

**CITIZENS' EXPECTATIONS AND PERCEPTIONS OF MUNICIPAL SERVICE DELIVERY IN  
MUTARE MUNICIPALITY, ZIMBABWE**

by

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### **CITIZENS' EXPECTATIONS AND PERCEPTIONS OF MUNICIPAL SERVICE DELIVERY IN MUTARE MUNICIPALITY, ZIMBABWE.**

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# **CITIZENS' EXPECTATIONS AND PERCEPTIONS OF MUNICIPAL SERVICE DELIVERY IN MUTARE MUNICIPALITY, ZIMBABWE.**

## **ABSTRACT**

The research study aimed to examine citizens' perceptions and expectations of municipal services delivery in Mutare municipality. The lack of quality service delivery by Zimbabwean municipalities is a problem that has become worse in recent years. The quality of services provided by local governments are thought to be generally poor or non-existent. The researcher investigated the Mutare urban municipality's nineteen (19) wards. The study determined that capacity difficulties, which have led to productivity gaps and resulted in Mutare municipality offering insufficient or no services, were related to citizens' unhappiness with service delivery in the municipality. Some of the problems include uncollected refuse, a poor road system, continuous sewer and water bursts, shortage of potable water, poor road maintenance, non-functional public streetlights, traffic lights, and poor drainage systems. The researcher collected quantitative data to examine citizens' perceptions and expectations of service quality. Primary and secondary data informed the study. Primary data was gathered from a sample of 468 residents in households selected from a total of 47 004 households. Secondary data for the research was gathered through reports, books, records, newspapers, internet articles and research articles by other researchers in Mutare. The study found that tangibility, reliability, responsiveness, assurance, empathy, service performance, service quality provided, and perceived service quality affect citizens' satisfaction. The researcher also discovered that poor communication strategies between the municipality and citizens, as well as a lack of citizen participation in municipal affairs were important factors contributing to service delivery dissatisfaction. The study concluded that Mutare municipality should conduct citizen satisfaction surveys regularly as a feedback mechanism for service delivery, involving all stakeholders in decision-making, service design, and delivery through an extensive consultative process. The researcher also advised the municipality to implement performance management systems, motivate team members and partnerships, and establish public participation to increase citizens' service satisfaction levels.

## **KEY TERMS**

Local government, municipal council, citizens, service delivery, service quality concept, service expectations, citizen perceptions, citizen expectations, service satisfaction, SERVQUAL model, service performance and public service delivery.

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## **DEDICATION**

This research is dedicated to my parents, my late father, Mr Morgan Mahachi, and my mother, Mrs Vena Mahachi. They encouraged me to appreciate learning and growing as a person and showed me that nothing is impossibly tough.

## **LIST OF ACRONYMS AND ABBREVIATIONS**

ZIMSTATS	Zimbabwe National Statistics Agency
IDP	Integrated Development Planning
SPSS	Statistical Programme for Social Sciences
DIA	Department of Indigenous Affairs of Western Australia
RBM	Result-Based Management
IDASA	Institute for Democracy in South Africa
UMRRT	United Mutare Residents Ratepayers trust
UK	United Kingdom
AU	African Union
GIS	Geographical Information System
NGO	Non-Governmental Organisation
SMART	Simple, Measurable, Attainable, Realistic and Time bound.
KPI	Key performance indicators

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## **CHAPTER 1: INTRODUCTION AND BACKGROUND TO THE STUDY**

### **1.0 INTRODUCTION**

Many organisations particularly public sector organisations are faced with the challenge of effectively managing their financial resources. According to Marumahoko (2020) this ineffective management of resources has a negative effect on public service delivery. Zimbabwe is one of the countries in Africa which has experienced poor resource management and the consequences of this on service delivery. Zimbabwe's current Minister of Finance and former Oxford professor of public policy Mthuli Ncube has pointed out how the remedy for quality service delivery is adequate and proper management of public sector resources in bringing sustainable economic growth and development (Ncube, 2018). According to Masiya (2021), Marumahoko (2020), and Chakaipa & Chikunda (2016), the failure of Zimbabwean municipalities to deliver high-quality services, has become much worse in recent years and is frequently thought to be inadequate or non-existent. To improve service delivery, municipalities or local governments should first understand the nature of their citizens' needs and priorities.

Local governments can prioritise development by identifying which services citizens find the most difficult to receive, and measure the level of dissatisfaction with those services. According to Section 14 of the Zimbabwean constitution (2013), local authorities ensure quality service deliveries that satisfy citizens' basic needs. Gumah and Aziabah (2020) are of the opinion that delivering high-quality services is crucial to enriching and improving individuals' lives. Ineffective public service delivery has a significant negative impact on citizens' lives, and it can be felt even by local businesses; this, in turn, can harm prospects of potential local economic development opportunities. Gumah and Aziabah (2020) also propose that direct citizen surveys help measure efficiency in public services. Local governments need to focus on improving service provision and enhancing the satisfaction of their citizenry. The biggest challenge confronted by nearly all countries and organisations worldwide, is the ability to provide quality services to their service recipients with less spending (Arfeen, Sarantis & Pereira, 2018).

The ability to provide consistent quality services helps an organisation's integrity and reputation in the eyes of the public improving service levels by learning about the perceptions and expectations of service recipients, it is a novel approach. The success or failure of local governments is closely related to the level of services provided to meet citizens' expectations. A service provider can gain a long-term competitive edge by improving service delivery and quality (Boyle, 2020). Ncube (2018) echoes these thoughts, stating that perceptions of the influence of public financial resource management is perceived from the perspective of quality-of-service delivery, *at the citizen level*," Liestyanti and Prawiraatmadja (2021) highlighted that the discrepancy between citizens' expectations and their impressions of the service, determines service quality. Service quality, citizen satisfaction, and value are increasingly critical considerations in service organisations; therefore, improving service delivery and quality should be prioritised (Liestyanti & Prawiraatmadja, 2021).

Academics and legislators alike are concerned about citizens' impressions of public service providers' day-to-day operations. A growing body of behavioural public administration research supports this; emotional biases impact people's perceptions (Bekerom, Voet, & Christensen, 2021). *The customer's impression of the difference between expected and perceived service is called service quality* (Gron-roos (1982), Parasuraman, Zeithaml, and Berry (1988). "Service quality is a targeted assessment that depicts the customer's perception of various service characteristics, including reliability, responsiveness, assurance, empathy, and tangibles" (Zeithaml, 2003, p. 85). Failing to provide citizens with the high-quality services they anticipate might lead to discontent or dissatisfaction.

Dissatisfaction has negative consequences as it might lead to citizens refusing to pay rates and taxes; they may feel robbed, which could lead to protests as an express of their dissatisfaction. According to Masiya, Davids, and Mangai (2019), quality is vital for reforming municipal services and a key driver of increased citizen happiness. To improve service delivery, role-players must commence by gaining a better understanding of citizens' needs and priorities and can be achieved through periodic surveys. Citizen



perception is influenced by citizen experiences, how they perceive the service provided, and whether they are satisfied with their experiences. Arfeen et al. (2018) mentioned that the performance of the service or the department providing services, greatly influences citizens' perception of service delivery and controls the level of satisfaction they derive from the services. Local authorities can succeed in this globally competitive environment by providing genuine citizen service and service quality.

Local government, like many other grassroots service organisations, is under pressure to enhance the quality of their services. According to James and Moseley (2014), public administration experts have discovered that negative performance information (information about the services that the entities provide, that comes from the services recipient's evaluations of the services provided), has a more significant impact on citizens' views and satisfaction than positive performance information. According to Chakunda (2015), most local governments have difficulty in consistently offering high-quality services, resulting in citizens losing their trust in these institutions. Fisher (2021) mentioned that some local authorities genuinely desire to enhance their public image by improving the quality of their services to the community. Others are forced to use initiatives to the public or increase citizens' awareness of their rights.

This study intends to establish citizen expectations, views, and perspectives about the quality of municipal services offered by Mutare Municipality from a Zimbabwean perspective. This chapter focuses on the background of service quality, the problem statement, objectives, significance, delimitations, research assumptions, and limitations on the study's impact on service quality and citizen satisfaction, with Mutare municipality as a case study.

## **1.1 BACKGROUND OF THE STUDY**

Mutare municipality has a population of 188 243 (ZIMSTAT 2012 National Statistics). According to the City of Mutare website <https://www.mutarecity.co.zw>, the vision of Mutare municipality is to be a centre of excellent service delivery and a prime investment destination by 2030. Its mission is to be committed to the provision of quality service to all stakeholders, in a transparent manner at a competitive cost. Within its service delivery mandate, the City of Mutare has five departments: Housing and Community Services, Finance, Health, Engineering, Chamber Secretary, and Town Clerk. All the departments execute their mandate and carry out their role according to the Urban Councils Act Chapter 29:15 (2015). Land sales, water charges, sewerage charges, fire protection charges, licences, and fines are among the primary sources of revenue for the city. Despite a very explicit mission statement centred on providing quality services to all stakeholders in a transparent manner at a competitive cost, Mutare Municipality is facing daunting challenges that have resulted in a sharp decline in service delivery (Marumahoko,2020).

The deterioration in service delivery in Zimbabwe has harmed public engagement and the growth of associational life, (Chilunjika & Chilunjika ,2021). The degradation has been systemic to the point where citizens must respond systematically. Citizens have attempted to collaborate to increase their voice, and in the process, public engagement has been institutionalised, (Chilunjika & Chilunjika ,2021). UMRRT (2016) indicated that there have been service delivery protests between local councils and self-organised residents' groups such as Mutare Residents Association (MRA), Chitungwiza Residents Trust (CHITREST) in Chitungwiza, Bulawayo Residents Association (BURA) in Bulawayo, and Gweru Residents Forum (GRF). These organisations seek to hold municipal governments accountable for the public service delivery plans that have been delegated to them.

According to Masiya et al. (2019), citizen satisfaction studies help policymakers and service providers understand their citizenry, identify subgroups, and access needs, or discover gaps in demands. Furthermore, citizen contentment can be a good measure of a government's overall performance. Boyle (2020) mentioned that collecting data to

measure satisfaction levels is necessary to understand whether public expectations are being met. He said local governments had used citizen surveys to assess the outcomes of their service supply initiatives and obtain feedback from their clients for decades. Despite significant differences in the strategies adopted worldwide, public administration reforms have always centred on the need to provide more and better efficient public services (Fourie & Poggenpoel, 2016). The local government's most pressing developmental responsibility is to improve the socioeconomic environment in its jurisdictions. The subordinating idea, which contends that elected authorities closest to the people should carry out public duties, is upheld by this mandate. In Zimbabwe, local governments are given various powers and responsibilities delineated in schedules (Chakaipa & Chakunda, 2016, p. 29).

These obligations and responsibilities fall under the categories of governance, management, regulation, and service provision (Chigwata, Marumahoko & Madhekeni, 2019). Local administrations are given authority and responsibilities as reflected in Chapter 14, Section 276 of the Zimbabwean constitution. These requirements demonstrate how the present system binds councils in subordinate connections with the central government, in addition to existing legislation and politico-administrative practices. The government has a crucial role in ensuring that citizens receive the necessary public services. However, it must decentralise its responsibilities and functions because of its other functions. A constitutional review process that began in the 1990s resulted in a new constitution being accepted by the Zimbabwean government in 2013 (Marumahoko, 2020). The Lancaster House Constitution, ratified in Britain in 1979 during the Lancaster House Conference, served as Zimbabwe's legal framework before the adoption of the new constitution. The introduction of the new constitution in 2013 improved local government service delivery prospects (Marumahoko, 2018).

The new constitution was implemented when the two major political players worked together under the Government of National Unity, and there was more dialogue across the political divide. It was a significant victory when the local government was constitutionalised as one of the three levels of government (the other two being the

national government and province and metropolitan councils) (Marumahoko, 2018). Previously, the local government enacted mediocre laws that dealt with power disparities (Moyo,2014). , it must be noted that local governments are the third level of government, following provinces and ministries in Zimbabwe. Local authorities are established under the Urban Councils Act Chapter 29:15 (2015) or the Rural District Councils Act Chapter 29:13 (2002) to promote Zimbabwe's development strategy locally. Like many other developed and developing countries, the local government is responsible for delivering services efficiently and effectively.

According to Chigwata, et al (2019), local governments are public organisations that offer urban services to communities to enhance operations. In this regard, Murimoga and Musingafi (2014) discovered widespread dissatisfaction in municipal and local government service delivery in Zimbabwe. The UMRRT Baseline Survey Report from 2016 revealed that Mutare municipality was experiencing a social service delivery crisis, with the municipality failing to deliver on any of its service delivery lines. Four years later, the situation has not improved. According to Marumahoko (2020), using a social attitude survey conducted from March 2020 to the end of April 2020., the findings revealed how the City of Mutare has reversed or failed to impact poor local public service delivery significantly. Muchanyuka and Fotsin also attested to this, saying Mutare Municipality has been failing to deliver service to the citizens through inconsistent garbage collection, housing difficulties, inconsistent and inadequate water supply, and waste management, which has resulted in the dissatisfaction of citizens.

According to the UMRRT (2016) social service report, the municipality was no longer servicing housing, resulting in a housing backlog for people; as a result, four families, for example, were forced to share a room and divide it with curtains in places like Sakubva (Chisamba singles, blocks, old location) and Dangamvura (region A). Water and Waste Management also suffered due to the council's inability to repair ageing water pipelines; as a result, towns like Dangamvura became desperate for water, which was only available for a few hours each day (UMRRT,2016). Water was scarce in newfound villages like Gimboki; residents would rely on communal taps and stream-bank springs. In other parts

of the city, garbage collection had been delayed for four months, and only one of the council's ten refuse trucks was operating (UMRRT,2016).

On 21 June 2019, Newsday reported Mutare's mismanagement of the council's fund. The auditor general Chiri said that the Mutare municipality failed to bank and account for cash collected, (Newsday, 2019) which amounted to \$1,1 million, which contributed to a promotion to encourage residents to pay off their bills. In addition, it was indicated that Mutare Municipality had one ambulance servicing the whole city. These situations have contributed to citizen fatigue, promoting citizen disengagement, and discouraging citizens from participating in council affairs.

Based on the above discussion, it should be noted that it is crucial to note that citizens ought to know that apathy is not a reasonable response to inadequate service delivery. When it comes to poor service delivery, the citizen's voice is needed even more. A survey conducted , in 2017 by Peacebuilding and Capacity Development Foundation (PACDEF), a vocal non-governmental organisation, revealed that Mutare had a number of unmet social service needs, including those for roads, housing stands, waste collection, and water supply (Fungurai, 2019). Key stakeholders (including municipal citizens' groups and non-governmental organisations (NGOs) attested that municipal service delivery and capital development in local authority-administered areas had deteriorated. Many local authorities in Zimbabwe have struggled to deliver quality services three decades after independence, despite having detailed vision and mission statements guiding their operations (Hove & Tirimboi, 2011). Zimbabwean cities appear to be experiencing many challenges that have resulted in a substantial drop in service delivery. The latter is mainly funded by rates, sewerage charges, fire protection charges, licenses, and fines.

According to Jonga and Munzwa (2009), inadequate clean water and sewerage services have contributed to the high cholera outbreak. During the Zimbabwe National Water Authority (ZINWA) era, water shortages affected Zimbabwe's urban regions, and citizens struggled to maintain sanitary living conditions. According to Hove and Tirimboi (2011), the worst level of inadequate service delivery contributed to the cholera pandemic that swept the country. From 15 August 2008 to 17 March 2009, 189,164 cases and 4 047

deaths were documented (Office of Humanitarian Affairs' OCHA', 2009 quoted in Hove and Tirimboi 2011). Outbreaks like cholera have adverse economic and social consequences on municipalities' provision of quality services. In addition, local authorities will now have to direct funds allocated for developmental needs to try to control and combat the outbreak. According to the Bulawayo news 24 (December 2021) and News Day (June 2019), reports were made about poor service delivery in most Urban Councils, poor leadership and management have been highlighted as the leading cause of poor service delivery, in the Zimbabwean media.

Studies are now necessary to assess citizens' perceptions regarding the quality of services provided by Urban Councils. Evaluating citizens' responses can be invaluable in developing local authorities' strategies for improved service delivery (Van de Walle, 2018 & Bouckaert, Van de Walle, Maddens & Kampen 2002). The goal of this study is to comprehend the expectations of the public and how they view the level of service provided by the Zimbabwean municipality of Mutare. It is important to note that citizen satisfaction surveys will help the researcher understand the degree of satisfaction with the municipality's services and assist in developing findings and recommendations. The researcher submits that assessing the performance of public administration without including input from service end-users of the administration, will be pointless. Knowing which areas need service improvement in Mutare Municipality will benefit the council and the whole community; it could also help improve residents' quality of life. Local authorities should collaborate with residents to generate fresh ideas for societal improvement.

## **1.2 STATEMENT OF THE PROBLEM**

The local government is a level of government that is closest to the local people. Urban and rural local authorities, which existed in Zimbabwe before the ratification of the constitution of Zimbabwe, are acknowledged in Chapter 14, Section 274 of that document. Their responsibilities are outlined in the Urban Councils Act Chapter 29:15 (2015) and Rural District Act Chapter 29:13 (2002). The urban and rural modes of local administration allow for the establishment of various local administrations. Currently, three categories of urban local administrations are recognised by law: town councils, local

boards, and municipal councils (including cities), which are ordered according to their authority, resources, and discretion. All rural local authorities have the same status; they all have the same rights and obligations. The Local governments are critical in providing quality, affordable services in their jurisdictions, most efficiently and effectively. The Urban Councils Act Chapter 29:15 (2015) mandates Mutare municipality to provide social services such as water, sewerage, refuse collection, roads, street lighting, traffic lights, health, and housing, and exists for commercial, industrial, and institutional purposes, recreational facilities, fire and ambulance services.

Service delivery is a process by which the local government provides social service to residents. The efficient delivery of these public services is critical in shaping the urban environment and residents' quality of life. When an urban area offers services like social services, physical infrastructure, and municipal services that directly impact people's quality of life, it should be efficient and effective. A local authority serves an essential role in the community and is required to provide services on behalf of the central government.

Despite its mandate to provide efficient service delivery, Mutare municipality has been experiencing a social service delivery crisis. Poor road networks, infrequent garbage collection, health care crises at local clinics, corruption in the local council, and a lack of water supplies are all indications of inefficient service experienced in the city. The Manica Post ( March 2018) reported a water shortage in Dangamvura, Chikanga and other residential suburbs. Most suburbs in Mutare have been failing to deliver quality services with the potential of triggering contagious diseases. Dangamvura's high-density suburb is the hardest-hit area, with residents going for days without water, it is reported that some areas go without running water for more than five (5) years.

Most street lighting is not working, which has increased crime levels. In an article published on newZimbabwe.com (July 2021), cases of theft and housebreaking had become rampant across the city, with criminals targeting areas with non-functional public lights and areas along Aerodrome Road; this area was reported as having become a hotspot for theft and assault cases, according to the provincial police public relations department. Refuse collection remains a challenge for the Mutare council, with garbage

piles reportedly going uncollected for weeks. As a result, cholera, typhoid, and malaria outbreaks have occurred. The road infrastructure is dilapidated, which poses severe problems to the residents, which includes an increase in the number of accidents. In an article published in December 2020 in business times, the spokesperson for the council, Spren Mtiwi, mentioned that the road network was in a bad state. During the rainy season, roads are flooded, and run-off water sometimes seeps into businesses and residential properties. These service delivery challenges have dire consequences for the residents; moreover, these challenges can discourage investors in the city.

There have been many reports from the media and researchers on poor service delivery in Mutare municipality. According to Marumahoko (2020), Fungurai (2019) and UMRRT (2016), their research findings established that the city of Mutare service delivery manifests itself through rare refuse collection, the development of unchecked dumps, decaying apartments and council homes. Furthermore, poor sewer reticulation, corruption, serious mismanagement, and bribery of the city's management, poor road maintenance, and deteriorating health care quality in council clinics have been challenges the municipality faces (United Mutare Residents and Ratepayers Trust - UMRRT, 2016). According to the report, residents are usually dissatisfied with the council's system of handling their well-being and service delivery during previous years. The report also noted that the council's 2016 budget preferences had not received consideration as foreseen by residents. Residents attributed this to the misuse of loans and failure to justify the use of internal council funds, as the primary reasons for its water shortages in mostly high-density suburbs in Mutare.

The city council's failure to engage residents on these issues and respond to illegal incidents, has harmed its reputation. It impedes public resources' effective and efficient use (United Mutare Residents and Ratepayers Trust - UMRRT, 2016). In the Newsday edition of 30 January 2015, residents of Mutare gave the city of Mutare a 30-day deadline to improve service delivery; failure to do so would result in a rate boycott. The United Mutare Residents and Ratepayers Trust petitioned Mutare Mayor, claiming that service delivery standards in the Eastern border city had deteriorated to "unacceptably low levels. "The residents accused the Municipality management of neglecting roads, failing to



provide clean water regularly, garbage collection and inadequate street lighting. All these issues lead to disease, crime, and community underdevelopment.

The city of Mutare has been asked to address these service delivery challenges, as they affect the well-being of residents, and impact negatively on their levels of satisfaction. The failure of urban councils to conduct their service delivery mandate, significantly impacts the standard of living of their citizens. The topical issue of poor service delivery in urban councils has motivated the researcher to conduct this research in Mutare. It will evaluate how closely people's expectations and perceptions of service quality match, using SERVQUAL dimensions, and will help the researcher in developing recommendations.

### **1.3 JUSTIFICATION OF THE STUDY**

This study is justified because it will analyse the citizens' satisfaction with services provided by the Mutare municipality council, and it will measure how citizens' views of service quality meet their expectations through service quality dimensions. Issues of citizen perception have not been explored enough in prior studies. Councils in general, and Mutare municipality will benefit by being more informed and proactive (through recommendations) rather than reactive in-service delivery. It will aid in the prevention of avoidable disasters such as disease outbreaks and Cyclone Idai, which hit the Manicaland region in 2019. Considering that citizen satisfaction is strongly related to real service quality, the satisfaction survey will give policymakers and management a quick and simple approach to evaluate the impact of governance reforms on performance, particularly in sectors where service quality assessment is challenging. A thorough understanding of the factors that affect public satisfaction is crucial when evaluating the effects of decentralisation or other governance reform initiatives. The research findings contribute to the current knowledge base on understanding service quality in urban local authorities and to how the citizens perceive it. It will help to solve service challenges faced by local authorities and provide real solutions to municipalities across Zimbabwe and Mutare to meet minimal expectations from their communities in service delivery.

#### **1.4 RESEARCH OBJECTIVES**

1. To investigate citizen perceptions and expectations about the services delivered by Mutare municipality, to identify potential service quality gaps.
2. To determine the level of satisfaction with the services provided in terms of tangibility, reliability, responsiveness, assurance, and empathy.
3. To understand citizens' level of participation/involvement in determining the quality of services based on citizen input and feedback.
4. To assess the effects of poor service delivery on the residents of Mutare.
5. To understand the level and method of communication between the municipality and the citizens, regarding council affairs currently in place.

#### **1.5 RESEARCH QUESTIONS**

The purpose of the research will be to answer the following questions:

1. What are the citizens' perceptions and expectations of the Mutare municipality's services?
2. What is the level of satisfaction of citizens concerning services dimensions of tangibility, reliability, responsiveness, assurance, and empathy, provided by the Mutare City Council?
3. To what extent do residents participate in municipal affairs, and how does the council respond to feedback?
4. What impact does poor service delivery have on the citizens of Mutare's quality of life?
5. Which methods and level of communication are used to communicate with citizens and how is feedback processed?

#### **1.6 STATEMENT OF HYPOTHESIS**

H<sub>1</sub>: Tangibility has a positive relationship with citizen satisfaction.

H<sub>2</sub>: Reliability has a positive relationship with citizen satisfaction.

H<sub>3</sub>: Responsiveness has a positive relationship with citizen satisfaction.

H<sub>4</sub>: Assurance has a positive relationship with citizen satisfaction.

H<sub>5</sub>: Empathy has a positive relationship with citizen satisfaction.

H<sub>6</sub>: Perceived service quality has a positive relationship with citizen satisfaction.

H<sub>7</sub>: Service performance has a positive relationship with citizen satisfaction.

### **1.7 RATIONALE OF THE STUDY**

This study focused on the gap and disparity between citizens' expectations and perceptions of services. The research findings will assist the Mutare municipality's management in becoming aware of the fundamental challenges that citizens face regarding service delivery quality. It will assist them in developing effective strategies to address these and to develop rules and regulations to control the challenges and improve perceptions, thereby improving citizens' quality of life. The study will better understand the multi-dimensional concept of citizens' satisfaction in the Mutare municipality (once research has been done). It will contribute to achieving user-focused service delivery in urban councils bearing in mind that the user's perspective is increasingly an essential part of how government services are delivered.

The research findings would also enable the researcher to be awarded a Master of Administration in Public Administration and Management degree for her personal and professional progress and contribute more to national and local development.

### **1.8 ASSUMPTIONS**

the researcher will make several assumptions to produce valid research results in this study, which are as follows:

1. All respondents would have adequate knowledge of their councils' duties and responsibilities.
2. The respondents in the research process would be sincere and genuine in their responses which will lead to credible findings.
3. The researcher will consider services rendered to citizens through donor agencies and partnerships provided by Mutare City Council.
4. The respondents should be willing to participate freely and honestly.

## **1.9 DELIMITATIONS**

This study used the Mutare Municipality as a case study to examine how service quality affects customer satisfaction. Mutare is Zimbabwe's fourth-largest city, located in the eastern highlands of Manicaland province, with a population of 188,243 urban residents and 260,567 rural residents. Mutare is a border town between Zimbabwe and Mozambique and hence, is a unique tourist hub. Its topography is splendid and has diverse cultures and languages. It is the administrative and financial centre of Manicaland. The researcher administered online questionnaires to Mutare municipality residents. This research dealt with respondents from low-density to high-density residential properties in different social settings. Respondents who had experience with council services were considered, and had to have been in the city for at least one year as a prerequisite, to generate credible results.

## **1.10 RESEARCH APPROACH**

This part introduces the research design, which is covered in more detail in Chapter 3. To comprehend the participants' concepts and presumptions regarding service quality in Mutare municipality, this study employed a quantitative, empirical and deductive approach with theoretically predetermined variables. The history and ideas that informed this study on service quality came from notable people such as Parasuraman, Zeithaml and Berry (1985, Parasuraman et al. (1988) and Zeithaml et al. (2009), based on the significant research objective: to examine perceptions and expectations about the quality of services provided by Mutare municipality to find any potential service quality gaps.

The researcher adopted a correlational research design for this study. The goal was to gain a better understanding of the subject under investigation, which was citizens' perceptions and expectations of service quality in Mutare municipality. According to Saunders, Lewis, and Thornhill (2019), quantitative research is defined as research data that relies heavily on scientific methods of analysis and interpretation. The researcher aimed to determine the relationships between and among phenomena, and to see whether there was a correlation between service quality and citizen satisfaction. Online

questionnaires were distributed to gather research data, which was then interpreted through descriptive analysis and inferential statistics.

### 1.11 DEFINITION OF KEY TERMS

The following concepts were applied to construct this research: citizen perceptions; public services; service delivery; service expectations; public service satisfaction, quality, local government (particularly concerning citizen evaluation); and communication.

**Local government:** A sphere of government that interacts most closely with people, responds effectively to local problems, and where service delivery occurs. It is also a well-capacitated sphere and can expedite socio-economic development and effectively address local issues, (Fisher, 2021). In Zimbabwe, **local government**" means a municipal council, town council, rural district council, or local board. The Urban Councils Act Chapter 29:15, (2015), defined *local government* as the level of government closer to the people. The researcher will interchangeably use words like local government, urban council, and municipal council.

**Service delivery:** According to Masiya et al. (2019), service delivery is a collection of formal provisions the government has established, to offer goods and services to its residents.

**Service quality:** The overall evaluation of the service by the recipient is referred to as service quality. Quality service is the capacity of a service provider to satisfy customers efficiently to improve business performance. In the service sector, "quality" is also essential in determining an organisation's success (Ramya, Kowsalya & Dharanipriya, 2019).

**Service Expectations:** *Expectations* are defined by Hjortskov (2019) as prospective envisioned subjective attitudes and viewpoints that include a wide range of factors. Expectations affect how citizen attitudes are formed, and their behaviours towards public services. Those attitudes might comprise citizen satisfaction, where expectations play a pivotal role; appropriate behaviours embrace high-quality services and the choice to voice to speak out about opinions about them (Hjortskov, 2019).

**Citizen Perceptions:** Perception is as the sensory experience of the world (Cherry, 2022), how people choose, organise, and assess the five senses' stimuli and how

they understand the world. Perception is the process where people interpret and organise sensory perceptions to provide meaning to their surroundings, and through this experience, gain information about the environment around them (Cant, Brink, & Brijal, 2002:99).

**Service satisfaction:** This is the impression that a product or service meets or exceeds in terms of customers' expectations. The claimed Disconfirmation Paradigm elucidates this concept (Boyle,2020). The Cambridge dictionary (2000) defined *satisfaction* as an excellent sensation 'you acquire when receiving something you wanted or have done something you wanted to do'. It is a way of dealing with a complaint or problem that makes the complainant feel happy.

**Citizens:** According to the Macmillan dictionary (2009), a citizen is "someone who can live permanently in a country and has privilege to its legal and social benefits as well as legal obligations toward it." Boyle (2020) stated that a citizen is a person or a community member with rights, responsibilities, and entitlements bound by specific duties and obligations. A person who is the direct recipient of service in the context of this study is a citizen. Citizens of Mutare participated in the study by responding to the research questions.

**Services delivery:** In the context of this study, "services" refers to the tasks carried out or authorised to be carried out by the local government department, such as the supply of water, health care, schools, street lighting, and several other duties as outlined in the Urban Councils Act, 2015. (Chapter 29:15). The second chapter of the investigation, which is about local government services, will provide more detail.

## **1.12 CONCLUSION**

Chapter one provided the introduction, background of the study, justification, problem statement, aims, statement of hypothesis, study significance and delineations. By evaluating service quality and comprehending how several factors influence service quality, service organizations should be able to design the service delivery process effectively and efficiently, delivering exceptional service to their citizens. The study is concerned with how Mutare's citizens feel about their services.

### 1.13 LAYOUT OF RESEARCH

The research outline and break down of chapters will be as follows:

**Chapter one:** provides a context to the problem, the problem statement, and the justification of the study. The research objectives and statement of hypothesis follow to crystallise the features that formed the basis of the questionnaire for data collection under methodology. The significance of the study, highlights the study's importance, essentially a search for feedback for the service provider.

**Chapter two:** will focus on the theoretical and conceptual framework of the research and demonstrate how it was relevant to the study. It covered existing literature on these types of research and what other scholars had found or postulated.

**Chapter three:** presents and discusses the methodology used in conducting the research. It justifies the sampling methods used, how critical data was gathered and how it was analysed.

**Chapter four:** presents research results, interpretation analysis and discussion.

**Chapter five:** summarises the research outcomes, research conclusions, and study recommendations.

## **CHAPTER 2: LITERATURE REVIEW**

### **2.0 INTRODUCTION**

The background information, problem statement, and objectives of the study were highlighted in the previous chapter, Chapter one. Chapter two begins by providing an overview of the legislative framework, which discusses the critical ideas in service delivery and the legislative structure and philosophies that govern service delivery in Zimbabwe's local government and the Urban Councils Act Chapter 29:15 (2015) is discussed in this section. Thereafter, the discussion on public service delivery follows; this section includes empirical studies on public service delivery, the elements that affect service delivery and performance gaps, which are the differences between citizens' expectations and perceptions of services, which are discussed in this chapter, where lessons can be drawn. The concept, dimensions, customer satisfaction, customer expectations and perceptions, and service-quality measurement techniques are highlighted in the subject of service quality. By using the example of Mutare Municipality, this chapter aims to provide the underlying theories, conceptual framework, and empirical investigations about the impact of service quality on citizen satisfaction. The researcher will use the SERVQUAL and the GAP service quality models to help generate and develop study recommendations.

### **2.1 LEGISLATIVE FRAMEWORK FOR LOCAL GOVERNMENT IN ZIMBABWE**

Zimbabwe has a long history of decentralisation and local governance that can be traced back to the pre-colonial era. The development of local government in the pre-colonial era describes traditional kingdoms headed by traditional leaders as representing embryonic forms of local government (Nyikadzino, 2022). Various projects were initiated at the local level through cooperatives, with traditional leaders spearheading the planning and implementation processes (Kurebwa, 2015). Decentralisation of local governance was adopted to give communities more authority to influence and participate in local development through the election of local representatives. The local government unit was to be changed at independence to facilitate local involvement and coordinate territory activities and development.



The commitment to have a local government that is independent in its fiscal management and local development planning is still a fantasy. Local Government Units function under the authority and policy directions of the central government, which are frequently out of step with various local issues, undermining their ability to play an economic role considering local conditions. The unique aspect of Zimbabwe's government is that it is the only source of state power that encourages the uniform application of policies, with local governments acting more as extensions of central authority than as agents of local development (Chakunda, 2018).

The local government is a public administrative system whose powers and functions are established by the constitution and statutory legislation adopted by local elected officials (Marumahoko, Afolabi, Sadie and Nhede, 2020). Cities, municipalities, towns, and local boards are the hierarchical divisions of urban councils (The Green Paper on Zimbabwe's Local Government, 2014). According to Ahmad and Koech (2019), local governments are best positioned to tailor the delivery of a service to citizens' needs because they are more in touch with the public, turn citizens into service recipients and consumers, and provide greater transparency for citizens regarding service quality.

There have been many policies formulated by the African Union (AU) with the aim to improve service delivery at the local government level. The African Charter on Decentralisation, Local Governance and Local Development, adopted in 2014, is one also a policy document formulated by the African Union that aims to promote the local government's role in local development. It stresses that central governments must collaborate closely with local authorities to provide the institutional, budgetary, and regulatory structures that support and encourage private sector and community development investments or activities. By pledging its members to democratic, bottom-up governance, the decentralisation framework places local government at the centre of service delivery and local development. It provides a base upon which decentralisation for development can be built. Eighteen of the AU's 55-member countries had signed the Charter, while only a further eight have ratified it, Zimbabwe has not yet signed the Charter (Mapuva & Takabika, 2020).

Adopting these policies is essential for improving service delivery and people's living conditions. It serves as a gauge and wake-up call for the government to identify areas that require focus and enhancement. In an article published on [sabcnews.com](http://sabcnews.com) in August 2021, Dr Nkosazana Dlamini Zuma, the South African Minister of Cooperative Governance and Traditional Affairs, declared the signing of the Charter in 2021 to be a significant step towards achieving the aspirations and developmental goals of the South African people. She continued by saying that this would reinforce efforts to emancipate women and provide services for everyone, particularly in rural areas. Zimbabwe and other countries still need to ratify this Charter and adopt the principles of good governance to improve service delivery.

