IMPACT OF OUTSOURCING SERVICES ON TERTIARY STUDENTS' LEARNING ENVIRONMENT: A CASE OF UNIVERSITY OF MALAWI, THE POLYTECHNIC.

MASTER OF BUSINESS ADMINISTRATION THESIS

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UNIVERSITY OF MALAWI

THE POLYTECHNIC

April, 2018

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Master of Business Administration Thesis

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Submitted to the Department of Management Studies, Faculty of Commerce, in partial fulfilment of the requirements for the degree of Master of Business Administration.

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April, 2018.

DECLARATION

I declare that this thesis and the work presented in it are my own and have been generated by myself as a result of my own original research. Where I have consulted and quoted the work of others, journals, books or other literature, this has been clearly given and acknowledged.

Name: **Willard Kamanya**

Student Signature………………………………………….

CERTIFICATE OF APPROVAL

We the undersigned certify that we have read and hereby recommend for acceptance by the University of Malawi, a thesis entitled "Impact of Outsourcing Services on Tertiary Students' Learning Environment: A case of University of Malawi, the Polytechnic."

Dean of Postgraduate : _____

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Date : _____

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Date :_____

Head of Department : _____

Signature : _____

Date : _____

DEDICATION

I dedicate this paper to my family, friends and all those who helped in making this research work a success. Special gratitude goes to my son Spencer and my wife Sheillah, for their encouragement and endurance. Special thanks go to my friend Ken for being there for me throughout my research programme. I will always appreciate what you have done.

ACKNOWLEDGEMENT

I would like to express my gratitude and appreciation to my supervisors, Dr Kennedy Machira and Mr Alick Kaumba for their guidance in the research process and for their constant encouragement and advice.

I also extend my great appreciation to the students at the Polytechnic for their time and willingness to take part in responding to the questionnaire without which the thesis would not have been completed. I say, "Guys, thanks for your support".

Finally my sincere thanks to all the members of my family for their tireless understanding at the time I was busy with this work, and to the Polytechnic community for their enormous support and contribution which enabled me to successfully complete my research work. Your comments and critiques really shaped the work up to this level.

ABSTRACT

Outsourcing of noncore services has been a new phenomenon in most institutions in most developing countries, Malawi inclusive. Although at tertiary institutions, the ultimate goal is ensuring that students have a better learning environment through the provision of such services, little is known about how contracting out such noncore services contributes towards this. Based on this background, the importance of a study of the impact of outsourcing of noncore services on the students' learning environment cannot be overstated. The study used data collected from Polytechnic from 80 students who were randomly sampled from the student body at the college. In collecting the data, a structured questionnaire was used, with a 5 point likert scale ranging from 1= strongly agree and 5=strongly disagree. Statistical analysis was performed using the Statistical Package for Social Sciences (SPSS v 16.0). The analysis was done using three approaches, Univariate, Bivariate and Multivariate. A Pearson's chi-square was also used to test association between variables at $p<0.1$. The results revealed that about 55% of the students indicated that their learning environment was not affected as a result of outsourcing practices whereas 45 % reported experiencing challenges due to the same. Furthermore, a bivariate analysis indicates that faculty of study, quality of food served, quantity of food served, and quality of services delivered, were the significant factors that affected students' learning environment at University of Malawi's Polytechnic. Thus the study generally found that, after implementation of the outsourcing policy, quality of services rendered by the contracted firms, in terms of food provision, cleaning and general sanitation, to the College have a significant effect on influencing the learning environment of the students at the Polytechnic. Therefore, based on the study findings, there is need for a comprehensive audit about the quality of services that the contracted firms provide to the students, if the learning environment is to be improved. Overall the study provides an insight and a way of addressing important practical applications that emanate from outsourcing practices within the University of Malawi.

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ACS	American College of Surgeons
CDC	Centre for Disease Control
GoM	Government of Malawi
MIM	Malawi Institute of Management
PPPs	Private Public Partnerships
QoS	Quality of Services
SADC	Southern African Development Community
SPSS	Statistical Package for Social Sciences
UNESCO	United Nations Education, Scientific and Cultural Organisation
UNICCO	United Nations International Centre for Computing
USDA	United States Department of Agriculture
WB	World Bank

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CHAPTER ONE

INTRODUCTION

1.0   Study Background

Outsourcing is a phenomenon that, as a practice, originated in the 1950s, but it was not until the 1980s when the strategy became widely adopted in organizations. Since then, the strategy has evolved from a strictly cost focused approach towards a more cooperative nature (Hatonen & Eriksson, 2009). Thus in the industrialized and developing countries, the call for a paradigm shift to liberalize and privatise public infrastructure then commenced in the 1980's and the development took a significant turn in the 1990's.

Much as several countries participated in the move, which was mostly trading under privatisation commissions, many countries in sub-Saharan Africa were lagging in private - public partnerships until in recent years (Kikeri & Phipps, 2006).   Services such as security, cleaning, students accommodation and provision of meals were the laggard services to be privatised (Uwakwe, Falaye, Emunemu & Adelore, 2008). This is the case because the policy of most governments in Africa did not have a political and economic thrust to implement the private- public service delivery initiatives compared to their counterparts in developed countries (Sahr, 2002). This development resulted in most academic institutions of higher learning using most of their resources, both financial and otherwise, in providing services that were not core to their mandate, to students. This subsequently affected the quality of the defined learning and environmental deliverables in university settings (Daun, 2000; Mbeki, 1999; Findlaw, 2004).

Some studies on outsourcing have contrasted current practices in organisations and institutions, where some are identified as pursuing more value adding sourcing strategies while others are more focused on gaining economies of scale. However, in both cases, all consider outsourcing as critical to their organizational/institutional strategy (Kakabadse & Kakabadse, 2002; Bovaid, 2009). In most tertiary education institutions the focus is on both. This is because colleges are aiming at improving the quality of service delivery in their teaching environment in order to ensure that their core business of delivering and engaging students towards academic work is enriched (Bovaid, 2009), while at the same time ensuring that provision of catering services to students is not compromised. A number of scholarly debates have pointed out that outsourcing of services within the universities provides an environment where institutions not only save

operational costs but also release the organisation from handling some services to professional bodies that do the work perfectly and appreciate the environmental status of the universities.

A study by Deem,Mok and Lucas (2003) pointed out that contracting services such as cleaning and cafeteria services to an external vendor has the impetus of relieving the firm from an overboard task of over trading, which results in lowering of quality of services. In the same way, as most institutions of higher learning are exploring ways of transforming higher education service delivery, outsourcing and contract rendering to external vendors is a central piece that is highly considered (Osborne,2002; Deem et al.,2003). As outsourcing entails the process of subcontracting out the provision of services to an external vendor who can be contracted for a defined period of time, the philosophy is to ensure that the contracting out firms experience improved economies of scale in their operational base (Scholes, Whittington & Jones, 2009).Colbert (2017) reiterated that most students in institutions of higher learning are benefiting greatly from the services rendered by the contracted firms as an improved quality of service is provided. University management may also benefit from the contract fees that the service providers pay to the institution, and this may provide a competitive advantage towards the institutions in achieving deliverables of their core business mandates (Scholes et al., 2009).

In Malawi, much as the aspect of privatisation was legislated in 1996 under the Public Enterprise (Privatisation) Act and was assented to in the same year with the aim of ensuring the acceleration of the privatisation of services in public institutions, in order to increase efficiency, reduce monopoly among the public institutions, promote participation of private enterprises in core economic activities and reduce the cost of operations. Most universities in the country delayed in the implementation of the practice a development which led to the underperformance of the universities due to high operational costs (Government of Malawi, 1996).

However, despite studies that hinted at privatization across school settings in Malawi in later years, the notion of contracting out services in the form of cleaning and food service delivery was completely neglected, more especially from the tertiary education systems' perspectives (Rose, 2010).Yet, studies that have been done did put much emphasis on the privatisation of the other sectors other than education (Government of Malawi, 1996; Chirwa, 2001).In the case of the University of Malawi, outsourcing was triggered by the report by the Malawi Institute of Management's University of Malawi Reform Study (MIM Report, 1996), which was made

at the request of the Malawi government. Outsourcing of non-core activities in the University of Malawi was part of the recommendations in the report. The reform study recommendations were aimed at streamlining the activities so that the University should concentrate and direct most of its financial and other resources towards the provision of its core activities, which are teaching , research, consultancy and outreach (University of Malawi Act, 1974, amended 1998, UNIMA Strategic Plan 2012 - 2017).However, despite implementation of some of these recommendations, there is little knowledge on how the provision of contracted out services in the form of outsourcing cleaning and catering services in the public university' system impact on the learning environment of the students. It is against this background that the motivation for this study came about, to assess the impact of outsourcing practices on tertiary students' learning environment from the perspective of the students at Polytechnic, a constituent college of the University of Malawi.

