STRATEGIES FOR BUILDING USER LOYALTY IN SELECTED UNIVERSITY LIBRARIES IN GHANA

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SUMMARY

Using business models in university libraries has proved to yield positive results. Employing an exploratory sequential mixed-method approach, this study investigated strategies for building user loyalty in selected university libraries in Ghana. One-on-one planned interviews were used to glean data from librarians from the selected institutions to assess the marketing strategies used in their respective libraries. Furthermore, data from university libraries' stakeholders were collected through focus group discussions to determine library user loyalty attributes. The results were utilised to develop the quantitative questionnaire in the second stage of the research, which was used to gather data from library users to establish the determinants of library user loyalty. In all, four study sites, twenty-eight focus group members, fifteen librarians for the one-on-one planned interviews were involved in the qualitative phase, and four hundred and thirty-four library users were considered for the quantitative strand. The researcher used the IBM SPSS version 22 to analyse the quantitative data while the qualitative data were thematically analysed using QSR NVivo qualitative analysis software. This study observed the ethical standards of research proposed by UNISA's ethical review guidelines. The findings of this study indicate that although libraries in selected universities were using various strategies to market their products and services, none had a marketing plan to drive its marketing agenda. The study further revealed that library user loyalty was determined through a four-phased loyalty process which included cognitive, affective, conative and action loyalty. To attain action loyalty which was demonstrated through user's commitment to using the library and its resources, librarians need to start from cognitive loyalty which was characterised by service quality to the affective loyalty which was predicted mainly by user satisfaction. Affective loyalty led to conative loyalty, expressed primarily through users' intention to utilise the library. It was also found that some predictive attributes mediated action loyalty. It was recommended that, for libraries to build and sustain loyalty among their users, there is the need for planned marketing activities. The study also proposed a framework to guide librarians in their bid to build library user loyalty.

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

DEDICATION

This thesis is dedicated to my lovely wife, Esther Asabea Yeboah and our beautiful daughter, Akosua Ohenewaa Agyei-Dankwah.

DECLARATION
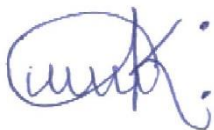
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Strategies for building user loyalty in selected university libraries in Ghana

I declare that the above thesis 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.

I further declare that I submitted the thesis to originality checking software and that it falls within the accepted requirements for originality.

I further declare that I have not previously submitted this work, or part of it, for examination at UNISA for another qualification or at any other higher education institution.

_____   _____January 11, 2021_____

SIGNATURE   DATE

Contents

ABBREVIATIONS

FGD	Focus Group Discussion
KUC	Kings University College
NAB	National Accreditation Board
NCTE	National Council for Tertiary Education
UG	University of Ghana
UHAS	University of Health and Allied Sciences
VVU	Valley View University

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CHAPTER ONE

INTRODUCTION TO THE STUDY

1.1 Introduction

Achieving user loyalty has long been viewed as an essential target in the service industry (Kim & Kim 2020; Yang & Yuan 2020; Uyar 2018). In order to understand the concept of loyalty, many studies have employed both attitudinal and behavioural tests (Saini & Singh 2020; Abd Aziz 2018; Kumari & Patyal 2017). From an attitudinal perspective, loyalty refers to a customer's wish to keep an association with a library (Saini & Singh 2020), and this demonstrates the relationship a customer maintains with an organisation. It is also expressed as the user's choice of a product or service over other options (Appiah, Ozuem & Howell 2016). From the behavioural perspective, on the other hand, user loyalty means repeat patronage (Abu-Alhaija, Yusof, Haslinda & Jaharuddin 2018; Kaura, Prasad & Sharma 2015; Ruiz-Mafe, Martí-Parreño & Sanz-Blas 2014). Thus, the proportion of times a user remains attached to a particular service in an industry over the frequency of purchases by the user in same industry (Saini & Singh 2020). Rai and Medha (2013) sum it up by stating that user loyalty is a mental concept shaped by the user's continued satisfaction coupled with personal attachments to an organisation, which can lead to one's willingness to establish a long-lasting relationship with the organisation. This assertion of Rai and Medha (2013) integrates both the attitudinal and behavioural perspectives of user loyalty.

Zhong and Moon (2020); Kim, Vogt and Knutson (2015) have identified creating user delight and delivering superior value driven by the provision of outstanding services, respectively, as practical means of generating user loyalty. Delighting users involves satisfying the user. Zhong and Moon (2020); Almohaimmeed (2019) substantiate this position by indicating that user satisfaction is essential for user retention and loyalty. Thus, it can be viewed as a passionate reaction of the user to the current business encounter with an organisation (Razzaq, Yousaf & Hong 2017; Loureiro, Ruediger & Demetris 2012). Delighting library users is one significant way university libraries can build their users' loyalty as satisfied users will keep using the library and its allied products and services. In the university library setting, user satisfaction may include users' ability to access information independently, or their ability to obtain up-to-date

equipment and technology, or a serene environment for users' activities, or an environment that inspires studies and learning (Helgesen & Nesset 2011).

In other words, delivery of superior value driven by the provision of outstanding services involves service providers going beyond the norm (Loureiro et al. 2012). Service quality has been defined in diverse ways, often in industry-specific terms. However, most studies, including that of Ko and Chou (2020); Slack and Singh (2020); Pakurár, Haddad, Nagy, Popp and Oláh (2019); Sayareh, Iranshahi and Golfakhrabadi (2016); Kumbhar (2012) accede that service quality is a product of the variance of performance and expectation. Service quality relates to a user's appraisal about the elements of service. Thus, for university libraries to deliver quality service, there should be a conscious effort to match performance with users' expectations by undertaking focused market research to understand user expectations and needs. According to Ghotbabadi, Feiz and Baharun (2015), service product, service delivery, and service environment are three service quality dimensions. Put differently, libraries must take into consideration these three dimensions of service provision in order to deliver quality service. Parasuraman, Zeithamal and Berry (1988) however maintained that service quality has five dimensions. Thus, a library with convenient opening hours, relevant and current information resources, well organised and intuitive portal and resourceful staff who deliver information services timeously may be considered dependable and, therefore, attract user loyalty.

In their bid to build user loyalty, university libraries could employ other strategies, such as market segmentation, targeting, positioning, branding, and effective utilisation of technology. For Camilleri (2018), market segmentation has to do with strategically splitting markets into groups, with members in each group having unique attributes. This can be done in the library by developing activities that may attract library users. After segmenting the market, librarians will have to embark on market targeting, which involves the library concentrating its marketing efforts on one or a few key segments. To effectively target the market, it is vital to relate with the demands of users. To fully appreciate users and their needs, Dobreva, O'Dwyer and Feliciati (2012) have advocated that libraries undertake regular user studies, while Case (2012) recommended information behaviour studies. Understanding each segment's information needs will enable the library to plan and proactively respond to users'

needs adequately. A library's ability to proactively respond to users' needs will enhance their efforts of providing quality and excellent services to deliver user satisfaction, all of which are prominent qualifications for user loyalty (Cristobal 2018).

1.2 Background to the study

Universities in Ghana are required by the National Accreditations Board (NAB) to have libraries in place before they are certified to operate as approved higher learning institutions (National Accreditation Board 2012). This requirement is because libraries are critically needed in an era when the whole idea of education is stressing more and more on independent learning and acting (Thorpe 2021; Atta-Obeng & Dadzie, 2020; Leung, Chiu & Lo 2020; Patel 2011). People must be able to find and utilise information with minimal guidance. Thus, libraries, act as a point around which information is acquired, organised, offered for use, and preserved. This function of the library initially gave it a larger market share of the information industry. However, with continuing decrease in budget size, due to global economic recession (Ebdon, Park, Franklin & Moore 2019; Velasquez 2015; Parikh, Jo, Lomax & Smith 2014), and competitions from online search engines, it has become evident that libraries are losing a proportion of the market share. Also, in a world of varying user behaviour, libraries are confronted with the challenge of providing services that are of quality standards. Users from diverse backgrounds come to the library with varying information needs, and it is this daunting task of satisfying all these users and their needs that librarians are confronted with.

The challenges outlined above have made many library practitioners investigate ways of building on their users' loyalty in order to provide quality services and satisfy users with the aim of retaining such users. Relying on business models like marketing in university libraries has, therefore, become imperative (Peacemaker & Heinze 2015). The aim of marketing libraries is to know and understand users and their needs and develop services that fit and satisfy them. Also, marketing libraries and their offers, in the long run, leads to user loyalty. Most libraries have instituted practical measures to communicate their values through various quantitative means (American Library Association 2020; Maine State Library 2011). This is why librarians must appreciate service quality as a critical tool that may guarantee user loyalty.

Librarians, because of this phenomenon, should look for strategies to build compelling user loyalty. According to Cheng (2011), this concept comes with many benefits, including an increased use of the library and enhanced budgetary allocation, and the reduction in the cost of acquiring and serving users. The provision of quality service has been recognised as an efficient tool to gain user loyalty (Yusoff, Ismail & Ali 2010). There have been many studies on service quality (Sumaedi, Bakti & Metasari 2012; Lin, Tsai, Wang, Su & Shaw 2011; Sumaedi & Bakti 2011). Most studies on service quality still relates with the service dimensions proposed by Parasuraman et al. (1988), including reliability, responsiveness, assurance, empathy, and tangibles. These service dimensions imply that reliable, responsive, and promising libraries, that identify with users and appeal to users' needs have a chance to win their users' loyalty.

Generally, satisfying users has become a standardised principle that most businesses utilise to succeed (Otto, Szymanski & Varadarajan 2020; Aksar, Kayani & Ali 2019; Beckers, Van Doorn & Verhoef 2018). This philosophy shows that for one to gain users' loyalty, such users must be satisfied in a way. According to Kotler, Armstrong and Opresnik (2018), user satisfaction is a feeling which results from a process of evaluating what has been received against what was expected. This evaluation may include the decision to purchase and as well as the needs for the purchase. Library users always visit or utilise the library with a level of expectation. Thus, if the library services meet or is beyond the user's expectations, satisfaction may be attained. Though university libraries may not be able to meet all these expectations, it is essential that they make efforts to get closer to reaching them.

Another strategy that can be employed to build user loyalty is for librarians to focus on the corporate image. Corporate image is an important element that is considered in the overall evaluation of the service and the company. It is viewed as the image or impression of the business (library) in the users' mind or the users' identification with the business (Hussain, Melewar, Priporas & Foroudi 2020). It is the accumulation of purchasing/consumption experience over time. People develop perceptions of organisations based on several factors. An organisation with a positive perception is likely to enjoy more loyalty from its users than organisations with negative perceptions. Factors like the quality of staff in terms of knowledge and experience, reliability, assurance and other dimensions are likely to influence an organisation's image

(Parasuraman et al. 1988). Thus, university librarians should develop systems that can measure these dimensions and know how to handle them. This will help them build a positive image, which may yield user loyalty in the long run. This is because, in libraries, users tend to exhibit certain unpredictable traits that the corporate image of the library can help to resolve such traits. For instance, users often utilise a library with knowledgeable and experienced staff than libraries where the staff struggle to understand their needs. Also, library users tend to have good image about libraries that continuously remain reliable in efficiently meeting the needs of users. Equally, users tend to remain loyal to libraries whose staff are courteous, kind, polite and willing to help users.

Another important factor to consider in building user loyalty in libraries is the switching cost factor. According to Cheng (2011), switching cost can make it very challenging users to change to other/competing service providers. Users usually assess the benefits and costs of involved in moving to other service providers before such decisions are made. When it costs more to switch than to gain, an exit barrier is created, which reduces the desire to move (Ghazali, Nguyen, Mutum & Mohd-Any 2016). For instance, in the library setting, if users find it more comfortable and less expensive to meet their information needs from the services of search engines like Google, Bing and Yahoo, building loyalty among such users is going to be difficult. However, if accurate, timely, updated, and relevant information can be retrieved from the library services, librarians may find it easy to build such users' loyalty.

In Ghana, some efforts have been made, particularly in university libraries to create loyalty among users. For instance, Budu, Korkuvi, Owusu-Ansah and Yeboah (2020); Twum, Adams, Budu and Budu (2020); Twum, Yalley, Agyapong and Ofori (2020); Banahene, Ahudey & Asamoah (2017) have conducted studies on different aspects of loyalty in libraries. However, regardless the efforts of these researchers to conceptualise and operationalise loyalty in libraries, many challenges exist that seem impede the realisation of such innovative efforts.

First, in Ghana, most library users own smartphones and/or other digital gadgets that enable them to easily access the Internet. In an era of Open Access and other free information channels, these users do not find it difficult to lay hands of the information

they need without utilising libraries. Even though, in most cases, the quality of such information sources cannot be guaranteed, users prefer them to going to the library. With time, this phenomenon has impacted negatively on libraries' efforts in creating loyalty among their users. Moreover, most libraries in Ghana do not have adequate ICT infrastructure and structure to efficiently deliver quality services to their users (Horsfall 2020). The inadequate ICT resources normally delays service delivery, or sometimes deny users of services (Mehta & Wang 2020). When such incidents occur, users then tend to believe that the open web resources are more reliable than the library services. This goes on to affect the loyalty of the users.

Another major hindrance to librarians' efforts to build loyalty in Ghana is inadequate commitments (human and financial) to drive the loyalty agenda. In most instances, libraries in Ghana do not have a clearly defined plan to build loyalty. As a result, no human or monetary budget is made for such purposes. This means that either no planned activity is made to generate loyalty or even if there are, they are normally on an ad hoc basis. These challenges, thus, call for a study that will provide a framework that will guide and drive a loyalty agenda in university libraries in Ghana.

1.3 Research problem

Libraries in today's world are inundated with many challenges. Earlier studies have revealed that common challenges like information explosion, the influx of automated systems, and rising library materials costs are associated with service provision in libraries (Ebdon et al. 2019). Also, researchers, including Velasquez (2015); Parikh et al. (2014); Fitchett, Hambleton, Hazelton and Klinefelter (2011) have mentioned the introduction of the Internet and the availability of online information service providers as key challenges facing libraries. Moreover, the pressure to offer excellent services, reduced staff strength, declining market shares and severe reduction in budgets are other challenges most libraries are facing. Additionally, the urge to improve upon the services offered by libraries, and the increasing demand to reasonably meet the varied information needs of users are some challenges libraries face. Librarians are, therefore, compelled to reach out and find out innovative ways to help mitigate these challenges. Libraries, therefore, need to adopt more proactive approaches in order to market and promote their services (Kodua-Ntim & Fombad 2020; Lamptey 2010).

Several studies have been conducted with the aim of adopting a practical position to market and promote library services. For instance, a study conducted by Mashroofa (2013) sought to investigate ways of marketing the library to the younger generation. Similarly, Gathoni and Van der Walt (2019) examined ways of adapting service quality concepts to university libraries. In a related study, Chandratre and Chandratre (2015) proposed the utilisation of market segmentation for better user service in libraries. Also, a study by Fourie and Fourie (2014) focused on user targeting as an efficient way of providing information services in libraries. Other researchers have broadly deliberated on the marketing of university library services (Ofori, Markwei & Quagraine 2020; Taiwo, Busari, Ayandare, Ayankola & Olusola, Ladipo 2015) and there is a body of research and commentary into promotion and marketing of libraries through the library website (Patil & Pradhan 2014).

A significant number of marketing definitions are user centred. As a result, most marketing activities are geared towards the user, especially creating a lasting relationship, or winning such users' loyalty. Practically, some studies have been done on library user loyalty. For example, Bakti and Sumaedi (2013) analysed library user loyalty by considering satisfaction and service quality. Alam and Noor (2020) also considered the effect of corporate image on quality, user satisfaction and user loyalty. Other researchers, including Boora and Singh (2011); Helgesen and Nesset (2011) have undertaken various studies relating to user loyalty in the library setting. Again, studies conducted on user loyalty have revealed that factors, including, the provision of quality service (Yusoff et al. 2010), satisfaction of users (Xu & Du 2018), building of strong corporate image (Hussain et al. 2020) and the switching cost influence (Cheng 2011) have helped in building the loyalty of users.

In Ghana, however, empirical, and theoretical evidence points out that the concept of user loyalty in university libraries is evolving. Available literature on library research in Ghana, do not focus on user loyalty in university libraries. For instance, Bani (2003) concentrated on Ghanaian university libraries and their image projection, whereas Anafo (2014) looked at strategies for marketing information services. In the case of Martey (2000), and Agyen-Gyasi, Lamptey and Frimpong (2010), they focused on how to market university libraries' products and services. Even though the studies of Twum, Adams et al. (2020); Twum, Yalley et al. (2020) are related to the current study, their

focus was on few antecedents of loyalty. Also, the scope of the two works was on just one private university in Ghana, thus it is limited.

It can be noted from the on-going discussion that although some of these studies do introduce the concept of marketing, none particularly examined how university libraries can build user loyalty. Thus, the dearth of key literature on the concept of loyalty in libraries was the primary inspiration for this research. Using the scientific process to understand the concept of loyalty and using same process to report on the findings of such investigations will guide librarians in making decisions that relate to their users and how such users can become loyal.

Moreover, this study's findings will enhance university libraries' policy decisions in Ghana. The literature and empirical evidence have adequately demonstrated the benefits of customer loyalty to organisations. This means that if university libraries adopt this study's recommendations, they will get their users to patronise their services repeatedly and refer others to their services. This positive development will, eventually, increase trust among their key stakeholders and their financiers.

Finally, since there is no framework on loyalty in libraries developed for Ghanaian university libraries, the framework from this study which made use of local attributes, will be a defining framework for building user loyalty in university libraries in Ghana.

1.3.1   Research purpose

The main purpose of the study was to explore strategies for building user loyalty in university libraries in Ghana with a view of establishing the challenges experienced in the process and proposing appropriate framework.

1.3.2   Research objectives

Specifically, this research sought to:
1. Find out how university libraries market their products and services to build Library Users' Loyalty (LUL).
2. Analyse the challenges university libraries face in building LUL.
3. Determine the impact that online search engines have on university libraries' efforts in creating an LUL culture.

4. Establish the determinants of LUL.

5. Develop a framework to predict library user loyalty in selected academic libraries in Ghana.

1.3.3 Research questions

To efficiently achieve the stated objectives, this thesis sought to answer the following questions:

1. What approaches are used by university libraries in marketing their products and services?

2. What challenges do university libraries encounter in building LUL?

3. What is the influence of online search engines on university libraries' attempts to create an LUL culture?

4. What factors contribute to the establishment of LUL?

5. What framework is appropriate for guiding library user loyalty in academic libraries in Ghana?

Table 1: Possible ways of obtaining data to answering each research question

Question	What approaches are used by university libraries in marketing their products and services?	What factors contribute to the establishment of LUL?	What challenges do university libraries encounter in building LUL?	What is the influence of online search engines on university libraries' attempts to create an LUL culture?
Will this question require empirical evidence?	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes
What research methods will be used?	Literature review Interview	Literature review Survey Focus Group Discussion (FGD)	Literature review Interview	Literature review Survey

What instrument(s) will be used?	Structured interviews	Questionnaires Unstructured interview guide	Interviews	Questionnaires Unstructured interview guide
Justify method and instruments. Why is/are this method(s) most suitable for answering this question?	It allows the researcher the opportunity to gather detailed responses in a standard form. It can be analysed more scientifically and objectively.	It allows responses to be gathered in a standard form. It can be analysed more scientifically and objectively.	It allows the researcher to gather detailed responses in a standard form. It can be analysed more scientifically and objectively.	It allows responses to be gathered in a standard form. It can be analysed more scientifically and objectively.
Where will data be obtained?	Librarians	Library users	Librarians	Library users
What sample will be used for this question?	Random sample	Convenience sample	Random sample	Convenience sample
How many respondents are sampled?	15	454	15	454
How many times will data be collected in order to answer this question?	1	2	1	2
Conceptual framework constructs (Oliver 1999)	cognitive	cognitive, affective, conative, and action	cognitive, affective, conative, and action	cognitive, affective, conative, and action

1.4 Justification for the study

In research, one's ability to demonstrate how innovative the study is, in terms of its significance, its usefulness to the society, and its influence on scholarship (Baptista, Frick, Holley, Remmik & Tesch 2015) is one way a researcher can justify a research topic. A realisation of the influence of information technology of the Fourth Industrial Revolution (4IR), with its associated challenges and diverse user needs, makes it reasonable and necessary for organisations like university libraries to determine and define how user loyalty may be built. This is because building user loyalty enables libraries to "spend less on users", "encourage usage of the library", "increase recommendation intention", "increase price tolerance" and "promote positive word-of-mouth" (Kandampully, Zhang & Bilgihan 2015; So, King, Sparks & Wang 2013; Evanschitzky et al. 2012; Pan, Sheng & Xie 2012; Cheng 2011). This proposition justified the need for a study into strategies for building user loyalty in university libraries in Ghana. Again, this study recognised and comprehended that several studies on marketing of library services had been carried out in Ghana. However, previous research had concentrated on the broad concept of marketing as applied to the library setting without emphasis on building and sustaining user loyalty. Therefore, this study intended to bring to the notice of university librarians in Ghana, the potential benefits libraries can gain by building user loyalty. It also sought to explore the functional determinants in building loyalty in libraries. Fundamentally, the study's findings will have academic and pragmatic influence in implementing marketing policies in university libraries in Ghana to create users' loyalty. Again, this study will benefit librarians and other information professionals in the information sciences in Ghana because less research has been undertaken in this area.

1.4.1 Originality of the study

In scientific investigations, the instruments, methods and procedures utilised in undertaking the study contribute to its originality (Baptista et al. 2015). These instruments refer to the designing of appropriate tools to conduct the study. The methods involve the procedures the researcher uses to conduct the study. The processes, on the other hand, means that the researcher has to fulfil appropriate ethical requirements (Mavodza 2010; Guetzkow, Lamont & Mallard 2004). The

application of a mixed-method data collection approach makes this study original as previous works in this area seem not to have used such approaches. This approach, through the exploratory phase was able to collect original data that further became the bedrock of the quantitative phase of the study. Previously conducted studies in this area did not exploit the prowess of an exploratory sequential mixed-method approach. For instance, Anafo (2014) and Bamigbola (2013) used a case study approach while Anafo (2014) used only questionnaire as a data collection instrument, Bamigbola (2013) on the other hand used only interview. Mavodza (2010) opined that originality also involves venturing into new areas. Previous studies on marketing or user loyalty seem to focus on profit-making organisations. The few ones conducted in library settings, however, appear to have focused on the generality of marketing as a concept. Examples are the works of (Anafo 2014; Bani 2003). Thus, a study that concentrated on building user loyalty through marketing in university libraries will be original as it attempted to explore the unexplored and the unanticipated. Again, any research that uses an original approach, has an original topic, comes out with an original theory and is deemed original (Gelling & Rodríguez-Borrego 2014). Therefore, this study is original as it has proposed an appropriate framework for user loyalty in university libraries; and used a new topic and a new approach of data collection.

1.5 Significance of the study

A study's importance alludes to how that study reflects broader topics and rationally justifies why it should be conducted (Kothari 2004). Abdulai and Owusu-Ansah (2014) have indicated that the study's significance justifies the necessity of the research. The study's significance helps to find responses to inquiries relating to the worth of the study in a community (Abdulai & Owusu-Ansah 2014). It further explains the study's relevance and its impact on all stakeholders (Creswell & Creswell 2018). This study, which concentrated on building user loyalty in university libraries, is important because earlier studies did not focus on the theme of this study. The few studies that come close to the objectives of this study rather focused on Ghanaian university libraries and their image projection (Bani 2003), marketing strategies for information services (Anafo 2014), marketing products and services of university libraries (Martey 2000), and the role of university libraries to enhance resource use (Agyen-Gyasi et al. 2010). The literature on building user loyalty through marketing in university libraries in Ghana

does not seem to exist. In this regard, this study will be of great significance as it will explore and establish strategies and a framework that libraries can use to build users' loyalty.

This study's findings and recommendations will be of immense significance to librarians, other library and information services stakeholders, and policy makers. In an industry with a growing competitive interest and ever-increasing avenues to free information resources, it is important for librarians to identify innovative and dynamic way of serving their users (Soltani-Nejad et al. 2021; Ugwu & Onyancha 2019). Library users are the pivot around which services are designed and delivered. As a result, a study that has developed a framework to serve as a reference point in driving this innovative process of retaining users would be significant to librarians.

Furthermore, this study will be significant to the users of academic libraries in Ghana. As librarians are guided by the findings of this study to improve service quality, satisfy users, and enhance user value, the ultimate beneficiary will be the library user. Users, like customers of commercial organisations can now enjoy the benefits of improved services as these services would be designed and implemented based on their preferences and expectations.

Finally, the findings of this study will contribute to the growing literature on library marketing, particularly in Ghana's university libraries. Over the years, a number of scientific studies have been conducted in Ghana that relate to the theme of this study. An increase in researchers' efforts to use the scientific method to propose solutions to service delivery in libraries, will also enhance data-driven decision making among library managers. This will in effect enhance service delivery in libraries.

1.6 Definition of terms

The under listed will be the operational definitions to be used in this study.

1.6.1 User loyalty

Rai and Medha (2013:141) defined user loyalty as "a psychological character formed by sustained satisfaction of the user coupled with emotional attachment formed with the service provider that leads to a state of willingly and consistently being in the

relationship with preference, patronage and premium". For this study, user loyalty means any established relationship between users and university libraries based on the users' prior experience with the library's services or products, that keeps the users to continually use the services of the library.

1.6.2 Marketing

"Marketing is the process of engaging customers (library users) and managing profitable customer relationships with the sole aim of creating value for customers in order to capture value from customers in return" (Kotler et al. 2018:671). For the purpose of this study, marketing is any activity that university libraries undertake to engage their users for them to appreciate the libraries' services and products.

1.6.3 Market segmentation

Camilleri (2018:80) defines market segmentation as "the process of dividing a market into subsets, or segments of consumers so that the members of each segment share common characteristics, are distinct from members of other segments, and can be reached by similar channels or media". For this study, market segmentation is termed as any action by librarians to categorise their users based on their needs with the purpose of efficiently serving them.

1.6.4 Service quality

"Service quality is a user's evaluation of the overall superiority of a service encounter". (Cheng 2011:151). This study defines service quality as users' general assessment of services provided by university libraries.

1.6.5 University library

It is any library attached to a higher education institution that serves two complementary purposes of supporting the school's curriculum and supporting the research of the university faculty and students (Aina 2004). This study conceptualises university library as any library established by institutes of higher learning with the purpose of providing services that support the teaching, research, and learning needs of lecturers, researchers, students and other recognised members of the university community.

1.7 Literature review and theories/models

Marketing is critical for success in business. Organisations that do not market their offers may not have customers patronising such offers (Alrubaiee & Al-Nazer 2010). However, all marketing activities should have the customer (user) at heart. Thus, marketing activities should be undertaken with the view of delivering excellent services and delighting users in order to win their loyalty. Some researchers have undertaken studies to investigate the concept of marketing in libraries. Some of these researchers are (Tajedini, Khasseh, Afzali & Sadatmoosavi 2020; Twum, Adams, et al. 2020; Twum, Yalley, et al. 2020; Chen & Shen 2020; Farooq et al. 2019; Beckers et al. 2018; Haruna, Madu & Adamu 2017; Ali, Zhou, Hussain, Nair & Ragavan 2016; Dahan, Taib, Zainudin & Ismail 2016; Wantara 2015; Adjei & Denanyoh 2014; Konya 2013; Bamigbola 2013; Muala & Qurneh 2012; Jahromi & Erfanmanesh 2011; Adeniran 2011; Boohene & Agyapong 2011; Jennings & Tvaruzka 2010; Agyen-Gyasi et al. 2010; Germano 2010; Veeramani & Vinayagamoorthy 2010).

In the case of Adjei and Denanyoh (2014), they argued that various factors affect user loyalty, and that marketing helps a company to identify these determining factors. If found, these factors can aid companies to adjust its offers to suit the users' needs. This will help it to gain the loyalty of their users. Again, Anafo (2014) argued that marketing is one of the tools that libraries can use to gain recognition of the mother organisations. The study revealed that because libraries lack a marketing concept, most members of the institution were ignorant of the existence of a library and its associated services and products. Equally, Muala and Qurneh (2012) argued that the product, price, personnel, and place (marketing mix) have direct impact on tourists' (users') satisfaction and loyalty. Agyen-Gyasi et al. (2010) further contended that today's university libraries are confronted with numerous difficulties and there is, therefore, the need to ensure that their users highly patronise their resources otherwise such libraries will fail to achieve their objectives. This can be achieved by delivering excellent services and also by delighting users.

In their studies, Twum, Adams, et al. (2020); Twum, Yalley, et al. (2020) sought to examine the influences of service quality and brand image respectively on customer loyalty of university libraries in Ghana. In the findings of Twum, Adams, et al. (2020),

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it was established that service quality has an impact on customer satisfaction, that, in effect, influences loyalty among library users. Again, Twum, Yalley, et al. (2020) found out that enhanced service quality would positively boosts brand image that also influences library users' loyalty. In their attempt to analyse the correlation between service quality and library users' behavioural intentions, Chen and Shen (2020) established a direct relationship between service quality and behavioural intention. Equally, Daud, bin Mohd Amin and bin Abdul Karim (2020) in their study on antecedents of loyalty among students in open and distance learning indicated that perceived service quality has a positive and significant relationship with both image and loyalty.

These studies by the various researchers above are not peculiar to Ghana and the West African sub region but are corroborated by other studies from all over the world. For instance, Konya (2013); Jahromi and Erfanmanesh (2011); Germano (2010); Veeramani and Vinayagamoorthy (2010); Sharma and Bhardwaj (2009) are various studies on the importance of marketing in the information industry from countries like Germany, Sri Lanka, India, Australia, Kuwait, Iran, the USA and other parts of the world. They all seem to be drawing one conclusion: libraries must a clear value plan, along with a coherent marketing strategy that places the library in an excellent position to develop user loyalty.

All the studies cited above focused on the importance of marketing in the service-rendering industry. There is still the need for more work to be done, especially in the area of information services and libraries, as all these studies barely focused on how user loyalty can be built through marketing. There is an even more scanty work done in this area on Ghanaian academic libraries. This current investigation, though similar to the various studies stated above and particularly that of Twum, Adams, et al. (2020); Twum, Yalley, et al. (2020); Anafo (2014), sought to establish a strategic framework for building user loyalty in Ghanaian academic libraries in, which the previous studies failed to achieve.

Using relevant theories/models is pre-requisite for a well-thought research study (Adom et al. 2016). The cognitive, affective, conative, and action by (Oliver 1999) will be used as a guide to identifying the determinants of library user loyalty.

1.8 Research methodology

One major component in a scientific study is the specific procedure that involves the forms of data gathering, testing, and clarification that scientists recommend for their studies (Creswell & Creswell 2018). In scientific investigations, Creswell and Creswell (2018); Ngulube (2015); Bryman (2012) have argued that the quantitative, qualitative and mixed-methods research can be used as appropriate approaches depending subject to the objectives of the research. Research methodology spells out the strategies a researcher adopts for a study, including the study design, data collection methods and instruments. As indicated by Kalusopa (2011), social research methodology also influences the study's philosophical assumptions. To respond to the research questions, the exploratory sequential mixed-method design as an approach was employed. It further used interviews and a survey to explore strategies for building user loyalty in selected university libraries in Ghana. The research methodology which is comprehensively discussed in Chapter 3 of this thesis incorporates the paradigm adopted for this thesis, the method that guided the study, research design, population, sampling techniques, data collection, data analysis and presentation, reliability, and validity of the study.

1.9 Ethical considerations

This research adequately complied with the UNISA (2020) ethical guidelines/policies on research (please refer to Appendix VII for a copy of the ethical clearance form). The researcher made the study participants aware of the processes and perils associated with their participation and allowed them to willingly agree to contribute to the study. This was done by informing them in advance about the research's overall purpose (Allen 2017). Again, the researcher always dealt with participants by first showing an introductory letter informing them of the research's intended purpose. The researcher also ensured that this study was done during private personal time rather than during office working hours.

1.10 Scope and limitations of the study

All the libraries sampled and used in this enquiry were all from the southern part of Ghana, with three located Accra. As a result, conclusions from this study may not

reflect the practices of libraries outside the scope of this study. Again, there were various ways of making users utilise a university library, but this study limited itself to using marketing strategies to build user loyalty in university libraries in Ghana.

1.11 Outline of chapters – Organisation of the thesis

In order to guarantee clarity, the thesis is structured into six chapters. The chapters include the introduction to the study, the literature review and conceptual framework, the research methodology, data analysis and presentation of findings, discussion and interpretation of the findings and finally the summary, conclusions and recommendations of this thesis.

Chapter 1: Introduction to the study

This part of the thesis informed readers of the broader and contextual settings of the study, the research problem, the research objectives, the research questions, the research purpose, justification, significance and originality of the study, summary of the methodology used, the definition of terms, and ethical considerations.

Chapter 2: Literature review and conceptual framework

This section of the thesis focuses on the assessment of related and pertinent literature to the study. It reviewed what has previously been done on the topic and what was proposed in this study. Literature on library services and products, marketing of library services, library user loyalty and its antecedents, challenges librarians encounter in building user loyalty, and online information service providers' impact on library user loyalty were reviewed. The chapter further elaborates on the cognitive, affective, conative and action framework (Oliver 1997) as a guide for this study.

Chapter 3: Research methodology

In chapter 3, the research methodology and methods are articulated. This chapter outlines the methodology and methods used for this research. It further spells out the paradigm adopted for the study, the method that guided the study, research design, population, sampling techniques, data collection, data analysis and presentation, reliability, and validity of the study.

Chapter 4: Data analysis and presentation of findings

The data collected through the focus group discussion are first analysed to extract valid and constructs that represented the study's aims. After this, the data from the survey are analysed together with the data from the structured interview. The IBM SPSS version 22 was primarily utilised in analysing the quantitative data while the qualitative data were thematically analysed using QSR NVivo qualitative analysis software.

Chapter 5: Discussion and interpretation of the findings

This section of the study offers a discussion of the results based on relevant literature and theories so as to situate the findings in the Library and Information Science context.

Chapter 6: summary, conclusions, and recommendations

With the study's objectives as guide, chapter 6 will display a synopsis of the outcomes of the study, conclusion and make scientific recommendations on strategies to build library user loyalty in university libraries.

1.12   Summary

This part of the thesis presented the foundation and established the setting for the study. It discussed the study's objectives, research questions, justification, importance and originality of this thesis, a synopsis of the methodology, definition of terms and ethical considerations.

CHAPTER TWO

LITERATURE REVIEW AND CONCEPTUAL FRAMEWORK

2.1 Introduction

As presented in the preceding section, the research problem that instigated this study involved building a robust strategy to build loyalty among library users in selected university libraries in Ghana amid expected challenges. This chapter offers an assessment of relevant literature that helped to place the research problem in focus and helped appreciate the gap in the context of this study's objectives. Generally, the chapter covers issues relating to library services in Ghana, marketing of library services and products, loyalty and its antecedents, and challenges involved in building loyalty. The chapter goes on to further present the theory that guided this study.

2.2 The role of literature review

Literature reviews are essential in any scientific communication, be it dissertations or journal articles. Mudavanhu (2017) sees review literature as a brief report of previously available knowledge. The literature review helps researchers demonstrate their proper appreciation of published knowledge, exhibit their independence of thought, and display their ability to evaluate knowledge (Paré, Trudel, Jaana & Kitsiou 2015). Furthermore, a well-composed review of the literature should emulate analytical arguments, displaying authority in the subject in terms of theories, and approaches (Paré et al. 2015). Mudavanhu (2017) corroborated this by affirming that literature reviews should evaluate a blend of pertinent scholarly work in a field of knowledge. In view of this, it includes the choice of accessible literature (both published and unpublished) on the subject. These documents may contain data, thoughts, information and proof composed from a specific stance to satisfy explicit points. Alternatively, such documents may express particular opinions on the quality of the subject and how it is to be explored.

One of the primary objectives of literature review is to provide reasonable justification to initiate a new study. According to Mudavanhu (2017), the need to undertake research could be justified by reviewing published materials to find and digest pertinent theories and research to assess the worth of research findings and find possible

shortcomings of such studies. Also, the review helps to explore unventured areas and also help in the selection of appropriate methodology for the study. Moreover, the literature review enables the researcher to own the work by explaining what has been done and what has not been done. It also enables the researcher to justify his/her own contribution (Snyder 2019). Again, the literature review becomes essential in the discussion section of a manuscript to critique others' findings in light of new results (Mudavanhu 2017).

For this study, the review of the literature played an important role as it enabled the researcher to evaluate every information source in order to utilise the relevant literature for this study. Similarly, literature review in this study helped in identifying the existing methodologies and sampling techniques appropriate in the field. This then influenced the research strategy used which possibly led to the results obtained in this study.

In writing dissertations, individual researchers are guided by certain conventions. One of such principles is the caution against the appropriation of ideas, and words taken from other published sources. Gasparyan et al. (2015), thus, advise scholars to always endeavour to acknowledge all quotations, procedures, and established scientific findings by citing similar works, prioritising literature from reputable sources. Whereas authors like Masic (2013) assert that appropriately ordered references provide credence to scholarly articles and acknowledge preceding scientific outputs of others working in the same field, Barroga (2014); Sarrafzadeh and Hazeri (2014) believe that proper referencing and citation enable "hypothesis formulation and sourcing of the original works in this rapidly developing digital age of publishing". For Parabhoi and colleagues, appropriate referencing and citation help to preserve the integrity of authors as it helps researchers to avoid committing basic ethical issues like plagiarism (Parabhoi, Sahu & Bhoi 2018).

The advent of computer-aided applications like EndNote, RefWorks, CiteULike, ProCite, Zotero, and Mendeley has enabled researchers to manage large sets of references and citations in consistent styles (Sarrafzadeh & Hazeri 2014; Lorenzetti & Ghali 2013). Specifically, this study used the Mendeley reference manager to organise its references and citations because Mendeley is free in terms of licensing cost. It is

an open-source application with additional capability to enable PDF storage and editing (Sarrafzadeh & Khaleghi 2017; Sarrafzadeh & Hazeri 2014).

Another significant indicator of the quality of a scientific write-up is the sources of information used in reviewing the literature. According to Mudavanhu (2017), such reviews use various documents to access available knowledge on a topic. For this study, an effort was made to systematically identify potentially relevant studies to include in the literature review. To this end, few academic databases like EBSCOhost, SAGE, ScienceDirect, and Emerald Insight were regularly consulted. Also, the researcher made use of the open web (Google search) to search for relevant materials that were published in other credible databases.

2.3 Map of research literature

One essential activity that scholars recommend during the literature review stage is creating a literature review map (Creswell & Creswell 2018; Lingard 2018). The literature map is a graphical illustration of one's search outcomes. It also enables authors to understand the relationships that exist between their search results. It further helps the researchers appreciate the value of their study regarding a broader scope of the topic (Creswell & Creswell 2018; Lingard 2018). The literature map can be used to identify significant terms applicable in a research area (Conceição, Samuel & Yelich Biniecki 2017). Another essential attribute of literature maps is that it could be used to classify more search concepts while, at the same time, bringing clarity into the structure of the literature review (Conceição et al. 2017). Regarding the form a literature map should take, Creswell and Creswell (2018) proposed three of them. First, it is suggested that a literature map could be displayed in a hierarchical order "with a top-down presentation of the literature ending at the bottom with a proposed study that will extend the literature". It could also "take the form of a flowchart, with the literature unfolding from left to right, with the studies on the right being closer to the 'gap' an author is proposing to close". The final proposal suggests a composition of circles, "with each circle representing a body of the literature and the intersection of the circles, indicating the place at which future research is needed" (Creswell & Creswell 2018:74).

Meaningful literature maps as recommended by Altinay and Paraskevas (2008) should follow the up-down approach where researchers write the title of the broad research topic they are studying. The steps involved in constructing a literature search as recommended by Altinay and Paraskevas (2008) include:

- A researcher writing the title of the broad research topic he is investigating on top of the map

- A researcher considering theoretical areas that are essential in the development of knowledge and scholarship for the topic

- A researcher logically adding the subject topics that are discussed in his literature under each subject heading

- A researcher classifying each of the sources under the relevant subject topic, based on its core ideas, concepts and narrative focus

- A researcher using directional arrows to indicate the links between subject headings, and between subject headings and subject topics.
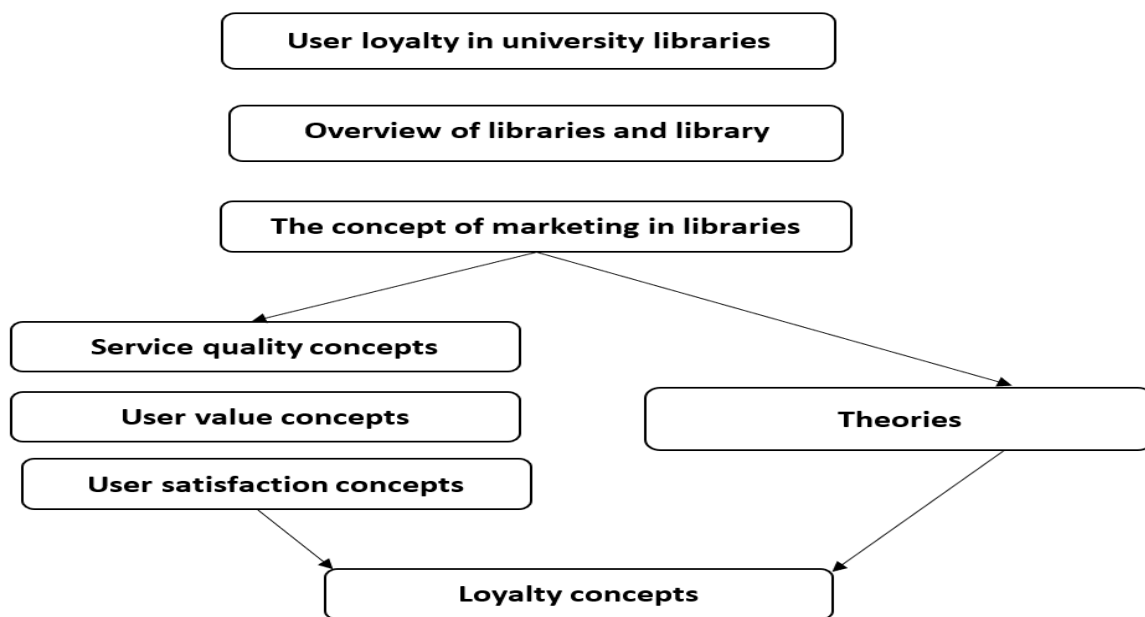
Figure 1: Map of research literature

2.4 General overview of libraries and library services in Ghana

The library is the cornerstone of the scholarship, an environment that provides its patrons with a place to conduct their study and advance their understanding (Pitts, Bonella, Coleman & Wathen 2019). The main reason for establishing libraries is to

provide services to clients of various classes with professional library personnel ensuring that various service outlets are established to achieve the maximum use of the library and its resources (Wexelbaum 2016). Librarianship has been a recognised profession in Ghana for more than seven decades and according to Alemna (1991), the profession's recognition in the country resulted from the infamous UNESCO seminar in 1953 which was on the theme "the development of public libraries in Africa". Subsequently, Alemna (1991) indicated that the seminar led to the formation of the West Africa Library Association with Ghana and Nigeria serving as active members. Librarianship has been evolving over these periods, enjoying significant recognition, especially with the advent of technology. Principally, libraries in Ghana are categorised into various types depending on institution they are affiliated with or the core functions they provide (Agyemang 2017). Agyemang (2017); Garoufallou, Siatri, Zafeiriou and Balampanidou (2013); Alemna (1991) identified the public, academic (school, college), national and special libraries as the key categories of libraries.

University libraries have for some time now, been perceived as the "hearts" of their institutions or establishments (Andoh, Kavi, Obeng-Koranteng & Bugyei 2019). Nonetheless, they have not been spared of the numerous challenges academic institutions face. To attain their central goal of supporting their constituents' curricular needs, these libraries create and keep up standard books, journal articles, and general information offers. The fast growth in higher education in Ghana calls for librarians to reconsider the types of services they provide and how relevant they are to their users (Adu–Sarbeng 2019).

University librarians, particularly subject librarians, ought to investigate the sort of aptitudes which will be needed soon to offer ideal services to their users. Andoh et al. (2019) noticed that, while innovative improvements obviously have significant ramifications for libraries, they should not dominate the more individual-situated abilities that are similarly fundamental for organising and offering compelling services. At that point, the authors made reasonable assertions concerning a specific group of abilities incorporated in improving academic staff's reliability, giving direction on teaching information literacy, emphasising specific IT-related abilities, and obtaining essential administrative competencies.

University libraries are one of the successful and valuable libraries in Ghana, as far as their structures, proficient personnel, advancement in their collections, services, and equipment are concerned (Ayoung, Baada & Baayel 2020). Even so, these libraries still face recurring challenges as well as potentials for the future. For quite a long time, libraries in Ghanaian universities have become the main sources of information for their constituents (Yebowaah & Plockey 2017). They obtain, measure and disperse documents and different types of information to help the examination, teaching, learning and research exercises of their mother institutions. They additionally give information to leaders in government, industry and trade. Again, they arrange for access to research information in the form of theses, dissertations and reports for local as well as foreign scholars.

Even though university libraries provide enormous assistance to local, national and international bodies to help advance research and knowledge, they, particularly libraries in Ghana, seem to have been ignored (Etse & Boateng 2016). Notwithstanding the numerous statements by the heads of their mother establishments acknowledging their significance as the soul or operational hub in universities, these libraries have mostly been left with insignificant resources. As per Kassim's (2017) observations, most African university libraries are confronted with insufficient funding, inadequate library resources, and lack of requisite human resources, which have remained unattended to for many years. Practices pointed toward renewing institutes of higher learning have been generally examined by authorities, such as the National Accreditation Board (NAB), and the National Council for Tertiary Education (NCTE). However, libraries have stayed at the outskirts of such conversation, that is, if they are fortunate to get noticed during such discussions (Cobblah & van der Walt 2017).

Even in this technological era, a more significant proportion of library collections in most university libraries in Ghana are mainly in print formats (Plockey & Pwadura 2018). Even though the print format is advantageous to many people, especially in Ghana, electronic resources have a richer combination of materials and a vast degree of excellent information searching and recovery capacities. The expectation is to see a future where more libraries have their collections digitised with backup records. Accordingly, university libraries in Ghana will need to revise their collections

development policies and systems to reveal the evolving changes. This point can help select and acquire educational materials effectively since there are numerous bibliographic tools to utilise. Going digital has its difficulties too. Zotoo and Liu (2019) contend that, with digitised libraries, genuine choice of resources can be challenging because, numerous materials will be available for access, and one will have to take note that there will be a problem in choosing what mode to lay more emphasis on in developing the collection.

2.5 Marketing of library services and products

Scientific exchange and advancement require useful explanations and characterisations of its fundamental expressions and constructs. As a result, services marketing as a field of study has over the years attempted to define and characterise its core term "services" (Blut, Beatty, Evanschitzky & Brock 2014). Consequently, Ali and Garg (2017) define service as any act or performance that one party can offer to another that is essentially intangible and does not result in the ownership of anything. The advent of technologies has enormously impacted the service industry (Lee et al. 2018). According to Furrer, Sudharshan, Tsiotsou and Liu (2016), the development of the service economy has gone through various stages. Service marketing has moved from the "crawling out stage" (1953–1979), where scholars in the service marketing field first fought to assert the discipline's right to exist (Furrer & Sollberger 2007; Fisk, Brown & Bitner 1993). It then went through the "scurrying about stage" (1980–1985), which was a bridging period where the services versus the goods debate began to wane (Furrer & Sollberger 2007; Fisk et al. 1993). It further moved to the "walking erect stage" (1986–1993), where scholars achieved a respected stance as service marketing became an established field within the marketing discipline (Furrer & Sollberger 2007; Fisk et al. 1993).

Service marketing, during these stages of development, did not happen with ease. Until recently, the manufacturing industry has been known to have utilised marketing applications more than the service industry (Soni 2015). Anytime consumers of products make a purchase, they have the ownership rights over the products transferred to them from the seller. However, for consumers of services, ownership over the service resides in them for only a brief period (Yuen, Wang, Ng & Wong 2018),

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and it cannot be returned (Engdaw 2020). Thus, it was evident that service organisations did not widely utilise marketing strategies in the early period. Again, Nuseir and Madanat (2015) argue that the service industry lagged because there existed professional service organisations whose personnel hitherto held the view that, it was improper to utilise marketing strategies to communicate what they have to offer to their potential customers. Soni (2015), avows that, it is recently that service organisations, such as libraries are applying marketing concept to sell their services. This is because such organisations were not having any competitions. Agreeing to Soni's (2015) assertion may not be far from the truth, as various service organisations are embarking on rigorous marketing activities to create awareness, visibility, competition and sustenance.

