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Consumers' perception of the service quality of fast-food outlets in Gauteng

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Consumers' perception of the service quality of fast-food outlets in Gauteng

by

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“A customer is the most important visitor on our premises. He is not dependent on us. We are dependent on him. He is not an interruption in our work. He is the purpose of it. He is not an outsider in our business. He is part of it. We are not doing him a favour by serving him. He is doing us a favour by giving us an opportunity to do so”.

- Kenneth B Elliot

Dedicated to

My Ouers,
Hendrik & Lynette

Declaration

I, Fransisca (A.M) du Plessis, hereby declare that the dissertation for the Masters in Consumer Science: Food Management at the University of Pretoria, hereby submitted by me, is my own work and has not previously been submitted for a degree at this or any other university or tertiary institution and that all reference material contained herein has been acknowledged.

Fransisca (A.M) du Plessis

November 2015

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Abstract

The fast-food franchise industry has become one of the fastest growing and most successful segments of its retail sector. This study defines fast food as food that is prepared and served to the consumer in some form of a take-away package. According to the South African Customer Satisfaction Index (SAcsi*), South Africa's fast food industry is ranked second in the world, with a customer satisfaction score of 79 out of 100. South Africans have literally become fast-food junkies embracing large portions of affordable food that are readily accessible and available almost immediately, especially in major urban areas throughout South Africa, like those in Gauteng.

The aim of this study was to determine and describe consumers' perception of the quality of the service offering of fast-food outlets (in general) and to determine how the additional service offerings of this growing industry determine consumers' patronage of fast-food outlets. Objectives were formulated to draw conclusions about consumers' satisfaction with the service quality of fast-food outlets based on the expectations-confirmation paradigm in terms of selected demographic characteristics namely gender, age, education level, population group and monthly household income. The quantitative, correlational study was cross-sectional and reflected on perceptions at the specific time of the study and in a specific urban context. Survey data was gathered electronically from 447 respondents implementing a structured, self-administered questionnaire in which the established scale of Oyewole (1999) was used to provide insightful conclusions about consumers' perceptions of specific dimensions of the service delivery, namely Hygiene and efficiency; Courtesy; Health consciousness; Child friendliness; Ease of complaint; Comfort; Orderliness; Availability; and Expeditiousness.

Data analysis involved descriptive and inferential statistics. Exploratory factor analysis, specifically Principal Axis Factoring, using Oblimin rotation with Kaiser Normalization to determine the underlying factors associated with service quality in fast-food outlets. Confirmatory factor analysis was done using unweighted least squares (ULS) estimation to address multivariate non-normality. Good fit indices were achieved. Calculations of means, standard deviations, Cronbach's Alpha,

Anova, t-tests and Post hoc Bonferroni tests were done to identify significant differences between and among different demographics categories for further interpretation.

The study concluded that consumers' expectations were higher than their perceptions for four of the eight factors, namely: Courtesy and efficiency; Hygiene and precision; Expeditiousness, and Availability. Confirmation of expectations was confirmed for three of the eight factors, namely Orderliness and ease of compliant; Healthiness, and Child friendliness. Positive disconfirmation occurred for only one of the eight factors namely Comfort. Findings indicate that there is ample opportunity for fast-food outlets to improve their service offering in terms of various dimensions and that they could even choose which elements they would want to excel in to achieve a competitive advantage in the Market place.

Females have significantly higher expectations than men for five of the eight dimensions of the service offering and therefore it would be more difficult to please females. Young consumers held significantly higher expectations about one of the eight factors namely child friendliness. Particularly interesting is that lower middle income consumers' expectations seem significantly higher compared to upper income consumers about health related aspects. White consumers were significantly more concerned about hygiene and efficiency compared to black consumers, whereas the opposite was true for child friendliness. Black consumers' expectations also seem significantly higher than white consumers in terms of the healthiness of fast foods. Fast food establishments should take note of the dimensions of the service offering where consumers' expectations are high, namely: Hygiene and precision; and Courtesy and efficiency to ensure confirmation as a non-negotiable mode of operation. Fast-food outlets could instigate consumers' satisfaction with positive return intentions if they exceed consumers' expectations with regards to service dimensions where expectations were not particularly high, for example Child-friendliness, and even Healthiness where consumers' expectations are modest.

Key words: Fast-food outlets, service quality, expectations, perceptions, South African consumer.

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List of Abbreviations

- CFA: Confirmatory factor analysis
EFA: Exploratory factor analysis
FF: Fast-food
KFC: Kentucky Fried Chicken
SERVQUAL: Service quality scale
ULS: Unweighted Least Squares
SAcsi: South African Customer Satisfaction Index
TQM: Total quality management
MEAL: The Menu Education and Labelling Act
QSR: Quick service restaurants

Chapter 1

THE STUDY IN PERSPECTIVE

This chapter provides the background to the study, introduces the research problem and briefly explains the methodology and theoretical perspective used. The study's structure and important definitions, abbreviations and acronyms as used in the text are explained.

1.1 INTRODUCTION AND BACKGROUND

Despite the global economic slump experienced at the turn of the century that resulted in retailers having to face major challenges (James, 2013), the South African fast-food franchise industry has become one of the fastest growing and most successful segments of its retail sector (James, 2013). South Africans have literally become fast-food junkies embracing large portions of affordable food that are readily accessible and available almost immediately, especially in major urban areas throughout South Africa, like those in Gauteng. The popularity of fast foods is indicative of changing lifestyles, the growing trend for convenience and consumers' need for value for money, despite a slow economy (FASA, 2012; Euromonitor International, 2015). South Africa's growth in this industry is in line with the global trend, which shows a total of 208 billion transactions in 2009, with a global revenue expected to reach \$240 billion by the end of 2014 (FASA, 2012).

Despite all the threats that the fast-food industry is currently facing, like rising commodity prices, an excessive supply of fast-food outlets in the market, load-shedding and hygiene scandals, the fast-food industry is still showing remarkable growth. This is particularly evident in the number of local consumers who are 16 years and older as this age group comprised 80% of the market in 2014 in relation to 66% in 2009 (Maharaj, 2015).

A senior research analyst, from Euromonitor International indicated to CNBCafrica.com that under 40% of the total consumer food service sales in South Africa come from the fast-food industry

(Naidoo, 2015). In 2012, 70% of the total fast-food sales were generated from chained outlets, with a value of R11.43 billion. Chicken is the biggest category in the fast-food industry, followed by fast-food burgers valued at R5.05 billion and chained fast-food pizza at R1.3 billion (Naidoo, 2015). The fast-food industry in South Africa is dominated by Yum! Brands with its Kentucky Fried Chicken (KFC) brand that has a total of 771 outlets, with a value share of 22% Famous Brands, Nando's and McDonald's follow alternating between 6% and 13% market share (Euromonitor International, 2015). Yum! Brands leads Steers, in response to South African's love for burgers it has a total of 509 outlets and is in second place. It is Famous Brands' largest franchise. Wimpy has a total of 497 outlets; Debonairs 382 outlets; The Fish & Chips Co 330 outlets; Nando's 300 outlets; McDonalds with 200 outlets; Roman's Pizza has 163 outlets; Fishaways a total of 157; Kuai a total of 148; and Mochachos a total of 76 (Writer, 2015).

Changes in the composition of South Africa's labour force may have influenced the notable increase in the consumption of fast foods, particularly the presence of more and more dual income households, which has resulted in fast-paced lifestyles, time pressures and an emerging black middle-class, generally the consequence of increased urbanisation and globalisation (Akabay, Tiryaki & Gul, 2007; Maumbe, 2010; Min & Min, 2013). Modern households now have less time available for traditional tasks such as preparing meals at home (Maumbe, 2010). Work, family and social responsibilities are constraints that consumers face daily. Traditional household tasks too like food preparation are different, therefore consumers are becoming increasingly dependent on a supply of food that is easily accessible, affordable and quick and effortless to obtain (Jabs & Devine, 2006). Fast foods save households much time and physical energy after a long working day, and with fast foods to rely on, inexperienced consumers such as young singles who cater for themselves, no longer require cooking skills to put meals on the table (Caraher, Dixon, Lang & Carr-Hill, 1999; Marshall, 2005). It is fairly easy for singles and time-pressured households to patronise fast-food outlets rather than to prepare meals from scratch.

Consumers' desire for convenience leads them to purchase and consume easy-to-prepare food and rely on fast-food outlets (Candel, 2001; Park 2004; Driskell, Kim & Goebel, 2005; Driskell, Meckna & Scales, 2006). A prominent trend in dietary behaviour over the past 40 years is the increase in the supply of food and beverages that are prepared and eaten outside of the home (Guthrie, Biing-Hwan & Frazao, 2002; Poti & Popkin, 2011; Powell, Nguyen & Han, 2012). This trend is clear from noting the number of times that individuals eat out, as well as the quantity of food and beverages that is consumed when eating out (Poti & Popkin, 2011). Some argue that the consumption of unhealthy

food options is due to effects of increased urbanisation and globalisation on the food industry (Logan & Jacka, 2014). The fast-food industry has grown considerably over the past few decades and, as a consequence, consumers are eating out more often (Garze, Ding, Owensby & Zizza, 2015). Fast food is meant to be time-saving, convenient and relevant in present-day times, as efficiency and immediate satisfaction have become crucial for a person's satisfaction (Zhong & Devoe, 2010). The significant consumption of fast food is associated with the perceived convenience that fast food offers, and the assumption that modern consumers' dislike cooking (Dave, An, Jeffery & Ahluwalia, 2009). Consumers indulge in fast food because of its convenience and the pleasant experience they get from it (Loewenstein, Brennan & Volpp, 2007).

For the purpose of this study, fast food is defined as food that is prepared and served to the consumer in some form of a take-away package in a formal retail establishment (Khan, Hussain & Yaqoob, 2013). Van Zyl, Steyn and Marias (2010) define fast food as cooked or ready-prepared foods bought at take-away food establishments. Fast-food outlets are therefore defined as a type of restaurant that serves food that requires little preparation before it is served and consumed (Reverso, 2013). Although convenience has become increasingly important to consumers in recent years, they are also more discerning about the food they consume (Buckley, Cowan, McCarthy & O'Sullivan, 2005). With so many types of food outlets within reach to choose from, it has become more difficult for fast-food outlets to please consumers.

A critical success factor for fast-food restaurants is effective service quality (Clemes, Gan, Kao & Choong, 2008; Yusoff, Ismail & Ali, 2010). Service quality can be defined as the overall evaluation of a specific organisation that results from comparing its performance with consumers' general expectations of how organisations in its industry should perform (Parasuraman, Zeithaml & Berry, 1991). One of the most important strategies service providers can use to position themselves more effectively in a competitive marketplace, and to distinguish themselves from competitors, is to improve their service quality to ensure consumer satisfaction (Cronin & Taylor, 1992). Retailers need to measure and improve their service quality continuously, and this is no different for fast-food managers. It is necessary to gain knowledge from measuring service quality in fast-food outlets that improved service offering is made possible (Sumaedi & Yarmen, 2015). Measuring service quality on an established scale is to note the difference between customers' expectations and their perceptions of a particular service experience (Parasuraman, Zeithaml & Berry, 1988; Oyewole, 1999). Although a single service offering comprises different service dimensions, overall customer

satisfaction with a particular service is eventually based on a consumer's total experience of the service an organisation offers. Fast-food outlets need to be aware and proactive in this regard too. In an increasingly competitive food retail environment, fast-food outlets therefore have to be customer-orientated, have to understand which factors and dimensions of their service offerings are lacking, and which are regarded as crucial to satisfy consumers' expectations thereby increasing their perceptions of the overall service quality and their eventual satisfaction (Law, Hui & Zhao, 2004).

It is important for organisations and retailers to continuously monitor and improve the quality of the service that they provide to consumers (Sumaedi & Yarmen, 2015). Service quality in fast-food restaurants is measured by the customers' evaluation of the superiority of the services that a particular fast-food restaurant offers them (Salami & Ajobo, 2012). Researchers agree that service quality is a multidimensional construct (Brady & Cronin, 2001), which means that service quality consists of more than one dimension. These dimensions of service quality represent the service components that are important for customers who purchase fast foods (Clemes *et al.*, 2008). Based on this, fast-food restaurants' service quality models should be adapted to the context of fast-food restaurants.

Of specific interest for this study is the research of Oyewole conducted in 1999 to determine the dimensions of service quality in the fast-food restaurant industry. The service quality instrument Oyewole (1999) eventually developed included 57 attribute items that are arranged as ten dimensions: hygiene and efficiency; courtesy; health consciousness; child-friendly; ease of complaint; comforts; orderliness; availability; expeditiousness; and communication. This particular scale was used for this research, although Oyewole did another study in 2007 titled 'Fast food Marketing and the African American Consumers' (Oyewole, 2007) with exactly the same scale as in 1999 to determine fast food consumption preferences of African Americans. Oyewole did another study in 2013 titled 'Multi-attribute Dimensions of Service Quality in the All-You-Can-Eat Buffet Restaurant Industry' (Oyewole, 2013) with a new scale specifically developed for Buffet restaurants. The previous scale of 1999 and 2007 was more relevant for this study as it was specifically about service quality in the fast-food restaurant industry, whereas the 2013 scale was designed solely for buffet restaurants. A complete discussion of Oyewole's scale (1999) and relevant literature to support the attributes in each of the ten dimensions is dealt with in Chapter 2.

1.2 RESEARCH PROBLEM

Fast foods have become the modern-day alternative to traditional home-prepared meals for single member households as well as time-stressed and less experienced in food preparation consumers. Moreover, fast-food outlets provide near immediate service, and a consistent and popular product almost on your doorstep when living in urban environments (Akabay *et al.*, 2007; Brunner, Van der Horst & Siegrist, 2010; Szerenyi, Zsoka & Szechy, 2010). Although convenience and accessibility of modern fast-food outlets are highly sought after benefits, according to the growth in the industry in recent years (Consulta, 2014), it does not imply that consumers who patronise fast-food outlets are any less discerning about the quality of the service offering. Consumers in an urban environment generally have a variety of these outlets to choose from, all within close proximity, which not only prevents monotony of the food types that are available, but also it allows consumers to compare the service offering of different fast-food outlets. When one service provider fails to meet consumers' expectations, it is fairly easy to go to another.

Over time, fast-food outlets have introduced several additional benefits and extras to entice and attract consumers, for example, very convenient drive-through facilities and playgrounds that help to occupy children while parents are waiting for their order or having a meal. Extended menus nowadays also include family meals and menu options for children. In addition, extended operating hours and paying attention to customer care, especially attending to young families, singles and families with children, have enhanced the attraction of the fast-food outlets (Maumbe, 2010). Consumers' frequent patronage of fast-food outlets does, however, not necessarily mean that they are satisfied with the service quality of fast-food outlets in general, or that the various dimensions of the service offering of fast-food outlets are satisfactory. The fast-food industry has indeed received much negative publicity in recent years (Binkley, Eales, Jekanowski, 2000; Duffey, Gordon-Larsen, Jacobs, Williams & Popkin, 2007), especially concerning health-related issues (Hur & Jang, 2015), despite evidence that many fast-food outlets have introduced a choice of healthier food options on their menus, for example, grilled or fried meat or fish as well as salads instead of chips.

Based on evidence that fast foods have become a very important alternative to family meals in modern-day consumers' busy lives, as is seen from the growth of the fast-food sector even in tough economic times, it is not clear how consumers perceive the service quality of fast-food outlets in general. In particular, to determine whether they perceive the service offerings as good, or whether

the service offering is merely tolerated for the sake of personal benefit, especially convenience. It is thus now clear that it is the value of the service offering that counts. Thus the issue is to ascertain how the service offering can be augmented to increase consumers' satisfaction and subsequently, the value of the service offering.

1.3 JUSTIFICATION

According to the South African Customer Satisfaction Index (SAcsi), South Africa's fast-food industry is ranked second in the world, with a customer satisfaction score of 79 out of 100 (Consulta, 2013). SAcsi does market research in South Africa to determine customers' satisfaction with the quality of products and services that are available to consumers. Prof Schreuder, the founder and chair of SAcsi, applauded the South African fast-food industry recently for achieving a high customer satisfaction score. At the same time, however, he encouraged fast-food retailers to maintain a customer-centric focus, as it is expected that South African consumers will become astute as time passes, and their expectations of brands and services will keep on rising. South African companies can therefore not afford to become complacent about the service they deliver (Consulta, 2013). Compared to SAcsi's findings, popular South African complaint websites, however, comment to the contrary. In fact, South African consumers, complain continually about the service offerings at fast-food outlets on a regular basis about matters such as the bad/ appalling/ unpleasant/ rude attitude of staff; slow and poor service; long waiting times; and tasteless and cold food (Hellopeter.com, 2012).

The unique contribution of this study is based on the empirical evidence it provides concerning the specific dimensions of the quality of the service delivered by selected fast-food outlets. This is something that has not been done before. The findings expose the shortcomings of their current service offerings that could be augmented to increase consumer satisfaction and reduce consumer complaints. This dissertation will conclude with recommendations that would be invaluable for the fast-foods industry to consider in their operations and which, if implemented, would be most important for consumers.

1.4 RESEARCH AIM AND OBJECTIVES

The principle aim of this study was to determine and describe consumers' s of the quality of the service generally offered at fast-food outlets in Gauteng through gathering evidence of consumers' expectations and perceptions of the fast food industry. In addition, to document the perceived shortcomings that could be addressed to enhance the service offered at a facility that has increased in popularity in the lives of time-pressed consumers and households especially in recent times.

The following objectives were formulated to ensure that applicable data would be obtained to draw appropriate conclusions. Each objective involved an investigation of selected demographic characteristics of the population with regard to their gender, age, education level, population group and monthly household income.

Objective 1: To determine and describe consumer's patronage of fast-food outlets

Objective 2: To determine and describe consumers' expectations of the service quality of fast-food outlets in terms of the specific dimensions of their service offering as deduced from the scale of Oyewole (1999).

Objective 3: To determine and describe consumer's perceptions of the service quality of fast-food outlets in terms of the specific dimensions of their service offering as deduced from the scale of Oyewole (1999).

Objective 4: To investigate and describe the congruence between consumers' expectations of the service quality dimensions as specified (Objective 2) and their perceptions of the service quality (objective 3) provided at fast-food outlets in order to identify shortcomings that could be addressed to augment the overall service quality perceptions.

1.5 STUDY AREA

The investigation was conducted in the geographical area of Gauteng, South Africa. This province was chosen as the area in which to gather the data as Consulta Research (Pty) Ltd, a market research company linked to the University of Pretoria would be involved. Only consumers in the community whose profile met the criteria for participation could be invited to complete the questionnaire. The location provided a convenient opportunity for the researcher to access Consulta personnel and consult supervisors as well as to maximise the use of available time and financial resources.

1.6 RESEARCH DESIGN AND METHODOLOGY

This abstract of the research methodology and design is meant to introduce the reader to the study. More detail is given in Chapter 4. The study is quantitative, investigative and descriptive in nature and could provide useful background for more extensive research in the future.

The survey was done in Gauteng. This quantitative survey was completed in a cross-sectional time frame in August 2014. Data was collected by means of a structured, self-administered questionnaire that Consulta distributed electronically in which respondents were asked to “Rate your fast-food brands”. The document went from the Consulta Panel to 9150 selected online community members whose profile indicated that they lived in Gauteng and who were 21 years or older. Two questions appeared on the computer screen before proceeding with the survey. This was done to ensure that the sample was accurately drawn: first, ‘Do you currently reside in Gauteng? And second, ‘Have you had a personal experience with at least one fast-food outlet within the last six months?’

The structured, self-administered questionnaire consisted of four sections with a total of 15 questions of which some were self-developed in that information about the consumers’ patronage of fast-food outlets was requested. Others were established scales based on Oyewole’s (1999) conceptualisation of service quality in the fast-food industry. After the approval of a statistician, the questionnaire was pre-tested to identify and address or remove any possible errors. The questions were Likert-type statements where respondents had to indicate their expectations and perceived level of satisfaction with the service quality of fast-food outlets in two separate sections. Instructions were in simple English. All Likert-type scales contained five increments.

In order to straighten out any possible misconceptions a pilot test with 20 respondents was carried out using the designed questionnaire. This was screened among the 20 respondents on a paper based questionnaire, to test whether the fundamental concepts expressed were clearly understood and that relevant responses were delivered that could be used to address the research objectives. The feedback from these 20 questionnaires was analysed to identify any problems and, when correct, it was incorporated into the final questionnaire to yield a valid and meaningful research instrument (Addendum D). The final questionnaire was sent to Consulta to launch the study.

Following the data collection done and checked by Consulta within two days in August 2014, completed questionnaires were coded by Consulta and the data was processed with the assistance of a qualified statistician. Descriptive and inferential statistics were used to analyse the data. As Leedy and Ormrod, (2013:214) point out, the findings from a study that applied convenience sampling cannot be generalised to a larger population, therefore due effort was made to recruit a substantive sample size that would allow for viable subsets within the sample that would produce meaningful results. A minimum of 350 respondents was envisaged. To eliminate erroneous assumptions throughout the investigation the researcher did a thorough review of existing literature related to the topic under investigation. A statistician was consulted before and after finalising the questionnaire and conducting a pre-test. Experts verified the content of the questionnaire to enhance face and construct validity.

1.7 DATA ANALYSIS

Data analysis involved descriptive and inferential statistics. Exploratory factor analysis, specifically Principal Axis Factoring, using Oblimin rotation with Kaiser Normalization to determine the underlying factors associated with service quality in fast food outlets. Confirmatory factor analysis was done as well with unweighted least squares ULS estimation to address multivariate non-normality. Good fit indices were achieved. Calculations of means, standard deviations, Cronbach's Alpha, Anova, t-tests and post hoc Bonferroni tests were calculated where significant differences between demographics were investigated for further interpretation.

1.8 THEORETICAL PERSPECTIVE

Expectancy disconfirmation theory was used as a theoretical framework for the study as it allowed for the investigation of consumers' expectations and their perceptions of all service quality factors. This information would then indicate how the service offering met consumers' expectations and how the service offering could be improved to enhance consumer satisfaction.

Leon Festinger introduced the cognitive dissonance theory in 1957 to explain how dissonance between an individual's cognition and reality influences their subsequent cognition and behaviour (Bhattacharjee & Premkumar, 2004). Cognitive dissonance theory is then the basis on which the expectancy disconfirmation theory is built upon. The expectancy disconfirmation model has been used in several service marketing studies (Oliver & Swan, 1989; Fornell, Johnson, Anderson, Cha & Bryant, 1996; Spreng & Mackoy, 1996) as well as studies of physical products (Churchill & Suprenant, 1982; Nield, Kozak & Le Grys, 2000). Oliver (1981) introduced the expectancy disconfirmation model for studies of customer satisfaction in the retail and service industries. Montfort, Masurel & Van Rijn (2000) point out that this theory indirectly addresses the way consumers respond to consumption experiences. Researchers describe the consumption evaluation process as a confirmation/disconfirmation paradigm where consumers compare their expectations of the product's or service performance with the perceived performance of the product or service, as a way to indicate whether differences exists between the two or not (Churchill & Suprenant, 1982; Oliver, 1980).

Disconfirmation theory presumes that customers make purchases based on their expectations, attitudes and intentions (Oliver, 1980). During or after the consumption process, a perception of performance is formed as customers then evaluate the actual consumption experience of the product or service within their own expectations framework. The experience is then compared to the individual's initial expectations. Whether realistic or not, the expectations are either confirmed or disconfirmed. Positive disconfirmation occurs when expectations are surpassed; negative disconfirmation occurs when expectations are not met; neutral conclusions result when the expectations are met, that is, the consumer receives the product or service as expected (Oliver, 1980; Churchill & Suprenant, 1982; Heung, 2000; Mill, 2002; Ryu & Han, 2010). Satisfaction is the resulting outcome of confirmation or positive disconfirmation. Dissatisfaction is the outcome of an emotion of negative disconfirmation.

1.9 ETHICS

De Vos, Strydom, Fouché & Delpont (2011:114) define ethics as “a set of moral principles which is suggested by an individual or group is subsequently widely accepted, and which offers rules and behavioural expectations about the most correct conduct towards experimental subjects and respondents, employers, sponsors, other researchers, assistants and students.” According to Walliman (2005:335), ethical issues in academic research can be viewed from two perspectives: the first perspective concerns the personal integrity of the researcher conducting the research study; the second is the perspective that relates to the courtesy, consent and confidentiality that the researcher places on the specific research issue on hand, as well as considering all the relevant parties the research affects.

The particular ethical issues considered for this research concerned the respondents who participated in the study and who have done so voluntarily. The selection of participants was unbiased as their gender, age, culture, level of education, financial status or disabilities did not preclude them from being respondents. Only those who were part of Consulta Research company database could have taken part in this study. The questionnaire was only distributed to consumers who had had a personal buying experience at a fast-food outlet within the last six months, either by personally being in the fast-food outlet physically or in a drive-through facility. Respondents could take part anonymously as no personal details such as name, identity number or contact details were asked. At no point was sensitive information asked in the questionnaire.

The purpose of the study was explained to the respondents on a cover screen before they commenced completing the questionnaire on their own computers. Information given included the time taken to complete the questionnaire as well as stipulating that respondents could withdraw from the study at any time and for any reason, and respondents needed to only complete questions with which they were comfortable (Leedy & Ormrod, 2013:105; Salkind, 2012:88). The respondents were asked to accept the accompanying conditions to ensure that an ethical code of practice was followed. The consent form the respondents had to acknowledge had been approved by the Ethics Committee of the Faculty of Natural and Agricultural Sciences at the University of Pretoria before the data collection commenced (See addendum A).

All the literature resources used in this particular research study can be accounted for and are acknowledged through proper citations and are recorded in the reference list. Necessary acknowledgements prevented plagiarism. The confidentiality of each respondent was preserved.

1.10 PRESENTATION AND STRUCTURE OF THE RESEARCH

The dissertation is structured in six chapters as outlined below:

Chapter 1 explains the background of the study and introduces the research problem as well as a justification for the research. The research aim and objectives are presented and the research design and methodology, data analysis and the theoretical perspective are briefly explained. The study's structure is included.

Chapter 2 provides the theoretical background to the study based on a review of relevant literature to support the constructs of the study and their meaning for the research. This literature review first focuses on the food service industry, including the fast-food industry; a discussion on service quality research referring to the history of service quality evaluation then follows; and it concludes with an exposition of Oyewole's conceptualisation of service quality in the fast-food restaurant industry.

Chapter 3 presents and justifies the theoretical perspective adopted and its assumptions that were used to guide the research. The conceptual framework and research objectives are presented and explained.

Chapter 4 comprehensively explains the research design and methodology chosen for the study to achieve valid and reliable results that would answer the research objectives of the study. Data analysis is discussed with attention being paid to the use of appropriate scales. The important concepts are operationalised and the methods used during the data analysis are specified. The chapter concludes with an indication of how the researcher attempted to eliminate error and dealt with the ethical issues relating to the research.

Chapter 5 presents the demographic characteristics of the sample, followed by the results which are discussed according to the study's objectives and existing literature is cited and incorporated.

Chapter 6 presents the conclusions in line with the objectives of the study. The procedures followed throughout the research process are reviewed and the limitations of the study are pointed out. Recommendations for further research are offered and the implications of the findings for academic interest and for the industry are discussed.



Chapter 2

LITERATURE REVIEW

From the literature consulted this chapter focuses on an exposition of food service industry in which fast-food outlets and restaurants are growing apace, creating a need for research to investigate its relevant constructs. First, the main characteristics of the food service industry in general are described, followed by an account of the significance of the fast-food component. Together with an exposition of Oyewole's conceptualisation of service quality in the fast-food restaurant industry, its historical development is documented.

2. THEORETICAL BACKGROUND

2.1 THE FOOD SERVICE INDUSTRY

The food service industry is diverse, because it comprises a range of operations from the most distant kitchen table to the tiniest hot dog stand, plus those of the largest corporation specialising in food services, its equipment and distribution facilities. Restaurants are part of the food service industry (Campos & Nobrega, 2009; Salami & Ajobo, 2012; Kaur, 2013). The food service industry represents all establishments where food is regularly served (Payne-Palacio & Theis, 2012:45) for consumption on the premises, at home or away from home (Edwards & Overstreet, 2009). When the primary activity of the business is to sell food for profit, it is called a commercial food service, for example, providing prepared food at restaurants, lodges and convenience stores (Ninemeier & Hayes, 2006:9; Gregoire, 2010:11). Today meals are sold and distributed commercially in so many ways, in multiple channels and forms (Jonsson & Knutsson, 2009). Food service today touches nearly every household in some way or another. The industry has grown over the years, stimulated largely by the way the typically American way of life has changed with the rest of the world following suit (Andaleeb & Caskey, 2007).

The food service industry today, and specifically the activity at fast-food outlets, involves more than just the opportunity to consume food, in that their service also provides relief from the everyday routine of food preparation which is something that the consumer usually looks forward to (Edwards, 2012). In general, the entire experience of the meal encompasses consideration of the food, the consumer and the specific situation under which food is consumed. The quality of food is thus a basic but an absolute necessity in the food industry. This, together with the ambience of the service provider and the service performance, contribute to the customer's evaluation of the establishment (Edwards, 2012) providing the service. Satisfied customers thus base their satisfaction on these three aspects: the *food*, its presentation, taste and smell; the *service component*, especially the willingness and knowledge of employees on duty with whom they interact as quick service forms part of the meal acquisition in fast-food outlets and can even be regarded as part of the food itself (Edwards, 2012); and the *ambience, and context*, largely created by the spatial seating arrangements, the interior design of the outlet and the music playing in the establishment (Namkung & Jang, 2008).

2.2 THE FAST-FOOD RESTAURANT INDUSTRY

This section provides background to the fast-food industry with reference to its related constructs and definitions.

2.2.1 Fast-food restaurants defined

Fast-food restaurants are generally described as restaurants that serve fast food, in their own building or as a part of another restaurant (Campos & Nobrega, 2009; Kaur, 2013). Researchers assign the following definition to fast-food restaurants regarding them as “chain restaurants that have two or more of the following characteristics: expedited food service, takeout business, limited or no wait staff, and payment tendered prior to receiving food” (Block, Scribner & DeSalvo, 2004).

The focus of this study is on food service providers offering a limited service and limited menu, also known as quick-service restaurants, fast-food restaurants or fast-food outlets that combine the speed and convenience of fast food with food quality and décor. These establishments are designed to provide a limited number of food items to customers in a short space of time. The customer

generally orders the food at a counter and pays for the food before consuming it. Their target market is working professionals and parents who want meals served quickly and at a low price (Ninemeier & Hayes, 2006:12; Gregoire, 2010:11). For the purpose of this study, the term fast-food outlets will be used. The fast-food outlets in Gauteng that were selected for this investigation were Chicken Licken, Debonairs, Fishaways, Kauai, Kentucky Fried Chicken (KFC), McDonald's, Nando's, Roman's Pizza, Scooters, Shisa Nyama and Steers. The fast-food industry will now be discussed.

2.2.2 Fast-food industry

One of the most significant changes in food consumption over the past fifty years is the increasing tendency of consumers to eat food that is prepared outside the home, including fast foods (Binkley, 2006). There has been rapid growth in the fast-food restaurant business in this decade (Campos & Nobrega, 2009; Salami & Ajobo, 2012; Kaur, 2013) and consequently the fast-food industry has become a popular topic in academic literature (Min & Min, 2011).

The fast-food industry provides a rapid, convenient and relatively inexpensive service (Sahagun & Vasquez-Parraga, 2014). Fast-food restaurants are differentiated from other types of restaurants by their unique characteristics that embrace prompt service, relatively low service interactions and relatively low price ranges, as characteristic of what these outlets offer to customers (Cao & Kim, 2015). Their service can be seen as a reaction to the fact that nowadays people want "more" for their money as customers' expectations of value in relation to price have risen (Andaleeb & Conway, 2006).

The location where a retail establishment is situated can be a critical determinant of financial success, especially in the fast-food industry. Fast-food restaurant sites are therefore selected strategically to increase the convenience to consumers with regard to access and to maximise their long term profits (Karande & Lombard, 2005; Thomadsen, 2007).

Fast-food marketers appeal to targeted customers by highlighting the value and cost saving, and state that the foods are easy and convenient meal solutions that minimise time-stressed consumers search and decision costs (Chandon, Wansink, & Laurent, 2000). In fast-food services, customers' satisfaction from the quick and convenient service offered by these fast-food outlets, might exceed their satisfaction level with the actual food product purchased (Sahagun & Vasquez-Parraga, 2014). Fast-food consumers who are satisfied with fast-food outlets, generally develop a trust relationship

that results in commitment to the brand. These customers become loyal to the brands they trust and with which they are satisfied (Sahagun & Vasquez-Parraga, 2014).

The value that consumers derive from eating out can be defined by the value derived from a combination of the food, the service and the restaurant itself. Consumers pursue these values for the following reasons: to satisfy their hunger; a need for convenience; for pleasure and entertainment; social interaction; and mood transformation (Park, 2004). The functional value of visiting a restaurant is to satisfy hunger. In fast food establishments consumers enjoy convenient food that is economical eating (Park, 2004). The increasing consumption of fast food has also resulted in more eating moments per day, which have become part of the modern lifestyles (Akabay *et al.*, 2007). In fast-food establishments only minimal time is spent obtaining product information, due to the standardised menus and consistent quality (Jekanowski, Binkley & Eales, 2001). Generally, workers tend to pursue convenience when eating (Park, 2004). For example, the Korean market considers fast-food restaurants as not only efficient and economical, but also as exotic places where they can have social interaction and entertainment (Park, 2004). In South Africa, consumers get fast food from a range of fast-food establishments and, in doing so, create more time for socialising with friends because the food is ready to eat immediately.

2.2.3 Fast-food industry in South Africa

One of the countries with the fastest growing fast-food industries in the world is South Africa. South Africa's fast-food industry has experienced continual growth over the last decade which is in line with the global trend, and the forecast is that it will continue expanding. The growth in the South African fast-food industry could be due to factors such as rising household incomes, the recent growth in the black middle class, and more female participation in the labour force of the formal sector that has subsequently limited their time spent on traditional tasks such as food and meal preparations (Maumbe, 2012).

