

## CHAPTER 7

### CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATIONS

#### 7.1 INTRODUCTION

The previous chapter presented the empirical findings of the study and these were discussed in detail. This chapter provides an overview of the literature study, while the research objectives, research questions and hypotheses are revisited and interpreted. The hypotheses are furthermore accepted or rejected based on the statistical techniques executed in Chapter 6. The contribution to the science and limitations of the study is indicated, together with the recommendations for further research into this field. The chapter ends with a summary and conclusion to the study.

#### 7.2 SUMMARY OF THE CHAPTERS

A review of each chapter of this thesis is presented next.

##### 7.2.1 Background and definition of the study

Chapter One discussed the background of the study and presented the problem statement as well as the primary and secondary objectives of the study. The chapter also presented an overview of the scope of the study. In so doing, it examined the rationale and conceptualisation of the study, thereby laying a foundation for the subsequent chapters of the thesis that were outlined. The chapter further formulated a number of research questions that were answered, and it also stated the hypotheses that were tested in the study.

## 7.2.2 Services and an introduction to quality

This chapter provided a critical review of literature about the concepts of services and quality. A distinction was first made between service quality and customer satisfaction. The literature revealed that it is important to distinguish between the two concepts, although clear distinctions were not always found in the literature. Traditionally, service quality and customer satisfaction were viewed as equivalent constructs but some degree of consensus among scholars were found in the literature that these are indeed distinctive constructs. The most popular definition of service quality in the literature is based on the so-called “disconfirmation approach” where customer satisfaction is said to be a comparison between customer expectations and perceptions regarding the actual service encounter (Bateson & Hoffman, 2010:295; Kasper *et al.*, 2006:105). It has been suggested that service quality is descriptive and based on fact (the customers’ judgement about the service itself), while satisfaction is more evaluative and based on emotion (more of a judgement of how the service affects the customer emotionally) (Schneider & White, 2004:51).

Empirical evidence was found in the literature that perceived service quality leads to satisfaction (Al-Hawari & Ward, 2006:140; Cristobal *et al.*, 2007:332; Dabholkar & Overby, 2005:23; Dagger & Sweeney, 2006:6; Fisk *et al.*, 2008:155; Gounaris *et al.*, 2010:150; Hume, 2008:349; Kasper *et al.*, 2006:105; Lundahl *et al.*, 2009:588; Maddern *et al.*, 2007:1013; Pantouvakis & Lymperopoulos, 2008:623; Pollack, 2008:537; 2009:46; Solvang, 2007:120; Zhang *et al.*, 2009:81). It was suggested that service quality creates a chain reaction with regard to customer satisfaction and customer loyalty in the establishment of enduring relationships with service firms (Fisk *et al.*, 2008:153). The assumption was therefore made that this notion also holds true for the relationship between small business tenants in shopping centres and their landlords. If the small business tenant is experiencing high service quality from the landlord, they will be more likely to remain at their location in the shopping centre and the landlord would not need to waste money on marketing and other related costs to fill the vacancy.

This research study though, concentrated on service quality as the spark that ignites the chain reaction towards customer satisfaction and positive behavioural intentions from the small business tenants. High service quality is thus viewed as an important aspect that needed investigation in the relationship between landlords and small business tenants in shopping centres.

With regard to the concept of services, it was found that it has changed considerably during the past 30 years. In earlier work found in the literature, the characteristics of services were viewed as a means to explain services and, it was believed that services should be defined by emphasising the difference between services and goods. Although many scholars admit that the distinction between goods and services is not always very clear, it is generally accepted that they are not distinct. These scholars believed that there is an important interdependence between goods and services, where some services may require physical goods to support and facilitate the delivery system and some physical goods may have intangible aspects. The view of Shostack (1977), that services can be arrayed on a continuum of intangibility, with pure services at the one extreme of the continuum and pure goods at the other extreme were widely accepted by researchers. Services offered by landlords to small business tenants in shopping centres were regarded as a good example of services that fall between the two extremes of the continuum.

Chapter Two further reported on the lively debate in the literature about the differences between goods and services. Several scholars like Akehurst (2008), Araujo and Spring (2006), Corrêa *et al.* (2007), Vargo and Lusch (2004b) and Ward and Graves (2007) were of the opinion that the differences between goods and services became increasingly blurred and regarded it as out of date, unproductive, distracting and irrelevant. It was found that in the early seventies, Levitt (1972) insisted that there are no such things as service industries, only industries whose service components are greater or less than those of other industries. The literature further revealed that more than 30 years later, Vargo and Lusch (2004a:5) emphasised the importance of service businesses by, maintaining that services become the unifying purpose of any business relationship – a service-dominant rather than a goods-dominant environment.