One major preoccupation of most marketing activities and research has been the difference between a service and a product. While service has been seen as an "act", "process", and "performance", product, on the other hand, has been recognised as a "thing". A product is tangible, whereas a service is a performance (Lovelock 2008) or as Talib, Rahman and Qureshi (2012) put it, service is anything that can be traded, but cannot be felt on ones' feet when it drops. Practically, because service is a process, organisations do not have products, but only interactive processes (Orel & Kara 2014). In recent times, there seems to be a clear distinction between services and products due to the acceptance and application of the Intangibility, Heterogeneity, Inseparability and Perishability (IHIP) attributes of service proposed by researchers (Kotler et al. 2018; Edgett & Parkinson 1993). Researchers believe that these four characteristics are what make service different from goods. Later, however, these service attributes ((IHIP) have received several criticisms (Wirtz & Lovelock 2016). Lovelock and Gummesson (2004) posit that, as a concept, the idea that these service attributes distinguish it from products is not valid. The authors propose two reasons. Firstly, the authors believe that the focal theme of service marketing has changed. Secondly, they argue that the advent of ICT has changed how service is produced and delivered (Wirtz & Lovelock 2016).

To identify service with the intangibility attribute means that they are activities that are felt and no one can experience them by the sense organs (Oyewole 2018). Similarly, service performance does not lead to the transfer of ownership from the seller to the

buyer. Thus, the buyer only purchases the right to the process and not the right to own (Palmer 2014). Kotler and Keller (2016) reiterated the point by indicating that services cannot be noticed, touched, sensed, or tasted before purchased. Though this characteristic has helped to shape the service literature, it has not been spared of criticism. According to Moeller (2010), most critics base their censure on the fact that mostly, concrete items are used in the performance of services.

Additionally, the concept of intangibility' is usually producer-oriented. Moreover, because consumers are mostly not interested in the difference between what is tangible and what is not, the intangibility aspect of service has been criticised as inadequate justification (Zeithaml, Bitner & Gremler 2018). Though these criticisms seem convincing, it must be said here that service is the process, the performance, and the act, but not the object used in processing, performing, or acting. Moeller (2010) acknowledges that intangibility does not have any relationship with the tools the service provider used to offer the service or the devices the service receiver used to access the service. Instead, it is the impact of the resources used in offering and accessing the service that is intangible and not the resources themselves. Djellal and Gallouj (2018) believe that even though services may involve physical actions, the processes used are always intangible. For instance, the procedures involved in imparting knowledge is intangible and not the resources used (the teacher, reading materials and the computer). Again, rendering a reference service in the library is intangible though the user and the reference librarian (tangible) are involved. The outcome of the resources used to access the service is the focal point of the service provision process. This outcome makes intangibility an essential attribute of service (Voorhees et al. 2017; Moeller 2010).

Heterogeneity is another distinctive characteristic of service. This attribute of service means that it is difficult to harmonise service and so the experience of service consumers is never the same (Oyewole 2018). Thus, service is dependent on the service provider, the time and place the service was performed (Kotler & Keller 2016). The human involvement in service leads to extreme inconsistencies in service performance (Peinado & Barber 2015). The human factor, thus, makes it difficult to control the outputs of services, unlike the outputs of products (Edgett & Parkinson 1993; Lovelock 1992). Heterogeneity also makes it difficult to observe improvement in

newly introduced services. This is because the inconsistency in service performance infers that past performance may not be a good benchmark for measuring future success (Javalgi & Martin 2007). It is however essential to offer training to all service providers so that they can achieve equivalence in service delivery. Also, companies should consider the fact that differences in culture influence the nature of employees and the standardisation of service delivery (Bluestone et al. 2013; Sarathy 1994).

Like other characteristics of service, heterogeneity is not without criticism. For instance, Lovelock and Wirtz (2011) have argued that there are countless possibilities of standardising services which have led to low level of heterogeneity. Vargo and Lusch (2004) criticise heterogeneity by arguing that using the human elements of service to judge it as heterogenous is a fiction. For instance, Gummesson (2000) suggested that a bank that provides ATM services is as standardised as many other products as possible. Thus, with the introduction of ICT, and in particular, the internet, standardisation of service performance has seen tremendous improvement. This means that variability in service provision has been reduced through the help of machines and computers (Lovelock 1983). Subsequently, the specific characteristic of the service is not affected neither by the difference between performance or the service performer nor the difference in the time the service was performed (Moeller 2010). Such innovations particularly in the library environment like book dispensing machines has created service standards which have also help to sustain the importance of the heterogeneity of services.

Another attribute of services is that they are perishable. Thus, unlike products, services are difficult to store once they are produced. Perishability implies that the service consumer must be around when the service is being offered. This poses challenges as far as balancing supply and demand and supply is concerned (Ruiz-Mafe et al. 2014). Similarly, Kotler et al. (2018) add to this by stating that one cannot save, stock or store services. However, Gummesson (2000) criticises this characteristic of service by arguing that services could be stored.

In the meantime, Edvardsson, Gustafsson and Roos (2005) corroborate the relate the critique of limited means of storing services by stating that of recollections of service delivery can be conserved for quite a long time. The critique regarding this

characteristic can be clarified. Moeller (2010) attempting to clarify the perishability of services states that though Gummesson (2000) statement could be true, as all aspects he cited are storable. However, the worth of such services, perishes if there is no immediate need for them (Moeller 2010). Time, as a component of service perishes quickly than any other service component (Amorim, Meyr, Almeder & Almada-Lobo 2013). Thus, services packaged or stored will still perish with time once there is no immediate demand for them. Yes, it is true that libraries may be furnished with current books and journals. However, once there is no immediate use of them, the potential capacity to provide that service perishes.

Another eccentric attribute of services is the inability to separate the creation of the service from its consumption. This means that there is an instantaneous relationship involved in the processes of performing a service. thus, one cannot separate the processes involved in producing, exchanging, and consuming a service as it is the case with products (Peinado & Barber 2015). In other words, service provision and utilisation happen concurrently (Kotler et al. 2018). These features of inseparability notwithstanding, Lovelock and Gummesson (2004) believe that service is not as inseparable as it is made to be believed. This, according to the authors is because many separable services. They further argue that most services are normally conveyed to customer's possessions, mostly in the absence of the customer (Lovelock & Gummesson 2004). Such examples are numerous in the library environment mostly because of the advent of technology. For instance, online/telephone reference interview, and Selective Dissemination of Information (SDI) are services that the library user does not necessarily have to be present. This seems to make the criticism of (Lovelock & Gummesson 2004) valid. However, Moeller (2010) once the point of reference for inseparability is defined, such criticism cannot be justified. Moeller (2010) continues to emphasise that one major element of service is the conversion of customer resources. It is important to note that such customers' resources are required for the conversion to be successful. As Lovelock and Wirtz (2011) points out, there is the need for the customer to be physically available for the service provision to be complete. This means that if one considers inseparability as a function of the customers' resources and not the personality of the consumer, then the feature of inseparability is valid (Moeller 2010). For instance, it must be noted that the student to

be educated is an example of the customer resources that are inseparably linked to their conversion.

From the ongoing discussion, it could be said that the introduction of technology, particularly the Internet, seems to make the IHIP characteristics of services lose its value. However, a critical consideration of these characteristics will prove that these attributes are still valid. As rightly put by Moeller (2010) it is not these service attributes that are not applicable, rather, it is their reference point. Thus, it is essential to find ways of establishing the point of reference of IHIP attributes of service. This is because, each attribute is applicable based on the available customer resources or the stage of the service provision.

2.5.1   Library and information service marketing

One of the key objectives of marketing is to help organisations in achieving their missions by concentrating on identifying and satisfying the needs of customers. According to Garoufallou, Zafeiriou, Siatri and Balapanidou (2013), an organisation's (including non-profit organisations like libraries) ability to satisfy their customers' needs can help them to attain their goals. This means that marketing helps organisations in their quest of improving the quality of their offers, by considering the customers' need, with the unique aim of increasing the awareness of the product and especially the utilisation of the product (Garoufallou, Zafeiriou, et al. 2013). Furthermore, marketing can be used to offer a series of essential tools that can be used identify and assess relevance of a product or service an organisation is currently offering (Cheng, Lam & Chiu 2020; Nooshinfard & Ziaei 2011).

Libraries and other non-profit organisations have been reluctant in marketing their services. According to Kotler et al. (2018), in some organisations, there existed experts who did not see the value of marketing. Some even believed that it was inappropriate to apply marketing strategies to promote their goods and services. In a similar vein, Rahman, Qi, Mohammad Saif, Ibrahim and Sultana (2017) noticed that because some organisations like libraries have not faced competitions, they do not see the need to utilise marketing tools. Similarly, Garoufallou, Zafeiriou, et al. (2013) have concurred that marketing is often mentioned as an ostracised concept among library staff. In recent years, however, the concept of marketing is gaining grounds among librarians,

with some advocating that it is crucial for the survival of libraries. Nyameti (2019) for example proffers that, librarians should not consider marketing as an opulence, but an essential component of their strategic management. Libraries, he said, can utilise marketing not only as sales tools, but also to understand needs of user and further enhance the popularity of unique services.

The need for marketing in libraries is, thus essential for ensuring that library patrons appreciate the unique services libraries can offer. This change of view may be attributed to the rate at which libraries are challenged with the problems of information explosion, the influx of automated systems, rising costs of materials and services, Internet and online services, demand for better services, staff shortage and harsh budget cutbacks Gupta and Jain (2009) coupled with the declining market share (Vasileiou & Rowley 2011). Libraries, therefore, need to adopt proactive tactics in order to market and promote their services (Khachatryan 2015). According to Yi (2016), the advances in technology and the society at large, might have contributed to librarians' willingness to accept and apply marketing concepts in libraries.

At any rate, marketing is considered as an important element of successful enterprises. According to Islam and Islam (2009) marketing products and services are essential so as to assure patronage of such products and services. However, all marketing activities should have the customer (user) at heart. Thus, marketing activities should be undertaken with the view to delivering excellent services and delighting users in order to win their loyalty. Writing on marketing communication in libraries Germany, Konya (2013) stated that the utilisation of marketing tools can help libraries in realising their goals. According to Konya (2013), libraries and librarians have risen to the challenges that come with advances in ICT over the years. Such developments have also affected the type of services libraries provide. As a result, experts have been instigated to work on promptly satisfying their users' needs by applying business models like marketing. It is important to agree with Konya's (2013) assertion as it will be essentially difficult to understand the changing and insatiable demands of information users without a careful laid down plan to comprehend them. Marketing, in this sense, will not necessarily be about selling the services of the library but also to increase visibility for the library, grow user counts or increase circulation statistics. However, it must be stated that such an activity should not be taken in vain,

but rather it should correspond with an improved service provision. If part of the already limited resources of the library is going to be used on marketing activities, then one will expect that the returns on such an endeavour is worth repeating.

Writing on the importance of marketing in libraries, particularly during economic downturns, Estall and Stephens (2011) suggested a cost-effective means of marketing library services: the narrative or story-based marketing. According to the authors, libraries from all over the world can derive tremendous benefits from marketing especially during economic challenges. Such marketing activities, according to the authors, should not only be resource-concentrated, but should also be relevant to the target group. The authors further proposed the adoption of a narrative or story-based marketing message as an efficient way of gaining the maximum returns while investing little resources in marketing. This story-based approach of marketing involves the development and reinforcement of a reliable value statements which can enhance users' experience with the library services. Again, such messages should be formulated in such a way that it can resonates with the users, relating to their experience with new and unfamiliar services (Estall & Stephens 2011). With this kind of approach, libraries will be in good positions to determine the factors that influence users to patronise the library and its services. The efforts of librarians to determine the needs of specific library groups could be daunting, but it is a necessary effort expected for a successful marketing strategy (Stejskal & Hajek 2015). Estall and Stephens (2011) concludes that, if libraries embrace this approach, it can aid them build and maintain a unique sense of value among its constituents, which in the long run can lead to loyalty. By so doing, the library builds loyal users who will champion the vision of the library, as well as defending the library when needed, and also provide essential platform for fundraising activities.

In the study of marketing approach for academic Libraries and Information Centres (LIC) in Kuwait, Veeramani and Vinayagamoorthy (2010) revealed that marketing of library services help to adopt better services for the benefit of customers (library users). Their study established that LICs in Kuwait are interested in marketing their products/services to increase user-awareness. Thus, the marketing of library services and its benefits has become a general realisation of most library and information centre managers. Kutu and Olabode (2018) also corroborated the above assertions

when writing on the India scenario of marketing library services. They conclude that marketing activities are helping libraries in diverse ways, especially in helping to understand the unique changes in the taste of their users, so that appropriate services are offered to meet such needs. The authors further posited that such marketing strategies help in managing challenges that confront libraries like reduction in budgets, and those posed by technology. Other researchers such as Jahromi and Erfanmanesh (2011); Madhusudhan (2008); Rhoades and Hartsell (2008) writing from other European countries have all emphasised the importance of marketing in libraries.

Studies relating to library marketing are also resonated in the African context. Adjei and Denanyoh (2014) argue that various factors affect user loyalty, and that marketing helps a company to identify these determining factors. If found, these factors can help the managers adjust their services to suit the needs of users. Again, Anafo (2014) argues that marketing is one of the tools that special libraries can utilise to gain recognition of the mother organisations. The findings indicated that because most libraries lack a marketing concept, most members of the institutions were ignorant about the existence of the library. Equally, Muala and Qurneh (2012) argue that the product, price, personnel, and place (marketing mix) impacted tourists' (users') satisfaction and loyalty positively. Agyen-Gyasi et al. (2010) further expressed that today's academic libraries are confronted with several challenges, and there is, therefore, the need to ensure that their users highly patronise their resources otherwise they will fail to achieve their objectives. This can be achieved by delivering excellent services and by delighting users through a well-designed marketing programme.

In effect, marketing helps most organisations to attain their goals by concentrating on identifying and satisfying users' needs (Garoufallou, Siatri, et al. 2013). It has been observed that marketing, has over the years helped many institutions in developing quality products and services. This has been achieved through various marketing strategies that help institutions to focus on the customer and their needs, with the key objective of increasing the awareness and the patronage of the library and its products and services (Garoufallou, Siatri, et al. 2013). Additionally, researchers have identified marketing as a key tool that can be utilised to better understand users and their tastes,

especially regarding the services and products of an organisation (Andreasen & Kotler 2007; Schmidt 2006; Besant & Sharp 2000; Martey 2000).

Libraries and other non-profit organisations have been reluctant in marketing their services. According to Kotler and Keller (2016), there are also organisations whose staff initially did not see the essence of utilising marketing strategies to sell their products and services. According to Jayasundara (2009), there still exists organisations like libraries which have not made any formal effort to market their products because for a long period, they had not faced any competition. The practice of marketing is not popular among librarians (Singh 2009). In recent years, however, that notion is changing as more professionals are embracing the idea of marketing library services. Patil and Pradhan (2014) advised that marketing should be considered as an essential practice in all libraries and not something for only a selected few. Libraries can utilise marketing not only as sales tools, but also as tools for studying users' needs so as to improve on the services provided. Marketing could be utilised by librarians as a critical instrument to persuade patrons to appreciate the worth of libraries. This change of view may be attributed to the rate at which libraries are challenged with the problems of information explosion, the influx of automated systems, rising costs of materials and services, Internet and online services, demand for better services, staff shortage and harsh budget cutbacks (Ashiq, Rehman & Mujtaba 2020; Umeozor 2017) coupled with the declining market share (Hazelton 2010). Libraries, therefore, need to adopt a proactive stance to market and promote their services (Vasileiou & Rowley 2011). Technological and societal changes have influenced the operations of libraries. This is because technology has increased sources of information available to library users. This, has therefore, compelled most libraries to apply business models like marketing in their operations in order to maintain their users (Collins & Quan-Haase 2012). As library users are now open to ever-increasing information sources (especially from the Internet), utilising marketing concepts in libraries has thus, become critical for librarians.

2.5.2 *Planning and Strategies of Marketing*

In today's world of information overload, libraries, experience enormous competitions. Hence, libraries should have a well organised marketing plan and strategy that seek

to encourage the utilisation of library resources and services (Anunobi & Ape 2018). The aim behind any marketing plan is to ensure growth in the number of patrons who utilise the library, and also create a good image for the library. Such plans also help to update users on the merits of using the library and its products and services. Chegwe and Anaehobi (2015) postulated that every library ought to have marketing plan that helps to contextualise procedures, define objectives, identify the 4P (product, price, place, and promotion), train staff and distribute resources needed to implement the plan. Thus, libraries should follow the established marketing practices in order to ensure that clients' needs could easily be coordinated.

2.6 Loyalty

Abu-Alhaija et al. (2018); Alshammary (2018); Felix (2017); Thakur (2016) have observed that until recently, customer loyalty had been viewed as a behavioural thought that involved continued patronage of products and services. This behavioural concept usually manifests through series of buying, recommendations, and enhanced relationships. However, Shankar, Smith and Rangaswamy (2003) found that the behavioural conceptualisation of loyalty was not enough or strong argument to differentiate between loyal and disloyal customers. The authors, thus, proposed that aside the behavioural perspective, loyalty should also be viewed from an attitudinal perspective. Researchers such as Song, Wang and Han (2019); Oliver (2015) have elucidated the attitudinal dimension of loyalty. The importance of integrating the attitudinal dimensions of loyalty has been proposed by (Nam, Ekinci & Whyatt 2011). According to the authors, situational issues like unavailability of products/services, personal issues like unwillingness to change and socio-cultural reasons like social attachment, are good reasons to distinguish between behavioural loyalty from attitudinal loyalty. Oliver (2015) defined loyalty as an intensely held promise to repeatedly patronise a favourite product or service constantly in the future. According to the author, this consistent commitment influences the consumption of same brand repeatedly, regardless other influencing factors to switch their purchasing decisions. Whereas Ramachandran and Balasubramanian (2020) express loyalty as attitude and behaviour, Ozioma and Marcus (2020); Agrawal, Gaur and Narayanan (2012) conceptualised loyalty as a customer's repeated consumption of a particular product or service. Rai and Medha (2013:141) summarise all these ideas by suggesting "that

customer loyalty is a psychological character formed by sustained satisfaction of the customer coupled with emotional attachment formed with the service provider that leads to a state of willingly and consistently being in the relationship with preference, patronage and premium".

The concept of customer loyalty, according to Khan (2012), is not new to businesses and that it is likely that businesses dating back thousands of years would have wanted to generate repeat business, create goodwill with customers, and improve their profits. Loyalty in literature, on the other hand, is a relatively new concept, which was earlier mentioned in the 1960s (Day 1969) and 1970s (Jacoby & Kyner 1973). "Apart from bringing it to the centre stage of customer related affairs of the company, the ethereal yet corporeal advantages of customer loyalty have rendered it a place of supreme importance in academic circles as well" (Rai & Medha 2013:139). The inception of loyalty in the research environment has produced much work (Khan 2012), particularly on issues relating to the benefits loyal customers bring to organisations. As a result, Rai and Medha (2013) assert that the world of marketing is increasingly moving towards loyalty marketing. According to Rai and Medha (2013;139), "the earlier business goal of ensuring customer satisfaction has been undermined due to prevailing colossal relationship orientation of businesses that calls for going beyond the boundaries of satisfaction and creating a commitment-based enduring association with customers, which renders immunity to the business against competitive pressures".

The value of customer loyalty for service industries has been recognised by many researchers (Fida, Ahmed, Al-Balushi & Singh 2020; Vilkaite-Vaitone & Skackauskiene 2020; Bhat, Darzi & Parrey 2018). Kang and Na (2020); Vilkaite-Vaitone and Skackauskiene (2020) have underscored the possible impact of customer loyalty on fostering a competitive edge for institutions. Having loyal customers helps companies to save numerous costs (Amha 2020; Morgeson, Hult, Mithas, Keiningham & Fornell 2020) because fresh clients are expensive to attain than to keep prevailing ones (Amha 2020). Again, loyal customers are key in revenue generation as loyal customers tend to spend more (Umashankar, Bhagwat & Kumar 2017). Apart from spending more with their primary product/service/brand, loyal customers also purchase a variety of products/services from the firm (Ramachandran &

Balasubramanian 2020). Also, Rai and Medha (2013) state that the unique attribute of services, enhanced role of ICT and intensified participation in service provision, have justified the significance of customer loyalty in the service provision industries. "Customer loyalty does not only ensure repeat purchases and positive publicity with greater value in terms of reliability, it also leads to a host of other significant benefits such as cross buying intentions, exclusive and priority-based preference to the company and its products/ services, and greater share of wallet which provide a competitive edge to the company" (Rai & Medha 2013:139). "Owing to these discernible and some other latent outcomes of customer loyalty like convivial attitude towards company's business policies, integrated marketing communication, new products and customer service initiatives, greater tolerance in the event of service failure and lower resistance to price ups, companies are hugely interested in a systematic and well-assisted development of loyalty behaviours among their customers" (Rai & Medha 2013:139-140).

Commenting on customer loyalty, Nowotarska-Romaniak (2020); Guillen, Nielsen and Pérez-Marín (2008) commended the need to focus on customer loyalty, especially in the life insurance industry, as it enables organisations to access quality information, efficiently manage customer-related issues, and strategically evaluate of the current market. Similarly, retaining clients essential for companies to establish an enduring relationship with their clients because such relationships lead to cross-selling and enhanced endorsements (Raza et al. 2020). Zeithaml, Berry and Parasuraman (1996) believe that creating an enduring association enables insurance companies to recuperate the cost of a policy as it usually takes as long as three to four years for such policies to be renewed. Gengeswari, Padmashantini and Sharmeela-Banu (2013) posit that an organisation that is able develop loyal customers also experience improved fiscal outlook. "Building customer loyalty involves detailed procedures that include various assessments of the service and other psychographic attributes of the service by the consumer (Rai & Medha 2013:141).

Put differently, building relationship with customers is essential, especially, where the good being offered is intangible. It is therefore important that organisations that provide different services need to appreciate the value of keeping and cherishing associations with customers (Levin 2009). However, building and maintaining such associations

are difficult and involve cautious strategies (Levin 2009). Thus, managers should take a keen interest in nurturing the loyalty of customers as the long-term benefits are enormous. Again, researching on loyalty in the banking sector, Yavas et al. (2014) agreed with early studies and concluded that in today's ever-growing financial industry, loyal customers are seen as valuable assets. Banks that will survive the future are those that focus on satisfying their customers. Thus, the authors establish a positive relationship between profitability and customer loyalty. It therefore calls for companies to establish factors that can influence customer loyalty (Yavas et al. 2014).

The significance of customer loyalty, particularly in the service industry, can never be underestimated as both practitioners and researchers keep elaborating on it. Abu-ELSamen et al. (2011), for instance, observed that in the telecommunications services, it has been observed that once a network operator attracts and retains customers, such relationships, especially in the long run gives the operator a competitive edge in the market. Thus, the authors urged mobile service operators to initiate programmes that will enhance customer satisfaction, which will lead to customer loyalty.

2.6.1   Library user loyalty

Previously, because libraries were not faced with market competitions that commercial organisations faced, most libraries did not find interest in building user loyalty (Moyane, Dube, Nkomo & Ngulube 2020). However, the narratives have changed in today's world. Today, most libraries are competing with other information service providers. This has ignited libraries' interest in building and retaining loyal users (Hommerová et al. 2020). Keshvari, Farashbandi and Geraei (2015) are of the view that building and sustaining a relationship with loyal users is imperative for librarians in academic libraries because, their users can easily switch to utilise Google. Hernon and Altman (2010) affirmed that, it is not just enough for librarians to be attracting new user or keeping old users. What the authors believe librarians need to do is to seriously consider strategies to convert these users into loyal ones. This is because, such loyal library users will help in enhancing the library's image. This enhanced image will go a long way of attracting the interest of all stakeholders, which may ultimately enhance the resource allocation into the library (Keshvari et al. 2015). As has been alluded to

already, the decline in the utilisation of libraries is a global issue (Frimpong 2015). As a result, Kerr (2010) has advocated that, librarians should focus on keeping their users and also try and find suitable ways of bringing back previous users.

An assessment of available scholarly documentations demonstrates an abundance of scholarly findings on library user perception (Tajedini et al. 2020; Nzivo 2012; Pedramnia, Modiramani & Ghanbarabadi 2012). These available studies, however, indicate that much attention has been giving to the discussion on library patrons' view of service quality and/or customer satisfaction (Pedramnia et al. 2012; Nagata & Klopfer 2011). Available studies have equally confirmed that two basic forms of user attitudes are service quality and user satisfaction (Parasuraman et al. 1988; Zeithaml 1988). Fleșeriu, Cosma and Bocăneț (2020) have posited that human behaviour is directly influenced by behavioural intentions. These behavioural intentions are also affected by human attitudes. In the consumer behaviour literature, it has been noted that customers' behaviours like the resolve to continue to patronise a product and speak positively about a brand are caused by behavioural intentions often referred to as customer loyalty (Molinillo, Mercadé-Melé & De Noronha 2020; Vilkaite-Vaitone & Skackauskiene 2020; Ngobo 2017; Lai & Chen 2011; Sancharan 2011; Clemes et al. 2008; Dowling & Uncles 1997; Zeithaml, Berry & Parasuraman 1996; Fornell 1992). Also, studies have confirmed that the two basic forms of attitude (service quality and customer satisfaction), can directly or indirectly affect customer loyalty (Sumaedi, Bakti & Yarmen 2012; Dahiyat, Akroush & Abu-Lail 2011; Kiran & Diljit 2011). Thus, it is essential to consider customer loyalty as part of studies on library user perceptions, aside those on service quality and customer satisfaction. This has, however, not been the case, as the literature on customer loyalty in libraries are few (Kiran & Diljit 2011).

Few studies on library loyalty have emanated from (O'Dell & Preston 2013; Romero 2012; Kiran & Diljit 2011; Helgesen & Nesset 2011; Ladhari & Morales 2008; Broady-Preston, Felice & Marshall 2006; Broady-Preston & Felice 2006; Martensen & Grønholdt 2003; Rowley 2000; Rowley & Dawes 1999). All these studies have in one way or the other looked at loyalty in the library settings, its importance and the factors that help to build and sustain library user loyalty.

Tajedini et al. (2020); Bakti and Sumaedi (2013); Rowley and Dawes (1999) appraised existing studies on library user loyalty and established that loyalty includes both attitudinal and behavioural dimensions. They additionally suggested that the management of loyalty must focus on the control or modification of its antecedents. In using the language in libraries, Rowley (2000) explores the diversity of the different groups with whom a library and information service needs to establish a relationship, the way in which the organisation can think about the relationship with its customers, and the management of that relationship. Ultimately, the creation of a community – whether the community is virtual or face-to-face, or a hybrid of the two – also requires that attention is paid to the relationship between customers, as well as those between the organisation and its customers.

In their study, Broady-Preston, Felice and Marshall (2006) stated that, it is important for librarians to actively endeavour to create lasting associations with their patrons, especially if libraries want to remain relevant to their stakeholders. The authors further indicated that libraries' efforts to relate well with their users will enhance the provision of quality service. Furthermore, the authors indicated that librarians should completely accept the difficulties that come with creating and sustaining such relationships with users, because it will eventually lead to the provision of quality services and also help librarians in establishing their worth. In a similar study, Broady-Preston and Felice (2006) established that without a good library-customer relationship, library customers bypass the library services and seek information elsewhere. They further suggested a new system where library staff and library customers will be trained to utilise the system, to enhance the rapport that exists between librarians and their users. The study indicated when libraries involve users in planning and executing their services, it often leads to the library's enhanced image among the users.

Ladhari and Morales (2008) in a related study, attempted to suggest a framework to understand the association that exists between value, perceived service quality and loyalty in libraries. The results of the investigation revealed service quality dimensions like affect of service, library as a location, and information control can significantly predict value. The findings further revealed a positive association between perceived service quality and loyalty. In determining the antecedents of loyalty in libraries, Kiran and Diljit (2011) found that users' choice of going back to utilise their library and its

services involves a lot of thoughts. According to the authors, users normally consider factors like service quality, value and users' satisfaction. Similarly, Bae and Cha (2015) undertook a study to investigate the predictive powers of service quality on user satisfaction and user loyalty among library users in South Korea. The study focused on service quality factors like the value of the library resources, personnel, library activities, amenities, online services, and user-friendliness. The findings revealed that user-friendliness of the library resources and the libraries' amenities significantly influenced user satisfaction and user loyalty.

O'Dell and Preston (2013) focused on three specific areas in their attempt to understand why some hospital staff under-use or do not utilise library resources, in the United Kingdom. These areas included 'the hospital staff's ignorance of library services', 'the staff had no information needs' and 'limitations in accessing the available information'. It was revealed that these employees were not using the library since they were ignorant of the library's services and products and the related benefits they can get from the services of the library. Again, employees were of the view that they did not have any need to derive answers from the library. The authors further referred hospital librarians to Hernon and Altman (2010) who in tandem with Wakeham (2004) concluded that regular utilisation of the library can be achieved by focusing on activities that will enhance library user loyalty.

2.6.2   Library user loyalty in developing countries

All the studies discussed in the previous section appear to have been conducted in the advanced and western countries. A review of the literature conducted in developing countries like Ghana, indicated a rather low publications on library user loyalty. Few of such examples are the investigation by Keshvari et al. (2015); Bakti and Sumaedi (2013); Keshvari and Geraei (2013); Hadadian, Kafashan, Asemandare, Rezaeizadeh and Ehsani (2012). The results of Keshvari et al. (2015) study on the predictive powers of the attributes of library user loyalty in Iran, for example, seem to agree with the results of (Martensen & Grønholdt 2003). The authors recommended that libraries should focus on satisfying their staff helping them to enhance their competence. This, according to the authors could be done through regular training programmes tailored to improve their relationship with users. The authors believed

that an enhanced librarian-user relationship will lead to loyalty in libraries. From these studies, it could be noted that service quality, either directly or through value and user satisfaction, is a key determinant of loyalty.

Bakti and Sumaedi (2013), in their study examined the association that exists between library user loyalty and service quality and user satisfaction in an academic library in Indonesia. Precisely, the study, through a structural equation modelling identified the analytical influences of service quality. The outcomes of the study established that in the library settings, service quality is not directly related to user loyalty. The study, nevertheless, indicated that service quality had an indirect influence of loyalty through user satisfaction. The findings, according to Bakti and Sumaedi (2013), indicated that an enhance library service quality may not lead to user loyalty, unless the efforts in enhancing service quality also led to an improved user satisfaction. From the findings, the authors recommended that librarians should endeavour to understand additional attributes of user loyalty in libraries aside service quality and user satisfaction. They further suggested that libraries should frequently conduct research on their user behaviours as that was the true way of understanding and including users' views in library plans and policies.

Hadadian et al. (2012) also conducted a study in Iran by using a model to explain the association that exists among perceived value, communication, customer satisfaction, loyalty, intention to return and preferring a library's name. The outcomes of the study indicated that whereas user satisfaction and communication had a direct impact on user loyalty, perceived value indirectly predicted loyalty in the library. In a related report, Keshvari and Geraei (2013) examined the determinants of library user loyalty in libraries of Lorestan province in Iran. The results of the study indicated that user satisfaction and perceived value were the main contributing elements of library user loyalty. It was however found that service quality also influenced library user loyalty through perceived value and user satisfaction. Clearly, it can be observed that all these studies seem to communicate similar message, that perceived value, service quality, user satisfaction and other latent variables, directly or indirectly can help in determining user loyalty in libraries. In Ghana, however, there seem to be no specific work done on library user loyalty.

2.7 Determinants of loyalty

Nandal and Malik (2020); Sharma and Bhardwaj (2015) asserted that understanding the antecedents of loyalty is essential if a library wants to enjoy the profits that user loyalty brings. As a result, libraries need to urgently investigate the determinants library user loyalty. In an era where libraries are faced with several challenges, it has been suggested that libraries should focus on creating strong ties with their stakeholders and establish perpetual associations with their users in order to remain relevant, profitable, and sustainable (Rai & Medha 2013). Ramachandran and Balasubramanian (2020); Janita and Miranda (2013) appraised published materials of the determinants of loyalty with regard to commercial enterprises. The analysis revealed that achieving loyalty is dependent on factors like the type of market, the geographical location of the organisation. The authors indicated that the presence of each of these factors could result in different antecedents of loyalty. Several studies have discussed customer satisfaction, service quality, service value, customer experience, trust and commitment as key determinants of customer loyalty (Adjei & Denanyoh 2014; Rai & Medha 2013; Kiran & Diljit 2011; Ladhari & Morales 2008; Ball, Simões Coelho & Machás 2004). This present study however focuses on service quality, service value and customer satisfaction as the key precursors to building loyalty in libraries.

2.7.1 Perceived service quality concept

Service quality is a key factor of loyalty (Fida et al. 2020; Ofosu-Boateng & Acquaye 2020; Abror et al. 2019; Izogo & Ogba 2015; Rai & Medha 2013; Abu-ELSamen et al. 2011; Jayasundara, Ngulube & Minishi-Majanja 2010). For some time now, most practitioners, managers, and researchers in the service provision industry have focused on the concept service quality. This is because the concept has a positive relationship with productivity, success, reduced operational costs, customer satisfaction and customer loyalty (Fida et al. 2020; Ariffin et al. 2018; Akroush, Dawood & Affara 2015). Conceptualising service quality has been viewed as a challenging task, when compared with goods or products (Mmutle & Shonhe 2017; Maklan & Klaus 2011). Nonetheless, scientific studies have introduced many models for measuring service quality, among which two stand out (Jayasundara et al. 2010). These models

are the SERVQUAL model which was advanced by Parasuraman et al. (1988) and the SURVPREF, the invention of (Cronin & Taylor 1992). SERVQUAL or the gap model describes service quality as a function of the difference that exists between the hopes of customers and their observations of the delivery of actual service by a company.

Service Quality is the comparison of perceived performance and expected performance (Ko & Chou 2020; Pakurár et al. 2019; Park & Yi 2016). Service quality is a universal appraisal of a specific service. it is the client's general feeling of the relative importance of an institution and its services (Mmutle & Shonhe 2017; Angelova & Zekiri 2011). Thus, service quality is a mental evaluation of organisations and their offers. It has been argued that an organisation's ability to provide excellent service quality helps improve the retention rates of clients, helps appeal to fresh clients, enhances performance, ensures to higher market shares, reduces personnel turnover and operational costs, motivates personnel, and increases an organisation's fiscal performance and profitability (Abdullah, Suhaimi, Saban & Hamali 2011). According to Mmutle and Shonhe (2017); Maklan and Klaus (2011), measuring service quality is difficult, and that, most often, those who measure service quality equate customer's anticipation to the actual service performance. Chuang (2010) later found out that service quality can be determined by finding the variances of customers' perceptions and expectations of clients about a specific service. The inseparable attribute of service signifies that, customers can only establish the value of a service only at the time of receiving such service (Mmutle & Shonhe 2017; Ghotbabadi et al. 2015). In the marketing literature, Parasuraman et al. (1988) defined this subjectivity of service quality as perceived quality; 'the consumer's judgement about a product's overall excellence or superiority'. Perceived service quality is obtained from the interaction between the client and the organisation, during which the client assesses quality of the service and makes a decision (Chaparro-Peláez, Hernández-García & Urueña-López 2015; Snoj 2010).

In a study on the antecedents of customer loyalty in the Indian insurance services, Rai and Medha (2013) established that, service quality is one of the key factors clients consider in making decisions of building a lasting relationship with an organisation. In other studies, service quality has been found to positively influence customers' willingness to endorse an organisation (Fida et al. 2020; Pakurár et al. 2019; Izogo &

Ogba 2015), and willingness to pay more and loyalty (Zhong & Moon 2020; Ariffin et al. 2018). Studies have also established that service quality is emphatically connected with customers' readiness to spend more on a product as well as being loyal to a brand (Fida et al. 2020; Rashid & Rokade 2019). The relevance of service quality is well exemplified in the Ghanaian banking and hospitality industries by a study undertaken by (Ofosu-Boateng & Acquaye 2020; Boadi, Wenxin, Bentum-Micah & Jerry 2019; Hinson, Amidu & Mensah 2006). These studies sought to investigate and compare service quality perception of in these industries in Ghana to confirm the critical determinants of service quality. It was discovered among other things that all the service quality dimensions used their studies significantly facilitated the attainment of service quality in Ghana. Again, a study by Adjei and Denanyoh (2014) to identify the factors that cause mobile telecom subscribers to be loyal revealed that call rate quality was the key determinant of customer loyalty.

2.7.1.1 *Perceived service quality in libraries*

The utilisation of business models, like service quality in academic libraries, can help such libraries to enjoy the advantages such models bring to commercial institutions (Baden, Peattie & Oke 2020). All businesses, whether profit making or non-profit making, work forward to satisfying their key patrons. In light of this, it will be challenging for any academic library to continue to exist without taking into consideration the needs of its users (Jayasundara et al. 2010). The need to survive in such situations call for libraries to pay attention to the quality of services they offer in order to enhance the satisfaction of their users. Using suitable antecedents of service quality in order to satisfy users can enable university libraries to limit the challenges they encounter in delivering services. Several service quality models exist in the commercial sector that could be adopted by libraries to assess the usefulness of library services. However, the adoption and utilisation of such business-oriented frameworks has not seen significant success in libraries (Jayasundara, Ngulube & Minishi-Majanja 2009; Filiz 2007). Even though several definitions have been proffered for service quality, specifically, experts define it as the evaluation of the variance of users' anticipations and their perception of service performance (Pakurár et al. 2019). Thus, service quality may be considered as an appropriate way of helping to narrow the variance that exists between users' anticipations and their opinions of actual service provided (Ko & Chou

2020; Ghotbabadi et al. 2015). Service quality in academic libraries is often related with user satisfaction (Palli & Mamilla 2012; Nejati & Nejati 2008). Customer satisfaction is key approach of assessing service quality in libraries (Gathoni & Van der Walt 2019).

The evaluation of service quality helps libraries to get the necessary feedbacks it needs to help in enhancing the type of services provided to users (Jayasundara et al. 2010). Using customer assessment tools to assess the quality of services provided by academic libraries has been recommended (Gathoni & Van der Walt 2019). In order for librarians to design services that meet the particular needs of patrons, it is appropriate to consistently evaluate the current services that are being offered.

Over the years, the application of service quality concept in libraries has gained grounds (Fida et al. 2020; Afthanorhan, Awang, Rashid, Foziah & Ghazali 2019; Einasto 2014). Issues of service quality in libraries emanated from a venture commenced in 1999 by the Association of Research Libraries (ARL). This project was meant to harmonise assessment tools of service quality in libraries. Together with the Texas A&M University, the ARL designed the LibQUAL^{+TM} instrument. The LibQUAL^{+TM} instrument was developed with the SERVQUAL instrument in mind. The intention of the LibQUAL^{+TM} scale was to assess service quality in libraries based on eight dimensions, which were eventually reduced to three dimensions (Association of Research Libraries Statistics and Assessment Programme (ARLSAP) 2015). The three dimensions include affect of service, information control, and library as a place. The LibQUAL^{+TM} instrument tested around the globe. For instance, Wei, Thompson and Cook (2005) have confirmed that the scale has been verified in many countries in the world. Mutisya and Onyancha (2020); Shoeb and Ahmed (2020) described affect of service as how librarians and other library staff relate with library users. Such services may include employees helping users to be confident, staff showing interest in their users' needs, staff respecting users, staff willing to respond to users' information needs, employees having the competence in dealing with the users' queries, and library staff relating with users a considerate manner. Thus, affect of service refers to the social aspect of service quality (Mutisya & Onyancha 2020). Information control, on the other hand deals with users' ability to traverse through the available library collections with ease. It focuses on the library's stock meeting the

teaching, research and learning needs of its constituents; and the ease with which one can browse through the library collections (Association of Research Libraries Statistics and Assessment Programme (ARLSAP) 2015). This may include a library web site that permits users to independently discover information, state of the art facilities that facilitate access to information, and easy-to-use discovery tools that enhance users' independent discovery of information. Another dimension, "library as a place" concentrates convenient and inviting library ambience that boosts learning and research (Association of Research Libraries Statistics and Assessment Programme (ARLSAP) 2015). Accordingly, this may include a library that has serene environment for personal learning.

Helgesen and Nesset (2011) affirmed the relationship between student loyalty and the drivers of the LibQUAL^{+TM} (information control, affect of service and library as a place) and observed a positive association between them. The authors further verified the predictive powers of the three dimensions and discovered that an enhanced affect of service positively influenced loyalty. Also, it was established that an increase in information control and library as a place positively resulted in an increase in loyalty. Thus, it was discovered by the authors that library as a place had the highest predictive powers for loyalty, followed by affect of service and information control respectively. A similar study conducted by Ladhari and Morales (2008) indicated the value of the "library as a place" dimension as an antecedent of perceived service quality. According to the authors, library as a place deals with how effective a library is able to satisfy the unique needs of users who visit the library premises. A serene environment for individual learning activities, an environment that instigates scholarship, a relaxed and appealing place, and rooms for collaborative learning all feature as essential attributes of this dimension. The study further stated that a modern library makes spaces available for members of the public and other groupings could meet for deliberations on social issues. According to the authors, the tangibles aspect emerged as the most essential dimension to the patrons of a library in Singapore. Thus, libraries should pay attention to their environments as an appealing service environment boosts perceived service value (Ladhari & Morales 2008). Once more, Ladhari and Morales (2008) accentuated the significance of the latter element of perceived library service quality. As per them, Information Control centres around how the library's stocks sustain

scholarship, and the ease with which users can browse the library's collections. They prescribed that it is important to have current resources that permits clientele to encounter a simple access to the different information resources available in the library. Innovative development in the last few years have ignited clients' attitudes towards information, both in terms of delivery and the quality of information services and resources (Angelova & Zekiri 2011).

In a related study, Martensen and Grønholdt (2003) established six service quality elements in available in libraries. First of the element is the availability of electronic resources which includes the online open access catalogue, library web, information base inquiry systems and access to publications of articles and reports. The subsequent element as suggested by the authors is the availability of printed resources and other library services like library client courses. Thirdly, the authors referenced technical facilities such as PCs and photocopying machines. The fourth element according to them comprised of the library environment like the physical ambience, rooms for learning and the period when the library is opened for business. Lastly, the authors referenced the social side of client services (like how knowledgeable, helpful and friendly the library staff are) as the fifth determinant. According to the study, for a library's service to be considered a quality, the library must have a host of reliable electronic and print resources supported by abled, resourced and knowledgeable human personnel and in a conducive environment. Martensen and Grønholdt's (2003) study aligns with the conclusion of a study by Keshvari et al. (2015) on the "predictive attributes of customer loyalty in public libraries in Iran", concluding that the varied dimensions of service quality implicitly influence customer loyalty (Keshvari et al. 2015).

In Indonesia, Bakti and Sumaedi (2013) undertook researach on library customer loyalty and the outcomes of the study indicated that service quality does not directly influence the loyalty of library users in using library services. However, it was discovered that service quality influences the loyalty of library users in patronising library services indirectly through library user satisfaction. These discoveries suggest that even if libraries improve on the quality of services they offer, it will not automatically give the assurance of loyalty from their users. It means that, for the library to get loyal users, the improvement in the quality of library services must result

in an increase in the fulfilment of the library client. The study of Kiran and Diljit (2011) seem to agree with (Bakti & Sumaedi 2013). There is an indirect way between the quality of service and loyalty of clients, which affirms the discoveries of other studies in different study areas. It likewise demonstrates that scientific investigations that have been undertaken to explore just the direct relationship between service quality and the loyalty clients are probably going to arrive at an unfinished conclusion. This is based on the reason that clients' choice for repeated utilisation and suggestion of the service to others is influenced by the value and fulfilments credits of the assistance.

The clients' perception of quality relies on the degree to which clients' expectation is synchronised with the library's offers (Afthanorhan et al. 2019; Islam, Ahmed & Razak 2015). Customers offer top priority to service continuity and service staff responsiveness. They also assume that good facilities and consistent services should be prepared by the library. Understanding the expectations of consumers along the dimensions of service quality exposes their priorities and resolving the same will help minimise service quality gaps. Many regular customers can be attracted to the library by good words of affirmation from happy clients. This warrants the honesty, self-interest, and determination of service providers to represent consumers. Daily customer surveys can provide insights into areas that need further focus. Pakurár et al. (2019) further suggest that building of relationships also help improve service quality. Thus, in university libraries, there is a degree of improvement in the level of service once there is a good interaction with customers.

In another study, Asogwa et al. (2014) attempted to employ ServQUAL as a tool to explore the views and aspirations of service quality of users in developed countries' university libraries. The findings found that average mean user experience scores were higher than user awareness scores, and that there were differences between the results of this analysis and the results obtained in developing countries where similar studies were performed several decades earlier. It also concluded that while duties and dependability in developed countries were the best, tangibility, and empathy in developing nations were the highest. This indicates that the number of services expected was higher than the real services rendered.

Hernon, Nitecki and Altman (1999) carried out a several factor analyses on several variables and realised that the measurements of the standard of library service included instruction, waiting time, electronic facilities, employees (including receiving courtesy, usability of services and friendliness) and detailed data positions, regular equipment function, data distribution time, library buildings and environment, library services, material that serves the needs of people, and so on. A questionnaire survey was used by Majid, Anwar and Eisenschitz (2001) to explore all potential causes that had a major effect on library studies. The findings found that collections, infrastructure, and physical infrastructure were the most significant concerns. In addition, an exploratory analysis on the expectations of library service efficiency was undertaken by Chang and Hsieh (1996), based on key library customers from Taiwan universities. They used a questionnaire survey and a series of tests of causes. Seven considerations were indicated by the findings, including: integrity, moderation, ease, tangibles, communications, and personnel adequacy as key determinants of the quality of service.

2.7.1.2 *The role of service quality in building user loyalty*

While a variety of studies have been undertaken to establish the connexions between the three assessment variables of service (including efficiency, value and satisfaction) and the anticipated impacts of these variables on behavioural results (loyalty), there has been no consistency as to which of the three variables or their variations have the most important, direct impact on customer behaviour. There is no consensus regarding studies on the correlation between quality of service and loyalty. Zeithaml, Berry and Parasuraman (1996) found a substantial association between service efficiency and loyalty in an analysis of four service providers. Helgesen and Nesset (2011) have reported that a partnership exists between student allegiance and the LibQUAL+TM drivers (Information Control, Effect of Service and Library as a Place) and concluded that a positive relationship exists between them.

However, Cronin and Taylor (1992) suggested divergent outcomes, finding no clear correlation between consistency and loyalty. The results of Cronin and Taylor (1992) were also expressed by Kiran and Diljit (2011) when they concluded in their research that there is no clear significant influence of web-based library service efficiency on

consumer loyalty, contrary to previous studies. Indeed, Cronin and Taylor (1992) found that the quality of the service has less effect on purchasing decisions than on customer loyalty, and that quality is a precedent for the latter. For Cronin, Brady and Hult (2000), this obvious inconsistency is an indicator that only a partial view of consumer satisfaction is given by service efficiency.

Keshvari et al. (2015) concluded that the various aspects of service quality indirectly influence consumer loyalty by investigating the influential influences of customer loyalty in public libraries in West Iran. This suggests that some ties may exist between the quality of service and customer loyalty. This indicates that there may be some links that liaise between service quality and customer loyalty. Service quality, thus, may influence loyalty indirectly via other antecedents of loyalty. This assertion has been made by several researchers, including (Debata, Patnaik, Mahapatra & Sree 2015; Yadav & Dabhade 2013; Santouridis & Trivellas 2010; Jamal & Anastasiadou 2009; Martensen & Grønholdt 2003; Sivadas & Baker-Prewitt 2000; Andreassen & Lindestad 1998). It is worthy of note that in all these studies, they all agreed that service quality helps in building customer loyalty in one way or the other. However, the difference in opinions relates to the direct or indirect effects of service quality on loyalty.

2.7.2 User value concepts

Another variable that can affect customer satisfaction, according to Kiran and Diljit (2011), is service value. One of the most significant aspects of distinction in service marketing campaigns has been identified as perceived service value (Molinillo et al. 2020; Alshibly 2014). Perceived value is rooted in equity theory, which is denoted by the proportion of the result/input of the customer to that of the outcome/input of the service provider (Jayawardhena 2010). The definition of equity applies to the client's estimation of what is equitable, accurate or justified for the perceived expense of the offering (Priester, Robbert & Roth 2020). McKnight (2010) describes perceived value as the total estimation of the usefulness of an organisation's offer by the customer dependent on assumptions of what is acquired and what was advertised. Customer-perceived worth, in essence, derives from an estimation of the comparative benefits and expenses linked with an offer (Jiang, Jun & Yang 2016). Customers also calculate the result-to-input ratio of a market by making comparisons with the products of its

rivals. Thus, perceived service value is a general assessment of their feedback (cost) and the returns they obtained from a product or service by the customer of a service based on their opinion of what was offered and what was received. Not all consumers have the same meaning (McKnight 2010). There are those who are faithful and buy a lot and those who are temporary and do not buy much.

Perceived costs comprise cash payments and non-monetary expenses, such as expenditure of time, use of electricity and customer tension (Jiang et al. 2016). Although what is obtained (which may include quantity, high quality, and convenience) and what is delivered (which may include money spent, and time or effort) differs from one customer to another, value is a balance between the main offer and obtain components (Ladhari & Morales 2008). The expected importance of the service is a subjective, distinct, and complex concept and the utility of the service is directly connected to the operationalisation of this construct (Kiran & Diljit 2011). Zeithaml (1988) identified four meanings from her exploratory studies that consumers equate with worth. Value is whatever the customer needs in a product; value is the service that the customer receives for the price paid and value is what the customer receives for what he/she offers. Some scholars see worth in retail literature as contingent on monetary costs (Slack, Singh & Sharma 2020) or what the consumer needs to compromise by using the service (Zauner, Koller & Hatak 2015). However, in information service centres, like university library services, where no direct expenses are imposed, the metrics are more connected to the 'usefulness' of the facility in study development (Landrum, Prybutok & Zhang 2007) or regulation (Parasuraman, Zeithaml & Malhotra 2005). Perceived service value is a compromise between efficiency (gains) and sacrifice (price). Perceived prices, such as time costs, quest costs and psychological costs, can be monetary or non-monetary (Zeithaml 1988).

