DURBAN UNIVERSITY OF TECHNOLOGY

Measuring customer satisfaction in restaurants in East London, South Africa

By

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A thesis submitted in fulfilment of the requirements for the degree of

Master of Technology

in the

Department of Tourism and Hospitality

Faculty of Management Sciences

at the

Durban University of Technology

Approved for examination.

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ABSTRACT

A mixed-methods research design was followed throughout this study. The primary focus of this study was to determine customer satisfaction through mixed (qualitative and quantitative) methods. Questionnaires for gathering quantitative primary data as well as collecting qualitative data by means of FGDs and semi-structured interviews. Primary data analysis throughout this study involved the descriptive as well as the inferential during the analysis of variance (ANOVA) and independent t-test. These tools aided the quantitative analysis that were applied to analyse the null hypotheses. Other statistical tools namely the means, standard deviation, Cronbach's alpha, ANOVA were performed to identify differences between various demographics characteristics for in-depth interpretations. The views of restaurateurs' customers and managers were explored through 235 customers of twelve (12) restaurants Buffalo City Metropolitan Municipality where participants successfully completed questionnaires and participated in FGDs and interviews. The study revealed high prevalence of female in restaurants industries. Majority of participants obtained tertiary degree as educational qualifications. Statistical tools of ANOVA and t-test were employed to test three null hypotheses. Inferential results revealed that participants in restaurants I were less satisfied as compared to others in restaurants E. Based on the statistical findings the initial hypothesis was rejected while the second indicated that monthly income has no effect on customer satisfaction. The independent t-test was employed to test the third hypothesis which indicated no significant relationship between the female and male participants.

Keywords: Mixed-methods, Customer satisfaction, Ambience factors, The Restaurant industry.

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

- Many people say things about me, but I am still here, and I am still going, I had my ups and downs, I had my struggles, the key is focus, a willingness not to be distracted. Off course, for me none of this will be possible without Jehovah God giving me strength to do what I do every day and for waking me up every day. Without uncertainty, the credit goes to God, who has, throughout my life, provided me with wonderful opportunities to learn, grow and make an impact on others.

- I dedicate this work to Nazareth God, to my son Owam, for giving me a complete purpose in life, for being my reasons to live and my reasons for striving for a better tomorrow.

- Moreover, special thanks are dedicated to my Mother and Father for embedding in me the love for education, which has taken me thus far.

- To my supervisor, Dr Albert Tchey Agbenyegah, for all the support, growing guidance and patience. Your wisdom, knowledge and experience have been a pillar of strength throughout this study. A true academic who holds hands to greatest achievements!

- The Durban University of Technology, KZN, for the financial assistance to complete this study and for the ample resources afforded to me. DUT I am forever thankful.

- To Walter Sisulu University in the Eastern Cape Province, specifically the Research Department for the financial assistance to complete this study and for the ample resources afforded to me.

- To all my family, colleagues, students and friends, especially Prof Dinesh Vallabh, Dr Vikelwa Nomnga, Dr Siyabonga Mxunyelwa, Dr Oswald Mhlanga and Mr Lwazi Apleni for all the support and encouragement. I salute you guys.

- Finally, to my sisters, brothers, nephews and cousins, for all the support and encouragement. Without you this would not have been possible.

DECLARATION

I, the undersigned, certify that:

- I am familiar with the rules regulating higher qualifications at the Durban University of Technology (DUT), and understand that DUT will deal with violations of ethical practice in my research;

- Where I have used the work of others, to my knowledge, this has been correctly referenced in the study and again referenced in the bibliography. Any research of a similar nature that has been used in the development of my research project is also referenced;
- This project has not been submitted to any other educational institution for the purpose of qualification;
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GLOSSARY OF ACRONYMS

ACRONYM	**DESCRIPTION**
ANOVA	Analysis of Variance
AU	Australia
BCM	Buffalo City Municipality
EC	Eastern Cape
ECP	Eastern Cape Province
EL	East London
GDP	Gross Domestic Product
LED	Local Economic Development
RSA	Republic of South Africa
SA	South Africa
SPSS	Statistical Package for the Social Sciences
CATHSSETA	The Culture, Art, Tourism, Hospitality, and Sport Sector Education and Training Authority
USA	United States of America

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CHAPTER ONE
NATURE AND SCOPE OF THE STUDY

1.1 INTRODUCTION

Dining in the restaurant industry has faced challenges during the past decade due to refined and advanced trends in the field (Heung & Gu, 2012). According to Grobbelaar (2008), people "are increasingly frequenting restaurants for the service provided first and for the food served second". Barsky and Nash (2003) state that it is essential to understand what satisfies customers as it has an impact on what they purchase. Apart from revenue, customers also "provide predictability, security and enjoyment for those involved in the business" (Kivela, Inbakaran & Reece, 2000).

The provision of food has been the focus of restaurants, even though customers are attracted to services more than food (Soriano, 2002). Thus, the frequency of customers is determined by the service they receive before they are served the food (Grobbelaar, 2008). Reynolds and Biel (2007) state that even though good food attracts customers, this only forms a part of the restaurant experience. Thus, for customers, although sometimes driven by hunger, eating out at restaurants might be for social contact and status in society, and to satisfy their curiosity (Iglesias & Guillén, 2004). Essentials such as cleanliness, music and lighting largely contribute to determining the satisfaction of the diners (Grobbelaar, 2008; Ladhari *et al*., 2008).

Quan and Wang (2004) and Hu (2009) point out that it has become more and more challenging to satisfy customers at food provision outlets due to an increase demand for a high standard of food quality. Challenges such as an increase in food and labour costs have resulted in smaller profits, which further compromise the stringent legal requirements that restaurant managers need to adhere to (Hu, 2009). Apart from that, there is fierce competition in the food provision market (Enz, 2004; Hu, 2009). The particulars of customers' expectations challenge the restaurateur to predict the reaction of customers to their experience (Pantelidis, 2010).

1.2 BACKGROUND TO THE STUDY

The literature reveals that it is strategically vital for restaurateurs to have knowledge about what satisfies their clients (Söderlund & Öhman, 2005). Customer satisfaction directly affects the financial functioning and running of the business for growth, sustainability and development (Chi & Gursoy, 2009). In addition, Soriano (2002) and Iglesias and Guillén (2004) argue that satisfaction also influences positive word-of-mouth communication.

Customer dissatisfaction negatively affects a business (Reynolds & Biel, 2007). Dissatisfied customers, in most cases, will not advise other potential customers to visit the restaurant; instead, they will bad mouth it (Wong, 2004). Thus, potential customers will avoid the particular restaurant, affecting its reputation with repeating and frequent customers (Andaleeb & Conway, 2006; Soriano, 2002). Mueller, Palmer, Mack and McMullan (2003) are of the view that national culture plays a pivotal role in customer satisfaction. Findings regarding customer satisfaction were applied to the South African national culture. As it is challenging to manage intangible service, it is of paramount importance to explore customer satisfaction.

1.3 PROBLEM STATEMENT

Over the years, the restaurant industry has shown growth and development as a sector. However, there has been a high failure rate within the restaurant sector due to poor customer satisfaction (Mhlanga, 2018). Some 60% of restaurants fail within the first three years of operation (Statistics South Africa, 2017). Mhlanga (2018) opines that the failure rate is so high in South Africa (SA) because there is limited research that focuses on customer service in the restaurant sector. Scholars such as Namkung and Jang (2008) have long deliberated about why there is such a high failure rate nationally.

Khalilzadeh, Rajabi and Jahromi (2013) recognize restaurateurs' incapacity to meet or satisfy their diners' service standards as one of the key reasons for the high failure rate. Despite mechanisms like lowering prices, and marketing strategies and promotions, the challenge of satisfying the customers remains (Ryu, Lee & Kim, 2012). It is significant to explore what satisfies customers in diner places. There have been limited studies regarding customer satisfaction in South Africa, while international studies might not be applicable to this study. Therefore, this research seeks to investigate the causes of failure among the restaurants in East

London (EL) The findings of the study could assist the restaurants with measures to increase service standards and improve their general performance. There has been tremendous growth in research into restaurant customer satisfaction internationally

1.4 AIM AND OBJECTIVES

This study aims to determine customer satisfaction in restaurants in East London in the Eastern Cape (EC) Province of South Africa. To ensure the above aim is achieved the following objectives are set below.

- To examine food and beverage factors that determine customer satisfaction in restaurants in East London
- To identify service factors that determine customer satisfaction in East London
- To explore ambience factors that contribute to customer satisfaction in restaurants in East London

1.5 RESEARCH QUESTIONS

- What are the food and beverage factors that determine customer satisfaction in East London restaurants?
- What service factors determine customer satisfaction in East London restaurants?
- What ambience factors contribute to customer satisfaction in East London restaurants?

1.6 RESEARCH HYPOTHESES

$H1_N$: Food and beverage factors do not determine customer satisfaction in restaurants in East London

$H2_N$: Service factors do not contribute to customer satisfaction in restaurants in East London

$H3_N$: Ambience factors do not contribute to customer satisfaction in restaurants in East London.

1.7 DEFINING KEY CONCEPTS

- Restaurant

A trade which makes and serves edible foodstuff and beverages to consumers in exchange for cash, tendered before eating, after eating, or using an open account (Mealey, 2010).

- Customer

Service is equal parts communication and genuine attention to your diners, vendor or supplier via a financial transaction or in exchange for money or some other valuable consideration (Kendall, 2007).

- Customer service

The tangible or intangible value increasing activities that relates to products or services, directly or indirectly, to meet customer expectations and so provide customer satisfaction and loyalty (Kursunluoglu, 2011).

- Customer satisfaction

Meeting the expectations of the customers in terms of parameters associated with satisfaction (Awara & Anyadighibe, 2014).

1.8 RATIONALE OF THE STUDY

This study focuses on customer satisfaction in restaurants as part of the hospitality and tourism industry. Over the years, the restaurant businesses have become common as part of households recreational and entertainment industry. In spite of its significance, not much empirical study has been conducted in the area of restaurants in East London. The restaurants businesses have been clearly left unnoticed despite its contributions to job creation. The primary reason could possibly be that the provincial government focus on mainstream hospitality and tourism industries as the primary economic strategy. In addition, there is growing concern that the restaurant businesses are unable to generate profit which result to business failures (Mhlanga, 2018).

In line with the provincial government objective of local economic development (LED) and job creation initiatives, this empirical study is relevant since it highlights reasons for restaurant business failures. Again, the study is very significant because it outlines the challenges of the restaurant businesses in East London. Another further point is that the final empirical findings will be of great value not only for the rural economic and also for job creation. Taken the fact that unemployment is on the increase, the restaurant businesses could enhance the basis on which consideration could be given to the sector. This study will add to existing body of knowledge that links to the hospitality and tourism industry and in-depth insights of the restaurant businesses.

1.9 SCOPE OF THE STUDY

This study, however, focuses on a coastal city in South Africa – East London. The scope of this study investigated customer satisfaction in restaurants in East London. The study focuses on the customers of restaurants in East London. Only restaurants listed in East London constitutes the study population. Primary data was collected from regular participants to the restaurants as customers. The selection criterion excluded those who were not customers of the restaurants. The researcher seeks to determine what entails customer satisfaction in the selected restaurants.

1.10 LITERATURE REVIEW

1.10.1 Defining the Restaurant business

The restaurant business is described as one of the essential components of the retail business in South Africa (Anselmsson, 2006). Over the past 10 years South Africa saw tremendous growth in the restaurant businesses (Statistics South Africa, 2009). Several restaurants including Spur, Kentucky Fried Chicken (KFC), McDonalds, Steers, Wimpy and others emerged across the country to serve various communities. The food and beverage industries in South Africa contributed R37360 million to the total income of the country in 2009 (Statistics South Africa, 2012b). Between the period 2010 to 2012, the restaurant industry generated a total income of R125 million (Statistics South Africa, 2012b). Total income generated by the food and beverage sector in the restaurant businesses increased more than 5% in 2014 (Statistic South Africa, 2014).

Empirical study showed that most restaurants form the core elements of the retail sector since it offers recreational and entertainment to the general public (De Nisco & Napolitano, 2006; Anselmsson, 2006). In South Africa, restaurants are categorised as one of the subsectors of the tourism industry (CATHSSETA, 2004). According to the Tourism Satellite Account for 2005 (StatsSA, 2009), the subsector contributed 1.66% to the GDP (contributed by the tourism industry) in South Africa. Moreover, there was an increase in the contributions from R1452-million to R1592-million between September 2009 and September 2010 (StatsSA, 2010).

The growing customer demands for the restaurant businesses in recent past can be linked to the overall shift in households' behaviours. This is because most households' way of life prefers not to spend more time cooking in contrast to eating out (Andaleep & Conway, 2006). The level of changes in household behaviour patterns is prevalent among high-income groups and in the developed countries (Frazão, Maede & Regmi, 2008; Vink, Kirsten & Woermann, 2004).

According to Maumbe (2013), the old South Africans culture of eating at home continue to decrease as majority of households shift to the Western diets due to the surge in globalisation. In developed countries, roughly 50% of consumers eat outside while individuals who are in the high-income groups spend about 47% on food that is prepared outside their homes (Vink et al, 2004; Frazão et al, 2008). In spite of the culture of providing households'' meals, there have been high failure rates of restaurants (Andaleeb & Conway, 2006). According to Parsa, Self, Njite and King (2005), about 30% of the restaurants failed in the first year of operations. Some of the reasons for the restaurants failures was due to the general dissatisfaction of customers (Chi & Gursoy, 2009; Soriano, 2002). Besides, it has become even more difficult to provide enough level of better satisfaction (ENZ, 2004; Hu, 2009).

Customers' satisfaction remains the strategic importance of the restaurant business. Customers who are fully satisfied spend more of their wealth in restaurants country wide. Thus, by satisfying customers the financial wellbeing of the restaurant business improves (Chi & Gursoy, 2009; Barsky & Nash, 2003). Further empirical studies indicate that customer satisfaction in restaurants have reached significant levels (Cheng, 2005; Han, Back & Barrett, 2009). Despite these positive trends in the restaurant sector, roughly 90% of customers' dissatisfaction reached a record high due to the provision of sub-standard service quality (Knutson & Patton, 1995).

1.10.2 Customer satisfaction in restaurants

Restaurants' primary objective is to provide comfort and satisfaction to customers without compromising the operational efficiency of the business (Barlan-Espino, 2017). Customers are important stakeholders in every organisation and their satisfaction is a priority to management (Anifowose & Olaleye, 2016); customer satisfaction is at the heart of marketing (Andaleeb & Conway, 2006). It sums up the value the restaurant provides and delivers. Customers are one of the most valued assets of restaurants (Barlan-Espino, 2017). Therefore, customer satisfaction should be important to restaurant management because it is assumed an important determinant in replicate sales, customer loyalty and positive word of mouth (Anifowose & Olaleye, 2016).

In most cases, satisfaction with services and products is determined by the customers' judgements in comparison to their expectations, and the services provided by a competitive service provider. If the standards are above the customers' expectations, the customers will be highly satisfied. However, if the standards are lower, the dinners will be dissatisfied. Zeithaml and Bitner (2003) therefore argue that if a consumer's satisfaction exceeds their anticipation, the eating encounter is likely to surprise the consumer in a good manner and such a satisfying experience can result in enjoyment. Sariano (2002) is of the view that a consumer will experience gratification mainly when the service provider surpasses their anticipations. Kurtz and Clow (1998) state that if the satisfaction is lower than the anticipated measure of expectation, the consumer might even become annoyed.

1.10.3 Relationships between customer satisfaction and ambient conditions

Customers are business assets because through satisfaction customer establishes boundless culture of loyalty (Rust & Zohoric, 1993). One of the main reasons for establishing business include the availability of customers (Varey, 1995). Several factors including supportive environment, scent and odours are known to promote unique and positive linkages with products or business entities (Mattila & Wirtz, 2001). The study further add that ambient has the edge to show the differences customers attain from various service providers. For instance, several ambient conditions have significant positive and negative impact on individual satisfaction. Lim (2010) suggests that the general conditions within the restaurant creates significant impact on the final customer.

Customers' satisfaction means the final measurement of how products and services by entities meet the final measurement of how products and services meet customers demand (Evans, 2003). Customers' satisfaction entails meeting expectations and considering specific parameters of satisfaction (Malik & Ghaffor, 2012). Parker (2004) further add that customer satisfaction within the environment in restaurants could be due to its closeness and the ability the ability of customers to increase their effort to patronise restaurants. Regardless of customers satisfaction in relation to the general dining experiences by restaurants remains very scanty. Several scientists have shown enough interest in service quality levels as well as individual satisfaction in restaurants for years (Agbor, 2011; Mohammad, Mushchah & Abdulraham, 2012) in sharp contrast to satisfaction due to conditions of ambient. Conditions of ambient entails several background characteristics of restaurants. These conditions include the interior and exterior appearances namely the tempo music, odours, and the highlighting (Zeithmal & Bitner, 2003).

1.10.4 The Food and Beverage Restaurants

In South Africa, the food and beverage sector contribute roughly 195335 employees to the labour market. According to Statistic South Africa (2010), the beverage sector is known to be the largest contributor to the Hospitality Industry country wide. For instance, coffee shops and restaurants add 3% and the catering services contribute 1.9% of employment opportunities to the job market. This sector is rated the second largest contributor to the hospitality industry (George, 2008). Further extant survey states that the food and beverage provide 6.8% of total earnings of the tourism sector South African economy (StatsSA, 2012). However, the food and beverage sector remain very complex because of several establishments namely the hotel restaurants, restaurants, the fast-food outlets, family restaurants and bars (Davis et al, 2008; Ninemrier, 2005).

1.10.5 Determinant of customer satisfaction

Ambiance, price and the quality of products and services are factors that affect customer satisfaction (Barlan-Espino, 2017). Additional scientific literature by Spence, Puccinelli, Grewal and Roggeveen (2014) add that ambient light colour is a primary element that is critical to the visual atsmophere including the size, shape location, colour, brightness of facilities influence customers satisfaction and their state of emotions. Various conditions of pleasant ambience in restaurants enable different dining experience especially to the restaurant public who are mindful of the existing environment (Tan & Yeap, 2001). Growing customer awareness of the atmosphere during dinning is consistent and in line with the feature of the physical settings. Kurtz and Clow (1998) state that factors like cleanliness, the presentation of staff, and the utensils used play a pivotal role in customer satisfaction. Barlan-Espino (2017) argues that restaurant staff should know the importance of maintaining cleanliness and hygiene in the workplace; this should be the first priority. If these requirements are not met, the customers will be dissatisfied. To manage competition and be sustainable in the market, service provision should be the standard that restaurants adhere to (Soriano, 2002).

Studies have indicated that customers are attracted by good ambience; this could lead to them becoming regular customers (Yuksel & Yuksel, 2002). Core products remains the primary offering of the business in return for the prices paid by customers (Barlan-Espino, 2017). Satisfaction can be achieved if there is a combination of excellent service and the features of the product are offered to the customer (Thwala & Slabbert, 2018). Perceptions by individual customers is widely affected by ambient lightening as well as differences in lightening colours. More empirical survey indicates that customers perceptions regarding ambience, satisfaction and the general environment is impacted by a combination of lightening and other elements found in the atmosphere (Ariffin, Bibon & Abdullah, 2017). As such, it can be argued that individuals are likely to react positively to various levels of lightening in the environment based on customers' levels of experiences (Randhawa & Saluja, 2017).