Outsourcing of non-core services has become a common phenomenon in most private enterprises as they try to attain a competitive advantage through minimising of the cost of operations while at the same time maintaining quality output. It is argued that outsourcing significantly influences a firm's cost efficiency, productivity and profitability (Jiang, Frazier, & Prater, 2006). Schniederjans, Schniederjans and Schniederjans,(2015) also added that outsourcing, if properly managed, will assist the firm to reduce its overheads and operational costs, help it to convert fixed costs into variable costs, and make its prices more competitive on the market. However, this can only be achieved if outsourcing risks which are a vital component in the decision and management process associated to the provision of services by a provider to the customer (Soares, Soares & Arnaud 2014)

It is imperative to note that when core competency and out-sourcing strategies are combined, a company can improve returns, lower risk, and respond to customer needs in a much better way (Quinn & Hilmer, 1994). According to Wood (2000) outsourcing also helps an organisation to concentrate on its core activities and in the process improves the quality of its output.However, while outsourcing is a powerful tool to cut costs, improve performance, and refocus on the core business, outsourcing initiatives often fall short of management's expectations. "In a survey of nearly a hundred outsourcing efforts in Europe and the United States, Barthelemy (2003) revealed that one or more of seven "deadly sins" that underlie most failed outsourcing efforts were: outsourcing activities that should not be outsourced; selecting the wrong vendor; writing a poor contract; overlooking personnel issues; losing control over

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the outsourced activity; overlooking the hidden costs of outsourcing; and failing to plan an exit strategy (i.e., vendor switch or reintegration of an outsourced activity)". These are some of the risk factors which Soares, Soares and Arnaud (2014) indicated that they are a vital component in the decision and management process of outsourced services, Liu and Yuliani (2016) also pointed out that successful risk management is a key factor in having successful results and full benefits of facilities outsourcing.

Outsourcing failures are rarely reported because firms are reluctant to publicize them. However, contrasting them with more successful outsourcing efforts can yield useful "best practices." Outsourcing as a business practice is flourishing in almost every domain, and organizations are outsourcing even more functional areas such as information systems, marketing, human resource administration, finance and accounting (Wessel et al., 2003). Organizations are embarking on this to take advantage and access technical and other expertise in form of human, material and other resources that they do not have within and may be too costly for them to acquire or invest in.

1.1   Problem Statement and Justification

Even though there are these significant benefits, as indicated above, in most public institutional settings little has been researched on the significance of such service provision contracts in improving the students' learning environment. For instance, studies that explored the contributions of the outsourcing returns on the performance of tertiary institutions such as universities, focused much on cost saving and economic gains that the institutions were benefiting from following the outsourcing practice (Phipps & Merosotis,2005;Sang, 2010; UNICCO,2002) and not its impact on the students' learning environment. Schniederjans, Schniederjans and Schniederjans,(2015) also agreed with this and indicated that outsourcing, if properly managed, will assist the firm to reduce its overheads and operational costs. Though Soares, Soares and Arnaud (2014) , and Liu and Yuliani (2016) agreed that outsourcing brings economic gains if the associated risks are properly managed, they did not touch the effect of the practice on the students. Thus, despite the popularisation of outsourcing in an African setup, more especially in the business sectors (Davis,2008; Sohail, Austin & Rushdi, 2004), little is known about its impact and contribution in the improvement of the learning environment in most tertiary institutions. It is for this reason that an assessment of the impact of outsourcing

practices on tertiary learning environment from the students' perspective was conducted with a focus on the Polytechnic, a constituent college of the University of Malawi.

1.2.   Study Objectives

The main objective of the study was to assess the impact of outsourcing practices on learning environment of the Polytechnic students. Specifically, the study sought to:

i.   Investigate the socio- demographic factors associated with student performance.
ii.   Establish the effect of cafeteria outsourcing at Polytechnic on student academic performance.
iii.   Explore how the outsourcing of facilities cleaning services have an impact on student performance.

1.3   Research Questions

In order to achieve the above listed specific objectives, the following research questions were considered:

i.   What are the socio- demographic factors associated with student performance?
ii.   What is the effect of cafeteria outsourcing at polytechnic on student learning environment?
iii.   To what extent does the outsourcing of   cleaning services have an impact on the students' learning environment?

1.4   Rationale for the study.

The findings of the study are to serve three major aspects. Firstly, as little is known in the scholarly world on the outsourcing of services and its contribution towards improving the learning environment, the current study is to serve as the benchmark across the country's universities in assessing how outsourcing non-core services operates and improves the learning environment and, subsequently, student performance in the long term. As such, based on the approach that this study is to adopt, it could be replicated to study similar situations in other institutions of higher learning in the country that are either, private, mission or public and provide an understanding as to how outsourcing services affect the students in general. Secondly, the findings of the study are paramount in assisting in evaluating the outsourcing implementation policy in the country. . Thirdly, the study is to provide some insights as to how

the recurrent outsourcing of services such as cafeteria and cleaning are conducted from the student perspective. This is significant because students are the major stakeholder in as far as operations of higher learning institutions are concerned, in this regard, their assessment of the positives and negatives of outsourcing is paramount.

1.5 Definitions of notable terms

i. *Outsourcing*: The process of contracting out services to an external service provider.

ii. *Service Level Agreement:* An agreement that an organisation makes to a service provider who is awarded an outsourcing contract to act as a guideline towards implementation of the contractual obligations.

iii. *Private Public Partnerships:* An agreement that the public institutions make with the public or private firms to work collaboratively in a symbiotic relationship to support each other's activities.

iv. *Contractual agreement:* A service agreement that an organisation awards to a service provider (a vendor) to undertake cleaning services within the premise organisation over a specified period of time.

v. *Service Charge*: The amount that is charged for the service rendered as per the contractual agreement.

1.6 Chapter Summary and Thesis Layout

This chapter has provided a background to the study, problem statement, research objectives, research questions and significance of the study. The chapter has also provided limitations of the study and has finally provided definitions of the major terms. The rest of the thesis is organised as follows: Chapter two provides a systematic review of related literature. Chapter three provides the methodology adopted for the study and outlines the following: research design; study population; sample frame and study sample; data collection tools; variables, definition, measure and expected signs; analytical procedure; ethical consideration; data quality and reliability and summary of the chapter. Chapter four presents results by starting with the background characteristics of the study respondents, socio-demographic attributes of the students; perception among the students of the college on the environments sanitation following out-sourcing; bivariate analysis: chi-square test of association between independent variables and dependent variable (learning adequacy); logistics regression estimates on the factors influencing learning environment of the students following outsourcing; then a

discussion and summary of the chapter is presented. Finally, Chapter five outlines study conclusions and recommendations based on the study results and discussions are presented.

CHAPTER TWO

LITERATURE REVIEW

2.0 Introduction

This chapter systematically reviews literature from different scholarly articles, and government reports from around the world on the subject associated with student performance within the universities. As such, the literature review covers the following areas: student performance within the tertiary education environment; socio- demographic factors and student performance in tertiary education environment; outsourcing of student cafeteria service and student academic performance; cafeteria quality of food and student performance; services quality within the cafeteria and student performance; cost of outsourced food; cleaning services facilities outsourcing and student performance; classroom cleanliness position and student performance; place of residence cleanliness and student performance; theories adopted in the study, conceptual framework and finally summary of the chapter.

2.1   Student Performance within the Tertiary Education Environment

Around the world, the relationship between students' achievements in their academic and school initiated activities has been viewed from a controversial lens. For instance, over the past decades, Eskew and Faley (1988) and Hanushek (1997) reiterated that the performance of most students at the tertiary education level is affected partly because of the inadequate resources provided to support their school based activities., Eskew et al. (1988) further indicated that the institutions inability to provide adequate support to the students' basic requirements for their education affects their academic performance. Hill and Epps (2010) postulated that school environment, among others, is the major predictor that affects the students' learning and subsequent progress in their academic performance. For instance, classroom environment in terms of noise control, tiered seating arrangements, and low standards of classrooms accessories like chairs and desks were perceived as factors that affect students' performance (Hanushek, 1996; Hill & Epps, 2010). A study by Kapetaniou and Lee (2016) highlighted that students' success is the measure of university's institutional performance.   The study further reiterated that if governments/institutions took a critical role in developing supportive and constructive operations within the college settings in the form of the provision of aconducive environment to spur teaching and learning, it may result into long term benefits in the form of good performance of the students in general.

However, despite these scholarly reiterations, little is known on the effect of outsourcing of services such as catering and cleaning services towards the students' uptake of their studies and, subsequently, performance. A study that explored the factors that influences student performance only discussed the more academic factors such as perception of heavy work load and state of the educational environment as predictors of learning outcomes among university students (Lizzio, Wilson & Simons, 2010). However, such a significant study failed to account for issues such as service quality delivery and its implication on the learning environment and thereby students' performance.

2.2   Socio-economic Factors and Student Performance in Tertiary Education Environment

The performance of students in institutions of higher learning is a factor that is defined by a number of factors. For example, the progressive performance of the students is somehow affected by the fact that in some instances they are selected for courses that they did not opt for (UNESCO, 2014). Furthermore, a study by UNESCO (2014) indicated that in most tertiary education institutions, students' performance is influenced by a number of factors such as difficulties in the courses that the students enrol in per year, which results in different performance levels. For example, if the student enrols for a sciences programme by default as a result of the selection criteria set by the university, his performance in that programme may be affected as opposed to where he is enrolled is his priority programme. Additionally, this also resulted in differences in the performance of the students by year with fresh students experiencing a lot of challenges   in proceeding to the next level compared to their counterparts who had been in the system longer and were accustomed to surviving the system over the subsequent years.

