

**STUDENTS' PERCEPTIONS OF THE ROLE OF THE LIBRARY IN THEIR STUDIES  
AT TSHWANE UNIVERSITY OF TECHNOLOGY, POLOKWANE CAMPUS**

by

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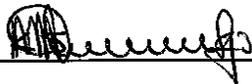
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**FEBRUARY 2017**

**DECLARATION**

Student number: 51860600

I declare that ***Students' perceptions of the role of the library in their studies at Tshwane University of Technology, Polokwane Campus*** is my own work and that all the sources that I have used or quoted have been indicated and acknowledged by means of complete references.



SIGNATURE

(Mr Kwetepo Julious Malatji)

03-02-2017

DATE

## **DEDICATION**

I dedicate this study to my parents, Mr SJ Malatji and Mrs MJ Malatji and to my late uncles Mmatase Thomas and Matsobane Samuel Malahlela. May their souls rest in peace.

## **ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS**

I express my gratitude and sincere appreciation to my supervisors, Professor GV Jiyane and Dr G Olasina. Without their supervision and guidance, this work would not have been possible.

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## **ABSTRACT**

The purpose of the study was to investigate students' perceptions of the role of the library in their studies. A positivist research paradigm was employed and quantitative and qualitative research approaches were followed. The research design was a case study. Three sampling methods were used in the study. To obtain a sample of the students, stratified random sampling and systematic sampling were applied. In the case of the library staff, purposive sampling was used. Data was collected from students and a limited number of library staff using questionnaires and interview schedules respectively. The latter was for the purpose of validating and collecting complete data from students. The findings of the study revealed that students at TUT, PC have positive perceptions of the library and are satisfied with library services. The findings of the study further revealed that students find the library to be user-friendly and they use the library to borrow materials, read their own notes and books, access the internet and study.

Factors, such as opening and closing hours, a conducive environment for studying, and knowledge of the library staff helps the library to contribute to students' achievement outcomes. Moreover, the findings reveal that lack of resources, non-attendance of information literacy programmes by students, a lack of research support, and an inadequate infrastructure hinder the library's contribution to students' achievement outcomes. The research recommends that there should be a credit-bearing and compulsory information literacy programme offered as part of the curriculum at all levels of study at TUT, PC. Furthermore, library staff need to engage and interact well with students in order to better meet the needs of individual students. They should have continuous engagement with students and notify them about important events within the library.

**KEY TERMS:**

User perceptions, Academic library, Academic studies, Tshwane University of Technology, Students' perceptions of the library, User satisfaction.

## Table of Contents

<b>DECLARATION</b> .....	<b>i</b>
<b>DEDICATION</b> .....	<b>ii</b>
<b>ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS</b> .....	<b>iii</b>
<b>ABSTRACT</b> .....	<b>iv</b>
<b>Table of Contents</b> .....	<b>vi</b>
<b>LIST OF TABLES</b> .....	<b>x</b>
<b>LIST OF FIGURES</b> .....	<b>xi</b>
<b>LIST OF ABBREVIATIONS AND ACRONYMS</b> .....	<b>xii</b>
<b>CHAPTER ONE</b> .....	<b>1</b>
<b>BACKGROUND TO THE STUDY</b> .....	<b>1</b>
<b>1.1 Introduction to the study</b> .....	<b>1</b>
<b>1.2 Contextual setting</b> .....	<b>5</b>
<b>1.3 Problem statement</b> .....	<b>7</b>
<b>1.4 Purpose of the study</b> .....	<b>8</b>
<b>1.5 The objectives of the study</b> .....	<b>8</b>
<b>1.6 Research questions</b> .....	<b>8</b>
<b>1.7 Significance of the study</b> .....	<b>9</b>
<b>1.8 Scope of the study</b> .....	<b>9</b>
<b>1.9 Literature Review</b> .....	<b>10</b>
<b>1.10 Research Methodology</b> .....	<b>10</b>
<b>1.11 Ethical considerations</b> .....	<b>11</b>
<b>1.12 Definition of key concepts</b> .....	<b>11</b>
<b>1.13 Organisation of the dissertation</b> .....	<b>12</b>
<b>1.14 Summary</b> .....	<b>14</b>
<b>CHAPTER TWO</b> .....	<b>15</b>
<b>LITERATURE REVIEW</b> .....	<b>15</b>
<b>2.1 Introduction</b> .....	<b>15</b>
<b>2.2 The role of academic libraries</b> .....	<b>16</b>
<b>2.3 Students' perceptions</b> .....	<b>17</b>
<b>2.3.1 Students' perceptions of libraries</b> .....	<b>17</b>
<b>2.3.2 Students' perceptions of satisfaction with library services</b> .....	<b>19</b>

2.4 Usability of libraries to students.....	21
2.5 Factors which enhance and, or hinder the library’s contribution to students’ achievement outcomes.....	24
2.5.1 Factors which enhance the library’s contribution to students’ achievement outcomes .....	24
2.5.2 Factors which hinder the library’s contribution to students’ achievement outcomes .....	25
2.6 Theoretical framework.....	26
2.7 Summary.....	27
<b>CHAPTER THREE.....</b>	<b>28</b>
<b>RESEARCH METHODOLOGY.....</b>	<b>28</b>
3.1 Introduction .....	28
3.2 Research paradigm .....	28
3.3 Research approach .....	29
3.4. Research design.....	32
3.5. Population.....	33
3.5.1 Students.....	33
3.5.2 Library staff.....	33
3.6. Sampling procedures and methods .....	33
3.6.1 Sampling method .....	34
3.6.1.1 <i>Stratified random sampling</i> .....	34
3.6.1.2 Systematic sampling.....	35
3.6. 1.3 <i>Purposive sampling</i> .....	36
3.6.2 Sample size.....	37
3.7 Data collection procedures and tools .....	37
3.7.1 Data collection tools .....	38
3.7.1.1 Questionnaire .....	38
3.7.1.2 Interviews.....	39
3.7.2 Data collection procedures .....	39
3.8 Validity and reliability .....	40
3.9 Ethical considerations .....	41
3.10 Methods of data analysis.....	41
3.11 Summary.....	44

<b>CHAPTER FOUR.....</b>	<b>45</b>
<b>DATA ANALYSIS, PRESENTATION AND INTERPRETATION .....</b>	<b>45</b>
<b>4.1 Introduction .....</b>	<b>45</b>
<b>4.2 Demographic data.....</b>	<b>46</b>
<b>4.2.1 Gender.....</b>	<b>47</b>
<b>4.2.2 Age of the respondents .....</b>	<b>48</b>
<b>4.2.3 Faculty distribution .....</b>	<b>49</b>
<b>4.2.4 Library usage distribution .....</b>	<b>50</b>
<b>4.2.5 Average use of the library .....</b>	<b>51</b>
<b>4.2.6 Reasons for visiting the library.....</b>	<b>52</b>
<b>4.3 Data analysis .....</b>	<b>53</b>
<b>4.3.1 The role of the academic library .....</b>	<b>54</b>
<b>4.3.2 Students’ perceptions of the role of the TUT, PCL in their studies .....</b>	<b>56</b>
<b>4.3.3 Students’ perceptions of satisfaction with library services .....</b>	<b>58</b>
<b>4.3.4 Usability of the library to students .....</b>	<b>59</b>
<b>4.3.5 Factors enhancing and hindering the library’s contribution to students’ achievement outcomes.....</b>	<b>61</b>
<b><i>4.3.5.1 Factors enhancing the library’s contribution to students’ achievement outcomes .....</i></b>	<b><i>61</i></b>
<b><i>4.3.5.2 Factors hindering the library’s contribution to students’ achievement outcomes .....</i></b>	<b><i>62</i></b>
<b>4.3.6 Suggestions on how to improve overall library usage .....</b>	<b>63</b>
<b>4.4 Interview report .....</b>	<b>64</b>
<b>4.5 Summary.....</b>	<b>64</b>
<b>CHAPTER FIVE.....</b>	<b>66</b>
<b>SUMMARY, CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS .....</b>	<b>66</b>
<b>5.1 Introduction .....</b>	<b>66</b>
<b>5.2 Summary of findings.....</b>	<b>66</b>
<b>5.2.1 Perceptions of students of the role of the TUT, PCL in their studies .....</b>	<b>67</b>
<b>5.2.2 Students’ perceptions of satisfaction with library services .....</b>	<b>67</b>
<b>5.2.3 Establish usability of the library to students .....</b>	<b>68</b>
<b>5.2.4 Factors enhancing and hindering the library’s contribution to students’ achievement outcomes.....</b>	<b>68</b>

<b>5.2.5 Suggestions on how to improve overall library usage .....</b>	<b>69</b>
<b>5.3 Conclusions.....</b>	<b>70</b>
<b>5.3.1 Perceptions of students of the role of the TUT, PCL in their studies .....</b>	<b>70</b>
<b>5.3.2 Students' perceptions of satisfaction with library services .....</b>	<b>70</b>
<b>5.3.3 Establish the usability of the library to students.....</b>	<b>70</b>
<b>5.3.4 Factors enhancing and hindering the library's contribution to students' achievement outcomes.....</b>	<b>71</b>
<b>5.3.5 Suggestions on how to improve overall library usage .....</b>	<b>71</b>
<b>5.4 Recommendations .....</b>	<b>72</b>
<b>5.4.1 Perceptions of students of the role of the TUT, PCL in their studies .....</b>	<b>72</b>
<b>5.4.2 Students' perceptions of satisfaction with library services .....</b>	<b>72</b>
<b>5.4.3 Establish usability of the library to students .....</b>	<b>72</b>
<b>5.4.4 Suggestions on how to improve overall library usage .....</b>	<b>72</b>
<b>5.5 Recommendations for further study .....</b>	<b>74</b>
<b>5.6 Summary.....</b>	<b>75</b>
<b>List of reference sources.....</b>	<b>76</b>
<b>APPENDICES.....</b>	<b>83</b>
<b>Appendix A: Questionnaire - Students.....</b>	<b>83</b>
<b>Consent to participate in this study .....</b>	<b>84</b>
<b>Appendix B: Interview schedule- Library staff .....</b>	<b>91</b>
<b>Consent to participate in this study .....</b>	<b>92</b>

**LIST OF TABLES**

Table 3.1 Illustration of number of sampling units in strata and sampling size in each stratum.....35

Table 3.2 Illustration of sources of data and data analysis.....43

## **LIST OF FIGURES**

Figure 4.1 Gender.....	47
Figure 4.2. The age distribution of the respondents.....	48
Figure 4.3 Faculty distributions of respondents.....	49
Figure 4.4 Library usage.....	50
Figure 4.5 Average use of the library.....	51
Figure 4.6 Students' reasons for visiting the library.....	52
Figure 4.7 Perceptions of students of the role of the academic library.....	55
Figure 4.8 Perceptions of students of the role of the TUT, PCL in their studies....	56
Figure 4.9 Students' perceptions of satisfaction with library services.....	58
Figure 4.10 Usability of the library to students.....	59

## **LIST OF ABBREVIATIONS AND ACRONYMS**

AIOU	Allama Iqbal Open University
OOU	OlabisiOnabanjo University
PC	Polokwane Campus.
PCL	Polokwane Campus Library
TUT	Tshwane University of Technology
U.I	University of Ibadan
UNAAB	University of Agriculture, Abeokuta

## CHAPTER ONE

### BACKGROUND TO THE STUDY

#### 1.1 Introduction to the study

Libraries contain records ranging from intellectual, cultural, economic, and social materials and are essential collection of tools in learning at any level. Libraries also serve as the intellectual centres of a society (Ogbedor 2011). The author further states that in providing a wide variety of information sources libraries expose users to different information sources with their respective values. In addition, users are also provided with the opportunity to learn and continue learning throughout their lives. Itsekor (2012:13) notes that libraries have always served as tools for educational advancement at all levels of education. Moreover, libraries assist in individualised, group and virtual learning and improve students' performance throughout the academic curriculum. Libraries are also central to the provision of the right type of information resources that empower educational institutions to produce highly resourceful people who can have positive impact on national development (Itsekor 2012).

Therefore, it may be said that higher institutions establish libraries so that they can serve as tools of educational progression by supporting learning and teaching through the provision of materials. In addition, Ugwu (2008:26) notes that academic libraries are information centres established in support of the mission of their parent institutions to generate knowledge as well as to equip people with knowledge which will enable them to serve society and advance the well-being of mankind. Jain (2012:137) also notes that the main function of academic libraries is to support the mission and vision of their parent institutions. Oyewusi and Oyeboade (2009) state that the primary purpose of university libraries is to support teaching, learning, and research in ways which are consistent with, and supportive of, the institution's mission and goals. In addition, library resources and services should be sufficient in quality, depth, diversity, and currency to support the institution's curriculum.

In his study, Gunasekera (2010:44) discovered that academic libraries are central to any learning community and provide a facility for students and faculty to conduct research and advance their knowledge. Academic libraries are expected to provide information services which will support research to various categories of library users in order to achieve the mission and vision of the university as mother body. The mission and vision of most universities generally include the creation of new knowledge and the production of informed members of the community and professionals (Gunasekera 2010). Furthermore, Knight (2012) indicates that the role of the library in academic institutions is generally understood to meet the information and research needs of students, faculty and staff.

Gretes (2013) contends that the essential role that academic libraries play is providing access to books. Access is the primary factor that leads to raising student test scores in all aspects of literacy. Access to books not only fosters learning and improves reading achievement, but access to books also appears to offset the impact of poverty. Academic libraries enable students from disadvantaged backgrounds to have access to reading materials which they could otherwise not afford. Therefore, it may be said that academic libraries improve education by supporting teachers with teaching materials and students with learning materials. As such, the academic library plays a central role in teaching and learning. Its activities may help or hinder the process of learning and teaching.

Wong and Webb (2011) state that library usage contributes positively to students' academic performance and, therefore, to the university's effectiveness. In addition, Biagini (2012:2) indicates that students at every grade achieve greater academic success when they have access to a library. Although it is evident above that academic libraries have been valuable in universities, Dube (2011:28) argues that the value of libraries is no longer self-evident because of information glut characterised by free web information and users who are increasingly becoming independent in their information seeking. Therefore, different authors have different insights regarding the role that libraries play in support of students' studies.

Students themselves also seem to be holding varying perspectives with regard to the role of libraries. Datig (2014:352) notes that students' value libraries as more than just a place to study and find books related to their coursework. They perceive it as a place to develop their knowledge. Students perceive the library as essential for substantiating the knowledge that they obtain in class and also for providing a quiet and comfortable place to study. For instance, Chinese academic libraries are considerably well perceived by international students although they have differing purposes, and differing needs for library services and information resources (Nzivo & Chuanfu 2012).

Ashaver and Bem-Bura (2013:14) contend that some students at Benue State University and the Federal University of Agriculture Makurdi, Benue State, in Nigeria have a negative perception of the library services rendered by these university libraries. Those perceptions arise from students' lack of awareness on how to search for information materials and ignorance on information search and retrieval strategies. In addition, outdated materials in these libraries also have an impact on the negative perceptions that students hold about libraries. Ashaver and Bem-Bura (2013) further state that students get frustrated when they search for current materials on a topic and cannot lay their hands on it easily. Therefore, they resort to other means of information retrieval than the library which should serve them better and is free for all. Moreover, the attitude of most librarians and library officers toward students in their search for information, or their awareness about library use and services, is not encouraging.

The library's physical building and infrastructure also play an important role in how students perceive it and its overall function and role. If students find that the library building and infrastructure does not meet their needs and expectations they may form a negative perception of it without even making use of the actual library services. Obasuyi and Idiodi (2015:121) state that the significance of an academic library can be assessed by the adequacy of the library's physical facilities and infrastructures, such as the library building, seating capacity, air conditioning system, and lighting situation.

Furthermore, the library's information resources ranging from textbooks, periodicals, and reference sources also play an important role in assessing the significance of the academic library. In addition, the availability of government publications, thesis and dissertations, grey literature, electronic and digital materials and the provision of adequate library personnel play an important role in determining the significance of a library. Provision of adequate library services, such as user education and orientation, reference services, internet services, reprographic services, interlibrary loan services, exhibition and display, access to online databases, and referral services are also essential (Obasuyi & Idiodi 2015).

Dewey (2014) indicates that students do not see the library as a primary destination for research because they perceive the library only within their electronic paradigm. As a result, a library which is not electronically equipped does not meet their expectations. Based on the above statements, it may be assumed that perhaps students' perceptions of the library arise from the actual use of the library and how well it meets their needs and expectations. For instance, if a library meets the needs and expectations of students they may develop positive perceptions of the library. On the other hand, students may also develop their perception of the library based on what they have heard from others without making use of the library themselves.

In short, the reason students have different perspectives of the role of the library may be because each student has had a different experience in the library. Sometimes the library meets their needs or it falls short of their expectations. Nonetheless, there are students who do not recognise the role played by the library in their studies. Usually, those students use the library for the advancement of their social functions. Furthermore, there are students who value the physical buildings of the library rather than the materials it houses. Also, there are students who perceive the library negatively because it does not seem to meet their expectations. Additionally, there are students who appear to recognise the role of the library in their studies or the potential role that the library may play in this regard. As a result of these compelling reasons, the current study investigates students' perceptions of the role of the library in their studies.

