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It Is More Than Eating Spiced and Fried Chicken Pieces! Service Quality Institutionalisation in the Fast-Food Industry: A Case of Chicken Inn-in Masvingo-Zimbabwe

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Abstract:
Customer satisfaction is paramount in the fast food industry. The level of competition experienced in the fast food outlets also calls for total embracement of service quality determinants. The purpose of this study is to explore the extent to which Chicken Inn embraces service quality as part of service enhancement to its clients. The study shows that a complete culture of client management is in place though there is need to collaboratively (management, employees and clients) enhance the practice of service provision as dictated by customer needs. The major recommendation is that there is need for institutionalisation of training and the learning concept by fast food providers'. Further research needs to be done focusing on how non-fast food outlet and street vendors threaten the viability of fast food industry in Zimbabwe and beyond.

Keywords: Fast food, Service quality, Customer satisfaction

1. Introduction

Western-style fast food franchises are increasingly crossing national boundaries and looking for growth among customers in Zimbabwe. Inscor Zimbabwe has opened several chicken Inn outlets in Zimbabwe and currently faces stiff competition from other fast foods companies such as the vibrant Chicken Slice located in Mvuma –a once dying mining town, about 40 km from Chivhu town. While it is difficult to deal with customer perceptions on quality, it is equally important to ensure that the quality of service provided meets and close the perception gap as enunciated by Parasuraman (1985) in his gap model and the subsequent models developed by various authors and scholars. The results of this study contribute to the understanding of service quality in Zimbabwe's fast food industry and provide insight about service management and improvement opportunities in Zimbabwe service operations.

1.1. Background to the Study

Figure 1: Chicken in Branded
Source: Photo captured (2017)

Managers in the service sector are under increasing pressure to demonstrate that their services are customer-focused and that continuous performance improvement is being delivered. *Service firms like other organizations are realizing the significance of customer-centred philosophies and are turning to quality management approaches to help managing their businesses.* Given the financial and resource constraints under which service organisations must manage, it is essential that customer expectations are properly understood and measured and that, from the customers' perspective, any gaps in service quality are identified. Customer

service has proved to be the focal point of fast food restaurants world over and industry players use it as a differentiating factor in the market that is characterised by constant innovation and re-innovation in the quest to satisfy customers. The industry has gained popularity driven by fundamental changes in the global economic environment. In my view, demographic changes such as the entry of women in employment have necessitated increase in demand for the type of duties that housewives traditionally performed. A more diverse population is entering the workforce, as with the entrance of women into the workforce, the increase in number of people from different cultures entering the workforce has a profound impact on the business environment (Lucas, 2009). This information then assists a manager in identifying cost-effective ways of closing service quality gaps and of prioritizing which gaps to focus on – a critical decision given scarce resources. In line with the cultural influences of the Zimbabwean people, where the traditional approach to feeding is fading away especially in the urban areas, the fast food feeding model appears to be domineering hence calling upon those who manage to refocus their management systems in terms of how the quality of service can be improved. With emerging competitors such as Chicken Slice, TN and even the small cafes or restaurants all over the show, one cannot deny that the need to continuously improve service provision is a must do activity. It is my belief that globalisation has enabled for the creation of a conducive environment for restaurant concepts to spread into Africa through franchising and other non-formal means. Africa has for the past three decades or so become a host of some major investments through the establishment of world-renowned restaurant giants such as KFC and McDonalds, for example. Lack of economic and political reforms in Africa contributed in the delay in global fast food restaurant brands such Pizza Hut, McDonalds, KFC, Starbucks, among others to show interest in setting business in Africa and the rest of the less developed countries. With more and more competition gripping across industries, fast food restaurants differentiate by offering highly quality service to customers that exceed customer expectation.

In many cases they are complains that come from customers of the fast foods industry and mainly these complains are service-based complains. Given this scenario, I felt it is necessary to undertake this research focusing on the impact service quality has on the performance of Chicken Inn Masvingo -Urban outlet.

1.2. Statement of the Problem
Clearly, from a Best Value (BV) perspective the measurement of service quality in the service sector should take into account customer expectations of service as well as perceptions of service. However, as Robinson (1999) concludes: "It is apparent that there is little consensus of opinion and much disagreement about how to measure service quality". Chicken Inn outlets face mounting challenges in meeting customer perceptions in line with Robinson's thinking. The people of Zimbabwe have a mixed cultural background in terms of feeding, and the service and quality processes has to take into account this background making it slightly different from the western model. It is against this that this study is carried to assess the impact of service provision on the performance of the fast food industry in Zimbabwe using the Masvingo outlet as a case study.

1.3. Research Questions
- To what extend does service quality impact on customer satisfaction?
- What are the key service determinants that determine customer satisfaction?
- What challenges does Chicken Inn face in its quest to deliver quality service?
- What benefits are accrued by providing quality service?

1.4. Significance of the Study
The study is being carried against a background to benefit a number of stakeholders and the fulfilment of specified obligations. The study benefits the management of Chicken Inn through service enhancement from the recommendations that are going to emanate from the findings. Secondly the customers of Chicken Inn will benefit too from an improved approach in service delivery and through their participation in the study; they will have an opportunity to contribute on service delivery at Chicken Inn. Employees of chicken Inn will also benefit by taking a leaf from the study.

1.5. Delimitations of the Study
The focus of the study in terms of its delimitations is broken into two distinct areas here referred to as the geographical and content delimitations alluded to below.

1.6. Geographical Scope and Content Delimitation(s)
Despite having other Chicken Inn restaurant outlets in all towns and cities in Zimbabwe I could not conduct research to cover the whole of Zimbabwe, hence the decision to focus on Masvingo. Masvingo is conveniently located and has a high number of people some on transit to South Africa and its tourist attractive packages like the Great Zimbabwe Monuments and various resort places makes it appropriate to carry out such a study. Thus, geographically, the researcher has decided to de-limit self to Masvingo. Secondly, because the field of service is too broad, the study will concentrate on service quality determinants which are directly linked to the dictates of the research topic.