South Africa's fast-food industry comprises both local and global players and therefore it is a very competitive market. Well established fast-food brand names such as Chicken Licken, KFC, McDonald's, Nando's and Steers, are highly visible in South Africa (Maumbe, 2012). According to Euromonitor International (2015), Yum! Brands with their KFC brand, has the largest number of fast-food outlets in South Africa, clearly due to the popularity of chicken as a fast food. They lead with a

total of 771 outlets, Famous Brands, that has 509 outlets in South Africa. Fast-food operators have taken the opportunity to attract customers throughout the day by including breakfast items on their menus. This initiative enables consumers to consider making use of fast-food facilities throughout the day. Over the forecast period in 2012, fast food is one of the most dynamic service categories, showing an increase of more than 16%, (Euromonitor International, 2013). Analytix Consumer Analysis revealed that the number of South African consumers aged 16 years and older that eat fast food once a month the number has increased by 13% from 2008 (65%) to 2012 (78%), which represents approximately 26.5 million consumers. It is estimated that in 2017, a total of 34.1 million South African consumers will eat fast food at least once every four weeks (Planting, 2013).

The growth of the fast-food industry has been exceptional and there has been a remarkable increase in the amount of money spent on fast-food outlets globally (Van Zyl *et al.*, 2010). There were a total of 8 661 fast-food outlets in South Africa in 2010 of which 4 991 were owned by fast-food chains, while the rest were independent outlets (Igumbor, Sanders, Puoane, Tsolekile, Schwarz, Purdy, Swart, Durao & Hawkes, 2012). There has also been an increase in the sales of almost all categories of packaged food in South Africa (Igumbor *et al.*, 2012). The sales of snack bars, ready meals and noodles increased by more than 40% between 2005 and 2010. A recent assessment of the consumption of so-called street food sold by vendors revealed that 11.3% of the population bought food from street vendors and 6.8% of the population bought fast food from formal fast-food outlets at least twice a week (Steyn & Labadarios, 2011). Although the amount of street food purchased remains almost twice the amount purchased from formal fast-food outlets (Steyn & Labadarios, 2011), the fast food chains have developed aggressive expansion strategies to increase the availability of their products. Park (2004) is of the opinion that, for fast-food restaurants to survive they should address this fierce competition through adopting customer-orientated marketing strategies that are based on culture specific characteristics.

2.3 CONSUMERS' CONSUMPTION OF FAST FOOD

Consumers' desire for convenience leads them to purchasing and consuming easy to prepare food and therefore patronising outlets that sell these type of foods (Candel, 2001). The major reason why consumers support fast-food outlets is that they are hard pressed for time (McCracken & Brandt, 1987). Time-pressured consumers benefit much from convenience food outlets as the overall transaction time is short reducing their time pressure at home (Heider & Moeller, 2012). Many

consumers eat fast food at least once per week, although they consider fast food to be an unhealthy food choice (Dunn, Mohr, Wilson & Wittert, 2008; Mulvaney-Day, Womack & Oddo, 2012). Other factors that affect their patronage of fast-food service providers are the demands of their gender roles, their working status, income level and civil status (Fox, Montgomery & Lodish, 2004; Raajpoot, Sharma & Chebat, 2008).

Due to the changing times in which we currently live, busy lifestyles and the consequences of dual-income households that increase household income on the one hand but also extend the period of time pressure to cope with everyday household tasks, consumers' food habits have changed. Many consumers no longer cook from scratch and the emphasis is rather placed on quick meal solutions like having ready-to-eat fast foods. Readymade food preparations have become the choice of many consumers as they are prepared and served quickly at outlets. Fast foods are known to be quick, cheap and convenient for consumers. Although they are not necessarily healthy, consumers highly value their convenience (Chavadi & Kokatnur, 2008). Fast foods give consumers the opportunity to still their hunger quickly and to move on to the next thing on their agenda (Zhong & Devoe, 2010).

The fast-food consumption patterns in South Africa have recently shown a decrease in the tradition of eating home-cooked meals (Rootman & Galloway, 2013). More people purchase fast food as the number of dual-income households and the standards of living are generally increasing. Consumers' busy lifestyles nowadays create a need for fast and healthy meal solutions more than ever before (Rootman & Galloway, 2013). Women having less time to plan and prepare meals at home is the result of the proportion of married woman in the workforce which has tripled since 1950 (Goch, 1999; Andaleeb & Conway, 2006). Meals today are no longer a planned occasion, but rather an afterthought (Mogelonsky, 1998), which leaves people who find themselves hungry with no time to cook, so their only solution is to eat out. The result of this tendency is a booming restaurant industry (Andaleeb & Conway, 2006). Eating out has thus become a necessity for many households and consumers across the world (Andaleeb & Caskey, 2007).

A prominent trend in dietary behaviours over the past forty years has been an increase of the range of food and beverages that are prepared and eaten outside of the home (Guthrie *et al.*, 2002; Poti & Popkin, 2011; Powell *et al.*, 2012). This trend is distinct as far as the number of times that individuals eat out is concerned as well as the amount of food, and beverages, that are consumed when eating out (Poti & Popkin, 2011). Unfortunately the consumption of unhealthy food options

is a direct consequence of increased urbanisation and globalisation in the food industry (Logan & Jacka, 2014). While the fast-food industry has grown over the past few decades, consumers are eating out more often (Garze *et al.*, 2015). Fast food is meant to save consumers time yet simultaneously provide convenience in a society that has become more efficient and needs and demands immediate satisfaction (Zhong & Devoe, 2010). A factor that has strongly influenced people's food choices is the limited time they have available for eating and food preparation. Those who have busy lives do not always have enough time to eat, and therefore many nowadays eat on the run, in a very short time. Since many consumers do not have sufficient time to prepare food from scratch, and because of their busy lifestyles, they tend to view the immediate availability of food in fast-food restaurants as a welcome alternative (Mulvaney-Day *et al.*, 2012).

The significant increase in consumption of fast food is associated with the perceived convenience that fast food offers and because many consumers dislike cooking (Dave *et al.*, 2009). Consumers therefore consume fast food because it is convenient and pleasant (Loewenstein *et al.*, 2007) and also because of its specific attributes, the perceived convenience, taste, and sense of being satisfied. The consumption of fast food is, however, likely to lead to ambivalence for many due to the high fat content of many fast meal options, which has negative long-term consequences. Nevertheless, a short-term positive consequence, however, is that fast food provides an immediate feeling of satiation (Dunn *et al.*, 2008).

The restaurant industry is growing at a fast pace, because people eat out more frequently (Gustafsson, Öström, Johansson & Mossberg, 2006). Busy, hardworking people demand convenience especially when they can afford it and this particularly true of fast foods and ready prepared meals. From this growing industry it is evident that consumers do have more money to spend. Family situations have also changed, because in most households both parents are now working, which leaves them with less time to cook (Gustafsson *et al.*, 2006). In addition, too many consumers do not have the ability to cook (Caraher *et al.*, 1999). Economising, efficiency, fun, taste preferences and a need for social interaction are a few of the various motivations for families to eat out more often which is part of their experiential values (Park, 2004). The benefits that consumers ultimately derive from food and restaurants are the main reasons why people eat out (Park, 2004), and those who eat fast foods frequently, would be able to provide multiple valid reasons why they do so.

The major changes in the lifestyles, education, income, and consumption patterns across the world have elevated the role of fast foods in modern times. Further evidence is the number of fast food chains and restaurants in newly established shopping centres and hypermarket complexes in the country is growing.

2.4 SERVICE QUALITY RESEARCH

2.4.1 Service quality defined

Parasuraman, Zeithmal and Berry (1985) stated that it might be inappropriate to use a product-based definition of quality in the service sector, therefore they developed the expression “service quality”. Service quality has become a major area of academic investigation the past few decades. There are many researchers who have defined the term “service quality” and these are summarised in Table 2.1.

TABLE 2.1: SUMMARY OF SERVICE QUALITY DEFINITIONS

Authors	Definitions	Similarities/Differences
Grönroos (1982;1984)	Described the total service quality as a customer's perception of the difference between the expected service and the perceived service	Difference between expectations and perceptions
Parasuraman, Zeithaml & Berry (1985)	Defined service quality as the comparison between customers' expectations and perceptions of service	Compare the expectations with the perceptions
Zeithaml (1988)	Defined perceived service quality as the customer's assessment of the overall excellence or superiority of the service	Overall assessment of the service
Czepiel (1990)	Defined service quality as customer perception of how well a service meets or exceeds their expectations	Compare the expectations with perceptions
Parasuraman, Zeithaml & Berry (1991)	Defined service quality as the overall evaluation of a specific organisation that results from comparing its performance with consumers' general expectations of how the organisation in its industry should perform	Compare expectations with performance
Cronin & Taylor (1992)	Stated that, in measuring perceived service quality, the level of comparison is what a customer should expect; whereas in measures of satisfaction, the appropriate comparison is what a consumer would expect.	Expectations of customers in terms of the service
Stevens, Knutson, & Patton (1995)	Defined perceived service quality as a function of the interaction among three independent variables: normative expectations, predictive expectations and actual service quality; the lower the expectations the consumers have about what should happen, the better their perceptions of the actual service; additionally, the higher their expectations about what will happen, the better their perceptions of the actual service.	Compare the expectations with perceptions

The most widely accepted definition of perceived service quality is that it represents the difference between customers' expectations and their perceptions of the service performance (Grönroos, 1984; Parasuraman *et al.*, 1988). Service quality definitions vary only in the wording, but all the definitions have one similarity, which is to ultimately determine whether the perceived service delivery meets, exceeds or fails to meet the customer expectations (Cronin and Taylor, 1992; Oliver, 1993; Zeithaml, Berry & Parasuraman, 1993).

2.4.2 Historical background of service quality research

Quality has long been recognised as essential to business survival in all industries in Japan and the United States of America that were the first countries to look at quality as an important determinant of a competitive advantage. After World War II, “quality movement” in manufacturing goods became even more important. Japan, for example, focused on quality improvements as part of rebuilding their economy (Kandampully, 2007:56).

Three American experts on quality, W. Edwards Deming, Joseph Juran and Philip Crosby, helped change American and Japanese markets to adapt to survive (Kandampully, 2007:62). They extended the philosophy of overall management and developed the strategy they called ‘Practical tools for quality management’ (Kandampully, 2007:62). Deming is known for his management philosophy to establish quality, productivity and a competitive position, and has formulated a 14-point plan of attention for companies to increase their quality (Gregoire, 2010:31; Kandampully, 2007:64). Joseph M. Juran, however, argued that quality is achieved through people and not through techniques. He then developed 10 steps for quality improvement, better known as total quality management (TQM) (Kandampully, 2007: 67). Philip Crosby on the other hand is best known for his approach to achieve “zero defects” as well as the concept of “do it right the first time”. He developed four absolutes for managing quality as well as 14 steps as a suggestion for quality management (Kandampully, 2007:69).

“Quality” in the service sector, however, lagged behind and was only introduced into the service literature in the early 1980s when service quality started to become an issue. Minimal reference was available to an overall philosophy of quality, concepts of quality or management models of quality (Kandampully, 2007:73), because previously the focus was more on the manufacturing industry rather than the service industry according to Deming, Juran and Crosby. Service marketers realised that the characteristics of services did not fit the characteristics of physical goods (Kandampully, 2007:73). Goods’ quality could be measured in terms of indicators such as durability and the number of defects (Garvin, 1983), but no measure existed to assess the quality of intangible services (Parasuraman *et al.*, 1988). Because consumers evaluate services differently from the way in which they evaluate goods (Parasuraman *et al.*, 1985), service marketing researchers had to develop concepts unique to service quality instead of merely copying concepts from the manufactured-goods industry. According to Grönroos (1992, in Kandampully, 2007:73), consumers’

ideas of quality had to become the benchmark. The perception of service quality has therefore been extensively studied during the past three decades (Martinez & Martinez, 2008, 2010), which explains why a number of researchers have proposed conceptualisations of service quality models.

Grönroos (1984) developed the first service quality model based on the disconfirmation paradigm in customer satisfaction literature to illustrate that service quality is a comparison between consumers' expectations and their perceptions of the service rendered (Grönroos, 1984). Grönroos identified two dimensions in service quality, namely functional quality and technical quality. The functional quality concerns "how" the service is delivered, thus the perception of how the service is delivered refers to how the customer receives a service. The technical quality concerns "what" service is provided, thus the outcome of the service, its performance is what the customer receives in material terms (Grönroos, 1984; Kandampully, 2007: 80).

According to service quality literature as we know it today, service quality is based on multiple dimensions (Parasuraman *et al.*, 1985). Parasuraman *et al.*, (1985) proposed that service quality is a function of the difference between expectation and performance along all the quality dimensions. Customer perceptions of service quality are influenced by five so-called "gaps" (Parasuraman *et al.*, 1985) and these are:

1. Gap 1: represents the difference between customers' expectations and management's perceptions of customer expectations
2. Gap 2: is the difference between management's perceptions of consumer expectations and the translation of these perceptions into service quality specifications
3. Gap 3: is the difference between the service quality specifications and service actually delivered
4. Gap 4: represents the difference between service delivery and external communication to consumers about the service delivery
5. Gap 5: is the difference between customers' expectations and perceived service.

Ultimately, Gap 5 is influenced by gaps 1-4. The "gap analysis" is important to identify the difference between providers' perception and consumers' perception of service quality dimensions. In the end, SERVQUAL, the scale designed to investigate service quality, was constructed based on Gap 5.

Parasuraman *et al.*, (1988) based the SERVQUAL scale they developed on the disconfirmation paradigm. SERVQUAL is a multiple-item scale used to better understand service expectations and

perceptions of performance from the customer's point of view (Parasuraman *et al.*, 1988). Based on exploratory research, Parasuraman *et al.* (1985) concluded 10 dimensions were essential parts of service quality: tangibles, reliability, responsiveness, communication, credibility, security, competence, courtesy, understanding and knowing customers and access which made up 97 items in total. After the results of the analysis were examined, these 10 dimensions were subsequently collapsed into the five that they considered as the most important dimensions of service quality. These were then represented by 22 items in total (Parasuraman *et al.*, 1988).

The SERVQUAL scale is grouped into five dimensions:

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:	Knowledge and courtesy of employees and their ability to inspire trust and confidence
Empathy:	Caring, individualised attention the firm gives its customers (Parasuraman <i>et al.</i> , 1988)

Service quality is assessed on the basis of the consumer's feedback in terms of the service expectations of the consumer, and the perceptions of the consumer regarding the service received (Kandampully, 2007:117; Ladhari, 2009).

Respondents needed to indicate their opinion on all 22 items on a seven-point Likert-type Agreement scale that ranges from "strongly disagree" (1) to "strongly agree" (7) (Ladhari, 2009).

The SERVQUAL scale became widely used but was eventually questioned in terms of its reliability in different circumstances (Akbaba, 2006; Kandampully, 2007). Therefore SERVPERF was proposed by Cronin and Taylor (1992). They measured service quality based on the performance only, without considering the consumer's expectations. SERVPERF is similar to SERVQUAL in the sense that it requires the customer to rate the performance of the service provider. It however differs in the sense that in the survey the consumers' expectations are not measured, and therefore no difference can be established between expectations and perceptions of the participating consumers regarding the service delivered (Cronin & Taylor, 1992). Stevens *et al.* (1995) adapted SERVQUAL and designed DINESERV for the restaurant industry.

All these mentioned models share a common feature in that they propose a multi-dimensional service quality conceptualisation that is inherently linked to measure consumers' perceptions of service quality. The service quality models offer a framework to understand what service quality is, as well as to measure service quality in each specific conceptualisation (Martinez & Martinez, 2010). Important however, is that each model is analysed and interpreted differently, and the model used determines the eventual outcome, whether formative or reflective. Oyewole's conceptualisation of service quality can be seen as a formative model as the service quality construct is formed by its dimensions and the service quality constructs do not exist separately or independently from the dimensions (Martinez & Martinez, 2010).

2.4.3 Service quality in the restaurant industry

The restaurant industry has experienced an incredible increase in sales over the past three decades, and therefore service quality is very important in this industry (Qin & Prybutok, 2008). Service quality is one of the focal features of consumer perception of restaurants as it is a short path to increasing customer satisfaction (Wong & Fong, 2010). Intense competition has been experienced in the restaurant industry in recent years (Cao & Kim, 2015). This has been fuelled by a worldwide economic recession and the over-abundance of fast-food restaurants in the industry (Min & Min, 2011). Fast-food restaurants therefore need to find ways to distinguish themselves from competitors by delivering superior service to customers while keeping problems in mind. A particular example would be the high-speed expansion of fast-food restaurants coupled with the fierce competition among outlets that carry the same brand, as many of them are situated within close proximity (Cao & Kim, 2015).

Researchers concur that service quality is a critical success factor for fast-food restaurants to survive and excel (Clemes *et al.*, 2008; Yusoff *et al.*, 2010). Therefore fast food managers need to measure and continuously improve the quality of the service they deliver. As Sumaedi & Yarmen (2015) observe, the knowledge gained from measuring service quality in fast-food restaurants is necessary to improve their service offering. An important indication of an establishment's service performance is customer satisfaction, which provides marketers with a benchmark to improve their service offerings (Gupta & Zeithaml, 2006).

In practice then, organisations should continuously monitor and improve the quality of their service offering (Sumaedi & Yarmen, 2015). Service quality in fast-food restaurants represents the

customers' evaluation of the superiority of the service offerings of fast-food restaurants (Salami & Ajobo, 2012). Researchers agree that service quality is a multidimensional construct (Brady & Cronin, 2001), which means that service quality consists of more than one dimension. These represent the service components that are important to the customers who patronise fast-food restaurants (Clemes *et al.*, 2008). Based on this agreed observation, fast-food restaurants' service quality models should be adapted to the accepted context of fast-food restaurants.

Many researchers have developed service quality models to depict the dimensions of the service offerings in various retail formats, for example: Gronroos (1984), Parasuraman *et al.*, (1985), Parasuraman *et al.*, (1988), Cronin & Taylor (1992) and Stevens *et al.*, (1995). Of specific interest in this study is the research of Oyewole (1999), which explored the dimensions of service quality in the fast-food industry. This study was carried out in two stages in the summer of 1997. During the first stage, seven fast-food restaurants were surveyed and a total of 68 customers completed the questionnaires. The respondents had to draw up a list of characteristics that they personally considered when evaluating the quality of service offering at a fast food restaurant. A total of 93 attributes were extracted in this way. During the second stage of the study, different customers of seven fast-food restaurants were asked to rate each of the 93 attributes that were extracted during the first stage on a 5-point semantic differential scale. Through this iterative process, from a list of 57 attributes 10 dimensions of service quality were extracted by grouping the qualities mentioned (Oyewole, 1999). These dimensions and attributes made sense for the context of this particular study.

2.4.4 Oyewole's conceptualisation of service quality in the fast-food restaurant industry

The service quality instrument Oyewole (1999) developed included 57 attributes that are arranged in 10 dimensions: hygiene and efficiency; courtesy; health consciousness; child-friendliness; ease of complaint; comforts; orderliness; availability; expeditiousness; and communication. These service quality attributes are now discussed with relevant literature to support the attributes in each dimension.

2.4.4.1 Hygiene and efficiency

Attributes relating to 'hygiene' and 'efficiency' include diverse indicators: clean facilities, clean rest rooms, well-prepared food, fresh-tasting food, the taste of food, fulfilling orders accurately, clean

employee work area, employees with good hygiene habits, clean workers, quality of food, sincerely attending to customer problems, getting correct change, clean tables, respectful employees, food served at the right temperature, cordial, good mannered attendants and good customer service (Oyewole, 1999). It does not necessarily make sense to combine hygiene and efficiency in one factor. These components will therefore be discussed separately.

Hygiene:

Literature confirms that the cleanliness of a restaurant and service attitudes are important determinants of customer satisfaction (Pizam & Ellis, 1999) that would motivate and encourage customers to revisit a restaurant. The profitability of the operation is hence directly affected by consumers' perception of these attributes (Agnes, Law & Hui, 2004).

Food hygiene is also related to food safety. Food safety is becoming more important and it has an influence on consumers' purchasing decisions (Knight & Warland, 2004; Sulek & Hensley, 2004). Food safety can be viewed as a system that consists of principles, practices and the implementation of aspects such as the processing, preparing, transporting, handling and the serving of food to ensure that it is all safe to eat (Barrie, 1996).

Efficiency:

Restaurant cleanliness as well as the attitude of staff will influence whether a customer will return to that food service or not (Pizam & Ellis, 1999). The waiting staff are actually the key representatives of the food outlet, as most of the contact in a restaurant or fast food outlet is between the customer and the serving staff (Pratten, 2004). The provision of customer service can be seen as a cycle that starts with the staff that designs a service product and which is then delivered to the customer. The effectiveness of the service delivered to the customer is eventually evaluated through customer feedback (Niu, 2010). Waiting staff need to be trained to ensure technical skills, product knowledge and interpersonal skills to prevent loss of business (Pratten, 2004).

Consumers' perception of a restaurant is influenced by efficient customer service (Garg, 2014). Customers organise their perceptions according to their feelings about the service (Berry, Wall & Carbone, 2006). Performance is one important value when a service is offered for a customer to experience. Those who provide this service are the employees and cashiers at a fast food outlet, a waiter or server in a restaurant (Garg, 2014). Services are created through environmental factors and the interaction between the people who perform the service and the consumer who visits the

restaurant or fast food outlet (Garg, 2014). While customers are experiencing a service, they consciously and unconsciously form an impression of the service (Berry *et al.*, 2006). Regarding quality service, the core service the employees offer the customers is crucial. Employees' promptness and friendliness are essential when dealing with customers (Kivela & Chu, 2001). How customers perceive restaurants is greatly influenced by the quality of customer service given by a company (Kivela & Chu, 2001).

2.4.4.2 Courtesy

Courtesy refers to the friendliness of the employees, how customers are greeted, the caring and communication of the servers, making customers feel at ease and their dress code (Oyewole, 1999). Some researchers are of the opinion that probably the most valuable asset of the food service industry is its employees (Niu, 2010). Therefore, it is of utmost importance for food outlets to ensure that the employees responsible for serving customers are knowledgeable and provide their customers with quick service. Front-line staff determine the quality of the service delivered as they create the first impression that customers get when entering the establishment (Johns, Chan & Yeung, 2003). The appearance of personnel has a strong influence on customer's pleasure and their arousal state (Ryu & Jang, 2007).

A customer's interaction with a service provider like fast-food outlets and the service-producing process, such as the employee servicing the client in a fast food outlet, has a significant impact on their perception of the quality of the service, which will subsequently influence the customer's satisfaction with the food outlet (Agnes *et al.*, 2004). The overall satisfaction of customers with a service is based on all the encounters and experiences with that particular organisation. Contact and interaction when providing a service is a real time activity (Agnes *et al.*, 2004).

2.4.4.3 Health consciousness

Health consciousness relates to healthy eating, for example, the fat and energy content of food served, the nutritional information provided, healthy food choices, concern for the environment, low-noise atmosphere and displaying government health certification (Oyewole, 1999), which is required in the USA. The Menu Education and Labelling Act (MEAL) was a proposed legislation in the USA that could be a possible solution as it requires restaurants to provide nutrition information at the point of purchase to consumer (Gerend, 2009). Further attempts to increase healthy eating in the USA, is that chain restaurants with 20 or more locations have to, as part of the Patient

Protection and Affordable Care Act of 2010, include calorie information on all menus. This fairly new legislation provides American consumers with more information about the foods they purchase away from home that aims to increase consciousness about healthy eating (Nestle, 2010). Over 30% of daily caloric intake and 50% of yearly food spending in the USA is from food away from home (Harnack & French, 2008; Chu, Frongillo, Jones & Kaye, 2009). Frequent consumption of food away from home is associated with higher rates of overweight and obesity, which portrays a negative image of fast-food restaurants (Jeffery, Baxter, McGuire & Linde, 2006).

Promoting good health in food-related businesses has thus become critical as consumers are increasingly demanding the availability of more healthy meals (Hur & Jang, 2015). The provision of healthier options in restaurants has become a key strategy for their survival (Hur & Jang, 2015). Healthy-related practices are now crucial for the quick service restaurants (QSR) as they are classified as so-called “anti-health” and “immoral” establishments (Hur & Jang, 2015). Quick service restaurants in the USA are making an effort to promote a healthy image. For instance, McDonald’s developed healthier meal options and now offer products on their menus that contain under 400 kilojoules, and they are offering grilled options like grilled chicken burgers instead of fried options (Hur & Jang, 2015).

The food items that are available at fast-food outlets and in food service industries are generally energy dense and poor in micronutrients, which is of great concern to health professionals amidst the increase of obesity and chronic diseases worldwide (Bowman & Vinyard , 2004). Fried potato chips (fries), burgers, fried chicken, pizzas and soft drinks are unhealthy options, yet popular items on fast-food outlets menus (French, Story, Neumark-Sztainer, Fulkerson & Hannan, 2001). These items are, however, high in energy, fat, saturated fats, added sugar, and sodium, and low in fibre and micronutrients, which all contribute to health concerns (Matthiessen, Fagt, Biloft-Jensen, Beck & Ovesen, 2003). There is a well-established link between obesity and fast foods (Binkley *et al.*, 2000; Duffey *et al.*, 2007). A larger menu variety and the availability of healthy options on a menu will therefore enhance the perceived value and satisfaction of consumers (Kwun, 2011). For example, many fast-food outlets now offer salad options on their menus and people can choose between grilled and fried options; chips or fries can even be exchanged for sweet potato options. Healthy food options can have a significant effect on customers’ perceived evaluation of their restaurant experience (Johns & Tyas, 1996). Because some customers are nowadays more concerned about healthy lifestyles and are more interested in healthy menu items, the availability of nutritious food items on menus has become more important for restaurateurs. It is currently

being acknowledged as one of the core properties of dining satisfaction (Sulek & Hensley, 2004). For some time now, healthy foods in restaurants as well as nutritious foods are enhancing diner satisfaction as well as return patronage (Kivela, Inkabaran & Reece, 1999).

An important consequence of consumers' concern about healthy eating is that the fat and sugar content of fast foods is being reviewed. Restaurants are also reconsidering the size of portions. Healthy menu options are now available at most fast-food outlets like pasta salads and corn on the cob, although they still have their traditional burger meals (Schroder & McEachern, 2005). Fast-food outlets also offer consumers nutritional information about all food-related products on the menu, or the information can be requested from the companies' websites. Fast-food restaurants tend to offer foods lower in kilojoules and fats (Driskell *et al.*, 2006), because a substantial proportion of a person's nutrient intake in the United States comprises food eaten at fast-food restaurants (Driskell *et al.*, 2006). Fast food has thus become a significant part of the American diet and continues to increase (Boutell, Fulkerson, Neumark-Sztainer, Story & French, 2007), and the rest of the world is not far behind. Unfortunately fast food is energy dense. Fast-food outlets' average menu is twice as energy dense as what healthy diets recommend (Prentice & Jebb, 2003). Eating fast foods is therefore associated with higher energy intake and unhealthy eating (Bowman, Gortmaker, Ebbeling, Pereira & Ludwig, 2004).

2.4.4.4 Child-friendly

Child-friendly attributes include the fast food outlet paying attention to children's menus by offering incentives such as toys, availability of a play area with toys for children, as well as accommodating children's needs (Oyewole, 1999). The fast-food industry's biggest category of expenditure is child-directed marketing for toys at fast-food outlets and offering special meals for children up to the age of 12-years-old (Ohri-Vachaspati, Isgor, Rimkus, Powell, Barker & Chaloupka, 2015). Many fast-food outlets target children as their major consumers and have thus introduced a variety of items to attract the children's attention so that they entice the parents to patronise them (Kaur, 2013). The higher consumption of fast food amongst children can be associated with the exposure of fast-food marketing like offering promotional gifts (Andreyeva, Kelly & Harris, 2011). Research shows that fast-food companies emphasise toys and other give-away products for children to market their brand and products rather than focusing on the food offered at the facility (Bernhardt, Wilking, Adachi-Mejia, Bergamini, Marijnissen & Sargent, 2013).

A particular USA study (Bowman *et al.*, 2004) revealed that one out of three children eat fast food on a daily basis which means that the rate has increased more than five times since 1970. Most of the fast food products targeted children and were advertised on the television yet are unhealthy, energy-dense and nutrient poor foods, and regarded as poor nutritional quality food (Powell, Schermbeck & Chaloupka, 2013; Kirkpatrick, Reedy, Kahle, Harris, Ohri-Vachaspati & Krebs-Smith, 2014). Children who consume fast food are less likely to meet the dietary recommendations of eating fruit, vegetables and dairy products regularly since the food they consume contains more calories in total, more fat, saturated fat, sodium and sugar (Paeratakul, Ferdinand, Champagne, Ryan & Bray, 2003; Bowman *et al.*, 2004; Sebastian, Wilkinson & Goldman, 2009).

2.4.4.5 Ease of complaint

Ease of complaint refers to the opportunity to communicate grievances, for example, displaying a consumer complaint toll free number or the availability of suggestion boxes (Oyewole, 1999). Avenues for consumers to complain and give feedback are important and help fast-food outlets to identify and become aware of problems in their service delivery. This enables them to improve these specific areas of their business that they might not know about. Feedback from customers is important, because their comments could give an organisation valuable information about changes that are required to improve the food or the service rendered (Gregoire, 2010:3). Satisfied customers are essential for the survival of any business as dissatisfied customers are more likely to complain and seek redress from it (Nyer, 1999). Failure to address complaints could have serious consequences for the reputation of the service provider particularly the ill effects of negative word of mouth communication.

With growing competition in the restaurant industry, these organisations are obliged to provide better service that will result in consumer satisfaction (Ladhari, Bruna & Morales, 2008). Customer loyalty, profits, return patronage, complaint behaviour and word of mouth communication are direct outcomes of both customer dissatisfaction and satisfaction (Dube, Renagham & Miller, 1994; Stevens *et al.*, 1995; Soriano, 2002). It is therefore of utmost importance to understand the antecedents and the consequences of customer's satisfaction (Ladhari *et al.*, 2008).

Customer satisfaction is an important way of measuring service outcomes and quality. It is also a way in which various organisations can be compared in a competitive environment (Paula, Long & Weiner, 2002). Dissatisfied customers tend to complain in order to seek compensation and to relive the failed consumption experience in multiple negative ways that would discourage them from

patronising the restaurant again (Oliver, 1977; Nyer, 1999). Online complaints provide an appropriate tool whereby consumers can inform companies about unfulfilled expectations of their service delivery (Goetzinger, Park & Widdows, 2006). The Internet creates a fast and easy way for consumers to express their complaints and at the same time restaurants have the opportunity to respond quickly (Memarzadeh & Chang, 2015).

2.4.4.6 Comfort

Comfort refers to offering attributes such as comfortable seating, convenient seating facilities, a spacious internal area and playing background music (Oyewole, 1999). Part of the total dining experience is good food. People are, however, also attracted to restaurants by other factors such as the environment that will influence consumers' perception of the brand or image of the restaurant or food outlet (Garg, 2014). Certain design factors that include the architecture, style and layout of the restaurant contribute to creating the atmosphere that will either attract or discourage customers (Garg, 2014).

The ambience in a restaurant or food outlet involves creating an atmosphere by using everything that is associated with its brand, the design, the décor, the colour scheme and texture of the walls. Even the food and kind of service contribute to the atmosphere that have an effect on consumers' perception of the facility (Garg, 2014). Bright lighting symbolises quick service and low prices which would particularly apply to fast-food restaurants that target children and young families. These restaurants will use bright colours on the exterior to attract attention (Garg, 2014). Some non-visual senses will also affect a customer's perception, such as background music, the scent and smell in the restaurants and its temperature (Garg, 2014). Comfort is therefore relative to the type of establishment. What is considered appropriate for fast-food outlets is not necessarily appropriate for fine dining.

The physical environment and atmospherics are vital for establishing the customer's perception of the quality of the fast-food outlet or restaurant's service offering (Bitner, 1992; Wakefield, & Blodgett, 1994, 1996). The physical environment can produce feelings of excitement, pleasure and relaxation (Namkung & Jang, 2008). Therefore, various aspects of atmospherics are used as tangible cues to assess the quality of a service (Aubert-Gamet & Cova, 1999). Within a service setting the atmospheric elements include visual and auditory cues such as function, space, design, music and colour (Namkung & Jang, 2008). Atmospherics, which include lighting, décor, and music are

emphasised in theme restaurants as it is a selling point to customers (Weiss, Feinstein & Dalbor, 2004). These should, however, be designed for the specific context to support the theme that is desired.

The space in a restaurant helps consumers form a mental picture before they have an emotional response or judgement of the specific service environment (Lin, 2004). The interior design will influence how long a customer will stay in the facility (Wakefield and Blodgett, 1996). A strong visual component of the physical setting in a restaurant is colour, as it draws customers' attention and also stimulates their emotional responses (Bellizzi & Hite, 1992). Music also stimulates emotions and behaviours in the service setting, which is a positive cue unless the music is loud and creates discomfort (Dube, Chebat & Morin, 1995; Mattila & Wirtz, 2001). Relevant literature explains that ambience is a powerful determinant of customer satisfaction (Jeong & Jang, 2011). The atmosphere/ambience of a food outlet can be perceived as the quality of the surrounding space (Liu & Jang, 2009) because consumers rate foods in different locations differently (Cardello, Bell & Kramer, 1996). Moreover, their expectations differ depending on where they consume the food (Kwun, 2011). Ambience is created (Heide, Laerdal & Gronhaug, 2007) and the atmosphere generates an image of the surrounding space in the mind of customer. The physical facility, which is something that can be controlled, therefore influences consumers' experiences (Pratten, 2004).