There are several factors affecting food quality: appearance, texture, flavour and taste. Customers have expectations of how the food they order should look in terms of colour, shape and size (Barlan-Espino, 2017). The price of the items on the menu can also greatly influence customers because price could attract or repel customers (Andaleeb & Conway, 2006). If the price is exorbitant, customers are likely to anticipate high quality, or it can encourage a sense of being "ripped off" (Andaleeb & Conway, 2006). Likewise, if the price is not high, clients may question the capability of the restaurant to produce good products and quality service (Andaleeb & Conway, 2006). This study therefore looked at the factors that affect customer satisfaction in restaurants in East London.

1.11 RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

According to Brynard and Hanekom (2005), research tools are determined through which an endeavour is designed to achieve solutions to the research questions in order to solve the research problems through systematic ways aided by variables facts. On the other hand, Welman, Kruger and Mitchell (2005) argue that every study requires diverse measurements and techniques to attain information.

This study employed mixed methods (qualitative and quantitative) to ensure that field information attained is not only objective but also correct. Through the application of qualitative methodology, the researcher was able to ascertain an in-depth reflection of customer satisfaction in restaurants in East London. Furthermore, the researcher was able to perform accurate measurement of customers' satisfaction through the quantitative approach using the research questionnaires. For qualitative data, the interview schedule was used to source interview the participants.

1.11.1 Target population

According to Kumar (2014), as the researcher narrow down the research problem, he/she needs to determine precisely who make up the target population, so as to choose the suitable respondents. The target population of this research involved all the customers of East London restaurants. A checklist of locally registered restaurants was acquired from the Buffalo City Metropolitan (BCM) Municipality, as well as from the restaurant directories of South Africa. There were 44 registered restaurants in East London at the time of this research. As such, the researcher used all the customers of the restaurants in gathering the data. The exact number was determined based on the cluster sampling tool. The restaurants used in the survey were chosen according to the formality of the service offered to customers and in particular food and beverages they provide to the restaurant owners in East London. All the customers who visited these restaurants formed the research population as described. Figure 1.1 on the following page depicts the location of the research where the restaurants owners and the customers were selected to participate in the study. The target population of 44 restaurants were chosen from East London.

1.11.2 Sampling

Sampling refers to the selection of a stipulated number of elements from a demarcated populace in order to represent the main population (Pandey & Pandey, 2015). This study utilised a sampling method to ensure the sample was the true reflection and represents the study population. Out of the target population of 44 registered restaurants only 12 restaurants were sampled through non-probability sampling method of cluster technique was used to provide qualitative data. In total 235 customers from the 12 sampled restaurants provided quantitative data. Figure 1.1 below depicts the study setting where the restaurants and participants were selected to provide primary data.

1.11.3 The study area

The present study is based in the Eastern Cape Province (ECP) which is the second largest province countrywide. Geographically, ECP is bordered by the Indian Ocean that is referred to as sub-tropical coastal belt climate in the West by the Karoo semi-desert and the East Coastal belt. The ECP consists of municipalities namely six separate districts divided into thirty-eight local municipalities excluding one metropolitan, the Nelson Mandela Metro. The general population of the province relies mainly on agricultural activities. Being second largest province in South Africa, the ECP is centred between two of the most major economic provinces namely the Western and KwaZulu Natal Provinces with two economic hubs of Buffalo City and Port Elizabeth. Besides, the Drakensburg region near Elliot also add to the existing tourist attractions. Table 1.1 depicts the map of the study area.

Figure 1.1: Map of the study area from which the restaurants were selected

Source: www.municipalities.co.za

1.11.4 Sample size

In quantitative research statistic-based procedures are used to create research sample size while qualitative research continues to be the primary topic of long-term debates (Sandelowski, 1995; Morse, 2000). This qualitative research used sample size based on number of participants for data provisioning to saturation (De Vos, 1998). This study used 12 restaurants out of 44 registered businesses and a selection of 235 customers to provide qualitative and quantitative data. The researcher made the decision to discontinue the process once saturation is reached in contrast to larger sample used in quantitative study.

1.11.5 Study limitations

This study is limited to restaurants in East London in the Eastern Cape Province of South Africa. The central focus of the study is on customer satisfaction in terms of food and beverages and ambience supply by owner-managers of restaurants. The final outcomes of this study cannot be generalised to include other restaurants country-wide.

1.12 Pilot study

A pilot study is an exceptional method to establish the practicability of a research so as to examine certain process, data collection tools, or analysing techniques (Leedy & Ormrod, 2013). Two different measurement tools such as the questionnaire and the interview schedule were piloted for the implementation of changes prior to distribution and to weigh the benefits in contrast to disadvantages (Greenfield, 2002).

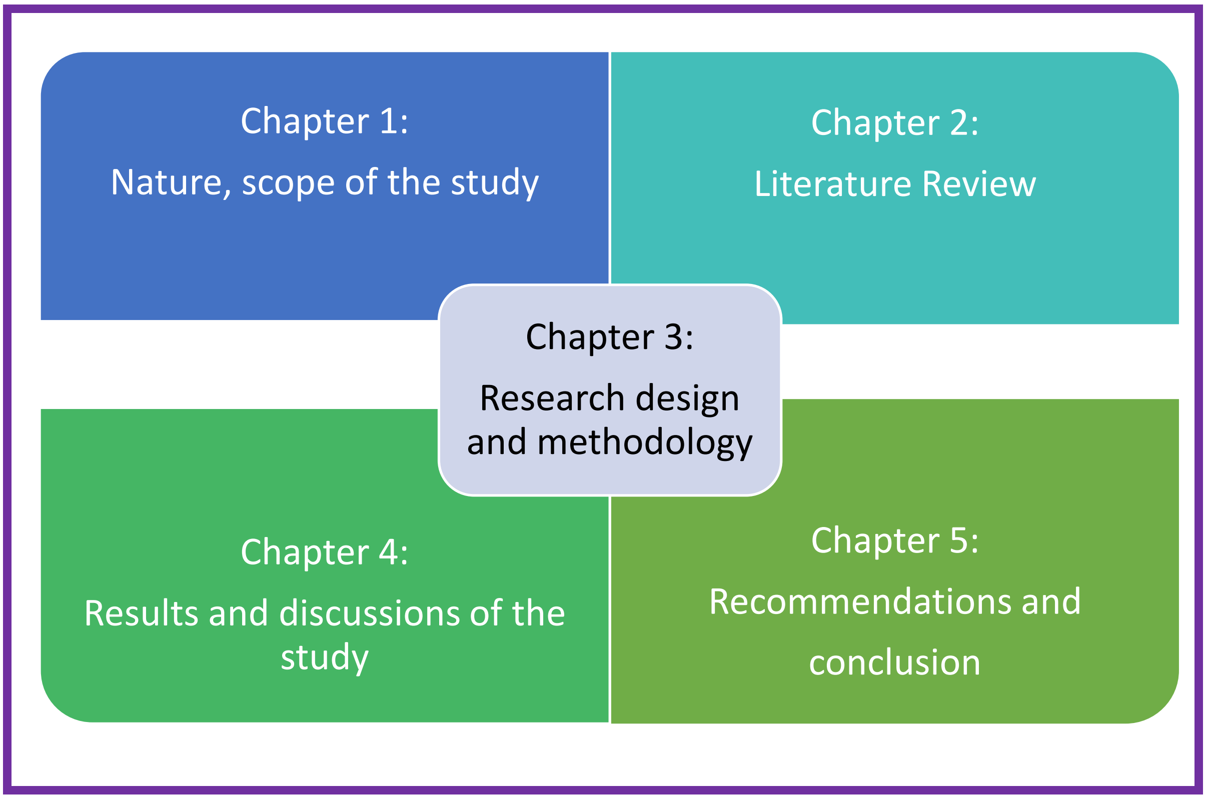
1.13 Ethical considerations

Ethics is mainly about human behaviour since it is key to provide primary understanding of the ethical as well as legal tasks to be displayed by the researcher during research processes. According to McMillan (2008), that before turning to the research format the researcher, the researcher needs to pay particular attention to ethical issues. During the present study, the researcher was careful of ethical issues and other legal principles not to manipulate the feelings and behaviour of participants (Neuman, 2000; Bless, Higson-Smith & Kagee, 2006). The researcher engaged the participants in an open and honest ways. Furthermore, all the participants were meant to withdraw anytime from the study. Information from participants are kept confidential, more protections from harm and mental challenges and possible dangers at the time of the study. One of the primary ethical considerations was for the researcher to seek permission from participants prior to starting scientific study.

1.14 Structure of the study

The different structures of the study are briefly defined below. Based on the graphic layout the study was structured into various headings. Figure 1.2 on the next page illustrates the layout.

Figure 1. 1: A graphic layout of the study



Source: Researcher's own contribution

Chapter 1: Nature, scope of the study

Chapter one provides a general introduction to the study in terms of the background and rationale of the study, the problem statement, the research objectives and the hypotheses as well as an outline of the chapter. The significance of the study is also discussed in this chapter, justifying why it was necessary to conduct it.

Chapter 2: Literature review

Chapter two is a review of literature on the study variables. Literature relating to the study variables, which are factors affecting customer satisfaction, is discussed. The chapter also provides the theoretical framework on which the research is anchored.”

Chapter 3: Research design and methodology

Chapter three discusses the research methodology that was adopted in the study. Sections include the population, sample, sampling techniques, data collection and research instruments. The way primary data was analysed is also examined.

Chapter 4: Discussion of results of the empirical study

This chapter focuses on the analysis and interpretation of the research results using qualitative and quantitative analysis. Descriptive and correlational analysis is employed to analyse the research data. Moreover, regression analysis is used to analyse the data. Tables, graphs, figures and frequencies are used to illustrate the results of the study.

Chapter 5: Recommendations and conclusions

The last chapter of the study provides the conclusion, the study limitations, and the directions or solutions to solve such limitations in the future. Recommendations to improve customer satisfaction are also discussed.

1.15 CONCLUSION

Restaurants are a form of business that depends largely on customer satisfaction to operate efficiently. Their survival and growth hinges on customer satisfaction. This study sought to measure customer satisfaction in East London restaurants. This chapter offered the introduction and background of the study. The chapter provided the statement of the problem together with the research aim, objectives, questions, rationale and scope of the study. Literature review featured outlining issues of customer satisfaction and customer services. It also offered a primer of the research methodology, which outlined the research design, target population, sampling method, pilot study, validity and reliability, data collection, data analysis, and lastly, the ethical considerations. The last section of the chapter outlined the structure of the study.

CHAPTER TWO

LITERATURE REVIEW

2.1 INTRODUCTION

It is evident that every business that is operating in the contemporary world tries to satisfy its customers so that it stays in the market. Due to high volumes of information exchange and travelling, the customers' need and demands are increasing and becoming more sophisticated. Shrestha (2015) asserts that businesses are spending a lot of money and time attempting to find out about customers' needs so that they can provide satisfactory services. In the restaurant business sector, the satisfaction of customers is important because it is a highly competitive sector. Being in the service industry, restaurants have an inherent obligation to ensure that there is quality provision of services to satisfy their customers. The growth of the restaurant business depends on customers' experiences meeting their expectations (Gupta, 2017).

Customers have different expectations and needs. As a result, customer satisfaction remains complex. Provision of quality service is primarily associated with customer satisfaction. However, it is not the only thing that makes up customer satisfaction. There has been much research on what constitutes customer satisfaction. A significant part of this chapter will discuss service provision in the restaurant industry, and how service provision links to customer satisfaction. Additionally, the chapter will reveal that other factors result in customer satisfaction, such as price, physical environment, ambience, and food or product. Moreover, the chapter will discuss the restaurant business sector, the conceptualisation of customer satisfaction, and service provision. The chapter will also review the literature to lay the foundation for what is necessary to measure customer satisfaction by taking into consideration various viewpoints raised in other studies.

2.2 NATURE OF THE RESTAURANT BUSINESS

The restaurant business is aimed at providing food and beverage services to people. Nxumalo (2017) states that the restaurant sector is a food and drink service provider, which is a subset of the hospitality industry. Restaurants differ from place to place. Some restaurants are solely indoor eateries, others outdoor, while others are a combination of both. Nxumalo (2017) states that restaurants are evolving constantly; they change as food service operations try to cater for varying customer needs in the market. Restaurants have become prominent worldwide. Powers and Barrows (2006) argue that describing the restaurant business is like attempting to hit a target that is in motion because the restaurant market evolves continually. Powers and Barrows (2006) add that restaurants can be divided into two main segments – eating and dining.

According to Wang and Chen (2012), the dining market is a full-service restaurant where customers are served at a laid table with the conventional preparation and presentation of food offered at a medium-high level of table service, which encompasses casual and fine dining restaurants. On the other hand, according to Nxumalo (2017), the eating market comprises of all the restaurants that operate to provide for people's biological needs. These are known as quick service restaurants; they include takeaway, home delivery, drive in, fast food, catering and healthy food bars.

Barlan-Espino (2017) states that people are too busy to prepare and eat meals at home; as a result, they eat out. According to the author (2017), some people look for a restaurant where they can find the best quality food and service, suited to their taste and satisfaction. According to Power and Barrows (2006), the restaurant business is composed of those that operate to satisfy people's biological needs (eating market) and those that primarily serve people's social needs (dining market). The restaurant business sector is competitive; therefore, the services provided by restaurants are important.

According to Mhlanga (2018), when people dine out in a restaurant, they cognitively assess the services and experience. Significantly, the author (2018) points out that most restaurateurs tend to focus more on food as the main component that contributes to service quality and customer satisfaction. However, Mhlanga (2018) asserts that even though food is important, several other components in a restaurant provide a good experience for a customer. These include the physical environment, employee service, location, ambience, pricing, and menu type. The restaurant business is a business that thrives on the good experience of customers.

According to Barlan-Espino (2017), restaurants face several challenges, such as uncertainty of economic status, demographic discrepancies in markets, competition, and changes in behaviour by employees. Due to these challenges, ensuring that they provide services that are satisfactory to their customers can be difficult.

2.2.1 Restaurant businesses national and international context

In Western economies, restaurants are among the largest sectors contributing to the GDP (Mueller *et al.*, 2003). According to the National Restaurant Association Report (2010), restaurants are the largest employers in the private sector. Nearly 13-million people are employed in the sector. In the USA, restaurants have 2 242 000 employees (National Restaurant Association Report, 2010). According to Restaurant and Catering Australia (2009), in Australia (AU), restaurants contributed 1.3% to the GDP in 2009.

Change and the modern way of life have influenced the growth in the restaurant industry. Time constraints have contributed to customers opting for restaurant food, which reduces the time that would be used to cook a meal at home or make lunch for work (Andaleeb & Conway, 2006). The tendency is most evident in developed countries (Vink *et al.*, 2004) and among high-income households (Frazão *et al.*, 2008). It has been noted that in developed countries, almost 50% of food expenses are used to buy food from restaurants (Vink *et al*., 2004), while in high-income households 47% of their total food consumption is linked to eating at restaurants (Frazão *et al.*, 2008).

In South Africa, restaurants are categorised as one of the subsectors of the tourism industry [Culture, Arts, Tourism, Hospitality and Sports Sector Education and Training Authority (CATHSSETA), 2020). According to the Tourism Satellite Account for 2005 (StatsSA, 2009), the subsector contributed 1.66% to the GDP (contributed by the tourism industry) in South Africa. Moreover, there was an increase in the contribution – from R1452-million to R1592-million between September 2009 and September 2010 (StatsSA, 2010).

Regardless of the popularity of eating out, and the continuous growth and development within the restaurant sector internationally, there has also been a growth in restaurants' failure rate compared to other small businesses (Andaleeb & Conway, 2006; SSA, 2010). Parsa, Self, Njite and King (2005) state that approximately 30% of restaurants collapse in the first year of operation. Soriano (2002) and Chi and Gursoy (2009) point out that restaurateurs who do not satisfy their customers' needs has been a major cause of these failures. Demand for higher quality food has made it a challenge for food outlets to satisfy their customers (Hu, 2009; Quan & Wang, 2004). Furthermore, an increase in the cost of labour and food also intensify the pressure on managers, which affects the provision of the required skills, and food quality and quantity. Thus, restaurants end up with small profit margins, which affect the smooth running of these businesses. They also need to comply with stringent legal requirements and cope with fierce competition (Hu, 2009; Reynolds & Bie, 2007). Furthermore, according to a study conducted by Moolman (2011) in Bloemfontein, failure to handle factors such as food quality, quality service, restaurant ambience, the quality of facilities, and the presence of management (all which influence customers' satisfaction) have led to certain restaurants in the city failing.

2.3 CONCEPTUALISATION OF CUSTOMER SATISFACTION

2.3.1 Defining customer satisfaction.

Customer satisfaction has been a popular topic in marketing practice and academic research (Fullerton & McCullough, 2014). Despite numerous studies, it seems no consensus has been reached concerning the definition of the concept. Satisfaction varies from one customer to the other, depending on imdividual preferences. As a result, there are various definitions of customer satisfaction. According to Zeithaml and Bitner (2003), satisfaction is a judgement that goods or a service item (or the product itself) offers an enjoyable level of consumption-related fulfilment. Choi and Chu (2001) state that satisfaction is an evaluation that is rated in respect of the request of the customer's preference and pleasures. Thus, satisfaction is connected to feelings of pleasure experienced by the customer during the dining process, which makes the customer feel happy or good (Namkung & Jang, 2008). Regardless of the various definitions, it is essential to note that satisfaction is crucial, and it is subject to customers' evaluations of the services provided to them.

Customer satisfaction therefore varies according to people's preferences, needs, expectations and judgement. According to Lin and Wu (2011), customer satisfaction is defined as a way of ensuring long-term customer retention. It is the evaluation of a product or service after it has been consumed or used (Khan & Afsheen, 2012). Customer satisfaction can be defined in terms of meeting the expectations of customers in terms of the parameters associated with satisfaction (Kursunluoglu, 2011). From the definitions provided above, it can be said that customer satisfaction is an evaluative process where the customer's expectations before purchasing the product or service is compared to the actual experience of using the product or consuming the service.

2.3.2 Understanding factors of customer satisfaction

Various factors influence customer satisfaction (Kasapila, 2006). Authors like Kleynhans (2003) and Zeithaml and Bitner (2003) argue that food quality, restaurant experience, services provision and consumption determine customer satisfaction. The provision of services in accordance with the customer's needs and requests is bound to make the customer satisfied. In support of this, Bowie and Shoemaker (2006) state that if a customer's expectations are exceeded, he/she may be exceedingly satisfied. On the other hand, if their experiences are not in line with their anticipations, diners become dissatisfied. It is thus said that the perceptions of customer satisfaction are determined by their evaluation of the services provided at a certain restaurant. Satisfaction concerning services and products is usually determined by the judgement of customers in comparison to their expectations and the services provided by a competitive service provider. If the standards are above the customer's expectations, the customer will be highly satisfied. However, the standards are lower than the expectations, the customer will be dissatisfied. Zeithaml and Bitner (2003) argue that if a customer's satisfaction exceeds his/her anticipations, the dining experience surprises the diner in a positive manner and such satisfaction may result in delight.