The literature cited from the scholarly work of Edvardsson *et al.* (2005), Grönroos (1988), Grönroos (2006), Lovelock and Wirtz (2011) and Moeller (2010) were in agreement with the fact that it is difficult to define a service. A more recent view in the literature on the definition of a service was found to be that of Lusch and Vargo (2011) and Vargo and Lusch (2004) where they base their definition of a service on the so-called value-in-use view: “the application of specialised competences, through deeds, processes and performances for the benefit of another entity or the entity itself”. According to this more recent view in the literature, value is created when products, goods or services are used by customers.

It was found that many textbooks and research articles still complement their discussion of what services are by differentiating between goods and services by means of the characteristics of services (Bateson & Hoffman, 2011; Chase *et al.*, 2006; Evans & Lindsay, 2008; Fisk *et al.*, 2008; Fitzsimmons & Fitzsimmons, 2006; Heizer & Render, 2006; Hollensen, 2010; Kasper *et al.*, 2006), to mention only a few. The characteristics of services (intangibility, inseparability, heterogeneity and perishability) as discussed in the literature by several scholars were therefore also discussed in Chapter 2. Several criticisms on these four characteristics were however found in the literature and were briefly discussed as well.

As far as the concept of quality is concerned, the reviewed literature revealed that the understanding and improving of quality are key factors leading to business success, growth and competitiveness. The meaning of quality was discussed in this chapter from Garvin’s (1984) proposed approaches, namely the transcendent approach, the product-based approach, the user-based approach, the manufacturing-based approach and the value-based approach.

### **7.2.3 Service quality**

The third chapter presented a review of the literature on service quality. The literature covered a brief review of perceived quality as a concept and also covered several service quality models. It was found in the literature that scholars like Grönroos (1988), Parasuraman *et al.* (1986), Schneider and White (2004) and Zeithaml (1988) have

expressed a preference for the concept “perceived quality”. They argued that all quality evaluations in effect are subjective, because these are made by people. Therefore, perceived quality was cast as “the customer’s judgement about a service’s overall excellence or superiority” and it was found in the literature that perceived quality is influenced by aspects such as extrinsic attributes (brand name and level of advertising), intrinsic attributes, and perceptions of lower-level attributes (perceived monetary price and reputation).

It was found in the literature that the debate on service quality revolved mainly around two competing perspectives, termed the Nordic school (Scandinavian or European) and the American school. The Nordic school defined service quality using overall categorical terms and included the aspects of technical- and functional quality. The American school on the other hand, used descriptive terms and included *inter alia* the five dimensions of reliability, responsiveness, assurance, empathy and tangibles in their definition.

In this chapter, it was also revealed that Grönroos (1984; 1988) was amongst the first scholars that called for conceptual models of service quality in order to understand the concept better. It was found that during the past approximately 15 years, at least 30 industry-specific scales and models of service quality have been published in the literature on service quality. A summary of 13 of the most important of these models are presented in Table 7.1.

**Table 7.1: Summary of service quality models**

Model	Key findings	Limitations/suitability for this study
1. Technical and functional quality model of Grönroos.	Service quality depends on technical quality, functional quality and corporate image of the organisation in consideration. Functional quality is regarded as more important than technical quality.	The model was not considered for this study because it does not offer an explanation on how to measure functional and technical quality.
2. SERVQUAL model of Parasuraman <i>et al.</i>	The model is an analytical tool. It enables management to systematically identify service quality gaps between a number of variables affecting the quality of the offering. The model is externally focused. It can assist management in identifying the relevant service quality factors from the viewpoint of the consumer.	The model was not considered for this study because, to measure expectations as well as perceptions, would have made the questionnaire relatively complicated and time-consuming.
3. SERVPERF model of Cronin and Taylor.	Uses only the perceptions part of the SERVQUAL scale. Measures service quality experiences only and not customer expectations as well. It directly reduces the number of items by 50 %.	The model was considered for this study because it was found that the five dimensions suited the landlord-small business tenant relationship in shopping centres. By measuring only the perceptions, made the questionnaire less complicated and more economical to administer.
4. Attribute service quality model of Haywood-Farmer.	This model provides a base of segregating service organisations on three dimensions for better management of quality. These dimensions are physical facilities, people's behaviour elements and professional judgement. The model enhances understanding of the concept of service quality.	The model was not considered for this study because it did not offer an instrument for measuring service quality. It did not offer a practical procedure capable of helping management to identify service quality problems or practical means of improving service quality.

Table 7.1 continues on the next page.

**Table 7.1: Continued**

Model	Key findings	Limitations/suitability for this study
5. The dynamic process model of Boulding <i>et al.</i>	This model attempt to provide insights into the process by which customers form judgements of service quality and the way these judgements affect subsequent behaviour. Customers' perceptions and expectations change over time, and the model claim to test the relationships between expectations, perceptions and intended behaviour.	The model was not considered for this study because it did not offer an instrument for measuring service quality. The model merely has enhanced understanding of service quality and behavioural intentions of customers.
6. The three-component model of Rust and Oliver.	The three components of this model are the service product, the service delivery and the service environment.	The model was not considered for this study because it did not offer an instrument for measuring service quality.
7. The return-on-quality approach of Rust <i>et al.</i>	The model advocates that the dimensions of measuring service quality should be related to the organisation's business processes. The model concentrates on making the quality improvement efforts financially viable.	The model is based on customer retention or repurchases behaviour and did not offer a practical procedure to identify service quality problems and, was therefore not considered for this study.
8. The P-C-P attribute model of Philip and Hazlett.	Provides a simple, effective and general framework of assessing service quality for any service sector. The model highlights the area of improvements for service quality depending on the frequency of the encounter. The dimensions to these three levels of attributes are individual sector-dependent and with reference to the consumer.	The model did not provide general dimensions to the three levels of attributes. It also lacked empirical validation and, was therefore not considered for this study.