2. Study Limitations
According to Cooper and Schindler (2003), a research can be either a cross-sectional study or a longitudinal study. Cross-sectional study is snapshot taken at a single point in time; this includes surveys, personal interviews, and telephonic studies among others. Longitudinal studies refer to tracking of reactions or behaviour of the same sample of a long time (Blankenship et al, 1998). The

researcher could not conduct longitudinal studies because of time that is required to complete them considering that they are done over a period of time hence the researcher settled for the cross-sectional research instead. The time constraint is managed by focusing on a singled case study and also bearing in mind the time zone set by the academic requirements of the study as far as research completion is required.

3. Related Literature Review
A lot of literature exists in books, articles and media. However, the main focus of this literature review will be to refocus attention on critical service determinants.

3.1. Definition of Key Terms
Below are definitions of common terms that recur in this study

3.1.1. Definition of Quality
McConnel and Anton, (2003) defined quality as value and reliability at a reasonable price. Gabbott and Hogg, (1998) defined quality as the form of value purchasers receive in consumption events. Evans, Campbell and Stonehouse (2003) defined quality as the fitness for the purpose. Buttle (2009) defined service quality based on two perspectives:

→ Quality as conformance to specification: he said this meant producing error-free invoices, delivering on time, in full as promised to customers and acknowledging customer complaints within 24 hours. Conformance to specification should be based on customers' expectation not the organisation.

→ Quality as fitness for purpose: that is creating products that are well suited to customer requirements and which meet their expectations. The purpose of any organisation is to meet and/or exceed customer expectations in the short and long-term. Quality should be defined based on what constitutes quality service from the customer's point view. Swarbrooke and Horner, (2001) define quality as fitness for purpose definitions, which are market-driven and customer oriented, and which focus upon customer utility and satisfaction. They further contended that quality is perceptions in the minds of customers as such quality depend on the customers' individual attitudes, expectations, and previous experiences as a consumer and the benefits customers will be looking for from the particular purchase in question.

The customer's perception of service quality is fundamental to service providers who have the ultimate goal of improving the company's overall performance. Haretsebe Manwa (2011), found out that Botswana's restaurants did not meet customer expectations hence they were found to be rude, hostile to customers and also, they were perceived not to be interested in their job functions despite customer's high expectations. He also drew the conclusion that Botswana's restaurants meet customer expectations in tangibles and perform below expectations with regard to intangible dimensions. Zimbabwe's restaurants can also draw lessons from the findings of Botswana's experiences, regardless of the geographical and cultural, variations. Harrington and Lenehan, (1998) thus agreed by saying that service expectations are now global and customers are more willing to compare offerings not only between companies but also across countries. Managing service quality more effectively in the future requires developing a better understanding of how service quality works and capitalizing on some fundamental, underlying trends that will create new areas of emphasis (Rust and Oliver, 1994). Harrington and Lenehan (1998) identified that traditionally, quality was based on the physical characteristics of the product and was regarded as a reflection of the differences in measurable elements between products; hence, quality of a product was assessed in terms of its conformance to a pre-determined set of specifications. They then concluded that service quality is a function of the comparison, which customers make between expectations of what an organisation should provide and perceptions of actual performance meaning that service quality is a measure of how well the organisation's service level matches customer expectations.

3.2. Customer Service
Customer service is defined as anything we do for the customer that enhances the customer experience. Customer service's goal is to at least meet or exceed customer expectations, as this will result in achieving customer satisfaction.

Buckner and Dorr, (1998) define customer service as activities, benefits or satisfactions that are offered for sale or are provided in connection with the sale of goods. Blem, (1995) define customer service as all the activities that create a bond between organisations and their clients. Many authors have defined customer service in many different ways as Gronfeldt and Strother (2006) states that service has been defined in a variety of ways and the definitions range from broad generic definitions encompassing the entire service process to highly specific descriptions of the value created by particular services. Zeithaml and Bitner (2003) argue that there is a distinction between services and customer service. They define services in its broadest terms as a wider range of industries each providing a set of services needed or wanted by their customers. They further hold that customer service is provided by all industries, but it is the service provided in support of an organisation's core products. Customers are not charged directly for the customer service that is rendered. On the other hand, Lucas (2005) defines customer service as the ability of knowledgeable, capable and enthusiastic employees to deliver products and services to their internal and external customers in a manner that satisfies identified and unidentified needs and ultimately results in positive word-of-mouth publicity and return business. Providing service to customers is not good enough but offering excellent service is good (Hopson and Scally, 1991).

3.3. Fast food Restaurant
 Restaurants that prepare and offer food to customers faster than the sit-down restaurant.

3.4. Customer Satisfaction
The extent to which a firm fulfils a consumer's needs, desires, and expectations (Perreault & McCarthy, 2002)