Sariano (2002) posits that a customer will perceive satisfaction only when the service provider surpasses his/her expectations. Kurtz and Clow (1998) state that customers might even become angry if the service is below the adequate level of expectation; this leads to customer dissatisfaction. Factors like cleanliness, the presentation of staff, and the utensils used play a pivotal role in customer satisfaction. If such factors are ignored or the expectations are not met, the customer will be dissatisfied (Kurtz & Clow, 1998). The price of products or food also influences customer satisfaction. However, in many cases, customers do not immediately switch restaurants over costs, but if the service is poor and does not satisfy them, they will look for a new restaurant (Kasapila, 2006). The more dissatisfied diners become, the quicker they will change to another restaurant (Kasapila, 2006). However, ensuring customer satisfaction is difficult because it is based on customers' expectations and perceptions. Enz (2004) notes that the need to keep up with customers' needs as they continue to demand fresh, inexpensive, and fascinating food cannot be achieved entirely because keeping them satisfied and coming back depend mostly on their expectations.

2.4 DEFINING THE CONCEPT OF SERVICES

There are numerous definitions of the term service. According to Du Plessis and Rousseau (2003), service is distinctly identifiable and primarily intangible activities, which offer the want-satisfaction, and are not linked to the sale of a specific product or another form of service. Du Plessis and Rousseau (2003) add that services are benefits, activities or satisfactions that are presented for sale or provided in association with the sale of goods. However, in a restaurant situation, according to Payne-Palacio and Theis (2005), service is defined as the untouchable, intangible or inconsumable component of the dining out experience.

Although there is a clear distinction between goods and services, these two are interrelated within the provision of services in the restaurant sector. Service provision complements the product that is sold to the customer; thereby, contributing to customer satisfaction. Powers and Barrows (2006) state that a hamburger cannot be offered to a customer without the component of service – the preparation, cooking and delivery of the hamburger to the customer. Therefore, provision of services is core to customer satisfaction in the restaurant industry as eating out can be regarded as a social event. According to Kharash (1999), great service can overshadow a bad meal and make customers want to come back for a better meal.

2.4.1 General classifications of services

According to Zeithaml and Bitner (2003), there are five dimensions of service. These dimensions play a pivotal in increasing and ensuring that services are of great significance to customer satisfaction. These dimensions are reliability, responsiveness, assurance, empathy and tangibles. They are critical in ensuring customer satisfaction and as such form an integral part of this research. The dimensions are discussed below.

2.4.1.1 Reliability

According to Zeithaml and Bitner (2003), the term reliability refers to the capability of an establishment to provide service dependably and perfectly. In its broader sense, reliability means that a business delivers on its promises about delivery, service provision, problem solution and pricing (Zeithaml & Bitner, 2003). Reliability relates to staff serving the orders as requested, which is also in accordance with the menu and accurate charging (Kasapila, 2006).

Therefore, customers are satisfied when the services are reliable and dissatisfied when the services are not reliable.

2.4.1.2 Responsiveness

Responsiveness refers to the willingness of waiters and staff to respond timeously to customers' requests (Kasapila, 2006). Thus, responsiveness emphasises effectiveness, efficiency and timeous service provision to the customers' requests and questions (Zeithaml & Bitner, 2003). Responsiveness also relates to the amount of time customers should wait for their orders, as well as their requests, or a problem that has been logged (Zeithaml & Bitner, 2003). It is through responsiveness that a restaurant is able to enhance the quality of its services. For example, if customers are assisted on time with menus detailing the food and beverages that are sold by the restaurant, they will have enough time to decide on their orders, allowing the orders to come out on time. This responsiveness will lead to customer satisfaction.

2.4.1.3 Assurance

Assurance relates to the knowledge and politeness of personnel and their ability to convey confidence and trust (Zeithaml & Bitner, 2003). Assurance plays a pivotal role in customer satisfaction as it relates to customers' enjoyment of the services provided by the restaurant. In addition, assurance also enhances word-of-mouth advertising, as customers will recommend the restaurant to other people (Kasapila, 2006).

2.4.1.4 Empathy

Empathy refers to the compassionate and individualised attention an organisation provides to its customers; thus, treating consumers as individuals (Zeithaml & Bitner, 2003). In principle, empathy acknowledges personalised service – that customers are distinctive and special. Customers desire to feel understood by and vital to organisations that offer services to them (Zeithaml & Bitner, 2003). It is essential, especially for employees, to greet customers by their names as well as know their regular meals and dietary preferences (if they are frequent customers) (Zeithaml & Bitner, 2003).

2.4.1.5 Tangibles

Tangibles are concerned with the appearance of the restaurant’s physical facilities, equipment and workforce. Tangibles are, therefore, utilised by restaurants to convey their image and signal quality to clients (Zeithaml & Bitner, 2003).

2.4.1.6 Ambience

Ambient conditions relate to the intangible background features of the environment, such as fragrance, temperature, music, and lighting (Liu & Jang, 2009).

2.5 SETTING AND CUSTOMER SATISFACTION

Setting is the intangible aspect the restaurant provides that enhance the experience of the customer (Zeithaml & Bitner, 2003). It is essential to note that to manage competition and be sustainable in the market, service provision should add to a favourable ambience (Soriano, 2002). Studies have shown that customers are attracted by good ambience, which in turn makes them regular customers (Yuksel & Yuksel, 2002). Thus, restaurants should make every effort to create a gratifying and comforting atmosphere for customers. Figure 2.1 on the following page illustrates the arrangement of common setting area found in typical restaurants.

Figure 2. 1: Illustration of a dining-service restaurant’s setting

Source: Grilled room, East London (2019)

Quality service, aimed at customer satisfaction, will result in customers becoming regulars and repeatedly coming to the restaurant (Soriano, 2002). There is a variety of expectations on which customers could base their satisfaction. A restaurant’s atmosphere must be appealing and should suit the characteristics of the client base (as depicted in Figure 2.1). Thus, a restaurant’s common features could result in a certain social class of customer preferring it to another (Jordaan & Prinsloo, 2001).

There are three dimensions to the quality of ambience or atmosphere in a restaurant, which influence a customer's satisfaction. Wakefield and Blodgett (1994) state that these dimensions are ambient conditions, spatial layout and functionality, and emblems, symbols and artefacts. Even though these three components will be discussed separately, it should be noted that customers respond to the restaurant setting or atmosphere holistically.

Zeithaml and Bitner (2003) state that although patrons may prefer certain setting factors, it is the total configuration of these factors that determines their evaluation of a setting in a particular restaurant. As such, it is essential to acknowledge that setting has its own sentiments, which bear similarities to the ambient conditions, such as exterior appearance, interior décor, lighting, temperature conditions, noise and sound, music, odours, spatial layout and functionality, and signs, symbols, as well as artefacts of high value.

2.5.1 Setting conditions

The general state of the available space in the restaurant has an emotional effect on customers. The general conditions prompt customers to purchase more servings and spend more time at the restaurant. Conditions such as the exterior appearance, the interior décor, the temperature, the lighting system, noise, music and odour are some of the contributing factors (Zeithaml & Bitner, 2003). The overall customer satisfaction brought about by these conditions could convince customers to spend more time in the restaurant. The general setting elements add to a customer's overall assessment of the restaurant (Liu & Jang, 2009).

2.5.2 Lighting

Generally, lighting up a space enables the customer to feel safe and at home (compared to dark and shady places). Gareth (2011) points out that lighting sets the mood and provides an uplifting feeling in any restaurant. It adds warmth and hospitality and puts customers at ease. Lighting also influences a customer's mood, tone, trust and assurance of the services to be provided (Jordaan & Prinsloo 2001; Perutkova, 2010). The dimness of the lights also influences a customer's behaviour and actions. Too much light makes the customer feel inhibited and self-conscious. Bright lights leave customers feeling uncomfortable; this does not translate into service quality. However, Gareth (2011) argues that a restaurant is not a bus station bathroom that must be dimly lit. The author (2011) states that food is enjoyed if it is seen. Hence, a balance is required for both a warm atmosphere and good food presentation (Lillicrap & Cousins, 2006).

2.5.3 Temperature conditions

A study by Kurtz and Clow (1998) found that the temperature and atmosphere in a restaurant influence the physiology of customers. The level of the inside temperature should be neither too cold nor too hot. According to Zeithaml and Bitner (2003), customers feel uneasy if temperature is not regulated. Moreover, the restaurant staff cannot provide optimum services if the temperature is not regulated (Kurtz & Clow, 1998).

2.5.4 Noise and sound

According to Jordaan and Prinsloo (2001), there is a thin line between sound and noise. Undesirable noise should be reduced, or it will diminish the customers' enjoyment and satisfaction. The amount of noise acceptable to the ears is usually determined by age (Payne-Palacio & Theis, 2005). The older the age group, the lower the intensity of noise that is considered tolerable (Payne-Palacio & Theis, 2005). Excessive noise also affects customers' senses, usually subconsciously (Wall & Berry, 2007), and can annoy diners and cause them to shorten their stay (Sulekand & Hensley, 2004). The noise of an icemaker or the group at the next table could affect customers who were looking forward to a quiet evening out (Rande, 1995). The noise level of discussions, serving personnel, the kitchen, and music also affect the ambience. As such, the way owner-managers of restaurants manage this element creates an expectation in customers even before the food is served (Sulekand & Hensley, 2004).

2.5.5 Music

Music is characterised as affirmative auditory signs that are made to stimulate customers' feelings (Mattila & Wirtz, 2001). Musical pitch, tempo, mode and category are linked to positive or negative emotions, as they tend to increase specific accents that reflect in the menu (Sulekand & Hensley, 2004). The rhythm of songs is perceived to have emotional impact, which might be happiness or sadness, depending on the specific music being played (Liu & Jang, 2009).

Jensen and Hansen (2007), on the other hand, argue that music tends to provide customers with the opportunity to enjoy aesthetic satisfaction. Supporting this, Lim (2010) states that as eating out is seen as a social activity, customers tend to stay longer in favourable musical conditions. Lim (2010) adds that background music in restaurants affects the period of time customers spend eating. Notably, customers spend more and stay longer if the rhythm of the music is suitable (Zeithaml & Bitner, 2003). Thus, it is important that restaurants provide a diverse blend of music suitable to their customers' tastes, depending on the location, as this relates to the status of the clients (Liu & Jang, 2009).

2.5.6 Odours

Restaurants are not always located away from other businesses, which might emit unpleasant odours. It is therefore important to check the surrounding environment to ensure that there are no unpleasant odours and scents that, when combined with food, might make customers nauseous while eating. It has also been noted that the aroma of cooked food entices customers, which could make them choose the food served at a particular outlet (Rande, 1995). In support of that, Jordaan and Prinsloo (2001) argue that pleasant aromas add to the overall ambience, which in turn increases the amount of time customers stay. Wall and Berry (2007) state that at Disney World in Orlando, the aroma of chocolate chip cookies baking is channelled from underground to the park's front gate to welcome customers, thereby generating warm feelings and whetting their appetite.

Ventilation plays a role in ensuring that there is the circulation of clean and pure air, which is not contaminated. In addition, the unpleasant odour of trash can create a negative experience for customers. Other unpleasant odours include kitchen odours of raw food like onions, garlic or cooking oil, and leftover food (Payne-Palacio & Theis, 2005). Unpleasant odours can make customers leave before they place their orders, or in the middle of their meal, which will make them not come back again (Wall & Berry, 2007).

2.5.7 Spatial layout and functionality

Spatial layout refers to the way the facility, equipment and furnishing are organised, the dimensions and shape of these items, and the spatial relationship among them (Zeithaml & Bitner, 2003). Wall and Berry (2007) state that functionality, on the other hand, refers to the ability of the facility, equipment and furnishing to facilitate customers' pleasure and comfort. An efficient layout and functionality will offer ease of entry and exit and ensure the accessibility of ancillary areas like restrooms (Zeithaml & Bitner, 2003). It is also important that the spatial layout enable customers to have parking space for their cars, which is safe and secure. According to Wakefield and Blodgett (1994), this means that the service area is accessible, allowing customers to enjoy a relaxed meal.

2.5.8 Signs, symbols and artefacts

Signs, symbols, and artefacts communicate a message to customers, which could attract them (Liu & Jang, 2009). These signs, symbols and artefacts both outside and inside play an essential role in advertising and giving direction to the customers. Thus, they are a medium of communication, for instance, when diners are unfamiliar with a certain restaurant or might be new in the area.

Signs, symbols and artefacts in the exterior and interior decoration all relate to presenting an attractive image of the restaurant (Zeithaml & Bitner, 2003). The interior includes decor styles and more, as shown in Figure 2.2. A well-decorated restaurant attracts the attention of customers and assures them that their expectations of satisfaction will be met. Customers will not enjoy having a meal in a restaurant that is not well decorated, or has unhygienic linen, utensils, and tables.

Figure 2. 2: A display of snowy white linen tablecloths in a restaurant

Source: Sanook Cafe, East London (2019)

Most restaurants countrywide have a sign on the exterior and interior as the only means to communicate signals to customers. Signals to customers may be utilised as labels (for example, a restaurant's name), for directional purposes (for example, entries and exits), and to convey rules of behaviour (for example, children must be accompanied by adults, no smoking zone, etc.) (Zeithaml & Bitner, 2003). Artefacts and symbols are lesser directional signs and provide hidden clues to patrons about a restaurant."

2.5.9 Exterior appearance

In relation to the discussion above, Jordaan and Prinsloo (2001) state that the exterior of the restaurant offers the first impression to the customer. This will not only attract and entice customers to eat, but also influence their satisfaction of the meal. Thus, the first outside presentation welcomes clients, or chases them away. The outside also establishes confidence (Jordaan & Prinsloo, 2001). Furthermore, the authors (2001) argue that an exterior sign with burnt-out lights and cracking paint or a dilapidated building, for example, could cause the customer to think less of the whole operation.

2.5.10 Interior décor

While the outside or exterior décor attracts customers, the inside should also complement the outside décor, thereby keeping customers in the restaurant. Thus, one should not expect the outside to be well presented and decorated, while the inside is filthy. Although the core reason for visiting a restaurant is to buy food, it has to be said that sometimes the food does not matter. Rather, it is about the environment, which is used to host a social event for people to enjoy themselves. Thus, the interior should make customers enjoy their stay, and even stay longer, which would increase sales (Namkung & Jang, 2008). Sometimes the interior décor also defines what type of food is offered at certain restaurants; for instance, some restaurants situated at the seaside sell seafood and their décor might include decorative boats and glass fish. This makes the restaurant attractive to customers.

Restaurants that sell provide traditional food might boast traditional emblems. In some instances, the décor also relates to seasons and festivities such as Christmas or Valentine's Day. In line with the above assertion, Liu and Jang (2009) postulate that warm colours are likely to be psychologically and physiologically disturbing and, at times, even stressful, whereas cool colours are relaxing and tend to reduce feelings of stress. In addition, according to Lillicrap and Cousins (2006), the colour scheme helps to reflect the character of the restaurant. Themes also determine how formal the restaurant is. This also relates to the type and class of customers who are catered for at a specific restaurant. Stroebele and De Castro (2004) state that bright colours tend to stimulate and arouse, whereas warm and cool colours seem to encourage relaxation. Therefore, by appropriately utilising colours, a restaurant can create almost any kind of environment that accommodates its clientele and adds to a feeling of cleanliness (Lillicrap & Cousins, 2006). The attractiveness and comfort of the environment positively contributes to customer satisfaction (Liu & Jang, 2009).

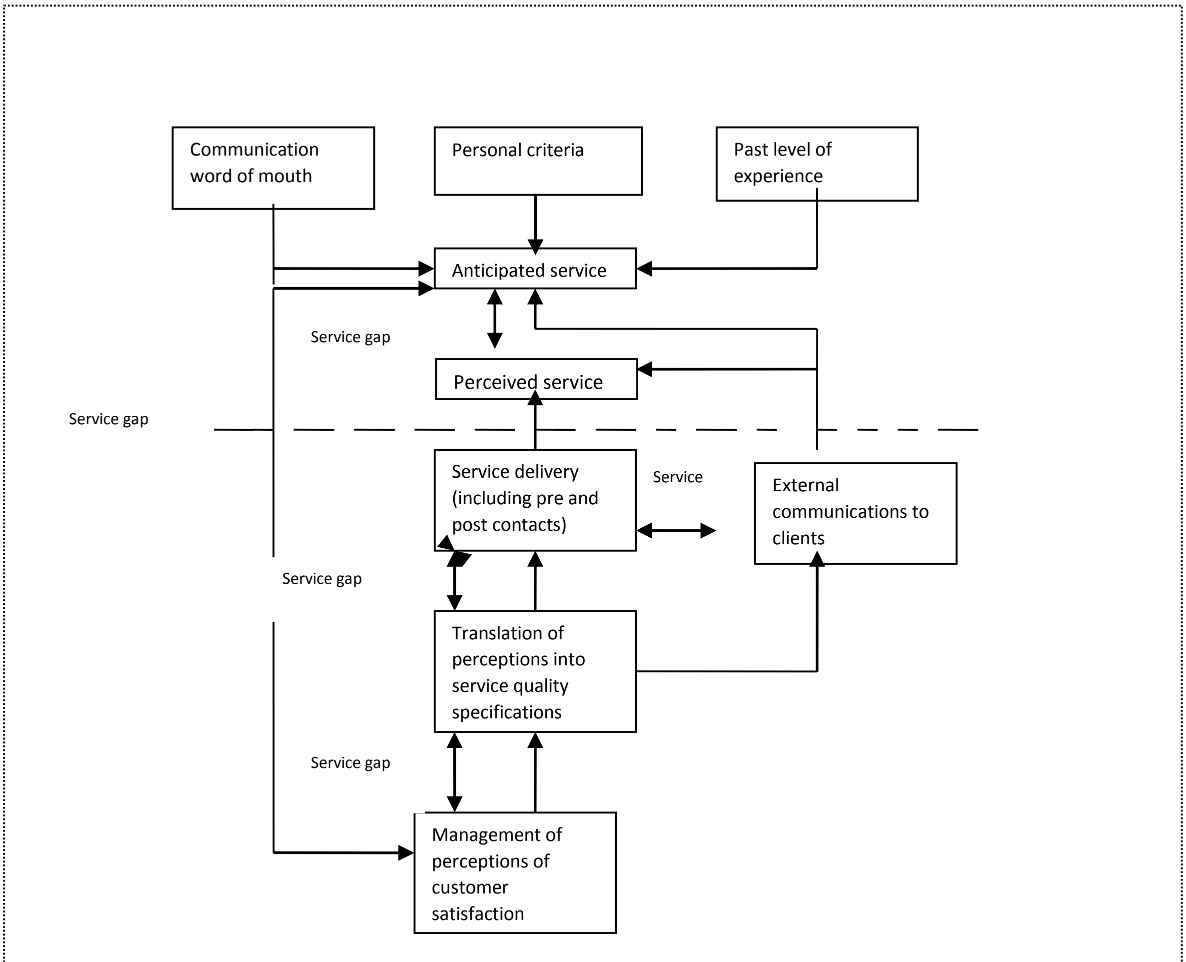
2.6 MODELS OF CUSTOMER SATISFACTION

An empirical study on restaurant customers and their satisfaction can assist in determining their levels of satisfaction via feedback prior to their departure (Enz, 2004). The section below discusses two well-tested research instruments available to assess service quality – SERVQUAL and DINESERV.