2.3   Outsourcing of Student Cafeteria and Student Academic Performance

Corporate influence on what people, in this case, students eat is rising at a faster rate around the world. In Brazil, outsourcing of food provision to students at educational institutions has been categorised into two (Ken, 2012). First are those that define the process neither as a minor competence nor as a core competence. Secondly there are those that define food provision as their core competence. The latter group of service providers do offer the services of food provision to the public as their core business. Their food pricing is therefore that of a corporate entity. They are profit-oriented and they target making supernormal profits in order for them

to define their existence (USDA, 2005). They may provide quality meals and a good service, but their pricing may not suit the pocket of an ordinary student. They may also have very limited options for providing the food to the students. An audit that targeted food served by these corporations concluded that these companies not only provide food that does not meet the requirements of the students but also made huge profits on the outsourced service contract at the expense of the students' health and academic performance (Shaw & Nirvi, 2011). It is because of this development that some service providers that operate on school premises are given cautions for the low quality of services that they give to the students, a situation which affects students' health and academic life (Wiggins & Ovetta, 2012). In most developing countries, Malawi included, private-public partnerships fail to reach the desired goals or produce the best results due to differences in the objectives and goals of the participating partners, that is, the private firms and the public institutions.

2.4.1   Cafeteria Quality of Food and Student Performance

Quality of food that the students get when at school not only has the advantage of providing nutritional value, but also their healthy living, which is a significant predictor of their performance. A Centre for disease Control (CDC) (2013) report indicated that in many school environments, food quality is always below the standards due to the fact that they try to serve a larger group with minimal resources, a situation which results in low quality of food being served to the students and, subsequently affecting their healthy living . This is so because in most institutions, there is no extensive assessment, monitoring and control of the quality of food stuffs that are prepared so that it not just satisfies their appetite but also that it provides the healthy needs of the students. Lack of quality and reasonably priced food being made available to the students by the formally engaged firms or service providers results in a lot of students going for fast foods such as takeaway restaurants and informal food suppliers that surround their learning environments (Axelson,Brinberg & Durand, 1993). Newborough and Probert (1988) also pointed out that when most institutions are outsourcing the food service delivery, they are more concerned with the price and not much on the ability and facilities of the service provider. Where the service quality is compromised and standards are lowered, students may decide to buy the food elsewhere outside their campus, a situation which consumes much of their time and, consequently, may affect their performance (Sawka, McCormack, Nette-Aguirre & Swanson, 2015). In the long term, the students resort to buying food outside the expected contracted food selling points from food sellers not contracted to

provide the services due to factors such as price and quality (CDC, 2013; Gosting, Doyle, Steinhart &Cochrane, 1991).

2.4.2   Services Quality within the Cafeteria and Student Performance

A study by Shaw and Nirvi (2011) pointed out that in most institutions where meals are provided to students by an outside supplier, their intention, first and foremost, is to make a profit, and this is achieved by minimising the costs of their service provision. This may happen at the expense of the quality or quantity of the food provided to the students. Where quality is compromised and standards are lowered, students do not get value for their money. Jefferies (1996) pointed out that privatisation of services within the public institutions, such as the tertiary education environment, has the impetus of streamlining the activities of the institutions and thereby make it concentrate on the delivery of its core activities, such as delivery of lectures, research and consultancy. According to Wood (2000), outsourcing helps an organisation to concentrate on its core activities and, in the process, improves the quality of its output. At an academic institution like the Polytechnic this may imply the improved quality of teaching through the availability of teaching resources and an improved teaching environment. In turn, this may result in quality graduates churned out to the industry. . Furthermore, it is reported that outsourcing of services among students is key to supporting students' emergent academic needs as they become better placed to work hard in order to meet their academic performance needs (DeCapua, 2006).

However, in situations where the outsourcing of services is not well planned and supported, it may result in controversy, which may have long-term effects on the management of the colleges (Bartem & Manning, 2001). Yet, in most developing countries, Malawi included, the notion of contracting services in schools and colleges is a new phenomenon with few studies having been done on the impact of the contracted services towards the student learning environment, and subsequently on their performance.

2.4.3   Perception of Outsourcing in Tertiary Institutions

In the literature, the concept of outsourcing has been viewed as a conceptual idea. This is because most institutions of higher learning   have not considered much   which areas require outsourcing   in order to improve the ultimate goal of the institutions, which is improving students' academic progress in the long term (Phipps & Merisotis, 2005; ACS, 2004). However, there are a number of barriers associated with outsourcing of the services, and these

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are perception risk, fear of the worst case scenario as regards the impact to the institution on the outsourced services, fear of increased cost in the service delivery, resistance to change by both the contracting team as well as the recipients of the service. (Phipps & Merisotis, 2005; UNICCO, 2002).

2.5   Cleaning Services Facilities Outsourcing and Student Performance

In the scholarly world, sociological discussion of the expansion of the services organisation within public institutions has been very limited. Yet, according to modern business tenets, most institutions that are public in nature have embarked on projects aimed at improving public private partnerships in the public place environment. These public private partnerships included provision of services, such as food services, cleaning services, and security services among others. According to a study done by Rees and Fielder (1992). It was noted that contracts in cleaning services were marred by service challenges due to the fact that people are employed on an ad hoc basis, and their pay is very minimal, as the organisations that have acquired the contracts streamline their activities in order to ensure that economies of scale are guaranteed (Rees & Filder, 1992). According to Rees et. Al. (1992), the trends of the organisation restructuring in their quest of improving service delivery by professionals in the areas such as cleaning have not been underemphasised. A recent study indicated that adding up all the hidden costs, contract cleaning does provide cost effective and convenient options and cost saving measures, a development which increases the saving nature of the organisation. Agular (2011) reiterated that the contracted cleaning, if closely monitored, does provide better services that could promote performance of a wide array of stakeholders in the community- based environment.

In Kenya, an outsourcing of the services has been associated with a lot of opportunities and strengths. For instance, much as outsourcing of the services has seen a lot of customers benefiting from the services, little is known of the benefits that the public based institutions, such as learning institutions, do acquire, more especially the student body. For instance, a study by Sang (2010), despite outlining the advantages of outsourcing of the services, such as cleaning, to tertiary institutions such as universities, its ultimate benefits to improve students' performance is hardly known. . Therefore, based on this development, the study needs to explore and document the contributions of contract services, such as cleaning, and its contribution on the learning environment of the students at tertiary institutions such as

Polytechnic. This is going to provide a basic linkage between the effect of contracted services and their service impact, not necessarily from the institutional dimension, as has been the case around the world, but in relation to affecting the students learning environment (Sang, 2010; Wood, 2000).

2.6   Theories Adopted in the Study

In this study, three theories are discussed and explained, with respect to how they are adopted and used in this study. These theories are resources based theories, service contracting theories and implicit theory of intelligence among students.

2.6.1   Resource - Based Theory

Over time, organisations have developed different resource based theories in order to streamline their operation in order to attain competitive advantages. According to grant (1991), resource based theory do provide a competitive advantage to organisation if, and only if, the process is well articulated in order to ensure that quality of operations is controlled. He further pointed out that control of internal resources and its operations is fundamental if the firms strategic call for development is to be ascertained. Different scholars adopted this resource based theory in order to enhance their operational capacity. For instance, Alvarez and Busenitz (2001) adopted the resource-based theory, which saw their entrepreneurial base increase to acquire more revenues due to streamlining of the activities and assumed competitiveness on the market. In another aspect, resource- based theory has been used to understand human assets and management dilemmas in which proper use of resources resulted in priority settings and thereby gain of competitiveness in the business sector (Coff, 1997).

Therefore, in this study, the resource- based theory provides an insight to understand how institutions of higher learning adopt and use resource- constrained technique, such as outsourcing of facilities like cafeteria and cleaning services, and the effect of this development on student performance at Polytechnic, a constituent college of the University of Malawi.

2.6.2   Service Contracting Theory

Outsourcing of services has been a significant factor that supports the performance of most public institutions. Over time, if contracting theory is properly implemented, it will help the institution to improve on performance. For instance, business may engage in contracting

services campaigns with the aim of having better business support in other areas while they concentrate on their core business by giving out the non-core activities to external vendors (Abraham & Taylor, 1996). According to Abraham et al. (1996) for organisations to receive good output, use of skilled external contractors is significant, more especially in service-centred organisations like tertiary education institutions, if they are to get better performance returns among the students in the long term. In this study, service contracting out theories, such as those for cafeteria and cleaning services that are rendered by skilled professionals operating in the tertiary educational environment, will be discussed.

2.6.3   Implicit Theory of Intelligence among Students

The implicit theory of intelligence among the students indicates that students' performance is a factor that indicates that positive beliefs, causal attributions and environmental situations have a positive effect on the performance of the students. The theory has been applied implicitly to assess the influence of environmental factors on the personality of the students and thereby, subsequently, on their performance (Yeager, Trzesniewski & Dweck, 2012). In this study, the issue of environmental conditions in as far as cleanliness is concerned is discussed. A study was carried out of how outsourcing of the cleaning services and cafeteria services has a bearing to implicitly affect the learning environment of the student and their subsequent performance.