Students' views of the role of libraries in support of their studies are important as they can help libraries to refine and transform according to students' needs (Datig 2014). Moreover, students' perceptions of the role of the library in their studies can also help the academic librarian to measure the extent to which the library contributes to student outcome achievements. The research may serve the purpose of evaluation to see if the perception of libraries on the part of university management agrees with those of students. Subsequently, the research may help the library to identify factors which enhance and hinder the library's contribution to students' perceived outcome expectations. Thus, there can be improved understanding of what influences students' use of the library. Libraries will also be able to provide services which meet the needs of students.

The current study investigates students' perceptions of the role of library in their studies within a South African context as there is no evidence of literature reporting South African students' perceptions of academic libraries. Hence, it is important to investigate students' perceptions of the role of the library in their studies. Thus, the contextual setting for the investigation is the Tshwane University of Technology, Polokwane Campus (TUT, PC).

## **1.2 Contextual setting**

TUT was established on 1 January 2004, with the merging of the former Technikon Northern Gauteng, Technikon North-West and Technikon Pretoria. At the time of the merger, the uniquely South African institutional designation of technikon was dropped in favour for the internationally accepted university of technology designation. TUT's geographic footprint covers four of South Africa's nine provinces, namely, Gauteng, Mpumalanga, Limpopo and the North-West Province. TUT has nine campuses, namely, Arts Campus, Arcadia Campus, Emalahleni Campus, Ga-Rankuwa Campus, Mbombela Campus, Polokwane Campus, Pretoria Campus, Soshanguve North Campus, and Soshanguve South Campus (Student diary 2016:05).

TUT enrolls approximately 60 000 students annually and its student body is one of the most demographically representative in the country in terms of both race and gender, reflecting the Rainbow Nation in all its diversity (Tshwane University of Technology 2011). TUT strives to be a leading institution, viewing the diversity of its staff, students and other stakeholders as strengths to be nurtured in service of the country and the African continent. The University is committed to on-going transformation to make it ever more responsive to the needs of Southern Africa and the continent as a whole (Tshwane University of Technology 2011). Each of the nine TUT campuses have a library which serves and supports the academic activities of the university. It may be difficult for a single study to cover all campus libraries. It is as a result of this, that the choice of the contextual setting for the current research is TUT, Polokwane Campus Library (PCL).

TUT, PCL serves approximately 800 students daily (Mukhola 2014). The library houses 6129 books covering different subjects, such as, communications, marketing, accounting and finance, policing and information technology; 81 reserved materials and 434 multimedia materials (Tshwane University of Technology 2011). In addition to the materials it houses; the library also provides internet access to users and has approximately 1000 computers which are connected to Wi-Fi. Moreover, the library subscribes to databases such as Sabinet, Ebscohost, to mention a few. Students and staff are also provided with information literacy training by the library staff as, and when, they require it (Mukhola 2014). The TUT, PCL is constantly being improved by means of acquiring the latest materials and upgrading to the latest technological devices available (Tshwane University of Technology 2011).

Most staff members who make use of the library are academics, such as lecturers and tutors. They use the library as an aid to support their teaching. Lecturers and tutors also play an important role in information literacy training as once they have been trained they indirectly transfer their skills to students during their teaching. However, it has not been clearly established how students perceive such efforts which are intended to support their studies. Perhaps a better understanding of the perceptions of the role of the library by students can improve existing knowledge in the field of User Studies.

### **1.3 Problem statement**

Mhinga and Agyei (2012) report that 53.92 % of students at TUT, Polokwane Campus use the library mainly for reading and studying their personal notes only. This has led to low rates of borrowing or of using library-based materials. However, the library continues to make available information resources to students at all times by housing current materials both in print and electronic form. Additional services include providing computers and free internet. Moreover, the library continues to provide information literacy training and library orientation to students. Despite these, the rate of use of the library by students remains low (Mhinga & Agyei 2012). It appears as if students perceive the role of the library only within physical parameters, such as, providing them with a place to study. Perhaps, the same perceptions are shared by students at other universities.

For instance, Nkosi, Leach and Hoskins (2012) report that at the National University of Lesotho, students generally use the library to read lecturers' notes. Moreover, students tend to use the library for other activities, such as social gatherings, rather than for locating, accessing and retrieving information. Likewise, a study conducted by Mostofa and Hossain (2014:88) reveals that at the University of Rajshahi in Bangladesh 55.6% of students prefer the library as a place of study and 42.86% students visit the library for exam preparation. In view of the above, it becomes important to investigate students' perceptions of the role of the library in their studies. Students' perceptions help in developing an understanding of why and how students use the library in the way they do. It also contributes to improving the understanding of students' perceptions. Finally, it helps in establishing how useful libraries are to students as well as in identifying factors which enhance and hinder the library's contribution to students' achievement outcomes.

## **1.4 Purpose of the study**

The purpose of the study was to investigate students' perceptions of the role of library in their studies. This helps to improve the understanding of perceptions in the context of library use by students.

## **1.5 The objectives of the study**

The objectives of the study were to:

- 1.5.1 Determine the perceptions of students of the role of the TUT, PCL in their studies.
- 1.5.2 Find out students' perceptions of satisfaction with library services.
- 1.5.3 Establish usability of the library to students.
- 1.5.4 Identify factors which enhance and hinder the library's contribution to students' achievement outcomes.
- 1.5.5 To offer suggestions on how to improve the overall library usage.

## **1.6 Research questions**

The following are research questions of the study:

- 1.6.1 What are the perceptions of students of the role of the TUT, PCL in their studies?
- 1.6.2 What are students' perceptions of satisfaction with library services?
- 1.6.3 How usable is the library to students?
- 1.6.4 Which factors enhance and hinder the library's contribution to student's achievement outcome?
- 1.6.5 What could be done to improve the overall library usage?

## **1.7 Significance of the study**

The study investigated students' perceptions of the role of the library in their studies at TUT, PC. The results of the study can benefit both the library and students. The research has the potential to reveal the relationship between students' perceptions of the library and their use of the library. The relationship can be a vital factor in improving the rate of library usage by students. Furthermore, the library may get an insight into what constitutes those perceptions. Students' perceptions can help the library to improve its services to meet the needs of students. Moreover, the study provided students with the platform to express their views regarding what they need in the library. If those views are taken into consideration students can benefit by getting better services. Lastly, it is expected that the findings of the study contribute to the existing literature in the field of User Studies and the perceptions of students of the role of the library in their studies.

## **1.8 Scope of the study**

Although TUT has nine campuses across South Africa, this study was conducted at PC. After all, the researcher identified a need for the study at this particular campus and excluded other TUT campuses to reduce costs which could be incurred through travelling to the different campuses. The study focused on the final year students from TUT, PC in the following Faculties, Economics and Finance, Humanities, Information and Communication Technology and Management Sciences. The study focused on students' perceptions of the role of the library in their studies and students' perceptions of satisfaction with library services. Also, the study covered the usability of the library to students and as well as factors which enhance and hinder the library's contribution to students' achievement outcomes. Finally the scope covered a limited number of library staff.

## **1.9 Literature Review**

The literature review in this study relates to the study's purpose and objectives. The literature covers topics on the role of academic libraries and the perceptions of students of the role of the library in their studies. Moreover, the literature review covers topics, such as students' perceptions of satisfaction with library services, and the factors which enhance and hinder the contribution of libraries to students' achievement outcomes. The literature review helped to enhance the researcher's knowledge and understanding of the topic under study. Additionally, it informed the researcher about what was already known about the problem or questions that the researcher plans to investigate. Thus, information gathered at this stage helped the researcher to define the research area for the current study.

Sources consulted in this study for the literature review are online journals accessed through online databases such as Ebscohost, Science Direct and Sabinet and library books. Furthermore, articles, conference papers and online books accessed through Google and Goggle Scholar were consulted to gain a deeper understanding of what previous research studies were about. Chapter two of this dissertation is devoted to a detailed literature review on these issues.

## **1.10 Research Methodology**

A discussion of the research method used in this study explains how, where, and when the research study was conducted. It is like an action plan. It contains details on what was done in the research and how it was done. It provides an overview on factors, such as, the research paradigm, research approach, and research design, population of the study, sampling method, and data collection tools. The positivist research paradigm was employed in this study. Also, both quantitative and qualitative research approaches are followed in this study. For the purpose of this study, case study design research was used to investigate students' perceptions of the role of the library in their studies in-depth.

The population of the study were final year students and a limited number of library staff at TUT, PC. Data was collected using questionnaires and an interview schedule. Using two data collection tools helped the researcher in improving the validity and reliability of the study by collecting complementary data. Full details are discussed in chapter three.

### **1.11 Ethical considerations**

Ethics are professional standards which lead the researcher to uphold the principles of integrity during the study. Also, they serve as moral principles intended to guide the researcher in situations where harm can occur to research participants. Informed consent, confidentiality and acknowledgment of sources are ethical considerations which were implied in this study. Research participants were informed about the purpose of the study, what type of information is needed from them and how the information was used. Furthermore, participants were given an opportunity to volunteer agreeing to partake in the study. Participants also had a chance to withdraw their participation in the study at any stage during data collection. Moreover, their identity remained unknown. The researcher also acknowledged any sources cited in this study.

### **1.12 Definition of key concepts**

#### **a. Academic library**

An academic library forms an integral part of a college, university or other institution of post-secondary education (Buchholz 2011:11).

#### **b. Library**

A library is a building housing material, such as, books, reference sources, including dictionaries, encyclopaedias, recordings, and other reading, viewing, or listening materials arranged and catalogued in a fixed way.

### **c. Perception**

Perception is the opinion held by an individual. It is the art of linking what is sensed with some past experience to give the sensation meaning (Masinti 2005:04). In this study, perception refers to the opinion held by students of the role of the library in support of students' studies.

### **d. Student**

The word 'student' refers to an individual who has registered to study at a higher institution, such as a university, university of technology or college. In this study, the word 'student' refers to a person who is registered for courses at TUT, PC.

### **e. Studies**

Studies refer to students' learning activities at a college or university which is aimed at acquiring knowledge or skills in a particular branch of learning, such as, science, art, technology or law.

### **f. University**

A university is an institution of higher education where one can study for a degree and do research in a variety of subjects. It provides both undergraduate education and postgraduate education (*Oxford advanced learner's dictionary 2010*). In this study, the word 'university' refers to TUT, PC.

## **1.13 Organisation of the dissertation**

The dissertation has preliminary pages and chapters as identified below.

### **Preliminary pages**

Title page, declaration, abstract, dedication, acknowledgements, table of contents, list of tables and figures, list of abbreviations and acronyms, and list of appendices.

## **Chapter one**

This chapter introduces the study and covers the following areas: contextual setting, statement of the problem, research questions, purpose and objectives of the study; research questions, significance of the study, scope of the study, and definitions of terms.

## **Chapter two**

This chapter focuses on the literature review which includes a review of literature on relevant topics based on the set objectives, including the role of academic libraries and the perception of students of the role of the library in their studies.

## **Chapter three**

Chapter three outlines the research methodology used in the study. It contains a description and explanation of the research approach, research method, population and sampling, data collection method and procedures and ethical considerations.

## **Chapter four**

Chapter four provides a presentation of the results of the data analysis, an interpretation of the results and includes a report of the data using tables and figures.

## **Chapter five**

This chapter provides a summary of findings, conclusions drawn based on the major findings and recommendations which the researcher believes should be implemented. This chapter also includes areas of study which, in the researcher's opinion, should be investigated further.

## **1.14 Summary**

This chapter provided introduction and contextual setting or background to the research topic under study. It explained the problem and provided an overview of the purpose of the study, its objectives and research questions. In addition, this chapter provided justification of the importance of the study, the scope of the study and an outline of the organisation of the dissertation. The next chapter presents the literature review for the study.

## **CHAPTER TWO**

### **LITERATURE REVIEW**

#### **2.1 Introduction**

This chapter provides a holistic overview of literature relating to the objectives of the study as already stated in 1.9 in chapter 1. According to Pickard (2007: 51) conducting a literature review involves the collection and synthesis of existing information relating to the research topic. A literature review acquaints the researcher with current thinking in the subject area as well as research methods and research processes used by other researchers investigating the topic. The literature review helps the researcher to put the research into the context of previous research investigations by showing how it fits into a particular field (Bertram & Christiansen 2014:13). A literature review also familiarises a researcher with the latest developments in the particular area of research. Moreover, it provides a framework for relating new findings to previous findings in the discussion section of a research paper. Without determining the state of previous research, it is impossible to establish how the new research advances the previous research. Furthermore, it informs the study of the influential researchers and research groups in the field (Randolph 2001; Du Plooy 2002).

The literature review comprises research conducted on the topic of the role of academic libraries, students' perceptions of the role of the library in their studies and students' perceptions of satisfaction with library services. In addition, the literature review also includes information on the usability of libraries to students, and factors which enhance and, or hinder libraries' contributions to students' achievement outcomes. All the topics in this section, excluding the topic on the role of academic libraries in 2.2, are derived from the research objectives and questions. Academic libraries was included as a topic of study to give a broader overview of their role so that a finding can be made as to whether or not students' perceptions of the role of the library are in line with other members of university communities, such as, librarians, the library's management and lecturers. The key findings from the study were used to confirm and/or reject the findings of the current study.

## **2.2 The role of academic libraries**

Literature on academic libraries reveals that libraries play an important role in providing students with premises and space to study, and books and reading materials which the students could not afford. Also, libraries provide students with the platform to verify information obtained from teachers. Dent (2006) conducted a study with the purpose of exploring connections between the availability of library facilities at two schools in rural Uganda and certain student academic engagement indicators, such as, scholastic performance, reading habits, study habits, and library use patterns. Both qualitative and quantitative research approaches were used. Data were collected through interviews and a questionnaire. The study revealed that the library provides students with a comfortable space for them to work, a place to investigate new ideas, and that access to the library helps them to work more efficiently. Also, the library supports students' efforts to learn more about the world. The current study adopted similar research approaches and data collection methods to Dent's (2006) study in which both qualitative and quantitative research approaches and interview and questionnaire data collection methods were used.

A report by Gretes (2013) complements Dent's (2006) study in that his findings highlight the essential role that school libraries play in providing access to books. Access is the primary factor that leads to raising student test scores in all aspects of literacy. The current study also illustrates how having access to the library and its services impacts on students' studies through students' perceived role of the library in their studies. Kargbo (2001) reports that academic libraries play an important role in securing, organising and providing book and non-book materials required for instructional programmes. Furthermore, libraries provide current reading materials for keeping lecturers abreast of their subject fields and enhances teaching methods and helps in doing individual research. Also, they encourage students to develop the habit of self-education, and in so doing, contributing to their intellectual development and output.

On the other hand, a study by Brown and Malenfant (2015) reveals that the library builds students' confidence in terms of the research process and contributes to retention and persistence. Also a library's research and study space fosters social and academic community among students. Soria, Fransen, and Nackerud (2013) also indicate that students who have used the library at least once had higher grade point averages compared to their peers who did not use the library at all. The current study reveals the role of the library as well as the role students' perceptions play in the attainment of those roles.

## **2.3 Students' perceptions**

Literature was reviewed in this subsection in a two-fold basis. The first aspect deals with students' perceptions of libraries and the second aspect deals with how they perceive satisfaction regarding libraries.

### **2.3.1 Students' perceptions of libraries**

Cited literature on students' perceptions of the role of the library in their studies informed the current study on how students from different universities and colleges view the library and identify with it. The literature provides the researcher with an insight into how students feel about academic libraries. Ashaver and Bem-Bura (2013) conducted a study aimed to examine how student perceive the library services offered in Benue State University and the Federal University of Agriculture Makurdi, Benue State, Nigeria. Random sampling was used and data were collected through a questionnaire and interviews. The study found that students at Benue State University and the Federal University of Agriculture Makurdi in Nigeria have a negative perception of the library services rendered by these university libraries. The negative perception arises from lack of awareness by the students on how to search for information materials and ignorance on information search and retrieval strategies.

In addition, the issues of outdated materials in these libraries and the attitudes of most librarians and library officers toward students in search of information, or students' awareness about library use and services, contribute to the negative perception. In short, cited literature informs the current study about factors which may influence students' perceptions about the library. Moreover, the study covers topics on how students' perceive library services in universities, the types of library services offered, how students benefit from these library services and the extent to which these services are made available. The abovementioned study, however, did not cover the perceptions of students on the role of the library in their studies and the students' perceptions of satisfaction with library services. These are covered by the current study.

In contrast, Obasuyi and Idiodi (2015) conducted a study with the objective of determining the value of the university library and its influence on the educational pursuit of the students. Descriptive survey design was adopted in the study. Simple random sampling was used and data were collected through questionnaires. The study found that students at a Federal University in Nigeria perceived the library to be of great value to their education and it impacted on their academic pursuits and studies, academic performances, productivity, and careers. Relative contributions of the library in respect of physical infrastructures, library personnel and library information services add value to the role of the library while information resources do not.

Long (2011) conducted a study with the purpose of exploring the attitudes of Latino undergraduate students in regard to their use of the academic library and its librarians, and to identify the conditions which impede or facilitate their use of the library. A qualitative research approach was adopted and convenience sampling was used while data was collected through semi-structured interviews. The findings of the study show that students perceive the library as a social destination and as a community network rather than a place which supports their learning. Students interpret the library as a space for cultural support based on their experiences with public libraries, and do not fully understand the range of resources and support available.

In addition, Nzivo and Chuanfu (2013) conducted a study with the aim of discovering the met and unmet needs as well as barriers encountered in library use by international students. A survey questionnaire was used to collect data and simple random sampling was employed. The findings of the study revealed that Chinese academic libraries are considerably well perceived by international students. The findings of the study show that the students perceived the book collection as very well stocked and they perceived the need for library information resources as very important. Also, the results show that students had great faith and trust in the academic library collection's information resources.