2.6.1 The SERVQUAL model

The SERVQUAL model was developed through the scientific work of Parasuraman *et al*. (1985). The mod0el focuses on service quality and survival in a competitive marketing climate. It is utilised to assess and measure service quality. According to Parasuraman *et al.* (1985), the core function of the SERVQUAL model is the measurement of performance gaps, as well as customer satisfaction.

Figure 2. 3: A conceptual model of service quality



Source: Adapted from Parasuraman *et al.* (1985)

Key to the service model is the general display of service quality, as well as customer perceptions that are influenced by the five distinctive service gaps (see Figure 2.3). These services are labelled and explained below (Zeithaml & Bitner, 2003).

2.6.1.1 The service model

Service 1: Not understanding customer satisfaction.
One of the root causes of failure to offer customer satisfaction is not understanding their needs, expectations and preferences. This would also mean that the restaurant did not do proper market research prior to its establishment to ensure it is competitive in the market.

Service 2: Setting of poor standards.

Standards lay a solid and firm foundation in ensuring that customers' perceptions are clearly understood and fulfilled. There is a clear distinction between a company's comprehension of customer anticipations and the establishment of customer-driven service designs and standards. As a result, performance standards and service designs should clearly reflect on accurate perception of customers' expectations. As the standards are evaluated and measured by the customers, their requirements, comments and suggestions should be customer-driven (Markovic *et al*., 2010).

Service 3: Service performance
Service performance plays an essential role in fulfilling customer expectations and satisfaction. Markovic *et al.* (2010) states that service performance fails if there is a "discrepancy between the development of customer-driven service standards and actual service performance by company employees". The authors (2010) also argue that regardless of having clear guidelines and correct customer treatment, it is not a given that service performance will be of a high quality. Remarkably, even if there is consistency of service delivery from workers, intermediaries and other contact personnel, the customer can erratically introduce heterogeneity in the service. Thus, failure of the customers to play their role will compromise the quality of services provided.

Service 4: Service delivery-communications gap

Communication plays an important role in the provision of services. Both verbal and non-verbal communication, as well as internal and external communication, must be clearly and properly articulated to ensure that it increases sales. Such communication includes advertising, which raises customer expectations. These expectations would be the measurement by which customers would evaluate the quality of services provided. The gap is created by the difference between real and pledged service. Thus, the larger the discrepancy, the more expansive the service will be (Zeithaml & Bitner, 2003).

Service 5: Perceptions-expectations service

The perceptions-expectations gap refers to the external gap between the customer's perceptions and expectations. This service can be referred to as "the moment of truth". In the restaurant context, service quality is only beneficial to the restaurant if it is profitable to both the restaurant and customers. Positive results in sales, profits and market share will not be produced by service quality performance in areas of little importance to the customer (Zeithaml & Bitner, 2003).

By utilising the five dimensions of service quality, the SERVQUAL model attempts to establish the differences in customer expectations and their perceptions of the service. The model uses 22 questions that are transposed into statements to measure customers' evaluation of service performance. The level of service quality is established by subtracting the perceived service score from customers' expected service score. Three outcomes are then possible, namely:

Condition 1: If the expectation score exceeds the perception score, the quality of service is poor, and the customer is disappointed. This is referred to as a service quality problem.

Condition 2: If the perception exceeds the expectation, the quality is excellent, and the customer is satisfied or delighted. This is referred to as service excellence.

Condition 3: If the expectations are equal to the perceptions, technical satisfaction is derived by the customer. This is referred to as technical satisfaction (Zeithaml & Bitner, 2003)."

2.6.1.2 Critique of the SERVQUAL model

Despite its fame and wide application, the SERVQUAL model has faced criticism – not only based on theoretical forms, but also through operational viewpoints (Buttle, 1996).

Theoretical reproaches comprise of paradigmatic oppositions, gaps model, process orientation and dimensionality (Ladhari *et al*., 2008):

- Paradigmatic objections state that the model focuses on expectation-disconfirmation over the attitudinal model of service quality (Parasuraman, Berry & Zeithaml, 1991). Therefore, it is premised on an affirmation sequence rather than on the pattern of understanding. Secondly, the model falls flat when it comes to drawing on an established economical, statistical and psychological theory (Buttle, 1996).
- The gaps model, which argues that the differences in the rating and scores of customers' evaluations might not reveal the accurate perceptions and satisfaction of the customers as the results are generalised. Thus, there is scant evidence that customers evaluate service quality in view of perception-expectation gaps (Ladhari *et al*., 2008).
- According to process orientation, the model focuses on the process of service rather than the outcomes related to the services provided (Buttle, 1996). It is argued that process and outcome reflect on true customer choices, perceptions and satisfaction, rather than on the outcome or process alone (Buttle, 1996).
- Dimensionality argues that the dimensions are not universal, which therefore compromises the quality of services. In addition, there is a high level of inter-correlation among the dimensions (Daniel & Berinyuy, 2010). Operational criticisms relate to expectations, item make-up, polarity, moments of truth, scale points, and two administrations and variance taken out (Ladhari *et al*., 2008).
- Expectations state that since expectations differ from individual to individual, it is not essential to measure satisfaction with expectations, as they are unique and subject to one's feelings. Basing on the uniqueness of customers it is not essential to measure satisfaction as the term itself is dynamic and varies from one customer to the other. Thus, there is not a uniform and universal expectation of customers, which compromises the service quality expectations (Daniel & Berinyuy, 2010).
- According to item composition, the fact that scale is comprised of either four or five items proves that it is an inadequate capacity to measure the variance (Buttle, 1996).

Parasuraman *et al.* (1991) state that context precise items can be utilised to supplement SERVQUAL, but caution that the novel items should be related in form to the existing SERVQUAL items.

- Moments of truth state that as satisfaction as well as standards vary according to one's feeling, there are moments when customers and staff would be true to each other's moment of truth. As a result, moment of truth is not an event but rather differs from customer to customer and also time to time. Thus, such moments cannot be loaded on a solitary responsiveness factor (Gilmore, 2003).
- Polarity states that, depending on how the statements and questions are developed in some instances, they might be both negatively and positively worded. As a result, the responses are bound to be biased as they have been led by how the statement was posed. Because the responses should be based on the statement provided, it does not give liberty to the customers if they perceive the service in a different way. In addition, Gilmore (2003) says that the statements will be confusing, which make customers respond for the sake of responding and not to provide the actual response.
- The 7-point Likert scale is criticised as inconsistent, owing to the fact that the mid-range ratings are not clear on their degree of the response (Buttle, 1996; Gilmore, 2003; Ladhari *et al.*, 2008). However, Babakus and Mangold prefer the 5-point Likert scale on the basis that it reduces the "frustration level" of participants and increase the response rate and response quality."
- Two administrations state that participants appear to be confused by the dispensation of the 'E' (expectations) and 'S' (satisfaction) versions of SERVQUAL, as well as being bored when filling in the questionnaire. Because of the confusion, the data quality is compromised (Buttle, 1996).
- Variance extracted focuses on the extent of variance extracted, which is a measurement of construct validity. The greater the variance extracted, the more valid the measure is. Normally the scales are likely to produce higher levels of variance extracted. The general SERVQUAL score accounts for a substandard proportion of item variances (Buttle, 1996). Similarly, Andaleeb and Conway (2006) stress that not all five components of SERVQUAL play an essential role in defining customer satisfaction in the restaurant industry where the customer's risk is minimal given the purchase price, the result of the service, and the options available. As a result, the outcome will not truly reflect all aspects of customer satisfaction in the industry. Andaleeb and Conway

(2006) state, "Full-service restaurants should focus on three elements, namely service quality (responsiveness), price and food quality (reliability) if diner satisfaction is to be treated as a strategic variable". Regardless of the critique, the SERVQUAL model has an impact in relation to the measurement of customer satisfaction for both businesses, as well as academic purposes.

2.6.2 The DINESERV model

Stevens, Knutson and Patton (1995) note that after the SERVQUAL failed, the LODGESERV model was drafted; however, "both models did not work". The DINESERV model was then drafted from the lessons learnt from LODGESERV. The model established that customers do not assess and evaluate only food quality, but the services provided overall. The DINESERV instrument includes service quality, as well as behavioural intention, as determinants of customer satisfaction (Liu & Jang, 2009).
Generally, the instrument comprises of 29 statements, while the dimensions remain those of the SERVQUAL instrument. The instrument consists of categories for tangibles, reliability, responsiveness, assurance and empathy. Tangibles refer to a restaurant's physical design, the appearance of staff, and cleanliness. Reliability involves the freshness and temperature of the food, accurate billing, and receiving ordered food. Responsiveness in restaurants relates to staff assistance with the menu or wine list, or appropriate and prompt responses to diners' needs and requests. Assurance means that restaurant diners should be able to trust the recommendations of staff, feel confident that food is free from contamination, and be able to raise any concern without fear. Finally, empathy refers to providing personalised attention to diners by anticipating special dietary requirements, or by being sympathetic towards diners' problems (Markovic *et al*., 2010).

The Likert scale will be used to measure the participants' responses, with 7 being strongly agree and 1 being strongly disagree. The other five will be slightly agree, slightly disagree, agree, disagree, and neutral. These will be analysed against the responses from the customer's reaction to the 29 statements. The higher the rating, the greater the chances of the customer becoming a regular, while the lower the rating, the more dissatisfied the customer is (Stevens *et al*., 1995).

2.6.3 The DINESERV per interview

The interviews will sort the following: tangibles items; reliability viewpoints; responsiveness viewpoints; assurance viewpoints, and empathy viewpoints.

Figure 2. 4: DINESERV per interview

Tangibles items	**Responsiveness viewpoints**	**Empathy viewpoints**
• Parking area and building exteriors should be attractive • Cleanness, neatness and appropriately dressed staff members should be standard • Dining area should be visually attractive • Restrooms must always be thoroughly clean • The dining rooms must have comfortable spaces **Reliability viewpoints** • Decor should complement the image and price range • Menu should be easily readable and understandable	• Menu should be eye-catching and replicate the restaurant's image • Should ensure that there are shifts for employees to ensure punctuality and effective quality services at all times • Propositions for immediate services • Good responsiveness to the questions of customers • Should have staff who have the ability and willingness to provide customers with menus, as well as list ingredients and explain how an item is prepared **Assurance viewpoints** • Comfortability and mobility should be standard in the dining area • Dining areas must always be spotless Should serve the customers on time	• Must ensure that they have the interest of the customers at heart • Offer flexibility regarding special requests and orders • Should make the customers feel happy and self-assured when placing orders with them • Greet the customers by their name

• Staff should speedily rectify orders that are incorrect • Service should be resolute and consistent • Staff who are kind and reassuring if something is wrong.	• Provide accurate customer bills • Should serve the exact food offered and ordered	• Know their regular meals and dietary preferences if they are frequent customers.

Source: Namkung (2008) and Markovic *et al*. (2010)

According to Markovic *et al*. (2010), the tool is proposed as a reliable and reasonably simple instrument for determining how customers view restaurant's quality. It is also appropriate for use by restaurant managers in capturing easily interpretable data. By dispatching the DINESERV questionnaire to customers, restaurant managers can obtain a reading on how they perceive the restaurant's quality, detect where problems are, and find solutions on how to resolve the problems (Namkung, 2008). Markovic *et al*. (2010) further state that the measurement tool provides a quantified measure of what customers expect in a restaurant.

However, despite its merits, the instrument has not been spared criticism. For example, Namkung and Jang (2008) state that one of the vital components of the restaurant experience, namely food quality, is not incorporated as part of the DINESERV measure. Similar to other quality studies in restaurant contexts, which focus on only a subset of quality, the instrument does not comprehensively scrutinise all the essential components of restaurant quality. Therefore, using the DINESERV may not properly capture the idiosyncratic makeup of the restaurant experience (Namkung & Jang, 2008).

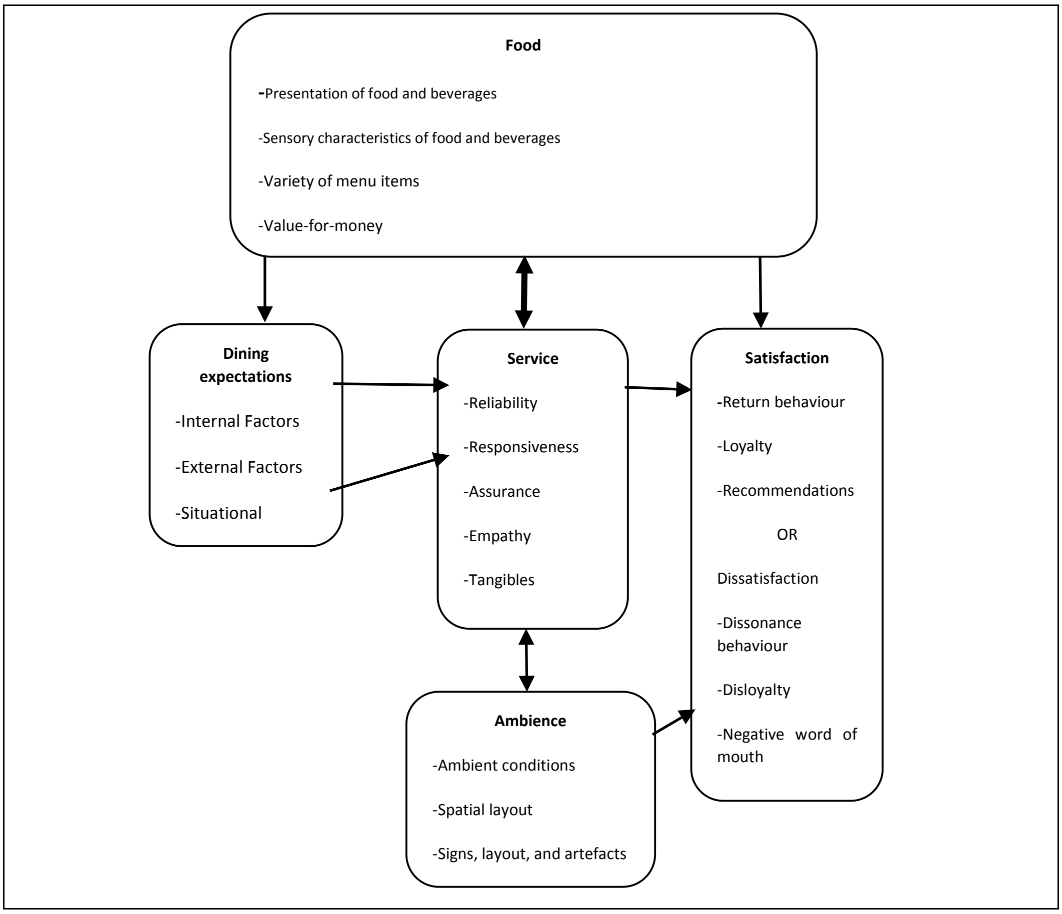
Furthermore, despite the fact that the instrument primarily aims to measure service quality components, including responsiveness, reliability and tangibles, it does not take into consideration the direct outcomes of the customers' satisfaction of service quality, including diner satisfaction and considerations on the service experience encountered (Mohsin, McIntosh & Cave, 2005). Nonetheless, as Alonso and O'Neil (2010) state, it is these latter outcomes, and the makeup of the perceived and anticipated service experience, that potentially can be the chief determinants of repeat purchasing and diner satisfaction.

2.7 CUSTOMERS SATISFACTION FRAMEWORK

Drawing from existing literature, Figure 2.5 on the following page depicts a framework that illustrates specific constructs of customer satisfaction (the main concepts of this study) in a formal full-service restaurant and how they interrelate to influence customer satisfaction in a restaurant. Customer satisfaction in a restaurant is influenced by a complex interplay of factors, namely food, service and ambience. If the satisfaction exceeds expectations, the customer's satisfaction could lead to return behaviour, loyalty and recommendations**.** At the same time if the satisfaction is below expectations, the customer's dissatisfaction could lead to dissonant behaviour, disloyalty, and negative word of mouth. Cursory illustration of the various constructs are explained on the following next page.

Figure 2. 5: A cursory framework of customers' satisfaction concepts

Source: Adapted from Zeithaml & Bitner (2003)



2.8 CONCLUSION

Several standards and expectations taken from a review of the available literature were presented in this chapter, which define customer satisfaction. These characteristics work mostly for the betterment of client-service provider relations. Customer satisfaction determines the growth and development of restaurants. In the next chapter, the research design and methodology that will be utilised in this study will be discussed.

CHAPTER THREE

RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

3.1 INTRODUCTION

This section of the survey outlines various areas including the methodology, the research population, sampling techniques as well as ethical considerations. Three levels of the study also feature in this section in addition to the methodology are discussed.

Level 1 of the study entails data collection processes through qualitative and quantitative methods through the application of literature review as well as semi-structured interviews and FGDs. Before the interview processes and questionnaire distributions, pilot studies were performed for verification of the data collection tools. Through the utilisation of questionnaires, the survey provides the opportunity for the researcher to contextualise the research problem, aims, objectives and seek answers to the survey questions by analysing, conduct data interpretations and to structure the empirical data.

Next the semi-structured interviews were conducted with customers who regularly patronise the restaurants. The researcher canvased their opinions on customers' satisfaction in areas of size, lightening, colour, ambience, the interior and exterior environment, and the level of quality services.

Lastly, the researcher conducted quantitative survey where 235 customers were asked to complete open-and closed ended questionnaires to measure customers' satisfaction on various variables. Final responses collected from the customers were quantified and analysed using SPSS and through content analysis.

3.1.1 Research design

To ensure relevant answers to the stated survey questions and aims, this survey has employed a mixed method research technique including the quantitative (survey) as well as qualitative (FGDs, and semi-structured interviews) using restaurant owners and customers (Bryman, 2012; Nagy Hesse-Biber, 2014). Adopting mixed-methods is complementary through a combination of fixed choices in addition to open-closed ended questions. Thus, this design allows a personal, flexible as well as a lesser hierarchical data gathering device. This form of design reduces the risk levels of "minimal number of participants" and build relationships between customers and restaurant owners (Bryman, 2012; Sheyvens, 2014). Prior to the survey the design took into account two different pilot studies to ensure the quality of research instruments namely the questionnaire and the interview schedule.

3.2 QUALITATIVE AND QUANTITATIVE STUDY

Qualitative and quantitative study provides the necessary opportunity where the past explained, and unexplained investigations are performed to determine resources (Welman & Kruger, 2002). This study aimed to provide solutions to the problem by gathering empirical data by using (mixed methods) qualitative and quantitative methods. According to Kumar (2011), qualitative study focuses on scientific evidence for solutions to potential research questions systematically in contrast to quantitative approach that aims to provide explanations to a phenomenon through gathering numerical dataset that are analysed and supported by numerical data techniques.

The first stage of this study was to gather qualitative data using semi-structured interviews and focus group discussions (FGDs) with restauranteurs. The qualitative data was guided by a standard interview schedule. The interview schedule was used to regulate answers based on semi-structured questions. Qualitative technique enabled the researcher to widely interact with participants. Next, the questionnaire was designed to source answers from participants who were mostly the customers selected from different restaurants. The questions were measured on scales while allowing the researcher to pose same questions in a similar order to customers (Kumar, 2011). Through the implementation of quantitative study the researcher was able to deduce comparison of customers' responses because every customer's opinion on satisfaction were assessed using similar approaches to ensure there was consistency. The researcher employed mixed method in this study since the method allowed the identification of factors that impacted on satisfaction and used the same information with quantitative study that evaluates how each factor would affect customers' satisfaction.