Table 7.1 continues on the next page.

**Table 7.1: Continued**

Model	Key findings	Limitations/suitability for this study
9. The antecedents model of Dabholkar <i>et al.</i>	Service quality is better visualised by its antecedents rather than its components. This model can provide a complete understanding of service quality and how these evaluations are formed. Customer satisfaction should be evaluated separately from service quality when trying to determine customer evaluations of service.	The model measured behavioural intentions rather than actual behaviour and was not considered for this study.
10. The hierarchical approach of Brady and Cronin.	Service quality is a multidimensional, hierarchical construct. Perceptions are based on evaluations of three primary dimension, outcome, interaction and environmental quality, which have each three sub-dimensions. The three sub-dimensions will first be evaluated and will influence evaluation of the primary dimensions that will lead to an overall service quality perception.	The model was not considered for this study because it did not offer an instrument for measuring service quality and, few efforts have been made to provide empirical evidence for this hierarchical structure.
11. Grönroos's model as adapted by Kang and James.	Technical, functional and image should be measured to fully capture overall perceptions of service quality. Grönroos's model is empirically tested and the five-factor structure of SERVQUAL is confirmed. Other than most other models, it is believed that technical quality can be assessed by customers.	The model was not considered for this study because the technical quality- and image dimensions did not play a big role in the landlord-small business tenant relationship.
12. Kang's hierarchical structure of service quality.	The five-factor structure as proposed by SERVQUAL is confirmed and represents the functional quality dimension of perceived service quality. This model provides empirical evidence for the claim that perceived service quality is based on technical quality and functional quality components.	Few efforts have been made to provide empirical evidence for this hierarchical structure. It also did not offer an instrument for measuring service quality.

Table 7.1 continues on the next page.



**Table 7.1: Continued**

<b>Model</b>	<b>Key findings</b>	<b>Limitations/suitability for this study</b>
13. Carr's FAIRSERV model.	The five SERVQUAL dimensions are accepted for measuring service quality, but equity (fairness) is added as an important dimension. It is felt that customers are concerned with getting what they deserve in relation to other customers of the same service. Their evaluation of the fairness of the service encounter will have an influence on their overall perception of service quality.	Since small business tenants in shopping centres often feel that they are treated unfairly in comparison with the bigger anchor tenants, especially in relation to leasing fees and location, it was considered to add a "fairness" dimension to SERVQUAL's five dimensions.

The chapter was concluded by the decision that the SERVPERF instrument will be used to measure the perceived service quality that small business tenants receive from their landlords. From the extensive literature review, it was found that the five dimensions of service quality proposed by this instrument (reliability, responsiveness, assurance, empathy and tangibles) fitted in with the relationship between the landlord and small business tenants in shopping centres. Since it was found in the literature that small business tenants in shopping centres often feel that they are treated unfairly, it was decided that a dimension of the FAIRSERV model will be included in this study's model.

#### **7.2.4 Small business tenants in shopping centres**

This chapter started off with a critical review of literature about the importance of small businesses for a country's economy, and the importance of the correct location for small businesses. Next, shopping centres as a good location for small businesses were discussed. In this respect, it was found that the concept of enclosed shopping centres became popular during the 1950s and early 1960s due to the decline of business within many Central Business Districts. Several scholars like Beyard and O'Mara (in Kajalo & Lindblom, 2010) and Goedken (2006), found that shopping centres have been the most successful retail business concept for the last 50 years and, have become the most powerful and adaptable machine for consumption that the world has ever seen. It was also revealed in the literature that shopping centres play a major role in customers' lifestyles where it became a community centre for social and recreational activities.

The literature revealed that, during the past few years, the market for some shopping centres in the USA has been declining. It has consequently been found that this should be all the more reason for shopping centre landlords in South Africa to improve their efforts in providing high quality services to their tenants.

Berman and Evans (2010), Goedken (2006), Levy and Weitz (2009) and Pitt and Musa (2009) defined a shopping centre as "a group of retail and other commercial establishments

that is planned, developed, owned and managed as a single property, with on-site parking provided”. Various types of shopping centres in South Africa were discussed, mainly from the work of Berman and Evans (2010), Levy and Weitz (2009) and Prinsloo (2010). These included small free standing and convenience centres with five to 25 stores, neighbourhood centres with 25 to 50 stores, community centres with 50 to 100 stores, small regional shopping centres with 75 to 150 stores, regional centres with 150 to 250 stores, and super regional centres with more than 250 stores. Other centres that were identified were lifestyle centres with 50 to 125 stores and value or strip centres with 20 to 40 stores.