To create an ambience in a fast-food outlet, attention needs to be given to the interior design, the décor, lighting, music, temperature, and odour (Ryu & Jang, 2007, 2008) to introduce customers to the selected theme when entering the food outlet. This would help them with food choices (North, Shilcock & Hargreaves, 2003; Edwards, 2012). The smell and odour in a food outlet can increase customers' hunger perceptions and actual food consumption as well as the amount of food consumed (Edwards, 2012). However, strong smells can cause considerable discomfort and even total rejection.

One of the fundamental determinants of satisfaction is the emotional side of the consumption experience (Bigne', Andreu & Gnoth, 2005) and this is important for fast-food facilities too. It is crucial for restaurant owners to understand consumers' emotions and how they affect the way consumers feel about a product or service (Barsky & Nash, 2002). Emotions are an important determinant of customers' satisfaction. In a restaurant or food outlet, the music, noise, cleanliness, crowdedness and lighting will affect consumers' emotions, which subsequently influences customers' overall satisfaction with the service offering (Ladhari *et al.*, 2008).

Physical surroundings are important for creating a specific image that would have a positive effect on customers' behaviour in the food service industry (Raajpoot, 2002; Ryu & Jang, 2008). Service is produced and consumed simultaneously, as consumers experience the total service within the physical facility (Bitner, 1992). The food and service should be of acceptable quality, but in pleasing physical surroundings as effects like music tend to determine the overall satisfaction to a large degree and can also influence a consumer's behaviour in the restaurant (Brady & Cronin, 2001; Ryu & Jang, 2008).

2.4.4.7 Orderliness

Orderliness should prevail with attributes such as the waiting line for customers, placing the orders at the drive-through facility (Oyewole, 1999) or the counter. A customer's dining experience is also influenced by service aspects (Jeong & Jang, 2011) such as the waiting time and orderly queuing in a food outlet which is part of the first impression a customer gets when entering the fast food outlet. This remains a memorable part of the total experience (Dawes & Rowley, 1996). Customers do not expect a long waiting time at fast-food restaurants (Chou & Liu, 1999). One of the key characteristics of a fast food outlet is a short waiting time, which directly links to customer satisfaction (Iqbal, Whitman & Malzahn, 2012). Information about the waiting time has a significant impact on customers' evaluation of the service in the fast-food industry (Iqbal *et al.*, 2012). Waiting time is a strong determinant of customer satisfaction and has a significant influence on overall satisfaction, customer loyalty and repurchase behaviour (Smith & Swinyard, 1988; Davis & Vollmann, 1990; Taylor, 1994; Hui & Tse, 1996; Agnes *et al.*, 2004). The waiting time is especially significant for fast food service operations, as the people who visit fast-food outlets mainly do so because they are in a hurry (Agnes *et al.*, 2004). The speed of service, wait time and price of food all has an effect on how customers would perceive a fast food restaurant, it is also evident that consumer's choice of fast-food restaurants is greatly influenced by the atmosphere in a restaurants as well as the friendliness of staff (Knutson, 2000).

Therefore service managers have to make more effort to reduce customer waiting times. The approach of the managers can make or break the customers' food-service experience; and this will lead to either customer repatronage or a bad review (Ruggless, 2002). Managers can increase the number of service personnel and/or change their schedule at different times to reduce waiting time during peak periods (Agnes *et al.*, 2004).

While queues may be frustrating, the waiting time may cause customers to complain about the quality of the food even if the food is totally acceptable (Davis & Heineke, 1998). Waiting in a queue in a food outlet can however also be advantageous as it will give the consumer more time to choose what to eat and can also result in making more healthier food choices (Lieux & Manning, 1992). Waiting time is an important element of consumers' overall satisfaction with a product or service (Zhou & Soman, 2003). Waiting time is predictor of perceived service quality and customer satisfaction. Service providers' major objective is to therefore reduce waiting-time (Kokkinou & Cranage, 2013). When the perceived waiting time is short, it will lead to a higher consumer satisfaction (Yalch & Spangenberg, 2000). Effort should nevertheless be made by service managers to reduce customer waiting times (Agnes *et al.*, 2004) as it significantly influences customer satisfaction (Davis & Vollmann, 1990).

Drive-through facilities at fast-food outlets make them more easily accessible to consumers (Van Zyl *et al.*, 2010).

2.4.4.8 Availability

Availability refers to late-hour operation, early-hour operation, and convenient hours of operation (Oyewole, 1999).

Because consumers often do not have time to prepare their own meals due to longer working hours (Min & Min, 2013), the extended operating hours of fast-food outlets are highly valued. Fast-food outlets that operate longer hours or offer delivery services, or are situated in convenient locations such as shopping malls, make it even more accessible and easy for consumers to make use of these facilities. Inevitably these advantages have contributed to dramatic changes in modern households' eating behaviour (Van Zyl *et al.*, 2010).

2.4.4.9 Expeditiousness

Expeditiousness refers to attributes relating to crowding and a variety of menu choices (Oyewole, 1999). Variety can be seen as the number of different menu items available (Namkung & Jang, 2007). New menus are developed constantly to attract customers and many restaurateurs have created an assortment of food and beverage offerings (Namkung & Jang, 2007). Menu variety is a crucial attribute that forms part of food quality which helps to create dining satisfaction (Kivela *et al.*, 1999; Raajpoot, 2002). Crowding and queuing is defined as part of expeditiousness, as well as orderliness as discussed in former sections.

2.4.4.10 Communication

Communication attributes relate to opportunities for customers to ask questions, for employees to properly inform customers when orders are ready and for clear identification of employees, they should wear name tags (Oyewole, 1999).

Fast-food outlets should effectively and efficiently communicate with their customers to ensure that discomfort and frustration is reduced. Customers who feel rushed or delayed, might feel dissatisfied and therefore discontinue their patronage (Kimes & Wirtz, 2002; Wirtz, Kimes, Ho & Patterson, 2003). Perceived waiting time has more effect on customer satisfaction than the actual wait time (Pruyn & Smidts, 1998). According to Berry *et al.* (2006), there are clues that contribute to the total experience of a customer and constitute the so-called 'humanic clue'. They are associated with the behaviour and appearance of the service providers and suggest that the enthusiasm of the employees, their body language, choice of words, the tone of their voices, tidiness and the way they are dressed in the restaurant create a meaningful impression. If the employees' kind of behaviour is favourable it suggests exceptional performance and contributes positively to the customers' perception as it results in service satisfaction and possible loyalty. This occurs when customers' expectations are exceeded through the pleasant surprise when service providers interact with their customers in an appropriate manner (Garg, 2014), for example, by informing customers when their orders will be ready.

Food quality is a crucial part of a dining experience. However, staff behaviour and performance influences a customer's evaluation of a restaurant considerably (Berry *et al.*, 2006). The kind of behaviour of employees adopted during the service they offer contributes to the consumers' perception of the quality of the service rendered (Berry, Leonard & Bendapudi, 2003). Front-line employees are central to the service encounter. These employees either satisfy or dissatisfy customers with their service encounter (Kivela, Inbakaran & Reece, 2000). Service providers that have employees with good behaviour can create a quality relationship between the employees and the customers, which could be a rewarding experience for the customer and also improve their perception of the service offering (Garg, 2014). On the contrary, the unwillingness of employees to respond to the needs of customers and an inability to understand what customers want has a negative effect. If employees take too long to respond to customers' requests and if they fail to provide prompt service, customer dissatisfaction is instigated which is detrimental to any organisation (Garg, 2014).

2.4.4.11 The food quality

Oyewole (1999) did not specify the food itself as a specific dimension of the service offering in fast-food establishments. However, food is a crucial item in consumers' expectations. Several studies in restaurant service quality and satisfaction reveal that consumers' satisfaction with a restaurant's services and the return patronage of consumers to outlets are determined by the quality of the food. Food provision encompasses the physical consumable elements that is the functional outcome, the cost or value of the meal, and the manner in which the service is delivered. In addition, reliability, responsiveness, the empathy of the restaurant's personnel serving the customers, and the ambience and atmosphere created in the restaurant or food outlet are significant (Ladhari *et al.*, 2008).

Quality service is one that meets or exceeds customers' expectations (Ariffin & Maghzi, 2012). In most restaurant quality-related studies, the importance of food quality and food itself as the core competency has been overlooked as the focus has been more on atmospherics and service delivery (Namkung & Jang, 2007). With reference to relevant literature on well prepared food and quality of food it is clear that the consumption of food is both a sensory as well as a social experience (Lupton, 1998). Food is a fundamental component of the restaurant experience, therefore there can be no doubt that the food has, and will continue to have, a major impact on consumer satisfaction and return patronage (Namkung & Jang, 2007). One of the challenges that the restaurant industry faces is to provide quality food that is fresh and tasty, which is not only compelling for customers but it also gives one a competitive advantage to outpace competitors and to maximize success in the restaurant business (Namkung & Jang, 2007). To outpace competitors and to maximise success in the restaurant business, tasty and fresh food plays an important role. A fundamental element that is part of the overall restaurant experience is food quality (Kivela *et al.*, 1999; Raajpoot, 2002; Sulek & Hensley, 2004; Namkung & Jang, 2007). Food quality is necessary to satisfy the needs and expectations of customers (Peri, 2006). Food quality is a significant predictor of customer satisfaction, but only accounts for 17% repeat patronage intentions from customers (Sulek & Hensley, 2004).

Food can be seen as the core product in a restaurant or food outlet, and therefore plays an essential role in the experience of the food outlet. Customer satisfaction and the post-dining experience are mainly influenced by the food quality (Liu & Jang, 2009). Namkung and Jang (2007) evaluated the relationship of the individual attributes that constitute food quality and these were: the presentation of the food, menu variety, healthy options, the taste, the freshness and the

temperature of the food were the most sought after attributes for customer satisfaction. Liu and Jang (2009) came to a similar conclusion but added food safety. The appearance of food provokes a sensation of interest (Lawless, 2000:96) and it creates an expectation for the pleasurable sensory perceptions (Gamble, Jeager & Harker, 2006). The presentation of food can be seen as how attractively the food is presented and decorated as a tangible cue for the customer's perception of quality (Namkung & Jang, 2008). A key food attribute in modelling dining satisfaction is the presentation of food (Kivela *et al.*, 1999). Raajpoot (2002) describes food presentation as one of the product or service factors of the tangible quality scale.

Another key attribute of food in the dining experience is taste, which influences customer satisfaction and future behaviour intentions (Kivela *et al.*, 1999). The fresh taste of food associated with the crispness, juiciness and aroma of food is referred to as freshness of food (Péneau, Hoehn, Roth, Escher & Nuessli, 2006). Freshness of food is identified in previous research as a crucial intrinsic quality cue (Johns & Tyas, 1996; Kivela *et al.*, 1999; Acebro'n & Dopico, 2000). With regard to the attributes of fresh tasting food and its taste generally, supporting literature states that the taste of food is not just simply the qualities that the food product owns, but it can be seen as the experience when tasting the actual food products (Korsmeyer, 1999). Various scholars (Rolls, Roe & Meengs, 2006; Spiller, 2010; Mann, Mol, Satalkar, Savirani, Selim & Sur, 2011) argue that taste is not just how consumers taste food or appreciate food, but it is what food means to consumers, and the interactions that help the consumer to understand food and make sense of it. Food quality in a restaurant may even be more important than any of the other attributes (Sulek & Hensley, 2004; Dube *et al.*, 1994). The taste of food is a key attribute which has a great influence on customer satisfaction as well as what consumers future behaviour intentions towards a specific restaurant will be (Kivela *et al.*, 1999). When the taste of food is good and customers get the necessary satisfaction out of the food taste, the possibility that consumers will go back to that specific place is good, but when the taste of food is not good and does not satisfy consumers taste profiles, they will most probably not return to that specific outlet.

Temperature is another sensory element of food quality (Johns & Tyas, 1996; Kivela *et al.*, 1999). Other sensory properties such as taste, smell and sight interacting with temperature affects how the flavour of food is evaluated (Delwiche, 2004). Customer satisfaction with food quality is a powerful predictor of customer intent to return (Oh, 2000).

2.4.4.12 Summary

Various scales exist to measure consumers' satisfaction with service quality. This study used the scale of Oyewole (1999) that was specifically designed for use in the context of fast food establishments as it offered the construct that the researcher was interested in following a scrutiny of literature. The scale as used in this research contains ten dimensions and although the scale was fairly long, it offered the opportunity for investigation in terms of the expectancy-confirmation paradigm. In Oyewole's (1999) documentation, no mention is made of how important one of the dimensions is in comparison to the other remaining ones while it is particularly important to remember that all these dimensions contribute value, but not necessarily equally. The superiority of one dimension of the service offering might negate poor delivery of another aspect. Empirical evidence to clarify this interaction is lacking and therefore this scale was suited for this investigation that aimed to indicate confirmation and/or disconfirmation of certain dimensions of the service offering so that limitations could be addressed.



Chapter 3

THEORETICAL PERSPECTIVE

This chapter explains and justifies the theoretical perspective that was used to structure the objectives and discussion for this study. It also provides and describes the conceptual framework and research objectives.

3.1 INTRODUCTION

The purpose of the theoretical perspective was to guide the researcher throughout the study to understand and interpret important concepts. The theoretical perspective leads to the study's objectives and interpretations, and at the end enables the drawing of conclusions about the outcome of the results.

Disconfirmation theory (Oliver, 1981) was chosen as the framework for this investigation. When looking at previous service quality studies that had been done, it was evident that the confirmation/disconfirmation paradigm would be appropriate for framing an understanding of how consumers' expectations and perceptions of service delivery differ. In this study, the focus fell on consumers' perceptions of service quality in fast-food outlets. Therefore, the difference between a consumer's expectations and their perceptions of the dimensions of service quality in the fast-food industry, as identified by Oyewole (1999), were measured. This enabled the researcher to do gap analysis to determine the dimensions that emerged as elements of excellence in the fast-food restaurant industry, and to note which dimensions were shortcomings so that fast-food restaurants could improve their service quality in order to have satisfied customers. The identification of both shortcomings and elements of excellence would be of immense value to the fast-food restaurant industry.

3.1.1 Choice of theoretical perspective

The most widely accepted framework for researching service quality is the gap between a consumer's expectations of a service and their assessment or perception of the service actually delivered (Parasuraman *et al.*, 1985; Schiffman & Kanuk, 2010:197).

Leon Festinger introduced the cognitive dissonance theory in 1957 to explain how dissonance between an individual's cognition and reality influences their subsequent cognition and behaviour (Bhattacharjee & Premkumar, 2004). Expectancy disconfirmation theory is built on the basic tenets of cognitive dissonance theory (Bhattacharjee & Premkumar, 2004). The expectancy disconfirmation model has been used in several service marketing studies (Oliver & Swan, 1989; Fornell *et al.*, 1996; Spreng & Mackoy, 1996) as well as studies of physical products (Churchill & Suprenant, 1982; Nield *et al.*, 2000). Oliver (1981) introduced the expectancy disconfirmation model for studies of customer satisfaction in the retail and service industries. The theory indirectly addresses the way consumers respond to consumption experiences (Montfort *et al.*, 2000).

Researchers describe the consumption evaluation process as a confirmation/disconfirmation paradigm where consumers compare their expectations of the product's performance with the perceived performance of the product, noting whether a difference exists between the two or not (Churchill & Suprenant, 1982; Oliver, 1980). Disconfirmation theory presumes that customers make purchases based on their expectations, attitudes and intentions (Oliver, 1980). During or after the consumption process, a perception of performance occurs as customers evaluate the actual consumption experience of the product or service. The experience is then compared to the individual's initial expectations. The expectations are either confirmed or disconfirmed. Positive disconfirmation is recorded when expectations are surpassed; negative disconfirmation is noted when expectations are not met; and when the expectations are just the description is neutral (Oliver, 1980; Churchill & Suprenant, 1982; Heung, 2000; Mill, 2002; Ryu & Han, 2010). Satisfaction is the outcome of confirmation or positive disconfirmation. Dissatisfaction is the outcome of negative disconfirmation.

3.1.1.1 Consumers' Expectations

Consumers' expectations are based on their previous experiences, with what they are familiar. The consumer perceives products and product attributes according to their given expectations (Schiffman & Kanuk, 2010:180,181). It is important for marketers to determine what attributes of

the product or service category consumers regard as important, and what attributes they perceive as what they need. In this way the marketer can improve the product or service on the basis of the consumers' needs, so that consumers will recognise that the product meets their needs and wants (Schiffman & Kanuk, 2010:181) and seek to acquire it. Thus, companies need to continuously meet and exceed consumers' expectations to ensure that their customers will not go to their competitors in the market (Schiffman & Kanuk, 2010:29) as companies do vie for business.

3.1.1.2 Consumers' Perceptions

Perception is defined by Schiffman & Kanuk (2010:175) as "the process by which an individual selects, organises, and interprets stimuli into a meaningful and coherent picture of the world". For example, two individual consumers who visit the same fast-food outlet at the same time and receive the same service quality from the service provider, will each recognise, select, organise and interpret the service quality provided differently. This is because their perception of it will be based on their own needs, values and expectations of previous experiences (Schiffman & Kanuk, 2010:175), as not one consumer is the same as another.

Perception is the result of two inputs that together contribute to forming the person's own picture or perception according to how the individual experiences it in their own way. The first input comprises the physical stimuli from the outside environment and the second input is based on the consumer's own expectations that relate to their previous experiences (Schiffman & Kanuk, 2010:179).

3.1.1.3 Service Quality

The quality of a product or service a consumer perceives depends on a variety of informational cues that are associated with the product or service. These cues are intrinsic and extrinsic. The intrinsic cues come from the physical characteristics, the size, the smell, the aroma, flavour and colour of the product. The extrinsic cues are external to the product or the service itself and are the price, the brand, the room furnishings, the service provided and the professionalism of employees. Perceptions of the product or service quality are formed based on these cues (Schiffman & Kanuk, 2010:195).

Grunert (2005) explained that quality has an objective and subjective dimension. Physical characteristics represent the objective quality that is built into the product and that is most often dealt with by the engineers and food technologists, whereas subjective quality is how consumers

perceive the quality. The relationship between objective and subjective qualities is the core of economic importance of quality. However, quality will only become a competitive parameter for food producers if two conditions come together. First, when producers can take consumers' wishes into account to produce a physical product with the desired characteristics of those wishes; and second, when the consumers understand the qualities in the way in which the product has been built. Then only will consumers be able to form judgements of quality under uncertainty in the food area. It is known that consumers use colour as well as the fat of the meat as indicators of its taste and tenderness (Grunert, 2005).

Two core concepts in marketing theory and practice are service quality and customer satisfaction (Spreng & Mackoy, 1996). There is intense competition in today's world, where delivering high quality service is the key to getting a sustainable competitive advantage. This will, in return, lead to satisfied customers (Shemwell, Yavas, & Bilgin, 1998). One of the most critical marketing priorities is customer satisfaction as it is a significant determinant of repeat sales, positive word-of-mouth marketing and customer loyalty (Ryu, Han & Kim 2008). The totality of the food service experience in a restaurant consists of two components: the tangible component that includes the food and the physical facilities; and the intangible component, which is employee-customer interaction. The tangible and intangible components together should have the result of a customer rating a restaurant's service quality efficiently as their perception would have been accurately established. If the evaluation yields a positive result customer satisfaction will be achieved and positive behavioural intentions will ensue and be helpful for providers in the restaurant industry (Ryu *et al.*, 2008).

A major determinant of consumer satisfaction, and whether a consumer will intend to repurchase the product or not, will be the confirmation or disconfirmation of expectations (Oliver, 1977). When a consumer purchases a new product or where the consumer visits the place for the first time, the consumer does not have any previous experiences on which to base their expectations of the brand at the point of purchase. Using Shisa Nyama as a fast-food outlet as an example, a consumer is not likely to know whether visiting it will be an enjoyable experience or not, as it is a new outlet that has been opened recently and it not well known. However, the consumer could assume with a fair degree of certainty that it would be worth going to from having experienced that type of offering before. The expectations that a consumer has of fast-food outlets in general will still play a role in a decision to act with an awareness that the product or service will either be a success or not on first using it. The final outcome will depend on whether the expectations that the consumer had will be

confirmed or not. It will also depend on how well the consumer predicted the quality beforehand using base cues at hand. Thus, a consumer can also have a disconfirmation of expectations with dissatisfaction as the consequence of the experience (Grunert, 2005).

The difference between service quality and customer satisfaction is that perceived service quality is correctly described as a form of attitude, an overall evaluation of a product and or service, whereas satisfaction is a transaction-specific evaluation (Bitner, 1990; Cronin & Taylor, 1992, Oliver, 1981; Parasuraman *et al.*, 1988). Increasing service quality levels leads to an increase in satisfaction level although; if the perceived quality is low, one might still experience high service satisfaction (Deruyter, Bloemer & Peeters, 1997). Thus service quality can be viewed as an expectation or perception. The expectation aspect can be viewed as a normative expectation of what should happen when purchasing a product or service (Parasuraman *et al.*, 1988), while the perception aspect is based on what actually occurred during the service encounter (Weiss *et al.*, 2004).

The quality of a service is more difficult to evaluate than the quality of products as services are intangible, variable, perishable and simultaneously produced and consumed. Service quality is evaluated by consumers on extrinsic cues (Schiffman & Kanuk, 2010:196) as well as intrinsic cues. When consumers evaluate the service quality of a fast-food outlet, for example, consumers will note the quality of the facility's interior and furnishings, pleasantness of employees serving them and their professionalism. Perceived quality has been accepted as the foremost antecedent of customer satisfaction (Churchill and Surprenant, 1982; Dabholkar, Shepherd & Thorpe, 2000). The restaurant industry now recognises the importance of perceived quality as well as is the case in most service industries (McCullough, 2000; Oh, 2000). Customer satisfaction is critically important as it reflects a customer's subjective evaluation of the attribute performances that are associated with the consumption experiences (Cronin & Taylor, 1992).

The quality of service can vary from one service employee to another, from day to day as well as from consumer to consumer, therefore service companies try to standardise their service to provide consistency of quality throughout the company (Schiffman & Kanuk, 2010:196). When consumers evaluate the service quality of a fast-food outlet they will be aware of the quality of the fast-food outlet's interior and furnishings, the pleasantness of employees serving them and the professional conduct of the employees, hence fast-food franchises ought to have standardised service quality to ensure that customers from all over receive the same quality of service from all its branded facilities.

3.1.1.4 The expectancy disconfirmation theory

It is important to retain customers in the highly competitive food service industry, therefore industry practitioners are implementing methods that reveal whether or not their customers are happy with the service they provide (Pettijohn, Pettijohn & Luke, 1997; Qu, 1997; Oh, 1999). A prevailing model of customer satisfaction assessment has its roots in expectancy disconfirmation theory (Weiss *et al.*, 2004).

One of the first researchers to propose a model where customer satisfaction was determined by differentiating between customers' perceptions and their expectations was Oliver (1981). In Oliver's model, customer satisfaction is viewed as an emotional state. This emotional state occurs when a customer experiences a positive disconfirmation of their expectations during a purchase encounter (Oliver, 1981; Weiss *et al.*, 2004). Oliver (1981) argued that three things are possible in a given purchase situation. A positive confirmation will occur when the purchase experience exceeds the consumer's expectation of the event; a negative disconfirmation will occur when the purchase experience is not exceeded by the customer's expectation; and a zero disconfirmation or confirmation will occur when the purchase experience meets the customers' expectations (Oliver, 1981; Weiss *et al.*, 2004).

The customer satisfaction model of Olivier applies to the retail setting to uncover potential behavioural outcomes of customer satisfaction and customer dissatisfaction. Oliver's model shows that customers enter a retail environment with a number of pre-patronage expectations. When the person's expectations are met, these expectations are positively disconfirmed, and when not met then they are negatively disconfirmed. These disconfirmations provide a basis for determining customer satisfaction and dissatisfaction. The possible behavioural outcome of customer satisfaction in a retail environment is a repeat purchase and or store loyalty, whereas the possible behavioural outcome of customer dissatisfaction would be a customer engaging in a complaint (Oliver, 1981; Weiss *et al.*, 2004). Research on consumer satisfaction and dissatisfaction, rests on the basic assumption that the extent of confirmation and or disconfirmation of the pre-purchase quality expectations will determine whether or not consumers are satisfied and whether or not there will be repurchase probabilities (Oliver, 1980).

The expectancy disconfirmation theory is one of the most popular and widely accepted ways to assess customer satisfaction in the service industry (Oh, 1999). According to the expectancy disconfirmation theory customers form an opinion about a given service by comparing the actual

service encounter with the expectations that a customer had of how the service provider should have performed the service (Oliver, 1980). When a customer's perception of a given service encounter exceeds the expectations of the customer for that encounter, the result is customer satisfaction (Oliver, 1980; 1981). Perceived quality is the gap that exists between a customer's perception and the expectation of the service encounter (Parasuraman *et al.*, 1988). When a customer's perceptions exceed their expectations, a positive disconfirmation occurs. When a customer's perception is below their expectations, a negative confirmation occurs, and when the perceptions of a customer equal their expectations then a zero disconfirmation occurs (Weiss *et al.*, 2004).

3.2 CONCEPTUAL FRAMEWORK

The conceptual framework is compiled by using all the necessary constructs of the study and the objectives formulated for the study, as well as how these objectives correlate with one another in order to reach the outcome of the study.

Figure 3.1 presents the conceptual framework for the study based on the expectancy disconfirmation theory. It illustrates the interrelationship of the concepts that are relevant to this research project. Firstly, the consumer's **patronage of fast-food outlets** (Objective 1) contributes to their **expectations of the quality of the service offering** in fast-food outlets in general in terms of specific denominators (Objective 2). Then the **consumer's experiences of those service quality indicators** are evaluated in terms of their actual expectations (objective 3) to determine **to what extent their expectations are confirmed** (or not) (objective 4). **Positive disconfirmation** suggests that consumers' expectations are exceeded and might result in **elements of excellence or major advantages**, an emotion with favourable consequences for the fast-food industry; while negative disconfirmation suggests the shortcomings in the industry. Through an investigation of discrepancies between consumers' expectations and their actual experiences, shortcomings and elements of excellence are identified and discussed to augment the service offering with more positive outcomes.

The confirmation/disconfirmation paradigm makes certain assumptions therefore consumers' expectations have to be investigated so that their perceptions of the experience can be tested. This ought to be done for the industry so that the similarities and differences between their expectations

and perception can be measured to identify whether their expectations were exceeded or not. For this, it is possible to identify how the fast-food establishments can enhance their service offering. When measuring the expectations and perceptions, the same items should be used in the scale for both expectations and perceptions.

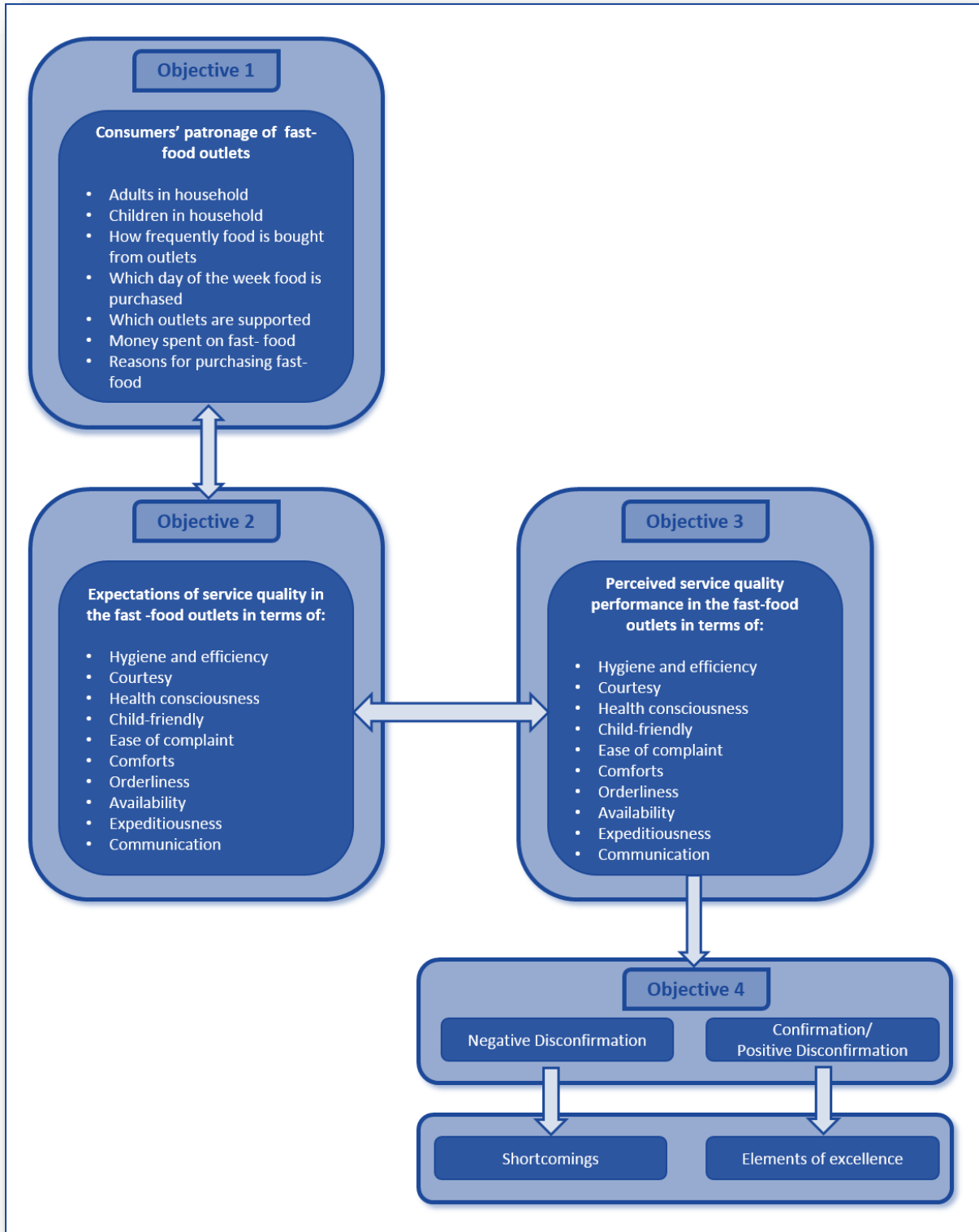


FIGURE 3.1: CONCEPTUAL FRAMEWORK

3.3 AIM AND RESEARCH OBJECTIVES

3.3.1 Aim of the study

The aim of this study is to determine and describe consumers' perceptions of the quality of the service offering of fast-food outlets, in general, in Gauteng, to get an indication of consumers' expectations and perceptions with the fast foods industry, as well as pertinent shortcomings that could be addressed to augment the service offering that seems very popular in the lives of time-pressed consumers and households in recent times.

The following objectives were formulated to ensure that applicable data will be obtained to draw appropriate conclusions. All the objectives involved an investigation of selected demographic characteristics of the population, namely, their gender, age, education level, population group and monthly household income.

3.3.2 Research objectives

- Objective 1:** To determine and describe consumer's patronage of fast-food outlets
- Objective 2:** To determine and describe consumers' expectations of the service quality of fast-food outlets in terms of the specific dimensions of their service offering as deduced from the scale of Oyewole (1999).
- Objective 3:** To determine and describe consumer's perceptions of the service quality of fast-food outlets in terms of the specific dimensions of their service offering as deduced from the scale of Oyewole (1999).
- Objective 4:** To investigate and describe the congruence between consumers' expectations of the service quality dimensions as specified (Objective 2) and their perceptions of the service quality (objective 3) provided at fast-food outlets in order to identify shortcomings that could be addressed to augment the overall service quality.

3.4 THE CONCEPTUAL FRAMEWORK AFTER FACTOR ANALYSIS

The conceptual framework presented in Figure 3.1, include the dimensions proposed by Oyewole (1999). However, these dimensions had to be confirmed through exploratory factor analysis as the

scale has to date never been used in South Africa before. Oyewole's (1999) scale therefore served as the point of departure for the study. The final conceptual framework that includes the final dimensions of the service quality investigation, will be included in chapter 6.

3.5 SUMMARY

The theoretical perspective was chosen after careful consideration and has been presented in this chapter to confirm the appropriateness of the objectives and conceptual framework throughout the study.



Chapter 4

RESEARCH DESIGN AND METHODOLOGY

This chapter introduces the research design and methodology for the study. Measures that were taken to enhance the quality of the study and to address ethical concerns are discussed.

4.1 INTRODUCTION

This chapter presents a detailed description of the research methodology followed for the study. The research design and techniques that were used to achieve the research objectives are discussed and justified, and each technique is evaluated. The rationale for using a quantitative research design is explained. The data collection techniques, sampling procedures, selection of participants and data analysis are discussed. Measures taken to ensure the objectivity and trustworthiness of the study are also specified in the final section of this chapter.

4.2 RESEARCH DESIGN

The research design provides an overall structure for the procedures the researcher followed, the data collected, and the data analyses the researcher conducted (Hofstee, 2011:113; Leedy & Ormrod 2013:74,). Proper planning is essential for a successful study. The nature of this research is explorative and descriptive. The study is quantitative and a survey method that utilise a self-administered structured questionnaire as measuring instrument was used for data collection. The study is cross-sectional because it was conducted at a certain point in time, August 2014, in the South African province of Gauteng.

The aim was to target postmodern consumers who reside in Gauteng, inclusive of both genders, 21 years and older and from various ethnic backgrounds, all representative of the South African population, to meet the required criteria of the demographic profile required for the study. The study would have the characteristics of being quantitative, investigative and correlational study and descriptive in nature as described in the literature (De Vos *et al.*, 2011:156, Walliman, 2011:13; Salkind, 2012:197). A correlational study examines the extent to which differences in one characteristic or variable are related to differences in one or more other characteristics or variables (Leedy & Ormrod, 2011:185). Correlation research is where the research is expressed in the form of numbers and not in artefacts, words or observation (Walliman, 2011:13). Descriptive research is concerned with identifying the characteristics of a phenomenon or exploring possible correlations among two or more phenomena (Leedy & Ormrod 2013:184). Thus, descriptive research examines a situation as it is (Leedy & Ormrod 2013:184). The research design for this study is descriptive in nature and aimed to describe certain events and situations surrounding the current situation of fast-food consumption in South Africa. Descriptive research can be conducted in a longitudinal or cross-sectional manner. This research is cross-sectional and empirical in nature and will obtain information at the specific time of the study and in a specific context as the researcher wants to gain an overview of the current situation (De Vos *et al.*, 2011:303; Kumar, 2011:107; Salkind, 2012: 253) regarding consumer's perceptions of service quality in fast-food outlets. This type of study was suitable as the researcher wanted to understand and describe the situation regarding consumers' perception of these outlets in Gauteng. The goal was not to generalise the findings but rather to develop an understanding of these facilities and issues that consumers have with the service quality they offer in this province at present.