Customer value can be viewed from a few viewpoints (Huber, Herrmann & Morgan 2001). Firstly, the importance of customers to a company concerns the immediate advantages experienced by an organisation due to the loyalty and continuing support of customers. Secondly, customer value represents individual customers' personal values. Finally, the perceived-value policy of the consumer reflects on the utility that a customer gets when buying a product. Four value forms were distinguished by Parasuraman and Grewal (2000): purchase value, sale value, in-use value, and

redemption value. Acquisition value is characterised as the advantages that customers feel they obtain when the service is obtained. Transaction worth is the joy that buyers have for having a decent price. The in-use value is the utility gained from using the program and the remaining incentives earned at the time of closure are the redemption value. Five dimensions of perceived service efficiency were established in the work of (Petrick 2002). What a customer gets from the transaction is reflected in three of the five dimensions: emotional responses to the service, quality earned from the service, and service credibility. The remaining two dimensions are connected to what is given, namely the price of money and non-monetary prices.

Lee and Cho (2005) have attempted to define reasons that enhance the utilisation of information intermediaries (including libraries, and fee-based intermediaries). Their findings indicate that the probability of utilising information intermediaries is dictated by the apparent importance of their use. They resolved that the greater the importance of the use of information intermediaries considered by the user, the more likely it would be to utilise it. Hastings (2004) placed perceived importance within its criteria for assessing the value of a public service broadcaster. Michalos and Zumbo (1999) in a related study looked at the use of public facilities by individuals, perceived worth and happiness with community services, and a wide range of factors concerning life satisfaction. Using a simple linear model, the study indicated the discrepancy in satisfaction scores could be explained by perceived value for money, and vice versa. Furthermore, the results indicated that perceived worth is an important factor that impacts customer decision-making. High value is one of the key reasons for client patronage. In this respect, Sirdeshmukh, Singh and Sabol (2002) claim that whereas consumer value is a superordinate objective, customer loyalty on the other hand is a subordinate objective, because it involves behavioural intentions. Pursuant to goal and action identity theories, a superordinate goal is likely to control subordinate targets. Thus, consumer value governs behavioural intentions of loyalty to the service provider as long as such inter-relational exchanges provide superior value (Sirdeshmukh, Singh & Sabol 2002). Prior empirical scholars have established relative worth to be a primary element of customer loyalty in environments such as mobile services (Bolton & Drew 1991), airline travel and retail services (Sirdeshmukh, Singh & Sabol 2002).

Chang and Wildt (1994) report that the benefit earned by the consumer has been described as a significant contributor to the buying intention.

2.7.2.1 User value in libraries

In the literature, the significance of perceived value is also well clarified, and it has been stated that there is a consensus that customer value is a key marketing strategy and can easily help organisations to have competitive edge over others (Kaleka & Morgan 2017). Regardless the relevance of customer value in the success of organisations, a search through the literature indicates the availability of few empirical findings on this concept (Durvasula, Lysonski, Mehta & Tang 2004; Lam, Shankar, Erramilli & Murthy 2004; Yang & Peterson 2004; Cronin et al. 2000; Sweeney, Soutar & Johnson 1999; Sirohi, McLaughlin & Wittink 1998; Bolton & Drew 1991). Also, it is important to note that all these studies were undertaken within the profit-making organisations. There are, however, some few studies undertaken in the library environment which in one way or the other highlighted on the concept of perceived value. Among these include (Keshvari et al. 2015; Keshvari & Geraei 2013).

The outcomes of an investigation by Keshvari et al. (2015) show that perceived customer value was the largest factor that predicted user loyalty in public libraries. Thus, in building user loyalty in libraries, librarians should ensure that factors that enable the creation of perceived value are engendered. Their study showed that three factors (the affect of the services, the information control and the location of the library) had the greatest predictive influence on perceived value of library customers. In a study, Keshvari and Geraei (2013) sought to establish the factors that influence user loyalty in libraries. The results of their study revealed that satisfaction and perceived value were the two factors that greatly influenced customer loyalty and that customer loyalty through perceived value and customer satisfaction affected dimensions of service quality. Again, investigating a model to explain the connection that exists among perceived value, communication, customer satisfaction, loyalty, intention to return and preferring a library's name, Hadadian et al. (2012), showed that perceived value indirectly affects customer loyalty through customer satisfaction.

Ladhari and Morales (2008) designed a model to empirically test the link between perceived services, perceived value and recommendations in public libraries. The

findings indicated that perceived value can be scientifically explained by the effect of services, library as a location, and information control. From these studies, it is evident that all the findings point similar conclusion regarding the notion of perceived value. Thus, factors leading to perceived value are associated with the 'usefulness' of the service in improving research (Landrum et al. 2007) or being in control when talking about information services, including academic library services, where there is no direct cost incurred (Parasuraman et al. 2005).

2.7.2.2 *The role of user value in building user loyalty*

Loyalty behaviours, including continuity of relationships, expanded size or reach of relationships, and feedback (word of mouth advertising) derive from the expectations of consumers that the amount of value obtained from one supplier is better than that available from other suppliers (Yeboah & Ewur 2014). Undeniably, many marketing researchers and practitioners have emphasised that creating and sustaining customer value is a key element that can lead to customer loyalty, which, in the long run, leads to sustainability of organisations. This notwithstanding, the relationship between perceived value and loyalty is still not clear. While some researchers like Šapić, Topalović and Marinković (2014); Tu and Chih (2013) established that perceived value can directly lead to customer loyalty, Cronin, Brady and Hult (2000) in their study, confirmed that customer value can directly or indirectly influence behavioural intentions.

Despite this contending opinions, Yang and Peterson (2004) and Lam et al. (2004) assert that perceived value influences customer loyalty positively. The value that the customers obtain from an organisation leads to the loyalty of the customer towards the organisation. From the above findings and discussions on perceived value, it can be posited that it has both a direct and indirect impact on customer loyalty. It can equally be deduced that the direct relationship between perceived value and loyalty is mediated by user satisfaction. Apart from its role of mediating between service quality and customer loyalty, perceived value has also been confirmed to have a relationship with satisfaction.

2.7.3 User satisfaction concept

There is a widely recognised principle that says that a corporation must please a consumer in order to be productive and sustainable (Clemes et al. 2008; Shin & Elliott 2001). This theory illustrates that customer loyalty is critical for organisation's success (Clemes et al. 2008). Customer satisfaction is a well-known and proven phenomenon in many fields, such as marketing, customer science, economic psychology, welfare economics, and economics, according to Akbar and Parvez (2009). Oliver (1997) and Kotler and Keller (2006) claim that it is possible to describe consumer loyalty in a number of ways. The common meaning gleaned from different researchers see satisfaction as an emotion that comes from an evaluation of what was received against what was expected (Kotler et al. 2018). Bitner and Zeithaml (2003) have suggested that satisfaction is the appraisal of a product or service by consumers in terms of whether the product or service has fulfilled their specifications and aspirations. Satisfaction is a positive, affective mood, according to Boeselie, Hesselink and Wiele (2002), arising from the assessment of all facets of the working relationship of a group with another. Lovelock and Wirtz (2007) also claim that consumer satisfaction can be defined as the feelings of enjoyment or dissatisfaction of an individual, arising from the experience of consumption when comparing the perceived output or outcome of a product with its expectations. Adapting the concept of student satisfaction from Elliot and Healy's (2001), one can conclude that library user satisfaction is an attitude that arises from the appraisal of their interactions with the library services offered.

Giese and Cote (2000) undertook a survey to define the philosophical domain of the customer satisfaction construct, which included an analysis of the literature on satisfaction along with several interviews. Their analysis indicates three general components that constitute the build of consumer loyalty. First of all, a summary affective reaction that ranges in severity is consumer satisfaction. Secondly, the answer refers to a single emphasis, be it a preference of commodity, purchasing, or use. Ultimately, the reaction takes place at a given time that varies by circumstance, although it is normally constrained in length. The authors suggest that these three dimensions provide a basis for a particular organisational meaning of the context. Customer satisfaction is therefore defined as a synopsis of affective responses of varying intensity, the acquisition and/or consumption of products.

Oliver (1980) explained that as consumers weigh their impressions of real service results against their wishes, consumer satisfaction emerges and any difference between the two produces disconfirmation of three kinds: optimistic disconfirmation: high satisfaction; negative disconfirmation: high dissatisfaction; and zero disconfirmation. Satisfaction is the answer to customer fulfilment, according to Oliver (1997), It is a decision arrived at by consumers when a product or service provides them with a level of fulfilment relative to consumption. Several studies have focused customer satisfaction and its relationship with customer loyalty over the years (Izogo & Ogba 2015; Bakti & Sumaedi 2013; Rai & Medha 2013; Goncalves & Sampaio 2012; Abu-ELSamen et al. 2011). Customer loyalty thereby enhances the long-term relationship of an organisation with its customers. Customer loyalty is regarded by Geyskens, Steenkamp and Kumar (1999) as an integral agent accountable for the lasting relationship between vendors and customers. Satisfaction has been noted to stimulate a pleased client to patronise the services of an organisation, as well as to recommend its services to others. The positive influence of consumer happiness has been consistently expressed in the literature on these aspects of loyalty (Rai & Medha 2013).

Exploring the dimensional structure of the SERVQUAL scale and the impact of service quality dimensions on customer satisfaction and loyalty in the automobile repair services sector, Izogo and Ogba (2015) recommended the use of different measurements for both customer satisfaction and customer loyalty. The implication of this that, most clients who are fulfilled will likely be faithful to the company. Consequently, the authors concluded that organisations that satisfy their customers through the provision of excellent services, can get more loyal customers. Moreover, results from a regression analysis by Awan, Bukhari and Iqbal (2011) in their efforts to explore service quality and its relationship with customer satisfaction corroborated the value of service quality aspects for behavioural intentions (satisfaction, feelings). This implies that, though customer satisfaction is essential in the most organisations, its importance depends on service quality.

In yet another study, Bowen and Chen (2001) established a non-linear relationship between customer loyalty and customer satisfaction. Thus, the outcomes of the research confirmed that customer satisfaction is not the same as customer loyalty.

They identified two essential thresholds that influence the relationship between the two constructs. They found that whenever there is a rise in satisfaction levels, loyalty increases and whenever satisfaction level reduces, loyalty equally reduces. These findings corroborate the outcomes of the study by Oliva, Oliver and MacMillan (1992) who established that the slightest modification in satisfaction level can lead to a substantial change in loyalty level. Bowen and Chen (2001) therefore remind organisations to realise that it is not enough to just satisfy their customers but rather focus on developing customers who are extremely satisfied. Aside the advantage of enjoying the repeated patronage of customers who are extremely satisfied, organisations can save their budget on marketing as it is expected that the extremely satisfied customers will market the organisation at no cost. Surveying the effects of service quality and the mediating role of customer satisfaction on service loyalty, Caruana (2002) established that the two main antecedents of service loyalty are service quality and customer satisfaction. It was also recognised that customer satisfaction is the most influencing antecedent of loyalty. Caruana (2002) further defined customer loyalty in the banking sector as a post purchase, global affective response, which may be of different intensities, occurring when customers are questioned relative to the services offered by competitors. An interesting observation in Rai and Medha (2013), however, is that, even though they found that customer satisfaction enhances customer loyalty, the predictive powers of customer satisfaction was low. It is, therefore, important to be cautious in relying on user satisfaction alone to achieve loyalty.

2.7.3.1 User satisfaction in libraries

In library literature, the idea of user retention has grown to have a wider emphasis on the library perspective of users (Kassim & Zakaria 2009). Satisfaction is about a library users' personal and emotional response, and according to Kassim and Zakaria (2009), it consists of customer satisfaction (disappointment of the consumer or satisfaction with a discrete service encounter) and total service satisfaction (overall dissatisfaction of the consumer or satisfaction with the company dependent on all interactions with the consumer). Majid, Anwar and Eisenschitz (2001) have supported the value of customer satisfaction in libraries, noting that all aspects associated with user satisfaction should be explored in order to maintain a secure and efficient library.

Again, as an essential voice in accessing service efficiency, Cook and Heath (2001) point to the customer satisfaction.

Keshvari et al. (2015), after modelling the factors that influence customer loyalty in public libraries in West Iran, also concluded that customer satisfaction has direct impact on loyalty through the three dimensions of service quality. Bakti and Sumaedi (2013), in their analysis of library customer loyalty in Indonesia, confirmed that customer satisfaction is the major precursor of customer loyalty, and that customer satisfaction is directly influenced by service quality. Lin, Cheng and Chu (2013) did an empirical study of institutional repository service quality and users' loyalty on library-users' satisfaction as a mediation. The outcomes of the empirical investigation that was based on Structural Equation Modelling (SEM) illustrated that users' satisfaction play the mediating role for e-service quality to users' loyalty. This result is the same as the previous study adopted on the hierarchical regression analysis by (Chuang & Cheng 2010). Thus, regardless of the methods used by the various researchers, the same statistical results were achieved. This means that increasing users' satisfaction may make users continue to reuse institutional repository service, and higher e-service quality, which will result in better satisfaction (Chuang & Cheng 2010) and better loyalty (Wahab et al. 2012). Pedramnia, Modiramani and Ghanbarabadi (2012) also found that service quality leads to user satisfaction and that service affect was the highest quality factor that influenced satisfaction.

Helgesen and Nesset (2011) also tried to find out whether LibQUAL^{+TM} can account for student loyalty to the library of an institution of higher education. They found, among other things, that student satisfaction is not positively related to loyalty. Again, Kiran and Diljit (2011) undertook a survey on the antecedents of web-based library customer loyalty in Malaysia. Their study also established that customer satisfaction leads to customer loyalty and that both web-based library service quality and service value lead to customer satisfaction. Furthermore, Jayasundara, Ngulube and Minishi-majanja (2009) in developing a model to forecast client satisfaction with regards to service quality in selected university libraries in Sri Lanka, established that responsiveness, supportiveness, building environment, collection and access, furniture and facilities, technology, web services and service delivery were quality domains which can be used to predict customer satisfaction. From the ongoing discussion, user satisfaction

can be said to be a key factor in building user loyalty in libraries. It can also be established that satisfaction is the creation of various factors among which service quality is key.

2.7.3.2 The role of user satisfaction in building user loyalty

Enough empirical evidence exists corroborate the fact that customer satisfaction is an antecedent of customer loyalty (Alegre & Cladera 2009; Mittal & Kamakura 2001) and that there is a positive link between these two constructs (Alegre & Cladera 2009; Streukens & de Ruyter 2004; Anderson & Mittal 2000). Many studies have also demonstrated the effect of customer satisfaction on firm profitability (Gomez, McLaughlin & Wittink 2003; Rust, Zahorik & Keiningham 1995), and on customer retention and firm profitability (Anderson & Mittal 2000; Heskett, Jones, Loveman, Sasser & Schlesinger 1994). All these studies call on organisations to commit themselves to satisfying their customers. However, some the outcomes of other studies contract the findings of those stated above. For instance, Verhoef (2003) and Jones and Sasser (1995), found no effect of customer satisfaction on customer loyalty. Conclusions on this association can vary dependent on the varied customer loyalty measures employed. Regrading repurchase intention, it has been found that a positive customer satisfaction can directly lead to repurchase intentions (Yi & La 2004). This, however, does not apply to the customer satisfaction-repurchase behaviour relationship (Verhoef 2003). The kind of service evaluated whether it is progressive or a more transaction-based service, affects a client's choice to keep an association with a service (Lemon, White & Winer 2002). Most of the studies that consider the linear nature of this link find no significant effects (Verhoef 2003), but non-linear models have confirmed to sufficiently represent this association (Agustin & Singh 2005; Mittal & Kamakura 2001). These examples reveal some of the complexity of the customer satisfaction-customer loyalty link. Additional investigations have endeavoured to further consider this association by reflecting on the influence of other variables effecting the customer satisfaction-customer loyalty link (Seiders, Voss, Grewal & Godfrey 2005; Mägi 2003; Verhoef, Franses & Hoekstra 2002; Homburg & Giering 2001; Mittal & Kamakura 2001).

Izogo and Ogba (2015) research on quality of service, consumer satisfaction and loyalty in the automotive repair service market found that the dimensions of service quality predict customer satisfaction and that customer satisfaction contributes to loyalty. In their analysis, Bakti and Sumaedi (2013) indicated that service quality indirectly causes consumer loyalty via customer satisfaction. These results show that increasing the efficiency of the services offered by the library does not automatically lead to the loyalty of library users if the improvement or otherwise in library service quality does not positively impact the satisfaction of library users. Therefore, library management needs to describe other characteristics that may impact customer enjoyment of the library, such as perceived price, situational factor, and personal factor. Bakti and Sumaedi (2013) therefore propose that librarians should undertake routine investigations on library usage so as to capture the customer's voice and convert it into the specification and action plan of the library service by using Quality Function Deployment (QFD). In addition, they also recommend that library administration could incorporate a management framework that will guarantee the happiness of customers. The writers indicated that ISO 9001 should be implemented by the library as its management system structure.

When analysing the direct impact of satisfaction on loyalty, Goncalves and Sampaio (2012) drew contradictory and diverse conclusions. First, customer satisfaction has a positive direct effect on customer loyalty, measured by repurchase intention. However, customer satisfaction has no effect on customer loyalty when assessed by repurchase behaviour measures. The authors therefore caution that because of these contradictory results, customer satisfaction-customer loyalty relationship outcomes can be clarified in varied ways. Bowen and Chen (2001) also established that there is a non-linear relationship between customer satisfaction and loyalty. The results of Kiran and Diljit (2011) study have mixed support for the basic theoretical propositions in customer loyalty evaluation. The findings of the hypothesis test suggest that both the efficiency and service value of the web-based library service are predictors of consumer satisfaction, and that customer satisfaction contributes to customer loyalty. This conclusion strongly supports the distinct constructs of service quality and satisfaction, and that service quality is a precedent for satisfaction. Another fascinating result is that a major determinant of consumer loyalty is quality value.

Abu-ELSamen et al. (2011), however, established a mediating role of customer satisfaction between customer service skills and customer loyalty. The study fundamentally shows that customer satisfaction is the direct consequence of a successful interaction between the service provider and the customer "pre-during-post" service delivery process which should create "a positive and memorable experience in the customer's eyes and minds". The research on customer service skills, customer satisfaction and customer loyalty indicate that customer satisfaction is an antecedent of customer loyalty. In other words, the presence of customer service skills is essential but not adequate to create customer loyalty unless customer service skills lead to customer satisfaction. Thus, customer satisfaction performs an intermediary role between customer service skills and customer loyalty (Chadha & Kapoor 2009; Xu, Goedegebuure & Van der Heijden 2007; Zulganef 2006; Kim, Park & Jeong 2004; Zeithaml et al. 1996; Anderson & Sullivan 1993).

2.7.4   Interrelationship among the antecedents of loyalty

Rust and Oliver (1994) have advocated for an empirical investigation to ascertain the relationships that exists among quality, value, and satisfaction. After this call, several studies have been conducted to conceptualise the interrelationships that exist between these variables (Izogo & Ogba 2015; Yadav & Dabhade 2013; Rai & Medha 2013; Santouridis & Trivellas 2010; Levin 2009; Ladhari & Morales 2008; Martensen & Grønholdt 2003). These studies concur that service quality, service value and customer satisfaction are key determinants of customer loyalty. A greater percentage of these investigations posited service quality impacts behavioural intentions only indirectly via value and satisfaction (Debata et al. 2015; Yadav & Dabhade 2013; Santouridis & Trivellas 2010; Jamal & Anastasiadou 2009; Martensen & Grønholdt 2003; Sivadas & Baker-Prewitt 2000).

Over the years, a number of integrative models of quality, value and satisfaction have been developed with the view of understanding customer's purchase decision-making process. Oh (1999), for instance, identified that perceived service quality had a positive direct influence on both customer value and customer satisfaction, and that perceived value had a direct and positive impact on customer satisfaction and repeat purchase behaviours, with customer satisfaction having a positive and direct impact

on repeat purchase intentions and on word-of-mouth referrals. Correspondingly, in their study, Brady, Robertson and Cronin (2001) found that service quality had a direct, positive influence on satisfaction and behavioural intentions only. However, satisfaction had a direct and positive relationship on behavioural intentions. Again, Petrick (2005) asserted that quality had both an indirect effect (through both perceived value and satisfaction) and a direct effect on behavioural intentions, with quality, value and satisfaction, all having a significant impact on repurchase intentions.

The outcomes of Keshvari et al. (2015) study on the factors that affect customer loyalty in libraries also revealed that there is an interesting relationship between service quality, customer's perceived value and customer satisfaction. It was established that service quality can indirectly predict customer loyalty through customer's perceived value and customer satisfaction. Perceived customer's value, however, has two relationships: direct and indirect (through customer satisfaction) with customer loyalty. There was a direct relationship between customer satisfaction and customer loyalty. Bakti and Sumaedi (2013) also examined the association relating library user loyalty to other latent constructs. The outcomes of the study indicated that service quality does not have a direct association with customer loyalty in libraries. However, it was discovered that, in libraries, service quality through satisfaction was indirectly linked with customer loyalty.

The outcomes of the research by Kiran and Diljit (2011) in an academic library environment to examine the antecedents of loyalty showed mixed support for the fundamental theoretical proposals in consumer loyalty assessment. Unlike previous research, their analysis revealed that there is no clear substantial influence of consumer satisfaction on the efficiency of web-based library service. In an analysis to empirically evaluate the relationships between perceived service quality, perceived value in the public library environment, Ladhari and Morales (2008) were able to demonstrate that perceived value was substantially clarified by the various aspects of perceived service quality (Affect of Service, Library as a Place, and Information Control). It also identified that a clear link exists between the perceived importance of the service and if the change in the quality of offers by the library does not lead to an enhanced perceived value and satisfaction of library users the recommendation. These results show an enhanced service quality alone would not guarantee the loyalty

of library users. Therefore, librarians need to describe additional characteristics that may impact customer enjoyment of the library, such as perceived price, situational factors, and personal factors. Thus, among the different antecedents of loyalty, particularly in the library environment, there is a cause-effect relationship.

2.8 Library users' access to the Internet

In their efforts to satisfactorily serve their users who come from diverse backgrounds, most university libraries capitalise on the strengths of ICT in delivering quality services. In today's technological information environment, most information resources are published in digital forms. According to Zhang, Wu and Zhou (2020) the global reprographics industry has witnessed a significant shift from traditional publishing to web publishing. Thus, most information resources are published in digital forms, and access to such digital information most often requires users to use the appropriate technology. The digital nature of information resources and its corresponding dependence on the Internet has made the Internet a significant resource in academic libraries. Both librarians and users rely on the Internet for service delivery and service consumption, respectively. In recent times, several studies on library users' access to the Internet have been conducted to in Ghana (Adarkwah 2021; Armah & Cobblah 2021; Agormedah et al. 2020; Antwi & Frimpong 2020; Owusu-Fordjour, Koomson & Hanson 2020).

Antwi & Frimpong (2020); Jibril et al. (2020); Machimbidza and Mutula (2020); Berkoh (2017) have lamented how low Internet penetration in Ghana is affecting online information access among students. Equally, Asampana, Akanferi and Ami-Narh (2017) have indicated that poor Internet access among Ghanaian students is a significant barrier to accessing online information resources. In assessing the preparedness and feasibility of an e-learning pilot project in Ghana, Alhassan (2020) revealed that most learners are limited by the low bandwidth and unreliable Internet connectivity within their learning institutions. In Ghana, most tertiary institutions have subscriptions to Internet access. However, the general challenge of low bandwidth and unstable Internet connectivity has made it difficult for users to access the services of the Internet, especially from their homes/hostels. This unfortunate phenomenon impedes libraries' digital services delivery. Most libraries have online resources that

are accessible to users regardless of their location. Nonetheless, most students are unable to exploit these essential resources because of Internet challenges. Such users will typically have to be in the physical library structure to experience reasonably stable Internet connectivity.

2.9 Theoretical framework

One of the vital scientific ways of knowledge creation is to build the knowledge on a rigorous procedure and an all-encompassing theory (Ngulube 2020a). Theory provides a backcloth and rationale for the research that is being conducted (Bryman, 2012) and as concurred by Bergman (2011) no practical research can be well executed if there is no suitable theory direct the selection of questions and, thus, act as a central piece in guiding one's research. There is a consensus among researchers that all successful scientific investigations are hinged on a theoretical framework (Bryman 2012; Van Peer, Hakemulder & Zyngier 2012; Cohen, Manion & Morrison 2007). Theories exist in different fields of study, and they can be diagnostic means to comprehend, describe and make projections about a phenomenon. It is therefore appropriate for researchers to establish the link between a specific theory and their research. Thus, researchers must clearly indicate the function of the selected theory without leaving such meanings for readers to interpret (Ngulube 2020a). Creswell (2014) also acknowledges the position of theories in scientific studies and thus, concurs that the utilisation of theories may be used to describe the phenomena under study deductively, inductively, or both deductively/inductively.

On the other hand, a model is a generalised description of a particular condition, with the key characteristics of the actual condition depicted by it (Kemoni 2008). Koutsoyiannis (1979) states that models serve the function of interpretation and simulation and, as Kemoni (2008) correctly puts it, their soundness is naturally based on several criteria. These criteria include the model's analytical strength, the reliability and pragmatism of its postulations, the degree of the information it offers, and its plainness and generality. It may also be difficult to research the material universe without utilising of models. Models originate from observing the universe and can be in the form of linguistic, visual, or mathematical representations (Ngulube, Mathipa & Gumbo 2015).

Conceptual framework, on the other hand, is a contention concerning why the subject of an examination matters, and why the techniques proposed to study it are suitable and thorough (Ravitch & Riggan 2012). According to Lester (2005), it is a position that justifies the choice of concepts for a study, and the relationships among these concepts and the suitability of these concepts regarding the problem statement of the study. Van der Walt (2003) adds that a conceptual framework explains either graphically or in a prose form, the key concepts to be studied − the main elements or variables and the postulated connections. A framework can be simple or detailed, theory driven or "common sensical", descriptive or causal. Botha (1989) also posits that, conceptual frameworks are similar to maps that consistently guides the empirical inquiry.

Many researchers have used the theoretical structure and the conceptual construct interchangeably. Kumar (2005), however, describes a conceptual structure emerges from a theoretical framework and typically focuses on an aspect of the theoretical framework, which is the foundation of research. In other words, the conceptual structure is an element chosen from the theoretical framework that becomes the foundation for a research problem (Kumar 2005). An empirical study's theoretical context applies to the structure of principles, observations, perceptions, values, and hypotheses that inform analysis (Schurink 2009) and a theoretical structure may be defined as a well-developed, coherent interpretation of an event, according to Vithal, Jansen and Jansen (2013). The relationship between these definitions is not linear, but iterative and cyclical (Silverman 2000). Models will contribute to the formulation of theories that, in turn, "lead to the development of another model to verify a theory" (Celine 2011). This present research utilises the four-stage loyalty principle of Oliver's (1997) emotional, affective, conative, and behaviour to direct the investigation both deductively and inductively. Ngulube (2020a) and Bawden (2008) have proposed that a discipline's theoretical foundations are the basis on which the discipline's research and development is based on producing ideas. As mentioned earlier, this study aims to define techniques in university libraries for creating user loyalty.

There are arguments among library science researchers over the application of hypotheses and there is no single definition on what constitutes theory in library science (Mavodza 2010). There are broad variations in the usage of theory of Library

and Information Science (LIS) that are due to the broad disciplinary content of the research, according to McKechnie and Pettigrew (2002). Again, Gregory (2006) indicates gap in research findings and practice. Ponti (2008) also addresses the large distance between librarians and information science study. There is, thus, the conclusion that there is minimal exchange of information and cooperation between the two communities (researchers and practitioners). Hildreth and Aytac (2007) propose that librarians do more library-oriented research and leave most of the usage and consumer studies for academics. Therefore, if the idea were put into effect, then the outcome may be a realistic model for library science research. It can be seen, based on the goals mentioned in Chapter One, that there are different hypotheses that are applicable to the current research. In this analysis, though, the cognitive affective, conative, and behaviour theory will be used due to its extensive evidence base. It also addresses the problems and variables related to this analysis carefully.

2.9.1   The cognitive, affective, conative, and action theory

Oliver (1997) describes loyalty as a strong determination to regularly repurchase or re-patronise a favourite product or service in the future, triggering repeated sales of the same brand or brand package, considering situational influences and marketing efforts that have the potential to cause shifting behaviour. A four-stage loyalty model presentation shows that various facets of loyalty do not occur concurrently, but rather consecutively over time (Oliver 1999). For this research, this paradigm was adopted because it includes guidance for creating or designing both the attitudinal and behavioural dimensions of loyalty. Different variables affecting loyalty may be observed at each loyalty level.

Oliver (1997) believes loyalty to require all stages of attitude and behavioural/action, and there are three main phases in the attitude process of loyalty (i.e., cognitive, affective, and conative). These multiple levels of allegiance occur consecutively instead of concurrently (Oliver 1997; Oliver 1999; Evanschitzky & Wunderlich 2006). Thus, the development of one phase leads to the other. Specifically, users' loyalty level increases through the cognitive, affective, conative, and behavioural/action stages in sequence. Oliver (1999) again posits that each level of loyalty is linked to diverse elements.

The cognitive stage is the first step of Oliver's (1997) theory. At this point, customer loyalty is determined by details such as price, cost, and so on relating to the offering. Loyalty stems from previous/explicit awareness or existing experience-based information (Oliver 1997; Oliver 1999). It has been argued that people build loyalty at this cognitive point by contrasting their chosen commodity with alternate offers based their prior exposure to the service, its features, its efficiency, or knowledge based on present experience (Oliver 1997; Oliver 1999; Back & Parks 2003; Evanschitzky & Wunderlich 2006). Studies performed by numerous scientists, including Oliver (1999); and Back and Parks (2003); Evanschitzky and Wunderlich (2006); Han and Back (2008) show that the cognitive phase of loyalty primarily entails perceived value that involves functional/psychological aspects and quality. Zeithaml (1988) described this perceived value as the total estimation of a product's effectiveness by consumers based on expectations of what is obtained and what is offered. Again, quality was described by Bitner and Hubbert (1994) as the overall opinion of the consumers of the comparative weakness /strength of the company and its offers. Oliver (1999, 1997) suggested that loyalty is very poor and superficial at this point, and thus, product/service providers want an enhanced level of customer loyalty. On this basis, cognitive loyalty can be conceptualised as user expectations, among other characteristics, about the nature of library content, online resources, personnel expertise, and user-friendliness of the library's website. The more optimistic the opinion or confidence users have about the nature of the library's different attributes, the greater the degree of cognitive loyalty of the users.

The second phase of the theory, which is seen as an enhanced form of loyalty, is the affective loyalty and, according to Oliver (1997, 1999), at this level, customers do not easily abandon the offer as it is the case in cognitive stage. During this phase, loyalty deals with users' enjoyable experience and favourable attitude toward an offer, and their overall evaluation of the offer (Oliver 1997, 1999). As a result, most researchers have concluded that this phase of loyalty principally comprises emotions and satisfaction, which are vital in the creation of user attitudinal loyalty (Oliver 1997, 1999; Bandyopadhyay & Martell 2007; Han, Hsu & Lee 2009). User satisfaction has sometimes been described as emotional responses to a customer's experiences relating to an offer (Han & Back 2007). However, according to Hunt (1977), satisfaction

is not the delight obtained from consuming an offer, but the assessment of the service encounter. Whereas emotions are generally considered as pleasant or unpleasant sentimental responses that occur during product/service usage or consumption experiences (Han et al. 2009; Havlena & Holbrook 1986), satisfaction on the other hand is the general appraisal of the perceived differences between anticipations and real encounter with the offer (Oliver 1997, 1999; Han, Hsu & Lee 2009).

There have been many studies conducted in the past to propose and test the link between cognitive and affective loyalty (Lee, Hsu, Han & Kim 2010; Yuksel, Yuksel & Bilim 2010; Evanschitzky & Wunderlich 2006; Back & Parks 2003). In a research conducted by Back and Parks (2003), for instance, it was established that cognitive loyalty significantly led to affective loyalty. Similarly, Back (2005) confirmed that cognitive loyalty is positively linked with affective loyalty. Cognitive loyalty is principally characterised by value and quality items (Back 2005). Again Lee et al. (2010) indicated that quality and value (which are all components of cognitive loyalty) can positively affect affective loyalty. Also, Evanschitzky and Wunderlich (2006) identified a progressive link between cognitive and affective loyalty. Yuksel, Yuksel and Bilim (2010) found that users' cognitive loyalty about an offer enhances their affective loyalty level. Furthermore, several studies have reported that perceived value and service quality (cognitive loyalty factors) directly lead to affective loyalty (Ryu, Han & Kim 2008; Hooi Ting 2004; Andreassen & Lindestad 1998). Andreassen and Lindestad (1998) identified that users' perceived value significantly led to affective loyalty factors. Again, Ryu, Han and Kim (2008) have confirmed the role of perceived value in both affective and cognitive loyalty. Hooi Ting (2004) in a related study, established that customer satisfaction is a positive function of service quality. All these reported outcomes give credence to the fact that affective loyalty is a function of cognition. Nonetheless, user loyalty is at its maturity at the affective phase as at this level, it is highly susceptible to the inducement of attractiveness of competitive offerings (Oliver 1997, 1999; Evanschitzky & Wunderlich 2006). Affective loyalty can thus be conceptualised as the degree with which users like or enjoy their experience with the library. The more the user likes and perceives the library as providing fulfilling experience, the higher would be the users' affective loyalty.

As a result, Han, Kim and Kim (2011) posit that most organisations seek to persuade their customers into the third phase, which is the conative loyalty stage. Oliver (1997) described conation as an attempt or allegiance to behave toward a goal in a particular manner. Similarly, conative loyalty involves an intense allegiance towards a brand and intention to continuously patronise the brand (Oliver 1997, 1999). During this phase, users develop an intense point of loyalty than in the affective stage. Several scientific investigations have recognised the critical roles that affective loyalty play in nurturing conative loyalty and its elements (i.e., commitment and intention) (Yuksel et al. 2010; Han & Back 2008; Kim & Han 2008; Kim, Han & Park 2001). Han and Back (2008) demonstrated that the emotional components of affect induce a considerable increase of behavioural intentions. Allen, Machleit and Kleine (1992) analytically confirmed that customers' emotions are powerful predictors of their intentions. Progressively, the findings of Morris et al. (2002) revealed that customers' behavioural intentions to patronise a brand and keep an existing association are persuasively affected by their emotions. Kim and Han (2008) also established that satisfaction enhances customers' favourable intentions toward an organisation.

Kim et al. (2001) established that satisfaction as a focal part of service quality, was an important predictor of commitment and behavioural intentions. Kandampully and Suhartanto (2000) verified that customer satisfaction can significantly impact repurchase intentions in the service industry. In their study, Ryu, Han and Kim (2008) identified that customer satisfaction is strongly linked with customers' behavioural intentions. The outcomes of Back's (2005) studies indicated that affective loyalty, which is influenced by cognitive loyalty greatly contributed the development of customers' conative loyalty. Consistently, Yuksel, Yuksel and Bilim's (2010) study outcomes corroborated the resilient link between affective and conative loyalty. Again, conative loyalty can be conceptualised as the degree with which the user exhibits dedication to keep using the library in future. It is usually characterised by an inclination to surmount any obstacles from keeping such commitments especially when there are more appealing alternate offers.

Finally, in order to achieve Oliver's (1997) loyalty series, however, it is essential to progress further than the earlier stages discussed. Accordingly, a comprehensive loyalty is attained at the action loyalty stage, which is the final stage of loyalty (Oliver

1999, 1997). Thus, customers first become cognitively loyal, then affectively loyal with emotional fulfilment and satisfactory experiences, thirdly conatively loyal with a deeply held commitment and intention to buy, and finally action loyal, and even overcoming obstacles associated with repurchase intentions (Oliver 1997, 1999; Back & Parks 2003; Evanschitzky & Wunderlich 2006). A positive attachment for an offer is likely to influence continuous patronage (Bandyopadhyay & Martell 2007). Previous studies advocate that conative loyalty is central in ascertaining Behavioural/action loyalty (Bandyopadhyay & Martell 2007; Evanschitzky & Wunderlich 2006; Back & Parks 2003). In establishing the factors that contribute to customer loyalty, Evanschitzky and Wunderlich (2006) found that customer loyalty is sequentially formed through the four stages. Remarkably, the findings indicated that conative loyalty, which is achieved through cognitive and affective loyalty, stimulates the attainment of action loyalty. Similarly, Back and Parks (2003) revealed that users' behavioural brand loyalty is a positive function of conative brand loyalty built through the cognitive and affective stages, confirming the sequential process of loyalty formation. Action loyalty can, thus, be conceptualised as the extent to which library users utilise and visit the library, spend time and money to make purchases relative to other service providers.

Aside Oliver's (1997) model which looked at loyalty conception in a four-dimension phase, there exist other models that approach loyalty as a one, two or three dimension phases. The one-dimension frameworks of behavioural loyalty which took centre stage until 1970 considered loyalty as the share of total purchases (Farley 1964; Cunningham 1956), frequency of purchase or buying pattern (Sheth 1968; Tucker 1964) or buying probability (Wernerfelt 1991; McConnell 1968). This approach considered brand loyalty as results (continuous buying behaviour) rather than reasons until Day (1969) introduced the two-dimensional concept of brand loyalty, which maintained that loyalty should be assessed on both behavioural and attitudinal criteria. This theory is supported by Dick and Basu (1994), who posited that loyalty should be an amalgamation of purchase behaviour and attitude. Worthington, Russell-Bennett and Härtel (2010) however disagreed with the two-dimensional approach and introduced the three-dimension theory that argue that all human behaviour is a blend of cognitive, emotional and/or Behavioural responses. Worthington, Russell-Bennett and Härtel (2010) claim that the behaviour/attitude approaches are not fully applicable

for example to the business-to-business sector or the three core marketing outcomes in a consumer context (recommendation, search, and retention).

The tri-dimensional approach to loyalty of Worthington, Russell-Bennett and Härtel (2010) is related to Oliver's (1997) conceptual framework of loyalty phases. Nevertheless, it does not have the same approach to attitudes but, instead, follows a two-component structure to attitude, where attitude consist of cognition and emotion (Worthington, Russell-Bennett & Härtel 2010). In contrast, Oliver's (1997) loyalty framework, which is main focus of this study, follows the structural approach to attitudes, and this includes intentions, cognition as well as emotion and completes the loyalty journey by adding a behavioural aspect (action).

Although Oliver's (1997) approach to loyalty is ideal for marketing activities, it has some issues that ought to be dealt with. Oliver (1999) saw the problem of consumer idiosyncrasies and switching incentives. Any elements of customer consumption are antithetical to commitment, Oliver (1999) suggests. Searching for variety, for example, has also been quoted as an attribute that would not encourage loyalty to grow until there is little variety to sample. At the cognitive and even conative point, this will be especially valid. Until the customer finding variety hits inertia in operation, the lure of the fresh experience will be too tempting to ignore. Many suppliers of goods and services fall into this trap and find that innovative and interesting alternatives can be sought even by their existing clientele.

Again, it can be observed that all the phases of loyalty have some vulnerabilities. Oliver (1999) has argued that cognitive loyalty is based on performance levels, whether functional, aesthetic, or cost-based, and is thereby vulnerable to failings on these dimensions. For example, in the field of services, it has been shown that deteriorating delivery is a strong enhancement to switch (Keaveney 1995). Price is a good pricing method for widely bought goods (Sivakumar & Raj 1997). Cognitive loyalty, however, is simply "phantom loyalty," since it is aimed not at the company, but at costs and rewards. In addition, affective commitment may become vulnerable at the cognitive stage to frustration (Heide & Weiss 1995; Keaveney 1995), thereby causing attitude changes (Oliver 1980). A concurrent effect of dissatisfaction observed in the literature is the increased attractiveness of alternative suppliers (Sambandam & Lord 1995; Ping

1994). Affective loyalty is thus first subjected to the weakening of its emotional basis, creating discontent, and therefore has deleterious consequences on the intensity of a brand's attitude toward a brand and, therefore, on affective loyalty. It is also possible to utilise imagery and affiliation for strategic communication to improve the reputation of alternative brands while undermining the image of the existing brand.

While conative loyalty takes the customer to a greater degree of dedication to loyalty, it has its limitations. A customer can tolerate a limited number of unsatisfactory episodes at this point (Oliva et al. 1992), but barrages of competitive signals can wear down the incentive to stay committed, particularly if they increase the perceived intensity of experienced disappointment (Oliva et al. 1992). Moreover, aggressive product testing originating from demos, discounts or point-of-purchase deals can be especially successful when the buyer is only dedicated to the company, not to prevent testing new offers (Oliver 1999). Therefore, the conatively faithful customer has not established the determination to deliberately resist consideration of competing products. The company has acquired product superiority at this juncture and perhaps before action loyalty expresses itself. Due to the consistency (information) and continued capacity to please, the company has developed increased liking, or even an existing affinity, for its brand. Furthermore, the buyer is committed to repurchasing them in the future. The user, however, has not achieved the state of resistance, endurance and the overcoming of the hurdles required for the advent of ultimate loyalty. In today's economy, this is even accurate because of the multitude of apparently superior substitutes that strike the senses of the user (Oliver 1999).

However, the customer has created the concentrated urge to rebuy the brand and only that brand upon hitting the action stage of brand connection and has also gained the skills required to resolve challenges and obstacles to this search. It would be expected that this customer would regularly "tune out" competitive advertisements, participate in an effortful quest for the favoured brand, and perhaps even shun competitive brand trials. Marketers of action-loyal segments do not need to pay substantial retention sums because, technically, inertial repurchasing controls their clients. Aside from declining efficiency, which at all stages is a possible switching inducer, only insurmountable unavailability will allow another brand to be tried by such a customer. With the advent of the action process, it seems like the loyalty formula has essentially

been established. There is a strong devotion of the action-loyal customer to repurchase, so much so that actions will lead itself in some habituated manner. Yet it is the province of competition to draw the interest of customers, because they hear the messages. The formation of discontent with the existing brand is one big technique by which this is done, typical in all stages of loyalty. It is now possible to determine more thoroughly the role of fulfilment in loyalty creation and defection. Dissatisfaction is the Achilles heel of loyalty in the same way as happiness is a building block for loyalty, mainly at the affective loyalty stage; this is where the rivalry will strike through the formation or facilitation of dissatisfaction. Table 2 gives a synopsis of the various phases of Oliver' (1997) loyalty with their corresponding characteristics and vulnerabilities.

Table 2: Loyalty phases and their vulnerabilities

Loyalty phase:	Characteristics:	Weaknesses:	Strengths:
Cognitive	• Loyalty to information such as: • Price • Features and so forth	• Actual or imagined better competitive features or price through communication (eg. Advertising) • Vicarious or personal experience • Deterioration in service features or price. • Variety seeking • Voluntary trial • Deteriorating performance	• Attraction based on available information • Less efforts are needed to achieve this
Affective	• Attachment and attitude toward service established. • Loyalty to a liking	• Vulnerable to switching • Cognitively induced dissatisfaction • Enhanced liking for competitive brands, perhaps conveyed through imagery and association	• Strong brand awareness • Evokes the feeling of satisfaction from the previous purchase • Little efforts lead to satisfaction

		• Variety seeking	
		• Voluntary trial	
		• Deteriorating performance	
Conative	• Commitment or plan to repurchase • Loyalty to intention	• Desire may remain unfulfilled • Induced trial • Deteriorating performance	• Willingness to recommend • Cross-buying intention • Repurchase intention
Action	• Strong eagerness to act • Loyalty to action inertia • Overcoming of obstacles	• Deteriorating performance • Increased obstacles	• A reflection of determination to commit to a service • Repeat purchases • Readiness to prevail over challenges
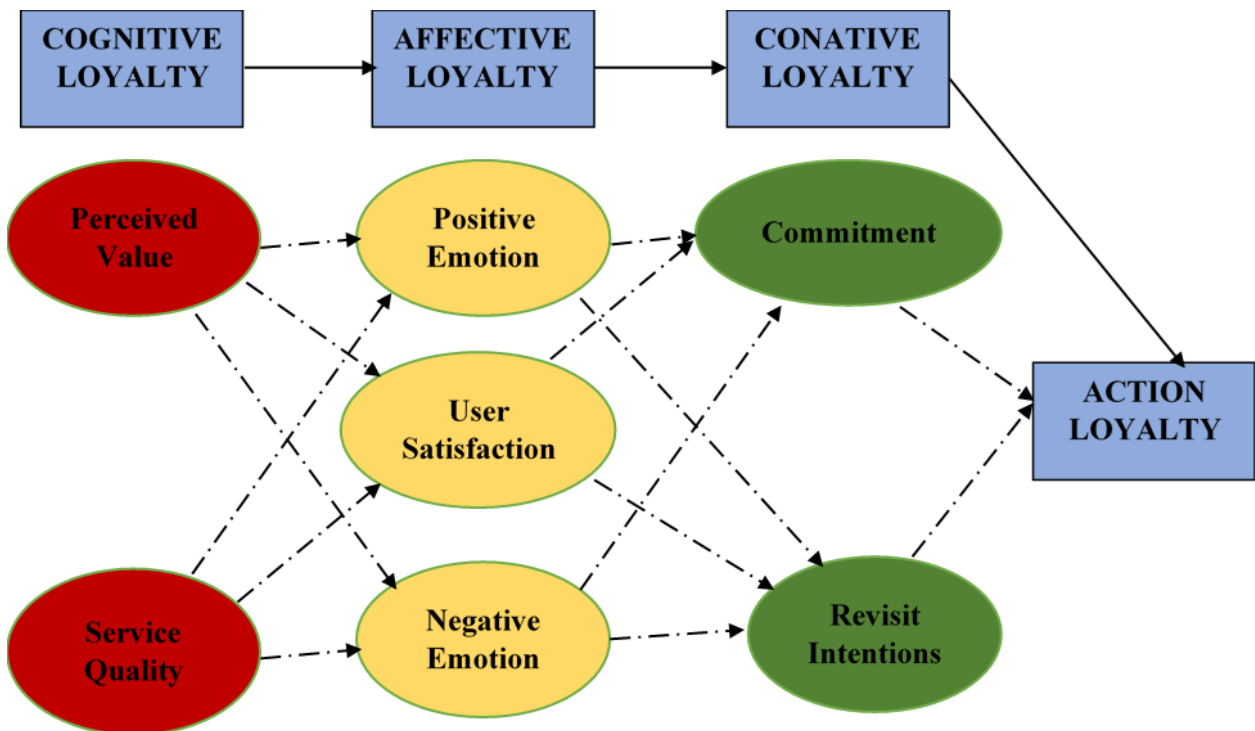
Figure 2: Cognitive, Affective, Conative, and Action Loyalty theory, adopted from (Han et al. 2011)

Figure 2 depicts a pictorial illustration of the four phases of Oliver's Cognitive, Affective, Conative, and Action Loyalty Model. It also shows each of the phases with

their corresponding antecedents and the relationships or the influence each antecedent has on the other to ensure that Action loyalty is achieved. Thus, the Cognitive Phase has perceived value and service quality as its antecedents whereas positive emotion, user satisfaction and negative emotion are the antecedents for the Affective Phase. The Conative Phase has commitment and revisit intentions as its antecedents. It must be said that all these antecedents of the various phases effectuate each other to cause Action Loyalty to be achieved. It should be recognised that perceived value has a positive impact on positive emotions, whereas service efficiency has a positive impact on positive emotions. Once again, perceived worth has a negative influence on negative emotions and the standard of service often has a negative impact on negative emotions. There are beneficial impacts on customer loyalty on both perceived value and service quality. Although positive feelings have a positive impact on engagement, negative feelings have a negative effect on engagement. In the same way, while positive emotion has a positive impact on the intention to revisit, negative emotion has a negative impact on the intention to revisit. It can also be observed that user satisfaction has a positive effect on both commitment and revisit intention of the users of the library facility. Conclusively, it can be detected that both commitment and revisit intentions have positive effects on action loyalty. Thus, like Oliver (1997) suggested, loyalty lacks a unitary approach, rather, it is a matter of degree, and it lies on a continuum. The assumption of a continuum between the various degrees of loyalty based on the degree of commitment of the user/consumer is in tandem with works done by (Sivadas & Baker-Prewitt 2000; Bloemer & Kasper 1995).

Oliver's (1997) components of loyalty have been tested and through empirical investigations across several disciplines (Han et al. 2011; Da Silva & Alwi 2006; Back & Parks 2003). Oliver's (1997) cognitive, affective, conative, and action model of loyalty is significantly suitable for this current study as it enables university librarians and other information professionals to understand the various constructs of loyalty and how each relates with the other in order to realise the ultimate degree of loyalty (action loyalty). Again, the various antecedents of each construct are of significant value for librarians to consider, since understanding them is a major step to start building loyalty. For this study, all the components of the model as displayed by Han et al. (2011) were

adopted. This was because, it was realised that all the four stages were applicable in libraries, and they also gave the researcher to understand how library users behave at each level of loyalty development.

