

**INVESTIGATING CUSTOMER SATISFACTION WITH LIBRARY
AND INFORMATION SERVICES AT MANAGEMENT
UNIVERSITY OF AFRICA (MUA) LIBRARY, KENYA.**

BY

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MOI UNIVERSITY

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DECLARATION

DECLARATION BY THE CANDIDATE:

This research report is my original work and has not been presented in any other institution for an academic award.

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DEDICATION

This research work is dedicated to all zealous information professionals who come up with workable solutions to the identified issues and challenges in the process of providing quality information services to satisfy library customers, and to all researchers who seek to add value to the body of knowledge.

ABSTRACT

University libraries as the heart of university and as fountains of knowledge are expected to provide quality services to support learning and research activities to students and be of assistance to academic staff in teaching and research. Management University of Africa (MUA) has been sponsored by Kenya Institute of Management with its first admissions done in January 2012. University library customers expect high standards of simplicity and immediate access to quality information. The current library and information services at MUA could be considered rather the usual traditional practice which were designed with little or no reference to users' needs and expectations despite the fact that the characteristics of the targeted customers indicate that they may not conveniently utilize them. The aim of this study was to explore the level of customer satisfaction with library and information services at MUA, and propose a framework of improving the quality of information services. The objectives of the study were: to find out customers' usage of library and information services at MUA Library; to examine strategies employed in customer care; to determine users' perceptions of the quality of library services and to ascertain their level of satisfaction; to establish gaps and identify challenges experienced in achieving customer satisfaction at MUA library; and to come up with recommendations and propose a framework for improving customer satisfaction. This study was informed by SERVQUAL Model. A case study employing mixed methods research approach comprising of both qualitative and quantitative design was used to achieve the set objectives. A sample size of 120 respondents was used. Purposive sampling technique was used to select a sample of 7 faculty members; while 113 students representing 30% of the student population of 377 were sampled using stratified random sampling method. Semi-structured questionnaires and interview schedule were employed as the main data collection instruments. Interviews were used to collect data from the key informants, while self-completion questionnaires were distributed to MUA students and faculty. The study achieved 96 (80%) response rate whereby 90 (75%) were students and 6 (5%) were faculty members. Qualitative data was systematically synthesized and analyzed to identify relevant themes and concepts then the results were presented in form of prose in a descriptive manner. Quantitative data was coded using statistical analysis and results presented in form of tables, percentages and charts. The outcome of the study was a set of recommendations and a framework that would help in aligning library and information services at MUA to meet customers' expectations probably resulting in reduced gaps in perceptions of service quality and improved customer satisfaction.

TABLE OF CONTENTS

DECLARATION.....	ii
ACKNOWLEDGEMENT	iii
DEDICATION	iv
ABSTRACT	v
TABLE OF CONTENTS.....	vi
LIST OF TABLES	x
LIST OF FIGURE	xi
LIST OF ABBREVIATIONS	xii
CHAPTER ONE.....	1
INTRODUCTION AND BACKGROUND INFORMATION	1
1.1 Introduction	1
1.1.1 Changing Information Landscape.....	2
1.1.2 University Libraries and Customer Satisfaction.....	4
1.2 Background of the Study.....	5
1.2.1 Categories of Universities in Kenya	6
1.2.2 Problems Facing University Libraries in Kenya.....	7
1.2.3 Customers' Perspectives on Services Quality	10
1.2.4 Customer Satisfaction and Quality of Library and Information Services	12
1.2.5 Background of MUA Library	13
1.2.5.1 MUA Library Membership	14
1.2.5.2 Information Resources and Services Provided at MUA Library	14
1.3 Statement of the Problem	16
1.4 Aim and Objectives of the Study.....	18
1.4.1 Aim of the Study	18
1.4.2 Specific Objectives	18
1.5 Research Questions.....	19
1.6 Assumptions	19
1.7 Significance of the Study	20
1.8 Scope and Limitation	21
1.8.1 Scope of the Study	21
1.8.2 Limitations of the Study	21
1.9 Definition of Key Terms	22
1.9.1 Customer.....	22

1.9.2 Customer Satisfaction	22
1.9.3 Customer Service	23
1.9.4 Expectation	23
1.9.5 Perception	23
1.9.6 Quality	24
1.9.7 Service Quality	24
1.9.8 Service Satisfaction.....	24
CHAPTER TWO.....	26
THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK AND LITERATURE REVIEW.....	26
2.1 Introduction	26
2.2 Theoretical Framework.....	26
2.2.1 SERVQUAL Model.....	27
2.2.1.1 Application of SERVQUAL in Libraries	31
2.2.1.2 Validity of SERVQUAL Instrument	32
2.2.1.3 SERVQUAL Criticized	34
2.3 Customer Satisfaction Conceptual Model.....	35
2.4 University Libraries	37
2.4.1 Changing Information Landscape.....	38
2.4.2 Customer Care in Libraries	40
2.4.3 Concept of Quality and Customer Care in Libraries.....	41
2.5 Service Quality	42
2.5.1 Service Quality in University Libraries	43
2.5.2 Service Quality Measures in Libraries.....	44
2.6 Customer Satisfaction	46
2.6.1 Customer Satisfaction in University Libraries	46
2.6.2 Customer Satisfaction Measures in Libraries.....	48
2.7 Relationship between Service Quality and Customer Satisfaction	49
2.7.1 Customer Satisfaction and Service Quality Interpretations.....	50
2.7.2 Strategies for Improving Customer Satisfaction in University Libraries.....	52
2.8 Conclusion.....	54
CHAPTER THREE.....	56
RESEARCH DESIGN AND METHODOLOGY.....	56
3.1 Introduction	56
3.2 Research Design	56

3.2.1 Qualitative and Quantitative Strategy	56
3.2.2 Case Study	57
3.3 Target Population	58
3.4 Sample Design.....	59
3.4.1 Sample Size	59
3.5 Data Collection Methods	61
3.5.1 Data Collection Instruments	64
3.5.2 Data Collection Procedure.....	65
3.6 Reliability and Validity of Research Instruments.....	66
3.6.1 Pre-testing of Research Instruments	67
3.7 Data Analysis Procedure.....	67
3.7.1 Data Interpretation	68
3.8 Ethical Considerations	68
3.9 Chapter Summary	69
CHAPTER FOUR	70
DATA PRESENTATION, ANALYSIS AND INTERPRETATION	70
4.1 Introduction	70
4.2 Response Rate	70
4.2.1 Students' Level of Study and Programme Enrolled	71
4.2.2 Status of Employment	73
4.3 Frequency of Library Visits and Usage Patterns of Information Services	73
4.3.1 Frequency of Library Visits.....	73
4.3.2 Awareness of Information Services provided at MUA Library	75
4.3.3 Barriers Experienced Hindering Effective Utilization	75
4.4 Customer Care Strategies Employed at MUA Library.....	76
4.4.1 Customer Care Services	77
4.5 Perceptions on Quality of Library Services and Satisfaction Levels	79
4.5.1 Rates of Service Quality.....	79
4.5.1.1 Ratings of Service Quality Perceptions Summary	81
4.5.2 Helpfulness of Library Staff Assistance.....	84
4.5.3 Comments on Overall Quality of the Library Services at MUA.....	84
4.5.4 Library and Information Services Satisfaction Levels.....	85
4.5.5 Customers' Expectations with Library Services.....	86
4.6 Challenges Encountered in Achieving Customer Satisfaction.....	87

4.6.1 Unavailability of a Particular Library Staff Assigned Customer Care Roles	88
4.6.2 Difficulties in Coordination of Customer Care Activities.....	88
4.6.3 Difficulties in using the Online Catalogue	88
4.6.4 Few copies of Books to Borrow Mainly when Approaching Exam Duration	88
4.6.5 Inconvenience in Accessing Information Resources	89
4.6.6 Frequent Slow Internet Connection	89
4.7 Suggestions for Improvement	89
CHAPTER FIVE	92
SUMMARY OF FINDINGS, CONCLUSION AND RECOMMEDATIONS.....	92
5.1 Introduction	92
5.2 Summary of the Findings	92
5.2.1 Characteristics of Library Users and Frequency of Library Visits	92
5.2.2 Customer Care Methods Executed at MUA Library	93
5.2.3 User Perceptions on Quality of Library Services and Satisfaction Levels.....	94
5.2.4 Challenges Experienced in Achieving Customer Satisfaction	94
5.2.5 Suggestions for Improving Service Quality	95
5.3 Conclusions	95
5.4 Recommendations.....	97
5.4.1 Identify User Needs	97
5.4.2 Design or Review Library and Information Services	99
5.4.3 Conduct regular Library User Surveys.....	100
5.4.4 Establish Customer Care Policy	101
5.4.5 Creation of the Position of Customer Care Officer	101
5.4.6 Enhance Information Accessibility	102
5.4.7 Training	102
5.5 Proposed Framework for Improving Customer Satisfaction	104
5.6 Suggestion for Further Research	107
REFERENCES	107
APPENDICES	114
APPENDIX A: SELF-COMPLETION QUESTIONNAIRES	114
APPENDIX B: INTERVIEW SCHEDULE FOR INFORMANTS.....	122

LIST OF TABLES

Table 3.1: Target Population.....	58
Table 3.2: Sample Size	60
Table 4.1: Response Rate Distribution	71
Table 4.2: Programme Enrolled Frequency	72
Table 4.3: Frequency of Library Visits and Usage Patterns	74
Table 4.4: Service Quality Ratings.....	79
Table 4.4.1: Summary Ratings of Service Quality Perceptions.....	82

LIST OF FIGURES

Figure 2.1: A Conceptual Model of Service Quality	29
Figure 2.2: Model of Two Levels of Satisfaction and Perceived Service Quality	36
Figure 2.3: Relationship between Service Quality and Customer Satisfaction	51
Figure 2.3: Relationship between Service Quality and Customer Satisfaction	51
Figure 4.1: User Orientation Facilities Provided	76
Figure 4.2: Customer Care Satisfaction Levels.....	77
Figure 4.3: Perception Rates on Overall Quality of Library services	85
Figure 4.4: Library Services Satisfaction Levels	86
Figure 4.5: Library Services in relation to Customer Expectations	87
Figure 5.1: Proposed Framework for Improving Customer Satisfaction	105

LIST OF ABBREVIATIONS

ARL:	Association of Research Libraries
BDS:	Bachelor of Arts in Development Studies
BML:	Bachelor of Management & Leadership
CUE:	Commission for Higher Education
DBL:	Doctor of Business Leadership
EAML:	Executive Master of Science in Applied Management & Leadership
EBBM:	Executive Bachelor Degree of Business Management
EMBA:	Executive Master of Business Administration
FPE:	Free Primary Education
ILL:	Inter-Library Loan
KIM:	Kenya Institute of Management
KLISC:	Kenya Libraries and Information Services Consortium
LIA:	Letter of Interim Authority
LIBQUAL:	Library Quality
LIS:	Library and Information Science
MUA:	Management University of Africa
RATER:	(acronym for ...) Reliability, Assurance, Tangibles, Empathy, and Responsiveness
SERVPERF:	Service Performance
SERVQUAL:	Service Quality
SML:	School of Management and Leadership
UPE:	Universal Primary Education

CHAPTER ONE

INTRODUCTION AND BACKGROUND INFORMATION

1.1 Introduction

Universities world over are one of the important educational institutions where people develop intellectual abilities that they will use throughout their lives given that they do not only plan careers but also provide a basis for creative and critical thinking (Niyonsenga & Bizimana, 1996). Universities may offer better quality services through their academic and administrative staff, and technical equipment they have. The quality of the services provided also depends on the users of that service as well. Library as the richest information treasure of human knowledge and cultural wealth is expected to effectively meet the challenges of the current technology revolution. Library services are an integral part of this quality chain since university libraries are cornerstones of the improvement of the students and academic staff.

Academic libraries today are complex institutions with multiple roles and a host of related operations and information services developed over the years. Snoj & Petermanec (2001) describes a university library as the heart of the learning community providing a place for students, lecturers and researchers to advance their knowledge, do their research and improve on their scholarly work in an institution of higher learning. Adnan and Mumtaz (2006) adds that, as the heart of university and as fountains of knowledge, university libraries are expected to play the fundamental role in delivering information to their customers by providing quality services to support learning and research activities to students and be of assistance to academic staff in teaching and research.

According to Manjunatha (2004), university libraries are essentially learning organizations stimulating academic and research activities by providing access to world-class information resources. Consequently, it is expected for a forward-looking university library to provide a wide range of quality information products and services to the intended user population. The main concern of users is obtaining information quickly in a library which is responsive to their needs. As such, knowledgeable staff should be able to provide seamless access to information regardless of format, whether the user is in the library or at a remote location.

This study was based on the premise that the culture of library assessment from the users' perspective is of vital importance in determining users' needs, expectations and perceptions; and whether the identified needs are being met. Consequently, identifying the gaps of the existing library and information services in a university and using the assessment results can improve service delivery and eventually customer satisfaction.

1.1.1 Changing Information Landscape

Edwards and Browne (1995) noted that over the years libraries have been considered unchallenged as the primary source of recorded knowledge and historical records. However, the present day university libraries seem to be facing daunting challenges in regard to their primary role of delivering quality information to their customers. Makori (2010) opines that, the reason as to why university libraries in Kenya are losing their supremacy in carrying out this fundamental role is due to the changing information environment and media landscape, growing user expectations, and various economic issues.

Today's online experience has evidently added a new dimension to information seeking activities, presenting users with a vast array of options for information sources. A considerable amount of information has migrated from the print media and is now available electronically. Thus a lot of people immediately associate the World Wide Web (WWW) with information and its related activities.

There are diverse avenues of information that are rapidly emerging to challenge the role and the very survival of libraries. Information seekers who once turned to their libraries for help may now be prompted to use other sources to retrieve full text articles or get individualized access rights in the form of database subscriptions or of purchased books instead of depending on the library. In a rapidly changing and complex environment where current generation of library users has become web savvy, it has become challenging to satisfy users' diverse needs and growing expectations. This calls for regular and systematic identification of users' perceptions and expectations in order to fine-tune information services towards satisfying target users.

While libraries aid the academic achievement as an information center, their environmental conditions change. Snoj and Petermanec (2001) points out that these changing conditions are rising user expectations and growing importance of quality in library services, technological developments, and increasing competition. Not only are libraries competing for customers within this challenging information delivery marketplace, they are re-examining their management, their manner of justifying budgets, and their very existence.

1.1.2 University Libraries and Customer Satisfaction

With continuing economic challenges witnessed in Kenya, it is increasingly becoming necessary to justify survival and continued support of university libraries. Thus, library and information services provided are expected to satisfy all the customers served. High satisfaction among library users has been reported by the American Library Association as evidence of the quality of information services. This implies that user satisfaction assessment could therefore be used in advancing the frontiers of library science especially in economically challenged times.

Traditional approaches to determine customer satisfaction in relation with library services provided are considered quite limited to cope with diversity and multiplicity of information resources available. Wang (2006) argues that, though the library performance may be analyzed from some statistical information such as number of people using the services, number of loans, etc., it is still inadequate to reveal the users' real perceptions of the library and information services.

As information technology puts increasing percentages of relevant information resources on the scholar's desk rather than on university library shelves, customer's expectations for library services too will continue to change. With the learning community being more interested in virtual information services on the internet, traditional measures of collection size, counts of use, number of staff and size of budget are no longer effective. On the contrary, guaranteeing effective and quality service as perceived by customers to their satisfaction has therefore become a better approach.

Customers have expectations upon which they base their perceived value of services. When services provided match consumers' expectations, they are perceived as satisfying thus considered to be of quality as opposed to those services that dissatisfy their needs and expectations. Quality and relevance of information services in terms of the value its users perceive it to have requires to be identified to justify the investments incurred in establishing them. Improving library and information services based on identified user needs, perceptions and expectations is essential as a way of being responsive to their informational needs.

Providing quality service means being able to view services from the customers' points of view and then meeting their needs and expectations effectively. This necessitates the need to comprehensively incorporate views of diverse user categories, in order to design appropriate information services. This is so because, different user groups in a university library have varied information seeking habits as well as expectations.

1.2 Background of the Study

Since Independence, the Government of Kenya has been having a long-standing objective of providing widely spread education and training opportunities. As such, the Government has sought to address the challenges facing the education sector through a range of policy initiatives, including the attainment of Universal Primary Education (UPE). This has led to establishment of institutions of learning as a means of achieving greater access, participation, equity, quality and relevance. A right to education implies a right to access information. Libraries and other related information services are crucial in educational development because the information they hold is an essential tool with which to foster the learning process.

University education is the climax of Kenya's formal education and training, and is vital to the provision of manpower for developing and running the educational programs in secondary schools and tertiary educational institutions. Tertiary educational needs and demand for higher education have been increasing continually mainly due to the introduction of Free Primary Education (FPE) in 2003, and increased secondary schools enrolment since 2008. This has resulted to mushrooming establishments of universities and constituent colleges as an effort to widen access to, and improve the quality of higher education. Institutions for higher learning provide a vital link between basic education and the world of work by advancing training.

1.2.1 Categories of Universities in Kenya

There are two categories of universities in Kenya, namely public and private. The public universities are funded or subsidized by the Government. They have been established through an Act of parliament, and given full charter by the Commission for University Education (CUE). University Constituent Colleges in Kenya are institutions offering diplomas, undergraduate and postgraduate degree programmes, and are affiliated to a public university. These colleges are public institutions working under interim charter, meaning they are not fully fledged public universities and have not been established by an Act of Parliament. On the other hand, the private universities are established and managed by private individuals or organizations. They are approved by CUE, and they offer various degree, diploma and certificate programmes.

The current demand for higher education has increased so much that there are flourishing satellite campuses spread over the country for almost every university. They are either fully managed by their respective university administration or managed under approved

centers in certain tertiary institutions through an accord. Kaberia (2006) observed that there is an increasing trend of university enrollment in both public and private universities in Kenya. As a matter of requirement, a university is expected to establish a library to support its academic programmes and research. University libraries have a responsibility to particularly deliver information services and preserve scholarly communications as well as the primary resources upon which learning often depends.

