discussions.

The findings are in stark contrast to that of a study by study done by Cook et al. (2003). Cook's study established that the libraries were doing well in the area of LP with a service adequacy gap of 0.64 and AS with a service adequacy gap of 0.60. In contrast to the African Court library, these libraries are situated in the West where funding for libraries is considerably higher than in developing countries where the African Court library is based (Asogwa, 2014; Chiweza, 2000; Opaleke, 2002; Paulos, 2008; Smart, 2005).

6.7.3 Tangibles

Participants felt that the library signage is not only old and out-dated, but also not clear. The shelf signage is also very misleading because books are moved, but the signage is not corrected to reflect the change. Most signage in the library is also not professionally done. It is printed on A4 paper and just stuck on walls and shelves with sellotape. Participants also observed that the signs were only in English and insist that they should also be in other AU languages and Swahili for the external users. The participants said that they had never seen any library brochures, leaflets or other promotion materials. This is true, since the library has so far produced none. On the other hand, they stated that the frequent bibliographies and current awareness notifications send by email are professionally produced and very useful.

The findings are consistent with research by Baker et al. (2015) and Palmer (2008) that have shown that in most libraries, patrons are still confused and lost when trying to locate items and areas in libraries due to misleading or a lack of adequate signage. According to Arthur and Passini (1992), signs are aids to direction, or markers that support navigation, and are integral to the way-finding process in the library. Library patrons expect that these way-finding tools will exist within the library, and that they will be useful in helping them navigate the library. According to a study by Mandel and Johnston (2016), libraries should provide signage that instructs users, reduces anxiety, mitigates negative experiences, and maximizes the user-friendliness of the environment.

In order to avoid overloading library users, scholars recommend avoiding “excessive” signage (Arthur & Passini, 1992; Eaton, 1991; Eaton, Vocino, & Taylor, 1993; Marks & Findley, 2006; Rosenbaum, 2010; Serfass, 2012). However, none of these specifically state how much is excessive. It is for this reasons that the *Tangibles* dimension scored the lowest perception means (4.98 in SERVQUAL and 5.01 in SERVPERF). This is also why this dimension had an overall negative SSG mean score. The two largest negative

SSGs were also found in this dimension: *Materials associated with services are visually appealing* (0.47); *Equipment is modern and in good condition* (-0.42).

6.7.4 Reliability

Staff of the legal division and also external users expressed satisfaction with the library's service delivery, especially in terms of quality of collection, promptness, timeliness and quality. Staff keeps them informed of new arrivals, new articles especially those relevant to their assignments or area of interest. They felt that the library serves their information needs and solves their problems, even if it takes some time, but they eventually solve them. This was not so for participants in the other groups. They largely felt neglected by the library staff and collection. The general feeling was that the library concentrates on solving the problems of the legal staff to the detriment of other non-legal staff. External users also felt that librarians do not give the same importance to the problems and needs of the external users, as they give to Court staff.

This explains why the *Reliability* dimension scored the lowest perception means (4.98). It is one of the dimensions (together with *Empathy*), which realised the lowest Perception mean scores across the five dimensions of SERVQUAL and SERVPERF. It also explains why the dimension had a negative SSG mean score. Most negative SSG mean scores were also realised in this dimension; 50% in SERVQUAL and 36% in SERVPERF. Other findings with similar results are Wu (1995), Miller (2008) and Asghar (2012) that revealed one of the causes of user dissatisfaction with library services was lack of up-to-date material.

6.7.5 Empathy/staff

Reactions to the convenience of opening hours of the library were mixed. The legal officers and ICT staff found the times convenient but the rest of the groups found them inappropriate. The Administration and Finance unit wanted the opening times extended to at least 8 p.m. and to open on weekends to enable them to read newspapers and access

the Internet. The language staff wanted the opening times extended so that their interns, who are mostly based in the library, can complete their assignments. The external users were the most vocal in asking for longer opening hours, including weekends. This is because currently, the library is only open when they are at school or in the office (8 a.m. to 5 p.m.). Opening till 9 p.m. or on weekends would give them time to visit and use the library. The legal staff also noted that the library staff are mainly general librarians. They need to participate in regular training sessions on law librarianship. This confirms why only one service quality statement in the Empathy dimension scored a negative SSG, EM-6 (*Convenient opening and closing hours for the library*).

This finding on the opening and closing hours is consistent with other findings, such as those of Mkhonta (2015) and Arshad (2009), that reported that the majority of users were very dissatisfied with the opening and closing hours of the library, and that these should be extended to accommodate their availability to visit the library.

6.8 ASSESSING QUALITY OF SERVICE USING THE THREE PROTOCOLS AND FGDS

The study sought to compare the findings from two perspectives. On the one hand, the findings from the three protocols of LibQUAL, SERVQUAL and SERVPERF were compared among themselves, and on the other hand, between the protocols and FGDS.

6.8.1 LibQUAL vs. SERVQUAL vs. SERVPERF

Findings from *Desired Expectations* are consistent with those from the Minimum expectations. The means for minimum expectations were AS (5.87), IC (5.47) and LP (4.95). The means for Desires (expectations) were AS (6.27), IC (6.03) and LP (5.95). The findings confirm the respondents' order of priorities as AS, IC and LP. Thus generally, the respondents had higher expectations in the service quality statements where they had the highest minimum expectations. The same applied to the lowest minimum expectations and the lowest desired expectations; the service quality

statements with the lowest means in Minimum expectations also had the lowest means in desired expectations. These were LP-5, IC-2, IC-5 and IC-8. It is an indicator that the users do not attach much importance to these aspects. The overall mean for quality of the service provided by the African Court library is 5.7, which is close to and confirms the overall perception mean of 5.67. Thus the LibQUAL findings demonstrate convergence and consistency of the various tests.

The mean for *Desired Expectations* in LibQUAL is 6.11, while the overall mean for *Perceptions* is 5.67. The overall mean for *Desired Expectations* in SERVQUAL is 5.2, while the overall mean for *Perceptions* is 5.16. These findings confirm each other in that in both LibQUAL and SERVQUAL, the users' expectations exceed their perceptions. The mean score for *Perceptions* in LibQUAL is 5.67. The overall mean for *Perceptions* in SERVQUAL is 5.16, while the same score in SERVPERF is 5.18. All three scores fall within the 5-score range. It can therefore be concluded that the Perceptions scores in LibQUAL, SERVQUAL and SERVPERF are very close and therefore confirm each other.

In comparing SERVQUAL and SERVPERF, it is clear that the mean scores in each of the dimensions are also relatively close in the two protocols; *Assurance* (5.29 and 5.29), *Empathy* (5.16 and 5.15), *Reliability* (5.11 and 5.15), *Responsiveness* (5.29 and 5.3), and *Tangibles* (5.16 and 5.18). Thus it can be concluded that the findings confirm each other.

The library recorded the highest Perception mean scores in the dimensions that touch on human aspects in the three protocols LibQUAL, SERVQUAL and SERVPERF. These were *Affect of Service* in LibQUAL (6.44) and *Responsiveness* (5.29; 5.29) and *Assurance* (5.28; 5.30) in SERVQUAL and SERVPERF respectively. These findings are consistent with those of an international LibQUAL research study by Killick et al. (2014:23) on library-user satisfaction. The study identified commonalities of satisfaction and dissatisfaction that influence the overall perception of libraries by users in the United

Kingdom and Netherlands. It established that the human element (library staff) is a vital component in the delivery of high quality library services (Killick, van Weerden, & van Weerden (2014:26). Killick's study also concluded that if users are satisfied with the level of service in the AS dimension, they are satisfied with the overall quality of the library. This study, however, diverges from Killick's findings in that satisfaction with human aspects did not translate into overall satisfaction with the library services.

The study also showed that the lowest mean scores were realised in the dimensions that touch on library equipment and ergonomics (library as a place). These dimensions are LP in LibQUAL and *Tangibles* in SERVQUAL and SERVPERF. The mean scores for these dimensions were the least in each of the protocols. In LibQUAL, the dimension of LP had a mean of 5.14 while in SERVQUAL the dimension of *Tangibles* had a mean of 4.98. In SERVPERF the *Tangibles* dimension has a mean of 5.01. Thus the findings confirm each other and share a convergence.

In comparing the mean scores for each of the dimensions, it can be seen that the highest Perception mean scores came from the *Assurance* and *Responsiveness* dimensions in both SERVQUAL and SERVPERF. The scores were 5.29 and 5.29 respectively in SERVQUAL and 5.29 and 5.30 respectively in SERVPERF. The lowest means scores in SERVQUAL came from the *Reliability* and *Tangible* dimensions. These are also the dimensions with the lowest means in both SERVQUAL and SERVPERF. Thus it can be safely concluded that these findings confirm each other.

The individual service quality statements with the highest Perceptions mean scores were similar in both SERVQUAL and SERVPERF, although not in the same order in both protocols. These were RS-4, RL-3, RL-4, RS-1, AS-3, AS-4, and RS-3. Similarly, the individual service quality statements with the lowest Perceptions mean scores were also similar, though not in the same order in both in both SERVQUAL and SERVPERF. These were RL-2, TA-1, TA-3, TA-4, RL-5, RL-1 and EM-2.

It is clear that the majority of the highest perception means in SERVPERF were in the *Responsiveness* and *Reliability* dimensions. This confirms the result from the SERVQUAL test where also the highest means were also realized in the dimensions of *Responsiveness and Reliability* dimensions. It can also be seen that the majority of the lowest Perception means were realised in the *Tangibles* and *Reliability* dimensions, confirming the findings of the dimensions means, which showed that these two dimensions had the lowest means in both SERVQUAL and SERVPERF.