2.7 Conceptual Framework

Figure 2.1 below illustrates the conceptual framework and the factors related to improved performance of the students.
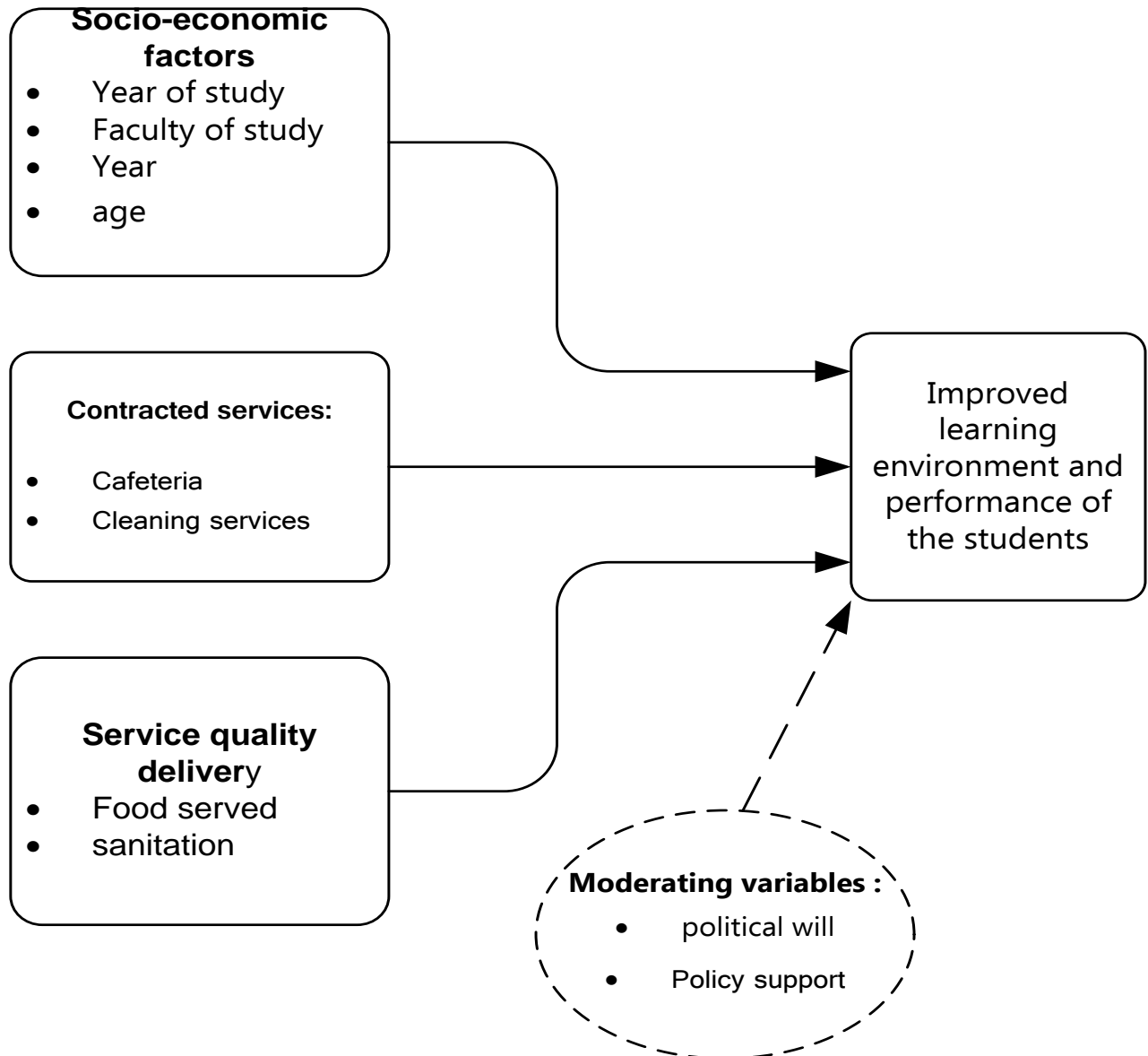
Figure 2.1: Conceptual Framework of the Socio-economic and Outsourcing Factors and Learning Environment that affect Students' Performance.

The conceptual framework above illustrates that students' performance is related to a number of factors, such as socio-economic factors of the stakeholders, in this case the students, type of outsourcing services rendered, in this case contracted food service delivery and cleaning services, which in the long term do provide quality of service delivery. However, this environment is defined by the political will and support of policy makers in order to ensure smooth and effective implementation of the contracted service operations.

2.8   Chapter Summary

The chapter presented the literature review of different outsourcing factors, from a number of scholarly articles and government reports, and how they relate to students' performance. This formed part of the data collection and collaboration for the study. Furthermore, some theories were explained, in which service delivery and the way it relates to performance was explained. In the following chapter, a research methodology, which was used to analyse data, is presented.

CHAPTER THREE

RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

3.0. Introduction

The chapter presents the research methodology, illustrating how data was analysed in order to achieve the study objectives. The following are the sections under discussion in this chapter: research design; study population; sample frame and study sample; data collection tools; variables, definition, measure and expected signs; analytical procedure; ethical consideration; data quality and reliability and summary of the chapter.

3.1 Research Design

The study employed a quantitative research design using cross-sectional data.

3.2 Study Population

The study targeted students from the Polytechnic, a constituent college of the University of Malawi, located in Blantyre City. The students were asked to supply information in a post-outsourcing period following implementation of the out-sourcing policy within the University of Malawi. . The students that participated in the study were drawn from all faculties of the college, namely, Applied Sciences, Commerce, Engineering, Built Environment and Education and Media Studies.

3.3 Sampling Frame, Sample Size and Sampling Technique

The sampling frame constituted a total of 1200 students that registered to participate in social weekend activities. Out of this 400 were residential students at the Polytechnic main campus from which a sample of 80 students was drawn using systematic random sampling. This sample size was about 20% of the main campus residential students. Creswell (1998) recommended that a minimum of 10% is acceptable to make a statistical inference about a designated population. Sandelowski (1995) also explained that determining adequate sample in qualitative research is ultimately a matter of judgement and experience in evaluating the quality of the information collected against the uses to which it will be put, the particular research method and purposeful sampling strategy, and the research product intended. The research assistants were counting and selecting every 15th student. If the student happened to be re-sampled, the process was restarted in order to ensure that each student was represented once.

3.5   Data Collection Tools

The study used a questionnaire to collect the data from the students. The questionnaire was designed in such a way that it gives out the service receivers perspective on the quality and impact of the services provided by the contracted firms. The questionnaire has close-ended questions, and specifically looked at the students' perspective. Respondents completed the questionnaire and the data captured in Statistical Package for Social Science (16.0). Some questions were designed using a Likert Scale where "1" implied a strongly agree for a highly valued response and "5" a strongly disagree for a lowly valued response.

3.7   Analytical Framework

The study used three approaches to analyse data, namely, univariate, bivariate and multivariate analysis. The succeeding sections explain more details.

3.7.1   Univariate Analysis

Univariate analysis was used to present the descriptive statistics of the data in which frequencies, percentages, and charts were used to present the socio-demographic perspectives of the respondents responses on factors associated with outsourcing of the services at Polytechnic, in Blantyre.

3.7.2   Bivariate Analysis

A Pearson's Chi-square test of association was used to measure the association between variables which picked the socio-demographic, quality of services delivery by the cafeteria after outsourcing of the services and, sanitation position of the environment after outsourcing of the cleaning services within the college.

The Pearson's Chi-square test is indicated using the equation below:

$$\text{Chi-square } (\chi^2 \ ) = \sum_{i=1}^{n} \frac{(O_i - E_i)^2}{E_i} \ \dots\dots \ (1)$$

Where O_i is the observed value and E_i is the expected value and n is the number of observations. In this case, the association checked for significance at $p < 0.001$, $p < 0.05$ and $p < 0.1$.

3.7.3 Multivariate Analysis

The study used logistic regression analysis in which learning environment was defined as 1 if outsourced cleaning and cafeteria service delivery conducive and 0 if otherwise. The problem was modelled as a latent variable presented as follows:

$$Y = \begin{cases} 1, \ if \ \mathbf{Z} > 0 \\ 0, \ Otherwise \end{cases} \tag{1}$$

$$Where; \ \mathbf{Z} = \mathbf{X\beta} + \boldsymbol{\varepsilon}$$

$$Z = log\left(\frac{\pi}{1-\pi}\right) \tag{2}$$

Therefore

$$log\left(\frac{\pi}{1-\pi}\right) = \beta_1 X_1 + \cdots + \beta_n X_n + \varepsilon$$

Where $(\pi \ / \ 1\text{-} \ \pi)$ is probability of the student getting the learning environment disturbed over its compliment on the out-sourced services. Furthermore, β_n is the odds ratio showing the effect of X_n on the dependent variable.