3.5. Literature Explored
Various scholars have come up with their findings concerning the impact of service quality on customer satisfaction. Undoubtedly, no business can exist without customers. In the philosophical words of Peppers and Rogers ***"The only value your company will ever create is the value that comes from customers—the ones you have now and the ones you will have in the future."*** Customer value is an asset to any organization. Hence, in order to maintain the customer, the organization needs to ensure that the right products and services, supported by the right promotion are made available at the right time for the customers (Mittal and Lassar, 1998). In quick service restaurants, the focus is on efficiency and quality service, the factors that are fundamental in the success by organisations in their quest in trying fulfilling customers' needs and wants. The major drawback in providing quality service in quick service restaurants could be customers' high expectations and lack of service culture in restaurants. This subsequently causes great variations or gaps between the service offered and customer expectations. One service quality measurement model that has been extensively applied is the SERVQUAL model developed by Parasuraman *et al.* (1985, 1986, A. Shahin 1988, 1991, 1993, 1994; Zeithaml *et al.,* 1990). SERVQUAL as the most often used approach for measuring service quality has been to compare customers' expectations before a service encounter and their perceptions of the actual service delivered (Gronroos, 1982; Lewis and Booms, 1983; Parasuraman *et al.*1985). The SERVQUAL instrument has been the predominant method used to measure consumers' perceptions of service quality. It has five generic dimensions or factors and are stated as follows (van Iwaarden *et al.,* 2003):
 Tangibles (physical facilities, equipment and appearance of personnel)
 *Reliability (*ability to perform the promised service dependably and accurately)
 *Responsiveness (*willingness to help customers and provide prompt service)
Assurance (including competence, courtesy, credibility and security, knowledge and courtesy of employees and their ability to inspire trust and confidence)
Empathy (including access, communication, understanding the customer, caring and individualized attention that the firm provides to its customers).
While quality service and merchandise are essential in today's competitive market, it is equally important that a customer experience the "Wow Effect" that only superior customer service can deliver. A business that caters to its customers` needs will inevitably gain the loyalty of its customers, thus resulting in repeat business as well as potential referrals. Consequently, it is imperative that businesses get to know their customers. Establishing a professional relationship with customers empowers us with the knowledge of what our customers need. When a business focuses on delivering what is of value to their customers, this will generate the potential for repeat business as well. The feedbacks from the survey is a testament to the customer satisfaction most definitely, there exists a positive relationship between reliability with customer satisfaction. Similarly, the other attributes, such as; assurances, tangibles, empathy and responsiveness all have positive relationship with customer satisfaction. It is far more difficult to measure the level of performance and satisfaction when it comes to the intangible expectations. One of the ways to help obtain loyal customers is by having products and services that are so good that there is very little chance that the customer requirements will not be met. Of course, one of the difficulties in understanding the true customer requirements is that the customer can and will change them without notice or excuse. Having a good recovery process for a dissatisfied customer is a very important and necessary process for any customer-oriented organization that embraces the fundamentals of meeting customer needs (Elson, 2011).
Currently, there is no comprehensive research that was done to identify and or address the problems of service quality in Zimbabwe's fast food industry-later alone Chicken Inn Masvingo- with the ultimate goal of identifying the impact or effect of service quality on customer satisfaction.

3.6. Elements of Service Culture in Pursuit of Customer Service Excellence
The figure below shows key elements of service culture of customer service excellence.
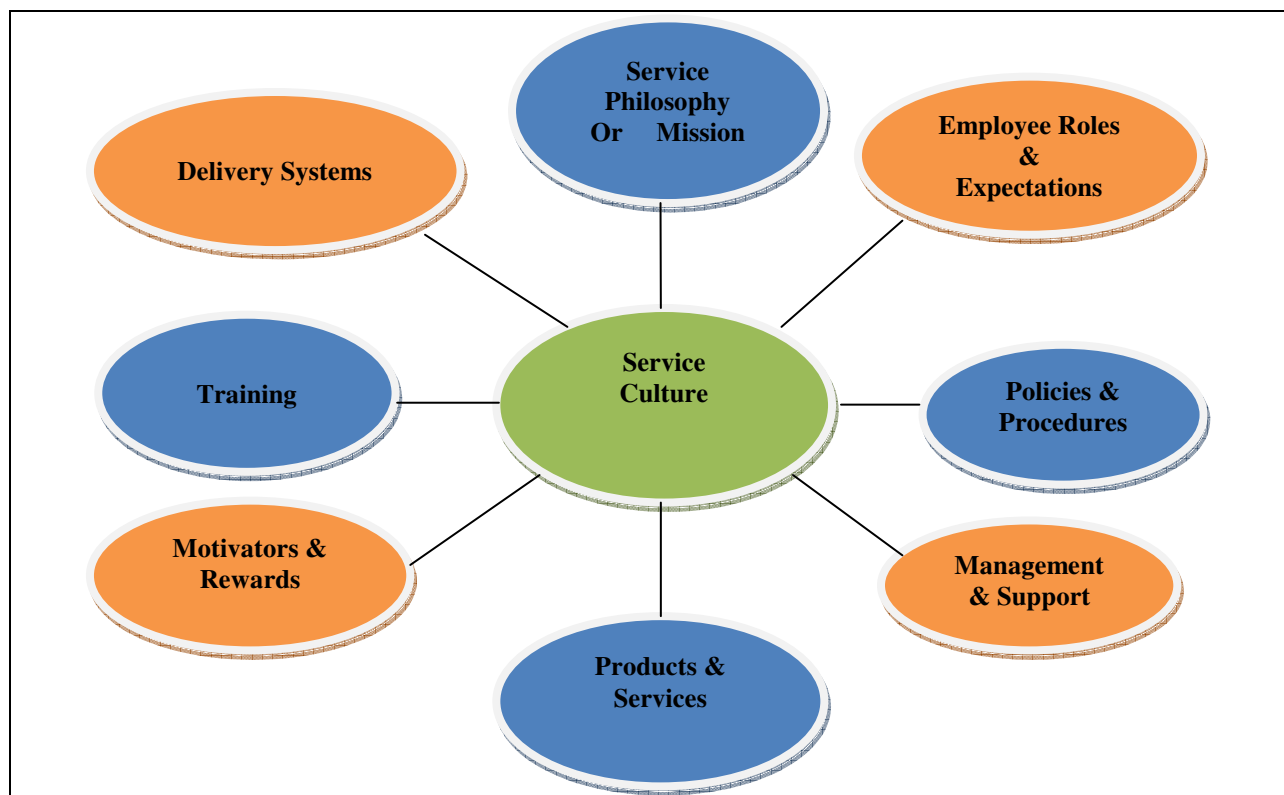
Figure 2: Elements of Service Culture
Source: Lucas (2005) Customer Service-Building Successful Skills for the Twenty-First Century

3.7. The SERVQUAL Model

Parasuraman, Zeithaml and Berny developed the SERVQUAL technique in 1985, which was designed to measure service quality. The technique focuses on five (5) factors that are tangibles, reliability, responsiveness, assurance and empathy. SERVQUAL however, according to Parasuraman et al does not embrace all the service determinants of service quality. Buttle (2009) asserted that the importance of SERVQUAL is that it offers managers a systematic approach to measuring and managing service quality. It emphasise the importance of understanding customer expectations and of developing internal procedures that align company processes to customer expectations. He further held that the SERVQUAL authors have also developed a measurement and a management model to accompany the conceptual model. The measurement model uses a 44-item questionnaire that measures customers' expectations and perceptions of the RATER variables.