Chapter 4 further reviewed literature on shopping centres as investments. The literature cited, particularly from Pitt and Musa (2009), Muller (2008) and Singh *et al.* (2010), showed that shopping centres are built by developers and sold to the institutional investment community. It was found that a great deal of the estimated 1 300 shopping centres in South Africa are owned by pension funds, life insurance companies, listed property groups and private developers. The main focus of these owners was found to be the maximising of profit for their investors. In order to do this and, to ensure the success of the shopping centre, the literature revealed the importance of managing the shopping centres effectively.

In this chapter the marketing and financial success of a shopping centre was found to be dependent on several factors, of which the importance of the right tenant mix was recognised to be the most critical factor. Greenspan (1997) defined tenant mix as “having a variety of stores that work well together to enhance the performance of the entire centre as well as performing successfully as individual businesses. Work by El-Adly (2007) and Ibrahim and Galven (2007) indicated that the most important element of survival for shopping centres lies with its tenants. In the literature reviewed, these tenants in shopping centres were divided into two types, namely traffic attractors and traffic users. A traffic attractor was identified as the tenant that draws the human traffic to the shopping centre and controls the customer movement patterns within the centre. These tenants are called anchor stores. The traffic users were typically found to be the stores that depended on the visitors drawn by the anchor stores. Small business tenants in shopping centres are typically traffic users. It was also found in the literature that landlords are well aware of the fact that the

realisation of a maximum return on their investment requires the presence of these anchor tenants. This was found to be one of the reasons why anchor tenants are able to enjoy rents per square metre that are far less than the rents of the smaller independent retailers.

The observations drawn from Damian *et al.* (2011), Carlson (1991), Ibrahim and Galven (2007) as well as that of Jones (2007), revealed that the success of individual tenants, as well as the success of the entire shopping centre, are interdependent and are enhanced by the cumulative synergy generated by the tenant mix. With regard to the landlord-tenant relationship in shopping centres, a review of the work of Roberts and Merrillees (2003), Whyatt (2008) as well as Yu and Ramanathan (2008) revealed that shopping centres include a complex network of internal and external relationships that can impact on the operations and working environment of the centre. The most important and most critical of these relationships were found to be the one between landlords and the tenants. In this regard, Howard (1997) suggested that a partnership approach among all the tenants and shopping centre management is the key for the success of the centre, as collaboration in the relationships provides mutual benefits and synergies.

It was found in the literature that it is of particular importance for landlords to ensure that their tenants stay with them, as the costs of attracting new tenants are much higher than the costs of keeping the present tenants. It therefore became clear that landlords in shopping centres will have to be proactive in the area of service quality. The work of Gray (1992) indicated that the measuring of service quality can help landlords to identify the areas that can provide them with a competitive edge and, those areas that need to be improved upon.

Chapter 4 further reviewed literature on the landlord-tenant contract of lease and set out the terms and conditions of such a contract. Crosby *et al.* (2006) pointed out that the lease terms can inhibit or facilitate certain aspects of the day-to-day operation and substantially affect cash flow for the tenant's business. Jacobsberg (2009) found that it is significantly important for small business tenants to employ an appropriate professional to help them through the process of negotiating a lease.

The definition and classification of small businesses in terms of the National Small Business Amendment Act, Act 26 of 2003, were also given in this chapter. Lastly, the role of small businesses in shopping centres was reviewed and it was found that shopping centres with a high volume of pedestrian traffic are seen as good locations for their businesses. The literature also reviewed that, although landlords realise the importance of accommodating small independent businesses in their centres, small independent businesses are still at a competitive disadvantage regarding several issues. Chapter 4 concluded with literature that revealed that small businesses often fail due to a deficiency in areas such as business knowledge, money, customer service, merchandising and marketing.

### **7.2.5 Research design and methodology**

This chapter discussed the research design and methodology adopted in this study. The chapter examined the research methods, population, sample, as well as the data collection and data analysis techniques used in the study.

Data were collected from the sample by the researcher, with the help of two field workers. An official introductory letter and consent form were obtained from the University of Pretoria to assure respondents that the collected data were purely for academic purposes and that their responses will be treated as strictly confidential. The data were coded and entered into the Microsoft Excel programme. This helped to edit and screen the data before it was imported into the BMDP statistical programme that analysed the data by means of descriptive and inferential statistical techniques deemed appropriate for the research questions and hypotheses of the study.

