



RESEARCH REPORT

WORKING TITLE: Investigating Service Quality Perceptions of consumers at Consolidated Store Holdings (CSH) stores in Johannesburg.

**by LSD. Pestana
14018008**

Varsity College Pretoria

IIE VC HBCp

2020

Supervisor: Ghazala Begum Essop

Word Count: 10357

This document was written by a student in fulfilment of the assessment requirements of IIE VC BCOMM/BA Honours Management. The paper is a scholastic document and contains facts and opinions, which the author alone considered appropriate and correct for the subject. It does not necessarily reflect the official policy or the opinion of Varsity College.

TABLE OF CONTENTS

1	INTRODUCTION	7
1.1	CONTEXTUALISATION.....	7
1.2	RATIONALE.....	8
1.3	PROBLEM STATEMENT	9
1.4	PURPOSE STATEMENT	9
1.5	OBJECTIVE	9
1.6	RESEARCH QUESTION	10
2	LITERATURE REVIEW	10
2.1	THEORETICAL FOUNDATION	10
2.2	CONCEPTUALISATION	11
2.2.1	Service Quality.....	11
2.2.2	Service Quality Dimensions	12
2.2.3	Customer Satisfaction.....	14
2.2.4	Customer Loyalty	15
2.2.5	Consumer behaviour.....	15
2.2.6	Consumer perception.....	16
2.3	DETAILS OF THE PROBLEM/ISSUE BEING INVESTIGATED	16
3	METHODOLOGY	21
3.1	RESEARCH PARADIGM	21
3.2	RESEARCH DESIGN AND APPROACH.....	22
3.3	POPULATION AND SAMPLING	23
3.3.1	Population.....	23
3.3.2	Sampling.....	24
3.4	DATA COLLECTION METHODS.....	25
3.5	DATA ANALYSIS METHODS	26
3.6	FINDINGS AND INTERPRETATION OF FINDINGS	27
3.6.1	Validity	41
3.6.2	Reliability	42
4	ANTICIPATED CONSIDERATIONS	42
5	ETHICAL CONSIDERATIONS AND LIMITATIONS	43

5.1	ETHICAL CONSIDERATIONS.....	43
5.2	LIMITATIONS	44
6	RECOMMENDATIONS.....	45
6.1	SCOPE FOR FUTURE STUDY	47
7	CONCLUSION.....	47
8	LIST OF REFERENCES.....	48

DECLARATION

I hereby declare that the Research Report submitted for the Bcomm Honours Management degree to The Independent Institute of Education is my own work and has not previously been submitted to another University or Higher Education for degree purposes.

This document was written in fulfilment of the assessment requirements of IIE VC BCOMM Honours Management. The paper is a scholastic document and contains facts and opinions, which the author alone considered appropriate and correct for the subject. It does not necessarily reflect the official policy or the opinion of Varsity College.

Acknowledgements

Throughout the writing of this Research Report I have received a great deal of support and assistance.

To God Almighty, Jesus Christ, who gave me strength to work through one of the toughest periods of my life. Thank you for blessing me abundantly.

This dissertation is dedicated to the memory of my late brother, Miguel Agostinho Dos Santos Pestana, who passed away when I was a toddler. He did not get the opportunity to grow up, go to school and study for a degree like I have. I pray to you to always keep me safe, happy and healthy and I know that you are the most proud of what I've achieved as your baby sister.

To my whole family who supported me – thank you for all the love and patience you all gave me.

To mommy and daddy, thank you for always keeping me motivated and being so proud of my work during the past year of my research. Every little “wow well done” and “that’s a great mark” kept me motivated and dedicated to give my best and work hard. “You’re almost done and almost have another degree”, that time has finally come. Thank you for giving me the great opportunity to further my studies and grow my knowledge in what I have chosen to study.

To my siblings, my life long best friends:

To my baby sister Gianina, thank you for always being so proud of every little achievement throughout this year and for always keeping me motivated. From every peep through my room door to say “finish your work” and walk away with a giggle, to all the iced coffee breaks and walks, you’ve kept me calm throughout it all.

To my older brother Daniel, thank you for helping me with my research when I felt like it all came crashing down. Your calmness and patience helped me work through a tough part of my research and made me write a better version of what I had.

To my younger brother Ronaldo, a special thank you to you for being patient with me whenever I walked into your room with my laptop and a bunch of papers asking for help. Even though you were busy completing your Honours as well, you would always find the time to put your work aside to help me.