3.3 POPULATION AND SAMPLING

The population of this study entails all the 44 registered restaurants in East London in the Eastern Cape Province of South Africa. South Africa has nine provincial administrations. All things being equal, this empirical study would have included all the restaurants from the nine provinces country wide. Considering time constraints, this study focused on samples from East London in the Eastern Cape Province. Welman et al (2005) stated that determining sample size entails compromise in terms of finding accuracy, time, and investment on available resources to collect, check and conduct data analysis. The compromise is governed by types of analysis the researcher intends to conduct, the confidence needed to attain the research data, the margin of error that can be tolerated as well as the specific population from which the study sample could be chosen. In total ten sampling tools exists. These sampling tools are categorised into probability sampling and non-probability sampling techniques. Non-probability sampling tools are utilised in cases where generalisation of the research outcomes from the sample to target population. Furthermore, the application and utilisation of probability sampling tool shows the general intention to generalise the final outcomes. This study intends to generalise the final outcomes. As such, the study employed a probability sampling in contrast to non-probability sampling tools.

According to Kumar (2014) and Creswell (2014) cluster sampling is correct where it is impossible to access the lists of every member of the target population. The researcher found it very difficult to access the correct number of restaurants in the Eastern Cape since there are no certified database across the Eastern Cape Province due to its rurality. The initial procedure in cluster sampling is not the population unit to be sampled rather the groups of the clusters. Bryman and Bell (2011) indicated that out of the units, group members or clusters constitutes the research sample. The members from clusters can be chosen through random sampling tool or by means of stratified random tools.

Based on the rural nature of this study, all the twelve restaurants in East London of the Eastern Cape Province represented the clusters drawn from different restaurants in East London. From the clusters, the researcher drew sampling frames that allows the research participants were selected on random basis. Using the random sampling tool, the researcher targeted 350 restaurants in East London. For this empirical study, a sample size of 300 is deemed satisfactory with a sample size over 235 reasonable enough to eliminate the margin of error (Sweeney, 2009).

As indicated above, the probability sampling tool of cluster sampling is used to gather data in this study. Due to lack of sufficient database to obtain participants list from the population, cluster sampling of probability sampling is applied (Welman et al, 2005; Kumar, 2014; Creswell, 2014). Only 12 restaurants complied with the criteria, of which two were used for the pilot study. The remaining 10 restaurants were included in the main research. The names of the 10 participating restaurants are not given for ethical/confidentiality reasons and are referred to as restaurants A, B, C, D, E, F, G, H, I, J, K and L. The restaurant managers or the food and beverage managers from each restaurant were approached through oral permissions to conduct the study on their premises among their customers.

Table 3. 1:Sample size per restaurant

Restaurant	Seating capacity	Total customers from each restaurant	Percentage (%)
Restaurant A	147	33	22,45
Restaurant B	115	26	22,61
Restaurant C	89	20	22,5
Restaurant D	102	23	22,54
Restaurant E	62	14	22,58
Restaurant F	53	12	22,64
Restaurant G	133	30	22,55
Restaurant H	80	18	22,5
Restaurant I	48	11	22.91
Restaurant J	44	10	22,72
Restaurant K	84	19	22,61
Restaurant L	84	19	22,61
TOTAL	1051	235	22,35

Source: Own design

3.4 DATA COLLECTION METHOD AND INSTRUMENTS

3.4.1 Research questionnaire

The questionnaire for this study was designed based on recommendations of Leedy and Ormond (2010) in which it was stated that:

- The wording of the questions should be brief and relevant.
- Avoid unclear usage of difficult languages.
- Be straight to the point and very precise.
- Consistency in wording the questionnaire.
- Researcher should provide clearer instructions.

All the questions in the questionnaires were framed with brief introduction about the study, aim and objectives and how the questionnaire should be completed. To guarantee that the participants provided maximum answers to the questions, open and closed-ended questions form part of the questionnaires. In total 46 statements were included in the research questionnaire. The questions ranged from demographic information, frequency of visits to restaurants, reasons for choosing the restaurants, perceptions with the quality of food, level of services offered to customers. Table 3.1 shows the composition of the questionnaires. As indicated in table 3.2 below, a total of 235 customers were selected from 12 restaurants to provide answers to the research questions.

The questionnaires were administered to all the participants by the researchers over two week's period. During the administration periods, two ways were used by the researcher to distribute the research questionnaires among the customers. Majority of the questionnaires were completed on time except few that were completed behind schedule. To further speed up the data collecting processes, the researcher was always available to answer participants' questions and to personally collect the completed questionnaires. During the data collection periods, the researcher suffered severe limitations due to the rural nature of the research setting; at times, the researcher walked long hours to collect completed questionnaires.

Generally, most of the questions were designed to measure customer satisfaction considering ambience, the physical environment, size, colour, space lightening and music, among others. Every question was structured to provide answers to the aims and objectives. The final data were analysed after they were exported to spreadsheet thereafter the Statistical Package for Social Science (SPSS) 26 version programme was used for data analysis. Table 3.1 below illustrates the composition of the questionnaires. Each section of the questionnaire outlines questions and statements that were structured to answer the research questions.

Table 3. 2: Composition of the questionnaire

Section of the questionnaire	Concepts measured
Questions 1 to 6	Demographics information
Question 7	Frequency of visits to the restaurants
Question 8	Reasons for choosing this restaurant
Question 9	Average rand spent per person at this restaurant
Questions 10 and 11	The number of customers at the table and their relationship
Questions 12 to 41	Expectations with the quality of food, service, and ambience
Questions 42 to 45	Overall perception with the quality of the food, level of service, ambience, and overall customer satisfaction
Question 46	Recommendations on improving restaurant customer satisfaction

Source: Researcher's own illustration

3.4.2 Advantages of the research questionnaire

Data collection can be costly, as a researcher might have to invest time and money in travelling from one area to the next, especially when the respondents are located in geographically dispersed areas. However, according to Sekaran (2006), the use of questionnaires makes data collection relatively cheap, as questionnaires can be mailed to all the respondents with a single "click" of a computer tab, and dissemination can be achieved economically and in a way that also results in time saving in respect of administration (Bryman & Bell, 2011). In addition, respondents have the freedom to respond honestly without feeling that they must please the researcher. Thus, this method is free of bias. It is also convenient for respondents as they can answer the questions in their own time. Over and above this, anonymity is assured due to the absence of face-to-face interaction between the researcher and the participants.

3.4.3 Disadvantages of the research questionnaire

One of the disadvantages arising from using questionnaires is that the researcher is not present to clarify questions if respondents are uncertain about them. Similarly, the researcher cannot ask the respondents to elaborate on their answers (Bryman & Bell, 2011). There is also a practical restriction on the total number of questions that can be asked and on the kinds of questions that can be asked because the respondents may be reluctant to write much (Saunders, Lewis & Thornhill, 2012) and may find the process of answering the questions boring. The use of a questionnaire is usually characterised by a low response rate, and even with the responses received the researcher can never be certain that these were answered by the correct person (Bryman & Bell, 2011; Saunders, Lewis & Thornhill, 2012).

3.5 INTERVIEW SCHEDULE

Interview schedule is a critical data collecting tool used in conducting semi-structured interviews (Rowley, 2012). Majority of the data based on the pilot exercise was used to compile the interview schedule. Prior to the compilation of the interview schedule, the researchers asked permission from the majority of customers. Thereafter, the researcher explained to the customers and gave them the assurance that information collected would be kept confidential. In the process, open-ended questions were featured in the interview schedule to enable participants to provide individual inputs to every questions. Data gathered from the pilot interview were used to design the interview schedule. In total, the questions in the interview schedule were seven open-ended questions. The questions were framed in the following categories:

- General information on restaurants in East London including the physical location, type of food and beverages offer to customers daily.
- The interior and external design of the restaurants
- Business locations of the restaurant businesses
- Nature of the general ambience
- Physical environment of the restaurant businesses
- Physical appearances of employees (design of dresses etc)
- Physical outlooks of the restaurant businesses in the night (lighting systems and other forms of decorations).

By using the interview schedule, the researcher was able to focus on every area of the questions that needed attention.

3.5.1 Advantages of interviews

Creswell (2013) opines that semi-structured interviews are normally face-to-face interviews that involve personal contact. This could be advantageous as valuable information could be obtained in this way. In addition, any uncertainties that might arise between the participant and the interviewer can be clarified immediately. Semi-structured interviews also allow the researcher to probe for answers that are more suitable. From a general perspective, interviews have numerous advantages that conform to the nature of a qualitative research paradigm. Interviews provide the participants with the much-needed flexibility of explaining issues based on how well they know them. To the qualitative researcher, this is significant as the central issue in qualitative research is to justify the occurrence of a particular phenomenon. Significantly, interviews, mainly semi-structured and unstructured, allow the researcher to interject where necessary and ensure that the subject understands the topic or question under scrutiny.

In addition to this, an interviewer uses his/her interpersonal skills to explore significant issues raised by the participants – aspects that are central to comprehensive data collection. In contrast to the general analytical approach, a specific approach is preferred by Opdenakker (2006). The researcher deduces the strengths of the qualitative interview based on the techniques used, which include face-to-face, telephonic, messenger and e-mail interviews. Face-to-face interviews are advantageous based on the amount of data that can be collected (Opdenakker, 2006). In a general interview, time is a major factor, which is well used when the face-to-face mode is applied.

The researcher has the time to get comfortable and articulate issues vividly with the subject. Besides the aspect of quantity, the quality of data collected is also high. With the possibility of sticking to visual aids, the subject is much more likely to understand the question and yield appropriate responses, compared to telephonic or e-mail interviews. Face-to-face interviews are perfect for focus groups (Doyle, 2005). The advantages of telephonic interviews include a wide geographical coverage, it is easy to contact inaccessible individuals in closed sites or war zones, and it is relevant in dealing with sensitive issues where personal contact is not required (Opdenakker, 2006). Messenger chats and e-mail save on time and the cost of interviews.

3.6 Piloting the research instruments

In every scientific study, pilot study is conducted to determine the possibility of potential benefits and drawbacks regarding inputs of the measuring instruments. In this study, the researcher conducted pilot study of interview schedule as well as the questionnaires to assess the benefits and the challenges for implementations of the instruments (Greenfield, 2002). It was important to pilot the questionnaires and the interview schedule for experts' advice prior to administering to participants. For this research, the questionnaire was pilot examined with five customers in two restaurants in East London that were not included in the study.

The main aim was to ensure adequate understanding and readability of every question. The researcher focused on changing non-verbal cues, noting the ones that encouraged participants to open up and tried to work on minimising closed postures when talking to participants. The researcher checked the time to be spent on each interview to estimate how long the interviews would take. The participants were asked to fill in the draft questionnaires, which focused on their level of satisfaction in a particular restaurant. The participants were asked to indicate whether they fully understood the instructions, the meaning of each questions, and the words in the questionnaire. Recommendations that were provided on the draft questionnaires were implemented to form part of the final questionnaires.

Data based on the pilot interviews were used as inputs to design the questionnaires in order to measure customer satisfaction in the restaurant industries. One of the primary reasons for piloting the questionnaires was to make sure the question is user-friendly and to ensure that each question was relevant to stated objectives. Twenty customers were selected to participate in the pilot study. The outcome of the pilot exercise showed that the questionnaire required slight amendments. The researcher conducted pilot interviews using data collected from one group of the FGDs. The group members were regular customers who eat at the restaurants. The piloting conversations were tape recorded for control purposes. Each pilot interviewed took roughly 35 minutes. At the end, the researcher reframed some questions that were repeated in the interview scheduled. However, irrelevant issues as indicated were amended. The final interview schedule was designed based on information from the pilot interviews.

3.7 DATA COLLECTION METHODS

There are multitudes of challenges and various kinds problems faced by human as they interact with each other. As such, some critical answers are needed to solve the problems. These answers finally emerge through research interviews and in most cases via experiments. This present study found answers to the research problems and issues through investigative means. Furthermore, intensive review of literature was conducted in addition to interviews, questionnaires and FGDs.

3.7.1 Semi-structured interviews

Semi-structured interviews were utilised in this research to ensure the researcher obtained enough information about customers' satisfaction. Through the semi-structured interviews, more rapport and credible information was achieved (Moustakas, 1994). The interview guide that provided guidance throughout the interview processes involved a list of open-ended questions covering the research questions. These open-ended questions were for the purpose of not restricting or limiting the interviewees' ability to express their views, while providing answers to questions being asked. These forms of interviews enable participants to discuss *"lived experiences"* regarding customers' satisfaction in restaurants.

3.7.2 Focus group discussions (FGDs)

In order to gather additional qualitative data, the researcher employed FGDs. FGDs was used since it allows the researcher to explore customers' opinions on the various issues that contributes to customers satisfactions in East London. The researcher set further clear parameters as well as perspectives regarding the research topic. Various perspectives were provided by means of selected groups during formal interviews for meaningful inputs on the topic. Similar questions were posed to group members based on the interview schedule. The focus group discussions (FGDs) lasted for 35 minutes as the discussions were tape recorded as done with the semi-structured interviews. The focus group members consisted of 12 selected restaurants categorised as A, B, C, D, E, F, G, H, I, J, K and L.

3.8 Conducting interviews with customers

A total of 20 restaurant managers were interviewed of whom only 19 were available resulting in 95% response rate. Out of the 19 participating restaurant managers, one was under private ownership. All the 20 restaurant managers provided goods and beverages including specific sections for coffee. Individual arrangements were scheduled to interview the restaurant managers for duration of 40 minutes per session each week. The entire interviews were conducted in the respective restaurants. Except in two occasion where two owners asked to be interviewed in their homes due to family commitment at the time. Despite severe conditions due to the rurality of the study environment, the researcher was able to conduct the interviews for the entire two weeks. Due to work constraints most part of the interviews took place late in the evenings.

The interview sessions were based on semi-structured interviews which allowed the researcher to pose face-to-face questions at the sometimes was able to tape recorded responses from the research participants. Through the semi-structured interviews, the researcher used the opportunity to solicit participants' opinion on how best to satisfy customers. One limitation during the interview process was that most customers were unable to provide answers in English. As such, the researcher translated the questions in the local languages during the interviews.

3.8.1Advantages of interviews

Creswell (2013) opines that semi-structured interviews are normally face-to-face interviews that involve personal contact. This could be advantageous as valuable information could be obtained in this way. In addition, any uncertainties that might arise between the participant and the interviewer can be clarified immediately. Semi-structured interviews also allow the researcher to probe for answers that are more suitable. From a general perspective, interviews have numerous advantages that conform to the nature of a qualitative research paradigm. Interviews provide the participants with the much-needed flexibility of explaining issues based on how well they know them. To the qualitative researcher, this is significant as the central issue in qualitative research is to justify the occurrence of a particular phenomenon. Significantly, interviews, mainly semi-structured and unstructured, allow the researcher to interject where necessary and ensure that the subject understands the topic or question under scrutiny.

In addition to this, an interviewer uses his/her interpersonal skills to explore significant issues raised by the participants – aspects that are central to comprehensive data collection. In contrast to the general analytical approach, a specific approach is preferred by Opdenakker (2006). The researcher deduces the strengths of the qualitative interview based on the techniques used, which include face-to-face, telephonic, messenger and e-mail interviews. Face-to-face interviews are advantageous based on the amount of data that can be collected (Opdenakker, 2006). In a general interview, time is a major factor, which is well used when the face-to-face mode is applied. The researcher has the time to get comfortable and articulate issues vividly with the subject. Besides the aspect of quantity, the quality of data collected is also high. With the possibility of sticking to visual aids, the subject is much more likely to understand the question and yield appropriate responses, compared to telephonic or e-mail interviews. Face-to-face interviews are perfect for focus groups (Doyle, 2005). The advantages of telephonic interviews include a wide geographical coverage, it is easy to contact inaccessible individuals in closed sites or war zones, and it is relevant in dealing with sensitive issues where personal contact is not required (Opdenakker, 2006). Messenger chats and e-mail save on time and the cost of interviews.

The downside of telephonic interviews includes short interviews due to limited resources, and like other technological platforms, mainly e-mail and Messenger, physical aids cannot be used for further justification (Opdenakker, 2006). Significantly, it is hard for the researcher to identify the physical or emotional state of the participant.

3.8.2Disadvantages of interviews

Interviews (including semi-structured interviews) generally tend to be time consuming and have cost implications that need to be taken into consideration (Creswell, 2013). The researcher decides on the questions in advance, therefore limiting what the respondent can talk about (and in turn limiting validity). The wording of some questions may need interpretation that the researcher cannot give. The respondents may interpret the interviewer's social characteristics, for example, age, gender and class, in ways that influence their responses. Respondents may lie and the interview cannot be exactly replicated as the data is influenced by the interviewer.

The definite structure of the interview can lead to areas of interest missed, as the interviewer has to stick to set questions. Sometimes rapport is required before responses are given or the interviewee feels the need to give the desired responses.

The structured interviews use a fixed list of closed-ended questions so that answers can be classified, counted and quantified. Structured interviews are lists of questions that are rigidly focused on, while semi-structured interviews have lists of questions or areas of interest that the interviewer uses to direct the interview, but the interviewer can ask other questions. Probing make each interview slightly different and increases the chance of interviewer bias (Creswell, 2013).

The disadvantages of qualitative interviews are linked to each technique used. The downside of face-to-face interviews includes being costly and requiring a long time to complete (Doyle, 2005). In face-to-face interaction, the researcher needs to travel or pay for the participants' travel fare to the interview sites. Significantly, interviewees also need to be trained. These are all aspects that add to the cost and time involved. Consequently, face-to-face interviews should be physically limited to a single geographical region where the interviewee is interviewed on the spot.

3.9 CONFIRMABILITY

The concept of confirmability of qualitative research establishes the interpretation of the outcomes (Tobin & Beglen, 2004). Confirmability is a research instrument to determine the authenticity of the research (Lincoln & Guba, 1985). This empirical research provided relevant steps and transparency of all the processes from the start to the end of the research. Furthermore, confirmability was established through the transcripts, based on the face-to-face interviews, as well as the field notes.

3.10 QUANTITATIVE PHASE OF DATA ANALYSIS

This study applied mixed methods to analyse primary data consisting of investigative tools. As a result, both qualitative and quantitative data are used to integrate the two forms in a single as well as a multiphase project (Creswell, Plano & Clark, 2011). Mixed methods enable the researcher in this study to conduct sets of analysis in combination to determine quantitative and qualitative research outcomes. These forms of analysis are in line with the research questions, the formulated hypotheses as well as the qualitative questions (Creswell, Plano & Clark, 2011).

The researcher in this study applied a Likert scale point questionnaire to analyse the primary data. During the quantitative analysis phase, the following steps were applied. Raw data was initially converted into useful data. This means primary data was scored by assigning values to responses and by cleaning the data. The outcomes of the data analysis are represented in statements of summary, figures and tables. The descriptive analytical tools were applied to analyse the study outcomes. Through the descriptive various characteristics of the study were explored among two or more phenomena (Leedy & Ormrod, 2013). This study applied descriptive statistics to show data-based questionnaires by means of percentages and frequencies. Thus, it allowed for pattern identifications and for statistical inferences regarding demographic population of variables.