### **7.2.6 Research findings**

This chapter presented and discussed the findings obtained from an analysis of the data. The chapter described the sample from which the data was collected. The sample consisted of small business tenants in shopping centres in Pretoria, South Africa. The majority of these

small business tenants were from the retail goods sector and most of the respondents were managers of the businesses. The business demographics and the personal demographics of the respondents were presented and discussed. The results on the perceived service quality that respondents received from landlords were presented with each variable's mean score and standard deviation. It was found that the statement that rated the highest on mean score was from SERVPERF's tangible dimension namely, "There is sufficient parking at the centre" (mean score of 3,5820). The statement that rated the lowest on mean score was from the fairness dimension of FAIRSERV namely "In general, small tenants are treated the same as bigger tenants" (mean score of 2,1969).

The chapter further presented factor analysis in order to confirm the validity and reliability of the measuring instrument, and two distinct factors were identified namely, intangibles as well as marketing and tangibles. The mean scores of these factors were found to be 2,8812 and 2,9903 respectively and is an indication that the respondents were in general dissatisfied with the overall perceived service quality that they received from the landlords.

The chapter also presented and discussed the findings in response to the research objectives, research questions and hypotheses of the study.

### **7.3 RESEARCH OBJECTIVES REVISITED**

The need to conduct this study arose as small business tenants in shopping centres felt that they were prejudiced by landlords that favour bigger, well-known retailers, mainly for economic reasons. As a result, the perception was that the service quality that they received from their landlords left a lot to be desired. The purpose of the study was therefore to measure the perceived service quality that small business tenants in shopping centres received from their landlords. The realisation of this purpose has been guided by a primary objective and six secondary objectives.

The primary and secondary objectives of the study are revisited and presented.

### 7.3.1 Primary objective revisited

The primary objective of the study was to measure the perceived service quality that small business tenants in shopping centres receive from their landlords.

The primary objective of the research was achieved, as the perceived service quality that small business tenants in shopping centres receive from their landlords was measured by the use of the combined SERVPERF and FAIRSERV model. Factor analysis was done on variables from the questionnaire used in this study and the two factors that were identified were: Factor 1, intangibles and Factor 2, marketing and intangibles.

**Table 7.2: Perceived service quality of landlords' service to small business tenants**

FACTOR	FINDINGS
Factor 1: Intangibles	The mean score for this factor was 2,881 (standard deviation 0,634), indicating that respondents were in general more dissatisfied than satisfied with the intangible factor of service quality that they receive from landlords.
Factor 2: Marketing and tangibles	With respect to the marketing and tangible aspect, the mean score was 2,990 (standard deviation 0,784), indicating that more respondents were dissatisfied than satisfied with the marketing and tangibles aspect of service quality that they receive from landlords.

Table 7.2 illustrates that more respondents were in general dissatisfied than satisfied with the overall perceived service quality that they received from their landlords. They were more dissatisfied though, with the intangible aspect of service quality that they receive from landlords.

### 7.3.2 Secondary objectives revisited

The secondary objectives of the study were to:

- Determine whether the combined SERVPERF and FAIRSERV model of service quality, in its original form, will be suitable to measure the perceived service quality that small business tenants in shopping centres receive from their landlords.
- Determine whether there are statistical significant differences regarding the perceived service quality that small business tenants receive from landlords, with regards to the position of the respondent within the business.
- Determine whether there are significant differences regarding the perceived service quality between small business tenants who have been in the centre for a short time and those who have been in the centre for long.
- Determine whether there are significant differences regarding the perceived service quality between small business tenants who have been a tenant in other shopping centres before and, those who have never been a tenant in another shopping centre.
- Determine whether there are significant differences regarding the perceived service quality between small business tenants who had no business experience prior to leasing in the shopping centre and those who had business experience.
- Determine whether there are significant differences regarding the perception of service quality received by small business tenants from landlords of different types of shopping centres in Pretoria.

The first secondary objective was met as follows:

The questions of the questionnaire were set according to the SERVPERF and FAIRSERV service quality models. Factor analyses were used to discover the underlying constructs that explain the variance and, it was found that only two distinct dimensions of service quality



were identified, namely **intangibles**, and **marketing and tangibles**. This was found to be contrary to what was suggested by the SERVPERF and FAIRSERV service quality models. The models suggested six service quality dimensions namely, reliability, responsiveness, assurance, empathy, tangibles and fairness. Although elements of these dimensions were retained in the two factors, it was clear that small business tenants in shopping centres only rated the perceived service quality received from the landlord according to the intangibles and the marketing and tangibles dimensions. The conclusion was therefore made that the combined SERVPERF and FAIRSERV service quality models, in its original form, were not suitable to measure the perceived service quality that small business tenants in shopping centres receive from their landlords.

The other secondary objectives were met as follows:

ANOVA was conducted in order to establish whether relationships exist between the factors and the independent variables. The results are depicted in Table 7.3 on the next page.

Table 7.3 is presented on the next page.