3.6   Variables, Definition, Measures

Table 3.1: Variables, definition and measures as is used in the study

Socio-Demographic Factors	Measure	Definition
Age of student		
	1="20 or higher"	Age of the respondents
	2="15-19"	
Year of study		
	1=1	Year of study
	2=2	
	3=3	
	4=4	
Respondents' faculty		Faculty of study of the student
	1="Applied Sciences"	
	2="Commerce"	
	3="Engineering"	

	4="Built Environment"	
	5="Education And Media"	
Out-Sourced Cafeteria services		
Quality of food served		Quality of food served
	3= "Low"	
	2="Medium"	
	1="High"	
Quality of services		Quality of service delivery
	3="Low"	
	2="Medium"	
	1="High"	
Quantity of food satisfaction		Quantity of food that the students be served in the cafeteria.
	1="Yes"	
	0="No"	
Sanitation service satisfaction		Sanitary environment condition in the form of clean classroom, toilets, and outside environments as its not hazardous to the students.
	3="Low"	
	2="Moderate"	
	1="High"	

3.8   Ethical Consideration

In order to ensure ethical consideration associated with the data, respondents were assured that anonymity will not be disclosed to anyone concerning their participation in the study. Each respondents was asked to be either free to participate or not depending on his or her interest towards the data collection process. Before the data collection, an informed consent agreement was presented to the respondents, in which the purpose of the study was presented.

3.9   Data Quality and Reliability

Data that was collected was checked for quality through a number of ways. Firstly each questionnaire was given a unique identity to ensure that information that was extracted and

entered electronically was verified in order to ensure that it was perfect and correct, as was captured. Before the questionnaire was taken from the respondents, it was thoroughly checked to ensure that the respondents have completed the questionnaire very well. When any missing information was noted, the respondent was requested there and then to give the missing information in order to ensure that the questionnaire thoroughly completed.

3.10   Chapter Summary

This chapter detailed the approach used to analyse data in order to achieve the research objectives. The succeeding chapter presents the results and discussions in detail.

CHAPTER FOUR

PRESENATION OF RESULTS AND DISCUSSIONS

4.0   Introduction

In the previous chapter, the research methodology that the study adopted to analyse data and derive the results aimed at answering the research objectives were presented. In this chapter, results are presented in which background characteristics of the study respondents, socio-demographic attributes of the students; perception among the students of the college environment following out-sourcing of sanitation services; bivariate analysis: Chi-square test of association between independent variables and dependent variable (learning adequacy); logistics regression estimates on the factors influencing learning environment of the students following outsourcing ; discussion and summary of the chapters are presented.

4.1   Background characteristics of the study respondents;

The study interviewed students to find out the impact on their learning performance of the outsourcing of the cafeteria and cleaning services   at the University of Malawi, the Polytechnic, which is located in Blantyre. The study used a questionnaire as described in the 'Data Collection Tools' section above, to collect some of the study data.Based on the study findings, 45 % of the students indicated that their learning environment was affected after the college implemented the outsourcing of cafeteria and cleaning services to external services providers at the college. On the other hand, about 55% of the students indicated that outsourcing of services did not have any impact on their learning environment and performance in general. Figure 4.1 presents the responses of the students regarding their perspectives of outsourcing of the services and its impact on performance learning adequacy rating of the sampled students at Polytechnic.
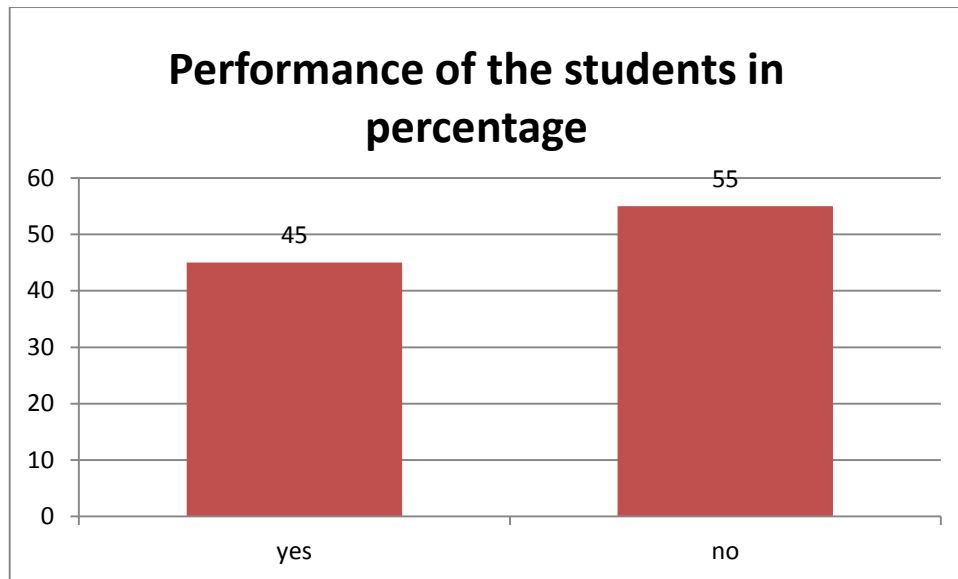
Figure 4.1: Performance Learning Adequacy Rating of the Sampled Students at Polytechnic

4.1.2 Socio-Demographic Attributes of the students

Considering the socio –demographic characteristics of the respondents as illustrated in Table 4.1, the study found that 55% of the majority of the students who participated in the study were aged below 20 years, with the students that were aged above 20 years representing about 45%. In terms of the years of study, the majority of the students who participated in the study were second year and these were 36.25%. The second category was the third year students who were represented by 37.5%. The fourth years represented the minority participants in the study and were represented by 15%.

Table 4.1 Background characteristics of the respondents

Variable	Freq.	Percent	Cum.
Respondents age			
less than 20	44	55	55
20 and higher	36	45	100
Year of study			

First	17	21.25	
Second	29	36.25	
Third	`22	27.5	
Fourth	12	15	
Faculty of study			
Commerce	13	16.25	
Engineering	13	16.25	
built environment	15	18.75	
Education and Median studies	18	22.5	

Furthermore, the study explored the faculty that the students were affiliated with. The study findings found that about 22.5% of the students that participated in the study were from Education and Media Studies and these represented the majority. On the same note, the study found that the second large category of the respondents, were students that came from the Built Environment faculty, and these constituted about 18.75%. However, other departments, namely, commerce and engineering each represented 16.25 % of the sampled students who participated in the study.

4.1.3 Outsourced Cafeteria Attributes

, Students' perspectives on the quality of food given to them from the cafeteria, after outsourcing of the service, were sought. The Likert measures were used to get the students' feedback on the quality of food measures, and these are: high quality for food that the students perceived to be of a good standard, medium for an average quality type of food and low for sub-standard and sub-optimal quality. As illustrated in figure 4.2, the study found that of the students that participated in the study, 43.75% indicated that they quality of food that the cafeteria gives to them was of low quality compared to the type of food that they either get elsewhere or that they used to get from the cafeteria before the outsourcing was implemented. Furthermore, only 21.25% of students indicated that the quality of food they were getting from

the cafeteria after outsourcing the food provision facility was high. 35% indicated that it was moderate. Figure4.2 provides more detail.

Students perception on quality of food in the college cafeteria
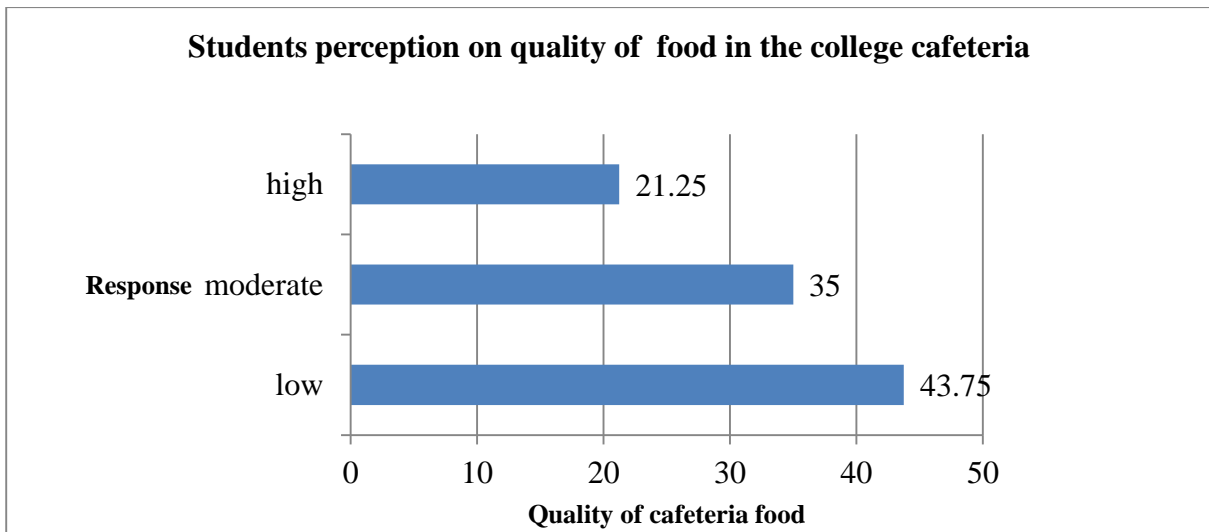
Figure 4.2: Perception of the Students on Quality of Food Served in College Cafeteria.