Datig (2014) conducted a study with the goal of developing a student-based perspective of libraries which can be used to improve library services and outreach. Data was collected through an online survey and one-on-one interviews. The study found that students perceive the library as a place to develop their greater knowledge. Moreover, students see the library as a bridge between students and the rest of the intellectual world. In summary, the majority of students hold the perspective that the library plays an important role in their studies as well as in other areas outside their academic performance. However, very few studies in this regard have been conducted in South Africa. Therefore, the present study investigated students' perceptions on the bridging role of the library in their studies in the context of TUT, PC.

### **2.3.2 Students' perceptions of satisfaction with library services**

Larson and Owusu-Acheaw (2012) conducted a study to find out users' satisfaction with services and resources at the Institute for Educational Development and Extension (IEDE) Library at the University of Education, Winneba, Ghana. A descriptive survey design was adopted for the study and a questionnaire was used for data collection. An availability sampling technique was adopted for the study. The findings reveal that students are satisfied with the availability of internet facilities and materials in the library. In addition, students are satisfied with the efficiency and helpfulness of staff. Even so, the students perceived the library collection as being outdated.

Furthermore, Bhatti and Hanif (2013) conducted a study with the purpose of exploring the impact of ICT and to obtain information related to purposes, search engines, database being used by the faculty members of the Faculty of Social Sciences at Bahauddin Zakariya University Multan. The study was based on descriptive research and the survey research method was used. In addition, a comprehensive questionnaire was used for data collection. The findings of the study revealed that most students are dissatisfied with the library's overall performance in meeting their needs. The majority of the respondents were not satisfied with the subscriptions to journals related to their field of interest and they preferred to use textbooks and the internet as their major sources of information. Most of them preferred a print format to a digital format. However, it is encouraging to note that a majority of the respondents were satisfied with the service attitude of the library staff.

Bhatti (2013) also conducted a study with the aim of assessing the frequency and purpose of library usage by LIS students at the Islamia University of Bahawalpur. The study was based on a user survey and data was collected by means of questionnaires. The findings of the study revealed that most of the students were satisfied with circulation, reference services, and physical facilities. However, students were dissatisfied with power fluctuation, lack of computers, slow internet speed, and unstable internet connections. Similarly, Khan, Bhatti, Khan and Ismail (2014) conducted a study at the University of Peshawar, Pakistan aimed at conducting a survey on students' utilisation of resources, services, and facilities of the Central Library of the University. A survey research method was adopted and a close-ended questionnaire was used to collect data while the participants were selected using a random sampling technique.

The findings of the study revealed that the library fulfilled students' information needs. Students are also satisfied with the library's physical facilities, such as the lighting system, ventilation facilities, reading tables, space for reading, and computer facilities. However, the respondents are dissatisfied with the research corner facility, air conditioning system, and display of new book arrivals, conference room, and audio-visual facilities of the library.

Arif and Mahmood (2010) conducted a study at Allama Iqbal Open University (AIOU), Islamabad-Pakistan to investigate the perceptions of teachers about the location and physical set up, collection, resources and services being offered in the central library at the main campus. A descriptive survey research method was employed to conduct this study, research participants were selected randomly and a semi-structured questionnaire was used to collect data. The findings of the study revealed that the University Library does not meet the information needs of users. Students expressed dissatisfaction with the library collection, online databases, virtual reference services, interlibrary loan, photocopy facilities, and subject journals. Nevertheless, they were satisfied with the location and the physical set-up of the library.

The cited literature shows the satisfaction and dissatisfaction of students with regard to how the library meets their information needs. It may be concluded that library services meets the needs of students to a limited extent. This is because the majority of students are happy with some of the services but not all of them. Clearly, libraries can fully satisfy the needs of students when they meet all their expectations. For instance, by improving the slow internet access and unstable internet connections and subscriptions to journals related to students' fields of study. Libraries should also improve the quality of their collections.

#### **2.4 Usability of libraries to students**

Abosede and Ibikunle (2011) conducted a study with the aim of determining the factors affecting library usage among students. Multi-stage sampling was used. The first stage involved the purposeful selection of four of the five departments in the school. The second stage involved the selection of three of the four levels in the school. The last stage involved the random selection of students from each of the selected levels in the school according to proportional representation. A questionnaire was used to collect data. The findings of the study revealed that students at the School of Agriculture of the Lagos State Polytechnic, Ikorodu Campus make more use of the library when they do not belong to registered groups than those who do belong to any group.

The library usage of those who belong to a registered group tends to decrease as membership of a group type shifts from a social group to an academic group and a mixture of social and academic groups. Moreover, the study reveals that use of the library increases as students' alternative to library use changes from personal internet use, to personal e-library use, to textbooks and notes. This means that students with textbooks and notes, make more use of the library. This may be connected to the fact that almost all the students use text-books and notes. However, internet connection and e-library use are not common among students. Also, it may perhaps explain why students prefer using textbooks and notes. The study further attested that the use of the library with friends encourages students to make use of the library. As the positive impressions of students about opening hours, silence, and power supply increases, use of the library also increases (Abosede & Ibikunle 2011).

However, as students' positive impressions about closing hours and air-conditioner facilities wane, the use of the library increases. This indicates that closing hours and air-conditioning facilities may not encourage library use and are not statistically significant. It may be due to the fact that students are aware that the library must definitely close at a specified time every day of the week and it has been observed that not many students patronise the library in the evening towards closing time. In addition, as relevant textbooks become available, the use of the library increases, similarly as the response from library staff and long-term loans of textbooks increase, library use also increases. Quick access to textbooks, the availability of short-term loans overnight, and loan and photocopying services do not affect library use. If these facilities are not offered, students still use the library (Abosede & Ibikunle 2011).

Agboola and Bamigboye (2011) conducted a study with the aim of establishing whether undergraduates' library use changes during each year of their education. A random sampling technique was used to select 1 300 students from three Nigerian universities, namely: University of Agriculture, Abeokuta (UNAAB); University of Ibadan (UI) and Olabisi Onabanjo University, Ago-Iwoye, Ayetoro Campus (OOU). A questionnaire was used to collect data.

The study revealed that students use the library for class preparation. However, students did not use library resources for various reasons, such as, students' lack of knowledge about library skills resulting in them using the wrong approach when using the library. For instance, students searched for library resources by first going to the shelves instead of the catalogues. Also, the majority of the students experience difficulties in locating books and journals articles. Students do not view reading as a way of acquiring knowledge or developing character mainly because of deficiencies in the educational system.

Also, Katopol (2012) conducted a study seeking to ascertain student feelings and behaviour in regard to information activities while also addressing the perceived effect of race on information behaviour, such as, retrieval and sharing. A qualitative research approach and exploratory research design were followed in the study and structured, open-ended interviews were conducted to collect data. The findings of the study revealed that students are frequent users of electronic media and rarely visit the library. The infrequent trips to the library were due mostly to time constraints, preferences for the electronic format which could be accessed from anywhere at any time and easily printed out if needed, and a belief that the librarian would not be helpful in attending to their particular information needs. While they do not visit the physical library, students make frequent use of the library website, ranging from several times per week to several times daily. They do this mostly to access journal databases and individual journal articles.

Nonetheless, rather than use the search function of the various databases, they use Google and Google Scholar to search for an article and then access it from the library website. The most frequent reason for using non-library resources and websites are that the library does not carry resources relevant to their research needs. This typically occurs when students are looking for research on Africans or created by African scholars, but also happens because the library does not carry a particular journal (Katopol 2012). In short, cited literature highlights situations in which students are prone to make use of the library. It also shows factors which have a direct effect on the way in which students use the library. The literature further outlines factors which are deemed crucial by students in motivating them to make use of the library.

The cited literature suggests that students make use of the library more frequently for social activities than for academic activities. Their library usage decreases as their group membership type changes from social to academic groups or a combination of both. In addition, students make use of the library mostly to read notes and textbooks. Students who do not frequent the library, rely on electronic media. In short, it appears that students do not make adequate use of library resources. The current study shows how students at TUT, PC make use of the library.

## **2.5 Factors which enhance and, or hinder the library's contribution to students' achievement outcomes**

The literature was reviewed in this subsection according to two aspects. The first aspect deals with the factors which enhance the library's contribution to students' achievement outcomes. The second aspect deals with factors which hinder the library's contribution to students' achievement outcomes.

### **2.5.1 Factors which enhance the library's contribution to students' achievement outcomes**

The findings of a study by Larson and Owusu-Acheaw (2012) show that at the University of Education, Winneba, Ghana the availability of library materials and electronic resources, such as, the internet encourages users to visit the library and contributes to user satisfaction. Although the study reveals that students are satisfied with the availability of materials; the study also found that students are not satisfied with the currency of the materials in the library. So this means that even when the library is packed with materials they are usually out-dated. Consequently, the current study investigates the perceptions of students about the capacity of services and materials available at TUT to meet their requirements.

A study by Brown and Malenfant (2013) indicates that factors, such as, library instructions, library study space, and the library's use of social media help to enhance the library's contribution to students' outcome achievements. This is because library instructions build students' confidence in regard to the research process and contributes to retention and persistence. Also, the study shows that social media fosters social and academic community amongst students. On the other hand, the library's use of social media promotes awareness of the library and builds academic community amongst students. Additionally, multiple library instruction sessions or activities in connection with a course are more effective than once-off library instruction sessions. Cited literature indicates that factors which enhance the library's contribution to students' achievement outcomes are availability of library materials and electronic resources.

### **2.5.2 Factors which hinder the library's contribution to students' achievement outcomes**

The findings of a study by Nzivo and Chuanfu (2013) reveals that a factor which hinders Chinese academic libraries from contributing to students' achievement outcomes, specifically in the case of international students, is the difficulties in communication due to a language barrier between students and library workers. This is because the students come from different countries where different languages are spoken. This makes it difficult for these students and the university librarians to understand each other fully when requesting and providing information services. The findings of the study also show that students do not have adequate skills to make use of the library because they have never been given user education instruction on how to use the library.

In addition, a study by Katopol (2012) found that one's race stands in the way of providing students with effective library services and it is perceived as a negative factor when students search for information. Students believe that librarians have no knowledge of their racially-related research interests and, therefore, cannot help them with their information needs. Students also believe that white students have separate access to information provided to them by the white majority faculty and based on a shared racial background.

Furthermore, it is reported in Katopol's (2012) study that when students are not provided with training, particularly as far as information searching is concerned, students usually become anxious. Students feel anxious or lost when they engage in an information search. Either they find too much information which usually leads them to spend a lot of time determining relevance, or they may not find enough information so that they spend time searching through scant sources in an attempt to find enough information to complete their task (Katopol 2012). The issue of race as already stated by Katopol (2012) may also play a vital role in this study. This is because TUT, PC is a culturally diverse campus comprising students and staff members from different cultural groups with different values and norms and way of life.

Although it may not be intentional for members to bring their cultural differences to the university, sometimes their cultural differences affect the activities of the university both positively and negatively. The same can be said about the rendering of services in the library. One cultural aspect which is evident at TUT, PC is the variety of languages spoken. The findings of a study by Nzivo and Chuanfu (2013), therefore, has provided the current researcher with insight into an aspect which may be hindering service delivery at TUT, PCL. In short, factors which hinder the library's contribution to students' achievement outcomes have been identified as the language barrier and a lack of skills in using libraries. Also, the lack of training on how to use the library, the inability to conduct information searches, and racism are other factors which impede libraries' contribution to students' achievement outcomes. The current study reveals factors which enhance and, or hinder the library's contribution to students' achievement outcomes at TUT, PC.

## **2.6 Theoretical framework**

The constructivist learning theory provides a sound theoretical framework for this study. According to Ertmer and Newby (2013:55) constructivism is a theory that equates learning with creating meaning from experience. Constructivists believe that the mind filters input from the world to produce its own unique reality. The mind is believed to be the source of all meaning and also direct experiences with the environment are considered critical.

Constructivism crosses both categories by emphasising the interaction between these two variables. Constructivists do not share with cognitivists and behaviorists the belief that knowledge is mind-independent and can be mapped onto a learner. Constructivists do not deny the existence of the real world but contend that what we know of the world stems from our own interpretations of our experiences (Ertmer & Newby 2013).

Omenyo (2016:27) indicates that constructivist learning theory explains how learners construct individually or socially constructed meanings in the process of learning. Therefore, this implies that learners/students construct knowledge based on their learning environment individually or within group settings. Learning environments like the library plays a fundamental role in students learning. For this reason, the study adopted the constructivist learning theory to investigate students' perceptions of the role of the library in their studies. Academic libraries have the potentially to contribute profoundly to students' academic achievements as shown in the introduction to the study in 1.1. However, this can be clearly uncovered through students' perceptions of the role of the library in their studies. The application of the theory in the study helps in determining the subjective and shared ideas students have with regard to the library, how the constructed the ideas, and how they influence their use of the library.

## **2.7 Summary**

This chapter presented the literature reviewed which relates to students' perceptions of libraries. It covered the role of academic libraries and students' perceptions of libraries. In addition, it discussed students' perception of their satisfaction with library services and the usability of libraries to students. It also covered the factors which enhance and hinder the library's contribution to students' achievement outcomes. The chapter also provided theoretical framework for the study. The next chapter provides research methodology.

## **CHAPTER THREE**

### **RESEARCH METHODOLOGY**

#### **3.1 Introduction**

The study aimed to investigate students' perceptions of the role of the library in support of their studies at TUT, Polokwane Campus. To explore this aim, a justification for the research procedure chosen is provided in this section. Research methodology serves as a guide and clearly outlines the route that the research studies follow (Sarantakos 2013:133). Research methodology is a part of the research process in which assumptions about the nature of reality and knowledge, values and theory and practice on a given topic come together (Wagner, Kawulich & Garner 2012: 52). The section provides justification of the research paradigm, research approaches and research design adopted for the study. Furthermore, it provides a description of the population selected, the sampling procedure, data collection and data collection tools, and ethical considerations in respect of the study.

#### **3.2 Research paradigm**

Bryman and Bell (2011:24) state that a paradigm is a cluster of beliefs and dictates to scientists in a particular discipline what influences should be studied, how research should be done, and how results should be interpreted. Bertram and Christiansen (2014:22) also indicate that a research paradigm represents a particular worldview that defines for the researchers who hold this view what is acceptable to research and how this should be done. There are three known and widely used research paradigms, namely: positivism, interpretivism and pragmatism. Positivism is an epistemological position that advocates the application of the methods of the natural sciences to the study of social reality and beyond (Bertram & Christiansen 2014). Gray (2009:579) defines positivism as a philosophical assumption in which the purpose of theory is application and the truth can be distinguished from untruth while also being determined by either deduction or by empirical support.

In addition, Kura (2012:4-5) notes that positivism is rooted in the ontological assumption of objective reality. Positivism is rooted in atomism which implies that a phenomenon exists as an entity separated from the whole world with discrete elements. It is also rooted in quantification which refers to the variables that can be expressed in terms of numbers and frequencies and operationalisation which seeks to define social phenomena as simple behaviour and life experience.

Interpretivism, on the other hand, is taken to denote an alternative to the positivist orthodoxy that has held sway for decades. Bertram and Christiansen (2014:17) note that interpretivism is predicated upon the view that a strategy is required that respects the differences between people and the objects of the natural sciences and, therefore, requires the social scientist to grasp the subjective meaning of social action. Moreover, pragmatism is described by Ngulube (2015:127) as methodological pluralism born out of an attempt to bridge the gap between interpretivist and positivist epistemologies. Creswell (2014:245) described pragmatism as a worldview or philosophy arising out of action, situations and consequences rather than antecedent conditions. In this paradigm, researchers emphasise the research problem and use all approaches available to understand it. Accordingly, a positivist research paradigm was employed in this study. Positivist is appropriate for this study as it helped the researcher to approach the research in a neutral, value-free, detached and systematic way. Thus, this ensured that the research is presented in an accurate manner without bias on the part of the researcher.

### **3.3 Research approach**

The research approach adopted determines the methods of data collection, analysis and interpretation that will be used. In a way, the research approach puts into place and narrows research projects by outlining in detail the data that will be collected to answer the research questions. Research studies can be classified into three research approaches, namely the qualitative, quantitative and mixed methods research approaches.

The choice of a research approach depends on what the researcher intends to achieve. For instance, when a researcher intends to measure and compare variables, a quantitative research approach will be appropriate. This is because the quantitative research approach deals with measurement to compare and analyse different variables (Bless, Higson-Smith & Sithole 2013). All the three approaches are discussed in this subsection to provide a brief overview of what they entail.

Bless et al (2013) define quantitative research as research conducted using a range of methods which use measurement to record and investigate aspects of social reality. Creswell and Clark (2011:12) indicate that the quantitative research approach has the advantage of allowing researchers to collect data from large sample populations and this makes it easy to generalise findings to a larger group. Another advantage of quantitative research is that it can be tested in time to determine the significance of the research frame or structure. The weakness of the quantitative research approach is that quantitative researchers are unable to understand the context or setting in which people talk and the voices of participants are not directly heard (Creswell & Clark 2011).