3.11 RELIABILITY OF RESEARCH CONSTRUCTS

The internal consistency of questionnaire items of a multiple nature can be measured by Cronbach's alpha coefficient (Tavakoli & Dennick, 2011). Cronbach's alpha is an adequate instrument used in empirical studies to test the reliability of a scientific tool used to implement a Likert scale. The numbers of Cronbach's alpha Coefficient range from 0 and 1. Any value that is above 0.8 is accepted as the test of intelligence. Below (refer to table 3.3) are four constructs food and beverage satisfaction, service and ambience satisfaction ranged from 0.917 to 0.956. All the constructs were more than the minimum required figure of 0.7 to ensure sufficient reliability (Nunnally, 1978).

Table 3.3: Cronbach's alpha scores for questionnaire items

Item constructs	No. of items	Cronbach's alpha
Food and beverage satisfaction	14	0.956
Service satisfaction	7	0.917
Ambience satisfaction	9	0.929
Overall satisfaction	4	0.882

Based on the table above, the reliability scores for the questionnaire were consistent. Sekaran (2006) states that substantial reliability (0.95) of a questionnaire might lack the desirability due to some items being redundant and thus not being able to provide fresh knowledge. Table 3.3 above depicts alphas for every dimension, including the total alphas. Drawing from the table, the three dimensions stated in the table revealed high coefficients of over 0.9. These dimensions are food and beverage satisfaction (0.956), service satisfaction (0.917), and ambience satisfaction (0.929). All the items indicated on the questionnaire showed a high level of internal consistency, ranging from 88.2% to 96.5%.

3.12 QUALITATIVE PHASE OF DATA ANALYSIS

Generally, data analysis entails the processing and analysing data for interpretations of results to reach the final conclusions (Theron, 2015). Interpretation of qualitative data allows the researcher to correctly assigned meanings to data (Yin, 2011). The qualitative phase of this study was based on interview schedule designed to gather data from participants. Participants responses through the semi-structured interviews as well as FGDs were analysed by means of thematic analysis. The thematic analysis was used to identify as well as for analysing and to report patterns as revealed by data (Braun & Clarke, 2006).

To ensure qualitative data in this study are analysed the researcher adopted the following processes:

- The researcher continuously read the interview transcripts and listen carefully to every recording.
- Perform thematic analysis as part of the process to identify and encode the qualitative data.
- Draw similarities of experiences, paraphrase every idea that emerged from participants and provide direct quotations.
- Finally, themes that bears similarities are combined into sub-themes.

Further results based on FGDs undergone comparisons with results of semi-structured interviews. Any form of discrepancies was investigated. To ensure that the study was validated, specific research questions posed were formulated to ascertain the appropriate information from the participants. Reliability of the questionnaire outcomes were compared to FGDs (triangulation).

3.13 Ethical considerations

One of the primary ethical issues of this study focused on participants of the study who were recruited voluntarily. Besides, the selection processes of participants were unbiased because individuals' age, education, culture, disabilities, and financial well-being was not applied. The research instruments were distributed to only customers who visited the identified restaurants. For anonymity and confidentiality, the researcher did not include personal details and personal information on the research instruments.

The purpose of this study was explained to participants prior to the commencement of the study. Information regarding time to be taken to complete each questionnaire, during the FGDs and interviews were provided to the participants. Also, the stipulation that at any time participants could withdraw from providing information; only answers to questions for which they were comfortable (Leedy & Ormrod, 2013; Salkind, 2012). Finally, participants were asked to acknowledge the consent form in line with the research ethics code.

3.14 CONCLUSION

This chapter outlines the research methodology, data collection methods, target population and the sampling strategy used. Besides, the issues of ethical considerations were explained while the chapter briefly discussed the piloting of the study instruments.

CHAPTER FOUR

PRESENTATION OF THE EMPIRICAL FINDINGS

4.1 INTRODUCTION

The main objective of this empirical research was to determine customers' satisfaction in East London restaurants. Besides, the research was designed to identify the various factors that determine customers' satisfaction of food and beverages in restaurants. The previous chapter described the methodology used to gather the primary data that was collected from qualitative and quantitative responses to meet the main objective of the empirical research to measure participants' satisfaction in restaurants across East London. This chapter presents the findings based on each process and procedure as described in the previous chapter. The present chapter is structured to outline the results based on the statistical and thematic information from field data that was collected from 235 participants across 12 restaurants in East London. Presentations were in graphs and tables to provide meaningful information in quantitative formats while qualitative data were addressed using thematic formats.

4.2 OBJECTIVES OF THE RESEARCH

Below are the objectives that guided the research:

- To identify the food and beverage factors that contribute to customer satisfaction in restaurants in East London.
- To identify the service factors that contribute to customer satisfaction in restaurants in East London.
- To explore the ambience factors that contribute to customer satisfaction in restaurants in East London.
- To make recommendations to improve customer satisfaction in restaurants in East London.

4.3 DESCRIPTIVE STATISTICS

The descriptive data for this empirical research applied descriptions to the data gathered from the fieldwork. Different descriptions and responses by the participants to each question were posed in relation to the research objectives. Below is the descriptive analysis based on the demographic profiles of participants.

4.4 SECTION A: DEMOGRAPHIC PROFILE OF PARTICIPANTS

- **Demographic data**

Section A of the Likert scale questionnaire asked the participants to provide background information regarding their profiles. The descriptive statistics were applied to explain and describe the primary data. Thus, the descriptive analysis involved raw data transformation for easy interpretation and insights (Zikmund, 2003; Sekaran & Bougie, 2010). Included were gender, age group, home language, monthly income, level of education, and occupation.

4.4.1 Gender of participants

- **Purpose of the question**

This section determined the split in the gender composition of the participants (refer to Appendix B).

- **Empirical outcome**

Figure 4.1 shows the composition of gender regarding the research target population.

Figure 4. 1: Gender of participants

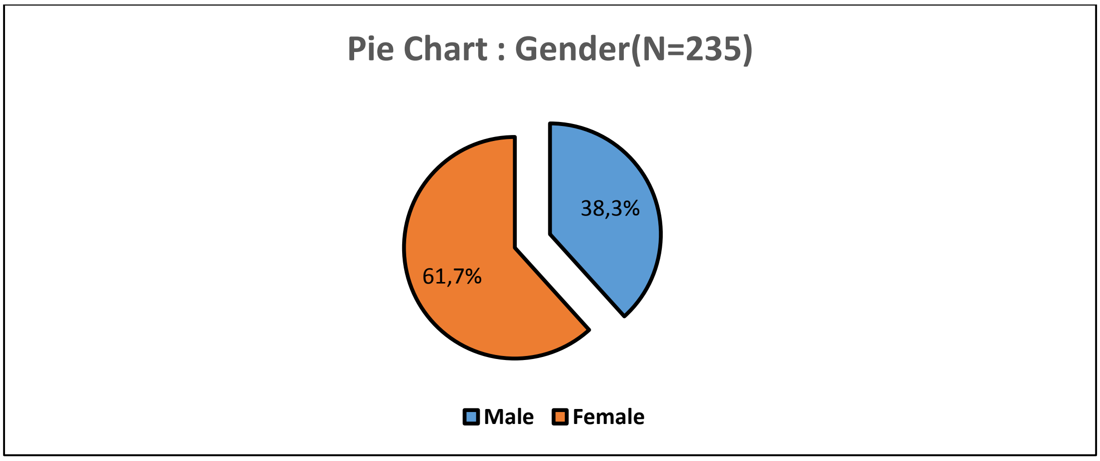


Figure 4.1 above indicates that most (n = 145; 61.7%) of the participants were female. From the total population of 235 (n = 90) 38.3% were male. This indicates the prevalence of females in the restaurant industry.

4.4.2 Age groups of participants

- **Purpose of the question**

The question on the participants' age, as stated in the questionnaire (refer Appendix B), was designed to determine the age groups of the participants.

- **Empirical outcome**

The participants' age composition is shown in Figure 4.2 below.

Figure 4. 2: Participants' age groups

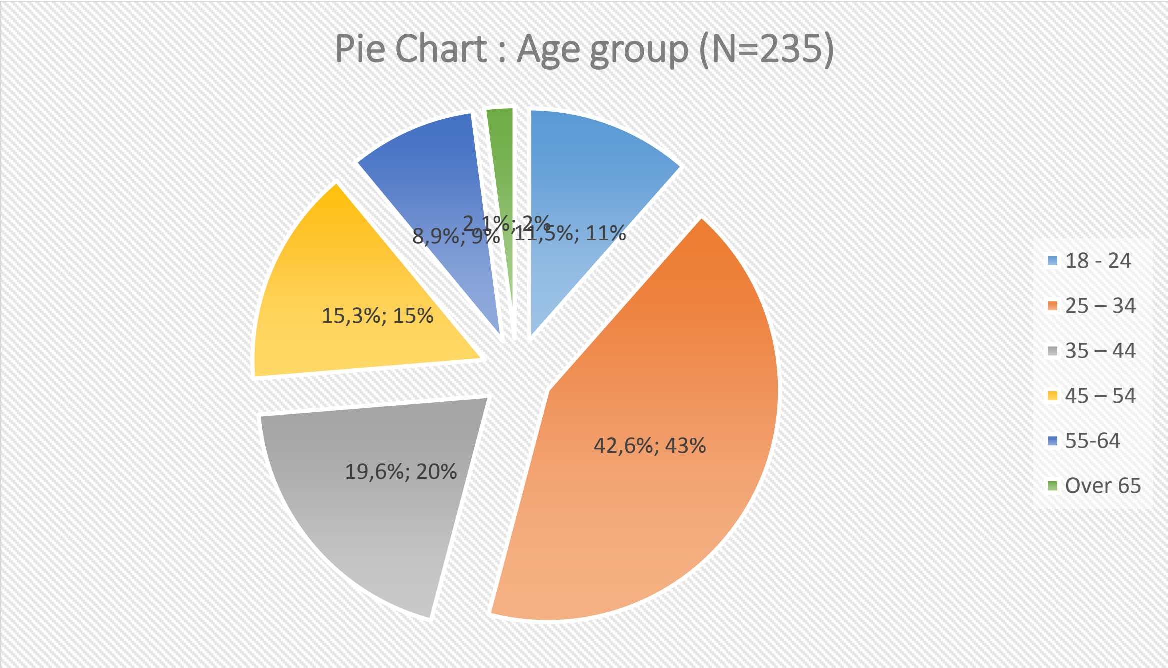


Figure 4.2 above shows that the majority of the participants are in the age group 25-34 (n=100, 42.6%); followed by 35-44 (n=46; 19.6%) 35-44; 45-54 (n=36; 15.3%); and 19-24 (n=27; 11.5%). The age group 18-24 was the second lowest (n=21; 8%), while over 65 constituted the lowest (n=5; 2.1%).

4.4.3 Home language of participants

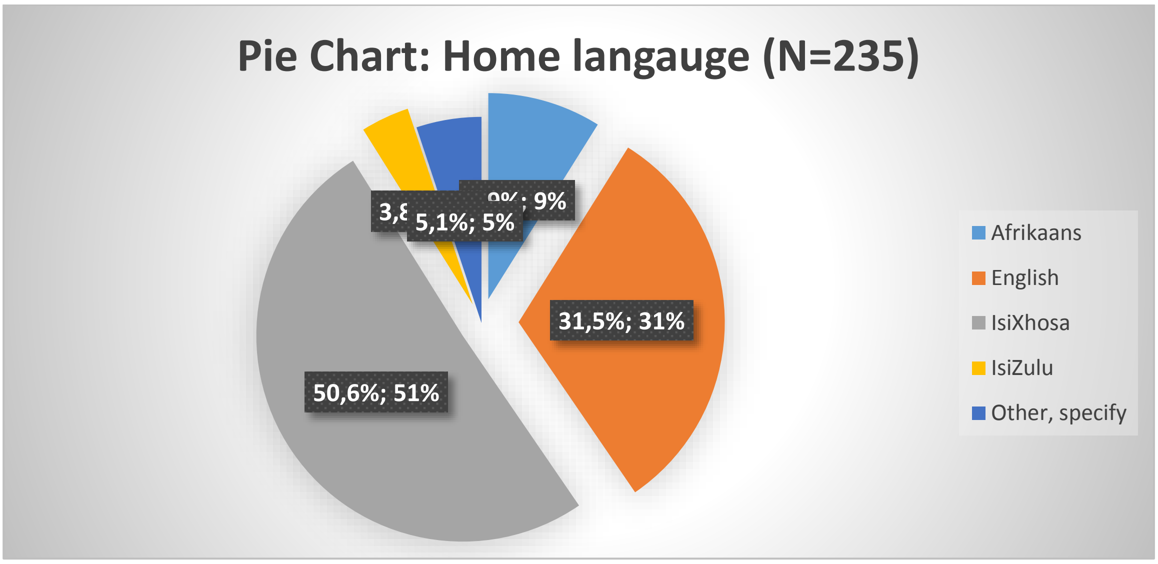
- **Purpose of the question**

This section of the questionnaire (refer to Appendix A) was designed to determine the language representation of the participants in the research.

- **Empirical outcome**

The participants' home language is indicated in Figure 4.3 below.

Figure 4. 3: Home language of participants



The home language of the majority (n=119; 50.6%) is IsiXhosa; then English (n=74; 31.5%); other languages (n=21; 8.9%); Afrikaans (n=12; 5.1%); and finally, IsiZulu (n=9; 3.8%).

4.4.4 Monthly income of participants

Purpose of the question

This section of the questionnaire (refer to Appendix A) was designed to provide information on the participants' income group.

Empirical outcome

The monthly income groups of the participants who provided empirical data are indicated in Figure 4.4 on the next page.

Figure 4. 4: Participants' monthly income

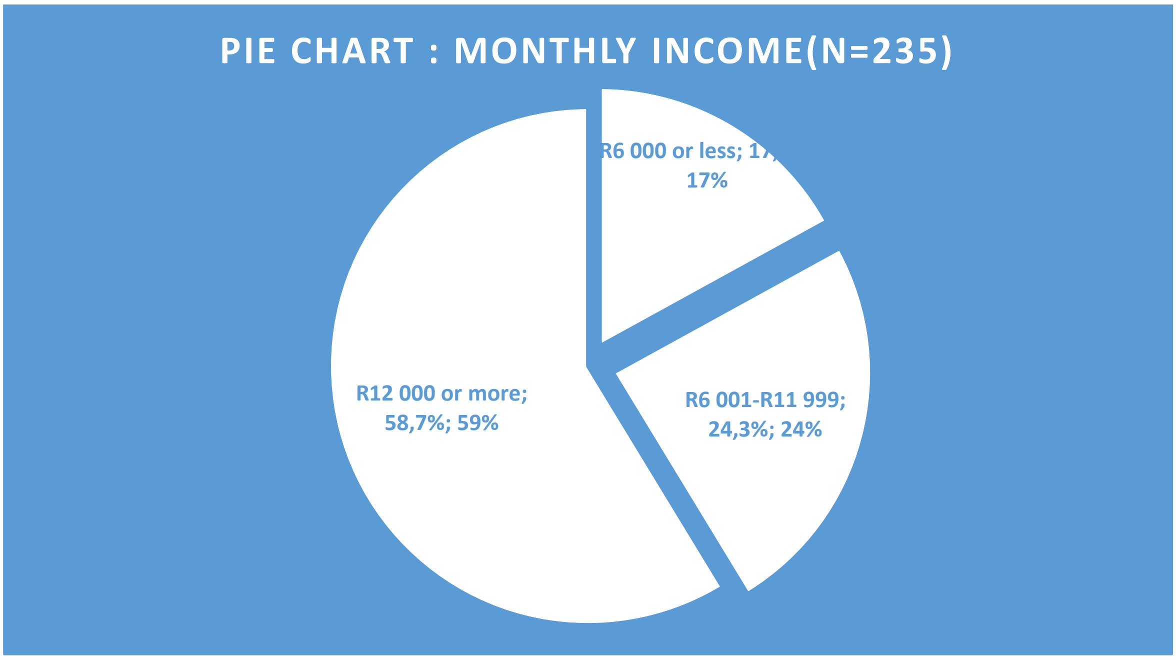


Figure 4.3 shows that the majority (n = 138; 58.7%) earn a monthly income of over R12 000, followed by the R6001 to R11 999 income group (n = 57; 24.3%). The income group R6000 or less accounted for the lowest number of the participants (n = 40; 17.0%).

4.4.5 Participants' level of education

- **Purpose of the question**

This section of the questionnaire (refer to Appendix B) was designed to ascertain the level of education among the participants.

- **Empirical outcome**

The level of education of the participants who provided empirical data are indicated in Figure 4.5 on the next page.

Figure 4. 5: Level of education

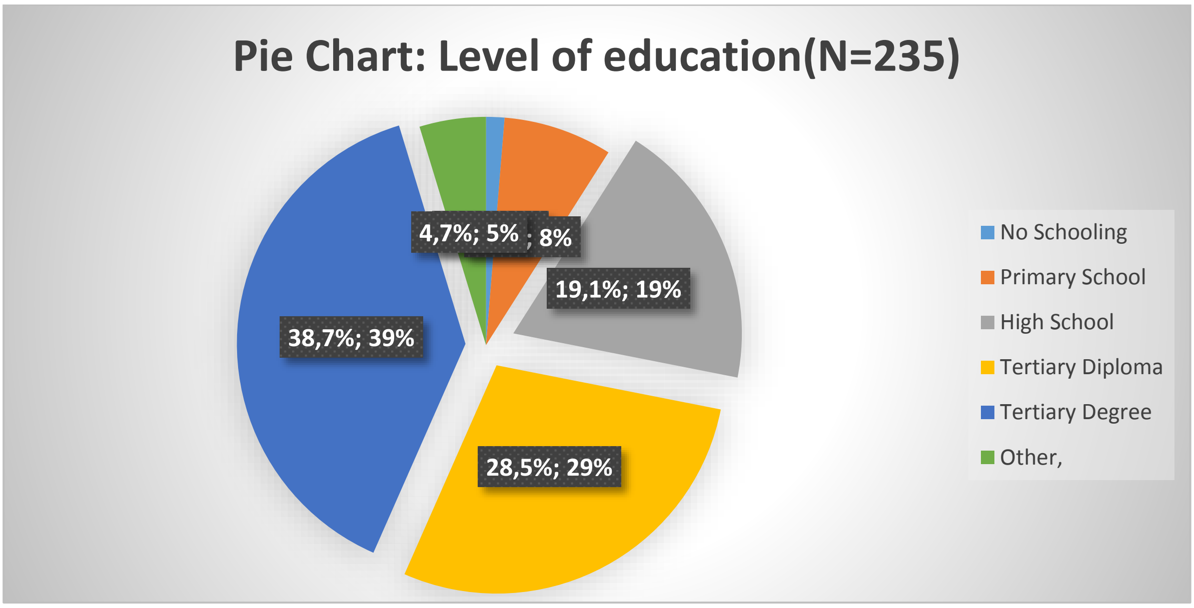


Figure 4.5 indicates that the highest (n = 91; 38.7%) percentage of participants obtained a tertiary degree. The next highest qualification (n = 67; 28.5%) was a tertiary diploma; then high school (n = 45; 19.1%); primary school (n = 18; 7.7%); other forms of education (n = 11; 4.7%); and finally, the lowest percentage of participants (n = 3; 1.3%) had no form of education.

4.4.6 Participants' occupation

- **Purpose of the question**

This section of the questionnaire (refer to Appendix B) was structured to explain the occupation of the participants.

- **Empirical outcome**

Figure 4.6 on the following page depicts the different occupations of the participants.