On the same note, the study further explored the perception of the students with regards to the quality of the services delivery at the college. As is illustrated in figure 4.3, 45% were found aggregately to have a moderate perception on the quality of services, such as friendliness of the staff, ability to provide menu and other relevant information. This means that they consider the service provided as not very bad, but that it was not reaching their desired expectation. 37.5% perceived the service quality to be low, and only about 17.5% of the students reported to have a high perception with regards to the quality of services that the cafeteria was providing following the outsourcing of the facilities at the Polytechnic.

Perception of students on quality of cafeteria service delivery
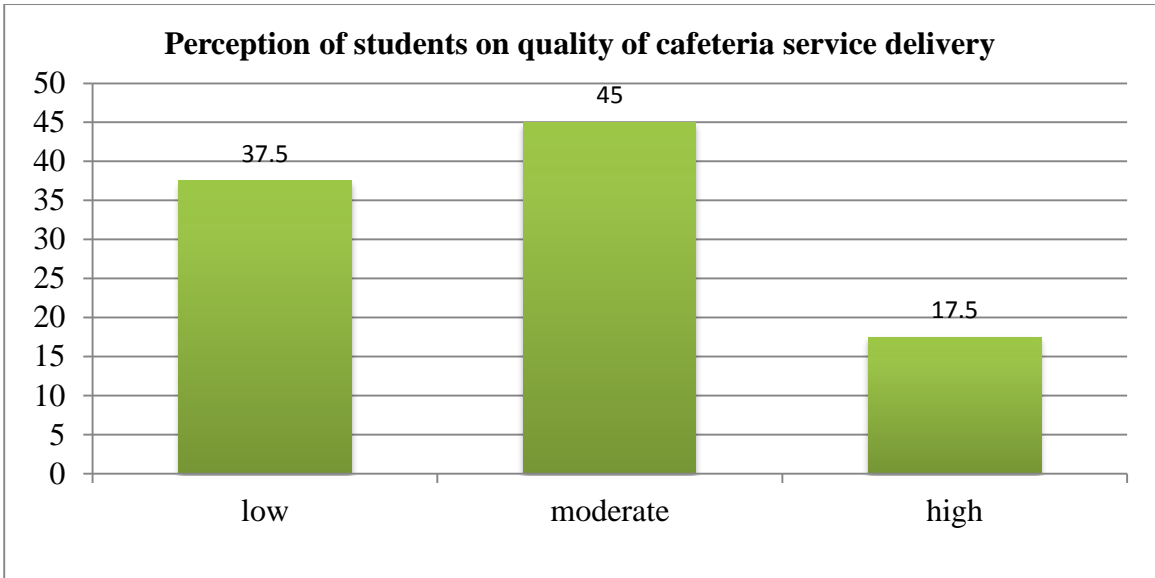
Figure 4.3: Students Perception of the Quality of Service Delivery at College Cafeteria

In another aspect, the study explored if quantity of food that the cafeteria was providing was meeting their expectations. Therefore, based on quantity of the food that they were getting from the service provider, 60% of the respondents indicated that the quantity of the food that the cafeteria was providing in the serving table was not adequate, whereas only 40% of the students indicated that the quantity was very sufficient. Figure 4.4 provides details.

Perception on sub-standard quantity of food served in the cafeteria

Figure 4.4: Unsatisfactory Quantity of Food Served in the Cafeteria

4.1.4 Perception of the Sanitation among the Students of the College Environment after Out-sourcing of the Cleaning Services

In the study, it was found that, the state of sanitation around the campus was checked using a number of indicators, such as cleanliness of the toilets, classrooms, hostels, if the students had residential status, environmental cleanliness in the area of botanies, litters around the campus premises, and the availability of dust bins.
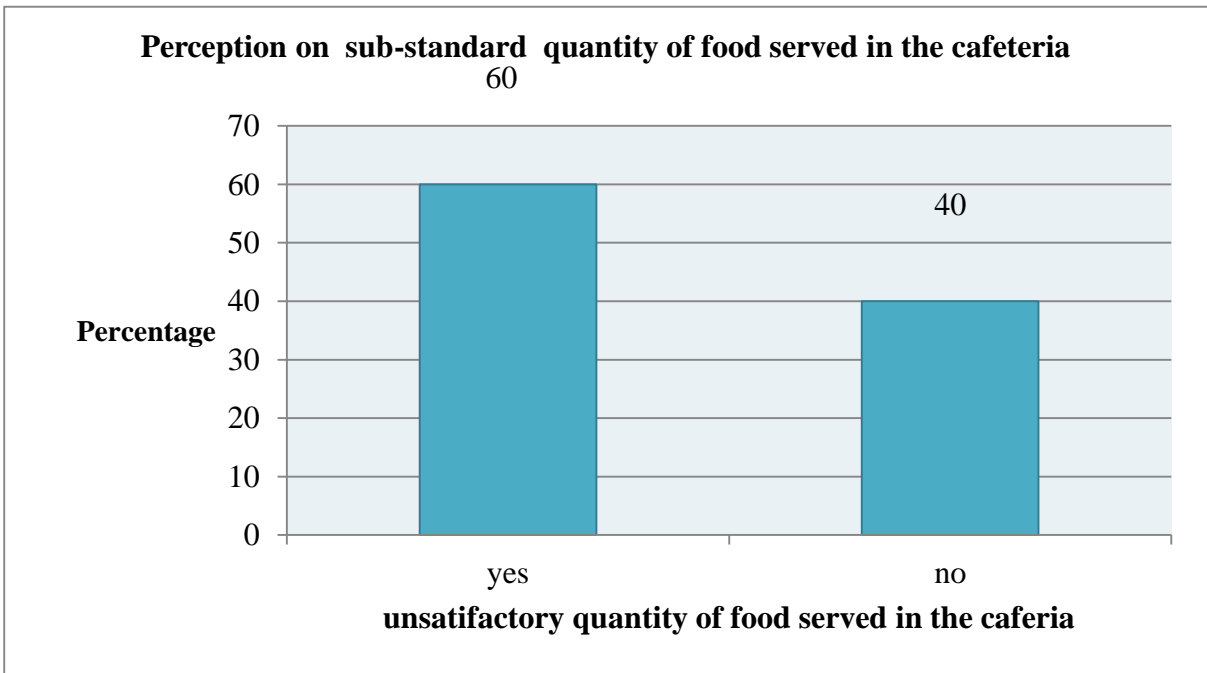
Therefore, based on these factors, a derived sanitation composite variable found that a majority of the students at the college (55%) reported to be moderately satisfied with the quality of sanitation within the premises of the college. However, it was also found that 13.75% of the respondents indicated that they were not satisfied with the quality of sanitation at the premises following the laying- off of the permanent cleaners who operated as support staff within the College and their replacement by staff from out-sourced firms. Furthermore, the study found that about a third, 31.25%, of the students who participated in the study, reported that the state of sanitation within the College infrastructure and premise was satisfactory following the implementation of the out-sourcing policy within the College with cleaning services taken by the external service providers for cleaning services. Figure 4.5 presents more details.
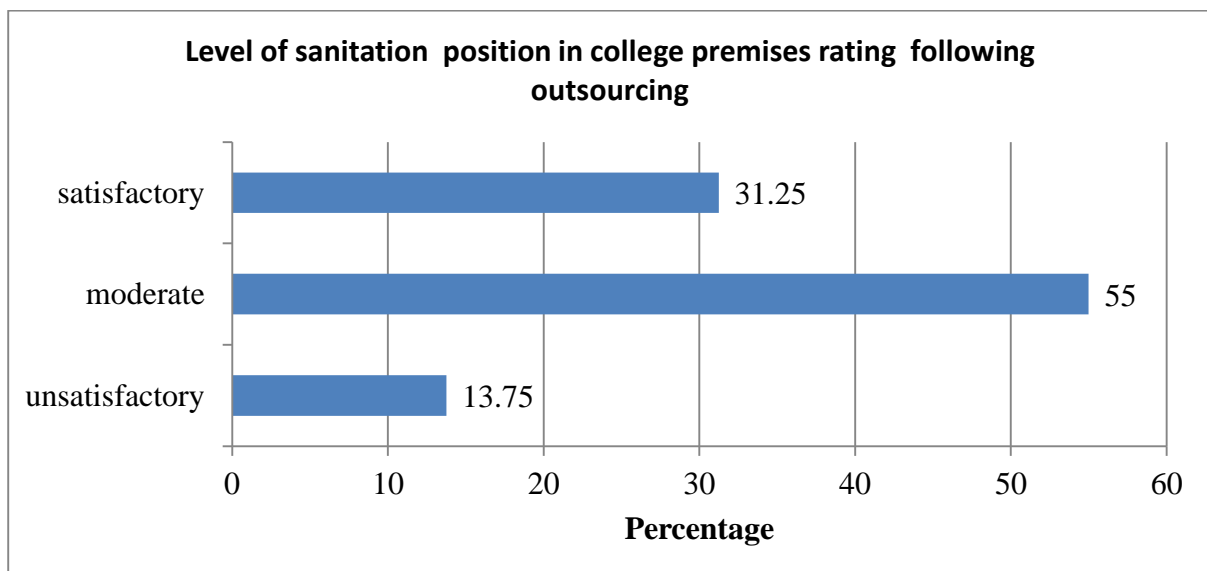

Figure 4.5: Sanitation Premise Score among the Students on the College Environment after Cleaning Services Outsourcing at the College.