On the other hand, the qualitative research approach aims to discover and develop a deeper understanding of how and why certain things occur according to Leedy and Ormrod (2013:95). Furthermore, qualitative data helps the researcher to gain a deeper understanding of how things happen, people's behaviour and to attach meaning to things. The advantage of the qualitative research approach is that it allows researchers to use different forms of data in one research study. For example, they can use a combination of data collected through interviews, observations or electronic materials. Another factor which attracts researchers to this approach is that it is less expensive than quantitative research as it focuses on a small population and the researcher is not bound to a specific theoretical model or a hypothesis, so fewer restrictions are placed on data collection. The weakness of this approach is that conclusions are drawn from the interpretations of the researcher which can lead to biased and unreliable results (Leedy & Ormrod 2005: 134-135).

The mixed methods research approach is a combination of quantitative and qualitative research approaches. In this method, the researcher approaches the question under study from the perspective of both the quantitative and qualitative research approaches, thereby benefitting from the distinctive characteristics of both approaches and gaining a better understanding of the phenomenon. For this study, quantitative and qualitative research approaches were employed. The quantitative research approach was used to collect data from a large sample and to generalise research findings to a larger group. In addition, it was used to reduce bias which may have resulted from the researcher's interpretation of qualitative data. The qualitative research approach, on the other hand, was used in the study to collect factual data which helped the researcher to determine perceptions of students regarding the role that the library plays in their studies. Furthermore, it was used to develop a better understanding of the research question. Moreover, it helped the researcher to gain an understanding of what constitutes students' perceptions of the role of the library in support of their studies.

Salomon (1991) and Lather (2006) have argued extensively on the appropriation of methods and approaches to address the purpose of a study. Their arguments oppose the views of the purists who believe that the choice of a paradigm presupposes the adoption of a research approach. These authors also stressed that both quantitative and qualitative approaches can be employed in a positivist paradigm, As a result of the compelling need to cover the research questions of the study, both approaches are deemed appropriate. The approach allowed the researcher to tackle the research problem from the perspective of both approaches, and thereby addressing the problem fully and without the shortfalls of one approach (Leedy & Ormrod 2013). Thus, in following mainly quantitative and qualitative research approaches the researcher was able to capitalise on the respective strengths of each method, corroborating findings, generating more complete data, and using results from one method to enhance insights gained from the complementing method.

Researchers, such as, Long (2011) and Dent (2006) have also employed both the quantitative and qualitative research approaches. In this study, the quantitative research approach was dominant and the qualitative research was the less dominant approach. The following subsection discusses the research design.

### **3.4. Research design**

The research design is like an action plan which outlines how activities should be carried out. According to Sarantakos (2013:120-121), research design explains in detail how the researcher intends to conduct the work. Additionally, it offers a guide that directs the research action and helps to rationalise the use of time and resources and to reduce costs. Kuada (2012:57) also states that research design is the blueprint of a research study as it provides a logical sequence of activities that show the connections between research questions, the approach to be adopted to address the questions, the assumptions underlying the approach, how data was collected and analysed and how findings and conclusions are to be presented. A case study research design was followed in this study. According to Creswell (2014:241) a case study is a qualitative design in which the researcher explores in depth a programme, event, activity, process or one or more individual.

Case study design is valuable in research because it helps the researcher to focus on a smaller number of units than would otherwise be involved if the whole object were to be measured. Moreover, Bertram and Christiansen (2014) explain that a case study describes what it is like to be in any particular situation, so it is generally descriptive in nature. However, a case study can also be used to generate claims for further verification. Kumar (2011:379) also points out that a case study is based on the assumption that the case being studied is atypical of cases of a certain type. Therefore, a single case can provide insight into the events and situations prevalent in a group from which the case has been drawn. For the purpose of this study, case study design research was used to investigate students' perceptions of the role of the library in their studies in-depth. Additionally, a case study is appropriate for the study as it also allows the use of both quantitative and qualitative data (Bertram & Christiansen 2014).

### **3.5. Population**

According to Sekaran and Bougie (2009:443) the population is the entire group of people, events or things that the researcher desires to investigate. Bless et al (2013:352) point out that the population is a set of elements on which the research study focuses. The population of the study includes final year students and library staff at TUT, Polokwane Campus. The following sub-sections provide more details on the population of the study.

#### **3.5.1 Students**

Students who participated in this study are final year students at TUT, PC. Final year students have been chosen because they have been at this institution longer than first- and second-year students and may have formed perspectives of the library depending on their use of the library. The population consists of 74 final year students from the Faculty of Economics and Finance, 148 final year students from the Faculty of Humanities, 57 final year students from the Faculty of Information and Communication Technology, and 189 final year students from the Faculty of Management Sciences (Tshwane University of Technology 2011). The total number of students in the study population is 468.

#### **3.5.2 Library staff**

TUT, PCL has 6 library staff members. However, only 5 library members formed part of the study as the 6<sup>th</sup> staff member is the researcher. Library staff members were chosen as they have experience in providing library services to different students. Thus, the library's staff members are likely to have an objective view on how students experience the library. Moreover, data collected from staff helped to validate data collected from students.

### **3.6. Sampling procedures and methods**

Kumar (2011:397) states that sampling is the process of selecting a sample from the population of the study to become the basis for estimating the prevalence of information of interest to a researcher.

Sekaran and Bougie (2009:445) note that sampling is the process of selecting persons or items from the population so that their characteristics can be generalised to the population.

### **3.6.1 Sampling method**

Given that the population of the study consists of two groups, namely, students and library staff members, participants in each group were selected differently. To obtain a representative sample of the target population of students two probability sampling methods were adopted, namely, stratified random sampling and systematic sampling. For library staff, purposive sampling was used. The sampling procedures are explained below.

#### ***3.6.1.1 Stratified random sampling***

The student population of the study involves four faculties, namely the Faculty of Economics and Finance, the Faculty of Humanities, the Faculty of Information and Communication Technology, and the Faculty of Management Sciences. To obtain a representative sample from each stratum stratified random sampling was used. Sarantakos (2013:172) explains that stratified random sampling is a probability sampling procedure in which the target population is divided into a number of strata, and a sample is drawn from each stratum resulting in sub-samples making up the final sample of the study. Walliman (2009:277) points out that stratified random sampling should be used when cases (events, people, groups or items) in the population fall into different strata. Therefore, stratified random sampling ensures that all the strata in the population are equally represented. In addition, this sampling method has also been used in similar research studies.

Walliman (2009:277) states that in order to achieve stratified random sampling, an equally sized randomised sample is obtained from each stratum separately to ensure that each is equally represented. The ratio of the sample was calculated using the following formula:

$$F = \frac{n}{N} = \frac{\text{Size of the sample}}{\text{Size of the population}}$$

The ratio of the sample is as follows:

$$F = \frac{n}{N} = \frac{47}{468} = \frac{1}{10}$$

The ratios of the sample for the study have been calculated as  $\frac{1}{10}$  and each stratum was multiplied by these ratios. After multiplying each stratum by the ratios the results are presented as follows in Table 3.1:

**Table 3.1 Illustration of number of sampling units in strata and sampling size in each stratum**

Strata	Number of sampling units in stratum	Sample
Faculty of Economics and Finance	74	7
Faculty of Humanities	148	15
Faculty of Information and Communication Technology	57	6
Faculty of Management Sciences	189	19
Total	468	47

### 3.6.1.2 Systematic sampling

After a sample has been drawn for each of the stratum, systematic sampling was used to select participants. Systematic sampling is a sampling method in which units are selected from a sampling frame according to fixed intervals, such as, selecting every nth subject in the sampling frame (Bryman & Bell 2011).

In short, this method is statistical involving the selection of a specific interval element from a sampling frame. Basically this method helped the researcher in ensuring that every element in the stratum as presented in table 3.1 is represented. To ensure equal representation of each student in the stratum, the researcher used the following formula to get a standard interval for each of the strata:

Total number of students in a faculty

Total number of students required by the researcher

From all of the strata, every student numbered one was randomly selected as a starting point. For the Faculty of Economics and Finance using an interval of 10, the following students were selected for inclusion in the sample: 1, 11, 21, 31, 41, 51, and 61. Using an interval of 9, the following students in the Faculty of Humanities were selected for inclusion in the sample: 1, 10, 19, 28, 37, 46, 55, 64, 73, 82, 91, 100, 109, 118, and 127. The following students were selected for inclusion in the sample of the Faculty of Information and Communication Technology using an interval of 9: 1, 10, 19, 28, 37 and 46. The following students in the Faculty of Management Sciences were selected for inclusion in the sample with an interval of 9: 1, 10, 19, 28, 37, 46, 53, 64, 73, 82, 91, 100, 109, 118, 127, 136, 145, 154, and 163.

### **3.6. 1.3 Purposive sampling**

Purposive sampling was used to select the library staff who participated in the study. The researcher purposefully selected the library staff as they are individuals who could help in understanding the research problem. The library's staff members are likely to have objective views and information required to answer the research questions (Creswell 2014 & Kumar 2011). The library staff consists of five members and all members formed part of the study as the number is very small.

### **3.6.2 Sample size**

According to Kumar (2011:194) sample size refers to the number of respondents from whom the researcher intends to obtain information. The study has two sample sizes, namely one for the questionnaire and one for the interview. The sample size for the questionnaire comprises 10 percent of the population of the study while the sample size for the interview comprises 100 percent of the population of the study. The sample size for the questionnaire is 47 students whereas the sample size for the interview is five members of the library staff. The sample size for the questionnaire consists of seven students from the Faculty of Economics and Finance, 15 students from the Faculty of Humanities, six students from the Faculty of Information and Communication Technology, and 19 students from the Faculty of Management Sciences (See Table 3.1).

The response rate refers to how well the samples drawn for the questionnaire participate and compare with representatives of the population of interest (Fincham 2008:01). Mellahi and Harris (2016:426) indicate that response rate is an important dimension in the assessment of the soundness of a study. It is often taken to be the primary measure of quality when assessing the validity data. A low response rate can be a serious threat to the quality of data and could seriously impair the validity and generalisability of the findings. Fincham (2008:01) maintains that a response rate of approximately 60% for most research should be the goal of researchers and this was certainly the expectation of the researcher. In this study, if the response rate had fallen short of the researcher's anticipation the acceptable response rate would have been 60% since Fincham (2008) maintains that researchers should aim for a 60% response rate.

### **3.7 Data collection procedures and tools**

According to Du Plooy (2002:99) data collection is a means by which measurement is realised. It is the gathering of data that is relevant to questions arising from the research problem. Data collection is carried out once the research method has been selected and the measuring instruments have been designed and tested.

### **3.7.1 Data collection tools**

Questionnaires and interview schedules are data collection tools used to collect data. By using two data collection tools the researcher was able to improve the validity and reliability of the study.

#### **3.7.1.1 Questionnaire**

A questionnaire was used to collect quantitative data. A questionnaire consists of a set of questions which can be answered by the research participants (Matthews & Ross 2010:203). Bless et al (2013:394) explain that a questionnaire is an instrument of data collection consisting of a standardised series of questions relating to the research topic to be answered in writing by participants. The questionnaire included only closed-ended questions. Closed questions are questions which confine the participants to specific answers provided by the researcher. In addition, closed questions are easy to answer and can be answered quickly (Kuada 2012). The advantage of using a questionnaire is that it is less expensive and it saves time which is very important and the researcher does not take up much of the research participant's time.

To save time, the researcher administered the questionnaire collectively to the participants. Moreover, a questionnaire ensures anonymity and, therefore, allows respondents to record opinions on issues which they may feel reluctant to express aloud (Kumar 2011). The questionnaire comprises three sections and themes. Section A is about general questions and Section B deals with questions relating to students' perceptions. Section C deals with questions relating to the usability of the library for students. The questionnaires were distributed on the 23<sup>rd</sup>, 24<sup>th</sup> and 30<sup>th</sup> August 2016 and lasted for 3 days. The researcher allocated each day to a faculty based on the time tables he obtained from the faculties. See Appendix A for questionnaire.

### **3.7.1.2 Interviews**

Interviews were used to collect qualitative data. According to Matthews and Ross (2010:476) the interview is a data collection method which enables the interviewer to elicit information, feelings and opinions from the interviewee using questions and an interactive dialogue. Kuada (2012:98) points out that when used for collecting qualitative data interviews seek to gain an insight into the lived experiences of the person one is interviewing. The interview is the appropriate data collection tool for collecting qualitative data as it helped the researcher to stimulate the opinions of research participants and to gain an understanding of the participants' perceptions of the library's role in students' studies. Structured face-to-face interviews were used because it provided undeviating information and helped in overcoming misunderstandings about the wording used in the schedule.

According to Kumar (2011:145) in a structured interview the researcher asks a predetermined set of questions, using the same wording and order of questions as specified in the interview schedule. The interview schedule consists of seven questions. The questions address themes on the role of the library in students' studies, students' library usage and students' perceptions about the role of the library. Moreover, the interview focuses on factors which enhance and hinder the library's contribution to students' studies. The interview also looked at how the library influences students' perceptions and students' satisfaction with library services. Each interview lasted for 20 minutes and all the interviews were conducted on one day which was the 25<sup>th</sup> August 2016. See Appendix B for a copy of the interview schedule.

### **3.7.2 Data collection procedures**

Data was collected at TUT, Polokwane Campus. The recruitment of students and library staff was done directly by the researcher. Five library staff members were interviewed in the library while 47 questionnaires were distributed to students in the lecture halls.

Before interviewing the participants and distributing questionnaires, the researcher read out a letter to the participants. The letter requested respondents to participate in the study informing them that their participation was voluntary and that they could withdraw at any point when they felt like doing so. The letter also informed the participants about the aim of the study and how the researcher intended to use the findings of the study. Finally, all approvals were granted before data were collected.

### **3.8 Validity and reliability**

According to Sarantakos (2013:99) validity is a property of a research instrument that measures its relevance, precision and accuracy. Validity refers to the ability to produce findings that are in agreement with theoretical or conceptual values. Leedy and Ormrod (2013) state that validity has to do with how accurate, meaningful and creditable a research project is. On the other hand, reliability is a measure of the research quality in which another researcher would expect to obtain the same findings if they carried out the research in the same way (Matthews & Ross 2010:479). Validity of the research instrument in the current study was ensured through data triangulation by collecting data using questionnaires and interviews. Data collected through interviews was used to validate and ensure trustworthiness of data collected through questionnaires. Data triangulation was also used to build a coherent justification for the subject under study.

Moreover, the researcher ensured the validity of the data through consistency by ensuring that the questions asked are derived from the objectives of the study. Reliability was ensured through test-retest reliability. Welman, Kruger and Mitchell (2005:146) state that to determine the test-retest reliability of a measuring instrument, the researcher has to administer the instrument on at least two occasions to the same sample. Reliability was also ensured through the use of clear instructions and by administering the instrument to all participants under standard, well controlled and similar conditions. In addition, the researcher ensured that the wording of both the questionnaire and interview schedule are not ambiguous.

### **3.9 Ethical considerations**

Ethical behaviour and considerations in research are important and come into play in three stages of a research project. It comes into play during the recruitment of participants, and during the measurement procedure to which participants are subjected and in the release of results obtained (Welman et al 2005:181). In this research, informed consent and confidentiality were taken into consideration to meet ethical requirements. According to Kumar (2011:244) informed consent implies that subjects are made adequately aware of the type of information the researcher wants from them, why the information is being sought, to what purpose it is put, and how they are expected to participate in the study.

In this study, all participants were informed about the purpose of the research and how the findings of the research would be used. In research, confidentiality implies the concealment of individual identity (Gorman & Clayton 2005). It is unethical for a researcher to reveal information about research participants in any way that may allow them to be identified. To ensure confidentiality in this study, interview notes did not have interviewee names written on them. Also, notes are locked up in a secure location where only the researcher has access to them.

### **3.10 Methods of data analysis**

According to Gomm (2008:240) there are three ways of analysing data collected through qualitative interviews. The first method involves analysing interviews as reports of affairs and matters of facts. The second one includes thematic analysis and the third method is linguistic analysis. In the study, thematic analysis was used to analyse qualitative data. Thematic analysis provides a flexible and useful research tool, which can potentially provide a rich and detailed, yet complex, account of data. Also the data were analysed as reports of affairs and matters of facts so that the analyses of the data and the conclusions drawn can be rooted in the data.

Denscombe (2007:287) explains that one of the guiding principles in the analysis of qualitative data is that the analyses of data and the conclusions drawn from the research should be firmly rooted in the data to ensure that the analysis and conclusions are based directly on the evidence that has been collected. Qualitative data from interviews was analysed using themes. Descriptive statistics was used to analyse quantitative data. Descriptive statistics are concerned with the description and, or summary of data obtained from a group of individual units of analysis. In analysing quantitative data, code categories were developed, a codebook constructed and then data were entered into an Excel spreadsheet and PHstat for analysis and clearing (Creswell 2012). Data was presented together with numerical data obtained through a questionnaire used to substantiate qualitative data obtained through interviews.

**Table 3.2 Illustration of source of data and data analysis**

Table 3.2 illustrates the relationship between research objectives and research questions. Also, the table shows the research approach, source of data and data analysis for each of the research objectives and research questions.