The urban local councils of Zimbabwe are required by Section 274 of the Constitution to oversee the administration of all regions under their control. Sub-section 1 mandates that the urban local authorities represent the citizens within their spheres of influence. They must further peoples' ambitions. The term "representing" indicates acting under the wishes or desires of the populace. This suggests that the people should govern over the people. The registered voters of a particular urban area are given the authority under this sub-section 2 to elect the council members overseeing the area's development initiatives (Mapuva & Takabika, 2020).

The provisions of this subsection agree with the dictates of Article 21 of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights (United Nations, 1948) as well as Article 13 (2) of the African Charter on Human and People's Rights, which stresses the right of the citizens to participate in the government of their country, directly or through freely elected representatives". According to Mapuva and Takabika (2020), This declaration also stresses that the people's will shall be the basis of government authority; this will shall be expressed through voting for the people they want to represent them and through a secret ballot and by equivalent free voting procedures.

The Electoral Law 2:13, referred to in Section 274 (4) of the constitution, clearly stipulates the election of councillors, mayors and chairpersons. The Electoral Act states that for one to be eligible to stand as a Councillor, he/she ought to be at least 21 years of age, be a resident of the ward they wish to represent and must be a registered voter. The Act is silent on academic or professional qualifications, probably regarding equality and non-discrimination as enshrined in Section 56 (3). In Zimbabwe, general elections for local government are held every four years.

According to the Zimbabwean constitution, the government is divided into central government, provincial administration, and local government. In Zimbabwe, the local government system is formed as the third tier of government, guaranteed by Chapter 14, Section 274 of the Zimbabwean constitution. Under section 274 (2), details and modalities in urban management are given, including the role of councillors elected by registered voters living in the urban areas concerned. It consists of elected representatives, and they must offer essential services to the people at the grassroots (Chigwata et al., 2019).

**Figure 2.1: Three Tiers of the government of Zimbabwe.**



Source: *Adapted and modified from Mlambo (2020:16)*

The national, provincial, and local governments are the three tiers of government in Zimbabwe. The national government of Zimbabwe is responsible for formulating policies and overseeing the effective operation of the local governments. Additionally, the national government offers competent local administration and sustainable housing provision (Mlambo, 2020, p. 16). Local government oversight and control fall under the purview of

the provincial government, facilitating traditional leaders' operations, promoting and coordinating development efforts, and overseeing housing and estates.

According to Zimbabwe's constitution Amendment No. 23 (2013), local authorities are split into two groups: urban councils, which represent and handle the affairs of people in urban councils, and rural councils, which handle those of people in rural areas (Mlambo, 2020, p. 16). In Zimbabwe, local governments are coordinated by the Ministry of Local Government. The Urban Councils Act, which describes the purpose for creating urban councils and how they would function, is supervised by the Minister of Local Government, Urban and Rural Development. An in-depth analysis of the Urban Councils Act Chapter 29:15 (2015) is provided in the following section as the study evaluates Mutare Municipality, a Zimbabwean urban local authority.

### **2.1.1 The Urban Councils Act Chapter 29:15 (2015).**

The Urban Councils Act governs the formation of municipalities and towns and their administration by local boards and municipal and town councils. It emphasises how cities are built and outlines all the functions and responsibilities. A city's status is determined by several elements, including its size and population, infrastructure, services provided, and social trends. Elected and appointed officials manage urban councils. The Urban Councils Act, which governs the day-to-day activities of urban councils, gives them several responsibilities which include:

- Supplying water for domestic, commercial, and industrial purposes; construction and upkeep of bridges, sewers, as well as drains
- Housing, transportation, and street lighting; hospitals, clinics, ambulances, maternity centres, and child welfare organisations.
- Schools, libraries, theatres, music, and science organisations, as well as garbage removal and disposal facilities,
- Firefighting, municipal police, park, recreation, grounds, and open space maintenance.

The efficiency of the political and administrative processes is significantly linked to the amount to which any local government may provide services" (Marumahoko, 2020), ". The parent ministry and the Urban Councils Act Chapter 29:15 (2015) oversee the financing and taxation of urban local administrations. The following are the principal financing sources for municipal councils in Zimbabwe:

- Revenue from services given, such as water sales; fees or tariffs for services delivered.
- Grants for education, health, and road construction; central government loans for housing open market and general loan funds for other infrastructures such as water, sewerage reticulation, roads, and stormwater drainage available through the national housing fund.
- The levying of property assessment rates.

Despite all the provisions in the Urban Councils Act, the local government still faces challenges in delivering quality services because the urban councils do not have original powers that reside with the central government. The central government determines which powers and functions urban councils will perform (Marumahoko,2020; Mlambo, 2020; Chakaipa, 2016 & Fisher,2021). It is clear from the authors above that the use of delegated powers has harmed the ability of urban governments to provide services effectively and efficiently. The claim is that the level of government closest to the people should decide to deliver a specific service. As a local authority, the Mutare municipality must be given the autonomy to run and make council decisions without an elevated level of central interference. The following discussion is on public service delivery.

## **2.2 PUBLIC SERVICE DELIVERY**

This section of the research will discuss different definitions of public service delivery from different authors to give the reader an understanding of the concepts that will be discussed. Masuku and Jili (2019) state that the public service delivery system is one of the most significant ways to reduce poverty through poverty programs. Local governments and relevant stakeholders must integrate their processes and services to

guarantee effective and efficient service delivery. In simple terms, *public service delivery* can be defined as a process by which local or municipal governments render public services like sewerage, garbage collection, street lighting and health care.

Liestyantiand and Prawiraatmadja (2021) mentioned that public service delivery is when social services are provided by the government (or its agencies) to those who live within its jurisdiction. With each passing day, municipalities are receiving a substantial position because of the greater competition to continue improving service provision among governments worldwide (per Van der Waladt, 2018). In the context of this research, public service delivery is when Mutare municipality provides social services to its citizenry as stipulated above as in the previous sections under the Urban Councils Act Chapter 29:15 (2015).

Furthermore, because of globalisation, localisation, and the information revolution, citizens have become more aware of their civil liberties in terms of services. It is now critical for Mutare municipality and local governments to take service recipients seriously and understand their needs to continue providing relevant services to citizens to ensure sustainable development. As per Van der Waladt (2018), effective service delivery can be seen as a requirement for the development and prosperity of communities. Furthermore, an effective urban government should promote socioeconomic development and create the conditions for localities to establish more resilient means of subsistence. The concept of service delivery includes programs and activities related to the powers and responsibilities that various levels of government are expected to carry out (Chigwata et al.,2019).

Besley and Ghatak (2018) argue that linkages between recipients, legislators, and service providers are used to distribute public services (such as municipalities, clinics, and schools). According to the authors, the primary concern in public service provision is how the various parties' responsibilities are formed and implemented. For this to be possible, government departments need human resources who are suitably trained and have the necessary skills to provide the services they are responsible for (Cutu, 2021; Dzansi & Dzansi,2001). Ncube (2018) agrees with Besley and Ghatak (2018), Cutu (2021), and

Dzansi and Dzansi (2001) that educating government executives as permanent secretaries and directors in government ministries and municipalities will help develop skills and improve service delivery.

Mutare Municipalities should recognise the vital role of workers in service delivery and should not disregard employee attitudes, qualities, and behaviours since this is likely to influence service delivery as noted above. According to these scholars, the delivery of public services is predicated on four major issues:

- Delivery of municipal services is mission-driven, fundamentally changing the conventional idea of profit maximization in the case of private sector organizations.
- Obligations in the provision of public services in the political, administrative, and market spheres.
- It is concerned with the system of punishment and restitution for agents' actions, as well as how decision-makers are chosen. It should not, however, must be supervised by official relations.
- Competitive pressure from private organisations can motivate public organisations to improve productivity to preserve funding and citizens.

The above four major issues as stated by Besley and Ghatak (2018), Cutu (2021), and Dzansi and Dzansi (2001) challenges Mutare municipality as a provider of public services' concern should be what service beneficiaries want instead of what it is willing to provide to continue serving their community needs and enhance satisfaction of the citizens.

### **2.2.1 International perspectives on public service delivery challenges**

This section discusses service delivery from Australia, Bangladesh, the United Kingdom, and Nigeria. The researcher chose the countries to gain factual, contextual, in-depth knowledge of public service delivery challenges from an international perspective and to draw lessons that can be applied to Mutare municipality. The research will begin with Australia, Bangladesh, the United Kingdom, and Nigeria.

According to Tamrakar (2010), in many developing countries, public service delivery could be better, more time-consuming, excessively formalised, expensive, riddled with red tape, and needs more transparency. Tamrakar (2010) stressed the failure of public servants to act as servants of the people rather than as leaders who have no accountability or transparency obligations to the citizenry. On the other hand, citizens have resorted to the improved service delivery of the private sector. As a result, they regard the public sector as yet another provider of services for which taxes are levied (Matei, Matei & Lazar, 2015).

#### **2.2.1.1 The Southeast Australia Experience**

In 1999, the Western Australian Department of Indigenous Affairs (DIA) mentioned several barriers to service delivery, which include resource constraints, land distribution, central government agencies choosing to ignore local government contracts and involvement, poor infrastructure, local government's limited authority to manage and control health and education services, and exceptions in other areas.

#### **2.2.1.2 The Bangladesh service delivery challenges**

According to Sadiki (2019), one of the critical institutional problems confronting service delivery at the local municipalities in Bangladesh is a lack of skilled workforce and resources, lack of coordination and information, systematic problems of decentralisation, political instability, and corruption, amongst others as significant obstacles of the local government to providing quality services to the local people. A study by Aminu zaman (2010) also reviewed local governments' need for more material support, such as computers and transportation organisational resources and the capability to develop and implement creative service delivery models in job creation, universal healthcare, and professional training. Aminuzzaman (2010) indicated that there is indeed a need for more cooperation between local governments and public extension service delivery employees on the ground. Aminuzzaman (2010) noted no formal links between local government departmental committees and the government's respective line ministries workforce.

Due to this isolation, many local government services are non - functional and ineffective. Local governments are also barred from receiving technical and professional assistance



from government line departments. Other issues raised by Aminuzzaman's (2010) study included a lack of adequate rules and regulations, inefficient monitoring, a lack of accountability and transparency, political meddling, non-cooperation from central government-based bureaucracy, an inadequate social understanding, the exclusion of women, and a constrained and precarious revenue base.

#### **2.2.1.3 United Kingdom service delivery challenges**

Sarshar and Moores (2006) conducted in the United Kingdom on improving service delivery in facilities management, an identical study to the one by Aminuzzaman (2010). Below were identified as significant challenges to service delivery:

- **Inadequate strategic awareness:** The study found out that regardless of the state having a vital plan of orders and procedures, it was discovered that several expert and managerial employees did not know the issues raised and how they should affect day-to-day activities.
- **Inadequate capacity:** The study found that much of the operational staff of national were not knowledgeable of control guidelines and their responsibilities. Lack of training was the primary issue of the awareness; employees were doing duties without having received adequate training exposing themselves and customers to risk.
- **Inadequate performance appraisal:** Lack of consistency and incorporation among performance monitoring was another issue that affected the delivery of services; despite the numerous monitoring systems in place.
- **Poor coordination processes:** Although each service had its expert processes for describing service requirements, conducting research, and supervising providers, the Executive's coordination was still based on simple mechanisms, as well as face-to-face interaction and evaluations, and the various service groups lacked clear and attainable performance standards, this led to long-standing disagreements between some of the service delivery teams, which reduced service quality.

It was also established that there was a high turnover of operational staff and an inadequate level of management resources, which impacted the delivery of services.

#### **2.2.1.4 Nigerian service delivery experience**

An evaluation of the local government administration in Nigeria and the challenges local governments face in delivering public services at the community level is provided by research done by Boris (2015). A thorough analysis of the performance of local governments in Nigeria shows that many issues contributed to their inability to provide services efficiently. Following are some of the elements that contribute to the local government's inability to perform its service delivery duties effectively and competently:

- (a) A lack of income, (b) the deterioration of local functions by state governments and their agencies, particularly in revenue-generating areas, (c) Inadequate skilful and knowledgeable human resources, a permissive attitude of current local government staff, weak governance, variable systems of local government, among other things, and (d) Level of coordination of relevant communities in the delivery of local service.

#### **2.2.1.5 Lessons learnt from the international perspective.**

From all the examples above, it is evident that local government challenges are common in various parts of the world and clearly show that improvement in local government remains a high priority in most countries. The study findings from the four countries assisted the researcher in coming up with recommendations; that Mutare municipality can implement to improve service delivery and enhance citizen satisfaction. Enhancing service delivery and a happy community should be the ultimate goal of all local governments to serve the needs of communities and create an enabling environment for the residents.

From the Australian local government experiences, resource constraints and the local government's limited authority to manage and control local initiatives were highlighted as some of the causes that stifled the performance of local government agencies and which Zimbabwe can learn from. Unless the relationship between citizens and government is

more fully developed, local government actions will not necessarily improve the conditions of people's lives. In the case of local authorities in Zimbabwe, the Ministry of Local government in Zimbabwe can draw lessons from Australia by allowing local government financial autonomy to run their councils' operations and impact change in their communities without too much involvement from the central government.

Allowing local government autonomous relationship aligns with the African Charter on Decentralisation provisions, Local Governance and Local Development of 2014, encouraging central governments to collaborate closely with local authorities by providing institutional, budgetary, and regulatory structures that support and encourage and encourage private sector and community development investments or activities. According to Chakaipa and Chakunda (2016), the central government in Zimbabwe's overall control has stifled local government performance. Local governments need more functional space to exercise functional autonomy due to a stringent operational environment prohibiting pursuing external financing arrangements without central government approval. Allowing councils financial autonomy assists them in making swift decisions to be able to address urgent needs and improve the residents' livelihoods.

Lack of competent staff was also one of the major issues that stood out from the Bangladesh and Nigerian experiences. As previously mentioned, these difficulties have significantly influenced the delivery of social services. The current research findings also indicated that most participants were unhappy with service quality and rated the municipality's staff's knowledge low and needed more confidence in them. The Mutare municipality can learn from this by emphasising capacity building and providing council staff with the appropriate training to enhance service performance. For successful and efficient service delivery that upholds honesty, impartiality, transparency, and responsiveness to the demands of ordinary people, it is essential to acquire well-trained, competent human resources.

It is also worth mentioning that the exclusion of women from decision-making in Bangladesh was pointed out as an area that has impacted the delivery of efficient services. The Mutare municipality must ensure the inclusion of women's perspectives in the planning and execution of municipal projects to improve service delivery. The findings

helped the researcher to produce recommendations that the council can apply to improve service delivery and satisfaction of the citizenry, which will be discussed in the closing chapter.

### **2.2.2. Variables which affect efficient and effective service delivery**

According to Akpan (2008), the following are the key variables influencing efficient and effective service delivery at local levels. As a local government, Mutare municipality can consider these variables and see what areas need attention to deliver services effectively and efficiently to the residents. Below are the variables as stated by Akpan (2008):

**i. Suitable Constitutional and Legal Framework** - Lower-level government powers and functions must be specified through an appropriate legal and constitutional framework. The central government must be prepared to distribute administrative duties and recognise the importance of local governments in service delivery.

**ii. Sufficient and Knowledgeable Human Resources** – Human resources or staff are one of the most critical determinants of sub-national governments' service delivery efficiency and effectiveness. In this regard, the sufficiency and competency of that staff are critical.

**iii. Sufficient Financial Infrastructure** - Local authorities should have the ability to legally raise the funds required to cover their expenses should be granted to them. As a result, the fiscal partnership between the centre and the lower levels of government must be based on respect, fairness, and justice.

**iv. Transparency and Accountability** – Openness and public accountability are essential components of economic development and must be followed to mitigate this risk of abusing power in local governments. Theoretically, increasing widespread support and legitimacy in selecting public services should result from assigning tasks to smaller groups closer to the populace.

**v. Ensure Easy Community Access to Information and Services** - One of the most serious issues confronting the public sector is that policymakers and ordinary citizens have limited access to information and services.

**vi. Mutual Understanding between the Central and Lower Levels of Government** – To reduce tensions and conflicts, both central and local governments must engage in dialogues and discuss issues of concern to face new challenges and ensure fiscal sustainability.

## **2.3 UNDERSTANDING CUSTOMER EXPECTATIONS**

Service organisations that do not understand service recipients' expectations risk spending money and time while losing consumers to rivals and other resources on irrelevant aspects of their target market. The same applies to the local government; understanding citizens' perceptions is crucial in retaining ratepayers, who are the primary source of revenue for Zimbabwean municipalities. According to Zeithaml et al. (2008:75), customer expectations are a critical factor that service organisations should consider. The consequences of consumer expectations have been well-recognised with private-sector products. This research seeks to find out citizens' expectations and their perception of service delivery in Mutare Municipality. A discussion without understanding what expectations will be meaningless. Still, little research has studied what influences citizen expectations of public services (James, 2011).

There is a considerable discrepancy between residents' service expectations and the actual services, (or believe they receive) assert Dinsdale and Marson (1999:21). Service expectations are generally what customers desire to receive, what they expect to receive throughout the service supply process, and they act as a baseline against which current and future service interactions are judged (Cant, Brink & Brinjal, 2002:239). Dinsdale and Marson's (1999:21) provide a probable description of the citizen's previously mentioned behaviour insofar as it demonstrates the gap mentioned above. Parasuraman et al. (1988) agree with this phenomenon that citizens' expectations of service quality are based on comparing their expectations (what they believe service providers should offer) versus perceptions of service provider performance). According to James (2011), expectations

were defined as the decisions of what subgroups deliberate will or should happen under specific circumstances. Expectations can be divided into two categories: (1) Expectations that are positive and (2) expectations that are normative. Citizens' positive expectations are their perceptions of service performance, whereas citizens' normative expectations refer to prescribed or standard assumptions about service performance.

Nonetheless, there are minor investigations into what drives citizen expectations is explored overtime (Hjortskov,2019). An essential component of public service attitudes is citizen expectations (Van Ryzin, 2004; James, 2011). In the context of this study, if public services are poor and fail to meet expectations, citizens may become dissatisfied and seek alternative providers; this will, in turn, deplete the revenue sources of the council. Poor service delivery in Mutare can shun potential investors away and impact profoundly on the resident's standard of living because some will lose their jobs. Citizen dissatisfaction with public service may lead to voting for someone or even protesting to improve service delivery.

Furthermore, even though public outcomes are challenging to measure accurately, there has been an overall push toward performance measurement outcomes in public management (Masiya et al.,2019). Municipal officials and politicians are increasingly conducting citizen satisfaction surveys to gather data about performance, satisfaction, and expectations (Masiya et al.,2019).

## **2. 4 CITIZEN PERCEPTION**

Service providers ought to be concerned about how the public views the performance of public service providers (van den Bekerom, van der Voet & Christensen, 2020; Wetterberg and Wibbels ,2018) argued that citizen perceptions are significant for several reasons, including the fact that providing security and basic services is at the heart of the contract and that providing services shows the government's desire and ability to address citizens' needs and demands. According to Brinkerhoff et al. (2018), residents are more likely to accept state power and legitimacy when they believe that the government is upholding its end of the social contract.

Mutare's municipality must understand citizens' perceptions because, without this knowledge, it will not know which services people require the most; understanding the perceptions will result in a satisfied community that knows their concerns are valued. Perception is how service recipients see something based on their experience. This view is shared by Marumahoko (2020) and Leach (2018). They both argue that it is critical to tap into ordinary people's perspectives to assess whether public policies and decentralised government programs and plans are reaching the people and achieving the intended goals and aims. Without this awareness of citizens' perceptions in Mutare municipality, the municipality will not know how to improve the quality of its offering; there is no room for improvement, no urgency in the improvement and a vicious cycle of inadequate service delivery that was discussed in the first chapter.

Every act of perception is assumed to be backed by the person's experience, which has developed a reasonably stable cognitive organisation within the person and determines the interpretation of a particular perception (Cant et al., 2002, p. 100). Brink and Berndt (2004:59) agree, asserting that perception is formed by several observations made by the service recipient. It is critical to remember that perception can transform from day to day and from experience to experience. The service provider should understand the importance of perception. Perceptions, unlike attitudes, can be influenced and changed. Perceptions may differ from reality depending on an individual's experience and point of reference (Harvey & Brown, 2001, p. 108).

Perception is also thought to be specific, with people only realising a tiny number of specific stimuli (Cant et al., 2002, p. 100). Perceptions are frequently formed over time, indicating how customers are treated (Theron et al., 2003, p. 9). Therefore, the researcher considered the perceptions of the individuals who participated in this survey in Mutare municipality as the basis to come up with recommendations. It is important to note that these perceptions can change over time and from person to person.

## **2. 4.1 Factors that influence the formation of citizen perceptions**

According to Hyewon, Gang and Luis (2021) and Groonos (2007), perceptions are derived from previous interactions with the service provider, rival services in the same sector, or related services in different sectors. Without prior experience, service recipients are more inclined to base their expectations on recommendations, news items, or marketing initiatives (Gronos, 2007). Hyewon et al. (2021) highlighted that expectations change over time because of changes in marketing, service technology, innovations, societal changes, and other factors.

Khadka and Maharjan (2017) stressed that a successful organisation could exceed expectations at every process phase. In general, prior experiences are essential to who we are today; previous experiences influence perception and they form our prejudices, thoughts, and expectations of others and ourselves. It is essential to be open to shifting our perceptions when circumstances change. Khadka and Maharjan (2017) also agree with Hyewon et al.'s (2021) thoughts above that customers' demands, interactions, and anticipated (expected service) influence organisational marketing communications activities. The authors went on to say that services perceived by customers (the perceived service) result from a series of internal organisational decisions and actions.

A recent study by van den Bekerom et al. (2021) in Netherlands made a novel contribution by investigating how perceptions are formed. The main question was whether citizens are more depressed about failing public service delivery than failing private service delivery, and if so, why? A study sample of 2,623 Dutch citizens was conducted, the study's main conclusion was that negative performance evidence has a greater impact on public organisations than on private organisations. Yet, this bias is prevalent among people who select a private service provider and differs among service areas. According to the study findings, citizens' evaluations of public services are influenced by various biases. These prejudices have a significant impact on how citizens perceive public organisations.

Van den Bekerom et al. (2021) went on to say further research into these complexities is necessary to understand political performance prejudices and intellectual bias in citizen



performance evaluations. This research is crucial for behavioural public administration scholars who want to understand the significant implications of a wide range of extremely diverse forces for the wide range of organizations that provide public services. The above research findings reviewed that public services tend to be inadequate and dissatisfying to citizens and are consistent with this research's results that Mutare Municipality is not exempt from the minimal, at best, service delivery culture of other public institutions. This culture needs to be improved in order to raise public satisfaction.

Insight Research in Malaysia conducted a study on the role of government in 1992, Ekos Research Associates Inc. in 1996, and the National Quality Institute in 1996 and 1997. The survey was evaluated by comparing government services to those provided by the private sector. These surveys repeatedly observed that the public evaluates the efficiency of public services considerably lower than private-sector services (e.g., banks). It noted that perceptions of politics and politicians were vital in influencing public service perceptions (Dinsdale & Marson, 1999, p. 11). Leach (2018) asserts that the definitions of satisfaction, quality, and loyalty in the service sector are impacted by variations in the types of services provided in the public and private sectors. This suggests that public (shared) services have unique ways of using these ideas. Perceived levels of government performance impact organisational trust, and poorer perceptions of municipal success were linked to low levels of institutional trust (Roberts & Hemson, 2008, p. 59).

According to Dinsdale and Marson's (1999) research, citizens need help distinguishing between the political sphere and public service (Dinsdale & Marson, 1999, p. 11). The features of public service consequence in its creation first from the political sphere (Dinsdale & Marson, 1999, p. 11). Only some factors have been highlighted by Dinsdale and Marson (1999:11) as impacting how citizens perceive governmental services. Public service impressions are fundamentally influenced by service expectations that result from several interactions with the service during the citizen's search for service information (Lovelock & Wirtz, 2011, p. 64). People's service demands are based on characteristics, specific circumstances, and prior service experiences with government service providers (Lovelock & Wirtz, 2011, p. 64). General conceptions of public services, as well as those of public employees and officials, are another aspect that shapes perceptions. These

impressions are connected to the larger ethos and ideals of government as an organization, such as equity, fairness, and judicial scrutiny (Dinsdale & Marson, 1999, p. 11).

Citizens' attributes, commonly known as mutually shared traits conveyed by citizens, also significantly influence service perceptions, such as age (Dinsdale & Marson, 1999, p. 11). Overall public service delivery perspectives also affect public service perceptions; for example, the behaviour and understanding demonstrated by administrative staff during the service interaction is a distinctive trait of service quality (Lovelock & Wirtz, 2011, p. 302). Additionally, this will have a favourable or unfavourable impact on citizens' impressions influencing citizens' perceptions of public services (Dinsdale & Marson, 1999, p. 11). Dinsdale and Marson (1999) developed *Dispelling Myths and Redrawing Maps Citizen/Client Surveys* in response to the Head of the Public Service's directive to render service improvement a government primary concern.

The review had two principal aims: (i) to define and record what has already been understood about citizens' perceptions of government service, and (ii) to pinpoint knowledge gaps that need further research for managers to increase efficiency and effectiveness measurably. Dinsdale and Marson (1999) observed that surveys that claim clients and citizens are dissatisfied with public sector services or that private sector services are of better quality than public sector services may not be telling the whole story. Specific public sector services should not be compared to private sector services. In simplest terms, public sector services discover different ends (protecting citizens' interests) via various methods (fairness and due process) than profit-seeking private enterprise services. As a result, public and private sector services attempt to enhance citizen satisfaction to guarantee survival. Nevertheless, in the private sector, this gratification must be matched with the need to profit in survival.

## **2. 5 SERVICE QUALITY CONCEPTS**

Ncube (2018) and Fisher (2021) agreed that in a volatile and intensely competitive global environment, local governments are expected to keep offering their residents high-quality services even though they are not commercial entities to ensure their sustainability. Mutare Municipality, as a local government, though it is not a business entity, must always

strive to ensure that it provides quality services to the citizens; failure to do so results in them not wanting to pay for the services rendered. The satisfaction of citizens is critical to the survival of the local government. If satisfied, they may be willing to pay rates and taxes, which are a significant source of revenue. For example, a poor water supply can push citizens to drill their boreholes rather than rely on municipal water, which is always scarce in most of the high-density suburbs in Mutare municipality. Citizens will not see the need to pay for their rates and taxes, which will deplete the municipality's revenue sources.

According to Madan and Pathak (2012), service quality has been thoroughly researched in business management. However, an agreement has yet to be reached on the most effective ways to conceptualise or implement the service quality concept in presenting the literature that reflects this lack of agreement. Studies are now necessary to understand the perceptions of quality in the public fraternity, as stated in the first chapter. The standard of service is more difficult to evaluate than the quality of goods. Local governments should be concerned when there is a decrease in citizen satisfaction because of poor service quality.

This section of this research discusses the studies which question the validity of the service quality concept. These studies suggest what is necessary when looking at the concept or conceptualising service quality. The researcher will discuss what existing literature says about service quality. As cited by Collins, Kim, and Tao (2019), earlier studies question the validity of this conceptualisation of service quality. First, individuals' expectations of services could significantly influence how they make decisions (Morgeson, 2012; Van Ryzin, 2013; Hjortskov, 2018). Second, citizens' cognitive and informational constraints may make correct evaluation challenging (Hjortskov, 2020; Hjortskov, 2019 & Olsen, 2017).

Third, people's judgments of the quality of services may be distorted by biases towards the public sector (Van de Walle & Bouckaert, 2018). Finally, context effects, such as changing question placements in a citizen survey design, can substantially impact outcomes (Hjortskov, 2019). The SERVQUAL instrument is the most effective technique

for measuring service quality. The entire discussion focuses on how service quality is conceptualised, the diverse methods to evaluate it, the benefits and drawbacks of each technique, and why the SERVQUAL model is considered the most accurate tool available for evaluating service quality.

According to Rita, Oliveira, and Farisa (2019), service quality is a perceived judgement culminating from an evaluation of the service received. Excellent service quality extends beyond economic indicators to have societal benefits, such as improving people's quality of life (Ncube,2018). The recipients judge the service quality, and what they perceive helps determine whether it is good or bad. Grönroos (1988), Parasuraman et al. (1986), Schneider and White (2004), and Zeithaml (1988) all agree on the concept of "perceived quality." The distinction between the service quality in organisations linked to both the delivery of goods and services, according to Bartley and McLoughlin (2015), is that the goods provision industry is more easily testable. Because they can only be evaluated after the service is consumed, service-related industries are more challenging to measure. Recognising service dimensions that are important to beneficiaries in service-related industries is complex. Organisations cannot make erroneous assumptions about what is essential, as this may not be what service recipients expect.

The issue is that recipients of services frequently have expectations for the services provided by the provider. When information is consistent with our pre-existing views, we pay much more attention to it and are more likely to retain it. This biased decision-making method is typically accidental and frequently leads to ignoring contradictory data. They influence how we perceive things. We are happy if we have positive expectations, and vice versa. (Bartley & McLoughlin,2015). A key factor in increased public satisfaction is service quality, a critical factor in transforming municipal services (Rodriguez et al., 2009). Rodriguez et al. (2009) said that creating and implementing community perspectives on government service effectiveness may result in higher quality service delivery standards. This section of the discussion will investigate assessing the quality of public services. Perceptions are also being considered for inclusion in service quality assessment.

Satisfaction is a post-transaction condition that indicates whether a service is delivered on its promise (Rita et al., 2019). Six perspectives on quality prevail, according to Leach (2018). The first is the redemptive viewpoint, equated with instinctive excellence: it represents resolute benchmarks and accomplishment (Lovelock & Wirtz, 2007, p. 419). The commodities approach is the second viewpoint., which is entirely unbiased and views quality as an accurate and quantifiable attribute that does not consider variations such as the recipient's individual preferences (Lovelock & Wirtz, 2007, p. 419). The third aspect, recognised as the consumer approach, affiliates quality with high customer satisfaction; the fourth approach, identified as the production approach, is supply-based and focuses on design and manufacturing practices. Fifth, the value-based definition is considered in terms of cost and value, also understood as "affordable excellence." Finally, the service-based approach contends that the distinguishable service necessitates a distinct method of measuring service quality (Lovelock & Wirtz, 2007, p. 419).

## **2.6 INSTRUMENTAL AND EXPRESSIVE QUALITY**

Two methods are typically used to measure service quality: accurate measures of quality and more qualitative aspects based on customer values. Zou, Brax, and Rajala (2021) identified two crucial aspects of service quality: "Expressive" quality, which deals with ambiguous or emotional elements, and "Instrumental" quality, which describes the substantial parts of the service.

## **2.7 TECHNICAL AND FUNCTIONAL QUALITY**

According to Gronroos' (1984) research, the two essential characteristics of quality are 'technical' and 'operational' quality. *Technical quality* is defined by Palmer (1998) as "the fairly measurable aspects of a service that consumers receive from providers." It is valuable for evaluating service quality because consumers and service providers can easily measure it. Functional quality is how the consumer receives the service, according to Lamberz and Litfi (2021), and the expressive nature of the service delivery (e.g., courtesy, attentiveness, promptness). The reliability of service provision and prompt response to service challenges can be an example of functional quality. Sweden's local

government can be an excellent example of how technical and functional quality has been applied and how it enhanced service delivery.

Montin (2016) highlighted that the provision of these services has increasingly been outsourced to private companies in Sweden, where the local government is democratically responsible for a wide range of services., which was a significant stride in improving service delivery at a local level. Montin (2016) said municipal businesses are "blended organisations," which means they work both for businesses in a market context while simultaneously advancing the public good. The Mutare municipality can draw lessons from the local government service delivery in Sweden, which has been commended on providing high service quality to the citizens through subcontracting its services to companies with the necessary skills and equipment to enhance service delivery and improve quality satisfaction and quality of lives of residents.

## **2.8 CITIZENS' EXPECTATIONS COMPARED TO PERCEPTIONS**

Gronroos (1984) believes that a service firm's corporate reputation plays a significant role in creating a public image centred on technical and functional excellence in establishing consumers' views of quality. The precise services that citizens receive (or perceive they receive) need to meet their expectations for service in a meaningful way (Dinsdale & Marson, 1999, p. 21). Service expectations are what customers desire, what they may measure current and future service interactions against, and what customers anticipate from service providers (Cant et al., 2002, p. 239). There are at least three degrees of service expectations, according to Cant et al. (2002, p. 240):

- The overall level imitates the ideal quality of service and depicts what the citizen hopes to get from the service encounter.
- The required level resembles the ideal quality of service and depicts what the citizen hopes to get from the service encounter.
- The minimum degree of service that a citizen can accept before becoming dissatisfied is known as the adequate level.

Dinsdale and Marson (1999:21) stipulate a description of the previously mentioned citizen's behaviour as it demonstrates the gap mentioned above. According to

Parasuraman et al. (1988), citizens' expectations of service quality are based on comparing their expectations (what they believe service providers should offer) with their perceptions of the service provider's performance.

Ithami (2016:10) cites Grönroos, who, in 2007, divided expectations into three categories. First, when customers expect a service provider to fix an issue but do not know how or properly comprehend what needs to be done, their expectations are ambiguous. Second, before the service process even begins, service recipients' explicit expectations are clear. They can be divided into two categories: realistic expectations and unrealistic expectations. Third, innate expectations imply a service component that is so evident to intended users that they would not only not give it much thought but also not take it seriously (Grönroos, 2007). The service provider should fully comprehend ambiguous expectations because they still impact citizen satisfaction and service quality, and service recipients will be disappointed if they are not met (Grönroos, 2007).

Citizens may assume that there is a need for service providers to understand what would satisfy these vague expectations or change their overall state; however, they do not understand what would satisfy this need or change their current state (Grönroos, 2007). According to Grönroos (2007), service receivers often anticipate clear expectations to be satisfied, and unrealistic expectations may be abandoned. To guarantee that service delivery fulfils consumer expectations, service providers must help service recipients change their unrealistic expectations into more realistic ones. To ensure that service delivery meets customer expectations, service providers must assist service beneficiaries in adjusting their unrealistic expectations to more realistic ones. In addition to unambiguous expectations, absolute expectations must be met. If such implicit services are not provided, they will become explicit. In general, the service provider should design the service offering to meet the customer's expectations and use a dynamic approach to managing service contexts (Grönroos, 2007). According to Lovelock and Wirtz (2007), understanding citizen expectations entails recognizing that when citizens evaluate service provision, they compare their expectations with what they believe they received from the service provider. Customers believe that high-quality service is provided when

their expectations are met or even exceeded. Expectations vary depending on the various value propositions used by different service providers.

Customers' perceptions are formed solely through their interactions with service providers (Douglas & Connor, 2003). Responsiveness, tangibility, reliability, competence, access, empathy, courtesy, communication, and credibility were identified as ten factors of service quality by Parasuraman et al. (1985), which was then shortened to five dimensions of service quality and will be discussed below. Parasuraman et al. (1985) connected service quality and customer satisfaction.