Both primary and secondary data was used in this research study. Primary data is data that has not been collected previously and secondary data is data that has been collected previously and documented. Primary data will be generated through questionnaires. The questionnaire utilised for this study was used in a pilot test. The pilot test was done to identify possible problems and limitations within the questionnaire to improve the quality of the data. The pilot test identified areas in the questionnaire where respondents had not understood certain questions clearly enough or/and how it should be answered. The purpose was also to identify areas where the wording could possibly have influenced the respondents to answer in a certain manner. All of these problems were corrected. A literature review was compiled from secondary data extracted from existing informational sources that specifically pertained to the fast-food industry and related service quality investigations, in order to set the context of the study and to describe relevant concepts. This study

is a survey and was quantitative in nature. In this research study, the quantitative research was based on a specific research question and subsequent research objectives. A structured, self-administrated questionnaire was used to collect the primary data, which produced objective results and descriptive statistics.

4.3 METHODOLOGY

4.3.1 Sample and sampling

A sample is a subset of the population that the researcher wants to study (Salkind, 2012:95). Sampling is a necessary procedure as it is impossible to collect data from the whole population. The sample design of a study describes who the respondents are (unit of analysis), how respondents were selected (techniques), and how many respondents were selected (sample size).

The unit of analysis for this study was the consumers who resided in Gauteng, South Africa, 21-years-old or older, irrespective of their gender or race. In order to obtain a meaningful sample, respondents needed to comply within specific criteria, namely individuals had to have had a personal buying experience with at least one of the many existing fast-food outlets in the previous six months, meaning that a consumer needed to have bought food from a fast food outlet, either by physically being in the fast-food outlet or at a drive-through facility. Respondents needed to be a resident of Gauteng, South Africa. Respondents had to be able to understand English, have access to a computer and be computer literate as the questionnaire was only be presented in English and submitted electronically. Concepts could be changed or interpreted differently if the questionnaire was translated into other languages.

4.3.2 Sampling method

There are different sampling techniques that can be used in any research study. Due to limited time and resources, a non-probability, convenience sampling was used to involve suitable respondents that are readily available. With non-probability sampling the researcher has no way of forecasting or guaranteeing that each element of the population will be represented in the sample, and the probability of selecting a single individual is not known (Salkind, 2012:102; Leedy & Ormrod, 2013: 214;). In convenience sampling, there is no pretence of identifying a representative subset of the

population (Leedy & Ormrod, 2013:214). The sampling will be purposive as the researcher identifies the elements that contain the most representative criteria required for the specific unit of analysis or sample (De Vos *et al.*, 2011:232; Leedy & Ormrod, 2013:215). Thus, respondents who can provide the best information for the researcher to achieve the objectives of the research study are found (Kumar, 2011:206).

The recruitment of suitable respondents who met the criteria for the study was done by Consulta. Respondents who were approached to complete the questionnaire had to be 21-years-old or older with a personal buying experience in a fast-food outlet within the past six months. A sample of at least 350 respondents across Gauteng was the initial minimum set for the research sample size. The respondents in this study completed an online electronic questionnaire in August 2014. A total of 447 respondents participated in the study between 14 and 15 August 2014.

Due to the sampling method that was used in this research, generalisations cannot be made about the entire population. The main aim was not to make generalisations but rather to gain better insight as to what consumers' perceptions are about fast-food outlets in South Africa. As this could provide valuable information for the fast-food industry as to what consumers expect and perceive in this food sector, these food establishments could have a better understanding of consumers' wants and needs in general. More importantly, this research was seen to create a platform for future research in other areas or on similar research topics in South Africa.

4.3.3 Measuring instrument

A good measurement tool should be an accurate indicator of what people are interested in measuring and should be easy and efficient to use (Blumberg, 2008: 447). This study made use of a survey, implementing a structured, self-administered questionnaire as the measuring instrument to collect the primary data/information and to explore the phenomena in accordance with the objectives set. The questionnaire was converted to an electronic format as data was collected by Consulta. The questionnaire was assessed by experts in the industry and in the Department of Consumer Science at the University of Pretoria to clarify wording and use of concepts, layout and practical sequences and the relevance of the proposed and finalised questions. The service quality measuring instrument was designed by Oyewole (1999) and the questionnaire was easy to complete as Likert-type scales were predominantly used. Table 4.1 presents the conceptualisation and operationalisation as well as the scales for variables.

The structure of the questionnaire consisted of four sections:

Section A contained questions relating to consumer patronage of fast-food outlets; size of family, how often consumers frequent fast-food outlets; when consumers eat fast food; where consumers eat fast food; why consumers eat fast food; and how much money is spent on fast foods.

Section B investigated the consumer's expectations in terms of the 10 dimensions and 57 service quality attributes as identified by Oyewole (1999): these concerned hygiene and efficiency, courtesy, health consciousness, child-friendliness, ease of reporting a complaint, comforts, orderliness, availability, expeditiousness and communication on a five point Likert-type scale, ranging from 1 to 5 (not important to very important)

Section C interrogated the consumer's perception in terms of the 10 dimensions and 57 service quality attributes as identified by Oyewole (1999); hygiene and efficiency, courtesy, health consciousness, child-friendliness, ease of reporting complaints, comforts, orderliness, availability, expeditiousness and communication on a five point Likert-type scale, ranging from 1 to 5 (not important to very important)

Section D contained questions relating to the consumer's demographic information: age, gender, income, educational status, population group and suburb in Gauteng where respondent lives, simply to ensure that the responding consumer does reside in the province, Gauteng, South Africa.

4.3.4 Pilot testing the measuring instrument

A pilot study was conducted by distributing the questionnaire to a sample of 20 respondents to detect any possible mistakes, ambiguous wording and any other possible problem that could render the questionnaire unusable or unreliable. This is a necessary step in the research process to enable the researcher to assess the validity and reliability of the questionnaire, a necessary step that also ensures that the method of data collection and analysis gives an accurate representation of what was needed (Salkind, 2012:269).

4.3.5 Data collection

Data collection is the process of going into the field to collect primary data that is necessary to draw conclusions to complete the research study. The data collection process involved a structured questionnaire that was hosted and sent via an online Internet-based research tool by Consulta. Primary data was gathered through Consulta on their database of people who are willing to

participate in studies. In this study they would qualify as meeting the requirement of being a consumer. Respondents were contacted electronically to participate in this study and a question on the screen when a potential respondent accessed Consulta's website. This question was used to determine whether the respondent complied with the sample's requirements for participation in the study. To ensure that only data from eligible respondents was captured, three screening questions were used. They requested the person's age, and patronage of fast-food outlets as well as respondents had to indicate their place of residence in Gauteng. The cover letter (Addendum C) informed the respondent of the purpose of the study. It ensured confidentiality and included contact details of the researcher should respondents have any queries that required an answer. The data collection for this study took place in a cross-sectional time frame on 14 and 15 August 2014. From this data collection exercise a total of 447 useable questionnaires were retrieved for further analysis.

4.4 OPERATIONALISATION

The operationalisation table details how the research instrument was used to test the various four research objectives and their associated constructs. The record shows how the items on the questionnaire matched the range of dimensions in the four sections and the statistical measures applied to test the data collected.

TABLE 4.1: OPERATIONALISATION TABLE

Objectives	Concept	Dimensions	Indicators	Items	Measure
Objective 1 To determine and describe consumer’s patronage of fast-food outlets	Consumer patronage	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Section A of the questionnaire 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Consumer profile • How frequently • Which outlets • How often • Money spent • Reasons 	V1 - 7	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Descriptive statistics • Frequencies Percentages
Objective 2 To determine and describe consumers’ expectations of the service quality of fast-food outlets in terms of the specific dimensions of their service offering as deduced from the scale of Oyewole (1999).	Expectations	Hygiene and efficiency Courtesy	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Clean facilities • Clean rest rooms • Well prepared food • Fresh tasting food • Taste of food • Filling orders accurately • Clean employee work area • Employees with good hygiene • Clean workers • Quality of the food • Sincerely attending to customer problems • Getting correct change • Clean tables • Respectful employees • Food served at right temperature • Cordial attendants (good mannered) • Good customer service ♦ Friendly employees ♦ Employees serving with a smile ♦ Being greeted with a smile by employees 	V8.1-8.57	Factor analysis (Exploratory) <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Calculation of Cronbach Alpha • Means • Std deviation • % Variance explained

TABLE 4.1: OPERATIONALISATION OF CONSTRUCTS (Continued)

Objectives	Concept	Dimensions	Indicators	Items	Measure
		Health consciousness Child-friendliness Ease of reporting a complaint Comforts	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ◆ Caring, communicating servers ◆ Polite and courteous server ◆ Making customers feel at ease ◆ Employees with nice personality ◆ Caring, communicating managers ◆ Neatly dressed employees • Keeping the fat low on food served • Keeping the calories low on food served • Nutritional information given on food • Healthy food choices • Showing concern for the environment • Quiet ambience (low-noise eating atmosphere) • Display of government health certification ◆ Child menu coming with toys ◆ Convenient child menu ◆ Availability of a play area for kids ◆ Availability of toys in kids play area ◆ Accommodate children • Display of consumer complaint toll free number • Availability of suggestion boxes • Having a consumer complaint toll free number ◆ Comfortable seating ◆ Convenient seating facilities ◆ Spacious internal area ◆ Playing background music 		

TABLE 4.1: OPERATIONALISATION OF CONSTRUCTS (Continued)

Objectives	Concept	Dimensions	Indicators	Items	Measure
		Orderliness	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Single waiting line for all customers • Two-way Video screen at drive-through window • Availability of double drive-through windows 		
		Availability	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ◆ Late-hour operation ◆ Early-hour operation ◆ Hours of operation 		
		Expeditiousness	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • No crowding • Short waiting lines • Variety of menu choices 		
		Communication	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Being asked if anything else is wanted • Employees wearing name tags • Being told when order will be ready 		
<p>Objective 3 To determine and describe consumer’s perceptions of the service quality of fast-food outlets in terms of the specific dimensions of their service offering as deduced from the scale of Oyewole (1999).</p>	Perceptions	The same as for Objective 2.	The same as for Objective 2	V9.1-9.57	<p>Factor analysis (Confirmatory)</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Calculation of Cronbach Alpha • Means • Std deviation • % Variance explained

TABLE 4.1: OPERATIONALISATION OF CONSTRUCTS (Continued)

Objectives	Concept	Dimensions	Indicators	Items	Measure
<p>Objective 4 To investigate and describe the congruence between consumers' expectations of the service quality dimensions as specified (Objective 2) and their perceptions of the service quality (objective 3) provided at fast-food outlets in order to identify shortcomings that could be addressed to augment the overall service quality perceptions.</p>	<p>Confirmation of consumers' expectations of the service quality (expressed as dimensions of service quality)</p>	<p>The same as Objectives 2 and 3</p>	<p>Gap analysis to detect differences among the primary constructs</p>	<p>V10.1-10.6</p>	<p>Correlations to enable gap analysis of the various dimensions Section B and Section C Expressed in terms of confirmation, or disconfirmation in terms of significant differences (t-tests and ANOVA) Calculations also in terms of demographic groups</p>

4.5 DATA ANALYSIS

The data obtained from the research was analysed according to the objectives that were set for this research study. Data analysis is defined as the application of thought to comprehend the sets of data that were collected to meet the purpose of this study. Suitable techniques for analysis are dictated by the nature of the gathered data, the research design characteristics and researcher's information requirements (Zikmund & Babin, 2007:56). A statistician at UP assisted with the data analysis process. As recommended in the literature (De Vos *et al.*, 2011:252), the data was analysed using descriptive and inferential statistics to translate the quantitative data into the relevant information necessary to address the objectives. A statistician determined the most suitable statistical methods for analysing and interpreting the data. The information was displayed using charts, graphs and tables, created with numeric measurements frequencies, means and percentages.

Descriptive analysis techniques were used to analyse the results. Descriptive statistics involves either identifying the characteristics of a phenomenon or exploring correlations among two or more phenomena and tables and figures result (Leedy & Ormrod, 2013: 184). This research study made use of descriptive statistics to present the data obtained from the questionnaire by means of frequencies, percentages and means. This allowed for pattern recognition and making statistical inferences about the demographic variables of the population.

One of the most widely utilised and broadly applied statistical techniques in the social sciences is exploratory factor analysis (Costello & Osborne, 2005). Exploratory factor analysis enables the researcher to summarise data so that the relationships and patterns can easily be interpreted and understood. Variables are regrouped into a limited set of clusters based on shared variances to isolate constructs and concepts. There are two main factor analysis techniques, exploratory factor analysis (EFA) and confirmatory factor analysis (CFA). Exploratory factor analysis attempts to uncover complex patterns by exploring the dataset and to test predictions, while CFA confirms hypotheses and also makes use of path analysis diagrams to present variables and factors (Young & Pearce, 2013). Exploratory factor analysis was chosen for this study. It is a statistical technique used to reduce the number of variables within a matrix in order to obtain manageable data. Variables within the matrix may be related to one another to represent a specific construct or factor. Therefore the closer the variables are related to one another, the fewer factors will be needed to

explain all the variables within the matrix. The factor scores may then be utilised as dependent variables (Salkind, 2012:191).

4.6 QUALITY OF THE STUDY

The aim of any research should be to provide data that is valid and reliable. Quality data allows for success and produces results that are relevant and prove useful to further studies in the field. In order to ensure that the findings of the study can be considered as facts that could be used in future literature in the academic community, it is important to attend to the quality of the research study. The validity and reliability of the measuring instrument was therefore assessed. The concepts of reliability and validity are related to the quality of the quantitative measurement.

4.6.1 Validity

Validity is the extent to which the instrument used measures what it is intended to measure (Salkind, 2012: 123; Leedy & Omrod, 2013:89) and involves several validity indicators that are external or internal in kind (Leedy & Ormrod, 2013:101). Internal validity is the extent to which the design and data of the study will ensure results that are a true measure of the phenomenon studied (Leedy & Ormrod, 2013:101), while external validity refers to the data's ability to be generalised across other persons. However, external validity could not be guaranteed in this study because it made use of non-probability sampling. Theoretical and measurement validity as relevant to this study will be discussed to show that it met a high degree of validity.

4.6.1.1 Theoretical validity

Theoretical validity is the accuracy of a measure or the extent to which a score truthfully represents the concepts being measured (Zikmund & Babin, 2007:2250). The study ensured theoretical validity by constructing a conceptual framework and by assessing relevant and recent literature that provided direction for the research study. Definitions of important concepts were included, in particular, fast-food outlets, and service quality. The expectancy disconfirmation model (Churchill & Suprenant, 1982) was integrated into the theoretical framework to guide the research (Chapters 2 & 3). A thorough literature review also provided relevant background to these concepts in terms of dimensions and attributes that influenced consumers' expectations and perceptions of the service quality offered at fast-food outlets. These concepts were included in the questionnaire and

experienced individuals in the Department of Consumer Science (UP) evaluated them to assess the validity of the measuring concepts.

4.6.1.2 Measurement validity

There are four types of measurements for validity: content, criterion, construct and face validity. Before data collection begins content and face validity should be established, while construct and criterion validity should be determined after data collection (De Vos *et al.*, 2011:173; Leedy & Ormrod, 2013: 89).

Content validity of the scale used in the questionnaire was ensured as all concepts relevant to the study are clearly operationalised. Existing measuring scales were also used and validated. A pilot study was conducted to ensure that participants had a clear understanding of the questions to accurately answer them. In this way a researcher is able to assess the validity of the questionnaire to ensure that the data collection gives an accurate representation of what is needed.

Face validity refers to the link between the objectives and the research instrument (Kumar, 2011:180). The questionnaire used in this study was broken down into sections to categorise the the questions according to its objectives. To ensure construct validity all constructs were carefully operationalised as the questionnaire was designed for capturing information about experiences in fast-food restaurants. According to Oyewole's (1999) service quality dimensions Experts in the field of Consumer Science field evaluated the questions. Concepts have to be accurately measured in a questionnaire (De Vos *et al.*, 2011:175).

Construct validity refers to the extent to which an instrument or scale measures the relevant concepts or characteristics that cannot be directly observed but are assumed to exist based on patterns in people's behaviour (Leedy & Ormrod, 2013:90). A thorough literature review was compiled to define and ensure the construct of service quality in fast-food outlets is meaningful in a theoretical sense. This review also identified known measures of the construct, which correlate with the construct. Likert-type scales were used as major means of measurement in the questionnaire.

Criterion validity is concerned with the usefulness of the measuring tool as an accurate predictor of the theoretical construct. This can be established with multiple measurements such as comparing the scores on the questionnaire with an established and reputable external criterion that measures

the same concept. In order to achieve a high degree of criterion validity, different items are to be used in each question of the questionnaire to measure the same concept, as well as adapting existing and tested scales to accommodate the objectives of the study (Zikmund & Babin, 2010:250; Salkind, 2012:125;). This procedure was followed for this study.

4.6.2 Reliability

Reliability is the consistency with which a measuring instrument yields certain, consistent results and the entity being measured has not been changed (Leedy & Ormrod, 2013:91). Reliability occurs when a test measures the same thing more than once and results in the same outcome (Salkind, 2012: 115). The effectiveness of a study can be judged by evaluating its reliability, if the research tool is consistent, stable, predictable and accurate (Kumar, 2011:181). A pilot study was also done, to ensure that the participants understood the concepts and questions, unclear items or language that were not understood were removed and changed in the questionnaire before data collection took place. Correlation coefficients and Cronbach's Alpha values were calculated to further test the reliability of the study. The extent to which the separate items in the scale were measured and has to correlate with the total measure of the scale (Salkind, 2012:119).

4.7 ETHICAL ISSUES

De Vos *et al.* (2011:114) define ethics as “a set of moral principles which is suggested by an individual or group [and] is subsequently widely accepted, and which offers rules and behavioural expectations about the most correct conduct towards experimental subjects and respondents, employers, sponsors, other researchers, assistants and students.” Throughout the research process, it was attempted to complete the research in an ethical manner. To meet ethical requirements stereotyping, prejudice, discrimination, bias and intolerance should be avoided (Walliman, 2005:342). The following ethical issues were considered for this research study, to ensure that a high degree of ethicality was met.

Plagiarism: Care was taken to ensure that plagiarism was avoided at all times. A thorough literature reference list indicates all the sources consulted and used. The adapted Harvard referencing method was applied, as the Department of Consumer Science of the University of Pretoria requires. The signed plagiarism declaration of the University of Pretoria can be found in Addendum B.

Ethical approval: The study's research, its questionnaire design and procedures followed, received written approval from the Faculty of Natural and Agricultural Sciences Research Ethics Committee before the data collection commenced (Salkind, 2012:90). This approval can be found in Addendum A.

Voluntary participation and informed consent: The cover letter (Addendum C) informed respondents of the study's objectives, a time estimate for completion of the questionnaire and that they may withdraw from the study at any time or only complete the sections that they are comfortable with. Informed consent was not necessary in this research as participation was voluntarily (Salkind, 2012:86, 91).

Protection from harm: The nature of the study was explained in the cover letter. No questions were included in the questionnaire that could cause respondents any emotional distress. Respondents were not forced or manipulated to complete questions that they were not comfortable with (Salkind, 2012:86).

Right to privacy: The cover letter informed participants that their information will be treated confidentially. No request was made for disclosure of names and no attempt was made by the researcher to match a specific person with a specific question. The questionnaires were treated anonymously and participants personally submitted the completed questionnaire online.

Data and interpretation: The data interpretation was done correctly and findings were presented truthfully. No attempt was made to manipulate the results. The study was conducted under the guidance of a study leader and any shortcomings of the research as well as its implications were clearly indicated in the final research (Salkind, 2012:90).

4.8 SUMMARY

The research design and methodology was chosen after careful consideration and has been presented in this chapter to confirm the appropriateness of the research methods used throughout the study. The study was predominantly exploratory and descriptive in nature, using a structured electronic questionnaire. The data collection yielded 447 respondents and took place in Gauteng, South Africa during August 2014. The unit of analysis was male and female respondents, 21 years of

age and older, irrespective of their population and income group. The data was analysed using descriptive and inferential statistical procedures and was presented in tables and graphs. Throughout the course of the study measures were taken to ensure constant validity and reliability of the results. Ethical research guidelines were also implemented to ensure that the study measured up to acceptable standards.



Chapter 5

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

This chapter introduces the demographic characteristics of the sample, followed by the data analysis and discussion of the results in accordance with the objectives set for the study together with the incorporation of existing literature.

5.1 INTRODUCTION

In this chapter, the data analysis and the results of the questionnaire will be discussed. Descriptive and inferential statistics were used to describe and summarise the quantitative data that emerged from the questionnaire instrument that was applied during the study. Tables, graphs and numerical summaries, such as frequencies, averages and percentages illustrate the descriptive statistics. Inferential statistics are used to generalise the findings to a larger population from which the sample was selected (Babbie & Mouton, 2002:481). The researcher analysed the data according to the objectives of the study as presented in the conceptual framework with the aim of addressing the research problem. The structured questionnaire guided the analysis process.

The demographic profile of the sample is presented first, then the findings in terms of the objectives that were formulated for the study.

5.2 DEMOGRAPHIC CHARACTERISTICS OF THE SAMPLE

The pre-requisites for the selection of the respondents were that they had to reside in Gauteng, irrespective of their gender and race, and that they had to be 21 years of age or older. Individuals also had to have had a personal buying experience with at least one of the prominent fast-food outlets in Gauteng, by either physically being in the fast-food outlet or using the drive-through

facility during the preceding six months. Two screening questions were used to ensure that respondents met the requirements for participation in the study.

Selected demographic characteristics were considered for this investigation and were included in the last section (Section D) of the research tool. This section allows for the creation of a sample profile to include details surrounding the following demographic sampling criteria: gender, age, level of education, approximate monthly household income, population group and area of residence.

5.2.1 Gender

Respondents who took part in this study were selected based on gender. The following information is therefore only meant to provide a description of the sample's profile. As mentioned previously, respondents were selected by means of convenience sampling through voluntary participation after an invitation was sent out by Consulta to members on their data base. The company, however, tried to invite an equal number of male and female respondents. The table below indicates the gender distribution of respondents who eventually accepted the invitation and completed the questionnaires. In total, four hundred and forty-seven (N = 447) questionnaires were deemed useable for further analysis. There was a good representation of male and female respondents.

TABLE 5.1: GENDER DISTRIBUTION OF THE STUDY (N = 447)

Categories in the questionnaire: Gender	n	%
Male	233	52.13
Female	214	47.87

5.2.2 Age

Age was one of the control measures in the study: in order to participate in this research project, respondents had to be 21 years of age and older. Respondents specified their exact age in an open question of the demographic section of the questionnaire. Their ages were afterwards grouped into three categories, simply to indicate the three age categories of respondents who participated in the study (Table 5.2).

TABLE 5.2: AGE DISTRIBUTION OF THE SAMPLE (N = 447)

Categories in the questionnaire: Age	n	%
21 years – 40 years	131	29.31
>40 years – <60 years	228	51.00
60 years and older	88	19.69

Table 5.2 presents the age composition of the sample. The age groups were simplified into these three categories for the purpose of statistical analysis as it was expected that different age groups would have dissimilar perceptions. The 21-40 age group included younger consumers of whom some were single and others had younger children; the 41-59 age group included more experienced middle-aged respondents, while the 60+ age group was smaller and included experienced consumers some of whom might have been the so-called “empty-nest” consumers. Differences in these groups’ family and work status were expected to influence their expectations and perception of fast-food outlets.

5.2.3 Education level

Respondents indicated their highest level of education. The eight categories presented in the questionnaire were re-grouped into three categories for investigation as presented in Table 5.3.

Table 5.3 presents the education level of the sample. The majority of respondents had a degree or diploma (42.95%).

TABLE 5.3: EDUCATION LEVEL OF THE RESPONDENTS (N = 447; MISSING: n = 3)

Categories in the questionnaire	n	%	Categories of investigation	N	%
Some secondary schooling	6	1.34	Some secondary schooling/Grade 12 undergraduate (currently busy with post-school graduate studies)	118	26.40
Complete secondary schooling (passed Grade 12/Standard 10)	86	19.24			
Undergraduate (currently busy with post-school studies)	26	5.82	Diploma/Degree	192	42.95
Graduate (Degree or Diploma)	192	42.95			
Honours graduate	69	15.44	Grade 12 + Postgraduate Diploma/Degree	134	29.98
Master’s graduate	56	12.53			
Doctoral graduate	9	2.01			
Unclassified	3	0.67	Missing	3	0.67

5.2.4 Monthly household income

The income level categories that were presented in the questionnaire are re-grouped to match the official Tshwane data to compare the data of the different income groups statistically.

TABLE 5.4: MONTHLY HOUSEHOLD INCOMES OF THE SAMPLE (N = 374; MISSING: n = 73)

Household income (monthly) Categories in questionnaire	n	%	Household income (monthly) Categories of investigation	n	%
Less than R6 000	12	2.68	Lower middle income group	123	27.52
>R6 000 - R25 000	111	24.83			
>R25 000 - < R 40 000	93	20.80	Upper middle income group	93	20.81
>R40 000 - < R100 000	130	29.08			
>R100 000	28	6.26	Upper income group	158	35.34
Missing	73	16.33	Missing	73	16.33

Although the higher income group was slightly larger, the three income categories were well represented as is evident in Table 5.4. Unfortunately a sizable percentage of the sample chose not to disclose their incomes. There were, however, enough respondents to allow for comparisons across the different income groups.

5.2.5 Population group

Respondents said which population group they belonged to according to the South African Equity Act. This enabled the researcher to describe the composition of the population groups in the sample. Even though this investigation never aimed to distinguish between the perceptions of the different population groups, the researcher was better able to describe and profile the different characteristics of consumers who tend to purchase fast foods to highlight culturally based preferences. Five categories were distinguished in the questionnaire and the data is presented in Table 5.5.

TABLE 5.5: REPRESENTATION OF POPULATION GROUPS IN THE SAMPLE (N = 432; MISSING: n = 15)

Categories in the questionnaire	n	%	Categories of investigation	n	%
White	337	75.39	White	337	75.39
African	55	12.30	Black	55	12.30
Indian	18	4.03	Other	40	8.95
Coloured	17	3.80			
Asian	4	0.90			
Other	1	0.22			
Missing/ preferred not to say	15	3.36	Missing/ preferred not to say	15	3.36

As can be seen from these results in Table 5.5, the majority of respondents were Whites (75.39%). Two other categories were formed, namely Black respondents' (12.30%) and Other (8.95%) for the purpose of statistical analysis. A small percentage of respondents did not indicate their population group (3.36%). For future research, researchers should try and get a more equal representation of the different populations groups.

5.2.6 Geographic area of residence

Respondents were asked to specify their area of residence by giving the name of the suburb where they live in an open question. This was simply used to confirm that they resided somewhere in Gauteng and details are not relevant in terms of this study.

5.3 RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

Results are presented and discussed according to the objectives of the study.

5.3.1 Consumers' patronage of fast-food outlets

Respondents' patronage of fast-food outlets as an indication of who eats fast foods, when, where, which foods they eat, how much money is spent on fast foods and reasons why they purchase fast foods were investigated by means of seven questions to present a comprehensive scenario of fast-food consumption.

5.3.1.1 Household composition

Respondents were asked to specify the number of adults (≥ 21 years) in their households in an open question to determine which respondents stayed alone or lived with a partner. They also had to state whether there were children in their homes which would show the influence of household members on the household's fast-food consumption.

TABLE 5.6: REPRESENTATION OF HOW MANY ADULTS IN THE HOUSEHOLD (N = 447)

Number of adults in the household	n	%
1	53	11.86
2	248	55.48
3	87	19.46
4	40	8.95
5	13	2.91
6	4	0.89
7	2	0.45

The majority represented households with two adults (55.5%), while a sizeable portion of the sample had three adults.

5.3.1.2 Children in the household

In the questionnaire, the respondents were only asked to specify the number of children in their household to see whether there was a difference between households with and without children regarding the purchase of fast foods. The result would help assessing the influence children might have on buying fast-food products. Respondents could indicate the number of adults staying in the household in an open-ended question, where after the researcher grouped all adults together in a group for further analyses.

TABLE 5.7: NUMBER OF CHILDREN IN THE HOUSEHOLDS (N = 447)

Number of children in the household	n	%
0	267	59.73
1	75	16.78
2	69	15.44
3	29	6.49
4	5	1.12
5	1	0.22
6	1	0.22

The majority represented households with no children (59.73%) in their household, while there was an almost equal representation of households with two (16.78%) and three children (15.44%).

5.3.1.3 How many times do you buy food from a fast-food outlet?

Consumers were asked to indicate how many times they buy food from a fast-food outlet. The options given in the questionnaire were 1. Once per month maximum. 2. Twice per month maximum. 3. Once per week maximum. 4. Twice per week maximum. 5. More than twice per week. 6. Occasionally.

TABLE 5.8: REPRESENTATION OF FOOD PURCHASES FROM FAST-FOOD OUTLETS (N = 446; missing: 1)

How many times food is bought from fast food outlets	n	%
Missing	1	0.22
Once per month maximum	46	10.29
Twice per month maximum	123	27.52
Once per week maximum	124	27.74
Twice per week maximum	69	15.44
More than twice per week	30	6.71
Only occasionally	54	12.08

As seen in Table 5.8, there is an almost equal representation of consumers who purchase fast food twice a month (27.52%) and once a week (27.74%), followed by consumers who purchase fast food twice a week (15.44%) and only occasionally (12.08%). Therefore, more than half of the sample purchase fast food at least twice per month, while approximately one out of four indicated that they purchase fast food once per week. Only a small percentage indicated that they do so more frequently. The findings nevertheless confirm that respondents had experience with fast foods outlets and that they would be able to complete the questionnaire, which is very important in terms of the reliability of the findings.

5.3.1.4 Which day of the week are you more likely to patronise a fast-food outlet?

Consumers were asked which day of the week they are more likely to buy food from a fast-food outlet. A five point Likert-type scale was used to measure this likelihood. The scale ranged from 1 representing never to 5 for always. Ten items were numbered Mondays, Tuesdays, Wednesdays,

Thursdays, Fridays, Saturdays, Sundays, Holidays, Special Occasions and other that they could specify.

TABLE 5.9: CONSUMERS' PATRONAGE OF FAST-FOOD OUTLETS ON PARTICULAR DAYS

	Never		Seldom		Sometimes		Regularly		Always	
	N	%	n	%	n	%	n	%	n	%
Mondays	207	46.31	141	31.54	78	17.45	19	4.25	2	0.45
Tuesdays	172	38.48	160	35.79	103	23.05	9	2.01	3	0.67
Wednesdays	125	27.97	135	30.20	141	31.54	41	9.17	5	1.12
Thursdays	126	28.19	144	32.21	136	30.43	38	8.50	3	0.67
Fridays	38	8.50	48	10.74	129	28.86	163	36.47	69	15.43
Saturdays	51	11.41	73	16.33	140	31.32	145	32.44	38	8.50
Sundays	127	28.41	105	23.49	120	26.85	81	18.12	14	3.13
Holidays	42	9.40	82	18.34	177	39.60	114	25.50	32	7.16
Special Occasions	134	29.98	82	18.34	128	28.64	68	15.21	35	7.83
Other	324	72.48	42	9.40	54	12.08	13	2.91	14	3.13

From Table 5.9, it can be seen that consumers mostly frequented fast-food outlets on Fridays and Saturdays while a sizable percentage also purchased fast foods on holidays, Sundays and special occasions. Patronage of fast food outlets was less frequent on Wednesdays and Thursdays. Mondays and Tuesdays seem the least popular days to purchase fast foods which may explain why these outlets often advertise special offers such as “buy one, get one free” on these days.

5.3.1.5 Where do you generally buy fast foods?

Consumers were asked from which fast-food outlets they purchase fast food. A five point Likert-type scale was used to measure this likelihood of choice. The scale range was from 1 for never to 5 for always. The following fast-food outlets were included in the list in the questionnaire, Kentucky Fried Chicken (KFC), Chicken Licken, Nando's, Steers, McDonald's, Debonairs Pizza, Roman's, Scooters, Kuai, Mochachos, Shisa Nyama, Fishaways and others, where consumers could specify other fast-food outlets.

TABLE 5.10: FAST-FOOD OUTLETS PATRONISED

	Never		Seldom		Sometimes		Regularly		Always	
	n	%	n	%	n	%	n	%	n	%
KFC	73	16.33	87	19.46	139	31.10	132	29.53	16	3.58
Chicken Licken	292	65.32	78	17.45	42	9.40	25	5.59	10	2.24
Nando's	117	26.17	142	31.77	115	25.73	57	12.75	16	3.58
Steers	62	13.87	138	30.87	150	33.56	86	19.24	11	2.46
McDonald's	113	25.28	107	23.94	97	21.70	113	25.28	17	3.80
Debonairs	160	35.79	147	32.89	83	18.57	44	9.84	13	2.91
Roman's	147	32.89	99	22.15	92	20.58	87	19.46	22	4.92
Scooters	299	66.89	89	19.91	39	8.72	19	4.25	1	0.23
Kuai	313	70.02	74	16.55	42	9.40	13	2.91	5	1.12
Mochachos	354	79.19	57	12.75	23	5.15	12	2.68	1	0.23
Shisa Nyama	391	87.47	31	6.93	18	4.03	7	1.57	0	0.00
Fishaways	151	33.78	120	26.85	111	24.83	57	12.75	8	1.79
Others	276	61.74	38	8.50	71	15.89	53	11.86	9	2.01

From Table 5.10, it can be seen from the 12 food outlets that were listed, KFC, Steers and McDonalds are patronised most frequently (Sometimes, Regularly, Often) compared to the other fast food outlets (>50% support). They are followed by Roman's Pizza, Nando's and Fishaways ($\geq 40\%$). Steers and McDonalds are particularly popular for their burgers, which may be an attraction. KFC is supported by more than 60% of the sample which may reflect the popularity of chicken dishes. Nando's which is also well supported, also specialises in chicken dishes.