<b>Table 9.2 Illustration of source of data &amp; data analysis</b>				
<b>Research objective</b>	<b>Research question</b>	<b>Research approach</b>	<b>Source of data</b>	<b>Data analysis</b>
Determine the perceptions of students on the role of the TUT, PCL in their studies.	What are the perceptions of students on the role of the TUT, PCL in their studies?	Quantitative & Qualitative	Literature Review, Questionnaire & Interview	Thematic analysis Descriptive statistics
Find out students' perceptions of satisfaction with library services	What are students' perceptions of satisfaction with library services?	Quantitative	Literature Review & Questionnaire	Descriptive statistics
Establish usability of the library to students.	How usable is the library to students?	Quantitative & Qualitative	Questionnaire & Interview	Thematic analysis
Identify factors which enhance and hinder the library's contribution to students' achievement outcomes.	Which factors enhance and hinder the library's contribution to student's achievement outcomes?	Qualitative	Literature review & Interview	Thematic analysis
To offer suggestions on how to improve overall library usage.	What could be done to improve overall library usage?	Qualitative	Literature review & Interview	Thematic analysis

### **3.11 Summary**

This chapter provided research paradigm, research approaches and research design. Furthermore, it provided a description of the population selected, the sampling procedure, data collection and data collection tools, and ethical considerations in respect of the study. A positivist research paradigm was employed and mainly quantitative and qualitative approaches were adopted. The research design for the study was a case study. Stratified random sampling, systematic sampling and purposive sampling were used. Finally, data was collected through questionnaires and interviews. The next chapter provides data analysis, presentation and interpretation.

## CHAPTER FOUR

### DATA ANALYSIS, PRESENTATION AND INTERPRETATION

#### 4.1 Introduction

The previous chapter discussed the research methodology that was used in this study. This chapter presents the results of the investigation into students' perceptions of the role of the library in their studies at TUT, PCL. The research questions were aimed at determining students' perceptions of satisfaction with library services, how usable the library is to students, which factors enhance and hinder the library's contribution to students' outcome achievements, and making recommendations on how to improve the overall library usage.

Data analysis involves the description and transformation of raw data collected from the sampled population of the study into meaningful information. The purpose of data analysis is to use the data collected to answer research questions, as well as to explain to the reader how data were collected from the sampled population and how the researcher arrived at the research findings. Saldana (2009) notes that data analysis is the process of obtaining meaning and implications from raw data. Additionally, Neuman (2006) states that data analysis involves the examination of empirical information to reach a conclusion based on reasoning and by simplifying the complexity in the data. The results presented are based on data collected by means of questionnaires and interviews. The questionnaire was used to collect quantitative data from students and the interview collected qualitative data from the library staff. The purpose of using two data collection tools was to use one instrument to complement the other and for reasons of validation.

The framework for the presentation of the results was guided by an integrated approach that enables the logical sequencing of both quantitative and qualitative results for comprehensibility (Bryman 2006). In other words, unnecessary duplication of results into two sections of quantitative and qualitative data is avoided as relevant results are presented together. In fact, conflicting results based on the two approaches are highlighted to avoid repetition. Finally, the next section presents the results of the demographic analysis and this is followed by further analysis. The presentation is guided by the research questions and objectives of the study.

## 4.2 Demographic data

Although finding answers to questions about demographic characteristics of the respondents was not one of the study objectives, it was important to solicit information about the respondents' gender and age to ensure that equality in terms of these attributes was achieved in this study. Although equal representation of both males and females was not fully achieved, both groups participated in the study and various age groups were represented. The study targeted final year students at TUT, PC and library staff. The total population of students was 468, with 74 students registered in the Faculty of Economics and Finance, 148 in the Faculty of Humanities, 57 in the Faculty of Information and Communication Technology, and 189 registered in the Faculty of Management Sciences.

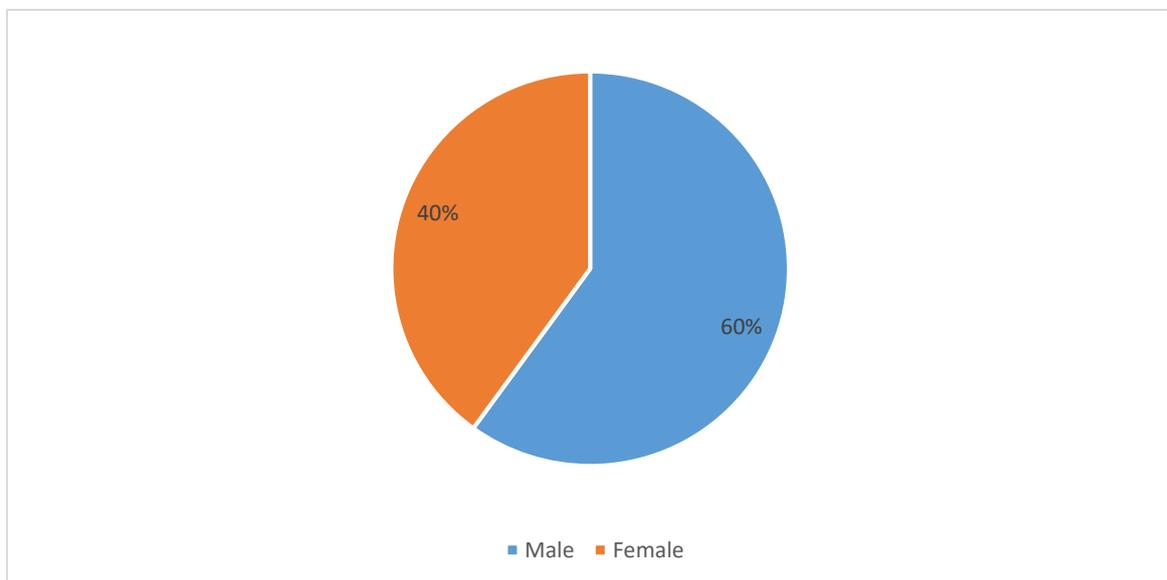
The sample size was 10 percent of the total population, resulting in 47 units required for the study. These units were composed as set out below. Seven units were required from the Faculty of Economics and Finance, 15 units in the Faculty of Humanities, six in the Faculty of Information and Communication Technology, and 19 in the Faculty of Management Sciences. Forty-seven copies of the questionnaire were distributed and all 47 (100%) participants responded while five interviews were conducted. The researcher achieved a full 100% response rate in respect of both data collection tools. This response rate was considered wholly adequate for the study based on the conviction by Babbie and Mouton (2001) that a response rate of 50% or above is acceptable and is considered adequate for analysis. In this case, the researcher was fortunate to achieve such a complete response rate. The questionnaire was separated into three sections. Section A covered general questions, Section B covered students' perceptions and Section C covered the usability of the library to students.

In terms of library staff, five library staff members were targeted and all of them participated in the study. The interview schedule consisted of 7 questions. The questions covered topics on the role of the library in students' studies, students' library usage and students' perceptions of the role of the library in their studies.

Moreover, the interview schedule covered factors enhancing and hindering the library's contribution to students' achievement outcomes and improvement of positive perceptions of the library (see questionnaire and interview schedule attached as appendices A and B respectively). The last question covered additional comments from the library staff. Data was analysed using Microsoft Excel.

#### 4.2.1 Gender

In the first question of this section, respondents were asked to indicate their gender to eliminate bias and to ensure that both males and females participated in the study. The gender of the respondents is given in Figure 4.1 below.



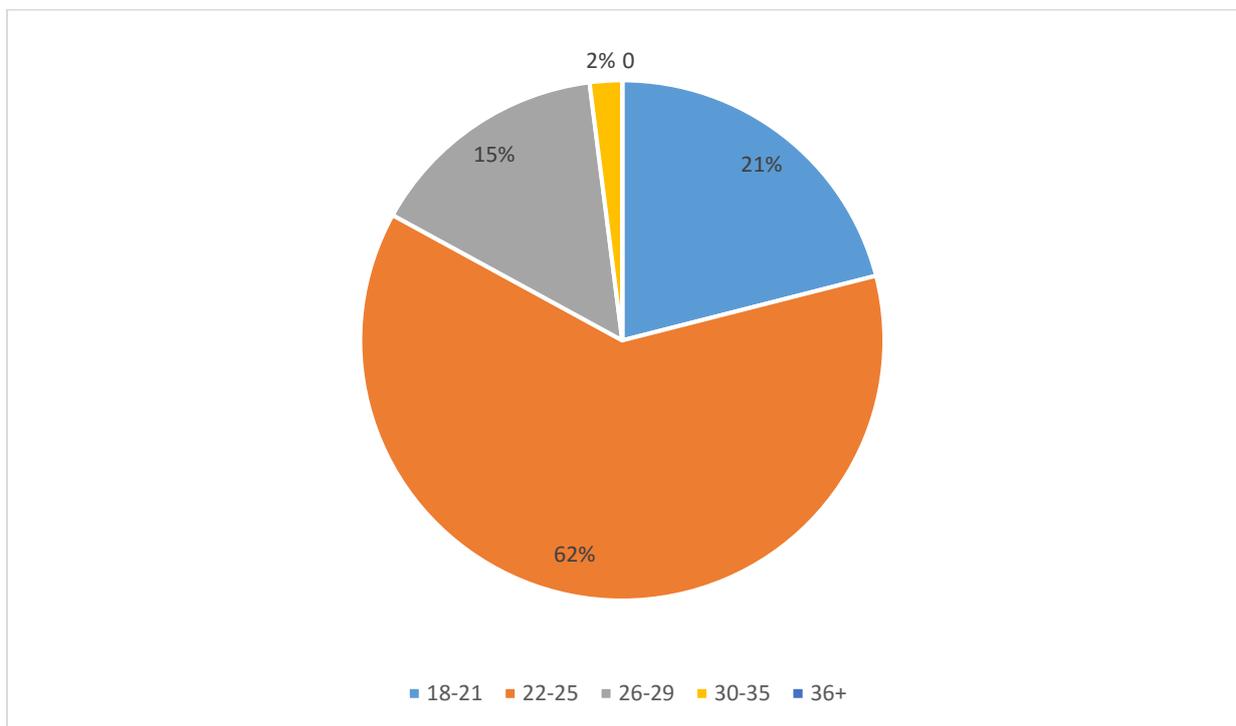
**Figure 4. 1: Gender**

Figure 4.1 reveals that out of the 47 respondents, 60% were male and 40% were female. There are more female than male students in South African Universities as indicated by the Department of Higher Education and Training (2013:04) which reports that 58% of all students enrolled in higher education institutions are female. However, in this study the majority of the respondents were males amounting to 60% of the respondents. The researcher assumes that there are more males than females at TUT, PC because more male than female learners passed their grade 12 examinations in 2013/2014.

More males qualified to study for diplomas than females. This resulted in more males registering in this institution as it offers certificates and diplomas.

#### 4.2.2 Age of the respondents

Respondents were asked to indicate their age. This was done to determine whether age has a bearing on how respondents perceive the role of the library in their studies. The age of the respondents is given in Figure 4.2.

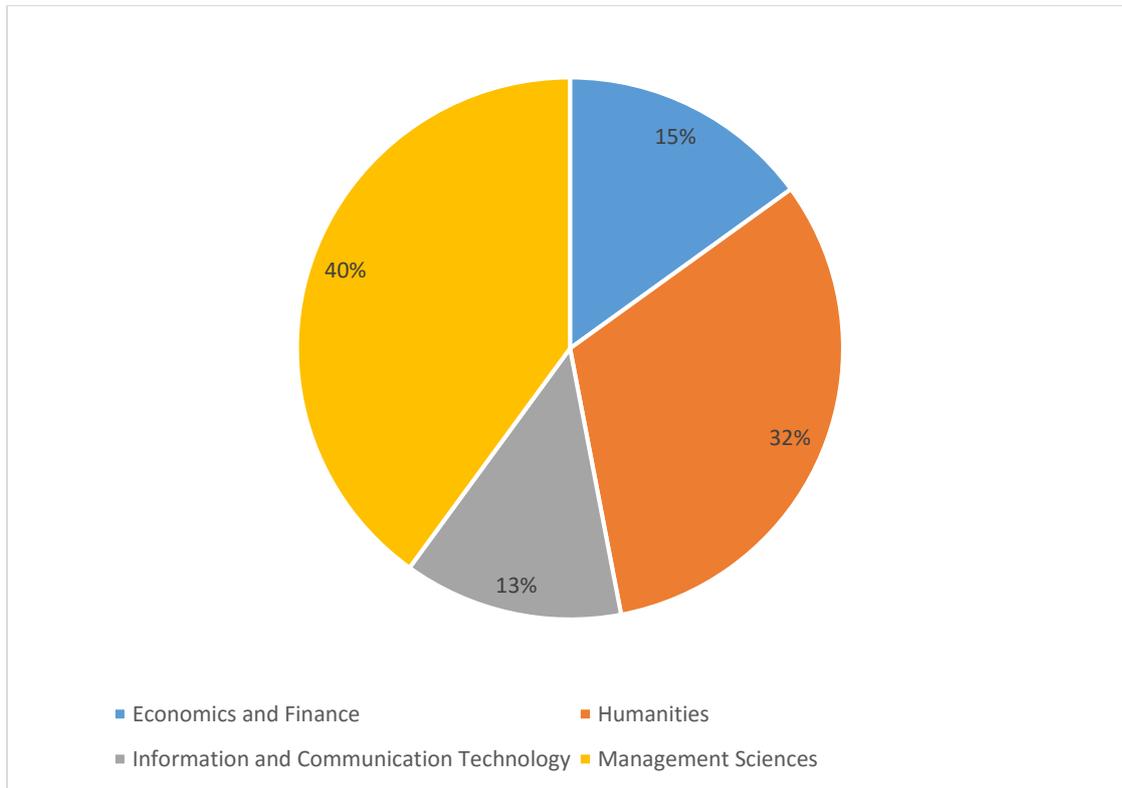


**Figure 4.2: The age distribution of the respondents**

The results show that the majority of the students are in the age range of 22 to 25 years. This could be due to the fact that most students enrol in universities when they are between the ages of 18 to 20 years. This means that they are able to complete their qualifications when they are between the ages of 22 to 25 years.

### 4.2.3 Faculty distribution

The study targeted students from four faculties in TUT, PC and stratified random sampling was used to ensure that all the faculties are represented. As such, it was crucial to ask respondents to indicate in which faculty they had been registered so that data could be collected in each of the faculties according to the percentages determined during the sampling process (see Table 3.1). Faculty distribution of respondents is presented in Figure 4.3.

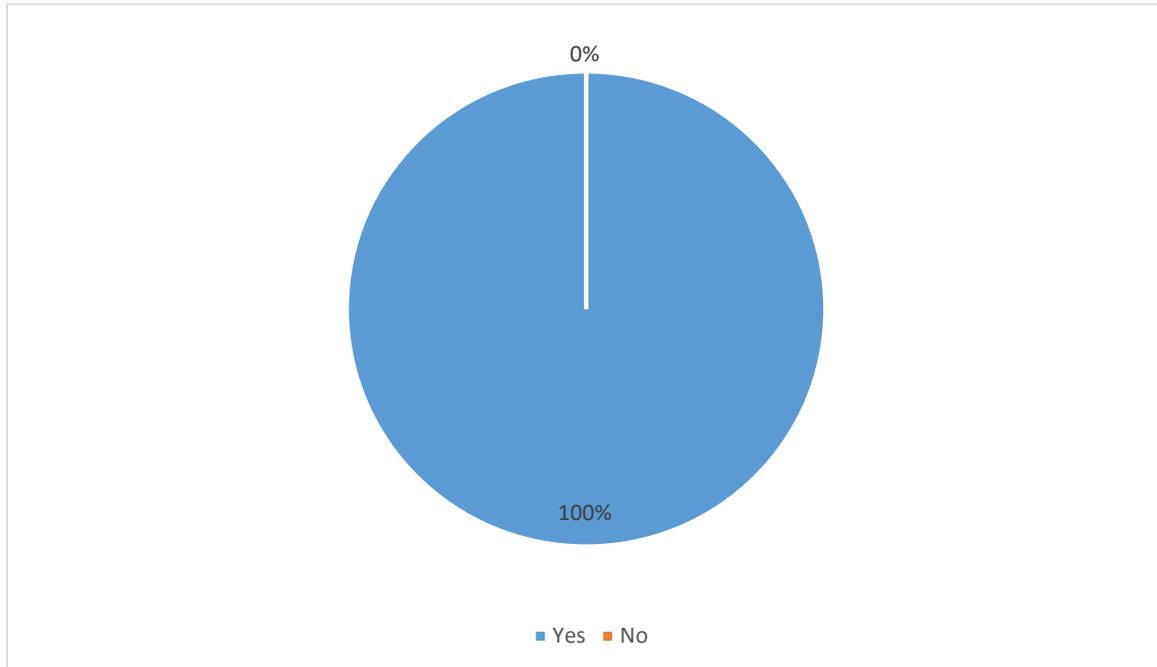


**Figure 4.3 Faculty distributions of respondents**

The results show that the majority of the students are registered in the Faculty of Management Sciences. Statistics of the South African Department of Higher Education and Training (2013:5) also reveals that the most popular field of study in 2011 was Business and Management Sciences.

#### 4.2.4 Library usage distribution

Respondents were asked to indicate whether or not they make use of the library. This question is important because it indicates whether respondents formed their perception of the library based on their own experiences gained through making use of the library or based on what they have been told by others. Library usage distribution is presented in Figure 4.4 below.