4.2. Bivariate analysis: Chi-square Test of Association between Independent Variables and Dependent Variable (Learning Adequacy)

In this study, a bivariate analysis was performed in which the independent variable under study was tested to assess the degree of association with the outcome variable using Chi-square test of association. Table 4.2 presents the results of distribution of the socio-demographic and outsourcing service factors in relation to the performance of the students.

The study found that 59.1% of the students aged 20 years or higher indicated that their leaning environment was affected due to outsourcing services, whereas 40.9% who responded in the same way were aged less than 20 years. Furthermore, based on the Chi-square test of association, the study found that student age was an insignificant association in influencing students' environment towards achieving their performance goals (Chi-square= 0.67; $p > 0.1$). With regards to year of study, 38.6% of the students that indicated that they outsourcing of the facilities within the college affected their learning environment, were studying in year 2. Additionally, about 31.8% of the students who had the same perspectives were studying year 3. Similarly, after outsourcing of the services it was observed that year of study in relation to the performance of the students associated insignificantly. On the same note, outsourcing of the cafeteria and cleaning services at Polytechnic affected the students that were doing education and media related programmes (25%). Additionally, it was observed that outsourcing of these facilities affected the students that were doing applied sciences degrees. Therefore, in terms of the measure of association between the students' performance, the study found that there was a significant association on student performance across faculties after implementation of the outsourcing policy at Polytechnic (Chi-square $=1.98$; $P<0.1$).

In as far as services at the cafeteria were concerned, it was observed that quality of food that the cafeteria was serving and its relation to students' performance had a varying outcome. For instance, 50 % of the students indicated that low quality of food that is served at the College cafeteria after the implementation of the outsourcing policy, affected their performance. In the same way, it was found that 29.6% of the respondents reported that outsourcing of the cafeteria did affect their performance moderately in as far as the quality of food served by the service provider was concerned. Further to this, the study found quality of food served to have a perfect significant association on performance of the students following the implementation of the outsourcing policy at the College (Chi-square= 1.77; $p<0.05$). Correspondingly, the study

found that only 9.1% of the students indicated that their performance is affected despite high quality of service delivery after the implementation of the outsourcing policies. The study also found that low and medium quality of services had a significant influence on student performance after the implementation of the outsourcing policy at the College by 45.5% and 45.6%, respectively, (Chi-square $=5.70$; $p < 0.1$).

Table 4.2 Bivariate Analysis Outcome of the Factors Related to Performance and Learning Environment among the Students at Polytechnic in Out-sourcing Environment.

	Performance and Learning environment after Outsourcing			
	No	Yes	Chi-square	p-value
	N(%)	N(%)		
Socio-demographic factors				
Age of student				
20 or higher	18(50)	25(59.1)	0.67	p>0.1
15-19	18(50)	18(40.9)		
Year of study				
4	8(22.2)	4(9.1)	3.12	p>0.1
1	8(22.2)	9(20.5)		
2	12 (33.3)	17(38.6)		
3	8(22.2)	14(31.8)		
Respondents' faculty				
Applied Sciences	12(33.3)	9(20.5)	1.98	p<0.1
Commerce	5(13.9)	8(18.2)		
Engineering	5(13.9)	8(18.2)		
Built Environment	7(19.4)	8(18.2)		
Education And Media	7(19.4)	11(25)		

Out-Sourced Cafeteria services

Quality of food served				
Low	13(36.1)	22(50)	1.77	p<0.05
Medium	15(41.7)	13(29.6)		
High	8(22.2)	9(20.5)		
Quality of services				
Low	10(27.8)	20(45.5)	5.70	p<0.1
Medium	16(44.4)	20(45.6)		
High	10(27.8)	4(9.1)		
Food content satisfaction				
Yes (R)	22 (61.1)	26(59.1)	0.04	p>0.1
No	14(38.9)	18(40.9)		
Sanitation service satisfaction				
Low (R)	8(22.2)	3(6.8)	4.8	p<0.1
Moderate	16(44.4)	28(63.6)		
High	12(33.3)	13(29.6)		
Number of Observations	**36(100)**	**44(100)**		
Note: **p<0.05; *** P<0.001; *p<0.1				

In terms of food quantity, it was observed that 59.1% of the students had their academic environment and their performance affected due to unsatisfying quantities of food that they were served from the cafeteria. In the same way, the measure of association between the variables indicates that quantity of the food served to the students, had an insignificant influence on their performance learning environment at Polytechnic (Chi-square= 0.04, p > 0.1).

In as far as sanitation was concerned the study found that 63.6% of the respondents indicated that sanitation had a moderate impact in affecting their learning environment and, subsequently, their performance. Likewise, it was found that 29.6% of the students indicated a high satisfaction with the sanitation quality provided by the outsourced service providers and that this had an impact on their learning environment and performance. The measure of association between the variable indicates that sanitation had a significant impact to influence the learning environment of the students (Chi-square = 4.8, p <0.1).

Therefore, based on the bivariate results and Chi-square test of association, the study found that quality of food served in the cafeteria, quality of services rendered within the cafeteria premises, and perspectives with regards to the sanitary environment following the implementation of the out-sourcing policy at Polytechnic, a constituent college of the University of Malawi, did affect the learning environment of the students significantly.

4.3 Logistics Regression Estimates on the Factors Influencing Learning Environment and Performance of the Students following Outsourcing.

The study further explored using the logistic regression technique factors predicting learning performance of the students following implementation of the outsourcing policies at the Polytechnic. Table 4.3 provides the detailed information.

The logistic regression results shows that students who were doing engineering and commerce were more likely to have their learning environment and performance significantly affected following implementation of the outsourcing policy at the Polytechnic. (OR=6.65; 95%CI [0.9-48.9]; p<0.1) and (OR= 5.01; 95%CI [0.85-29.37]; p < 0.1) respectively. On the same, it was found that it was less likely that the performance of the students would significantly be affected by the quality of food served at the College cafeteria after the implementation of the outsourcing services since it was of moderate quality, compared to their counterparts who indicated that the services were of low quality (OR=0.1; 95%CI[0.02-0.63], p<0.05).

The logistic regression outcome further found that students that reported to have received medium quality of services were less likely to have their learning environment and performance significantly affected as a result of the services rendered by the outsourced service providers compared to their counterparts who were given low quality of services in the cafeteria

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(OR=0.28;95% CI [0.07-1.11]; p <0.1).It was also observed that high quality of services delivery from the cafeteria, was associated with a decreased likelihood of the students learning environment being affected following the implementation of the outsourcing policy at Polytechnic, relative to their counterparts who indicated that they experienced low quality of service delivery (OR=0.08, 95% CI [0.01-0.5], p < 0.05). Table 4.3 illustrates the details.

Table 4.3: Logistic regression results socio-demography, outsourcing of services on student performance

	Odds Ratio (OR)	P>z	[95% Conf.	Interval]
Age of student				
20 or higher®	1.00			
15-19	2.44	0.14	0.74	8.01
Year of study				
4 (R)	1.00			
1	0.84	0.85	0.14	5.10
2	1.38	0.69	0.28	6.96
3	3.21	0.19	0.56	18.40
respondents' faculty				
Applied Sciences ®	1.00			
Commerce	5.01*	0.07	0.85	29.37
Engineering	6.65*	0.06	0.90	48.83
Built Environment	4.36	0.13	0.64	29.91
Education And Media	2.30	0.29	0.49	10.83
Out-sourced Cafeteria services				
Quality of food served				

Low ®	1.00			
Medium	0.10**	0.01	0.02	0.63
High	0.70	0.63	0.17	2.95
Quality of services				
Low®	1.00			
Medium	0.28*	0.07	0.07	1.11
High	0.08**	0.01	0.01	0.50
Food content satisfaction				
Yes (R)	1.00			
No	0.74	0.63	0.22	2.50
Sanitation service satisfaction				
No ®	1.00			
Yes	1.15	0.74	0.52	2.54
Note: ***p<0.001; **p<0.05 and *p<0.1; R = Reference category				

4.4   Discussion of the Study Findings

The study anticipated to find out the impact of outsourcing on tertiary students' learning environment in Malawi based on the perspective of Polytechnic, a constituent college of the University of Malawi. Based on the data that was collected through a questionnaire which was administered, the variation exists in as far as the impact of outsourcing of the services in influencing the students' learning environment.

For instance, the study found out that outsourcing of the services and considering the responses from students by their ages, the learning environment was insignificantly influenced. A study by Lizzio et al. (2010), however, found out a contrary perspective in that socio-demographic difference of the communities, more especially in school settings, has a better impetus of improving students' performance. This, however, also depended on the socio-economic

attributes of the learners. (Osman, Eslam, & Fathy, 2016). This development creates an environment that is more peculiar to each learner and, may, in the long term increase their level of performance (UNESCO, 2014).

On the contrary, the study found that students' performance across the faculties after implementation of outsourcing of services such as cafeteria and cleaning had a significant impact on the learners work space, and this affected their performance. The findings support an earlier argument that found that in Brazil if the outsourcing services are core and well supported despite the nature and value of the contract, it enhances not only the performance of the learners but also other stakeholders within the school settings (Ken,2012).