The lowest mean in the SERVPERF service quality statements was in the *Empathy* dimensions (EM-2; *Convenient opening hours for the library*) the majority of the other lowest means in SERVPERF are to be found in the *Tangibles* and *Reliability* dimensions. This confirms the SERVQUAL test where the lowest *Perception* means were also realised in the *Tangibles* and *Reliability* dimensions.

6.8.2 Gaps in the three protocols

The models revealed significant gaps in the perceptions and desires of the library users. In LibQUAL, there are 11 service quality statements out of 22 with a negative SSG score, which is 50% of all the service quality statements. In SERVQUAL there are 8 service quality statements out of 22 with negative SSG scores, which is about 37% of all the service quality statements. Thus about a half of the service quality statements in both LibQUAL and SERVQUAL had negative SSG scores. The study has also shown that these statements fall within the dimensions of *Reliability* and *Tangibles*. This confirms the findings of the test for service quality statements that fall short of user expectations, which showed that most of these statements also came from the *Reliability* and *Tangible* dimensions.

The overall SSG score in LibQUAL is -0.45. This is confirmed by the same score in SERVQUAL, which is -0.04. Both are negative, which indicates that the library services do not meet the expectations of its users. These findings are consistent with those of

studies by Kachoka and Hoskins (2009:177) and Khaola and Mabilikoane (2015:44) which have shown that generally, customers are not satisfied with the resources available in libraries. They always expect more.

In Malawi, Kachoka and Hoskins (2009) measured service quality at the University of Malawi and established that the library did not perform well in all the LibQUAL service quality dimensions. The library users had higher expectations of service quality than the perceived quality of service for desired expectations and minimum expectations, which resulted in negative SAGs. This means that in most cases, the majority of the attributes exceeds customers' minimum requirements but rarely meet expectations. This could be attributed to several factors, for example low minimum expectations, poor user education efforts by libraries, or weak services being offered by an alternative source of information. In the case of the African Court, certainly lack of adequate user education has affected library service quality. In line with these findings is a study by Roszkowski, Baky and Jones (2005:428), arguing that rarely do people rate the actual experience higher than the desired level, making it difficult to fully satisfy customers. Another study by Nimsomboon and Nagata (2003) claimed that all service quality attributes of desired expectations were not met, a result that they attributed to users always desiring more than whatever they presently have.

The findings are also consistent with the findings of a study by Asogwa (2014) on service quality of academic libraries in developing countries. Asogwa argued that in the developing countries sampled, all the service quality indicators that were evaluated were negatively scored by users and that there were significant gaps between the perceptions and expectations of library users. His conclusion was that libraries in the developing world did not satisfy users' expectations.

Other studies by Paulos (2008:252) and Nawe (2004:382) have established that service quality in most research libraries in developing countries has been poor since the 1980s.

According to his study, the chief cause of this was inadequate financial support from parent institutions. The African Court library is no different. Annual budgets have been erratic since the demise of the founder of the African Union, Colonel Gaddafi, in 2011. The findings at the African Court library, situated in the developing world, have confirmed this viewpoint. The findings are also similar to those of a service quality study by Kanguru (2014) at the Aga Khan University library in Nairobi. It also established that the overall expectations of library users are higher than their perceptions.

6.8.3 LIBQUAL, SERVQUAL and SERVPERF vs FGDs

The findings from FGDs largely confirmed those from the questionnaires in various ways. According to the questionnaires, users were generally satisfied with the human aspects of the library service. These are AS in LibQUAL and *Responsiveness* and *Assurance* in SERVQUAL and SERVPERF. The FGDs confirmed this with all participants expressing satisfaction with the conduct and service by library staff. Participants had confidence in library staff and were satisfied with the knowledge, responses, attention, courtesy and care that they received from them. The findings are similar to that by Lockhart (2012) on the effects of library staff training and development on the user experience at the Cape University of Technology in South Africa. In the study, it was discovered that the interaction and support from library staff plays a significant part in the users' perception of the library service quality. According to users, if library staff render a poor level of service, this will most likely impact upon their view of the entire library service by influencing them to have a negative perception. In a study on public libraries in Africa by Fuegi and Lipeikaite (2011:3), in order for libraries to attain customer satisfaction through good quality service, it is imperative that they invest resources in not only improving the information collection, but also building the staff aspects of library service.

The overall findings from the questionnaires clearly indicate that there were significant gaps between user expectations and perceptions and that the library was not satisfying

these expectations. The overall gaps between perceptions and desires in the questionnaires were negative, -0.45 for LibQUAL and -0.04 for SERVQUAL, which is a confirmation that the library services do not meet the expectations of its users. The protocols revealed that generally the library collection is inadequate for the majority of users, and that aspects of library physical facilities do not meet their expectations. The FGDs have confirmed this. Participants pointed to various aspects that in their perceptions adversely affected the service quality of the library. The critical factors are discussed here.

These findings on the existence of gaps in the library service are consistent with other studies by Asogwa (2014), who evaluated service quality of academic libraries in developing countries. Asogwa's study revealed that overall, there were significant differences between the perceptions and expectations of library users and that academic libraries are not satisfying users' expectations. They are also consistent with the findings of a LibQUAL study by Nicol and English (2012) whose findings indicated that there were significant gaps between users' perceptions and expectations and that the library had not met the expectations of users. The marked difference between the perceptions and expectations of library users was tagged to rising faculty expectations which required strengthening communication and connection with faculty users so that libraries can retain relevance in the academic environment (Carlson & English, 2012).

The findings are similar to those of a service quality study by Asghar (2012). In his study on special libraries in Bahawalpur, Asghar revealed that generally, services provided by the special libraries of Bahawalpur were not up adequate and users were dissatisfied with the quality of services. But the overall findings on satisfaction differed from those of a study by Mkhonta (2015) at the US Embassy library in Mbabane, Swaziland, whose findings showed that the overall quality of the library services was high, as evidenced by a D-M score of 83.46% and a service adequacy gap of 0.66.

The questionnaire findings showed that the IC dimension had negative scores in all the service quality measurements (SAG, SSG and D-M scores) and had one of the least perception means in LibQUAL. The focus group discussion findings confirmed this. According to FGD participants, the collection is largely made up of books on law and human rights only, thus alienating other units of the Court who form the majority of users. Even though the legal officers were largely satisfied with the collection, some legal officer also asked for more up-to date information resources. The language of the collection is also biased towards French and English (especially French), leaving out other languages of the African Union such as Portuguese, Arabic and Swahili. These findings are consistent with a study by Wu (1995) that studied Chinese and Japanese collection at the Center for Asian Studies library of Arizona State University. According to Wu (1995:31), the development of a particular library collection is linked with the growth and strength of the academic and research programmes of a particular study area and the financial resources of the library to support such programmes. With this in mind, it would be imprudent to strive to achieve parity for its own sake. This is because in the past libraries have operated on a 'just in case' mind-set in their acquisitions and collection development, which focussed on future probabilities of need (Wu, 1995:35). But this approach has been replaced by the 'just in time' paradigm shift, which focuses on what is currently needed by library users (Wu, 1995:36). In the face of strained budgets, providing access to information is indeed more important than ownership of material (Miller, 2008:6). A similar study by Asghar (2012) also revealed that one of the causes of user dissatisfaction with library services was lack of up-to-date material.

The findings of FGDs confirmed from the questionnaires that users were largely dissatisfied with library ICT facilities which were found to be old and inadequate and that the OPAC is down most of the time. The only copier is old and is continually breaking down; there is no library scanner, and there are very few ports to charge laptops and phones. This mirrors the findings of a service quality study by Asghar and Shafique (2012) at three special libraries in Bahawalpur that found an acute shortage of adequate

computers and Internet facility in the libraries, which was severely affecting the overall service quality of the library. A user satisfaction study by Deo (2016) at the Fiji National University library also observed that the library performed poorly in ICT service areas including availability of charging outlets, adequacy of computers, photocopiers and printers, Internet, electronic journals and databases, leading to poor service quality. Another study by Musoke and Naluwoza (2013) on user perceptions at Makerere University library services, revealed that lack of basic ICT facilities such as computer hardware and software, technical support and training were all identified as significant to service quality of the library. Their absence was negatively affecting the library's service quality. As most library users embrace the modern digital and ICT age, they expect to have more and more resources and facilities in the library. The findings also corroborate those of a study by Asogwa (2014), which used SERVQUAL to evaluate service quality of academic libraries in developing countries. Asogwa's study established that factors such as lack of modern facilities, poor funding, and weak e-leadership quality were negatively affecting the quality of library services.

The findings from the FGD also confirmed why the LP dimension scored the lowest perception mean in LibQUAL and also had a negative SSG mean score. According to the discussions, users found the library very noisy, dusty and with various disturbances, all creating a poor atmosphere for study and learning. There was also no room for group activities or for use of audio-visual resources. The findings from the focus group discussion confirmed why the *Tangibles* dimension in SERVQUAL had a negative SSG. According to the participants, the library signage was old, of poor quality, out-dated and misleading. The library produces no brochures or any other promotional material. These findings are consistent with those of a study by Opaleke (2002:105) that revealed inadequate physical facilities led to adverse effects in the library such as noise, dust, disturbances, mutilation and other damage to collections. He concluded that in the physical aspects of service, the libraries under study did not measure up to the expectations of their users. A study by (Oyedum and Nwalo (2011:75) has shown that

favourable environmental conditions, such as good ventilation, low noise level, and adequate illumination improved library service quality and encouraged clients to use the library more frequently. A study by Ali and King (2015) on student needs in Africa also identified high levels of noise at the library, which adversely affected the service quality. Another study on user satisfaction at the Edo State Central library, Benin-City, Nigeria by Iwhiwhu and Okorodudu (2012), revealed that the high levels of noise and other disturbances were contributing to a poor quality of service in the library.