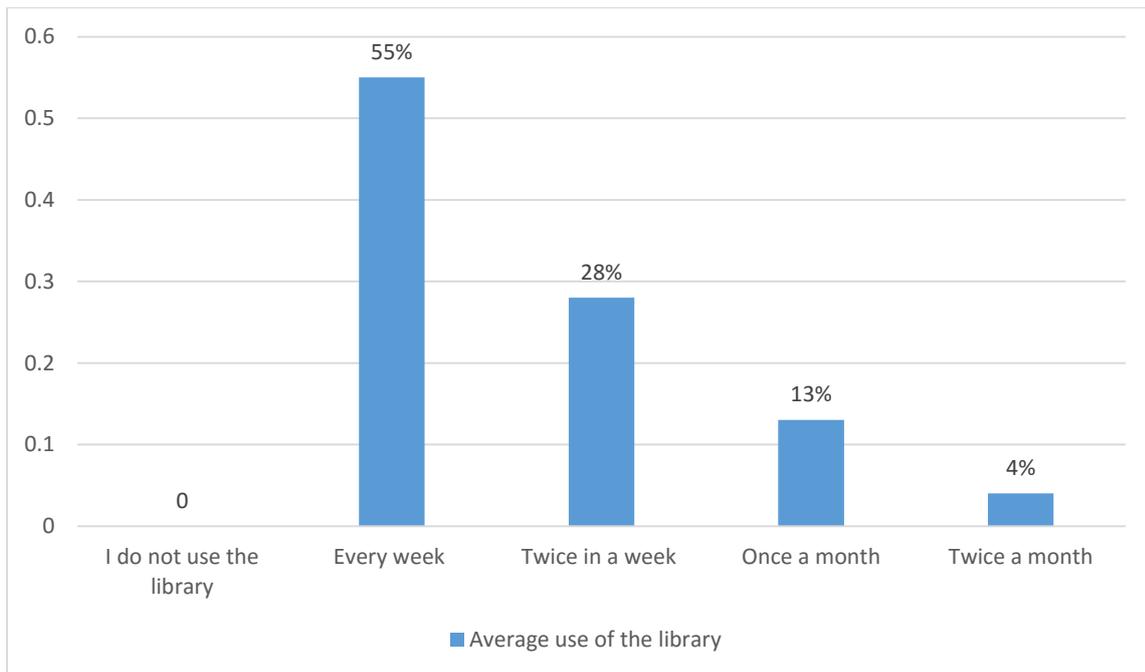


**Figure 4.4: Library usage**

The results reveal that all 47(100%) of the respondents make use of the library. This implies that all the perceptions that the respondents have with regard to the library were formed based on their own experiences and encounters with the library. This is important as the views of the library held by students are not based on mere hearsay or heard through the grapevine. Rather they seem to be based on how these students truly feel about the library.

#### 4.2.5 Average use of the library

In addition to asking respondents about their library usage, respondents were also asked about their usage based on a monthly interval. The question was aimed at discovering the rate of library usage amongst the participants. Monthly usage of the library is presented in Figure 4.5 below.



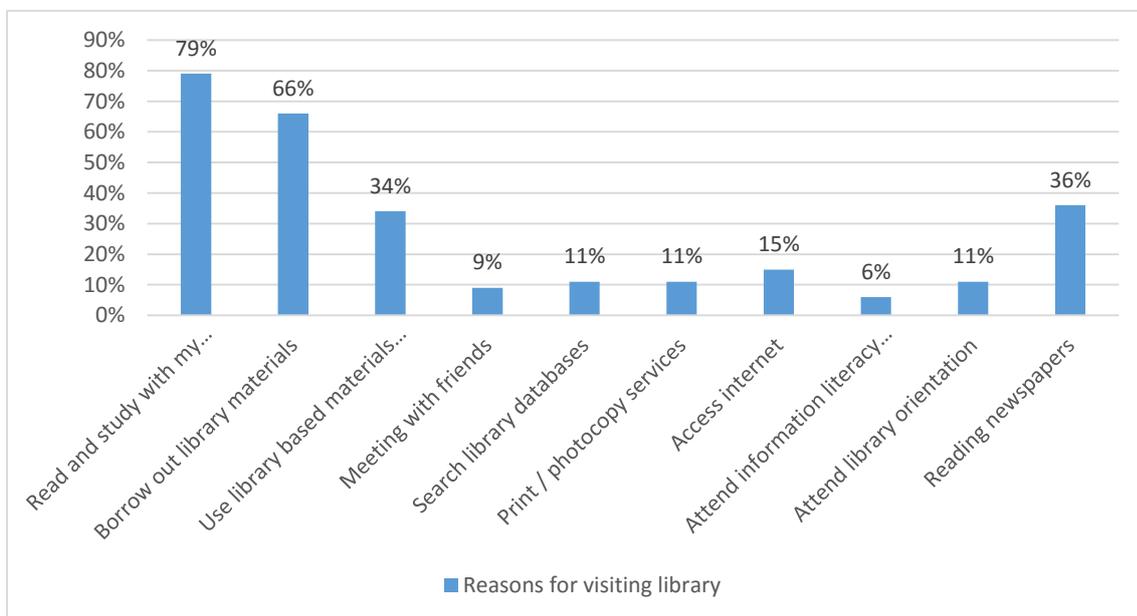
**Figure 4.5: Average use of the library**

The results reveal that none of the respondents indicated that they do not use the library, 26 (55%) of the respondents use the library every week and 13(28%) use the library twice per week. Moreover, 6 (13%) respondents use the library once per month and 2 (4%) use the library twice per month. The results show that most students at TUT, PC use the library every week. Therefore, students are making frequent use of the library. This is important as most libraries are faced with the challenge of being under-utilised. After all, the purpose of the research was to investigate students' perceptions of the library. Under-utilisation of libraries results in fruitless expenditure incurred through the purchase of materials, subscriptions to databases and other costs involved in the operation of libraries.

Shandu (2014:33) notes that most libraries are under-utilised. Under-utilisation of libraries is often the result of an inadequate collection of books and inconvenient opening hours. Poorly arranged library collections contribute significantly to poor utilisation. If books are not systematically ordered on the shelves, students are not keen on using the library because they know it is very difficult to get the information they need. Another factor which leads to the under-utilisation of libraries is staff that lack suitable training and dedication. As a result they rarely assist students when they seek information (Shandu 2014). Hart (2012:48) argues that the under-utilisation of libraries is a problem among African communities. Although they have been given instruction on how to consult the library for all their information needs, they do not make use of them.

#### 4.2.6 Reasons for visiting the library

After investigating respondents' library usage and the frequency of library usage their reasons for visiting the library were investigated. This question was intended to find out how the respondents use the library. Students' reasons for visiting the library are presented in Figure 4.6 below.



**Figure 4.6: Students' reasons for visiting the library**

The results indicate that 37(79%) of the respondents visit the library to read and, 05(11%) visit the library to search library databases while 03(6%) of the respondents visit the library to attend information literacy training sessions. The results further reveal that 05(11%) of the respondents visit the library to attend library orientation and 17(36%) to read newspapers. Based on the analysis, it may be concluded that students value the library's physical buildings and reading space as the majority of the students visit the library to read their personal notes.

The findings of a study by Mhinga and Agyei (2012) also reveal that 53.92 % of students at TUT, PC use the library mainly for reading and studying their personal notes only. Likewise, a study conducted by Mostofa and Hossain (2014:88) reveal that at the University of Rajshahi in Bangladesh, 55.6% of students prefer to use the library as a place to study and 42.86% of students visit the library for exam preparation. In addition, a study by Nkosi, Leach and Hoskins (2012) reveals that at the National University of Lesotho, students generally use the library to read lecturers notes. Moreover, students tend to use the library for other activities, such as, social gatherings rather than for locating, accessing and retrieving information.

Similarly, in this study only 11% of the students search the library's data bases. Furthermore, only a few students 6% attend information literacy trainings. This may imply that students do not have the skills to make effective use of the library and its services because the majority of them do not attend training and library orientation sessions. Tella, Owolabi and Attama's (2009: 11) findings provide a conflicting view in that although the most common use of the library by students is for reading, students also use the library for borrowing books, journal issues and other materials, making photocopies, and searching the library catalogue.

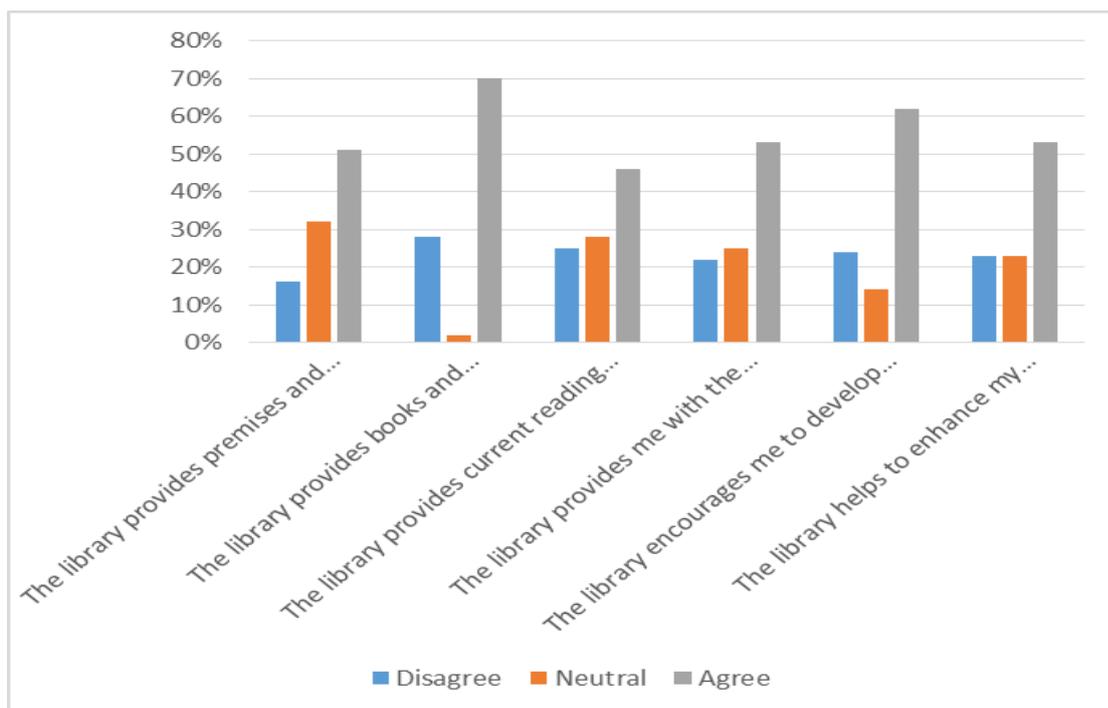
### **4.3 Data analysis**

In this section, respondents used a scale of 1-5 (1=strongly disagree, 2=disagree, 3=neutral, 4=agree, 5=strongly agree) to express their perceptions regarding the role of the academic library.

Furthermore, the scale was used to express the perceptions of students regarding the library in their institution and their perceptions on matters relating to the library, such as, library collections, services, furniture, library staff and infrastructure. The diagrams below present the results for the options of “disagree”, “neutral” and “agree” only because the results for “strongly disagree” and “disagree” were combined. For example, “strongly disagree” + “disagree” = “disagree” and “agree” + “strongly agree” = “agree”. Neutral was left as it is. The section presents the results on both the quantitative and qualitative aspects together (see section 4.1). However, it should be borne in mind that the quantitative approach is the dominant one and that the results of the qualitative interviews of a limited number of library staff were aimed at validating and complementing the responses of students. In the final instance, the main focus of the research is on the students.

#### **4.3.1 The role of the academic library**

Although the topic of the role of the academic library does not form part of the research objectives, a question on the role of academic library was included to provide a general overview of the role of academic libraries from students' points of view. It should be kept in mind that libraries perform different functions for different individuals. The role that a library has in an individual's life depends mostly on the individual's reasons for making use of the library. After asking respondents about the reasons for their library visits to the TUT PC Library (in 4.2.6) it was necessary that they should be asked about the role of academic libraries in general. The results are presented in Figure 4.7.



**Figure 4.7: The role of the academic library**

Based on the results presented in Figure 4.7, students view the role of the academic library as providing premises and space to study. In addition, students indicated that the academic library provides books and reading materials as well as providing current reading materials which keeps students abreast of their field of study. Moreover, the results show that the academic library provides students with the platform to verify information from lecturers, encourages students to develop the habit of self-education while also helping them to enhance their intellectual development and output.

The results of the qualitative data collected through interviews from library staff also reveal positive views of the role of the academic library. However, for the interviewees the role of the academic library is seen through the provision of information. The interviewees made the following comments with regard to the role of the academic library:

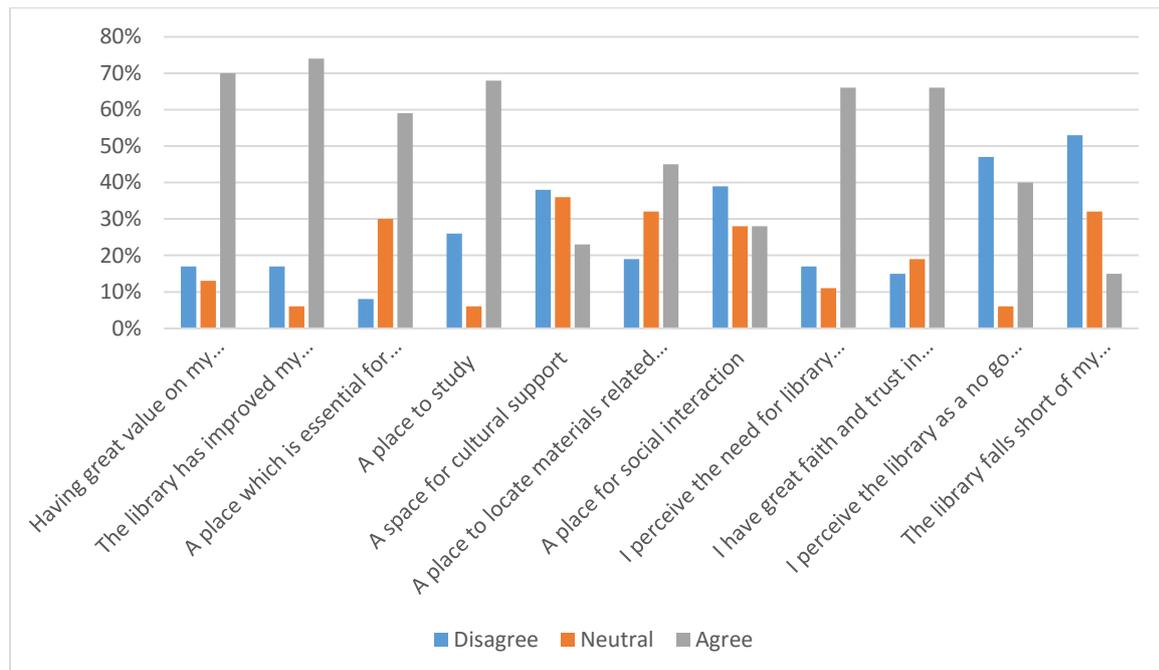
Interviewee 1: ***“Libraries play an important role in students’ studies by providing access to information resources and relevant information for assignments and studies as per need”.***

Interviewee 2: ***“The library plays a vital role in the studies of students as it enhances the researches of students and provides students with a lot of information”.***

Interviewee 3: ***“Libraries play an important role in students’ studies by providing access to information resources”.***

### 4.3.2 Students’ perceptions of the role of the TUT, PCL in their studies

The researcher sought to determine students’ perceptions with regard to the role of the TUT, PCL in their studies. This question addresses the aim of the study which is to investigate students’ perceptions of the role of library in their studies.



**Figure 4.8 Students’ perceptions of the role of the TUT, PCL in their studies**

The results presented on Figure 4.8 reveal that students at TUT, PC have positive perceptions of the library in their institution. In the current study, the majority of the students perceive the library as adding a great deal of value to their education and of contributing to their academic pursuits. Students also perceive the library as having enhanced their academic performance and of substantiating the knowledge that they obtain in class. In addition, students perceive the library as a place to study. Students also have great faith and trust in the library’s resources and the services provided in their institution. The results of Figure 4.8 further reveal that the majority of the students did not agree that the library is perceived as a hostile or ‘no-go’ area for them, or that the library falls short of their expectations because it does not meet their needs.

The results of the current study are in agreement with findings of a study by Obasuyi and Idiodi (2015). The latter study found that students at a Federal University in Nigeria perceived the library to be of great value to their education and it impacted on their academic pursuits and studies, academic performances, productivity, and careers (Obasuyi & Idiodi 2015).