1.2.2 Problems Facing University Libraries in Kenya

During the past two decades, many challenges and opportunities for libraries have been presented as a result of the rapid development and deployment of information technologies. This environment has spurred university management to inevitably reconsider and redefine collections, services, organizational structure, the skill sets required of library staff, and the attributes of library facilities. The continuing proliferation of information formats, tools, services, and technologies has swayed how librarians arrange, retrieve, and present their holdings. University library customers expect immediate access to quality information and high standards of simplicity. Library decision makers must therefore determine how to meet new and evolving expectations for library and information services. Kaberia (2006) noted the following hurdles that face university libraries in Kenya: -

a) High demand for convenient library services

Lungu (2004) in Kaberia (2006) stated that there is increased number of students and especially a lot mostly working adult students taking up university courses on part time basis. The enrollment of adult students has created not only a library clientele which is highly dependent on the library, but also a serious challenge to the library to offer

information services to a widely dispersed customers consisting of adult learners who may only use the library during odd hours.

b) Poor financial support for library services

Universities tend to direct funds to what is considered essential services as a first priority before directing these funds to the rest of the services. Due to this fact, any time when departments face competitive situations for inadequate financial resources, the library is quite often on the losing rather than on the winning end. In such a situation, university libraries are therefore likely to be considered last in the priority list of the departments with various needs.

To solve the problem, university libraries therefore need to justify their worth by providing irresistible quality library services to win the support from the funders.

c) Low usage of university library services

Scholars have observed that, different categories of library users within university setting have portrayed lack of interest in the use of their respective university libraries. Rosenberg (1997) observed that academicians in Kenya have adopted strategies to obtain information from elsewhere, other than from the university library. Such include, creating personal contacts to obtain reports and journal articles from foreign countries, buying key textbooks, or even developing personal or departmental libraries.

There has also been increasing dependence on lecture notes and handouts as well as purchase or photocopying of textbooks by students. This problem has been worsened by the sudden rise in demand for higher education which has resulted into overcrowding in university facilities including the library. The tremendous increase in student numbers

particularly undergraduates make some customers find university libraries deficient in terms of providing the needed information materials and services as expected, and naturally this makes them to lack interest in use of library and information services.

Makori (2010) stated that one main reason attributed to lack of use of university libraries in Kenya is the deteriorating quality of library services resulting from poor funding by the parent organizations. While this scenario may hold true to a certain extent, certain libraries particularly the upcoming private universities have been considerably well equipped with quality physical facilities. This notwithstanding, some of such libraries have poor quality information services which are designed with little or no reference to users' needs and expectations leading to inevitable underutilization.

The challenge in relation to this problem, as advised by Kaberia (2006), is for the university librarians to establish ways of attracting library users to make optimal use of library services.

d) Conservative nature of traditional library practices

Persistent provision of traditional library services has been threatening relevance of most university libraries in Kenya. Clair (1997) in Kaberia (2006) observed that if information providers hope to be effective in the delivery of information services, it is important for them to move from old-fashioned perspectives to what truly reflects the positive effects of modern information delivery.

This calls for rethinking of establishing library and information services designed with the characteristics of target user categories in mind.

1.2.3 Customers' Perspectives on Services Quality

In the for-profit sector, customer satisfaction measurement and management has long been a common practice, and contemporary service quality assessment has its roots in customer satisfaction measurement.

The current focus of customer satisfaction measurement can be traced most directly to the 1980s, when the total quality movement captured the attention of businesses in Western economies. Businesses recognized the need for a model that addressed the fundamental shift to a service-based rather than product-based economy. This was mainly because there was no longer a specific, tangible product to assess and so businesses turned to customer perceptions to determine whether their expectations were being met or exceeded.

According to Manjunatha (2002), a better approach to service quality should assess performance of products and services from customers' perspective. A library has both tangible information products and intangible services. Assessing service quality as management technique is of recent origin and relatively new to Library and Information Science (LIS) professionals.

Today, the library customers are open to multiple sources of information and expect quality materials within shortest possible time irrespective of the format of information. The web technologies and commercial information service providers have impelled libraries to be customer-focused for their survival. Proper understanding of customers' perceptions along service quality dimensions is essential for LIS professionals to

recognize the customer expectations. While library practice is changing, the commitment to maintaining valuable information services should remain well grounded.

Librarians in all types of libraries are expected to ensure that they provide high quality information services in support of the goals of the parent institution. University libraries in Kenya are increasingly considering service quality an important aspect of carrying out their mission to support teaching, learning, and research (Makori, 2010). Library administrators are however faced with the challenge of determining whether their libraries are meeting the new expectations of customers, particularly in a highly competitive environment.

The prevailing declining economic situations have necessitated libraries to be judged on the same cost-conscious grip in the value-driven environment as any other business. This has led university libraries to be concerned with service quality and customer satisfaction matters. Ability of any service provider to provide promised products/services is one of the primary goals of service organizations like libraries which are expected to provide quality service to their customers. Kumar (1996) opines that, a service library is supposed to provide effective services to its users, and enable them to make the most effective use of the resources and services. As such modern university library should be regarded as a service institution aiming at enabling the users to make the most effective use of the information resources and services provided.

Modern university libraries in Kenya are heavily investing on establishing state-of-the-art information centers to support their institutional objectives. The quality of library and information services provided is of necessity expected to be rewarding and geared

towards satisfying the target customers who should perceive their expectations to be effectively met or even exceeded.

1.2.4 Customer Satisfaction and Quality of Library and Information Services

University libraries require sustained financial commitments for their establishment. However, their survival is expected to be justified by ensuring provision of quality information services which are beneficial to the intended users. Such services ought to be considered of great value as perceived by the users in satisfying their informational needs. Furthermore, prevailing economic situations have dragged libraries into the value-driven environment. This has exposed libraries on the same cost-conscious foothold as any other business, therefore being subjected to matters concerning customer satisfaction, service quality and cost benefit.

Customer perception gauged through service quality has been widely researched in the business world; however a review of the literature reveals that the current body of knowledge regarding the prediction of customer satisfaction in relation to service quality in academic world particularly in libraries by examining expectations and/or perceptions of their customers is limited in scope. Dalton (2002) observed that in Africa, few attempts have been made to measure customer satisfaction in academic libraries, and the primary attention has been given to conducting objective measures of library performance. Furthermore, very few studies have addressed such a perspective in university libraries in Kenya. As such, it possibly remains among the least researched subject areas open to intense research.

In this client-centered information age, it is appropriate to base library services on customer information and knowledge rather than on library staff's perspective and assumptions of what the target customers may need. Library administrators require valid and reliable information about their customers in order to ascertain their expectations and design information services that meets identified needs. Customer feedback on their perception towards information services would therefore give insight on appropriate strategies of improving library performance.

According to Whitlatch (2005), librarians have never had good information about their customers and what constitutes customer satisfaction. Although librarians in private universities in Kenya may have addressed the needs of students to a certain extent, they have been limited to specific aspects of library and information services. Hence, this study addresses this limitation by means of assessing customer satisfaction with library and information services at MUA.

1.2.5 Background of MUA Library

Kenya Institute of Management sponsored MUA as a result of transformation of School of Management into upgraded university status. The first admissions were done in January 2012. Undergraduate and post-graduate courses are offered in various Management and Leadership concepts including: - Bachelor of Management & Leadership (BML), Bachelor of Arts in Development Studies (BDS), Executive Bachelor Degree of Business Management (EBBM), Executive Master of Business Administration (EMBA), Executive Master of Science in Applied Management & Leadership (EAML), and Doctor of Business Leadership (DBL).

The university courses on full-time and part-time basis are offered with options of either weekday (day-time or evening) or weekend. Since most of the students are working adults, the preference is mostly on part time basis particularly evening and weekend programmes.

MUA library, which is a one-floor facility, is situated at the Management Centre in Nairobi South C. It was established in 1992 previously to serve KIM fraternity in supporting the institute's mission by providing access to information sources and resources. With the establishment of the university in 2012, the library has consequently been upgraded and branded with a goal to serve and provide information services and resources to the MUA community to support teaching, learning and research. MUA library exists to serve the information and research needs of the university community and is therefore the nerve centre for learning and research.

1.2.5.1 MUA Library Membership

Membership to MUA library is eligible to the following user groups: -

- a) Students of MUA;
- b) Faculty of MUA;
- c) Non-Academic (administrative) Staff of MUA;
- d) Alumni of MUA; and
- e) Members of general public on payment of prescribed access fees.

1.2.5.2 Information Resources and Services Provided at MUA Library

Information resources available at MUA library collection comprises of both print and electronic resources (e-resources). The collection predominantly covers various aspects of management and leadership disciplines including Business Communication;

Entrepreneurship; International Relations; Managerial Economics; Development Studies; Marketing Management; Supply Chain Management; and Total Quality Management.

MUA library also subscribes to well over 35 e-resources databases such as EBSCO-Host, Emerald, JSTOR, Taylor & Francis, Book Boon, Ebrary, etc. through the Kenya Libraries and Information Services Consortium (KLISC). These databases offer clients access to a wide range of current electronic journal articles and e-books. In addition, it has a rich collection of CD-ROMs, DVDs and Video tapes in Management principles and practices. There is also an e-library and Multi-Media section adjacent to the main library.

Services provided at MUA Library as indicated by MUA Library Brochure, 2012 are as follows: -

- a) Circulation services: Eligible MUA library users are permitted to borrow general collection and short-loan collection materials for consultation outside the library, and then return after stipulated loan duration.
- b) Reference services: This service is offered from the reference desk at the first floor in the library which comprises of face-to face interactive sessions between reference librarian and a user. The purpose is to identify the user's specific informational need, so as to avail that information either directly by getting the needed information from an appropriate information source; or indirectly by providing the person with information source(s).
- c) User Instruction and Information Literacy service: Users of MUA Library are guided to know how to access the library resources and services effectively. This includes

user induction, orientation, information literacy skills training and guidance to ensure that customers are familiar with the university library, its resources and services.

- d) Electronic Searching service: Users get assistance on how to carry out online searching by being guided on how to formulate search strategy using suitable search terms to retrieve relevant online information especially from the subscribed databases.

1.3 Statement of the Problem

In libraries, customer satisfaction is considered as the degree to which the library is perceived to be able to meet informational demands of intended users. High quality of library performance is crucial for every library to survive. Extensive online access to information makes researchers and students in university settings to demand the highest quality library services. This underscores the premise that it is the customers' expected quality of services that decides on the perceived satisfaction level with the library and information services within its parent institution and the society.

In universities, students require to access and utilize information services to enable them accomplish their scholarly assignments and academic research. Faculty members play key role in imparting knowledge to the students and guiding them on research work, thus they should be well equipped since their level of preparedness reflects their ability to effectively deliver to the students.

Information services provided in a university library should be geared towards accommodating the needs and expectations of various categories of the users served. Paying attention to users' satisfaction would enable university library staff to develop a

partnership with their customers, thus avoiding experiencing a decline in library usage. This is so because customers have options to find other avenues to access information rather than visiting the library. As such feedback should be sought from all categories of university library users in relation to how they are satisfied with the quality of services provided.

According to Wolf (2005), an academic library needs both to satisfy its users and to prove to its funding bodies that it is worth investment. Quality of library and information services in terms of the value its users perceive it to have requires to be identified to justify the investments incurred in establishing them. Mostly in modern university libraries in Kenya, user-needs surveys are conducted to identify the specific needs and expectations of intended users albeit not in a holistic manner. Despite the necessity to find out the perceived satisfaction levels of users so as to determine the effectiveness of university library and information services in meeting their informational needs, there is hardly ever an evaluation conducted to establish how well those needs and expectations are eventually met.

A good number of the library customers at MUA are part-time adult working class mostly in managerial positions or those who aspire to be managers in future. Often, they rarely find enough time to visit the library due to their demanding work schedule, despite the fact that they need to access information services to enable them in accomplishing their academic assignments and research. The current library and information services could be considered rather the usual traditional practice even though the characteristics of the targeted clients at MUA indicate that they may not conveniently make use of them. Designing library and information services without prior identification of user needs and

actual expectations implies that, it is difficult to develop quality information services in the perspective of library users. Also, with the upgrading to university status, library users' expectations are assumed to change to reflect the transformation.

In modern times, possibly no academic library can easily survive if it fails to recognize and meet the actual needs of all its customers such as students, lecturers, researchers and other stakeholders. This drew attention to the necessity for ascertaining the perceived level of users' satisfaction with library and information services provision in any effectual university in order to improve on services quality and hence achieve greater customer satisfaction. As such, this study was focused on investigating customer satisfaction with library and information services at MUA; consequently suggest recommendations on strategies for improvement.

1.4 Aim and Objectives of the Study

1.4.1 Aim of the Study

To explore the level of customer satisfaction with library and information services at MUA, and propose a framework of improving the quality of information services.

1.4.2 Specific Objectives

- a) To find out customers' usage of library and information services at MUA Library;
- b) To examine strategies employed in customer care at MUA library;
- c) To investigate users' perceptions of the quality of library services ascertaining their level of satisfaction;
- d) To establish gaps and identify challenges experienced in achieving customer satisfaction at MUA library; and

- e) To come up with recommendations and propose a framework for improving customer satisfaction.

1.5 Research Questions

The study attempted to answer the following questions to achieve the above aim and objectives: -

- a) What are the usage patterns and frequency of library and information services at MUA?
- b) What customer care strategies are employed at MUA library?
- c) What are the customers' expectations about the quality of information services provided at MUA Library?
- d) What is the users' perceived level of satisfaction with library and information services?
- e) What are the challenges experienced in achieving customer satisfaction at MUA library?
- f) How could the quality of library and information services be improved to satisfy users?

1.6 Assumptions

The underlying assumptions formed the basis for interpreting the results of the study: -

- a) It was assumed that, MUA library management do not have adequate customer knowledge, hence library and information services provided may have been designed without considering their actual needs and expectations leading to users not fully appreciating the quality of the services.

- b) It was assumed that redesigning of library and information services and products based on customers' needs, expectations and perceptions would result to provision of quality services that may lead to improved customer satisfaction.

1.7 Significance of the Study

Since library and information services are provided to the target customers, their perceived satisfaction is important to information providers, or else information services would not be appreciated and thus cannot be justified. Research findings of this study were expected to recommend ways of improving quality of library and information services so as to achieve customer satisfaction at MUA library. As such, the study would contribute to the body of knowledge and possibly be of benefit to the following stakeholders: -

a) Information service providers

Library and other information providers in a university setting could customize their services by designing them to suit customers' identified needs and expectations. The study gave direction on some effective strategies for improving the quality of library and information services to improve on users' satisfaction.

b) Other institutions of higher learning

The results of this case study were expected to provide insights to other universities and colleges who would need to improve on their customer satisfaction. Provision of quality information services in university libraries would result in the production of more informed graduates.

Presumably, by knowing the strategies for improving library and information services, academic libraries in tertiary institutions in Kenya may be in a better position to redesign them and effectively provide customer satisfying services.

c) Academicians and Researchers

This study was expected to enrich the body of knowledge regarding the assessment of customer satisfaction in university libraries. The findings of this study intended to shed light on strategies for improving customer satisfaction with library and information services, and may possibly prompt other researchers who might be interested in pursuing this subject further on.

1.8 Scope and Limitation

1.8.1 Scope of the Study

This study was focused on determining customer satisfaction, only concentrating on the perception of the users in relation to the library and information services offered at MUA library.

Data to inform this study was collected from a sample of the current students and faculty members in the university.

1.8.2 Limitations of the Study

The limitations in this study included the following: -

- a) There being little research done particularly on library customer satisfaction in private universities in Kenya made this study to face the problem of inadequate related literature to inform the researcher.

However, this limitation was overcome by reading widely to find out how libraries elsewhere particularly in the developing countries have approached and dealt with this issue.

- b) As a result of the limited sample size used, only reasonable generalizations could be made from this study.

However the limitation notwithstanding, this study anticipated to give significant insight to appreciate customers' expectations and perceived satisfaction with library and information services in university libraries; and due to homogeneity factor of private universities in Kenya, the new body of knowledge gathered from the study could be useful for other private universities as well.

1.9 Definition of Key Terms

1.9.1 Customer

The term 'customer' refers to the consumer of any type of services in any organization; in this study customer is considered as a recipient of library and information services.

According to Quinn (1997) "recipients or users of services are commonly referred to as customers, but the use of the word 'user' has been criticized for implying that the user is a passive consumer of information, rather than being actively engaged in the learning process".

1.9.2 Customer Satisfaction

Customer satisfaction generally refer to the customer's perception that his or her expectations have been met or surpassed. Oliver (1997) in Kaberia (2006) defined customer satisfaction as the customer's fulfillment of response. It is the judgment that a

product or service feature, or the product or service itself provided (or is providing) a pleasurable level of consumption-related fulfillment, including levels of under or over fulfillment.

1.9.3 Customer Service

This refers to measurable activities and/or materials intended to satisfy or contribute to the information expectations of customers (Hernon& Altman, 1998). According to Kotler (2000), a service is any act or performance that one party can offer to another that is essentially intangible and does not result in the ownership of anything. Its production may or may not be tied to a physical product.

1.9.4 Expectation

This is the belief that certain library and information services are probable, certain, reasonable, due, or necessary.

1.9.5 Perception

This refers to the mental image of something, in this case quality of library and information services. According to the Oxford Advanced Learner's Dictionary (Hornby, 2006) 'perception' is defined as noticing things, especially with the senses; the ability to understand the true nature of something; an idea, a belief or an image you have as a result of how someone sees or understands something. For the purpose of this study 'perception' was used with regard to views of the library customers at MUA library on services provided.

1.9.6 Quality

According to the ISO Standard 11620 Performance Indicators for Libraries, the term quality means "totality of features and characteristics of a product or services that bear on the library's ability to satisfy stated or implied needs" (ISO 11620, 1998). This implies quality is the degree to which a set of inherent characteristics fulfils requirement. The American Society for Quality (2005) defines quality as "the characteristics of a product/service that bear on its ability to satisfy stated or implied customer needs".

1.9.7 Service Quality

The concept of service quality in the context of a library can be defined as the "difference between users' expectations and perceptions of service performance and the reality of service" (Sahu, 2007). Sahu further explains that service quality means being able to view services from the customers' point of view and then meeting the customers' expectation for service. In this study, service quality was defined as a service's conformance to customer needs or the capability of a particular service to satisfy the customer actual needs, as expected by library customers in universities. It was the outcome of an assessment process of overall customer satisfaction, in which the customer compares his/her expectations with the information service s/he perceives s/he has received.

1.9.8 Service Satisfaction

Tessier and Crouch (1997) describes user satisfaction as an affective or cognitive state of mind which the user experiences as a result of the use and subsequent evaluation of library services. This implies that, service satisfaction is the degree to which customers are satisfied and pleased with their experience on usage. Quality of services is inferred

from the degree of satisfaction experienced by the library user. Service satisfaction results from perceptions of quality or value.