A special thank you to my best friend and boyfriend. You have pushed me to become a better version of myself by always motivating me to be the absolute best I could. Thank you for listening to my endless phone calls and video calls where I'd read aloud and show you all my work. Your constant support, motivating talks and comforting hugs are the main reason I have gotten through this year and completed my study. Thank you for all your love, patience and understanding throughout this year.

Thank you to my supervisor Ghazala Begum Essop for the great guidance, support and for always being a phone call or text message away when I needed any help. Your kind heart and happy personality helped to stay motivated and work hard to also make you proud. You've been a great mentor and supervisor and I am extremely happy that I got the opportunity to work on my research with you.

Lastly, I am sincerely grateful to CSH as a whole and to all the participants who put a minute or two aside to participate in my study.

Abstract

Service quality, customer satisfaction and consumer behaviour have become the primary focus of service organizations in today's customer era. Service Quality is viewed as the output for the service delivery system. The definition of service quality is threefold. Physical quality is viewed as all of the tangible aspects of services offered. Interactive quality makes use of the nature of services in an interactive way, which links the flow between a customer and service provider. Corporate quality is the image of the service provider in the eyes of its customers (Lehtinen & Lehtinen, 1982).

The purpose of this research study was to investigate service quality perceptions of consumers at Consolidated Store Holdings (CSH) stores in Johannesburg. The SERVQUAL questionnaire was used as an instrument to measure consumers' expectations and perceptions according to tangibles and reliability. The fifteen consumers that participated in this study were selected from a CSH store in Johannesburg by use of convenience sampling. Descriptive statistics were used in this study. The study revealed that expectations were higher than perceptions. Both dimensions, tangibles and reliability, scored a negative result which denotes the need for improvement. The negative gap score found was indicative of dissatisfied consumers and that service quality exists in CSH. Conclusions and recommendations were made from the findings of the study.

1 INTRODUCTION

1.1 CONTEXTUALISATION

The purpose of this study is to investigate the service quality perceptions of consumers at Consolidated Store Holdings (CSH). Competition in the corporate environment in South Africa has increasingly become more aggressive over the years due to globalisation and technology (Naidoo, 2012: 1). Intense competition and changing technologies in the corporate environment has led to an increase in customer awareness and sophistication. Customers are now demanding even higher standards of services, therefore customer satisfaction and service quality are the primary focus of service organizations (Devnarrian, 2011: 1). The rapid increase in competition in the corporate environment has forced companies to think about differentiating strategies and more inventive ways to attract and satisfy their customers and give them the best quality services possible.

In December 2017, the formation of Unitrade Investment Holdings (UIH) was announced. Unitrade Investment Holdings (UIH) comprises of two operating entities: Unitrade Management Services (UMS) and CSH.

Unitrade Management Services is a dynamic, innovative and excellence-driven Voluntary Trading Association. This group was established to contribute to the success and sustainability of the independent wholesale and retail market in South Africa. Unitrade Management Services provides business solutions to independent Fast Moving Consumer Goods (FMCG) wholesale and retail traders, assisting these entrepreneurs to successfully compete in all arears with corporate chains (Our History - UMS, 2020).

CSH has a cohesive group of entrepreneurs who are united in their power of price and power of promotion under their brands. They have various national footprints of Fast Moving Consumer Goods (FMCG) branded stores across South Africa. These stores include retail format stores, wholesale and hybrid stores, large scale wholesale distribution centres and banner group stores (Save A Lot, 2020).

The foundation of CSH was built on previous members' stores that were bought and taken over by UMS. For the purpose of this study, the focus will be on CSH and the researcher will be investigating the perceptions and expectations of consumers at CSH.

Research has found that the higher the level of customer satisfaction, the higher the level of customer loyalty and word of mouth recommendations (Sambasivan, Guan Cheng, Kasiri & Sidin, 2016: 91-97). It is important that any organization like CSH adopts their customers definition of service quality which will give them a competitive advantage. The main goal is to meet the needs of the target population which are the current and potential customers of CSH. This is the key element in defining service quality within any organization (Naidoo, 2012: 1). This study will measure the service quality at Consolidated Store Holdings which will indicate whether consumers are satisfied with the services offered by CSH. Marketers are aware of how important service quality is for an organizations long-term survival. Service quality is an asset in any organization (Devnarrian, 2011: 2).