Figure 4. 6: Participants' occupation

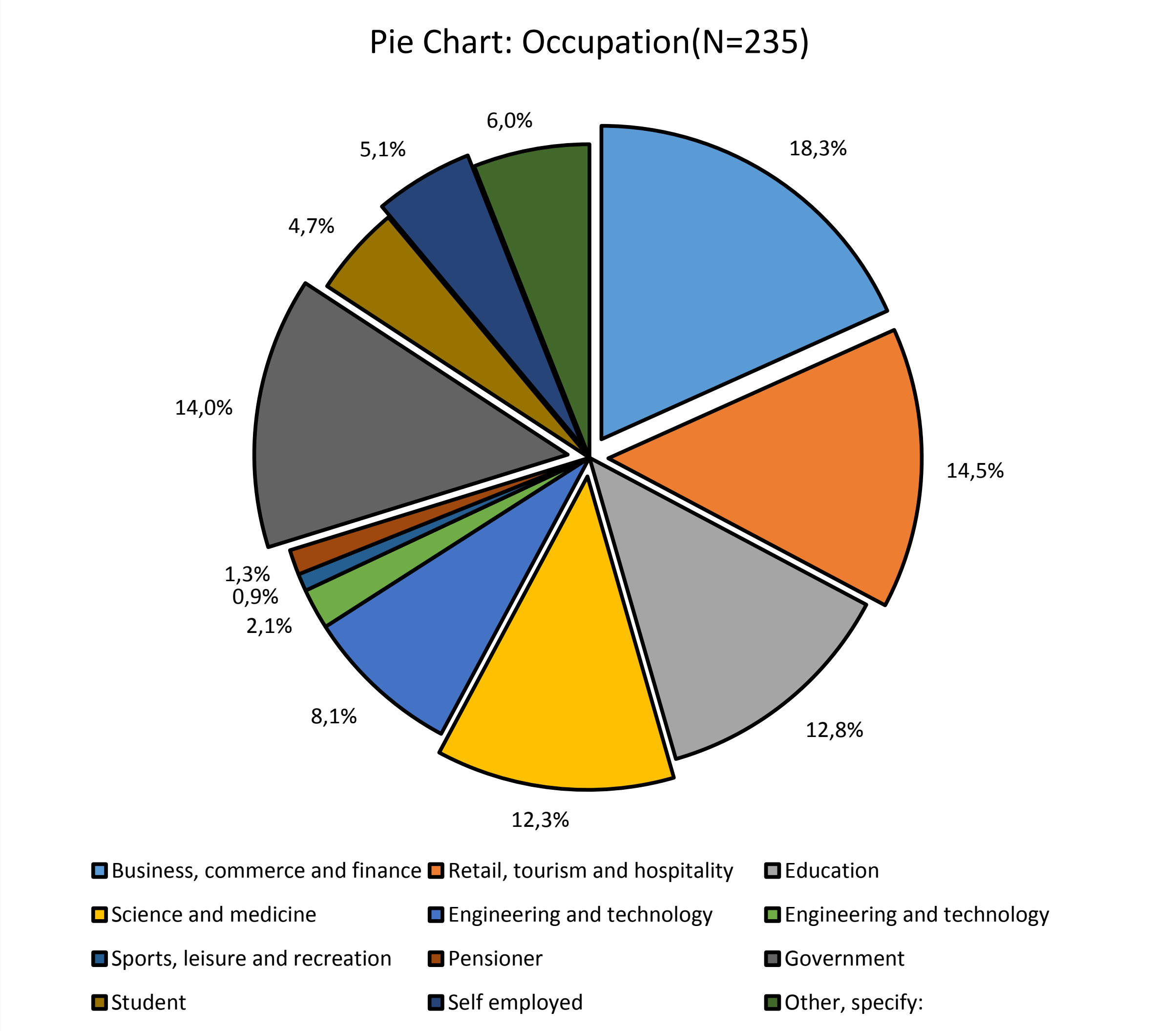


Figure 4.6 above shows the three largest occupations (n = 43; 18.3%; n = 34; 14.5%; n = 32; 14%) and the previous largest occupations – business, commerce and finance, retail, tourism and hospitality, education, science and medicine. The occupations that featured least were engineering and technology (n = 2; 0.9%), pensioner (n = 3; 1.3%), and other (n = 5; 2.1%).

4.5 SECTION B: INFERENTIAL STATISTICS

To ensure that the stated objectives were met, the researcher formulated 3 null hypotheses to be tested. For this study inferences were drawn based on the statistical tool of a non-experimental design of ANOVA to explore degree to which the variables impact customers satisfaction in restaurant businesses in East London. This was preceded by utilising descriptive statistics to distribute the primary data. This section (section B) of the research questionnaire was employed for inferential statistics.

4.6 RESEARCH HYPOTHESES

4.6.1 Descriptive statistics

Table 4. 1:Descriptive statistics

Food and beverage satisfaction index								
					95% Confidence Interval for Mean			
	N	Mean	Std. Deviation	Std. Error	Lower Bound	Upper Bound	Min	Max
Restaurant A	32	54.31	10.733	1.897	50.44	58.18	29	70
Restaurant B	26	56.15	11.383	2.232	51.56	60.75	28	70
Restaurant C	20	58.15	8.368	1.871	54.23	62.07	37	70
Restaurant D	23	56.09	12.656	2.639	50.61	61.56	26	70
Restaurant E	14	60.14	7.774	2.078	55.65	64.63	45	70
Restaurant F	12	59.58	10.466	3.021	52.93	66.23	40	70
Restaurant G	30	56.97	10.394	1.898	53.09	60.85	37	70
Restaurant H	18	47.33	10.566	2.491	42.08	52.59	32	70
Restaurant I	11	40.82	6.030	1.818	36.77	44.87	33	54
Restaurant J	10	41.50	8.721	2.758	35.26	47.74	31	61
Restaurant K	19	40.58	8.395	1.926	36.53	44.63	24	59
Restaurant L	19	42.58	10.521	2.414	37.51	47.65	27	63
Total	234	52.19	12.105	0.791	50.63	53.75	24	70

Based on the table above, there is a high significant mean in terms of the food and beverage satisfaction index in the restaurants under study in East London. Restaurant E displayed the highest level of food and beverage satisfaction (mean= 60.14, SD= 7.774) in comparison to other restaurants. Restaurant I displayed the lowest level of satisfaction (mean = 40.82; SD = 6.03). The conclusion reached is that most of the restaurants that took part in the survey recorded a good score in terms of providing food and beverages to customers satisfaction in East London. To further understand the level of customer satisfaction, the study employed and discussed the null hypothesis as stated on the next page.

4.7 TESTING NULL HYPOTHESIS

To test or make comparison for significant differences in the means values of two groups of population as in this study, the researcher applied ANOVA as the appropriate statistical tool (Zikmund, 2003). Participants' responses are stated in the table below based on the formulated hypothesis.

$H1_N$: Food and beverage factors do not determine customers' satisfaction in restaurants in East London.

Table 4. 2: ANOVA

Food and beverage satisfaction index					
	Sum of Squares	Df	Mean Square	F	p-value
Between groups	11144,713	11	1013,156	9,781	0,000
Within groups	22995,633	222	103,584		
Total	34140,346	233			

In the table above, a one-way ANOVA was performed at 5% level of significance. The aim was to test the significant effect of the restaurant on food and beverage satisfaction in Restaurant A to L. According to the table, there is a significant effect of the restaurant's name on the food and beverage satisfaction at $P< 0.05$ for the 12 conditions (F, (11.222= 9.781; P-Value = 0.000); the null hypothesis (H/n_1) is rejected at 5% level of significance. Thus, restaurant E has a significant effect on food and beverage satisfaction. This implies that food and beverage have positive influence on customer satisfaction.

4.7.1 Descriptive analysis

Table 4. 3: Monthly income and service satisfaction

		N	Mean	Std. Deviation	Std. Error	95% Confidence Interval for Mean		Min	Max
						Lower Bound	Upper Bound		
Service satisfaction index	R6 000 or less	40	25,28	6,500	1,028	23,20	27,35	11	35
	R6 001-R11 999	57	25,67	6,206	0,822	24,02	27,31	7	35
	R12 000 or more	137	26,36	6,728	0,575	25,23	27,50	7	35
	Total	234	26,01	6,553	0,428	25,16	26,85	7	35

Table 4.3 above shows that the respondents with a monthly income of R12 000 or more indicated the highest mean of service satisfaction (mean = 26.36; SD = 6. 728) in contrast to the income group who earned R6000 or less, who had the lowest mean of service satisfaction (mean = 25.28; SD = 6.500).

4.8 TESTING NULL HYPOTHESIS

To test or make comparison for differences in the means values of two, groups or populations as in this study, the researcher applied ANOVA as the appropriate statistical tool (Zikmund, 2003). Responses of the research participants are stated in the table below.

H_{2N}: Monthly income do not contribute to customer satisfaction in restaurants in East London

To test or make comparison for differences in the means values of two, groups or populations as in this study, the researcher applied ANOVA as the appropriate statistical tool (Zikmund, 2003). Responses of the research participants are stated in the table below.

Table 4. 4: ANOVA

		Sum of Squares	df	Mean Square	F	p-value
Service satisfaction index	Between groups	45,589	2	22,795	0,529	0,590
	Within groups	9960,393	231	43,119		
	Total	10005,983	233			

A one-way ANOVA was conducted at 5% level of significance to test the significant effect of monthly income (R6000 or less, R6001 to R11 999, and R12 000 or more) on service satisfaction conditions. As stated in Table 18, there is no significant effect of monthly income on service satisfaction at $p > 0.05$ for three conditions ($F (2.231) = 0.0529$, $p = 0.590$). The null hypothesis (H_{2N}) is not rejected at 5% level of significance. Therefore, monthly income has no significant effect on service satisfaction.

Descriptive statistical

Table 4. 5: Ambience customer satisfaction by gender

Group Statistics					
	A1. Gender	N	Mean	Std. Deviation	Std. Error Mean
ASSI	Male	89	32,81	8,135	0,862
	Female	145	32,13	8,263	0,686

Table 4.5 shows a slightly greater ambience customer satisfaction (mean = 32.81; S.D = 8.135) for male respondents compared to the ambience customer satisfaction (mean = 32.13; SD = 8.263) for female respondents.

4.9 TESTING NULL HYPOTHSIS

The independent t-test was run to test the null hypothesis between two independent groups for statistical evidence that are associated with the population means.

$H3_N$: Ambience factors do not contribute to customer satisfaction in restaurants in East London.

This section of the study used an independent t-test to test the formulated hypotheses to determine the significant differences between two independent group of categories.

Table 4. 6: Independent t-test

Independent samples test										
		Levene's Test for Equality of Variances		t-test for Equality of Means						
		F	Sig.	t	df	p-value	Mean Difference	Std. Error Difference	95% Confidence Interval of the Difference	
									Lower	Upper
Ambience Satisfaction index	Equal variances assumed	0,159	0,690	0,613	232	0,541	0,678	1,106	-1,502	2,857
	Equal variances not assumed			0,615	188, 542	0,539	0,678	1,102	-1,496	2,852

In order to test the equality of variances between the two gender groups (males and females) in respect to ambience customer satisfaction, the researcher conducted Levene's test. Results seemed to be satisfactory, but not significant (Sig = 0.690> 0.05). Therefore, the variance may be assumed to be equal between the genders. An independent sample t-test was conducted to test for a significant difference between male and females in terms of ambience customer satisfaction at 5% level of significance (alpha = 0.05). There was no significant difference between male and females in terms of ambience customer satisfaction (0.05 (t (232) = 0.613; p-value = 0.0541). Therefore, the null hypothesis (H_{3N}) is not rejected at 5% level of significance.

4.10 QUALITATIVE ANALYSIS

This section of the empirical research presents the results of the face-to face-interviews and focus group discussions (FGDs) with 33 participants. Specifically, it focuses on Section 46 of the questionnaire. In an attempt to assist the researcher to contextualise the participants in both the face-to-face interviews and the FGDs, only Question 46 (refer to the questionnaire) was distributed among the customers in all the restaurants (A to L). The question aimed to explore various recommendations to improve customer satisfaction. Using these methods, the actual lived recommendations, in line with customer perceptions about the services provided to them by selected restaurants, were outlined. The final findings are outlined with practical discussions.

Of the 33 participants, 20 took part in the FGDs. Each group consisted of five participants. The focus groups were labelled group AL to DL. Participants in the interviews and FGDs were chosen by means of the convenience sampling tool. The qualitative data was collected after the face-to-face interviews took place over a period of two weeks. The FGD's data were ascertained and presented after the researcher listened to the recordings. Below are the recommendations gathered from the various participants in the restaurants under study (Restaurant A to Restaurant L).

Most of the participants in Restaurant A (57%) were unable to make recommendations to improve customer satisfaction. During the face-to-face interviews, the participants offered recommendations, including the following: *"Everything is excellent", "Incomplete", "Look at improving the services", and "Menu needs improvement and the taste of food to level up a bit". One participant stated, "Visibility of the manager also needs to improve to check on customers' services". During the FGDs, the participants provided mixed recommendations, such as: "Extension of opening hours of the restaurant", and "the safe seats are impractical to sit…low for the tables".* One participant stated that they waited one hour for a cup of tea.

During the interviews and FGDs with participants in Restaurant B, the majority were unable to make recommendations on the services. The bulk of the participants recommended free Wi-Fi. Another recommendation was that "the place is small; they need to enlarge it". Further engagement with the participants in focus group BC revealed similar recommendations – increasing and augmenting staff and services. "Personalised touch… by waiters" was another suggestion. A participant from focus group CL stated, "I personally recommend that managers of this restaurant invest more in employees, especially the waiters, to enhance customer services delivery".

Majority of the participants who were interviewed in Restaurant C selected "no comment". A few recommended that the menu in the restaurant needs improvement. Participants in focus group CL suggested the following: “speed up services” and “open mini bar at the bar section”. One participant recommended that a “traditional outfit will be ideal for cultural day”.

Restaurant D’s participant recommendations during the face-to-face interviews and FGDs ranged from: “More desert options and healthier choices” to “chefs should not put too much spice on the meat… beef had too much”. However, at the time of the face-to-face interviews, most participants had no comment on the restaurants.
Regarding the participants interviewed in Restaurant E, over half selected “no comment” while the following were mentioned during the face-to-face interviews, the participants mentioned “Local music…will not be enjoyable”, “More ambience needed”, and “Install DStv channels”. The researcher engaged in FGDs with the “AL” participants to obtain their recommendations. One participant recommended the following: “More interior decor is required. More improvement in terms of waiting time. Improve food conditions in the restaurant”.

The bulk of the participants interviewed in the face-to-face interviews for Restaurant F were unable to provide concrete recommendations. One participant suggested the following: “Attention to customer needs and serve hot steak”. Another participant recommended: “More greetings from restaurant staff… show lovely gestures to customers”. Another suggestion was “warmer restaurant conditions”. Other participants recommended friendlier staff.

The researcher interviewed participants in Restaurant G for more recommendations. During the face-to-face interviews, the participants put forward several recommendations. However, the majority (63.3%) were unable to provide recommendations. The FGDs established that the participants wanted the restaurant to provide more variety on the menu, as well as more photographs of the food and beverages to assist customers in their choices. During the probe for more recommendations during the FGDs, recommendations varied from improved interior décor to Wi-Fi, and “more cappuccino”. A participant from group CL recommended that “the restaurant moves the restroom of males further from females”. Similar interviews and FGDs discussion with the participants in the restaurant indicated that the majority (83.3%) of the participants did have any recommendations. It emerged from the general interaction with the FGDs that the participants needed a focussed organised policy framework. Further recommendations were that food items should be readily available on the premises. Other recommendations from the participants in the FGDs indicated that “drinks are required in addition to several foodstuffs”.

Based on the FGDs as well as the face-to-face interviews with the participants in Restaurant I, they were in agreement with the other participants, who recommended from a good location to the better provisioning of food. However, the majority (72.7%) of the participants who were interviewed in Restaurant I provided no comments. A few participants reiterated that more needed to be done in terms of the existing menu. During the face-to-face interviews, one participant suggested more visible management presence in the restaurant. Another recommendation was to "increase in routine table checks".

More recommendations were provided by the participants in Restaurant J during the probing interviews and the FGDs. However, the majority (80%) of the participants were unable to provide recommendations but those in the FGDs recommended more friendly staff and management, and better services in the restaurant.

Participants in Restaurant K were also unable to provide recommendations. Most of them (68.4%) did not recommend any further action. Only a few recommendations emerged during the FGDs and face-to-face interviews. For instance, the FGDs revealed recommendations such as management acknowledging staff and the services provided, providing adequate waiters, more staff training, and general staff management to handle customers' complaints. One participant suggested the following: *"Management needs to upskill employees to better handle customers' complaints"*.

In terms of the interviews and the FGDs with the participants in Restaurant L, several related recommendations emerged. The bulk (63.2%) of the respondents did not put forward any recommendations. However, recommendations such as the provision of sufficient customer services to clients, the quick delivery of services, and the cleanliness of restrooms were highlighted. A participant suggested the following: *"Staff cleanliness and appropriate dress is required"*. Another participant from the face-to-face interviews recommended "additional waiters" for the restaurant. A final suggestion was that *"management needs to be available"*.

4.11 OBJECTIVES OF THE EMPIRICAL RESEARCH

The broader research objectives were to determine the significant effect of the independent variables. However, the research was designed specifically:

- To examine food and beverage factors that determine customer satisfaction in restaurants in East London.
- To identify service factors that determine customer satisfaction in East London.
- To explore ambience factors that contribute to customer satisfaction in restaurants in East London.

It is the responsibility of the researcher to ensure that the empirical processes are pursued in a logical and traceable manner with adequate documentations. Several tasks were completed to ascertain the dependability of this research. This included providing deeper coverage of the entire empirical processes. In addition, various face-to-face interviews and FGDs were conducted.

4.12 RESEARCH QUESTIONS

- What are the food and beverage factors that determine customer satisfaction in restaurants in East London?
- What are the service factors that determine customer satisfaction in restaurants in East London?
- What are the ambience factors that contribute to customer satisfaction in restaurants in East London?
- What are the food and beverage factors that determine customer satisfaction in East London restaurants?
- What service factors determine customer satisfaction in East London restaurants?
- What ambience factors contribute to customer satisfaction in East London restaurants?

4.13 TRIANGULATION OF QUALITATIVE AND QUANTITATIVE FIELD DATA

Comparing the field data results from qualitative and quantitative data identified mixed findings. Among these are findings that the participants were not generally satisfied for services provided due to menu, taste of food quality, visibility of restaurant owner-managers as well as the setting arrangements. During the FGDs participants in various groups agreed that managers need to invest more in employees to increase service quality delivery. It emerged from qualitative data that participants needed more to be done in terms of food quality and also increase in ambience factors to improve interior décor. The key focal point of qualitative and quantitative was that not all participants dislike services and food quality in restaurants. Different reasons were highlighted to increase service and food quality. Similarly prefer improvement to the interior décor, sound, and music quality. These were some of the reasons why customers not satisfied. Regarding food and beverage, service quality and ambience factors participants during the qualitative and quantitative findings showed mixed feelings that qualitative data indicates that much improvement in food quality to increase customer satisfaction.