5.3.1.6 Money spent on fast foods per household per month

This was an open-ended question in the questionnaire which allowed respondents to fill in the approximate amount of money they spend on fast food in a month. Results are summarised in Table 5.11.

TABLE 5.11: MONEY SPENT ON FAST-FOODS MONTHLY (N = 447)

Categories	n	%
R0 - < R500	274	61.30
R500 - < R1 000	104	23.27
R1 000 - < R1 500	30	6.71
R1 500 - < R2 000	21	4.69
$\geq R2 000$	18	4.03

As can be seen in Table 5.11, more than 60% of the households in the sample spent up to R500 per month on fast foods, while near one out of five indicated that they spent between R500 and R1 000 on fast food monthly. Less than 10% spent more, and therefore those who spend more than R1500 monthly, are the exception rather than the rule.

5.3.1.7 Reasons for purchasing fast food

Consumers had to give reasons why they purchase fast foods. A five point Likert-type scale was used to measure this likelihood. The scale ranged from 1 for never to 5 for always. Six items were measured: convenience, 'can't cook', buying fast food is cheaper than buying ingredients to prepare their own meal, fast food is a treat, there is no time available, or because of special deals at fast-food outlets.

As shown in Table 5.12, the reasons why consumers purchase fast foods are mostly for their convenience (75.16%) and because it is a treat for them (63.32%). Consumers often purchase fast food because there are sometimes special deals at fast-food outlets (32.22%), such as Steers that has "Wacky Wednesdays". Time constraints were mentioned by 33.11% of the respondents which was a lower percentage than expected, but that nevertheless indicates approximately one out of every three consumers.

TABLE 5.12: REASONS FOR PURCHASING FAST FOODS

	Never		Seldom		Sometimes		Regularly		Always	
	N	%	n	%	n	%	n	%	n	%
Convenience	16	3.58	15	3.36	80	17.90	156	34.89	180	40.27
Can't cook	398	89.04	28	6.26	13	2.92	4	0.89	4	0.89
Cheaper than ingredients	228	51.01	96	21.48	79	17.67	26	5.82	18	4.03
A treat	31	6.94	29	6.49	104	23.25	147	32.89	136	30.43
No time	122	27.29	77	17.23	100	22.37	102	22.82	46	10.29
Special deal	113	25.28	81	18.12	109	24.38	85	19.02	59	13.20
Other	352	78.75	22	4.92	33	7.38	18	4.03	22	4.92

5.3.2 Consumers' expectations of the service quality at fast-food outlets

Consumers' expectations of the service quality of fast-food outlets was investigated using a 57-item scale that was developed and tested by Oyewole (1999) for use in fast-food contexts. The scale measured the level of importance that consumers attach to various aspects relating to the quality

of the service offering in fast-food restaurants. The original scale examined ten dimensions of service quality using 57 items. The original scale utilised a five point Likert-type scale, ranging from 1 (not important) to 5 (very important). For the purpose of this study, the scale with all its items was used, although the items were shuffled and the wording was slightly re-phrased to appeal to the South African consumer.

5.3.2.1 Exploratory factor analysis to confirm the dimensions of the service offering for consumers' expectations

Because this scale has not been used in a South African context before, the data relating to this investigation was subjected to exploratory factor analysis to differentiate coherent factors and to determine the components of each factor. The Statistical Package for the Social Science (SPSS) was used to perform exploratory factor analysis, specifically Principal Axis Factoring, using an Oblimin rotation with Kaiser Normalization. The factor loadings are represented by the correlation coefficients between the factor and the variables. Factor loadings equal or greater than ± 0.50 are considered practically significant (Williams, Brown & Onsman, 2010).

The subsequent outcome of the exploratory factor analysis procedure yielded eight factors instead of the original 10 dimensions. Factors were labelled according to the content (items within) of each factor:

Factor 1:	Courtesy and efficiency	(17 components/items)
Factor 2:	Child- friendliness	(5 components/items)
Factor 3:	Hygiene and precision	(11components/items)
Factor 4:	Healthiness	(5 components/items)
Factor 5:	Expeditiousness	(4 components/items)
Factor 6:	Availability	(4 components/items)
Factor 7:	Orderliness and ease of complaint	(6 components/items)
Factor 8:	Comfort	(5 components/items)

An explication of the factors in terms of their content is presented in Table 5.13.

The items within the eight factors were coherent according to the literature, with their respective Cronbach Alpha values (0.95; 0.95; 0.90; 0.87; 0.68; 0.70; 0.83; 0.83), indicating internal consistency within the factors (Field & Miles, 2010:583). This then allowed for further analyses. The factors and

their respective items are similar to the dimensions of the original scale, although factors 1, 3, 4, 5, 6, 7 and factor 8 represents attributes from the 10 original factors as identified by Oyewole (1999). A discussion will now follow to explain which items moved from their original factors within the eight factors that emerged through factor analysis.

Factor 1: Courtesy and efficiency

All nine items of the original scale of Oyewole's factor 2 were retained, but an additional eight attributes were added:

- Five items originating from Oyewole's factor 1 (Hygiene and efficiency) namely, sincerely attending to customer problems (V8.28); respectful employees (V8.33); food served at the right temperature (V8.47); cordial attendants (V8.56); and good customer service (V8.24).
- One item from Oyewole's factor 3 (Health consciousness) namely, quiet ambience (V8.42).
- Two items from Oyewole's factor 10 (Communication) namely, employees wearing a name tag (V8.22) and being told when order will be ready (V8.44).

It was decided that all these items could be associated with courtesy and efficiency. In this study, factor 1 then contained 17 items.

Factor 2: Child-friendliness

All five items of the Oyewole scale (Oyewole, 1999, factor 4) assembled as factor 2 in this study.

Factor 3: Hygiene and precision

Eleven items from Oyewole's factor 1 (Hygiene and efficiency) clustered as factor 3 in this study. Therefore, in this study, hygiene distinguished itself as an entity, including attributes referring to the precision of preparation and functioning, namely: Clean facilities (V8.1); well prepared food (V8.23); fresh tasting food (V8.41); taste of food (V8.19); filling order accurately (V8.2), clean employee work area (V8.26); employees with good hygiene (V8.13); clean workers (V8.39); quality of the food (V.32); getting correct change (V8.14); and clean tables (V8.50).

Factor 3 concluded with eleven attributes.

Factor 4: Health aspects

Five of the seven attributes from Oyewole's factor 3 (Health consciousness) were retained as factor 4 of this study, namely: keeping the fat low on food served (V8.4); keeping the kilojoules low on food served (V8.16); nutritional information given on food (V8.27)' healthy food choices (V8.36); and showing concern for the environment (V8.46).

No additional items were added, and the researcher was satisfied with the items and their coherent meaning.

Factor 5: Expeditiousness

Two attributes from Oyewole's original factor 9 (Expeditiousness) were retained in a factor with the same label, namely: no crowding (V8.10); and short waiting lines (V8.21). In addition, two items were added, namely:

- One item originating from Oyewole's factor 7 (Orderliness) was added, namely: single waiting line for all customers (V8.8).
- One attribute from Oyewole's factor 8 (Availability), namely: late-hour operation (V8.9).

The researcher was satisfied that the additional items made sense in terms of the coherent label and decided to retain the items.

Factor 6: Availability

This factor merged items from three factors of the original scale, retaining two items that formed part of Oyewole's original factor 8 (Availability) with the same label, namely: early-hour operation (V8.31); and hours of operation (V8.52).

In addition, two items that formed part of other factors in the original scale were added, namely:

- One attribute from Oyewole's factor 5 (Ease of complaint) namely: having a consumer toll-free complaint number (V8.43).
- One attribute from Oyewole's factor 9 (Expeditiousness), namely: variety of menu choices (V8.4). Factor 6 of this study concluded with four items.

Factor 7: Orderliness and Ease of complaint

Two items originating from Oyewole's factor 7 (Orderliness) were retained, namely: availability of double drive-through windows (V8.55); and two-way video screen at drive-through window (V8.20).

The following items were added:

- One item from Oyewole's factor 10 (Communication), namely: being asked if anything else is wanted (V8.11).
- Two items diverted from Oyewole's factor 5 (Ease of complaint), namely: display of government health certification, consumer complaint toll-free number (V8.6); and availability of suggestion boxes (V8.18).
- One attribute from Oyewole's factor 3 (Health consciousness) was added, namely: display of government health certification (V8.51).

Factor 7 concluded with six items that made sense in terms of the factor label even though several items diverted from other factors.

Factor 8: Comfort

All four of Oyewole's factor 6 (Comfort) items were retained in this study's factor 8, namely comfortable seats (V8.7); Comfortable seating facilities (V8.30); spacious internal area (V8.38); and playing of background music (V8.57).

One item originating from Oyewole's factor 1 (Hygiene and efficiency) was added, namely: clean rest rooms (V8.12). This aspect could contribute to overall comfort in terms of patronising the fast food outlet, and therefore the item was retained. Factor 8 concludes with five attributes.

Conclusive remark

The original scale of Oyewole (1999) contained ten dimensions. Through exploratory factor analysis, this study concluded with eight factors that made sense as the factors' respective items. In conclusion, Oyewole's factors 5 and 7 were integrated into a single factor 7 in this study, while his factor 10's items dispersed to merge with items in other factors, which upon scrutiny, were retained as a good fit. The respective Cronbach Alpha coefficients of the factors were used as a guideline.

Findings of the factor analysis procedure are presented in Table 5.13, which distinguishes eight factors as labelled and named in the preceding section.

TABLE 5.13: STRUCTURE MATRIX OF CONSUMER EXPECTATIONS

	Factor							
	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8
V8.45 Polite and courteous servers	.880	.225	.551	.401	.296	.366	-.356	-.299
V8.56 Cordial attendants	.867	.216	.495	.360	.270	.399	-.303	-.289
V8.40 Being greeted with a smile by employees	.862	.248	.481	.379	.310	.319	-.399	-.309
V8.33 Respectful employees	.839	.209	.570	.396	.272	.225	-.226	-.318
V8.34 Caring, communicating managers	.819	.203	.543	.504	.226	.260	-.312	-.397
V8.15 Employees serving with a smile	.814	.238	.487	.429	.282	.234	-.421	-.305
V8.25 Caring, communicating servers	.796	.243	.518	.406	.225	.255	-.279	-.370
V8.35 Neatly dressed employees	.788	.210	.587	.435	.262	.348	-.338	-.356
V8.49 Employees with nice personality	.785	.275	.373	.407	.281	.372	-.331	-.357
V8.53 Making customers feel at ease	.764	.263	.434	.376	.282	.625	-.350	-.378
V8.24 Good customer service	.743	.190	.719	.378	.242	.248	-.173	-.263
V8.3 Friendly employees	.673	.239	.495	.379	.242	.080	-.266	-.295
V8.47 Food served at the right temperature	.632	.096	.613	.320	.230	.385	-.185	-.133
V8.28 Sincerely attending to customer problems	.610	.253	.472	.503	.253	.301	-.349	-.385
V8.44 Being told when order will be ready	.606	.252	.480	.407	.334	.435	-.379	-.229
V8.22 Employees wearing name tags	.574	.301	.320	.375	.324	.359	-.567	-.452
V8.42 Quiet ambience	.376	.225	.198	.354	.301	.327	-.359	-.369
V8.29 Play area for kids	.219	.920	.096	.265	.240	.255	-.304	-.433
V8.17 Child menu	.217	.908	.093	.294	.146	.164	-.373	-.389
V8.37 Toys in kids' play area	.203	.904	.068	.237	.223	.241	-.345	-.416
V8.48 Accommodate children	.234	.859	.108	.261	.228	.284	-.268	-.370
V8.5 Child menu coming with toys	.136	.819	.035	.162	.147	.084	-.330	-.315
V8.39 Clean workers	.577	.164	.828	.366	.206	.214	-.221	-.189
V8.13 Employees with good hygiene	.523	.099	.821	.343	.220	.135	-.181	-.236
V8.26 Clean employee work area	.590	.139	.770	.392	.184	.178	-.194	-.198
V8.23 Well prepared food	.511	.101	.769	.262	.333	.180	-.094	-.151
V8.32 Quality of the food	.404	.061	.679	.214	.291	.126	-.039	-.074
V8.1 - Clean facilities	.385	.096	.660	.243	.128	.080	-.150	-.168
V8.50 Clean tables	.482	.194	.656	.305	.229	.291	-.172	-.238
V8.2 Filling orders accurately	.414	.037	.634	.179	.177	.137	-.124	-.078
V8.19 Taste of food	.346	.085	.603	.151	.345	.213	-.013	.049
V8.14 Getting correct change	.497	.131	.567	.387	.163	.159	-.294	-.236
V8.41 Fresh tasting food	.277	.081	.530	.157	.287	.264	-.028	.054
V8.16 Keeping the kilojoules low on food served	.365	.194	.252	.864	.194	.198	-.306	-.209
V8.36 Health food choices	.361	.284	.254	.790	.117	.308	-.270	-.333
V8.4 Keeping the fat low on food served	.333	.194	.271	.788	.146	.071	-.288	-.233

V8.27 Nutritional information for food	.397	.309	.241	.739	.127	.338	-.448	-.370
V8.46 Showing concern for the environment	.605	.278	.350	.620	.222	.448	-.434	-.309
V8.10 No crowding	.319	.199	.307	.265	.731	.180	-.240	-.230
V8.10 No crowding	.319	.199	.307	.265	.731	.180	-.240	-.230
V8.21 Short waiting lines	.387	.161	.392	.236	.589	.249	-.168	-.207
V8.9 Late-hour operation	.199	.355	.131	.184	.464	.322	-.303	-.293
V8.8 Single waiting line for all customers	.288	.208	.158	.136	.457	.125	-.442	-.277
V8.52 Hours of operation	.389	.271	.289	.339	.365	.659	-.365	-.260
V8.54 Variety of menu choices	.533	.268	.439	.360	.221	.573	-.225	-.278
V8.31 -Early hour operation	.266	.370	.122	.263	.373	.419	-.305	-.327
V8.43 Having a consumer complaint toll-free number	.449	.373	.231	.482	.281	.363	-.792	-.403
V8.6 Display of consumer complaint toll-free number	.372	.452	.236	.401	.256	.211	-.781	-.451
V8.18 Availability of suggestion boxes	.341	.548	.150	.422	.220	.323	-.701	-.455
V8.55 Drive-through facilities	.372	.411	.217	.425	.364	.354	-.570	-.300
V8.20 Two-way video screen at drive-through window	.323	.396	.167	.416	.391	.222	-.566	-.286
V8.51 Display of government health certification	.416	.321	.272	.470	.136	.499	-.513	-.281
V8.11 Being asked if anything else is wanted	.361	.301	.164	.288	.161	.375	-.419	-.346
V8.30 Convenient seating facilities	.378	.538	.155	.338	.343	.277	-.324	-.826
V8.7 Comfortable seats	.345	.464	.142	.298	.326	.131	-.510	-.781
V8.38 Spacious internal area	.477	.559	.195	.396	.331	.387	-.432	-.585
V8.12 Clean rest rooms	.384	.334	.384	.397	.188	.195	-.293	-.569
V8.57 Playing of background music	.365	.359	.125	.352	.198	.342	-.433	-.442
Mean	4.29	2.28	4.75	3.71	3.65	3.54	2.99	3.28
SD	0.62	1.29	0.42	0.93	0.80	0.80	0.97	0.92
% Variance explained	35.20	10.09	4.54	3.70	3.24	2.52	2.32	2.08
Cronbach Alpha	0.95	0.95	0.90	0.87	0.68	0.70	0.83	0.83

The mean values are visually presented in Table 5.13. The means for the eight factors varied between 4.75 and 2.28 (Max = 5). The percentage variance explained is 64.69, which is acceptable in terms of explaining variance in the data. Standard deviations were acceptable (0.42 to 1.29).

For the purpose of the interpretations of the means (M), the following applied:

M = ≥4; Very high/ favourable expectation/ very favourable, highly positive perception

M = >3.5<4: Above average expectation/perceptions, nevertheless positive

M = >2.5<3.5: Average expectation/ neutral perceptions, yet slightly positive

M = <2.5: Below average/ low/ expectation/ negative perceptions

5.3.2.2 Conclusion of the exploratory factor analysis procedure

- Consumers' expectations of the following dimensions of the service offering in fast-food outlets, were very high ($M \geq 4.0$):

Factor 3: Hygiene and precision: $M_{\text{Factor3}} = 4.75$

Factor 1: Courtesy and efficiency: $M_{\text{Factor1}} = 4.29$

These therefore represent characteristics that customers regard very highly and which would instigate consumer dissatisfaction when not attended to meticulously. Hygiene and efficiency can be related to food quality, while courtesy and efficiency relate to how the service is rendered and this is strongly influenced by the personnel on duty.

Hygiene and precision: This factor consists of 11 items, which reflects what consumers expect in terms of clean workers with good hygiene, clean facilities and tables, as well as quality foods, taste of food and food served at the correct temperature, orders filled correctly and getting the correct change. Based on previous literature, cleanliness of restaurants will affect whether or not customers will revisit a restaurant (Pizam & Ellis, 1999; Agnes *et al.*, 2004). The appearance of employees who serve customers has a strong influence on customers' experiences in fast food establishments (Ryu & Jang, 2007). Quality of food is a very important in terms of customers' satisfaction and would therefore unmistakably influence any dining experience (Kivela *et al.*, 1999; Raajpoot, 2002; Sulek & Hensley, 2004; Peri, 2006; Liu & Jang, 2009). Previous literature also concurs that the taste of food influences consumers' satisfaction and is important in terms of the customers' overall experience when eating out (Kivela *et al.*, 1999; Korsmeyer, 1999; Sulek & Hensley, 2004). The temperature of food influences the sensory properties of the food and how consumers evaluate the food (Johns & Tyas, 1996; Kivela *et al.*, 1999; Delwiche, 2004). When purchasing fast foods, the food is not necessarily consumed immediately and this may have a negative influence on how the food is evaluated later on. Oyewole (1999) also concluded that consumers regard hygiene as very important in the fast food industry.

Courtesy and efficiency: Consumers apparently have high expectations with regard to how they are treated by employees in fast-food outlets, including being greeted with a smile and effective communication like telling them when their orders will be ready, being friendly and positive while serving customers, are appreciated personnel attitudes. Based on previous research, South African consumers have even higher expectations with regard to these dimension when compared to what

Oyewole (1999) concluded. Various other studies also mention that the service employees provide is a very important determinant of customers' evaluation of the service offering in restaurants and their total experience of the service offering in fast-food establishments (Kivela & Chu, 2001; Agnes *et al.*, 2004; Berry *et al.*, 2006; Garg, 2014).

- Consumers' expectations of the following dimensions of the service offering in fast-food outlets, were high ($M \geq 3.5 < 4.0$), namely:

Factor 4: Healthiness: $M_{\text{Factor4}} = 3.71$

Factor 5: Expeditiousness: $M_{\text{Factor5}} = 3.65$

Factor 6: Availability: $M_{\text{Factor6}} = 3.54$

Healthiness relates to the food that is offered, while expeditiousness and availability can be related to how the service is managed at the fast-food outlet. As explained, fast-food outlets have to be very meticulous about the service dimensions that customers have high or very high expectations of. These should be a priority in their service offering, because failure to meet consumers' expectations would instigate dissatisfaction that are likely to follow a negative disconfirmation of expectations. These might then discourage revisits to that food outlet.

Healthiness: The five items in this factor referred to consumers' expectations concerning specific aspects about health like the energy value (kilojoule content) of the food; healthy food options; attention to the fat content of food; availability of nutritional information; and evidence of concern for the environment. Oyewole, (1999) also concluded that consumers regard this health dimension as important. Earlier literature indicates that food items in fast-food outlets are usually energy dense with questionable nutritional value and that healthiness in the food business has become increasingly important (French *et al.*, 2001; Prentice & Jebb, 2003; Bowman & Vinyard, 2004; Hur & Jang, 2015). This has motivated fast-food establishments to offer healthier options on their menus, and to attend to the kilojoule and fat content of foods (Schroder & McEachern, 2005; Driskell *et al.*, 2006).

Expeditiousness: Four items in this factor measured consumer's expectations of aspects such as crowding with too many people waiting for service, waiting time, operation hours and the arrangement of the waiting lines for customers. Oyewole, (1999) found that the service quality at fast-food retailers would be enhanced by shorter waiting lines and with reduced crowding. Previous

literature found that when waiting lines are too long, customers end up complaining about non-related aspects such as the quality of the food. Waiting time is therefore crucial to boost customer satisfaction (Davis & Heineke, 1998; Agnes *et al.*, 2004; Kokkinou & Cranage, 2013). Customers therefore want the service to be fast and efficient, probably due to time constraints that have become a universal problem and generally people do not have the patience to tolerate the frustration of waiting in a queue when ordering fast foods.

Availability: Four items related to consumers' expectations of so-called availability. They referred to hours of operation, the variety of menu choices, early-hour operation and availability of a consumer complaint free number. Oyewole (1999) found that consumers would like the fast-food facility to be available late in the evenings as well as quite early in the mornings as a matter of convenience. Due to their longer working hours, consumers tend to have very busy lifestyles and many consumers have little or no time to prepare meals from scratch. Extended operation hours of fast-food outlets are therefore highly valued by these time-stressed consumers (Min & Min, 2013). Customer's first impression when entering a fast food outlet is the part that remains memorable for them, therefore waiting time should not be long as customers do not expect time delays in fast-food outlets (Dawes & Rowley, 1996; Chou & Liu, 1999; Jeong & Jang, 2011).

- Consumers' expectations of the following dimensions of the service offering in fast-food outlets, were above average ($M \geq 2.5 < 3.5$), namely:

Factor 8: Comfort: $M_{\text{Factor8}} = 3.28$

Factor 7: Orderliness and ease of complaint: $M_{\text{Factor7}} = 2.99$

Although not particularly strong or pertinent in terms of consumers' expectations, customers would appreciate measures that would enhance comfort and reduce frustration in the fast-food environment. Orderliness and ease of reporting complaints that are expected to be attended to are important issues. These aspects are, however, not required to be painstakingly perfect. What is very important though, is that a fast food retailer would like to impress customers when these aspects are attended to beyond what they expect to experience and receive recognition for their initiative. An element of surprise for consumers would contribute to more favourable perceptions and ultimately, customer satisfaction with the benefit of positive return intentions. It is probably easier for a fast food retailer to impress customers with noticeable improved aspects of the service offering than those that are less fussy and as they would have minimal effect.

Comfort: Five items in the scale evaluated consumers' expectations regarding aspects such as the seating facilities, seating comfortability, spaciousness of the establishment, rest room facilities, and background music. Oyewole (1999) found that consumers value comfort in fast-food outlets even though many customers do not necessarily spend much time there, compared to their visits to other types of restaurants. Existing literature shows that the environment also has an influence on consumers' perception of a brand or restaurant, as the style and layout contributes to the atmosphere (Garg, 2014). The space in a restaurant helps consumers to form a mental picture before they have an emotional response or judgement of the specific service environment (Lin, 2004). The food and service should be of acceptable quality, but pleasing physical surroundings such as background music may enhance overall satisfaction, and may also influence customers' behaviour positively and or negatively (Kotler, 1973; Bitner, 1990, 1992; Parasuraman *et al.*, 1988; Brady & Cronin, 2001; Ryu & Jang, 2008).

Orderliness and ease of complaint: Contrary to Oyewole's study (1999), this study combined several important aspects of the service delivery as an integrated factor. They concern the display of a toll-free number where consumers' complaints can be lodged, the availability of suggestion boxes, drive-through facilities, two-way video screens at the order counters, display of government health certification and general attention to customers' needs. Oyewole (1999) concluded that consumers would have a more favourable perception of service quality in fast-food outlets if the service offering creates the impression that everything is well-ordered and that procedure to present complaints are in place. Previous studies shows that feedback from customers is important, because their comments could give the organisation valuable information regarding changes that are required to improve the food or service (Gregoire, 2010:3). Drive-through facilities offered at certain fast-food outlets make the facilities more accessible and create a sense of comfort (Van Zyl *et al.*, 2010).

- Consumers' expectations of the child-friendliness of fast-food outlets, do not seem to be particularly high ($M < 2.5$). Child-friendliness: $M_{\text{Factor3}} = 2.28$.

One could reason that this is the overall result for the entire sample, and that demographic analyses discussed later on show that younger consumers with children have higher expectations. This is a characteristic that is of concern to a very specific part of the population. The child-friendly factor consisted of five items which measured consumers' expectations with regard to availability of a play

area for children, toys in the play area, child menus, and incentives with special meals for children. Oyewole (1999) found this to be very important in terms of consumers' expectations of fast food restaurants, especially for those with younger children. For some time, fast-foods outlets have targeted parents with children by offering promotional gifts (toys) with meals purchased to attract children. Apparently the biggest expenditure in the fast food industry is on child marketing (Kaur, 2013; Ohri-Vachaspati *et al.*, 2015). Oyewole (1999) found child-friendliness to be particularly important. In terms of the entire sample in this research, consumers' expectations about child-friendliness were not particularly high but it could be ascribed to a larger number of older consumers in the sample.

Analyses in terms of the demographic characteristics of the sample will shed more light on this aspect in the following section. This is an unfortunate result of the convenient sampling procedure followed. Results are presented visually in Figure 5.1 in the order of the extraction of the factors through the exploratory factor analysis (EFA) done.

For the purpose of the interpretations of the means (M), the following applied:

M = ≥4; Very high/ favourable expectation/ very favourable, highly positive perception

M = >3.5<4: Above average expectation/perceptions, nevertheless positive

M = >2.5<3.5: Average expectation/ neutral perceptions, yet slightly positive

M = <2.5: Below average/ low/ expectation/ negative perceptions

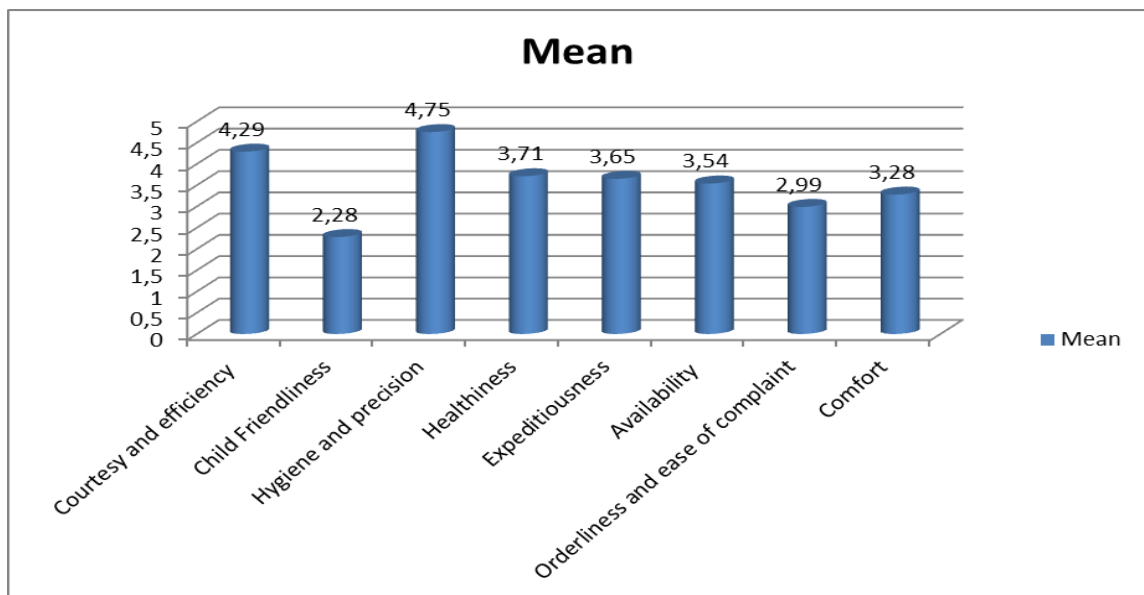


FIGURE 5.1: A VISUAL PRESENTATION OF CUSTOMERS' EXPECTATIONS (PRESENTED AS MEANS) FOR THE VARIOUS DIMENSIONS OF THE SERVICE OFFERING IN FAST-FOOD OUTLETS

This section reported on the consumers' expectations and those indicators that consumers are more discerning about have been revealed. The following section presents the results of the consumers' interpretation and assessment of the service offering in fast-food outlets in general.

5.3.3 Consumer's perception of the service quality of fast-food outlets

Consumer's perception of the service offering of fast-food outlets was investigated using the same 57-item scale that was used to investigate consumers' expectations of the service offering (Oyewole, 1999). The scale measured consumers' perception of their actual experiences of the service offering in fast-food outlets.

5.3.3.1 Confirmatory factor analysis to explore consumers' perception of the service offering of fast food outlets

For the purpose of this investigation, the same eight dimensions that were identified through exploratory factor analysis (as discussed in the previous section) were used as the point of departure for confirmatory factor analysis (CFA), namely:

Factor 1: Courtesy and efficiency; factor 2: Child-friendliness; factor 3: Hygiene; factor 4: Healthiness; factor 5: Expeditiousness; factor 6: Availability; factor 7: Orderliness and ease of complaint; factor 8: Comfort.

SPSS was again used to perform confirmatory factor analysis and multi-variate kurtosis indicated multi-non-normality, hence unweighted least squares (ULS) estimation was used to perform CFA per factor. The aim with the CFA was to confirm structures identified by EFA during the explorative expectations investigation. The factor loadings are represented by the correlation coefficients calculated between the factor and the variables. Factor loadings equal to or greater than ± 0.50 are considered practically significant (Williams *et al.*, 2010).

5.3.3.2 Path diagrams confirmed through the confirmatory factor analysis procedure

Findings of the confirmatory factor analysis procedure are presented in Figures 5.2 to Figure 5.9, in which every figure presents the findings for a specific factor.