## **2.9 SERVQUAL MODEL DEFINED**

A model for measuring service quality and customer satisfaction is called SERVQUAL. The SERVQUAL model was developed in 1988 by American marketing authorities Zeithaml, Berry, and Parasuraman to examine service quality aspects and customer perceptions of service quality. According to Bhasin (2021), this comprehensive strategy helps close the gap between client expectations and needs. The current five dimensions of the SERVQUAL model are used to rate service quality. At first, it was evaluated according to 10 criteria: responsiveness, dependability, competence, access, courtesy, communication, trustworthiness, security, client comprehension, and tangibles. (Bhasin, 2021). Customer satisfaction is divided into five distinct areas by the measuring instrument: tangibles, reliability, responsiveness, assurance, and empathy (Parasuraman, Zeithaml et al. 1988). The SERVQUAL approach in this research context will assist the researcher in gathering essential information in determining how citizens perceive and expectations of services rendered by Mutare municipality through the application of the five dimensions. SERVQUAL is considered a practical approach and is suitable for several institutions that provide services to the people, such as hotels, schools, hospitals, and local governments (Nguyen, Doan, and Nguyen, 2018).

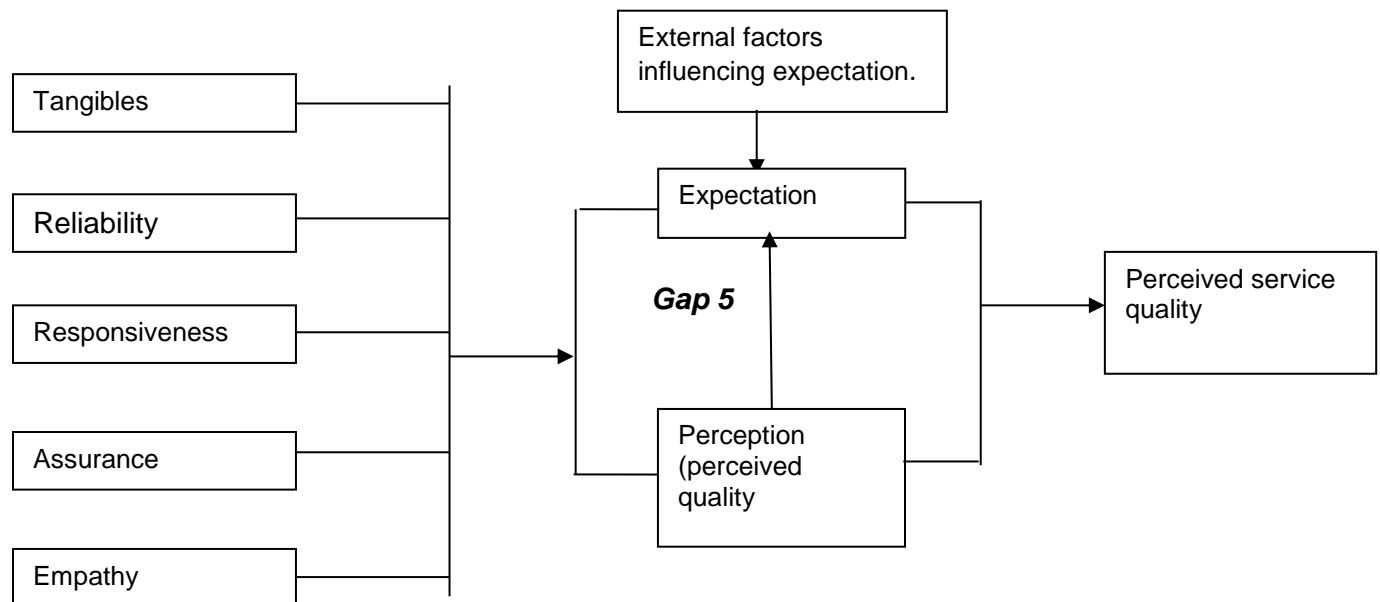
### **2.9.1. The functioning of the SERVQUAL model**

SERVQUAL defines *service quality* as the difference between a customer's expectations and their views of the service received, allowing respondents to voice their service expectations and impressions (Parasuraman et al., 1988). Gap 5, as seen in fig 1.2 below, is the variance between expectations and perceptions, and it is a determinant in



consumer perceptions of service quality. In the context of this research, four hundred and sixty participants responded to the survey, which enabled the researcher to understand perceptions and expectations of service quality in Mutare municipality and to produce recommendations that the municipality can implement to close that gap. The only gap that can be wholly analysed using information from service users is not providing the service (perception). Recognising the elements that impact citizens' expectations in Mutare municipality will assist the municipality in implementing suitable processes to alter people's expectations and provide citizens with the desired service

**Figure 2.2: SERVQUAL model dimensions; measuring service quality.**



**Source:** Kumar et al, (2009)

## 2.9.2 The SERVQUAL model dimensions

To evaluate service quality, the SERVQUAL model includes five dimensions: tangibility, reliability, responsiveness, assurance, and empathy.

**i. Tangibility:** The tangible evidence of an organisation, such as its personnel's personalities and appearances and the tools and equipment needed to perform the service. Bhasin (2021). defined tangibility as physical facilities, equipment, and the look

of personnel and administration. It is also described as a convenience for observing the tools required to serve people, nicely dressed employees, and gathering written materials like pamphlets, brochures, folders, and information books (Parasuraman et al., 1985). The positive benefits of tangibility on consumer satisfaction are perceived in the public sector as modern-looking or advanced technology, as well as a visually pleasing or appealing environment (Nguyen et al., 2018). Panda (2014) further explained that tangibles are the observable features of the service that institutions like municipalities use to enhance the external parts of customer satisfaction. The Mutare municipality should make a concerted effort to ensure that its buildings and equipment are well maintained to provide efficient services that will satisfy citizens.

**ii. Reliability:** The ability to provide the promised service constantly and correctly. It also entails on-time service delivery and accurate record-keeping. The core concepts of reliability in customer services are accuracy in processing orders, maintaining accurate records, correctness in billing, and preserving promised services, all of which are essential in persuading users to keep using public services (Nguyen et al., 2018). For citizens to rely on a specific service provider, it is considered necessary that the same approach or policy direction implemented in one context gives the same result when applied in another. According to Hayes (1992:32), reliability is how dimensions are free of random-error variance.

**iii. Responsiveness:** The willingness of the workers to help clients and give swift service, such as quick service and expertise in dealing with and recovering from mistakes. Muthwa (2015) noted that responsiveness is the ability of a service provider to deliver promised services on time. According to Zeithaml et al. (1990), *responsiveness* is the desire to give prompt service to clients when required. According to Parasuraman et al. (1988), it is also about employees' willingness or readiness to deliver essential customer service without causing any inconvenience. As a result, many customers consider a service provider's ability to deliver services on time essential to service quality.

**iv. Assurance:** Employee competency, civility, credibility, and security, as well as their capacity to express trust and confidence, are all factors to consider. Assisting citizens in a pleasant and friendly manner is what assurance implies in public services; a well-

experienced and competent management team will positively impact customer satisfaction (Boyle,2020).

**v. Empathy** refers to the kind, one-on-one care that clients receive. An empathy training program could be put in place to help employees relate to their clients more empathically. When it comes to customer service, empathy is being able to pay attention to each customer individually (Iwaarden et al.,2003). According to Parasuraman et al. (1988), it has also been discovered that knowing customer expectations better than rivals and offering appropriate customer care at any time without inconveniencing customers has a significant impact on customer satisfaction. Customer satisfaction will rise because of more convenient working hours, personalised attention, a better understanding of customers' specific demands, and enhanced communication between management and customers (Boyle,2020). The 22 assertions from Parasuraman et al. make up these five dimensions (1988). The gap between customer expectations and customer perceptions of service quality is depicted in figure 2 above (Kumar et al., 2009). This research focused on the difference between individuals' expectations and perceptions of services.

### **2.9.3 SERVQUAL model strengths and shortcomings**

In the current service literature, several key instruments are available for measuring service quality. The SERVQUAL model has been the primary generic model used to measure and manage service quality across different service settings and cultural backgrounds and is valued by academics and practitioners (Nguyen et al.,2018). Boshoff and Du Plessis (2009:43) believe that this model is arguably the best-known instrument to measure customers' perceptions of service quality. According to Jabnoun and Khalifa (2005:375), the popularity of SERVQUAL is because of the various advantages the model offers. Below are some of the main advantages and reasons to use the SERVQUAL model to measure an organisation's customer satisfaction level. According to several authors, including Parasuraman et al. (2002), Boshoff and Du Plessis (2009), Moletsane (2012), Mkwanzani (2019) and many others, there has been consensus that the SERVQUAL model is the best tool so far to measure service quality. Below are the advantages that arose:

- It can be used on a regular basis to track customer perceptions of the service quality of a particular firm compared to its competitors. Once data have been analysed, they can be visually presented so that it is easy to identify strengths and weaknesses relative to competition.
- It provides the opportunity for an organisation to assess its service quality performance based on each dimension individually as well as the overall dimensions.
- It helps service organisations to classify their consumers into different segments based on SERVQUAL scores.
- SERVQUAL model can be used in various service settings/sectors and provides a basic skeleton that can be adapted to fit the specific attributes of a particular organisation. It is applicable across different empirical contexts and various countries and cultural backgrounds.
- SERVQUAL gap analysis approach seems a logical and straightforward concept and the questionnaire is also pre-described and can be adapted as required.
- Finally, SERVQUAL is a tried and tested instrument which can be used comparatively for benchmarking purposes. It benefits from being a statistically valid instrument because of extensive field testing and refinement (Al Bassam & Al Shawi, 2010).

Özkan (2016) mentioned that even though most theories of service quality are based on the work of Parasuraman and Zeithaml, the SERVQUAL quality model has shortcomings. He said the SERVQUAL model focuses on customer perceptions, and if the consumer views are reasonable, it offers dependable results. However, due to personality problems or cultural variances, cognitive differences may create irrationality or perceptual discrepancies. SERVQUAL's limitations are hence some prevalent cognitive differences. In the context of this study, despite the criticism above, the researcher still believes that the SERVQUAL model is the best approach to conceptualising and measuring service quality. The data used for this study to come up with findings was a collective of responses from a bigger sample size from different age groups and from all 19 wards, which enabled

the researcher to obtain comprehensive data on how the citizens perceive service delivery in Mutare municipality.

The SERVQUAL model assists service providers in better understanding customer expectations and perceptions of certain services, as well as long-term quality improvements (Parasuraman et al., 1988, p. 26). In the first chapter of this research, the researcher highlighted that the outcomes would assist the municipality in solving service challenges faced by the local authority and provide real solutions that will enhance service delivery. For this reason, the researcher used the SERVQUAL tool because it was the most appropriate to elicit responses from participants about their perceptions of service quality. According to Hu et al. (2010:501), the SERVQUAL model explains why service quality in the service industry cannot fulfil consumer needs and that the SERVQUAL model's five service quality gaps must be filled to meet these needs.

SERVQUAL, according to Parasuraman et al. (1991:420), can be adapted to any service organisation with minor modifications. They said that data on service quality gaps could help marketers figure out where performance enhancements can be targeted most effectively. Lovelock and Wirtz (2007:421) overcame this notion by stating that this tool solidifies quality measurement by identifying some crucial service quality assessment concepts and dimensions. It is also popular and valuable in various service industries (Lovelock & Wirtz, 2007, p. 420).

## **2.10 SERVICE QUALITY MODELS**

Several studies on service quality have been conducted in various countries, including South Africa, Australia, Malaysia, India and America. Saravanan and Rao (2007) triumph with the statement that several models for measuring service quality were developed, including the Cohort analysis by Dagger and Sweeney (2007), Zeithaml et al. (2009) proposed the GAP model and notably, the SERVQUAL model to identify, quantify, and evaluate the factors influencing service quality (Madan & Pathak, 2012, p. 8). The researcher will discuss the GAP model in detail in the sections below. While the service quality literature identifies various service quality models developed by different

researchers, there is little consensus and much disagreement on measuring service quality (Madan & Pathak, 2012). According to Al-Jazzazi and Sultan (2017), quality of service is a thorough evaluation of a particular service and the degree to which it satisfies their desired expectations and provides fulfilment or satisfaction. The gap between a customer's expectation of service and perception of the service provided is referred to as service quality (Parasuraman et al., 1988). Researchers strongly support the SERVQUAL and Gap Analysis models, according to Seth and Deshmukh (2005:934). The SERVQUAL centred on the disparity between customers' expectations of service quality from the service provider and their evaluation of the service provider's actual performance. According to Ooi, Lin, Tan, and Chong (2011:411), these two models have been impactful in conceptualising service quality. The Gap Analysis model will be discussed in the following section.

### **2.11 GAP MODEL OF SERVICE QUALITY**

Parasuraman, Zeithaml, and Berry proposed the GAP Model in 1985. The GAP Model of Service Quality helps organisations understand customer satisfaction. The GAP Model has been widely used in the service industry to understand various discrepancies during service delivery. The model attempts to show the salient activities of the service organisations that influence the perception of quality. The GAP Model determines the overall service delivery process and classifies gaps between processes to improve the overall model's efficiency and effectiveness. It aids service providers in the identification of inadequacies in the service delivery process.

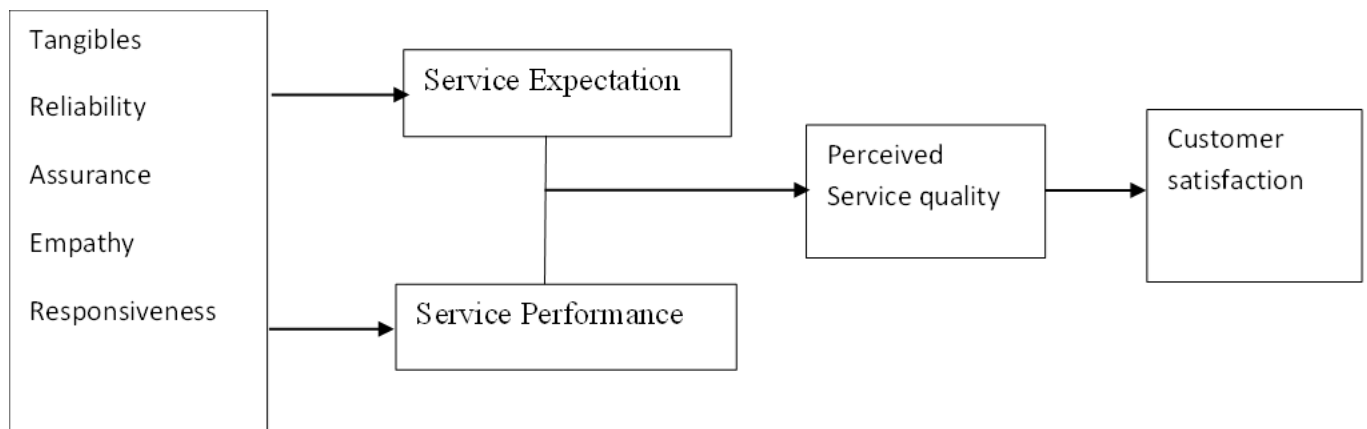
According to Gobena 2019 and Madan and Pathak (2012), the GAP model both shared the same sentiments that it establishes a roadmap for the complete service delivery process and detects the gap between the perceived and desired service. It is a quality diagnostic tool that allows organisations to analyse all the aspects that impact service quality, as presented by (Zeithaml et al., 2009). Zeithaml et al. (2009: 311-42) investigated four potential service quality gaps in listening, service design, service delivery, and communication within the service environment, all of which might lead to a fifth, the customer gap. The following are the five gaps identified by Parasuraman et al. (1985):

- Gap 1: Customer expectation and management gap- The most noticeable and immediate is the customer gap, which often occurs between what consumers want and what management believes customers want (Bateson & Hoffman, 2011, p. 328).
- Gap 2: Service Quality Specification and Management Perception - This gap occurs when management or a service provider fully understands what the consumer expects but fails to define a performance standard. It might be due to inadequate service design, insufficient physical evidence, or an inefficient new service development process (Zeithaml et al., 2009, p. 34).
- Gap 3: Service Quality Specification and Service Delivery- This gap may exist in situations that exist for service personnel. It may arise due to inadequate training, inability, or reluctance to achieve service requirements. It might occur because of ineffective assessment and compensation systems. The primary source of this disparity is ineffective recruitment (Zeithaml et al., 2009, p. 37).
- Gap 4: Service delivery and external communication gap. This gap covers the disparity between service delivery and customer communications on service delivery, i.e., whether promises are met (Zeithaml et al., 2009, p. 38).
- Gap 5: Expected service-perceived service gap. This gap addresses the difference between consumers' expectations and perceived service. This gap depends on the size and direction of the four gaps connected with service quality delivery in the organisation (Zeithaml et al., 2009, p. 42).

Parasuraman et al. (1988) proposed the SERVQUAL scale for gauging Gap 5 based on this paradigm. Parasuraman et al. (1988) then identified five criteria for measuring service quality (tangible, dependability, responsiveness, assurance, and empathy); these dimensions were examined in the preceding sections.

## 2.12 CONCEPTUAL FRAMEWORK

**Figure 2.3: Conceptual framework guiding the study.**



***Adapted and modified from Kumar et al, (2009)***

The conceptual framework selected for this study is adopted from the SERVQUAL model. This study applies the widely used SERVQUAL model developed by Parasuraman et al. (1988) to measure the expectations, performance and relative importance of service dimensions. This study adapted the model by rewording the attributes questions to suit Mutare municipality. Parasuraman et al. (1991) pointed out that the SERVQUAL model was suitable for assessing an organisation's quality along the five service dimensions or providing an overall measure of service quality. The SERVQUAL approach combines the two constructs and proposes that perceived service quality predicts satisfaction



(Gobena,2019). it is assumed that service quality and customer satisfaction are related, and that customer satisfaction is a precursor to service quality. The study uses the exact dimensions to measure both by analysing the responses from the participants who are citizens of Mutare municipality through the application of SPSS to determine if there is a correlation between service quality and satisfaction.

## **2.13 CITIZEN SATISFACTION**

Citizen satisfaction is citizens' evaluation of government services based on past expectations. Citizen satisfaction has been actively researched in recent decades, reflecting the rising relevance of citizens' engagement in public administration, leading to advancements in theory, datasets, technique, and the extent of the literature on this subject (Kim & Kim, 2022). Although it may seem instinctively tempting, Van de Walle (2018) points out that satisfaction with public services is a complicated phenomenon that combines expectations, experiences, and established attitudes. According to Liestyanti and Prawiraatmadja (2021), satisfaction is a requirement for both the public and private sectors. Employees in the public sector have a duty to the community or its residents to ensure public satisfaction. Research has focused on whether citizen satisfaction can be utilised as an adequate performance criterion, with conflicting results (Kim & Kim,2022). Citizen satisfaction, according to Kim and Kim (2022), is a practical kind of public involvement that allows individuals from all backgrounds to participate in government by removing time and geographical constraints.

Citizen satisfaction with public services demonstrates how public services are seen about people's expectations; hence, citizen satisfaction may promote many public ideals such as accountability, trust, and social fairness (Ncube, 2018). Service organisations must strive to achieve and ensure that service recipients are satisfied. One of the most important aspects of retaining citizen attention is to offer the best and most satisfying services to its recipients. If satisfaction is earned, it is almost certain that customer loyalty will follow (Khadka & Maharjan,2017). Furthermore, a service organisation would only exist with the service recipients. Citizen satisfaction is critical to increasing and returning recipients and motivating them to pay their rates and taxes in the case of municipalities.

Understanding citizens' perceptions and striving to deliver good service quality results in citizens' satisfaction, which is crucial in attaining organisational goals.

In Urban Councils, there have been attempts to define what it means to be satisfied with the services received. The actual definition of being satisfied (or not) can be interpreted only considering known expectations, which vary according to experience (Gaster, 1996). According to Distant and Prawiraatmadja (2021), satisfaction with the service is based on the providers' service quality. Wilson et al. (2008), as cited in Karim & Chowdhury (2014), concurred that customer satisfaction and service quality share some attributes. However, they point out that customer satisfaction is typically a more comprehensive concept than service quality. Thus, citizen satisfaction is determined by a service provider's experience and the output of the service.

Citizens and service providers have a relationship in urban councils. As a result, this study considered satisfaction as part of ultimate citizen attitudes toward the service provider. When the citizens are happy with the services, they receive from Mutare municipality, it creates an enabling society for growth and development, and lives will ultimately change for everyone. Zeithaml et al. (2008:103) indicated that satisfaction is a broad notion, whereas service quality focuses on the specific features of services. It is logical to conclude that expectations for service delivery before getting service and perceptions following service are vital factors in citizen satisfaction with public services. It could be asserted that citizens are satisfied with public services when they are pleased with the ones, they receive without encountering any delays or obstacles. s. Citizen satisfaction is influenced by perceived service quality. Citizen satisfaction and service quality are strongly intertwined, (Noone and Namasivayam 2010:273 and Palmer 2011:288). In other words, the better the quality-of-service delivery, the more satisfied citizens are with service delivery.

## **2.14 EMPIRICAL STUDIES**

This section of this research gives empirical studies on citizen satisfaction in which Mutare municipality can draw lessons to improve service delivery and enhance citizen satisfaction which is the goal of the municipality to be a centre of excellent service delivery

as stated in the first chapter when the researcher gave the background of the municipality. Customer satisfaction is one of the most incredibly researched topics, and many studies have been conducted to examine the satisfaction and intention of public customers (Lee, Hung, & Chung, 2022). Determining user satisfaction with public goods and services is central to a citizen-centric approach to quality, and it is a critical component of organisational performance strategies for continuous improvement.

Collins et al. (2019) examined citizen-centric performance evaluation and professional public management at the local level of government to ascertain whether the number of government goods and services offered also affects citizen satisfaction or if the quality of government service provision is the only interpretative characteristic that matters for satisfied citizens. The scientific findings of their research back up the notion that the availability of public goods and services and their number and quality affect citizens' satisfaction with elaborate packages of public amenities. They found that maintaining citizen happiness necessitates a more comprehensive understanding of what citizens value. Indeed, fundamental citizen-customer models that emphasise quality assessments should also recognise the value of quantity assessments.

Lee et al. (2022) satisfaction investigation in Taiwan suggested that both experimental and prescriptive disconfirmation (between expectation and perceived level of performance) influence citizen satisfaction in three policy areas: public safety, transportation, and environmental cleanliness. These findings highlight the importance of local government representatives managing citizen satisfaction harmoniously with community expectations. Understanding and controlling citizen expectations may assist in addressing citizen discontent and improving public perception of government.

According to Gaster (1996), satisfaction is only interpreted in the light of general expectations, which vary according to experience. DeHoog, Lowery, and Lyons (1990) investigated the sources of citizen satisfaction with local governments and developed three explanations that focus on the personal level, the authority level, and city or neighbourhood-particular determinants. Gaster (1996) investigated the quality of service

in local governments and proposed that quality must be a collection of characteristics that vary from service to service. It takes much work to provide high-quality, cost-effective public services. It entails establishing organisations with appropriate approaches, establishing simple means of providing these services, and putting human resources in a position to react to citizens' needs. Proper policy development, effective execution, a complete grasp of people's desires and expectations, enough resources and technology, a responsive organisational culture, and well-trained workers are all required (Rodrguez et al., 2009). Simultaneously, local governments must supplement their earnings by offering better services that citizens demand.

Kim and Kim (2022) assert that service quality has become a critical component of many organisations' promotional activities due to intense competition and harmful external factors. It emphasises the need to enhance service quality for an organisation because it can help them overcome these issues in marketplaces that are competitive and promote growth. As a result, to ensure a sustainable strategic advantage, local governments must provide excellent services to their citizens. When what is perceived falls short of expectations, consumers rate the quality as low; when what is perceived standards and meets expectations, consumers rate the quality as high "The genuine rewards of a quality revolution come exclusively from customer delight," which strongly depends on the client's judgments of total service quality (Sureshchander, Rajendran, and Anantharaman,2002). As a result, it is crucial to understand how citizens evaluate service excellence and how it influences consumers repurchase choices.

Understanding how citizens perceive service quality will allow organisations to identify gaps and take corrective actions to improve their operations. Organisations can implement appropriate quality systems in this manner, resulting in satisfaction. Citizen satisfaction is determined by the quality of service offered by service providers, as determined by the consumer's cumulative interactions with the organisation at all points of contact. Zulnaidi (2010) collected data from 205 heads of departments connected to local authorities in West Malaysia to investigate the effects of continuous enhancement at various intensity levels on customer satisfaction. He discovered a significant difference

in customer satisfaction between implementers who go the extra mile and those who do not. This study adds to the literature by identifying the intensity of quality management as a significant factor in increasing higher levels of citizen satisfaction.

The process of defining quality and then implementing it must actively involve the citizens who are the recipients because they are ultimate judges of whether they have had a quality experience. Quantifying citizen satisfaction also allows policymakers and managers to understand their customer base better and recognise users' sub-groups, needs, and inaccessible gaps. Boshoff and Mazibuko (2008) indicated that the failure of South African authorities to deliver quality service had become a common problem. They developed an instrument to measure and assess customer satisfaction within the municipality's waste management. The empirical research establishes a link between service quality and citizen satisfaction. The higher the quality of the service provided, the happier the citizens are with the service.

## **2.15 RELATIONSHIP BETWEEN SERVICE QUALITY AND CUSTOMER SATISFACTION**

Parasuraman et al. (1985) proposed that whenever perceived service quality is excellent, it increases customer satisfaction. Goldstein et al. (2002) researched to discover a gap between the two concepts and that an increase in one risk leads to a rise in the other. Whether service quality directly influences consumers' behavioural intentions or whether customer satisfaction modulates service quality and consumers' intentions have been debated. According to Dagger and Sweeney's (2007) quality model, satisfaction enhances the connection between service quality and behavioural intentions. Customer happiness is also influenced by the level of service quality given by the service provider (Lee et al., 2022). Customers' re-patronage intentions are favourably affected by service quality and customer contentment, according to Lee et al. (2022), meaning that service quality and customer satisfaction are crucial to the success and survival of any organisation in a competitive market. As a result, the fundamental principles of providing services are quality and contentment. The public should pay close attention to them to see progress. As a result, service quality is a critical component of customer perception. Customers base their satisfaction on the perceived quality element of a service or a good

procured or delivered. Organisations must pay attention to customers or beneficiaries of services. In this case, Mutare Municipality citizens' suggestions or complaints encapsulate their innermost feelings and perception of the quality of products or services offered.

## **2.16 CONCLUSION**

Service quality is undoubtedly an essential element of service organisations today. For this purpose, the researcher investigated expectations and perceptions of municipal service delivery and how it impacts citizen satisfaction. There has been less research in this arena referring to municipalities in Zimbabwe. For this reason, the researcher investigated how service quality is conceptualised, evaluated, and employed in the day-to-day operations of public service organisations. This chapter outlined literature on the foundations of local government in Zimbabwe and the legal framework that govern the local governments. The chapter also discussed the challenges faced by the local government and used examples from an international perspective to draw lessons that Mutare municipality can apply to improve service delivery. The concept of service quality, the five dimensions of service quality, and service quality, models were discussed in detail. The advantages and disadvantages of the SERVQUAL model were discussed. This chapter discusses the proposed service quality models for this investigation. The research approach used to perform the empirical investigation is described in the following chapter.

## **CHAPTER 3: RESEARCH DESIGN AND METHODOLOGY**

### **3.1 INTRODUCTION**

This chapter discusses the data sources and the data collection and analysis method used in the study. The research methodology, data collection processes, quantitative research, questionnaire design, sample size, questionnaire administration and ethical considerations are all described in this chapter. Furthermore, it discusses how the former was applied to achieve the research objectives and answer the research questions. The previous chapter discussed the theoretical underpinnings, conceptual framework, service conceptualisation, Gaps model, SERVQUAL model and how these were applied to this study, while this chapter focus on research design and related issues. The study aims to provide and understanding of individuals' perspectives and expectations of municipal service delivery in the Mutare Municipality. Quantitative research was considered an appropriate methodology for this study because it is particularly suited to some of its objectives and questions. The primary data source for this study came from online questionnaires, which were sent out to residents of the Mutare municipality.

### **3.2 RESEARCH METHODOLOGY**

This study was conducted using a quantitative research methodology. Research methodology is described by Sileyew (2019) as how researchers should conduct research. According to Saunders, Lewis, and Thornhill (2019), an appropriate method based on the research questions and the study's objectives , the state of the art of the field being studied, the amount of time and resources available, as well as the level of current knowledge, should be selected. The research is predicated on an existing model. The SERVQUAL model, which assumes that customer satisfaction and service quality already exist and that the beneficiaries are aware of them, enabled the collection of responses regarding citizen perceptions.

### **3.3 PURPOSE OF THE STUDY**

In this study citizens' perceptions and expectations of the quality of services provided by Mutare Municipality, were examined. It was discovered that Mutare municipality was failing to deliver on any of its service delivery lines, as reflected in various media reports, articles, and recent studies by Marumahoko (2020) and the UMRRT (2016) Baseline Survey Report. According to Marumahoko (2020), Mutare residents expressed their dissatisfaction through protests and threats to boycott paying taxes to the municipality. The problem of inadequate service quality and low customer satisfaction necessitated a large-scale survey; hence a quantitative research approach was chosen.

Using the SERVQUAL dimensions, which the researcher described in the previous chapter, this study includes an evaluation of the service quality provided by Mutare municipality, and how it impacts satisfaction. The study also aims to determine which service quality determinants/dimensions impact enhancing service quality and examine how service quality affects customer satisfaction. A quantitative research approach was appropriate for this study, since service quality and customer happiness necessitate the participation of a more significant sample to generalise the findings on citizen satisfaction, perceptions and levels to a broader group. As a result, a quantitative research approach is appropriate for this objective because it uses more extensive samples, allowing generalisation to the wider un-sampled population (Creswell, 2017).

### **3.4 TYPES OF SCIENTIFIC RESEARCH**

According to Rwegoshora (2017), methodology in research mainly clarifies the method or what the researcher intends to do in the study. He categorised scientific research into four types: exploratory, correlational, descriptive, and explanatory. These research types were summarised by Rwegoshora (2017) as follows:

- **Exploratory** – This research investigates a topic with little or no information. This type of research is qualitative because it aids in formulating hypotheses and theories. This kind of study assumes that the researcher is unfamiliar with the group's structure or has little knowledge of the situation related to the study. In the social sciences, exploratory research is essential when a researcher breaks new ground.



- **Correlational-** Variables are not within the researcher's direct control or manipulation when using a correlational research methodology. It investigates how closely the variables are related to one another. The magnitude and direction of a correlation between two (or more) variables are measured; this direction might either be positive or negative. The correlation method is scientifically based, carefully and deliberately carried out, yielding more remarkable accuracy and precision than simple methods (Rwegoshora,2017).
- **Descriptive** – This study describes social situations, events, systems, and structures. The researcher observes or gathers information and describes what they see. A census is an example of a descriptive study. because it precisely and accurately describes a wide range of characteristics in a population (Rwegoshora,2017).
- **Explanatory research-** This type of study explains a social phenomenon. It seeks to answer the 'why' question: why are local governments not providing quality services?

This study used the correlational research design to understand the connection(relationship) between service quality and citizen satisfaction.

### 3.5 RESEARCH DESIGN

The researcher used the quantitative empirical and deductive approach of theoretically pre-determined variables to bring out participants' ideas, claims and assumptions about how the municipality delivers its citizens. Patten (2019:71) defined a *design* as the outline of research approaches and procedures chosen by a researcher. A research design collects relevant information without wasting resources, including money and time (Asenahabi, 2019). According to Majid (2018), a research design provides the tools and framework for conducting a study using evidence-based processes, protocols, and guidelines. In this study, the researcher chose the correlational research design based on the primary research objective: To investigate perceptions and expectations about the quality of services delivered by Mutare municipality to identify potential service quality gaps. This method allowed the researcher to gather relevant information without wasting resources, including money and time.

### **3.5.1 Correlational research design**

A correlational research approach was used to examine how closely the quality-of-service delivery and citizen satisfaction are related in the Mutare municipality. The association between these two factors was something the researcher was interested in knowing. Because no variables are manipulated, the researcher considers a correlational observational, research study. The researcher does not control or influence any of the variables in a correlational research design, and the results can be either positive or negative (Creswell, 2017). For this study, the researcher would need to collect citizens' perceptions from Mutare residents, who are the service recipients. In this regard, correlational research studies include both prediction studies and related studies. A predictor and criteria are the variables in a prediction study, and the researcher is interested in whether one or more variables can predict another (Patten & Newert, 2019). As a result, the researcher attempts to determine whether poor service delivery or quality can predict citizen dissatisfaction in this study.

The study's findings revealed that tangibility, empathy, responsiveness, reliability, service quality, and service performance impact citizens' satisfaction. In the context of this study, lower scores reflected the citizens' dissatisfaction. Through the descriptive and inferential statistical analysis, the researcher understood the relationships between variables, such as service quality and citizen satisfaction, and saw how they influence each other. As a result, perceived quality measures correspond directly to citizen satisfaction measures. Simply put, measuring perceived service quality allows the researcher to assess citizens' satisfaction with the quality of services. In this study, the researcher only collected citizens' perceptions from Mutare residents via online questionnaires, without having to manipulate the outcomes. Through the research findings, the researchers developed recommendations that the municipality can use to increase citizen satisfaction. A survey questionnaire released among four hundred and sixty - eight (468) respondents, was utilised to investigate how citizens perceived service quality and the results were then used to make recommendations.

### **3.6 RESEARCH METHODS**

Utilising research methodologies, we can gather data and samples to solve problems. Scientific research procedures need explanations based on gathered data, measurements, and observations rather than just reasoning. Daniel (2016) mentioned that research designs are qualitative, quantitative, or mixed methods. According to Creswell (2017), research methodology outlines the procedures and approaches used in research, whereas research methods are used to find solutions to research questions. Thus, methodology discusses the instruments, events, and procedures employed in the investigation process, the designs and processes to study it and also includes how to select an appropriate data-gathering method. According to Bairagi and Munot (2019), the quantitative technique is the conservative and investigative study method. On the other hand, the qualitative approach is a method of conducting creative, truthful, and descriptive research. Despite the distinctions in quantitative and qualitative analytic definitions, Kaplan (2015) emphasises that all approaches use organised processes; all aspects of a research process, such as methodologies and design, are usually considered carefully.

#### **3.6.1 Mixed methods**

Mixed methods research merges aspects of quantitative and qualitative research to solve a research problem. George (2022) indicated that mixed methods incorporate the advantages of both methodologies; it gives a more comprehensive perspective than a standalone quantitative or qualitative study. Mixed methods research is frequently employed in the behavioural, health, and social sciences, particularly in collaborative settings and detailed contextual or societal studies. According to Bairagi and Munot (2019), mixed-methods research requires much labour. It takes a lot of time and effort to gather, analyse, and synthesise two distinct types of data into a single research output; thus, multidisciplinary teams of researchers, rather than lone researchers, are frequently used. Knowing how to interpret conflicting outcomes from data analysis in a mixed methods research method, study can take time and effort.