The findings of a study by Nzivo and Chuanfu (2013) show that students at Chinese academic libraries perceive their book collections as very well stocked, and that the library's information resources are very important. In addition, the results show that students have great faith and trust in the academic library collection and information resources. On the other hand, the results of the current study conflict with those of a study by Ashaver and Bem-Bura (2013). The latter study found that students at Benue State University and the Federal University of Agriculture Makurdi in Nigeria have a negative perception of the library services rendered by these university libraries. Although students at TUT PCL were positive about the library, the results of the qualitative data gleaned from library staff reveal that students may not have such positive perceptions of the library. The following statements summarise how the library staff believe students perceive the library:

*Interviewee 1: "Students perceive the library as a place where they can sit quietly and study rather than a place that provides information".*

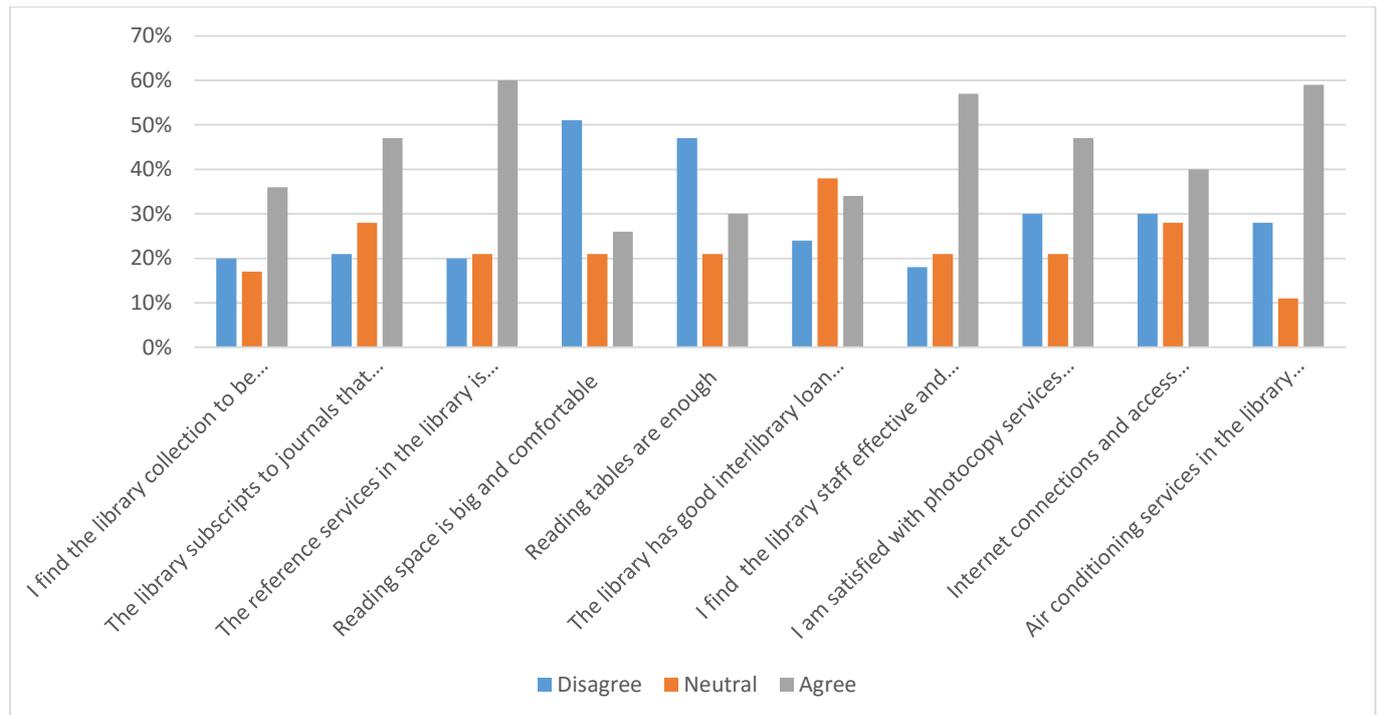
*Interviewee 2: "As a place where they can study in silence".*

*Interviewee 3: "They perceive the library as a substitute of their homes, residence or flats for studying. They rely more on notes given in class than information available in the library".*

*Interviewee 4: "Students perceive the library as a division only providing services for studies and research and provides relevant information when needed".*

### 4.3.3 Students' perceptions of satisfaction with library services

The purpose of this question was to determine students' satisfaction with the library collection, the library's subscription to journals, its reference services, reading space, and reading tables. Moreover, the study aimed to determine students' satisfaction with interlibrary loan services, library staff, photocopying services, internet, and air conditioning services. The results are presented in Figure 4.9.



**Figure: 4.9 Students' perceptions of satisfaction with library services**

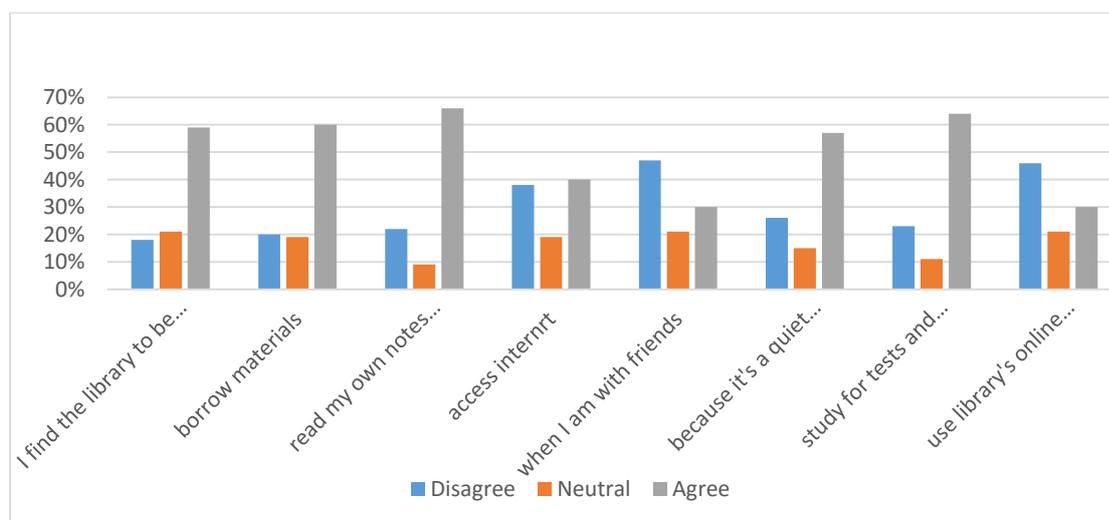
Based on the above results, students generally express satisfaction with the library. The majority of the students find the library collection to be current and relevant and expressed satisfaction with the library's subscription to journals that are relevant to their field of study. Moreover, students perceive the reference services in the library to be good, find library staff to be effective and helpful and are satisfied with photocopy services in the library. Also, students perceive the internet connection and access provided by the library to be good. The air conditioning services in the library are also perceived to be good. Nonetheless, students also expressed dissatisfaction with the reading space and reading tables as the majority of the students did not agree that the reading space is large and comfortable or that the number of reading tables are adequate.

The current study's results differ from the findings of a study conducted by Arif and Mahmood (2010) which reveals that the library at Allama Iqbal Open University (AIOU), Islamabad, Pakistan does not meet the information needs of users. Students expressed dissatisfaction with the library collection, online databases, virtual reference services, interlibrary loan, photocopy facilities, and subject journals.

A study by Bhatti and Hanif (2013) also revealed that most students are dissatisfied with the library's overall performance in meeting their needs. Students are not satisfied with the subscriptions to journals related to their fields of interest. On the other hand, a study conducted by Khan et al (2014) reveals that students at the University of Peshawar perceive the library's physical facilities, such as, the lighting system, ventilation facilities, reading tables, space for reading, and computer facilities to be good. However, they are not satisfied with the research corner facility, air conditioning system, and display of new arrivals, conference room, and audio-visual facilities of the library.

#### 4.3.4 Usability of the library to students

With this question, the researcher intended to determine how usable the library is to students and the situations in which students are more prone to make use of the library. The results are presented in Figure 4.10.



**Figure 4.10: Usability of the library to students**

The results of Figure 4.10 show that students find the library to be user-friendly and they visit the library to borrow materials. The results also reveal that students mostly use the library to read their own notes and books, access the internet, and to study because it is a quiet place to study. Furthermore, students use the library to study for tests and examinations. The results also show that students are less likely to use the library when they are with friends and use the library's online databases outside the library building. On the other hand, the results of the qualitative data reveal that students may be using other library services, such as loaning materials, searching for information on databases, retrieving videos as prescribed by lecturers, and requesting information from the information librarian. Students mostly use the library to study, more particularly during test weeks and during examinations. This is summarised in the following statements from interviewees:

Interviewee 1: ***"...Circulation statistics continues to drop every year. The library study area is used to full capacity during peak periods eg tests weeks and examination. ILL is also on a downward trend"***.

Interviewee 2: ***"A majority of them come to study; only a few borrow books and ask for information when given assignments"***.

Interviewee 3: ***"The library is mainly used for studying as for loans. Library loans are only used when students are given an assignment and the turn-out is very low for library loans"***.

Interviewee 4: ***"studying in study space, loaning for relevant information sources, searching for information on databases and retrieving videos as prescribed by lecturers"***.

Interviewee 5: ***"From the information librarian point of view, very few students approach the information librarian for information requests"***.

#### **4.3.5 Factors enhancing and hindering the library's contribution to students' achievement outcomes**

The results related to the factors which enhance and hinder the library's contribution to students' achievement outcomes are outlined below.

##### **4.3.5.1 Factors enhancing the library's contribution to students' achievement outcomes**

Interviewees were asked about the factors enhancing the library's contribution to students' achievement outcomes. The aim of this question was to find out what helps the library in contributing to the success of students academically in this campus. The interviewees responded as follows:

Interviewee 1: ***"The kind of information resources provided, electronic databases, electronic books, print material and reference and information literacy training"***.

Interviewee 2: ***"Relevant collection. Opening and closing hours. Conducive environment for studying. How knowledgeable librarians are, or the ability of librarians in providing relevant information"***.

Interviewee 3: ***"Library orientation, training, competitions, awareness, such as, world book day or library weeks, as well as making them participate in our collection development"***.

The results reveal that the information resources provided in the library like electronic databases, electronic books, print materials, and reference sources enhance the library's contribution to students' achievement outcomes. In addition, the results reveal that information and communication technology, such as, the internet and the use of computers helps the library to create an electronic environment that is efficient in rendering services to students. Relevant collections housed by the library, such as, prescribed books, its opening and closing hours, its conducive environment for studying, and knowledge of the library staff also play an important role in enabling the library to contribute to students' achievement outcomes.

The results further reveal that information literacy training, library orientation, training sessions, competitions, and library awareness, such as, world book day or library weeks and inviting students to participate in collection development enables the library to contribute to students' outcome achievements. The findings of a study by Larson and Owusu-Acheaw (2012) conducted at the University of Education, Winneba, Ghana reveals that the availability of library materials and electronic resources, such as, the internet encourages users to visit the Library and contributes to user satisfaction. In addition, the study by Brown and Malenfant (2013) found that factors, such as, library instruction and the availability of library study space helps to enhance the library's contribution to students' outcome achievements. This is because library instruction builds students' confidence in participating in the research process and contributes to retention and persistence. In addition, multiple library instruction sessions or activities in connection with a particular course are more effective than once-off library instruction sessions.

#### ***4.3.5.2 Factors hindering the library's contribution to students' achievement outcomes***

The above question focused on what helps the library to contribute to the success of students academically. This question focuses on factors hindering the library's contribution to students' achievement outcomes. The interviewees responded as follows:

Interviewee 1: ***“Non-credit bearing courses offered by the library. Non-attendance of information literacy programmes by students”***.

Interviewee 2: ***“The librarians should improve their information provision skills. Collections should be updated. Enhance the library environment to be more conducive. The reception of students by library workers”***.

Interviewee 3: ***“Lack of communication, be it notifying them about library products, not willing to go the extra mile to assist when they make queries”***.

The results shows that lack of resources, non-attendance of information literacy programmes by students, lack of research support, and inadequate infrastructure hinders the library's contribution to students' achievement outcomes. Furthermore, non-credit bearing courses offered by the library, a small collection; outdated information sources, limited study space, unacceptable levels of noise and activities around the library also play a role. The results reveal that a lack of communication in notifying students about library products and an unwillingness to make an extra effort to assist students when they make enquiries also affect the library's contribution.

In this study, it seems as if communication problems occur as a result of the library's staff members' attitudes towards students. This means that staff members are somehow unapproachable and this makes it difficult to ask for assistance. This may discourage students from attending user education courses since only a few students attend information literacy training 6% and library orientation (11%) sessions. In other institutions, communication problems take place due to a language barrier between students and library workers (Nzivo & Chuanfu 2013).

#### **4.3.6 Suggestions on how to improve overall library usage**

The researcher asked respondents what could be done to improve overall usage of the library. The intention of this question was to find out methods which the library could use to reach out to students and to reform its image. The results reveal that engagement and involvement of students in library matters, getting feedback from students, credit-bearing information literacy and current library materials can help to create positive perceptions of the library among students. In addition, improvement in the library staff's provision of information to students and the creation of an environment that is conducive to learning can also help to improve positive perceptions of the library. The interviewees responded as follows:

Interviewee 1: ***Continuous engagement with the students, regular satisfaction surveys, and involvement of students in campus library committees.***

Interviewee 2: ***Having credit-bearing information literacy programmes offered through all university levels, for example undergraduate and postgraduate.***

Interviewee 3: *Librarians should improve their information provision skills, collections should be updated. The library environment should be enhanced to be more conducive and the reception of students by library workers should improve.*

#### **4.4 Interview report**

The previous chapter provided the details of the approach and methods adopted. The quantitative approach predominated while the qualitative method was secondary. The results from the qualitative analysis were presented together with the quantitative findings based on the corresponding research questions and objectives. However, additional context-specific matters that do not fall under any of the research questions and objectives are presented below.

The interviewees responded that the library provides information in various formats to the students. The majority of the students still need to be taught how the library adds value to their learning. The library needs to rigorously market their services. Students tend to see the library more as a reading and studying area and not as an information provision area.

Respondents commented that information literacy training should be included in the curriculum and be a credit-bearing course that is compulsory to all students so that they become independent scholars who are able to search information for their assignments or research projects as experts in their fields of study. The library should also be extended to provide more study space for users. Wi-Fi should be accessible to users so that they can use their own gadgets.

#### **4.5 Summary**

This chapter presented data analysis and interpretation. The results reveal that students at TUT, PC have positive perceptions of the library in their institution. Students expressed satisfaction with the library's services. The results further reveal that students find the library to be user-friendly and they use the library to borrow materials, read their own notes and books, access the internet, and to study.

Factors, such as, opening and closing hours of the library, its conducive environment for studying, and the knowledge of the library staff help it to contribute to students' achievement outcomes. The results also reveal that lack of resources, non-attendance of information literacy programmes by students, lack of research support, and an inadequate infrastructure hinder the library's contribution to students' achievement outcomes. The next chapter provides summary, conclusions and recommendations.

## CHAPTER FIVE

### SUMMARY, CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

#### 5.1 Introduction

The purpose of the study was to investigate students' perceptions of the role of the library in their studies. By conducting the study, the researcher sought to improve the understanding of perceptions in the context of library use by students. This chapter summarises the main findings, draws conclusions and provides some recommendations which may help to improve students' perceptions of the role of the TUT, PCL. The summary, conclusions and recommendations are aligned to the objectives of the study which were to determine the perceptions of students of the library's role, find out students' perception of satisfaction with the library's services and establish in what ways the library is usable to students. Other objectives of the study were to identify factors which enhance and hinder the library's contribution to students' achievement outcomes and to glean students' suggestions on how to improve overall library usage.

#### 5.2 Summary of findings

Eze and Uzoigwe (2013: 432) maintain that one of the objectives of establishing a university is to promote scholarship, research and learning in the various fields of learning. Behind the mission and vision of university education is the university library, which is the academic library serving the university community. Academic libraries are the nerve centre or the hub around which scholarship revolves. They are indispensable instruments for intellectual development, since they are storehouses of information to which users (students as well as lecturers) may turn to for accessing information (Eze & Uzoigwe 2013). Therefore, academic libraries are expected to, and should provide library and information services that will support research for various categories of users in order to achieve the mission and vision of the university as a mother body.

### **5.2.1 Perceptions of students of the role of the TUT, PCL in their studies**

Students at TUT, PC have positive perceptions of the library in their institution. The students perceive the library as adding great value to their education and to have had an impact on their academic pursuits. Students perceive that the library has also improved their academic performance. Furthermore, students recognise the library's value in substantiating the knowledge that they obtain in class. In addition, students perceive the library as a place to study. Students also have great faith and trust in the library resources and services provided in their institution. However, the library's staff members maintain that students' perception of the library is limited to its physical parameters. The key results confirm the notion that students perceive the library as a place where they can sit quietly and study rather than a place that provides information. For students, in most cases, the library serves as a substitute for their homes, residence or flats when studying. They rely more on notes given in class than information available in the library.

Cited literature in chapter two, section 2.3.1 reveals that very few South African studies deal with the role of the library in students' studies. The studies reported in the literature addressed students' perceptions in academic libraries in the context of Nigeria, the United States of America and China. The current study has, therefore, filled the gap and contributed to students' perceptions of the role of the library within a South African context.

### **5.2.2 Students' perceptions of satisfaction with library services**

Students expressed satisfaction with the library services. Students find the library collection to be current and relevant and expressed satisfaction with the library's subscriptions to journals that are relevant to their field of study. Moreover, students perceive the reference services in the library to be good, find library staff to be effective and helpful, and are satisfied with photocopy services in the library. Students also perceive the internet connection and access provided by the library to be good. The air conditioning facilities in the library are also perceived to be good. However, students also expressed dissatisfaction with the reading space and number of reading tables.

The cited literature in chapter two, section 2.3.2 shows that academic libraries meet the needs of students to a limited extent. In earlier studies, most students expressed dissatisfaction with most aspects of library services, such as, subscriptions to journals, a lack of computers, internet access and the infrastructure in libraries, such as air conditioning facilities. However, this current study reveals that students are satisfied with other services in the library and the infrastructure of the library except for the reading space and tables.

### **5.2.3 Establish usability of the library to students**

Students find the library easy to use. They use the library to borrow materials, read their own notes and books, access the internet, and as a quiet place to study. They also use the library to study for tests and examinations. In addition, students use the library to search for information on databases, retrieve videos as prescribed by lecturers, and request information from the information library. Cited literature in chapter 2, section 2.4 suggests that students make use of the library to a greater extent for social activities than for academic purposes. However, the current study reveals that students use the library mainly for academic activities.