The FGD findings also confirmed why the *Reliability* dimension scored the lowest perception mean in SERVQUAL and SERVPERF, why it had a negative SSG, and why most negative SSG scores were to be found here. From the FGDs, only the legal officers expressed satisfaction with the library's reliability aspects. All other focus groups were very dissatisfied with these. In general, they felt that the library concentrated largely on the legal officers and neglected other groups of users. They also felt that the collection focuses on and addresses the needs of legal officers while ignoring the needs of the other groups of users.

The only statement in the *Empathy* dimension that scored a negative SSG was the *Convenience of opening and closing hours* of the library. The FGDs confirmed this with the majority of groups expressing great dissatisfaction with the library's opening and closing hours. The only exception was the legal officers and ICT unit staff. Participants felt that the hours were inconvenient and should be extended to 9 p.m. on weekdays and Saturdays. This finding regarding the opening and closing hours is consistent with the findings of the study by Mkhonta (2015) who that argued that the majority of users were very dissatisfied with the opening and closing hours of the library, and that these needed to be extended to accommodate their availability to visit the library. Other studies elsewhere have recorded the same findings. Kachoka and Hoskins (2009:177) in a study at the University of Malawi's Chancellor College, and Lessin (2004) found that users expected convenient library opening hours, adequate lighting and library staff with the

knowledge to answer customers' queries. A study by Lessin (2004) on service quality at Wayne State University library argued that having convenient business hours was one of the most important factors for users. In conclusion, the FGDs largely confirmed the issues arising from the analysis of the questionnaires.

6.9 SUMMARY OF CHAPTER

This chapter interpreted and discussed the findings and significant relationships and differences between the variables in the study as drawn from the sample population. This has been done in accordance with the objectives of the study as stated in chapter one. The study discussed the minimum and desired expectations of library users and established that the service quality statements with the highest minimum expectations also had the highest desired expectations. Those with the lowest minimum expectations also had the lowest desired expectations, which is an indicator that users attach small importance to them.

It also discussed the perceptions of users on the service quality of the library and concluded that the highest perception scores were recorded in the dimensions that touched on human aspects of the library across the three protocols. These are AS in LibQUAL and *Responsiveness* and *Assurance* in SERVQUAL and SERVPERF. The lowest perception mean scores were recorded in the dimensions that touch on library equipment, space and ergonomics. These are LP in LibQUAL and *Tangibles* in SERVQUAL and SERVPERF.

In LibQUAL, the overall ZoT for the library was 0.50. The SAG is 0.15, which means that the library is exceeding the minimum expectations of its users. The SSG in LibQUAL is -0.45 while in SERVQUAL it is -0.04, which is a strong indicator that the library services do not meet the desired expectations of its users. The overall D-M score of the library is 25.42, which, according to the D-M score interpretation standard, is rated as *Problematic*, meaning that there is need for remedial action in order to meet user

expectations. The library's poor performance is also confirmed by the overall quality score of 5.7.

About half of the service quality statement in LibQUAL and SERQUAL do not meet user expectations. The majority of these are included in the dimensions of *Reliability* and *Tangibles*. In comparing the findings from the questionnaires and FGDs, it was established that findings from the discussions largely confirm and corroborate those from the questionnaires. While this chapter has discussed and interpreted the findings, the following chapter provides the summary, conclusions and recommendations for this study.

CHAPTER SEVEN: SUMMARY, CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

7.1 INTRODUCTION

This thesis has presented and discussed the findings of an assessment of the quality of international court libraries with a focus on the African Union Court on Human and Peoples' Rights Library. Chapter one described the background to the study by providing the general introduction and definition of the research problem, a brief outline of the research aims and the research methodology. The limitations, structure and chapter divisions were also indicated. The definitions of key words used in this study were also explained. Chapter two discussed relevant theoretical models used in service quality assessment, identified and explained the theoretical framework on which the study is based while chapter three reviewed and discussed literature focusing on this investigation and related studies on service quality. Chapter four presented the research method and procedures used in this study. The research methodology detailing research approach, paradigm, design, population, data collection instruments and procedures, and data analysis methods were explained. Chapter five reported and presented the research findings while chapter six addressed the interpretation of, and discussion on, the emerging study findings of the study. In chapter seven, recommendations have been made on how to address service quality in view of the findings in order to meet the expectations of the users in accordance with the findings of the study.

The purpose of this chapter is to summarize the study as well as present the conclusions and recommendations thereof. Suggestions for further research are also presented at the end of this chapter.

7.2 OVERALL SUMMARY OF THE STUDY

The purpose of this study was to assess the quality of international court libraries with a focus on the African Union Court on Human and Peoples' Rights Library. To achieve

the aim of the study, seven objectives and nine research questions, as outlined in Table 1 of chapter one, were formulated in view of the scope of this investigation. The study used the LibQUAL, SERVQUAL and SERVPERF models of service quality. These models were derived from the original Gaps model as developed by Parasuraman et al. (1985:41-50). The model provides the theoretical guidance for this study. According to Herson (2002), the model measures customer perceptions of service quality by identifying differences or gaps between customers' expectations and perceptions of service.

The study used questionnaires and FGDs for data collection. The service quality protocols of LibQUAL, SERVQUAL and SERVPERF were used as the questionnaires. The questionnaire targeted 94 respondents. These comprised 65 internal users of the library and 29 external users. The internal users were the entire staff of the Registry while the external users were users of the library who are not under the employ of the Court. Among the administered questionnaires, 87 were useful. The FGDs were held with five groups of individuals selected to represent the key users of the library. These were Legal unit staff, Administration and Finance unit staff, ICT unit staff, Language unit staff, and external users. Each focus group was comprised of 6 to 9 participants. The study also carried out a literature review in order to provide the researcher with a general understanding of the research problem. Data collected from the study was analyzed using Microsoft Excel. The following is a summary of the key results of the study. The themes of the summary are based on the seven research objectives of the study:

1. Determine the minimum expectations of library users using the LibQUAL, SERVQUAL and SERVPERF models.
2. Study the desired level of expectations of library users across the three models.
3. Investigate the perceived level of service across the three models.
4. Assess the service quality of library services by determining the gaps between the various service quality variables across the three models.

5. Find out the attributes of service quality that meet, or do not meet, library user expectations across the three models.
6. Compare findings across the three models and FGDs to establish points of convergence or non-convergence.
7. Make recommendations on how to improve service delivery in accordance with the user needs.

7.2.1 Minimum expectations of library users

The overall mean for minimum level of service expected was 5.52. Users had the highest minimum expectations in the dimensions of AS followed by IC while the least minimum expectations were in LP. The service quality statements with the highest minimum expectations were *Employees who have the knowledge to answer user questions; Employees who understand the needs of their users; Employees who instil confidence in users; Employees who understand the needs of their users; Making information easily accessible for independent use; and Dependability in handling users' service problems.* The majority of these are in the AS dimension.

The service quality statements with the lowest minimum expectations were *Community space for group learning and group study; Modern equipment that lets me easily access needed information; A library website/page enabling me to locate information on my own; Library space that inspires study and learning; Print and/or electronic journal collections I require for my work; and A place for study; learning; or research.* The majority of these statements are in the LP dimension and the hardware (equipment) part of IC dimension.

7.2.2 Desired expectations of library users

In LibQUAL, the overall mean for *Desired Eexpectations* was 6.12. Users had the highest expectations on the aspects of AS followed by IC while the least desires were placed on aspects of LP. The desired expectations that had the highest means were *The*

printed library materials I need for my work; Employees who have the knowledge to answer user questions; Employees who instil confidence in users; Quiet space for individual activities; The electronic information resources I need; and Employees who are consistently courteous. These are quality statements that cover information resources, both printed and in electronic format, and staff knowledge/courtesy and library space. The majority of these statements fall under AS and IC.

In SERVQUAL, the overall mean for desired expectations was 5.2. The highest desires in SERVQUAL were recorded in *Responsiveness* followed by *Reliability* and *Assurance*. Of the individual quality statements, the highest desires were *The library provides services at the promised time; Library staff keep users informed about when services will be performed; Materials associated with the services are visually appealing; Library shows sincere interest in solving users' problems; Library staff is knowledgeable to answer users' queries and questions; Library staff are never too busy to respond to user's questions* and *Library staff are willing to help user*. It is clear that these are spread across the dimensions of *Responsiveness, Reliability, and Assurance*, but the majority are found in the *Responsiveness* dimension.

In LibQUAL, *Desired Expectations* with the least means were *Community space for group learning and group study; A library website/page enabling me to locate information on my own; Employees who deal with users in a caring fashion; Modern equipment that lets me easily access needed information; and Print and/or electronic journal collections I require for my work.* These are statements that cover community space, website, staff, library equipment and collections. The statement *Community space for group learning and group study* was the least rated. This is consistent with the results in Table 5.4a which show that the dimension of LP was the least rated of the three dimensions. The majority of the other least-rated statements are in the IC dimension.