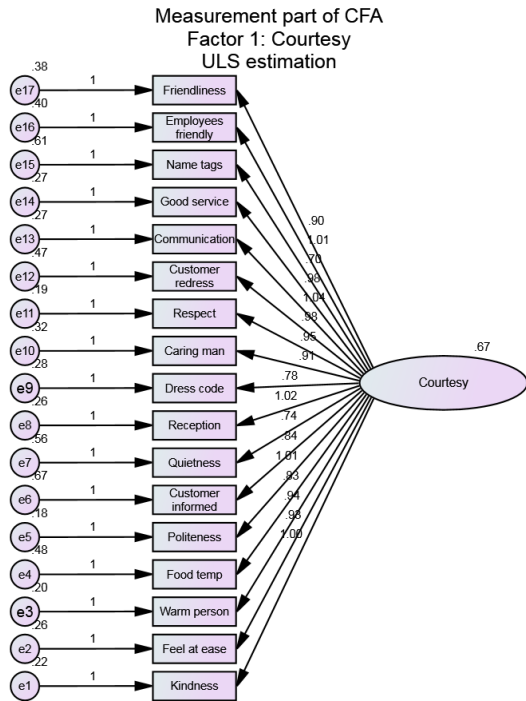


FIGURE 5.2: PATH DIAGRAM FOR FACTOR 1: COURTESY AND EFFICIENCY

Measurement part of CFA
Factor 2: Child friendliness
ULS estimation

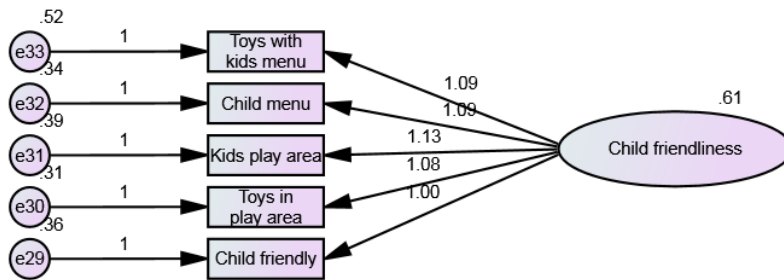


FIGURE 5.3: PATH DIAGRAM FOR FACTOR 2: CHILD FRIENDLINESS

Measurement part of CFA
Factor 3: Hygiene
ULS estimation

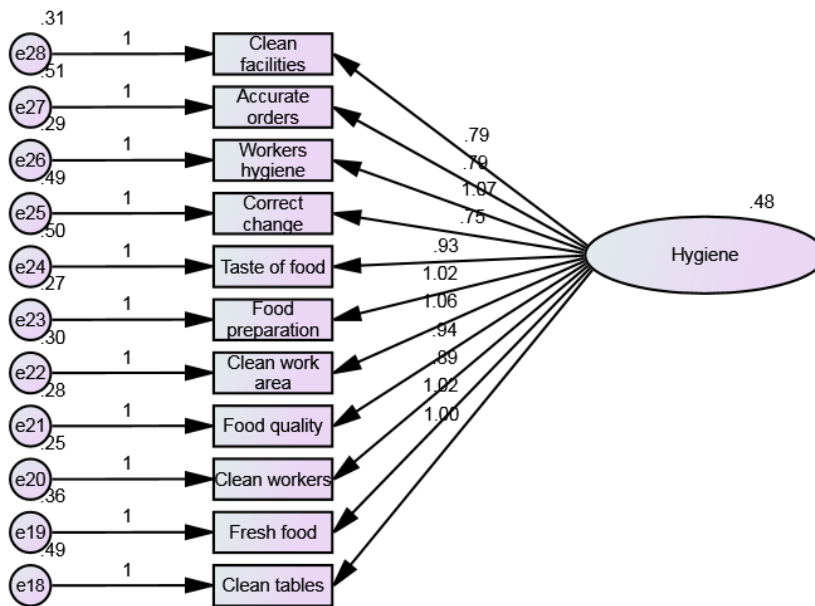


FIGURE 5.4: PATH DIAGRAM FOR FACTOR 3: HYGIENE

Measurement part of CFA
Factor 4: Healthiness
ULS estimation

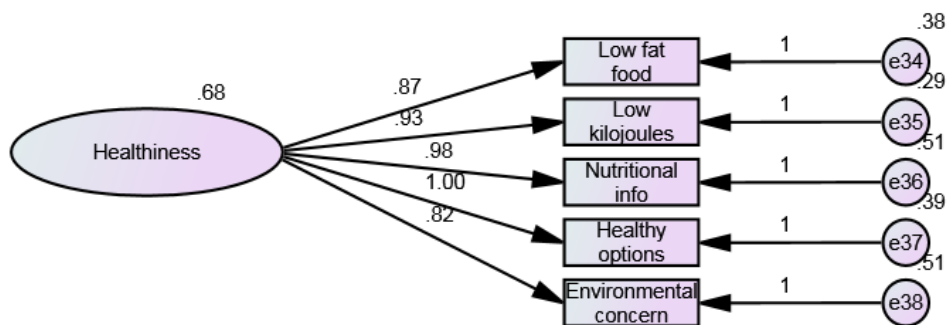


FIGURE 5.5: PATH DIAGRAM FOR FACTOR 4: HEALTHINESS

Measurement part of CFA
Factor 5:Expeditiousness
ULS estimation

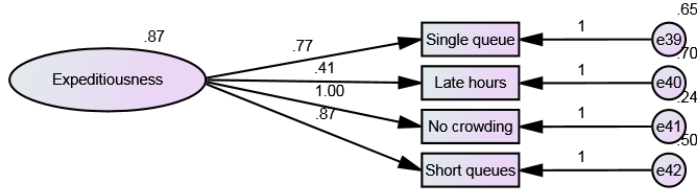


FIGURE 5.6: PATH DIAGRAM FOR FACTOR 5: EXPEDITIOUSNESS

Measurement part of CFA
Factor 6: Availability
ULS estimation

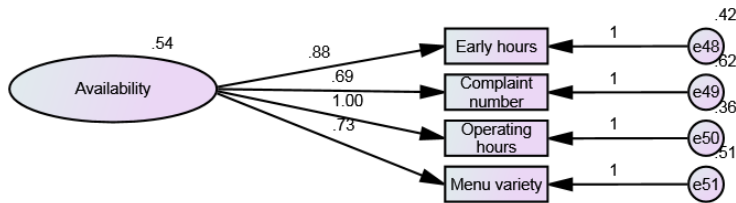


FIGURE 5.7: PATH DIAGRAM FOR FACTOR 6: AVAILABILITY

Measurement part of CFA
Factor 7: Order, complaints
ULS estimation

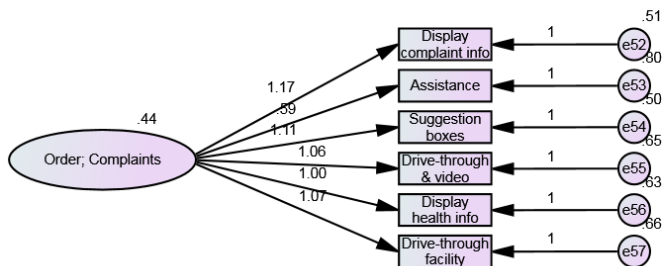


FIGURE 5.8: PATH DIAGRAM FOR FACTOR 7: ORDERLINESS AND COMPLAINTS

Measurement Part of CFA
Factor 8: Comfort
ULS estimation

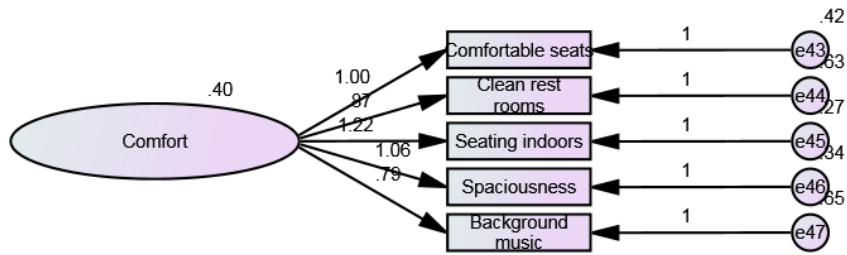


FIGURE 5.9: PATH DIAGRAM FOR FACTOR 8: COMFORT

5.3.3.3 Conclusion of the confirmatory factor analysis procedure

Confirmatory factor analysis was done by means of unweighted least squares (ULS) estimation to address multivariate non-normality. Good fit indices were achieved as presented in Table 5.14

TABLE 5.14: FIT INDICES FOR THE CONFIRMATORY FACTOR ANALYSIS PROCEDURE

Factor	GFI	AGFI	NFI	Std SMR	Factor means
1	0.996	0.995	0.995	0.0410	3.05
2	0.999	0.996	0.998	0.0247	2.24
3	0.985	0.977	0.980	0.0709	3.46
4	0.996	0.989	0.994	0.0396	3.78
5	0.998	0.990	0.995	0.0275	3.00
6	0.991	0.954	0.975	0.0544	3.19
7	0.989	0.974	0.977	0.0535	3.02
8	0.997	0.992	0.994	0.0293	3.39

The same eight factors that were identified through EFA were relevant in this analysis: factor 1: Courtesy and efficiency; factor 2: Child-friendliness; factor 3: Hygiene; factor 4: Healthiness; factor 5: Expeditiousness; factor 6: Availability; factor 7: Orderliness and ease of complaint; factor 8: Comfort. The means for the eight factors varied between 3.78 and 2.24.

The following section explains the congruence between consumers' expectations and their perceptions, which provides empirical evidence of avenues to augment the service offering in order to increase consumer satisfaction (positive disconfirmation of expectations).

For the purpose of the interpretations of the means (M), the following applied:

M = ≥ 4 : Very high/ favourable expectation/ very favourable, highly positive perception

M = $\geq 3.5 < 4$: Above average expectation/perceptions, nevertheless positive

M = $\geq 2.5 < 3.5$: Average expectation/ neutral perceptions, yet slightly positive

M = < 2.5 : Below average/ low/ expectation/ negative perceptions

5.3.4 Congruence between consumers' expectations and their perceptions of the service offering in fast-food outlets

Having accepted the fit indices as an indication of consistency in the data, means were calculated for each factor as an indication of consumers' perceptions of the service offering in fast-food outlets Table 5.15 presents the results for the expectations as well as the perception investigation. Figure 5.10 presents the results visually.

TABLE 5.15: COMPARISON OF CONSUMERS' EXPECTATIONS AND THEIR PERCEPTIONS OF THE SERVICE OFFERING DIMENSIONS

	F1: Courtesy and efficiency	F2: Child friendliness	F3: Hygiene and precision	F4: Healthiness	F5: Expeditiousness	F6: Availability	F7: Orderliness & Ease of complaint	F8: Comfort
Expectations	4,29	2,28	4,75	3,71	3,65	3,54	2,99	3,28
Perceptions	3,05	2,24	3,46	3,78	3,00	3,19	3,02	3,39

Red font: expectations exceed perception of the reality

Blue font: expectations and perceptions are near equal

Green font: perceptions exceed expectations

Based on the means, consumers' expectations were higher than their perceptions for four of the eight factors, namely, factor 1: Courtesy and efficiency; factor 3: Hygiene and precision; factor 5: Expeditiousness; Factor 6: Availability. These are aspects that could instigate consumer

dissatisfaction when the service offering is lacking because a negative disconfirmation of expectations is fertile breeding ground for negative emotions, complaints and negative return intentions.

Consumers' expectations and their perceptions were near equal for three factors, namely: factor 2: Child-friendliness; factor 4: healthiness; and factor 7: Orderliness and ease of complaint. For these aspects, consumers more or less get what they expect. The mean values are not particularly high, and therefore the fast-food retailers should focus on these aspects of service delivery to enhance their services and to surprise their customers, which would be favourable for positive emotions and positive return intentions.

Consumers' perceptions of the reality slightly exceeded their expectations for only one factor, namely factor 8: Comfort. Even though the means are just above average, it does not mean that fast-food retailers should ignore this aspect, thinking that all is well. As is the case with the former three factors, there is still much room for improvement to impress customers.

In the following section the factors are discussed individually, first attending to factors as the dimensions of the service offering where consumers' expectations were not met, i.e. negative disconfirmation of expectations. Then this is followed by presenting the dimensions where consumers' expectations were confirmed. Third, and lastly, the one dimension where consumers' expectations were exceeded through positive disconfirmation.

5.3.4.1 Factors that indicate negative disconfirmation of consumers' expectations:

Factor 1: Courtesy and efficiency

The mean ($M = 3.05$) indicates that consumers' perception of the service offering is slightly above average. What is more important though, is that consumers' expectations are not met. Therefore, fast-food retailers need to attend to how their employees treat customers; the friendliness of employees; communication with customers, for example, informing them when their orders will be ready. Crucial therefore, is personnel demonstrating a positive attitude to prevent dissatisfaction as indicated by the negative confirmation of consumers' expectations.

Factor 3: Hygiene and precision

The calculated mean ($M = 3.46$) for this factor indicates that consumers' perception of the hygiene in fast-food establishments is above average, but less favourable than their expectations.

Consumers' expectations are particularly high ($M = 4.75$), which means that this dimension of the service offering poses a serious threat to consumers' satisfaction with the service offering of fast-food outlets. As a matter of serious concern, more attention should be given to how clean personnel appear to be, the hygienic aspects of the facilities, cleanliness of tables as well as how food is prepared. It is crucial that food is served at the correct temperature, and that orders and financial calculations are completed correctly when employees deal with them. South Africans have very high expectations with regard to this dimension of the service offering, and based on consumers' perception, this aspect seems to be neglected and is a shortcoming in the industry. It should be understood that if consumers' expectations of certain dimensions of the service offering are particularly high, the industry should regard this as a non-negotiable factor in their service offering to pay attention to if they are serious about consumer satisfaction and positive return intentions.

Factor 5: Expeditiousness

Consumers' perception of expeditiousness in fast-food outlets was slightly above average, but still below what is expected in this context ($M = 3.65$). Aspects that might contribute to negative disconfirmation of expectations are: crowding in restaurants, longer than expected waiting lines, and/or restricted hours of operation. Negative disconfirmation of expectations could cause frustration, especially for time-pressured consumers. When this dimension is attended to properly, it could become an element of excellence that would encourage retailer patronage.

Factor 6: Availability

Although consumers' perception of availability in fast-food outlets was slightly above average, it was lower than what is expected ($M = 3.54$), which is a shortcoming that could have direct consequences for consumer satisfaction. The fast-food industry would have to attend to providing adequate hours of operation, variety of menu choices, early-hour operation and display of a toll-free complaint number that would provide a sense of care. Oyewole (1999) determined that consumers would like fast-food restaurants to be available from very early in the morning until very late at night as a matter of convenience.

5.3.4.2 Factors that indicate confirmation of consumers' expectations

The following factors are areas in which consumers' expectations were more or less confirmed. These are therefore not issues that would necessarily instigate consumer dissatisfaction. It does, however, neither mean that fast food-retailers should ignore them nor act in the faith that they are on the right track. What needs to be attended to, is how positive these dimensions are perceived to

be in order to instigate positive disconfirmation with subsequent consumer satisfaction, fast-food outlets could make an effort to surpass consumers' expectations.

Factor 2: Child-friendliness

Child-friendliness is not important for all patrons. Fast-food retailers could, however, ensure a competitive edge by promoting themselves as child-friendly establishments to attract certain markets. It is a well-known phenomenon that children can exert tremendous pressure on parents to purchase certain food items. Parents can still act as gate-keepers by patronising fast-food outlets that provide healthy meal options for children (factor 4) while spoiling children with their superb facilities and promotional gifts. The mean ($M = 2.24$) indicates that consumers' general perception of child-friendliness of fast food restaurants is below average. At the same time, their expectations are, in general, also merely average ($M = 2.28$) which poses an ideal opportunity for facility owners to surprise and impress patrons. Oyewole (1999) also found that consumers would like fast-food restaurants to make better provision for children and to offer certain additional incentives such as toys as a matter of encouragement to patronise those retailers who do.

Factor 4: Healthiness

The mean ($M = 3.78$) confirmed consumer perceptions that tend to be positive, in that the consumers' perception of healthiness associated with food provided by fast-food outlets is above average. Patrons' perceptions more or less confirmed their expectations ($M = 3.71$). However, the mean values indicated that there is much room for improvement, considering that the maximum mean is $M = 5$. The low mean could suggest that positive disconfirmation could be instigated. Measures that could be taken are to curb the kilojoule and fat content of certain food items, to attend to more healthy food options on their menus, to provide nutritional information about the food offered and to show more concern for the environment. The healthiness of food provided by fast food restaurants has been a topic of concern for some time (Hur & Jang, 2015) and this dimension of the service offering from fast-food restaurants could be optimised to ensure positive disconfirmation of consumers' expectations that would enhance consumer satisfaction.

Factor 7: Orderliness and ease of complaint

Consumers' perception of this dimension of the service offering should be interpreted and dealt with in much the same way as the previous factor. On the positive side, there are no indications of negative disconfirmation. Fast-food retailers could, however, do much to boost consumer satisfaction by attempting to achieve positive disconfirmation of expectations that are currently

rated as being merely average ($M = 2.99$). Aspects that could be improved, are: display of information on how consumers could deal with complaints; the availability of suggestion boxes; improvement of drive-through facilities; the installation of a two-way video screen at the order desk; display of government health certification; as well as effort to attend to customers' needs.

5.3.4.3 Factor where positive disconfirmation of consumers' expectations was confirmed

Factor 8: Comfort

As a specific dimension of the service offering in fast-food outlets, the calculated mean ($M = 3.39$) of consumers' perception for comfort as a construct indicates positive disconfirmation of expectations, slightly above the average evaluation. This was the only one of the eight dimensions where consumers' perceptions exceeded their expectations ($M = 3.28$). This dimension of the service offering could be further enhanced to impress customers to strengthen positive disconfirmation of expectations. Aspects that fast-food retailers could improve on are: having convenient seating facilities available with comfortable seats to impress consumers so that they enjoy their time at the fast-food outlets, as well as a spacious internal area, with background music playing and rest rooms that have been cleaned.

Means are portrayed visually in Figure 5.10 to illustrate the results between the expectations and perceptions to enhance their meaning.

For the purpose of the interpretations of the means (M), the following once again applied:

$M = \geq 4$: Very high/ favourable expectation/ very favourable, highly positive perception

$M = \geq 3.5 < 4$: Above average expectation/perceptions, nevertheless positive

$M = \geq 2.5 < 3.5$: Average expectation/ neutral perceptions, yet slightly positive

$M = < 2.5$: Below average/ low/ expectation/ negative perceptions

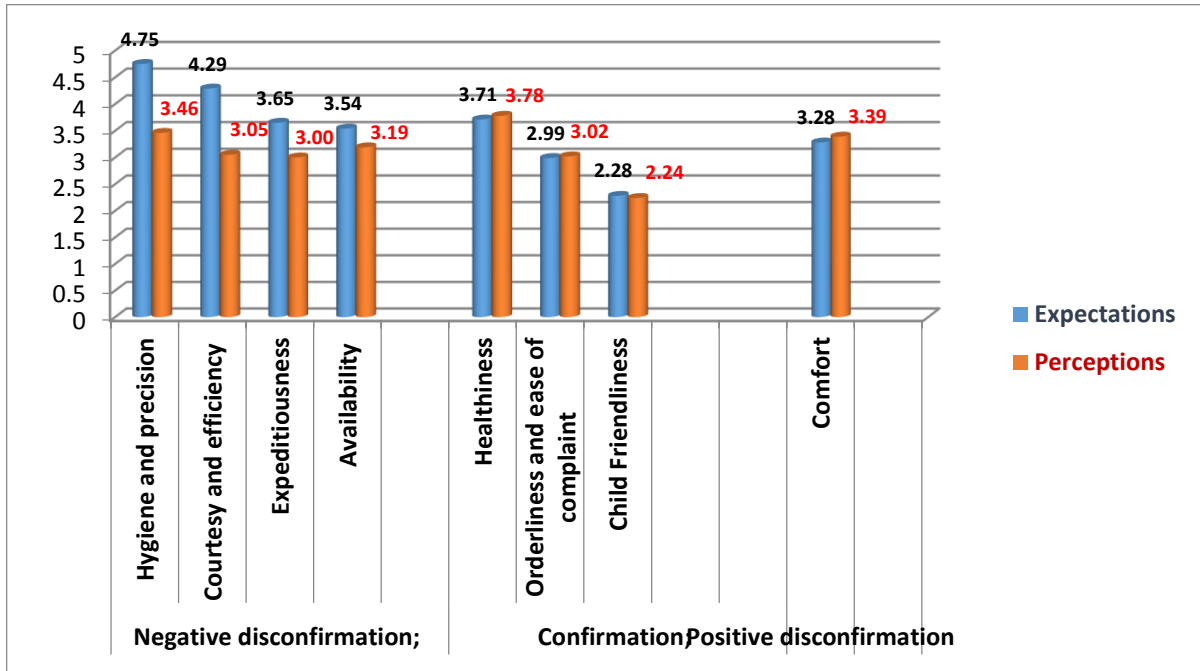


FIGURE 5.10: A COMPARISON OF CONSUMERS’ EXPECTATIONS AND THEIR PERCEPTION OF THE ACTUAL SERVICE OFFERING IN FASTFOOD OUTLETS

5.3.5 Demographic differences in consumers’ expectations and their perceptions of the service offering in fast food outlets

Extant literature suggests that demographic characteristics may influence consumers’ expectations of the service offering in fast-food restaurants, for example, that younger parents would expect more in terms of the child-friendliness of these establishments (Kaur, 2013). Consumers’ perceptions of the actual service offering might also be influenced by their demographic profiles, which suggests that consumers’ satisfaction with fast-food outlets that results from positive disconfirmation may differ for different demographic groups. This study therefore also investigated the possible relationship between gender, age, income and population group and consumers’ expectations, as well as their perceptions of the service offering in fast-food restaurants.

The following section presents the results for consumers’ expectations and their perceptions of the eight dimensions of the service offering in integrated tables per the various demographic characteristics to indicate possible differences that could initiate consumer dis/satisfaction.

For the purpose of discussion, the factor labels are:

Factor 1: Courtesy and efficiency; Factor 2: Child-friendliness; Factor 3: Hygiene and precision;

Factor 4: Healthiness; Factor 5: Expeditiousness; Factor 6: Availability;

Factor 7: Orderliness and ease of complaint; Factor 8: Comfort

5.3.5.1 Gender differences

Table 5.16 presents the gender differences for respondents' expectations as well as their perceptions.

TABLE 5.16: A GENDER COMPARISON OF CONSUMERS' EXPECTATIONS AND PERCEPTIONS (N = 447)

Gender	n	Mean: expect	Std. Dev	Anova Sig.	n	Mean: percept	Std. dev	Anova Sig.
F1: Male	233	4.2042	.66304	0.020	233	3.4772	.72140	0.308
Female	214	4.3760	.56973		214	3.4288	.80423	
Total	447				447			
F2: Male	233	2.2206	1.20413	0.002	233	3.0206	.88157	0.788
Female	214	2.3495	1.36903		214	3.0421	.88954	
Total	447				447			
F3: Male	233	4.6929	.43257	0.001	233	3.7476	.65421	0.737
Female	214	4.8071	.38834		214	3.7672	.69705	
Total	447				447			
F4: Male	233	3.5296	.97407	0.021	233	3.0017	.78433	0.233
Female	214	3.9159	.83313		214	2.8935	.83798	
Total	447				447			
F5: Male	233	3.5923	.79266	0.866	233	3.1642	.73192	0.049
Female	214	3.7138	.81263		214	3.1986	.86313	
Total	447				447			
F6: Male	233	3.4367	.81342	0.425	233	3.3798	.68193	0.909
Female	214	3.6542	.77342		214	3.3820	.71809	
Total	447				447			
F7: Male	233	2.8491	1.02003	0.006	233	3.0107	.72698	0.296
Female	214	3.1363	.88648		214	3.0101	.75701	
Total	447				447			
F8: Male	233	3.2386	.90633	0.786	233	3.2232	.69405	0.809
Female	214	3.3299	.93052		214	3.2682	.69392	
Total	447				447			

To detect possible significant differences between different gender groups within the eight dimensions of the service offering, t-tests were performed. Results indicated significant differences among different **gender groups' expectations** of:

- "Courtesy and efficiency" (p = 0.020):

Females' expectations ($M = 4.38$) were significantly higher compared to male consumers ($M = 4.20$).

- "Child-friendliness" ($p = 0.002$):

Females' expectations ($M = 2.35$) were significantly higher compared to male consumers ($M = 2.22$).

- "Hygiene and precision" ($p = 0.001$):

Females' expectations ($M = 4.81$) were significantly higher compared to male consumers ($M = 4.69$).

- "Healthiness" ($p = 0.021$):

Females' expectations ($M = 3.92$) were significantly higher compared to male consumers ($M = 3.53$).

- "Orderliness and ease of complaint" ($p = 0.006$):

Female consumers' expectations ($M = 3.14$) were significantly higher compared to male consumers ($M = 2.85$).

Therefore, gender is a significant predictor of consumers' expectations in terms of five factors related to the service offering in fast food outlets. Without exception, females' expectations were significantly higher for five factors/ dimensions of the service offering, namely for courtesy and efficiency, child-friendliness, hygiene, healthiness and orderliness and ease of reporting a complaint in fast-food restaurants.

To detect possible significant differences between males and females in terms of their **perception of the actual service offering**, t-tests were again performed. Results indicated a significant difference for one of the factors, namely:

- Expeditiousness ($p = 0.049$):

Females' perceptions were significantly more positive ($M = 3.20$) compared to male consumers' perceptions ($M = 3.16$), although in both instances, their perceptions were merely average, therefore not particularly positive. This is an aspect where fast food outlets can do a lot impress consumers and thus to improve consumers' perceptions.

Anova indicated that differences in males' and females' perception of the remaining dimensions of the service offering were not statistically significant ($p > 0.05$).

In conclusion, females' expectations were significantly higher compared to their male counterparts' for five of the factors/ dimensions, while perceptions of the actual service offering differed significantly for only one of the factors, namely "expeditiousness" and in this instance, females' perceptions were significantly more positive ($p>0.05$).

Age differences were also investigated to explore possible significant differences.

5.3.5.2 Age differences

TABLE 5.17: A COMPARISON OF CONSUMERS' EXPECTATIONS AND THEIR PERCEPTIONS ACROSS THE DIFFERENT AGE GROUPS

Age	n	Mean: expect	Std. Dev	Anova	N	Mean: percept	Std dev	Anova
				Sign				Sign
F1: 21-40 years	131	4.2506	.64856	0.332	131	3.3552	.81601	.100
41 -59 years	228	4.3364	.60799		228	3.4626	.74616	
60+ years	88	4.2106	.63051		88	3.5789	.70424	
Total	447	4.2865	.62537		447	3.4540	.76170	
F2: 21-40 years	131	2.5649 ^a	1.39283	.000	131	2.9954	.93297	.541
41 -59 years	228	2.2711 ^b	1.27919		228	3.0754	.83698	
60+ years	88	1.8909 ^c	1.01615		88	2.9682	.93311	
Total	447	2.2823	1.28588		447	3.0309	.88446	
F3: 21-40 years	131	4.7370	.48002	.325	131	3.6995	.74035	.320
41-59 years	228	4.7763	.37992		228	3.7580	.63613	
60+ years	88	4.6890	.39775		88	3.8399	.66676	
Total	447	4.7476	.41548		447	3.7570	.67437	
F4: 21- 40 years	131	3.7786	.91391	.242	131	2.8473	.90259	.159
41-59 years	228	3.7325	.94826		228	2.9684	.76996	
60+ years	88	3.5727	.89401		88	3.0545	.76337	
Total	447	3.7145	.92864		447	2.9499	.81135	
F5: 21-40 years	131	3.7901	.82615	.379	131	3.1508	.84846	.737
41-59 years	228	3.6261	.81170		228	3.1765	.74896	
60+ years	88	3.5057	.72117		88	3.2358	.84278	
Total	447	3.6504	.80368		447	3.1806	.79671	
F6:21-40 years	131	3.6756	.87634	.364	131	3.3550	.80500	.814
41 -59 years	228	3.5285	.76814		228	3.4013	.65547	
60+ years	88	3.3722	.73890		88	3.3665	.64097	
Total	447	3.5408	.80105		447	3.3809	.69868	
F7: 21- 40 years	131	3.0636	.97763	.527	131	3.0153	.77085	.936
41-59 years	228	2.9956	.96207		228	2.9993	.74297	
60+ years	88	2.8485	.96577		88	3.0322	.69520	
Total	447	2.9866	.96807		447	3.0104	.74067	
F8: 21- 40 years	131	3.3573 ^a	1.03210	.003	131	3.2382	.72371	.823
41-59 years	228	3.3140 ^a	.86293		228	3.2623	.66198	
60+ years	88	3.0886 ^b	.85869		88	3.2091	.73338	
Total	447	3.2823	.91809					

Anova was performed to detect possible significant differences among different age groups for the eight dimensions of the service offering. Results indicated significant differences among different age groups' in terms of their expectations of two of the eight dimensions of the service offering and post hoc Bonferroni tests were performed to distinguish the differences.

- “Child-friendliness” ($p = 0.000$)

Consumers between 21 and 40 years of age that represent an age category where there might be young children in the households, had significantly higher expectations ($M = 2.56$) compared to consumers >40<60 years of age ($M = 2.27$), whose expectations were also significantly higher than consumers who are 60 years or older ($M = 1.89$). Means however indicate that overall, expectations were relatively low ($M < 3$).

Therefore, age is a significant predictor of consumers’ expectations of the child-friendliness of fast-food restaurants. However, irrespective of the age of consumers, their expectations were below average. This means that fast food outlets could more easily impress customers because they do not expect much.

- “Comfort” ($p = 0.003$)

Adults <60 years of age had significantly higher expectations about the comfort in fast food restaurants compared to older consumers, and their expectations were above average, implying that fast food outlets should attend to this dimension as the majority of consumers have pertinent ideas about what they want.

Differences among different age groups in terms of their expectations of the other six dimensions of the service offering were not statistically significant ($p > 0.05$).

In terms of consumers’ **perception of the service offering**, Anova indicated that differences among different age groups were not significant for any of the eight dimensions of the service offering ($p > 0.05$).

Age therefore only seems to be a notable predictor of consumers’ expectations of child-friendliness and comfort and in both instances, young consumers’ expectations were significantly higher.

5.3.5.3 Level of education differences: expectations

Consumers’ expectations for the eight dimensions of the service offering of fast food outlets per level of education group are presented in Table 5.18.

TABLE 5.18: EXPECTATIONS FOR INDIVIDUAL FACTORS PER LEVEL OF EDUCATION GROUP

Level of Education		n	Mean	Std. Deviation	Std. Error
Q8_F1	Completed secondary schooling	112	4.4428	.54550	.05155
	Graduate	192	4.2911	.58894	.04250
	Post graduate	134	4.1484	.70066	.06053
	Total	438	4.2862	.62346	.02979
Q8_F2	Completed secondary schooling	112	2.5464	1.38979	.13132
	Graduate	192	2.1125	1.19836	.08648
	Post graduate	134	2.2716	1.27330	.11000
	Total	438	2.2721	1.28148	.06123
Q8_F3	Completed secondary schooling	112	4.8093	.33883	.03202
	Graduate	192	4.7348	.43617	.03148
	Post graduate	134	4.7293	.42355	.03659
	Total	438	4.7522	.40992	.01959
Q8_F4	Completed secondary schooling	112	3.7786	.87296	.08249
	Graduate	192	3.7531	.88766	.06406
	Post graduate	134	3.5836	1.02159	.08825
	Total	438	3.7078	.92871	.04438
Q8_F5	Completed secondary schooling	112	3.7388	.82840	.07828
	Graduate	192	3.6354	.79874	.05764
	Post graduate	134	3.6138	.78017	.06740
	Total	438	3.6553	.80055	.03825
Q8_F6	Completed secondary schooling	112	3.6942	.79957	.07555
	Graduate	192	3.5664	.76607	.05529
	Post graduate	134	3.3470	.81163	.07011
	Total	438	3.5320	.79821	.03814
Q8_F7	Completed secondary schooling	112	3.2217	.94873	.08965
	Graduate	192	3.0434	.95316	.06879
	Post graduate	134	2.6803	.92289	.07973
	Total	438	2.9779	.96395	.04606
Q8_F8	Completed secondary schooling	112	3.4554	.91207	.08618
	Graduate	192	3.2750	.88324	.06374
	Post graduate	134	3.1373	.94429	.08157
	Total	438	3.2790	.91530	.04373

Subsequently, Anova was performed to determine significant differences ($p < 0.05$) within the groups. Findings are presented in Table 5.19.

TABLE 5.19: ANOVA RESULTS SPECIFYING SIGNIFICANT DIFFERENCES AMONG LEVEL OF EDUCATION GROUPS ($p < 0.05$)

		Sum of Squares	Df	Mean Square	F	Sig.
Q8_F1	Between Groups	5.295	2	2.647	6.998	.001
	Within Groups	164.570	435	.378		
	Total	169.865	437			
Q8_F2	Between Groups	13.319	2	6.660	4.113	.017
	Within Groups	704.321	435	1.619		
	Total	717.640	437			
Q8_F3	Between Groups	.493	2	.246	1.469	.231
	Within Groups	72.938	435	.168		
	Total	73.431	437			
Q8_F4	Between Groups	3.023	2	1.512	1.759	.174
	Within Groups	373.891	435	.860		
	Total	376.914	437			
Q8_F5	Between Groups	1.088	2	.544	.848	.429
	Within Groups	278.980	435	.641		
	Total	280.068	437			
Q8_F6	Between Groups	7.759	2	3.880	6.235	.002
	Within Groups	270.668	435	.622		
	Total	278.428	437			
Q8_F7	Between Groups	19.346	2	9.673	10.881	.000
	Within Groups	386.718	435	.889		
	Total	406.064	437			
Q8_F8	Between Groups	6.177	2	3.088	3.732	.025
	Within Groups	359.930	435	.827		
	Total	366.107	437			

Results indicate significant differences among the level of education groups, within factors 1 ($p = 0.001$); f2 ($p = 0.017$), f6 ($p = 0.002$), f7 ($p = 0.000$) and f8 ($p = 0.025$).

In order to specify the differences, post hoc Bonferroni tests were performed. The results are presented in Table 5.20.

TABLE 5.20: POST HOC BONFERONI OUTCOMES FOR THE LEVEL OF EDUCATION INVESTIGATION

Dependent Variable	(I) VV12.1 Education level Grouped	(J) VV12.1 Education level Grouped	Mean Difference (I-J)	Std. Error	Sig.
Q8_F1	Completed secondary schooling	Graduate	.15170	.07313	.116
		Post graduate	.29438*	.07875	.001
	Graduate	Completed secondary schooling	-.15170	.07313	.116
		Post graduate	.14268	.06924	.120
	Post graduate	Completed secondary schooling	-.29438*	.07875	.001
		Graduate	-.14268	.06924	.120
Q8_F2	Completed secondary schooling	Graduate	.43393*	.15129	.013
		Post graduate	.27479	.16291	.277
	Graduate	Completed secondary schooling	-.43393*	.15129	.013
		Post graduate	-.15914	.14323	.801
	Post graduate	Completed secondary schooling	-.27479	.16291	.277
		Graduate	.15914	.14323	.801
Q8_F6	Completed secondary schooling	Graduate	.12779	.09379	.521
		Post graduate	.34718*	.10099	.002
	Graduate	Completed secondary schooling	-.12779	.09379	.521
		Post graduate	.21939*	.08879	.042
	Post graduate	Completed secondary schooling	-.34718*	.10099	.002
		Graduate	-.21939*	.08879	.042
Q8_F7	Completed secondary schooling	Graduate	.17832	.11211	.337
		Post graduate	.54138*	.12071	.000
	Graduate	Completed secondary schooling	-.17832	.11211	.337
		Post graduate	.36305*	.10613	.002
	Post graduate	Completed secondary schooling	-.54138*	.12071	.000
		Graduate	-.36305*	.10613	.002
Q8_F8	Completed secondary schooling	Graduate	.18036	.10815	.288
		Post graduate	.31804*	.11646	.020
	Graduate	Completed secondary schooling	-.18036	.10815	.288
		Post graduate	.13769	.10239	.538
	Post graduate	Completed secondary schooling	-.31804*	.11646	.020
		Graduate	-.13769	.10239	.538

Results indicate significantly higher expectations for consumers in the lowest level of education category, i.e. those who have completed secondary schooling with no further education (M = 4.44)

and the highest level of education group with post graduate qualifications ($M = 4.15$). However, all consumers, irrespective of level of education, had high expectations ($M > 4$) of this dimension of the service offering, namely “Courtesy and efficiency”.

For factor 2, i.e. Child-friendliness, a similar outcome was confirmed. Those in the lowest level of education group had significantly higher expectations ($M = 2.55$) than the graduates ($M = 2.11$; $p = 0.013$). Overall however, consumers’ expectations were below average, indicating that they were not very pedantic about the offering.

For factor 6, i.e. Availability, the expectations of those with post graduate qualifications were significantly lower ($M = 3.35$; $p = 0.002$) and merely average compared to graduates and the lowest level of education group ($M > 3.6$) whose expectations were above average. This could be investigated further: it may be that the highest level of education group consumers do not frequent fast food outlets regularly and are therefore not very adamant about the availability of this service.

For factor 7, i.e. Orderliness and ease of complaint, the expectations of the highest level of education consumers with post graduate qualifications were significantly higher than the lower educated counterparts ($p = 0.000$ and $p = 0.002$ respectively). In all instances their expectations average, thus not very high.

For factor 8, i.e. Comfort, the expectations of the lowest level of education group was again significantly higher ($M = 3.46$) compared to those with post graduate qualifications although the expectations of all were only average.