### **5.2.4 Factors enhancing and hindering the library's contribution to students' achievement outcomes**

The findings reveal that the information resources provided in the library, such as, electronic database, electronic books, print materials, and reference sources enhance the library's contribution to students' achievement outcomes. Also, the findings show that the provision of information and communication technology, such as, the internet and computers help the library to create an electronic environment and to effectively render services to students. The library collection, its opening and closing hours, its environment that is conducive for studying, and the knowledge of the library staff also enables the library to contribute to students' achievement outcomes. Other factors which enhance the library's contribution to students' achievement outcomes are information literacy training, library orientation, competitions, library awareness programmes, such as, world book day or library weeks, and inviting students to participate in collection development.

Factors which hinder the library's contribution to students' achievement outcomes are a lack of resources, non-attendance of information literacy programmes by students, a lack of research support, and inadequate infrastructure. Furthermore, non-credit bearing courses offered by the library, its small collection, outdated information sources, limited study space, unacceptable levels of noise and activities around the library also prevents the library from contributing to students' achievement outcomes. Other factors include a lack of communication in notifying students about library products and an unwillingness to make an extra effort to assist students when they make enquiries.

The current study addresses the same issues which have been reported in the literature. However, this study has touched on, and emphasised important aspects, such as having credit-bearing, compulsory information literacy programmes introduced at the university.

#### **5.2.5 Suggestions on how to improve overall library usage**

It was suggested that continuous engagement with the students, regular satisfaction surveys, and involvement of students in campus library committees, and having credit-bearing and compulsory information literacy programmes offered as part of the curriculum throughout all university levels can help to improve positive perceptions of the library. It was also suggested that librarians should improve their information provision skills, update the collection, enhance the library environment so that it can be more conducive to students, and improve library workers' communication with students. Moreover, the library should also be extended to provide more study space for users. Wi-Fi should be accessible to users so that they can use their own hardware and software.

## **5.3 Conclusions**

The conclusions are in line with the summary of the findings and are also based on the objectives of the study.

### **5.3.1 Perceptions of students of the role of the TUT, PCL in their studies**

For objective number one, the researcher concludes that students' perceptions of the role of TUT, PCL in their studies is positive. Although the library staff may have a different view of how students perceive the library, the majority of the students perceive the library as having great value for their education and of having a beneficial impact on their academic pursuits. Students hold the view that the library has improved their academic performance, it helps in substantiating the knowledge that they obtain in class, and provides them with a place to study. The majority of students also expressed their faith and trust in library resources and services provided at their institution.

### **5.3.2 Students' perceptions of satisfaction with library services**

Students expressed satisfaction with the library services. Students are satisfied with the library collection, the library's subscription to journals, reference services, library staff, and photocopy services in the library. Furthermore, students are satisfied with the internet connection and access provided by the library, and the air conditioning services in the library. However, students are not satisfied with the reading space and number of reading tables.

### **5.3.3 Establish the usability of the library to students**

The study established that students find the library to be user friendly and use the library to borrow materials, read their own notes and books, access the internet, and use the library as a quiet place to study. In addition, students mostly use the library to study for tests and examinations. They also use the library to search for information on databases, retrieve videos as prescribed by lecturers, and request information from the information library.

### **5.3.4 Factors enhancing and hindering the library's contribution to students' achievement outcomes**

The study found that information resources provided in the library, such as, electronic databases, electronic books, print materials, and reference sources enhance the library's contribution to students' achievement outcomes. The study also found that information and communication technology, the library's opening and closing hours, its environment that is conducive to studying, and the knowledge of the library staff also enables the library to contribute to students' achievement outcomes. Other factors which enhance the library's contribution to students' achievement outcomes are information literacy training, library orientation sessions, competitions, and library awareness. Lack of resources, non-attendance of information literacy programmes by students, lack of research support, an inadequate infrastructure, a small collection, outdated information sources, and limited study space hinder the library's contribution to students' achievement outcomes.

### **5.3.5 Suggestions on how to improve overall library usage**

The study found that continuous engagement with the students, regular surveys of user satisfaction, and the involvement of students in campus library committees, and having credit-bearing and compulsory information literacy programmes offered as part of the curriculum throughout all university levels can help to improve positive perceptions of the library. It was also suggested that librarians improve their information provision skills, update the collection, and enhance the library environment so that it can be more favourable for students. Library workers should also improve their communication with students. Moreover, the library should also be extended to provide more study space for users. Wi-Fi should be accessible to users so that they can use their own gadgets.

## **5.4 Recommendations**

Based on the findings of this study the researcher proposes the recommendations below.

### **5.4.1 Perceptions of students of the role of the TUT, PCL in their studies**

Although the study reveals that students hold positive perceptions of the library, the library has to continue working hard to maintain and sustain those perceptions. The study suggests that the library should establish a platform where students will constantly leave their comments. This will help the library to detect early signs of dissatisfaction and changes in the perceptions of students.

### **5.4.2 Students' perceptions of satisfaction with library services**

The findings of the study reveal that the library space is limited and not comfortable and the number of reading tables are not sufficient. As a result, it is recommended that the library should be extended. The extension can result in more space in the library and the library can install more study tables. Thus, this will result in students being more comfortable in making use of the library.

### **5.4.3 Establish usability of the library to students**

The study found that students mostly use the library to study for tests and examinations. It is therefore recommended that the library should market its other services extensively and introduce library users to other services which are offered in the library. For example, the library could draw up a schedule indicating that for a particular month, the librarians are going to inform students about inter-library loans, electronic databases and training them in the use of these resources. This might improve the usage of other services in the library.

### **5.4.4 Suggestions on how to improve overall library usage**

The study recommends that there should be a credit-bearing and compulsory information literacy programme offered as part of the curriculum at all levels of study at TUT, PC since it was established that the majority of students do not attend information literacy and library orientation programmes.

These programmes should be more practical and less theoretical. This will ensure that students attain the necessary skills to enable them to make effective use of the library and its services rather than only using the library to read and study. Positive perceptions of the library by students may also be improved as students will gain a clear understanding of the purpose of the library. Consequently, this could result in an increase in library usage. Moreover, the library collection should be developed and extended and kept current to allow students to have a variety of choices in their use of library materials. This will also help in keeping students abreast of developments taking place in their respective fields of study, such as new theories, methodologies, influences, and principles.

Different scholars, researchers and authors always develop new theories, and come up with different philosophies and ways of thinking. If the library has outdated collections students will not keep abreast of the latest developments which have occurred. Furthermore, the study found that there is lack of communication in notifying students about library products and an unwillingness to exert an extra effort to assist students when they make enquiries. Communication is of the outmost importance in everything that an organisation intends to achieve. Library staff need to reflect on the library's values, mission and objectives through their communication and interaction with their users. They need to engage and interact well with students.

Moreover, they need to keep their channels of communication open to students at all times. The study suggests that the library should have continuous engagement with the students, and notify them of important events taking place within the library. The library could also invite students to join the library committee. Students on the committee will serve as the middle man between the library and students. Although there is WI-FI access for students within the library internet access should be available across the campus. There is an existing problem in regard to of space and the availability of sufficient tables in the library. Thus, this may be hindering some students from gaining access to these facilities. Providing access across the campus will ensure that all students benefit from this.

A study by Zhong and Alexander (2007) reveals that students need to feel that they are a part of the institution, empowered by using its resources, and at ease and welcomed in their educational environment. The abovementioned authors further stated that training, evaluation, and assessment strategies should focus on reference personnel friendliness in addition to effectiveness. Library personnel need to understand their critical role in fostering a welcoming environment that facilitates student learning. Additionally, Morgan, Saunders, and Shrem (2013) note that academic libraries should seek to engage students by appealing to their learning modalities. Students should be connected to technology relevant to their lives, creating applications of research databases for personal devices, and student-published academic journals and newspapers. By so doing, academic libraries not only seek to engage students in their learning, but to create an environment for students that motivates them to engage in their learning.

### **5.5 Recommendations for further study**

The researcher recommends that a study investigating students' library use patterns, focusing specifically on why students prefer to use the library as a space to read and study should be conducted. Such a study will help researchers to understand why students prefer to use the library to read and study rather than to use other library services. In addition, a study investigating the impact of library space on the effective usage of the library could be crucial. Moreover, a study on the role of compulsory information literacy programmes in enhancing library usage should be conducted.

The study will help in identifying benefits which could result from having compulsory information literacy programmes at universities and how they can be used to encourage effective library usage. Moreover, a study which quantitatively correlates perceptions of the role of the library with the actual academic performance of students should be conducted. The study will help to outline the relationship between perceptions and actual findings regarding improved academic performance as a result of the use of the library.

## **5.6 Summary**

In conclusion, this study has found that students at TUT, PC have positive perceptions of the library and are satisfied with library services. However, it does not mean that the library should stop working towards improving its services. The library should also start working on areas which pose challenges for them. The library should have research support for students and its infrastructure should be improved. It is recommended that there should be a credit-bearing and compulsory information literacy programme offered as part of the curriculum at all levels of study at TUT, PC. Library staff need to reflect on the library's values, mission and objectives by communicating and interacting with their users. They need to engage and interact well with students. Moreover, they need to keep their channels of communication open to students at all times. The study suggests that the library should have continuous engagement with the students, and notify them of important events within the library.

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## APPENDICES

### Appendix A: Questionnaire - Students

Dear Prospective Participant

My name is Kwetepe Julious Malatji and I am doing research under the supervision of Prof GV Jiyane, and Dr G Olasina, lecturers in the Department of Information Science towards a Master's degree (MA) at the University of South Africa. We are inviting you to participate in a study entitled *Students' perceptions of the role of the library in their studies at Tshwane University of Technology, Polokwane Campus*.

The study will help to improve the understanding of perceptions in the context of library use by students. Participating in this study is voluntary and you are under no obligation to consent. If you do decide to take part, you are free to withdraw at any time and without giving a reason. However it will not be possible to withdraw once you have submitted the questionnaire. The study provides you as a student the platform to express your views regarding what you need in the library. In case those views are taken into consideration; you can benefit by getting better services.

This study has received written approval from the Research Ethics Review Committee of the *Department of Information Science*, Unisa. A copy of the approval letter can be obtained from the researcher if you so wish. Feel free to contact the researcher for require any further information or want to inquire about any aspect of this study.

Thank you for taking time to read this information sheet and for participating in this study.

Thank you.

Malatji KJ

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**Consent to participate in this study**

I, \_\_\_\_\_ (participant name), confirm that the person asking my consent to take part in this research has told me about the nature, procedure, potential benefits and anticipated inconvenience of participation.

I have read (or had explained to me) and understood the study as explained in the information sheet.

I have had sufficient opportunity to ask questions and am prepared to participate in the study.

I understand that my participation is voluntary and that I am free to withdraw at any time without penalty (if applicable).

I am aware that the findings of this study will be processed into a research report, journal publications and/or conference proceedings, but that my participation will be kept confidential unless otherwise specified.

I agree to the recording of the <insert specific data collection method>.

I have received a signed copy of the informed consent agreement.

Participant Name & Surname..... (Please print)

Participant Signature.....Date.....

Researcher's Name & Surname.....(please print)

Researcher's signature.....Date.....

## Section A: General questions

Please make a clear cross (X) where appropriate

1. Gender

Male	<input type="checkbox"/>	Female	<input type="checkbox"/>
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2. Age group

Age	<input type="checkbox"/>
17-21	<input type="checkbox"/>
22-25	<input type="checkbox"/>
26-29	<input type="checkbox"/>
30-35	<input type="checkbox"/>
36 +	<input type="checkbox"/>

3. Faculty

Faculty of Economics And Finance	<input type="checkbox"/>
Faculty of Humanities	<input type="checkbox"/>
Faculty of Information and Communication Technology	<input type="checkbox"/>
Faculty of Management Sciences	<input type="checkbox"/>

4. Do you use the library?

Yes	<input type="checkbox"/>	No	<input type="checkbox"/>
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5. How often do you use the library in a month?

I do not use the library	
Every week	
Twice in a week	
Once a month	
Twice a month	

6. When visiting the library, I..... ***More than one answer is allowed***

Read and study with my personal notes	
Borrow out library materials	
Use library based materials within the library	
Meeting with friends	
Search library databases	
Print / photocopy services	
Access internet	
Attend information literacy trainings	
Attend library orientation	
Reading newspapers	

## Section B: Students' perceptions

Please make a clear cross (X) where appropriate

7. Please indicate the extent to which you agree with the following statements regarding the role of academic library based on a scale of 1-5 (1=strongly disagree, 2=disagree, 3=neutral, 4=agree, 5=strongly agree)

Statements	1	2	3	4	5
The library provides premises and spaces to study					
The library provides books and reading materials					
The library provides current reading materials for keeping me abreast of my field of study					
The library provides me with the platform to verify information from lecturers					
The library encourages me to develop the habit of self-education					
The library helps to enhance my intellectual development and output					

8. Below are statements concerning your perception(s) of library in your institution. Please select statement(s) which best describes your perception(s) of the library, based on a scale of 1-5(1=strongly disagree, 2=disagree, 3=neutral, 4=agree, 5=strongly agree)

I perceive the library as:

<b>Statements</b>	<b>1</b>	<b>2</b>	<b>3</b>	<b>4</b>	<b>5</b>
Having great value on my education and it has impacted on my academic pursuits					
The library has improved my academic performance					
A place which is essential for substantiating the knowledge that I obtain in class					
A place to study					
A space for cultural support					
A place to locate materials related to my modules					
A place for social interaction					
I perceive the need for library information resources as very important					
I have great faith and trust in library resources and services provided in this institution					
I perceive the library as a no go area/place for me					
The library falls short of my expectations because it does not meet my needs					

9. Based on a scale of 1-5 (1=strongly disagree, 2=disagree, 3=neutral, 4=agree, 5=strongly agree), please rate your satisfaction of the library based on the following statements:

<b>Statements</b>	<b>1</b>	<b>2</b>	<b>3</b>	<b>4</b>	<b>5</b>
I find the library collection to be current and relevant					
The library subscripts to journals that are relevant to my field of study					
The reference services in the library is good					
Reading space is big and comfortable					
Reading tables are enough					
The library has good interlibrary loan services					
I find the library staff effective and helpful					
I am satisfied with photocopy services provided in the library					
Internet connections and access provided by the library is good					
Air conditioning services in the library is good					

### Section C: Usability of the library to students

Please make a clear cross (X) where appropriate

10. Below are statements concerning usability of the library in your institution. Please select statement(s) which best describes your usage of the library, Based on a scale of 1-5 (1=strongly disagree, 2=disagree, 3=neutral, 4=agree, 5=strongly agree)

Statements	1	2	3	4	5
I find the library to be user friendly					
I visit the library to borrow materials					
I visit the library to read my own notes and books					
I visit library to access internet					
I mostly use the library when I am with friends					
I use the library because it's a quiet place to study					
I use the library to study for tests and examinations					
I do not physically use the library but I use library's online databases					

Thank you for your participation

## **Appendix B: Interview schedule- Library staff**

Dear Prospective Participant

My name is Kwetepe Julious Malatji and I am doing research under the supervision of Prof GV Jiyane and Dr G Olasina in the Department of information sciences towards a Master's degree (MA) at the University of South Africa. We are inviting you to participate in a study entitled *Students' perceptions of the role of the library in their studies at Tshwane University of Technology, Polokwane Campus*.

The study will help to improve the understanding of perceptions in the context of library use by students. As library staff, you have been invited to participate in the study because you have experience in providing library services to different students. Thus, this put you in a better position to have an objective view on how students encounter the library. Participating in this study is voluntary and you are under no obligation to consent to participation. If you do decide to take part, you are free to withdraw at any time and without giving a reason. However it will not be possible to withdraw once the interview guide has been put away as the identity of the participant will be anonymous.

This study has received written approval from the Research Ethics Review Committee of the *Department of Information Science*, Unisa. A copy of the approval letter can be obtained from the researcher if you so wish. Feel free to contact the researcher for require any further information or want to inquire about any aspect of this study.

Thank you for taking time to read this information sheet and for participating in this study.

Thank you.

Malatji KJ

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## Consent to participate in this study

I, \_\_\_\_\_ (participant name), confirm that the person asking my consent to take part in this research has told me about the nature, procedure, potential benefits and anticipated inconvenience of participation.

I have read (or had explained to me) and understood the study as explained in the information sheet.

I have had sufficient opportunity to ask questions and am prepared to participate in the study.

I understand that my participation is voluntary and that I am free to withdraw at any time without penalty (if applicable).

I am aware that the findings of this study will be processed into a research report, journal publications and/or conference proceedings, but that my participation will be kept confidential unless otherwise specified.

I have received a signed copy of the informed consent agreement.

Participant Name & Surname..... (Please print)

Participant Signature.....Date.....

Researcher's Name & Surname..... (please print)

Researcher's signature.....Date.....

**Questions**

1. What role(s) do you think academic library play in students' studies?

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2. Please explain students' library usage.

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3. Based on students' usage of the library, how do you think they perceive the role of the library in their studies?

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4. What factors enhances library's contribution to students' achievement outcome?

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5. What factors hinders library's contribution to students' achievement outcome?

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6. What can be done to improve the overall library usage?

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7. Any other additional comments that may be useful

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Thank you for your participation