### **3.6.2 Quantitative method**

Quantitative research is a study in which conclusions are primarily the result of statistical analysis (Creswell & Creswell, 2017). The quantitative research strategy and aim adopted in this study was to obtain valuable data from the target sample. During research, the phenomenon studied must be examined, focused on, and measured to conduct objective quantitative research. Streefrkerk (2019) stressed that quantitative research uses numbers and statistics when collecting and analysing data, while qualitative research deals with differences of opinion and meanings (literature). Bairagi and Munot (2019) indicated that quantitative research involves the measurement of quantities of characteristics that uses features of the research; its purpose is to evaluate assumptions.

### **3.6.3 Qualitative method**

According to Creswell and Creswell (2017), qualitative research aims to comprehend the social reality of certain people, communities, and civilisations as closely as possible in terms of how its participants experience it. Saunders et al. (2019) indicated that qualitative research focuses on the nature or quality of the research parameters used. In this kind of research, everyone sees things differently, and it is challenging to propose predictive findings.

The quantitative approach was used in this research because the coding process can be highly time-consuming, after the interview, with qualitative research. It is typically expensive, and some researchers account for more lost data in interview research than in survey research; hence, population comparisons can be challenging (Kabir,2016). The non-use of numbers by qualitative researchers makes it difficult and impossible to simplify findings and observations. A proper explanation is impossible because the outcome depends on the researcher's explanation (making it more subjective), which may vary between researchers. As a result, a different researcher cannot do the same study and obtain the same results (George,2022).

### **3.6.4 Justification of the methodology adopted in the research.**

This study utilised the Quantitative methodology to gather and analyse the data. The researcher used this approach due to its high level of general competence to represent a considerable population in less time and for less money. Compared to other methods of data gathering, surveys can extract data near the larger population's exact attributes. Another reason why the researcher chose the quantitative method is because of its ability to give systematic and standardised comparisons between different groups involved in statistical analysis; its results are considered more reliable (Creswell,2017). The quantitative approach is the most appropriate approach to examine the best variables in the case of this research, service quality vs satisfaction. Data for this study were gathered from 468 residents from a population of 47000 households. Data collection was done in one and a half months, from the beginning of September to the middle of October, which was faster despite being amid the Covid pandemic in 2021.

The quantitative approach allowed data (numbers, percentages, measurable figures) to be calculated and conducted on a computer using a social science (SPSS) statistical package, saving energy and resources. In the context of this research, because quantitative research focused on data that can be measured, this method was very effective at addressing citizens' perceptions regarding the quality-of-service Mutare municipality provides. The questions were straightforward, and this method made it easier to collect, quantify, analyse, and generalise data. According to Creswell (2017), the researcher can describe the findings more quickly and with less effort by employing numerical data for study descriptions and analysis.

The quantitative design allowed the researcher to collect responses from all nineteen wards of Mutare municipality, which would have been impossible if the research had been conducted using other methods. According to Kabir (2016), quantitative methods are cheaper to implement and homogenous, so that the researcher can easily make judgements, and the scope of the outcome can usually be measured. According to Goertzen (2017), the following are the main benefits of the quantitative method:

- The research conclusions can be generalised to a precise population.

- The information sets are large, and the results characterise the population.
- Research framework and method documentation can be shared and simulated; standardised methods permit the study to be replicated over time.

However, as with any other approach, it is important to note that quantitative research needs to provide a more in-depth understanding of why people think, feel, or act in specific ways. In other words, quantitative research identifies trends across data sets or study groups, but not the motivation behind observed behaviours. Studies can take time and require extensive data collection (Goertzen, 2017).

Despite the shortcomings of the quantitative approach, quantitative methods were deemed the best way to answer the research questions under consideration. Lichtman (2013:4) and Williams and May (1998:1-2) agree with the preceding authors that the quantitative approach allows for research replication. The researcher does not require intelligent guesswork, because the research approach is based on hypothesis testing. Instead, the researcher would adhere to clearly defined guidelines, objectives, and findings. Likewise, the interpretation of research findings does not have to be purely coincidental. In this study, the quantitative method enabled the researcher to receive 468 responses, which is a bigger sample size at a low cost.

### **3. 7 RESEARCH POPULATION**

Lorch (2019) defined a *research population* as "the complete reflection from which the researcher intends to study or collect information." A *population* is defined as a collection of persons who are the focus of the research and in which the research can be conducted, and results ascertained" (Saunders, Lewis & Thornhill, 2019). Citizens in this study included residents in their households, registered institutions (such as schools, churches, crèches, clubs, non-governmental organisations, and government departments), and registered businesses. According to Research Advisors (2006), a representative sample for an entire country like Zimbabwe, with approximately 16 million people, would necessitate 2645 carefully selected respondents from various provinces and genders.

This study focused on Mutare, a city with a population of 188 243 people (ZIMSTAT, 2012 National Statistics). Mutare stakeholders include residents, corporations, and other

institutions ranging from government departments to schools. The population for this study was the sum of households in the city's nineteen wards. The statistics for the total number of households (of 47004) was obtained from the Zimbabwe National Statistics Agency (ZIMSTAT) from the 2012 National Census report. The study used the ZIMSTAT total population of 47004 households.

### **3.8 SAMPLING**

According to Majid (2018) and Cant & Wild (2018), *sampling* is defined as choosing a statistically illustrative sample of people from the entire population under investigation. Sampling is essential in research studies, because the entire population is usually too large for any research project to include. Similarly, Pattern (2020) defined *sampling* as selecting a subset of a population that accurately reflects the entire population. Saunders (2019), on the other hand, explains that before data collection can begin in any research study, a thorough understanding of the population is required to determine the appropriate sample size. Several types of sampling are discussed as follows:

#### **3.8.1 Probability sampling**

Probability sampling is the process of choosing a sample from a population using the randomization principle, also called chance or random selection; the procedure is known as probability sampling, which is more complex, takes longer, and is costlier than non-probability sampling. Below are the types of probability sampling, according to Saunders et al. (2019).

#### **Types of probability sampling:**

- ***Simple random sampling***

Simple random sampling, the most basic form of probability sampling, involves selecting research sample members randomly from the target population. Here, the researcher assigns numbers to the research population and selects random numbers to select variables for the systematic examination. The process of selecting a random sample consists of two steps. First, compile a list of every person in the community. Second, randomly select a predetermined number of samples from the total.

- ***Stratified sampling***

The stratification principle is the foundation of stratified sampling. Stratification occurs when the examined population is split up into strata according to gender, age, economic levels, and other equivalent factors; each stratum is given a weight based on its size. A sample is gathered from a randomly selected starting point in each stratum.

- ***Systematic sampling***

Systematic sampling is a probability sampling technique where the researcher employs a random starting point and predetermined intervals to pick volunteers from the research community. It is simple to comprehend and to carry out systematic sampling. The likelihood of it contaminating the data samples is the lowest.

- ***Cluster sampling***

Cluster sampling, called multi-stage sampling, is a probability sampling technique used to choose research samples from a sizable population. Here, the researcher uses pre-existing units, such as geographic landmarks like cities and neighbourhoods, to divide the population. The study separates the sample into naturally occurring subgroups with recognizable traits. Afterwards, they randomly choose clusters to represent the sample and gather the necessary information.

### **3.8.2 non-Probability sampling**

In a non-probability sample, some population members have a larger but unknowable likelihood of selection than other population members. Non-probability samples can be divided into five fundamental types: self-selection, convenience, quota, purposive, and snowball. (Patten & Newhart, 2019)

- ***Convenience Sampling***

The term "convenience sampling" refers to the practice of taking samples from places that are conveniently situated nearby (Stratton,2021). This is the most typical nonprobability sample and is known as "convenience" sampling because, by choosing only a specific portion of the population, it is probable that bias may be introduced, unless the targeted user group is exclusively made up of those people.



- ***Purposive Sampling***

By using purposive sampling, people are chosen based on their interests, qualifications, or typicality (they fit a general profile of the types of participants who would be typical users of a product). A researcher looks for samples that match the study's precise objectives. Patten & Newhart (2019) is of the opinion that one might want to seek the "best of the best" and employ them for your interviews or survey, for example, if one were attempting to learn how professionals in a particular industry work on complicated tasks (Patten & Newhart, 2019)

- ***Quota Sampling***

Participants are selected because of their demographic presence, the population is initially split into mutually exclusive groups, or "strata," and then sample units are recruited until the quota is met (Patten & Newhart, 2019).

### ***Snowball sampling***

It involves using primary data sources to suggest a different or alternative primary data source that could be used in the study. The snowball sampling technique relies on recommendations from the initial individuals to produce additional subjects, to put it another way. When it is challenging to identify individuals within a community, a snowball sample can be helpful (Saunders et al. 2019).

### ***Self-selection***

Identifying your requirement for units (or cases) and then determining whether they are relevant before inviting or rejecting them, are two easy procedures in the self-selection sample.

For this research, the researcher chose purposive sampling by gathering data from Mutare residents who know the Mutare municipality, and also randomly from the database that UMRRT provided. This helped the researcher to get reliable data from service recipients. These sampling procedures allowed the citizens to have an equal opportunity of participating in the survey.

### **3.8.3 Justification of sampling method adopted in the research.**

The study used a purposive sampling technique to ensure that only those Mutare residents who are directly involved and have knowledge of municipal services enable the researcher to gather reliable and relevant data from service recipients. In Mutare municipality, residents who understood the questionnaire requirements were advised to complete it, and those who participated had to have lived in Mutare for at least a year. Besides the non-probability (purposive) sampling method, the study used simple random sampling (probability) to select the sample for the study. This technique allowed all elements to be selected from the database provided by UMRRT from all the nineteen wards of Mutare, including different age groups and gender. The researcher used purposive random sampling by identifying and selecting individuals or groups exceptionally knowledgeable about, or who had experienced service delivery in Mutare.

Data collection was facilitated by UMRRT, who granted the researcher permission to access the database with the contact information of the residents, ratepayers, and tenants of Mutare municipality. From these readily available details, the researcher distributed the questionnaire online via emails, web, and mobile to Mutare municipality's property owners and tenants in all nineteen wards. Information was gathered from the high, medium, and low-density suburbs from different ages and genders. It would be technically and logistically impossible to include every citizen; purposeful random sampling enabled data to be collected without difficulties. Data collection was done when there were so many Covid-19 restrictions; obtaining data using the freely available contact details of Mutare residents and property owners was easy. It must be noted that all Covid-19 regulations were strictly followed during the data collection processes, as specified in the ethical clearance. No questionnaires were physically distributed, to avoid contracting or spreading covid.

According to Stratton (2021), many researchers employ purposive sampling since it requires less time and money and is more straightforward than alternative sampling procedures; this is also what the researcher considered. According to Stratton (2021), purposive sampling's main drawback is that it is vulnerable to researcher bias, because

researchers may make arbitrary or broad assumptions when selecting participants for their online survey. Despite these objections, the researcher deemed the purposive method to be practical, and implemented the following actions to mitigate the approach's weaknesses and ensure the research's credibility:

- The researcher ensured that the questionnaire was in simple language; the questions were related to personal experience, were brief and closed-ended to keep participants' attention.
- The researcher followed up throughout the data collection period to ensure enough responses to analyse the data.
- The researcher included participants from all age groups and genders to avoid potential bias in the research.
- The survey questionnaires were distributed at different times and dates to recruit more participants.

The researcher employed all these strategies above, to ensure that data collected under the purposeful method was dependable.

### **3.9 RESEARCH SAMPLE**

Creswell & Creswell (2017) described a sample as a small subgroup of the population or a collection of people/events from a population used to discover facts about the population under study. According to Flynn, Kramer, and Sumaya (2019), the need for bigger sample sizes may limit the utility of the data collected. The current study population comprises a sample size of three hundred and eighty -three (383) citizens who were ratepayers' participants who were conveniently selected from the database that UMMRT provided. To generate 95% confidence within a margin of error of 5%, the researcher required a sample of 383 participants from a total population of 47004 households in Mutare (Research Advisors,2006). In other words, the sample size required to infer 47004 people within a 95% confidence interval is 383. There is a 5% margin of error. The researcher received four hundred sixty-eight responses from the online questionnaires distributed. The high response rate was a positive outcome for obtaining valid results because it exceeded the required minimum of 383 for the study.

Several types of quantitative research use samples because it is impractical to include the entire population, if it is small. According to Lohr (2019), A sample is a subset of the population to be studied. Dixon et al. (2016) defined a *sample* as "a small fraction of the population under examination," whereas sampling included the steps to select the respondents or objects. When analysing quantitative data from a sample, researchers employ statistics to identify patterns and present findings from that sample (Patten & Newhart,2019). Patten and Newhart (2019) contended that the larger the sample size, the more accurately the sample reflects the population.

### **3.10 DATA COLLECTION TECHNIQUES**

The survey approach was selected to gather the relevant data for this study. The data applied in this research included primary data obtained through questionnaires to respondents through online surveys (web, mobile and email). The distribution/administration of the questionnaires took approximately one and a half months, from the beginning of September to mid-October 2021. Pituch and Stevens (2016) argued that careful consideration should go into the data-gathering methods used because no post-collection investigation can make up for subpar data collection. Similarly, Sutton and Austin (2015) emphasised the significance of data gathering in every research effort, because it helps to comprehend a phenomenon. The approaches or procedures used by the researcher to collect data for a study are referred to as data collection techniques. According to Robinson (2002), publicly available information is one of the most common data collection methods. Therefore, in this study, the researcher used a structured questionnaire and the survey method to gather data on how customers perceived the quality of the delivery of municipal services.

The secondary data used in the study was attained through a literature study of related publications from various sources such as reports, books, and internet articles. Official documents from UMRRT, an individual-based resident body that advocates for good governance and accountable and transparent municipal services, were also used to gather secondary data. The researcher used convenience sampling by using the contact

details of property owners and residents of Mutare Municipality provided by UMRRT management. Information was gathered from all nineteen high, medium, and low-density wards. The researcher considered convenience sampling in this study, because it guaranteed equal representation of defined groups in the population; the method was cheap and not time-consuming. Creswell & Creswell (2017) described a sample as a small subset of the population or a selection of people/events from a population used to discover facts about the population under study. According to Flynn, Kramer, and Sumaya (2019), the insufficient sample size may limit the utility of the data collected. The current study population comprises a sample size of three hundred and eighty -three (383) citizens who were ratepayers' participants, and were conveniently selected from the database that UMMRT provided. To generate 95% confidence within a margin of error of 5%, the researcher required a sample of 383 participants from a total population of 47004 households in Mutare (Research Advisors,2006). In other words, the sample size required to infer the 47004 people within a 95% confidence interval was 383. There is a 5% margin of error. The researcher received four hundred sixty-eight responses from the distributed online questionnaires. The high response rate was a positive outcome for obtaining valid results because it exceeded the required minimum of 383 for the study.

Several types of quantitative research use samples because it is impractical to include the entire population unless it is small. According to Lohr (2019), A sample is a subset of the population to be studied. Muchengetwa (2005) defined a *sample* as "a small fraction of the population under examination," whereas sampling included the steps to select the respondents or objects. When analysing quantitative data from a sample, researchers employ statistics to identify patterns and present findings based on that sample (Patten & Newhart,2019). Patten and Newhart (2019) contended that the larger the sample size, the more accurately the sample would reflect the general population.

### **3.10.1 Questionnaires**

According to Bhandari (2020), A questionnaire is a research tool that consists of a series of questions designed to elicit valuable information from respondents. The questionnaire may include written or oral questions, an interview-style format, and open-ended or

closed-ended questions. A questionnaire is a series of questions designed to evoke responses that prove or disprove a hypothesis. It obtains information from locations beyond the researcher's reach (Creswell (2017)). Because the data on a standard questionnaire is structured, Creswell and Creswell (2017) claim that using questions results in a low cost per questionnaire and a reasonably straightforward analysis. This study used a questionnaire to gain information on citizens' perceptions and expectations of service quality in Mutare Municipality to determine whether it influences customer satisfaction. The questionnaire was closed-ended, with thirty-three (33) questions derived from the SERVQUAL five dimensions, the gap model, and other service quality measures mentioned in the literature review.

The SERVQUAL scale, created by Parasuraman et al. (1993), was incorporated into the questionnaire to gauge how well municipalities delivered their promises to their customers. Five dimensions were created from fifteen items: tangibility (three), reliability (three), responsiveness (three), assurance (three), and empathy (three) (three items). Customers' expectations regarding the quality of the services they receive, and the perceived levels of service received, were used to measure each element separately. The researcher decided on SERVQUAL because it made it possible to assess the level of service in the Mutare municipality. The researcher understood the discrepancy between individuals' expectations of local government and their perceptions of performance in various areas (tangibles, reliability, responsiveness, assurance, and empathy). The questions on the survey were designed to elicit responses from participants about their perceptions of service quality.

The structured questionnaire asked questions and provided guided responses on a Likert scale of 1 to 5. The questionnaire was divided into three sections: The first section (section A) was designed to collect demographic data and included questions on gender, group, age, area, and years of residence, allowing the researcher to understand specific background characteristics of the participants better, and assisting in data analysis. The second part (section B) measured service quality dimensions, including tangibility, reliability, responsiveness, assurance, and empathy. Lastly, the third part (section C) was on service quality

perceptions and expectations of the services offered by Mutare Municipality. The researcher measured Municipality's perceptions and expectations using a 5-point Likert scale. These questions were divided into four parts which are perceived service quality (four items), service performance (three items), provided services (three items) and service expectation (three items.) The Likert scale, also known as a summated scale (Jebb, Ng & Tay,2021), is used by researchers to measure attitudes. According to Jebb et al. (2021), Rensis Likert, a psychologist, created the Likert scale, also referred to as an agree/disagree scale, in 1932.

The technique presents respondents with a series of attitude dimensions on which they are asked to indicate whether and how strongly they agree or disagree with a given statement. For expectations and perceptions, it ranged from (1 = strongly disagree,2=disagree,3=neutral,4=Agree and 5= strongly agree) and service quality ranging from (1=Completely dissatisfied, 2=dissatisfied,3= neutral,4=satisfied and 5=Completely dissatisfied). The researcher used the questionnaire because of its advantage of being cost-effective. The respondents answered questions at their convenience as it was an online survey. A questionnaire also allowed respondents to answer questions freely with a feeling of anonymity. The researcher used an online designed questionnaire to collect information on the expectations of Mutare citizens and their perceptions of municipal service delivery. Table 3.1 below shows the construct of the questionnaire:

**Table 3.1: Construct of the questionnaire**

<b>Section of Questionnaire</b>	<b>Content</b>	<b>Link to Objectives</b>
A	Demographics	1,2,3,4, and 5
B	Service Quality Dimensions	2,3,4,5
C	Service quality perceptions	3,4,5
C	Communication	4

C	Customers' Expectations	2,3,4 and 5
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The researcher developed a good relationship with United Mutare Resident Ratepayers Trust personnel, enabling smooth data collection without any challenges. UMRRT was always available to assist whenever needed because they dealt with residents daily and understood them better. The researcher sent reminders to survey respondents to ensure that data collection was done within the prescribed period; these measures assisted the researcher in getting enough survey responses.

### **3.10.2 Secondary data**

For this study, the researcher gathered secondary data from books, records, newspapers, internet articles, and articles written by other researchers. Secondary data assisted the researcher in developing an understanding of citizens' attitudes toward service delivery. Secondary data was essential in this study because it is challenging to conduct new research that adequately captures previous transformations and advances. Secondary data has the distinct advantage of having previously completed much of the contextual work required. Secondary data provided the researcher with a baseline against which to compare the collected primary data results. As a result, it is always prudent to begin any research activity by evaluating secondary data. The researcher used several of the above secondary data, which formed the basis of the literature, theories, and models, contributing to the conceptual framework applied in the study. Secondary data allowed the researcher to design a proper methodology to collect primary data.

Kabir (2016) outlined that secondary data is collected from a previously published source in any form. Literature review in any research is founded on secondary data. It is gathered by someone else for another purpose (but used by the researcher for another purpose). For instance, literature reviews and case studies might have been carried out, published texts and statistics could have already been used elsewhere, and media and personal contacts had also been utilised (Kabir, 2016). Kabir (2016) said that secondary data generally have a confirmed degree of validity and reliability, which need not be assessed by the researcher re-using such data. Moreover, secondary data can also be helpful in the research design of subsequent primary research.



### **3.11 DATA PRESENTATION AND ANALYSIS PROCEDURE**

An external statistician was approached to help with the data's statistical presentation. The questionnaire was designed to make it simple to collect the data for statistical analysis on the spreadsheet. For analysis, all the survey information was recorded. To help with the analysis of the research, quantitative statistical findings were generated. The Statistical Program for Social Sciences (SPSS) version 16.0 was used to organise and summarise data from all completed questionnaires. The results were combined with the demographic information gathered from survey respondents, and then the data was analysed using accurate descriptive and inferential statistics. Tables and diagrams were used to present and describe the nature of the responses in the study data using descriptive statistics (frequency tables). In the case of jointly distributed data, the Pearson correlation coefficient was utilised (data with a bivariate normal distribution). Pearson's correlation coefficient, represented by the letters  $r$  or  $r_{xy}$ , assesses the strength of a linear link between two or more variables, according to Schober, Boer, and Schwarte's (2018) definition (where  $x$  and  $y$  are the two variables involved). There is no correlation; the positive correlation is 0 to +1, and the negative correlation is 0 to -1. (0). In this study, the Pearson correlation coefficient was employed to establish a statistically significant link between service quality and citizen satisfaction, in Mutare Municipality.

The researcher measured these service quality dimensions: tangibility, responsiveness, dependability, empathy, assurance, expectations, perceptions, and service provided. Correlation coefficients range from -1 to +1. Furthermore, the p-value was calculated as a measure of significance at 0.05. If the p-value is less than the significance level of 0.05, we reject the  $H_0$ . Data analysis entailed condensing accumulated data into manageable sizes, creating summaries, looking for patterns, and employing statistical techniques to present data logically and objectively (Liu, Sun, Zhang, Wang, Tang, and Zhu, 2019). The results were analysed using appropriate descriptive and inferential statistics, after combining them with the demographic variables collected in the survey from participants. Thus, the chosen method of data analysis should follow a circular process flow that includes the research questions, data interpretation, and the ability to produce and then communicate the study findings.

### **3.11.1 Data validity**

Sürücü and Maşlakçı (2020) mentioned that validity is concerned with the depth to which the measurement tool captures a theoretical construct, such as a hypothesis, behaviour, idea, or quality. In the context of this study, the researcher ensured that the survey was designed carefully in simple English, was easy to understand, and kept the survey as short as possible. The supervisor and the research committee checked and approved the questionnaire before distribution. Yin (2011:78) describes proper research as adequately collecting and deducing its data, so that the deductions correctly reproduce and symbolise the natural sphere the researcher studied. The researcher made sure that the questionnaire outcomes represent the original score of the measured variables; thus, if the same results are used more than twice, they give the true meaning of the original score of the variables.

The researcher ensured the following were considered to ensure data validity:

- Questions were thoroughly researched and based on existing knowledge and could assist in unpacking the research objective to analyse the perceptions and expectations of service delivery in Mutare Municipality.
- The researcher used the scientific method of gathering data to ensure the validity of the research findings.
- During research it was ensured that the research instrument, i.e., the questionnaire, involved subjective evaluation by an experienced researcher to ensure that all the questions answered the problem under investigation.
- To ensure data validity, the researcher guaranteed the technique and measurement method used; in this case, the questionnaires and questions were targeted to measure the specific aspects of the research objectives.

### **3.11.2 Data reliability**

The researcher ensured that questionnaires were administered to the residents who were service recipients in all the nineteen wards to ensure data reliability that represented the views of the entire population. The questionnaire used in the study was not self-designed but borrowed, based on a well-established model (SERVQUAL) to assess service quality and customer satisfaction. The researcher only used responses from the participants and

findings represented from the participating group's perspective. To decrease prejudices, the questionnaire did not include any questions that asked respondents to identify themselves by their race or ethnicity. Data used in this research was only from the responses of Mutare citizens, property owners and tenants who had stayed in the city for two years, to ensure reliable data to enable the researcher to come up with valid recommendations. Mohajan (2017) highlighted, "It is of paramount importance to assess the reliability and validity of each research instrument used to ensure credible results. "Reliability" refers to the consistency of the measured values derived from repeated measurements made with the same measuring tool and under the same conditions. According to Creswell and Creswell (2017), reliability relates to how consistently a research instrument measures the outcome produced; as a result, a research instrument that yields inconsistent results repeatedly has low reliability (Block & Block, 2005, p. 86).

According to Trochim (2012), the dependability of the assessing tool refers to whether the outcomes of the assessing procedures are stable, at points when they could be reliable. According to Burns and Bush (2010), dependability as an arithmetic model is related to uniformity and trustworthiness, which represents evenness in getting the same comparative answer while computing miracles that do not change. Sekaran (2011), surveys could be more persistent. They are frequently one-time information-gathering strategies with a concise timeframe geared towards a specific population. A pilot study was carried out to examine the dependability of the questions. The Coefficient Cronbach Alpha test was then performed to calculate dependability, which ranged from 0.653 to 0.849.

Data were analysed using the SPSS system to mitigate the risk of the researcher misinterpreting or manipulating the results to get the same results more than twice and ensure dependability and trustworthiness. The researcher followed these recommendations. Discussions on ethical considerations will follow.

### **3.12 ETHICAL CONSIDERATION**

Researchers should consider ethical conduct's values and guiding principles while planning and conducting studies with human subjects. Research ethics committees (RECs) typically assess whether research ideas are ethically acceptable (Kaewkungwal & Adams, 2020). The researcher obtained gatekeeper's letters from Mutare Municipality and the United Mutare Resident Ratepayers Trust (UMRRT) to conduct the research. According to UNISA Ethics Policy (2016:5), the researcher must meet specific criteria before obtaining ethical clearance. Therefore, the researcher ensured they obtained ethical clearance from the ethics review committee before conducting research. The researcher was granted ethical clearance by the UNISA Research Ethics Committee, and adhered to fundamental moral values during the research process by ensuring the anonymity of respondents. The questionnaires did not require the personal details of respondents, such as contact numbers, physical addresses, or names. Thus, the researcher ensured that any information that would lead to the identification of a respondent was omitted or excluded.

Ethics is "a question of principle sensitivity to others' rights and that while honesty is good, respect for human dignity is superior," according to Cohen et al. (2011:84). The researcher kept data safe and would only share data with third parties if a court order had compelled the researcher to do so. Data collected was kept safe on the researcher's google drive as passwords would not be shared. When the data was no longer required and the research expired, the researcher would destroy confidential data documents and securely remove electronic information. The questionnaire did not have questions that were harmful to the self-interest of respondents. The research outcomes will be published in a dissertation available at the University of South Africa library. A copy of the dissertation will also be made available to the Town Clerk and top management of Mutare Municipality and United Mutare Residents Ratepayers Trust (UMRRT).

UNISA Ethics policy (2016:5) indicates that the researcher should refrain from researching if it violates its integrity and validity. Before conducting the research, the researcher should consider all possible risks that the research might pose. The researcher must take robust precautions to ease the potential for harm and deal with it,

should it occur. Questionnaires were distributed online through the website, mobile and email to Mutare Municipality residents. The researcher was granted permission from UMRRT to use the contact details of ratepayers and property owners to administer the questionnaire via email, WhatsApp, SMS, and UMRRT reports getting secondary data on the residents' perceptions of Mutare municipality's service quality. The respondents were free to answer the online questionnaire in their own space and time. The researcher will acknowledge the contributions of various authorities.

### **3.13 CONCLUSION**

This chapter laid out the methodology employed when conducting this research study. It discussed the research context, design, the data collection instruments used, sampling methods, how data was collected and analysed, the rationale for choosing a correlational research design and ethical considerations that were dealt with in this study's data requirements. The next chapter is data presentation and analysis and provides detailed reports on the study's research outcomes after the methodology chapter. Chapter five (5) will outline a research summary, conclusions, and recommendations.

## **CHAPTER 4: RESULTS, PRESENTATION AND ANALYSIS**

### **4.1 INTRODUCTION**

Following the research methodology that was detailed in chapter three, chapter four reveals the study's findings. It displays the precise results of the data-gathering procedure. The findings reflect the study respondents' opinions, expectations, and perceptions. As a result, the chapter will concentrate on the procedure for data processing as well as the proper statistical tests. The researcher used both the descriptive and inferential statistics presented in this section. The Pearson Correlation analysis method was used because the research aims to establish associations between variables, i.e., service quality and citizen satisfaction. According to scientific research, if the independent and dependent variables are both continuous, as in this research examining association, the Pearson Correlation test is used to investigate the relationship between dependent and independent variables. The statistical analysis used IBM Statistical Programme for Social Sciences (SPSS) version 16. Data was collected using the correlational research design; a survey questionnaire was used to collect data in which the citizens had to describe the current situation, using an online questionnaire from service recipients. Four hundred and sixty-eight (468) responses were received.

The chapter links the conceptual framework created in the study, which was empirically illuminated, with pertinent elements of the literature review, after presenting the data collection's findings. The study also used the official documents from UMRRT, mainly the baseline survey on social service in Mutare conducted in 2016. The researcher used purposive sampling by using the available database for the property owners of Mutare municipality, to understand citizens' perceptions and expectations of municipal service delivery in the municipality.

The researcher organised and summarised data in this chapter based on all completed surveys to comprehend, discuss, and analyse data. Data were analysed using the (SPSS), as mentioned earlier, to determine if past expectations, as well as perceived performance and satisfaction, had a direct impact on future expectations. Tables, graphs, and descriptive statistics (frequency tables) display and describe the types of replies

found in the study's data. Pearson correlation coefficients were employed in inferential analysis, to assess the significance and strength of the association between two variables (Boer & Schwarte, 2018 & Hair, Black, Babin and Anderson, 2010). Boer and Schwarte (2018) indicated that Pearson's correlation coefficient measures the strength of a linear relationship between two or more variables, where x and y are the two variables under consideration - the positive Correlation (0 to +1), Negative Correlation (0 to -1) and Zero Correlation (0). This study used the Pearson correlation coefficient to determine a statistically significant difference between service quality dimensions and citizen satisfaction in Mutare Municipality. The researcher measured these dimensions for service quality, including tangibility, responsiveness, reliability, empathy, assurance, expectations, perceptions, and service provided, which will be shown in the data presentation section.

Liu, Sun, Zhang, Wang, Tang, and Zhu (2019) postulates that the Pearson correlation coefficient measures the strength of a relation between variables. The correlation coefficient ranges between -1 and +1. Furthermore, the p-value, as a measure of significance at 0.05, was calculated. It must be noted that we reject the H0 if the p-value is lower than the significance level of 0.05. The statistical package SPSS 16.0 was used to perform quantitative data analyses.

#### 4.1.1 Reliability test

**Table 4.1: Case Processing Summary**

Case Processing Summary			
		N	%
Cases	Valid	468	95.5
	Excluded	22	4.4
	Total	490	100.0
a. Listwise deletion based on all variables in the procedure.			

The case processing results show that out of 490 returned questionnaires, twenty-two were excluded from the reliability test, through a listwise deletion based on all variables in the procedure.

**Table 4.2: Reliability Statistics**

Cronbach's Alpha	N of Items
0.904	34

The reliability statistics using Cronbach's test show that the instrument used to gather data for this research had a Cronbach's alpha value of 0.904, from 34 Likert scale items analysed. These findings show that the instrument was dependable as the reliability statistics was in the excellent range above 0.9. This means that the collected data could have the ability to address the research objectives and the research problem.

## **4.2 PRESENTATION AND INTERPRETATION OF DATA**

The presentation and interpretation of data examine the outcomes and quantitative analysis of the data. The researcher used descriptive and inferential analysis to evaluate the data after carefully examining the acquired data. The data from the primary survey were analysed using the SPSS. Coding and reviewing the descriptive statistics produced from the analysis were part of the data processing. Data were entered into the excel spreadsheet after the questionnaires were collected from the respondents. The data collected from the respondents were coded, utilising the Likert scale approach. Data was pre-coded in only one method; therefore, data coding included locating, classifying, and giving it a numeric or character symbol.

In this study, all responses were pre-coded; they were chosen from a list of options, and a number was assigned to each choice. Following completion, the data was applied in the subsequent phases using SPSS version 16.0 on Windows 10 statistical analysis software. Descriptive statistics, and inferential analytic techniques, such as mean, correlation coefficient, chi-square, and graphical analysis, were used to explore the data.



The relationship between variables was explored and a comparison about how they affect each other, was made; this was done using the method to determine whether the data were normally distributed, and the preliminary data was examined. To summarise the sample data distribution, descriptive statistics were calculated. The information obtained was helpful and gave the researcher insightful knowledge that allowed her to respond to the study questions. Participants' responses are summarised below.

**Table 4.3: The distribution of the participants by gender**

<b>Gender</b>	<b>Frequency</b>	<b>Percentage</b>
Female	277	59,2
Male	183	39,1
Other/non-binary	8	1,7
<b>Total</b>	<b>468</b>	<b>100,0</b>

Table 4.3 above shows the distribution of the participants by gender. 468 participants participated in the study. Of the 468 participants, 59,2% (277) were women, whereas 39,1% were male. These figures above could be attributed to cultural beliefs, for example, that females typically have time to participate in surveys compared to male participants, in most circumstances. Primarily, women always carry the burden of poor service delivery, for example, water shortages. Women are naturally the majority in the homes as they usually run the homes, so this kind of survey could have encouraged them to participate, hoping to see some changes after expressing themselves. The gender distribution reflects the situation in Zimbabwe, where females dominate their male counterparts in terms of numbers.

**Table 4.4: The distribution of the participants by age group**

Age group	Frequency	Percentage
18-30 years	86	18,4
31-40 years	172	36,8
41-50 years	171	36,5
Above 50 years	39	8,3
Total	468	100,0

The study included participants from 18 years to above 50 years (See Table 4.4). 18.4 % of the participants were between 18-30, 36.8 % were between 31-40 years, and 36.5 were aged 41-50 years. Meanwhile, the lowest number of the participants were persons above 50 years (8,3%). This distribution was crucial, since it ensured that people of different ages contributed to the study. As a result, the result would be reflective of the Mutare municipality's residents. This ensured the generalisability of the research results. A total of 468 responded to the questionnaire, which was above the minimum of the required 382. It follows that the research findings could be inferred from the entire population. Their participation contributes valuable research findings that can make the municipality more efficient and effective in delivering service. This will improve service delivery in Mutare, which is correlated to positive citizens' perceptions and expectations.

**Table 4.5: The distribution of the participants by house ownership status**

House ownership status	Frequency	Percentage
In charge of the house. The owners are abroad	1	0,2
Owner/Landlord	351	75,0
Rented accommodation	1	0,2
Student	1	0,2
Tenant	114	24,4

<b>Total</b>	<b>468</b>	<b>100,0</b>
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Table 4.5 above shows that participants are distributed by house ownership status. 75% of respondents own a property in Mutare municipality, which is necessary for the research since they are the ones who face most of the challenges of service delivery. The highest share of the participants in the study comprises homeowners – 75% of the participants. The second-largest representation of the participants were tenants, who contributed 24.4 %. Meanwhile, the lowest were students, rented accommodation, and owners being abroad at 0,2% respectively.