**Table 7.3: Relationships in terms of respective independent variables**

<b>FACTOR</b>	<b>Independent variable</b>	<b>FINDINGS</b>
<b>Intangibles</b>	Respondents' position in the business.	With a p-value of 0,2951, it is clear that no statistical significant difference was found between the respondents' position in the business and this aspect of perceived service quality (Table 6.10).
	Period as tenant in the centre.	It was found that there were no statistical significant differences between the period of time that the small business tenants were at a particular shopping centre and this aspect of perceived service quality (p-value: 0,3462).
	Tenant in other shopping centres before.	There were statistical significant differences regarding the perception of service quality between small business tenants regarding to whether they have been a tenant in other shopping centres before.
	Business experience prior to leasing in centre	There were statistical significant differences regarding the perception of service quality between small business tenants who had no or little business experience prior to leasing in the shopping centre and those who had business experience.
	Types of shopping centres.	There were statistical significant differences regarding the perceived service quality that small business tenants receive from landlords, with regards to the type of shopping centre they were leasing from.
<b>Marketing and tangibles</b>	Respondents' position in the business.	It was found that there were no statistical significant differences between the period of time that the small business tenants were at a particular shopping centre and this aspect of perceived service quality (p-value: 0,3462).
	Period as tenant in the centre.	There were statistical significant differences regarding the perception of service quality between small business tenants who have been a tenant in the centre for a short time and those who have been a tenant for long.

Table 7.3 continues on the next page.

**Table 7.3: Continued**

<b>FACTOR</b>	<b>Independent variable</b>	<b>FINDINGS</b>
<b>Marketing and tangibles</b>	Tenant in other shopping centres before.	There were statistical significant differences regarding the perception of service quality between small business tenants regarding to whether they have been a tenant in other shopping centres before.
	Business experience prior to leasing in centre	The respondents' perceptions of the marketing and tangible aspects of service quality were not influenced by their previous business experience.
	Types of shopping centres.	There were statistical significant differences regarding the perceived service quality that small business tenants receive from landlords, with regards to the type of shopping centre they were leasing from.

## 7.4 RESEARCH QUESTIONS REVISITED

A summary of the findings in response to the research questions of the study is presented in Table 7.4.

**Table 7.4: A summary of the findings in response to the research questions**

<b>Research Questions</b>	<b>Findings</b>
<b>Research question one:</b> Are small business tenants in shopping centres generally satisfied with the quality of service they receive from landlords?	With mean scores of 2,881 (standard deviation 0,634) for the intangibles aspect and 2,990 (standard deviation 0,784) for the marketing and tangibles aspect of service quality, it can be concluded that the respondents were in general not satisfied with the service quality that small business tenants in shopping centres receive from their landlords

Table 7.4 continues on the next page.

**Table 7.4: Continued**

Research Questions	Findings
<p><b>Research question two:</b> Is the combined SERVPERF and FAIRSERV service quality model, in its original form, suitable for measuring the perceived service quality that small business tenants in shopping centres receive from their landlords?</p>	<p>Although several of the elements of the five SERVPERF dimensions were found to be relevant, the factor analysis showed that these elements are divided into only two distinct factors, namely intangibles and, marketing and tangibles. The five separate dimensions as suggested by the SERVPERF model, namely reliability, responsiveness, assurance, empathy and tangibles were found not to be relevant to the landlord-small business relationship in shopping centres. Most of the FAIRSERV elements that were added to the measuring instrument were retained after the factor analysis, but it was not identified as a separate dimension of perceived service quality. It was therefore found that the combined SERVPERF and FAIRSERV model, in its original form, is not suitable for measuring the perceived service quality that small business tenants in shopping centres receive from their landlords.</p>
<p><b>Research question three:</b> Are there any significant differences regarding the perceived service quality provided by landlords to small business tenants depending on their position in the business?</p>	<p>There were no significant differences regarding the perceived service quality that small business tenants receive from landlords, with regards to the position of the respondents in the business. This was the case for both the intangibles construct, and the marketing and tangibles construct of service quality. These findings show that it made no difference whether the respondents were the owners, managers, owners and managers or any other full-time employees of the business when it came to their perception of service quality received from the landlords.</p>
<p><b>Research question four:</b> Are there any significant differences regarding the perception of service quality received by small business tenants who have been a tenant in the centre for a short time and those who have been a tenant for long?</p>	<p>With respect to the service quality construct intangibles, there were no statistical significant differences regarding the perception of service quality between small business tenants who have been a tenant in the centre for a short period of time and those who have been a tenant for long. This was however, not the case with the service quality construct marketing and tangibles, where a statistical difference was found for this variable. The respondents' perceptions of the intangibles aspects of service quality were therefore not influenced by how long they have been tenants in the shopping centre. Their perceptions of the marketing and tangible aspects of service quality were on the other hand, influenced by the length of their tenancy.</p>

Table 7.4 continues on the next page.