CHAPTER TWO

THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK AND LITERATURE REVIEW

2.1 Introduction

This chapter provides a review of literature as presented by various authors and scholars mainly emanating from developing countries comprising of journal articles, theses and dissertations, conference proceedings, and books. The literature review is based on relevant concepts of service quality, customer care and customer satisfaction in libraries. This enabled the researcher to draw on the heritage of past research findings to set the current study within its wider context.

2.2 Theoretical Framework

Theories are the principles upon which a subject is based and are useful as far as they serve to assist and to guide the development of further understanding of practical activities (Shi and Levy, 2005). According to Kelsey & Bond (2001) a theoretical framework is the structure of ideas or concepts that attempt to show the existence of formulated theories in so far as they relate to research objectives and questions in connection with a proposition.

There are some models and paradigms that have been suggested in the field of customer satisfaction in relation to service quality. Early quality models concentrated primarily on goods, but with the enormous growth of the service sector particularly after the World War II resulted in a growing body of literature on service quality. There is general agreement in the more recent literature that service quality has been characterized as an antecedent of satisfaction (Simba, 2006; Jayasundara, 2009; Bhim, 2010).

There are a few models that have been adopted from management and marketing literature and used to measure the effectiveness of library services in scores of institutions around the World. Jayasundara, Ngulube, and Minishi-Majanja (2009) observed that some of these models on service quality have been found applicable in the library and information service sector with significant success. However, Coye (2004) adds that some modification is usually necessary because of the intangible nature of information services making it difficult to define and model service quality than it is in modeling quality of goods. SERVQUAL and SERVPERF are two popular service quality models that are being used worldwide to measure service quality in various service industry settings. This study will adopt SERVQUAL model to give insights on assessment of customer satisfaction in university libraries.

2.2.1 SERVQUAL Model

The SERVQUAL model is a service quality framework that was developed in 1985 by A. Parasuraman, Valarie A. Zeithaml, and Leonard L. Berry. SERVQUAL is one of the most popular models used in service marketing, and is based on the perception gap between the received service quality and the expected service quality. It has been widely adopted for explaining consumer perception of service quality, and is based on the disconfirmation paradigm, also referred to as the 'Gap Model' which 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 organization.

SERVQUAL was originally measured on ten determinants used to measure various aspects of service quality as perceived by the company, i.e. Reliability, Responsiveness, Competence, Access, Courtesy, Communication, Credibility, Security, Understanding the

consumer, and Tangibles. By early 1990s, the authors had refined the model and reduced the dimensions to five, forming an acronym RATER, i.e. Reliability, Assurance, Tangibles, Empathy, and Responsiveness. Based upon the five domains, Parasuraman et al. (1988) posited that service quality could be measured by obtaining the difference between perceptions of performance and the expectations in those domains.

Parasuraman et al. (1988) noted that discrepancies existed between the firm's and the customer's perceptions of the service quality delivered. In investigating these discrepancies, the authors asserted that service quality can be assessed by measuring the discrepancies or gaps between what the customer expects and what the consumer perceives s/he receives.

Through empirical researches a conceptual model of service quality has been developed that measures the gap between customer expectations and experience as shown in Figure 2.1.

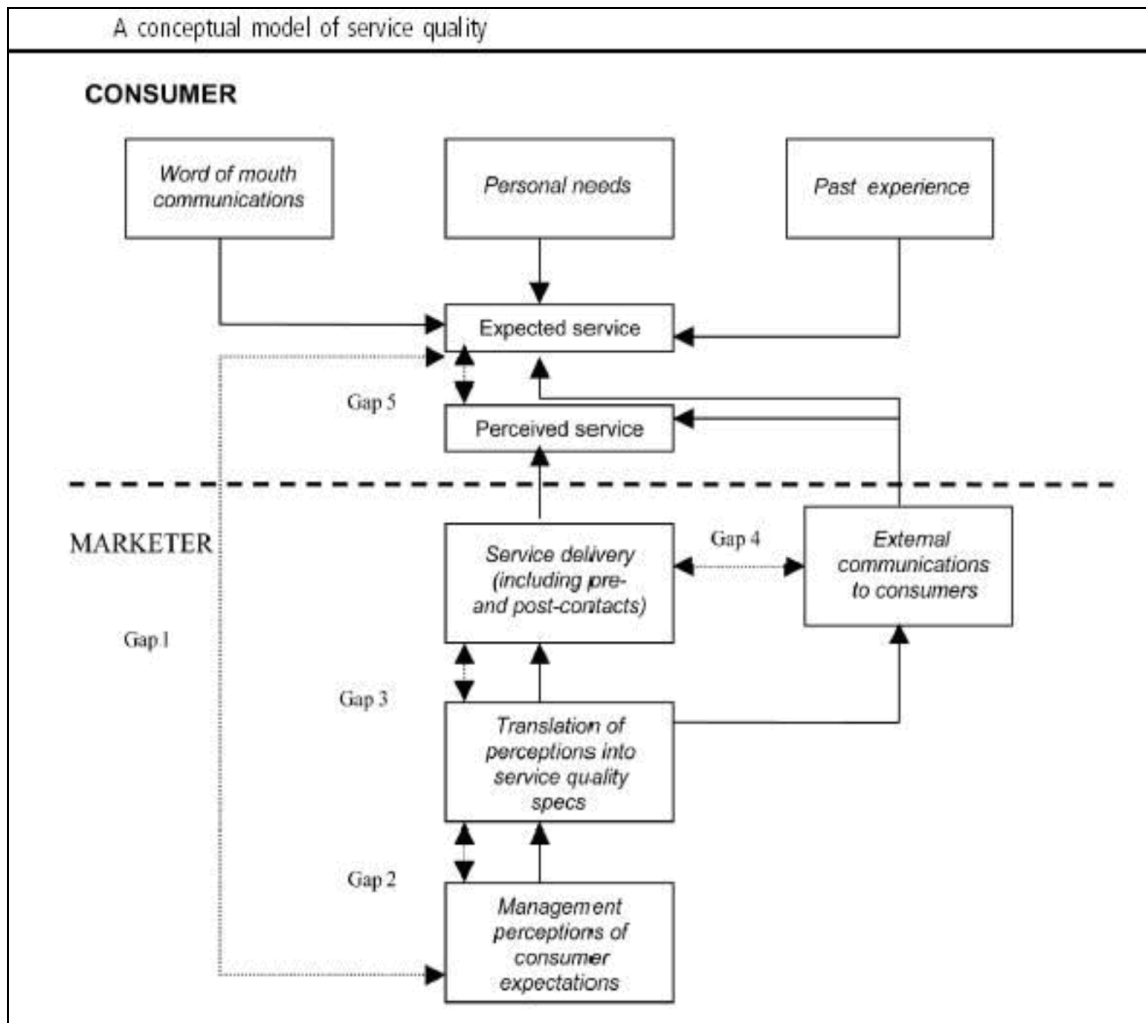


Figure 2.1: A Conceptual Model of Service Quality

Source: Parasuraman et al. (1985, p. 12)

The above model highlights the following five service quality gaps that organizations should measure, manage and minimize (Zeithaml, Parasuraman, & Berry, 1990)

Gap 1: Consumer expectations (This is the management's perceptions of consumer expectations, and is the distance between what customers expect and what managers think they expect);

Gap 2: Management perceptions of consumer expectations (This is gap between management perception and the actual specification of the customer experience);

Gap 3: Service quality specifications (This is from the experience specification to the delivery of the experience);

Gap 4: Actual service delivery (This is the gap between the delivery of the customer experience and what is communicated to customers - All too often organizations exaggerate what will be provided to customers, or discuss the best case rather than the likely case, raising customer expectations and harming customer perceptions).

Gap 5: This is the gap between a customer's perception of the experience and the customer's expectation of the service (This final gap is the result of the four other gaps).

The model in figure 2.1 advances five gaps that reflect a discrepancy between customers' expectations and management's perceptions of these expectations. Expectations are desired wants, and perceptions are a judgment of service performance (Parasuraman et al., 1985).

Although all the five gaps may hinder an organization in providing high quality service, the fifth gap is the basis of a customer-oriented definition of service quality that examines the discrepancy between customers' expectations for excellence and their perceptions of the actual service delivered. The fifth gap is the conceptual basis for SERVQUAL which is the difference between customers' perceptions of what a service should deliver and how well that service meets idealized expectations. Most marketing and Library & Information Science (LIS) researchers have concentrated on this perspective.

The Gap Model of Service Quality reflects that perspective and offers service organizations a framework to identify services in the form of the gaps that fail to meet (or exceed) customers' expectations. Fedoroff (2006) correlates with this concept by declaring that poor service results if the gap, or difference, is large between what is expected and what is delivered. When what is delivered matches what is expected, customers find the service acceptable and satisfying. If the service provided is better than what they expected, exceptional service materializes.

2.2.1.1 Application of SERVQUAL in Libraries

The applications of SERVQUAL model have been traced in the LIS discipline from 1990s. In library settings, SERVQUAL is repeatedly used to assess library quality service (Cronin and Taylor, 1994; Edwards and Browne, 1995; Nitecki, 1995; Srisa-Ard, 1997). SERVQUAL is one of the generic instruments that have been used to gauge service quality in academic, public and special libraries. The empirical studies using SERVQUAL as principal survey instrument have varied from testing one service to testing the whole range of library services.

The researchers of various subject areas have contributed and adapted SERVQUAL as the instrument to assess service quality in library setting showing a clear preference for SERVQUAL, which has broad application to service industries. SERVQUAL tool is reported by Nitecki and Herson (2000) as widely adopted by academic libraries. According to Edwards and Browne (1995) SERVQUAL instrument measures quality from the customer's perspective based on the following five dimensions (abbreviated RATER) reflecting the core criteria that customers find most important in judging service quality: -

- a) Reliability: Ability to perform the promised service dependably and accurately.
- b) Assurance: Knowledge and courtesy of employees and their ability to inspire trust and confidence.
- c) Tangibles: Appearance of physical facilities, equipment, personnel and communication material.
- d) Empathy: Provision of individualized care and attention to customers.
- e) Responsiveness: Willingness to help customers and provide prompt service.

Calvert (2001) studied the customer expectations in a comparative research which examined the expectation between the library users in New Zealand and China. The data suggested that ‘academic library users have almost similar expectations of services’. The concerns of staff attitudes, the library environment and services that help the customers to find and use the library’s material efficiently are the three dimensions found in both studies. Remarkably, the users from both countries preferred to be empowered to work on their own without personal contact. Calvert (2001) recommended that library should make its service readily available when the customer wants it, and offer the collection in good order that matches the customer’s need.

2.2.1.2 Validity of SERVQUAL Instrument

SERVQUAL model was designed as a generic instrument that could be slightly modified for use in the context of any particular service industry setting (Nitecki, 1995). Different modified versions of the original SERVQUAL model have been used by several scholars to assess the service quality of libraries. Most of the studies accept the validity of the SERVQUAL instrument and suggest that the instrument can be used in library

environment with little caution, and changes could be made in the instrument to suit local environment without problems.

One of the most significant researches using the SERVQUAL instrument was done by Nitecki (1995) where the validity of the instrument was tested on three services: Interlibrary loan, Reference, and Closed-reserve at a large academic research library. Her data suggested a three-factor relationship among the 22 SERVQUAL items rather than the five collapsed dimensions which Parasuraman et al. (1985) revealed.

In Thailand, Srisa-Ard (1997) examined user expectations and perceptions of library service quality. The survey focused on three service areas: Circulation, Reference and Computer information service. The SERVQUAL instrument used was with similar findings with what had been done by Nitecki, that the users rated reliability as most important whereas tangibles were rated least important. However, these studies did not include the construct of satisfaction in assessing service quality for performance improvement.

Hernon and Altman (1998) introduced modification of SERVQUAL model in their case study research in US and New Zealand libraries. They used the data collected from surveys and focus groups to refine the SERVQUAL model in order to develop a robust survey instrument for use specifically in library and information services.

Cook & Thomson (2005) developed a web-based total market survey tool for assessing academic library service quality. They used the SERVQUAL instrument and confirmed the SERVQUAL constructs mainly Reliability, Assurance, Tangibles, Empathy and Responsiveness (RATER). However new constructs that emerged in their study specific

to library context are: library as a place; ubiquity and ease of access to collection; and self-reliance.

Ashok (2007, p. 11) used SERVQUAL instrument in Jawaharlal Nehru University library using a five-point Likert scale to assess the library services based on six factors: Reliability, Responsiveness, Assurance, Access, Communications and Empathy. Filiz (2007, p. 6) used five service quality related domains namely, quality of library services; quality of information and library environment; reliability; quality of online catalogue system; and confidence applicable to academic libraries.

2.2.1.3 SERVQUAL Criticized

SERVQUAL has its detractors who considered it overly complex and subjective; customer perception of service quality is likewise a complex process. In their discussion, Parasuraman et al. (1988, p. 21) assert that the SERVQUAL scale deals with perceived quality and looks specifically at service quality, not customer satisfaction. They state that "perceived service quality is a global judgment or attitude concerning the superiority of service whereas satisfaction is related to a specific transaction".

While the SERVQUAL instrument has been widely used, it has been subject to criticism mainly relating to the use of different scores, dimensionality, and applicability especially with respect to the dependence or independence of the five main variables (Newman, 2001). Cook & Thompson (2005) report that there is disagreement over which version of SERVQUAL to use, and the instrument can only be slightly modified without having an impact on the dimensions that are probed. The simplified RATER model is however a

simpler and useful model for qualitatively exploring and assessing customers' service experiences, and has been used widely by service delivery organizations.

In spite of SERVQUAL being an efficient model in helping an organization shape up their efforts in bridging the gap between perceived and expected service; critics have questioned whether respondents can distinguish between desired and minimum expectations and about whether customers have formulated specific expectations about services.

Whilst there is no universally accepted notion of the optimal instrument to conceptualize customer satisfaction in relation to service quality, SERVQUAL can provide relevant insights. Fedoroff (2006) suggested that SERVQUAL may be considered as one of the best models for measuring the customer satisfaction and service quality constructs in the library and information services with certain modifications to the type of library and its target users. Thus, investigating and recommending other models that may predict customer satisfaction regarding services provided by university libraries is a worthwhile venture.

2.3 Customer Satisfaction Conceptual Model

Bitner & Hubbert (1994, p.24) provided a customer satisfaction macro-model which highlights the linkage of overall service satisfaction, encounter satisfaction, and perceived service quality, as shown in Figure 2.2 below.

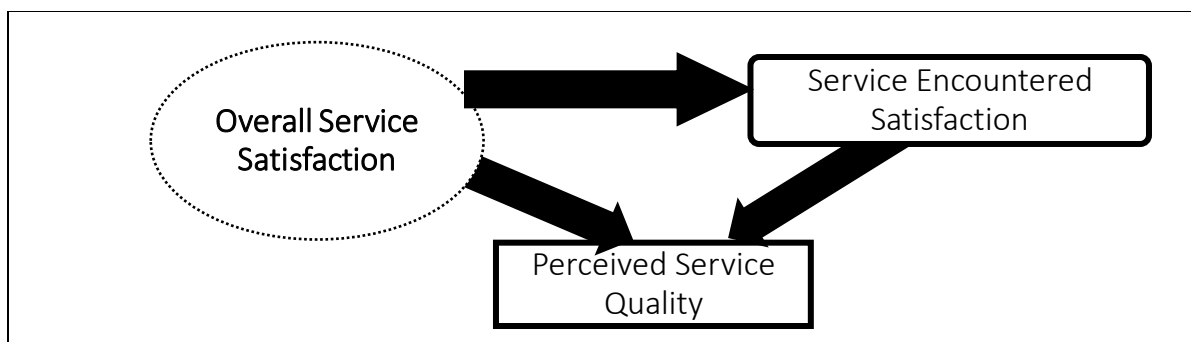


Figure 2.2: Model of Two Levels of Satisfaction and Perceived Service Quality

Source: Adapted from Bitner & Hubbert (1994)

This model supports the conceptualization of perceived service quality as an antecedent of service satisfaction, even though it is a separate construct, distinct from satisfaction. Furthermore, it highlights the construct of the overall service satisfaction in contrast to the construct of the encounter service satisfaction. An important point about this model is the use of customer as the overall judge of service quality (Bitner & Hubbert, 1994, pp 25).

The above model indicates there is a clear relationship between customer satisfaction and service quality, and each is worthy of examination as a framework for evaluating library services from a customer's perspective. Bitner & Hubbert (1994) argue that guessing what customers expect to receive can be perilous. The more sensible approach is to find out how customers judge the quality of existing service, and improve upon it because customer encounter with the organization creates a unique experience.

Smith, Bolt & Wagner (1999) opines that to survive in highly competitive markets, organizations need to provide goods and services that yield highly satisfied and loyal customers. According to Bitner & Hubbert (1994) when customers are satisfied, they are

more likely to return to those who helped them, while dissatisfied customers are more likely to go elsewhere.

Wang (2006) adds that, the retention of very loyal customers is crucial for organizational survival. Manjunatha (2002, p.15) reported that, ‘the higher the service quality the more satisfied the customers’. Thus, satisfaction is based on customer expectations and perception of service quality, and so organizations are challenged to create demand for their products and services through outstanding customer support.

2.4 University Libraries

According to Andaleed & Simmonds (1998) university libraries are described as the heart of academic institutions, providing a base venue from which students and faculty members can conduct research and advance knowledge. The authors deduce that customers of academic libraries can be grouped as either primary customers consisting mainly of students and staff, or secondary customers such as alumni, the community and stakeholders.

According to Kachoka (2010, p. 9) “university libraries represent one area in which students have to adjust; and the previous library experiences of these students is a critical determinant of how much adjustment to the library system is needed”. Different user categories manifest library usage characteristics (Bhim, 2010).

Niyonsenga & Bizimana (1996, p.18) assert that universities are one of the important educational institutions where people develop intellectual abilities that they will use throughout their lives. They do not only plan careers but also provide a basis for creative and critical thinking. A university library may therefore be described as the heart of the

learning community, providing a place for students, lecturers and researchers to do their research and advance their knowledge. University libraries are regarded as the learning organizations stimulating academic and research activities by providing access to world-class information resources.

Snoj and Petermanec (2001, p.12) claims that university libraries are part of the intellectual and knowledge chain that provide service to access accurate information. These authors add that access to and usage of information has been one of the essential developments in our century. This fact emphasizes the importance of university libraries in the information industry since they have vital importance especially academic improvements of students and academicians.