2.10   Summary

Following a step-by-step literature map, this chapter introduced the various concepts and related literature regarding the topic of this study. An overview of libraries and library services about Ghana was reviewed. Also, the chapter considered the concept of marketing in libraries with the view of appreciating how libraries market their products and services. With the guide of the cognitive, affective, conative and action framework, literature on the concept of library user loyalty was reviewed. Consistently, most of the views expressed in the literature point to the fact that perceived service quality, user value and user satisfaction are key determinants of loyalty that librarians should leverage on in their bid to building loyalty among their library users.

CHAPTER THREE

RESEARCH DESIGN AND METHODOLOGY

3.1 Introduction

As indicated in the previous chapters, this research sought to examine strategies for building user loyalty in selected university libraries in Ghana. Such an enterprise needs a clear and unequivocal blueprint that serves as a guideline for data collection, enabling the researcher to conclude on various variables (Mathipa & Gumbo 2015; Pickton 2013). As asserted by Creswell and Plano Clark (2018), this plan describes the "path" that the researchers pursued in carrying out their study. According to Mathipa and Gumbo (2015), a research methodology enables a researcher to collect data that is suitable for responding research questions or hypothesis. Equally, it involves all the scientific processes that scientists employ to gather, evaluate, and present their findings in a research study (Creswell & Creswell 2018; Creswell & Plano Clark 2018). According to Creswell and Plano Clark (2018), research design in a research study has to do with the processes involved in data collection, analysis, interpretation, and reporting. Abutabenjeh and Jaradat (2018) also see research design as a blueprint that guides scientific investigations. According to the authors, the design stipulates how the investigation flow from the purpose to the findings of the study. While research design is a detailed strategy for collecting and analysing data to facilitate the comprehension of the research purpose, research methods involve all the required actions, tools used, and procedures needed to accomplish the research process.

3.2 Research framework

Theory and practice have a continuum relationship in research (ten Have 2017). Theory, which is regarded as "a scheme of interrelated concepts that summarises knowledge in the world (Neuman 2014), does not only help to expedite an efficient assessment of occurrences, but it helps to guide practice and research (ten Have 2017). Whereas practice helps in the evaluation of hypothesis and the construction of research questions, research, on the other hand, promotes the building of hypothesis (Lauffer 2011). This study sought to test available theories in the library sciences with

the view of creating new knowledge. An exploratory mixed-method research design was employed to execute the objectives of this research. To accomplish the objectives of the study, a two-step strategy, with each strategy comprising several different steps was employed. The two main strategies used in this study included an exploratory phase (which involved the identification of attributes/domain) and the quantitative phase (which focused on constructing a model). The exploratory study used inductive approaches, which involved the use of literature review, the use of interviews among library experts (librarians) and focused group discussions among the library users. The quantitative phase of the study included the use of an Exploratory Factor Analysis to design questionnaires to collect quantitative data from library users. These were undertaken to identify the various attributes and domains that help in building loyalty in the library settings. This study complied with and was equally guided by the policies on research and ethics (UNISA 2016, 2018, 2020).

3.3 The research processes

This part of the research outlines the various scientific processes that the researcher used to arrive at the findings. It took into consideration the study's objective, available literature, and personal experience of the researchers.

3.3.1 Research philosophy/paradigm

According to Bryman (2016), research philosophy refers to a collection of principles that relate to the background of the concept of investigation in research. It includes the beliefs, values, and worldviews of researchers that influence the choice of their research perspectives. Researchers may choose such perspectives or worldviews to conceptualise and conduct their studies (Ngulube et al. 2015). More so, the generation of ideas facilitated by research philosophy gives a direction to how the study will be conducted (Flick 2011), and such philosophies vary depending on the aims of the study and on the suitable approach to accomplish the objectives of the study (Ngulube 2020b, 2019; Maarouf 2019; Lohse 2017; Ngulube 2015; Goldkuhl 2012). According to Creswell and Plano Clark (2018), the philosophical worldviews at the broadest level of research are the epistemological issues supporting the research or the notions relating to how researchers build on what they know. Accordingly, such worldviews of philosophies also guide the choice of theories, which also directs the methodology to

employ for a study. Ultimately, the methodology, as it were, integrates the methods employed for the collection, analysis, and interpretation of data. Thus, research philosophies facilitate researchers to exclusively comprehend their investigations and appreciate the procedures used to achieve the study's set of objectives. The philosophical viewpoints of researchers can enable them to streamline the research process of their studies.

According to Ngulube (2015), philosophical assumptions principally deal with the nature of knowledge, ontology, and epistemology. Such assumptions constitute the paradigmatic background of research in a subject field. Even though researchers have identified several worldviews that guide research, they are all uniquely philosophical in nature. These assumptions include axiology, ontology, epistemology, methodology, and rhetoric (Kaushik & Walsh 2019; Maarouf 2019; Creswell & Creswell 2018; Creswell & Plano Clark 2018; Ngulube 2015). According to Kaushik and Walsh (2019), whereas axiology deals with the ethics in research, ontology, on the other hand, includes principles relating to reality. Also, in research, epistemology relates to the processes and the elements in knowledge generation, whiles methodology includes the appreciation of the procedures needed in knowledge creation (Kaushik & Walsh, 2019). The authors further describe rhetoric to include the comprehension of the research language.

Thus, philosophical worldviews help scientists to decide the problem that instigated the study, the research questions, and the appropriate theories to utilise in their bid to generate helpful knowledge (Kaushik & Walsh 2019; Maarouf 2019; Creswell & Creswell 2018; Creswell & Plano Clark 2018; Lohse 2017). These worldviews may include positivism, post-positivism, transformative orientation, pragmatism, and constructivism (Saunders et al. 2019; Creswell & Plano Clark 2018). Such philosophical assumptions help the researcher to design his/her studies. These worldviews are framed on various axiology, epistemology, ontology, methodology, and rhetoric (Creswell & Creswell 2018). According to Creswell and Clark (2018), researchers can align with postpositivist, constructivist, transformative, and pragmatist orientations. However, Saunders et al. (2019) identified positivism, realism, interpretivism, and pragmatism as the research philosophies that researchers can use. Similarly, Ngulube (2015) believes that researachers can either be positivist.

The objectives and methods adopted for this study influenced the selection of the pragmatist worldview of research as appropriate and suitable for this study. This philosophical orientation that dates to the 19th Century, supports both the qualitative and quantitative strategies of conducting research (Wilson 2010) and provides enough independence to design the research (Kaushik & Walsh 2019; Žukauskas, Vveinhardt & Andriukaitienė 2018). According to Saunders, Lewis and Thornhill (2019), pragmatists "accepts concepts to be relevant only if they support action". Also, it has been argued that pragmatism "recognises that there are many different ways of interpreting the world and undertaking research, that no single point of view can ever give the entire picture and that there may be multiple realities" (Saunders, Lewis & Thornhill 2019). Even though Norwich (2020) has argued against using pragmatism as a justification for mixed-method research, Maarouf (2019) has argued that most scientists consider this orientation the most popular justification for mixed-method research. Expressly, Creswell and Plano Clark (2018) have stated that pragmatism permits researchers to choose different methods to create and add to knowledge.

These attributes of pragmatism helped the researcher to successfully support the findings' discussions by using quotations from the qualitative data and the formalised and controlled language of the quantitative data to provide answers to the stated research questions. It further allowed the research to integrate the data from qualitative and quantitative data to give a rich explanation to the study's findings. This orientation further offered the researcher the chance to explore essential links between the qualitative and quantitative data (Tran 2017). Thus, triangulation of data then became possible by the adoption of this worldview. Since this study involved the use of different data collection techniques (interviews, focus group discussions, content analysis, and a survey) and different data types (qualitative and quantitative), to adequately explore the strategies for building library user loyalty in academic libraries, pragmatism, thus, was fit for purpose.

In terms of the epistemological view of research, pragmatists believe that experience is the foundation of knowledge, such that social experiences shape how researchers view the world (Kaushik & Walsh 2019). Principally, Saunders et al. (2019) summarise the epistemological viewpoints of the pragmatists as "practical meaning of knowledge in specific contexts". For the pragmatist, knowledge is more of a construct than a reality

(Goldkuhl 2012). With these assumptions as a guide, this study sought to explore the experiential knowledge of librarians on their marketing strategies that can help build library user loyalty. Also, the experiences of library users with regards to the attributes and domains of loyalty were equally investigated. The decision was made because, as pragmatists believe, knowledge is founded on experience. So the researcher assumed that both librarians and library users have substantial knowledge on the concept of library user loyalty.

In order to avoid difficulties in selecting research methods, researchers are steered by the tenet of ontology to have a perfect idea about reality (Lohse 2017). In pragmatism, ontology is a two-edged sword and, according to Maarouf (2019), can be objective and subjective views of reality. Morgan (2007) has indicated that researchers need to be intersubjective when adopting pragmatism, as there is one objective contextual reality. However, individuals have multiple subjective interpretations of this objective reality. It is argued that there is a reality out there, but individuals subjectively interpret this reality to suit their circumstances (Johnson & Christensen, 2017; Saunders, Lewis, & Thornhil, 2009). Maarouf (2019) explains it as understanding the social actors' (research participants') point of view. The assertion is that there is one reality in a certain context and multiple perceptions of this reality in social actors' minds. Therefore, there is no existence of multiple realities based on researchers' construction of reality. This study presupposed the reality of library user loyalty in academic libraries in Ghana and attempts by stakeholders in libraries to conceptualise this. However, the stakeholders may interpret this reality differently regarding how the attributes and domains and other predictive variables of library user loyalty. Their views on what constitutes the attributes and domains of library user loyalty are interpreted by them. This reality may be individualised to the circumstances of the stakeholders. Therefore, the researcher realised the reality of the existence of these stakeholders and their views, and the subjective reality held them.

In most cases, the activities in social science research are meaningful before the research even starts (Maarouf 2019). According to Ma (2012), such prior knowledge about phenomena is unavoidable, and they often influence the research questions and variables. Thus, pragmatists believe that axiology (values and beliefs) makes researchers aware of the phenomenon of investigation even before the process starts,

and it influences social scientists in the research process. The researcher's conviction influenced the researcher's selection of the title/topic for this study that achieving loyalty among library users is essential for both the library and the library users. Even though the concept, loyalty, seems to be known in academic libraries in Ghana, its impact on libraries and library users does not seem to have been well exploited.

In most cases, scientists conduct their studies with the influence of their inherent beliefs and values. However, Kaushik and Walsh (2019) have admonished researchers to avoid such biases unless they will improve the research or provide answers to the questions. Maarouf (2019) calls this the "necessary bias principle". Maarouf (2019) further advised that such values and beliefs should not be barriers to the research but rather strengthen the scientific process in achieving its purpose. To this end, researchers are asked to be guided by the study's objectives and only use their values and beliefs to improve the study's findings. The research questions and objectives thoroughly guided this study, and the researcher tried to avoid imposing personal values and beliefs. For instance, even though the researcher is a librarian who was aware of some of the issues raised in the study, he instead used the published literature to identify attributes of library user loyalty.

3.3.2   Research approach

Deciding on the strategy for the research from a broader perspective to a more specific approach (Creswell & Creswell 2018) enabled the researcher to choose the appropriate theories and design (Johnson & Christensen 2014). This approach helped to meet the issues raised in this study and helped adapt the research design to adjust to other limitations (Saunders et al. 2019). Primarily, this research was empirical even though the exploratory stage of the study used a non-empirical approach. Saunders et al. (2019) mentioned two research approaches (deductive and inductive approaches) that are used to plan the research process.

According to Zalaghi and Khazaei (2016), the deductive approach uses an existing theory to form hypotheses after which it formulates the research approach to test it. This approach is appropriate for this research, particularly the quantitative stage of the research where the focus was on assessing if the perceived events match anticipated results based on existing knowledge (Wiles, Crow & Pain 2011). This approach also

fits the positivist paradigm chosen for this study which allows hypotheses to be formulated and further permits the testing of statistical data to a satisfactory degree of possibility (Snieder & Larner 2009). Some attributes of deductive approach are related to positivism. The authors identified specifically, causality between the concepts and the concepts' characteristics and domains to facilitate acceptable validity and reliability (Kothari 2004). Using a positive way of research permitted the utilisation of a quantitative research paradigm, and this was driven by the objectives of the study. Thus, the quantitative approach was the appropriate method to help in building library user loyalty in university libraries in Ghana.

An inductive approach helped the researcher during the exploratory stage of this study, where no framework initially informed the data collection (Young, Varpio, Uijtdehaage & Paradis 2020; Nili, Tate & Johnstone 2017; Flick 2011). Moreover, this approach was used because it concentrated on understanding the empirical nature of human behaviours and the causal procedures. This method is often utilised in qualitative research, where the lack of a theory may help in cutting down the possibility of partiality in the data gathering process by the researcher (Creswell & Creswell 2018; Bryman & Bell 2015; Johnson & Christensen 2014). Studies that utilise this approach do need a theory to comprehend the hypotheses to be tested. Instead, such studies start by discovering the problem of concern, and makes an investigation, after which an explanation is scientifically assigned to understand the phenomena of interest. In line with the assertion of Flick (2011), focused group discussions and interviews were undertaken with regards to the problem of interest after which the data were assessed for a possible relationship among the responses. The focus group discussions were conducted among library users to identify the varied attributes of library user loyalty. Thus, this approach was used to generate data and validate/refine the prospective constructs of library user loyalty. To avoid the situation where the context of the study could influence the results, the researcher employed the inductive approach. This enhanced the researcher's ability to cover and understand all the essential aspects of library user loyalty in the selected Ghanaian academic libraries.

3.3.2.1 Quantitative, qualitative, and mixed methods

Traditionally, the quantitative and qualitative research methods have been established, especially in the library and information science research (Kalusopa 2011; Bryman, Becker & Sempik 2008). Whereas the debate on these two approaches to research has not been on their relevance or superiority, most often the choice of one or the other is based on several factors (Bryman et al. 2008). Plano Clark and Creswell (2015); Onwuegbuzie and Leech (2005) have outlined some factors regarding the differences between these two approaches. These factors include the kind of the reality (whether the research is objective or subjective), the association between the researcher and the study objectives, the research procedure, the language of the study, and the role of values in the research process. According to Plano Clark and Creswell (2015); Johnson and Christensen (2012), however, these approaches to research all aim to achieve similar objectives but for the different techniques and processes and their unique strengths and weaknesses.

Primarily, the quantitative research method involves the quantification and assessment of variables to get results (Creswell & Creswell 2018; Apuke 2017). This usually includes collecting and analysing statistical figures following the required statistical procedures. This entails the gathering of quantifiable data that can be exposed to statistical protocols with the sole aim of supporting or denying an existing knowledge (Maarouf 2019; Johnson & Christensen 2014). Uniquely, as agreed by most researchers (Maarouf 2019; Creswell & Plano Clark 2018; Johnson & Christensen 2014), quantitative research methods are characterised by the following:

- Testing hypotheses, looking for causality and making forecasts
- Studying specific variables
- Involving numbers and statistics
- Depending on precise measurements by using structured and validated data-collection instruments
- Discovering statistical associations
- Focusing on fairness
- Statistically reporting with correlations, comparisons of means, and statistical significance of findings

Contrary to the position of quantitative research methods, the qualitative research method is a one-sided method, which involves assessing opinions in order to comprehend societal and human interactions. Qualitative research has been described as a research process that utilises inductive data analysis to learn about the meaning participants hold about a problem or issue through theme identification (Lewis, 2015). Thus, the qualitative research method seeks to comprehend and explain societal connections while quantitative involves testing hypotheses, looking at causalities, and forecasting (Apuke, 2017). Again, like the quantitative research method, qualitative research method has its own unique attributes. Researchers like (Creswell & Creswell 2018; Johnson & Christensen 2014) identify qualitative research methods are with the following:

- Seeking to understand and interpret social interactions
- Involving the subjectivity of the researcher
- Leading to specialised findings that are less generalisable
- Studying behaviour in a natural environment
- Final reports are usually presented in narrative form with a contextual description and direct quotations from research participants

Meanwhile, evidence exists to show that researchers are progressively using mixed-methods to conduct research (Wilkinson & Staley 2019; Khoo-Lattimore, Mura & Yung 2019; Alavi, Archibald, McMaster, Lopez & Cleary 2018; Ngulube 2015). Mixed-methods research involves the collection and analysis of data, integrating the results, and drawing inferences by utilising qualitative and quantitative approaches in a particular study (Creswell & Plano Clark 2018; Molina-Azorin 2018). According to Creswell and Plano Clark (2011), in a mixed-method, there is a basic idea of trying to incorporate both quantitative and qualitative approaches on a common theme that combining the two approaches will result in a better understanding of the research interest.

Proponents of this approach have argued that mixed-methods ensure a syndicate of both the qualitative and quantitative methodology's powers to deliver complete and detailed research (Wilkinson & Staley 2019; Alavi et al. 2018; Ngulube 2012, 2015; Creswell 2014). However, these authors are quick to caution against the temptation of vaguely combining the quantitative and qualitative approaches and just refer to it as

mixed-methods (Ngulube 2012; Fidel 2008). Thus, researchers must be able to blend them well by following appropriate scientific processes. For a study that qualitatively explored the various factors that library patrons considered as determinants of loyalty to scientifically build a framework to predict the connections between these determinants and loyalty, the mixed-method approach to research was considered appropriate.

3.3.3   Research design

Researchers undertaking studies that involves qualitative, quantitative or mixed-methods approaches are often directed by the type of research design (Creswell & Creswell 2018). Other researchers have used other terms like research strategy. For instance, Denzin and Lincoln (2011) referred to it as strategies of inquiry. Saunders et al. (2019) posited that the research strategy indicates the processes a researcher intends to conduct a study. It can also be viewed as a plan that outlines the necessary conditions for gathering, quantifying and analysing data by considering the essence of the objectives of the study and the appropriate process to adopt (Abutabenjeh & Jaradat 2018). To effectively achieve this study's objectives, the exploratory sequential mixed-method design utilised for this thesis. This is a mixed-method strategy that includes a three-phase mission where the researcher initially gathers qualitative data and analyses it. Based on the results of the analysis, a quantitative feature is then developed. Ultimately, the quantitative feature is then tested (Creswell & Creswell 2018; Creswell & Plano Clark 2018). The exploratory sequential mixed-method helps in combining both qualitative and quantitative data collection and analysis in a series of phases (Creswell & Plano Clark 2018).

For this research, the qualitative approach was initially utilised to explore participants' views through structured interviews and focus group discussions. The collected data were then analysed, and the results were used to design a questionnaire for the quantitative stage. The quantitative phase was used to design a model for predicting library user loyalty. During the qualitative stage, structured interviews were used to explore the marketing strategies that selected academic libraries in Ghana utilise in building library user loyalty. After this, focus group discussions were organised among

library users to establish the attributes of library user loyalty in selected academic libraries in Ghana.

The quantitative stage used the survey research strategy. According to Bryman and Bell (2011), surveys are often employed to assess causative variables between different data types. Surveys were viewed as having the features of quantitative and emanates from the positivism (Tanner 2018). When surveys are also used in quantitative research studies, they usually encompass applying sampling techniques to select appropriate representatives from the population (Bryman & Bell 2011). During the quantitative stage, the library user attributes that were identified during the first phase of the study were subjected to a factorial analysis. The results of this analysis led to a brief but more representative attributes which were then converted into questionnaires. These questionnaires were then administered to library users in order to find the relationships that exist among the attributes.

3.3.4   Time horizon

Time horizon refers to the time scope within a researcher intends to accomplish the objectives of the study (Saunders et al. 2019). According to Bryman (2016), two specific types of time horizons exist: the cross-sectional and the longitudinal. Cross-sectional was the selected time horizon of this research. With this horizon, the research design concentrated on several institutions and circumstances during a limited time. Predominantly, the focus was on four universities, over a brief period.

3.3.5   Population

Population represents all units of interest that a researcher intends to make definite deductions (Creswell & Creswell 2018; Creswell & Plano Clark 2018; Johnson & Christensen 2014; Neuman 2014). The main population for this thesis was library patrons of university libraries in Ghana. Ghana has about nine (9) public universities and forty-three (43) private universities (National Accreditation Board 2012). Given both the qualitative and quantitative nature of the survey, limited resources and time constraint, it was not possible to survey every university library in Ghana, and so a selected number was the focus. Two public universities [the University of Health and Allied Sciences (UHAS) and University of Ghana, Legon (UG)] and two private

universities [Kings University College (KUC) and Valley View University (VVU)] were selected. These four institutions have a student population of about 45,411 altogether. Table 3 shows the population for the study.

Table 3: Population of the study

S/N	Institutions	Population
1	University of Ghana	36,739
2	University of Health and Allied Sciences	5142
3	Valley View University Students	2708
4	Kings University College	822
	Total	**45,411**

Compiled by Author from statistics from each institution

3.3.6   Sampling procedure

This study used multiple sampling techniques to select units or cases by employing both probability sampling and non-probability sampling strategies (Creswell & Creswell 2018; Creswell & Plano Clark 2018; Johnson & Christensen 2014). The four institutions under review were purposively chosen. Purposive sampling (a non-probability sampling) involves using established criteria as a guide in the selection of individuals to be considered for the study. These criteria may include the purpose of the study, wiliness of the individuals to participate in the study, and specialist knowledge of the individual regarding the objectives of the study (Bhardwaj 2019). UHAS was purposively selected because it is one of the newly established public universities (apparently with a newly established library) in Ghana (University of Health and Allied Sciences 2012). Thus, this allowed the researcher to verify if librarians have strategies in place to build user loyalty. Again, UG was purposively selected because unlike UHAS, UG is the oldest public universities (presumably with one of the oldest

university libraries) in Ghana (University of Ghana 2008). This selection afforded the researcher the opportunity to compare the two as far as the existence of a strategy to build user loyalty in their respective libraries.

At the same time, VVU and KUC were purposively selected because VVU is the oldest private university (Valley View University 1979) in Ghana (with one of the oldest libraries). On the other hand, KUC is one of the new and evolving private universities (Kings University College 2014) in Ghana (with a developing library). The selection of private and public universities also helped the researcher compare the various strategies these two sectors (private and public institutions) have put in place to build loyalty among their patrons.

The convenience sampling method was, however, employed to choose the library users. This method helped the researcher select prospective participants who were available and willing to respond to the questions (Bhardwaj 2019). This is because locating a delineated library user may be difficult, so resorting to prospective participants, who were available at the libraries and were willing to answer the questions was the ideal thing to do. After obtaining permission from the various institutions, the researcher was, together with other assistants, at the libraries to distribute the questionnaires to users who were available and willing to participate.

3.3.7 Sample size

A sample refers to all individuals chosen from the entire population based on accepted criteria. The number of the individuals considered for the study is however called the sample size (Berndt 2020). The sample size for the main study was 454 respondents. A confidence level and confidence interval of 95% and 5, respectively, were used (Neuman 2014). Following Neuman's (2014) position, that recommended a 1% sample size for large populations, 454 was determined as the appropriate sample size, given a population of about 45,411. This decision was made after thoughtful consideration of the study's given time frame, the study sites' geographical location, and the financial and material costs involved in the study. This figure was proportionally divided into groups of undergraduate and postgraduate students. Table 4 shows the sample size for the study.

Table 4: Sample size for the study

S/N	Institutions	Sample
1	University of Ghana	367
2	University of Health and Allied Sciences	51
3	Valley View University Students	27
4	Kings University College	9
	Total	**454**

3.3.7.1 Inclusion criteria

The under listed criteria guided the selection of subjects for the research:

- All qualified subjects had to be recognised users of the respective library.
- All subjects under the "undergraduate" category should have completed their first year.

3.4 Research stage one: Exploratory study

To be able to efficiently identify the attributes and domains, the under listed methodological design was followed. This methodological design is first illustrated in figure 3 and, subsequently, explained in the under listed phases.
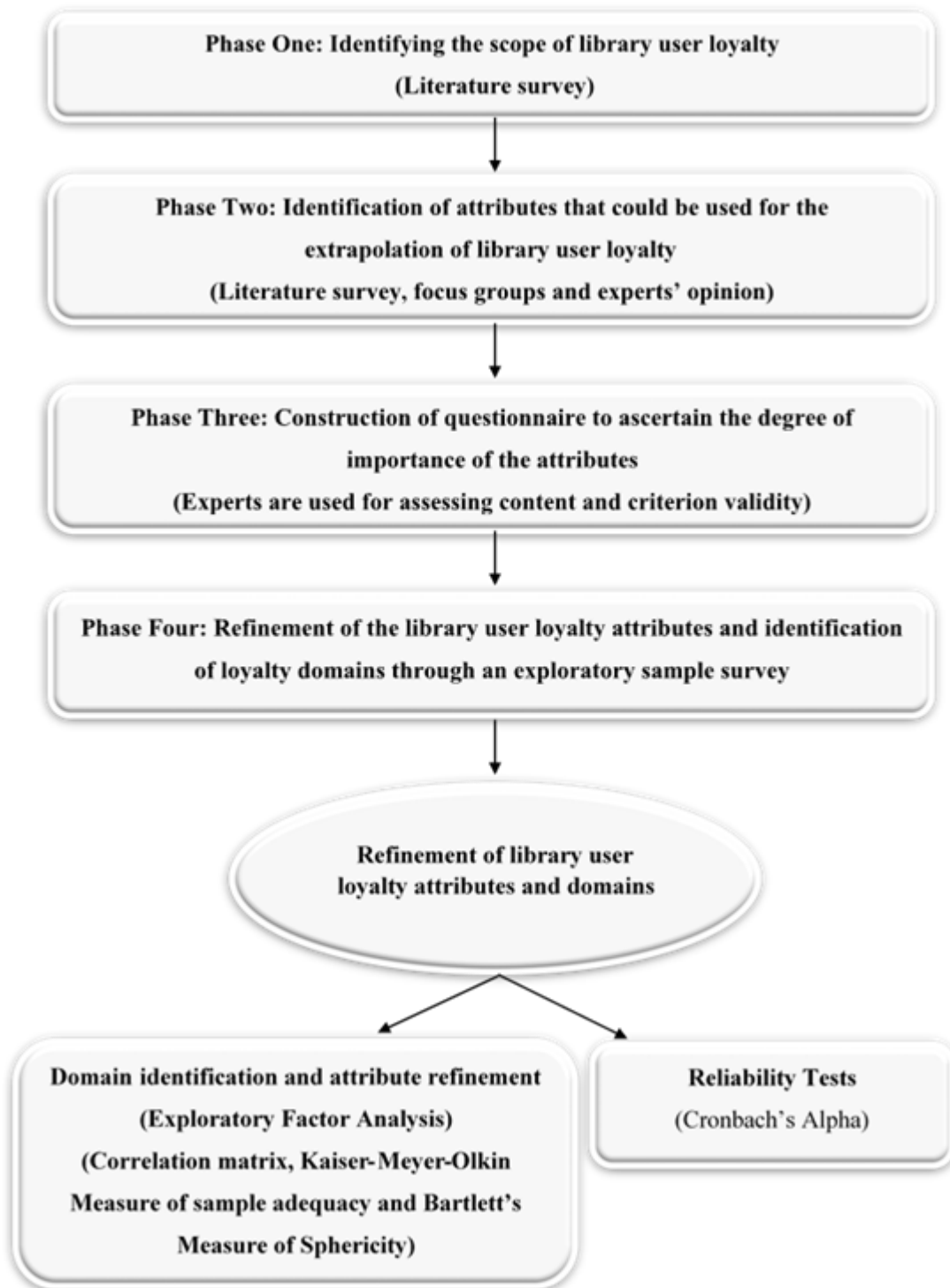
Figure 3: A methodological map for the exploratory study

3.4.1.1 Phase one: Identifying the scope of library user loyalty

The scope of the current study was explored through an extensive analysis of related literature. The literature exploration was guided by the study's objectives and focused on themes like service quality in libraries, user satisfaction, service value, library user loyalty, and others.

3.4.2 Phase two: Identification of attributes that could be used for the extrapolation of library user loyalty

This phase was undertaken to propagate a collection of attributes that were specific to the library user loyalty construct. This collection of attributes was deductively generated by reviewing related literature and, most importantly, through an inductive means of soliciting for information from respondents by asking them to describe their feelings and attitudes towards user loyalty in libraries. Deductively, the study searched relevant databases, such as ERIC, Emerald Insight, ScienceDirect, and Google Scholar, among others. Keywords like marketing, loyalty, service quality, customer satisfaction, university libraries, theories, models, Ghana, and others were used. Through the help of Boolean operators and other searching tools and strategies, these key concepts were combined to create search queries that were, in turn, used in the various databases and search engines.

The attribute identification phase also involved an inductive approach that involved expert opinions and focus group discussions on generating attributes for the construct of library user loyalty after which the data were analysed in order to identify the themes of commonality (Nili et al. 2017). The focus group stage saw the exploration of the relevant attributes being considered for library user loyalty.

3.4.2.1 Focus groups

Focus groups are recognised approaches to solicit data in qualitative, mixed-method, and quantitative methodologies (Pearson & Vossler 2016). Traditionally, it has been posited that focus group is "a qualitative data collection technique, that uses limited people in a relaxed group discussion (or discussions), 'focused' around issues of interest (Nili et al. 2017; O'hEocha, Wang & Conboy 2012). According to Jayasundara, Ngulube and Minishi-Majanja (2010), focus groups are essential in reaching effective

decisions, without initiating a hostile atmosphere. Focus groups are commonly utilised as preliminary research procedures and an antecedent to a mainstream research activity (Clow & James 2014). The reason for using focus group discussions for this thesis was to facilitate the generation of a pool of library loyalty attributes and validate the various attributes discovered during the literature exploration. These were done to substantiate a comprehensive understanding of what constitutes library user loyalty, leading to potential model development.

For this study, the focus group size was seven library users for each group selected from each of the libraries under review. This number was consistent with Creswell and Creswell (2018); Clow and James (2014); Johnson and Christensen (2014) who recommended a focus group with participants ranging between 6 and 12. Guest, Namey and McKenna (2017) posited that as few as three to six focus groups are likely to identify 90% of the themes. Focus groups should involve adequate members to generate variety in the data provided. However, the number of participants should be controllable as larger participants' size can inhibit members from freely participating in the discussions (Clow & James 2014). This study also used four groups that comprised one group from each of the four university libraries under review.

This study opted to utilise focus groups to augment the other methods to generate themes because it was realised that there was a scarcity of literature that could be utilised to provide a comprehensive conceptualisation of user loyalty in university libraries. Using focus groups in marketing-related studies to generate novel themes is not new as earlier studies by Nilsson (2020); O.Nyumba, Wilson, Derrick and Mukherjee (2018) used it. To enhance active participation among the group members, the researcher undertook some activities during the discussions. Members of each group were asked to conceive any library activity or idea that could enhance their loyalty for their libraries. This activity was undertaken to stimulate members' conception of loyalty in libraries and also appreciate the various services/activities/ideas that can help generate loyalty. These activities were undertaken to allow the group members to better appreciate library services and the loyalty generation stages.

It further enhanced the systematic evaluation of the customer's perceptions of the complete process of library user loyalty attributes and the total library user loyalty package that is being provided by an organisation. Subsequently, the members were encouraged to identify the various attributes of loyalty in libraries. For this study, all the groups consisted of four continuing undergraduate students, and three postgraduate students. These groups were considered for the discussions because they were deemed as the primary patrons of academic libraries in Ghana. In all, four focus group discussions were organised, with one taking place in each of the four selected universities. Each group was made up of seven members, who had diverse library exposure, and had been using the library for more than a year. This was because one critical factor in determining quality is the experience of the user (Kadlubek & Grabara 2015). During these discussions, the various attributes of loyalty identified through literature exploration were extensively debated to examine their applicability to Ghanaian university libraries.

The length of discussion in each group varied as the researcher allowed the dialogue to continue until a point of saturation or when there appeared to be a repetition of ideas and views (Saunders et al. 2018; Faulkner & Trotter 2017). During the discussions, the researcher observed the pertinent details and recorded them instantly. After all the discussions, a content analysis of the views was conducted by identifying the content elements (Grønkjær, Curtis, De Crespigny & Delmar 2011). Doody, Slevin and Taggart (2013) specifically, mentioned constant comparison analysis, classical content analysis, keywords-in-context, and discourse analysis as the appropriate tools for analysing focus group data. This study used a constant comparison analysis approach to evaluate the data. This approach involved three stages where the researcher divided the data into smaller units and attached descriptors or codes to each of the units. After this, the codes were categorised into themes, and finally, the researcher developed one or more themes that expressed each group's content. This approach is usually useful when a researcher is handling several group discussions in a singular study, allowing the researcher to assess saturation in general and across-group saturation in particular (Doody et al. 2013). The multiple groups helped to verify if themes that came up in one group were repeated in the other groups.

3.4.2.2 Expert opinions

Another significant activity that was carried out after the attribute generation processes achieved during the focus group phase was to seek experts' opinions on the generated attributes. This activity was undertaken in order to validate the identified attributes during the focus group discussions. Thus, the researcher consulted the opinions of librarians on the outcome of the discussion. These librarians are considered as experts who are familiar with the attributes identified and understand how these attributes are applied in the library setting. Four librarians who are currently working in the university libraries in Ghana were contacted. To qualify, a librarian must be working in a university library for at least ten years. He or she must have had master's degree or higher in library or related field with some level of exposure in service provision in libraries. This process of seeking library professionals' opinions helped reduce issues of redundant attributes, ambiguity and biases identified in the focus group discussions.

Thus, to comprehensively identify appropriate library loyalty attributes, this study first embarked on literature searches to dig out attributes identified by various authors. The focus group members then assessed these attributes to establish the attributes that more applicable to the settings of the study and discover other attributes that were not identified in the existing literature. Decisively, experts in the profession were used to validate the attributes identified.

3.4.3 Phase Three: Designing a questionnaire to ascertain the degree of importance of the attributes

Results from the attributes identification exercise undertaken under phase two enhanced the design of a questionnaire used to specify the extent of relevance of the library user loyalty attributes relevant to university libraries in Ghana. This was then tested through the opinions of professional librarians (as described under sub-heading 3.4.2.2) to assure quality and robustness of the attributes for the questionnaire. Additionally, the precision of the data collection tool (questionnaire) and content validity were scrutinised. These were done to guarantee the attributes exhibited both the face validity and content validity and eliminate equivocal and recurring attributes (Bryman and Bell, 2015). The retained attributes were then converted into the questionnaire (see Appendix I).

3.4.4 Phase Four: Refinement of the library user loyalty attributes and identification of loyalty domains through an exploratory sample survey

This phase saw the researcher undertaking an exploratory survey to discover relevant library user loyalty attributes, as perceived by library users. It also helped in discovering important domains of library user loyalty. The under listed methodology guided the conduct of the exploratory survey:

3.4.4.1 Exploratory study data collection

The structured questionnaire developed in phase three was utilised as data collection instrument. This contained a nine-point Likert scale. For a swift and economic means of recording all aspects of loyalty domains, a Likert scale was used (Bryman 2016). The questionnaires (see Appendix I) were administered on a sample obtained premised on the inclusion criteria explained above. Thus, the data collected during the exploratory survey facilitated the improvement of attributes and classification of domains.

3.4.4.2 Exploratory study data analysis

After removing invalid responses as a way of cleaning the data, a normality test was conducted to ascertain the skewness of the distribution (Mishra et al. 2019). Also, to reduce errors and equally improve the validity and reliability of the process, both theoretical and construct validity were undertaken. This study also undertook domain identification and attribute purification using appropriate analytical techniques. This process helped identify the relationships among the attributes and identify the essential loyalty domains. A vivid description of the techniques that were used for the data analysis are outlined in the following sections:

3.4.4.2.1 Attribute refinement and domain identification

During this stage of the research, Principal Component Analysis and reliability analysis were adopted to enhance the attributes and also identify the essential loyalty domains.

3.4.4.2.2 *Exploratory Factor Analysis*

During the exploratory phase of this research, the researcher employed the Exploratory Factor Analysis (EFA) and reliability analysis to facilitate the refinement of the attributes and to discover the appropriate loyalty domains. EFA is a multivariate exploratory approach used to identify common variation between analysed variables, aiming to reduce the dimensionality of the dataset and to detect the primary source of inherent variation among investigated variables (Selig 2017; Panazzolo et al. 2012).

Exploratory Factor Analysis was used to identify patterns in data, and it was also used to express the data in such a way as to highlight their similarities and differences. EFA has been identified as a powerful tool for analysing multivariate and large dimensionality data in a reduced dimensionality (Abekah, Jackson & Tenkoran 2015). It has also been identified as a useful tool for identifying groups or clusters of variables (Oh et al. 2016). As EFA is a multivariate analysis procedure that establishes fundamental factors in a set of interrelated attributes (Alkarkhi & Alqaraghuli 2019; Ockey 2013), it was deemed as the most suitable method for this study (Vilkaite-Vaitone & Skackauskiene 2020; Zhong & Moon 2020). EFA was useful in identifying the composition of the set of user loyalty variables; in designing a questionnaire to measure the core variables, and also in reducing the data set to a controllable amount without losing the value of the original information (Selig 2017). The initial objective of the exploratory analysis was to make the data more meaningful in a simplified way by transforming the original interrelated assets into uncorrelated sets with the first set explaining most of the variation with the subsequent sets explaining as much as possible of the remaining variation (Tzavidis, Zhang, Luna, Schmid & Rojas-Perilla 2018). In order to successfully undertake the EFA, five key steps were followed. These included a pre-analysis check, sampling adequacy, factor extraction, factor rotation and factor interpretation.

a) Pre-analysis checks

A pre-analysis exercise was conducted before using the Principal Component Analysis (PCA) to in order to guarantee:

- A stable population factor structure emerged from the sample
- Items are scaled correctly and bias-free and

- The dataset is appropriate for the EFA.

b) Sampling adequacy

The data was evaluated for its appropriateness for factor analysis. This was done by inspecting the correlation matrix through the computation of the Kaiser-Meyer Olkin (KMO) value (Cleff 2019). KMO value of 0.60 or above was accepted as satisfactory data for the EFA (Heggland et al. 2012).

c) Factor extraction

According to Yong and Pearce (2013), factor analysis is based on the 'common factor model' which is a theoretical model which postulates that observed measures are affected by common underlying factors and unique factors, and the correlation patterns need to be determined. Method of factor extraction and criteria for selecting the factors were two key issues that were considered under factor extraction.

i. **Method of factor extraction**

Yong and Pearce (2013) stated that there is an array of extraction methods available (like Principal Component Analysis, and Principal Axis Factor, among others. Principal Components analysis is used to extract maximum variance from the dataset with each component, thus reducing many variables into a smaller number of components (Jolliffe & Cadima 2016). The use of Principal Component Analysis (PCA) is prevalent among most marketing-related studies (Ranjani & Ambe 2016; Ampaw, Akuffo & Larbi 2014; Martey 2014). This research thus opted for PCA to obtain the factors that clarify the associations that exist among the data.

ii. **Criteria for selecting the factors**

The Kaiser's criterion is a critical benchmark used to ascertain the number of factors to maintain (Yong & Pearce 2013). This criterion recommends the retention of factors whose eigenvalue equals one or more. Following the suggestions of (Yong & Pearce 2013; Panazzolo et al. 2012), this study considered Eigenvalues of 1.0 or more as the factor selection cut-off.

d) Factor rotation

Factor rotation helps to facilitate excellent interpretation of the factors as it tries to remove all ambiguity from the factors (Yong & Pearce 2013). A primary aim of factor rotation is to achieve an ideal structure that endeavours to have each variable load on a few factors as possible but maximises the number of high loadings on each variable (Osborne 2015). Orthogonal rotation and oblique rotation have been the two main methods of rotation (Tabachnick & Fidell 2007), and Yong and Pearce (2013) believe that the orthogonal rotation is when the factors are rotated 90° from each other. The varimax method of the orthogonal rotation, which limits the quantity of items that present great loadings on each factor and ensures that factors with low loading are even reduced further (Yong & Pearce 2013), was used for this study because of the discrete nature of the underlying attributes of loyalty.

e) Factor interpretation

According to Yong and Pearce (2013), one major criterion for ascertaining the reliability of the factors is to consider that connection between the individual rotated factor loadings and the magnitude of the absolute sample size. As a general principle, using an alpha level of 0.01 (two-tailed), a rotated factor loading for a sample size of at least 300 would need to be at least .32 to be considered statistically meaningful (Tabachnick & Fidell 2007). A factor loading of 0.32 gives us approximately 10% of the overlapping variance (Yong & Pearce 2013). However, Costello and Osborne (2005) have argued that a factor with 5 or more strongly loading items (0.50 or better) are desirable and indicate a solid factor. This study, therefore, used 0.50 as the cut-off point for factor interpretation.

3.5 Quality issues in the quantitative phase

A key objective of the research was not just to get credible findings, but also to implement the outcomes of the scientifically executed research (Heale & Twycross 2015). For the research findings to be considered authentic, credible, and believable, efforts should be made to ensure that the results of the study are credible and the assurance that the entire research process was rigorous. Rigour refers to the efforts the research put in place to assure quality results (Heale & Twycross 2015). For

quantitative research, the measurement of validity and reliability gives an indication of the rigour of the study. For Kalusopa (2011), validity and reliability are central when it comes to positivist research for research to stand out as authentic, credible and believable. This means that any study that does not consider the issue of validity and reliability is likely to fail to yield a comparable result if undertaken by another scientist.

3.5.1 Reliability

It is always essential for researchers to importance of a research instrument in answering research questions whenever a researcher is confronted with the choice of developing a new instrument for a study (Bastos, Duquia, González-Chica, Mesa & Bonamigo 2014) Also, the researcher needs to consider the value of the said instrument (Taber 2017). Traditionally, quality refers to issues of validity and reliability (Taber 2013). Cronbach's alpha is a relevant measurement utilised to assess internal consistency, and it has been considered as the best tool for estimating real reliability (Taber 2017). Cronbach's alpha is a statistical name for reliability instruments used in published science education studies (Taber 2017).

Cronbach's alpha ensures an excellent internal consistency that is required for model fit and it is especially important when it is often used in research with multiple-item measurements (Taber 2018). This study regarded internal consistency to be adequate whenever alpha was greater than 0.7. According to Kongsin, Chaiear, Thanomsieng and Boonjaraspinyo (2020), an accepted practice is to consider internal consistency as appropriate if alpha is greater than 0.7. Ranjani and Ambe (2016) have indicated that a Cronbach's alpha reliability coefficient normally ranges between 0 and 1 and the nearer it is to one, the better.

3.5.2 Validity

In research, validity indicates how well a given concept is adequately reflected in available data collected to measure the concept (Neuman 2014). Thus, validity describes the extent to which the collected data covers the scope of the study (Taherdoost 2016). Validity increases openness and decreases biases in qualitative research (Singh 2014). Although Neuman (2014) mentions four types of validity,

namely: face validity, content validity, criterion validity and construct validity, this study used only the face and content validity.

For Neuman (2014), face validity refers to the opinions of researchers regarding how well the indicator measures the construct. Thus, it is a skewed assessment on the operationalisation of a construct and refers to the extent to which a measure appears to be related to a specific construct, in the judgment of nonexperts (Taherdoost 2016). For this study, experts' involvement in the identification of the library user loyalty attributes helped to ensure face validity as the contents on the instruments were deemed fit on the face value by the team of experts. This team of experts, thus, confirmed the relevance, reasonableness, and unambiguity of the instrument. More so, the researcher ensured that every phase of the study was linked with the study's objectives.

On the other hand, content validity refers to a type of measurement validity that requires that a measure represent all aspects of the conceptual definition of a construct (Neuman 2014). In this study, content validity, which was derived during the study's concept identification phase, is the measurement property that assessed whether the identified attributes were exhaustive and adequate and reflected library users' perspective for loyalty (Brod, Pohlman & Tesler Waldman 2014). Equally, this study employed the judgemental approach to determine content validity and this involved the review of the literature after which a team of experts also evaluated them. The process of judgemental approach of content validity demands that the researcher has to be with the experts to enhance the validation process (Taherdoost 2016).

3.6 Quality issues in the qualitative phase

The essence of qualitative research is to make sense of and recognise patterns among words in order to build up a meaningful picture without compromising its richness and dimensionality (Leung 2015). While reliability and validity have become accepted standards for assessing the quality of quantitative research, Lincoln and Guba (1985) contended that such may not be good for qualitative research and thus proposes transferability, credibility, dependability and confirmability as appropriate criteria for assessing the quality of qualitative research.

3.6.1 Transferability

Transferability as a standard for assessing the worth of qualitative research has to do with the extent to which qualitative research results can be transmitted to other jurisdictions with another set of partakers (Korstjens & Moser 2018). Transferability also refers to the generalisability of inquiry where findings in a single research can be utilised to make predictions in comparable or related studies (Nowell, Norris, White & Moules 2017). Thus, even though the researcher may be aware of the settings where outcome of his/her study may be conveyed, the researcher is still accountable for offering enough descriptions, so that researchers who wish to replicate the findings to their context can do so without the input of the researcher will do so with ease. Hadi (2016) entreats researchers to vividly describe their study settings, outline their sampling techniques and spell out data collection and analysis procedures to ensure transferability. For this study, transferability is demonstrated as the researcher has described the population from which the samples were selected, demonstrated that structured interviews, focus group discussions and questionnaires were employed for the data collection, and, finally, described the data analysis and presentation procedure for both the qualitative and quantitative data. Thus, the findings of this study can easily be replicated by other researchers even from different research settings.

3.6.2 Credibility

For Korstjens and Moser (2018), credibility relates with the level with which an individual can have faith in the outcomes of the research. Credibility also refers to the degree to which research represents the actual findings as expressed by research participants and free as far as possible of the researcher's subjective views (Moon, Brewer, Januchowski-Hartley, Adams & Blackman 2016). Here again, Hadi (2016) advises researchers to utilise data collection triangulation, extended engagement, constant surveillance, data gathering triangulation and member checking. For this study, the researcher observed these pieces of advice by using different techniques to collect data. The study witnessed the use of structured interviews to gather data from librarians on the marketing strategies deployed in their respective academic libraries. Also, a focus group discussion was employed to glean data from library users to identify the various attributes of library user loyalty. More so, questionnaires were

used to generate views from library users in order to develop a model to predict library user loyalty. Another issue that is worth noting is the length of time the researcher spent with the study participants. During each interview or focus group discussion, the researcher was patient and continued to engage with the participants without rushing the process till the stipulated data was collected.

3.6.3 Dependability

Primarily, dependability means the constancy of outcomes over time and includes the aspect of consistency of qualitative data over time (Nowell et al. 2017). Dependability refers to respondents' judgement that the outcome, interpretation, and suggestions that emanate from a study are backed by data (Korstjens & Moser 2018). Dependability is achieved by ensuring that procedures involved in the research are plausible, traceable, and evidently recorded (Nowell et al. 2017). Nowell et al. (2017) further advise researchers to undertake an audit trail that transparently records all the processes used in the study. For this study, the researcher has vividly undertaken the audit trial, as shown in the various chapters of this research. For instance, the researcher has carefully outlined the statement of the problem, purpose, and objectives of the study in Chapter One. The researcher has also painstakingly reviewed relevant literature to situate this study in a perspective, as seen in Chapter Two. Chapter Three of the study further outlined the research design, data collection, and data analysis techniques adopted for the study. More so, Chapters Four and Five display the study's findings and further interpret and discuss these findings. The final chapter summarised the entire process, concluded and made recommendations to impact research and practice. These were undertaken to help readers appreciate the various marketing strategies that selected academic libraries utilise to build user loyalty. Equally, it brings clarity on the attributes of library user loyalty and how they interact to predict loyalty in selected Ghanaian academic libraries.

3.6.4 Confirmability

Confirmability relates to the understanding that, the way a researcher interprets his/her findings is clearly derived from the data. This requires that the researcher demonstrate how his/her conclusions and interpretations were drawn (Nowell et al. 2017). Confirmability equally means to the degree with which other scientists could

corroborate the outcomes of the research study. Confirmability ensures that data and its interpretations are objectively handled (Korstjens & Moser 2018). Research results are easily confirmed by others where a researcher guards against inner subjectivity by making sure research findings and interpretations are not based on his or her preferences and viewpoints but those of participants as derived from the data. According to Nowell et al. (2017), confirmability is established when credibility, transferability, and dependability are achieved. As indicated from the issues discussed previously (3.6.1 – 3.6.3), the researcher ensured that confirmability was achieved for this study. Issues relating to transparency have been discussed. For instance, the researcher justified his choice of the subjects for this study, provided the face-to-face interview guide (see Appendix III), an outline for the focus group discussion (Appendix V) and the questionnaire (Appendix I). All these served as guides for the researcher so as to eliminate the issue of using his subjective ideas in the processes. Also, all the issues raised in Chapter One relating to the study objectives were all confirmed by this study's findings.