In summary, for five of the factors, consumers with post graduate qualifications expected significantly less ($p < 0.05$) compared to the lowest level of education group. This means that fast food outlets should target consumers in lower level of education groups who have higher expectations to ensure that their expectations are met, to ensure positive disconfirmation.

5.3.5.4 Level of education differences: perceptions

Consumers’ perceptions for the eight dimensions of the service offering of fast food outlets per level of education group are presented in Table 5.21.

TABLE 5.21: PERCEPTIONS FOR INDIVIDUAL FACTORS PER LEVEL OF EDUCATION GROUP

		n	Mean	Std. Deviation	Std. Error
Q9_F1	Completed secondary schooling	112	3.4354	.82744	.07819
	Graduate	192	3.4458	.75442	.05445
	Post graduate	134	3.4622	.71802	.06203
	Total	438	3.4482	.76137	.03638
Q9_F2	Completed secondary schooling	112	3.0429	.91806	.08675
	Graduate	192	2.9667	.95607	.06900
	Post graduate	134	3.1030	.74419	.06429
	Total	438	3.0279	.88633	.04235
Q9_F3	Completed secondary schooling	112	3.7589	.72149	.06817
	Graduate	192	3.7628	.67390	.04863
	Post graduate	134	3.7266	.62860	.05430
	Total	438	3.7507	.67174	.03210
Q9_F4	Completed secondary schooling	112	2.9679	.82026	.07751
	Graduate	192	2.9292	.79894	.05766
	Post graduate	134	2.9209	.78252	.06760
	Total	438	2.9365	.79787	.03812
Q9_F5	Completed secondary schooling	112	3.1964	.84990	.08031
	Graduate	192	3.1172	.79425	.05732
	Post graduate	134	3.2519	.75624	.06533
	Total	438	3.1787	.79789	.03812
Q9_F6	Completed secondary schooling	112	3.3906	.77021	.07278
	Graduate	192	3.3841	.62917	.04541
	Post graduate	134	3.3507	.69782	.06028
	Total	438	3.3756	.68716	.03283
Q9_F7	Completed secondary schooling	112	2.9688	.80057	.07565
	Graduate	192	2.9740	.73724	.05321
	Post graduate	134	3.0920	.67833	.05860
	Total	438	3.0088	.73720	.03522
Q9_F8	Completed secondary schooling	112	3.2214	.75855	.07168
	Graduate	192	3.2313	.67309	.04858
	Post graduate	134	3.2597	.65167	.05630
	Total	438	3.2374	.68822	.03288

Table 5.22. presents the Anova outcomes, which aimed to determine significant differences among groups within factors.

TABLE 5.22: ANOVA RESULTS SPECIFYING SIGNIFICANT DIFFERENCES AMONG LEVEL OF EDUCATION GROUPS FOR THEIR PERCEPTION OF THE SERVICE DIMENSIONS (p<0.05)

		Sum of Squares	Df	Mean Square	F	Sig.
Q9_F1	Between Groups	.046	2	.023	.039	.961
	Within Groups	253.274	435	.582		
	Total	253.319	437			
Q9_F2	Between Groups	1.500	2	.750	.955	.386
	Within Groups	341.800	435	.786		
	Total	343.300	437			
Q9_F3	Between Groups	.113	2	.057	.125	.882
	Within Groups	197.075	435	.453		
	Total	197.189	437			
Q9_F4	Between Groups	.153	2	.077	.120	.887
	Within Groups	278.042	435	.639		
	Total	278.196	437			
Q9_F5	Between Groups	1.479	2	.740	1.162	.314
	Within Groups	276.729	435	.636		
	Total	278.208	437			
Q9_F6	Between Groups	.122	2	.061	.129	.879
	Within Groups	206.222	435	.474		
	Total	206.344	437			
Q9_F7	Between Groups	1.341	2	.671	1.235	.292
	Within Groups	236.153	435	.543		
	Total	237.494	437			
Q9_F8	Between Groups	.102	2	.051	.108	.898
	Within Groups	206.883	435	.476		
	Total	206.986	437			

Results in Table 5.22 indicate that consumers' perceptions did not differ significantly within the level of education groups for any of the eight factors (dimensions of the service offering) ($p > 0.05$).

In conclusion, level of education is not significant in distinguishing differences in consumers' perceptions of the service offering of fast food outlets. Consumers' perceptions were average ($M = > 2.5 < 3.5$) for seven of the eight factors and above average for factor 3, namely Hygiene and precision.

5.3.5.5 Income differences: expectations

Anova was performed to detect possible significant differences among different income groups within the eight dimensions of the service offering. Results are summarised in Table 5.23.

TABLE 5.23: A COMPARISON OF CONSUMERS' EXPECTATIONS AND THEIR PERCEPTIONS ACROSS THE DIFFERENT INCOME GROUPS

Income groups	n	Mean: expect	Std. Dev	Anova	n	Mean: percept	Std dev	Anova
				Sig.				Sig.
F1: Lower middle income	123	4.2941	.65278	0.808	123	3.5371	.78816	0.463
Upper middle income	93	4.3238	.57049		93	3.4295	.80345	
Upper income	158	4.2223	.65279		158	3.4304	.76628	
Total	374	4.2712	.63316		374	3.4652	.78236	
F2: Lower middle income	123	2.5463	1.36732	0.036	123	3.0862	.90647	0.503
Upper middle income	93	2.1011	1.29199		93	2.9570	.89581	
Upper income	158	2.1190	1.19618		158	3.0772	.86451	
Total	374	2.2551	1.29120		374	3.0503	.88553	
F3: Lower middle income	123	4.6822	.53154	0.016	123	3.8263	.68378	0.422
Upper middle income	93	4.7957	.32823		93	3.8045	.69000	
Upper income	158	4.7267	.40154		158	3.7244	.67754	
Total	374	4.7292	.43438		374	3.7778	.68245	
F4: Lower middle income	123	3.7398	.87401	0.322	123	3.0927	.86053	0.250
Upper middle income	93	3.8559	.91050		93	2.9742	.80662	
Upper income	158	3.5620	.99198		158	2.9316	.78352	
Total	374	3.6936	.93975		374	2.9952	.81611	
F5: Lower middle income	123	3.6524	.85269	0.325	123	3.1646	.80204	0.775
Upper middle income	93	3.6935	.73178		93	3.2366	.78398	
Upper income	158	3.5237	.81525		158	3.1709	.81735	
Total	374	3.6083	.80940		374	3.1852	.80254	
F6: Lower middle income	123	3.6850	.82098	0.567	123	3.4675	.75610	0.233
Upper middle income	93	3.6048	.79256		93	3.4113	.65072	
Upper income	158	3.3418	.75204		158	3.3244	.69605	
Total	374	3.5201	.79854		374	3.3930	.70658	
F7: Lower middle income	123	3.2588	1.00187	0.093	123	3.1084	.74505	0.345
Upper middle income	93	3.0538	.84204		93	3.0072	.75778	
Upper income	158	2.6624	.95269		158	2.9821	.72480	
Total	374	2.9559	.97690		374	3.0299	.73989	
F8: Lower middle income	123	3.4439	.94800	0.146	123	3.3252	.72129	0.341
Upper middle income	93	3.2946	.84421		93	3.2215	.70060	
Upper income	158	3.0544	.93690		158	3.2063	.69334	
Total	374	3.2422	.93179		374	3.2492	.70459	

- Results indicated significant differences among different income groups' expectations of two factors, namely f2: Child-friendliness ($p = 0.036$); and f3: Hygiene and efficiency ($p = 0.016$).

Post hoc Bonferroni tests were hence performed to specify the differences. The following was found:

- “Child-friendliness”

Consumers in the lower middle income group’s expectations were below average (M =2.54) but nevertheless significantly higher compared to higher income groups’ expectations of this dimension of the service offering (M = 2.10; $p<0.05$).

Therefore, income can be used to predict consumers’ expectations of the child-friendliness of fast food restaurants, and it seems as if higher income groups are less pedantic.

- “Hygiene and efficiency” ($p = 0.016$)

All income groups’ expectations of this dimension of the service offering in fast food outlets were fairly high ($M>4.5$) although the lowest income groups’ expectations were significantly lower (M = 4.68) than higher income groups’ expectations ($M>4.72$; $p<0.05$). An important outcome of this finding is that fast food outlets need to be highly aware of this dimension of the service offering because consumers’ expectations are very high. Failure to deliver adequate service would thus instigate consumer dissatisfaction as a consequence of negative disconfirmation.

Differences in the various income groups’ expectations of the other dimensions of the service offering were not statistically significant ($p>0.05$).

5.3.5.6 Income differences: perceptions

Anova indicated that income groups’ perceptions of the service offering were not statistically different within the various factors/ dimensions of the service ($p>0.05$). Income does therefore not seem to be a useful predictor of significant differences in consumers’ perceptions of the service offering in fast food outlets.

5.3.5.7 Population group differences: expectations

Differences among population groups’ expectations for the eight dimensions of the service offering of fast food outlets are presented in Table 5.24.

TABLE 5.24: EXPECTATIONS FOR INDIVIDUAL FACTORS PER POPULATION GROUP

		N	Mean	Std. Deviation	Std. Error
Q8_F1	White	337	4.2505	.61362	.03343
	Black	55	4.4107	.70192	.09465
	Other	40	4.4368	.60297	.09534
	Total	432	4.2881	.62709	.03017
Q8_F2	White	337	2.0202	1.15039	.06267
	Black	55	3.5091	1.23397	.16639
	Other	40	2.9250	1.31007	.20714
	Total	432	2.2935	1.28910	.06202
Q8_F3	White	337	4.7521	.37754	.02057
	Black	55	4.6231	.66216	.08929
	Other	40	4.8409	.30028	.04748
	Total	432	4.7439	.42071	.02024
Q8_F4	White	337	3.6255	.90839	.04948
	Black	55	4.1164	.92110	.12420
	Other	40	3.9150	.91471	.14463
	Total	432	3.7148	.92511	.04451
Q8_F5	White	337	3.5764	.78200	.04260
	Black	55	3.9636	.88639	.11952
	Other	40	3.8625	.77821	.12305
	Total	432	3.6522	.80681	.03882
Q8_F6	White	337	3.4280	.76341	.04159
	Black	55	3.9727	.91625	.12355
	Other	40	3.9063	.71092	.11241
	Total	432	3.5417	.80709	.03883
Q8_F7	White	337	2.8566	.91687	.04994
	Black	55	3.5515	1.05159	.14180
	Other	40	3.3458	.89823	.14202
	Total	432	2.9904	.96582	.04647
Q8_F8	White	337	3.1371	.88322	.04811
	Black	55	3.9200	.89905	.12123
	Other	40	3.6950	.78052	.12341
	Total	432	3.2884	.92124	.04432

Anova was performed to detect possible significant differences in the expectations among different population groups within the eight dimensions of the service offering. Where significant differences were detected, post hoc Bonferroni tests were performed to specify the differences. Results are of the Anovas and are presented in Table 5.25.

TABLE 5.25: ANOVA RESULTS SPECIFYING SIGNIFICANT DIFFERENCES IN EXPECTATIONS AMONG POPULATION GROUPS (P<0.05)

		Sum of Squares	Df	Mean Square	F	Sig.
Q8_F1	Between Groups	2.188	2	1.094	2.805	.062
	Within Groups	167.299	429	.390		
	Total	169.486	431			
Q8_F2	Between Groups	122.399	2	61.199	44.213	.000
	Within Groups	593.823	429	1.384		
	Total	716.222	431			
Q8_F3	Between Groups	1.201	2	.601	3.431	.033
	Within Groups	75.084	429	.175		
	Total	76.286	431			
Q8_F4	Between Groups	13.158	2	6.579	7.935	.000
	Within Groups	355.707	429	.829		
	Total	368.865	431			
Q8_F5	Between Groups	9.039	2	4.520	7.141	.001
	Within Groups	271.516	429	.633		
	Total	280.555	431			
Q8_F6	Between Groups	19.887	2	9.944	16.353	.000
	Within Groups	260.863	429	.608		
	Total	280.750	431			
Q8_F7	Between Groups	28.405	2	14.203	16.307	.000
	Within Groups	373.638	429	.871		
	Total	402.043	431			
Q8_F8	Between Groups	36.269	2	18.134	23.610	.000
	Within Groups	329.513	429	.768		
	Total	365.782	431			

Results indicate significant differences among the level of education groups, within seven of the eight factors (shaded areas in Table 5.25), namely factors 2 ($p = 0.000$); f3 ($p = 0.033$), f4 ($p = 0.000$), f5 ($p = 0.001$), f6 ($p = 0.000$), f7 ($p = 0.000$) and f8 ($p = 0.000$). Factor 1, Courtesy and efficiency, was the only factor where population groups' expectations did not differ significantly.

In order to specify the differences, post hoc Bonferroni tests were performed. The results are presented in Table 5.26.

TABLE 5.26: POST HOC BONFERONI OUTCOMES FOR THE POPULATION GROUP EXPECTATIONS INVESTIGATION

Dependent Variable	(I) VV14: Ethnicity	(J) VV14: Ethnicity	Mean Difference (I-J)	Std. Error	Sig.
Q8_F2	White	Black	-1.48891*	.17110	.000
		Other	-.90482*	.19675	.000
	Black	White	1.48891*	.17110	.000
		Other	.58409	.24448	.052
	Other	White	.90482*	.19675	.000
		Black	-.58409	.24448	.052
Q8_F3	White	Black	.12895	.06084	.104
		Other	-.08882	.06996	.615
	Black	White	-.12895	.06084	.104
		Other	-.21777*	.08694	.038
	Other	White	.08882	.06996	.615
		Black	.21777*	.08694	.038
Q8_F4	White	Black	-.49084*	.13242	.001
		Other	-.28948	.15228	.174
	Black	White	.49084*	.13242	.001
		Other	.20136	.18922	.864
	Other	White	.28948	.15228	.174
		Black	-.20136	.18922	.864
Q8_F5	White	Black	-.38723*	.11570	.003
		Other	-.28609	.13304	.096
	Black	White	.38723*	.11570	.003
		Other	.10114	.16532	1.000
	Other	White	.28609	.13304	.096
		Black	-.10114	.16532	1.000
Q8_F6	White	Black	-.54469*	.11340	.000
		Other	-.47821*	.13041	.001
	Black	White	.54469*	.11340	.000
		Other	.06648	.16204	1.000
	Other	White	.47821*	.13041	.001
		Black	-.06648	.16204	1.000
Q8_F7	White	Black	-.69494*	.13572	.000
		Other	-.48926*	.15607	.006
	Black	White	.69494*	.13572	.000
		Other	.20568	.19393	.868
	Other	White	.48926*	.15607	.006
		Black	-.20568	.19393	.868
Q8_F8	White	Black	-.78291*	.12745	.000
		Other	-.55791*	.14657	.000
	Black	White	.78291*	.12745	.000
		Other	.22500	.18212	.652
	Other	White	.55791*	.14657	.000
		Black	-.22500	.18212	.652

In terms of factor 2: Child- friendliness: Blacks' expectations ($M = 3.550$) were average and not particularly high while the rest of the populations' expectations were below average. Blacks' expectations were significantly higher ($p = 0.000$) than Other populations groups' expectations ($p = 0.000$), which were also significantly higher than the expectations of Whites ($p = 0.000$). This is therefore an area where fast food outlets can very easily exceed consumers' expectations if they wish to instigate positive disconfirmation of expectations and subsequent consumer satisfaction.

In terms of factor 3: Hygiene and precision, Other populations groups' expectations ($M = 4.84$) were significantly higher than the expectations of Black consumers ($M = 4.62$; $p = 0.038$) while the expectations of Whites and Blacks did not differ significantly ($p > 0.05$). All populations groups' expectations were very high in terms of this dimension of the service offering. Service providers should therefore be careful not to neglect this aspect of the service offering as that would result in negative disconfirmation and subsequent dissatisfaction.

In terms of factor 4: Healthiness, Black consumers' expectations ($M = 4.11$) were relatively high and significantly higher (more positive) than their White counterparts ($M = 3.63$) as well as other population groups ($M = 3.91$; $p < 0.05$). This is an interesting finding that could be investigated further. Expectations were above average and fairly high for this factor.

In terms of factor 5: Expeditiousness, Black consumers' expectations ($M = 3.96$) were significantly higher ($p = 0.003$) than the other population groups ($p < 0.05$), indicating that Black consumers may be more meticulous in terms of the speed of service in fast food outlets and that failure to do so would result in negative disconfirmation of expectations which precedes consumers' dissatisfaction.

In terms of factor 6: Availability, the expectations of White consumers ($M = 3.42$) were significantly lower than the other two population groups ($p < 0.05$) and when discussed along with factor 5 it means that fast food outlets should focus on the geographic areas where there are many Black customers to ensure that their need for fast foods is addressed and that the service is not disappointing.

In terms of factor 7: Orderliness and ease of complaint, Blacks' expectations were significantly higher ($M = 3.55$) than the expectations of both of the other population categories ($p < 0.05$) although expectations were merely average for all.

In terms of factor 8: Comfort, White consumers' expectations ($M = 3.13$) were significantly lower ($p < 0.05$) than Blacks' and Other population groups' expectations. Black consumers' expectations were high ($M = 3.92$) while the other groups' expectations were average/ moderate ($M < 3.5$).

5.3.5.8 Population group differences: perceptions

Differences among population groups' perceptions (expressed as Means) for the eight dimensions of the service offering of fast food outlets are presented in Table 5.27.

TABLE 5.27: PERCEPTIONS FOR INDIVIDUAL FACTORS PER POPULATION GROUP

		N	Mean	Std. Deviation	Std. Error
Q9_F1	White	337	3.4346	.71677	.03904
	Black	55	3.5893	.91665	.12360
	Other	40	3.4647	.91049	.14396
	Total	432	3.4571	.76383	.03675
Q9_F2	White	337	2.9151	.85331	.04648
	Black	55	3.4327	.92197	.12432
	Other	40	3.4300	.91545	.14475
	Total	432	3.0287	.89209	.04292
Q9_F3	White	337	3.7464	.64217	.03498
	Black	55	3.8793	.78517	.10587
	Other	40	3.7364	.83238	.13161
	Total	432	3.7624	.68076	.03275
Q9_F4	White	337	2.8677	.72698	.03960
	Black	55	3.3382	1.04128	.14041
	Other	40	3.1700	.95493	.15099
	Total	432	2.9556	.81201	.03907
Q9_F5	White	337	3.1647	.76129	.04147
	Black	55	3.2773	.97619	.13163
	Other	40	3.1688	.86859	.13734
	Total	432	3.1794	.80055	.03852
Q9_F6	White	337	3.3531	.61777	.03365
	Black	55	3.5455	.95269	.12846
	Other	40	3.3938	.93351	.14760
	Total	432	3.3814	.70296	.03382
Q9_F7	White	337	2.9505	.67568	.03681
	Black	55	3.3000	.92262	.12441
	Other	40	3.0708	.88987	.14070
	Total	432	3.0062	.74030	.03562
Q9_F8	White	337	3.1733	.63274	.03447
	Black	55	3.5564	.87829	.11843
	Other	40	3.4350	.79986	.12647
	Total	432	3.2463	.69742	.03355

Anova was performed to detect possible significant differences in the perceptions among different population groups within the eight dimensions of the service offering. Where significant differences were detected, post hoc Bonferroni tests were performed to specify the differences. Results are presented in Table 5.28.

TABLE 5.28: ANOVA RESULTS SPECIFYING SIGNIFICANT DIFFERENCES IN PERCEPTIONS AMONG POPULATION GROUPS (P<0.05)

		Sum of Squares	Df	Mean Square	F	Sig.
Q9_F1	Between Groups	1.134	2	.567	.971	.379
	Within Groups	250.328	429	.584		
	Total	251.461	431			
Q9_F2	Between Groups	19.766	2	9.883	13.117	.000
	Within Groups	323.238	429	.753		
	Total	343.004	431			
Q9_F3	Between Groups	.865	2	.433	.933	.394
	Within Groups	198.874	429	.464		
	Total	199.739	431			
Q9_F4	Between Groups	12.495	2	6.248	9.865	.000
	Within Groups	271.691	429	.633		
	Total	284.187	431			
Q9_F5	Between Groups	.604	2	.302	.470	.625
	Within Groups	275.617	429	.642		
	Total	276.222	431			
Q9_F6	Between Groups	1.756	2	.878	1.783	.169
	Within Groups	211.227	429	.492		
	Total	212.982	431			
Q9_F7	Between Groups	5.958	2	2.979	5.551	.004
	Within Groups	230.247	429	.537		
	Total	236.206	431			
Q9_F8	Between Groups	8.508	2	4.254	9.074	.000
	Within Groups	201.126	429	.469		
	Total	209.634	431			

Results indicate significant differences among the population groups, within four of the eight factors, namely factors 2, Child friendliness ($p = 0.000$); f4, Healthiness ($p = 0.000$); f7, Orderliness and ease of complaint; ($p = 0.004$); and f8, Comfort ($p = 0.000$).

In order to specify the differences, post hoc Bonferroni tests were performed. The results are presented in Table 5.29.

TABLE 5.29: POST HOC BONFERONI OUTCOMES FOR THE POPULATION GROUP PERCEPTIONS INVESTIGATION

Dependent Variable	(I) VV14: Pop grp	(J) VV14: Pop grp	Mean Difference (I-J)	Std. Error	Sig.
Q9_F2	White	Black	-.51759*	.12623	.000
		Other	-.51487*	.14516	.001
	Black	White	.51759*	.12623	.000
		Other	.00273	.18038	1.000
	Other	White	.51487*	.14516	.001
		Black	-.00273	.18038	1.000
Q9_F4	White	Black	-.47053*	.11573	.000
		Other	-.30234	.13309	.071
	Black	White	.47053*	.11573	.000
		Other	.16818	.16537	.929
	Other	White	.30234	.13309	.071
		Black	-.16818	.16537	.929
Q9_F7	White	Black	-.34946*	.10654	.003
		Other	-.12029	.12252	.980
	Black	White	.34946*	.10654	.003
		Other	.22917	.15224	.399
	Other	White	.12029	.12252	.980
		Black	-.22917	.15224	.399
Q9_F8	White	Black	-.38307*	.09958	.000
		Other	-.26171	.11451	.068
	Black	White	.38307*	.09958	.000
		Other	.12136	.14228	1.000
	Other	White	.26171	.11451	.068
		Black	-.12136	.14228	1.000

In terms of factor 2, Child friendliness: ($p = 0.000$); f4, Healthiness ($p = 0.000$); f7, Orderliness and ease of complaint; ($p = 0.003$); and f8, Comfort ($p = 0.000$).

In terms of factor 2, Child- friendliness: Black and other population groups' perceptions were the same ($M = 3.43$) and significantly more positive ($p < 0.05$) than Whites' perceptions although all perceived the child-friendliness of fast food outlets as average. By improving this dimension of the service offering, fast food retailers could instigate positive disconfirmation that would boost consumer satisfaction.

In terms of factor 4: Healthiness, perceptions of all population groups were merely average although Black and other population groups' perceptions were significantly more positive compared to their White counterparts. Black consumers' expected more of this dimension (see 5.3.5.7) but were also

more positive about the offering. Compared to their expectations, all population groups' perceptions were less favourable compared to their expectations, which is problematic and a potential cause for consumer dissatisfaction unless attended to.

In terms of factor 7, Orderliness and ease of complaint, all population groups' perceptions were less favourable compared to what they expected of this dimension of the service offering. Black consumers however, seem more forgiving as their perceptions were significantly more favourable compared to the other two groups ($p = 0.003$). Significant differences are probably less important than the fact that the expectations of all were not met (negative disconfirmation), which is cause for disgruntlement.

In terms of factor 8, Comfort, all population groups' expectations were not met and therefore the significantly more positive perception of Black consumers compared to Whites has little value for fast food outlets.

5.3.6 Summary

The investigation depended on an established measurement scale of Oyewole (1999) that was specifically formulated for use in fast food contexts. The scale allowed the quantification of consumers' expectations as well as their perceptions in terms of specific dimensions of the service offering that were identified through exploratory factor analysis and which were later on successfully confirmed through confirmatory factor analysis. The results were presented per dimension of the service offering and through Anova and post hoc Bonferroni tests, significant differences between gender groups as well as among age-, level of education-, income and population groups were identified and discussed.



Chapter 6

CONCLUSION OF THE STUDY

This chapter presents the conclusions to the objectives set for this study, indicates the limitations in the research and makes recommendations for future research.

6.1 INTRODUCTION

In retrospect, this chapter relates the entire research process to the relevance the findings could have for the fast-food industry as a whole, and the outlets in particular, with regard to meeting the consumers' expectations. The research process is also reviewed to indicate that the research procedures were followed correctly and that all the objectives were met according to accepted ethical standards. The limitations of the study and recommendations for further research are discussed.

6.2 THE FINDINGS OF THE STUDY

The study aimed to determine and describe consumers' perceptions of the quality of the service offering of fast-food outlets in general in Gauteng, South Africa and to analyse their expectations and perceptions within the fast-food industry. The aim was to ultimately detect shortcomings that could be addressed to augment the service offering of fast-food facilities to benefit all concerned.

6.2.1 To determine and describe consumers' patronage of fast-food outlets (Objective 1)

Consumers' fast-food purchase behaviour was investigated to indicate the frequency of fast-food purchases made by households; which day of the week they were more likely to purchase fast-food;

how often they purchased certain brands of fast-food; the amount of money spent on fast-food monthly; as well as the most pertinent reasons for purchasing fast-foods.

Most respondents were adults who were part of two-member households (55.48%), of which the majority had no children (59.73%). A sizable percentage of the sample bought fast food once a week maximum (27.74%), while an almost equal percentage of respondents indicated that they purchased fast food twice per month at most (27.52%). Kentucky Fried Chicken (KFC) and Steers seem to be the two most frequented fast-food outlets, followed by McDonald's and Roman's Pizza, which gave an indication that chicken and burgers were quite popular. Most respondents spent no more than R500 per month on fast food, and indicated that they appreciated the convenience derived from it and because it is a way to treat to their families. Time restriction was the third most important reason for purchasing fast food, followed by the benefits of special deals at fast-food outlets.

6.2.2 To determine and describe consumers' expectations of the service quality of fast-food outlets (Objective 2)

The established 57-item scale of Oyewole (1999) was used to measure consumers' expectations of the service offering at fast-food outlets. Because the scale had never been used in a South African context before, these items were subjected to exploratory factor analysis, which produced eight factors rather than the ten factors of the original scale. The original ten factors included F1: Hygiene and efficiency; F2: Courtesy; F3: Health consciousness; F4: Child-friendly; F5: Ease of complaint; F6: Comforts; F7: Orderliness; F8: Availability; F9: Expeditiousness, and F10: Communication. Through an iterative exploratory factor analysis process, eight factors were extracted in this investigation and they were labelled: F1: Courtesy and efficiency; F2: Child-friendliness; F3: Hygiene and precision; F4: Healthiness; F5: Expeditiousness; F6: Availability; F7: Orderliness and ease of complaint; and F8: Comfort. The factors and their respective items were very similar to the dimensions of the original scale, although certain items were dispersed among the eight factors that the factorial procedure yielded. The items within the eight factors coincided with what was found in the work of other scholars consulted, and the respective Cronbach Alpha values for the factors (in numerical factor order were 0.95; 0.95; 0.90; 0.87; 0.68; 0.70; 0.83; 0.83) indicated internal consistency within the factors.

The overall means for the eight factors suggest the following:

- Consumers' expectations for hygiene ($M_{\text{Factor3}} = 4.75$) and precision ($M_{\text{Max}} = 5$), and courtesy and efficiency ($M_{\text{Factor1}} = 4.29$) were **very high** in fast-food outlets' service offerings.
- Consumers' expectations were **high** for healthiness ($M_{\text{Factor4}} = 3.71$), expeditiousness ($M_{\text{Factor5}} = 3.65$) and availability ($M_{\text{Factor6}} = 3.54$) in the service fast-food outlets offered.
- Expectations for comfort ($M_{\text{Factor8}} = 3.28$), orderliness and easy reporting of complaints ($M_{\text{Factor7}} = 2.99$) in fast-food outlets was **above average**.
- Consumers' expectations of the child-friendliness ($M_{\text{Factor3}} = 2.28$) dimension in the service offered at fast-food outlets were **not particularly high**.

Consumers' expectations set the norm for their evaluation of the actual service offering. Confirmation of expectations as well as positive disconfirmation of expectation provides fertile ground for consumer satisfaction. Negative disconfirmation of expectations would however instigate consumer dissatisfaction that is detrimental in terms of positive return intentions. In terms of high and very high expectations, service providers therefore have to be very cognisant of their service offering because when they fail to meet consumers' expectations, that is, negative disconfirmation of expectations, consumers might become dissatisfied and even refrain from returning to the particular fast-food outlet.

The findings of this study indicate that fast-food outlets should carefully attend to the following dimensions of their service offering to ensure positive judgements of fast-food establishments: hygiene and precision; courtesy and efficiency; healthiness; expeditiousness and availability. Other factors where consumers' expectations were not very high but which should nevertheless be attended to, are: comfort; orderliness and ease of lodging a complaint as well as child-friendliness. These are characteristics that fast-food retailers should optimise and strive to exceed customers' expectations (although modest), to bring about positive disconfirmation that may result in consumer satisfaction. The fact that consumers' expectations are not particularly high creates an opportunity to surprise and impress customers.

6.2.3 To determine and describe consumers' perceptions with the service quality of fast-food outlets (Objective 3)

Using the same scale (Oyewole, 1999), consumers' perceptions of the actual service offering of fast-food outlets was investigated. The identical eight factors identified through exploratory factor

analysis were used as point of departure for gap analysis to investigate the difference between consumers' expectations (6.2.2) and their perceptions of the actual service offering. For this purpose confirmatory factor analysis (CFA) was done using the Statistical Package for the Social Sciences (SPSS). Multi-variate kurtosis indicated multi-non-normality, hence unweighted least squares (ULS) estimation was used to confirm structures identified by exploratory factor analysis (EFA) during the explorative expectations investigation.

The following came to the fore:

- Consumers' perceptions were confirmed for three dimensions of the service offering, namely: Orderliness and ease of complaint (M = 3.02), Healthiness (M = 3.78) and Child-friendliness (M = 2.24). The mean values suggest that although consumers' perception were confirmed, there is much room for improvement as at present, fast-food outlets are merely doing what is expected of them. Consumers might therefore not necessarily be satisfied, which is a positive emotion, and therefore fast-food outlets have to make the effort to enhance their service offering beyond what is expected of them as consumers' expectations are merely modest. These are not issues that would instigate total consumer dissatisfaction. It does, however, not necessarily mean that fast-food retailers should ignore them or merely think that they are on the right track. In order to instigate positive disconfirmation with subsequent consumer satisfaction, fast-food outlets should try to surpass consumers' expectations.

Regarding factor 7, Orderliness and ease of complaint, fast-food retailers could do much to boost consumer satisfaction by attempts to achieve positive disconfirmation of expectations which is merely average (M = 2.99), while the perception is (M = 3.02). Some of the aspects that could be improved are tangible and should be easy to rectify, for example, to display information on how consumers could deal with complaints; to provide suggestion boxes; to improve drive-through facilities and to install a two-way video screen at the order desk. Online complaints provide an appropriate tool whereby consumers can inform companies about unfulfilled expectations of their service delivery (Goetzinger, Park & Widdows, 2006). The Internet creates a fast and easy way for consumers to express their complaints and at the same time restaurants have the opportunity to respond quickly (Memarzadeh & Chang, 2015).

Regarding factor 4, Healthiness, consumer perceptions may seem fairly positive ($M = 3.78$), but there is much room for improvement based on the negative publicity that fast-food outlets often get in terms of the healthiness of their food items. Measures that could be taken is to curb the kilojoule and fat content of foods and to attend to more healthy food options on their menus, to provide nutrition information about the foods they serve and to demonstrate concern for the environment. Promoting good health in food-related businesses has thus become critical as consumers are increasingly demanding the availability of more healthy meals. The provision of healthier options in restaurants has become a key strategy for their survival (Hur & Jang, 2015).

Regarding factor 2, Child-friendliness, fast-food retailers could ensure a competitive edge by promoting themselves as child-friendly establishments for those who have children and who wish to treat their families with fast food. These points were raised in the participants' responses. Parents' perception of the child-friendliness of fast-food restaurants is below average, which signals concern if these establishments want to impress a very important market segment that cannot go to sophisticated restaurants with small children. Consumers between 21 and 40 years of age who are probably those who have young children, had significantly higher expectations compared to older consumers >40<60 years of age, which confirms that fast-food outlets need to attend to customers with children if they wish to have satisfied customers.). The higher consumption of fast food amongst children can be associated with the exposure of fast-food marketing like offering promotional gifts (Andreyeva, Kelly & Harris, 2011). Research shows that fast-food companies emphasise toys and other give-away products for children to market their brand and products rather than focusing on the food offered at the facility (Bernhardt, Wilking, Adachi-Mejia, Bergamini, Marijnissen & Sargent, 2013).

- Negative disconfirmation was confirmed for four dimensions of the service offering, which were Courtesy, Expeditiousness, Hygiene and Availability. This means that four of the eight dimensions of the service offering of fast-food outlets are not offered in accordance with consumers' expectations, a situation that could initiate consumer dissatisfaction because a negative disconfirmation of expectations is fertile breeding ground for negative emotions, complaints and negative return intentions. Consumers' expectations are not particularly high ($M < 3.5$), and therefore the fast-food retailers could focus on these aspects of service

delivery to augment their services and to surprise their customers, which would be favourable for positive emotions and positive return intentions.

With regard to factor 1, Courtesy and efficiency, consumers' perception of the service offering was slightly above average ($M = 3.05$). Fast-food retailers need to attend to how employees treat and communicate with the customers. It is crucial that personnel demonstrate a positive attitude thereby preventing dissatisfaction that is the result of negative confirmation of consumers' expectations. Therefore, it is of utmost importance for food outlets to ensure that the employees responsible for serving customers are knowledgeable and provide their customers with quick service. Front-line staff determine the quality of the service delivered as they create the first impression that customers get when entering the establishment (Johns, Chan & Yeung, 2003). The appearance of personnel has a strong influence on customer's pleasure and their arousal state (Ryu & Jang, 2007).