4.14 CONCLUSION

This section of the chapter outlined the qualitative and quantitative outcomes of the research. The chapter also triangulates the entire findings. These findings arose from the face-to-face interviews, as well as from descriptive data. The chapter also interpreted and discussed the descriptive data based on specific findings. In addition, the empirical results were discussed and presented in pie graphs and tables to ensure that the findings were understandable.

CHAPTER FIVE
SUMMARY OF EMPIRICAL FINDINGS, CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATIONS

5.1 INTRODUCTION

The research overview and the in-depth conclusions, which emerged from this empirical research, are presented in this chapter. In addition, the research limitations, the practical implications, and the final recommendations for restaurants owners in East London are provided.

5.2 RESEARCH OVERVIEW

The primary purpose of this empirical research was to ascertain customer satisfaction in restaurants in East London. Mixed methods research was used to achieve the stated objectives. Empirical data was collected through instruments such as the Likert scale, questionnaires, face-to-face interviews and FGDs from 12 restaurants across the city. In addition, this research applied null and alternative hypotheses in search of the objectives.

The qualitative findings revealed mixed but relevant information. Many of the participants stated that services were highly satisfactory. For instance, participants in Restaurant F indicated high service satisfaction. However, it emerged that the services offered in Restaurant I were below expectations. The research further showed that participants who earned an income of R12 000 and above were more satisfied regarding the food and beverages. The results established that monthly income earners of R6000 or less were not satisfied with the food and beverages in restaurants.

It also emerged that another factor the level of education plays significant role in a customer’s satisfaction in a restaurant. Simply stated, the empirical findings outlined that customers who are more highly qualified appeared more satisfied in terms of the food and beverages offered in East London restaurants.

Regarding customer satisfaction relating to ambience, the participants in Restaurant J were least satisfied in this regard. The results based on the gender of the participants indicated that differences existed between male and female levels of satisfaction. Further results based on the age group of the participants established that a significant number of those between the ages of 28 to 34 were satisfied with the ambience. The age group 35 to 55 achieved a similar level of ambience satisfaction.

The qualitative outcomes of the face-to-face interviews and FGDs revealed mixed results. A total of 33 participants took part in the qualitative research. From that number, 20 were selected to participate in the FGDs, and then they were divided into groups AL to DL. The qualitative research focused mainly on question 46, as outlined in the questionnaire. Participants were asked to make recommendations based on their level of satisfaction regarding the food provided by the restaurants. In the end, the participants gave mixed recommendations on various issues ranging from increased manager visibility to extended opening hours. Others expressed their satisfaction concerning the furniture, but some wanted furniture that was more comfortable. It emerged from the face-to-face interviews that participants in Restaurant B recommended Wi-Fi connectivity to add value to the existing services. Additional staff, personalising restaurant services, providing mini-bars and DStv, increasing ambience, and improved interior décor were also suggested.

Further discussions during the face-to-face interviews revealed that the restaurants needed heightened management presence. Many participants were also of the view that more routine table checks were required. One participant during the FGDs recommended that improved managerial skills for employees were critical to handle customer complaints. It should be noted that 80% of the participants were unable to provide recommendations.

5.3 RESEARCH LIMITATIONS

No matter the empirical design, its limitations cannot be ignored. The researcher conducted this empirical research in East London. The research sample was taken from the target population of restaurant customers across the city of East London. Though the final empirical outcome showed a high level of reflective results, as the data reached saturation level, the sample could not be widened to include every restaurant in East London. Additionally, the researcher is employed in East London, and as such, the researcher was more likely to influence the sample selection process. Furthermore, the responses by the participants during the interviews and FGDs could also have been influenced. Despite these limitations, the researcher was able to achieve the stated objectives. The next section will provide a detailed discussion of the practical implications and recommendations, as well as suggestions for research that could be conducted in the future.

5.4 PRACTICAL IMPLICATIONS

Drawing from the empirical results of the research, the practical implications are significant to restaurant owners in East London. The outcomes identified several practical factors that could improve general customer satisfaction concerning food and beverages, management, ambience service satisfaction, and several other areas. For practical implications, all the recommendations by the participants (especially during the face-to-face interviews and FGDs) should be taken seriously for the successful operation of a restaurant. Based on the theories that underline the empirical research, it is essential that customer satisfaction be put first in service satisfaction – especially in the service industry.

By exploring the general level of customer satisfaction in restaurants, this empirical research outlined several recommendations by customers that could enhance their general satisfaction. This research adds values to existing literature on the restaurant industry. It also identified practical factors, such as improved interior décor, and the provision of DStv and Wi-Fi connectivity. These factors will not only enhance service satisfaction, but also provide improved restaurant services.

The key implications of this research are as follows:

- By adding DStv connectivity and Wi-Fi applications, customers are drawn to the service provided by the restaurant.
- By providing the specific recommendations of customers of the participating restaurants implies that putting such recommendations into use could have positive implications.
- If other recommendations, such as improved management practice, the extension of opening hours, and the visibility of managers, are implemented, service satisfaction could be enhanced.
- Adequate customer satisfaction with regards to food and beverages across restaurants could have a knock-on-effect on other socio-economic activities of the local population. This implies the expansion of the restaurant industry, more

job opportunities, and lower crime levels as more individuals will be employed to work in various restaurants.

5.5 RECOMMENDATIONS

Based on the research, specific recommendations are provided below to enhance the operations of restaurants in East London.

5.5.1 Recommendations for restaurant owners

This study provides ample evidence that the restaurant industries can improve customer satisfaction through different factors. Owner-managers in East London restaurants need to increase and offer to selling quality food and beverages based on the needs of customers. To ensure that customers are satisfied in restaurants, prices of foods and beverages need to be affordable and suitable. The study further recommends that customer complaints regarding food and beverages must be adequately addressed. Regarding ambience factors, the researcher recommends that owner-managers of restaurants in East London should manipulate the general environment to stimulate qualities by providing favourable temperature, scents and lightening systems to customers. Besides, the researcher recommends that owner-managers focus enough on ambient climate in restaurants differently taking into considerations operational environment. This is key as most customers perceive ambient factors very significant factor satisfaction. All ambient factors in the environment must be controlled to enhance or adjust the lightening systems to brighten the restaurant space to attract and satisfy customers. Service training is critical since it increases employees' ability to deliver good services to satisfy customers. Based on the research finding, it is recommended that owner-managers consider long-term systematic employees training (SET).

5.6 SUGGESTIONS FOR FUTURE EMPIRICAL RESEARCH

Throughout the research process, the researcher observed some key issues. These issues could form part of future scientific works:

- Due to the current high rate of unemployment, this researcher suggests that future research activity on the restaurant industry should focus on factors that contribute to its growth and sustainability.

- Majority of participants in this research mentioned issues relating to management skills. In addition, the research revealed that those between 24 and 35 years were satisfied with restaurant services. Further studies should be conducted to assess wheth8er the youth intend to open restaurants.
- Finally, future scientific work should be conducted to understand the various policy frameworks that support the different provinces’ restaurant industries countrywide.

5.7 CONCLUSIONS

This chapter provided conclusions as well as recommendations on what needs to be done by restaurant owners in East London to improve services to ensure that customers are satisfied. Given the empirical outcomes, it is recommended that all the participants’ recommendations during the face-to-face interviews and FGDs be prioritised. Besides this, the research recommends that more education and skills training be provided to owner-managers and employees on continuous basis. Through adequate education and skills training, more efficient services can be delivered to customers to ensure that more of them frequent restaurants.

This study further recommends that restaurant owners initiate integrated planning programmes to include every restaurant in the research area. The integrated plan can potentially eradicate managerial gaps that are seen across the restaurant industry due to a lack of skills and managerial deficiencies. Once the integrated plans are formulated, all stakeholders need to provide the requisite support system to activate the plans. Furthermore, it is recommended that specific programmes be followed to develop and update systems in the restaurants. Key programmes, according to the recommendations, include the establishment of outreach programmes to ensure that interior decor is updated and relevant information on customer satisfaction is provided. Based on the empirical findings, the researcher recommends that in order to increase sustainability across the different sectors of the restaurant industry, measures to keep record of customer complaints and grievances are important.

In conclusion it can be stated that the findings, as indicated, have made it possible to achieve the stated objectives of this study. Hence, through the objectives, relevant recommendations were highlighted to enhance the service in restaurants in East London.

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Appendix A: letter of permission

TASTE FACTORY
EST. 2016

LETTER OF PERMISSION

MG Taste Factory (PTY) ltd.
Reg. 2011/004871/07
23 Smartt Rd., Nahoon, 5241
East London

East London, Friday, 11th May 2018

To whom it may concern

The MG Taste Factory (PTY) ltd. t/a German Taste herewith grant permission to Zwelethu Mtshokotshe, a master student at the Durban University of Technology to conduct research at German Taste Restaurant, 1 Aquarium Rd, Quigney, East London, 5211. The purpose of his research is to measure customer satisfaction and the causes thereof in East London area.
The collected data will be kept confidential and German Taste will be provided with the results of Mr Mtshokotshes study. Data collection can be done during operation hours (Tues- Frid 12.00hrs – 21.30hrs) and shall not disturb running operations at the restaurant.

We are wishing all the best and looking forward to the results!

Sincerely,

Franziska Czikmantori
Management - MG Taste Factory

SANOOK
EATERY

Date: 23-05-18

13A Beacon Bay Crossings
Bonza Bay Rd
Beacon Bay
East London
5206

Distribution of questionnaires at Sanook Eatery

To whom it may concern,

Permission is granted for Zwelethu Mtshokotshe, a masters student at Durban University of Technology to conduct research at Sanook Eatery restaurant. I understand the purpose of the project is on measuring customer satisfaction in restaurants. Evidence from East London Restaurants, South Africa.

Any data collected by Zwelethu Mtshokotsha will be kept confidential. Zwelethu has also agreed to provide us a copy of aggregate results of the research. If the managers approached have any concerns about the permission being granted by this letter, please contact me at the phone numbers listed below.

Yours Sincerely

Natasha Hogg
Director

A Shop 13A, Beacon Bay Crossing, Beacon Bay, East London
T +27 (0) 43 748 2494
E eatery@sanook.co.za
R Tide Ross (Pty) Ltd trading as Sanook Eatery
VAT No. 455 026 9122
Reg No. 2014/154175/07

www.sanook.co.za

22 Esplanade • Beachfront • East London • 5201 • P.O. Box 18143 • Quigney • 5211
Tel: +27 (0) 43 709 5000 • Fax: +27 (0) 43 742 1261 • Email: regent@premierhotels.co.za
www.premierhotels.co.za

PREMIER
HOTEL REGENT

Date: 2018-05-10

22 Esplanade
Beachfront
Quigney
East London
520.

Distribution of questionnaires at Grill Room Restaurant, Regent Premier Hotel

To whom it may concern.

Permission is granted for Zwelethu Mtshokotshe, a masters student at Durban University of Technology to conduct research at Grill Room Restaurant. I understand the purpose of the project is on measuring customer satisfaction in restaurants. Evidence from East London Restaurants, South Africa.

Any data collected by Zwelethu Mtshokotsha will be kept confidential. Zwelethu has also agreed to provide us a copy of aggregate results of the research. If the managers approached have any concerns about the permission being granted by this letter, please contact me at the phone numbers listed above.

Yours Sincerely.

Sinomzi Mbatana

Grill Room Restaurant Manager

The Regent
HOTEL, SUITES & CONFERENCE CENTRE
P.O. Box 18143, Quigney, 5211, East London
22 Esplanade, Beach Front, East London
Tel: (043) 709 5000/29 Fax: (043) 742 1261

Directors: V S Nassimov - (Managing Director)
Reg No. 2002/010924/07
Hotel Reservation Worldwide (Pty) Ltd trading as Premier Hotel Regent
Central Reservations: 086 111 5555
"Where everyone is treated like Royalty" ™

Date: 23-05-18

Shop I &J Beacon Bay Crossings

Bonza Bay Rd

Beacon Bay

East London

5206

Distribution of questionnaires at Cantina & Craft

To whom it may concern,

Permission is granted for Zwelethu Mtshokotshe, a masters student at Durban University of Technology to conduct research at Cantina & Craft restaurant. I understand the purpose of the project is on measuring customer satisfaction in restaurants. Evidence from East London Restaurants, South Africa.

Any data collected by Zwelethu Mtshokotsha will be kept confidential. Zwelethu has also agreed to provide us a copy of aggregate results of the research. If the managers approached have any concerns about the permission being granted by this letter, please contact me at the phone numbers listed below.

Yours Sincerely

Natasha Hogg

Director

043 748 2636

Appendix B: Letter of information

Title of the Research Study: Focus of my research was on restaurant customer satisfaction and return patronage in restaurants: Evidence from East London restaurants, South Africa.

Brief Introduction and Purpose of the Study: The main aim of this study was to measure customer satisfaction in restaurants in East London and researching customer satisfaction is crucial, as there is a need to provide information on the experiences of customers because they ensure the survival and growth of restaurants.

Outline of the Procedures: Participants will be required to honestly rate service, it functions as well as it partners through distributed questionnaires in satisfying customer needs. Participants will be chosen through purposive sampling and questionnaires will be given.

Risks or Discomforts to the Participant: None.

Benefits: Participants and their institute will benefit in finding truths on research and effectiveness and furthermore it policy makers will get insights on what areas requires urgent interventions and what are possible improvement actions they could implement to better performance.

Reason/s why the Participant May Be Withdrawn from the Study: Incomplete information submitted and non-signing of consent form will constitute to exclusion of potential participants in the research however no negative actions will be taken against potential participant.

Remuneration: Participation will purely be voluntary and no remuneration will be provided to participants.

Costs of the Study: Participants will incur no financial loss and they are not expected to pay any fees towards carrying out of the study.

Confidentiality: Information including names of participants and personal responses will strictly be treated confidential and will not at any stage revealed without prior consent of participant.

Research-related Injury: None

Persons to Contact in the Event of Any Problems or Queries: Z. Mtshokotshe @ 0734650563

General:

Potential participants must be assured that participation is voluntary and the approximate number of participants to be included should be disclosed. A copy of the information letter should be issued to participants. The information letter and consent form must be translated and provided in the primary spoken language of the research population e.g. isiXhosa.

Appendix C: Questionnaire

Addendum A

COVERING LETTER FOR THE QUESTIONNAIRE

Respondent number | | | |

Restaurant name ________________

Respected participant,

Questionnaire on measuring customer satisfaction in restaurants: Evidence from East London Restaurants, South Africa.

I am Zwelethu Mtshokotshe, a Masters student at the Hotel School (Faculty of Management Sciences) at the Durban University of Technology in KwaZulu Natal. I plan to focus my research on restaurant customer satisfaction and return patronage in restaurants: Evidence from East London restaurants, South Africa. The idea is to collect the relevant data by means of a structured questionnaire and to make observations of the activities in the various restaurant in East London.

Please assist me in the gathering primary data by filling in the questionnaire. Take note of the following things before filling in the questionnaire:

- There are no correct or incorrect answers. Simply give your personal opinion.
- All the data collected will be treated confidentially and anonymously.

The questionnaire to be completed after the meal.

The questionnaire will take approximately five minutes to complete.

Thank you for your esteemed co-operation. It is highly appreciated.

Yours sincerely,

Zwelethu Mtshokotshe

Student: Hospitality Management Department.

Addendum

SURVEY QUESTIONNAIRE

Respondent number

Restaurant name ________________

The purpose of this survey is to determine customer satisfaction with regard to the quality of food, service and ambience while dining at this restaurant. You are not required to identify yourself. All responses will be treated with strict confidentiality. Please complete Section A before the meal and Section B after the meal. Please mark the appropriate block with an X, using a pen.

SECTION A: To be completed before the meal

1. Gender

	1	2
	Male	Female

2. Age

1	2	3	4	5	6
18 – 24	25 – 34	35 – 44	45 – 54	55-64	Over 65

3. Home language

1	2	3	4	5
Afrikaans	English	IsiXhosa	IsiZulu	Other, specify

4. Monthly income

1	2	3

R6 000 or less	R6 001-R11 999	R12 000 or more

5. Level of education

1	2	3	4	5	6
No Schooling	Primary School	High School	Tertiary Diploma	Tertiary Degree	Other,

6. Occupation

1	Business, commerce and finance	7	Sports, leisure and recreation
2	Retail, tourism and hospitality	8	Pensioner
3	Education	9	Government
4	Science and medicine	10	Student
5	Engineering and technology	11	Self employed
6	Legal	12	Other, specify: ………………..………………………………

7. How many times have you dined in this restaurant in the past six months?

1	2	3	4	5
0-1	2-4	5-7	8-10	More than 10

8. State the main reasons for choosing this restaurant. (Multiple responses?)

1	Convenience	7	High quality food
2	To relax	8	Good service
3	Been here before	9	Good atmosphere
4	Celebration	10	Quiet/peaceful
5	Business need	11	Recommended by others
6	Social occasion (going out for a meal with friends/family)	12	Others, specify

9. How much do you spend per person at a restaurant?

R ___________________

10. The number of guests at your table, including yourself is ____________________

11. The guest(s) at your table, if any, is/are your -

1	2	3	4	5
Partner	Family member(s)	Friend(s)	Colleague(s)	Other…………………….

SECTION B: To be completed after the meal

What were your expectations of each of the following attributes when you decided to dine in this restaurant?

Tick **ONE** box only to indicate your degree of expectation.

1=Very low expectations, 2=Low expectations, 3=Indifferent, 4=High expectations, 5= Very high actu satisfaction.

FOOD AND BEVERAGES

		1	2	3	4	5
12	Presentation of the food (for example, decoration, shape of food)					
13	Combination of food on the plate					
14	Garnishing					
15	Colour of food					
16	Colour of beverages					
17	Smell of food					
18	Smell of beverages					
19	Taste of food					
20	Taste of beverages					
21	Texture of the food					

22	Temperature of food					
23	Temperature of beverages					
24	Variety of menu items					
25	Value for money					

SECTION C: To be completed after the meal

SERVICE

←→

		1	2	3	4	5
26	Friendliness and politeness of staff					
27	Attentiveness of staff					
28	Staff greeting customers					
29	Efficient service					
30	Management presence					
31	Staff have food and beverage knowledge					
32	Sympathetic handling of complaints					

SECTION D: To be completed after the meal

AMBIENCE

←→

		1	2	3	4	5
33	Attractiveness of exterior appearance					
34	Attractiveness of interior décor					
35	Subdued lighting					
36	Comfortable temperature					
37	Desirable level of noise					
38	Rational music?					
39	Pleasant smell					
40	Spatial layout and functionality					
41	Effective signs, symbols and artefacts					

Indicate your overall expectation with the quality of the food, level of service, ambience and the overall dining satisfaction.

1= Very dissatisfied 2=Dissatisfied 3 =Unsure 4= Satisfied 5=Very satisfied

		1	2	3	4	5
42	Quality of food					
43	Level of service					
44	Ambience					
45	Overall dining satisfaction					

SECTION E: To be completed after the meal

46. Recommendations to improve the customers' satisfaction offered by this restaurant?

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Thank you for your time and participation.

Appendix D: Letter from the editor

MARGARET LINSTRÖM

LANGUAGE PRACTITIONER

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12 November 2019

CONFIRMATION OF EDITING

I, Margaret Linström, hereby confirm that I language edited the master's thesis of Zwelethu Mtshokotshe.

The editing was done electronically, using Track Changes, to enable the candidate to accept or reject the suggested changes; thus, retaining his authorial discretion and right to assert authorship.

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