In another aspect, as quality of food served within the schools has been associated with a significant effect on the learners' performance (Sawka*et.al.,* 2015),the current study found that implementation of the outsourcing policy in the cafeteria by the College had a significant impact on the learners performance as their environment was appreciated greatly. The findings concurs with what the Centre for Disease Control (CDC) found that in most school setups, food borne diseases might be on the increase if the institutions do not have proper measures of ensuring that quality of food given to students is satisfied. As such, if good food is given to people in community settings, they have a better way of developing and achieving their goals as the environment that they are operating in becomes quite stable to support their developmental agenda. In the same way, another study found that better quality food given to students implies better performance of the students in an outsourcing environment (Sawka *et al*., 2015).

Similarly, it was observed that in times when quality of services offered by the contracted institutions degrades, it has a significant effect on the learners' environment and, thereby, affects their performance. .Furthermore, the study concurs with a study by Shaw and Nirvi (2011) who argued that low quality standards in food services delivery among students does have a bearing on their performance and, thereby, learning environments.

Furthermore, it is worth noting that sanitation of the environment following an outsourcing of the contract had had a significant effect in influencing the learning environment. At times, lower standards of sanitation within the school environment, is partly due to the desire to make more profits by the contracted firms who often times are not audited (Ree and Filder, 1992).

These developments result in the organisations lacking the credibility to meet the service- level agreement that was duly signed at the beginning of the contract. The call for improved service delivery could only be ascertained if and only if the institution devises a measure to ensure service audit is taking place in order to improve quality of service delivery by the contracted firm.

4.5 Summary of the Chapter

In the chapter, the factors affecting the learning environment of students after the outsourcing of services such as cleaning services and cafeteria services was presented. In the succeeding chapter, the study presents the conclusions and recommendations based on the study findings.

CHAPTER FIVE

CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

5.1   Introduction

The study anticipated to explore the impact of outsourcing of services within the tertiary institutions and its effect on the learning environment of the students at the Polytechnic, a constituent college of the University of Malawi. In this chapter, the conclusion and recommendations, which were drawn in trying to answer the research questions, are presented.

5.2   Conclusions

In trying to answer the research questions, an outline of the conclusion for each objective is presented below:

i.   According to the study findings, age variation and year of study across faculties is not influencing the learning environment of the students after implementation of outsourcing services at the Polytechnic. This finding satisfies the first research objective and also answers the first research question.

ii.   In as far as faculty of study is concerned, the study found that outsourcing implementation at Polytechnic along the faculty that the students belong to significantly affect their learning environment. This finding again satisfies my curiosity in the first research objective and also answers the first research question as well.

iii.   On the services delivery, with regards to the quality of food in the cafeteria, the study found that implementation of the outsourcing policy within the cafeteria, affected the learning environment of the students significantly. This study result responds well to the second objective and also answers the second research question.

iv.   After implementation of the outsourcing policy, quality of services, in terms of cleaning and sanitation that the service providers render to the College, have a significant effect on influencing the learning environment of the students at the Polytechnic. This finding responds to the third objective and also answers the third research question. The major lessons that I have noted from the study are that, if properly managed, outsourcing can assist the institution to streamline its operations and attain a competitive advantage. This is more so because the institution will direct most of its financial and human resources towards the provision of its core activities as the other non-core activities will be supported by the contracted service providers. This then entails the institution

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producing better products in terms of graduates and innovations. This relates well with the Resource Based Theory as well as the Service Contracting Theory adopted in the study. The other lesson is that where the contracted service providers are properly monitored and that there is constant audits on how they are doing their work and ensuring that they are proving a good environment in terms of cleanliness and sanitation as well as good quality of food and ancillary services, it will have a positive impact on the students and thereby assist in improving their performance. This relates well with the Implicit Theory of Intelligence which has also been adopted in this study.

5.3.   Recommendations and Policy Implications

Based on the results of the current study, several recommendations can be drawn from the study in as far as outsourcing at tertiary education institutions of the type of Polytechnic.

i.   There is need for College management to monitor service operations that the contracted firms give to the institution if the services are to improve and, in the long term, improve the learning environment within the College.

ii.   There is need for government to have task forces that will assist in auditing all the contracted firms within the institutions that are public in nature in order to ensure that whatever contract is given to provide services to the institutions is complementing very well to the government's efforts in fostering financial prudence, quality of services and sanitary conditions across institutions other than the universities.

5.4   Further Research Directions

There is need to explore all the outsourcing services in public and parastatal institutions in order to understand the contribution of the services on the performance of the communities within the firms. This is significant in the future provision of the contract services and thereby improved work environmental conditions.

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Appendix 1*: **QUESTIONNAIRE**

DISCLAIMER:

This questionnaire is used to collect data in order to assess the condition of the services rendered by the contracted firms and perspectives of the students with re*gards to the impact of the services towards their learning environment. The information that is collected in this questionnaire will be used for academic purposes only and do not disclose your name to the data collector and feel free to reject your participation in this data collection process. The information collected will be analysed and be use for a Master of Business Administration degree tenable at the Polytechnic, Blantyre.*

Section One

Socio-demographic characteristics

1)   Age of the respondent

a)   20 >   [ ]

b)   15-19   [ ]

2)   year of study

a)   year one   [ ]

b)   year two   [ ]

c)   year three   [ ]

d   year four   [ ]

e)   year five   [ ]

3)   Faculty of study

	Tick
1. Applied Sciences	
2. Commerce	
3. Engineering	
4. Built Environment	
5. Education And Media	

Section Two

4)   Quality of food served

At the Polytechnic the quality of food served by the outsourced service providers is:

3= "Low"

2="Medium"

1="High"

5)   Quality of cleaning services provided

At the Polytechnic the quality of cleaning services provided is:

3= "Low"

2="Medium"

3="High"

6)   **Sanitation service satisfaction:** *use the code to tick your preference[one tick per point.]*

1 =strongly agree

2 = agree

3 = neutral

4 = disagree

5 = strongly disagree

At the Polytechnic, because of outsourcing:

a) The Sanitary environment has improved   1 [ ]   2 [ ]   3 [ ]   4 [ ]   5 [ ]

b) Classrooms are always cleaned in time   1 [ ]   2 [ ]   3 [ ]   4 [ ]   5 [ ]

c) Toilets are clean all the time   1 [ ]   2 [ ]   3 [ ]   4 [ ]   5 [ ]

d) The environment outside the college buildings is not hazardous   1 [ ] 2 [ ] 3 [ ] 4 [ ] 5 [ ]

Section 3

7) Outsourcin*g impact on learners environment*: *use the code to tick your preference[one tick per point.]*

1 = strongly agree

2 = agree

3 = neutral

4 = disagree

5 = strongly disagree

With the outsourcing of services at the Polytechnic	

a) learning environment has improved   1 [ ] 2 [ ] 3 [ ] 4 [ ] 5 [ ]

b) I pass without any challenge   1 [ ] 2 [ ] 3 [ ] 4 [ ] 5 [ ]

c) Quality of food provided does not affect my studies   1 [ ] 2 [ ] 3 [ ] 4 [ ] 5 [ ]

d) Outside environment perimeter has improved my concentration of studies asit is not hazardous   1 [ ] 2 [ ] 3 [ ] 4 [ ] 5 [ ]

e) Outsourced services have no impact on my education progress

1 [ ] 2 [ ] 3 [ ] 4 [ ] 5 [ ]

THE END

THANK YOU FOR YOUR TIME

wsk.

Appendix 2: Letter of consent.

THE POLYTECHNIC

PRINCIPAL
Professor Grant Kululanga, PhD. Eng., MSc. Eng., BSc. Eng., MASCE

Our Ref.: 34/F/2

Your Ref:

Date: 22nd December 2016

Please address all correspondence to the Principal
The Malawi Polytechnic
Private Bag 303
Chichiri
Blantyre 3
MALAWI
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TO WHOM IT MAY CONCERN

ASSISTANCE TO CARRY OUT AN ACADEMIC RESEARCH FOR MBA DISSERTATION: MR WILLARD KAMANYA

I write to certify that **Mr W Kamanya** is a University of Malawi Postgraduate student who is pursuing a Master of Business Administration Degree course at the Polytechnic.

One of the important requirements of this degree programme is that students carry out research project known as dissertation in the final semester. This introduces the student to the methodology of research, the systematic analysis of ideas, the problems of data collection and the presentation of ideas in a clear and coherent way. *Mr Kamanya* is currently working on his MBA dissertation titled *"Impact of Outsourcing Practices on Tertiary Students' Learning Environment: The Student Perspective at University of Malawi, the Polytechnic"*.

I am therefore writing to ask for your kind assistance in allowing **Mr Kamanya** access to carry out his research in your organization and help him with any information/literature that your organization may have on the topic of his dissertation.

Your assistance in this matter will be of greatest importance and highly appreciated and any information that may be provided will be treated with utmost confidentiality.

Yours faithfully

ALICK KAUMBA (MR)
HEAD, MANAGEMENT STUDIES DEPARTMENT

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