Broadly-Preston & Preston (1999) opines that by providing quality information services to customers, a university library is able to fulfill its goals and objectives in relation to the promotion of advanced learning and research. The motivation underlying this view is that customer demands are continually growing, and the library administrators are keen upon proving that they too are important players in the teaching and learning process of the university.

2.4.1 Changing Information Landscape

With continuing emphasis being placed on electronic resources, and users being more interested in access rather than actual ownership, university libraries are facing greater competition from many sources like bookstores and information from publishers and vendors who try to provide some of the same services that libraries provide. These

competitors sometimes provide their services faster and more efficiently, while virtual libraries are easily available through the Internet.

Edwards & Brown (1995, p.5) predicted that as the continuing advancements in information technology puts increasing percentages of relevant information resources on the scholar's desk rather than on library shelves, the users' expectations for other library services too will change. This raises the need for modernizing core values of libraries and librarianship in the changing face of customers' information literacy and expectations that the current generation of Google-bred library customers brings.

With escalating availability of electronic resources, and the learning community being more interested in virtual information services on the internet, university libraries urgently need to assess the quality of its services and how user satisfaction can be improved. Jayasundara et al. (2009) argue that university libraries worldwide are facing increasing competition from a global digital environment which brings about the ongoing change in user needs and expectations of information services. They suggested that librarians must compete for limited resources and for recognition as the primary information provider in a university.

Cooper & Dempsey (1998) views that university libraries are expected to offer convenient media to study and to research, and to have sufficient number of current sources. They should provide high quality services in order to satisfy their customers, because library users (customers) increasingly have options to obtain information services outside of the traditional academic library arena. In the Kiran (2010) study indicated that 79% of respondents felt they could have gotten needed information from

another information service as a substitute of the library. In the client-centered organizations, librarians have more autonomy but are expected to work more closely with clients in order to increase staff awareness of client needs putting in mind the above highlighted concerns.

According to Simmon (2001) providing quality services in academic libraries is now a major issue among academic librarians; they see the library more in terms of the provision of and access to service quality than as just a physical place. Technology and automation have also changed the way people perceive libraries. This implies that, modern university libraries are expected to operate within an electronic collaborative environment with an emphasis on access to information regardless of its location.

2.4.2 Customer Care in Libraries

Schorer (2003) noted with concern several issues that indicate an increasing need for customer studies in academia as well as in for-profit organizations. In the ever more competitive world of information and document delivery channels, libraries need to focus sharply on customer satisfaction, as satisfied customers are returning customers. Schorer (2003, p. 6) suggests that focusing on ensuring quality of services reflects customer care on the part of service provider.

Dlamini (2004) advises that in order to be effective, library administrators require valid and reliable information about their customers. The ability of university library staff to respond to customer expectations depends upon having a good understanding of those expectations and needs. Research demonstrates that, feedback or knowledge of customers reduces task uncertainty and improves performance.

Naidu (2009) emphasizes that library staff with a good understanding of users' needs and expectations; as well as their relation to customer satisfaction will experience greater success in satisfying their customers. However, Majid et al. (2001) advocates that the goal should not be simply to meet expectations but rather to exceed them by surprising and delighting customers. To do so, library staff must attempt to both manage and redefine customer behavior and expectations.

Results of a study by Dlamini (2004) revealed that academic libraries do not have proper methods and strategies for conducting customer care. Furthermore, Dlamini (2004) found that even those strategies that exist are unknown among library users. Subsequently, the study recommended that academic libraries incorporate a unit/person or committee responsible for customer care. Library staff should also be given regular training regarding customer care.

2.4.3 Concept of Quality and Customer Care in Libraries

The concept of quality and customer service is not a new phenomenon for LIS professionals as it is rooted in library philosophy and principles. For example, Ranganathan's Laws of Library Science particularly the fourth law "save the time of the reader" implicitly focus on quality of library products/services from customers' perspective.

Ashok (2007) describes "quality service" as a service which fulfils customer expectations. This alludes to the fact that good quality library services offer users an experience with which they are satisfied. Thus, customer experience and satisfaction is inextricably linked with quality. One way of assessing quality is to focus on customer

satisfaction, and this could be determined by establishing effective customer care services.

With regard to customer care strategies, Smith et al. (1999) are of the view that the concept of satisfaction is similar to an escalator. This implies that, as customers get better treatment which in turn leads to a higher level of satisfaction, they raise their level of expectations, demand better treatment, and motivate libraries to strive even harder.

While this situation presents library staff with a challenge, it can also create a win/win situation in which libraries gain valuable support from their stakeholders. Though the quality concept is rooted in library principles, the study of service quality as a management philosophy is of recent origin to LIS professionals.

2.5 Service Quality

According to Kotler (2000) 'a service is any act or performance that one party can offer to another that is essentially intangible and does not result in the ownership of anything. Its production may or may not be tied to a physical product'. In describing a service, Kotler (2000) identified four key characteristics as;

Intangibility (services cannot be seen, touched, felt or smelled before they are purchased); Inseparability (services are more often than not produced and consumed simultaneously); Variability (service depends on who provides it, and also where and when it is provided); and Perishability (services cannot be inventoried, stored or warehoused).

According to The American Society for Quality (2005, p.3), quality can be defined as "the characteristics of a product/service that bear on its ability to satisfy stated or implied

customer needs”. Today, this customer-driven approach to quality has become a strategic weapon for many organizations. Moreover, characteristics of services make quality a more critical and essential issue for the service providers.

Service quality has been recognized as an abstract construct that is difficult to define and measure, but it refers to ‘a form of attitude related but not equivalent to satisfaction, [which]... results from a comparison of expectations with perceptions of performance (Parasuraman, et al, 1985, p.43). Service quality is defined by Zeithaml et al. (1990, p.7) as “delivery of excellent or superior service relative to customer expectations.” Service quality can thus be said to be the measure of how well the products/ services delivered meet customer expectations.

Researchers concur that service quality should be defined and measured from the customer’s perspective. Accordingly, service quality refers to the comparison customers make between their expectations and their perceptions of the service received.

2.5.1 Service Quality in University Libraries

Hernon and Altman (1998) state that ‘fundamental to service quality is the belief that an organization exists to serve its customers’. Kiran (2010) advises that ‘a library should focus on providing the best services possible, and be willing to change to serve its customers’. Intangible nature of services forces users to look for clues of service quality to reduce uncertainty. The perceived quality derives from the consumers’ overall evaluation of a service experience. This implies that, service providers should support the intangible attributes of services besides the tangible ones.

When identifying the service quality of a given service, Naidu (2009) point that the service encounters must have quality characteristics, such as characteristics of employees' responses and reliability of automated systems. A service encounter is defined by Dlamini (2004) as any aspect of a service organization with which a customer interacts.

Nitecki and Hernon (2000) report that for years, researchers in LIS have examined information needs, user wants and user perceptions about the value of library services. They have also looked at an elusive concept of quality in terms of collections and the effectiveness of library services (in terms of the extent to which goals and objectives are set and met). However, Kiran (2010) observed that in recent years LIS researchers have drawn on marketing and other literatures to focus their attention on expectations which is an alternative view of quality, one representing the user's or customer's perspective on the services used.

2.5.2 Service Quality Measures in Libraries

In the 1970's librarians started to recognize the service function of libraries that coexist with maintaining and circulating collections. It was observed that, such assessments studied the library user, patterns of library use, and the degree to which user needs were satisfied. Regrettably in those early assessments, library users did not whatsoever participate as informants. On the contrary, Maddox-Swan (1998) noted that those studies rather relied on library staff persons' perceptions of user needs under the assumption that users were unable to communicate their own needs.

Weiner (2005) observed that the success of any library is traditionally measured in terms of the size of its collection, staff, and budget. But Manjunatha (2002) claim that in the present day competitive world, university libraries need to go beyond the traditional modes of assessments and apply marketing techniques for understanding customer requirements.

Jayasundara et al. (2009) declare that quantitative assessments of service quality such as collection size and circulation figures are no longer regarded as sufficient in themselves to reflect holistic library service. Parasuraman et al. (1988) affirm that quantitative assessment used alone can bring misleading results. According to Maddox-Swan (1998), it is useful to conduct a study that can help libraries to select tools that produce information about what customers really want and need in the way of information services.

According to Bhim (2010) customer focus in services delivery is essential for satisfying the customers. The success depends on customers' perceptions or judgment on the quality of products/services provided by the service personnel in libraries.

Hernon and Whitman (2001) provided libraries with a framework on which to base service standards, develop quality provision and then detail various assessment methods through which the service can be measured. Jayasundara et al. (2009) observed that, although apparently adequate resources, facilities and staff are made available at university libraries, the emphasis on the delivery of quality service is lacking.

2.6 Customer Satisfaction

Zeithaml et al. (1990) describes satisfaction as “a broad evaluation of a product or service that is influenced by perceptions of service quality”. According to Andaleeb & Simmonds (1998) confirmation of desired expectations is a primary antecedent of satisfaction, but Cronin & Taylor (1994) suggested service quality and material satisfaction as the other antecedents that may influence customer satisfaction. Thus, satisfaction seems in part to be a function of prior attitude.

Maddox-Swan (1998) argue that no coherent theory has been advanced for the explanation of the satisfaction process despite the significance of the satisfaction concept. Although some useful findings have been documented, little consensus has been reached regarding the appropriate description of the satisfaction process itself. The primary points indicated in most definitions of satisfaction are that, it implies the existence of an appraisal of perceived performance, and that it is an active comparative process between varied process components such as expectations and perceptions of service (Andreasen & Kotler, 2007).

2.6.1 Customer Satisfaction in University Libraries

Simmon (2001) posit that, librarians have been aware of the importance of conducting user studies, but have traditionally experienced difficulty in discerning customer/user expectations. This may be attributed to little interaction between customers and library staff; and to differing expectations of various customer groups.

Filiz (2007) indicate that while some common ground exists, most academic library priorities do not address user needs. Different categories of customers in a university

library have a different perception of the library. The faculty member may likely identify the library by its collections, the student by its facilities and the librarian by its services (Broady-Preston & Preston, 1999). It can therefore be argued that, through the use of information on the expectations of various customer groups, university librarians will be better able to make changes in the library that fit the perceptions of its customers.

Simba (2006) identified several factors that influenced user satisfaction; these factors included responsiveness, competence and assurance (which translated to demeanor), tangibles, and resources. However, the researcher did not investigate whether quality services leads to increased usage of the library itself.

According to Manjunatha & Shivalingaiah (2004) customer satisfaction represents the degree to which a library has met the user's needs and expectations. They point out that satisfaction is based on the concept of dis-confirmation, which represents the gap that exists between customer expectations and service performance. The authors are of the view that customer satisfaction creates a win-win situation in which libraries gain valuable support from their stakeholders.

The level of satisfaction experienced by the customer can be directly related to the extent to which customer expectations are realized. This implies that, if customer perception of library service exceeds expectations, the result is high customer satisfaction. If customer perception of library service matches expectations, the result is customer satisfaction. According to the Wang (2006), customers feel satisfied when library staffs demonstrate genuine focus and interest in their needs and wants.

2.6.2 Customer Satisfaction Measures in Libraries

There are so far no measures of customer satisfaction designed primarily for use in university libraries. In the corporate sector, organizations have recently begun to measure customer satisfaction, though their measurement processes are still in refinement and redefinition (Kelsey and Bond, 2001). Gerson (1994) argue that whenever you measure something, it gets performed, completed, and usually improved upon. Asking customers to rate your levels of quality and service, and their level of satisfaction, virtually guarantees that you will work to improve your efforts in these areas.

In using the subjective approach to measurement, Maddox-Swan (1998) highlighted that the customer rather than the system becomes the unit of analysis and the customer's opinion of how well the organization has performed in satisfying customer demand is the measurement of satisfaction. According to Kachoka (2010) quality of library services is mostly measured by statistics that are reported annually to the university administration in the form of funds spent on collection development, number of professional librarians employed, number of customers that utilize the service and the queries answered by librarians. Simmon (2001) argue that these measures need to be changed because the success or effectiveness of a library can be determined only through customer satisfaction.

Jayasundara (2009) argue that continuous interaction between library customers and information providers is essential for developing a better understanding of the informational needs of customers, acceptance and use of library collections, services and facilities, and their opinions on the utility of various information sources.

It can therefore be concluded that, customer assessment can provide invaluable data to libraries for re-orienting their collections, services and activities in order to effectively meet the informational needs of their valued customers.

2.7 Relationship between Service Quality and Customer Satisfaction

The relationship between customer satisfaction and service quality is an on-going question in service marketing. Related to service quality is the concept of customer satisfaction. Practitioners and writers in the popular press tend to use the term satisfaction and quality interchangeably, but researchers have attempted to be more precise about the meanings and the measurements of the two concepts, resulting in considerable debate.

While early service quality researchers defined satisfaction as an antecedent of service quality (Heron& Altman, 1998), it has now been generally accepted that service quality is an antecedent of customer satisfaction (Naidu, 2009). Researchers agree that customer satisfaction refers to judgment made about a specific transaction; on the other hand service quality is a more generalized, enduring judgment based in part on previous encounters which themselves resulted in satisfaction judgment (Coye, 2004).

Parasuraman et al. (1985) opine that businesses or organizations can achieve customer satisfaction through high quality service. Improving quality does not always result in satisfied customers since what customers want or expect from a product/service is not high quality all the time. The critical issue is what the customer expects from a product/service and how much the product/service meets these expectations. As far as the product/service meets these expectations, it can be said to have high quality.

Quality and satisfaction are therefore related concepts, and some believe that satisfaction with a series of transactions leads to perceptions of good quality. Parasuraman et al. (1988) conceptualized customer evaluations of overall service quality as the gap between expectations and perceptions of service performance levels. According to Naidu (2009) customer satisfaction and perceptions of quality depends on the extent to which customer expectations are matched by services delivered by the library. Bhim (2010) adds that understanding customers' preferences along service quality dimensions reveal their priorities and addressing the same would reduce the gaps in service quality.

Gronroos (2000) propose that high quality service may allow an organization to gain a competitive advantage, simply by achieving customer satisfaction. Shemwell (1998) observed that in today's competitive milieu, delivering high quality service and having satisfied customers are viewed as indispensable for gaining a sustainable advantage.

The literature reviewed indicate that there is universal understanding that keeping a loyal base of customers is much more profitable for a company than attracting new clients. Realizing the negative ramifications caused by dissatisfied customers, companies are increasingly making senior management accountable for ensuring high degree of customer satisfaction (Wang, 2006).

2.7.1 Customer Satisfaction and Service Quality Interpretations

Gerson (1994) view customer satisfaction as the customer's perception that his or her expectations have been met or surpassed; while quality is based on the perception of the customer.

In business context, Gerson (1994) argue that satisfied customers do more business with you more often in the sense that they purchase more each time around, and they purchase more often. They also refer their family and friends to you. This implies that quality and service are the means to the ends of satisfaction and retention. Although the concepts of customer satisfaction and service quality have certain things in common, satisfaction is generally viewed as a broader concept, whereas service quality focuses specifically on dimensions of service (Zeithaml et al., 1990).

Based on this view, perceived service quality is taken as a component of customer satisfaction, and the relationship between the two concepts is illustrated by figure 2.3: -

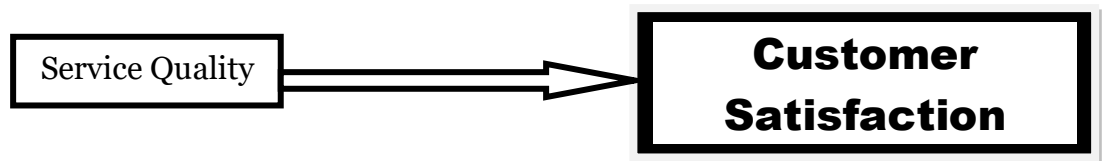


Figure 2.3: Relationship between Service Quality and Customer Satisfaction

- | <u>Service Quality Determinants</u> | <i>*direct effect</i> |
|-------------------------------------|-----------------------|
| • <i>Reliability</i> | |
| • <i>Assurance,</i> | |
| • <i>Tangibles,</i> | |
| • <i>Empathy,</i> | |
| • <i>Responsiveness.</i> | |

Figure 2.3: Relationship between Service Quality and Customer Satisfaction

Source: Adapted from Zeithaml et al., (1990, p.8).

According to figure 2.3, it indicates that customer satisfaction is influenced by the service quality. Each of the service quality determinant has an impact on the overall customer satisfaction.

According to Zeithaml et al. (1990), RATER (Reliability, Assurance, Tangibles, Empathy, and Responsiveness) of service have a significant impact on customer satisfaction. The overall service quality has a significantly positive effect on customer satisfaction. Researchers like Srisa-Ard (1997) and Weiner (2005) suggests that service quality provides a superior indicator of user satisfaction, and indicates that service quality can influence user satisfaction. Over time, repeated satisfaction with service encounters results in a perception of service quality.

Although customer satisfaction can be predicted by service quality attributes, few empirical research studies have been carried out in the field of library and information sciences (Shi & Levy 2005). As a result, many questions still remain unanswered as researchers have been slow to embrace the idea of predicting customer satisfaction. The failure to incorporate these concepts in service models has resulted in studies that cannot adequately explain customer needs, expectations and satisfaction.

2.7.2 Strategies for Improving Customer Satisfaction in University Libraries

Nitecki and Hernon (2000) state that customers who share information about their expectations offer an opportunity for that library or service provider to establish a closer personal contact with them and this relationship can result in libraries providing, and customers receiving better service.

According to Manjunatha & Shivalingaiah (2004) good words of appreciation from satisfied customers will bring more loyal users to the library. This warrants service providers' sincerity, self-interest and commitment to serve the customers seeing that the periodic customer assessments can give insights into the areas that require more attention.

In today's global information marketplace, university libraries must be both competitive and serve as wise stewards of society's considerable investment in them and this includes effective service delivery (Heath & Cook 2003). According to Kotler (2000) globalized competition has stressed the strategic importance of satisfaction and quality in the battle for winning consumer preferences and maintaining sustainable competitive advantages.

With the Internet and the availability of new technologies, the range of services that university libraries can provide has increased dramatically. Edwards & Brown (1995) are of view that, library staff are able to provide effective and value-added traditional library services to the customer community, such as lending, reference, periodical information services, inter-library loans and other services, while also providing emerging technology-based services, such as e-Journals, e-books, Web OPACs, e-Mail, Internet and other allied services.