3.7 Research stage two: quantitative phase

This part of the chapter discussed, extensively, the research design, the population and sampling techniques employed in the study, the tools for data collection and data collection procedure. As a social investigation, research is established on certain metaphysical notions (Maarouf 2019; Creswell & Plano Clark 2018; Lincoln, Lynham & Guba 2018; Romm 2018). In the social sciences, positivism and interpretivism have become unique paradigms that are utilised by researchers. These customs have steered the patterns of reasoning and eventually influenced certain research methodologies and outcomes (Ngulube 2015). The positivist philosophical viewpoint guided this part of the study. This, together with the interpretative approach used during the exploratory stage, helped this study to develop a robust methodology. Creswell and Plano Clark (2018) have argued that when it is inadequate to use only one approach to respond to the research problem, then the application of multiple methods in the research is recommended. Accordingly, this study that seeks to understand strategies for building user loyalty in university libraries tends to blend these paradigms.

3.8 Data collection strategies

This research employed several data gathering techniques to solicit for respondents' views on library user loyalty. This study used a face-to-face interview to gather data from librarians on the marketing strategies that were being deployed in selected academic libraries in Ghana. The study further used the focus group discussion to generate ideas on the attributes of library user loyalty from the perspectives of academic library users. Finally, the identified and confirmed attributes were used to design questionnaires that were used to solicit for data for the exploratory study and the design of the model for this study.

Regarding the face-to-face interview, the researcher sought permission from the librarians of the four libraries in this study. Appendix IV shows the letters the researcher wrote to the librarians to ask for permission so as to carry out the interviews. After receiving approval to conduct the research, the researcher again asked for the library staff sampling frame, out of which the researcher conveniently selected all Heads of Department for the face-to-face interviews. In all, 15 librarians were selected for the interviews. The selected/potential respondents were then informed about the study objectives after which their consents were sought. Once a respondent agrees to participate in the study, an appropriate time is arranged for the interview. On the interview day, the researcher made him/her complete and sign the participant consent form. Appendix VI is a copy of the consent form. These face-to-face interviews were conducted in the comfort of the office of the respondents and at their convenient times. It must be said here that the COVID-19 protocols of wearing face/nose masks, using sanitisers, and observing social distancing were observed. Each face-to-face interview lasted for a period of about 30 minutes. With the interviewee's permission, each face-to-face interview was digitally recorded and equally written down. The recorded interviews were later transcribed for analysis. Also, the transcribed copies and the digital records were then saved in the researcher's Google Drive account.

The researcher went through the same process for the focus group discussions. After getting permission from the library authorities, the researcher met with the librarians and shared the study's objectives with them. The idea was to get the librarians to help

them in selecting participants for the group discussion as outlined in previous sessions. Once the prospective group members were identified, the researcher, through the librarians, contacted them. An agreed time and date were shared with group members of the respective groups. Each member was made to sign the participant consent form. Here again, the COVID-19 protocols were observed. The time used for the focus group discussions varied from group to group. However, an average of a two-hour discussion time was observed across the four groups. The researcher only acted as a moderator without participating/contributing to the discussion. The brainstorming processes were recorded till the final refinement of attributes were reached. The accepted attributes were then transformed into a set of questionnaires for the quantitative stage of the study to begin.

The quantitative survey also followed the processes outlined above. Upon receiving approval from the library authorities, the researcher visited the respective libraries on separate occasions. During these visits, the researcher approached library users who were available and willing to take part in the study (with strict adherence to the COVID-19 protocols). After introducing himself, the researcher shared the study objectives with them, after which each participant was made to sign the participant consent form. Some respondents completed the questionnaire and submitted it on the same day. Others sent them home, and the researcher had to do several follow-ups in order to retrieve them.

3.9 Data processing and analysis

One key aspect of any study is the management of data and scientifically analysed to draw conclusions and generalise findings to the stated problems (Neuman 2014). This includes the processes involved in managing collected data. It also involves the recording, coding, and methods for analysing data. Following the advice of Creswell and Plano Clark (2018), the researcher analysed the database of responses to answer the research questions. The researcher used the research questions as a guide in analysing the quantitative data. Also, the researcher employed the most suitable statistical test to respond to each question. During the data analysis, the researcher took into consideration the research questions asked, the quantity of variables in the questions, the kind of scales employed for measuring the variables, and other factors.

The quantitative data that were gleaned during the survey were carefully analysed using the IBM SPSS version 22. This was used in reducing the factors during the Exploratory Factor Analysis stage. The same software was also used for the logistic and regression analysis undertaken to establish relationships between the domains of library user loyalty. The results were presented in tables and graphs. This is because such presentations are easy to understand and, thus, more appealing to the readers and audience of the findings (Duquia, Bastos, Bonamigo, González-Chica & Martínez-Mesa 2014). The data was assessed through the process of scrubbing. This helped check for accuracy and validity of the data. In processing the data for the analysis, the researcher followed the advice of (Fowler 2014). Accordingly, the researcher designed codes which were computer-processable, after which he coded the responses. The data were then recorded in the IBM SPSS programme. The researcher then again cleaned the data to make it more accurate and more complete. A copy of the was then stored in the cloud through the researchers gmail account.

However, the qualitative data were grouped and thematically analysed to match the results derived from the quantitative study. This study used the QSR NVivo qualitative analysis software for analysing the qualitative data. Using statistical packages for analysing qualitative data with qualitative data analysis software like MaxQDA, QSR Nvivo, QDA Miner, Atlas.ti and Ethnograph has been advocated (Creswell & Plano Clark 2018). According to Creswell and Plano Clark (2018), the utilisation of qualitative data analysis software facilitates the storage of transcribed data and graphical data for analysis. It also enables the researcher to block and label text segments with codes so that they can easily be retrieved. It further organises codes into visuals, making it possible to diagram and see the relationship among them and search for segments of text that contain multiple codes. The transcribed data were first validated to determine whether the data collection was done as per the pre-set standards and without any bias. The responses were then imported into the software, which was then analysed after which themes were generated. The researcher then discussed the generated themes. The software was also used as a repository for the data for future use.

3.10   Data integration

One key thing that researchers conducting mixed-methods research should be able to do skilfully is to demonstrate how the qualitative and the quantitative data were mixed (Ngulube 2020b). Data integration is the deliberate approach utilised by researchers to bring quantitative and qualitative methods together in a study (Creswell 2015; Guetterman, Fetters & Creswell 2015). Integration is the research process where qualitative studies interact with quantitative studies (Creswell & Plano Clark 2018). As a flagship feature of mixed-methods research, Creswell and Plano Clark (2018) believe that the ability to eloquently integrate both qualitative and quantitative studies uniquely differentiate mixed-methods from other methods that do not focus on integrating data. Meaningful integration allows researchers to realise the potential gains of mixed-methods (Creswell 2015; Fetters & Freshwater 2015). In an exploratory sequential design, the integrative data analysis procedure, according to Creswell and Plano Clark (2018), includes the analysis of the qualitative data, using the qualitative data to design a quantitative feature that is usually influenced by the analysis of the qualitative data, after which the quantitative data is subsequently analysed. Thus, following the counsel of Creswell and Plano Clark (2018) in integrating the qualitative and the quantitative data, this study:

- Analysed the qualitative database for themes and codes to understand the personal experiences of individuals that provide a context or cultural-specific understanding of library user loyalty.
- Determined what quantitative feature needs to be developed (survey questionnaire) and stated its precise objective and function.
- Linked the identified themes to elements of the quantitative feature (survey questionnaire).
- Designed a joint display that conveys the link between themes/codes and specific elements of the quantitative feature.
- Pilot tested and polished the quantitative feature by utilising thorough processes.
- Interpreted how the quantitative findings give credence to the value and cultural specificity of the newly developed instrument for the precise context and settings of the study.

3.11   Ethical considerations

This study adequately complied with the ethical guidelines/policies of the University of South Africa (UNISA 2016, 2018). Please refer to Appendix VII for a copy of the ethical clearance form. The researcher notified potential research contributors about the processes and possible hazards they could encounter in the study and sought their agreement to take part in the study (Johnson & Christensen 2014; Babbie 2010). Again, the researcher always related to participants by first showing an introductory letter informing them of the research's intended purpose. The researcher also ensured that the study took place the during times proposed by the participants.

The researcher also understood and familiarised himself with major dangers associated with the research. As a result, the study adhered to all ethical issues relating to the conduct of any scientific study. Additional concerns, such as withdrawal of approval by participants and interrogation of participants, anonymity and confidentiality of participants, recompensing control groups, data analysis and reporting research results were given priority (Coffelt 2017). As presented under section 1.10 (ethical considerations) of chapter one of this monologue, the study avoided other ethical issues like plagiarism.

Again, the research instruments for this study were pre-tested in order to ensure reliability and validity. Also, it was meant to reduce all issues of confusion when the participants were responding to them. This also assured that the data collection instruments asked clear and precise questions and questions that could solicit responses to answer the research questions (Artino, La Rochelle, Dezee & Gehlbach 2014). With regards to the sources of literature for this study, all materials consulted were duly cited using the appropriate Harvard referencing style. This was to help readers to identify the researchers own ideas and those of other researchers. It was also meant to guide readers to easily trace and locate all information sources cited in this research.

3.12   Summary

This chapter sought to discuss the research design and methodology for the study. Through this chapter, the researcher has demonstrated to its readers, the research

paradigm, research methodology, research approach, population of the study, sampling procedures, data gathering methods, and data analysis of the research study. The chapter also gave an additional picture on issues relating to the reliability and validity of data, including other ethical issues. Based on the data gathered from the instruments designed in this chapter, the next chapter will present the outcomes of the data collection. It is important to state here that the researcher encountered a number of challenges in following the processes outlined in this chapter. The primary challenge has to do with data collection. The data collection process was affected by the outbreak of the COVID-19. All the subjects used in this study are either students or staff of academic institutions. As a result of the pandemic, the country was locked down after which most of these academic institutions were closed. This situation delayed the data collection process, which, in the long run, has affected the completion of the entire study.

CHAPTER FOUR

DATA ANALYSIS AND PRESENTATION OF FINDINGS

4.1 Introduction

In the previous chapter of this thesis, the researcher discussed the scientific processes used to conduct the study to meet the study's objectives. This section, therefore, outlines the findings that emanated from the processes outlined in the previous chapter. In order to answer objectives 1, 4, and 5 of this thesis, a face-to-face interview was organised among librarians selected from the four institutions used for this study. This was done to explore whether university libraries in Ghana market their products and services and the various strategies they employ to carry out these marketing activities. Also, the challenges they encounter in marketing their libraries' products and services were examined. Again, focus group discussions were undertaken among a team of experts (students and librarians) to identify attributes of library user loyalty. This qualitative exploratory phase of the study set the tone, as per the research design, to construct a survey tool for the quantitative phase of the study. It is worthy to note that the initial data collected with the constructed instrument was subjected to exploratory factor analysis for factor reduction, after which the final survey was conducted.

4.2 Results from the face-face-interview

This section of the study focused on presenting and analysing the responses from the qualitative structured interviews. This qualitative phase of the study intended to explore how university libraries market their services and products to build library user loyalty and identify the challenges university libraries face in building user loyalty. It further sought to explore the impact of online search engines on university libraries' bid to building library user loyalty. As a background, the face-to-face interviews were conducted in the comfort of the office of the respondents. It is worth noting that due to the Corona Virus pandemic (COVID-19), all necessary protocols as prescribed by the World Health Organization (2020) and adapted by the Ghana Health Service (2020) were followed. The researcher also ensured that all the interviews took place in well-ventilated offices of the interviewees. All participants were encouraged to wear their

face/nose masks. No research assistant was employed in conducting the interview. The researcher made audio recordings with a smartphone of the interviews, aside the notes that were taken for the sake reference. These recordings were done with the permission of the interviewees. The researcher transcribed the interviews verbatim and thematically analysed them. Thematic analysis is simply where responses of similar ideas are grouped as the same construct. According to Xu and Zammit (2020) and Herzog, Handke and Hitters (2019), thematic analysis is a regularly utilised technique in analysing qualitative data and has been applied in various social science studies.

In this study, the thematic analysis was electronically aided using QSR NVivo qualitative analysis software. After familiarising with the data (reading the transcript at least twice), the transcribed data were imported into the software. This was done by clicking on import and then data. In the open file dialogue box, all the transcribed data were imported into the software for the analysis. Interview responses were highlighted and coded into nodes. Nodes of similar ideas were then reviewed and recoded into themes. This meant that the initial codes morphed into subthemes while the final codes formed the main themes for analysis and interpretation.

A total of 15 face-to-face interviews were conducted across the four study sites. According to Vasileiou, Barnett, Thorpe and Young (2018), the sample size for qualitative interviews is based on the principle of saturation and pragmatic considerations. Pragmatically, working with smaller sample after saturation meant that the researcher needed not to interview further respondents. This gave him enough time to immerse himself in the data for in-depth analysis fully. The socio-demographic characteristics of the face-to-face interview respondents are presented in Table 5. In all, 15 librarians were involved in the face-to-face interview, among which the majority were males. It was also observed that majority of the respondents were between 30 and 41 years of age, with most of them having obtained at least a master's degree. Also, it was found that the respondents who participated in the study were Senior Members in their respective libraries.

Table 5: Socio-demographic characteristics of Face-to-Face Interview Respondents

Parameter	Frequency	Percentage (%)
Sex		
Male	9	60.00
Female	6	40.00
Age Group		
31 to 40 years	7	46.67
41 to 50 years	6	40.00
51 to 60 years	2	13.33
Level of Education		
PhD	4	26.67
Master's	11	73.33
Institution		
University of Ghana (UG)	7	46.67
University of Health and Allied Sciences (UHAS)	5	33.33
Valley View University (VVU)	2	13.33
Kings University College (KUC)	1	6.67
Position		
Librarian	3	20.00
Deputy Librarian	2	13.33
Assistant Librarian	10	66.67

Source: Field data (2020)

4.2.1 How university libraries market their products and services

Responding to the first objective of this thesis (which touched on how university libraries market their products and services), the study participants were invited to respond to a set of queries to ascertain how their libraries are marketed to their users. Some of these questions centred around the availability of formal marketing plans, dedicated departments in charge of marketing library products and services, the current marketing strategies being used, and budgeting issues concerning marketing the libraries' products and services.

4.2.1.1 Availability of formal structures in place to market library's products and services

Respondents were asked whether they have any formal marketing plan in place. One common theme emerged from the responses of the interviewees. There are no formal structures or policies in place to market their services and products to their users. However, from the interviews, it was gathered that three of the institutions had some informal strategies that they utilise to market their libraries' products and services to their users and prospective users. This is evident from the response of an interviewee from VVU.

> We do not have any formal plan for marketing what we do. However, every year, as part of the library's plan for the year, we indirectly make provision for marketing our resources. We organise orientation for new students and one on one instructions for other students and faculties. I am also an adjutant lecturer here, and I utilise that opportunity to talk about the library and what we do. (Respondent 1 from VVU)

Another respondent corroborated this response from UG regarding the availability of formal structures for marketing their library's products and services. He stated the following:

> Not necessarily. We do not have a written down policy on marketing the services and products of the library. However, there is that consciousness among the library staff to market their library's products and services. We endeavour to market the library wherever we find ourselves. We utilise orientation programmes, information literacy classes, among others to announce our presence and what we offer. (Respondent 3 from UG).

Regarding the view of respondent three from UG on how marketing activities are carried out, he reiterated by stating that "I am a subject librarian to a college in the university and uses this platform to tell people what the library does and even leave my contact for any follow-ups". The above responses clearly indicated that the selected academic libraries used in this study do not have any formal policy or structure to market their products and services. This likely means that the libraries are not formally mandated to make their users know the products and services they offer. Though there are no formal means of marketing, it can be realised that there has been some form of consciousness to market the libraries' products and services informally. It is worthy of note that though they utilise informal means to market the products and services of the libraries, this initiative depends on the individual interviewee and the position he or she occupies. An example is cited below:

> I teach Information Literacy, which is first year university-wide course. And so, on my first day of lecture, I always make sure that I preach about the library and how it can benefit my students as people who find themselves in an academic environment. So, I even feel that this way of marketing the library is more effective than other formal means that other institutions use. (Respondent 4 from UHAS)

The above response confirms that though formal marketing strategies are not in place in the libraries, individual librarians' motivation to market and their marketing strategies are highly contextual. For example, an Assistant Librarian in KUC indicated that "there is nothing in place like that. Even the resources we have are limited." This response shows that resources can also be a barrier to marketing library products and services.

Regarding whether the selected institutions' libraries have dedicated departments in charge of marketing the products and services of the libraries and budgeting for marketing activities, there was also one common theme of no marketing department realised. This also meant that there is no dedicated budget for marketing. Respondent 2 from VVU responded to the query as to whether they had a dedicated department for marketing the products and services of the library by answering with the following:

> No, we do not have any department in charge of marketing, let alone to budget for it. However, anything related to marketing the library's services and products and the library's budget for marketing are informally coordinated from the office of the University Librarian. (Respondent 2 from VVU)

This response shows that libraries in this study do not have dedicated departments in charge of marketing the products and services that they offer. Most often, as indicated from the above quote, such activities are not well planned and may arise from an individual librarian's subjective vision for the library. This also means that there is no accountability in terms of the impact of marketing the libraries activities. Therefore, arguing for a dedicated budget for marketing library's activities may be a challenge. Since there are no such departments, there is the likelihood of haphazardness in marketing libraries' services and products in the selected institutions in this study. Other departments in the libraries, as and when they deem it necessary, may unofficially take up the libraries' marketing activities, which may not yield any useful results since they are not trained to do so. Usurping the marketing activities by a non-marketing department within a library was pointed out by a UG respondent.

> No. We do not have such department, but the Reference Service Department unofficially does this. This is because it is responsible for organising orientation programmes for students, faculties and other users in the university. Moreover, such marketing activities are not budgeted for. (Respondent 3 from UG)

From the above, it can be argued that the universities in this study do not have dedicated departments in their libraries to take care of marketing activities. Therefore, it is clear that since such departments are absent, there is no proper planning, coordination, and assessment of such activities. There is also the possibility of no reporting structure in terms of what the libraries do regarding marketing their products and services to its users. This also demonstrates that there is no actual budgeting for the activities as disclosed by respondent six from UG, saying 'How do I even say it? We don't actually have a budget per se. It is an embedded budget. Anytime there is the need, there is the means.' This finding shows that universities in this study do not consider marketing their products and services to their users as a priority in order to boost user loyalty.

4.2.1.2 Marketing strategy employed by the libraries to ensure customer loyalty

Since the respondents indicated that they were engaged in informal marketing of their libraries' products and services, the study went further to probe the specific marketing

strategies they use. Concerning this, eight (8) main themes emerged. These are product, price/value, place, promotion, branding, switching cost, user satisfaction and service quality. For example, the first four themes (product, price/value, place and promotion) concerning the marketing strategies have been confirmed by (Kotler, Armstrong & Opresnik 2018). According to the authors, having a mix of these strategies under the control of an institution enables the institution (libraries) to adapt to the actors and forces in the marketing environment. The application of such business models leads to ensuring that clients are attracted and eventually retained. The retention of the customers is asserted to lead to client loyalty. The other four themes (branding, switching cost, user satisfaction and service quality) have also been found and examined in other service providing institutions (Slack & Singh 2020; Putro & Rachmat 2019; Rashid & Rokade 2019). These themes are presented and analysed accordingly.

First of the themes is the product. According to Kotler et al. (2018), the product is the physical good or tangible good that can be sold, or a complex set of benefits that can be used to satisfy users' demands. The product is the 'thing' needed by a customer but possessed by an institution which the customers consume or patronise. From the interviews, it was gathered that the libraries try to make available the goods that the users need in order to get the users always coming to utilise the library. Respondent 5 from UHAS intimated the following:

> Our library makes conscious efforts to acquire materials that users will need. This is normally done in consultation with key stakeholders (faculty and students). We make sure they bring their recommendation regarding the books and other resources they will need before the beginning of every academic year. Due to this, you can therefore appreciate it when our users keep using our products (Respondent 5 from UHAS)

A respondent from UG also said:

> As a marketing strategy, we ensure, through the Acquisitions Librarian, materials acquired for the library are of value and that users will have no choice but to utilise our products. This has always worked for us since we make sure that we have authoritative and current editions of books and other materials. (Respondent 4 from UG)

From these two responses, it can be determined that the use of relevant products with the capacity to serve library users' needs is used by the libraries in this study to attract,

retain and possibly build users' loyalty. Another respondent from VVU also repeated a similar idea concerning using relevant products as a marketing strategy and stated the following:

> As a library, we believe that we are the custodian of knowledge which is mostly reflected in the kinds of products, such as books and other reference materials we stock. Thus, we always try to get the best so that it will market the library for us. As you know in Twi Language we say "Adepa na ɛtɔn noho". So, we strive to get the best materials. (Respondent 1 from VVU)

From VVRUR1's response, relevant materials are necessary to attract users to patronise the library and goes ahead to say an adage in the local language that 'Adepa na ɛtɔn noho', which literally means 'things of value market themselves'. So, to this respondent, her library only needs to get relevant materials as the relevant materials will attract library users into the library. This shows that relevant products that serve clients' needs cannot be left out as an informal marketing strategy by libraries.

The second theme, price/value, was also repeatedly echoed throughout the face-to-face interviews with the respondents. According to Ladhari and Morales (2008), price/value is the cost in terms of money or time that a library user incurs in accessing a library and or its resources. If it costs a library user more in terms of time, money, and effort to access information from a library, the library user will be more likely to opt for an alternative source. In this study, most of the respondents indicated that price/value in terms of time and money is a major determinant of library resources' usage. A response from Respondent 1 from KUC relates:

> To market our library's products and services, and make it competitive, we ensure that our users spend less in terms of money and time to access our services. We have continuously improved our e-resources and online services. All these are done to ensure that our users always choose us over other libraries. (Respondent 1 from KUC)

Another response from respondent two from UG refers to users spending less effort accessing library resources, thereby increasing users' value from using the library. This also means that cost in terms of price is reduced. Respondent 2 UG states that 'As a library, we ensure that electronic services are always highlighted. Moreover, because of this, we make sure that our systems and servers are always working efficiently.' This response indicates that reducing searching time, and access cost can keep users to continue to utilise the library. Since the advent of digital technology,

libraries are moving online and becoming digital so that users will not always have to move to the traditional 'brick and mortar' libraries to access information and other resources. Leveraging on this has been seen by libraries in this study as a relevant strategy to market their libraries' products and services. Respondent 2 from UHAS reiterate this idea by saying that:

> I must say that apart from the library user fee that our users pay (which is very minimal). They do not pay any other amount. Also, through our e-resources, they get more than they pay and even at a rapid time. We utilise this as a strategic plan to market our library. (Respondent 2 from UHAS)

The place has been lauded as a means of marketing (Kotler et al. 2018). A welcoming and warm environment tends to attract customers to a place of service or buy a product from a particular place. Some of the respondents indicated that their libraries' physical spaces were welcoming and had all the necessary spaces such as discussion areas, research commons and private areas that inspire learning and research. This a response from respondent three from UG:

> The library is always a cool place for both group and personal studies. The environment promotes learning. For graduate students, we have the research commons where they are provided with their privacy and any other resources they will need.

Respondent 1 from VVU also said:

> Have you been to our library before? If you have not, please find time to visit us. You will realise that it is an environment that inspires learning. The place is cool, hidden from disruption, and I know it is one great asset we have as a library. This pulls users into the facility. (Respondent 1 from VVU)

Using library space to attract library users has become an important marketing strategy in today's library, as the serene and conducive environment has been found to entice users to continue visiting a particular library. This was corroborated by Respondent five from UHAS, who said 'The conducive environment and the attractive nature of our library speaks a lot about the library. It does the marketing for us'.

Promotion as a marketing strategy is a common engagement by service providers, globally. This has gradually found its way into the information management and library sector. The respondents indicated some strategies they utilise to promote their libraries. For example, Respondent one from UHAS indicated that the institution

embarks on promotional activities to market the library and its offers to students and faculties and other library users.

> Anytime we embark on such promotional activities through emails and other social media platforms, we see a rise in the patronage of our services. (Respondent 1 from UHAS)

The advent of information technology has again made the promotion of services and products easy by providing the platform to send promotional offers to people. It can be realised that emails and other social media platforms serve as means to get promotional contents to users of library resources. Appel, Grewal, Hadi and Stephen (2020) asset that social media has become a powerful tool in disseminating promotional contents. They contend that libraries can reach a large audience in the shortest possible time. Below is a response from respondent six from UG on promotion as a marketing strategy:

> We also promote new services and products. We particularly use our subject librarians in this regard. These are Senior members with much experience who are assigned to various schools. Aside from this, anytime we have a new service or product, we advertise it through our webpage, social media platforms, and emails. (Respondent 6 from UG)

Social media and emailing have been the primary means through which promotional contents of the libraries were shared. However, since these various marketing tools are not official, it can be assumed that the contents of the promotion are not reviewed and accepted by the institutions within which the libraries operate.

Branding as a marketing strategy was realised to be used as a marketing strategy in only one institution, that is, UG. UG has the most prominent academic library in Ghana, called Balme Library. It can boast of adequate facilities and staff that can adequately cater for the needs of users. The theme branding was gleaned from only the responses of the respondents from UG. Respondent four from UG said 'The name Balme Library is a bigger brand among academic libraries in Ghana. So yes, our brand name does a lot for us in terms of marketing'. This shows that Balme Library is well known within the academic circles in Ghana and serves the need of academics. Another response from UG states the following:

> As a library, we get referrals from all over the country. For instance, when most libraries are finding it difficult to meet the request for their users, it is

Balme library that they look up to as a last resort. This alone markets us to current and prospective users. (Respondent 7 from UG)

Switching cost demonstrates how expensive it is to switch to an alternative service or product from a known brand. From the interview responses, it was gathered that the libraries are trying to make it difficult for users to switch away from them by making it expensive to do so in terms of cost (money, time and efforts). That is, offering low-cost subscriptions and penalties for late returns of borrowed resources. Respondent 2 from VVU stated that:

> We try to make it difficult for our users to switch from us. It is often expensive for our users to access databases on their own because of the high cost of subscriptions. Also, the cost of the Internet is virtually free in our library. This and other factors like the quick service time make it difficult for our users to resort to others for their information needs. (Respondent 2 from VVU)

Respondent 1 from UHAS also indicated that:

> Because the library uses qualified personnel who understand the user's needs better, plus the human relationship we establish with them, I can say that they will find it more expensive using other sources to satisfy their information needs. We try to leave a lasting impression on our first-time users as well as our regular users. (Respondent 1 from UHAS)

Offering low-cost subscriptions, highspeed internet and making sure that generally there is lower cost and efforts in accessing a library will most likely make it difficult for library users to switch to alternatives. Offering these services makes it expensive for users to switch to different libraries that may not offer these services.

Customer satisfaction was the seventh theme realised from the study concerning the libraries' informal marketing strategies. When clients are satisfied, there is the likelihood of returning for more services and products. It is therefore not surprising that this theme was ascertained from the responses of the interviewees. Respondent 3 from UG responded that they make sure that their users are satisfied.

> We always seek for feedback to work towards making our clients satisfied. Most feedbacks are positive. Sometimes you meet people you do not recognise, and the kind of appreciation and gratitude they show tells it all. (Respondent 3 from UG)

It is worth to take note that satisfied users of libraries serve as ambassadors for the libraries since they will themselves market the libraries' products and services. An

important strategy to satisfy a client is to ask for feedback from the clients and attend to their needs and improve upon services and products. This increases the number of library users who are satisfied and eventually become loyal.

> We believe in the notion that a satisfied customer will come back and come with other customers. As a result, we endeavour to make sure that our users are satisfied with our services. Attending to their needs and requests when they come into the library is prioritised. (Respondent 5 from UHAS)

A respondent from VVU spoke in light of customer satisfaction and loyalty.

> Once our users are satisfied, they will remain loyal to us. They will speak well about us. They will bring more users. Having taken notice of these advantages, yes, we strive always to satisfy our users. However, once in a while, you will get disgruntled patrons, for instance, concerning the application of library rules such as making phone calls within the library. In all these, we look at the supreme good. (Respondent 2 from VVU)

The eighth and last theme gleaned was service quality. Quality service projects image of institutions and is crucial as poor-quality service can reduce the client's uptake of services. With this understanding, the respondents indicated some informal marketing activities they engage in to project their libraries' services and products.

> We provide the best of services we could. As a result, we keep training our staff on new products and services, technology, among others, with the aim of ensuring that the service they provide to our users is always quality. Because, you know, quality service will make the users come back to our library. (Respondent one from VVU)

> I think our team of experts have done well in providing quality service and products to our users. We have librarians who understand the medical language and so can easily relate with our users who are basically medicine and health-oriented students. (Respondent 2 from UHAS)

> As I said earlier, we use subject librarians in our library. We organise regular training for our staff so they can provide quality services. Our focus is on ensuring that the quality is reflected in the skills of our users in producing quality research in the form of thesis and manuscripts. (Respondent 6 from UG)

These responses indicate the libraries' zeal to provide quality service as a means to market their products and services and get users to continue using their libraries and build customer loyalty. It can be observed from the quotations that quality library service delivery is highly deemed necessary by the libraries in this study.

4.2.2 Challenges university libraries face in building library user loyalty

Striving to achieve customer loyalty is no easy feat, as it is fretted with challenges. It is worth noticing that since the marketing strategies are mainly informal and under no direct supervision of any department, it can be argued that challenges will be faced. In response to challenges faced by the libraries in building library user loyalty, two main themes emerged. These themes are technical/infrastructural challenges and human/financial resource challenges.

Regarding the technical and infrastructural challenges, most of the interviewees revealed that they are faced with such challenges related to ICT and how the lack of resources and technical glitches impact the delivery of library services and products to the library users.

> Institutionally, there are instances where the servers may be down, especially during weekends. When it happens like that, users may feel we are not doing well. At times getting ICT personnel to resolve issues is difficult. Also, we do not have official iPads, and laptops to work from outside the office. If it happens that way, it always becomes a challenge meeting the needs of our users. (Respondent 5 from UG)

Respondent 3 from UG also confirmed the response of Respondent 5 from UG by saying:

> It is not easy at all. Sometimes our internet will not be working so people cannot access the library virtually and also the library staff cannot respond to queries. This slows the library's activities, and particularly, promotional offers promised by the library. You know, students complain a lot when these things happen.

Respondent 2 from UHAS also states the following:

> The only challenge has to do with the time of delivery. Remember that service delivery is highly attached to the availability of other resources like the Internet, robust server, and supportive IT personnel. If any of these is not available or fails to function, it affects the price of our services. (Respondent 2 from UHAS)

> With the advent of technology and other online information service providers, our users can now get resources for free. When they begin to compare our services to that of such service providers, it sometimes becomes frustrating, especially when our IT services are down. (Respondent 1 from KUC)

The challenge with ICT infrastructure has a negative impact on the librarians' efforts of building loyalty among their patrons. As observed from the above views, one can see the frustration of these librarians. For instance, even though, efforts and promises are made to deliver quality service, because these services are delivered on the 'unstable and inadequate' ICT infrastructure, patrons are likely not to experience the expected service. The prevalence of such phenomena can have derailing effects on patrons becoming loyal to the library and its services.

In the provision of products and services, there is a need for money and human resources to execute activities. However, these are challenges indicated by the respondents as impacting negatively on building library users' loyalty in the libraries. Respondent one from KUC, again states the following to buttress this point.

> Finally, I will say that our biggest challenge that has prevented us from doing any of these is money and the availability of properly trained library personnel. We cannot plan anything because the required resources to accomplish such activities are not adequate. (Respondent one from KUC)

The availability of a well-trained human resource or staff to market libraries' activities to library users to build library user loyalty is essential. From respondent one of KUC, it can be ascertained that the institution lacks the requisite human resources to market the library's offers. This could mean that the library either lacks the needed financial resources to recruit or the qualified individuals are not available to be recruited.

Also, the interviewees were asked whether online search engines like Google, Bing, Yahoo and the likes pose as a challenge their activity of meeting the information needs of library users. There was a general agreement from the respondents that they pose a challenge to their work since library users can on their own make use of these search engines for their information needs.

> I think it does pose challenges. This is because most often, we are not able to meet their information needs as a library. As a result, they heavily depend on these online information resources. They rely on Google mostly because they get what they want from there. (Respondent one from KUC)

Respondent two from VVU stated that 'My patrons utilise Google, a lot. Thus, I will say yes, they are a challenge. We have tried to deal with it by joining CARLIGH'. The Consortium of Academic and Research Libraries in Ghana (CARLIGH) was founded in 2004 to provide access to online resources and training for members. It has seven

prominent founding institutions as its members and accepting members on an ongoing basis. It can be opined that the fear of losing library users has created a new wave of online presence for the libraries in Ghana.

> As I indicated in my earlier submission, it is easy and quick to get resources from such platforms, especially if the users have the requisite skills to query such systems. As a result, some users believe they can do without the library. I must say that I do not agree with their position because the involvement of our expert of subject librarians will always be above what they experience from such search engines. (Respondent 1 from UHAS)

In order to know whether the libraries' informal marketing strategies have yielded results, the respondents were asked to give their assessments. In their assessment, they perceived their activities contributed to creating library user loyalty on the part of their libraries' users. Only a respondent from KUC indicated that she could not state emphatically since no data was there to inform her assessment. This is her response 'It will be difficult to say that since there is no data to speak to that'. However, Respondent five from UG indicated the following:

> Yes, I can say so. For instance, Faculty willingly bring their students in groups for training. Student groups organise themselves and invite us. They keep engaging us through our online platforms. Through the feedback we get, you can see they are loyal. Just last week, the University Librarian was commending the library staff because as she puts it, there has been a tremendous increase in the usage of our e-resources. This would not be possible if we were not marketing our services and products in our own informal way. (Respondent five from UG)

> Yes, we are making an impact, and we are building loyalty among our library users. For instance, some of our users got to know the library through some of our outreach/marketing activities. And because they saw us and related to us during such meetings, they keep coming to us either physically or virtually. Some complete their programmes or leave the university community and still call on us. So, yes, I can confidently say that library user loyalty might be affected without these outreach programme. (Respondent 5 from UHAS)

These responses signal that though the universities in this study do not have dedicated departments in charge of marketing their libraries' products and services, they, however, perceive to achieve some library user loyalty through their informal marketing activities.

4.3 The exploratory phase

The exploratory study's main objective was to find and group the library user loyalty attributes using exploratory factor analysis. In order to accomplish this, a set of questions on library user loyalty needed to be put before library users to solicit their views on the subject matter. One promising approach to build a robust set of questions was to utilise focus group discussions where the researcher got involved in a very deep discussion on what group participants considered key attributes of library user loyalty. Before this exercise, the researcher had equally identified a set of library user loyalty attributes from the existing literature. The outcomes from the focus group discussion enabled the researcher to develop a data collection instrument (questionnaire) to gather data from library users on their perspectives on library user loyalty. This section of the study demonstrates the processes used to identify library user loyalty attributes, how these attributes aggregated to form components of library user loyalty, and how these components correlated with each other to predict library user loyalty.

4.3.1   Literature exploration

This phase of the study explored the literature on loyalty and library user loyalty. The focus was on existing research findings that discussed theories, frameworks and other pertinent issues on loyalty and library user loyalty, particularly in those related to the Ghanaian academic library settings. In all, 60 attributes were identified by the researcher (See Appendix V). These attributes then became the agenda for discussion during the focus group discussions, aimed at identifying those specific to the Ghanaian university library settings.

4.3.2   Focus group discussions

To facilitate the discovery of the traits of loyalty, an exploratory study was conducted. To begin with, four focus group discussions were held on the various study sites. This process' principal objective was to facilitate the collation of loyalty attributes for the refinement and domain identification process of this study. The study witnessed a focus group set up in each of the four selected academic libraries for this study. The size of each focus group was seven library users (Creswell & Creswell 2018; Clow &

James 2014; Johnson & Christensen 2014). This number included three postgraduate students and four undergraduate students. The selection of members for the focus group was made together with the University Librarians (or their representatives) of these institutions. And users who were known to have frequently been visiting the library were given the priority.

Each group was moderated by the researcher who led the focus group discussions, and an observer who kept records of the interactions between participants. The observer's role was to help manage the knowledge produced from the discussions and was also responsible for handling the recording device and the materials used as a support during the discussions. The researcher converted the attributes identified from the literature exploration into a form of semi-structured interview guide to conduct the discussions with the sole view of maintaining a consistent flow of discussion while allowing the flexibility to discuss the themes raised by participants (Krueger & Casey 2000). Before each discussion took place, group members were informed about the focus group discussions' objectives, and the researcher insisted on the fact that there were no correct or erroneous answers. This created a cordial environment for both students and lecturers to unreservedly contribute without considering their status. Also, the statuses of respondents in their respective institutions (whether students or lecturers) were not revealed throughout the discussions. This helped to ensure that all discussions took place with members respecting each other, and no member looked down on other members.

As indicated earlier, these discussions that lasted for about two hours were meant to identify attributes of library user loyalty in selected academic libraries in Ghana from the group members' standpoints. Positively, the group members were forthcoming with ideas, and they expressed their objective views on the subject matter. Members exhibited their intellectual, emotional, and attitudinal ideas during the discussions. It must be indicated that at this point, the role of the researcher was purely coordination. As a guide to direct a fruitful discussion, all discussions were centred around library user loyalty attributes, particularly those that relate to the Ghanaian context. Also, the loyalty attributes found in the literature and those that the group members are familiar with through experience were given much consideration. The rationale behind this was

to find out if the library user loyalty attributes the researcher identified in the literature were relevant and applicable in the Ghanaian academic library setting.

It must be stated clearly here that, the researcher, together with group members, adhered to the COVID-19 protocols set out by the Ghana Health Service. In all, 23 attributes were identified, verified, and agreed to by the researcher and the participants (See appendix I). These attributes were then transformed into a questionnaire for the exploratory factor analysis to understand the relationships between these attributes and their predictive powers. The questionnaire was then pre-tested among library users at UHAS. Issues that came out of the pre-testing stage helped refine the questions to eliminate ambiguity. The developed instrument was then administered to all qualified respondents on all the four study sites.

To enhance fruitful discussions, the following served as guides:
- Members' understanding of library user loyalty
- Members' understanding of the attributes of library user loyalty
- Members' view on the groupings of the library user loyalty attributes

4.3.2.1 Guidelines for discussion

To avoid a situation where the discussion will lose its focus, the researcher developed the following guidelines. Table 6 is a set of guidelines for these discussions.

Table 6: A guide for the focus group discussions

S/N	DRIVING TOPICS	JUSTIFICATION	TECHNIQUE
1	Background information on the group members	To ensure that selected group members were appropriate for meeting the objective of the discussion	Group members were asked to give provide basic demographic information (sex, age, level of education, programme of study, number of years of using their respective libraries and the frequency of their visit to their libraries).
2	Defining the concept "library user loyalty."	To ascertain whether group members were conversant	Members were asked about their knowledge on the library user loyalty concept

		with "library user loyalty concept."	
3	Attributes of library user loyalty	To identify as many library user loyalty attributes as possible	Members were asked to share with the group an experience they had had with their libraries that made them develop an admiration or otherwise with their libraries.
4	Deliberations on all library user loyalty attributes found identified in the literature	To verify if the attributes of library user loyalty identified during the literature exploration phase are relevant to the library user in the Ghanaian university library.	The researcher provided the group members with the library user loyal attributes identified during the literature exploration phase. The purpose was to allow the group members to screen the attributes and also make a decision on whether each attribute qualifies to be considered given the special context of Ghanaian university libraries

Source: Compiled by Author

4.3.2.2 Socio-demographic characteristics of FGD members

Twenty-eight library users participated in the focus group discussion. Among this number, most of the respondents 16(57.14%) were males. It was also observed that most of them were within the 20-29 age range with most of them pursuing undergraduate programmes in Arts and Humanities. It is also important to note that the number of years a member had used a library was a key selection criterion. To this end, it was realised that most of the participants had had at least four years of experience with their respective libraries with most of them frequently visiting their libraries at least four times a week. Table 7 displays the socio-demographic characteristics of the focus group members.

Table 7: Socio-demographic characteristics of the Focus Group members

Parameters	UG (FG 1)	UHAS (FG 2)	VVU (FG 3)	KUC (FG 4)
Sex				
Male	4(57.14)	2(28.57)	4(57.14)	6(85.71)
Female	3(42.86)	5(71.43)	3(42.86)	1(14.29)
Age				
40 year or more	1(14.29)	1(14.29)	0(0.00)	2(28.57)
30-39	1(14.29)	0(0.00)	0(0.00)	2(28.57)
20-29	5(71.42)	6(85.71)	7(100.00)	3(42.86)
Level of education				
Undergraduate	5(71.43)	6(85.71)	7(100.00)	3(42.86)
Postgraduate	2(28.57)	1(14.29)	0(0.00)	4(57.14)
Programme of study				
Arts and Humanities	4(57.13)	0(0.00)	3(42.86)	7(100.00)
Biological Science	1(14.29)	0(0.00)	2(28.56)	0(0.00)
Medical/Health Science	1(14.29)	7(100.00)	1(14.29)	0(0.00)
Physical Science	1(14.29)	0(0.00)	1(14.29)	0(0.00)
Years of using the library				
4 or more years	3(42.86)	4(57.14)	4(57.14)	5(71.42)
3 years	3(42.86)	2(28.57)	1(14.29)	1(14.29)
2 years	1(14.28)	1(14.29)	2(28.57)	1(14.29)
Frequency of visit per week				
4 or more times per week	5(71.42)	6(85.71)	4(57.14)	3(42.86)
3 times per week	1(14.29)	1(14.29)	1(14.29)	3(42.86)
2 times per week	1(14.29)	0(0.00)	2(28.57)	1(14.28)

Data is presented as frequency with percentage in parenthesis. FG means Focus Group

4.3.2.3 *Identifying the attributes of library user loyalty*

Members of the focus group discussion were engaged in a series of conversations regarding library user loyalty attributes, especially in Ghanaian settings. First, the discussion focused on the attributes identified in the literature after which the group

members' experience with loyalty attributes were considered. Concerning, members were presented with questions for the discussion. The first question that came up for discussion was:

Are library users aware of the idea of loyalty?

Regarding the above question, members freely shared their views on their knowledge/awareness of the concept 'loyalty' in the library setting. Representing the group's views, a member from FG3 communicated their view on the concept of loyalty.

> For me, my trust in our library for my information needs cannot be measured. I run to the library for everything that has to do with my academic activities. It looks like I have some trust in the people who work in the library to get me what I need. This is perhaps, the case because I seem to get answers to my queries anytime I encounter them. If I cannot physically come here, I either call those I have their contacts or utilise their online services. I feel that I have developed a bond with the library since I started using it for the past three years. Generally, yes, I understand loyalty, and I think I am one of their loyal users. I come here often, at least to benefit from the serene environment for studies. (Focus group 3)

Other groups share similar views. In all, one can observe that most of the members of the groups loyal to their libraries had developed a kind of relationship with the library staff. They seem to trust them to get answers to their information needs. From focus group 1, a member mentioned that:

> Sometimes, the staff seem to understand and help us appreciate the assignments we present to them for help. It sometimes appears to me that, they were with me in the lecture hall when the assignment was being given or perhaps, they had a prior discussion with the lecturer. The staff are good. And this makes me to go to the library anytime there is a research need or information need I have to accomplish. (Focus group 1)

The discussion revealed that members were familiar with the concept of library user loyalty. Most of them attributed it or related it with the library staff's service provision, particularly those directly delivered by the library staff.

Another question that was presented to group members for discussion was:

What makes library users loyal?

This question generated passionate responses from members out of which various themes like service quality, satisfaction, time, and staff knowledge came up. A member from FG 2 indicated that for him,

> Once a staff shows a level of knowledge in his area of study and does so with confidence, he develops a bond with such a staff which indirectly means that he becomes loyal to the library.

Also, two members from FG 2 seem to agree that satisfaction is what makes them loyal to the library.

> For me, once the library can consistently provide what I need, I automatically become loyal to them. For instance, if I can find the resources I need, or if the library staff can answer my questions politely and correctly, or if the library equipment is working, why not? I will always go there. So, I will say that "satisfy me and I become loyal to you". Focus group 2.

Libraries that provide quality services to their users tend to have their users becoming loyal to them. During the discussion, a member from group 1 indicated that she always prefers to utilise their library because of the nature of their service.

> Can you imagine that this library always gives you the best? Why would I not come here always if I get the best of treatments? You always have current materials. Yes, very current materials. The photocopying machine will always give you neat copies, and the staff are courteous. They are very decent and polite to the extent that even if they cannot provide you with what you need, the way they will talk to you will still get you coming back to the library. So, for me service quality is the deal. Focus group 1

The discussion further tried to establish the unique attributes of the various library user loyalty domains that came up during the discussions. The objective was to obtain as many as possible, the key domains for predicting library user loyalty. For this discussion, the question below was asked.

If library user loyalty is obtained from service quality, user satisfaction, value, and staff qualities, what key attributes contribute to these domains?

> Yes, personally I feel that these concepts are interrelated to the extent that you hardly know when a user who is served well gets satisfied or when one is satisfied because he or she is served well. However, there are basic things that one expects to confirm that one of these is present. They mostly happen based on human elements in the library and the effective utilisation of available resources. Most users in our library seem satisfied because

they always encounter knowledgeable and experienced staff who can help them meet their needs. (Focus group 1).

The ensuing remark from the focus group member indicates that user satisfaction and service quality are two domains of loyalty, yet they influence each other in predicting library user loyalty.

In order to get the members' experiences with library user loyalty, the discussion asked members to share their experiences with their libraries, whether good or bad. This discussion generated additional themes. A member from Focus group 4 shared her experience. Accordingly, she indicated that:

> It is difficult to get the requisite information resources from our library. Access to information is bad. It is either not available or it is outdated. When you complain too, some of the staff may even make you feel bad. Such attitudes are not helpful. I have had an encounter like that before. Thankfully, it has never happened again. (Focus group 4)

The theme of easy access to information resources came up as an attribute of service quality. Thus, users feel dissatisfied in access to information resources (which is a major product/service for libraries) is a challenge. On the other hand, others shared their best experience with their libraries. Such members indicated that they always associate access to information resources to a positive experience.

Which of the statements given to you (researcher gives group members a set of statements on library user loyalty) really describes or contributes to library user loyalty in Ghana?

This question saw group members brainstorming, arguing, and making judgements on the library user loyalty attributes identified during the literature search phase. In all the deliberations in all the groups, members made insightful inputs regarding what they seemed fit to be considered as attributes of library user loyalty. For some members, some of the attributes identified did not reflect library user loyalty attributes, particularly given the particular context of the Ghanaian university library environments. Some were also of the view that most of the statements communicated the same message and were just repetitions. In such situations, wherever possible, the group agreed to delete the redundant statements.

I feel that some of the statements are just repetitions. They are communicating the same message. Let us, for instance, consider these statements: "Library staff instil confidence in library users", "Library staff give users individual attention", and "Library staff are consistently courteous". To me, the underlining message here is about staff helping users. They all mean the same thing. Let us all have a look at them again and reconsider making a statement to represent all of them. (A member from FG2)

After a lengthy and insightful discussion in all the four groups, the researcher reviewed the key issues raised, particularly library user loyalty concepts. These contents were then considered as worthy of explaining the attributes of library user loyalty. In all, twenty-one (21) loyalty attributes were examined and then converted into appropriate statements that reflected the Ghanaian academic library setting. See Table 8 for details.

Table 8: Library user loyalty attributes in the literature and confirmed by the focus groups from the literature

S/N	Loyalty attributes
1	I prefer to use my university library's website because it helps me locate needed information
2	The existence of quiet space for individual learning makes me prefer my university's library
3	I think my university's library provides the best resource I can get for my academic activities
4	My university's library's opening/closing hours are convenient for me
5	My university's library aids my advancement in my academic discipline
6	My university's library enables me to be more efficient in my academic pursuits
7	My university's library helps me to distinguish between trustworthy and untrustworthy information
8	My university's library provides me with the information literacy skills I need in my study
9	In general, I am happy with the quality of treatment I receive at my university's library
10	I am satisfied with my university's library support for my learning, and research needs
11	Generally, I receive satisfactory services from my university's library staff
12	My university's library offers good value for the time I spend there
13	The service I receive from my university's library is worth the time I spend there
14	My university's library provides a good deal as compared to other academic libraries I have visited in Ghana

15	My university's library offers online services at an attractive cost (time, bandwidth etc)
16	I feel that my university's library meets both my high quality and low-price requirements
17	The library provides support anytime I visit the library (virtually or physically)
18	My university's library provides services at the promised time
19	The overall service quality of my university's library is great
20	Overall, I consider services at my university's library to be excellent
21	My university's library assures users of the privacy and confidentiality of their personal information/data

Source: Compiled by Author

Aside the identified 21 loyalty attributes identified from the literature and confirmed by the participants of the focus group discussion, the members also suggested additional 2 attributes based on their personal experience in using or working in an academic library over the years. These attributes are, according to the members, very specific to the Ghanaian academic library setting. Similarly, these attributes were transformed into statements. These attributes are displayed on Table 9.

Table 9: Library user loyalty attributes proposed by focus group members

S/N	Loyalty attributes
1	My university library has subscription to the best academic databases in my area of study
2	My university's library provides photocopying and other reprographic services

Source: Compiled by Author

Thus, in all, 23 library user loyalty attributes were certified to be used for data collection used for the exploratory factor analysis.