1.2 RATIONALE

By means of this study, the researcher aims to provide information and awareness to the organization on how to keep service quality high and to make adjustment to it if the organization does come across a defect in their service quality operations. This research task involves the researcher gathering information from consumers at CSH to collect the needed data. By making use of certain theories and concepts. The aim of this research is to highlight the importance of service quality in FMCG's, to see how consumers perceive these services and what they expect from the services offered to them by CSH.

Service quality is a big part of any organization as it is the backbone of any business. As any organization grows, like CSH has in the past few years, competition has become more aggressive and there is a greater need to measure the service quality offered (Devnarrian, 2011: 3). This topic needs to constantly be re-evaluated to get the organization to grow and ensure good service quality. This study will help the researcher

find evidence of how service quality is managed at the CSH stores in Johannesburg. Through this extensive research, CSH and the researcher will be able to identify the gaps that exist in service quality at a corporate level and give assistance to better produce ways for the service quality and the delivery thereof to improve.

1.3 PROBLEM STATEMENT

There is a deficiency of research done on service quality at this organization. There is a lack of research done on the perspectives and expectations of the consumers at CSH. The study will measure service quality at CSH which will indicate whether consumers are satisfied with the services offered by the organization. Marketers are aware of how important service quality is for an Institutions long-term survival. Service quality is an asset in any organization (Devnarrian, 2011: 2). The objective of this study is to investigate consumer perceptions on service quality at CSH stores in Johannesburg.

1.4 PURPOSE STATEMENT

The purpose of this study is twofold. Firstly, this study will critically explore the responses of consumers at CSH on the service quality at the organization. Secondly, the study will go into depth on how the service industry at CSH can be improved if needed.

1.5 OBJECTIVE

The researcher has identified three objectives that are relevant and shape this research.

- To investigate how service quality at CSH affects their consumers
- To identify the different consumer perceptions of the service quality at CSH
- To measure the service quality at CSH by making use of an adapted version of a SERVQUAL questionnaire

1.6 RESEARCH QUESTION

- With regards to tangibles and reliability, what are the perceptions of service quality among consumers at Consolidated Store Holdings (CSH)?
- With regards to tangibles and reliability, what are the service quality expectations of consumers at CSH?
- Are there any gaps between perceptions and expectations of consumers?

2 LITERATURE REVIEW

2.1 THEORETICAL FOUNDATION

This theory is a quantitative study which makes use of an adapted version of SERVQUAL, where service quality is the difference between customer expectations and their perceptions (Oh, 1999: 68). Conducting quantitative research in this particular field includes the use of questions in the form of a survey to form the base of this study's findings. Researching service quality at CSH will provide a portal of reasoning as to why and where the organization can improve on their service delivery if needed. This study is based on reality and on a large group of consumers with the use of a descriptive study (Maree, 2016: 307).

Service is a product that requires customer involvement. The perceived quality of a service will be evaluated by consumers and compared to their expectations and reality of the service they receive (Grönroos, 1984: 37).

Quality is described as the degree to which the service, process and service organization satisfies their customer's expectations and it is viewed as the extent to which a service satisfies a customer's needs, wants and expectations (Devnarrian, 2011: 21).

2.2 CONCEPTUALISATION

2.2.1 Service Quality

Service quality is the main and most important theory in this study, as it focuses on the consumers that will be evaluated and their perceptions and expectations on the service quality of CSH. It is necessary to have a good understanding of service quality to be able to move forward with this study. The definition of service quality is threefold. Physical quality is viewed as all of the tangible aspects of services offered. Interactive quality makes use of the nature of services in an interactive way, which links the flow between a customer and service provider. Corporate quality is the image of the service provider in the eyes of its customers (Lehtinen & Lehtinen, 1982).

Lovelock and Wirtz (2007), as cited by Naidoo (2012) described five perspectives of services quality, which are:

- The transcendent view of quality which is synonymous with excellence; known as a mark of very high standards and achievements. This viewpoint argues that people can learn to recognize quality through experience which isn't the case.
- The product-based view shows quality as a precise and measurable variable. It is said that differences in quality reflects differences in the amount of something one needs for a product. This view does, however, fail to account for the differences in taste, preferences and needs for customers.
- The user-based view states that quality mainly lies in the eye of the beholder. In other words, different customers will always have differentiating preferences and taste.
- The manufacturing-based view is mainly supply-based and focuses on engineering and manufacturing activities.
- The value-based view looks at quality and focuses on its value and price by evaluating the trade-off between performance and price. Quality in the end is basically defined as “affordable excellence”.