**Table 4.6: The distribution of participants in wards and tenure of stay in Mutare Municipality**

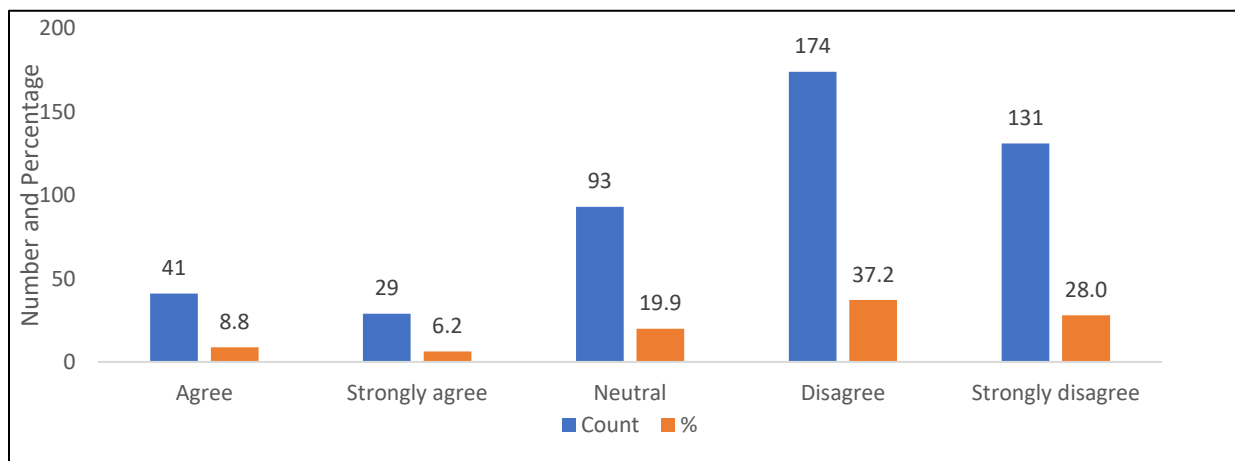
<b>Wards</b>	<b>Frequency</b>	<b>Percentage</b>
Low density	73	15,6
Medium density	45	9,6
High density	350	74,8
<b>Grand Total</b>	<b>468</b>	<b>100,0</b>
<b>Tenure</b>		
2-5 years	67	14,3
5-10 years	231	49,4
more than 10 years	170	36,3
<b>Grand Total</b>	<b>468</b>	<b>100,0</b>

Table 4.6 shows that 74,8% of the participants came from high-density areas, followed by those residing in low-density areas and medium density areas at 15,6% and 9,6%, respectively. Furthermore, 49.4% currently have resided in the municipality between five and ten years, and the least were observed in the municipality for two to five years, which

contributed 14.3 %. 468 respondents had lived in Mutare for more than two years, a period the researcher presumed was sufficient for them to proffer their views on services they have experienced. It is mutually understood that people who have stayed in the city for a longer period have better knowledge and insight about the quality of services. In terms of the population distribution, the data above clearly shows the current situation ; most of the residents in Mutare municipality reside in the high-density suburbs.

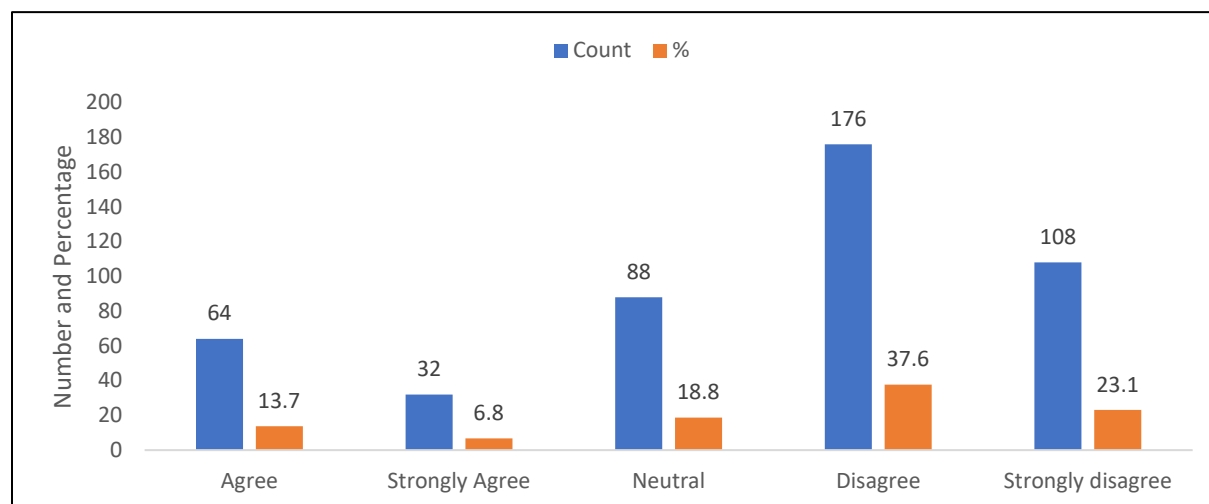
#### 4.3: TANGIBILITY DIMENSION

**Figure 4.1: Mutare has modern equipment and appealing physical facilities.**



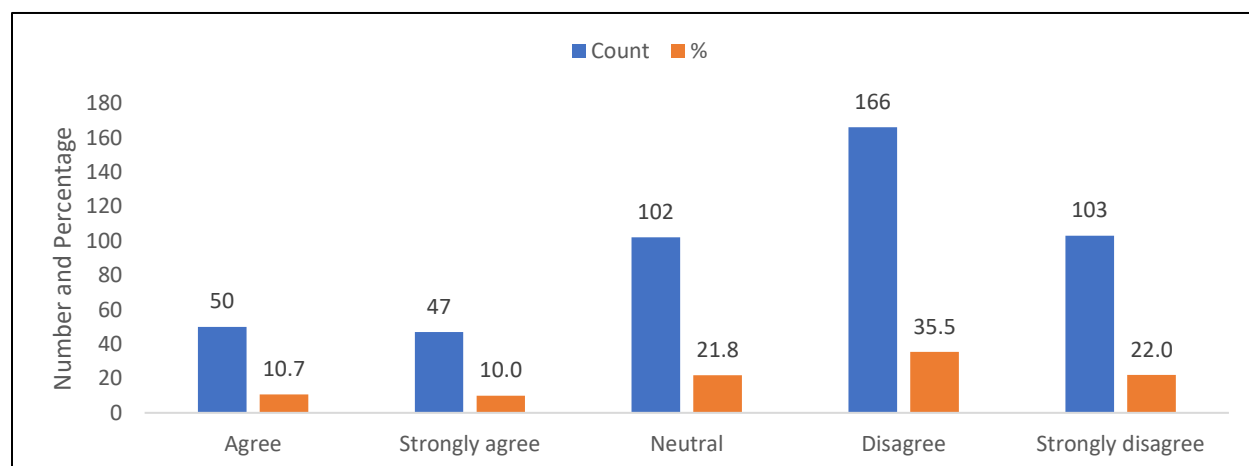
The distribution of responses in terms of the modern-looking equipment and appealing physical facilities of the municipality is indicated above = figure 4.1 shows that 65% of the participants indicated that the municipality does not have appealing modern-looking equipment and 15 % were happy with the available physical facilities. In addition, 19.9 % neither agreed nor disagreed about the physical facilities of the municipality.

**Figure 4.2: Workers in the City of Mutare look good and well-presented or appropriately dressed**



Participants were not entirely impressed by the dress code of the municipal workers. Just above 60.7 % of the participants indicated that they disagreed that workers in the City of Mutare look good and well-presented, or appropriately dressed. In comparison, 20.5% of the participants indicated that they were presentable. In addition, 18.8 % of participants indicated that they were unsure.

**Figure 4.3: Materials associated with service are visually appealing (pamphlets, statements)**



The response about the municipality's materials (pamphlets and statements) used on services rendered, clearly shows that citizens were not impressed (Figure 4.3) shows that 20.7% of the participants indicated municipality's materials on services rendered were appealing. In comparison, 57% of participants indicated that they disagreed with it.

The above section looked at the tangibility dimension. As discussed in the literature review by Ncube (2018), Cutu (2021), and Parasuraman (1985), the availability of the resources needed to provide the service to clients, well-groomed employees, and the accessibility of written documents like pamphlets, brochures, folders, and information books would all have a positive impact on the degree of customer satisfaction. One of the research objectives was to analyse the level of satisfaction with the services offered concerning service dimensions of tangibility.

From the above outcomes, most respondents were unhappy; it is evident that Mutare municipality needs to pay attention to its physical features as it would help enhance service delivery efficiency and increase citizens' satisfaction. In terms of the dress code of the municipality employees, even the respondents could have been more impressed. The researcher did not see how it could impact service delivery, though it is necessary to give the organisation a good image. Local governments should give more attention to acquiring modern equipment, as highlighted in the literature, to improve service provision and enhance citizen satisfaction. When facilities are in order, service beneficiaries would have confidence in the municipality; the pleasant atmosphere puts citizens in an optimistic mood, improving their perception of service quality and satisfaction.

#### 4.4: RELIABILITY DIMENSION

**Figure 4.4: Mutare municipality gets things right the first time and keep its promises.**

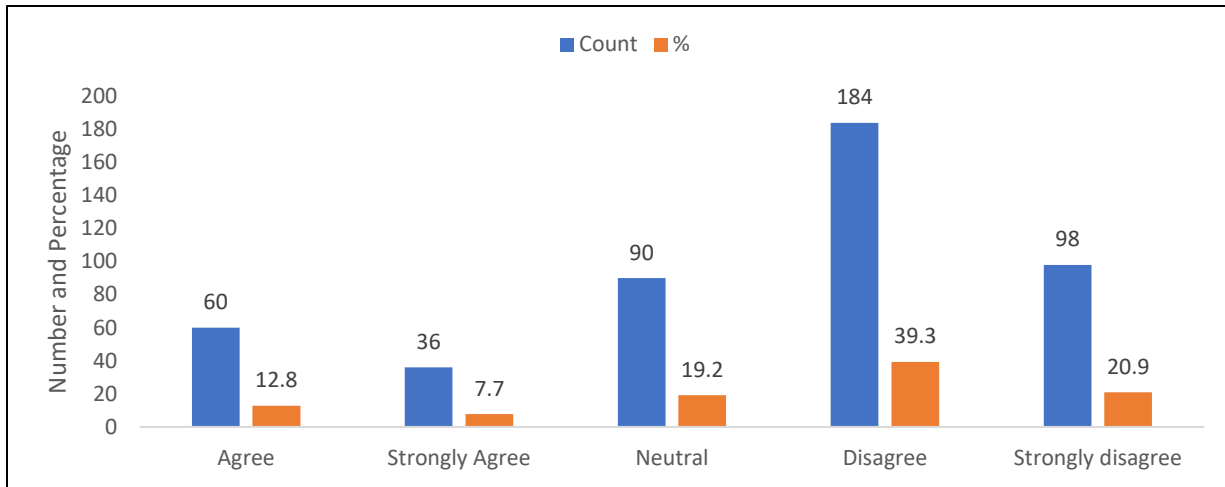
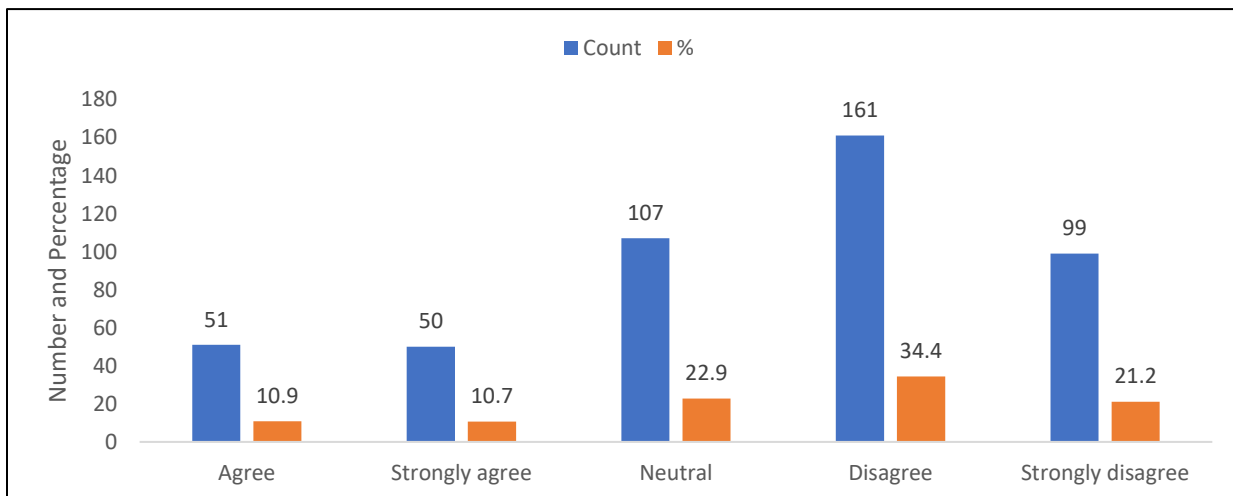


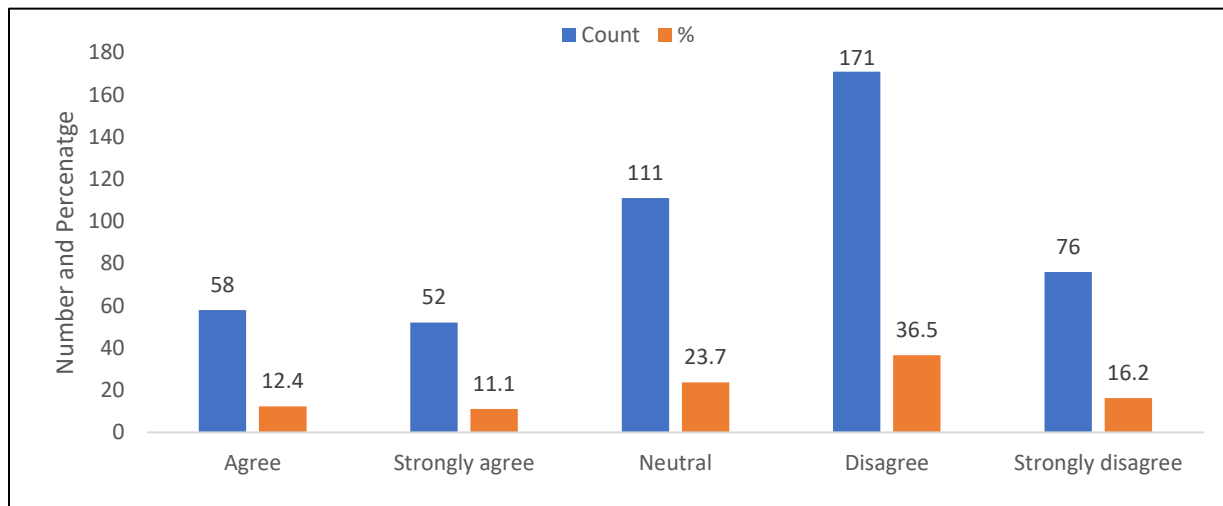
Figure 4.5 shows that most participants do not think that the municipality did what they promised, timeously. 60.2 % of participants did not agree that the municipality kept its promises or honour its commitment to residents. Meanwhile, 20.5 % of participants indicated that they agree, and 19.2 were neutral, respectively.

**Figure 4.5: When you have a problem, the City of Mutare shows sincere interest in solving it.**



About 55.2% of the participants indicated that they do not think the municipality genuinely wanted to resolve their issues when called. In contrast, about 21.6% of the participants indicated that the municipality showed sincere interest in resolving their issues when needed.

**Figure 4.6: Mutare municipality insists on error-free records.**



At least 52.7 % of participants felt that the municipality did not ensure error-free records in their system (See Figure 4.6). Meanwhile, 23.5 % indicated that the municipality insisted on an error-free records system. In addition, 23.7 % remained neutral.

Reliability is the capacity to execute assured service dependably and accurately. This dimension looked at variables including the sincerity of the municipality in solving problems, keeping promises, getting things right the first time and maintaining error-free records. As statistically shown in the graphs above, there is a clear indication that the residents perceived Mutare municipality as unreliable in delivering critical services to them. Gobena (2019) emphasised that timely service delivery and the maintenance of error-free records are becoming increasingly important survival tools, with superior service quality and customer satisfaction. The Mutare municipality had much work to do to improve citizens' perceptions of the reliability of services.



#### 4.5: RESPONSIVENESS DIMENSION

**Figure 4.7: Does municipal workers tell you exactly when services will be performed and give prompt service.**

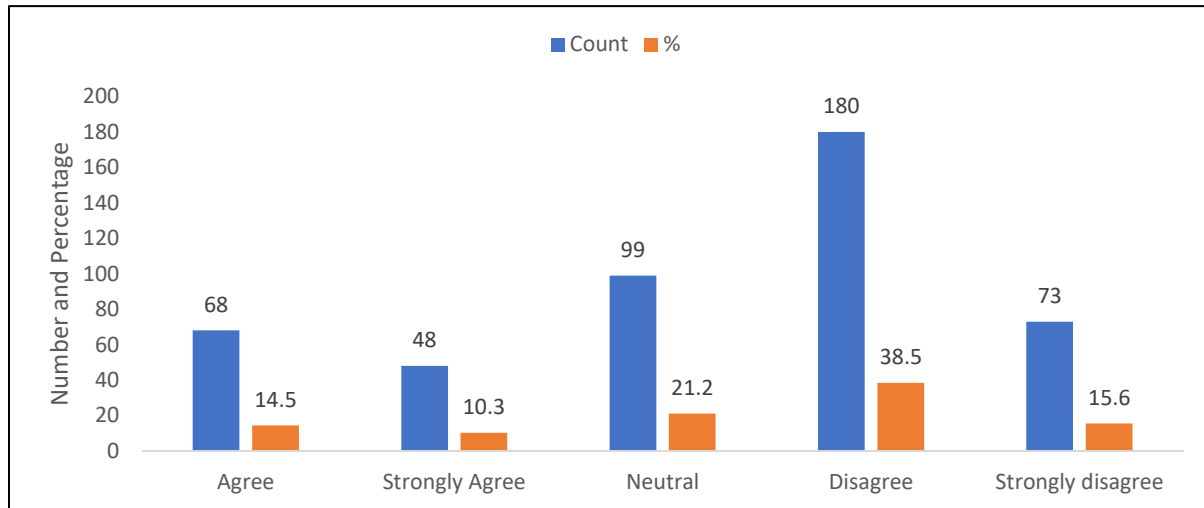
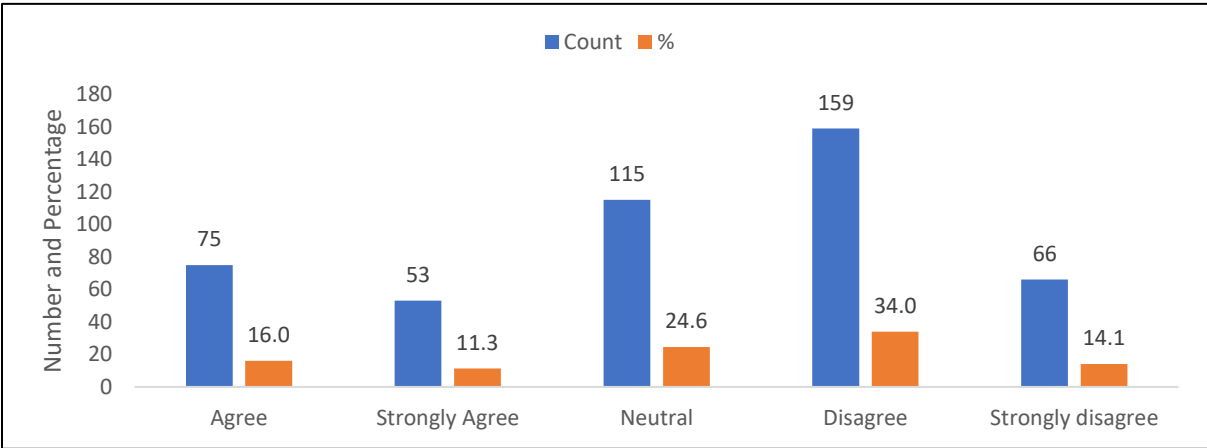


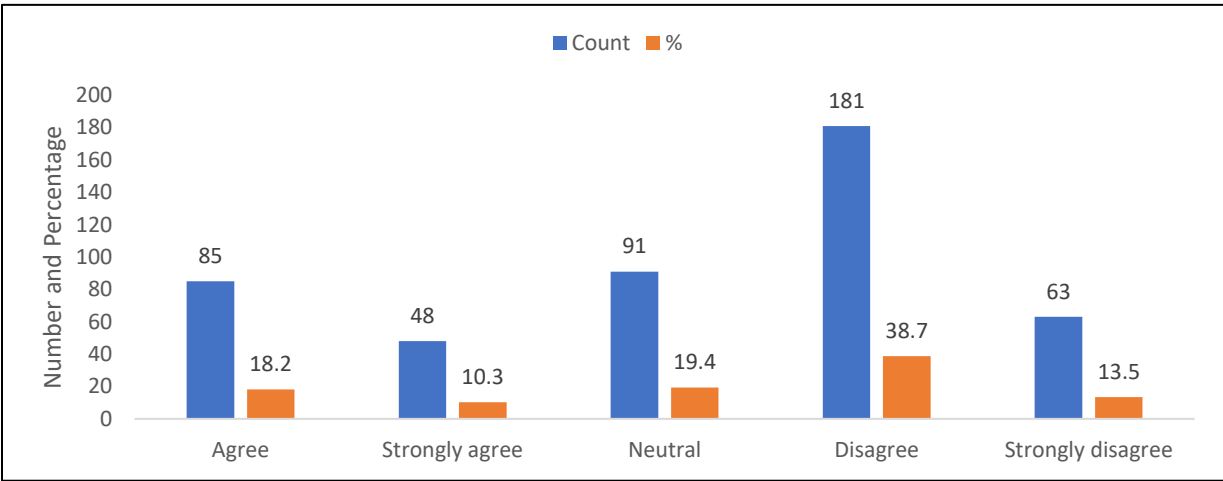
Figure 4.7 above shows the number and percentage distribution of the workers in Mutare municipality's ability to inform citizens exactly when services will be performed. The data distribution shows that 54.1 % do not agree that the municipality informs them, while 24.8 % indicated that the municipality informs them exactly when services will be performed.

**Figure 4.8: Workers in Mutare municipality are always willing to help you.**



About 48,1% of the participants indicated that the municipal workers are always unwilling to help them. In comparison, 24,5% indicated they are unsure, and 27,3% indicated that municipal workers are always willing to help.

**Figure 4.9: Workers in Mutare municipality always respond to your requests.**



Above 52,2% of the participants indicated that they disagree that municipality workers are always busy responding to citizen requests. In comparison, 28,5% indicated that municipality workers are always busy responding to their requests. In addition, 19,4% indicated that they are not sure.

On all the questions asked under the responsiveness dimension, the responses indicate that Mutare municipality fails to respond to the citizens' needs. Muthwa (2015) referred to responsiveness to the service provider's willingness to deliver services promised promptly. At least 54.1 % of the respondents indicated that they would like more time the municipality takes to attend to their requests. Mutare must adopt comprehensive strategies to address these challenges, and failure might lead to severe problems as residents will get to the point when they boycott paying rates and taxes. As mentioned in the literature review, in section 2.2.2.

Cutu (2021) emphasised that one of the primary factors contributing to poor service in municipalities is the need for a qualified workforce to address the community's needs. He also emphasised the importance of adequate financial resources and ensuring the community's easy access to information and services. Ekpo (2008) added that local governments must be legally capable of raising the necessary funds to meet their spending needs and effectively meet the needs of service recipients.

#### 4.6: ASSURANCE DIMENSION

**Figure 4.10: The behaviour of workers in Mutare municipality instils confidence in you?**

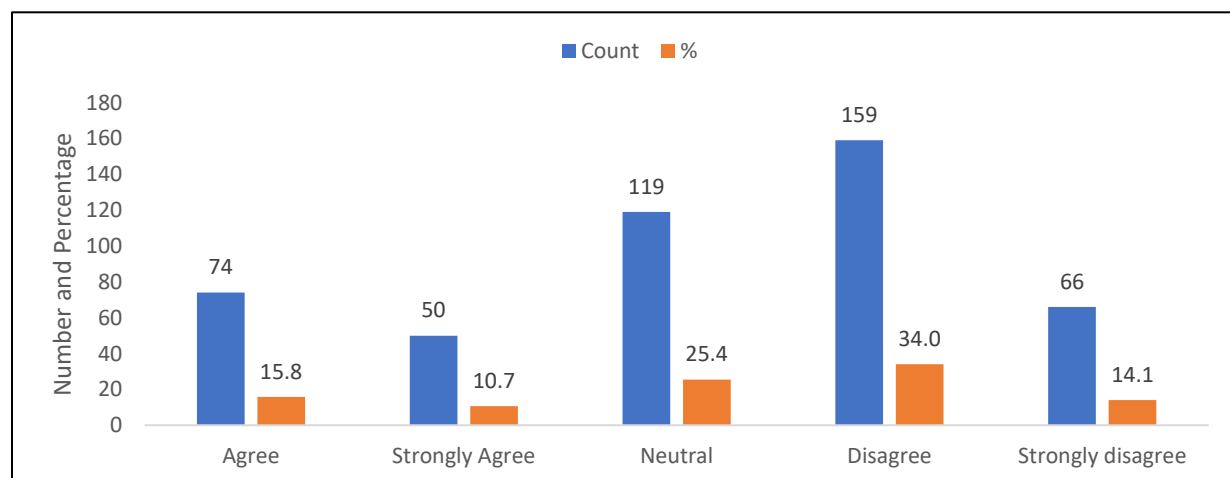
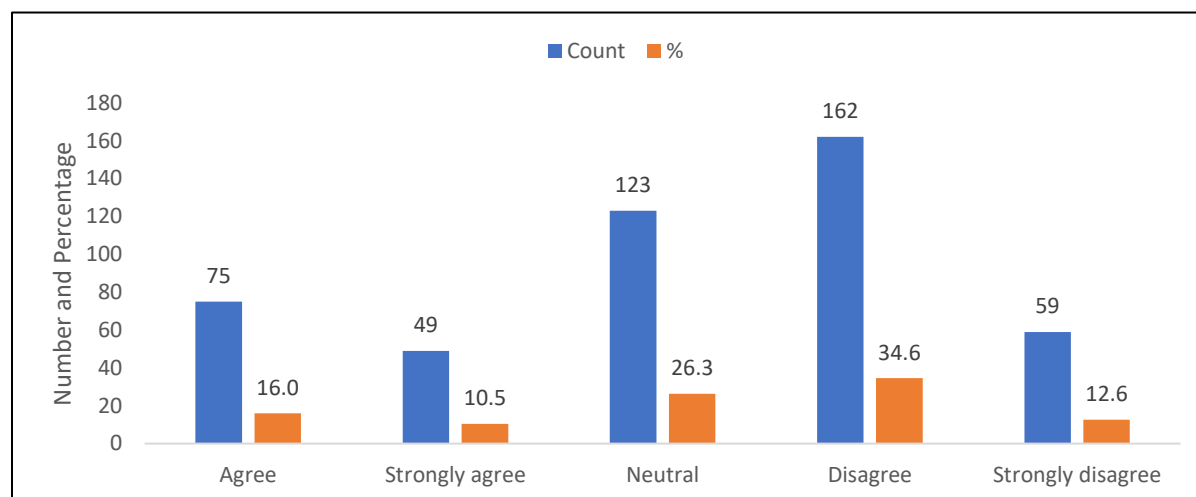


Figure 4.10 shows the number and percentage distribution of workers' behaviour in Mutare regarding the ability of Mutare staff to instil confidence and if they feel safe dealing with them. 48.1% of participants indicated that they disagree that the behaviour of workers

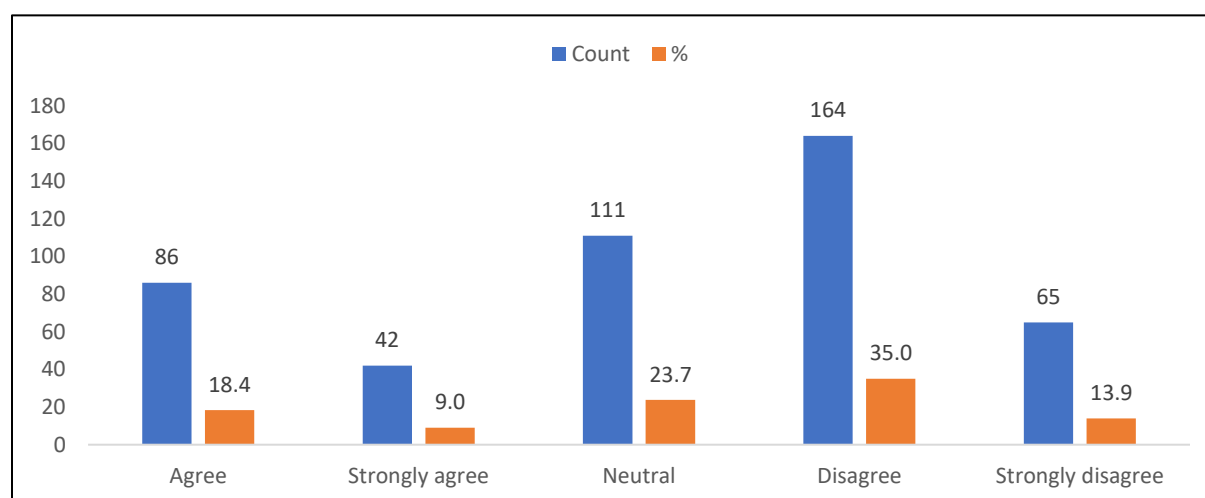
in Mutare municipality instils confidence in them. In comparison, 26.5 % of participants indicated that the behaviour of workers in Mutare municipality instils confidence in them, and they feel safe in their dealings.

**Figure 4.11: Workers in Mutare municipality are consistently courteous with you.**



At least 47.2 % of participants indicated that workers in Mutare municipality are not consistently courteous with them. Furthermore, 26.5 % of participants remained unsure and consistently courteous with them, respectively.

**Figure 4.12: Workers of Mutare municipality have knowledge to answer your questions.**



Participants are only partially happy with the responses received from the municipal workers. 48,9 % of people are not happy with the answers. In comparison, 27,4% of participants are happy or satisfied with municipal workers' knowledge when responding to questions.

Assurance relates to how the council communicates its processes to the citizens. Open communication builds trust and positive perceptions. Poor communication breeds distrust and dissatisfaction. In all the questions, the respondents who felt that the council was not doing enough ranged between 47%- 48 %, which is a clear indication that they are not confident with the municipality, and the knowledge of the workforce and do not feel safe dealing with the municipality. Gobena (2019) indicated the significance of willing and competent human resources or staff in enhancing service delivery efficiency and effectiveness in local government. As a public organisation, the Mutare municipality should take note of these factors to improve citizens' perceptions.

#### 4.7: EMPATHY DIMENSION

**Figure 4.13: Mutare municipality gives you individual attention**

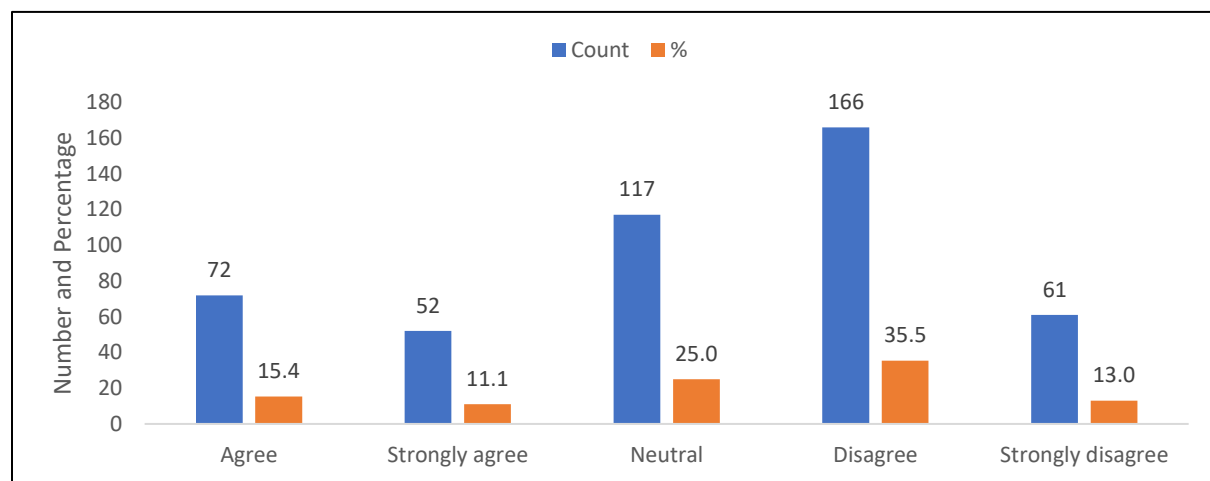


Figure 4.13 above shows that 48.5% of the participants indicated that they do not get individual attention from the municipality. On the other hand, 25.5 % indicated that the municipality does give them individual attention.