**Table 7.4: Continued**

Research Questions	Findings
<p><b>Research question five:</b> Are there any significant differences regarding the perceived service quality received by small business tenants who have been a tenant in other shopping centres before and those who have never been a tenant in other shopping centres before?</p>	<p>There were statistical significant differences regarding the perceived service quality that small business tenants receive from landlords, with regards to whether they have been a tenant in other shopping centres before and whether they have never been a tenant in other shopping centres. This was the case for both the intangibles construct, and the marketing and tangibles construct of service quality. The respondents' perceptions of perceived service quality were significantly influenced by their previous tenancies in other shopping centres.</p>
<p><b>Research question six:</b> Are there any significant differences regarding the perceived service quality received by small business tenants who had no business experience prior to leasing in the shopping centre and those who had business experience?</p>	<p>With respect to the service quality construct intangibles, there were statistical significant differences regarding the perception of service quality between small business tenants who had no or little business experience prior to leasing in the shopping centre and those who had business experience. This was however, not the case with the service quality construct marketing and tangibles, where no statistical difference was found for this variable. The respondents' perceptions of the intangibles aspects of service quality were therefore influenced by their previous business experience. Their perceptions of the marketing and tangible aspects of service quality were, on the other hand, not influenced by their previous business experience.</p>
<p><b>Research question seven:</b> Are there any significant differences regarding the perception of service quality received by small business tenants, from landlords of different types of shopping centres in Pretoria?</p>	<p>There were statistical significant differences regarding the perceived service quality that small business tenants receive from landlords, with regards to the type of shopping centre they were leasing from. This was the case for both the intangibles construct, and the marketing and tangibles construct of service quality. The respondents' perceptions of perceived service quality were significantly influenced, depending on the type of shopping centre they were leasing from.</p>

## 7.5 HYPOTHESES REVISITED

A summary of the findings obtained from testing of the null hypotheses is presented in Table 7.5 on the next page

**Table 7.5: Findings from testing of the Null Hypotheses**

HYPOTHESES	FINDINGS	
<p><b>H1o:</b> Small business tenants in shopping centres are in general not satisfied with the service quality they receive from landlords.</p> <p><b>H1a:</b> Small business tenants in shopping centres are in general satisfied with the service quality they receive from landlords.</p>	Null accepted and alternative rejected.	
<p><b>H2o:</b> The combined SERVPERF and FAIRSERV model of service quality, in its original form, will not be suitable to measure the perceived service quality that small business tenants in shopping centres receive from their landlords.</p> <p><b>H2a:</b> The combined SERVPERF and FAIRSERV model of service quality, in its original form, will be suitable to measure the perceived service quality that small business tenants in shopping centres receive from their landlords.</p>	Null accepted and alternative rejected.	
<p><b>H3o:</b> There are no significant differences regarding the perceived service quality that small business tenants receive from landlords' depending on the position of the respondent in the business.</p> <p><b>H3a:</b> There are significant differences regarding the perceived service quality that small business tenants receive from the landlords, irrespective of what the position of the respondent in the business is.</p>	<b>Intangibles factor</b>	<b>Marketing and tangibles factor</b>
	Null accepted and alternative rejected	Null accepted and alternative rejected

Table 7.5 continues on the next page.

Table 7.5: Continued

HYPOTHESES	FINDINGS	
	Intangibles factor	Marketing and tangibles factor
<p><b>H4o:</b> There are no significant differences regarding the perception of service quality between small business tenants who have been a tenant in the centre for a short period of time and those who have been a tenant for a longer period of time.</p> <p><b>H4a:</b> There are significant differences regarding the perception of service quality between small business tenants who have been a tenant in the centre for a short period of time and those who have been in the centre for a longer period of time.</p>	Null accepted and alternative rejected	Null rejected and alternative accepted
<p><b>H5o:</b> There are no significant differences regarding the perceived service quality between small business tenants who have been a tenant in other shopping centres before and those who have never been a tenant in other shopping centres.</p> <p><b>H5a:</b> There are significant differences regarding the perceived service quality between small business tenants who have been a tenant in other shopping centres before and those who have never been a tenant in other shopping centres .</p>	Null rejected and alternative accepted	Null rejected and alternative accepted
<p><b>H6o:</b> There are no significant differences regarding the perceived service quality between small business tenants who had no or little business experience prior to leasing in the shopping centre and those who had business experience.</p> <p><b>H6a:</b> There are significant differences regarding the perceived service quality between small business tenants who had no or little business experience prior to leasing in the shopping centre and those who had business experience.</p>	<p><b>Intangibles factor</b></p> <p>Null rejected and alternative accepted</p>	<p><b>Marketing and tangibles factor</b></p> <p>Null accepted and alternative rejected</p>

Table 7.5 continues on the next page.