3.8. The Service Quality Gaps Model

This is another key model that has been adopted by a number of industries. The management model or technique identifies the reasons for any gaps between customer expectations and perceptions (Buttle, 2009). According to Parasuraman et al (1985), postulates that customer dissatisfaction is caused by perceived gaps between expectation and actual outcomes, coined the concept.   Parasuraman et al (1985) as quoted by John and Susan identified five potential service gaps that include:

- Differences between consumer expectations and management perceptions of consumer expectations: the difference between what consumers expect and management perceptions of consumer expectations causes managers to waste company resources making products that will never meet customer expectations and this subsequently lead to loss of sales caused by consumer dissatisfaction. Parasuraman et al identified the service gaps and identified remedial course of action that might be taken by organisation in their quest to offer quality service to customers as highlighted below.
- Closing the gap 1: Buttle (2009) suggested that in order to close the gap between consumer expectations and management perceptions of consumer expectations the following should be done:

Firstly, primary research should be conducted into customers' service quality expectations. Secondly, knowing what customers expect from the service provider is the starting point in the company's quest to provide quality service to its customers.

Thirdly, feedback about customers' expectations can be learned from the front-line staffs that are exposed to customers.

The fourth alternative is to include expectations data in the customer records that are also important to organisations that are customer oriented.

- Differences between management perceptions of consumer expectations and service quality specifications: management that has different perceptions of consumer expectations compared to the service quality specifications can cause disastrous consequences. Some perceptions mislead management and result in their failure to meet customer needs and expectations.
- Closing gap 2: Buttle suggested that in order to close gap 2 the following should be done:

The organisation should be committed to the development of service standards, staffs acquaint themselves to company set standards and procedures hence failure by an organisation to develop the standards might cause staff to relax and become alienated from quality service culture.

Basic service excellence standards are a prerequisite when an organisation wants to benchmark its expectations against the actual service offered. Setting the minimum expected standards drives staff to excel and or exceed what is expected of them.

- Differences between service quality specifications and the service actually delivered: the service quality specifications should be used as the yardstick in determining customer expectations otherwise it will be futile offering service that is divorced from the service quality specifications.   The result is an increase in customer attrition rate.
  - Closing gap 3 :(between service quality specifications and actual service delivery)

Invest in people, recruitment, training and retention. Employees are the greatest tools that are used to deliver service hence the right people should be recruited, trained and retention strategies put in place to make sure the right people remain loyal. Motivational strategies also should be used.

Invest in technology that will make work much easier to perform and expedite the process of service delivery. The dispersion of technological advancements has given room for organisations to use these technologies to help in creating and offering quality service in the QSR industry.

- Differences between service delivery and what is communicated about the service to consumers: it is unethical to advertise a product that is different from the actual product that is different from the actual product and erodes trust between the company and consumers and this causes customer dissatisfaction.
  - Closing the gap 4: (between actual service delivery and the promises communicated to customers)
- Differences between consumer expectations and perceptions of the quality of the service received (Parasuraman, Zeithaml and Berry, 1985 as quoted by John and Susan 2001).   L.T. Schiffman, J. Wisenblit and Leslie Lazar Kanuk define perceived quality as consumers' judgment of quality of a product or service based on a variety of informational cues that they associate with the product.   Some of these cues are intrinsic to the product or service; others are extrinsic such as price, store image, service environment, brand image and promotional messages.   If a customer's perception of a service differs with his/her expectations, this causes the customer to search for alternatives that will meet his/her expectations.
  - Closing gap 5: (between consumer expectations and perceptions of the quality of the service received):

Communicating with customers without falsifying any part of the service offering. When customers are well informed of what they should expect, customers will not expect something more than that but if what is communicated and what is offered are different this causes customer dissatisfaction and negative perception about service.

3.9. The Satisfaction Mirror

This is an important tool used to reflect on evaluating customer services and the extent to which customers are satisfied through a reflective process illustrated by the figure below.
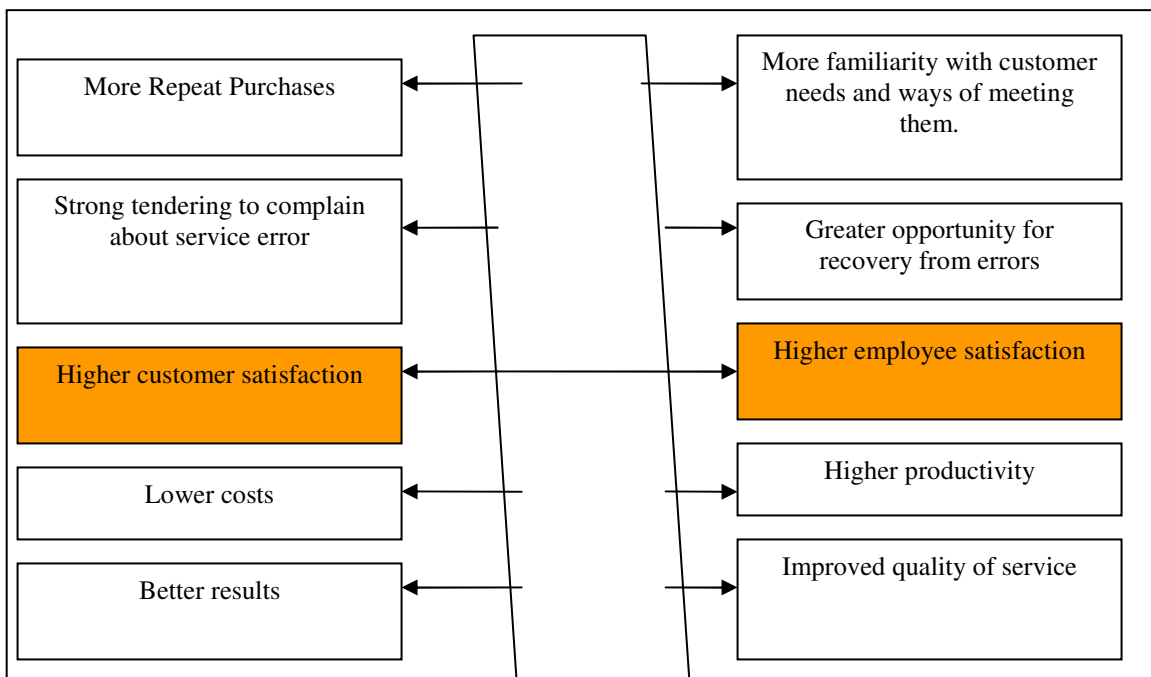
3.10. The Satisfaction Mirror