**Figure 4.14: Mutare municipality has your best interest and understand your needs.**

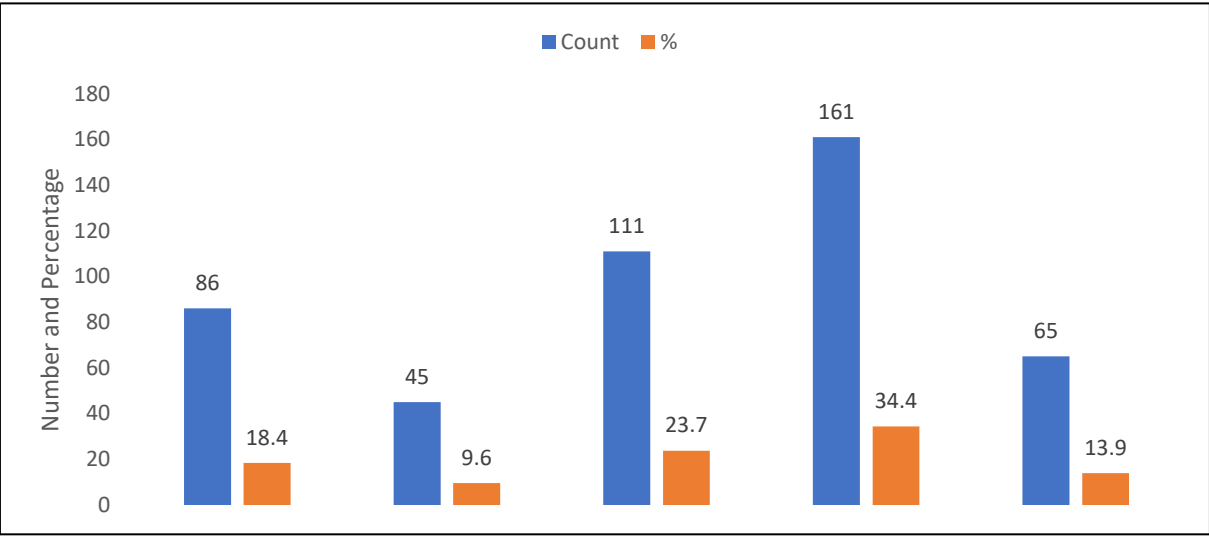
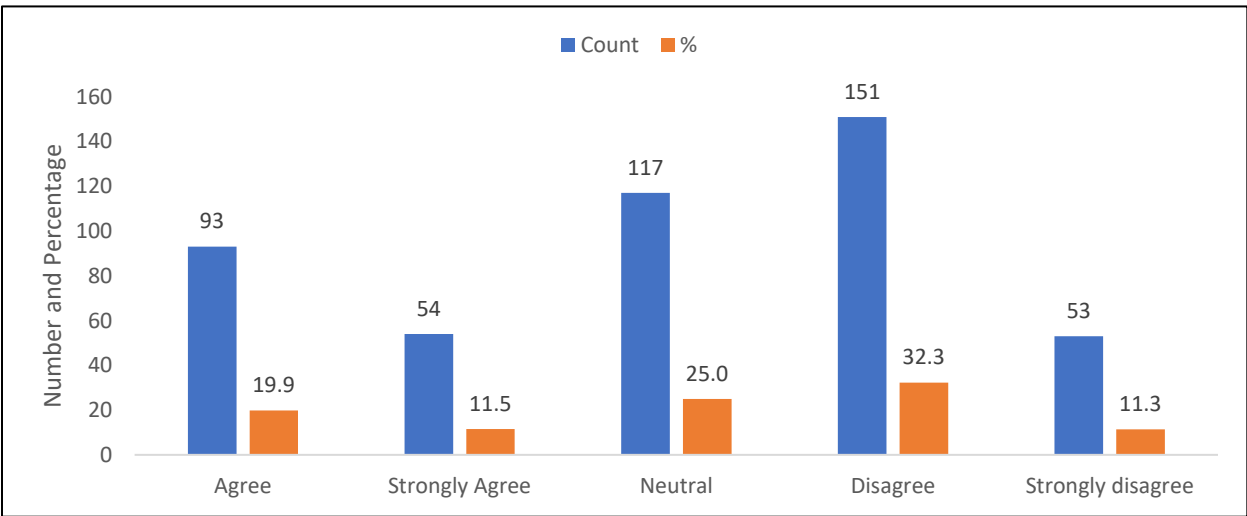


Figure 4.14 shows the number and percentage distribution of Mutare municipality have your best interest at heart. 48.3 shows that they disagree that the municipality has people’s best interest at heart, while 28 % of the participants indicated that the municipality has people’s best interest.

**Figure 4.15 Mutare municipality has operating hours that are convenient for residents.**



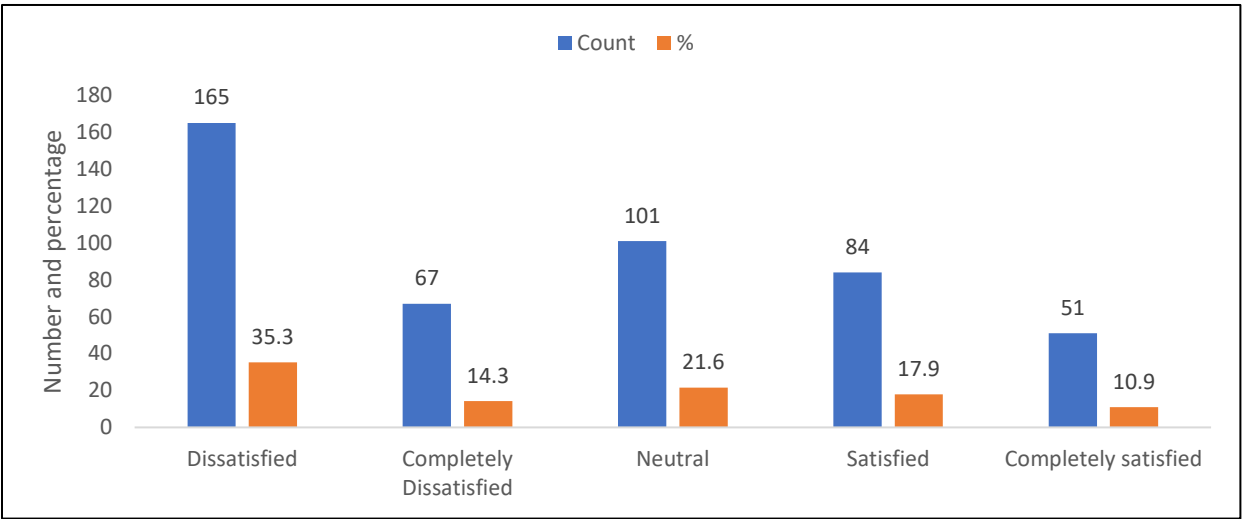
Participants were asked about the operating hours of the municipality. Participants indicated different views on this matter in figure 4.15. About 43,6% indicated that the

municipality operating hours are not convenient to residents compared to 31,4% of the participants who indicated that municipality operating hours are convenient to residents.

It is vital to show empathy to citizens because it influences citizens’ perceptions negatively or positively. Whilst empathy is more of people management, citizens expect the municipality to show compassion. It is something that Mutare municipality could improve and train staff on people management skills.

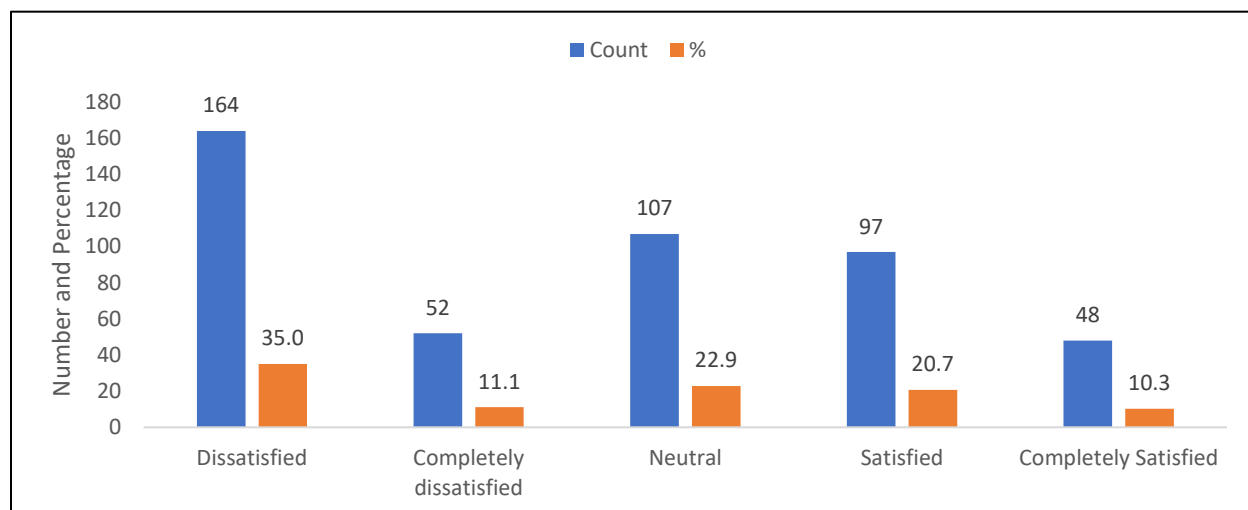
**4.8: PERCEIVED SERVICE QUALITY**

**Figure 4.16: Mutare municipality provides quality health care (clinics)**



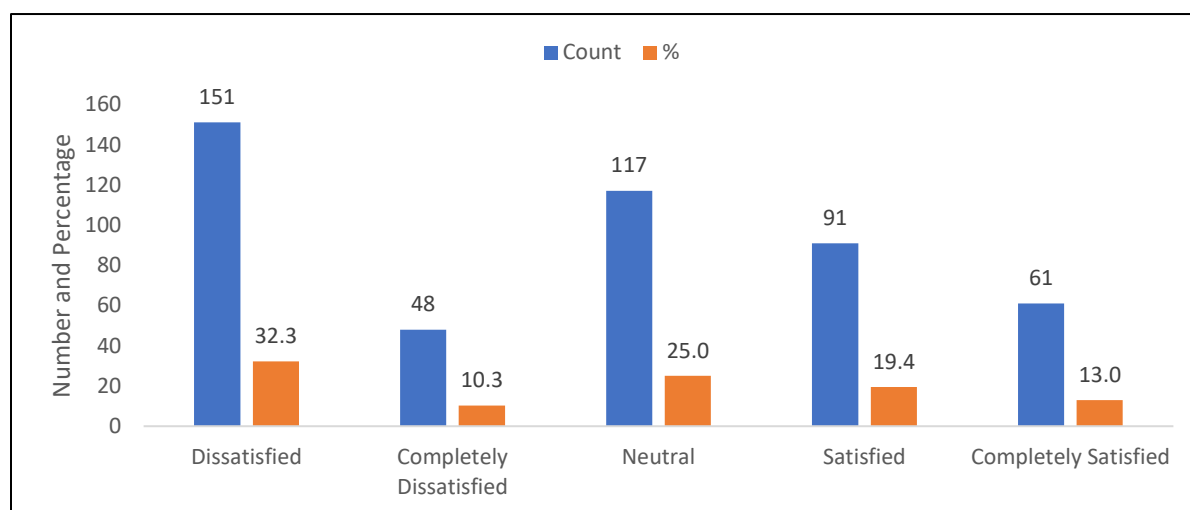
Participants gave different views about their satisfaction with the quality of health care provided in the clinics (See Figure 4.16). About 49,6% indicated that they are not satisfied with the quality of the health care services provided in the clinics compared to 28,8% of the participants who indicated that they are satisfied.

**Figure 4.17: Happy with the housing service, allocation of commercial & industrial stands**



Participants were asked to rate the quality of the housing services of the municipality, the allocation of commercial & industrial stands – Figure 4.17. Different views were recorded where 51.1% of participants indicated that they were not satisfied with the quality while 30% of participants indicated that they were satisfied, and 22, 5 % were neutral.

**Figure 4.18: Municipality has cleaned portable and clear drainage (run-off)**



Regarding clean water and the drainage system state, 42.6% of the participants rated it poorly, while 32,4 % were satisfied with the drainage system (Figure 4.18). The researcher found out that most residents perceived service quality as poor and were dissatisfied with the level of service delivery by Mutare municipality. From the above five



attributes under the perceived service quality dimension, the average dissatisfaction score was 44.2%, indicating that residents are unhappy.

Mutare should double its efforts to improve residents' satisfaction by providing efficient and sufficient services. Areas of special attention should be the housing service which 51.1% of the respondents rated the service poor and health care, respectively, with 49.9% of the respondent showing dissatisfaction. Clean water and drainage systems were also rated unsatisfactory by the residents, with 42,6% of the respondents rating it poor, which is still a considerable margin to be ignored. The results clearly show that Mutare municipality still needs to work on delivering quality services and needs mechanisms to measure satisfaction levels of its services.

Efficient and sufficient services would improve the residents' quality of life in Mutare. According to Nyarota (2021), in an article published on All Africa news on the 17th of January 2022, *water supply is still a challenge; some sections of residential areas in Dangamvura water is rationed and dirty*. This is attributed to old and small pipes to sustain the high pressure of the water from the reservoirs. As a result, numerous and regular bursts are experienced, affecting the water distribution. The Mutare municipality should concentrate its efforts on addressing these challenges; it needs to acquire new pipes to service the old ones to end the perennial water shortage in the suburbs. Residents tend to have greater satisfaction in situations where service delivery is above board and less satisfaction in situations of poor service delivery. Residents perceived service quality as generally poor from all the services evaluated in the research.

**Figure 4.19: The streetlights are well functioning.**

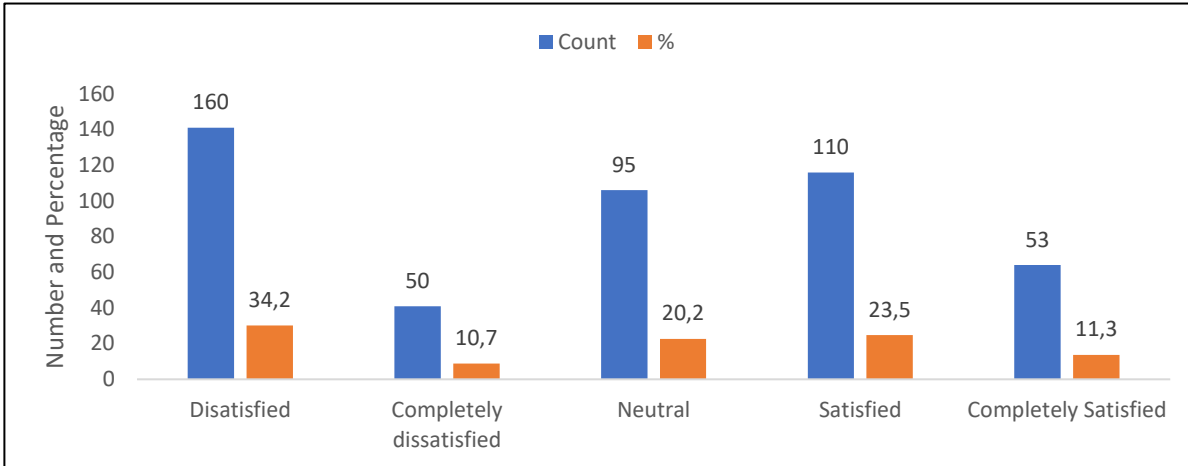
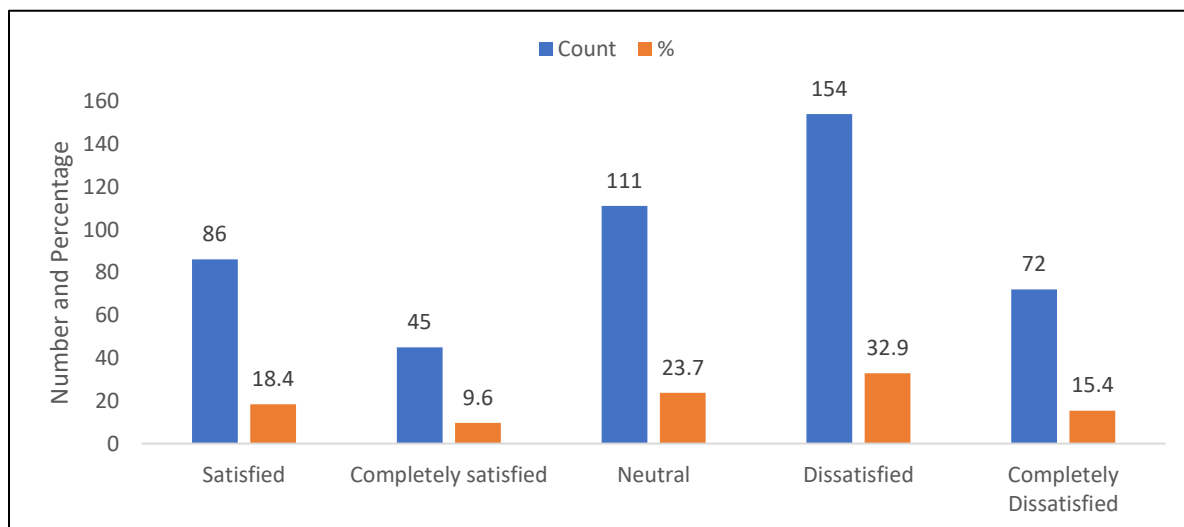


Figure 4.19 above indicates that 34.8 % of the participants are satisfied with the streetlight's functionality, while 44.9% are dissatisfied with its functionality in their area. These results support the findings from the literature, as mentioned in the first chapter in section 1.2 that the crime levels and house break-ins have increased in the Municipality because of the streetlights not functioning.

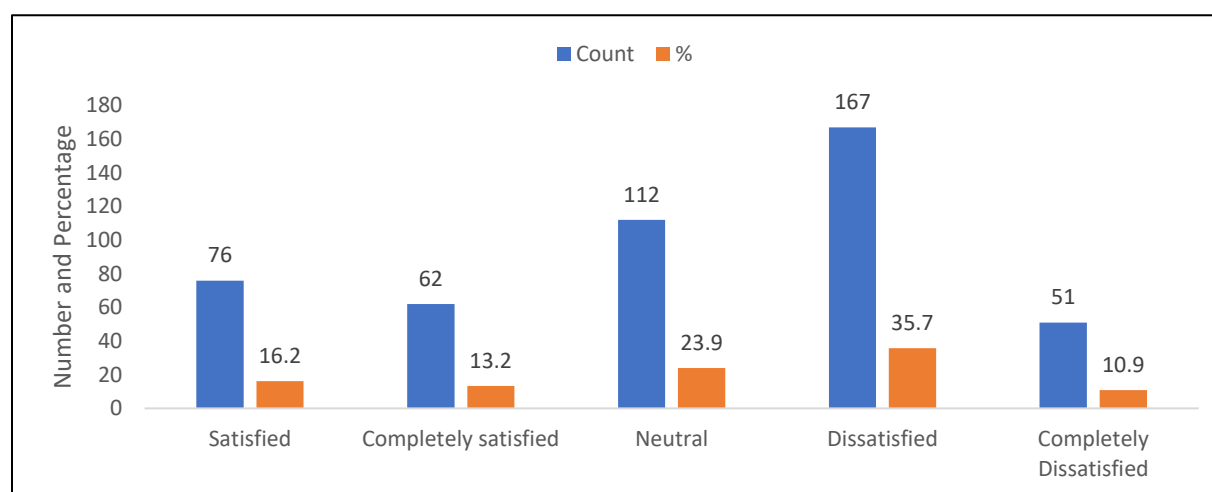
#### **4.9: SERVICE PERFORMANCE**

**Figure 4.20: I am satisfied with solid waste disposals in Mutare municipality**



Based on the above graph, close to half of the participants, 48.3%, indicated that they were not satisfied with the solid waste disposal in Mutare municipality, 28 % indicated that they were satisfied with waste disposal, while 23.7% were neutral.

**Figure 4.21: The street, road network and recreational facilities are well maintained.**



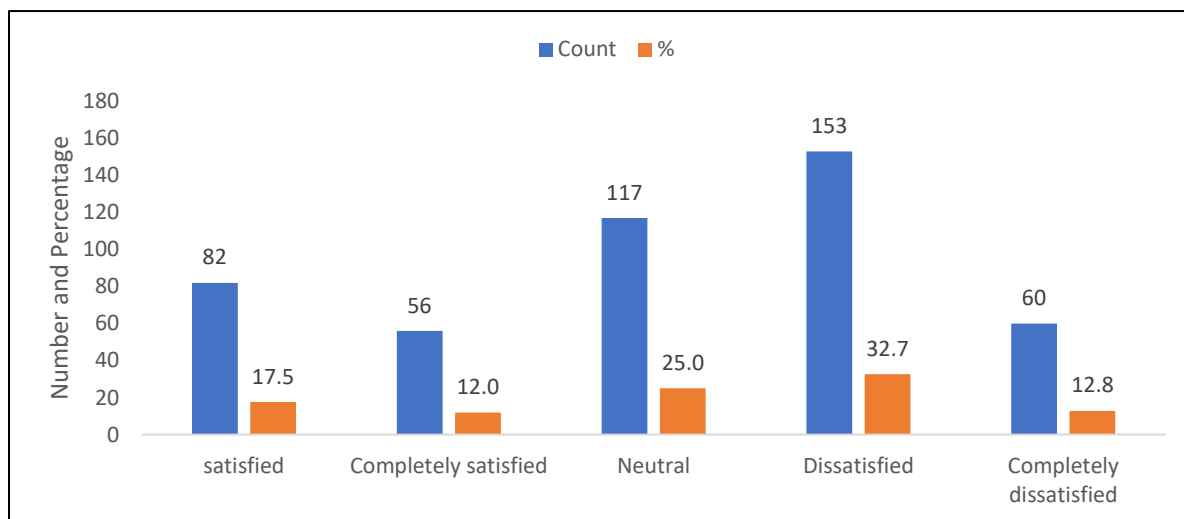
About 48.6% of the participants wanted more satisfaction with how the streets, road networks and recreational facilities were maintained. Meanwhile, 29.4 % of the participants indicated they were satisfied with the streets, road networks and recreational facilities. In addition, 23.9 % of the participants indicated they were unsure (See Figure 4.21).

The outcomes above on the service performance dimension, which included solid waste disposals, road network, recreation facilities, and park maintenance, indicated lower satisfaction levels, which are statistically shown in percentages. Poor solid waste management contributes to creating unhealthy and unsafe living conditions; one of the research objectives was to assess the effects of poor service delivery on the residents of Mutare. In previous chapters, the social service report by UMRRT (2016) and Marumahoko (2020) indicated that Mutare municipality service delivery manifests itself through unregulated waste dumps, deteriorating apartments and social housing.

The municipality also must deal with issues like inadequate sewer reticulation, corruption, poor road upkeep, and declining medical quality at council clinics. Despite the previous research that had been done, it was still clear that there was still plenty of work to be done to change citizens' perceptions in Mutare municipality. The integrated control of undesirable elements that would otherwise have been damaging to the environment, is related to the collection and disposal of solid waste, which is necessary for preserving a clean, safe, and healthy environment (Marumahoko, Afolabi, Sadie, & Nhede, 2020). Mutare must strive to improve these conditions to enable a safe environment. Poor road networks and poor maintenance of public spaces make it difficult to attract new businesses or industries, limiting job opportunities for residents

#### 4.10: DELIVERED SERVICE QUALITY

**Figure 4.22: Service quality for sewerage is high.**



At least 45.5 % indicated that they were not satisfied with the services of the sewerage systems. Meanwhile, 29.5% indicated that they were satisfied.

**Figure 4.23: How do you rate Mutare municipality's fire brigade services and traffic management**

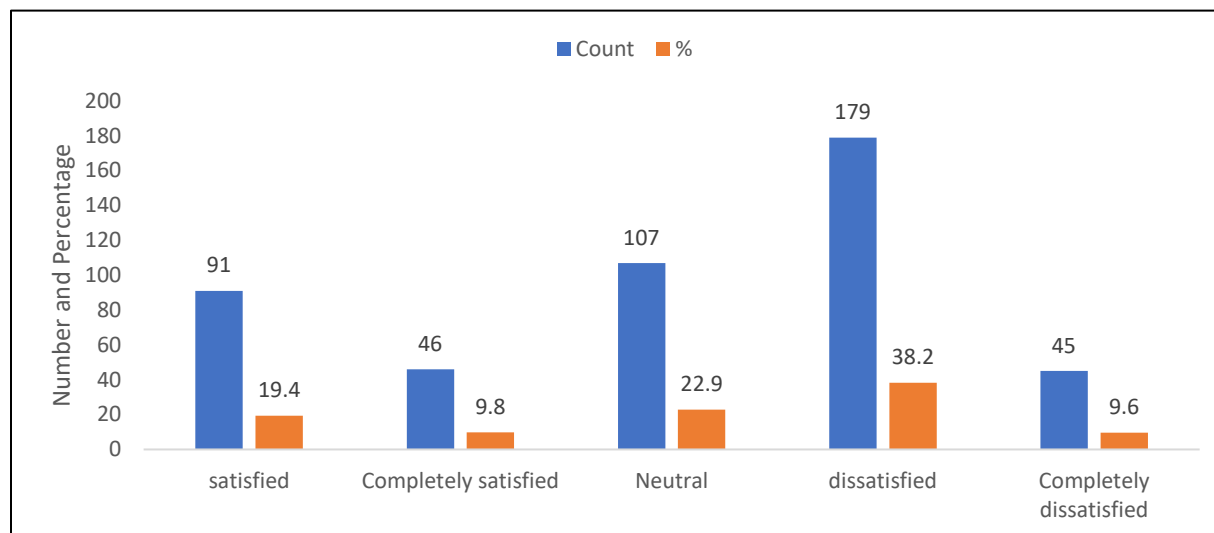
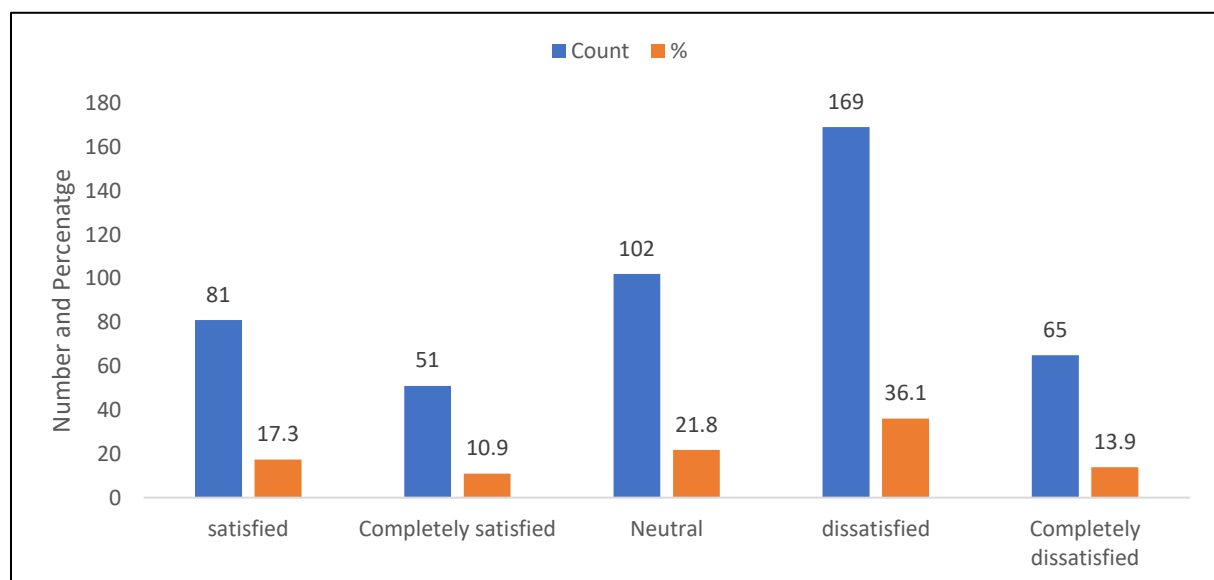


Figure 4.23 shows that 47.8 of the participants in the study rated fire brigade services and traffic management low, while 29,2% indicated that they were satisfied with traffic management in the municipality.

**Figure 4.24: How do you rate Mutare municipality's ambulance services**



Half of the participants indicated they were dissatisfied with the ambulance services. In contrast, almost 38.2 % of the participants indicated that they were satisfied with the ambulance services provided by the municipality.

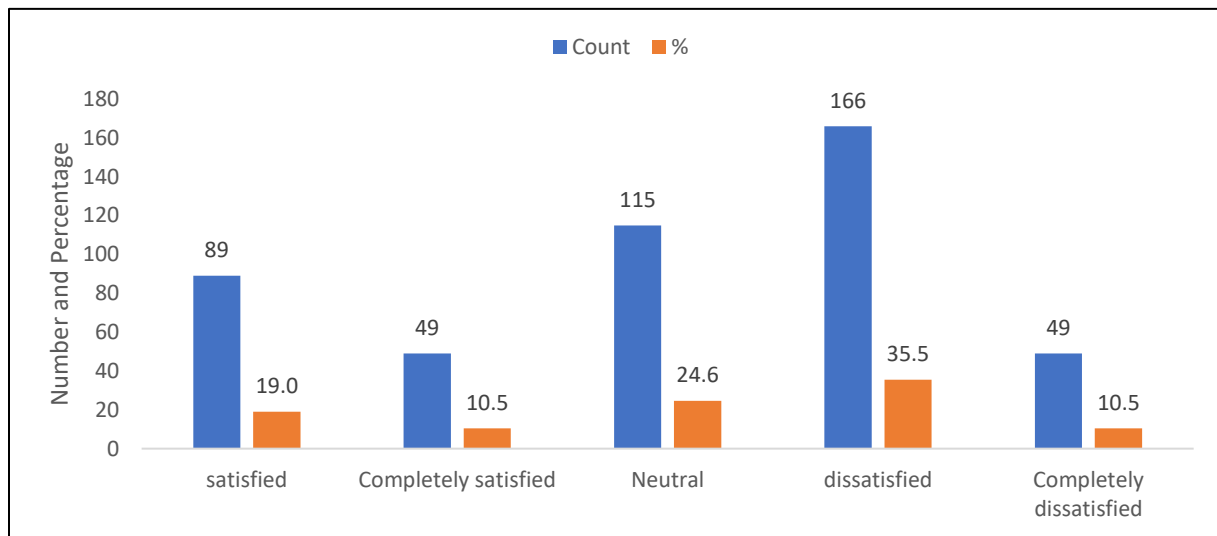
As highlighted in the previous sections, delivering quality services should be the primary objective of any service organisation. Gumah and Aziabah (2020) agree that providing quality services is critical in enhancing and improving the quality of citizens' lives. On the contrary, ineffective public service delivery profoundly affects citizens' lives. The survey outcomes indicate that citizens would like to be happier with Mutare municipality's inability to provide quality services. The ambulance services and the fire brigade were both given poor ratings; the council should prioritise these services because if these problems are not resolved, lives could be lost.

These outcomes are also supported by media reports in the business times in August (2021); *UMRRT said that complaints forwarded to the city council are rarely addressed. The municipality was criticised for mismanagement of funds such as buying expensive cars, disregarding key service delivery issues such as providing safe drinking water for its residents. The residents also blamed the municipality for failing to respond to the request for maintenance of sewer pipes bursting, which jeopardised the lives of citizens.*

Local governments should attend to services like sewerage maintenance to avoid outbreaks of deadly diseases like cholera, typhoid, and dysentery, as they can negatively affect citizens' quality of life. Živković, Glogovac and Kovačević (2019) argued that municipalities should enhance their performances in all the perceived dimensions of service to increase citizen's satisfaction because they expect more than they get from the services provided by the municipalities.

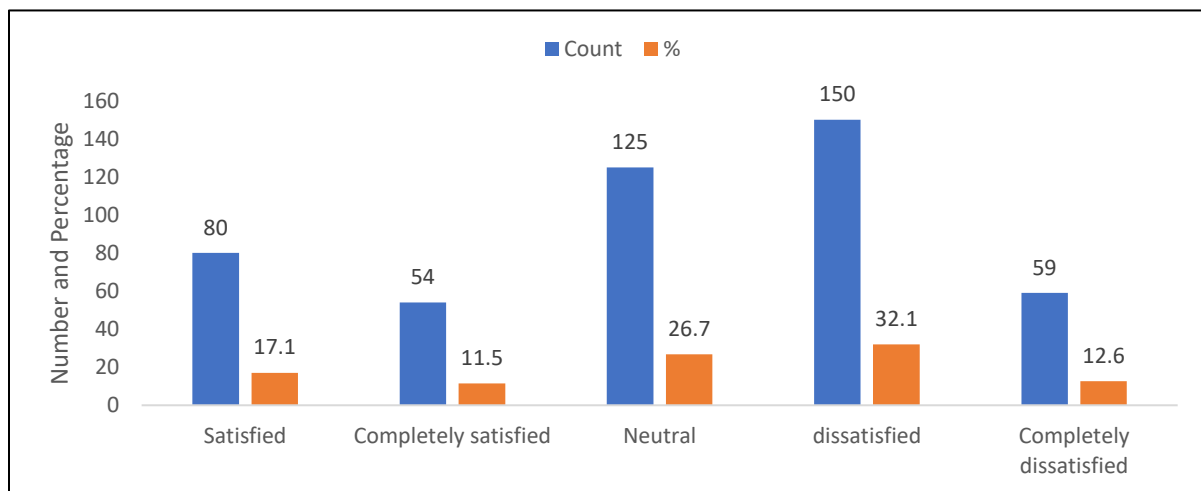
#### **4.11: SERVICE EXPECTATION**

**Figure 4.25: Mutare municipality encourages public engagement.**



46% of the 468 participants in the study indicated that they were not satisfied with how the municipality encouraged public engagement of their residents; meanwhile, 29,5% indicated that they were satisfied.

**Figure 4.26: Does the municipality involves residents to participate in municipal affairs?**



Participants were asked whether the municipality does involve its residents in municipal affairs. Figure 4.26 reveals that more than four in 47% of the participants indicated that they were not satisfied with how the municipality involved its residents in municipality affairs.

**Figure 4.27: I am satisfied with how the council responds to feedback given by citizens.**

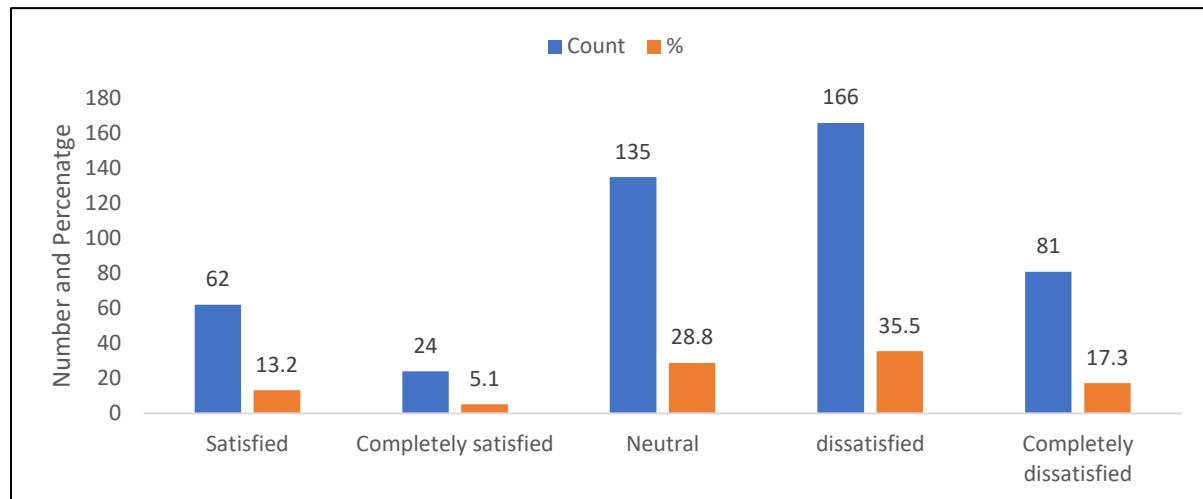


Figure 4.27 above indicates that at least 52.8% of the respondents were not satisfied with how the council responded to feedback given by citizens. In contrast, 18.3 % of the participants indicated that they were satisfied, as they understood the communication channels and their effectiveness between the municipality and its residents on council activities; this was one of the research objectives. The response received shows that most respondents wanted more communication mechanisms in place. Much still needs to be done by the municipality to instil confidence in the citizens and improve its communication mechanisms. Citizens who are well informed by their council tend to be more optimistic about the authority on several matters. They feel they are part of, and willing to work with the council. Improving communications can positively impact service quality perceptions and improve satisfaction. Cant et al.(2002:239) indicated that communication was crucial to good governance and citizen satisfaction.