In SERVQUAL, the least means for desired expectations were realized in the dimensions of *Tangibles* and *Empathy*. The service statement with the lowest expectations were *Library staff are neat in appearance at all times*; *Convenient opening hours for the Library*; *Library staff understands the specific needs of the users*; *Library gives users individual attention*; *The Library has error-free records* and *Library has the users' best interests at heart*. It is clear that the majority of these are under the *Tangibles* and *Empathy* dimensions. From these findings it may be interpreted that respondents do not consider these as very important to them.

7.2.3 Perceptions of library users

In LibQUAL, the overall mean for perceived levels of service was 5.74. The mean for AS under perceived levels of service was 6.44. The mean for the IC was 5.32, while that for LP was 5.14.

Of the individual service quality statements, the highest perception scores were recorded in *Employees who have the knowledge to answer user questions*; *Employees who instil confidence in users*; *Readiness to respond to users' questions*; *Employees who understand the needs of their users*; *Giving users individual attention*; *Employees who deal with users in a caring fashion* and *Employees who are consistently courteous*. All these came from the AS dimension.

In SERVQUAL, the overall mean for *Perceptions* was 5.16, while the highest means were realized in the *Responsiveness* and *Assurance* dimensions, followed by *Empathy*, while the lowest was realized in *Tangibles* and *Reliability*. In the service quality statements the highest means were recorded in *Library staffs are never too busy to respond to user's questions*; *Library staff provides services as promised*; *Library gives users individual attention*; *The library provides services at the promised time* and *Library staff are willing to help user*. It is clear that the majority of the highest *Perception* means were found in the *Responsiveness* and *Reliability* dimensions.

In SERVPERF, the overall mean for *Perceptions* of users is 5.18. Of the five SERVPERF service quality dimensions, the highest mean was realized in the dimensions of *Responsiveness* and *Assurance*, followed by *Empathy* and *Reliability*, while the lowest was realized in *Tangibles*. Of the individual service quality statements in SERVPERF, the highest means were recorded in the statements: *The library provides services at the promised time; Library staff provide services as promised*; followed by *Library staff are never too busy to respond to user's questions; Library staff is willing to help users and Library staff serve users promptly*. It is clear that the majority of the highest *Perception* means in SERVPERF are in the *Responsiveness* and *Reliability* dimensions.

In LibQUAL, the lowest-rated quality statements were *Library website/page enabling me to locate information on my own; Print and/or electronic journal collections I require for my work; Printed library materials I need for my work; and Electronic information resources I need; Community space for group learning and group study; Quiet space for individual activities*. These statements come from the IC and LP dimensions.

In SERVQUAL, the lowest means were recorded in *When the library promises to do something at a certain time, it is done; Equipment is modern and in good condition; Convenient opening hours for the library; The library has error-free records/users list, library database, accessions list; Library staff are neat in appearance at all times and Materials such as brochures, statements or signs associated with the services are visually appealing*. This shows that the majority of the lowest *Perception* means were realised in the *Tangibles* and *Reliability* dimensions.

In SERVPERF, the lowest means were realised in *Convenient opening hours for the Library; When the library promises to do something at a certain time; it is done; Appealing materials; Equipment is modern and in good condition; Library staff are neat in appearance at all times; The Library has error-free records and The Library shows sincere interest in solving users' problems*. As in the SERVQUAL test, the majority of

the lowest means in SERVPERF also came from the *Tangibles* and *Reliability* dimensions.

7.2.4 Variables of service quality that meet or fall short of users' expectations

The study sought to establish variables of service quality that meet or fall short of users' expectations.

7.2.4.1 Variables of service quality that meet or exceed users' expectations in LibQUAL, SERVQUAL

In LibQUAL only the dimension of AS meets and exceeds the users' expectation. This is because it had a positive gap score, while the others had negative gap scores. Individual service quality statements of the library that are meeting or exceeding the expectations of the users were *Employees who deal with users in a caring fashion; Readiness to respond to users' questions; A library website/page enabling me to locate information on my own; Employees who have the knowledge to answer user questions; Employees who understand the needs of their users; Employees who instil confidence in users; Modern equipment that lets me easily access needed information; Making information easily accessible for independent use; Willingness to help users; Employees who are consistently courteous; and A comfortable and inviting location.*

In SERVQUAL the dimensions that exceed the expectations of users are *Assurance, Empathy, and Responsiveness*. Individual service quality statements of the library that are meeting or exceeding the expectations of the users were as follows:

1. *Library gives users individual attention*
2. *Library staff provides services as promised*
3. *Library staff understands the specific needs of the users*
4. *Library staff is never too busy to respond to user's questions*
5. *Library staffs are always courteous*
6. *Library staff serves promptly to the users*
7. *Facilities are visually appealing*

8. *Behaviour of library staff instils confidence in users*
9. *Library staff is knowledgeable to answer users' queries and questions*
10. *Library users feel safe when transacting with the library*
11. *Library staff is neat in appearance at all times*
12. *Library has the users' best interests at heart*
13. *Library staff is willing to help users*
14. *Library staff gives personal attention to the users.*

The majority of these are in the AS and *Empathy* dimensions.

7.2.4.2 Variables of service quality that fell short of users' expectations in

LibQUAL, SERVQUAL

In LibQUAL, the dimensions that fell short of users' expectations were IC and LP. These had negative service superiority scores. The individual service quality statements that did not meet the expectations were LP-5, LP-4, IC-6, IC-8, IC-1, LP-1, AS-9, AS-2, IC-4, IC-3, and LP-2. The majority of them are in the IC and LP dimensions. They too had negative service superiority scores.

In SERVQUAL the dimensions of *Reliability* and *Tangibles* fall short of the expectations of users by virtue of having negative service superiority scores. Individual service quality statements that fell short of the users' expectations were as follows:

1. *Materials (such as brochures, statements or signs) associated with services are visually appealing*
2. *Equipment is modern and in good condition*
3. *When the library promises to do something at a certain time, it is done.*
4. *Library staff keeps users informed of when services will be performed*
5. *Library has error-free records (users' list, library database, accessions list etc)*

6. *Library provides services at the promised time*
7. *Library shows sincere interest in solving users' problems*
8. *Convenient opening hours for the library.*

The majority of these statements are to be found in the *Reliability* and *Tangibles* dimensions.

7.2.5 Quality of library services

The study sought to establish the service quality of library services by investigating the gaps between various service quality variables in the LibQUAL and SERVQUAL models. To calculate the level of service quality, the study measured SAG, SSG, ZoT, and D-M scores. The overall ZoT for the library was 0.59. The perceived scores that fell outside the ZoT are in the service quality statements of the entire AS dimension, IC-3, IC-4, IC to IC-8 and LP-2. These are scores that are either above 100 or below zero.

The overall average SSG score for the library in LibQUAL was -0.45, which is an indicator that overall the services provided by the library were inferior compared to users' desired expectations. The services neither meet nor exceed the desired expectations of users. Only the AS dimension had a positive score and thus exceeds the expectations of users. The dimensions of IC and LP had negative SSG scores and thus fall below the expectations of users. Individual LibQUAL service quality statements with the largest SSG are all in the AS dimension. These are *Employees who deal with users in a caring fashion*; *Readiness to respond to users' questions*; *Employees who have the knowledge to answer user questions* and *Employees who understand the needs of their users*. These statements not only met but also exceeded the expectations of users.

In SERVQUAL, the overall SSG score was -0.04, which confirms that overall the services provided by the library are inferior compared to users' desired expectations. Of the five (5) dimensions, three (3) have a positive SSG while two (2) have a negative SSG. Those with a positive SSG were *Assurance*, *Empathy*, and *Responsiveness*. This

indicates that the library has exceeded the expectations of its users in these dimensions. Those with a negative SSG were *Reliability and Tangibles*. In SERVQUAL, there are 14 service quality statement items that had a positive score. These statements with a positive score indicate that the service quality statements meet or exceed the expectations of the respondents and hence high service quality.

In LibQUAL, the lowest (negative) SSGs were *Library as a quiet space for individual activities*; *Printed library materials I need for my work*; *The electronic information resources I need* and *Giving users individual attention*. SERVQUAL had eight (8) service quality statements with a negative gap score, most of which came from two dimensions, *Reliability* and *Tangibles*. The service quality statements with a negative score indicate that these statements do not meet, and therefore fall below the expectations of users.

The overall SAG for the African Court library was 0.15. The gap is positive and slightly above zero, which means that the African Court library is barely exceeding the customers' minimum expectations. The mean SAG score for AS was 0.57, while that of IC is -0.15. The mean for LP was 0.19. It can also be seen that the SAG scores are negative in 9 out of 22 statements. This means that the library is falling below the minimum expectations in the dimension of IC and in these statements that have negative SAG scores.

The overall mean for the D-M score of the library in LibQUAL was 25, which is an indicator that the library's service quality is in a *Problematic* situation. The mean for D-M score in the AS dimension was 142.25. The same score for IC was -26.79 while the score for LP was 19. The scores show that the library had better perceptions and thus high relative strength in the dimension of AS (a D-M score of 142) but had poor perceptions (low relative strength in AS (a D-M score of 26.79) and IC (a D-M score of 19)).