Filiz (2007) suggests that university library staff to provide a constant, around-the-clock access to online databases mounted on user-friendly systems; twenty-four hour help desk or technical support; and a personal relationship with customers in the nature of a customer-business relationship. According to Jayasundara (2009), presently users can easily access the libraries' resources without stepping into the library building.

Kiran (2010) state that, with the advent of online databases and other electronic resources, new methods of document delivery, and access to information, the role of modern academic library has begun to change. Customers do not have to be physically present in the library in order to access the library's resources. As a result of the availability of relatively affordable software, it implies that university library staff may now work with clients, including remote users with their own unique characteristics, needs, and expectations.

Andaleeb & Simmonds (1998) stress that, customer satisfaction assessment is the basis of a competitive strategy that every university should undertake in order to gain preferences and reach high ranking by their prospective customers. Given the reason that university library users have varying needs and expectations, it is the responsibility of the library staff to know these needs and expectations and strive to meet them by ensuring they are incorporated into the development of library programs and in the designing of library and information services.

This is underscored by the idea that, "when university librarians do not commit to thinking about improving their customers' satisfaction and service quality in libraries, they should not think of the future sustainability of those libraries to any further extent" (Cooper & Dempsey, 1998, p.42).

2.8 Conclusion

University libraries are expected to offer their customers with convenient media to study and research, and to have sufficient number of current information sources. They should provide high quality information services in order to satisfy their customers.

Today, as library customers are open to multiple sources of information, they expect quality information materials within shortest possible time irrespective of the format of information. The web technologies and commercial information service providers have impelled university libraries to be customer focused for their survival.

Proper understanding of customers' perceptions along service quality dimensions is essential for LIS professionals to recognize the customer expectations. Aligning the library and information services to meet the identified customer expectations would result in reduced gaps in perceptions of service quality and hence improved customer satisfaction.

CHAPTER THREE

RESEARCH DESIGN AND METHODOLOGY

3.1 Introduction

This chapter describes the methodology employed to achieve the objectives of the study. It discusses, under respective sections the research design adopted, the target population, sample and sampling procedure. It also highlights data collection methods and research instruments used, reliability and validity of the research instruments, data analysis, and ethical considerations.

3.2 Research Design

3.2.1 Qualitative and Quantitative Strategy

Both positivism and interpretivism research philosophies were integrated thus adopted mixed method approach comprising of quantitative and qualitative paradigms. Quantitative research design was more dominant involving fact finding and was used to collect data from larger group of the study respondents. It was complemented by qualitative research design enabling researcher to gain deeper understanding of the research problem from the perceptions and experiences of the respondents describing the state of affairs as it existed at MUA library when the study was carried out.

The choice of mixed methods research methodology was consistent with the objectives of the study as quantitative strategy permitted making inferences and conclusions based on the outcomes of quantifiable statistical data, while qualitative strategy was suitable in enabling exploration of people's experiences in their natural situations thus permitting this research to go beyond the statistical results usually reported in purely quantitative

research. The designers of the SERVQUAL instruments which has been adopted to assess service quality in different contexts used both quantitative and qualitative research approaches (Parasuraman, et al., 1988).

According to Creswell (2009) research design is a plan and the procedure for research that span the decision from broad assumptions to detailed methods of data collection and analysis. Research design or strategy is a general plan indicating how the research questions were answers showing clear objectives derived from the research questions and specifying the sources of collected data, considered constraints inevitably encountered while conducting the study as well as ethical issues (Saunders, et al. 2009).

Research design serves as a bridge between research questions for a study and the execution or implementation of the research as suggested by Punch (2005: p.34) stating that, “it enables researcher to obtain answers to the research questions by showing how the research questions are connected to the data.” As such, a research design is the conceptual structure within which research is conducted providing a strategic framework or blueprint for the collection, measurement and analysis of data (Kothari, 2006; Bryman, 2008)

3.2.2 Case Study

A case study strategy was adopted given that this study was concerned with exploring practices and activities surrounding customer satisfaction with library and information services to understand perceptions, opinions, and views of respondents at MUA.

Case study is a method of study in-depth rather than breadth, and is appropriate where one is interested in gathering extensive data about the research problem. MUA was

considered a suitable case to inform the study since it is among the universities in Kenya established in recent times.

3.3 Target Population

Target population for this study was 400 persons comprising of MUA students currently on board and permanent faculty members at the time of data collection. This consisted of 23 (6%) faculty members and 377 (94%) students, whereby 280 (70%) were undergraduates and 97 (24%) were postgraduates as shown in table 3.1

Table 3.1: Target Population

Category		Frequency	Population percentage
Under- Graduate Students	Bachelor of Management & Leadership (BML)	120	30 %
	Bachelor of Arts in Development Studies (BDS)	19	5 %
	Executive Bachelor's Degree of Business Management (EBBM)	141	35 %
Post- Graduate Students	Executive Masters in Business Administration (EMBA)	76	19 %
	Executive Master of Science in Applied Management & Leadership (EAML)	11	3 %
	Doctor of Business Leadership (DBL)	10	2 %
Faculty Members		23	6 %
		Total = 400	100 %

Source: MUA Registrar's office (2013)

In addition, the target population also included five (5) key informants who comprised of three (3) section head librarians, one (1) quality assurance officer, and one (1) customer care officer in the university.

3.4 Sample Design

A sample design is a procedure or technique a researcher adopts in selecting items to constitute study sample. Sampling is the process of obtaining information about an entire population by examining only a part of it, and is used when it is not possible, or even necessary, to include the entire research population in a study.

Experience is an influential factor in assessing the quality of library and information services, only students with more than one semester of learning were selected for the sample. Faculty members with a minimum of six months full-time working experience at MUA were included in the sample. Non-academic staff members were excluded since they are not the focal library clients and also due to their noted low library usage (MUA Library, 2012).

Purposive and stratified random sampling techniques were used. Stratified random sampling method was used to sample 113 students representing 30% of the student population of 377; and 7 faculty members out of 23. Purposive sampling was used to target the key informants thus allowing the researcher to select a sample or use cases she believed would provide the data needed.

3.4.1 Sample Size

Case studies involve intensive analysis of small number of subjects rather than gathering data from a large population. MUA students and faculty staff formed the sampling frame

(source list) of the study with a total of 400 persons as obtained from MUA administration records. Since it was not possible to include the whole target population, just a section was taken to form the study sample size of one hundred and twenty (120) participants as tabulated below: -

Table 3.2: Sample Size

Category	Population frequency	Sample size computation	No. of units in sample
Undergraduate Students	280	$(30/100) \times 280$	84 (70%)
Postgraduate Students	97	$(30/100) \times 97$	29 (24%)
Faculty	23	7 faculty heads and senior lecturers	7 (6%)
Totals = 400		Totals = 120 (100%)	

Source: Researcher (2013)

The sample units comprised eighty four (84) undergraduate students, twenty nine (29) postgraduate students, and seven (7) faculty members summing up to a sample size of one hundred and twenty (120). This sample size was considered adequate to provide required data to inform the study. Creswell (2009) state that, the key idea behind qualitative research is to learn about the problem or issue from participants and to address the research to obtain that information.

3.5 Data Collection Methods

In view of the in-depth nature of case study, questionnaire method was used as the main method of data collection complemented by face-to-face interviews and documentary evidence. The researcher was the key instrument in collecting data in person through interviewing participants to obtain primary data. Secondary data was gathered using questionnaire responses and examining documentary review.

a) Self-completion Questionnaire Method

This involved a series of semi-structured questions which addressed a specific issue, and was used to find out what, how much, how many, and how often kind of data hence useful when factual, data is desired. The questionnaires were administered personally.

Merits of Questionnaire Method:

- i. Questionnaire method gave respondents opportunity to respond to questions in their own words, and at their convenient time and place within the duration provided. This probably resulted to well thought-out answers.
- ii. This was an inexpensive and fast way of contacting members of the target population. It was also easy to administer even without requiring much skills to distribute and receive feedback.
- iii. Questionnaire method may be useful in exploring topics that may be uncomfortable for participants to discuss.

Demerit of Questionnaire Method:

- i. In this method, once the questions have been formulated they cannot be modified according to the answers received, as may be possible with interview method. This

was however overcome by designing a reliable and valid questionnaire to ensure that vagueness was avoided in the data collection instrument so as to make the questions easy to understand.

- ii. The responses were not always spontaneous and independent of each other since respondents could read through all the questions first and possibly avoid answering some questions logically following the sequence of the questionnaire.

b) Interview Method

Data was collected using face-to-face or personal interviews enabling researcher to have face-to-face interaction with the participants and personally take interview notes. This method entailed one-on-one, in-person interview. Interview method was considered more suitable when collecting qualitative data pertaining to views, opinions, feelings, and attitudes (Chibini, 2009). The objective of the interview was to gain more information about the library services and collections from an administrative point of view using key informants at MUA.

During interviews, non-verbal communication was taken into account through observation as advised by Slater (1990) who emphasizes that a good interviewer should always be alert to visual evidence and sensitive to body language as a two-way communication process.

Merits of Interview Method:

- i. During the interview the researcher gained useful insights through verbal responses, and also had control over the line of questioning.

- ii. Interview method provided comprehensive data since interviewees were engaged in interview session individually to enable researcher to establish a close personal contact with the interviewees. This allowed for detailed descriptions and collection of in-depth information.
- iii. Since the researcher directly and personally probed the interviewees it enabled clarifications by seeking elaborations on responses, hence allowing collection of more and first-hand data. If conducted well, interviews can provide an avenue for effective interaction and genuine conversation.
- iv. Since both interviewer and interviewee were present, this method gave an opportunity to establish rapport and greater flexibility in data collection.

Demerits of Interview Method:

- i. Not all people are equally articulate and perceptive. To overcome this, the interview was conducted at a pace consistent with the respondent's habits and their availability.
- ii. The presence of the interviewer on the spot may over-stimulate the respondent, sometimes even to the extent that s/he may provide imaginary information just to make the interview interesting.

c) Document Review (Documentary Sources)

Documentary sources reviewed included MUA publications and institutional online content to obtain raw and published primary data. These sources were systematically reviewed and analyzed in line with study objectives thus formed basis for more probing.

This enabled the researcher to evaluate what have been documented about MUA particularly the library and information services.

Merits of Documentary Sources:

- i. As written evidence, documentary sources saved on time and expense of transcribing; and were accessed at researcher's convenient time as an unobtrusive source of information.
- ii. Documentary review enabled researcher to obtain language and words of participants.
- iii. This method enabled capturing of useful data that other methods may perhaps missed.

Demerits of Documentary Sources:

- i. The major disadvantage of this type of information was bias, incompleteness and protected information unavailable to public access. This was overcome by creating rapport with MUA authorities to be allowed access for the purpose of the research and eventual verification during interviews to ensure the information documented was reliable.

3.5.1 Data Collection Instruments

In this study the data collection instruments used were interview schedule and self-administered questionnaire.

a) Questionnaire

Questionnaire was designed comprising both structured (close-ended) and unstructured (open-ended) questions. Structured questions were used where respondents could select

their answers from the possible alternatives given which best described their experience, situation, expectations, perception or opinion.

In order to avoid limiting the respondents' ideas to the options provided, unstructured questions were also be used in order to give the respondents freedom to formulate answers in their own words thus providing more varied and deeper ideas about the topic.

b) Interview Schedules

Interview method of collecting data involved presentation of oral-verbal stimuli and reply in terms of oral responses. Interview schedule was prepared and interview appointment arranged with the selected key informants. It guided and assisted the researcher to remain focused on the key elements.

Semi-structured interview schedule was used, where both open-ended and close-ended questions were designed to facilitate in-depth probing and prompting of relevant data by encouraging interviewees to discuss issues more openly and exhaustively. The questions were drawn from the objectives of the study in order to provide adequate information for answering the research questions.

Face-to-face interviews were used on key informants so as to gather deeper information on the study to clarify the issues. Conducting fruitful interview needed a friendly relationship with the respondent in order to obtain accurate information.

3.5.2 Data Collection Procedure

This section outlines the procedures and methods used for data collection from the study respondents and key informants. This study was conducted in July 2013 for a period of 12 days from 1st to 12th July 2013. MUA authorities granted permission to conduct the

study which contributed to cooperation such as the office of University librarian, Dean of students, Registrar, and finance office during data collection period.

Each questionnaire was numbered with a unique number to aid in tracking thus ensuring systematic administration of questionnaires, convenience in distribution and eventual receiving of feedback. Questionnaires were administered personally to students and faculty members with help of students' representatives and the Dean of students who also assisted in collecting the completed questionnaires and handing them over to the researcher before 12th July 2013.

Interview sessions with respective key informants was arranged at their convenient time and place. Each interview session took an average time of 15 minutes where the research used written note-taking method to document key responses guided by the study objectives.

3.6 Reliability and Validity of Research Instruments

An assessment of the collected data hinges upon determining the reliability and validity of the data collection instruments for the study. According to Yin (1994) reliability is achieved when the findings of a case study are the same if the investigation were to be repeated; and validity establishes the quality of the research design in answering the research question.

In an attempt to achieve validity, the data collection instruments was designed to ensure that they provide adequate coverage of the research questions guiding the study, having ability to produce accurate results that can be depended upon.

3.6.1 Pre-testing of Research Instruments

A pre-test was carried out to ensure research instruments are free of ambiguities so as to achieve reliable findings. The initial draft of data collection instruments was pre-tested on three (3) respondents who were not included in the final sample. A pilot study was carried out guided by a pre-test check list to test suitability of the instruments in collecting the required data; to ascertain that the questions were clear and easily understood, and to gain an appreciation of the respondents' reactions to the questions, and also to check on reliability and validity of the responses. The feedback was used to effect necessary adjustment before being subjected to the actual data collection.

3.7 Data Analysis Procedure

Bordens & Abbott (2006) state that data analysis is the process of bringing order, structure and meaning to the mass of information collected. Cooper & Schinder (2006) adds that data analysis procedure comprises the process of editing and reducing accumulated data to a manageable size, developing summaries, looking for patterns, and applying statistical patterns.

Quantitative and qualitative approach was used to collect and analyze data for this study. Raw data collected was reviewed for any inconsistencies and organized. Each completed questionnaire was checked for ambiguity, omissions and errors. Descriptive analysis was used to analyze quantitative data and presented using descriptive statistics. A statistical Package for the Social Sciences (SPSS) software was used to help in descriptive statistical analysis to present quantitative data in form of including frequency distribution

tables and percentages and statistical charts to give a clear picture of the research findings at a glance.

Thematic analysis was done for the qualitative data that emanated mainly from open-ended questions. The data that cut across all of the data sources was organized thematically according to the research objectives. Thematic analysis involved categorizing the qualitative data into themes in accordance with research objectives and presented thematically in narrative manner. Codes were used to generate themes to indicate perceptions and opinions of the respondents and categorized to enable interpretations to be drawn and inferences to be made regarding service quality and customer satisfaction with library services at MUA guided by the research questions.

3.7.1 Data Interpretation

Data interpretation involves attaching meaning and significance to the analysis, explaining descriptive patterns, and looking for relationships and linkage among descriptive dimensions (Kasomo, 2010). Creswell (2009) views qualitative research as a form of interpretive inquiry in which researchers make an interpretation of what they see, hear, and understand. Interpretive analysis was done on the analyzed data so as to make sense of it, by highlighting important features hence attaching meaning to the data with regard to the study objectives. This involved evaluating the usefulness of information in answering the research questions.

3.8 Ethical Considerations

Research ethics are a set of principles or guidelines that assisted the researcher to behave responsibly by protecting the participants, develop trust with them, promote integrity, and

guard against any misconduct in carrying out research study. Ethical issues for consideration in this study included the following: -

a) Informed consent

The researcher made sure that participation was completely voluntary by seeking informed consent. The researcher ensured participants had an understanding of the purpose of the study, methods used, and the requirements for participation. Although voluntary participation may sometimes result in low response rate thus introducing response bias; the researcher encouraged willingness to participate by making multiple contacts to the potential participants.

b) Confidentiality

The researcher ensured anonymity and confidentiality of participants, and any possible psychological harm to them was avoided by ensuring no sensitive questions were included that would cause uncomfortable feelings.

c) Objectivity

Interpretations of findings were presented honestly and objectively, and also they were disseminated ethically and used for research purposes only. In addition, all discussions remained confidential during the reporting of findings, and no source was correlated with specific findings or comments attributed without the express permission of the originator.

3.9 Chapter Summary

In this chapter the research methodology adopted was outlined including the research methods and a description of procedures that were used in the study. Also the population, sampling techniques, instrumentation used, data collection, methods of data analysis, and ethical considerations were presented.

CHAPTER FOUR

DATA PRESENTATION, ANALYSIS AND INTERPRETATION

4.1 Introduction

This chapter provides a description of data presentation, analysis, and interpretation. It presents analysis of the collected data for the study discussing the interpretation of key findings in light of the research problem, study objectives and the reviewed literature.

The study findings were discussed under the following aspects:

- i. General background information
- ii. Frequency and usage patterns of library services
- iii. Methods executed in providing customer care
- iv. Users' perceptions of quality of provided library services
- v. Customers' perceived level of satisfaction with provided information services
- vi. Challenges experienced in achieving customer satisfaction at MUA library
- vii. Suggestions on ways of promoting service quality to attain customer satisfaction
- viii. Conclusions

4.2 Response Rate

This study used a sample of 120 respondents comprising 84 (70%) undergraduate students, 29 (24%) postgraduate students, and 7 (6%) faculty members. Self-completion questionnaires were administered to the students and faculty members, while the key informants were interviewed.

The study attained 80% response rate, whereby 75% were students and 5% were faculty members as shown in Table 4.1 below: -

Table 4.1: Response Rate Distribution

Category	Sampled respondents frequency	Response rate distribution
Undergraduate Students	84 (70%)	68 (57%)
Postgraduate Students	29 (24%)	22 (18%)
Faculty	7 (6%)	6 (5%)
Totals =	120 (100%)	96 (80%)

Source: Researcher (2014)

Undergraduate students comprised the majority population group at MUA; and thus they also provided most of the response/feedback (i.e. 57%).

4.2.1 Students' Level of Study and Programme Enrolled

The study sought to establish students' level of study and programme enrolled because this would shed light on the distribution of student population at MUA who are the key library customers.

The study revealed that among the undergraduate respondents, those enrolled to BML programme were 30 (25%), BDS were 10 (8%), and EBBM were 28 (24%). Postgraduates taking EMBA were 14 (11%), EAML were 5 (4%), and DBL were 3 (3%) as shown in Table 4.2.