Figure 3: The satisfaction Mirror
Source: Heskett et al (1997)

Highly satisfied employees make efforts to familiarise with customer needs and ways of meeting them. This will result in more repeat purchases. Satisfied customers on the other hand highlight service offering mistakes and this subsequently lead to the creation of opportunities for employees to rectify their mistakes. This ultimately creates room for viable customer relationship management that will enhance better customer understanding. Employee satisfaction also increases productivity and result in lowering of costs that benefits all parties. Improved service quality resulting from satisfied customers will lead to better results.

4. Research Methodology

A research design is an important consideration in any study. According to Smith (2002) a research design is a plan of proposed research work. It describes the number of decisions which need to be taken regarding the collection of data to be analyzed (Obasi, 1999). It needs to be noted at early stage that was carried out within the terrain where practice, theory and sociology of SERVQUAL are inseparable entities hence use of observations and judgements that are influenced by human values. This research design (for this study) is a case study type of design in which qualitative (phenomenology) is at the centre stage. However quantitative (positivism) was used as complementary approach making the study a triangulated one. Gay et al (2006) calls this the *Quan-qual* model- a model in which the researcher uses two or more methods in an attempt to confirm and corroborate findings within a single study. It is important to mention that phenomenology (Smith, 2002) focuses on social processes and how individual shape and give meaning to the social world (lived experiences) while positivism emphasis highly on structured methodology to facilitate replication and quantifiable replications and quantifiable observations that lend themselves to statistical analysis. In qualitative research, it is vital to understand the subjective reality of those people that are studied (Stake, 1995). The use of both methods resulted in the compensation of the weaknesses of the other. The use of a case study is critical in trying to find out the phenomena of provision of quality service as is experienced at Chicken Inn Masvingo outlet.

As has already been indicated, case studies require multiple data collection methods results hopefully converge, in order to establish construct validity. Hence observation, interviews and document analysis and desk research were employed as data collection methods. The major data collection tools used were question-guide for the in-depth interviews and a questionnaire quide for focus group method which was used for collecting data from the employees. The target population for this study were all managers, employees and clients of Masvingo Chicken Inn. Sampling is that part of statistical practice concerned with the selection of an unbiased or random subset of individual observations within a population of individuals intended to yield some knowledge about the population of concern, especially for the purposes of making predictions based on statistical inference. Purposive sampling, considered by Welman and Kruger (1999) as the most important kind of non-probability sampling, to identify the primary participants was used. The researcher has to select this method based on his judgment and the purpose of the research (Babbie, 1995; Grieg & Taylor, 1999; Schwandt, 1997), looking at clients, managers and employees who appear to have the experiences to the phenomenon (SERVQUAL) to be researched. Data analysis of interview questions and field notes was based on an inductive approach geared to identifying patterns in the data by means of thematic codes. Inductive analysis means that the patterns, themes, and categories of analysis has to come from the data, they emerge out of data rather than being imposed on them prior to data collection and analysis (Pattopn, 1980).

5. Findings of the Study

The overall response rate was measured at 87%-quite an acceptable response. The 13% non-response emanated from unreturned questionnaire, absent respondents on in-depth interviews and focus group interviews. The 13% did not in any way affect the validity, reliability and strength of the study outcome.

5.1. Analysis of Literature

Most of the results of the studies on service quality within the fast food industry indicated consistence in terms of the key service dimensions that are critical in determining the quality of service rendered. The general data shows that there are ten basic service determinants and these are critical to ensuring that quality is determined. The key determinants are reliability, tangibility, competence, courtesy, responsiveness, credibility, security, accessibility, communication and understanding customer needs (Parasuraman et al., 1990). These determinants have been compressed into five major determinants (Zeithaml et al., 1996; Buttle, 2004) representing the core service quality and are at the heart of customer satisfaction. The RATER dimensions are popularly used in service industry and quite relevant to the QSRs. The dimensions are:

- Reliability
- Assurance
- Tangibles
- Empathy
- Responsiveness

This literature concurs very well with the result of the primary research at Chicken Inn, in terms of service quality. The model of SERVQUAL which emphasis on gap management is also one revelation that defines the extent to which customer needs can be met. Thus, customer satisfaction has been found to be a function of service quality, although there is controversy as to which comes first (Zeithaml, 1994). Given the controversy of relying on one model like the SERVQUAL, many researchers are content with using in tandem with the SERVQUAL, other models such as SERVPERF, TOPSIS model by (Markerjee and Nath,2005) and the QUALITOMETRO model by Franceschini and Rosetto,1997).

The major findings from the primary study are presented in the subsequent section.