7.2.6 Comparing findings from the three protocols and FGDs

The study revealed a number of convergences between the results from the protocols and those from the FGDs:

1. The study has shown that the users' expectations exceeded their perceptions in both LibQUAL and SERVQUAL.
2. The *Perceptions* mean scores in LibQUAL, SERVQUAL and SERVPERF were very close. They all fell within the 5-score range and therefore confirm each other.
3. The mean scores in each of the dimensions of SERVQUAL and SERVPERF were relatively close; thus it can be concluded that the results confirm each other.
4. The library recorded the highest *Perception* mean scores in the dimensions that touch on human or staff aspects in the three protocols, LibQUAL, SERVQUAL and SERVPERF.
5. The study also showed that the lowest mean scores were realised in the dimensions that touch on library equipment and ergonomics, or library as a place. These dimensions are LP in LibQUAL and *Tangibles* in SERVQUAL and SERVPERF.
6. The highest *Perception* mean scores came from the *Assurance* and *Responsiveness* dimensions in both SERVQUAL and SERVPERF.
7. The lowest means scores in SERVQUAL dimensions came from the *Reliability* and *Tangible* dimensions. These are also the dimensions with the lowest means in SERVPERF. Thus it can be safely concluded that these results confirm each other.
8. The individual service quality statements with the highest *Perceptions* mean scores were similar in both SERVQUAL and SERVPERF. These were RS-4, RL-3, RL-4, RS-1, AS-3, AS-4, and RS-3.

9. The individual service quality statements with the lowest *Perceptions* mean scores were similar in both SERVQUAL and SERVPERF. They were RL-2, TA-1, TA-3, TA-4, RL-5, RL-1 and EM-2.
10. The majority of the highest *Perception* means in SERVPERF were in the *Reliability* and *Responsiveness* dimensions. This confirms the result from the SERVQUAL test where also the highest means were realized in the dimensions of *Reliability* and *Responsiveness*.
11. The majority of the lowest *Perception* means were realised in the *Tangibles* and *Reliability* dimensions, confirming the results of the dimensions means, which showed that these two dimensions had the lowest means in both SERVQUAL and SERVPERF.
12. About a half of the service quality statements in both LibQUAL and SERVQUAL had negative SSG scores. In LibQUAL, there are 11 service quality statements out of 22 with a negative SSG score, which is 50% of all the service quality statements. In SERVQUAL there are 8 service quality statements out of 22 with negative SSG scores, which is about 37% of all the service quality statements.
13. The study also showed the statements in (12) above fell within the dimensions of *Reliability* and *Tangibles*. This is a confirmation of the results of the test for service quality statements that fall short of user expectations, which showed that most of these statements also came from the *Reliability* and *Tangible* dimensions
14. The overall SSG score in LibQUAL was -0.45. This is confirmed by the same score in SERVQUAL, which was -0.04. Both are negative, which indicates that the library services were not meeting the expectations of its users.
15. From the LibQUAL test, the overall D-M score of the library was 25, which is an indicator that the library's service quality is in a *Problematic situation*. This is confirmed by the SSG scores from both LibQUAL and SERVQUAL,

both of which are negative and confirm that the library services are inferior and not meeting the needs of the users.

16. The findings from FGDs confirmed those from the questionnaires in various ways:
 - a) They confirmed why the IC dimension scored a negative SSG and had one of the least *Perception* means in LibQUAL. The library collection is biased towards law and is mainly in French and English, thus alienating a large part of the users who are no legal interests or who prefer items in the other African Union languages of Portuguese, Arabic, and Swahili.
 - b) They confirmed why the LP dimension scored the lowest *Perception* mean in LibQUAL and also had a negative SSG mean score. The library was found to be noisy, dusty and suffered various disturbances. It lacked room for group activities and for use of audio-visual resources. The building had no adequate ports for charging phones and laptops.
 - c) They confirmed why the *Tangibles* dimension in SERVQUAL had a negative SSG. The library signage is old, of poor quality, out-dated and misleading, and the library produces no brochures or any other promotional material.
 - d) The FGD results also confirmed why the *Reliability* and *Tangibles* dimensions scored the lowest perception means in SERVQUAL and SERVPERF, why it had a negative SSG, and why most negative SSG scores were to be found here. According to the users, the library concentrates largely on the legal officers and neglects other groups of users as far as the collection and attention to user needs are concerned.
 - e) In SERVQUAL and SERVPERF, the lowest *Perception* mean scores across the five dimensions were realised in the *Tangibles* and *Reliability* dimensions.

7.3 CONCLUSIONS

The above section summarizes key findings from this study, while this section provides critical conclusions as guided by the themes drawn from the research objectives of the study. The first objective of this study was to establish the minimum expectations of library users. The study findings lead to the conclusion that the users place more value on the human aspects (AS) and the information collection aspects of the library (IC). Users have their least minimum expectations in the physical aspects of the library (LP and *Tangibles*).

The second objective of this study was to establish the desired level of expectations of library users across the three models. From the results we can conclude that the users had the highest expectations on aspects of human and information collection (AS, IC, *Responsiveness* and *Reliability*), while the least desires were placed on physical aspects of the library (LP and *Tangibles*).

The third objective of this study was to establish the perceived level of service across the three models. From the study it can be concluded that users have the highest perceptions on the human aspects of the library (AS, *Assurance* and *Responsiveness*), while the lowest perceptions are in aspects of information collection and physical facilities such as LP and *Tangibles*.

The fourth objective of this study was to establish the service quality of library services by investigating the gaps between the various service quality variables across the three models. With the exception of the SAG, all other scores showed an overall negative or below- expectations level of service quality. It can therefore be concluded that the service quality of the African Court library is generally poor, problematic and below the expectations of the users.

The fifth objective of this study was to establish the attributes of service quality that meet, or do not meet, library user expectations across the three models. From the findings, only about 50% of the services at the African Court library meet the expectations of users. Aspects of staff (AS) met and exceeded user expectations while aspects of the collection (IC) and physical facilities (LP and *Tangibles*) did not meet user needs. It is therefore clear that a considerably greater effort is required towards meeting the expectations of the library users and subsequently in ensuring quality service at the library.

The sixth objective of this study was to compare results across the three models and FGDs to establish points of convergence or non-convergence. The conclusion from the findings is that the results among the protocols confirm each other and have a convergence, especially in the areas of minimum expectations, desired and perceived expectations, SSG and D-M scores. The results from FGDs largely confirmed the key issues arising from the questionnaires as regards the generally low service quality (and particularly perception, SSG and D-M scores) for aspects of information collection and physical facilities (IC and LP, *Tangibles* and *Reliability*).

The following recommendations, based on the conclusions drawn from the previous section, will help the library to address deficiencies in service quality in order to meet the expectations of the users.

7.4 RECOMMENDATIONS

The findings of the study lead to the conclusion that the service quality of the African Court library is generally poor, problematic and below the expectations of the users. There are glaring gaps that point to the fact that the service quality of the library does not satisfy the users. The FGDs have delved deeper into why this is so and emphatically confirmed the findings of the questionnaires. This section provides recommendations the library could apply in order to improve its service quality;

This is the first service quality assessment exercise at the African Court library. It is hereby recommended that there should be more regular service quality assessments in order to listen to the voices of the users. This exercise has helped the library to understand the expectations and needs of the library users. In addition, there is need for the library to put in place techniques and methods to effectively implement the results of the findings, and also to monitor and sustain the improvement over time.

The study has shown that generally, users are satisfied with the quality of library service in the dimensions that touch on human and information aspects. These were AS, IC, *Responsiveness* and *Assurance*. The library should continue to allocate resources to keep these at high levels of quality in order to ensure the continued satisfaction of users. This should, however, not be at the expense of other dimensions of the library that touch on information collection and physical attributes. These are IC, LP, *Tangibles*, *Empathy*, and *Reliability*.

The library should direct more resources to the service quality aspects that had high minimum expectation means. Generally these are AS and IC. In particular, they include capacity in terms of knowledge, skills, and efficiency in meeting users' needs and solving their problems. These aspects with high minimum expectations are the service quality areas that users value most and from which they expect high levels of service quality. To this end, the library, in collaboration with the Human Resources training unit, should continue to organize periodic training and development programmes in order to equip staff with the requisite knowledge, skills and confidence to deliver a high-quality service.

The library should pay close attention to the desired expectations that scored high means. This is because these are the aspects of service quality on which users place the highest premium. From the study these are generally aspects of *Affect of service*, *Information Control*, *Responsiveness* and *Reliability*. Specific service quality aspects to strengthen

are the information collection and staff capacity. As it seeks to strengthen these aspects, the library should not ignore the statements with low desired expectations. Resources, allowing, effort should be made to also improve them over time.

The library should take note of the perceptions of users. Perceptions are a pointer to the users' assessment or feelings of the library's performance as far as service quality is concerned. Service quality statements with high perception scores indicate user satisfaction with those statements. Conversely, the service quality statements with low perception scores are an indication of dissatisfaction with those conditions. In order to increase the satisfaction of users, the library should allocate resources in ensuring that the service quality statements with low mean scores are improved. These are generally aspects connected with the library collection, facilities and physical aspects of the library. In particular, the service quality issues to address are print and electronic resources and revamping of the library web page.

In its collection development, the library needs to consider other departments of the Court and start purchasing information resources (in print and electronic formats) in subject areas other than law. It should purchase books that cater for staff members other than lawyers. These are finance and administration, human resources, protocol, communication, security, ICT, languages, and others relevant to the Court registry. There is also a need to create a good balance between the languages of the collection in order to cater for the various users of the library. Consequently, the library should strive to attain an equitable balance of information resources in English, French, Arabic, Portuguese and Swahili.