Table 4.2: Programme Enrolled Frequency

Respondents' Category	Programme	Percentage of Programme enrolled frequency
Undergraduate Students	BML	25%
	BDS	8%
	EBBM	24%
	Total = 57%	
Postgraduate Students	EMBA	11%
	EAML	4%
	DBL	3%
		Total = 18%
		Totals = 75%

Source: Researcher (2014)

Key to programmes offered at MUA:

- **BML**: Bachelor of Management & Leadership; **BDS**: Bachelor of Arts in Development Studies; **EBBM**: Executive Bachelor Degree of Business Management; **EMBA**: Executive Master of Business Administration; **EAML**: Executive Master of Science in Applied Management & Leadership; and **DBL**: Doctor of Business Leadership.

-

The table above shows that MUA has most students enrolled for undergraduate programme, i.e. 57%; while postgraduate students are only 18%.

4.2.2 Status of Employment

The study sought to find out the employment status of students. This was necessary because this would have an indication on the nature of the customers served at MUA library.

75% of the respondents indicated they are in employment, either formally employed (i.e. 58%) or self-employed (i.e. 17%). Only 25% are not employed majority of which were undergraduate students. This indicated that most of the MUA students are not only working adults but also they are part-time learners, thus a possibility of having tight schedule to find adequate time to visit the library during normal operation time.

4.3 Frequency of Library Visits and Usage Patterns of Information Services

The study sought to establish usage patterns and frequency of library and information services at MUA.

4.3.1 Frequency of Library Visits

Having established the nature of clients served at MUA library, the respondents were asked to describe how often they visited the library which would be an indication of their frequency of usage of library services. It was found that majority of the respondents visit MUA library twice a week accounting for 35% whereby 30% were undergraduate students, 4% were postgraduate students and 1% represented faculty members.

The researcher used the knowledge of customers in this study based on the premise that customers cannot be familiar with a service if they do not know about it. The respondents' consumption experiences were considered in this study as indicative of their sufficient capability to evaluate/judge service quality and rate their satisfaction level.

Taking into consideration the reviewed literature, it was found that characteristics of different customer groups determined their library visits frequency and consequently usage pattern. Table 4.3 below summarizes the responses.

Table 4.3: Frequency of Library Visits and Usage Patterns

Frequency of Library Visit	Under-graduates	Post-graduates	Faculty Members	Total
Everyday	14%	2%	0%	16%
Twice a week	30%	4%	1%	35%
Once a week	17%	12%	1%	30%
Once a month	10%	5%	4%	19%
Never	0%	0%	0%	0%
Totals =	71%	23%	6%	100%

Source: Researcher (2014)

According to the study findings, 30% of the undergraduate students visit the library twice a week while 10% visit only once a month. This could be attributed to the fact that most of them especially those not employed were able to visit the library during the day hours hence have higher possibility of accessing and using library services.

Majority of undergraduate students visit the library more frequently (i.e. twice a week 30%) than postgraduate students and faculty members. Only 12% of postgraduate students visit the library once a week, while 4% of the faculty members indicated they only visit the library once a month. This in effect reflects on usage patterns and utilization of the library and information services which concurs with what the study informants indicated that library experience a low usage, characterized with seasonal pick time

during university's exam duration. The findings as indicated in the table above show that 35% of the respondents visit the library twice a week; while those who visit the library every day, once a week and once a month accounted for 16%, 30% and 19% respectively. This could be attributed to possibility of their tight schedule because most of them are in employment. There were no non-library customers among the respondents in this study. There is a significant number of clients who rarely visit the library (i.e. 19% visiting only once a month) hence possibility of low usage pattern of library and information services unless some intervention is put in place to facilitate convenient access and utilization.

4.3.2 Awareness of Information Services provided at MUA Library

According to the responses received all the respondents were aware of circulation, reference and online information retrieval services, while only 30% were aware of inter-library loans service; but none was aware of customer care services. This is an implication that customer services at MUA library either do not exist or if it exists clients are not aware of it.

4.3.3 Barriers experienced Hindering Effective Utilization

The study sought to establish challenges hindering effective utilization of library and information services at MUA. Some of the main challenges pointed out by most of the respondents were: -

- Delays in getting current books
- Inadequate quantities of available materials
- Difficulties in getting the right information materials
- Problems in accessing online information resources
- Frequent unexpected power blackouts and lack of UPS to curb the issue

4.4 Customer Care Strategies Employed at MUA Library

In order to establish customer care strategies employed at MUA library, the informants were asked to shed light on the matter. Their responses indicated that, library staff rely solely on the established rules and regulations to guide them on how to handle general queries and customer care issues. In order to further establish customer care strategies available at MUA as perceived by library users, the students and faculty members were requested to indicate their awareness on user orientation facilities provided and literacy programs used. The most popular user-orientation facility as indicated by majority of respondents (70%) was library rules and regulation bulletin, while 23% of the respondents indicated information literacy trainings; and only 5% indicated library use guide. Only 2% of the respondents indicated information help desk as a customer care strategy as shown in the figure 4.1 below: -

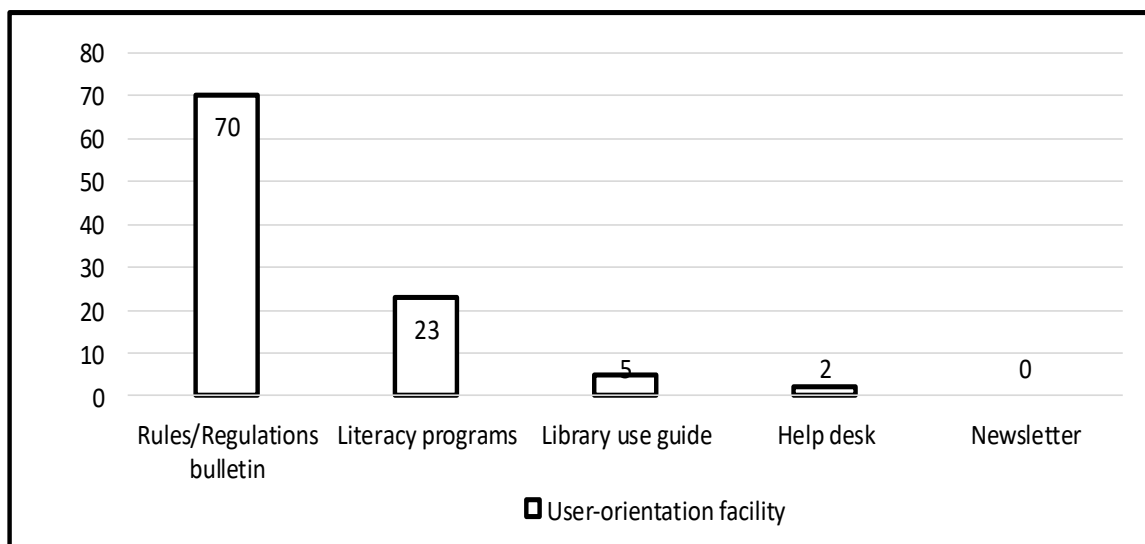


Figure 4.1: User Orientation Facilities Provided

(Source: Researcher, 2014)

The findings revealed that respondents were aware of the usual information services expected to be offered in a library such as circulation and reference services with none indicating awareness of customer care service. From the study, it was revealed that the mostly used customer care strategy employed was rules and regulations bulletin which library clients receive as hard copies to refer so as to be informed on library operations. For face-to-face interaction with library clients, the study revealed literacy programs strategy was used. However other strategies such as library use-guide, help desk, and newsletter lacked emphasis. The researcher also observed that there lacked adequate helpful directional signs within MUA library facility.

4.4.1 Customer Care Services

To further ascertain on any form of customer care services that could be offered to library clients at MUA library, the respondents were asked to indicate awareness of availability and satisfaction level of help desk. The study revealed that 80% of the respondents indicated there is no help desk set aside specifically for customer care services at MUA library, while 20% confused it with either circulation counter or security desk.

Informants were asked to indicate on how they would rate customer care at MUA library. The library staff indicated there has never been a study or a formal investigation done to rate customer care at MUA library, however there was a general feeling there is great room for improvement. Other informants gave an administrative view indicating significant level of low rating of customer care as informed by many complaints received by the university customer care and quality assurance officers.

In relation to satisfaction levels on customer care, 70% of the respondents rated customer care at MUA library as 'Dissatisfying'; while 20% rated it as 'Fairly Satisfying'. Only 10% of the respondents rated it as 'Satisfying' as shown in the figure 4.2 below: -



Figure 4.2: Customer Care Satisfaction Levels

(Source: Researcher, 2014)

The level of satisfied customers was low, i.e. 10% as compared to those that were dissatisfied, i.e. 70% hence indicating there is great need to put up deliberate actions towards improving customer care strategies employed at MUA Library to the expectation of the customers.

The study findings demonstrated that there were inadequate and ineffective customer care strategies employed at MUA library hence resulting to majority (70%) of respondents indicating dissatisfaction with customer care. This concurred with the results of a study by Dlamini (2004) that showed that academic libraries do not have proper methods and

strategies for conducting customer care. The study by Dlamini also found that even those strategies that exist are unknown among library users, subsequently recommending that a unit/person or committee responsible for customer care be incorporated in academic libraries.

4.5 Perceptions on Quality of Library Services and Satisfaction Levels

4.5.1 Rates of Service Quality

A university library is required to provide access to quality library information resources and services in order to stimulate and sustain academic and research activities. Service quality of library and information services as perceived by users is an important determinant of customer satisfaction in a university library as echoed by Naidu (2009).

In order to establish service quality levels as rated by clients, the study sought users' perceptions of the quality of library services. The questions were addressed to students and faculty members. Table 4.4 shows the ratings of various aspects of library services as judged by the respondents.

Table 4.4: Service Quality Ratings

Service Quality Criteria	RATE(5= Highest; 1=Lowest)				
	5	4	3	2	1
Timeliness and promptness of services	40%	20%	0%	30%	10%
Ability to perform the promised service dependably and accurately	55%	20%	5%	10%	10%
Relevance of information materials to your	40%	20%	10%	10%	20%

informational needs					
Currency of information received	60%	20%	10%	0%	10%
Comprehensiveness and diversification of the collection	65%	10%	10%	10%	5%
Ease of use and convenient access to library collection	60%	20%	10%	0%	10%
Ease of use and access to the online catalogue (OPAC), electronic databases, or digital collection	40%	15%	15%	20%	10%
Remote access to facilitate further convenient access to library services	10%	0%	0%	20%	70%
Library web page (e.g. having correct and useful content information)	50%	0%	10%	10%	20%
Appearance of physical facilities, equipment, directional signs and communication materials	40%	10%	30%	20%	0%
Convenient opening hours	20%	0%	10%	10%	60%
Knowledge of library staff and their ability to inspire trust and confidence to customers	80%	10%	10%	0%	0%
Friendliness and politeness of staff giving customers individual attention in caring manner	90%	10%	0%	0%	0%
Training sessions on use of library and information services (e.g. user trainings on use of electronic sources)	50%	40%	10%	0%	0%

(Source: Researcher, 2014)

The above findings show that the two highly rated aspects of library services as indicated by respondents included: 'Friendliness and politeness of staff' (90%) and 'knowledge of library staff and their ability to inspire trust and confidence to customers' (80%). This is an indication that MUA library can capitalize on their potential aspects of the strength of library staff capability so as to improve on customer service to the satisfaction and expectations of clients.

On the other hand, the two least rated aspects of library service were: 'Remote access to facilitate further convenient access to library services' (10%) and 'convenient opening hours' (20%). The above findings indicates that operation hours of MUA library are not considered convenient to most of the clients whose majority are adult working class and part-time learners, thus calling for consideration to facilitate for remote access to library services. This implies that the main concern of users is obtaining information quickly and conveniently thus prompting the need for MUA library management to fine tune their services so as to be perceived as responsive to the needs of the intended clients. This is emphasized by Manjunatha (2004) who stated that, it is expected for a forward-looking university library to provide a wide range of quality information products and services to the intended user population.

4.5.1.1 Ratings of Service Quality Perceptions Summary

This study was based on SERVQUAL tool which provides a reliable criteria to guide in assessing service quality based on the following 5 dimensions, which according to Zeithaml et al. (1990) Reliability, Assurance, Tangibles, Empathy, and Responsiveness (RATER) of service has a significant impact on customer satisfaction: -

- Reliability:** Ability to perform the promised service dependably and accurately.
- Assurance:** Knowledge and courtesy of employees and their ability to inspire trust and confidence.
- Tangibles:** Appearance of physical facilities, equipment, personnel and communication material.
- Empathy:** Provision of individualized care and attention to customers.
- Responsiveness:** Willingness to help customers and provide prompt service.

To investigate customers' perception of library service quality which could be indicative of satisfaction levels, five service quality attributes (RATER) adopted from SERVQUAL instrument was used. Table 4.4.1 shows a summary of the ratings of various aspects of library services as judged by respondents using Likert scale ranging from 5 to 1; where 5 represent highest rate while 1 the lowest rate of service quality.

Table 4.4.1: Summary Ratings of Service Quality Perceptions

Service Quality Aspects/Criteria	RATE(5= Highest; 1=Lowest)					Mean Rate
	5	4	3	2	1	
Reliability	4%	12%	20%	36%	28%	20%
Assurance	64%	22%	8%	4%	2%	20%
Tangibles	10%	19%	48%	17%	6%	20%
Empathy	2%	6%	8%	16%	68%	20%
Responsiveness	25%	58%	13%	2%	2%	20%

(Source: Researcher, 2014)

The above summary show that the respondents of this study had varied ratings on aspects of service quality. The highest rate for the 'Reliability' aspect was at scale 2 with 36%; Assurance was rated highest at the scale of 5 with 64%; Tangibles aspect was rated highest at the scale of 3 with 48%; Empathy aspect was rated highest at scale 1 with 68%; while Responsiveness aspect was rated highest at scale of 4 with 58%. Thus, according to the findings, 'Assurance' service quality criteria was rated highest as compared to other criteria, indicating that majority of the respondents appreciated the knowledge and courtesy of MUA library staff and their ability to inspire trust and confidence to the users.

On the overall, the study findings revealed that the two strong dimensions of service quality at MUA library as perceived by respondents were 'Assurance' and 'Responsiveness'. This is an indication that MUA library can capitalize on their potential aspects of the strength of library staff knowledge and supportiveness/helpfulness so as to improve on customer service to the expectations and satisfaction of clients. According to the Wang (2006), customers feel satisfied when library staffs demonstrate genuine focus and interest in their needs and wants.

The aspects of 'Empathy', 'Reliability' and 'Tangibles' were rated relatively low indicating need improvement. Empathy was judged by majority of respondents as the least rated service quality indicating they perceived MUA library as weak in providing individualized care and attention to customers.

The findings indicated that operation hours of MUA library were not considered convenient to most of the clients whose majority are adult working class and part-time learners, thus calling for consideration to facilitate for remote access to library services.

This implies that the main concern of users is obtaining information quickly and conveniently thus prompting the need for MUA library management to fine tune their services so as to be perceived as responsive to the needs of the intended clients.

4.5.2 Helpfulness of Library Staff Assistance

The study sought to establish on how library users perceive the assistance they receive from library staff. According to the responses gotten, 90% of the respondents rated helpfulness of library staff assistance as ‘Helpful’; while 10% considered it ‘Very helpful’.

This is an indication that clients rely heavily on library staff for assistance as opposed to being empowered to independently access and utilize library and information services on their own which could be a more sustainable and convenient approach. This view was also highlighted by the informants particularly library staff.

4.5.3 Comments on Overall Quality of the Library Services at MUA

The respondents were asked to comment on their perception in relation to overall quality of library services at MUA whereby 47% of the respondents indicated it was good, while 53% pointed out it is wanting and can be improved as shown in figure 4.3: -

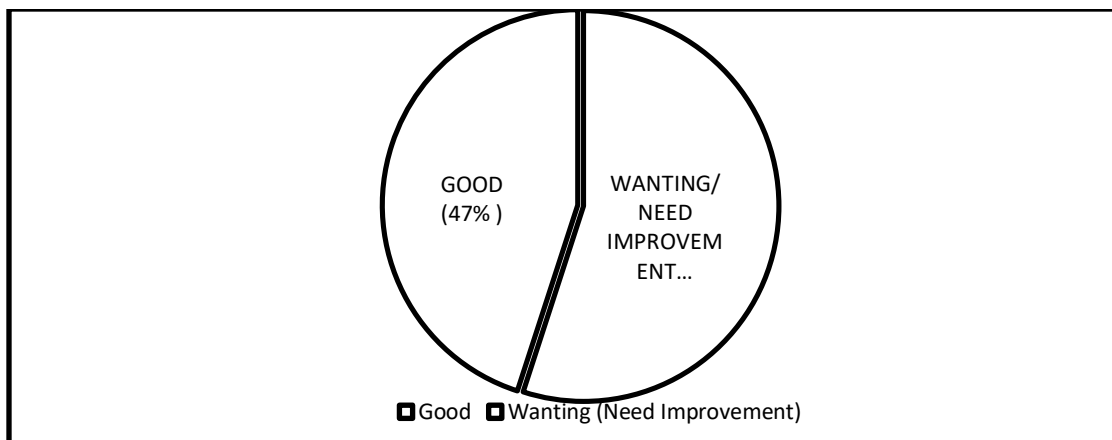


Figure 4.3: Perception Rates on Overall Quality of Library services

(Source: Researcher, 2014)

From the findings above, it was evident the overall quality of library services as perceived by the respondents requires an improvement towards aligning them to match users' needs and expectations.

4.5.4 Library and Information Services Satisfaction Levels

The respondents were asked to indicate their satisfaction levels with library and information services provided at MUA library in order to establish on how library users perceive the services.

Respondents indicated 30% satisfaction levels with convenience of library and information services provided at MUA and 60% dissatisfaction; while 70% satisfaction levels with its helpfulness and only 5% dissatisfaction as shown in figure 4.4.