4.3.2.4 Expert opinions

After identifying and finalising these attributes by the group members, the researcher once again engaged with two independent librarians who are currently working in Ghanaian academic libraries. These were experts in library administration, who had had at least ten years working experience in the profession. Again, these experts had at least a second degree in library or information related science with some service provision experience to library users. Their views were sought to clarify the group

members' views so that issues regarding ambiguity, bias, and repeated attributes identified in the focus group discussions are cleared or corrected. At the end of the exercise, these experts accepted the decisions of the group members.

4.3.3   Exploratory factor analysis

In order to determine the domains of library user loyalty, this study employed the Exploratory Factor Analysis (EFA) to improve on the attributes of library user loyalty identified during the focus group stage of the study. In all 23 attributes were approved. These attributes were transformed into questions using a 9-point Likert scale (1 being the lowest and 9 being the highest). To efficiently execute this, the study used the IBM SPSS Statistics version 25. Exploratory Factor Analysis was used to ascertain outlines in data, and it was also used to present the data in a way that underscored their relationships. As EFA is a multivariate analysis method that outlines fundamental factors (domains) in a set of interrelated attributes, it was deemed the most suitable procedure to classify the domains and the relevant connected qualities of loyalty. EFA was useful in understanding the structure of the set of user loyalty variables; in constructing a questionnaire to measure an underlying variable in the main study and bringing the size of the data set down and still making sure to keep as much of the original information as possible.

4.3.3.1 Socio-demographic   characteristics   of   respondents   of   the quantitative phase

The study initially sought to solicit data from 450 qualified respondents. However, 16 of the questionnaires were not returned. Thus, a response rate of 96.44% was achieved. Most respondents (237, representing 54.61%) were females. This study also saw most respondents (347 representing 79.95%) coming from the University of Ghana, with most of them 301(69.40%) between the 18 to 26 year old group. The study also observed that majority of the respondents (398, representing 91.71%) were students from public universities, most of them (384, representing 88.48%) were undergraduate students offering various programmes in the Arts and Humanities (328, representing 75.58%). On a scale of 1-6 measuring the frequency of library users' utilisation of library resources on the library premises, the study reported an average of 3.76±1.04 indicating that most of the respondents were more likely to utilise such

resources on the library premises. However, this was not so when it came to the frequency of use of library resources through library web pages and frequency of use of non-library gateways for information by the respondents. Table 10 displays the socio-economic description of the study participants.

Table 10: Socio-demographic characteristics of respondents

Parameter	Frequency	Percentage
Sex		
Male	197	45.39
Female	237	54.61
Age group		
18-26 years	301	69.40
27-35 years	105	24.20
More than 35 years	20	4.61
Name of institution		
University of Ghana	347	79.95
University of Health and Allied Sciences	51	11.75
Valley View University	27	6.22
Kings University College	9	2.07
Type of institution		
Public	398	91.71
Private	36	8.29
Area of study		
Arts and Humanities	328	75.58
Biological Science	7	1.61
Medical/Health Science	71	16.36
Physical Science	28	6.45
Level of study		
Undergraduate	384	88.48
Postgraduate	50	11.52
	Mean	**SD**

Frequency of use of library resources on library premises	3.76	1.04
Frequency of use of library resources through a library web page	3.34	1.08
Frequency of use of non-library gateways for information	3.34	1.08

Source: Field data (2020)

4.3.3.2 Reliability test

To start with, a Cronbach's Alpha test was conducted on the data to measure the reliability, or internal consistency, test items. This was done to ensure that the measurement was consistent in rating library user loyalty. A Cronbach's Alpha of 0.87 was achieved on the 23 items on the scale. According to Taber (2016); Ursachi, Horodnic and Zait (2015), an alpha value of 0.70 is considered as suitable for measuring the reliability an instrument. Table 11 shows the result of the reliability test.

Table 11: Reliability test on the 23-item scale

Cronbach's Alpha	No. of Items
0.87	23

α > 0.70

4.3.3.3 Sampling adequacy and Sphericity test

To further check for the data's suitability in order to conduct the exploratory factor analysis, the KaiserMeyer-Olkin Measure of Sampling Adequacy and Bartlett's Test of Sphericity were conducted. Thus, the KaiserMeyer-Olkin Measure of Sampling Adequacy helped identify the proportion of variance in the variables caused by underlying factors. The Bartlett's Test of Sphericity was also used to confirm the hypothesis that the correlation matrix is an identity matrix. As shown in Table 12, the data reported a KMO value of 0.897 and a 0.000 value for Bartlett's test. A KMO score of 0.8 or greater is considered as excellent and scores that are less than 0.05 for Bartlett's test indicate that the data do not produce an identity matrix and are thus approximately multivariate normal and acceptable for further analysis (Ul Hadia, Abdullah & Sentosa 2016). This means that the set of data for this study is appropriate for the exploratory factor analysis.

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Table 12: KMO and Bartlett's Test

Kaiser-Meyer-Olkin Measure of Sampling Adequacy.		0.897
Bartlett's Test of Sphericity	Approx. Chi-Square	2152.536
	df	253
	Sig.	0.000

P is significant at 0.05

4.3.3.4 Components extracted

The study used the Principal Components Analysis as a factor extraction method to extract the dataset's maximum variance. This statistical technique was used to generate uncorrelated principal components (PC) which were the linear amalgamation of the original variables (attributes of library user loyalty) (Rahman & Rahman 2020). This was done to bring down the number of variables into a manageable number of components. Initially, five components loaded with eigenvalues greater than one when the analysis was conducted. However, guided by this study's theoretical framework (Bobâlcă, Gătej & Ciobanu 2012; Han et al. 2011), the "fixed number of factors" option under extraction was used to retain four factors. Table 13 demonstrates the components that were retained and the variance they explained. Thus, this was done to acquire a set of theoretically meaningful factors that could easily be interpreted, and which accounted for the bulk of the variance (Hair, Babin, Money & Samouel 2003). Also, the scree plot method (Nguyen & Holmes 2019) from the analysis supported the idea of retaining four components as the curve begun to slope downwards after the fourth component. See Figure 4 for a graphical representation of the scree plot.
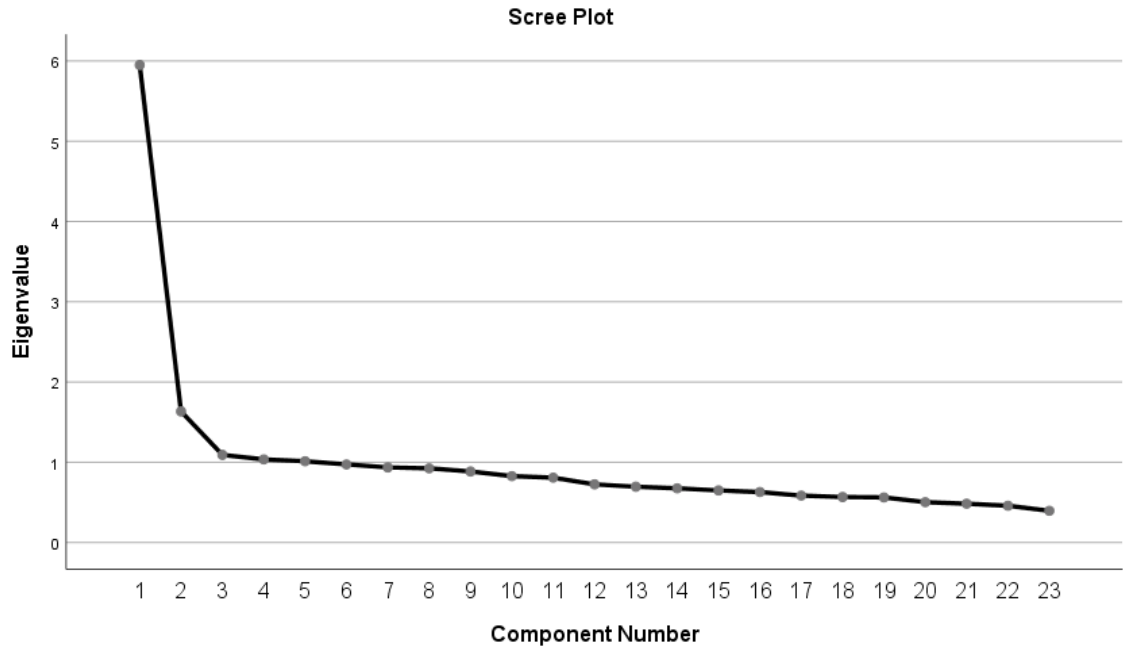
Figure 4: Scree plot displaying components retained

Table 13: Components extracted and the total Variance Explained

Component	Initial Eigenvalues			Extraction Sums of Squared Loadings			Rotation Sums of Squared Loadings		
	Total	% of Variance	Cum. %	Total	% of Variance	Cum. %	Total	% of Variance	Cum. %
I prefer to use my university library's website because it helps me locate needed information	5.950	25.870	25.870	5.950	25.870	25.870	2.771	12.046	12.046
The existence of quiet space for individual learning makes me prefer my university's library	1.633	7.100	32.970	1.633	7.100	32.970	2.468	10.730	22.776
I think my university's library provides the best resource I can get for my academic activities	1.092	4.747	37.717	1.092	4.747	37.717	2.387	10.380	33.156
My university library has subscription to the best academic databases in my area of study	1.035	4.501	42.218	1.035	4.501	42.218	2.084	9.062	42.218
My university's library's opening/closing hours are convenient for me	1.013	4.405	46.623						
My university's library aids my advancement in my academic discipline	0.973	4.231	50.854						
My university's library enables me to be more efficient in my academic pursuits	0.935	4.066	54.920						

My university's library helps me to distinguish between trustworthy and untrustworthy information	0.924	4.019	58.939
My university's library provides me with the information literacy skills I need in my study	0.885	3.848	62.787
In general, I am happy with the quality of treatment I receive at my university's library	0.827	3.597	66.384
I am satisfied with my university's library support for my learning, and research needs	0.808	3.514	69.898
My university's library provides a good deal as compared to other academic libraries I have visited in Ghana	0.725	3.151	73.049
My university's library offers good value for the time I spend there	0.695	3.021	76.070
The service I receive from my university's library is worth the time I spend there	0.675	2.933	79.003
Generally, I receive satisfactory services from my university's library staff	0.649	2.820	81.823
My university's library offers online services at an attractive cost (time, bandwidth etc)	0.629	2.733	84.556

I feel that my university's library meets both my high quality and low-price requirements	0.584	2.540	87.096
The library provides support anytime I visit the library (virtually or physically)	0.567	2.464	89.560
My university's library provides photocopying and other reprographic services	0.562	2.443	92.003
My university's library provides services at the promised time	0.503	2.187	94.189
The overall service quality of my university's library is great	0.483	2.101	96.290
Overall, I consider services at my university's library to be excellent	0.458	1.991	98.281
My university's library assures users of the privacy and confidentiality of their personal information/data	0.395	1.719	100.000

Source: Field Data (2020)

4.3.3.5 Factor Rotation

The varimax rotation was deemed the best method for this study (Maskey, Fei & Nguyen 2018). Factor rotation is essential for straightforward interpretation. For this study, all attributes presenting with 0.50 or lesser factor loadings were not included in the analysis. Also, all attributes that loaded on more than one factor with a loading score equal to or greater than 0.50 on each factor were excluded from the analysis (Maskey et al. 2018). This exercise resulted in removing 8 more attributes. Thus, the rotated component matrix yielded in the retention of 15 attributes loading on four components. Theoretically, these attributes best explain the cognitive, the affective, the conative and the action stages of loyalty (Bobâlcă et al. 2012; Han et al. 2011). The first factor, which the researcher has named cognitive loyalty had three attributes. The second factor, called the affective loyalty, had four items, with the third factor (cognitive loyalty) yielding five items. Finally, the fifth factor had three attributes. The number of attributes under each component is in tandem with the number of items found by (Bobâlcă et al. 2012). Table 14 shows the rotated component matrix.

Table 14: Rotated Component Matrix

Items	Factor 1	Factor 2	Factor 3	Factor 4
I prefer to use my university library's website because it helps me locate needed information			0.577	
The existence of quiet space for individual learning makes me prefer my university's library			0.691	
I think my university's library provides the best resource I can get for my academic activities			0.672	
My university library has subscription to the best academic databases in my area of study			0.653	
My university's library's opening/closing hours are convenient for me			0.561	
My university's library enables me to be more efficient in my academic pursuits	0.674			
My university's library helps me to distinguish between trustworthy and untrustworthy information		0.738		
My university's library provides me with the information literacy skills I need in my study		0.546		
In general, I am happy with the quality of treatment I receive at my university's library	0.598			
Generally, I receive satisfactory services from my university's library staff		0.561		
My university's library provides a good deal as compared to other academic libraries I have visited in Ghana		0.520		
My university's library offers online services at an attractive cost (time, bandwidth etc)				0.631
I feel that my university's library meets both my high quality and low-price requirements				0.636

The library provides support anytime I visit the library (virtually or physically)	0.554
The overall service quality of my university's library is great	0.534

Source: Field Data (2020)

4.3.3.6 Suitability of the library user loyalty attributes

The means and standard deviations for the various subscales were calculated to verify the suitability of the subscales of library user loyalty. In all, the attributes for cognitive, affective, conative and action subscales reported 5.57±1.63, 5.51±1.55, 5.39±1.69 and 5.36±1.64 (mean±standard deviation) respectively. The comparatively low level of standard deviations compared with their respective means reported among the subscales indicate the suitability of each group's attributes. Table 15 shows the mean, standard deviation, and the Cronbach's Alpha tests for the subscales.

Table 15: Mean, Standard Deviation and Reliability of Library User Loyalty

Parameters	Mean	SD	Reliability
Cognitive	**5.57**	**1.63**	**0.55**
My university's library enables me to be more efficient in my academic pursuits			
In general, I am happy with the quality of treatment I receive at my university's library			
The overall service quality of my university's library is great			
Affective	**5.51**	**1.55**	**0.64**
My university's library helps me to distinguish between trustworthy and untrustworthy information			
My university's library provides me with the information literacy skills I need in my study			
Generally, I receive satisfactory services from my university's library staff			
My university's library provides a good deal as compared to other academic libraries I have visited in Ghana			
Conative	**5.39**	**1.69**	**0.68**
I prefer to use my university library's website because it helps me locate needed information			
The existence of quiet space for individual learning makes me prefer my university's library			
I think my university's library provides the best resource I can get for my academic activities			
My university library has subscription to the best academic databases in my area of study			

My university's library's opening/closing hours are convenient for me			
Action	**5.36**	**1.64**	**0.53**
My university's library offers online services at an attractive cost (time, bandwidth etc)			
I feel that my university's library meets both my high quality and low-price requirements			
The library provides support anytime I visit the library (virtually or physically)			

Source: Field Data (2020)

4.3.3.7 Relationship between the factors

The Pearson correlation coefficient was used to measure the linear association's strength between each factor against the other (Sedgwick 2012). It was realised that the factors significantly correlated among themselves. For instance, Cognitive significantly correlated with affective, conative and action ($r = 0.474$, $p < 0.001$), ($r = 0.334$, $p < 0.001$) and ($r = 0.433$, $p < 0.001$) respectively. Also, affective significantly correlated with conative and action ($r = 0.362$, $p < 0.001$) and ($r = 0.408$, $P < 0.001$) respectively. Finally, it was observed that conative also significantly with action ($r = 0.310$, $p < 0.001$). This implies that the subscales can substantially correlate among themselves to predict library user loyalty. Table 16 shows the Pearson correlation. This also confirms the findings of earlier studies regarding the relationship between loyalty components (Bobâlcă et al. 2012; Lu & Lu 2009). Thus, all things being equal, cognitive, affective, conative and action stages of loyalty can significantly correlate to predict library user loyalty in the selected academic libraries in Ghana.

Table 16: Intercorrelation among factors

Parameters	Cognitive	Affective	Conative	Action
Cognitive				
Affective	0.474*			
Conative	0.334*	0.362*		

Action	0.433*	0.408*	0.310*

*Correlation is significant at the 0.01 level (2-tailed).

4.3.3.8 Categorisation of library user loyalty

The next phase of the analysis was to determine the number of library users who indicated a level of loyalty to their respective libraries. To this end, the cumulative averages of all the 15 factors were calculated for each respondent. Then after, the researcher calculated the average of the cumulative means. The resultant average was then used to divide the respondents into two groups. Those above the average were referred to as More loyal library users, and those below average were referred to as Less loyal library users. The study observed that more 50% of the respondents were less loyal to their libraries. Table 17 shows the categories of loyalty for this study.

Table 17: Categorisation of library user loyalty

Parameter	Frequency	Percentage
More Loyal	205	47.24
Less Loyal	229	52.76

Source: Field Data (2020)

4.3.3.9 Relationship between library user loyalty and nominal demographic characteristics of respondents

The study further sought to establish relationships between library user loyalty and the categorical variables. The chi-square test was employed to achieve this. Chi-square test is a non-parametric test which is used to test the significance of the relationship between two variables measured at the nominal or ordinal level. The chi-square test for library user loyalty and the sex of respondents was not significant ($x2 = 0.952$, $p > 0.05$). This means that as far as library user loyalty is concerned, respondents' sex had no predictive power. Regarding respondents' age and their relationship with loyalty, the study reported that majority of the study participants who fell in the 35 years

or more age grouping were less loyal (19 representing 67.86%). The chi-square test also showed that age groupings did not have any predictive power to influence library user loyalty as the chi-square test was insignificant ($x2 = 3.693$, $p > 0.05$). Once again, the type of institution the respondents were affiliated with was measured against their loyalty level towards their university libraries. The chi-square test showed an insignificant relationship between the two variables ($x2 = 0.488$, $p > 0.05$). With regards to the level of study of the respondents, the study revealed that although most of the postgraduate students (29 representing 58.00%), their predictive power to stimulate library user loyalty was not statistically significant ($x2 = 0.621$, $p > 0.05$).

As shown in Table 18, the outcome of this study indicated that the names of the institution and programme of study were two unique variables that positively influenced library user loyalty. As far as the institution's name was concerned, respondents from the University of Health and Allied Sciences were more loyal (38 representing 74.51%) compared with those from other institutions. This also showed in the high level of the chi-square value that was presented ($x2 = 19.130$, $p < 0.05$). Once again, as alluded to earlier, the respondents' programme of study proved to be a robust variable that could predict library user loyalty. It came to light that the majority of the respondents who were pursuing various programmes in the health sciences (44, representing 61.97%) were more loyal to their libraries. This could be seen from the chi-square value and the level of significance ($x2 = 13.827$, $p < 0.05$). These findings were in tandem with a view expressed by a librarian from the university during the face-face interviews. The views of Respondent 3 from UHAS are presented below:

> For us, the nature of the courses that our students pursue naturally makes them loyal to the library. This is a medical school, and most students hardly find time to study independently. As a result, the little chance they get, they would want to find a getaway, a hiding place, a serene environment for their personal studies. One of the convenient places on our campus where students can achieve this is the university library. This makes it easier to get the students to utilise the library. Also, once they find themselves in the library, they are automatically exposed to our products and services which they eventually find useful. (Respondent 3 from UHAS).

Another view expressed by a librarian from UG corroborates this finding. According to her,

> Most loyal users of our library are medical students or students pursuing programmes in medicine and allied programmes. I have come to realise

that the expensive nature of health-related learning resources is a contributing factor. Most of the medical books, databases and other resources are very expensive to acquire or subscribe to. Individual students can hardly afford to get all their information needs on their own. As a result, most of them rely on the university library, which is a repository of all these resources to satisfy their information needs. (Respondent 5 from UG)

Table 18: Chi-square for library user loyalty and nominal demographic characteristics

Parameters	Loyalty		Chi-square
	Less loyal	More loyal	
Sex			**0.952**
Male	109(55.33)	88(44.67)	
Female	120(50.63)	117(49.37)	
Age group			**3.693**
18-26 years	160(53.16)	141(46.84)	
27-35 years	50(47.62)	55(52.38)	
More than 35 years	19(67.86)	9(32.14)	
Name of institution			**19.130***
University of Ghana	195(56.20)	152(43.80)	
University of Health and Allied Sciences	13(25.49)	38(74.51)	
Valley View University	14(51.85)	13(48.15)	
Kings University College	7(77.78)	2(22.22)	
Type of institution			**0.488**
Public	208(52.26)	190(47.74)	
Private	21(58.33)	15(41.67)	
Area of study			**13.827***
Arts and Humanities	176(53.66)	152(46.34)	
Biological Science	4(57.14)	3(42.86)	
Medical/Health Science	27(38.03)	44(61.97)	
Physical Science	22(78.57)	6(21.43)	
Level of study			**0.621**
Undergraduate	200(52.08)	184(47.92)	

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| Postgraduate | 29(58.00) | 21(42.00) |

*p < .05

4.3.3.10 *Multivariate analysis*

Two multivariate statistical analysis were conducted to build further regression models to predict library user loyalty. To this end, a binary logistic regression analysis was computed to appreciate the independent variables' predictive powers on the dependent variable. Through the multiple linear regression analysis, another model was built with the continuous independent variables and the dependent variable.

4.3.3.10.1 *Binary Logistic Regression Analysis*

To further ascertain the predictive powers of the variables, a binary logistic regression analysis was conducted. The Binary Logistic Regression Analysis (BLRA) analyses the relationship between multiple explanatory variables and a single binary response variable, a categorical variable with two categories (Abdulqader 2017; Sweet & Grace-Martin 2012). To do this, a set of independent variables (demographic characteristics of respondents) were used against a binary dependant variable (more loyal vrs Less loyal). This analysis was done to help appreciate the probability of predicting library user loyalty given the various explanatory variables.

One way to verify the goodness or accuracy of a model is by using the classification table which represents the result of cross-classification of the response variable Y and a binary variable whose values are gained from the probabilities of estimated logistic (Hosmer & Lemeshow 2000). It shows the frequencies of the predicted and observed classification of cases and percentage of correct predictions depend on the logistic regression model (Abdulqader 2017). This model was deemed fit as it was able to classify about 61.50% correctly. The model was a good fit as it was able to explain 10% (Cox & Snell R Square) to 14% (Nagelkerke R Square) of the variation in library user loyalty.

It was observed that the name of institution of respondents, type of institution of respondents, area of study of respondents, and the frequencies of use of library resources by respondents were likely indicators of library user loyalty. From Table 19, it can be seen that regarding the prediction of library user loyalty, students from the University of Health and Allied Sciences, compared with those from the Kings

University College were about 26 times more likely to be loyal to their libraries (Exp(B) = 26.059, p < 0.002). However, compared with students from the Kings University College, students from the University of Ghana and the Valley View University, were less likely to be loyal to their respective libraries (p values were greater than 0.05). This observation further corroborates an earlier view expressed by a librarian from the University of Health and Allied Sciences.

> For us, the nature of the courses that our students pursue naturally makes them loyal to the library. This is a medical school and most of the students hardly find time to study on their own. As a result, the little chance they get, they would want to find a getaway, a hiding place, a serene environment for their personal studies. One of the convenient places on our campus where students can achieve this is the university library. This makes it easier to get the students to utilise the library. Also, once they find themselves in the library, they are automatically exposed to our products and services which they eventually find useful. (Respondent 3 from UHAS).

Once again, it became clear that, compared to students from private institutions, those from the public institutions were 26 times more likely to be loyal to their libraries (Exp(B) = 26.059, p < 0.002). This finding is in tandem with the previous finding. It must be noted that the University of Health and Allied Sciences is a public university. Another variable that showed a high likelihood of predicting library user loyalty was the area of study of the respondents of this study. It was established that, as far as the predicting power of the area of study was concerned, with physical science as a reference point, those who were pursuing various programmes in the arts and humanities were about four times likely to be more loyal to their respective libraries (Exp(B) = 3.566, p < 0.009).

Aside from these categorical variables, the study again determined the likelihood of some continuous variables predicting library user loyalty. In this regard, it was realised that respondents who frequently utilised the library resources on the library premises were more likely to be loyal to their libraries (Exp(B) = 1.245, p < 0.032). Also, it was realised that those who frequently used library resources through their libraries' websites were equally likely to be loyal to their respective libraries (Exp(B) = 1.252), p < 0.026). Table 19 shows the details of the binary logistic regression model for this study.

Table 19: Binary Logistic Regression Model

Demographic Characteristics	B	S.E.	Sig.	Exp(B)
Kings University College	0		0.003	1
University of Ghana	1.045	0.836	0.211	2.844
University of Health and Allied Sciences	3.260	1.040	0.002	26.059
Valley View University	1.523	0.934	0.103	4.585
Public	3.260	1.040	0.002	26.059
Male	-0.267	0.209	0.203	0.766
More than 35 years	0		0.183	1
18 to 26 years	0.940	0.684	0.169	2.561
27 to 35 years	1.104	0.635	0.082	3.017
Physical Science	0		0.017	1
Arts and Humanities	1.271	0.489	0.009	3.566
Biological Science	1.357	0.920	0.140	3.885
Medical /Health Science	0.192	0.701	0.784	1.212
Postgraduate	0.000			1.000
Undergraduate	-0.425	0.524	0.418	0.654
Frequency of use of library resources on library premises	0.219	0.103	0.032	1.245
Frequency of use of library resources through a library web page	0.225	0.101	0.026	1.252
Frequency of use of Yahoo, Google or non-library gateways for information	0.195	0.106	0.067	1.215
Cox & Snell R Square	0.105			
Nagelkerke R Square	0.140			
Hosmer & Lemeshow Test	6.509			
Constant	-5.076	1.219	0.000	0.006

*P<.05; Dependent Variable = Loyalty

4.3.3.10.2 Multiple Linear Regression Analysis

At this stage, the study used multiple linear regression to exploit various explanatory variables to predict library user loyalty among the respondents. Thus, the analysis was carried out to investigate if respondents' frequent use of library resources on library premises, or if respondents' frequent use of library resources through the library website, or if respondents frequent use of Yahoo, Google or non-library gateways for information could significantly predict library user loyalty. The regression analysis revealed that the model explained about 5% of the variance and that the model was a significant predictor of library user loyalty, $F(3,430) = 7.803$, $p < 0.000$ (refer to Table 20 for details on the ANOVA analysis). The analysis revealed that all the independent variables (respondents' frequency of use of library resources on library premises, respondents' frequent use of library resources through library website and respondents' frequent use of Yahoo, Google or non-library gateways for information) contributed significantly to the model (B = 0.161, $p < 0.05$), (B = 0.149, $p < 0.05$) and (B = 0.171, $p < 0.05$) respectively (See Table 21 for details on the multiple linear regression analysis).

Regression techniques seek to establish a rectilinear relationship between the attributes concerned. Tabachnick and Fidell (2007) provide a mathematical equation for multiple linear regression analysis whose focus is to provide a predictive equation:

$Y = \alpha + \beta_1 x_1 + \beta_2 x_2 + ... + \beta_n x_n$

Where α = constant

$\beta_1, \beta_2 ....\beta_n$ = beta coefficient or standardised partial regression coefficients

$x_1 x_2 ....x_n$ = scores on different predictors

In this model:

Y = Library user loyalty, $\alpha = 3.796$, $\beta_1 = 0.161$, $\beta_2 = 0.149$, $\beta_3 = 0.171$

x_1 = frequency of use of library resources on library premises

x_2 = frequent use of library resources through library website

x_3 = frequent use of Yahoo, Google, or non-library gateways for information

Thus, the final predictive model was:

Library user loyalty = 3.796 + (0.161*frequency of use of library resources on library premises) + (0.149*frequent use of library resources through library website) + (0.171*frequent use of Yahoo, Google, or non-library gateways for information).

Views from the face-face interview findings from makes the findings of the linear regression clear. For instance, a respondent expressed how their library takes e-resources seriously and how they train their users to utilise them. This view might be a contributing factor to the results we have here. A respondent from UG indicated that:

> Most of our students are young and are people who play with technology a lot. We capitalise on this and train them on how to exploit our e-resources efficiently. Frequently, we organise training on how to access our subscribed databases. We also try our best and introduce them to the various technologies that can help them maximise these resources. For instance, there is regular training on how to utilise reference management software, among others. I can say that most of our users like using our e-resources because of the focus we give to it. (Respondent 3 from UG)

During the face-face interviews, another respondent indicated how they see Google and other information gateways as partners and not competitors.

> For us, we actually introduce our users to such platforms. I believe that there are a lot of relevant materials that our users can get from there. What we do, and I believe we should enhance, is that we equip our users with the requisite knowledge and skills so that they can independently solicit for information from them, critically evaluate such information and effectively utilise them for their academic activities. (Respondent 1 from UHAS)

These and other views expressed during the face-face interview with the librarians are key indicators why there the libraries' online presence significantly predicted library user loyalty.

Table 20: ANOVA analysis

Model 1	Sum of Squares	df	Mean Square	F	Sig.
Regression	32.286	3	10.762	7.803	.000
Residual	593.059	430	1.379		
Total	625.345	433			

P<0.05

Table 21: Multiple Linear Regression Analysis for library user loyalty

Model	Unstandardised Coefficients		Standardised Coefficients	t	Sig.
	B	Std. Error	Beta		
(Constant)	3.796	0.351		10.811	0.000
How often do you use resources on library premises	0.161	0.056	0.141	2.864	0.004
How often do you access library resources through a library web page	0.149	0.055	0.134	2.702	0.007
How often do you use Yahoo, Google or non-library gateways for information	0.171	0.058	0.145	2.973	0.003

P<0.05   Dependent Variable = Loyalty

4.4 Summary

As indicated in previous chapters, the main purpose of this research was to examine strategies for building user loyalty in university libraries in Ghana. To achieve this, several questions were asked as a guide to help unravel the best strategies for building library user loyalty. This chapter then sought to utilise scientifically approved methods to understand the data collected from respondents through quantitative and qualitative means. A structured interview was used to collect data on the state of marketing activities undertaken in university libraries in Ghana. Also, a focus group discussion was used to gather views on the attributes of library user loyalty. A questionnaire was then used to further collect data in order to explore, appreciate and identify which of the attributes can predict library user loyalty. As has been discussed, it was revealed that although the libraries had no marketing plan in place, each of the libraries had an informal way of exposing their products and services to their targeted users. It was found out that some of the libraries were using marketing strategies like the provision of quality services, the satisfaction of their users, switching cost effects among others to attract and maintain users in their efforts to building library user loyalty. Guided by theory, the study used exploratory factor analysis to reduce the library user loyalty attributes identified during the literature exploration and the focus group phases of the study and also to find a relationship among them. Four factors (cognitive, affective,

conative and action) were identified and through the use of statistical tools, relationships were established among them. The study revealed that these factors positively correlate among themselves. Furthermore, through the use of BLRA and MLRA, the study revealed that library user loyalty could be built through other independent variables. It came to light that, the name of the institution, type of institution one is affiliated to, the area of study of library users and the frequency of use of library resources, positively influenced the prediction of library user loyalty. In the next chapter, this study's findings will be discussed with a highlight on their managerial, theoretical, and practical implications on university libraries, particularly in the Ghanaian context.

CHAPTER FIVE

DISCUSSION AND INTERPRETATION OF THE FINDINGS

5.1 Introduction

Chapter Four of this thesis focused on analysing the collected data with the sole aim of meeting the objectives of the study. The data collection was conducted through the face-to-face interviews and the questionnaires. It also demonstrated the various process that the researcher employed to arrive at the various analysis. Also, the chapter presented the results from the data in tandem with study objectives. This chapter, thus, seeks to discuss and interpret the results as displayed the Chapter Four. Since this thesis employed the mixed-methods approach, the processes of interpreting the findings will, as mentioned by Creswell and Plano Clark (2018), include indicating the research results and making meaning of the results. This process was guided by the research questions of the study, existing literature and personal reflections of the researcher. It further includes summarising the key findings and matching them against the main research questions of the study with the aim of ensuring that the results are answers to the research questions (Creswell & Plano Clark 2018). The researcher, thus, makes inferences from the findings of the analysed data and its relationship with the objectives of the study with the view to helping readers appreciate the research findings and understand them in the light of wider context. The presentation of the interpretation and discussion section of this section is based on the research themes and findings of this study depending on whether they emanated from the qualitative or the quantitative phase. Primarily, it will cover results on:

- The strategies university libraries use to market their products and services to build Library Users' Loyalty (LUL).
- The challenges university libraries face in building LUL.
- The impact that online search engines have on university libraries' efforts in creating an LUL culture.
- The determinants of LUL.
- A proposed framework to predict library user loyalty in selected academic libraries in Ghana.

5.2 How university libraries market their products and services

In this era of information explosion, the provision of information is no longer the prerogative of libraries alone. As a result, libraries of all types, are competing with other information service providers for same market share (Ofori, Markwei & Quagraine 2020). Information service providers are not excepted from the competitive market environment. In line with this, commercial information brokers, information managers and librarians have to make efforts to make their services stand out among other similar offerings (Wójcik 2019). Such efforts could include adopting a business models like marketing, in order to enhance the visibility, and relevance of such organisations to their stakeholders (Ofori et al. 2020). To help understand the marketing approaches university libraries in Ghana have been using, the under listed themes were be discussed:

5.2.1 Availability of formal structures in place to market library's products and services

The study sought to determine if the respondents had any formal marketing structures in their respective libraries. Aside from finding out about the marketing plan, the study further sought to establish if the libraries had designated departments solely responsible for their marketing activities. More so, the study found out from the respondents if their libraries have dedicated budgets to drive their marketing plans.

5.2.1.1 Availability of marketing plans

As far as this theme was concerned, there was a common voice from the respondents. Thus, none of the institutions had formal marketing plans in place. As expressed by a respondent from the Valley View University and echoed by the other respondents, there was no marketing plan. The respondents rather reported that they resort to informal approaches to marketing their products and services.

> We do not have any formal plan for marketing what we do. I hope by a formal plan, you are referring to an accepted and documented blueprint for our marketing activities. For that I will say no. Our focus has rather been on documenting our core duties and not additional functions like marketing of our services. (Respondent 1 from VVU)

Lack of formal marketing plans in university libraries has long been documented (Edewor, Okite-Amughoro, Osuchukwu & Egreajena 2016). In their study on

'marketing strategies used in African libraries', Edewor et al. (2016) observed that majority of the respondents in their study revealed the absence of marketing plans in their libraries. In a related study, Dowd (2013) in a survey among public librarians in the United States revealed that only 20 percent of public libraries have a marketing plans, with only 11 percent of this number having an up-to-date marketing plan. Equally, in an evaluation of studies on marketing of e-resources, Kennedy (2010), observed that even though marketing was a popular concept among librarians, most of the results from the analysis revealed that most libraries failed to develop a proper plan. Corroborating the findings of (Kennedy 2010), a survey was conducted among a group of librarians by Eastman and Saulnier (2020). The survey sought to understand the marketing strategies libraries utilised, and how effective these strategies were. It was revealed that the libraries did not have a marketing plan for nurturing awareness of their products and services. All these findings support the observation from this study. Interestingly, many reasons could be ascribed to this common phenomenon in libraries.

Garoufallou et al. (2013) believe that even though applying business models like marketing is popular among librarians, most librarians have not taken time to understand the concept. As a result, most librarians often associate marketing with other allied concepts, such as promotional activities and so fail to recognise the need to pay so much attention and allocate resources to that. Even though many academic libraries are adopting innovative marketing strategies (Ofori et al. 2020; Waral 2020), most librarians often do not possess proper marketing knowledge (AlAwadhi & Al-Daihani 2019; Inyang & Ekpang 2019; Osinulu, Adekunmisi, Okewale & Oyewusi 2018). Most librarians do not see marketing as a core library function and so invest little or nothing in acquiring the requisite knowledge to help champion their libraries' marketing agenda. The situation where librarians without any knowledge or with little knowledge in marketing leading marketing activities will always result in unplanned marketing activities as witnessed in this study.

Undoubtedly, marketing competency is one of the key skills needed to succeed as information professionals (Singh 2017). However, the inadequate knowledge in marketing concepts by librarians as discussed above may be due to the lack of marketing courses in Library schools' curricula (Inyang & Ekpang 2019; Osinulu, Adekunmisi & Okewale 2017; Singh 2017). Several studies on the skills that

information professionals are expected to possess have mentioned marketing, advocacy, politics as key skills/competencies that an information professional should possess (Ofori et al. 2020; Singh & Vorbach 2017; Monica & Bii 2016). Although several publications exist on marketing and libraries, only a few studies on marketing education in library and information science curricula can be found (Singh 2017). Even though the literature suggests the need for the teaching of marketing in library schools, most of such schools seem not to acknowledge the concept as a fundamental subject in their curricular (Brown & Albright 2013). The inadequate emphasis on marketing in library schools often leads to students not appreciating the importance of marketing in their profession (Singh 2017). It is important to inculcate or incorporate elements of marketing education in library and information science schools' curricula so that library professionals will possess the requisite managerial skills, including marketing, to manage their libraries competently. Thus, if this situation goes on, librarians will not understand the need to have a structured marketing plan to guide the marketing activities of their libraries. It must be acknowledged that, in recent times, most library schools are including the teaching of soft skills like marketing in their curricula (Buarki & Al-Omar 2020; Essien, Lu & Su 2020). However, such developments are not having great influence on existing librarians who graduated from these library schools many years before the updates in curricula took place.

In academic libraries, budgeting is one of the important activities that seeks to plan for the financial, material, and human resources needed for the library's operations within a period. The funding of libraries in most developing countries has been characterised by continued cuts, coupled with inflation and currency fluctuation (Coleman, Mitchell & Quinn 2020; Rosa & Storey 2016). Financial constraints have been cited as a reason why most libraries do not have a formal marketing plan (Anwar & Zhiwei 2020; Nowrin, Mostofa & Akter 2020; Ofori et al. 2020; Bhardwaj & Jain 2016). With these libraries having limited and continuous cuts in budgets, it is apparent that they will hardly focus on intangible activities like marketing, whose effects may not be felt in the shortest possible time. Most often, librarians in such institutions strive so hard to acquire essential library resources like the acquisition of books and subscription to databases, payment of salaries, and it becomes difficult or impossible to get money separately for marketing activities. Thus, librarians are caught between using the limited budget on "core" library functions and allocating a portion of the library budget for marketing

activities. It is not uncommon to see most librarians in developing countries opting for the later choice. This trend has resulted in a situation where most libraries in developing countries do not have dedicated budgets for their marketing activities.

The unplanned nature of marketing activities as undertaken by the libraries, can negatively affect the library's operations. Such libraries are likely to spend more of their limited resources on marketing. This is because such libraries do not make budgets and so end up spending on avoidable expenses. Also, since such activities are not coordinated, it is most often undertaken subject to the librarian's marketing competence. Thus, if the current librarian does not have any marketing interest, such a library may never undertake any marketing activity. The unplanned nature of marketing in these libraries also means that they cannot assess the impact of marketing on their activities. They usually do not have any benchmark to measure their marketing results with. This may lead to people believing that marketing of library products and services has no direct effect on the library. However, if librarians have a plan for their marketing activities, they will have key targets they would want to meet, and they can methodologically assess such targets.

5.2.1.2 *Presence of marketing departments*

In line with the "no marketing plan" attributes of the libraries in this study, it was expected that these libraries would not have dedicated departments to handle the planning, budgeting, and execution of marketing activities. All the libraries confirmed that they did not have dedicated departments in charge of marketing the libraries and budgeting for marketing activities. It was also observed that it is often either the office of the librarian or the reference service departments of these libraries that undertake these ad hoc marketing activities. The view of a respondent from UG captures it better.

> The library does not have a marketing department. No, we do not have. What happens is that normally, based on the type of product or service we want to market, the university librarian will coordinate it from her office or would want the reference service department or the e-resources department to organise it. For instance, if it is the introduction of a new database or software, usually the e-resource department does the planning and execution. On the other hand, if it has to do with marketing the library to new patrons, the reference services department is assigned that responsibility. So, as you can see, there is no clearly identified department to supervise the library's marketing activities. (Respondent 4 from UG).

Marketing is not a one-off affair, but an everyday activity that demands that there be people in the library whose responsibility is to ensure that marketing activities continue and are always on top of their libraries' marketing trends. Apart from a few studies that indicated that libraries had dedicated departments for marketing activities (Hommerová et al. 2020), most libraries found in the literature did not have such departments. Hommerová et al. (2020) reported the presence of a promotion and marketing department in a library, with the sole responsibility of managing the library's communication with its publics. Similarly, Eastman and Saulnier (2020) surveyed to find out how the marketing responsibilities of libraries were being divided. The survey reported that only a marginal percentage of the respondents indicated that they had dedicated marketing specialists in their libraries responsible for planning their libraries' marketing activities. Sadly, Kolendo, Kwembe and Snelling (2019) report of a situation where a previously instituted department for marketing library resources had to be closed down. As reported earlier, most libraries have limited budgets with endless needs. Prioritising and justifying the need to allocate limited resources to an activity that may not yield immediate results is a challenge for most librarians. Hence, most librarians would want to undertake such marketing activities themselves or delegate people they trust to do that for them.

Baada, Ayoung, Bekoe and Azindow (2020) have pointed out already in their studies that financial constraints in Ghanaian libraries prevent them from embarking on innovative ideas. A respondent in their study stressed how frustrating it is when one knows what ought to be done, yet the person cannot do because of financial challenges. Libraries will have to sit back and do a cost-benefit analysis of having a department that will supervise the library's marketing agenda. If this is done well, librarians will begin to appreciate the long-term benefit that such initiatives could bring. On the other hand, if the library does not do such an assessment to ascertain the benefits of having a unit responsible for planning and implementing its marketing-oriented activities, they will always have a wrong notion about it. Such a situation will not help the library reap the benefits such that initiatives bring. A well-structured marketing plan should be clear on the responsibility of departments and personnel so as to ensure successful implementation.

5.2.1.3 Dedication of a budget for marketing activities

The record of no dedicated budget for marketing activities in libraries is a worrying issue. It has been an issue of discussion over the years. For instance, Kennedy (2011) has observed the situation where most libraries have habitually reported that there is no special fund exclusively dedicated for the management of marketing-related issues in the library. Ndungu (2016) further corroborates this finding by asserting that disbursing money to market libraries' resources has not been the focus of many libraries. Furthermore, Bhardwaj and Jain (2016) have reported that most respondents in their study indicated that they did not have a separate budget that focused on their libraries' marketing activities. In a study that reviewed the literature on why libraries need to coordinate their marketing activities, Nagra (2017) identified many studies that reported the lack of dedicated budgets for marketing activities in the library. This challenge is prevalent among most libraries in developing countries. This may partly be attributed to librarians' inadequate knowledge on the concept of marketing and also, the already declining budget allocation to the library.

It has also been established that regardless of the library budget's size, if librarians do not put in place a well-defined marketing plan to utilise such funds, they will still not see the rewards of having such funds (Nagra 2017; Bhardwaj & Jain 2016). Edewor et al. (2016) have equally outlined the absence of a marketing plan as a significant hindrance to the marketing of library products and services in Africa. Libraries must fully embrace the idea of marketing and commit enough means to it so as to reap the benefit it comes with. By this, they are likely to initiate and sustain programmes that will help appeal to and keep more users who may subsequently become loyal users of their libraries. Achieving the status where more of your users are loyal to your services and products means that you have more justification for your existence and operations, and justifications to ask for enhanced budgetary allocations.

5.2.2 Marketing strategy employed by the libraries to ensure customer loyalty

As indicated in the previous chapter, even though there was no report on the existence of a formal marketing plan, the respondents indicated that they rely mostly on informal approaches to market their products and services. This study, thus, sought to find out

from the respondents the specific marketing strategies they utilise in their respective libraries. In this regard, the study observed that most libraries focused on products, price/value, place, promotion (the 4 Ps), promotion, branding, switching cost, user satisfaction and service quality. Marketing strategy has been defined by Kotler, Armstrong and Opresnik (2018) as a coordinated plan through which an organisation envisages to achieve an enhanced association with its customers with the hope of delighting such customers. It has also been remarked as an organisation's unified way of taking important decisions. These decisions may relate to the organisation's products, markets, activities, and resources that are utilised to create and communicate the organisation's offers with its customers (Varadarajan 2010). According to Kotler, Armstrong and Opresnik (2018), having a mix of these strategies under an institution's control enables such institutions (libraries) to be successful. This helps in developing focused library services that aid in ensuring that clients are attracted and eventually retained.

5.2.2.1 *Product*

The product is a key component of the marketing mix. Products differ in diverse forms. The difference could be related to the characteristics of product depending on the variations in the target markets (Al Badi 2018). Focusing on products to create user value and achieve profitable user relationships has been exploited in many libraries. Product is one of the marketing mix (Kotler et al. 2018), and it is the product or service that is exchanged to create a relationship (Moqiseh, Kazerani & Shekofteh 2020). Thus, it is anything that an organisation can provide to help in satisfying the needs of a specific market (Kotler et al. 2018). It includes all facets of both the product and services that organisation offers to a market (Fraser-Arnott 2020), which includes their features, quality indicators, and variations (Kotler, Keller, Ang, Leong & Tan 2012).

In libraries, products include all the services and products offered to library users to satisfy their information needs (Bamigbola 2013). Such products vary and may include all services and products offered to current and potential library users (Bamigbola 2013). One crucial role of academic libraries is to provide offers that are meant to help users to satisfy their information needs. Such user needs may be related to the society, education, recreation, among others. It must be noted that it is not only academic libraries that offer these products. In the 21st Century, many organisations that offer

information-related services exist. As a result, they compete with the library for their customers. Thus, it is important for libraries to be imaginative and inventive by employing business models that can help in marketing the library products and services successfully (Iwu-James, Haliso & Ifijeh 2020). In order to effectively do this, the libraries must understand the needs of their user groups so that appropriate tailored products could be provided to them. This study observed that most of the libraries strived to meet their users' needs by providing the suitable products. For instance, a respondent from the University of Health and Allied Sciences expressed this view to indicate how seriously they take product as a marketing strategy:

> Our library makes conscious efforts to acquire materials that users will need. This is normally done in consultation with key stakeholders (faculty and students). We make sure they bring their recommendation regarding the books and other resources they will need before the beginning of every academic year. Due to this, you can therefore appreciate it when our users keep using our products. (Respondent 5 from UHAS)

Market research is very crucial if librarians want to have a competitive edge over other information service providers. By this, they will be in a position to comprehend needs of users. For instance, whereas subscription to academic journals may be suitable for the postgraduate user group, acquisition of textbooks may be the interest of the undergraduate group. Any library that does not understand its users' needs will end up stocking the library with products that the users may never use. If this happens over time, the users may be turning gradually to other information service providers. Such a phenomenon will not be suitable for the library as the loyalty of such users is affected.

Academic libraries must be innovative in their approaches by going beyond the normal to provide products that users will appreciate. Innovations is very key for efficiently managing libraries (Potnis, Winberry, Finn & Hunt 2020). During a period of scarce resources and budget cuts, Sin and Vakkari (2015) reported that innovations became critical in ensuring libraries' relevance in the USA. Through innovations, most libraries interact with their users and understand them and provide products that best suits them at lesser costs. Since most library products are expensive to acquire, it is imperative for librarians to utilise innovative means to procure them and use the same innovative means to get users to patronise them. For instance, some libraries have deployed QR code technology to enhance the usage of products among their users (Parabhoi, Bhattacharjya & Dhar 2017).

If libraries continue to provide products that users can easily and cheaply find from other providers, they will continue to discourage users from using their products. Libraries, thus, must be selective in the kind of products that they acquire for their users. As observed in this study, some of the libraries took advantage of their unique strengths to select appropriate products for their users. For instance, a respondent remarked that:

> As a marketing strategy, we ensure, through our acquisitions librarian that the materials acquired are of value and that users will have no choice but to utilise our products. This has always worked for us since we make sure that we have authoritative and current editions of books and other materials.

The presence of subject and acquisitions librarians gives the library a competitive edge. These are experts who understand the scope of subject selection and evaluation. If the library can exploit their expertise very well, their users will keep patronising their products. This is because most of the other service providers lack that element of human expertise. Aside from selecting, evaluating, and acquiring appropriate library materials, these human experts also have the requisite skills to help users utilise the products. For instance, librarians are good at helping users navigate various academic databases successfully to get their required information. Also, some of the products like reference management software, require training to utilise them. Once the library can explicitly take users through their usage, such products are likely to enjoy increased patronage.

Even though much is known about product as a marketing strategy, less work has been done in Ghana. Majority of the few studies on product as a marketing strategy only mention it without explaining how it is used (Anafo 2014; Martey 2000). Product is an important marketing strategy around which most other strategies hinge. The low level of research on product in libraries may be because most library users always have no option but to utilise the available products in stock in their academic libraries. If users have other freely available options, they may opt for them. However, if the users are satisfied with the library products, it will lead to the repetition and continuation of library use.