The above section examined the expectations of citizens as ratepayers. In relation to the municipality's ability to encourage public engagement, 52,8 % of the respondents showed dissatisfaction regarding the municipality's ability to respond to feedback given by citizens. Rodríguez et al. (2009) indicated that providing quality, cost-effective public



services is daunting. It involves the creation of organisations with suitable approaches, establishing straightforward ways of delivering these services, putting human resources in place to respond to citizens' needs and allowing citizen involvement in decision-making. A responsive organisational culture, well-trained employees, effective policy formation, successful execution, a clear awareness of people's needs and expectations, and access to the right resources and technology are all necessary (Gobena,2019).

#### **4.12 INFERENCE STATISTICS**

The researcher employed inferential statistics to analyse the data; testing the stated hypothesis is a part of inferential statistical analysis. According to Schober et al. (2018), the alpha or level is the proportion of options that are considered "remote," or, in other words, the proportion of most unlikely outcomes. The amount is often set at 0.05, or 5%. It might be set to lower or higher values in unusual circumstances. The false positive rate can be level. Diamantopoulos and Schelegelmilch (2000) further corroborate this by stating that typical values for the significance threshold are 0.05, 0.01 0.001.

The outcome of the statistical test indicates that the value has a probability of occurrence that is less than or equal to. In that situation, the test result is significant, the alternative hypothesis is accepted, and the original hypothesis is rejected. The researcher employed hypothesis testing, an inferential technique that uses sample data to assess the validity of a population-specific hypothesis. The significant value was determined by the researcher using the 0.05 level mark. The likelihood that a test result is the result of chance is how statistical significance is defined by Liu et al. (2019) and Sarantakos (2007). The level of relevance of the research is then described. The researcher calculated the data using IBM SPSS version 16.0, and the Pearson correlation and regression analysis models.

**Table 4.7: Correlation and P-values of tangibility dimension**

	<b>Tangibility</b> _ The physical facilities in the Municipality of Mutare are appealing	<b>Tangibility</b> _Workers in the City of Mutare look good and well presented, approximately dressed	<b>Tangibility</b> _Materials associated with service are visually appealing (pamphlets, statements).
<b>Q6: Tangibility-</b> Pearson Mutare municipality Correlation has modern equipment and appealing physical facilities Sig. (2-tailed) N	1  468	.555**  .000 468	.456**  .000 468
<b>Q7: Tangibility</b> _ Pearson Workers in City of Correlation Mutare look good and well presented, approximately dressed Sig. (2-tailed) N	.555**  .000 468	1  468	.458**  .000 468
<b>Q8: Tangibility</b> _Materials Pearson Correlation associated with service are visually appealing (pamphlets, statements). Sig. (2-tailed) N	.456**  .000 468	.458**  .000 468	1  468

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

H<sub>0</sub>: Tangibility has no positive relationship with citizen satisfaction

H<sub>1</sub>: Tangibility has a positive relationship with citizen satisfaction.

Table 4.7 above shows the bivariate correlation within the variables of tangibility. The correlation coefficient values ( $r$ ) interactions between 0.0 and 0.6 with  $p$ -values of 0.00 are lower than the significance levels of 0.05 in all variables. Thus, tangibility has a significant positive relationship with citizen satisfaction. This finding is consistent with Nankervis' (1995) research, which contends that organizations should intentionally ensure that their properties adhere to international facility standards. Numerous studies have shown that in Indian public sector banks, tangibility has a positive effect on customer satisfaction. In research on service quality and patron satisfaction in thermal tourism, Silvestri, Aquilani, and Rugieri (2017) discovered that resort spa and thermal pool aesthetics, cleanliness, comfort, safety, and tangibility increased user satisfaction. In a different study, tangibility and security were discovered to have a favourable effect on Namibian customers' satisfaction (Whyte & Bytheway, 2017). In Nigeria, Izogo and Ogba (2015) discovered a strong correlation between the tangibility measures of service viewpoints, customer contentment and loyalty research on service orientation metrics and customer satisfaction in the car repair sector.

The authors contend that the perceived level of tangibility supports client loyalty and satisfaction. The research's findings indicated that the tangibility of services in the Mutare municipality was inadequate, which led to citizen unhappiness. The findings of Mkwanzizi's (2019) study, which claimed that respondents were primarily interested in the appearance of the equipment used to deliver service quality because it enhances service performance, is consistent with this research. Local governments should take the time to learn about citizens' perspectives. as they are essential in gauging their performance and pointing out any gaps or problem areas, thereby enhancing the quality of their services, despite the claims of academics (Egan, 2010; Palmer, 2011; Leonard & Sasser, 2012) who suggest that tangibility is the least important aspect of service.

**Table 4.8: Correlation and P-values of reliability dimension**

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

	<b>Reliability _ Mutare municipality gets things right the first time and keep its promises</b>	<b>Reliability _ When you have a problem, the City of Mutare shows sincere interest in solving it.</b>	<b>Reliability _ Mutare municipality insists on error-free records</b>
<b>Q9: Reliability_ Mutare municipality gets things right the first time and keep its promises</b>	Pearson Correlation Sig. (2-tailed) N	.481** .000 468	.460** .000 468
<b>Q10: Reliability _ When you have a problem, City of Mutare shows sincere interest in solving it.</b>	Pearson Correlation Sig. (2-tailed) N	.481** .000 468	.460** .000 468
<b>Q11: Reliability _ Mutare municipality insists on error-free records</b>	Pearson Correlation Sig. (2-tailed) N	.460** .000 468	1 .000 468

H<sub>0</sub>: Reliability has no positive relationship with citizen satisfaction.

H<sub>2</sub>: Reliability has a positive relationship with citizen satisfaction.

Table 4.8 above shows the bivariate correlation within the variables in reliability. The correlation coefficient values (r) for all interactions between 0.4 and 0.7 with p-values of 0.00 are lower than the significance levels of 0.05 in all variables. The researcher accepts the hypotheses that reliability has a positive relationship with citizen satisfaction. The

finding is supported by Tolpa (2012), who argues that customers expect service quality delivery that is accurate and dependable. The finding indicates that respondents are mainly concerned about the outcome of the service quality delivery, and hence have expectations in this regard. Furthermore, this finding corroborates with Zeithaml, Bitner and Gremler (2009), who reported reliability as a critical element of service quality delivery. The reliability dimension is more concerned with meeting customers' expectations than empathy, assurance, responsiveness, and tangibility, which are concerned with providing service quality, which is important in surpassing customers' expectations.

The results conform with Gobena (2019) in Nekemte Municipality, Ethiopia, where delivering services timeously and maintaining error-free records were stressed as a vital weapon to enhance higher service quality, and higher customer satisfaction. Yang and Wang (2004) also agree that accuracy in completing orders, maintaining precise records, and billing and maintaining promised services are the basic views of reliability, and are considered the most crucial factors in convincing customers to retain public services. The researcher found out that the residents were generally dissatisfied with the reliability of service delivery by the municipality. Parasuraman et al. (1985) indicated that a gap between what the service provider promises to customers and what it eventually delivers, exists.

Therefore, accurate and appropriate communication from the service provider, realistic advertising, and public relations, do not exaggerate the promises or give wrong impressions in delivering service, that customers may perceive as high in quality matters. The advertised service may either increase or decrease customers' expectations. This gap is higher in service-providing schemes than those producing physical goods because people who provide these services may not be controlled in a similar fashion to machines. This gap may be breached by inadequate horizontal communication among operations, marketing, and human resources, between advertising agencies and sales operations, in terms of propensity and overpromising (Parasuraman et al., 1985, p. 46).

**Table 4.9: Correlation and P-values of responsiveness dimension**

	<b>Responsiveness_</b> The workers in Mutare municipality tell you exactly when services will be performed and give prompt service	<b>Responsiveness</b> _workers are always willing to help you	<b>Responsiveness</b> _The workers are never too busy to respond to your requests
<b>Q12: Responsiveness_</b> Pearson The workers in Mutare municipality tell you exactly when services will be performed and give prompt service Sig. (2-tailed) N	1 468	.536** .000 468	.491** .000 468
<b>Q13: Responsiveness</b> Pearson _workers are always willing to help you Sig. (2-tailed) N	.536** .000 468	1 468	.613** .000 468
<b>Q14: Responsiveness</b> Pearson _The workers are never too busy to respond to your requests Sig. (2-tailed) N	.491** .000 468	.613** .000 468	1 468

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

H<sub>0</sub>: responsiveness has no positive relationship with citizen satisfaction.

H<sub>3</sub>: responsiveness has a positive relationship with citizen satisfaction.

Table 4.9 above shows the bivariate correlation between the variables in responsiveness. The correlation coefficient values ( $r$ ) for all interactions between 0.4 and 0.7 with p-values of 0.00 are lower than the significance levels of 0.05 in all variables. Thus, responsiveness has a significant positive relationship with citizen satisfaction.

This research indicated that the citizens rated the responsiveness as poor. There is a need for the municipality to deal with citizens' needs promptly. Zeithaml et al. (1990), who indicated that responsiveness is the interest in providing prompt customer service when required, supported this. In addition, it is the willingness or readiness of employees to provide the necessary customer service without any inconvenience at any time, Parasuraman et al., (1988). The outcomes of this research conform to Gobena's (2019) study on Nekemte Municipality, which found a strong positive association between customer satisfaction and each of the five service quality categories, with responsiveness showing the strongest correlation. As a result, a service provider's capacity to deliver timely services is a crucial aspect of service excellence for many clients. It is disadvantageous when service delivery personnel ignore and delay replying to consumers' inquiries, requests, or complaints; Malhotra (2007) suggested that providing responsive service quality to customers is challenging. According to Mokhlis (2012), service providers should adapt their offerings to suit the needs of each client and be adaptable to being responsive.

**Table 4.10: Correlation and P-values of assurance dimension**

	<b>Assurance_</b> The behaviour of instils confidence, and do you feel safe dealing with them?	<b>Assurance</b> _ Workers in are consistently courteous with you	<b>Assurance</b> _ Workers have the knowledge to answer
<b>Q15: Assurance</b> Pearson _ The behaviour Correlation of workers instils confidence, and Sig. (2-tailed) do you feel safe dealing with N them?	1    468	.561**  .000  468	.558**  .000  468
<b>Q16: Assurance</b> Pearson _ Workers in Correlation Mutare municipality are Sig. (2-tailed) consistently N courteous with you	.561**  .000  468	1    468	.591**  .000  468
<b>Q17:</b> Pearson <b>Assurance_</b> Correlation Workers have knowledge to Sig. (2-tailed) answer N	.558**  .000  468	.591**  .000  468	1    468

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

H<sub>0</sub>: Assurance has no positive relationship with citizen satisfaction.

H<sub>4</sub>: Assurance has a positive relationship with citizen satisfaction.



Table 4.10 above shows the bivariate correlation within the variables in assurance. The correlation coefficient values ( $r$ ) for all interactions between 0.5 and 0.7 with  $p$ -values of 0.00 are lower than the significance levels of 0.05 in all variables. Thus, assurance has a significant positive relationship with citizen satisfaction. The results demonstrate that consumers' perceptions of the guarantee of the service quality given, do not inspire confidence, trust, or give them the impression that personnel are kind and informed. Beytell (2010)'s opinions concur with the conclusion that service providers who lack knowledge and civility, reduce their capacity to gain consumers' confidence and trust. This finding is consistent with research by Sadek, Zainal, and Taher (2010), who contend that in public services provided, assurance means assisting in a polite and friendly manner and that a management team with considerable experience and professionalism would have favourable results on customer satisfaction.

**Table 4.11: Correlation and P-values of Empathy dimension**

		<b>Empathy _ Mutare</b> municipality has your best interest and understand your specific needs	<b>Empathy_ Mutare</b> municipality has operating hours that are convenient to residents
<b>Q18: Empathy_</b> Pearson Mutare Correlation municipality gives you individual attention Sig. (2-tailed) N	1    468	.597**  .000 468	.485**  .000 468
<b>Q19: Empathy _</b> Pearson Mutare Correlation municipality has your best interest and understand your specific needs Sig. (2-tailed) N	.597** .000 468	1  468	.532** .000 468
<b>Q20: Empathy_</b> Pearson Mutare Correlation municipality has operating hours that are convenient to residents Sig. (2-tailed) N	.485** .000 468	.532** .000 468	1  468

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

H<sub>0</sub>: Empathy has no positive relationship with citizen satisfaction.

H<sub>5</sub>: Empathy has a positive relationship with citizen satisfaction.

Table 4.11 above shows the bivariate correlation between the variables in empathy. The correlation coefficient values ( $r$ ) for all interactions between 0.5 and 0.7 with p-values of 0.00 are lower than the significance levels of 0.05 in all variables. Thus, empathy has a significant positive relationship with citizen satisfaction. The findings show that empathy in the service quality provided to residents, is not impressive, particularly when giving individualised attention, attending to and understanding their needs. The result is consistent with Kaura and Datta's (2012) finding that customers may believe their service provider does not care about them, which could negatively affect their rating of the quality of the services they receive. This outcome supports Parasuraman et al. (1988)'s claim that customer happiness is significantly influenced by a company's ability to anticipate consumer needs, better than its rivals and deliver those services efficiently.

**Table 4.12: Correlation and P-values of Perceived Service Quality dimension**

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

			<b>Perceived quality_</b> high quality housing, commercial, institutional, industrial stands	<b>Perceived quality</b> _clean portable water	<b>Perceived quality</b> _streetlights well- functioning
<b>Q21:</b> <b>Perceived</b> <b>quality</b> _healthcare	Pearson Correlation  Sig. (2- tailed)  N	1   468	.643**  .000 468	.412**  .000 468	.527**  .000 468
<b>Q22:</b> <b>Perceived</b> <b>quality</b> _ high quality housing, commercial, institutional, industrial stands	Pearson Correlation  Sig. (2- tailed)  N	.643**  .000 468	1  .000 468	.525**  .000 468	.556**  .000 468
<b>Q23:</b> <b>Perceived</b> <b>quality</b> _clean portable water & clear drainage (run- off)	Pearson Correlation  Sig. (2- tailed)  N	.412**  .000 468	.525**  .000 468	1  .000 468	.509**  .000 468
<b>Q24:</b> <b>Perceived</b>	Pearson Correlation	.527**	.556**	.509**	1

<b>quality</b>	Sig.	(2-				
_streetlights	tailed)		.000	.000	.000	
well-						
functioning	N		468	468	468	468

H<sub>0</sub>: perceived service quality has no positive relationship with citizen satisfaction.

H<sub>6</sub>: perceived service quality has a positive relationship with citizen satisfaction.

Table 4.12 above shows the bivariate correlation within the variables in perceived service quality. The correlation coefficient values (r) for all interactions between 0.4 and 0.7 with p-values of 0.00 are lower than the significance levels of 0.05 in all variables. As a result, citizen contentment and perceived service quality have a strong positive link. Due to clients' incapacity to accurately assess the services they receive, there is a perception gap (Lovelock & Wirtz, 2011, p. 408). To prevent the scenario in which citizens incorrectly estimate service quality, due to insufficient knowledge about the service, providing citizens with helpful information about services is vital (Lovelock & Wirtz, 2011, p. 408). The research's findings make it abundantly evident that the perceived gap between the people of Mutare municipality and the citizens themselves must be closed. The council might believe it provides services in the best way possible under harsh economic conditions, while citizens perceive the council as failing to provide services. That perception gap has resulted in dissatisfaction, that may emerge through citizens' protests and demonstrations.

**Table 4.13: Correlation and P-values of Service Performance dimension**

	<b>Service performance- I am satisfied with solid waste disposals</b>	<b>Service performance _ The recreation facilities are well catered for.</b>	<b>Service performance - The streets and road network are in a good state.</b>
<b>Q25: Service performance- I am satisfied with solid waste disposals in Mutare municipality</b>	Pearson Correlation Sig. (2-tailed) N	1 .656** .000 468	.568** .000 468
<b>Q26: Service performance- The recreation facilities are well catered for</b>	Pearson Correlation Sig. (2-tailed) N	.656** .000 468	1 .571** .000 468
<b>Q:27: Service performance- The streets and road network are in a good state.</b>	Pearson Correlation Sig. (2-tailed) N	.568** .000 468	.571** .000 468

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

H<sub>0</sub>: service performance has no positive relationship with citizen satisfaction.

H<sub>7</sub>: service performance has a positive relationship with citizen satisfaction.

Table 4.13 above shows the bivariate correlation between the variables' in-service performance. The correlation coefficient values (r) for all interactions between 0.5 and 0.7

with p-values of 0.00 are lower than the significance levels of 0.05 in all variables. Thus, service performance has a significant positive relationship with citizen satisfaction. The research results agree with Roberts & Hemson (2008:59) findings, which indicated that perceived spheres of government performance affect organisational confidence. Lower levels of perceived municipal performance were directly linked to low levels of institutional trust, affecting citizen satisfaction. Zeithaml et al. (2009: 38) indicated that a service performance gap signifies the discrepancy between the development of customer-driven service standards and the actual service performance of employees. The presence of guidelines for excellent service performance and delivery does not guarantee high-quality service performance (Zeithaml et al., 2009, p. 38).

Ineffective human resource policies, including recruitment, ambiguous role definitions within the organisation, poor employee-technology fit in jobs, inappropriate compensation and evaluation systems, and a lack of employee empowerment are all potential contributing factors to this service performance provider gap (Zeithaml et al., 2009, p. 39). The erratic and personalised nature of services is one of the main contributors to this gap. People provide most services; hence the quality of the service is determined by how well the service provider does their job (Kurtz & Clow, 1998, p. 115). Teamwork is a critical component of successful service businesses. If employees perform the services following the job standards, they must match their skills and those of the position (Kurtz & Clow, 1998, p. 117).

When public services are not driven by profit, it is inappropriate when supply and demand are out of balance (Dinsdale & Marson, 1999, pp. 18-19). Customers harm each other, because they are unaware of their roles and obligations (Zeithaml et al., 2009, p. 39). This results in clients failing to complete their obligations, which widens the disparity (Zeithaml et al., 2009, p. 39). Problems with service intermediaries, such as alternative providers of public services and service partners (Gildenhuis & Knipe, 2000:65–67), are another contributing issue, according to Zeithaml et al. (2009). Controlling service consistency, quality, and the conflict between empowerment and control are challenging (Zeithaml et al., 2009, p. 39).

**Table 4.14: Correlation and P-values for Provided Service dimension.**

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

		<b>Provided Service-</b> How do you rate Mutare municipality's fire brigade and traffic management.	<b>Provided Service</b> How do you rate Mutare municipality's ambulance services.
<b>Q28: Provided Service</b> - Pearson Service quality for sewerage is high Correlation Sig. (2-tailed) N	1   468	.629**  .000 468	.535**  .000 468
<b>Q29: Provided Service</b> - Pearson How do you rate Mutare municipality's traffic management. Correlation Sig. (2-tailed) N	.629**  .000 468	1  468	.531**  .000 468
<b>Q30: Provided Service</b> - Pearson ambulance services Correlation Sig. (2-tailed) N	.535**  .000 468	.531**  .000 468	1  468

H<sub>0</sub>: provided service quality has no positive relationship with citizen satisfaction.



H<sub>8</sub>: provided service quality has a positive relationship with citizen satisfaction.

Table 4.14 above shows the bivariate correlation within the variables in provided service quality. The correlation coefficient values ( $r$ ) for all interactions between 0.5 and 0.7 with  $p$ -values of 0.00 are lower than the significance levels of 0.05 in all variables. Thus, provided service quality has a significant positive relationship with citizen satisfaction. This result is in line with what Noone & Namasivayam (2010) articulated, namely that local governments should strive to deliver quality services to their citizenry even if they are not business institutions in a turbulent and highly competitive global environment.

Akinboade, Kinfack and Mokwena (2012) agree that a close relationship exists between the two variables provided - service quality and citizen satisfaction. Public services can increase or decrease citizen satisfaction directly through the quality of what they deliver; therefore, public authorities must target the perception of citizens to improve their satisfaction (Akinboade et al., 2012). Most of the locals claimed there was poor service delivery. Therefore, regardless of the evaluation criterion, residents would continue to voice their unhappiness with subpar service delivery. The resident satisfaction with the services provided by Mutare municipality could have been improved by addressing the difficulties it faced.

**Table 4.15: Correlation and P-values of Service expectation dimension**

	<b>Service expectation_</b> Mutare municipality encourages public engagement.	<b>Service expectation_</b> Municipality involves residents to participate in municipal affairs	<b>Service expectation</b> Municipality responds to feedback given by citizens
<b>Q31: Service expectation_</b> Mutare municipality encourages public engagement. Pearson Correlation Sig. (2-tailed) N	1   468	.601**  .000 468	.528**  .000 468
<b>Q32: Service expectation</b> Municipality involves residents to participate in municipal affairs Pearson Correlation Sig. (2-tailed) N	.601**  .000 468	1   468	.585**  .000 468
<b>Q33: Service expectation_</b> Municipality responds to feedback given by citizens Pearson Correlation Sig. (2-tailed) N	.528**  .000 468	.585**  .000 468	1   468

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

H<sub>0</sub>: service expectations have no positive relationship with citizen satisfaction.

H<sub>9</sub>: service expectations have a positive relationship with citizen satisfaction.

Table 4.15 above shows the bivariate correlation within the variables in service expectations. The correlation coefficient values ( $r$ ) for all interactions between 0.4 and 0.7 with  $p$ -values of 0.00 are lower than the significance levels of 0.05 in all variables. Thus, service expectations have a significant positive relationship with citizen satisfaction. The research outcomes conform to Van Ryzin (2004) and James (2011), who indicated that service expectations are an essential element of attitudes to public services. If services are suitable and meet expectations, citizens may be satisfied with public services and choose other providers.

According to Bateson & Hoffman (2011:328), the customer expectation gap is typically between what service receivers want and what service providers believe they want. It is the most immediate and evident gap. According to Wilson et al. (2008:106), this gap results from the divergence between what is expected from the organization's service and what the consumer expects. The disparity between client expectations and perceptions, or perceived service, is the focus of the service quality gap (Zeithaml et al., 2009, p. 32). Expectations from customers or users are used as benchmarks while providing services, such as in the public sector (Zeithaml et al., 2009, p. 32). User perceptions are arbitrary evaluations of actual customer care interactions and frequently reflect what a consumer thinks should, or will, transpire (Zeithaml et al., 2009, p32).

#### **4.13 SUMMARY OF RESULTS**

The results from the tested hypotheses indicated that tangibles, reliability, assurance empathy, responsiveness, service performance and perceived service quality positively impact citizen satisfaction.

#### **4.14 CONCLUSION**

Chapter four of this study covered data, presentation, data analysis and inferential statistics to show the crucial dimensions in determining customer satisfaction. A general discussion of the results was also part of this chapter. In addition, the influence of each

variable in every dimension was outlined, using descriptive analysis and correlation coefficient. In contrast, the significance of such correlation coefficient values was validated using the p-values. The tests were conducted using SPSS version 16. These were discussed, together with the suggested hypotheses. The entire project will be summarised in Chapter 5, with conclusions and recommendations.

## **CHAPTER 5: SUMMARY OF FINDINGS, CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS**

### **5.0 INTRODUCTION**

The primary responsibility of municipalities in Zimbabwe is enhancing service delivery and improving the quality of life of the people at the local level. This chapter highlights the summary of outcomes based on preceding chapters. Conclusions are based on the data analysis derived from the citizens of Mutare's expectations and perceptions of service delivery rendered by the local authority. The chapter also analysed whether or not the objectives have been achieved and whether the cause has been justified. The study's rationale focused on the disparity between citizens' expectations and perceptions of services. The research findings will help Mutare municipality management understand the fundamental challenges citizens face regarding service delivery quality. It will help them develop effective strategies for dealing with them and enforce rules and regulations to control the challenges and improve perceptions, thereby upgrading citizens' quality of life.

This chapter is a synopsis of the research presented in chapters one to four. The focus of this chapter is the formulation of recommendations on service quality in Mutare municipality. The study's recommendations will be forwarded to Mutare municipality management, who will either consider them for action or authorise additional research to assist and improve service delivery. These are recommendations on how municipalities can improve service delivery to enhance citizen satisfaction. Recommendations made in the chapter can be applied to other local authorities inside and outside Zimbabwe.

### **5.1 SYNTHESIS OF THE CHAPTERS**

The primary objective of this research was to determine customer expectations of the municipal services provided by Mutare Municipality, and to identify potential gaps that

may exist. This study used citizen-based data to provide realistic expectations and perceptions of quality service, resulting in service quality dimensions. The research was introduced in the first chapter, emphasising the core of the project. The study's background was outlined, paving the way for the problem statement, which was primarily poor service delivery resulting in citizen dissatisfaction. Citizens had been complaining, as evidenced by the UMMRT social service report of 2016, the media, and the 2020 Marumahoko survey.

It was stated that citizens had lost faith in the Municipality and were questioning its intentions to improve their well-being. The study's primary objectives were examined, and questions were developed that were answered by addressing the research questions. The chapter also included a discussion on the quantitative research methodology and the practical design and data collection method applied in this research. Limitations encountered during the research were detailed, as well as ways to overcome them.

**Chapter two** addressed a theoretical framework outlining the literature on service quality and its relevance to citizen satisfaction. A literature review on the various service quality models and the SERQVAL model was described in detail. The legal framework guiding local government operations in Zimbabwe was discussed. The researcher reviewed the literature on different factors affecting service provision. It provided insight into what other authors were saying about citizens' expectations, perceptions, and satisfaction with local government services. Variables affecting service delivery were also discussed, which aided the research in developing recommendations. Literature on other countries' service challenges and empirical studies on service quality were also provided.

**Chapter three** outlined the research methodology. Quantitative research was applied in this study through the administration of online survey questionnaires. The quantitative design method enabled the researcher to know the actual state of the challenges being faced by the council, making it possible to visualise the challenges in their natural setting and to be able to understand how citizens perceive service quality. The Mutare municipality was perceived as having serious challenges, which had significantly compromised its capacity to deliver services to its residents of Mutare. Four hundred and

sixty-eight questionnaires were returned online from Mutare citizens, the service recipients.

In the **fourth chapter**, research results were presented. The researcher used an external statistician who helped organise and summarise data from all the completed questionnaires, to answer the research objectives and questions. The processing of the data was done using SPSS. Tables, pie charts and graphs were used in the presentation of data. The researcher was able to see existing challenges through the questionnaire responses, where most participants rated service delivery as poor. The citizens indicated that more human resources and adequate plant and equipment were needed, in light of the absence of a service charter, lack of accountability and transparency, absence of performance measurement mechanisms, absence of a strategic plan and lack of stakeholder participation in civic matters. These challenges led to performance gaps resulting in Mutare municipality providing inadequate or no services.

In addition to the above summary, lastly, this chapter will provide significant outcomes and recommendations on how Mutare municipality can enhance service delivery; indicate areas of further research will also be included.

## **5.2 RESEARCH OBJECTIVES OVERVIEW**

**The research objectives are:**

- To investigate citizen perceptions and expectations about the services delivered by Mutare municipality, to identify potential service quality gaps.
- To determine the level of satisfaction with the services provided in terms of tangibility, reliability, responsiveness, assurance, and empathy.
- To understand citizens' level of participation/involvement in determining the quality of services against citizen input and feedback.
- To assess the effects of poor service delivery to the residents of Mutare.
- To understand ways and the level of communication between the municipality and the citizens regarding council affairs, currently in place.

### **5.3 CONTRIBUTION OF THE STUDY**

The study findings will provide a platform for increasing citizen services because these will closely match citizens' expectations. This study makes a significant contribution by outlining which of the numerous service quality characteristics affect customer satisfaction, and by offering potential methods on how towns might efficiently and effectively design their service delivery process, leading to better service delivery. Municipalities would be better positioned to improve service quality if they understand their citizens' expectations and perceptions. This study contributes significantly to bridging the identified gaps in service quality by highlighting the gaps. The findings of this research, as highlighted in the first chapter in section 1.3, will contribute to the current knowledge base on understanding service quality in urban local authorities, and how the citizens perceive it.

A similar study on perceptions and expectations of service quality was conducted by Moletsane (2012) in the Emfuleni local area. It can be accessed at the following link, <http://dspace.nwu.ac.za/handle/10394/10321?show=ful>. The study also reviewed that the customers of the Emfuleni Local Municipality had negative perceptions of the quality of service delivered by the municipality. This research collaborates with Moletsane's findings that service quality is poor in municipalities, who need to address the service quality gaps to improve service quality and enhance citizen satisfaction. The researcher will present the outcomes of the study and make recommendations. The study's recommendations will be forwarded to the Mutare municipality's Town Clerk. They will be expected to review the recommendations for implementation, or to authorise additional research on the areas for improvement identified in the report.

### **5.4 FINDINGS FROM THE STUDY**

#### **5.4.1 Key Findings from the literature review**

##### ***Local government's role***

Findings from the literature review in section 2.1 have shown the local government's crucial role in ensuring that services are delivered efficiently and effectively to improve citizens' quality of life. As a government closer to the people, local governments must



seek to understand the perceptions and expectations of citizens to deliver services that meet their needs. Good service delivery in the municipalities was regarded as a determinant of citizen satisfaction. In line with the latter, the literature also reviewed that understanding customers' expectations and perceptions allows managers to exercise managerial judgment from a position of knowledge, rather than guesswork; it allows municipalities to make more informed decisions and improve strategic resource allocation and value for money.

### ***Service quality***

The findings from the literature review, as indicated in section 2.2, have shown the importance of local governments in providing quality service and taking service recipients seriously, for their survival. The prime objective of municipalities should be to offer quality service; to retain ratepayers, even though they are not business entities. They still need to ensure that the communities they serve are attended to, and failure to do so might result in residents losing their tempers and ending up boycotting payment of taxes. Van der Waldt (2018) stressed that effective urban governance encourages socio-economic development, creating a setting where communities can establish more resilient subsistence.

### ***Variables to improving service delivery.***

Findings from the literature in Section 2.2.2 have shown that a suitable Constitutional and Legal Framework, sufficient and knowledgeable human resources, sufficient financial infrastructure, easy access to information and mutual understanding between the central government and lower-level governments, are crucial variables needed for effective and efficient provision of services. Good service delivery in local government is considered a prerequisite for community growth and prosperity. The literature also reviewed that capacitating municipality employees with the necessary skills and resources plays an essential role in improving service quality (Besley & Ghatak, 2018), (Cutu, 2021) & (Ncube, 2018). The researcher agrees that it is crucial that employees are equipped with the necessary skills, because there is no room to make mistakes. It saves the council

resources and time, and as a result, it enhances service delivery; municipalities would then be responsive to the needs of the ordinary people.

### ***The importance of citizen satisfaction***

The literature review in section 2.13 also revealed that citizen satisfaction with public services indicates how those services are perceived in terms of people's expectations; as a result, it may support many public values, including social justice, trust, and accountability (Ncube, 2018). Service providers must strive hard to meet and maintain service recipients' satisfaction. Providing the best and most fulfilling services to those who receive them is one of the most crucial components of sustaining citizen attention. According to (Khadka & Maharjan, 2017), if satisfaction is attained, it is nearly a given that the service recipient's loyalty will follow. A satisfied citizenry means fewer demonstrations and boycotts against paying council bills. This benefits the council because it will have funds to develop the municipality, thereby luring potential investors. Service providers must strive hard to meet and maintain service recipients' satisfaction. Providing the best and most fulfilling services to those who receive them is one of the most crucial components of sustaining citizen satisfaction.

### **5.4.2 Key Findings from the primary study**

#### **5.4.2.1 Citizen perceptions and expectations of services quality and potential gaps.**

The data gathered in this research showed a correlation between service quality and citizens' satisfaction. The main objective outlined in the study was to investigate citizen perceptions and expectations about the services delivered by Mutare municipality, to identify potential service quality gaps. Mutare residents had a low perception of the services they receive from the council. They believe that the services need to meet their expectations and give them value for their money. The survey revealed that Mutare municipality still needs to succeed in promoting better service delivery, due to widespread discontent, and the fact that residents want more from the local administration. From the responses received, citizens of Mutare were aware of what was expected of the municipality, as indicated by the scores received from the survey. These expectations varied from tangibles like parks, roads, infrastructure, and street lighting to intangible

services like refuse collection and security. The Mutare municipality should strive hard to address the challenges it faces in service delivery, and provide services that meet the citizenry's expectations and perceptions to help improve citizens' quality of life.

According to Zeithaml (2009:76), customer expectations of services are the primary premise for providing services. Service organisations must invest time and money in learning about and assessing what citizens regard as excellent service delivery. Ncube (2018) agrees with these thoughts, as he states that the success of public sector organisations begins with establishing a culture of successful service delivery. However, Parasuraman et al. (1985:270-271) demonstrate that there would still be a gap between customer expectations and what can be provided as services. Citizen satisfaction can be defined as service providers' ability to bridge this gap. Khadka and Maharjan (2017) and Marumahoko (2020) stressed that consumer satisfaction is critical in determining consumer behavioural intentions. Citizen satisfaction measurement is essential because it provides insight into their needs, behavioural patterns, and aspirations. It is important in the context of service transformation. It enables an organisation to identify what its citizens value, how this varies across different types of people, and thus where action could be taken to enhance service delivery.

Mutare Municipality is thus challenged to be constantly aware of what residents' demand from them to have a happy citizenry. The UMRRT findings from the social audit report on Mutare municipality in 2016, the recent study by Marumahoko (2020) and this study on citizens' perceptions and expectations indicate that Mutare municipality is failing to deliver quality services to the citizens, and thus undermining the citizens' quality of life.

#### **5.4.2.2 Level of satisfaction with the services provided in terms of tangibility, reliability, responsiveness, assurance, and empathy.**

One of the study's goals was determining how satisfied Mutare citizens were with various dimensions of SERVQUAL. The study examined numerous tasks that Mutare municipality administration must complete to keep up with citizens expectations ,improve service

quality and customer satisfaction. Customer satisfaction and service quality are substantially impacted by the factors stated below. Service quality and customer satisfaction must match the perceptions of service recipients, to support the municipality's objectives and programs, and enhance service delivery. Gaining the citizenry's support would also assist the municipality in fulfilling its responsibility to provide high-quality services, such as clean and safe drinking water, prompt garbage pickup, efficient road systems, and functional street lighting.

- **Tangibility** as a factor influences the citizen's level of satisfaction based on the services provided to them by the local authority.
- The objective of **reliability** on service provision directly impacts the level of satisfaction to the citizens, who are the final consumers of the services provided.
- **Responsiveness** as a factor impacts the level of satisfaction of the citizen, who is a direct beneficiary of the services provided by the local authorities.
- The objective of **assurance** has an impact/effect on the level of satisfaction of the citizens from the services provided by Mutare municipality.
- **Empathy** has a direct and positive effect on the level of satisfaction of the citizen, in relation to the services provided to them by the Mutare municipality.

#### **5.4.2.3 Citizens' level of participation in determining the quality of services.**

Understanding ways, and the level of participation, in determining the quality of services against citizen input and feedback, was also one of the research objectives. The response shows that most respondents were unhappy with the communication mechanisms and their level of participation in council affairs. Findings from the study reviewed that 58.2 were not satisfied with how the council responded to feedback given by citizens. In contrast, 18.3 % reviewed that they were satisfied. The municipality still needed to do more to instil confidence in the citizens, and improve its participation communication and feedback mechanisms. From these findings, the researcher could recommend what the municipality could do to improve this situation. Citizens who were well informed by their council tend to be more optimistic about the authority on a wide range of issues. They feel they are part and parcel of the process and are willing to work with the council.