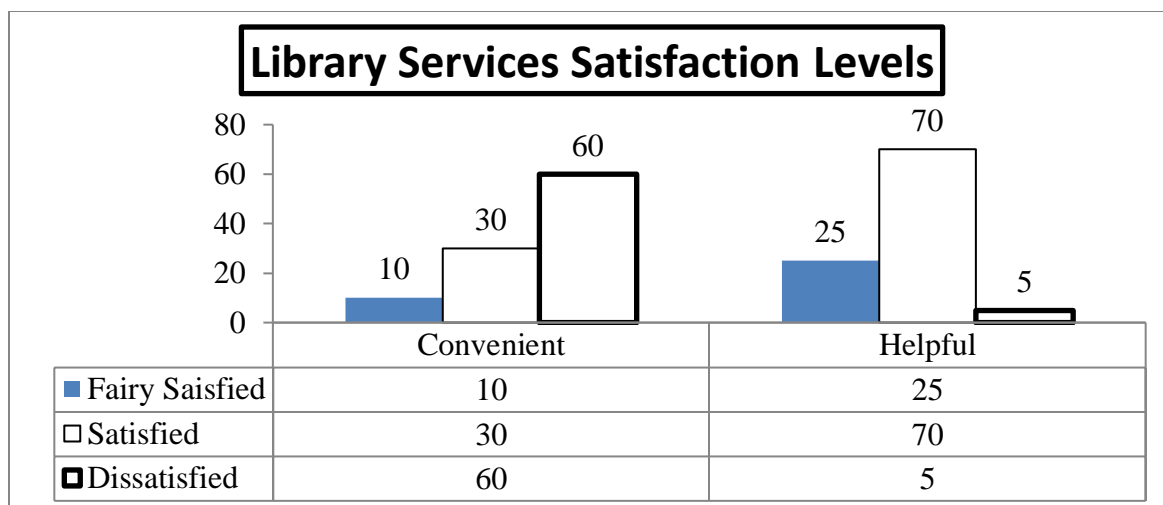


Figure 4.4: Library Services Satisfaction Levels

(Source: Researcher, 2014)

The above findings indicate that there is a need to identify why the section of dissatisfied respondents consider library services as not convenient and not helpful so as to inform library management on the right action to take for improvement.

4.5.5 Customers' Expectations with Library Services

The study sought to identify whether library and information services at MUA were aligned with customers' expectations.

As shown in figure 4.5 below, only 33% of the respondents pointed out that the services were aligned with their expectations while 67% felt they were not, further adding that they expected services on online searching, current awareness and library newsletter as well as more support on use of electronic databases.

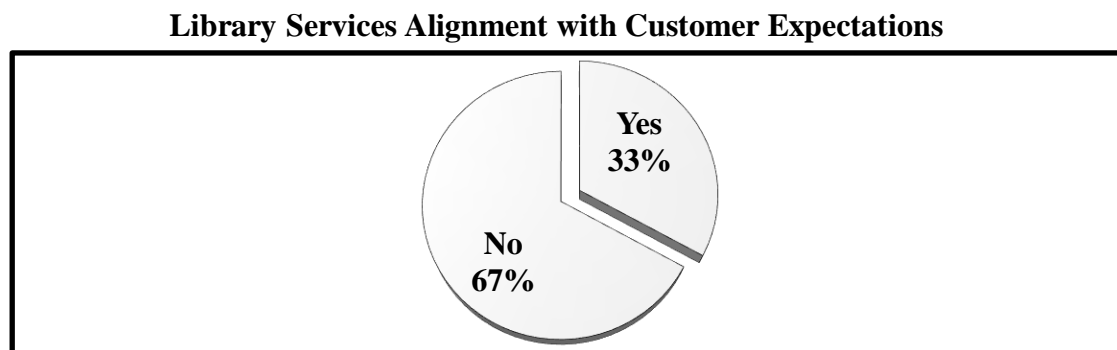


Figure 4.5: Library Services in relation to Customer Expectations

(Source: Researcher, 2014)

The above findings is an indication that there is a disconnect with the alignment of library services offered at MUA with what the customers expect since majority (67%) of the respondents perceived them as ‘not to be according to what they expected’. This calls for library management to come up with strategies of ensuring that array of library and information services are tailor-made or re-oriented to march customers’ expectations.

4.6 Challenges Encountered in Achieving Customer Satisfaction

The study sought to establish gaps and identify challenges experienced in achieving customer satisfaction at MUA library. Using open-ended questions, the informants were asked to shed light on their experience in attempting to achieve customer satisfaction; while the respondents were asked to point out the challenges they encountered when using library and information services. Their responses generated qualitative data in form of comments based on individual’s experiences and opinions. The study found that there were some challenges experienced thus hindering effective achievement of high level customer satisfaction at MUA library as discussed below: -

4.6.1 Unavailability of a Particular Library Staff Assigned Customer Care Roles

Library section heads pointed out that there was no particular library staff assigned customer care roles at MUA library. This was emphasized by Customer Care officer who felt that the customer care strategies used were unsuitable could have contributed to low appreciation of customer care concept in the university library.

4.6.2 Difficulties in Coordination of Customer Care Activities

The study revealed that there were difficulties in coordination of customer care activities as stated by the Customer Care Officer. This could be attributed to the fact that there is no staff assigned customer care duties coupled with lack of customer care policy, thus it becomes an underlying issue causing difficulties in employing effective customer care strategies as well as poor coordination of customer care activities at MUA library.

4.6.3 Difficulties in using the Online Catalogue

The study revealed that library customers especially students experienced difficulties in using the online catalogue. It was learnt through the study informants that MUA library has automated some of its core functions including providing online catalogue. However, it was observed that there were very few customers making use of the facility, thus indicating difficulties in using OPAC and online databases which was rated quite lowly.

4.6.4 Few copies of Books to Borrow Mainly when Approaching Exam Duration

The responses from students indicated that they experience a challenge of having few copies of books to borrow mainly when approaching exam duration. It may not be practically possible for a university to meet the desired user/book ratio given the current trend in increasing admissions translating to more customer population; however

improving on accessibility particularly on other information sources and resources would complement the available books in a university library.

4.6.5 Inconvenience in Accessing Information Resources

Postgraduate students indicated that they felt inconvenienced because of not being able to access information resources and utilizing library services especially when off-campus. This was in line with the findings of the low rating towards the aspect on library remote access to facilitate further convenience accessibility to library services whereby majority (70%) of the respondents judged it with lowest rating.

4.6.6 Frequent Slow Internet Connection

The study respondents indicated they experienced frequent slow internet connection and frequent power blackouts. It was observed that library lacked Uninterrupted Power Supply (UPS) to curb the issue. The informants indicated that MUA has subscribed to various digital-content (e-resources) which is expected to be accessed on the library web page. However, low bandwidth resulting to frequent slow internet connection hinders the prospects of optimizing utilization of the useful online content.

4.7 Suggestions for Improvement

The study sought suggestions from the respondents on recommendations for improving customer satisfaction. Their suggestions were key to guide the researcher in achieving the last objective of this study which was to suggest recommendations and come up with a framework for enhancing customer satisfaction. Below is a summary of the suggestions that respondents gave on areas they felt need improvement: -

- 4.7.1** Provide customer care desk with a customer-care librarian: A faculty respondent suggested that: ‘one counter or a desk to be identified in the library where customer issues can be addressed’. Customer Care Officer suggested ‘provision of a suggestion box and consideration for assigning customer care roles to one library staff to handle customer issues in the library. This inferred there need to be provision of a customer care desk with a customer care librarian.
- 4.7.2** Review library operating hours: Students’ respondents suggested ‘consideration for opening the library till late in the evenings especially during exam time; and reviewing library operation hours in the evenings and weekends’. This was an indication of need to review library operating hours to convenience users
- 4.7.3** User needs identification: A faculty member suggested that: ‘we need to be consulted as lecturers before new books are acquired. Librarians should not assume they know all what is needed for each program instead there should be opportunity for lecturers to contribute when purchasing library books’. This indicated there was need for user needs identification and incorporation of users’ suggestions into service delivery so as to establish service quality focused on user needs.
- 4.7.4** Enhancing service accessibility/ remote access: Postgraduate students suggested ‘provision of online reference services; improving the library webpage to enable retrieval of online journals even when away from the university; and establishing institutional repository for research studies’. This was an indication on need for enhancement of library service accessibility particularly on remote access

4.7.5 Customer care policy: Quality Assurance Officer suggested that: “there is need to develop a guide on how to handle customer care issues in the library”. This indicated that formulation of customer care policy in the library was necessary.

CHAPTER FIVE

SUMMARY OF FINDINGS, CONCLUSION AND RECOMMEDATIONS

5.1 Introduction

This chapter summarizes the study findings which are linked to the research questions providing a conclusion. It also provides recommendations on strategies for improving customer satisfaction with library and information services and suggestion for further study.

5.2 Summary of the Findings

The study sought to investigate customer satisfaction with library and information services using MUA library as a case study. In answering the research questions, the study expected to reveal customers' expectations, attitudes and feelings towards service quality as an indication of their satisfaction level regarding the library and information services at MUA. The study findings relating to the research questions are summarized below: -

5.2.1 Characteristics of Library Users and Frequency of Library Visits

MUA Students and faculty members form the intended category of Library users/customers. Majority of the respondents visited MUA library twice a week while minority respondents visited the library daily. Undergraduate students were found to be heavy library users compared to other categories, and there was a significant number of respondents who visited the library only once a month hence a possibility of low usage pattern of library information services. Library clientele at MUA were found to be highly

dependent on the library staff to assist them in accessing and utilizing information resources and services provided.

Majority of the student population are adult working and part time-learners raising a concern of limited time to visit the library. This brings about the challenge to the library to offer information services to a widely dispersed customers who may only use the library during odd hours, thus prompting the need for library administration to put a strategy in place to deliver effective information services that key category of the intended users could conveniently utilize and appreciate.

5.2.2 Customer Care Methods Executed at MUA Library

User orientation facilities used at MUA library seems to dwell more on rules and regulations as opposed to customer care. There were inadequate and ineffective customer care strategies employed at MUA library. This indicates there is need to improve on employing other effective approaches to enhance customer orientation at MUA library since better treatment to customers may lead to higher level of satisfaction.

There is no library personnel or a unit responsible for customer care services pointing to several challenges experienced that hindered achievement of customer satisfaction at MUA. This necessitates the need to enhance customer care strategies geared towards achieving customer expectations and improved customer satisfaction with library and information services at MUA library.

5.2.3 User Perceptions on Quality of Library Services and Satisfaction Levels

Service quality contributes to overall customer satisfaction in that quality of library services may influence customer perception of satisfaction. Library and information services provided at MUA were considered to have been designed without proper knowledge of users' expectations and needs. Majority of the respondents indicated dissatisfaction with the service quality thus registering low rating to various aspects of library service. There were quite a high number of customers who perceive quality of library services as wanting as well as not aligned to their expectations, further rating the overall customer satisfaction level with library and information services as 'Dissatisfying'.

The highly rated aspects of library services included: 'Friendliness and politeness of staff; the ability library staff to inspire trust and confidence to customer; and helpfulness of library staff'. The lowly rated aspects comprised of: 'Remote access to library services; and convenient opening hours'. On the overall, the two strong dimensions of service quality at MUA library were 'Assurance; and Responsiveness', as compared to the aspects of 'Empathy; Reliability; and Tangibles' which were rated relatively low indicating need for improvement. Since customers feel satisfied when library staff demonstrate genuine focus and interest in their needs, MUA library can capitalize on their potential aspects of strength to improve on service quality to satisfy their customers' expectations.

5.2.4 Challenges Experienced in Achieving Customer Satisfaction

The challenges experienced that hindered achievement of high level customer satisfaction at MUA library included: Unavailability of a particular library staff assigned customer

care roles; difficulties in coordination of customer care activities; difficulties in using online catalogue; few copies of books to borrow; inconvenience in accessing information resources and utilizing library services when off-campus; and frequent slow internet connection.

5.2.5 Suggestions for Improving Service Quality

Library and information services provided at MUA were deemed to be fairly newly designed and therefore could be easily refined and re-oriented for improvement. It was expected that, if those services were designed on the right foothold it would have translated into effective and quality information services that customers would appreciate thus having high possibility of boosting customer satisfaction levels.

The main areas that the respondents suggested included: need for customer care desk and assigning customer care roles to a particular library staff; revising library operation hours to convenience users; identifying user needs and incorporate them into service delivery; facilitation of convenient access particularly remote access; and formulation of a policy to guide in provision of customer care services.

The findings of this study assisted in the development of a framework that may ensure improved customer satisfaction at MUA library, and would as well be adopted for other university libraries in Kenya.

5.3 Conclusions

The purpose of this study was to investigate customer satisfaction levels with regard to the quality of library and information services at MUA. It was based on the assumptions

that MUA library services are not designed as per users' needs and expectations leading to users not fully appreciating them; and that the quality of library and information services could be improved by redesigning them based on customers' needs, expectations and perceptions leading to improved customer satisfaction. Basing on the findings of the study, it can be concluded that: -

5.3.1 The overall high service quality has a significantly positive effect on customer satisfaction level, thus service quality is an antecedent of satisfaction. This concurs with most of the literature on customer satisfaction that has endorsed the growing popularity of service quality and customer satisfaction to be interrelated concepts, with researchers agreeing that quality judgments cause satisfaction (Heron& Altman 1998; Jayasundara, Ngulube, &Minishi-Majanja, 2009; Bhim, 2010; Kachoka, 2010).

5.3.2 Customers' expectations and perceptions with library and information services at MUA were moderately rated, with customer care services rated as 'Dissatisfying'. This may be attributed to non-alignment of the services to the expectations and perceptions of the customers as well as ineffective strategies for customer care.

5.3.3 Library usage patterns may be influenced to a great extent by customers' perception on quality of services and resources available, as well as convenient ease of accessing. There was need to consider improving service delivery in terms of customer education programmes, useful library guides, remote access and e-journals access. Employing technology would improve on web services to ensure there is useful library website and well-organized web-page.

5.3.4 Customer assessment can provide invaluable data to libraries for re-orienting their collections, services and activities in order to effectively meet the informational needs of their intended customers guided by their identified expectations and perceptions.

5.3.5 With regard to quality of library services as perceived by customers, the study findings demonstrated that there are gaps in regard to how their expectations are met. Therefore, there is room for improvement to enhance customer satisfaction since enhanced quality may lead to improved customer satisfaction.

5.4 Recommendations

The study attempted to explore on ways that service quality at MUA library could be improved to satisfy the intended users. This was guided by assumption that identifying service quality and customer satisfaction from the customers' perspective, library and information service could better strengthen its quality of services as expected by customers. From the results of the study, the following recommendations were made that may result to improved customer satisfaction at MUA library: -

5.4.1 Identify User Needs

Naidu (2009) suggested that library staff with a good understanding of users' needs and expectations as well as their relation to customer satisfaction will experience greater success in satisfying their intended customers. Informants from the library staff indicated there has never been a logical user needs survey conducted since launching of the university.

This study submits that, improving library and information services based on identified user needs, perceptions and expectations is essential as a way of being responsive to their informational needs. Dlamini (2004) advises that in order to be effective, library administrators require valid and reliable information about their customers. The ability of university library staff to respond to customer expectations depends upon having a good understanding of those expectations and needs.

Jayasundara et al. (2009) indicate that university libraries worldwide are facing increasing competition from a global digital environment which brings about the ongoing change in user needs and expectations of information services. Filiz (2007) indicated that while some common ground exists, most academic library priorities do not address user needs. Providing quality service means being able to view services from the customers' points of view and then meeting their needs and expectations effectively. Since different user groups in a university library have varied information seeking habits as well as expectations, the study recommends the need to comprehensively incorporate views of diverse user categories in delivering appropriate information services.

Andaleeb & Simmonds (1998) stresses that, customer satisfaction assessment is the basis of a competitive strategy that every university should undertake in order to gain preferences and reach high ranking by their prospective customers. Given the reason that university library users have varying needs and expectations, it is the responsibility of the library staff to know these needs and expectations subsequently strive to meet them by ensuring they are incorporated into the development of library programs and in the designing of library and information services.

5.4.2 Design or Review Library and Information Services

Designing library and information services without prior identification of user needs and expectations implies that, it is difficult to develop quality information services in the perspective of library users. Persistent provision of traditional library services is threatening relevance of most university libraries in Kenya.

Clair (1997) in Kaberia (2006) observed that if information providers hope to be effective in the delivery of information services, it is important for them to move from old-fashioned perspectives to what truly reflects the positive effects of modern information delivery. The study therefore recommends designing of library physical premises and service points which are communication-based rather than collection-based one.

According to Wolf (2005), an academic library needs both to satisfy its users and to prove to its funding bodies that it is worth investment. Quality of library and information services in terms of the value its users perceive it to have requires to be identified to justify the investments incurred in establishing them. Aligning the library and information services to meet the identified customers' expectations would result in reduced gaps in perceptions of service quality and hence improved customer satisfaction.

This calls for rethinking of establishing library and information services designed with the characteristics of target user categories in mind. There is therefore great need for MUA library administrators to consider assessing customer satisfaction from the service quality perspective. Identifying user needs and expectations would give library management an opportunity to design or review library services which are fine-tuned towards aligning them to meet those needs, thus boosting customer satisfaction with

library and information services. Improving quality of library and information services as perceived by customers would consequently lead to improved customer satisfaction.

Makori (2010) stated that one of the reasons for low use of university libraries in Kenya is the deteriorating quality of library services which could be attributed to a scenario of such libraries having designed poor quality information services with little or no reference to users' needs and expectations leading to inevitable under-utilization. There is great need for MUA to provide web-based library services coupled with information rich products.

5.4.3 Conduct regular Library User Surveys

In a university library setup with diverse categories of customers, it is necessary to conduct systematic and regular user surveys seeking to determine user needs, expectations and perceptions, eventually followed by establishing their satisfaction levels.

The study findings confirmed its prior assumption that, MUA library management do not have adequate customer knowledge, hence library and information services provided may have been designed without considering their needs and expectations leading to users not fully appreciating the quality of the services. In this client-centered information age, it is appropriate to base library services on customer information and knowledge rather than on library staff's perspective and assumptions of what the target customers may need (Broady-Preston & Preston, 1999).

It is submission of this study that library administrators require valid and reliable information about their customers in order to ascertain their expectations and design

information services that meets identified needs. Customer feedback on their perception towards information services would therefore give insight on appropriate strategies of improving library performance. Previous research studies demonstrated that, feedback or knowledge of customers reduces task uncertainty and improves performance.

Jayasundara (2009) suggested that, collating opinions of customers on current library services, the libraries can reorient and regulate the services to serve the customers better. The study emphasizes that information services provided in a university library should be geared towards accommodating the needs and expectations of various categories of the users served.