5.2.2.2 Price/value

Price is another vital marketing strategy that commercial organisations capitalise on to be profitable. The free nature of library services complicates the relevance of price in service delivery and planning (Iwu-James et al. 2020). However, libraries need to take price seriously because business survival is linked to profitability. Also, librarians should be aware that administrators of academic institutions usually require that the library justifies its worth in the institution. Libraries that are not able to demonstrate their worth often struggle to get the support of such administrators (Iwu-James et al. 2020). Estimating the monetary value of the offers of academic libraries is important even when the offer is provided at no cost. Price has been defined as "the amount of money charged for a product or service, or the sum of the values that customers exchange for the benefits of having or using the product or service" (Kotler et al. 2018:672). In the library setting, Ladhari and Morales (2008) perceive price/value as the cost in terms of money or time that a library user incurs in accessing a library and or its resources. Naturally, people have often expressed their unwillingness to pay for library services. However, over the few years, available literature indicates that individuals appreciating the need to pay for library services (Bamigbola 2013). A library's ability to manage the prices of its products has the potential of influencing users to utilise the product or not.

This study observed that librarians in the selected academic libraries in Ghana utilise price as a marketing strategy to attract and retain their users. This strategy was predominantly reported by respondents from both the private and public institutions. For instance, as reported earlier, a respondent from a private university posited that:

> To market our library's products and services, and make it competitive, we ensure that our users spend less in terms of money and time to access our services. We have continuously improved on our e-resources and online services. All these are done to ensure that our users always choose us over other libraries. (Respondent 1 from KUC)

Time and money are critical factors to consider in pricing library products (Association of College and Research Libraries 2010). These factors are crucial in the Ghanaian academic library setting because if pricing is not well considered, it will deter users from using the library's products and services. The time users take in accessing a library's service is a factor that users consider in assessing a product or service price.

In Ghana, library services are virtually free, but if such free services are accessed by consuming many users' time, users may consider it expensive. For instance, if a user wastes time accessing a free journal article from a library's website due to its server's slow nature, the user tends to spend more money to purchase Internet data. Thus, even though the service is free, the cost of accessing such services can be prohibitive. In such cases, if a user finds out that there is an alternative service provider, such a user may opt for that. It is also important for libraries to continue to train their users to utilise the products, as users who understand the system will spend less time to access it (Rakshikar & Powdwal 2020). Libraries should consider the real-time cost that users incur in accessing their products. In this study, Librarians capitalised on price to market their products because most libraries in Ghana provide free Internet services for their users. Given the expensive nature of the Internet in Ghana, it is expected that most library users will be attracted to the library and eventually become loyal users.

The money users pay, or the cost incurred by users in exchange for library services is another key thing that might have guided the librarians in this study to focus on price as a strategy for marketing their products. Ghanaian academic libraries charge users for using the services of the library. This fee, which is usually a component of students' academic fees, is not paid directly by the students. Most academic library users may not be aware that they pay for the library services they receive. As such, most of them may consider the services as free. This might influence the users to resort to using the library services rather than opting for an alternative service where they will have to 'pay' for the product or service. Even though it is a public knowledge that the users pay 'library user fees', the fact that some of them may be ignorant about the cost of library services is something that librarians need to manage very well. It should be managed so that users will still be satisfied when they find out about it.

Another factor that is worth noting is the efforts users use in accessing a library product. Effort and time are interlinked. However, effort refers to the energy users expend in accessing a library product. In libraries where resources are well organised with an updated library catalogue (OPAC), accessing materials becomes easy. However, if the library does not take an interest in organising its resources in a meaningful way, users will have to put in many efforts before getting what they need. Equally, a library with a user-friendly webpage enables users to search through their databases effortlessly. On the other hand, some users quickly switch to other search

engines not because their libraries do not have the resources they want. They mostly do so because of the way the library's webpage is organised. Some webpages can be unfriendly, where users will have to do many clicks before they get to the page they want. User-friendly libraries provide more indicators and cues to facilitate comfort and ease, as well as to save the time of library users while using library infrastructure, sources and services (Rakshikar & Powdwal 2020).

5.2.2.3 Place

Another important marketing strategy that came out in this study is place. The place element focuses on all the actions undertaken in delivering the appropriate product to customers at the required time and it represents the channel of distribution a library uses to convey its products to its users (Johoran 2019). Place refers to the physical or digital locations where current or potential uses can access the library's offerings (Fraser-Arnott 2020) and may include channels, coverage, assortments, locations, inventory, and transport (Kotler et al. 2012). Place as a marketing strategy involves the location where the service is provided. In many studies regarding libraries, a place's definition is limited to the library's premises only. However, in the present era of ICT, the concept of the place goes beyond the physical environment of the library. It extends to the computer terminals or telephony communications as a place for the transfer of information to users. Thus, a place could be physical or virtual. It also means that the place should be easy to access. It was evident that the libraries considered in these studies took place as a serious marketing strategy. The physical environments of all the four libraries depicted a welcoming and convenient ambience for learning.

Mayer, Dineen, Rockwell and Blodgett (2020) have established in their study on 'undergraduate student success and library use' that there is a relationship between a library that prioritises place as a strategy and usage of the library. A serene library environment, with no disturbance and the right atmosphere, attracts users. Library users want a place where they can hide and do private studies. Given the campuses' nature, one can observe that there were few places that students can utilise for private studies and so the reason most of them might have been using the library. Therefore, this makes the place a key strategy to be exploited by the libraries who want to gain a competitive edge over their contenders. Libraries should endeavour to invest in the

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right space, logistics and channels, whether physical or virtual. A library sited at a convenient place for users, with adequate computer terminals and other peripherals, proper lighting system, and stable Internet connectivity, will attract and maintain users to the library. If such investments are made, most library users will remain loyal to their respective libraries.

5.2.2.4 Promotion

Promotion deals with all activities that aim to inform customers about a product and persuade them to utilise the product. Promotion is a company's designed activities to inform and lead other parties to the company (Wahyuntari, Sutarma & Antara 2020). Furthermore, promotion includes the communication tools and techniques used above and below the line by marketers in the marketplace (Lahtinen, Dietrich & Rundle-Thiele 2020). Promotion has been noted as a good marketing strategy that can help enhance users' memory of the library's pricing structure and strategies (bin Abdul Lasi & Man 2020). Promotional activities can be used to get library users acquainted with information about the library's services. This can be done through communication and persuasion of the intended user group and by establishing the needs of such groups (Johoran 2019). Promotion as a marketing strategy involves every action utilised to communicate, motivate, and remind a defined group about an organisations' offers, with the intention of building an encouraging mindset about the organisation (Sidhanta & Chakrabarty 2010).

The current study once again witnessed respondents indicating their resolve to utilise promotion as a marketing strategy. It was observed that the respondents' basic promotional tool was advertisement usually through emails or personal announcements. This view was contained in an expression by a respondent from the University of Health and Allied Sciences. She asserted that:

> Anytime we embark on such promotional activities through emails, and other social media platforms, we witness a rise in the usage of our products and services.

Using promotional tools as a way of strategically influencing user behaviour has been emphasised to possibly influence perceptions about the location of the promoted product or competitive products as well as the saliences of attributes and locations of ideal points (Donndelinger & Ferguson 2020). Promotional tools have been used in

the library environment to influence usage. A study by Yi (2016) on practical techniques for the promotion of library services and resources revealed that librarians utilise various techniques to promote services and resources. Girton (2018) in a study has also demonstrated the need of using advertisement to market library products to distance students. The study indicated how advertisement could be used to communicate what and how the library and its staff could help users in meeting their information needs. It has also been established that some librarians even go beyond the library to contact other departments with the aim of generating promotional materials for users (Johns, Price & Ungaretti 2019; McCallister & Peuler 2016).

Donndelinger and Ferguson (2020) mentioned advertising, sales promotions, direct marketing, personal selling, and public relations as the key promotional tools used in marketing. Specifically, in libraries, Harlow and Hill (2020) found email advertisements, orientations, online tutorials, library workshops, as everyday promotional activities. These tools, notably, the use of emails, orientations and library workshops were reported to have been employed by librarians used in this research. Email is a popular and cheap way of promoting library services (Digiorgio 2016). Most library users have institutionally created emails. As a result, once these emails are active, librarians could effectively exploit it to reach out to their diverse users to introduce new products/services, announce a training or any other activity (Starr 2013).

Another effective means of promoting library products and services is through the utilisation of library orientations. George (2014); Vasileiou and Rowley (2011) have underscored the importance of library orientation. Library orientation is usually utilised to help library patrons to appreciate how to use the library resources effectively and efficiently (Omeluzor, Akibu, Dika & Ukangwa 2017). Library users are more likely to be reluctant in using a product or service that they are ignorant about its usage. Therefore, to enhance library patronage, it is imperative for librarians to continually organise orientation programmes for new users and on new products and services so that users can be confident in their usage.

5.2.2.5 Branding

According to Kotler et al. (2018:667), a brand is "a name, term, sign, symbol, or design, or a combination of these, that identifies the products or services of one seller or group of sellers and differentiates them from those of competitors". Branding, therefore,

involves the creation of an exclusive identity for a product in the minds of users, usually with the help of advertisement with a consistent theme (Sharma, Majumder & Uraon 2017). In this digital age, librarians are introduced to the concept of branding and rebranding, its processes, marketing strategies and different online platforms are open to design and market products and services to remain relevant in their role (Horsfall 2020). Regarding library and information services, branding can be defined as a library's defined story, which is usually brief but attractive sentence that communicates a story, and it is usually presented in a visual form through images or other branding elements (Sharma et al. 2017). In libraries, branding can be seen in the logo and colours, specific typefaces that might be used in the library building, library cards, name tags worn by the staff- any visual representation of the library and its services (Docuett 2008).

In this study, one library where respondents strongly indicated branding as a marketing strategy is the University of Ghana. The Balme Library (University of Ghana's library) is very popular among Ghana's academic community. Most libraries in Ghana attach the name of their mother institutions to their names before they are identified. For instance, the University of Health and Allied Science's Library is normally used. However, wherever Balme is mentioned among academicians in Ghana, most people know what it is. Therefore, it is not surprising that the librarians there have capitalised on this to sell the library to its users. Libraries making conscious efforts to utilise a brand name for marketing themselves as observed in the findings of this research is in tandem with a research that took place in the Czech Republic to examine if people were aware of existing brands of some research libraries in the country (Hommerová et al. 2020). The analysis revealed that the library has consistently taken a keen interest in brand management innovations and that it pays attention to and cares about its values and maintains good relations with all its stakeholders (Hommerová et al. 2020). Grant (2015) admonishes librarians to consciously reassess their brands and build an inspiring brand that will identify with their visions. In the case of Wynne, Dixon, Donohue and Rowlands (2016), the authors outlined the steps of creating brands, and they present a classic example on the significance of changing a library's brand.

5.2.2.6 Switching cost

Several researchers have defined switching cost in diverse ways. According to Kim, Byon and Choi (2020), some believe that it is the decision service users make regarding the time, money, and effort one will incur in his or her attempt to change the service provider. The authors also state that, switching cost can mean "one-time costs facing the buyer of switching from one supplier's product to another's" or "the onetime costs that customers associate with the process of switching from one provider to another". It has also been defined as the sacrifices or penalties consumers feel they may incur in moving from one provider to another (Jones, Reynolds, Mothersbaugh & Beatty 2007). Avgeropoulos and Sammut-Bonnici (2015), however, see it as the cost consumers face to change between substitute products. In the marketing and management literature, one concept that is increasingly being discussed is switching cost, indicating its critical role in enhancing consumer loyalty (Ghazali et al. 2016). Kim, Byon and Choi (2020) have argued that even though providing the best of service and satisfying customers a challenge for competitors to come between customers and service providers, it is rather switching costs that inhibit customers from switching to competitors.

Ghazali et al. (2016) identified three categories of switching cost in the service industry, especially where consumers are regarded as co-producers of the service. The three categories are the procedural costs components (learning costs, search and evaluation costs, and uncertainty costs), the economic or monetary costs component (artificial costs), and the relationship-based or psychological costs component (brand relationship loss costs). According to the authors, learning cost involves the expenses incurred in terms of the period and attempts to learn, comprehend or effectively utilise the new service. Thus, if users find it extremely difficult to comprehend the alternative system, they will instead remain attached to the current system. The authors also described the search and evaluation costs as the cost users incur in examining appropriate alternative service provider to switch to. Uncertainty cost refers to the customer's perception of future costs or losses associated with possible negative consequences of switching to an unfamiliar or untested retailer. Artificial costs are those actions initiated by a firm to retain customers and also aims to make it more

expensive for them to switch. Finally, the brand relationship loss costs deal with a customer's feeling of loss in leaving a brand (Ghazali et al. 2016).

The free or low-cost nature of the libraries' services in this study makes it possible to exploit switching cost as a marketing strategy. Comparatively, if a user wants to purchase a journal article or subscribe to an academic database, the cost such a user is going to pay will be too much to bear. Alternatively, most libraries have subscribed to a lot of these credible databases for their users, provide them with free Internet service to access them and even provide support on how to access and utilise them effectively. This marketing strategy has placed the library ahead of its competitors as users are typically faced with the switching cost categories, as explained by (Ghazali et al. 2016). Most library users are under pressure to meet deadlines and so may be hesitant to explore other alternative service providers. Therefore, the selected academic libraries in Ghana should employ this strategy in order to focus on attracting and maintaining their users.

5.2.2.7 Customer satisfaction

Ratnasari, Gunawan, Septiarini, Rusmita and Kirana (2020) have conceptualised customer satisfaction as the outcome of consumption based on a consumer's judgement of the benefits and costs associated with the service. Also, Oliver (2010) has defined it as the user's response to fulfilment, which is an evaluation of the pleasure that customers get from consuming a product or service. Thus, customer satisfaction is a user's evaluation of an offer based on his or her purchasing or consumption of the offer over a period. In today's competitive marketing environment, brands, both large and small, emphasise the importance of customer satisfaction in their marketing strategies (Otto et al. 2020). For companies to be profitable, it is essential that they entice many new customers and also ensure that they offer excellent services that exceeds the customer's expectations, which often lead to continuous purchases (Hwang & Lyu 2020). This is because, as Manosuthi, Lee and Han (2020) put it, If customers express satisfaction after purchasing a product/service, they usually indicate their wiliness to revisit and patronise the organisation's offers and even inspire their relations to utilise these products as well.

Customer satisfaction is a primary attribute of customer loyalty (Lee, Han, Radic & Tariq 2020; Otto et al. 2020; Ratnasari et al. 2020). In libraries, customer satisfaction

has featured as a critical marketing strategy. For instance, a study by Twum, Adams et al. (2020) on achieving university libraries user loyalty indicated a significant positive relationship between user satisfaction and library user loyalty. Also, in an effort to developing a model to identify the determinants of user satisfaction in libraries, Soltani-Nejad, Taheri-Azad, Zarei-Maram and Saberi (2020) established that enhancing user satisfaction with library services may lead to recommendations of the service to others, and reuse of the service. Similarly, a study in Kenya to assess postgraduate students' satisfaction with e-resources established that user satisfaction has a statistically significant relationship with users' perception of the library's image. The authors concluded that user satisfaction is a critical determinant of users' attitude towards library usage (Murithi, Gichohi & Irura 2020).

In this current study, almost all the libraries under investigation indicated that achieving customer satisfaction is one key marketing strategy they employ to build library user loyalty. A respondent from the Valley View University gave an impressive view on how serious they take customer satisfaction. According to her

> Once our users are satisfied, they will remain loyal to us. They will speak well about us. They will bring more users. Having taken notice of these advantages, yes, we strive always to satisfy our users. However, occasionally, you will get disgruntled patrons, for instance, in relation to the application of library rules such as making phone calls within the library. In all these, we look at the supreme good.

The respondent stressed on how the library tries very hard to maintain high standards and adherence to library protocol and at the same time tries to ensure that users are satisfied. The respondent further clarified that there is a difference between satisfying users and allowing users to do whatever they want. She believed that upholding library rules to the highest is also part of the user satisfaction process. As a result, she admonished librarians not to reduce their standards all in the name of satisfying users. Another observation that came up as far as user satisfaction is concerned is that most libraries indicated that they regularly take feedback from their users to improve service provision. Regarding taking feedback from users, Wallace (2020) through the American Library Association's customer satisfaction survey checklist advises librarians as to how to conduct such exercises to generate the best of responses. According to Larsen and Gibson (2020), surveying users is a worthwhile endeavour to

understand their perspective better and help the library staff learn to better contribute to the research process.

5.2.2.8 Service quality

The assessment and appreciation of customer service quality perceptions have been a topical issue in the academic arena and among practitioners over the years (Akter et al. 2019; Parasuraman et al. 1988). Service quality is a consumer's judgment on the overall excellence of perceived service. It has been defined as a psychological evaluation rather than an objective quality and a judgment made within the consumer's perception (Kim & Ha 2015; Zeithaml et al. 1996). Assessing service quality is an innovative approach to understanding whether users appreciate the services being rendered and whether they are satisfied with the service received (Ogiemwonyi, Harun, Othman, Ismael & Ali 2019; Othman, Harun, Rashid & Ali 2019).

Service quality as a marketing strategy contributes to customer satisfaction and a key determinant of customer loyalty (Fida et al. 2020; Saneva & Chortoseva 2020; Tohid, Dinesh & Shailaja 2020). A study by Alauddin, Ahsan, Mowla and Islam (2019) investigated the relationship between service quality, customer satisfaction, and customer loyalty revealed a significant relationship between service quality attributes and customer satisfaction. It was also found that service quality results in satisfying customers' satisfaction and customer loyalty. Similarly, a study by Joudeh and Dandis (2018) found similar results. The authors found that an enhanced service quality often results in customers who are satisfied, which can lead to a better customer loyalty level. Improving service quality is a critical strategy to attract and maintain library users. This means that librarians have to focus on the product or service they are providing, try to be innovative and ensure that users always get the best out of the services they provide. Providing service quality can enhance satisfaction, which will, in the long run, lead to enhanced switching cost that is likely to deter users from seeking the services of other service providers.

Service quality has also captured the attention of both scientists and practitioners involved in library administration the library and information science industry. Twum et al. (2020) used the LibQUAL model to ascertain the quality of services provided by a public university in Ghana. The study established a quality-satisfaction-loyalty nexus as an important concept for librarians in tertiary institutions. The study recommended

using appropriate marketing practices to augment service quality, user satisfaction and user loyalty. They concluded that the provision of excellent service can impact the satisfaction of users which also leads to library user loyalty. Using the same LibQUAL mode, Shoeb and Ahmed (2020) sought to examine the extent to which major public university libraries in Bangladesh were meeting users' expectations. The study's findings revealed that major university libraries' service performances lagged far behind students' minimum expectation. Asante and Ngulube (2020) also sought to find out the key factors that facilitate quality management in academic libraries in Ghana. The study revealed that most of the quality indicators used in the study had a positive relationship with total quality management implementation. Thus, management of quality goes beyond the services provided to users but includes all aspects of management of the library which librarians should give a critical attention to it.

Even though all these studies used quantitative approaches, the findings are not different from this qualitative study's findings. The librarians in this study indicated the importance of service quality and how they strive to achieve that. One key theme that kept coming up was the continuous training of library staff to be in excellent positions to provide the best of services to users. A respondent in a medical library outlined some of the things they do. According to him, they encourage the reference and subject librarians to learn basic medical terminologies so that they can easily understand their users. This approach is commendable as it will allow them to speak the same language. It will also help in literature searching processes, where using controlled vocabularies (MeSH) to search for related (broader and narrower) terms will become a key asset in retrieving relevant results. Apart from investing in their staff, other factors like the libraries' convenience and comfortable location, appropriate library collections were also mentioned.

5.3 Challenges university libraries face in building library user loyalty

There is no doubt that marketing is an ideal business concept that can help librarians position themselves well among their constituents (Ofori et al. 2020). Given the numerous challenges librarians face in their day-to-day managerial activities to meeting the ever-changing and diverse needs of their users (Smith 2019), the concept of marketing has been a welcoming idea in most libraries, especially in Ghana. In Ghana, Budu et al. (2020) investigated using social media platforms in marketing

university libraries. Anafo (2014) also examined various marketing Strategies for information services in a special library in Ghana. Martey (2000) studied how academic libraries in Ghana market their products and services. Though marketing has been a welcoming concept in libraries, it has also been reported in the literature that libraries encounter several challenges in their efforts to market their products and services. This section of the study discusses the challenges the selected academic libraries go through in marketing their products and services regarding the findings of this study. In this study, three dominating themes regarding the challenges librarians face in marketing their products and services emerged. It came out clearly that technical/infrastructural, and human/financial resource were the key challenges librarians in this study indicated they face in marketing their products and services.

5.3.1 *Technical/infrastructural challenges*

Under technical and infrastructural challenges, this study reported ICT issues, lack of appropriate technology, and technical glitches. A respondent from the University of Ghana shared how librarians are challenged with some technical issues with the researcher.

> Institutionally, there are instances where the servers may be down, especially during weekends. When it happens like that, users may feel we are not doing well. At times, getting IT personnel to resolve issues is difficult. Also, we do not have official iPads, laptops etc. to work from outside the office. If it happens that way, it is always a challenge to meet our users' needs.

Respondents lamented about the lack of ICT infrastructure to help them deliver their mandates. Most often, the available infrastructure is not strong or robust enough to handle the existing demands. Frequent breaking down of servers came out strongly in this regard. Accordingly, the respondents indicated that technically, some services/products seize to function or exist anytime the server is down. Most library services are ICT dependent, so whenever there is an issue with the server, users cannot access the requisite resources they need. In an environment where electricity supply is not stable, and Internet connectivity is erratic, the provision of consistent e-resources service becomes a challenge. Users are therefore tempted to resort to alternative service providers. If such challenges persist and are not resolved in time, it will, in the long run, affect library users' loyalty.

The results from this study confirm earlier studies on challenges librarians face in marketing their products and services. According to Horsfall (2020), most libraries do not have up to date ICT infrastructure. Osinulu et al. (2018) also mentioned the lack of Internet connectivity as a major challenge to effective marketing when they conducted a study to investigate approaches utilised by university libraries to market their products and services. In a study to examine the application of corporate models in academic libraries in Jordan, Hamad, Al-Aamr, Jabbar and Fakhuri (2020) observed that the lack of appropriate technical foundation to execute business intelligence tools as a major hindrance to the execution of marketing strategies in libraries. Corroborating the findings listed above, Lynch et al. (2020) asserted that limited access to technology impedes libraries' efforts in marketing their products and services.

Another issue that came up as relating to infrastructure was the libraries' inability to resource their staff with personal computers and peripherals. According to the respondents, their attempts to help users resolve service issues have been difficult, especially when they are not in the office. Some respondents indicated that some users call them for help during weekends, but because they are not resourced with the appropriate tools at home, they often find it challenging to provide such help. A respondent gave this view:

> Sometimes, we promise our users that we will respond to their issues with all seriousness and as quickly as we can. This, however, has not been the case, and it is sometimes embarrassing. Just imagine a user reaching out to you during weekends, and you are consistently failing them because you do not have the requisite tools to assist them from your home. It is very frustrating. (Respondent 3 from UG)

The issue of telecommuting has been a problem for most librarians. A study of digital library services during the COVID-19 pandemic by Mehta and Wang (2020) demonstrates the challenges shared by respondents in this study. According to the authors, most librarians are not resourced to engage in telecommuting as some librarians do not have personal computers. They reported that some librarians even have to wait and lend a laptop from the library. They further indicated that even when computers are available, most library personnel lack connectivity (Internet) their residence (Mehta & Wang 2020). This is a big challenge that can disturb a library's effort of building library user loyalty.

5.3.2 Human/financial resource challenges

Human/financial resource challenges came up as a strong theme as far as respondents' efforts to market their library products and services are concerned. Human and financial capital are essential resources needed to carry out any business-related function in any organisation. Whereas humans would be needed for planning and implementing a well-designed marketing plan, it will take dedicated financial resources to acquire all other pertinent resources required for the efficient application of the marketing plan. As a result, the inadequacy or the lack of these resources poses a major setback to librarians' efforts in marketing their offers. This view was expressed by a respondent from the Kings University College.

> Finally, I will say that our biggest challenge that has prevented us from doing any of these is money and the availability of properly trained library personnel. We cannot plan anything because the required resources to accomplish such activities are not adequate.

This view is supported by previous studies on issues that hinder the smooth and efficient marketing of library products and services. In a study on marketing library and information services in the digital age, Horsfall (2020) decried the lack of funds. According to the author, some libraries in Nigeria are not funded to procure the needed resources to promote their services. Also, Iwu-James et al. (2020) in their study realised that frequent budget cuts impeded librarians' resolve to marketing their products and services. The authors explained that substantial financial commitment is required of the library in order to be able to maintain any competitive intelligent practice. They sadly concluded that such commitments are not forthcoming and thus, pose a challenge to librarians. The authors further attributed this to a library's inability to demonstrate return on investment/value. It is observed that libraries find it difficult to express their value in quantitative means that could easily be noticed and comprehended by funders and administrators. Iwu-James et al. (2020) believe that libraries find it difficult in explaining the importance of marketing to their parent institution or partners, especially if they are unable to justify the budgetary commitments associated with efforts. Hamad et al. (2020) enumerated lack of financial resources as a challenge to marketing. The authors found that even though money is required to train personnel in applying business models in libraries, such monetary supports are not available in most libraries. Osinulu et al. (2018) equally found

inadequate funding to purchase needed resources as a major challenge to the marketing of library services and products. Consistently, the lack of adequate financial support has been found as a major setback to marketing library services.

Another challenge that this study discovered was the deficit in the availability of appropriate and qualified human capital to carry out marketing function in libraries. This challenge has been reported in the literature. According to Horsfall (2020), the lack of training and retraining of library staff is the cause of unqualified human resources. Even though libraries conduct training for their staff, such training concentrates on the library's core functions without paying attention to other business tools that can help the library be more competitive. The lack of training in such areas has resulted in most librarians lacking competency in marketing-related activities. Iwu-James et al. (2020) corroborate this by indicating that limited number of library personnel have the necessary expertise, experience, and instruction in competitive intelligence business models like marketing. This situation can be attributed to the fact that only a few library schools offer courses in such areas. As much as librarians need to possess the requisite professional certificates, obtaining training in business-related programmes will be helpful. The findings of Hamad et al. (2020) even put this situation clearer. According to the authors, the lack of specialised human resources and the fight against change/innovation by employees is a major problem. The issue on staff fighting change is another area that needs to be taken seriously; otherwise, such a culture will impede the value of libraries.

5.4 Impact of online search engines

Another interesting result of this study was librarians' views on search engines as alternative information service providers. Most of the respondents in this study considered search engines as competitors and that search engines can mitigate librarians' efforts of building library user loyalty. According to the respondents, most library users' perception is that they can get everything they need concerning their information needs from search engines. As a result, most of the library users underutilise the subscribed resources. Other librarians have expressed these views from the respondents from other jurisdictions. According to Indrák and Pokorná (2020), the continuous growth in online resources has introduced libraries into a world of competition with many technologies (search engines). Salehi, Du and Ashman (2018)

have established from their study that Google is the well-known search engine and the primary/only source of academic information among students, including doctoral students. The authors further realised that most library users prefer Google as their first point of enquiry to the library. Also, an exploratory study to investigate library users' information-seeking behaviours by Wellings and Casselden (2019) revealed that online search engines were ranked first among many other sources of information including print and electronic resources of libraries. According to the authors, the users' preference for online search engines was because they perceived them to be convenient, readily available, and easy to use. The implication of this is that librarians need to find a way around this, as it can negatively affect their efforts of building library user loyalty.

Even though most respondents indicated that they view these search engines as competitors, a view expressed by a respondent from the University of Ghana contradicted the earlier responses. According to the respondent, they rather see such platforms as partners.

> For us, we see these platforms as partners whose services augment the services our library provides to our users. We actually introduce these platforms to them during our orientation programmes and information literacy classes and even guide them to utilise them efficiently. We do not see them as competitors. As librarians, there have been many times when we have exploited these platforms to meet our users' information needs. We believe that with the right searching techniques and skills, one can retrieve relevant literature. (Respondent 4 from UG)

Librarians are in business to provide information to users. As a result, ones' ability to go the extra step to find information for users is commendable. For instance, in a study by Khan, Khan, Malik and Idrees (2017), it was found that many librarians do not see search engines competitors to the services they provide. The authors concluded by admonishing librarians to get acquainted with and harness such platforms as it is crucial for the survival of library professionals.

Iwu-James et al. (2020) share a practical situation where Cornell University Library embraced and integrated Google into their system to enhance usage. According to the authors, Google, the main internet search engine, had just announced Google Answers. According to Kenney, McGovern, Martinez and Heidig (2003), the introduction of such technology affected reference services. Thus, Cornell University

Librarians successfully adopted and modified the technology to design a virtual reference service based on Google Answers' technology, which helped solve its challenge (Iwu-James et al. 2020).

5.5 Determinants of library user loyalty

One key objective of this study was to investigate the factors that determine library user loyalty. This objective was investigated through a multifaceted approach. First, a thorough literature review was conducted to identify key library user loyalty attributes. This exercise resulted in the identification of 60 library user loyalty attributes. Snyder (2019) recommends the use of literature as the building block in identify concepts. This approach was justifiably used because it helped the researcher to discover new areas for inclusion in a library user loyalty study (Valverde-Berrocoso, Garrido-Arroyo, Burgos-Videla & Morales-Cevallos 2020). During the literature exploration phase, the attributes identified were used as the foundation for the focus group discussions that took place on all the four study sites. The focused group discussion was an efficient way of validating identified attributes, modifying them to suit the research context, and exploring new attributes. As a common tool used in marketing research, the focus group discussions to assess library users' behaviour and perceptions towards library services and products (Barlagne, Cornet, Blazy, Diman & Ozier-Lafontaine 2017). The focus group discussions were also important in this thesis as they helped the researcher to gain qualitative information that were essential for the development of the questionnaire that was used in the quantitative phase of the study.

By employing an exploratory factor analysis, the study used the principal component analysis was conducted on the data collected (with the questionnaire developed after the focus group discussions) from the respondents. As discussed earlier, appropriate statistical standards were observed. The data's reliability and validity were tested, and they were suitable for the study to continue. Also, KaiserMeyer-Olkin Measure of Sampling Adequacy and Bartlett's Test of Sphericity were conducted, and the results indicated that the data was suitable for the factor analysis. The previous chapter outlines all the statistical protocols that were observed in this study.

It is a natural occurrence to have customer loyalty once there is service provision. Customer loyalty acts as a critical construct for service companies because it shows long-standing viability in marketing (Leckie, Nyadzayo & Johnson 2018). In the

marketing literature, customer loyalty is not a new concept, and researchers believe that customer loyalty is determined by many factors (Vilkaite-Vaitone & Skackauskiene 2020). Many studies have been conducted over the years to examine the factors that influence customer loyalty (Auapinyakul & Deebhijarn 2019; Tefera & Migiro 2019; Gómez, Martín-Consuegra, Díaz & Molina 2018; Ofori, Boakye & Narteh 2018; Bhatnagar, Syed & Mishra 2017; Ou, Verhoef & Wiesel 2017). These studies have revealed that grouping factors affecting customer loyalty vary based on different reasons (cultural, industry, sociodemographic attributes among others). According to Vilkaite-Vaitone and Skackauskiene (2020), the number of factors that influence customer loyalty vary between 3 and 30. Specifically, Bobâlcă, Gătej and Ciobanu (2012) asserted that customer loyalty can be investigated as a component of one (general loyalty), two (attitudinal and behavioural) or four dimensions (cognitive, affective, conative, action). This study being guided by the Oliver (1997) focused on four components of customer loyalty.

5.5.1 The Cognitive, affective, conative and action factors

In this study, four factors, as proposed by (Oliver 1997), which also represent the phases of loyalty development, were identified. Oliver's (1997) model means that customer loyalty is a growing phenomenon with both attitudinal and behavioural phases. Thus, library user loyalty grows cognitively based on a user's access to information on a library's offers. It then grows into the affective phase which is characterised by pleasing emotions about how the library's offers meet users' expectations. Loyalty grows further conatively with an allegiance to an offer. All these three phases of loyalty growth are attitudinal in nature. Finally, loyalty grows behaviourally into the action phase, which is depicted by repeat purchase (Han & Hyun 2012). Library user loyalty formation can thus, be described as a developing process. This process sees loyalty as progressing from a logical (cognitive loyalty) reason for continued purchase giving way to passionate (affective loyalty) relationships between the user and the offer, followed by an allegiance to continue to patronise an offer (demonstrating conative loyalty), which may ultimately lead to a continuous patronage even when action (loyalty) is essential to conquer difficulties (Fraering & Minor 2013).

According to Lu and Lu (2009), cognitive loyalty is characterised by customers' opinions on excellent services provided by certain brands compared to alternate

brands. This study found that items that predicted the cognitive factor were related to service quality. For instance, 'in general, I am happy with the quality of treatment I receive at my university's library' and 'the overall service quality of my university's library is great' suggest attributes of service quality. Kiumarsi, Isa and Jayaraman (2015); Han and Hyun (2012) have posited that the cognitive stage of loyalty involves perceived value, service quality, and image. This study also established that the affective loyalty (second factor), was generally characterised by user satisfaction. For instance, items like 'generally, I receive satisfactory services from my university's library staff' and 'my university's library provides a good deal as compared to other academic libraries I have visited in Ghana' indicated attributes of satisfaction. Bobâlcă et al. (2012); Han, Kim and Kim (2011); Lu and Lu (2009) have identified that customer satisfaction has direct, positive, and significant impacts on the affective loyalty.

In agreement with the definition of conative loyalty, this study found that the third factor was characterised by users' behavioural intentions to continue using library products and services (Bobâlcă et al. 2012; Han et al. 2011). The conative phase/factor as observed by this study includes items like 'I think my university's library provides the best resource I can get for my academic activities', 'my university library has a subscription to the best academic databases in my area of study' and 'my university's library's opening/closing hours are convenient for me', which are all indications of users' commitment towards their libraries and their intentions to utilise their library products and services. Bobâlcă et al. (2012); Han et al. (2011) have posited that the first three stages of loyalty lead to a strong commitment of library users and trigger the action of using the library products and services. This study observed that the fourth factor/phase's items had positive words for the library, indicating their commitment to the library and its products and services. Thus, the study found library user loyalty as a sequential development where library users initially turn out to be loyal at a knowing level (cognitive) and then progress to the level of feeling (affective), and grow further to the willing level (conative), after which they reach the stage where they are ready to overcome challenges (action) loyalty (Oliver 1999).

In furtherance to understanding the relationship that exists among the factors, a Pearson Correlation analysis was conducted. The analysis indicated that the factors significantly correlated among themselves. The implication is that the attitudinal dimensions of loyalty (cognitive, affective, and conative) interacted to cause the

behavioural aspect (action) of loyalty. Thus, cognitive loyalty led to affective loyalty which also led to conative loyalty which set the path for action loyalty. Whereas some studies have found a direct linear relationship among all four factors, others found a linear relationship among only three factors. For instance, Han et al. (2011) found that conative and action loyalty are positively influenced by elements of the cognitive loyalty. They found that factors in the affective and conative stages were interrelated. However, Lu and Lu (2009) found a linear causal relationship among customer loyalty's three dimensions (cognitive loyalty improves affective loyalty, and affective loyalty improves behavioural/action loyalty. The authors, however, did not find a direct relationship between cognitive loyalty and behavioural loyalty.

5.5.2 *Relationship between library user loyalty and nominal independent variables*

In libraries, loyalty involves library users' behavioural responses that may include users' decision to continue to use a particular library given alternative libraries or information service providers (Tajedini et al. 2020). Descriptively, this study recorded that most of the respondents were 'less loyal' to their respective libraries. Even though the study did not determine why these users were less loyal, some inferences could be drawn from the qualitative. The views, as expressed by the librarians during the face-face interview, brought out issues of concern.

Principally, it was observed that no library in this study had a formal and consistent approach to marketing. No library had a marketing plan in place, no dedicated marketing department, or allocated budget for marketing activities. Studies have established a significant positive relationship between customer loyalty and marketing plan/strategies (bin Abdul Lasi & Man 2020; Hommerová et al. 2020; Iwu-James et al. 2020; Kim et al. 2020; Manosuthi et al. 2020; Mayer et al. 2020; Rakshikar & Powdwal 2020; Tohid et al. 2020). Thus, the absence of such a formal plan might explain why the study reported a high level of less loyal library users. In the absence of a marketing strategy, individual librarians try their own inconsistent approaches, which are also hinged on 'an idle budget which hardly exists' and executed by people with no marketing experience. As a result, there is no plan to monitor and evaluate loyalty programmes in the library. Most of the libraries were indeed undertaking some form of marketing activities, yet, it must be noted that, if these activities had been well planned,

the study would have witnessed an increase in the number of 'more loyal' users. The view of a respondent from the Valley View University gives a clearer picture of this challenge.

> We do not have any formal plan for marketing what we do. However, every year, as part of the library's plan for the year, we indirectly make provision for marketing our resources. We organise orientation for new students and one on one instructions for other students and faculties. I'm also an adjutant lecturer here, and I utilise that opportunity to talk about the library and what we do.

Relying on library orientation cannot be an effective marketing strategy to build library user loyalty. Most library orientations are organised for first-year students during their first years in universities. After such orientations (which are typically mandatory for all first-year students), majority of the students do not revisit the library. Furthermore, because the library has no plan in place, there is no follow up on such potential clients.

Another thing that came up during the face-to-face interview that might have accounted for most library users being less loyal may be librarians' strict insistence that library users abide by library rules and regulations. The absence of a marketing strategy may mean that the libraries place less priority on user retention. As a result, librarians may not see the direct effect of offending a library user. As reported in the previous chapter, a librarian gave a view of how they ensure that library rules are adhered to in their efforts to ensure that the library provides quality service. Ensuring service quality should always be commended. However, such an exercise should not be done at the expense of losing customers. Thus, if the libraries have a marketing plan in place, they will find a better way of resolving conflicts than just insisting that the right thing is done. Luo (2016) proposes that librarians should find a way of managing the issue of ensuring that rules are adhered to and at same time users receive satisfying services. Adebayo, Fagbohun, Osayande and Owolabi (2015) also observed adherence to library rules and regulations is a major cause of conflict between librarians and library users. Thus, the authors suggested that librarians should adopt a more professional and user-friendly approach to get library users to obey library rules and regulations.

As identified from this study's findings, the lack of ICT infrastructure was a major hindrance to building library user loyalty. In today's era of the Internet of Things, an information service provider without adequate and robust ICT infrastructure is likely to

lose its customers to competitors. According to Atiso and Adkins (2015), libraries cannot fully deliver services due to a lack of infrastructure and/or qualified personnel to operate them. If libraries cannot fully deliver their services, their users will focus on a provider who will timely and effortlessly provide them with what they want. Even when such infrastructure present, there have been reports of a lack of skilled personnel to handle ICT infrastructures. Some libraries will have to rely on their institutions' IT department staff to help them solve basic user queries that are ICT-focused. Such situations have not yielded better results because these IT staff are already burdened with the workload at their respective departments.

In most academic institutions in Ghana, libraries indirectly have a monopolistic power for their services. Most often, the library is the only information service provider with many branches. As a result, some librarians do not see the need to implement business strategies to attract and maintain their users. Such librarians move with the mantra 'they need our services, so they will come'. These librarians refuse to realise that competitors do not necessarily have to be 'brick and mortar' libraries. These days, as found in this study, online search engines, individuals who can provide users with access to academic databases, among others, have become direct competitors to the services that these librarians provide. Librarians are striving to make good cases of their value in their community. To succeed in such an enterprise, they should desist from such attitudes and be user-focused and embrace business-related programmes that can help ensure that they build users who are 'more loyal'. This is because a library with more loyal users has one of the most significant assets.

This study further sought to find out through a Chi-square test if any of the categorical independent variables had a predictive power to influence library user loyalty. Significantly, the name of the institutions and the programme of study were able to influence the prediction of library user loyalty. As far as the institution's name was concerned, it was observed that students from the University of Health and Allied Sciences which is predominantly, a medical school had more loyal library users than the other institutions. Equally, it was established that students pursuing programmes in medical/health sciences were significantly more loyal to their libraries than others pursuing other programmes. Some reasons why medical students or medical schools had more loyal library users were gathered during the face-to-face interviews. Some respondents from UHAS, which offers only medical programmes and UG that also

runs medical programmes ascribed various reasons that could explain why most medical students were loyal to the libraries. Most of them indicated that the library served as a hiding place to do their individual studies. It was gathered that most medical students spend more time in the lecture rooms, laboratories, and clinical wards than the other students (Twiss-Brooks et al. 2017). As a result, they hardly find time for personal studies. Thus, the little time they get, they would want to spend it in the library. Another reason that was given was the expensive nature of the medical students' resources (books). Accordingly, most students have to fall on the library for most of their learning resources. The views, as expressed by the respondents, are stated below:

> For us, the nature of the courses that our students pursue naturally makes them loyal to the library. This is a medical school, and most students hardly find time to study independently. As a result, the little chance they get, they would want to find a getaway, a hiding place, a serene environment for their independent studies. One of the convenient places on our campus where students can achieve this is the university library. This makes it easier to get the students to utilise the library. Also, once they find themselves in the library, they are automatically exposed to our products and services which they eventually find useful. (Respondent 3 from UHAS).

Regarding the cost element of medical books, a respondent indicated this:

> Most loyal users of our library are medical students or students pursuing programmes in medicine and allied programmes. I have come to realise that the expensive nature of health-related learning resources is a contributing factor. Most of the medical books, databases and other resources are very expensive to acquire or subscribe. Individual students can hardly afford to get all their information needs on their own. As a result, most of them rely on the university library, which is a repository of all these resources to satisfy their information needs. (Respondent 5 from UG)

Even though some studies are contrary to the findings in this study that medical students are loyal library studies (Abdulgani, Borle & Tapare 2016; Aronoff 2016), several other studies support this study's finding. In their study on library usage by the medical students, Ata, Hoque, Mostafa and Barua (2020) found that most medical students frequently utilise libraries for self-study. Also, Eldredge, Hall and Patel (2020) found that medical students are heavy users of library information resources as they progress through the courses over their first 20 months of medical school. The findings of all these studies corroborate the finds of the current study. Thus, medical students are loyal library users. A study to identify factors that predict the importance of libraries

and research activities for undergraduates by Soria (2013) found that library users who were undertaking programmes in medicine and other related sciences believed libraries are significantly more important. Soria (2013) attributed this result to the fact that these users undertake a lot of academic and research activities as part of their academic preparations. As a result, they utilise the library often to meet such information demands. Shah and Parmar (2011) have indicated that medical students utilise the libraries often for the purpose of consulting textbooks. A study by Karunanayake (2016) equally revealed that medical students are regular users of libraries. Additionally, the problem-based nature of the curriculum of medical programmes could explain why medical students are loyal to libraries. As alluded to by Amoako-Sakyi and Amonoo-Kuof (2015), the availability of satisfying educational resources like well-furnished libraries, dependable internet connectivity, among other resources are needed to facilitate self-directed learning in a Problem-Based Learning curriculum. Thus, the curriculum of most medical programmes (which are often problem-based) requires such students to be independent learners. This makes the library, where requisite resources for such curricula are found, a preferred choice for these medical students.

In a study to justify libraries' economic impact, a team from the University of South Carolina's School of Library and Information Science found that most people use libraries because of economic reasons (Barron, Williams, Bajjaly, Arns & Wilson 2005). The team realised that the high cost of library materials that could not be borne by individual library users made it prudent to utilise the library resources. Regardless of the type, Libraries ensure that they acquire the best of materials that will meet the needs of all groups of users. Therefore, it is not out of order that this study found that medical students resort to the library, especially given their expensive learning materials. It must also be stressed that most libraries whose institutions offer medical education have subscriptions to expensive and relevant medical databases, which are freely made available to the users.

Regarding libraries as a hiding place for self-learning, Fedorowicz-Kruszewska (2020) has opined that, libraries enable students to gather resources in a friendly environment that is equipped with comfortable furniture, where silence is maintained and personnel (librarians) with positive attitudes to help users. As per the view of Fedorowicz-Kruszewska (2020) these medical students choose the library over other locations for

self-learning because of the friendly and comfortable environment that the library provides. On the campuses of most of these universities, some students utilise the lecture rooms, their hostel rooms, or any other available space for learning apart from the libraries. Noticeably, all these places are prone to external noise and disturbances that will not facilitate smooth learning especially for medical students.

5.5.3 Predictive powers of nominal independent variables on loyalty binary variables

A binary logistic regression analysis was conducted to describe the data further and explain the relationship between the loyalty binary and nominal independent variables. The results were consistent with the Chi-square test that was conducted earlier. It was realised that the name of institutions, type of institutions and the frequency of use of the library products and services had high predictive strength on library user loyalty. The findings established that a library user from the University of Health and Allied Sciences had a high chance of being loyal to their library than those from the other institutions. This result may stem from various favourable reasons. It must be stated that the University of Health and Allied Sciences, is one of the youngest public universities in Ghana. It is the only state university that is wholly dedicated to healthcare professionals' training in the country. Another factor may be the small population of the institution.

In Ghana, the establishment of new universities is considered as political achievements for governments. More so, Newman and Duwiejua (2015) have indicated that the primary funding source for public universities was the government. The government's allocation of funds to these institutions is based on historical funding/incrementalism, bidding, and bargaining, and discretion. The government allocates funds based on previous year's allocations, or institutions make cases/justifications for their budgets, or the authority responsible for budget allocation uses its discretion based on needs assessment. This means that a government that establishes a new university tries to resource such institutions to see it survive and grow. In the case of UHAS, its establishment was also in line with the government's policy of bridging the health system gap. As a result, for instance, the Government of Ghana, through an agreement of the Chinese government built the UHAS campus (including libraries, laboratories, lecture rooms among others) and provided requisite

resources (University of Health and Allied Sciences 2019). This means that the university library might have indirectly benefited from such governmental supports that the university receives. Increased government support will help the library be in an excellent position to provide quality service to its users, thereby bolstering library users' loyalty.

The university's unique and focused mission might have influenced the results of this study. Unlike the other institutions considered in this study, UHAS' focus is on health. This means that the library does not have to spend as the other libraries will spend on varied resources. A library like the Balme Library of the University of Ghana will have to distribute its resources to cover all the university courses equitably. In the health sciences, especially in the basic sciences, most of the students utilise similar resources. As a result, the UHAS library can cut down cost on library materials and invest in other areas. This is equally reflected in the library's ability to subscribe to major medical databases. The university library has subscriptions to databases like the Research4Life (HINARI), ScienceDirect, and HSTalks. These databases host relevant but expensive health learning materials, journals, and textbooks that users on their own will find it extremely difficult to acquire. Availability of relevant library print and electronic resources has been reported to have led to library user satisfaction in Ghana (Evelyn & Lydia 2019; Nunekpeku 2019).

The library user population's size might have contributed to strength library users from UHAS in predicting library user loyalty. The university has a low student enrolment as compared to other public universities. As a result, the size of library users is comparatively small. Yeboah, Adams and Boakye (2018) researched library user satisfaction with library resources and established a that satisfaction is directly related to the size (population) of library users. Thus, they indicated that library users from libraries with small population size tend to be more satisfied. The small population size of the library means that the library will have individual attention for its users. It will also mean that the library's limited resources could judiciously be shared/utilised among the users. Once users are not competing for limited library resources, users will be satisfied, which in the long run may lead to library user loyalty. Twum et al. (2020) in their study on 'achieving university libraries user loyalty', advised librarians to ensure that patrons can access information equitably, as it leads to satisfaction, which also leads to loyalty.

The study used both the binary logistic regression and the multiple linear regression analysis on the continuous independent variables to ascertain their predictive powers on library user loyalty. The findings revealed that library users' frequent use of library resources (whether on library premises or library website) and library users' frequent use of other information sources had the strength to predict library user loyalty. These results are contrary to Khaola and Mabilikoane (2015) who found that library resources frequency did not have any influence user satisfaction and loyalty. The difference in findings could be due to the different data collection instruments used in each study. For instance, Khaola and Mabilikoane (2015) used the LibQUAL+TM instrument while the current study used a self-developed instrument (with the help of a focus group discussions). Regardless the difference between these studies, results of other studies confirm that of this study (Soltani-Nejad et al. 2020; Tajedini et al. 2020; Wassouf, Alkhatib, Salloum & Balloul 2020; Trivedi & Bhatt 2019; Hoffmann 2014). According to Soltani-Nejad et al. (2020), user engagement enhances regular usage of libraries which promotes loyalty among library users. Also, Tajedini et al. (2020) postulated that library user loyalty is based on perceived service quality, enhanced interaction between library service providers and users. It is also based on users being satisfied with the library (services and personnel) and other related factors.

Regarding library users' use of Yahoo, Google, or non-library gateways and their likelihood to predict library user loyalty, the binary logistic regression indicated a non-predictive power. However, when the multiple linear regression was conducted, it confirmed the likelihood of users who frequently utilise such platforms being loyal to their libraries. This observation gives credence to one of the views expressed by a respondent during the face-face interviews. For instance, a respondent from the University of Health and Allied Sciences indicated the following:

> For us, we actually introduce our users to such platforms. I believe that there are a lot of relevant materials that our users can get from there. What we do, and I believe we should enhance is that we equip our users with the requisite knowledge and skills so that they can independently solicit for information from them, critically evaluate such information and effectively utilise them for their academic activities. (Respondent 1 from UHAS)

If a library can introduce its users to these platforms and help them efficiently explore such resources, it may in effect, help both the users and the library. First, if the users cannot find their required information resources from their library, consulting such

platforms becomes automatic. Such users may even see those platforms as an extension of the library services. If libraries can successfully integrate these platforms into their services, it will go a long way to build library user loyalty. Perruso (2016) in their study on 'undergraduates' use of Google vs. library resources' observed that majority of the respondents of their study relied on Google for their information needs. The author went further to recommend to librarians to integrate both systems to meet their users' information needs.