There is also a need to replace all library equipment especially that in the ICT field, such as computers and printers, copiers, TV set, DVD players, and charging ports. These should have been replaced in 2013 but that has not happened. Their replacement is therefore long overdue. The library should also start periodical production of information

materials such brochures, pamphlets, and other promotion materials. There is an urgent need for the library to replace its current signage system and ensure that it is visually appealing. There is a need to improve the signage inside the library as well. Signs should be clear and easily visible, made from some durable material, not A4 paper, as is the case currently. When items are moved within the shelves, the signage should be moved to reflect the change. The signage should preferably be in the two working languages of the Court, English and French.

The study has shown that users have low perceptions in the physical aspects of the library (LP and *Tangibles*). While the results have shown that users have low expectations in these dimensions, the library cannot ignore them. All other services take place in a library environment and therefore these aspects should be addressed in order to improve service quality. This is also an indication that users prefer to access content remotely through their gadgets and Internet. Hence the library should increase the percentage of its contents in electronic formats. This has already started with journals where subscriptions are now online, and with selected articles which will be posted on the library web page once it is up and running. It should be extended to subscriptions to electronic books. In this manner, users will be able to access content electronically at their convenience and within the confines of their homes or distant workplaces.

There is a clear shortage of ports to charge laptops and cell phones. This situation could be remedied easily with the services of an electrician; in the meantime extension sockets could be provided to address the problem. A partition could be created between the library and the Documentation unit to create space for group discussions, watching videos and use of audio-visual items.

The atmosphere in the library is not conducive to silent and private study. The library should take remedial action to reduce noise levels, which have been shown by the study to be very high. This can be done by stricter controls and deterrent measures on the use

of cell phones, noisemaking and discussions within the library. The dust levels can be reduced by more frequent and thorough cleaning of not only the floors but also the shelves and books. The doors leading to the Documentation Unit should also be permanently closed in order to reduce disturbance from people passing through the library to that unit. The library should also cease to be used a place for recruitment tests and interviews. The Court could use the VIP or conference rooms for this exercise. Interns could undertake research in the library but without discussion. The Administration unit should also consider changing the cleaning times to earlier than 8 a.m. This will go far in reducing noise and disturbances.

There is a general feeling of neglect among other groups of users except legal staff. The library could address this by giving greater attention to the needs of these users through more personalised attention to their requests and information needs. Considering that the library only has only three staff members, this will take a great effort but could be mitigated by use of interns, as happens in other departments of the Court, until a time when the library is able to recruit additional staff. The positions of extra staff have already been created and budgeted for.

There is a need to extend the hours of opening of the library beyond the current 8 a.m. to 5 p.m. weekdays. The library can either extend the closing hours on weekdays to 8 p.m. or keep them as they are and open on Saturdays until about 3 or 4 p.m.

7.4.1 Strategic framework for service quality in the Court and library

In order to ensure user satisfaction is observed throughout the library at all times, there is a need to create and maintain a culture of service quality through the implementation of the developed service quality framework. The rationale of developing a service quality strategic framework was to draw together the knowledge gained by means of the empirical research and the theory identified through the literature research in chapter two of this study. The basis of the framework is that the library of the African Court does not

operate in isolation. In its work, it interacts with a number of other units of the Court to accomplish its mission. For example, it relies on the following services:

- a) Procurement Unit: all acquisitions
- b) Finance Unit: all payments
- c) Administration: management of staff records, cleaning and sanitation
- d) ICT: all ICT-related issues.
- e) Language: all translation and interpretation services.

With this in mind, a service quality framework for the library has to start and link with the Court's other units in order to ensure that quality is observed throughout all its processes. A framework that concentrates only on the library will leave it vulnerable to inefficiencies from other departments and thus negatively affect its service quality (Islam & Haque, 2012). This is the only viable way for a successful service quality implementation exercise. The strategic framework proposed for the Court library is based on confirmation-disconfirmation theories (LibQUAL and SERVQUAL) and quality management principles. This framework is shown in Figure 7.1.

7.4.1.1 Governance/Leadership (judges)

The framework starts with the governance of the Court. For any organisation to successfully foster a culture of service quality, the initiative has to start from the very top (ISO, 2015). In most organisations, the most senior structure is the board. For the Court, this senior decision-making organ is comprised of the judges of the Court, also known as the Bench (Maan, 2009:2). It follows that in order to inculcate the culture of service quality in the library and all other departments of the Court the judges' role is to set everything in motion. Their role is defined as approving the strategic plan of the Court and setting the pillars of service quality (ENCJ: 2008). These pillars should be at the core of the Court's strategic plans. The pillars are:

- a) Organizational commitment to service quality
- b) Creating an environment that promotes and sustains service quality.

The judges have to start by affirming organizational commitment to service quality and fostering a service quality culture and environment in the Court (Albers, 2014). The starting point for this culture is the Court's strategic plan, which puts in place a strategic approach to service quality at the Court.

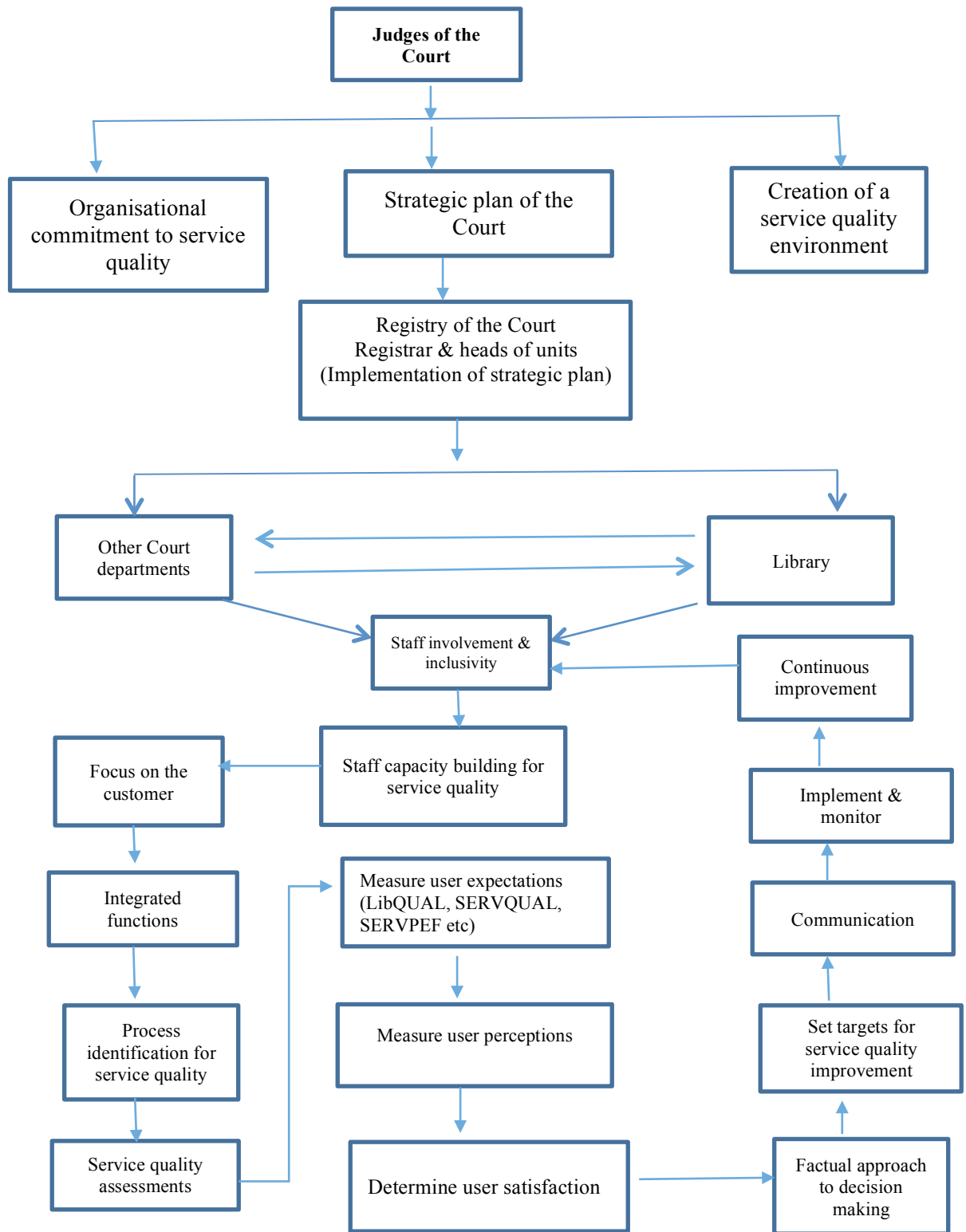


Figure 7.1: Strategic framework for service quality in the library and Court

a) **Strategic approach to service quality (judges of the Court):** To achieve its vision, mission, and goals, the Court should adopt a strategic approach towards quality improvement. This involves the development of a strategic plan with service quality as the core aspect of all organizational processes. Service quality has to be embedded in the mission, vision and values of the Court and must be made clear and communicated to all employees in the organization. The culture of service quality is an organization-wide challenge that is everyone's responsibility. According to Besterfield et al. (2009), an organization will not begin the transformation of service quality until it is aware that the quality of its services must be improved. The results of this study have shown that for the African Union Court that is exactly the case. The Court is currently preparing the 2018–2022 strategic plan, making this a good time to make service quality one of its core pillars.

b) Registry management (Court Registrar and heads of units)

Once the judges have set the environment for service quality, the implementation becomes the responsibility of the Registry, which runs the day-to-day affairs of the Court (a kind of secretariat). The library falls under the Registry. The Registrar, as the CEO of the Court, will need to work closely with the heads of all units to ensure the smooth implementation of service quality throughout the institution. Therefore, the Registrar should hold regular meetings with the heads of units in order to plan for the implementation of service quality programmes in the Court. The purpose of this planning is to create an awareness programme for service quality implementation. This will lead to an organization-wide positive and receptive environment for its quality implementation. These meetings are crucial for service quality implementation because the various units are not autonomous; they frequently interact with each other in their operations. First, it can be delivered through a specialized formal training and education programme with heads of units and selected focal points for service quality implementation.