5.1.1. Impact of Service Quality on Customer Satisfaction

The study revealed that service quality was highly effective when it comes to customer satisfaction. Continuous willingness to adopt customer care programs and customer inclusivity was found an important step towards increasing customer satisfaction. It also emerged that customer satisfaction was not only about external customers but also the internal customers who are the first. 'I believe more is needed to be done in terms of cascading quality improvements programs and projects. It seems many of our employees do not have this touch of respecting our clients. In-fact they expect our clients to give them respect...I suppose we move ourselves in the right direction if we are to propel ourselves in the next few years' Apparently the study shows that there was need to focus more also on satisfying internal stakeholders if external clients were to benefit from service rendered. The figure below indicates the extent to which customers of Chicken Inn are satisfied with Service Offered.
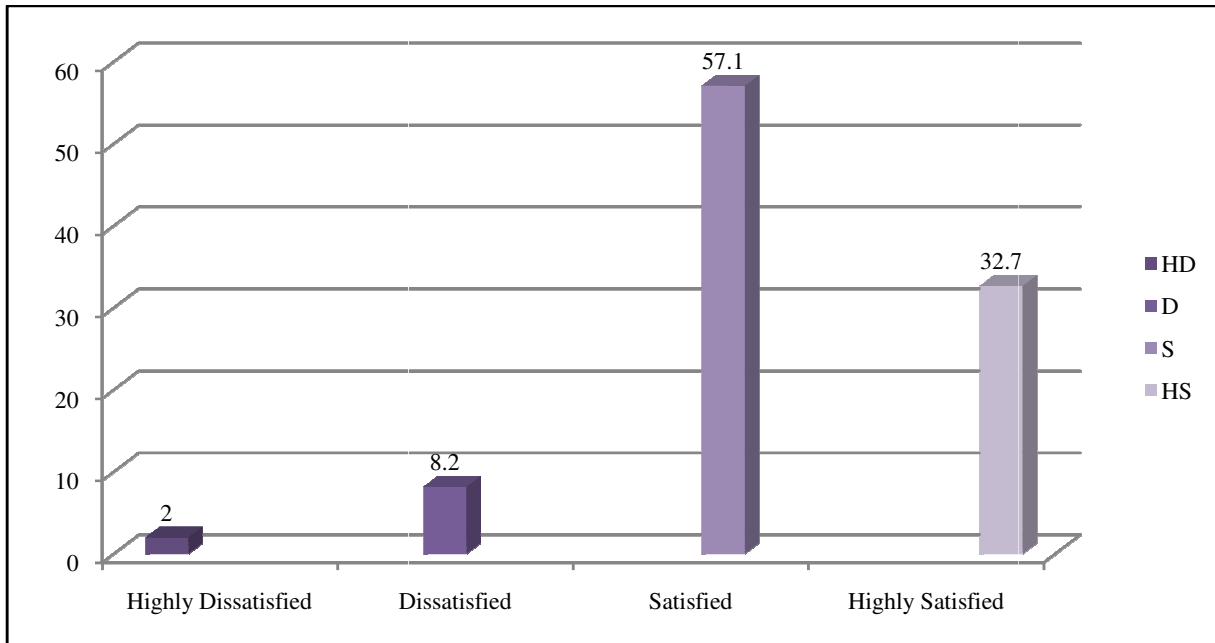
Figure 4: Level of customer satisfaction
Source: Self-created -Gwakwa (2017)

32.7% of the respondents were highly satisfied with the service they get from Chicken Inn-Masvingo and 57.1% were satisfied. 8.2% of the respondents were dissatisfied while 2% were highly dissatisfied. Cumulatively those in the satisfied range were 89.8% and 10.2% were in the dissatisfied range.

5.1.2. Key Service Determinants That Determine Customer Satisfaction and Type of Service Required

It emerged that the key service determinants that determine customer satisfaction in the fast food industry are reliability, assurance, tangibles, empathy and responsiveness. This is in agreement with previous researches by Parasuraman (1985) as propounded in his gap model. Further revelations showed that other determinants included organisational culture, training of employees, ambience and global tenets.

	QUESTION	Total	YES				NO			
			Frequency	Percent	Valid %	Cumulative %	Frequency	Percent	Valid %	Cumulative %
1	What Type of Service Do You Normally Require?(Counter TakeAway)	49	11	22,4%	22,4%	22,4%	38	77,6%	77,6%	100,0%
2	What Type of Service Do You Normally Require?(Counter Sit Down)	49	9	18,4%	18,4%	18,4%	40	81,6%	81,6%	100,0%
3	What Type of Service Do You Normally Require?(Collect Takeaway)	49	2	4,1%	4,1%	4,1%	47	95,9%	95,9%	100,0%
4	What Type of Service Do You Normally Require?(Collect Sit-Down)	49	3	6,1%	6,1%	6,1%	46	93,9%	93,9%	100,0%
5	What Type of Service Do you Normally Require? (Delivery)	49	18	36,7%	36,7%	36,7%	31	63,3%	63,3%	100,0%
6	Why Do You Buy Food From us (Co. Function)	49	0	0,0%	0,0%	0,0%	49	10,0%	100,0%	100,0%
7	Why Do You Buy Food From us?(Family Get-Together)	49	3	6,1%	6,1%	6,1%	46	93,9%	93,9%	100,0%
8	Why Do You Buy From Chicken Inn? (Family Meal)	49	27	55,1%	55,1%	55,1%	22	44,9%	44,9%	100,0%
9	Why Do You Buy From us? (Special Occassions)	49	7	14,3%	14,3%	14,3%	42	85,7%	85,7%	100,0%
10	Why Do You Buy From us? (Token of Appreciation)	49	5	10,2%	10,2%	10,2%	44	89,8%	89,8%	100,0%
11	Why Do You Buy From us? (Lunch at Work)	49	10	20,4%	20,4%	20,4%	39	79,6%	79,6%	100,0%
12	Why Do You Choose To Eat From us? (Quality Service)	49	10	20,4%	20,4%	20,4%	39	79,6%	79,6%	100,0%
13	Why Do You Choose To Eat From us? (Best Pizza)	49	25	51,0%	51,0%	51,0%	24	49,0%	49,0%	100,0%
14	Why Do You Choose us? (Only Brand That Delivers)	49	4	8,2%	8,2%	8,2%	45	91,8%	91,8%	100,0%
15	Why Do You Choose To Eat From us? (Convenience)	49	11	22,4%	22,4%	22,4%	38	77,6%	77,6%	100,0%
16	Why Do You Choose us? (Good Environment/ Vibe)	49	1	2,0%	2,0%	2,0%	48	98,0%	98,0%	100,0%
17	Why Do You Choose To Eat From ChickeInn? (Family Likes It)	49	5	10,2%	10,2%	10,2%	44	89,8%	89,8%	100,0%

Table 5: Type of service required by clients
Source: Self-created-Gwakwa (2017)