**Table 7.5: Continued**

HYPOTHESES	FINDINGS	
	Intangibles factor	Marketing and tangibles factor
<p><b>H7o:</b> There are no significant differences regarding the perception of service quality that small business tenants receive from landlords/centre management of different types of shopping centres in Pretoria.</p> <p><b>H7a:</b> There are significant differences regarding the perception of service quality that small business tenants receive from landlords/centre management of different types of shopping centres in Pretoria.</p>	Null rejected and alternative accepted	Null rejected and alternative accepted

#### 7.4 CONTRIBUTION/NEW KNOWLEDGE GENERATED BY THE STUDY

This study has comprehensively revealed and documented the nature of the perceived service quality that small business tenants in shopping centres in Pretoria, South Africa receive from their landlords. This study was the first of its kind in South Africa. There are several instruments available to measure perceived service quality, but none of them had been used previously in determining the unique relationship between small business tenants in shopping centres and their landlords. The major contribution of the study is a validation of the SERVPERF dimensions in a landlord-small business tenant relationship. This study proves that these five dimensions of SERVPERF and the one dimension of FAIRSERV cannot be applied directly to the landlord-small business tenant relationship in shopping centres and will need to be adjusted and adapted to add more service quality dimensions, especially on the tangible items.

Further contributions to the science are as follows:

- The latest theory on perceived service quality and small business tenants in shopping centres has been organised, captured and documented. This can assist in the increase



of the body of knowledge on service quality and the relationship between landlords and small business tenants in shopping centres.

- No research has been done on the perceived service quality that small business tenants in shopping centres receive from their landlords. The results of this study can be used by landlords in an effort to improve their service quality as well as their image to small business tenants.
- The findings can assist small businesses to assess a specific shopping centre's landlord before deciding to lease from that landlord. A more informed decision can therefore be taken.

## 7.5 LIMITATIONS OF THE STUDY

This study is only a starting point for the measuring of service quality in a landlord-small business tenant relationship in shopping centres. It is thus not suggested that the concepts, findings, conclusions and recommendations as discussed in the study are definitive. It should be kept in mind that this research study could be incomplete and may have deficiencies. Given the exploratory nature of the research, the reader should be aware of the following limitations of the study, namely:

- The sample frame that was used in the study was from shopping centres in one city only, namely Pretoria, South Africa. It is thus important to be aware that any references made in this study regarding any part of the universe should not be read to be representing the population, but rather seen in context of the sample frame that was used.
- This research study is confined to the landlords' provisioning of service quality to small business tenants in shopping centres. It may not be possible to generalise into other industries, though with continued research similar constructs could materialise. Parasuraman, *et al.* (1988:23) emphasised this when considering the SERVQUAL model, as there are idiosyncrasies in every industry and not all dimensions of the model may be relevant in all industries.

- Although the researcher might have assured the participants of the anonymity of their responses, participants might still have been cautious in the amount of information that they have divulged. Small business tenants especially, might not have shared information freely because they might have felt that their responses could have been held against them by landlords.

## 7.6 RECOMMENDATIONS FOR FURTHER RESEARCH

Collecting data on the perceived service quality that small business tenants in shopping centres receive from their landlords has a very clear importance and further research in service quality in this relationship is still required. It is clear that the landlord-small business tenant relationship in shopping centres is a unique one. This is not a normal “business-customer” relationship as the small business tenants and the landlord are interdependent. They need one another for their survival. This study has contributed results and research approaches that could stimulate further research on this important issue.

The following opportunities for further research were identified during the course of this research study, namely:

- A study to determine specific service quality dimensions that would be pertinent for a landlord-small business tenant relationship in shopping centres.
- A study to develop a specific model for measuring perceived service quality that small business tenants in shopping centres receive from landlords.
- A comparative study between small business tenants and bigger anchor tenants in shopping centres with regard to the perceived service quality they receive from their landlords.
- A comparative study between the perceived service quality that small business tenants in shopping centres in other cities and other provinces of South Africa receive from their landlords.

## 7.7 CONCLUSION

The literature review of this study introduced various important elements within the field of perceived service quality and, specifically in the context of service quality measurement models. The literature review also introduced shopping centres as important business locations for small businesses and the unique relationship between them and the landlords. During this chapter the major aspects of service quality and small businesses in shopping centres were highlighted and the objectives that showed that the objectives of the study were met were revisited. Furthermore, the research questions and hypotheses were revisited, summarised and indicated whether they were rejected or accepted.

The findings from the empirical part of this study have helped to highlight the important aspects of service quality that is considered as important by small business tenants as well as their level of satisfaction with these aspects. This study has shown that small business tenants in shopping centres are in general not satisfied with the perceived service quality that they received from landlords. This study has further shown that the combined SERVPERF and FAIRSERV models of service quality, in its original form, are not suitable to measure the perceived service quality that small business tenants in shopping centres have received from their landlords. An important finding is the fact that only two distinct dimensions of perceived service quality were found to be pertinent in this relationship. The study has shown that small business tenants in shopping centres are concerned about the intangible, softer issues, and the marketing and tangibles issues of service quality received from the landlords. Small business tenants in shopping centres basically want to be treated with respect and courtesy by the landlord and, they want the landlord to assure them of continued and sufficient foot traffic to the centre as well as to their stores.

Hopefully the findings of the study will serve as a motivation and a guideline for landlords of shopping centres to assess their quality of service that they provide to their small business tenants and that they will get insight in the aspects of service quality that is most important for small business tenants.