Later it can be done through internal forums such as seminars, symposiums or workshops for the rest of the staff members as the plan is rolled out.

From here the heads of units, including the librarian, now take service quality implementation to their units, taking full responsibility. It is recommended that the library take the approach shown here:

c) **Staff inclusivity:** A central pillar of the strategic framework is that all staff are responsible for achieving high service quality, and therefore have to be fully involved. The library will need to involve its staff as much as possible in the day-to-day operations and decision-making process in order to give them a sense of empowerment. This creates an environment of success and unity of purpose, which helps inculcate a culture of service quality in the library. Involvement of staff plays an important part in maintaining high morale and in motivating employees at all levels. This is something that is rarely done at the time of this study.

d) **Staff capacity building:** An important aspect of service quality is continuous empowerment of staff through capacity building programmes so that they can deliver high levels of service quality. This can take various forms, such as staff training (internal and external), sponsorship to attend quality seminars, workshops and conferences. Staff should be trained in a professional manner and encouraged to make sound decisions relevant to their current situation to improve the overall quality and attain higher standards. This is crucial to achieving high service quality and user satisfaction because a member of staff is the first contact a library user has with the institution. Empowerment of staff is an area in which the Court has achieved very well. Every year there is a budget for staff training and development, held internally and externally. This has been seen in the results of this study where respondents rated staff capacity to meet their needs very highly, making the staff dimension the best scored. Efforts should be made to maintain this momentum.

e) **Focus on the customer:** Library users are the ultimate judges of library service quality. The Court may make great efforts in training library staff, improving buildings, equipment and in technology upgrades, as well as in service standards; however, it is the library users who make the final judgement on the library and its services. The user is and should remain the focal point for quality implementation. The user will ultimately determine the level of quality and whether the efforts were worthwhile.

f) **Integrated functions:** The Court comprises various units with different functionality purposes, but all interacting with each other to achieve organizational goals. These units are interconnected with various horizontal and vertical processes that determine service quality. They are for example legal, administration, finance, procurement, and language to name a few. For effective service quality management, everyone at the Court should have a thorough understanding of organizational quality, policies, standards, objectives, and processes. An integrated system will ensure overall continual improvement and the enhancement of service quality across all units and processes.

g) **Process identification for service quality:** Processes are central to service quality. The library should identify, define and document its procedures, for example, the procedures for ordering books, cataloguing, lending and borrowing, etc. These procedures should be continuously monitored in order to detect unexpected variations. In 2015, the Court instructed all units to develop standard operating procedures (SOPs), without success. This instruction was not followed up and each unit keeps its own SOPs independently. There is a need to go beyond this step, identifying areas of interaction and convergence, and making them as smooth as possible in order to avoid duplicity, grey areas, and bottlenecks and ensure service quality.

h) **Service quality evaluations:** For effective service quality management, the Court must conduct periodic service quality evaluations, continually collect and analyse data on service quality. This is where the various service quality evaluation tools will be applied. These are LibQUAL, SERVQUAL, SERVPERF, and others. The result of service quality measurement is data on the state of service quality in the library.

i) **Fact-based decision-making:** Data from service quality evaluations could then be analysed to show the status of service quality at the library at any given time. The results of these analyses would be used for decision-making accuracy aimed at service quality improvement. This is because quality decisions are based on factual information in order to avoid emotionally based decisions. The results of this study are a perfect and empirically established example of the procedure to follow.

j) **Communication:** Effective communication is a key aspect of service quality and plays an important role in service quality management (Maan, 2009:3). Communication would keep all staff aware of organisational processes and activities at any given time. For example, the finance and procurement units could keep the library updated on library orders and payments for books, while the library would in turn be in a strong position to inform library users of when to expect the books. The library can also keep users posted on new arrivals, new services, closures and others. On the other hand, the ICT unit could regularly keep users informed on software upgrades, Internet downtimes and information on routine maintenance. Effective communication is something seriously lacking between the various units of the Court. This framework will hopefully address the problem.

k) **Continuous improvement:** For successful implementation of service quality, the library has to adopt a culture of continuous improvement. This would lead to improved and higher quality processes. It will ensure that the library will find new ways and techniques to better meet the needs of users, as well as meet and exceed customer expectations.

Successful service quality implementation and management will require effort, time, courage, and patience. The most important requirement is sustained and continuous effort to achieve high service quality at all times. With this effort, the library and its users, and the Court at large, would start to witness improved service quality in all its services. Higher service quality will in turn translate to increased library user satisfaction, reduction of costs, higher staff morale and improved team work among staff (ISO, 2015). This will in turn be good news to the parent organization, the African Union and current and potential partners of the library.

7.5 SUGGESTIONS FOR FURTHER RESEARCH

Court libraries, and by extension law libraries, are often overlooked in library studies. The same applies when it comes to service quality studies in libraries. Researchers could use this study as a base to address these gaps.

The African Union has various organs, each with its own library. Some of these are the African Union Commission (Addis Ababa), African Commission on Human and Peoples' Rights (Banjul), Pan-African Parliament (PAP), Economic, Social and Cultural Council (ECOSOCC), Peace and Security Council (PSC), among others. This is the first quality assessment of any of the African Union libraries. Further quality studies should be done on the other libraries. There are three international human rights courts: the African Court on Human and Peoples' Rights, The European Court on Human and Peoples Rights and the Inter-American Court of Human Rights. To the researcher's

knowledge, this is the first quality assessment study done on any of these libraries. Similar studies could be carried out on the others.

There are various international courts and tribunals most of which have been established by treaties between nations. They deal with specific aspects of law such as human rights, criminal matters, and arbitration. They include the International Criminal Court (ICC), International Court of Justice (ICJ), International Criminal Tribunal for the Former Yugoslavia (ICTY), ECOWAS Court of Justice (ECJ), East African Court of Justice (EACJ), United Nations Mechanism for International Criminal Tribunals (UNMICT), to name a few. Like the African Court, the EACJ and the UNMICT are based in the same city of Arusha. A review of the literature has not shown any service quality study carried out in these libraries. This study could be an inspiration for similar studies in those libraries. Similar studies can be contacted in the judiciary libraries of the host country, Tanzania, starting with the Registry of the Tanzania High Court in Arusha.

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APPENDICES

APPENDIX 1: Consent letter to respondents

Dear respondent,

I am conducting a study titled: *Assessment of the quality of international court libraries: a study of the African Union Court on Human and Peoples' Rights Library*. This study is a partial fulfilment of the requirements for the Degree of Doctor of Literature and Philosophy (DLITT & PHIL) in Information Science at the University of South Africa (UNISA). The purpose of this research is to assess the quality of services offered by the African Court library through determining user satisfaction, experiences, perceptions and expectations of library services

You are kindly requested to participate in this study by completing the attached questionnaires. The information that you provide will form part of the findings of this study and will be used solely in assessing the quality of the Library. Please note that participation to this survey is voluntary. All information given during the survey is confidential and anonymous. No names or information that may identify is required anywhere.

Upon completion, return the questionnaires to any of the Library staff members. The questionnaires will take approximately 10-15 minutes to complete.

You may contact me on Tel +255-732-979 509, Ext 81144, Email: fidelis.mutisya@african-court.org

Thanking you for your cooperation,

Yours faithfully

Fidelis K. Mutisya

APPENDIX 2: LIBQUAL QUESTIONNAIRE

PART 1: BACKGROUND INFORMATION

- 1) Library user category?
 Internal User (Court Staff member)
 External User (Non-staff member)

- 2) Highest level of education attained
 Secondary School
 Diploma
 Bachelors
 Masters
 PhD
Other (please specify)

- 3) Age group
 18-29
 30-39
 40-49
 50 and above
- 4) Gender Male Female

- (5) How often do you use the library?

Daily	Weekly	Monthly	Never

PART 2: QUESTIONNAIRE

Instructions

Please rate the following statements (1 is lowest, 9 is highest) by attending to all three areas, namely:

Minimum -- the number that represents the *minimum* level of service that you would find acceptable

Desired -- the number that represents the level of service that *you personally want*

Perceived -- the number that represents the level of service that *you believe* our library currently provides

For each item, you must EITHER rate the item in all three columns OR identify the item as "N/A" (not applicable). Selecting "N/A" will override all other answers for that item.