5.6 Summary

This chapter provided an in-depth discussion and interpretation of the study's findings. It came out that even though the libraries were engaged in various forms of marketing activities for their products and services, such marketing activities were conducted in informal ways. This was evidenced in the unplanned nature of their marketing activities, mostly characterised by the non-existence of a marketing plan, dedicated marketing budget and designated marketing department. This, thus, exposed the marketing of library offers to the discretion of librarians, and the availability of 'surplus money'. Primarily, it was realised that most of the libraries used marketing strategies including product, place, price/value, promotion, image, switching cost, service quality, and user satisfaction, though not in a well-organised manner. It was observed that these activities had a direct relationship with library user loyalty. Thus, the more the libraries deployed these services, the likelihood of users getting loyal was high. It also came to light that most of the libraries were faced with technical/infrastructural and human/financial challenges in their efforts to build library user loyalty.

Furthermore, the chapter established that library user loyalty is growing phenomenon that states from the cognitive phase through the affective and conative phases to the action phase of loyalty where most library users are characterised by continuous utilisation and visit of the library. Additionally, the chapter revealed that library user loyalty is influenced by both categorical and continuous independent variables' predictive powers. The institution's name, the type of institution, the area of study, and the frequency of use of library resources were highly likely to influence the prediction of library user loyalty in selected academic libraries in Ghana. The succeeding chapter will give a synopsis of the entire thesis. It will also conclude this study by giving recommendations based on the study's objectives and findings. The chapter will also

propose a framework for building library user loyalty in selected academic libraries in Ghana based on the study's findings.

Generally, the findings of this study supported existing studies. Nevertheless, this study observed that building user loyalty in libraries involves a lot of integrated activities and commitments from library managers. Uniquely, it was observed that while existing literature on library loyalty mostly focused on core issues of service quality, user satisfaction, user value among others, this study observed that aside ensuring that these core issues are critically considered, engaging in relationship marketing will help librarians to understand users. This will further help in appreciating how libraries would manage issues relating to service quality, user satisfaction, user value and many more in the most efficient manner in order to get the best of results.

CHAPTER SIX

SUMMARY, CONCLUSIONS, AND RECOMMENDATIONS

6.1 Introduction

In Chapter Five of this thesis, the researcher discussed this study's results and went further to interpret the meaning of the findings. The interpretation of the findings was steered by the study's objectives and related published materials. The current chapter summarises the results of the study, makes inferences from the results and proposes recommendations to help improve the strategies of building library user loyalty in selected academic libraries in Ghana. This was done in such a way that the relationships between the purpose of the study, the main findings and its implications on practice were clearly indicated. Also, the chapter examined the extent to which the study's objectives were attained. At the conclusion section, the chapter clearly articulated the study's outcomes and their relationships with the purpose of the study and further made suggestions for future research regarding strategies for building library user loyalty in selected academic libraries in Ghana. After that, applicable recommendations drawn from the conclusions made were suggested. At the later end of this chapter, the researcher proposed a library user loyalty framework for Ghana's academic libraries. This was to help fulfil a significant objective of this study 'develop a framework to predict library user loyalty in selected academic libraries in Ghana'. As indicated earlier, this chapter was driven by the under listed objectives of the study:

- Find out how university libraries market their products and services to build Library Users' Loyalty (LUL).
- Identify the challenges university libraries face in building LUL.
- Determine the impact that online search engines have on university libraries' efforts in creating an LUL culture.
- Establish the determinants of LUL.
- Develop a framework to predict library user loyalty in academic libraries in Ghana.

Thus, this chapter's presentation included a synopsis of the study's outcomes, which was then followed by the conclusions deduced from the findings of the study.

Subsequently, the recommendations from the study followed. Finally, a proposed framework for predicting library user loyalty is then presented.

6.2 Summary of the findings

To sum up, this study sought to find how library user loyalty could be established in Ghana's academic libraries. Four main academic libraries were considered for this study. Thus, the University of Ghana, University of Health and Allied Sciences, Valley View University, and the Kings University College. To aid the study find responses to the questions raised in this study, qualitative and quantitative research approaches were used. Overwhelmingly, the study found that the selected academic libraries in Ghana did not have formal plans for marketing their products and services. This, the study witnessed through the unplanned nature of marketing activities. None of the libraries investigated had a formally laid out blueprint for marketing their products and services. However, the study noticed that these libraries were engaged in several informal ways of marketing their products and services. In addition to the evidence of the prevalence of no marketing plan, the study also witnessed that none of the libraries had a dedicated department responsible for the steering the marketing activities of the respective libraries. What was gathered was a situation where the librarian or other library staff, usually those from the reference service departments, sporadically took charge of the library's marketing business. Furthermore, the study recorded a situation where none of the libraries dedicates funds for managing the libraries' marketing activities. It however, was observed that money was typically released for marketing activities as and when funds are available, and as and when such activities are deemed necessary by the librarians.

As revealed, most of the libraries were engaged in various marketing activities, though in informal approaches. The libraries' informal marketing approaches saw them using product, place, price/value, promotion, image branding, switching cost, service quality, and user satisfaction as crucial marketing strategies. The study revealed that the libraries were keen on the products they offer their users and so, rely on their staff's expertise (acquisitions librarians) to ensure that every library resource whether electronic or print has gone through a critical review to meet the varied demands of their users. Thus, subject experts were used to select, acquire, and organise information resources for users. This, according to the findings, places such libraries

competitively over other information service providers that users could rely on. Consequently, users' satisfaction in the libraries' products and services impacted their loyalty for the library.

Generally, it was also found that most of the libraries did their best to provide an inviting, convenient, comfortable library facilities for their users. Given the nature of the facilities on these institutions' campuses, the libraries have competitively become the place of choice for students to engage in personal academic activities. Results from the study indicated that most librarians planned to make access to their products and services cheap and easy. They did this by ensuring that information resources in the library are well organised, so that less time is spent accessing them. Most libraries also provided free Internet services to their users to enable them to access their e-resources with ease. Some of the libraries promoted their products and services through their library websites and emails. Others also indicated that they used orientation programmes and any opportunity they had to engage with their users to promote their products and services. On image branding, it was realised that most of the libraries were not exploiting its advantages as a marketing strategy. Enthrallingly, some of the libraries had put in place specific measures that made it challenging and costly for users to move to other competitors. The study found out that the libraries under review ensured that they provided quality service to their users which often led to user satisfaction. According to the findings, the satisfied users found it difficult and expensive to switch; hence, most became loyal library users. The use of these marketing approaches by the libraries was seen to have influenced their users' loyalty.

Like any business activity, deploying the concept of marketing in libraries also comes with its challenges. Two broad challenges were observed in the study. It was observed that most of the libraries were faced with technical/infrastructural and human/financial problems. Technically, the study gathered that the libraries did not have the requisite ICT resources in the form of stable Internet connectivity, robust servers, among others, to facilitate uninterrupted service provision. This, according to the findings, sometimes affects the offered service's value, the price of the service, makes switching to other competitors easier, among others. The results revealed a situation where the majority of the selected libraries were saddled with the challenge of having dedicated budgets to manage their marketing activities. Similarly, the librarians' technical know-how on issues relating to marketing was found to be a problem.

One key result from the study was the factors that determined library user loyalty. It was found out that library user loyalty is not static, but a dynamic and growing concept that evolves over a period. The study revealed that library user loyalty usually moves from a cognitive phase where users are now introduced to information about the product or service to the affective phase and then to the conative phase where users have an attachment to the library's product or services. Finally, loyalty grows to the action phase where library users are usually ready to spend on the library products and services. This phase is usually characterised by users' continued patronage of the library and its offers. Additionally, it was established that user loyalty was influenced by the predictive powers of both categorical and continuous independent variables. It was found out that the names of the institutions, the types of institutions, the areas of studies and the frequency of use of the library and its resources were highly likely to influence the prediction of library user loyalty in selected academic libraries in Ghana.

6.3 Conclusions

This section of the chapter sought to make inferences from the findings of study, taking into consideration the objectives of the study. In this twenty-first century, provision of information is not a privilege of the library alone. The information industry has become competitive with most of them employing business concepts like marketing to gain a competitive edge over other information service providers. Generally, this study witnessed the application of marketing strategies by librarians, though in informal means. In trying to understand how university libraries market their products and services, the study probed to determine if the respective libraries had marketing plans in place to guide their marketing agenda. The study concluded that the libraries under review did not have formal marketing structures in their respective libraries. It was found out that although the libraries were engaged in various marketing activities, none of them had an official outline that sought to guide the planning and execution of those marketing pursuits. The study also concluded that most marketing activities were initiated based on the librarians' interest in marketing activities. Thus, a library with a librarian who has a keen interest in marketing is likely to have more marketing activities and resources than a librarian who is not fascinated by marketing. Again, the study probed to find out if the libraries had departments that oversee their marketing activities. In this regard, it was concluded that none of the selected libraries had a

designated department to champion the library's marketing agenda. In all, the offices of the university librarians or the reference service departments were concluded to have had handling such activities as and when it became necessary. This meant that most of the services and products that were marketed were usually of interest to these personnel. The absence of a marketing plan and the non-existence of a marketing department were coupled with the challenge of the libraries not having dedicated budgets to their marketing activities.

Closely linked to the above is the realisation that all the libraries in this study had employed various marketing strategies to drum home their marketing agenda. It was observed from the respondents that mostly the libraries relied on the product, place, price/value, promotion, image branding, switching cost, service quality and user satisfaction as marketing strategies with the view to attracting and retaining library users. Most interviewees indicated that to stay relevant, the libraries always ensured the acquisitions of relevant, current, and valuable information resources for their libraries. This, they do by relying on the expertise of subject librarians and acquisitions librarians. It was concluded that if this is done well, the libraries can serve their users with the best of resources as against other sources of information where the human factor/expertise is low or absent.

The study further concluded that most of the libraries were inviting and comfortable for learning and research activities. This, the libraries had employed as a strategy to ensure that they attract more users who will become loyal. As a result, the study observed that the libraries had invested in their facilities (place) with appropriate fixtures and fittings. The study further inferred that most of the libraries had strategically made their prices very cheap compared to the prices of competitors. For instance, it was remarked that the cost of Internet services was virtually free to the library users. Another notable thing that the libraries did was to ensure that they respected the users' time by putting efficient services in place. Generally, it was noted that the libraries heavily relied on emails and the libraries' web sites to promote library products and services. Again, it was noticed that apart from the library of the Balme Library, all the other libraries did not make judicious utilisation of image branding as a marketing strategy. Strategically, the libraries ensured that they provided products and services more cost-effectively so as to make it challenging and costly for their users to consider other competitors' offers. To achieve this, the libraries ensured that they

prioritised the provision of quality service to their users. Accordingly, the provision of services that were of quality enhanced the satisfaction levels of the library users. Once the users are satisfied because they are receiving the best of services, switching to competitive services becomes difficult. Thus, such users eventually become loyal to their respective libraries.

Furthermore, this study observed that, in their efforts to build user loyalty, the libraries were confronted with two broad challenges. First, most libraries did not have the requisite technical infrastructure to help build and sustain library user loyalty. Building library user loyalty required that libraries provide their products and services to their users in an uninterrupted fashion. However, it was observed that most of these libraries did not have them. This then makes it easier for the users to switch to other providers. The study also noticed that the libraries lacked personnel who have had academic or professional training in business-oriented programmes. As a result, the technical know-how and the will power were not there. Finally, it was concluded that the limited budgetary allocation to the library also hindered the libraries' efforts in building library user loyalty as there is not enough money to support and sustain such programmes.

Another important observation was on the impact of online search engines. In this regard, it was observed that the interviewees believed that these online search engines negatively affected their efforts and activities put in place to build library user loyalty. According to them, when the users are continually exposed to these online search engines, they suddenly drift away from library resources. However, it was observed from a respondent that their library does not see the online search engines as a challenge. Instead, they see them as partners having the same aim of satisfying common users' information needs. It was observed that they train and recommend their users to utilise such platforms effectively.

Lastly, the study found out that four direct factors had the predictive strength to determine library user loyalty. These four factors, which include cognitive, affective, conative and action loyalty, also served as the four loyalty levels. The study concluded that library user loyalty is not static, but a growing occurrence that requires knowledge in library administration and adequate knowledge in business-related activities and tolerable commitment (in terms of human, financial, technical, and financial

commitments) from librarians. It was realised that the cognitive phase of loyalty was the first determinant/phase of library user loyalty, and it is characterised by unique features like users previous/explicit knowledge or information library products and services based on experiences. Also, the study identified affective loyalty as the second determinant/phase of library user loyalty. It was noticed that at the affective loyalty phase, library users demonstrated pleasurable fulfilment from the library products and services. Similarly, it was noted that library users exhibited favourable attitudes toward a library service/product/brand at this level. The third factor that determined library user loyalty is conative loyalty. This type of loyalty, the study noticed, was characterised by library users' strong commitment to using library products and services. Also, users who reach this level of loyalty usually demonstrate convincing intention visit the library frequently and reuse library products and services. Ultimately, the highest level of library user loyalty is action loyalty, which is also the fourth determinant of library user loyalty. At this level, library users prove their strong willingness to overcome challenges associated with accessing library products and services without being swayed by enticing offers from competitors.

The study further concluded that additional factors like the names of institutions, types of institution, areas of study, and rate of patronage of library and its offers by library users could help predict the attainment of library user loyalty. It was realised that among the institutions that were considered for this study, library users from the University of Health and Allied Sciences were more likely to be loyal to their libraries than those from the University of Ghana, Valley View University, and the Kings University College. The study also concluded that library users whose libraries are affiliated to public institutions were more likely to be loyal to their respective libraries. Furthermore, the study remarkably noticed that library users who were pursuing various courses in medicine and health sciences were more likely to be loyal to their libraries than their colleagues who were undertaking courses in the humanities, physical and biological sciences. Finally, the study noticed that library users who frequently used library resources on library premises were equally likely to be loyal to their respective libraries as library users who frequently used the library resources through the library website. It was also unpredictably noticed that library users who frequently used Google, Yahoo and other online search engines were equally likely to be loyal to their libraries.

6.4 Recommendations

The chapter offered to make the under listed recommendations with the sole aim of helping to boost library user loyalty in the selected academic libraries in Ghanaian. These recommendations were also based on the study's findings.

In the study, it was realised that none of the libraries had a marketing plan in place and that most marketing activities in the library were done on an ad hoc manner. This was because it was realised that most librarians did not have trainings in integrating business models into their practices. To help overcome this challenge, the following are recommended:

- Institutions that train librarians should update their curricular to integrate entrepreneurship and business models that involve programmes like marketing. This will help create business mindsets among prospective librarians who will understand the concept of marketing better.
- Themes for the various Continuous Professional Development programmes for librarians should include business-related topics. This will help practising librarians to refresh their memories and also update themselves on the current practice of business models in librarianship.
- As part of their annual strategic preparations, librarians should make conscious efforts to develop a marketing plan, taking into considerations their aspirations, resources, strengths, and weaknesses.

Generally, the study concluded that none of the libraries had departments solely dedicated to handle their marketing activities. As part of the library's strategic marketing plan, there should be a clear statement on which department will be accountable for organising marketing-related activities. The management of the library should clearly define the duties of such a department with a clearly defined chain of command. In as much as this study recommends the setting up of a distinct department for marketing activities, it is also admonished that such initiative could be assigned to an existing department (for example, the reference service department) to be responsible for such an agenda. Once such departments' roles are clearly defined, it makes it easier to monitor their progress through the submission of periodic marketing reports.

As concluded earlier, this study realised that none of the libraries had a dedicated budget for executing its marketing plans. This situation has affected the execution of marketing plans in several libraries. This study recommends that libraries in preparing their annual budgets should be specific on the percentage they will want to apportion for marketing their products and services. When this commitment is made, it will help the marketing department, or the department assigned to execute the library's marketing agenda to properly assess and account for the marketing activities within a specific academic year.

Furthermore, this study concluded that the interviewed librarians indicated various marketing strategies they employ to attract and maintain patrons. The effectiveness of such strategies could not be assured, particularly as they were done on ad hoc basis. To enhance the effectiveness of the observed strategies used by the selected libraries, the study recommends the following:

- The libraries should utilise market segmentation and targeting to understand their users' needs better. This will, for example, help the library to provide appropriate offers that will best be needed by postgraduate students alone. This means that each product or service offered will definitely be needed and appreciated by a group of users. This will in facilitating the building of library user loyalty. For example, providing reference management services to research students would be much appreciated as this group is highly sought out by this group than providing it to all user groups.
- Academic libraries should continue to make their environments inviting and convenient for academic works. Regular repairs on air conditioners, lighting systems among others should not be taken for granted. Also, libraries may consider the creation of research commons for private studies and study rooms for group discussions.
- Time has always been a factor most library users consider in their utilisation of libraries. Libraries should, therefore, make it easier for users to browse their collections or utilise their resources. An updated online public access catalogue and efficient and stable Internet connectivity should be guaranteed in this regard.

- Librarians should come out of their shells and utilise applicable promotional approaches to reach out to their current and prospective users. This study highly recommends that academic libraries should utilise available social media platforms in their bid to effectively market their libraries' products and services.

- Libraries should advocate for their mother institutions to give them identifiable names instead of using the names 'university library'. Like the Balme Library, all the selected academic libraries should be given distinct names. This will help the libraries focus on branding themselves to distinguish themselves from competitors and clearly clarify what it is they offer. Such branding could include consistently identifying themselves with a unique message, delivering on promise, associating with a distinctive name and logo.

- In these days of information overload, it is easier for library users to switch to other information service providers. To maintain their lead in the provision of information, librarians should invest in the skills of their human resources, ICT infrastructure and library collections. The use of subject librarians and other experts in academic libraries, makes these libraries distinctive information service providers as other providers usually rely on robots and non-human approaches. ICT has also become the pivot around which information is generated, curated, processed, and disseminated. A library with a robust ICT infrastructure and experienced human resource will easily attract and maintain users.

- The fact that academic libraries may be the only information service units recognised on various university campuses should not make them complacent in discharging their duties. Libraries should be guided by the principle of providing quality services to their users. Satisfying users should be their primary focus. Equally, the 'Every reader his or her book' mantra of Ranganathan should jealously be adhered to if libraries want to build library user loyalty.

As concluded already in the previous chapter, the study observed that most libraries face some challenges in their efforts to build library user loyalty. To this end, this study offers the following recommendations:

- Empowering librarians through further trainings, workshops, seminars and other available platforms to appreciate the need to integrate business models into libraries library practice.

- Establishing departments that will handle the marketing of libraries' offers. Such dedicated and resourced departments/units will plan, implement, and report on the marketing activities of the library.

- Providing adequate budgetary allocations for such purposes. The establishment of marketing departments should go with the appropriate human, financial and technical resources required to make the department functional.

- Investing in ICT and related infrastructure to boost efficient service provision. To enhance efficient and effective service delivery in the library, it is imperative that enough investment is made in ICT infrastructure as most services in the libraries these days run on ICT.

As far as the effects of online search engines are concerned, this study subscribes to the idea that these online search engines are partners to libraries and recommends that libraries, aside subscribing to the most relevant and recognised databases, should endeavour to complement their collections with others provided through the online search engines. Librarians should, therefore, learn how to effectively exploit such platforms to get the best out of them. They should be ready to transfer such knowledge to their users through their various training packages so that users can always rely on the library and these online search engines. This action will help as the open access philosophy of publication now makes authoritative, current, and relevant knowledge freely available through these search engines. This will become handy as most institutions, particularly the private universities continue to struggle to keep up with the ever-increasing subscription costs of recognised databases. Also, equipping their users with the right search skills will also mean that such users can safely navigate in such open environments and still get the best out there.

Importantly, this study developed a scale for measuring library user loyalty in the selected academic libraries in Ghana by using an approach that believes loyalty is a growing process with four distinct stages. It is recommended that libraries focus on assessing these dimensions of library user loyalty in order to make compelling and feasible marketing plans to boost their users' behavioural and attitudinal loyalty. It is

also suggested that since library user loyalty is influenced by the predictive powers of the name of the institution, type of institution, programme of study and frequency of use of library services by users, libraries should develop strategies to take advantage of these variables. For instance, it is recommended that:

- Libraries should focus on image branding.
- Libraries should utilise the concepts of market segmentation and targeting in providing appropriate offers that would be appreciated by the library users.
- Libraries should institute programmes and offer products and services that will instigate frequent visits and use of the library.

6.5 Proposed framework to predict library user loyalty in the selected academic libraries in Ghana

One key objective that this study sought to meet was to develop a framework that seeks to guide librarians to build library user loyalty. According to Kivunja (2018) a framework should put together ideas, concepts, and themes, which constitute a deep and broad knowledge base. The aim of such frameworks should be to offer justifications to the meaning, nature, relationships, and challenges asserted, or predicted to be associated with library user loyalty. According to Glanz (2008), such frameworks bring together ideas, interrelated concepts, definitions, and propositions that explain or predict events or situations by specifying relations among variables. Thus, the proposed library user loyalty framework attempts to put together in a pictorial form, ideas/concepts, the relationships between them, and their power of predicting library user loyalty. Unlike most existing loyalty frameworks for library and information science professionals, this distinct framework took makes provision for both attitudinal and behavioural facets of library user loyalty. Additionally, the framework, at each level of loyalty development, identifies various characteristics of users and further offers appropriate remedy/action/services to meet the needs of such users. Another strength of this proposed framework various predictive variables applicable to the Ghanaian academic library settings.

LIBRARY USER LOYALTY
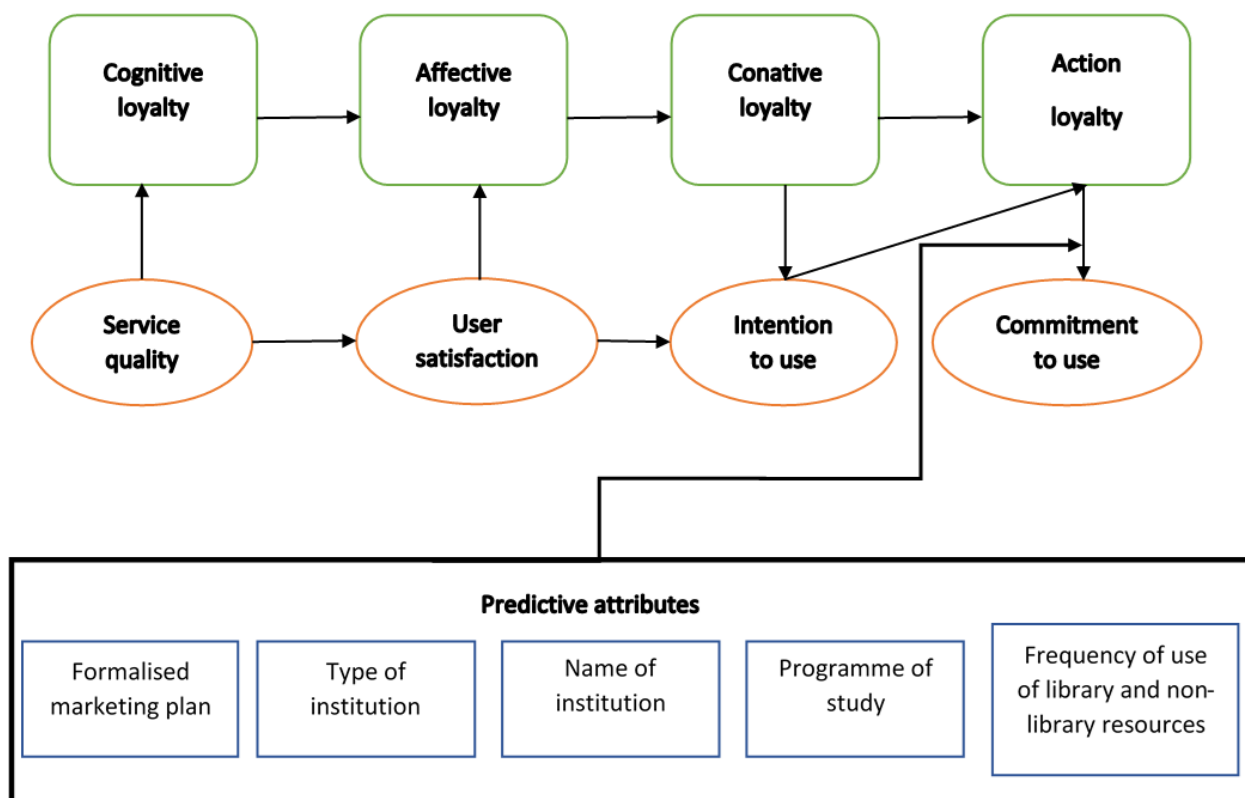
Figure 5: Proposed library user loyalty framework

The proposed framework for this study which sought to guide librarians in their efforts to designing programmes to attract and maintain library users was driven by the assertions of Kivunja (2018). Accordingly, Kivunja (2018) indicated that a framework should be reasonable and clear, have concise definitions of terms or variables, and have boundary conditions that should have clearly described relationships among variables and should describe, explain, and make specific predictions, among many suggestions. First, this framework proposed a four linear phased library user loyalty. The proposed framework also recommended both attitudinal and behavioural dimensions of library user loyalty. It postulates that library user loyalty is a growing concept. It involves gradual but developing stages, in which coherent intentions of continued utilisation of the library shifts to the development of emotive affiliations with the library, which also transforms into an assurance to reuse the library and what it offers and may ultimately lead to unending utilisation of the library (Fraering & Minor 2013).

As shown in Figure 5, cognitive loyalty is the initial stage of the loyalty formation process. At this stage, library users focus on evaluating the library or the performance of the library products/services attributes. Library users focus on service quality. During this phase of the library user loyalty, librarians need to ensure that users receive the best of services. That is, they should ensure that the library offers what users expect. Here, libraries can focus on training its staff to be on top of their jobs, ensure that the library environment in terms of lighting systems, proper ventilation, serenity, and comfortability are assured. Once these are ensured, the cognitive phase will directly lead to affective loyalty.

The affective phase of the framework represents the library loyalty process stage, where library users begin to show satisfaction with their services. Users express emotional attachment to the library and its products/services. At this stage, libraries must focus on initiating programmes that will help understand users' need. Here, programmes like user studies, targeting and market segmentation are recommended. These programmes will help the library to identify individual user needs and offer unique services/products to meet such needs. As indicated in figure 5, affective loyalty, which usually starts from the cognitive phase, directly leads to conative loyalty.

Following the affective stage is the conative stage of loyalty. Here library users begin to show their intention to utilise library products and services. At this stage of the loyalty formation process, library users develop trust in the services they receive. As such librarians should invest in their resources (both print and electronic resources), enhance their ICT capacity so that they can always provide such services without interruptions. Librarians need to sustain this type of loyalty as it can easily lead to action loyalty. As indicated on the figure, conative loyalty, which arises because of the previous phases' cumulative activities, can directly lead to action loyalty. This phase of library user loyalty is mostly manifested in users' intention to utilise the library and its products and services.

Finally, the four-phased linear approach to achieving library user loyalty is completed at the action loyalty phase. At this level, all the activities that were put in place from the cognitive loyalty phase interact together to facilitate users' commitment to utilising the library and its products and services. Here, users are not keen on the cost of the product or services offered to them. They can easily recommend the services of the

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library to other potential users, thereby increasing the number of library users. This phase of loyalty begins to pay off in diverse ways as alluded to already. Also, librarians can take advantage of it to justify the need for more investments in the library and its resources. Action loyalty is evidenced in users' commitment to using the library and its products. This linear approach of achieving or building library user loyalty is essential as it helps librarians to understand the direct relationship between the behaviours of library users at the various stages of loyalty development. This also enables them to offer the appropriate action at each stage. For instance, since there is a direct or linear relationship between the first two stages, it becomes easy for librarians to know what actions to take if there are issues at the second phase of loyalty development.

Closely linked to the action loyalty are mediating factors, which are referred to as predictive attributes in this framework. These attributes exhibit predictive powers to influence action loyalty to lead to users' commitment to patronise the library and its products and services. All things being equal, users will be committed to using the library if they consider these predictive attributes. First, it has been found that libraries that have institutionally accepted marketing plan with the requisite financial, human, and technical support can easily attract and maintain users who can quickly develop commitments to the library and its products and services. Equally, libraries affiliated to public institutions are likely to have library users who can easily commit to the library and its products and services. This means that libraries affiliated to private institutions will have to put in more efforts to win more loyal library users.

Furthermore, the programme that library users pursue in their various institutions can determine users' commitment to patronise the library and its resources. Thus, libraries should embark on more marketing activities and utilise programmes like market segmentation to help meet the various user groups' unique needs. Finally, libraries should institute programmes that will facilitate users' frequent visit and utilisation of the library and what they offer. This can increase users' commitment to either utilise the library resources through the library website or the physical library premises.

This framework is unique and justifiable as it inculcated both attitudinal and behavioural dimensions of library user loyalty. The framework also went further to propose certain actions that librarians need to take to enhance users' commitment to

utilise library resources, which is usually demonstrated through positive word of mouth, frequent library visits, and frequent library use. Furthermore, the framework suggested some influencing variables based on the Ghanaian context that could quickly help to boost library users' commitment to patronise the library. Thus, this framework is good and fit for use in the selected Ghanaian academic libraries to achieve library user loyalty.

6.6 Implications for policy, practice, and research

The outcomes of this research, and particularly the proposed framework, have direct implications for policy, practice, and research. The framework for building library user loyalty proposed in this study will impact theory. It was influenced by conceptual perspectives of the cognitive, affective, conative and action loyalty model.

6.6.1 Suggestions for policy

This study found that university libraries' enhanced and coordinated marketing approaches can lead to increased attraction and retainment of loyal library users. Through the literature review, it was also observed that libraries are using business models like marketing and loyalty to justify their worth in academic communities. However, it was observed that most of the libraries, though engaged in various forms of marketing activities, did not have a structured plan for their marketing activities. Thus, the findings of this study will influence librarians' decisions on data collection on users, user behaviour data, marketing approaches and feedback from users. Furthermore, this study's findings will function as a model for university librarians in their efforts to market their products and services. The findings of his study will further enhance theory development in the field of library and information science. Through this study, the adaptation of business models (Oliver's model) in libraries has proven to be possible. Thus, going forward, libraries will further subject the developed framework to test its applicability and sustainability in this non-for-profit library environment.

6.6.2 Suggestions for practice

As a way of enhancing the practice of librarianship, this study has demonstrated that building library user loyalty is one key approach librarians can utilise to justify their

worth, validate the need for further investments, and rationalise their existence. To this end, the study has developed a scale that will guide librarians to measure their users' loyalty. This study will also help librarians, and other information service rendering organisations appreciate that library user loyalty is a growing process consisting of four phases (cognitive, affective, conative, and action loyalty). It will also help them to adopt the right marketing approach required for each phase. Thus, this study implores on librarians to patiently embark on the programmes that will facilitate library user loyalty, as it will go a long way to help them.

6.6.3 Suggestions for further research

Increased use of library services and products has generally become one of the accepted key performance indicators in academic libraries. Moreover, the increased utilisation of library services and products has become a significant justification for budgetary negotiation and accountability in university libraries. It has also been argued that libraries that can attract and maintain their users have always had a competitive edge over other contenders. In the customer behaviour literature, it has been demonstrated that library users' behaviours such as frequent use and re-use of library services, recommendation actions among others constitute library user loyalty. Thus, libraries need to take loyalty programmes seriously in order to attract and maintain more library users. Even though an analysis of previous findings revealed several studies on customer loyalty, it was however found that few studies have been conducted on library user loyalty, particularly in the Ghanaian university library context. To further appreciate the concept of library user loyalty and to encourage the use of business models in library management, this study suggests further studies in all aspects of library user loyalty in Ghanaian settings. Also, as with all new instruments, the scale developed in this study needs to be tested. Thus, it is further suggested that new studies, using the developed scale, should be conducted. Such studies, using a Ghanaian validated instrument will express the loyalty story better as they relate to academic libraries in Ghana.

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UNIVERSITY OF SOUTH AFRICA, PRETORIA

Academic Library User Loyalty Survey

I kindly ask you to answer the following questions and statements. By doing so, you contribute to a better scientific understanding of library user loyalty in your institution.

Thank you in advance.

CODE:_____   **Date:** __/__/___

	I have given my consent to partake in this study	Yes ☐	No ☐
1	**Gender**	**Male**	☐
		Female	☐
2	**Age**	**Please write below**	
3	**Name of institution**	**Please write below**	
4	**Type of institution**	**Public**	☐
		Private	☐
5	**Programme of study**	**Please write below**	
6	**Level of study**	**Undergraduate**	☐
		Postgraduate	☐
Please rate the following statements (by ticking 1 is lowest, 9 is highest) depending on your degree of agreement with them			

7	I prefer to use my university library's website because it helps me locate needed information	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10
8	The existence of quiet space for individual learning makes me prefer my university's library	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10
9	I think my university's library provides the best resource I can get for my academic activities	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10
10	My university library has subscription to the best academic databases in my area of study	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10
11	My university's library's opening/closing hours are convenient for me	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10
12	My university's library aids my advancement in my academic discipline	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10
13	My university's library enables me to be more efficient in my academic pursuits	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10
14	My university's library helps me to distinguish between trustworthy and untrustworthy information	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10
15	My university's library provides me with the information literacy skills I need in my study	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10
16	In general, I am happy with the quality of treatment I receive at my university's library	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10
17	I am satisfied with my university's library support for my learning, and research needs	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10

18	My university's library provides a good deal as compared to other academic libraries I have visited in Ghana	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10
19	My university's library offers good value for the time I spend there	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10
20	The service I receive from my university's library is worth the time I spend there	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10
21	Generally, I receive satisfactory services from my university's library staff	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10
22	My university's library offers online services at an attractive cost (time, bandwidth etc)	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10
23	I feel that my university's library meets both my high quality and low-price requirements	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10
24	The library provides support anytime I visit the library (virtually or physically)	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10
25	My university's library provides photocopying and other reprographic services	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10
26	My university's library provides services at the promised time	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10
27	The overall service quality of my university's library is great	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10
28	Overall, I consider services at my university's library to be excellent	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10
29	My university's library assures users of the privacy and confidentiality of their personal information/data	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10

Please indicate your frequency of use of the following. [1= Never; 2= Very Rarely; 3= Rarely; 4= Occasionally; 5= Frequently; 6= Very Frequently

30	How often do you use resources on library premises?	1	2	3	4	5	6
31	How often do you access library resources through a library Web page?	1	2	3	4	5	6
32	How often do you use Yahoo (TM), Google (TM), or non-library gateways for information?	1	2	3	4	5	6

Thank you.

DOMINIC AGYEI DANKWAH
Department of Information Science
University of South Africa
Pretoria, South Africa

Tel: 024-252-0797
Email: 55464963@mylife.unisa.ac.za

March 05, 2020

Dear Sir/Madam,

AN EXPLORATORY STUDY TO ESTABLISH THE DETERMINANTS OF LIBRARY USER LOYALTY.

My name is Dominic Agyei Dankwah, a Ph.D. student at the University of South Africa, Pretoria. To partially fulfil the requirements for my doctoral study in Information Science, I am undertaking a study to help understand strategies for building library user loyalty in university libraries in Ghana. As part of the study, I am doing an exploratory study to establish the determinants of library user loyalty in university libraries in Ghana. The findings of this survey will help complete the main study of building library user loyalty.

You are kindly being invited to participate in this study, particularly because you are a library user in one of the sites for this study. Please be assured that all information given for this study will be kept confidential. Again, the data will be stored in a secured place. The researcher will not make any reference in his reports, that could link you to the study. Your participation in this study is voluntary.

This study has obtained ethical clearance approval with the reference number (2020-DIS-0012) from Department of Information Science Ethics Review Committee of the University of South Africa, Pretoria (Find a copy attached to this letter). For further information and clarification regarding this study, kindly contact me through 55464963@mylife.unisa.ac.za or +233 242 520 797.

Thank you.

Sincerely yours,

Dominic Agyei Dankwah
(Ph.D. Student)

Interview

INTERVIEW GUIDE FOR LIBRARIANS

ASSESSING AVAILABLE MARKETING STRATEGIES IN UNIVERSITY LIBRARIES IN GHANA

University of Health and Allied Sciences

University Library

Strategies for building user loyalty in selected university libraries in Ghana

Objective: This interview guide seeks to solicit information from you with regards to your marketing strategies and the challenges you face in your efforts of building loyalty among your library users. This is part of a broader study that seeks to model a strategy to build user loyalty in selected university libraries in Ghana.

Name:

Department:

Rank:

Position:

Institution:

Consent:

1. How university libraries market their products and services

a. Do you have a formal marketing plan for your library?

b. Does your library have a department or function whose primary focus is to market library services and products?

c. What functional area in the library does the marketing unit report to?

d. Does the library have an allocated budget to support the marketing unit?

e. How does any of the following play a part in your marketing strategy?

i. Product

ii. Price

iii. Place

iv.   Promotion

v.   Branding

vi.   Switching cost

vii.   Customer satisfaction

viii.   Service quality

ix.   Image

f.   Have your marketing activities in any way helped in building loyalty among your users?

2.   Challenges university libraries face in building Library User Loyalty

a.   Does any of the following pose challenges to your efforts in building loyalty among your library users?

i.   Switching cost

ii.   Customer satisfaction

iii.   Service quality

iv.   Price/value

v.   Image

b.   How do online platforms like Google Search engines pose a challenge to you in building loyalty among your users?

3.   Would you say your marketing strategies have made your users loyal?

………………….…..   ……….……………….   ………..……………

Name of interviewee   Signature   Date

DOMINIC AGYEI DANKWAH
Department of Information Science
University of South Africa
Pretoria, South Africa

Tel: 024-252-0797
Email: 55464963@mylife.unisa.ac.za

_____

April 17, 2020

Dear Sir/Madam,

AN EXPLORATORY STUDY TO ESTABLISH THE DETERMINANTS OF LIBRARY USER LOYALTY.

My name is Dominic Agyei Dankwah, a Ph.D. student at the University of South Africa, Pretoria. To partially fulfil the requirements for my doctoral study in Information Science, I am undertaking a study to help understand strategies for building library user loyalty in university libraries in Ghana. As part of the study, I am doing a qualitative study to understand the various marketing strategies being deployed in university libraries in Ghana. The findings of this survey will help complete the main study of building library user loyalty.

You are kindly being invited to participate in this study, particularly because you are a library user in one of the sites for this study. Please be assured that all information given for this study will be kept confidential. Again, the data will be stored in a secured place. The researcher will not make any reference in his reports, that could link you to the study. Your participation in this study is voluntary.

This study has obtained ethical clearance approval with the reference number (2020-DIS-0012) from Department of Information Science Ethics Review Committee of the University of South Africa, Pretoria (Find a copy attached to this letter). For further information and clarification regarding this study, kindly contact me through 55464963@mylife.unisa.ac.za or +233 242 520 797.

Thank you.

Sincerely yours,

Dominic Agyei Dankwah
(Ph.D. Student)

APPENDIX V: Library user loyalty attributes used for the focus group discussions

UNIVERSITY OF SOUTH AFRICA, PRETORIA

Academic Library User Loyalty Survey

1	Staff who instill confidence in library users
2	Space that inspires study and learning
3	Staff who gives users individual attention
4	Library's website that helps me locate needed information
5	Library that provides online help
6	Staff who are consistently courteous
7	Availability of printed library materials I need for my work
8	The existence of quiet space for individual learning
9	Library that provides the best resource for my academic activities
10	Library that has subscription to the best academic databases in my area of study
11	Library that provides online course support
12	Library staff who have the knowledge to answer user questions
13	Presence of subject specialists
14	Library that is situated in a comfortable and inviting location
15	Library staff who deal with users in a caring fashion
16	Library that has modern equipment
17	Library with convenient opening/closing hours
18	Library staff who understand the needs of their users
19	Availability of easy-to-use access tools that allow me to find things on my own

20	Library that serves as a getaway/hiding place for study, learning, or research
21	Library staff who are willing to help users
22	Library that makes information easily accessible for independent use
23	Library that provides a community space for group learning and group study
24	Library that provides access to archives, and or special collections
25	Library staff that I can depend on
26	Library that helps me to stay abreast of developments in my field(s) of interest
27	Library that aids my advancement in my academic discipline
28	Library that enables me to be more efficient in my academic pursuits
29	Library that helps me to distinguish between trustworthy and untrustworthy information
30	Library that provides information literacy skills training
31	Library that provides quality treatment to users
32	Library that supports my learning, and research needs
33	Library staff who provide satisfactory services
34	Library that offers good value for the time
35	Library that offers services that worth the time I spend there
36	Library that provides a good deal
37	Library that offers online services at an attractive cost
38	Library that meets both high quality and low-price requirements
39	Library that provides cost effective services
40	Library that delivers services on time
41	Library that offers best services
42	Library that provides services as promised

43	Library that always provides support to users
44	Library that provides access to digital collections
45	Library that provides photocopying and other reprographic services
46	Library that maintains clean environment
47	Library that has current and relevant materials in my field of study
48	Library that keeps an up-to-date catalogue (OPAC)
49	Library that has enough seating space for library users
50	Library that has enough lighting systems
51	Library that provides services at the promised time
52	Library that offers quality service
53	Library that offers excellent services
54	Library that keeps users informed about when requested services will be performed
55	Library that assures users of the privacy and confidentiality of their personal information/data
56	Library that serves as a place for reflection and creativity
57	Library that is associated with visually appealing materials
58	Library that has visually appealing facilities
59	Library that has resources and space for minority groups
60	Library that has resources and space for the physically challenged

APPENDIX VI: Participant consent form

31st March, 2020

Title: Strategies for building user loyalty in selected university libraries in Ghana

Dear Prospective Participant

My name is Dominic Agyei Dankwah and I am doing research with Professor Patrick Ngulube, a Professor in the Department of Information Science towards a Ph.D. at the University of South Africa. We are inviting you to participate in a study entitled "Strategies for building user loyalty in selected university libraries in Ghana".

This study is expected to collect important information that could help your university library understand the strategies for building loyalty among its patrons.

You are being invited to participate in this study because you are a member of the university community and a direct user of the university library. It is expected that you will because of your status in the university as a student/faculty and a library user, you will be able to provide the requisite information needed for this study. The study team formally applied to your institution for your details to enable us to contact you with regards to this study. In all, this study seeks to recruit about 450 respondents from four (4) university libraries (including yours) in Ghana.

The study involves *questionnaires/surveys/interviews*. You would be kindly asked to respond to questions that relate to service quality, your satisfaction with the library services/products, your reason for using or not using your university library. In all, you will need about fifteen (15) minutes to complete this survey. This survey would be conducted at your free time.

Participating in this study is voluntary and you are under no obligation to consent to participation. If you do decide to take part, you will be given this information sheet to keep and be asked to sign a written consent form. You are free to withdraw at any time and without giving a reason.

By agreeing to participate in this study, you are helping the research team to scientifically understand strategies for building loyalty among library patrons in your institution. This will go a long way to help managers of your library to improve service quality, put measures in place to enhance library user satisfaction which will eventually help you to succeed in your academic pursuit.

There are no potential risks associated with your participation in the study.

As a participant, you have the right to insist that your name will not be recorded anywhere and that no one, apart from the researcher and identified members of the research team, will know about your involvement in this research OR your name will not be recorded anywhere and no one will be able to connect you to the answers you give. Your answers will be given a code number, or a pseudonym and you will be referred to in this way in the data, any publications, or other research reporting methods such as conference proceedings*.*

Your answers may be reviewed by people responsible for making sure that research is done properly, including the transcriber, external coder, and members of the Research Ethics Review Committee. Otherwise, records that identify you will be available only to people working on the study, unless you give permission for other people to see the records.

Information generated from the study, including your participation, will remain confidential. Your information, in line with best practices, will be de-identified. No one will have any right to give information on you or about you to anyone else. However, the data collected from you will be used for analysis and for publication. This publication will not have your name in it, and no information in the said publication will be directly related to you.

For focus group participants, while every effort will be made by the researcher to ensure that you will not be connected to the information that you share during the focus group, I cannot guarantee that other participants in the focus group will treat information confidentially. I shall, however, encourage all participants to do so. For this reason, I advise you not to disclose personally sensitive information in the focus group.

Hard copies of your answers will be stored by the researcher for a period of five years in a locked cupboard/filing cabinet in the researcher's office in Ho, Ghana for future research or academic purposes; electronic information will be stored on a password protected computer. Future use of the stored data will be subject to further Research Ethics Review and approval if applicable. Hard copies will be shredded and/or electronic copies will be permanently deleted from the hard drive of the computer using a relevant software programme].

There is no monetary reward for your participation in the study.

This study has received written approval from the Research Ethics Review Committee of the *[Department of Information Science Ethics Review Committee],* Unisa. A copy of the approval letter can be obtained from the researcher if you so wish.

If you would like to be informed of the final research findings, please contact Dominic Agyei Dankwah on +233 242 520 797 or dadankwah@uhas.edu.gh. Should you require any further information or want to contact the researcher about any aspect of this study, please contact Dominic Agyei Dankwah on +233 242 520 797 or dadankwah@uhas.edu.gh.

Should you have concerns about the way in which the research has been conducted, you may contact Professor Patrick Ngulube (ngulup@unisa.ac.za). Alternatively, contact the research ethics chairperson of the Department of Information Science Ethics Review Committee.

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

Thank you.

Dominic Agyei Dankwah

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 interview.

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

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

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

Dominic Agyei Dankwah

Researcher's Name & Surname……………………………………

31st March, 2020

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

Request for permission to conduct research at your library

"Strategies for building user loyalty in selected university libraries in Ghana"

31st March, 2020

The University Librarian

University of Health and Allied Sciences, Ho

University Library

PMB 31, Ho

Dear Sir/Madam,

I, Dominic Agyei Dankwah, am doing research with Professor Patrick Ngulube, a professor in the Department of Information Science towards a Ph.D. at the University of South Africa. We are inviting you to participate in a study entitled Strategies for building user loyalty in selected university libraries in Ghana.

The aim of the study is to find out strategies for building user loyalty in selected university libraries in Ghana.

Your University has been selected because as a young public university library, the research team wanted to scientifically understand the strategies put in place by your library to build loyalty among your patrons. Your institution has been selected together with other public and private academic libraries to help the researchers understand the concept of user loyalty in academic libraries.

The study will entail interviewing selected librarians and also administering questionnaires to your library users.

By agreeing to allow this study to be conducted in your institution, you are helping the research team to scientifically understand strategies for building loyalty among library patrons in your institution. This will go a long way to help you to improve service quality, put measures in place to enhance library user satisfaction which will eventually help you to your mission.

There are no potential risks associated with your participation in the study.

Yours sincerely

Dominic Agyei Dankwah

Student/Researcher

APPENDIX VII: Ethical clearance form

![UNISA logo - university of south africa]

DEPARTMENT OF INFORMATION SCIENCE ETHICS REVIEW COMMITTEE

20 May 2020

Dear Mr Dominic Agyei Dankwah

Decision: **Ethics Approval from 20 May 2020 to 20 May 2024**	DIS Registration #: Rec-20200520 References #: 2020-DIS-0012 Name: DA Dankwah Student #: 55464963

Researcher(s): Mr Dominic Agyei Dankwah
        55464963@mylife.unisa.ac.za
        +233 242 520 797

Supervisor(s): Prof P Ngulube
        ngulup@unisa.ac.za

Strategies for building user loyalty in selected university libraries in Ghana

Qualifications: Doctoral Study

The *low risk application* was reviewed and expedited by the Department of Information Science Research Ethics Committee on 20 May 2020 in compliance with the Unisa Policy on Research Ethics and the Standards Operating Procedure on Research Ethics Risk Assessment. The proposed research may now commence with the provisions that:

1. The researcher(s) will ensure that the research project adheres to the values and principles expressed in the UNISA Policy of Research Ethics.

2. Any adverse circumstances arising in the undertaking of the research project that is relevant to the ethicality of the study should be communicated in writing to the Department of Information Science Ethics Review Committee.

3. The researcher(s) will conduct the study according to the methods and procedures set out in the approved application.

4. Any changes that can affect the study-related risks for the research participants, particularly in terms of assurances made with regards the protection of participants' privacy and the confidentiality of the data should be reported to the Committee in writing, accompanied by a progress report.

5. The researcher will ensure that the research project adheres to any applicable national legislation, professional codes of conduct, institutional guidelines and scientific standards relevant to the field of study. Adherence to the following South African legislation is important, if applicable: Protection of Personal Information Act, no. 4 of 2013; Children's Act no. 38 of 2005 and the National Health Act, no. 61 of 2003.

6. Only de-identified research data may be used for secondary research purposes in future on condition that the research objectives are similar to those of the original research. Secondary use of identifiable human research data requires additional ethics clearance.

7. Research must consider rules for engagement that are in line with observing COVID 19 regulations.

8. No field work activities may continue after the expiry date of **20 May 2024**. Submission of a completed research ethics progress report will constitute an application for renewal of Ethics Research Committee approval.

Note:

*The reference number **2020-DIS-0012** should be clearly indicated on all forms of communication with the intended research participants, as well as the Committee.*

Yours sincerely

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