Of all the respondents 22.4% of them require counter takeaway service from Chicken Inn, Masvingo while 77.6% require other services. 18.4% of the respondents require counter sit down service while the remaining 81.6% utilise other service options. 4.1% of the respondents require collect take away service against 95.9% that do not require this service. Three respondents out forty-nine respondents, which are 6.1%, require collect sit down while the remaining 93.9% require other service options. Delivery has been shown to be the service that is required by most customers as 36.7% of customers prefer their orders to be delivered against 63.3% that do not use delivery preferring to use other options available in Chicken Inn. 6.1% of respondents held that they buy food from Chicken Inn for family get together while 93.9% buy for other different reasons. 55.1% of the respondents said they buy food for family meal purposes while the remaining 44.9% buy for other reasons. Those who buy for special occasions were 14.3% while 85.7% do not buy for the same reason. Five respondents, 10.2% of the total number of respondents said they buy food as tokens of appreciation while 89.8% had opposing reasons. 20.4% of the respondents said they buy food for lunch at work and 79.6% had other reasons why they buy food. 20.4% of the respondents said they choose from Chicken Inn because of quality service that they receive.

5.1.3. Challenges Chicken Inn Face in its Quest to Deliver Quality Service

The results of the study show that Chicken Inn faces a number of challenges in her quest to deliver quality service. Improving quality of service delivery requires commitment and sacrifice in an endeavour to overcome various challenges that are bound to affect the effectiveness of service delivery and customer satisfaction. The revelation was that there were serious challenges facing the restaurant that hinder effective delivery of service. The majority of the respondents blamed lack of support especially with training and human resource management functions, hence making service delivery improvements very difficult. 'We are guided by the company policy that stipulates that we should resolve all complaints within twenty-four hours maximum, and this put pressure on us such that we resolve all complaints within the specified time or else the customer would lodge his or her complaint with top management and this does not reflect the store managers' capability in handling complaints'.

The results indicate that there appears to be too much interference in the management of the restaurants and hence workers are not free to give their free thoughts in some initiatives that they think would be good to undertake...initiatives that will have a direct impact on the performance of the employees. Employee empowerment is lacking and there is too much emphasis on the external customer satisfaction thereby ignoring internal customer satisfaction as well. One of the challenges is parking space which is not sufficient to accommodate all clients. In the end business is lost because clients shun coming to Chicken Inn.

5.1.4. Benefits Accrued by Providing Quality Service

The finding on this area is that quality service results in increased sales of Chicken Inn Products, increased customer loyalty, repeat purchase and more advocacies as well as change in staff attitudes and behaviour. Figure shows consensus on staff attitude changes.
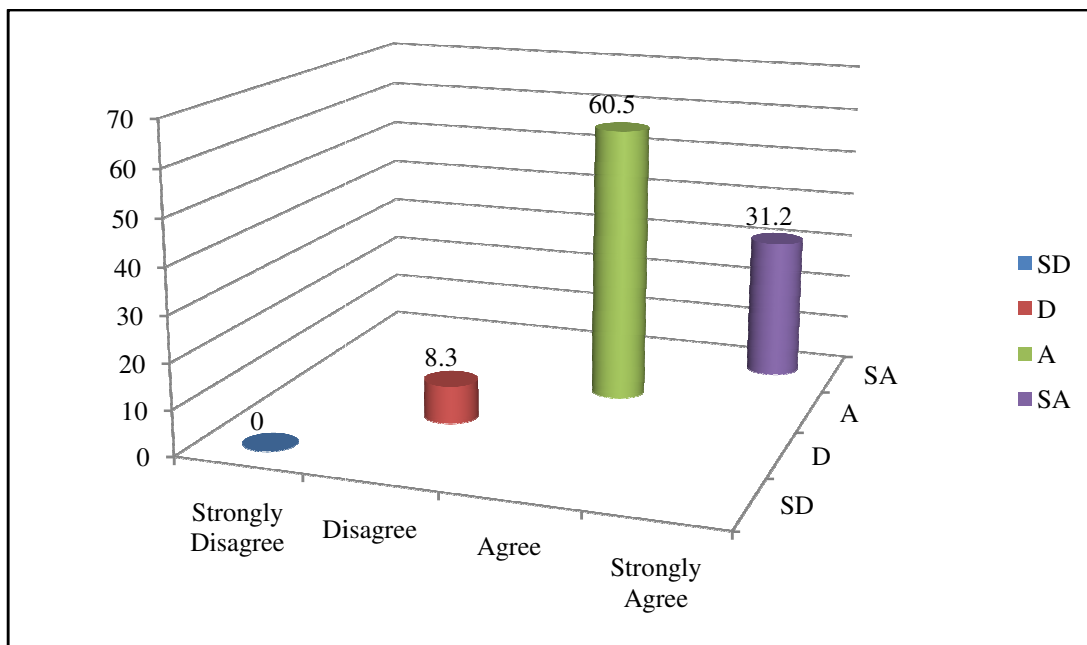

Figure 6: Benefits in staff attitude and behaviour
Source: Self-created-Gwakwa (2017)

A high cumulative positive response of 91.7% is shown on figure 6 above, supporting the view that Chicken Inn staff possesses good attitude and behaviour towards customers. 31.2% of the respondents strongly agreed and 60.5% agreed. 8.3% of the respondents disagreed and none of the respondents strongly disagreed. Indeed, evidence from respondents shows that while there was need to meet promised time on order delivery; effort was high on quality of food sold and cleanliness of the general ambience.

6. Conclusions and Discussions

It is clear from the study that while quality service and merchandise are essential in today's competitive market, it is equally important that a customer experience the "Wow Effect" that only superior customer service can deliver. A business that caters to its customers' needs will inevitably gain the loyalty of its customers, thus resulting in repeat business as well as potential referrals. The revelation in this study on (Chicken Inn Masvingo) is that consequently, it is imperative that businesses get to know their customers. Establishing a professional relationship with customers empowers fast food companies with the knowledge of what their customers need. When a business focuses on delivering what is of value to their customers, this will generate the potential for repeat business as well. The feedbacks from the survey is a testament to the customer satisfaction most definitely, there exists a positive relationship between reliability with customer satisfaction. Similarly, the other attributes, such as; assurances, tangibles, empathy and responsiveness all have positive relationship with customer satisfaction. It is far more difficult to measure the level of performance and satisfaction when it comes to the intangible expectations. One of the ways to help obtain loyal customers is by having products and services that are so good that there is very little chance that the customer requirements will not be met. Of course, one of the difficulties in understanding

the true customer requirements is that the customer can and will change them without notice or excuse. Having a good recovery process for a dissatisfied customer is a very important and necessary process for any customer-oriented organization that embraces the fundamentals of meeting customer needs.