Bitner &Hubbert (1994) state that guessing what customers expect to receive can be perilous. The more sensible approach is to find out how customers judge the quality of existing service, and improve upon it because customer encounter with the institution creates a unique experience.

5.4.4 Establish Customer Care Policy

Since the informants from the library revealed unavailability of a policy to guide customer care, the study therefore recommends establishing of customer care policy to give systematic guidelines on how to provide customer care service as well as improve on customers' experiences at MUA library. This would go a long way in ensuring appropriate steps are taken towards implementing effective customer care strategies.

5.4.5 Creation of the Position of Customer Care Officer

The study established that there is no desk/office set aside to cater for customer care, implying there is no specific library staff assigned responsibility to provide customer care

services. Currently if there are any customer care activities done at MUA library, they are remotely done at other service desks such as circulation counter as a supplementary activity.

Filiz (2007) proposed that university library staff should strive at providing a constant, around-the-clock access to online databases mounted on user-friendly systems, and twenty-four hour help desk or technical support to the users. This calls for need to appoint a devoted library staff to offer customer care services and also distinctly create an office or a desk within the library. This would ensure that customer care service policy will be implemented effectively.

5.4.6 Enhance Information Accessibility

Since the study established that most of the library customers are working adult learners underlining the need of facilitating them on how they may access information resources conveniently. This would entail employing technology and enhancing infrastructure to ensure improved information access to both customers visiting the library and also those who would like to access off-campus. In addition, developing of institutional repository as well as creating relevant digital content would be a means of expanding access of information resources and services.

5.4.7 Training

The study recommends efforts to be made to train library staff on customer care, as well as conduct regular user-orientation trainings and literacy programs for library customers. This would ensure staff will have relevant professional skills to provide effective

customer care services, and also library users are equipped with adequate information literacy skills to maximally enable them utilize library and information services.

Maintain improved service quality and customer satisfaction

Service quality is an antecedent of satisfaction, thus improving on the quality of library and information services guided by identified user needs and customer expectations would result in improved customer satisfaction. Naidu (2009) emphasizes that library staff with a good understanding of users' needs and expectations; as well as their relation to customer satisfaction will experience greater success in satisfying their customers. However, Majid et al. (2001) advocates that the goal should not be simply to meet expectations but rather to exceed them by surprising and delighting customers. To do so, library staff must attempt to both manage and redefine customer behavior and expectations.

The study recommends that it is necessary for university library staff to pay keen attention to users' perceived service quality and satisfaction levels so as to develop a partnership with their customers, thus avoiding experiencing a decline in library usage. This is so because customers have options to find other avenues to access information rather than visiting the library.

With escalating availability of electronic resources, and the learning community being more interested in virtual information services on the internet, university libraries urgently need to assess the quality of its services and how user satisfaction can be improved. Broady-Preston & Preston (1999) opines that by providing quality information

services to customers, a university library is able to fulfill its goals and objectives in relation to the promotion of advanced learning and research.

Cooper & Dempsey (1998) views that university libraries are expected to offer convenient media to study and to research, having sufficient number of current sources and providing high quality services in order to satisfy their customers, because library users (customers) increasingly have options to obtain information services outside of the traditional academic library arena. Customers have expectations upon which they base their perceived value of services. Contemplating customer satisfaction means the prediction of levels of satisfaction from the service quality perspective, thus identifying the strengths and weaknesses of the information services to enhance the service provision of the university library (Jayasundara, 2009).

When services provided match consumers' expectations, they are perceived as satisfying thus considered to be of quality as opposed to those services that dissatisfy their needs and expectations (Kiran, 2010). Improving library and information services quality based on identified user needs, perceptions and expectations is therefore essential as a way of being responsive to their informational needs, thus resulting to improved customer satisfaction.

5.5 Proposed Framework for Improving Customer Satisfaction

In order to improve on customer satisfaction, the following framework was proposed as shown in figure 5.1: -

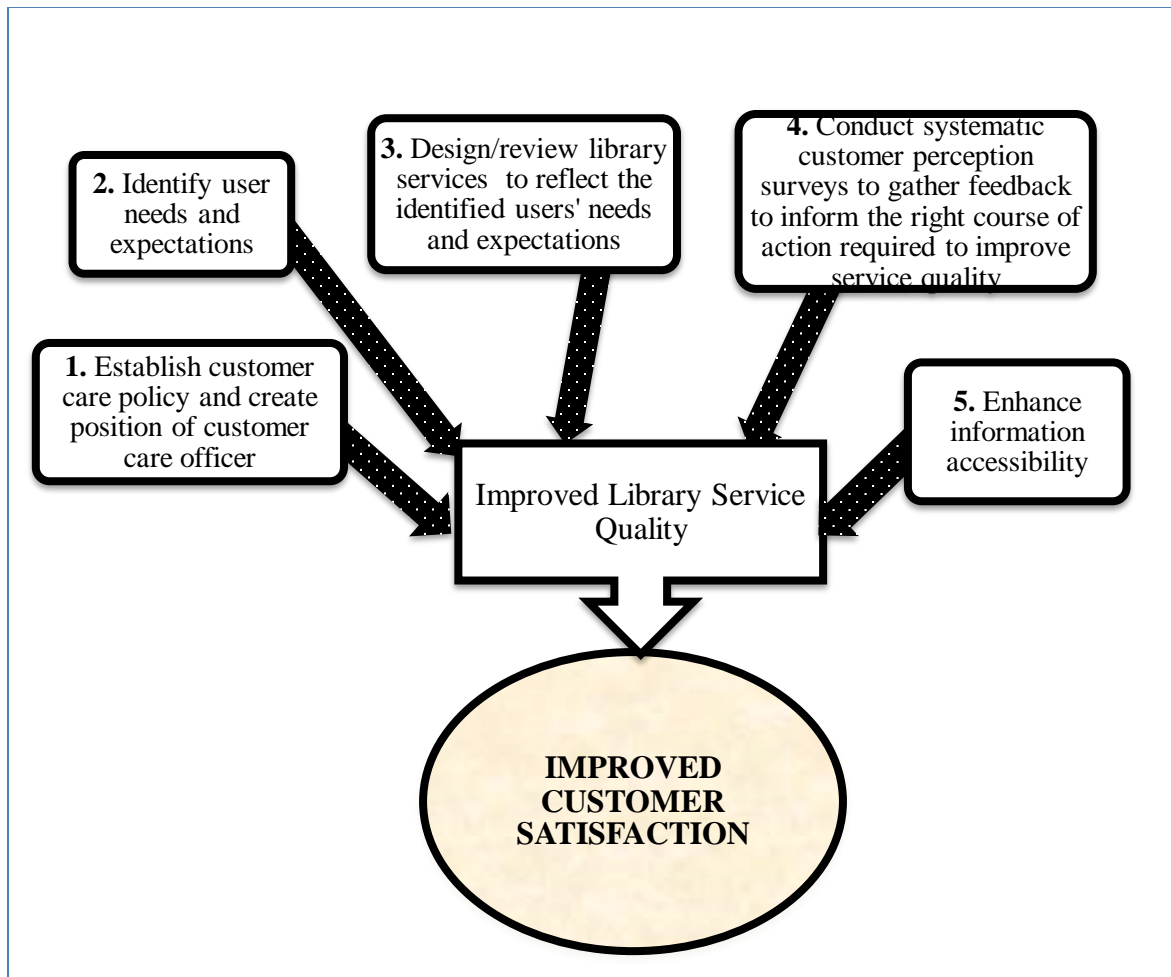


Figure 5.1: Proposed Framework for Improving Customer Satisfaction

(Source: Researcher, 2014)

As shown in the proposed model Figure 5.1, it was submission of this study that deliberate measures need to be put in place by library administration and to improve on library service quality in order to experience improvement on customer satisfaction in university libraries.

Recommended strategies to promote delivery of quality services include the following:

5.5.1 Establish customer care policy and create position of customer care officer

A policy would give guidelines on requirement and procedures for provision of customer care in libraries. It would also guide on training for library and information services providers so as to equip library staff with adequate customer care skills and appropriate attitudes.

5.5.2 Identify user needs and expectations: Improving library and information services based on identified user needs, perceptions and expectations is essential as a way of being responsive to their informational needs.

5.5.3 Design/review library services to reflect the identified users' needs and expectations: This would involve the library management to fine tune their services so as to be perceived as responsive to the needs of the intended customers.

5.5.4 Conduct customer perception surveys: Conduct systematic customer perception surveys to gather feedback to inform the right course of action required to improve service quality

5.5.5 Enhance information accessibility: This would entail employing technology and enhancing infrastructure to ensure improved information access to both users visiting the library and also those who would like to access off-campus.

Implementing the proposed framework for improving customer satisfaction would enable MUA library, as well as other modern university libraries to achieve improved service quality that are appreciated by customers resulting to higher levels of customer satisfaction. This would go a long way in enabling university libraries become a gateway to information rather than storehouses of knowledge. When customers perceive service quality as satisfying, this would consequently improve customer satisfaction levels.

5.6 Suggestion for Further Research

This study was narrowed to investigating customer satisfaction with library and information services with MUA as the case study. There is need for further research to be conducted to investigate barriers hindering delivery of quality services in university libraries in Kenya. This will enhance appreciation of customer care concept in Library & Information Science (LIS) discipline, as well as help in shedding light on the role of customer care officer in a university library.

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APPENDICES

APPENDIX A: SELF-COMPLETION QUESTIONNAIRES

(I) Questionnaire for Students

INSTRUCTIONS: Please tick your choice of response that reflects your correct answer in the space provided, and where necessary fill in by writing.

Section A: Personal Data

1. a) What is your level of study?

Undergraduate Student Postgraduate student

b) Which programme are you enrolled in? (Please tick)

BML BDS EBBM EMBA EAML DBL

2. Please indicate your status of employment

Formally Employed Self-employed Not employed

Section B: Frequency and usage patterns of library and information services

3. How often do you visit MUA library? (Please tick only one)

Everyday Twice a week Once a week

Once in a month Never Other

4. Why do you visit the MUA library? (You may give more than one choice)

To borrow information materials

To consult materials that cannot be borrowed

To do private studies

To access internet and online resources

For research purposes

Other purposes (Please specify

.....

5. (a) Does the library provide you with the following user-orientation facilities and information literacy programs?

Library use guide

Information help-desk

Information literacy trainings

Library rules and regulations bulletin

Occasional library newsletter

(b) Which information services are you aware they are provided at MUA library?

Circulation services []

Reference services []

Interlibrary loans []

Online information retrieval training []

Customer care services []

Any other, please specify

(c) Which other library and information service do you suggest should be provided?

.....

Section C: Customers' Expectations, Perceptions and Satisfaction Levels

6. How would you judge service quality of the following aspects of library services to your satisfaction using a rate of 1-5, (1 being lowest and 5 being the highest)?

NB: The following are the major dimensions to guide you in judging service quality: -

Reliability: Ability to perform the promised service dependably and accurately.

Assurance: Knowledge and courtesy of employees and their ability to inspire trust and confidence.

Tangibles: Appearance of physical facilities, equipment, personnel and communication material.

Empathy: Provision of individualized care and attention to customers.

Responsiveness: Willingness to help customers and provide prompt service.

CRITERIA	RATE (5=Highest; 1=Lowest)
Timeliness and promptness of services	
Ability to perform the promised service dependably and accurately	
Relevance of information materials to your informational needs	
Currency of information received	
Comprehensiveness and diversification of the collection	
Ease of use and convenient access to library collection	
Ease of use and access to the online catalogue (OPAC), electronic databases, or digital collection	
Remote access to facilitate further convenience access to library services	
Library web page (e.g. having correct and useful information content)	
Appearance of physical facilities, equipment, directional signs and communication materials	
Convenient opening hours	
Knowledge of library staff and their ability to inspire trust and confidence to customers	

Friendliness and politeness of library staff giving customers individual attention in a caring manner	
Training sessions on use of library and information services (e.g. training on use of electronic sources)	

7. On the overall, which dimension do you perceive to be the highest and the lowest choosing from among the dimensions of ‘Reliability; Assurance; Tangibles; Empathy; and Responsiveness’

Highest Lowest

8. Does the MUA library have a help desk allocated for customer care services?

Yes [] No []

If ‘Yes’, where is it located?

.....

9. How would you rate customer care at MUA library? (Please tick only one among the given options)

Very Satisfying [] Fairly satisfying [] Satisfying []

Very Dissatisfying [] Fairly dissatisfying [] Dissatisfying []

Any additional comment

.....

10. How would you rate the helpfulness of library staff assistance?

Very helpful [] Helpful [] Somewhat helpful [] Not helpful []

11. Comment on the overall quality of the library services at MUA?

.....

12. To what level of satisfaction do you find library and information services provided at MUA library?

	Very Satisfied	Fairy Satisfied	Satisfied	Dissatisfied	Fairy Dissatisfied	Very Dissatisfied
Convenient						
Helpful						

Any additional comment

.....

13. In your view, are the library and information services at MUA Library aligned with your expectations?

YES [] NO []

(a) If 'No', what do you expect to improve your satisfaction?

.....

Section D: Challenges Encountered and Suggestions for Improving Customer Satisfaction

14. What challenges do you encounter when using the library and information services at MUA?

.....

15. Have you experienced barrier(s) to any of the services offered which affect your ability to utilize a service effectively for your academic success? Yes [] No []

a) If **Yes**, please describe the barrier(s) encountered

.....

b) If **No**, how better would you suggest could done to support your learning and academic success?

.....

16. What suggestions do you propose in improving the quality of library and information services and customer satisfaction at MUA?

.....

Thank you for your kind assistance and cooperation.

(II) Questionnaire for Faculty Members

INSTRUCTIONS: Please tick your choice of response that reflects your correct answer in the space provided, and where necessary fill in by writing.

Section A: Personal Data

1. a) Please indicate your status of employment at MUA

Full-time basis [] Part-time basis []

b) What is the duration of your engagement at MUA? (Please tick)

6 Months and above [] Below 6 Months []

Section B: Frequency and usage patterns of library and information services

2. How often do you visit MUA library? (Please tick only one)

- | | | | | | |
|-----------------|--------------------------|--------------|--------------------------|-------------|--------------------------|
| Everyday | <input type="checkbox"/> | Twice a week | <input type="checkbox"/> | Once a week | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| Once in a month | <input type="checkbox"/> | Never | <input type="checkbox"/> | Other | <input type="checkbox"/> |

3. Why do you visit the MUA library? (You may give more than one choice)

- To borrow information materials
- To consult material that cannot be borrowed
- To do private studies
- To access internet and online resources
- For research purposes

Other purposes (Please specify

.....

4. (a) Does the library provide you with the following user-orientation facilities and information literacy programs?

- Library use guide
- Information help-desk
- Information literacy trainings
- Library rules and regulations bulletin
- Occasional library newsletter

(b) Which information services are you aware they are provided at MUA library?

- Circulation services
- Reference services
- Interlibrary loans
- Online information retrieval training
- Customer care services

Any other, please specify

(c) Which other library and information service do you suggest should be provided?

.....

Section C: Customers' Expectations, Perceptions and Satisfaction Levels

5. How would you judge service quality of the following aspects of library services to your satisfaction using a rate of 1-5, (1 being lowest and 5 being the highest)?

NB: the following are the major dimensions to guide you in judging service quality: -

Reliability: Ability to perform the promised service dependably and accurately.

Assurance: Knowledge and courtesy of employees and their ability to inspire trust and confidence.

Tangibles: Appearance of physical facilities, equipment, personnel and communication material.

Empathy: Provision of individualized care and attention to customers.

Responsiveness: Willingness to help customers and provide prompt service.

CRITERIA	RATE (5=Highest;1=Lowest)
Timeliness and promptness of services	
Ability to perform the promised service dependably and accurately	
Relevance of information materials to your informational needs	
Currency of information received	
Comprehensiveness and diversification of the collection	
Ease of use and convenient access to library collection	
Ease of use and access to the online catalogue (OPAC), electronic databases, or digital collection	
Remote access to facilitate further convenience access to library services	
Library web page (e.g. having correct and useful content information)	
Appearance of physical facilities, equipment, directional signs and communication materials	
Convenient opening hours	
Knowledge of library staff and their ability to inspire trust and confidence to customers	
Friendliness and politeness of staff giving customers individual attention in caring manner	
Training sessions on use of library and information services (e.g. training on use of electronic sources)	

6. On the overall, which dimension do you perceive to be the highest and the lowest choosing from among the dimensions of 'Reliability; Assurance; Tangibles; Empathy; and Responsiveness'

Highest Lowest

7. Does the MUA library have a help desk allocated for customer care services?

Yes [] No []

If Yes, where is it located?

8. How would you rate customer care at MUA library? (Please tick only one among the given options)

Very Satisfying [] Fairly satisfying [] Satisfying []

Very Dissatisfying [] Fairly dissatisfying [] Dissatisfying []

b) If **No**, how better can be done to support your learning and academic success?

.....
.....

15. What suggestions do you propose in improving the quality of library and information services and customer satisfaction at MUA?

.....
.....

Thank you for your kind assistance and cooperation.

APPENDIX B: INTERVIEW SCHEDULE FOR INFORMANTS**(I) Library Staff Interview Schedule:**

1. What are some of the user-orientation facilities and information literacy programs provided at the MUA library?
2. Are there user surveys conducted at MUA library? If yes, which ones and how often?
3. Amongst the information services provided at MUA library, which one do you rate high and low?
4. What determined/guided on how library and information services offered at MUA were designed?
5. What are some of the policies that are used to guide provision of library and information services at MUA? Is there any formulated policy distinctly for customer care?
6. What level of satisfaction would you consider the overall library and information services at MUA?
7. How satisfying would you judge the overall quality of the information services at MUA library?
8. How would you rate customer care at MUA library?
9. What suggestions would you give to improve customer satisfaction with library and information services at MUA?
10. Which other additional information would you like to provide regarding this matter?

(II) Administrative Staff Interview Schedule:

1. How is customer care services conducted at MUA?
2. Does MUA have in place a guiding policy on service quality and customer service?
3. Are there user surveys conducted at MUA? If yes, how often?
4. What are some of the user-orientation facilities and information literacy programs provided at the MUA library?
5. Do you consider information services that are provided at MUA library high or low?
6. How satisfying would you judge the overall quality of the information services and resources at MUA library?
7. How would you rate customer care at MUA library?

8. Would you consider overall library and information services at MUA satisfying or dissatisfying to the intended customers?
9. What suggestions would you give to improve customer satisfaction with library and information services at MUA?
10. Which other additional information would you like to provide in this matter?