When it comes to...		My Minimum Service Level Is		My Desired Service Level Is		Perceived Service Performance Is		N/A												
Service Effect		<i>Low</i>	<i>High</i>	<i>Low</i>	<i>High</i>	<i>Low</i>	<i>High</i>													
1)	Employees who instill confidence in users	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	N/A
2)	Giving users individual attention	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	N/A
3)	Employees who are consistently courteous	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	N/A
4)	Readiness to respond to users' questions	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	N/A
5)	Employees who have the knowledge to answer user questions	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	N/A
6)	Employees who deal with users in a caring fashion	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	N/A
7)	Employees who understand the needs of their users	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	N/A
8)	Willingness to help users	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	N/A
9)	Dependability in handling users' service problems	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	N/A
Information Control																				
10)	Making electronic resources accessible from my home or office	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	N/A
11)	A library Web site/page enabling me to locate information on my own	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	N/A
12)	The printed library materials I need for my work	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	N/A
13)	The electronic information resources I need	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	N/A
14)	Modern equipment that lets me easily access needed information	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	N/A
15)	Easy-to-use access tools that allow me to find things on my own	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	N/A
16)	Making information easily accessible for independent use	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	N/A
17)	Print and/or electronic journal collections I require for my work	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	N/A
Library as a Place																				
18)	Library space that inspires study and learning	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	N/A
19)	Quiet space for individual activities	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	N/A
20)	A comfortable and inviting location	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	N/A

21)	A place for study, learning, or research	1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9	1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9	1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9	N/A
22)	Community space for group learning and group study	1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9	1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9	1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9	N/A

APPENDIX 3: SERVQUAL QUESTIONNAIRE

PART I: EXPECTATIONS

ID		1	2	3	4	5	6	7
AS	Assurance (AS): This assesses the knowledge and courtesy of the library staff and their ability to transmit confidence.							
1	Behaviour of Library staff instils confidence in users (AS-1)							
2	Library users feel safe when transacting with the library (AS-2)							
3	Library staff are always courteous (AS-3)							
4	Library staff are knowledgeable to answer users' queries and questions (AS-4)							
EM	Empathy (EM): This assesses the behaviour, attitude and approach of the library staff towards users.							
1	The Library gives users individual attention (EM-1)							
2	Convenient opening hours for the Library (opening and closing times) (EM-2)							
3	Library staff give personal attention to the users (EM-3)							
4	The Library has the users' best interests at heart (EM-4)							
5	Library staff understand the specific needs of the users (EM-5)							
RL	Reliability (RL): This measures to the delivery of the service as it relates to dependability and accuracy.							
1	The Library shows sincere interest in solving users' problems (RL-1)							
2	When the library promises to do something at a certain time, it is done (RL-2)							
3	Library staff provide services as promised (RL-3)							
4	The library provides services at the promised time (RL-4)							

5	The Library has error-free records (Users list, Library database, Accessions list etc) (RL-5)								
RS	Responsiveness (RS): This refers to the readiness of library staff in providing the service.								
1	Library staff are willing to help user (RS-1)								
2	Library staff keep users informed about when services will be performed (RS-2)								
3	Library staff serve users promptly (RS-3)								
4	Library staff are never too busy to respond to user's questions (RS-4)								
TA	Tangibles (TA): This evaluates the appearance of physical facilities, equipment, and communication material.								
1	Equipment is modern and in good condition (TA-1)								
2	Facilities are visually appealing (such as computer, audiovisual etc, shelves, tables, chairs etc) (TA-2)								
3	Materials (such as brochures, statements or signs) associated with the services are visually appealing (TA-3)								
4	Library staff are neat in appearance at all times (TA-4).								

PART II: PERCEPTIONS

ID		1	2	3	4	5	6	7
AS	Assurance (AS): This assesses the knowledge and courtesy of the library staff and their ability to transmit confidence.							
1	Behaviour of Library staff instils confidence in users (AS-1)							
2	Library users feel safe when transacting with the library (AS-2)							
3	Library staff are always courteous (AS-3)							
4	Library staff are knowledgeable to answer users' queries and questions (AS-4)							
EM	Empathy (EM): This assesses the behaviour, attitude and approach of the library staff towards users.							

1	The Library gives users individual attention (EM-1)								
2	Convenient opening hours for the Library (opening and closing times) (EM-2)								
3	Library staff give personal attention to the users (EM-3)								
4	The Library has the users' best interests at heart (EM-4)								
5	Library staff understand the specific needs of the users (EM-5)								
RL	Reliability (RL): This measures to the delivery of the service as it relates to dependability and accuracy.								
1	The Library shows sincere interest in solving users' problems (RL-1)								
2	When the library promises to do something at a certain time, it is done (RL-2)								
3	Library staff provide services as promised (RL-3)								
4	The library provides services at the promised time (RL-4)								
5	The Library has error-free records (Users list, Library database, Accessions list etc) (RL-5)								
RS	Responsiveness (RS): This refers to the readiness of library staff in providing the service.								
1	Library staff are willing to help user (RS-1)								
2	Library staff keep users informed about when services will be performed (RS-2)								
3	Library staff serve users promptly (RS-3)								
4	Library staff are never too busy to respond to user's questions (RS-4)								
TA	Tangibles (TA): This evaluates the appearance of physical facilities, equipment, and communication material.								
1	Equipment is modern and in good condition (TA-1)								
2	Facilities are visually appealing (such as computer, audiovisual etc, shelves, tables, chairs etc).								
3	Materials (such as brochures, statements or signs) associated with the services are visually appealing (TA-3)								
4	Library staff are neat in appearance at all times.								

APPENDIX 4: SERVPERF QUESTIONNAIRE

EXPECTATIONS (PERFORMANCE) ONLY

AS		1	2	3	4	5	6	7
	Assurance (AS): This assesses the knowledge and courtesy of the library staff and their ability to transmit confidence.							
1	Behaviour of Library staff instils confidence in users (AS-1)							
2	Library users feel safe when transacting with the library (AS-2)							
3	Library staff are always courteous (AS-3)							
4	Library staff are knowledgeable to answer users' queries and questions (AS-4)							
EM	Empathy (EM): This assesses the behavior, attitude and approach of the library staff towards users.							
1	The Library gives users individual attention (RS-1)							
2	Convenient opening hours for the Library (opening and closing times) (RS-2)							
3	Library staff give personal attention to the users (RS-3)							
4	The Library has the users' best interests at heart (RS-4)							
5	Library staff understand the specific needs of the users (RS-5)							
RL	Reliability (RL): This measures to the delivery of the service as it relates to dependability and accuracy.							
1	The Library shows sincere interest in solving users' problems (RL-4)							
2	When the library promises to do something at a certain time, it is done (RL-3)							
3	Library staff provide services as promised							
4	The library provides services at the promised time (RL-4)							
5	The Library ha error-free records (Users list, Library database, Accessions list etc) (RL-5)							
RS	Responsiveness (RS): This refers to the readiness of library staff in providing the service.							
1	Library staff are willing to help user (RS-1)							

2	Library staff keep users informed about when services will be performed (RS-2)								
3	Library staff serve users promptly (RS-3)								
4	Library staff are never too busy to respond to user's questions (RS-4)								
TA	Tangibles (TA): This evaluates the appearance of physical facilities, equipment, and communication material.								
1	Equipment is modern and in good condition (TA-1)								
2	Facilities are visually appealing (such as computer, audiovisual etc, shelves, tables, chairs etc) (TA-2)								
3	Materials (such as brochures, statements or signs) associated with the services are visually appealing (TA-3)								
4	Library staff are neat in appearance at all times (TA-4)								

APPENDIX 5: FOCUS GROUP GUIDELINES

The researcher will be the moderator. He will start by explaining the following;

I. Introduction (5 Minutes)

1. The welcome

Good afternoon and welcome. My name is Fidelis Mutisya and I am Doctoral student at UNISA. Thank you for taking the time to join our discussion of quality issues in the African Court Library.

2. Overview of topic

The themes included here are those that users expressed dissatisfaction in the questionnaires that you filled previously. You have been invited because you are all regular clients of the library. I want to tap into your experience and your opinions about the library and its services.

3. Ground rules

This is an informal discussion and participation is encouraged from everyone. I encourage you to speak to the group rather than to me necessarily. I will jump in as necessary. Feel free to voice a different opinion, whether positive or negative. I am not seeking consensus of group thought. Please speak up and one at a time so that we can all be heard, and so that I can obtain a clear audio recording for later transcription.

You can take comfort in knowing that your participation furthers the cause of research and in improving the quality of the African Court library services. This discussion should take about one hour. There are no right or wrong answers. I expect that you will have differing points of view. Please feel free to share your point of view even if it differs from what others have said. No names will be included in any reports. Your comments are confidential.. If you want to follow up on something that someone has said, you want to agree or disagree, or give an example, feel free to do that. Feel free to

have a conversation with one another about these questions. I am here to ask questions, listen and make sure everyone has a chance to share. I am interesting in hearing from each of you. I want to make sure all of you have a chance to share your ideas.

QUESTIONS

- 1) Information control
 - a) What are your views on the adequacy and relevance of printed and electronic information resources found in the library?
 - b) Describe the condition and adequacy of equipment for access needed to information (Computers, charging ports, scanners, copiers, etc).
 - c) How do you find the library Web site/page?
 - d) Comment on the Access tools of the library.
- 2) Library as a Place
 - a) Does the library space encourage study and learning? What are your views?
 - b) Discuss the condition of the library in terms of comfort, quietness and conduciveness for study.
 - c) Does the library provide space for group learning and group study? Explain.
- 3) Tangibles
 - a) What are your views on the appeal of library facilities (computer, audio-visuals, shelves, tables, chairs etc)?
 - b) Are materials (such as brochures, statements or signs) associated with the services visually appealing? Explain.
- 4) Reliability
 - a) What is your opinion on the library's service delivery (promptness, timeliness, quality etc)?
 - b) Assess the library in terms of solving your problems.
 - c) What is your assessment of the library records (Library database, patrons list, accessions list etc)?

5) Empathy

- a) What are your views on the convenience of opening hours of the Library (opening and closing times)?
- b) What is your assessment of staff neatness?
- c) Does the library pay attention to user needs? Kindly explain.

Thank you for your valuable contribution.

APPENDIX 6: LETTER OF AUTHORISATION FROM THE REGISTRAR TO CONDUCT THE STUDY