7. Recommendations

Given the above findings, it is important that I provide an additional suitable recipe to the way service quality can be productively implemented. Below are the recommendations to that effect.

- Establish formalised training, which should be conducted, coordinated and supervised by Retail Group as the managing company of the franchise.
- There is need to establish continuous linkages with customers and even offer delivery services to customers within ten kilometre radius as a way of combating parking dilemma.
- Establish a human resources department that solicits, oversees, implements, monitors and controls all employee motivational strategies and conducts formalised recruitment and induction processes.
- Prioritise training and employee skills development initiatives that might improve staff morale and motivation.
- Encourage work groups/ forums that are meant to represent the needs of all employees in the organisation. Employee involvement through the utilization of work groups can encourage employees to feel part of the decision-making board of the organisation and this can possibly trigger higher productivity and motivation.
- Try to keep each and every promise that it enters with its clients. Failure to owner promises might result in poor productivity, higher level of *untrust*, lack of loyalty that might increase runaway clients, and ultimately higher sales loss.
- Hold all employees that contribute to the success or failure of stores to keep the delivery promise accountable.
- Make sure that the quality promise is adhered to by all employees. Managers should be able to monitor and control employees in trying to keep the promise and in compensating customers when the promise is not met.

It is important to further contemplate about carrying out a similar research country wide to enable us to see if the same outcomes and experiences in Masvingo are experienced throughout the fast food industry in Zimbabwe. This approach will enable creating an all-embracing quality service model for the fast food industry in Zimbabwe and beyond.

8. Conclusion

It is important to further contemplate about carrying out a similar research country wide to enable us to see if the same outcomes and experiences in Masvingo are experienced throughout the fast food industry in Zimbabwe. This approach will enable creating an all-embracing quality service model for the fast food industry in Zimbabwe and beyond. It is noteworthy to say that the study has to a large extend explicitly identified that service quality has a direct impact on customer satisfaction, and hence improving and increasing customer satisfaction is not an option if anyone has to survive in this industry.

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Appendix 1: Questionnaire for customers

Great Zimbabwe University
Faculty of Commerce
Bachelor of Commerce Honours Degree in Office Management

QUESTIONNAIRE

Good day. My name is Maudy Mdutshwa and I am a student at Great Zimbabwe University in my final year of the Bachelor of commerce Honours degree in Office Management. I am carrying out a study titled: An impact assessment of Service Quality in the fast food industry in Zimbabwe. A case of Chicken Inn-Masvingo urban. Please assist in filling in this questionnaire. All information provided will be kept confidentially and will be used for academic purposes only.
Fill in the questionnaire by putting in a tick or completing the gap where necessary.

Part A - Demographic data: Tick in the appropriate box

1. I am a:

Female	Male

2. Age range

0-14 years	15-35 years	35years+

3. What is your marital status?

Single	Married	Divorced	Widowed	Privacy

4. What is your highest academic qualification?

Grade 7	'O'Level	'A' Level	Certificate	Diploma	Degree

5. In which suburbs do you stay?

High density	Medium density	Low density

6. Are you a student or not?

I am a student	I am not a student

Part B: Questionnaire survey

1. How often to you buy from chicken Inn?

Bi-weekly	Weekly	Fort nightly	Monthly	Quarterly	Every six months	Once a year

2. What is the most relevant type of service you want from Chicken Inn? Choose.

Counter-take away	Counter-sit-down	Counter take-away	Order-Delivered

3. Why do you buy from Chicken Inn?

Family-get together	Family meal	Special occasion	Token of appreciation	Lunch at work

4. Why do you choose to eat from Chicken Inn?

Quality service	Best chicken pieces	Only brand that delivers	Convenience	Good environment vibe	Family likes it

5. Staff is welcoming and cheerful

Strongly agree	Agree	Neutral	Strongly disagree	Disagree

6. Staff acknowledges each and every client

Strongly agree	Agree	Neutral	Strongly disagree	Disagree

7. Staff has good product knowledge

Strongly agree	Agree	Neutral	Strongly disagree	Disagree

8. Orders are delivered within the time promised

Strongly agree	Agree	Neutral	Strongly disagree	Disagree

9. Products and service are always value for money (meet and or exceed client expectations)

Strongly agree	Agree	Neutral	Strongly disagree	Disagree

10. I always buy again from Chicken Inn because of quality of service package

Strongly agree	Agree	Neutral	Strongly disagree	Disagree

11. I am satisfied with service offered at Chicken Inn

Strongly agree	Agree	Neutral	Strongly disagree	Disagree

12. Management is always available to resolve complaints

Strongly agree	Agree	Neutral	Strongly disagree	Disagree

13. Staff has good attitude towards customers

Strongly agree	Agree	Neutral	Strongly disagree	Disagree

14. Quality service always increases customer satisfaction

Strongly agree	Agree	Neutral	Strongly disagree	Disagree

Any comments...
....
....
....
....

Thank you

Appendix 2: In-depth and Focus Groups Interviews Question Guides for Chicken Inn Employees

1. Do you have a customer service policy?
2. Are they any key client care programs in place at Chicken Inn?
3. Comment on the following service dimensions as they apply to your situation:
   - Reliability
   - Responsiveness to client needs
   - Assurance
   - Operating environment(ambience)
   - Individual attention
4. What do customers say about service offered at Chicken Inn?
5. What challenges are you facing in trying to meet customer needs?
6. Are they any benefits enjoyed from delivering service excellence?
7. What are the key satisfiers to your customers?
8. Comments in terms of competition faced by Chicken Inn.
9. Any other comments.

Thank you