With regard to factor 3, Hygiene and precision, consumers' perception of evidence of hygienic practice in a fast-food establishment was above average ($M = 3.46$) but less favourable than their expectations, which was particularly high ($M = 4.75$). This is a matter of serious concern and more attention should be given to all aspects of cleanliness, even the appearance of personnel. Restaurant cleanliness as well as the attitude of staff will influence whether a customer will return to that food service or not (Pizam & Ellis, 1999). The waiting staff are actually the key representatives of the food outlet, as most of the contact in a restaurant or fast food outlet is between the customer and the serving staff (Pratten, 2004). This seems to be neglected and to be a shortcoming in the industry. One should understand that, if consumers' expectations of certain dimensions of the service offering are particularly high, the industry should regard this as a non-negotiable factor in their service offering, if they are serious about consumer satisfaction and positive return intentions.

With regard to factor 5, Expeditiousness, consumers' perception ($M = 3.00$) were slightly above average, but lower than what they expected ($M = 3.65$). Over-crowding in restaurants and long waiting lines should therefore be treated as a matter of concern to promote consumers' return intentions. Waiting time is an important element of consumers' overall satisfaction with a product or service (Zhou & Soman, 2003). Waiting time is predictor of perceived service quality and customer satisfaction. Service providers' major objective is to therefore reduce waiting-time (Kokkinou & Cranage, 2013). When the perceived waiting

time is short, it will lead to a higher consumer satisfaction (Yalch & Spangenberg, 2000). Most fast-food outlets have extended their hours of operation, which also seems critically important. Negative disconfirmation of expectations could cause frustration, especially for consumers who are time stressed and in a hurry. When this dimension is attended to properly, it could become an element of excellence.

With regard to factor 6, “availability”, consumers’ perception ($M = 3.19$) was lower than what they expected ($M = 3.54$). Hours of operation, the variety of menu choices, and early-hour operation could be ways to improve consumers’ perception of the convenience facet of using fast-food outlets and appears to be an important issue. Because consumers often do not have time to prepare their own meals due to longer working hours (Min & Min, 2013), the extended operating hours of fast-food outlets are highly valued. An important consequence of consumers’ concern about healthy eating is that the fat and sugar content of fast foods is being reviewed. Restaurants are also reconsidering the size of portions. Healthy menu options are now available at most fast-food outlets like pasta salads and corn on the cob, although they still have their traditional burger meals (Schroder & McEachern, 2005).

- **“Comfort”, factor 8,** was the only one of the eight dimensions or factors where consumers’ perceptions ($M = 3.39$) exceeded their expectations ($M = 3.28$), that is, where positive disconfirmation of expectations was confirmed. This does not mean that fast-food outlets should be content, as the mean values are not that high. This dimension of the service offering could therefore be further enhanced to impress customers to strengthen positive disconfirmation of expectations. The space in a restaurant helps consumers form a mental picture before they have an emotional response or judgement of the specific service environment (Lin, 2004). Music also stimulates emotions and behaviours in the service setting, which is a positive cue unless the music is loud and creates discomfort (Dube, Chebat & Morin, 1995; Mattila & Wirtz, 2001). Ambience is created (Heide, Laerdal & Gronhaug, 2007) and the atmosphere generates an image of the surrounding space in the mind of customer. The physical facility, which is something that can be controlled, therefore influences consumers’ experiences (Pratten, 2004).

6.2.4 To investigate and describe shortcomings that could be addressed to augment customers' overall service quality perceptions (Objective 4)

Consumers' expectations were higher than their perceptions for four of the eight factors, namely, factor 1: Courtesy and efficiency; factor 3: Hygiene and precision; factor 5: Expeditiousness and Factor 6: Availability, which means that fast-food outlets have much to improve on (See Figure 5.10). Even regarding comfort related aspects, which respondents seemed satisfied with, consumers' perceptions were not very positive ($M < 4$). Findings therefore point to multiple aspects in the fast-food industry that are not optimal and which could be improved to promote consumer satisfaction rather than discontent. Some of the aspects are fairly easy to address, for example, to attend to the interaction between customers and employees, and to upscale hygiene and cleanliness, which should not be negotiable. Other factors may be more difficult to implement as they imply financial consequences, for example, improving facilities for children and drive-through facilities, and installing electronic media at the point of ordering where staff are stationed.

What is important though, is that aspects that are superb, could negate negative evaluations. For example, if a fast-food retailer decides to focus on hygiene, courtesy and healthiness related aspects that were the three dimensions they expected the most of, shortfalls in another aspect, such as orderliness (where expectations were lower) might be forgiven more easily. Nevertheless, findings do indicate that there is ample opportunity for fast-food outlets to focus on certain dimensions in which they would like to excel in, to achieve a competitive advantage in the market place.

Also, demographic characteristics of respondents notably influenced their expectations of the service offering at fast-food restaurants, which should be acknowledged. Females have significantly higher expectations than men in terms of the following dimensions of the service offering: Courtesy and efficiency ($p = 0.020$), Child-friendliness ($p = 0.002$), Hygiene and precision ($p = 0.001$), Healthiness ($p = 0.021$), as well as Orderliness and ease of complaint ($p = 0.006$). It would therefore be more difficult to please females than males. Females were also significantly less impressed about Expeditiousness ($p = 0.049$), which is an indication of time pressure. Young consumers (<40 years of age) held significantly ($p = 0.000$) higher expectations about Child-friendliness, which is understandable. Adults <60 years of age also expected significantly more in terms of the comfort related attributes of the service offering in fast-food restaurants ($p = 0.003$), which suggests that fast-food outlets should pay more attention to all their customers to reduce frustration and to increase the pleasure of a visit to an outlet.

Of particular interest is that lower middle income consumers' had significantly higher expectations ($M = 3.54$) compared to upper income consumers ($M = 3.43$) about health-related aspects ($p = 0.016$) of fast foods. This could be related to affordability, as confirmed in the study (Section 6.2.1), in that a visit to fast-food outlet is generally an occasion for a family treat. Fast-food outlets should remember that households with children and younger families are very important target markets and that their needs should take precedence.

Population differences too should be noted and would be particularly relevant in terms of the area where a fast-food retailer is located as different cultural beliefs and practices might have to be accommodated. Results also showed that White consumers were significantly more concerned about hygiene and efficiency ($M = 4.75$; $p = 0.002$) compared to Black consumers ($M = 4.62$) although expectations seem fairly high overall. The opposite was true for Child-friendliness, as all the other population groups had significantly higher expectations ($M = 3.43$) for this dimension of the service offering compared to White consumers ($M = 2.92$; $p = 0.000$). Significant differences in Orderliness, Ease of complaint, and Comfort were confirmed, indicating that Black consumers are significantly more positive. However, it is important to keep in mind that expectations were overall not high ($M < 3.5$) and discretion should therefore be exercised with this finding. In a cosmopolitan urban context, it is difficult to distinguish between needs of different population groups any way, and fast-food outlets should rather aim to outperform expectations, which should not be too difficult given the findings of this study.

6.3 THE RESEARCH IN RETROSPECT

After the completion of a study it is important to establish if the objectives were met, that the data and the findings are accurate and reliable and that the study was executed in an ethical and honest manner.

A thorough review of relevant literature on the important constructs in the research study was done. The main constructs within the research problem were therefore thoroughly operationalised, which assisted the researcher in formulating and structuring the research objectives, conceptual framework as well as compiling the questionnaire. The study followed a quantitative research design which was exploratory and descriptive in nature. The study was cross-sectional in nature,

using a structured, self-administered questionnaire. The questionnaire was developed with the guidance of a professional statistician. Existing scales were used, which were adapted for an investigation in a South African context. A pilot test was conducted to ensure that respondents understood the questionnaire; some minor problems that were identified were resolved (mainly rewording of instructions) before the data collection commenced. The purpose of the research was explained to respondents on the cover screen of the electronic questionnaire, which explained that participation in this research study was voluntary and that the information gathered in this research would be treated confidentially and would only be used for academic purposes.

The University of Pretoria's Department of Consumers Science and Faculty of the Natural and Agricultural Science's Ethics Committee approved the research design and questionnaire before data collection commenced. To implement a cross-sectional survey Consulta Research collected the data during August 2014 in Gauteng, South Africa. Convenience sampling was used to recruit 447 willing participants for the study. This means that the findings can unfortunately not be generalised to the entire population. Consulta recruited suitable respondents who met the criteria for the study by sending an invitation to members on their data base. With the assistance of a statistician and a research consultant, the data was analysed using descriptive and inferential statistics (factor analysis, ANOVA and t-tests) to translate the quantitative data into the relevant information necessary to describe the objectives in a scientific manner. Cronbach Alpha values were calculated on individual items which confirmed the internal consistency of the responses. This was also done for the measuring scale that had never been used in a South African context before.

Throughout the research study special attention was given to accuracy, reliability and validity as explained in Chapter 4. All participants willingly participated in the study and all responses were handled confidentially.

After exploratory factor analysis was performed for Oyewole's scale (1999), the factors were restructured and a new conceptual framework was developed. Figure 6.1 presents the amended dimensions/factors that were used for analyses in this research study. All the objectives of the study have been met as it was possible to draw appropriate conclusions for all the objectives.

The adapted conceptual framework will now be presented.

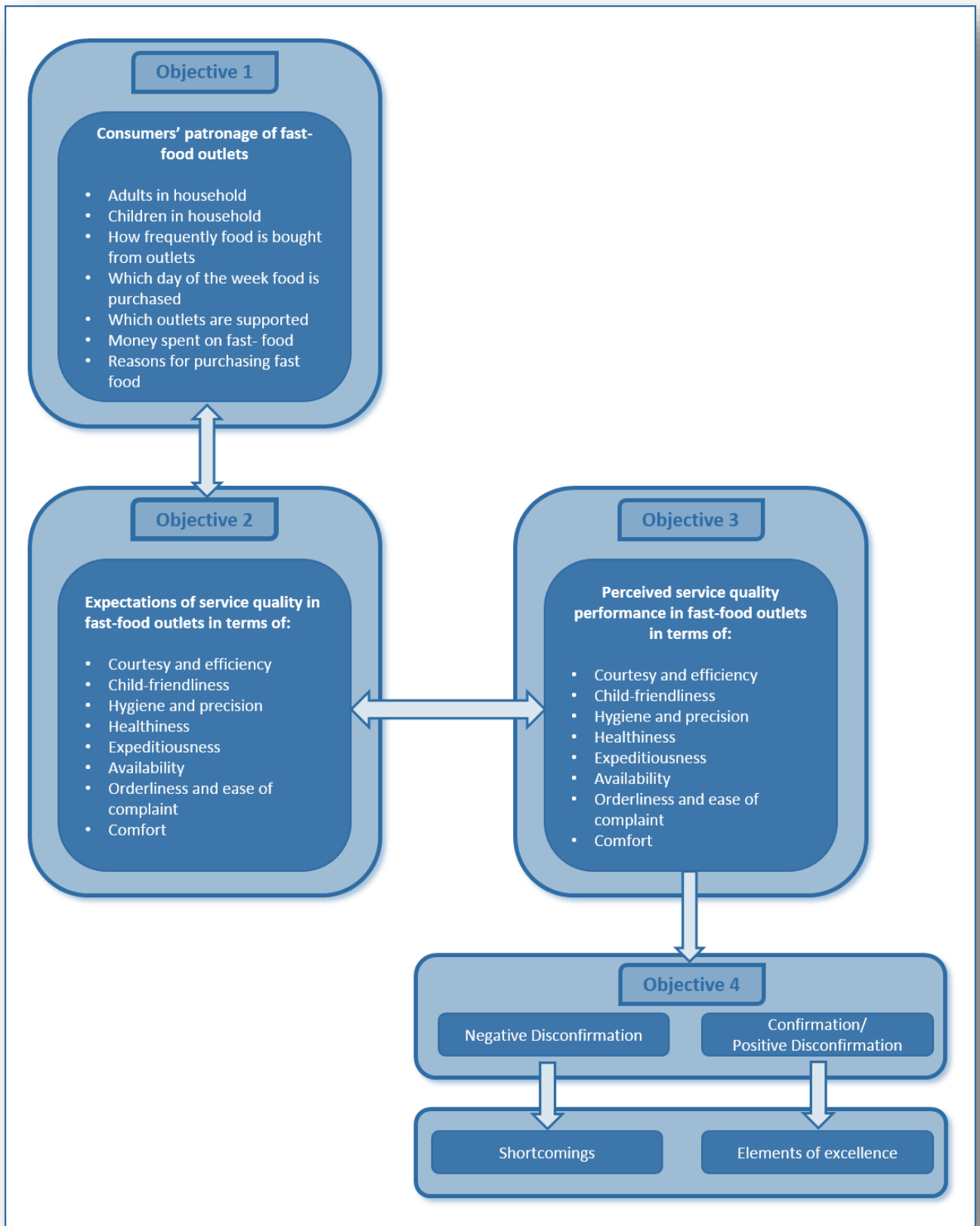


FIGURE 6.1: ADAPTED CONCEPTUAL FRAMEWORK

6.4 LIMITATIONS OF THE STUDY

Although the researcher took care in conducting the research in an ethical and reliable manner, certain limitations were inevitable. One of the main constraints was the availability of resources. The National Research Foundation provided funding but it was limited to the data collection part of the study. The sample size was influenced by the available budget. Although this was a costly process, it was done to facilitate data collection within a reasonably short period. Nevertheless the sample size (N = 447) was acceptable and useful conclusions could be drawn. The research provided exploratory evidence of the quality of service in fast-food outlets. However, since non-probability convenience sampling was applied the results cannot be generalised with certainty. The representation of population groups of the participants in the survey was uneven as there were more responses from white residents in Gauteng than the other groups in the sample, which is not representative of the South African population.

6.5 RECOMMENDATIONS FOR FUTURE RESEARCH

During the course of this study, the researcher identified opportunities for further research.

The method of sampling holds an array of prospects for future research. First probability sampling methods can be used instead of non-probability sampling to obtain a more representative group of respondents which will allow for the possibility of generalising the findings. It is especially important to have a representative sample of all population groups, seeing that the research showed some differences in their expectations and perceptions about the service quality of fast-food outlets in South Africa. A second point is that a more equal representation of age categories in the sample would be an advantage, as this study included an over representation of older respondents.

Two interesting findings were identified in the study, which can be investigated for future research. Firstly, in terms of Availability, the expectations of consumers' with post graduate qualifications were significantly lower and merely average compared to graduates and the lowest level of education group whose expectations were above average. This could be investigated further as it may be that the highest level of education group consumers do not frequent fast food outlets

regularly and are therefore not very adamant about the availability of this service. Secondly, in terms of Healthiness, black consumers' expectations are significantly higher than their white counterparts as well as to other population groups, which is an interesting finding and could be investigated further to explore this phenomenon.

6.6 IMPLICATIONS OF THE FINDINGS

The findings of the study can contribute to the work of the academic community and to the fast-food industry. Fast-food establishments in South Africa could find the information in this study useful as it indicates consumers' expectations and perceptions of the service offering at fast-food outlets as specific dimensions that are easy to address. Fast-food establishments need to make a constructive effort to improve the dimensions that consumers value most, which relate to hygiene and courtesy. Consumers have high expectations about hygiene and would like clean facilities, well-prepared food, fresh-tasting food, flavour of food, having orders fulfilled accurately, seeing a clean work area for the employees who practise good hygiene, clean workers, quality food, getting correct change and clean tables.

Consumers also have high expectations with regard to the courtesy dimension which relates to polite and courteous servers, cordial attendants, being greeted with a smile, respectful employees, caring, communicating managers and servers, employees serving with a smile, neatly dressed employees, employees with pleasant personalities, making customers feel at ease, good customer service, friendly employees, food served at the right temperature, sincerely attending to customers problems, being told when orders will be ready, employees wearing name tags, quiet ambience.

Fast-food establishments should give attention to expeditiousness and avoiding crowding in outlets by having short waiting lines, late hour operations and a single waiting line for all customers. Availability is important with appropriate hours of operation, early-hour operation, a variety of menu choices and having a consumer complaints toll-free number. Fast-food establishments will impress consumers if there is a focus on child-friendliness and healthiness. Play areas for children, a children's menu, and toys in the children's play area would be appreciated. Keeping the fat and kilojoules low on the food served, giving nutritional information and health food choices as well as showing concern for the environment would improve and benefit patronage.

6.7 SUMMARY

The fast-food industry can benefit from these results and their documentation as they show which dimensions consumers regard as important for them to be satisfied with the service offered at a fast-food outlets. Dimensions that do not deliver the service expected from consumers cause dissatisfaction if present at a fast-food facility. Ultimately these shortcomings in the industry will need improvement. The information given in this dissertation could assist the fast-food industry in prioritising the dimensions in their service offering that are important to consumers. This action would enable them to provide the best possible service by having more elements of excellence to attract more customers then, in time, be more profitable themselves.



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Addendum A

ETHICAL APPROVAL



UNIVERSITEIT VAN PRETORIA
UNIVERSITY OF PRETORIA
YUNIBESITHI YA PRETORIA

ETHICS COMMITTEE
Faculty of Natural and Agricultural Sciences

17 April 2014
Dr G du Rand
Department of Consumer Science
University of Pretoria
Pretoria
0002

Dear Dr du Rand

EC140403-023 Consumers' perception of the service quality of fast food outlets in the Tshwane Metropolitan Area

Your application conforms to the requirements of the NAS Ethics Committee

Kind regards

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'NH Casey'.

Prof NH Casey
Chairman: Ethics Committee

Agriculture Building 10-20
University of Pretoria
Private bag X20, Hatfield 0028
Republic of South Africa

Tel: 012 420 4107
Fax: 012 420 3290

ethics.nas@up.ac.za

Addendum B

PLAGIARISM DECLARATION

DECLARATION OF ORIGINALITY UNIVERSITY OF PRETORIA

The Department of Consumer Science places great emphasis upon integrity and ethical conduct in the preparation of all written work submitted for academic evaluation. While academic staff teaches you about referencing techniques and how to avoid plagiarism, you too have a responsibility in this regard. If you are at any stage uncertain as to what is required, you should speak to your lecturer before any written work is submitted.

You are guilty of plagiarism if you copy something from another author's work (e.g. a book, an article or a website) without acknowledging the source and pass it off as your own. In effect you are stealing something that belongs to someone else. This is not only the case when you copy work word-for-word (verbatim), but also when you submit someone else's work in a slightly altered form (paraphrase) or use a line of argument without acknowledging it. You are not allowed to use work previously produced by another student. You are also not allowed to let anybody copy your work with the intention of passing it off as his/her work.

Students who commit plagiarism will not be given any credit for plagiarised work. The matter may also be referred to the Disciplinary Committee (Students) for a ruling. Plagiarism is regarded as a serious contravention of the University's rules and can lead to expulsion from the University. The declaration which follows must accompany all written work submitted while you are a student of the Department of Consumer Science. No written work will be accepted unless the declaration has been completed and attached.

Full names of student: **Fransisca (A.M.) du Plessis**

Student number: **29233853**

Topic of work: **Consumers' perception of the service quality of fast-food outlets in Gauteng**

Declaration

1. I understand what plagiarism is and am aware of the University's policy in this regard.
2. I declare that this research proposal is my own original work. Where other people's work has been used (either from a printed source, Internet or any other source), this has been properly acknowledged and referenced in accordance with departmental requirements.
3. I have not used work previously produced by another student or any other person to hand in as my own.
4. I have not allowed, and will not allow, anyone to copy my work with the intention of passing it off as his or her own work.

SIGNATURE:

Addendum C

COVER LETTER



UNIVERSITEIT VAN PRETORIA
UNIVERSITY OF PRETORIA
YUNIBESITHI YA PRETORIA

Faculty of Natural and Agricultural Sciences
Department of Consumer Science
2014

RESEARCH PROJECT: Consumers' perception of the service quality of fast food outlets in Gauteng

Dear respondent

The intention with this research is to gain some insight into customer's expectations and perceptions regarding the service quality of fast food outlets in Gauteng. Only individuals who reside within the Gauteng area of South Africa are allowed to complete the questionnaire. Individuals must have had a personal buying experience with at least one of the fast food outlets (meaning that a consumer needed to have visited a fast food outlet, either physically being in the fast food outlet or at the drive through facility) in the previous 6 months. Respondents need to be 21 years or older. It will take at least 10 minutes of your time to complete this questionnaire that forms part of a dissertation for a Master's degree in Consumer Science. All information will be dealt with anonymously.

Please read the questions carefully and give your honest opinion throughout.

Thank you for your participation!

Fransisca du Plessis

Student: M Consumer Science Food Management

Study Leaders: Dr GE du Rand

: Prof AC Erasmus

If you have any questions, please do not hesitate to contact me at 082 926 5155 or email me at fransiedp@gmail.com

Addendum D

QUESTIONNAIRE



UNIVERSITEIT VAN PRETORIA
UNIVERSITY OF PRETORIA
YUNIBESITHI YA PRETORIA

DEPARTMENT OF CONSUMER SCIENCE

CONSUMERS' PERCEPTION OF THE SERVICE QUALITY OF FAST FOOD OUTLETS IN
GAUTENG

Please follow the instructions for each question very carefully. There are no correct or incorrect answers. Your responses will be treated confidentially and you will remain anonymous as your identity can not be retrieved and disclosed in any way. Thank you for your participation!

Section A											Respondent number:		Office use				
CONSUMERS PATRONAGE OF FAST FOOD OUTLETS.													V0				
<i>Answer every question and mark every relevant answer with an X</i>													V1				
1. How many adults are in your household?													V2				
2. How many children are in your household?													V3				
3. How many times do you buy food from a fast food outlet?	Once per month maximum	1	Twice per month maximum	2	Once per week maximum	3	Twice per week maximum	4	More than twice per week	5	Only occasionally	6					
4. Which day of the week do you buy food from a fast food outlet?													Office use				
<i>Please respond to every item. Mark the number with an X which is most applicable to you</i>											NEVER	SELDOM	SOMETIMES	FREQUENTLY	ALWAYS		
1. Mondays											1	2	3	4	5	V4.1	
2. Tuesdays											1	2	3	4	5	V4.2	
3. Wednesdays											1	2	3	4	5	V4.3	
4. Thursdays											1	2	3	4	5	V4.4	
5. Fridays											1	2	3	4	5	V4.5	
6. Saturdays											1	2	3	4	5	V4.6	
7. Sundays											1	2	3	4	5	V4.7	
8. Holidays											1	2	3	4	5	V4.8	
9. Special occasions											1	2	3	4	5	V4.9	
10. Other, please specify:											1	2	3	4	5	V4.10	

5. How often do you buy fast food from the following outlets?						Office use						
<i>Please respond to every item. Mark the number with an X which is most applicable to you</i>						NEVER	SELDOM	SOMETIMES	FREQUENTLY	ALWAYS		
1. KFC	1	2	3	4	5						V5.1	
2. Chicken Licken	1	2	3	4	5						V5.2	
3. Nando's	1	2	3	4	5						V5.3	
4. Steers	1	2	3	4	5						V5.4	
5. McDonalds	1	2	3	4	5						V5.5	
6. Debonairs	1	2	3	4	5						V5.6	
7. Romans	1	2	3	4	5						V5.7	
8. Scooters	1	2	3	4	5						V5.8	
9. Kauai	1	2	3	4	5						V5.9	
10. Mochachos	1	2	3	4	5						V5.10	
11. Shisa Nyama	1	2	3	4	5						V5.11	
12. Fishaways	1	2	3	4	5						V5.12	
13. Other, please specify	1	2	3	4	5						V5.13	
6. Approximately how much money is spent on fast foods by your household per MONTH?						R _____					V6	
7. What are the reasons why you purchase fast food?						Office use						
<i>Please respond to every item. Mark the number with an X which is most applicable to you</i>						DEFINITELY NOT	UNLIKELY	POSSIBLY	MOST LIKELY	DEFINITELY YES		
1. Convenience / It is convenient	1	2	3	4	5						V7.1	
2. I can't cook/ I do not have the skills to cook	1	2	3	4	5						V7.2	
3. Fast food is cheaper than buying all ingredients and preparing the food myself	1	2	3	4	5						V7.3	
4. It is a treat to the family/ myself	1	2	3	4	5						V7.4	
5. No time available to cook	1	2	3	4	5						V7.5	
6. Special deals	1	2	3	4	5						V7.6	
7. Other, please specify:	1	2	3	4	5						V7.7	

Section B						Office use						
8. HOW IMPORTANT DO YOU REGARD THE FOLLOWING ASPECTS OF THE SERVICE OFFERING AT FAST FOOD OUTLETS? <i>(Please answer EVERY QUESTION. Mark the number with an X which is most applicable to you)</i>						NOT IMPORTANT	OF LITTLE IMPORTANCE	MODERATELY IMPORTANT	IMPORTANT	VERY IMPORTANT		
Clean facilities	1	2	3	4	5						V8.1	
Filling orders accurately	1	2	3	4	5						V8.2	
Friendly employees	1	2	3	4	5						V8.3	
Keeping the fat low on food served	1	2	3	4	5						V8.4	
Child menu coming with toys	1	2	3	4	5						V8.5	
Display of consumer complaint toll free number	1	2	3	4	5						V8.6	
Comfortable seats	1	2	3	4	5						V8.7	
Single waiting line for all customers	1	2	3	4	5						V8.8	
Late-hour operation	1	2	3	4	5						V8.9	
No crowding	1	2	3	4	5						V8.10	
Being asked if anything else is wanted'	1	2	3	4	5						V8.11	
Clean rest rooms	1	2	3	4	5						V8.12	
Employees with good hygiene	1	2	3	4	5						V8.13	
Getting correct change	1	2	3	4	5						V8.14	
Employees serving with a smile	1	2	3	4	5						V8.15	
Keeping the kilojoules low on food served	1	2	3	4	5						V8.16	

Section B continued....	NOT IMPORTANT	OF LITTLE IMPORTANCE	MODERATELY IMPORTANT	IMPORTANT	VERY IMPORTANT	Office use	
8. HOW IMPORTANT DO YOU REGARD THE FOLLOWING ASPECTS OF THE SERVICE OFFERING AT FAST FOOD OUTLETS? (Please answer EVERY QUESTION. Mark the number with an X which is most applicable to you)							
Convenient child menu	1	2	3	4	5	V8.17	
Availability of suggestion boxes	1	2	3	4	5	V8.18	
Taste of food	1	2	3	4	5	V8.19	
Two-way video screen at drive-through window	1	2	3	4	5	V8.20	
Short waiting lines	1	2	3	4	5	V8.21	
Employees wearing name tags	1	2	3	4	5	V8.22	
Well prepared food	1	2	3	4	5	V8.23	
Good customer service	1	2	3	4	5	V8.24	
Caring, communicating servers	1	2	3	4	5	V8.25	
Clean employee work area	1	2	3	4	5	V8.26	
Nutritional information given on food	1	2	3	4	5	V8.27	
Sincerely attending to customer problems	1	2	3	4	5	V8.28	
Availability of a play area for kids	1	2	3	4	5	V8.29	
Convenient seating facilities	1	2	3	4	5	V8.30	
Early-hour operation	1	2	3	4	5	V8.31	
Quality of the food	1	2	3	4	5	V8.32	
Respectful employees	1	2	3	4	5	V8.33	
Caring, communicating managers	1	2	3	4	5	V8.34	
Neatly dressed employees	1	2	3	4	5	V8.35	
Health food choices	1	2	3	4	5	V8.36	
Availability of toys in kids' play area	1	2	3	4	5	V8.37	
Spacious internal area	1	2	3	4	5	V8.38	
Clean workers	1	2	3	4	5	V8.39	
Being greeted with a smile by employees	1	2	3	4	5	V8.40	
Fresh tasting food	1	2	3	4	5	V8.41	
Quiet ambience (Low-noise eating atmosphere)	1	2	3	4	5	V8.42	
Having a consumer complaint toll free number	1	2	3	4	5	V8.43	
Being told when order will be ready	1	2	3	4	5	V8.44	
Polite and courteous servers	1	2	3	4	5	V8.45	
Showing concern for the environment	1	2	3	4	5	V8.46	
Food served at the right temperature	1	2	3	4	5	V8.47	
Accommodate children	1	2	3	4	5	V8.48	
Employees with nice personality	1	2	3	4	5	V8.49	
Clean tables	1	2	3	4	5	V8.50	
Display of government health certification	1	2	3	4	5	V8.51	
Hours of operation	1	2	3	4	5	V8.52	
Making customers feel at ease	1	2	3	4	5	V8.53	
Variety of menu choices	1	2	3	4	5	V8.54	
Availability of double drive-through windows	1	2	3	4	5	V8.55	
Cordial attendants (Good mannered)	1	2	3	4	5	V8.56	
Playing of background music	1	2	3	4	5	V8.57	

Section C						Office use	
9. HAVING USED FAST FOOD OUTLETS IN THE PAST, HOW DID THE SERVICE OFFERING AT FAST FOOD OUTLETS MEET YOUR EXPECTATIONS? (i.e. how well do they perform in terms of the various aspects of the service offering)?	NOT IMPORTANT	OF LITTLE IMPORTANCE	MODERATELY IMPORTANT	IMPORTANT	VERY IMPORTANT		
<i>(Please answer EVERY QUESTION. Mark the number with an X which is most applicable to you)</i>							
Clean facilities	1	2	3	4	5	V9.1	
Filling orders accurately	1	2	3	4	5	V9.2	
Friendly employees	1	2	3	4	5	V9.3	
Keeping the fat low on food served	1	2	3	4	5	V9.4	
Child menu coming with toys	1	2	3	4	5	V9.5	
Display of consumer complaint toll free number	1	2	3	4	5	V9.6	
Comfortable seats	1	2	3	4	5	V9.7	
Single waiting line for all customers	1	2	3	4	5	V9.8	
Late-hour operation	1	2	3	4	5	V9.9	
No crowding	1	2	3	4	5	V9.10	
Being asked if anything else is wanted	1	2	3	4	5	V9.11	
Clean rest rooms	1	2	3	4	5	V9.12	
Employees with good hygiene	1	2	3	4	5	V9.13	
Getting correct change	1	2	3	4	5	V9.14	
Employees serving with a smile	1	2	3	4	5	V9.15	
Keeping the kilojoules low on food served	1	2	3	4	5	V9.16	
Convenient child menu	1	2	3	4	5	V9.17	
Availability of suggestion boxes	1	2	3	4	5	V9.18	
Taste of food	1	2	3	4	5	V9.19	
Two-way video screen at drive-through window	1	2	3	4	5	V9.20	
Short waiting lines	1	2	3	4	5	V9.21	
Employees wearing name tags	1	2	3	4	5	V9.22	
Well prepared food	1	2	3	4	5	V9.23	
Good customer service	1	2	3	4	5	V9.24	
Caring, communicating servers	1	2	3	4	5	V9.25	
Clean employee work area	1	2	3	4	5	V9.26	
Nutritional information given on food	1	2	3	4	5	V9.27	
Sincerely attending to customer problems	1	2	3	4	5	V9.28	
Availability of a play area for kids	1	2	3	4	5	V9.29	
Convenient seating facilities	1	2	3	4	5	V9.30	
Early-hour operation	1	2	3	4	5	V9.31	
Quality of the food	1	2	3	4	5	V9.32	
Respectful employees	1	2	3	4	5	V9.33	
Caring, communicating managers	1	2	3	4	5	V9.34	
Neatly dressed employees	1	2	3	4	5	V9.35	
Health food choices	1	2	3	4	5	V9.36	
Availability of toys in kids' area	1	2	3	4	5	V9.37	
Spacious internal area	1	2	3	4	5	V9.38	
Clean workers	1	2	3	4	5	V9.39	
Being greeted with a smile by employees	1	2	3	4	5	V9.40	
Fresh tasting food	1	2	3	4	5	V9.41	

Section C continued.....						Office use
9. HAVING USED FAST FOOD OUTLETS IN THE PAST, HOW DID THE SERVICE OFFERING AT FAST FOOD OUTLETS MEET YOUR EXPECTATIONS? (i.e. how well do they perform in terms of the various aspects of the service offering?)						
<i>(Please answer EVERY QUESTION. Mark the number with an X which is most applicable to you)</i>						
NOT IMPORTANT	OF LITTLE IMPORTANCE	MODERATELY IMPORTANT	IMPORTANT	VERY IMPORTANT		
1	2	3	4	5	V9.42	
1	2	3	4	5	V9.43	
1	2	3	4	5	V9.44	
1	2	3	4	5	V9.45	
1	2	3	4	5	V9.46	
1	2	3	4	5	V9.47	
1	2	3	4	5	V9.48	
1	2	3	4	5	V9.49	
1	2	3	4	5	V9.50	
1	2	3	4	5	V9.51	
1	2	3	4	5	V9.52	
1	2	3	4	5	V9.53	
1	2	3	4	5	V9.54	
1	2	3	4	5	V9.55	
1	2	3	4	5	V9.56	
1	2	3	4	5	V9.57	

Section D										Office use		
PLEASE TELL US MORE ABOUT YOURSELF.												
Answer every question and mark every relevant answer with an X												
1. What is your gender?					Male	1	Female	2			V10	
2. What is your age at your last birthday?								<input type="text"/>	<input type="text"/>	Years	V11	
3. What is your highest level of education?		Lower than grade 10	1	Grade 10 or 11	2	Grade 12	3	Degree/diploma	4	Post graduate	5	V12
4. What is your approximate total monthly HOUSEHOLD INCOME?		Less than R5000	1	R5000 to R9999	2	R10000 to R14999	3	R15000 to R24999	4	R25000 or more	5	V13
5. What population group do you belong to according to the SA Population Equity Act?												
White	1	Black	2	Indian	3	Coloured	4	Other:	5		V14	
6. What is the name of the suburb where you live in Gauteng? Please specify:											V15	

Thank you for your participation!