Improving communications and involving citizens can positively impact service quality perceptions and improve satisfaction. Cant et al., (2002:239) indicated that communication is crucial to good governance and citizen satisfaction.

#### **5.4.2.4 Findings from objective 4: Effects of poor service delivery on the residents of Mutare.**

The findings of the UMMRT audit report, literature review, media articles and reports enabled the researcher to understand the effect of poor service quality, which was one of the research objectives. During the research process, it was discovered that service delivery demonstrations was one method individuals must use to communicate their dissatisfaction. It is important to note that the service delivery protests may take many different forms, including processions, mass gatherings, petitions, and election boycotts. This has led to conjecture that the service delivery protests are fundamentally a poor people's uprising against neoliberal policies (Marumahoko, 2020). UMRRT (2016) exposed Mutare's service delivery problem, which manifested in irregular garbage collection, housing issues, an inadequate road network, poor health care crisis management at local clinics, corruption at the local council, erratic and poor water supply, and trash management in most sections of the city.

According to the research, high-density areas like Dangamvura were the most impacted, with residents going without water for days. Street lighting in Aerodrome Road in Mutare municipality is a significant concern that the municipality needed to address as it affected residents' quality of life, increased crime levels and can shun away potential investors who were meant to develop the city. These findings from previous surveys other researchers conducted aided the analysis. The findings of this study have shown that most residents expressed dissatisfaction with the condition of service delivery in Mutare Municipality, a crucial recurring issue that Mutare must address.

## 5.5. CONCLUSIONS

Municipalities need help in providing the quality of services that citizens expect. Municipalities are under increasing pressure to demonstrate the citizen-centricity of their services. Most municipalities should focus more on striving to deliver quality services and respond to the request, so that continued trust may be gained from citizens; also critical is coming up with novel ways to deliver a service that will improve the morale of the populace. Understanding citizens' expectations help in identifying service quality gaps as well as assisting in keeping citizens satisfied. During the research study, it was found that expectations and perceptions of service quality directly impact or affect the citizens' level of satisfaction (based on the research outcomes). Factors such as reliability, tangibility, responsiveness, assurance, empathy, service performance, perceived quality and service expectations can affect citizens' satisfaction and appreciation. Understanding these factors would assist municipalities in prioritising which gaps to focus on, and in identifying ways of closing service quality gaps.

## 5.6 RECOMMENDATIONS RELATING TO THE FINDINGS OF THE STUDY.

The following recommendations are based on the literature review on service quality and statistical analysis of Mutare Municipality citizens' feedback. These recommendations represent citizens' expectations, perceptions of service quality and service quality gaps identified in terms of customers' expectations and perceptions.

- **Mutare municipality should conduct citizen satisfaction surveys at regular intervals as a service delivery feedback mechanism since they are vital in assessing and evaluating the municipality's efforts on the quality of services being offered.**

The researcher sought to answer the research question: which ways and levels of communication are used with the citizens, and how is feedback processed in Mutare municipality? This study found that a higher percentage of participants, 52 percent, were dissatisfied with how the council responded to citizen feedback. The researcher

recommended that municipalities regularly conduct surveys as a service delivery feedback mechanism, to learn what citizens are dissatisfied with regarding service quality. The citizens' surveys increase accountability and transparency in service delivery. Regular surveys enable service organisations to gauge how citizens perceive their operations, interactions with them, and services. By conducting this type of research, the organisation considers the consumer experience and shifts its focus to be more outward-looking.

These general surveys assist in obtaining a comprehensive picture of service recipients' opinions on various issues. These surveys can be completed every three to four years, assisting the municipality in assessing public opinion and identifying areas for improvement. Surveys are frequently used to assess satisfaction levels, track change over time, and create an up-to-date profile of service recipients. Furthermore, this is critical in gaining citizens' trust because the service organisation has their best interests at heart, and strengthening the processes and systems of service delivery significantly, increases citizen satisfaction.

- **Inclusion of Citizens, Residents associations, Business organisations and Non -Government Organisations in service design and delivery through an extensive consultative process**

One of the research objectives was to examine participation/involvement in determining the quality of services in Mutare municipality concerning citizen input and feedback. The lack of citizen participation in municipal affairs was identified as an issue that required attention, with 47 percent of research participants expressing dissatisfaction with the Municipality's ability to involve them. Consultation has long been recognised as the undisputed means of ensuring that service delivery closely resembles consumer expectations, and this appears to be lacking in local governments, including Mutare. The researcher contends that through this consultative process, the public sector will take ownership of the processes and the municipality, recognising the value of incorporating all stakeholders in the design and delivery of services.

Effective delivery of critical services such as clean water and sanitation, health, education, power, road infrastructure, and other amenities may only be possible with active public involvement. Residents of Mutare have specific expectations of what the government should accomplish for them. The municipality needs help to carry out its service delivery mandate. The involvement of stakeholders creates a responsible citizenry that hold each other and the council accountable. Mutare may need to embrace the crucial concept of good governance in its responsibilities. Accountability and transparency may address residents' widespread belief that the municipality exists solely to misappropriate public funds. Involving them in decision-making processes can be beneficial. Malemane and Nel-Sanders (2021) emphasised that citizen consultations and participation in local governance imply ordinary citizens' ability to assess their needs and contribute to local public developments.

Allowing citizens to attend hearing sessions and planning activities before implementation reduces the risk of them feeling like strangers; instead, they will have a sense of belonging, resulting in better management of public resources. On the one hand, as Ngidi (2012:25) points out, consultation tempers citizens' expectations and moderates their perceptions of what can and cannot be done. Consultation with service recipients may prevent undesirable social consequences such as protests and reduce the complications and costs of service delivery, because they feel included in the development plans. According to Cermak, File, and Prince (2011:90), involving non-governmental organisations, particularly service consumers, in the design of public services, helps shape their service expectations. This also means that citizens' assessments of service delivery and individual services would be honest and reasonable; in other words, the intolerance zone would be increased. As a result, Mutare Municipality must include resident groups, non-governmental organisations, and individuals in the service delivery decision-making.



- **Implementation and operationalisation of service charters in Mutare municipality.**

The research findings indicated that poor service quality in Mutare is still a significant concern that needs immediate attention. 45.5 percent of participants were dissatisfied with the sewerage systems, 47.8 percent rated traffic management as poor, and potable water remains a challenge. The UMRRT social service report of 2016 indicated that citizens were dissatisfied, as evidenced by the strikes, and boycotting of rate payments mentioned in the first chapter. The researcher suggests that Mutare municipality should fully operationalise service charters recently adopted in November 2021. The service charter allows the public to address the issue directly with the municipality. There would be clearly defined communication protocols to handle complaints and provide feedback. It would allow the municipality to see the gaps between citizen expectations and perceived service quality, thereby helping to improve service delivery.

Ensuring the functional citizen service charter would grant recipients of public service, rights; However, the rights are not constitutional, and the 'pressure' of the promise is such that the organisation would make a significant agreement to fulfil the promises (Joseph,2019). In this way, the service charter could aid citizens in shifting from a subservient position of needing to wait for what the municipality has in mind, to a more empowered one. The presented rights would show that the municipality valued them, enhancing their satisfaction.

- **Implementing performance management systems approach, motivating team members and partnerships.**

According to the findings of this study, local governments should know their residents' service quality expectations and perceptions and keep track of these changes. The municipality of Mutare is increasingly being asked to clarify its mission, improve its citizen focus as a core value, and develop effective delivery methods focused on serving citizens' demands better. The municipality must always track progress against targets, as this is crucial. The municipality is encouraged to produce quarterly and annual reports that may

be used to track performance and help the municipality see areas that need improvement. A SMART (Simple, Measurable, Attainable, Realistic and Timebound) objective must be constantly reviewed using KPI (Key performance indicators). Mutare municipality must urge residents to participate in decision-making at all phases, from strategic planning and design to implementation.

The municipality should consider advancing and maintaining infrastructure, improving partnership, coordination, and cooperation between departments; maintaining up-to-date records, improving communication programs, and having management and leadership training for the management team. Training and motivating staff and recruiting qualified personnel willing to help, are all suggestions for closing these gaps to provide effective service delivery.

The SERVQUAL attributes "perceptions of actual service received and expectations" were used to analyse the differences between consumers in the survey questionnaire. Mutare municipality should adopt a culture of doing these surveys after every two years, if resources permit, to appreciate more fully all the benefits of using SERVQUAL surveys for the following reasons.

- To enable annual comparison.
- to track how service improvements have changed perceptions and expectations over time and
- to assess the success of service development and improvement initiatives in targeted dimensions

Using SERVQUAL and monitoring citizen perception and service expectations may result in citizen retention, citizen loyalty and positive word-of-mouth about the municipality, attracting new investors and businesses, and resulting in the municipality's development.

- **Creation of a Public Participation Unit.**

Because of the lack of public engagement techniques discovered in Mutare municipality through the study results, this study suggests a new normative approach for increased public engagement. The researcher advocates for institutionalising public involvement projects and tactics throughout the municipality, with a Public Participation Unit housed in the Chamber Secretary's Office as a coordinating body. The Mutare municipality should also create a Public Participation Strategy and Plan that identifies and communicates events for each year ahead of time, where citizens can express their views of service quality and challenges. According to Malemane and Nel-Sanders (2021), local governments that encourage citizen participation, allow people to voice their views on issues of public interest. It makes it simpler for citizens to be heard by elected authorities and those who make decisions. Participatory local governance brings residents closer to local government agencies to promote the institutions' accountability, transparency, and responsiveness. Every year, a dedicated and substantial budget should be made accessible. There should be time-bound targets which citizens are constantly appraised of through community meetings, for example, fixing damaged water pipes in Dangamvura by December 2023. In this scenario, the issue of a budget and the method to raise money would have to be considered.

- **Strengthening Communication**

Communication between the Mutare municipality and the public should be a key component of service delivery and governance. A culture of open and ongoing communication should dominate, not just in times of crisis, by marketing, or as a response to public comments. The researcher contends that service providers who consistently interact with customers and learn about their expectations, obtain favourable feedback on their offerings. This is accurate because of the client's lax standards for timely service providers and because providers can offer what is required with constant communication. This is also what Mutare's mission statement stands for: To improve the quality of life for Mutare residents in a transparent manner. Transparency translates to, and includes a free flow of communication.

Citizens in Mutare municipality should refrain from making assumptions about when services will be provided. Citizens were asked to rate municipalities' abilities to inform citizens precisely when services would be performed, and 54.1 per cent said they were dissatisfied, indicating that the municipality failed to engage with service recipients. Ward committee representatives from all nineteen wards should speak directly with the Mutare municipality's relevant officials about specific issues. It is also recommended that meeting notices be promptly sent to the appropriate citizens. Critical policy decisions in Mutare municipality's various standing committees should be adequately conveyed and disseminated to Ward Committee members on time. In consultation with critical stakeholders, a complete communications plan, implementation strategies, and timeframes must be prepared. The researcher also came up with the recommendations based on the **SERVQUAL dimensions** that was applied in the study, as indicated below:

**Tangibility:** The research findings indicated a higher discrepancy in the scores, with 61.8% indicating that citizens were not happy while 17.7% of respondents were happy regarding the tangibility dimension. It is recommended that the municipality upgrade existing infrastructures, provide adequate physical facilities, and improve maintenance to allow for efficient service delivery. The municipality should invest in infrastructure development and maintenance (Roads, Refuse collection Trucks, recreational and sanitary facilities like toilets). To lessen the impact of water borne disorders, there is a need to enhance water delivery to high-density areas. It aids in sewage disposal.

**Reliability:** There is still much work to be done in Mutare municipality to bridge the gap between citizens' expectations and the quality of services. On average, 61.2 percent rated the reliability dimension as poor, while 20.5 percent were satisfied with the municipality's reliability. The local government should always be dependable. Mutare municipality should focus on closing this gap by implementing various strategies such as improving departmental collaboration, coordination, cooperation, integrating departmental planning processes, and maintaining precise records. Well-trained personnel are critical to providing timely services by providing accurate information using innovative information technology, which is critical to closing this gap. When it comes to service provision,

Mutare municipality should take these fundamental views of reliability seriously, as this influences the level of satisfaction of local citizens.

**Responsiveness:** Most citizens expect their local government to act in times of crisis. In this research's first chapter, the discussion included that Mutare residents complained that the council took too long to respond to their requests, or during a crisis. The municipality should focus on closing this gap by implementing various strategies to improve citizen satisfaction. The researcher's recommendations for Mutare municipality include continuous management and leadership training from various departments, ongoing staff motivation and training, increased departmental collaboration, coordination, and cooperation, improved communication going forward, current and up-to-date electronic technology, and qualified staff who are willing to assist. Responsiveness is an essential part of service supply since it affects the satisfaction of local citizens; that is, staff must be ready and prepared to give the necessary customer service without any difficulty.

**Assurance:** Based on customers' expectations, the average score of dissatisfied respondents was 47%. Assurance refers to how the council communicates its processes to citizens. Open communication fosters trust and positive attitudes. Placing the right people in the proper jobs, training and continually motivating workers, offering individualised attention and courtesy, increasing service recovery, product expertise, and expressed sensitivity to the demands of residents. all contribute to closing this gap. Mutare municipality should reassure service recipients as this impacts their satisfaction level regarding services provided to them; in other words, they should help residents nicely and kindly, with a well-experienced and competent leadership team.

**Empathy:** When engaging with citizens, Mutare municipality should improve customer service and empathy. Mutare staff should be urged to act more receptively by giving consumers their complete attention, welcoming them, using their names more frequently, and utilising the words "please" and "thank you." They should always listen to residents' needs and do everything necessary to meet their requirements. Mutare municipality's culture should provide personalised and courteous service, be sensitive to citizens' needs, employing empathetic, qualified personnel, providing continuous staff training and

motivation, and have convenient operating hours. As is indicated in the above and throughout the study, good customer service directly impacts citizen satisfaction.

## **5.7 AREAS FOR FURTHER RESEARCH**

As the research on the expectations and perceptions of municipal service delivery progressed, the researcher highlighted various areas. However, these were outside the scope of the current research but should be conducted simultaneously. Another area where more research is required is in service delivery, to understand why there are usually delays in processing applications to address water and sanitation concerns such as terminated service, sewage, and water burst pipes. The researcher also noted that residents were adamant that the council was obliged to provide them with services since they were paying rates. Another field of study is evaluating the link between rate payment and service performance. Lastly, the researcher recommends investigating the municipality's perception of the citizens' attitudes based on the assumption that finding out what they need might improve service delivery as citizens' expectations and views would be clearly understood.

## **5.8 Conclusion**

This chapter focused on the summary of outcomes, conclusions, and recommendations. The researcher concluded the research objectives, and several recommendations were presented on how local governments could improve service delivery and enhance citizen satisfaction. Recommendations on reliability, tangibility, assurance, responsiveness, and empathy were also discussed. The study was of value to the researcher because it presented an opportunity to learn more about perceptions, expectations, and satisfaction levels towards service delivery in Mutare municipality. The researcher investigated the many aspects that might lead to satisfaction and their influence on citizen satisfaction.

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## Appendix 1: Questionnaire

### QUESTIONNAIRE

#### SERVICE QUALITY QUESTIONNAIRE

#### SECTION A: BACKGROUND INFORMATION OF RESPONDENTS: DEMOGRAPHIC INFORMATION

[Please tick where applicable]

1. Your Gender: (1) Male ☐ (2) Female ☐ (3) Other/non-binary ☐
2. Your age (1)18-30 years☐ (2) 31-40 years ☐ (3) 41-50 years ☐ (4) above 50 years
3. Which ward do you stay in Mutare Municipality? .....
4. How many years have you lived in Mutare municipality? (1) Less than 2 years ☐ (2) 2-5 years ☐ (3) 5-10 years ☐ (4) more than 10 years ☐
5. House ownership status: (1) Owner/Landlord ☐ (2) Tenant ☐ (3) Other [specify.....]

#### SECTION B: SERVICE QUALITY DIMENSIONS

The following set of statements relate to your feelings (perceptions) of Mutare municipality. For each statement, please show the extent to which you believe Mutare municipality has the feature described in the statement. Please circle your selection as follows: 1-strongly disagree,2-Disagree, 3-Neutral, 4-Agree and 5-Strongly Agree. You may circle any of the numbers in the middle that show how strong your feelings are. There is no right or wrong answer- all I am interested in is a number that best shows your perception about Mutare municipality.

		Strongly disagree	Disagree	Neither Disagree nor Agree	Agree	Strongly Agree
	<b><u>TANGIBILITY DIMENSION</u></b>	1	2	3	4	5
6	Mutare has modern looking equipment and appealing physical facilities.	1	2	3	4	5
7	Workers in City of Mutare look good and	1	2	3	4	5

	well presented, approximately dressed					
8	Materials associated with service are visually appealing (pamphlets, statements).	1	2	3	4	5
	<b><u>RELIABILITY DIMENSION</u></b>					
9	Mutare municipality gets things right the first time and keep its promises	1	2	3	4	5
10	When you have a problem, City of Mutare shows sincere interest in solving it.	1	2	3	4	5
11	Mutare municipality insists on error-free records	1	2	3	4	5
	<b><u>RESPONSIVENESS DIMENSION</u></b>					
12	The workers in Mutare municipality tell you exactly when services will be performed and give your prompt service	1	2	3	4	5
13	Workers in Mutare municipality are always willing to help you	1	2	3	4	5
14	Workers in Mutare municipality are never	1	2	3	4	5

	too busy to respond to your requests					
	<b><u>ASSURANCE DIMENSION</u></b>					
15	The behaviour of workers in Mutare municipality instils confidence, and do you feel safe dealing with them?	1	2	3	4	5
16	Workers in Mutare municipality are consistently courteous with you	1	2	3	4	5
17	Workers Mutare municipality have knowledge to answer your questions	1	2	3	4	5
	<b><u>EMPATHY DIMENSION</u></b>					
18	Mutare municipality gives you individual attention	1	2	3	4	5
19	Mutare municipality has your best interest and understand your specific needs	1	2	3	4	5
20	Mutare municipality has operating hours that are convenient to residents					

### SECTION C:

For this section, please rate whether you are completely satisfied or dissatisfied with City of Mutare on the quality of the following services or facilities? Please circle your selection as follows:



1-Completely dissatisfied,2- Dissatisfied, 3-Neutral, 4- Satisfied and 5-Completely satisfied.  
[Circle your choice]

		Completel y dissatisfie d	Dissatisfi ed	Neither dissatisfi ed nor satisfied	satisfie d	Comple tely satisfied
	<b>PERCEIVED SERVICE QUALITY</b>					
		1	2	3	4	5
21	Mutare municipality provides quality health care (clinics)					
22	Happy with housing service, commercial, institutional, industrial stands are allocated.	1	2	3	4	5
23	Mutare municipality has clean portable water and provides clear drainage (run-off)	1	2	3	4	5
24	The streetlights are well functioning	1	2	3	4	5
	<b>SERVICE PERFORMANCE</b>					
25	I am satisfied with solid waste disposals in Mutare municipality	1	2	3	4	5
26	The street and road network and re creation facilities are well maintained	1	2	3	4	5
27	The re recreation facilities are well catered for.	1	2	3	4	5
	<b>PROVIDED SERVICE</b>					

28	Service quality for sewerage is high	1	2	3	4	5
29	How do you rate Mutare municipality's fire brigade services and traffic management	1	2	3	4	5
30	How do you rate Mutare municipality's ambulance services	1	2	3	4	5
	<b>SERVICE EXPECTATION</b>					
31	Mutare municipality encourages public engagement	1	2	3	4	5
32	Municipality involves residents to participate in municipal affairs	1	2	3	4	5
33	I am satisfied by how the council responds to feedback given by citizens	1	2	3	4	5

This concludes the survey. Thank you for your time!

THANK YOU.

## Appendix 2: Permission letter from Mutare municipality

ADDRESS ALL CORRESPONDENCE  
TO THE TOWN CLERK

OUR REF:  
YOUR REF:

  
CITY OF MUTARE

OFFICE OF THE TOWN CLERK  
CIVIC CENTRE, NO.1 QUEENS WAY  
P.O.BOX 910, MUTARE, ZIMBABWE  
GENERAL LINE: +263 2020 64412  
DIRECT LINE: +263 2020 64469  
HOTLINE: +263 2020 60551  
FAX: +263 2020 01002  
EMAIL: [kini@mutarecity.org.zw](mailto:kini@mutarecity.org.zw)  
WEBSITE: [www.mutarecity.co.zw](http://www.mutarecity.co.zw)

Our ref: AAMks 11 June 2021

Patricia Mahachi  
44 Cooper Street  
Cyrildene, 2198, Johannesburg,  
**SOUTH AFRICA**

Dear Madam,

**REQUEST FOR PERMISSION TO CONDUCT RESEARCH IN MUTARE MUNICIPALITY**

Your letter dated 18 August 2020 on the above matter refers.

I wish to advise that you have been granted permission to carry out a research entitled: **Citizen's expectations and perceptions of Municipal service delivery. A case study of Mutare Municipality, Zimbabwe.**

I wish to further advise that permission is being granted on condition that the research findings will be shared with the Municipality and also to avail a copy of the completed dissertation to the Municipality of Mutare.

Yours Faithfully

  
**DR. A. MUTARA**  
**ACTING TOWN CLERK**

Only when our characters and attitudes are molded into genuine selfless service governed by integrity will we begin to build inclusive cities and lasting legacies

### Appendix 3: Permission letter from United Mutare Residents ratepayers



#### UNITED MUTARE RESIDENTS & RATEPAYERS TRUST

155 Upper Third Avenue, Mutare, Landline: 0958-005380, Email: [umrt.mutare01@gmail.com](mailto:umrt.mutare01@gmail.com) / Website: [www.umrt.org/](http://www.umrt.org/)  
Twitter: @UmrtMutare / Facebook: United Mutare Ratepayers & Residents Trust - UMRRT

44 Cooper Street  
Cyrildene, 2198, Johannesburg  
South Africa

11 May, 2021

**SUBJECT: PERMISSION FOR CONDUCTING A RESEARCH AND ACCESS  
CONTACT DETAILS OF MUTARE THE RESIDENTS**

Dear Patricia Mahachi

We are pleased to inform you that UMRRT has permitted you to research your project entitled Citizen's expectations and perceptions of Municipal service delivery in Mutare. UMRRT will help you with the contact details of Mutare Residents and permit you to access Trust reports for your study. You are required to exercise the highest degree of confidentiality to protect the information. UMRRT will need a copy of the completed dissertation to be availed to them.

We wish you all the best in your research.

Regards

For and on behalf of United Mutare Residents and Ratepayers Trust

Dube Edson



## Appendix 4: Ethical clearance



### DEPARTMENT: PUBLIC ADMINISTRATION AND MANAGEMENT RESEARCH ETHICS REVIEW COMMITTEE

Date: 10 August 2021

PAM/2021/019 (Mahachi)  
Name of applicant: Ms P Mahachi  
Student#: 61974498

Dear Ms Mahachi

#### Decision: Ethics Clearance Approval

#### Details of researcher:

Ms P Mahachi, student#:61974498, email: [61974498@mylife.unisa.ac.za](mailto:61974498@mylife.unisa.ac.za), tel: 078 418 0772

Supervisor: S Ntoyanto, staff#: 90403649, email: [ntoyass@unisa.ac.za](mailto:ntoyass@unisa.ac.za),

**Research project** 'Citizens' expectations and perceptions of municipal service delivery in Mutare Municipality, Zimbabwe'

**Qualification:** MAdmin – Public Administration

Thank you for the application for **research ethics clearance** submitted to the Department: Public Administration and Management: Research Ethics Review Committee, for the above mentioned study. Ethics approval is granted. The decision will be tabled at the next College RERC meeting for notification/ratification.

**For full approval:** The application was **reviewed** in compliance with the *Unisa Policy on Research Ethics* and the *Standard Operating Procedure on Research Ethics Risk Assessment*.

The proposed research may now commence with the proviso that:


- 1) The researcher will ensure that the research project adheres to the values and principles expressed in the Unisa Policy on Research Ethics.
- 2) Any adverse circumstance arising in the undertaking of the research project that is relevant to the ethicality of the study, as well as changes in the methodology, should be communicated in writing to this Ethics Review Committee.



University of South Africa  
Pretorius Street, Muckleneuk Ridge, City of Johannesburg  
PO Box 592 UNISA, 0003 South Africa  
Telephone: +27 12 429 3111 Facsimile: +27 12 429 4130  
[www.unisa.ac.za](http://www.unisa.ac.za)

## Appendix 5: Confidentiality Statistical Analysis

1



# UNISA

university  
of south africa

**UNISA RESEARCH ETHICS 3<sup>rd</sup> Party Confidentiality Agreement**  
**(Transcriber, Co-coder, Statistician and/or Fieldworkers)**

---

**A. INSTRUCTIONS**

Please read through the entirety of this form carefully before signing.

After completing the required fields, please sign the form. After this form has been signed by the transcriber, co-coder, statistician or fieldworker, it should be given to the principal researcher for submission to the relevant UNISA Research Ethics Committee.

The transcriber, co-coder, statistician and/or fieldworker should keep a copy of the *Confidentiality Agreement* for their records.

---

**B. CONFIDENTIALITY OF A RESEARCH STUDY**

Confidentiality is the treatment and maintenance of information that an individual has disclosed in a relationship of trust and with the expectation that it will not be divulged to others in ways that are inconsistent with the understanding of the original disclosure (the informed consent documentation) without permission. Confidential information relating to human participants in a research study may include, but is not limited to the personal information listed below:

- a) information relating to the race, gender, sex, pregnancy, marital status, national, ethnic or social origin, color, sexual orientation, age, physical or mental health, well-being, disability, religion, conscience, belief, culture, language and birth of the person;
- b) information relating to the education or the medical, financial, criminal or employment history of the person;
- c) any identifying number, symbol, e-mail address, physical address, telephone number, location information, online identifier or other assignment to the person;
- d) the biometric information of the person;
- e) the personal opinions, views or preferences of the person;
- f) correspondence sent by the person that is implicitly or explicitly of a private or confidential nature or further correspondence that would reveal the contents of the original correspondence;
- g) the views or opinions of another individual about the person; and
- h) the name of the person if it appears with other personal information relating to the person or if the disclosure of the name itself would reveal information about the person.

Form adapted from the confidentiality agreement developed by the University of St Thomas IRB, retrieved from <https://www.stthomas.edu>



As a third party you will have access to research information (e.g. audio or video recordings, DVDs/CDs, transcripts, data, etc.) that include confidential information. Participants have revealed information to the researcher(s) since they have been assured by the researcher(s) that every effort will be made to maintain their privacy throughout the study. That is why it is of the utmost importance to maintain confidentiality when conducting your duties as a transcriber, statistician, co-coder and/or fieldworker during the research study. *Below is a list of expectations you will be required to adhere to in your role as a third party in this study. Review these expectations carefully before signing this form.*

### C. THIRD PARTY EXPECTATIONS

To maintain confidentiality, I agree to:

1. Keep all research information that I collect or that is shared with me confidential by not discussing or sharing this information verbally or in any format with anyone other than the principal researcher of this study;
2. Ensure the security of research information (e.g. audio or video recordings, DVDs/CDs, transcripts, data, etc.) while it is in my possession. This includes:
  - Keeping all data and/or transcript documents and digitized interviews on a password protected computer with password-protected files;
  - Closing any programs and documents when temporarily away from the computer;
  - Keeping any printed transcripts or data in a secure location such as a locked file cabinet;
  - Permanently deleting any digital communication containing the data.
3. Not make copies of research information (e.g. audio or video recordings, DVDs/CDs, transcripts, data, etc.) unless specifically instructed to do so by the principal researcher;
4. Give all research information (e.g. audio or video recordings, DVDs/CDs, transcripts, data, etc.) and research participant information, back to the principal researcher upon completion of my duties as a transcriber;
5. After discussing it with the principal researcher, erase or destroy all research information (e.g. audio or video recordings, DVDs/CDs, transcripts, data, etc.) that cannot be returned to the principal researcher upon completion of my duties in this study.

---

Name of 3<sup>rd</sup> party involved in research activities: Innocent Dala Mathebula

Research activity responsible for (transcribing interviews, co-coding of data, statistical analysis, collecting data, etc.): Statistical analysis

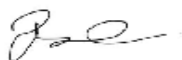
Title of Research Study: Citizens' expectations and perceptions of municipal service delivery in Mutare Municipality, Zimbabwe.

Name of Principal Researcher: Patricia Mahachi

By signing this form, I acknowledge that I have reviewed, understand, and agree to adhere to the expectations described above. I agree to maintain confidentiality while performing my duties as acquired

Form adapted from the confidentiality agreement developed by the University of St Thomas IRB, retrieved from <https://www.stthomas.edu>

by the principal researcher. I recognise that failure to comply with these expectations may result in legal action.



16 June 2021

Signature of 3<sup>rd</sup> party

Date



Innocent Dala Mathebula

Print Name



## Appendix 6: Confidentiality Thesis Editing and Confirmation from Language editor.

1



university  
of south africa

**UNISA RESEARCH ETHICS 3<sup>rd</sup> Party Confidentiality Agreement**  
**(Transcriber, Co-coder, Statistician and/or Fieldworkers)**

---

**A. INSTRUCTIONS**

Please read through the entirety of this form carefully before signing.

After completing the required fields, please sign the form. After this form has been signed by the transcriber, co-coder, statistician or fieldworker, it should be given to the principal researcher for submission to the relevant UNISA Research Ethics Committee.

The transcriber, co-coder, statistician and/or fieldworker should keep a copy of the *Confidentiality Agreement* for their records.

---

**B. CONFIDENTIALITY OF A RESEARCH STUDY**

Confidentiality is the treatment and maintenance of information that an individual has disclosed in a relationship of trust and with the expectation that it will not be divulged to others in ways that are inconsistent with the understanding of the original disclosure (the informed consent documentation) without permission. Confidential information relating to human participants in a research study may include, but is not limited to the personal information listed below:

- a) information relating to the race, gender, sex, pregnancy, marital status, national, ethnic or social origin, color, sexual orientation, age, physical or mental health, well-being, disability, religion, conscience, belief, culture, language and birth of the person;
- b) information relating to the education or the medical, financial, criminal or employment history of the person;
- c) any identifying number, symbol, e-mail address, physical address, telephone number, location information, online identifier or other assignment to the person;
- d) the biometric information of the person;
- e) the personal opinions, views or preferences of the person;
- f) correspondence sent by the person that is implicitly or explicitly of a private or confidential nature or further correspondence that would reveal the contents of the original correspondence;
- g) the views or opinions of another individual about the person; and
- h) the name of the person if it appears with other personal information relating to the person or if the disclosure of the name itself would reveal information about the person.

Form adapted from the confidentiality agreement developed by the University of St Thomas IRB, retrieved from <https://www.stthomas.edu>

As a third party you will have access to research information (e.g. audio or video recordings, DVDs/CDs, transcripts, data, etc.) that include confidential information. Participants have revealed information to the researcher(s) since they have been assured by the researcher(s) that every effort will be made to maintain their privacy throughout the study. That is why it is of the utmost importance to maintain confidentiality when conducting your duties as a transcriber, statistician, co-coder and/or fieldworker during the research study. *Below is a list of expectations you will be required to adhere to in your role as a third party in this study. Review these expectations carefully before signing this form.*

### C. THIRD PARTY EXPECTATIONS

To maintain confidentiality, I agree to:

1. Keep all research information that I collect or that is shared with me confidential by not discussing or sharing this information verbally or in any format with anyone other than the principal researcher of this study;
2. Ensure the security of research information (e.g. audio or video recordings, DVDs/CDs, transcripts, data, etc.) while it is in my possession. This includes:
  - Keeping all data and/or transcript documents and digitized interviews on a password protected computer with password-protected files;
  - Closing any programs and documents when temporarily away from the computer;
  - Keeping any printed transcripts or data in a secure location such as a locked file cabinet;
  - Permanently deleting any digital communication containing the data.
3. Not make copies of research information (e.g. audio or video recordings, DVDs/CDs, transcripts, data, etc.) unless specifically instructed to do so by the principal researcher;
4. Give all research information (e.g. audio or video recordings, DVDs/CDs, transcripts, data, etc.) and research participant information, back to the principal researcher upon completion of my duties as a transcriber;
5. After discussing it with the principal researcher, erase or destroy all research information (e.g. audio or video recordings, DVDs/CDs, transcripts, data, etc.) that cannot be returned to the principal researcher upon completion of my duties in this study.

Name of 3<sup>rd</sup> party involved in research activities: Dr Bobo Chazireni


Research activity responsible for: Thesis Editing

Title of Research Study: **Citizens' expectations and perceptions of municipal service delivery in Mutare municipality, Zimbabwe.**

Name of Principal Researcher: Patricia Mahachi

Form adapted from the confidentiality agreement developed by the University of St Thomas IRB, retrieved from <https://www.stthomas.edu>

By signing this form, I acknowledge that I have reviewed, understand, and agree to adhere to the expectations described above. I agree to maintain confidentiality while performing my duties as acquired by the principal researcher. I recognise that failure to comply with these expectations may result in legal action.



31-10-2022

\_\_\_\_\_  
Signature of 3<sup>rd</sup> party\_\_\_\_\_  
Date\_\_\_\_\_  
Dr Bobo Chazireni

Print Name



To: UNISA

Ref: 61974498

This letter serves to confirm that Bycdi Consultancy carried out language, proofreading and technical alignment on a Master's thesis entitled: Citizens' expectations and perceptions of municipal service delivery in Mutare municipality, Zimbabwe: Patricia Mahachi

Student No: 61974498.

Editing was done over 176 pages. Any queries regarding the above, please contact the numbers below

Yours Sincerely

Dr B. Chazireni

—Date: 31/10/2022

## **Appendix 7: Consent to participate in the study.**

### **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 complete the questionnaire.

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


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

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

Researcher's Name & Surname... Patricia Mahachi

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

## Appendix 8: Turnitin report



### Digital Receipt

This receipt acknowledges that Turnitin received your paper. Below you will find the receipt information regarding your submission.

The first page of your submissions is displayed below.

Submission author:	Patricia Mahachi
Assignment title:	Revision 2
Submission title:	CITIZENS' EXPECTATIONS AND PERCEPTIONS OF MUNICIPAL ...
File name:	Final_Thesis_PMahachi_61974498_04112022.docx
File size:	323.43K
Page count:	128
Word count:	37,706
Character count:	223,644
Submission date:	03-Nov-2022 11:32PM (UTC+0200)
Submission ID:	1943799597

THE UNIVERSITY OF KENYA  
SCHOOL OF DISTANCE EDUCATION  
Nairobi

PATRICIA MAHACHI

Submission ID: 1943799597  
Revision 2

File Name: Final\_Thesis\_PMahachi\_61974498\_04112022.docx  
File Size: 323.43K  
Page Count: 128  
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Character Count: 223,644  
Submission Date: 03-Nov-2022 11:32PM (UTC+0200)  
Submission ID: 1943799597

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## Appendix 9 : Thesis Re-editing confirmation letter.