After reviewing some of the different views and definitions on service quality cited by Naidoo (2012), the researcher agrees on the user-based definitions of quality, because each consumer will have a unique way of thinking and looking at the experience they receive from their organization.

2.2.2 Service Quality Dimensions

Devnarrian (2011: 26) mentions that SERVQUAL has its theoretical foundations in the gaps model. He further goes on to define service quality as the difference between customer expectations and performance perceptions.

As researched by Devnarrian (2011), the SERVQUAL instrument has five difference dimensions which express how a customer views service quality. These dimensions include:

1. Assurance

Assurance is the dimension that addresses an consumers knowledge, courtesy and their ability to inspire trust and confidence in a client. This dimension is important to services because consumers are constantly confronted with a high level of uncertainty when it comes to evaluating the outcomes of a service. CSH must constantly provide assurance that their employees have the ability to convey trust and confidence in their consumers (Devnarrian, 2011: 28). CSH already has a strong brand so it is very easy for them to convey trust and confidence.

2. Empathy

Empathy is a way of providing care and individualised attention to all consumers. The main message that this dimension highlights is that all consumers are unique and special in their own way. Empathy causes the consumers to feel that the organization actually cares about them during the service process (Ansary, Jayashree & Malavizhi, 2014: 99). Staff at CSH needs to always listen, understand and communicate with each and every one of their consumers.

3. Reliability

Reliability is the ability to perform the service as promised and as accurately and dependably as possible. These services should be available to consumers whenever they need it and it should fully satisfy their needs and desires (Ansary, Jayashree & Malavizhi, 2014: 100). Many organizations tend to oversell their services which leads to a large discrepancy between promise and delivery. Providing a service and meeting deadlines as promised will influence a consumer's perception in a good way. CSH is seen as a strong brand among other organizations that has already established itself in the corporate environment due to the way they have always been reliable.

4. Tangibles

Tangibles are something you can physically see and use like, products, equipment, store appearance and technology and equipment needed. This dimension of service quality is the first impression that consumers get from an organization and it will be their view towards the organization (Ansary, Jayashree & Malavizhi, 2014: 100). The tangibles at CSH stores in Johannesburg must add value to their customers and give them the best shopping experience.

5. Responsiveness

Responsiveness is the willingness of an organization and their staff to help consumers and provide them with the best service. This dimension deals with the attentiveness and promptness of consumer questions, complaints and problems. Responsiveness is present in the time where consumers wait for help or receive information on their problems. The staff at CSH must always be ready and willing to help consumers. Staff at CSH needs to be knowledgeable about the services they present (Devnarrian, 2011: 28).

2.2.3 Customer Satisfaction

According to Oliver (1981), customer satisfaction is measured using the expectancy-disconfirmation theory. Customers are usually satisfied by a specific product or service as a result of the direct comparisons found between their perceptions and expectations. Customer satisfaction is a very important aspect in any organization as they always have to be sure that their customers receive the best quality services to keep them satisfied and happy with their products and services.

Lovelock and Wright (2002: 87) has a different definition of customer satisfaction which states that customer satisfaction is a kind of emotional reaction that can arise from an experience and it is a customer's fulfilment response.

Customer satisfaction is basically measured by how happy a customer is with the services they receive from a specific organization. With the use of surveys, the researcher will be able to measure the level of satisfaction reached by their target market.

Customer satisfaction and service quality are two distinct concepts, but also closely related. According to research done by (Devnarrian, 2011: 37), there is a positive relationship between these two concepts. Satisfaction is based on a customers expectations and perceptions of service quality. In other words, while the quality of a service is being produced, the service supply and consumption is also taking place, which is the exact moment that customer satisfaction and service quality exists together (Devnarrian, 2011: 37).

Customers in all organizations experience different degrees of satisfaction. A customer is fully satisfied when the service they receive meet their expectations and they are even more delighted when the service exceeds their expectations (Kotler & Keller, 2006: 16). Service quality should be viewed in the same light as customer satisfaction. Delighting a customer with great service that outweigh their expectations can highly improve customer satisfaction which will lead to an organization having a competitive edge. (Zeithaml, Bitner & Gremler, 2006: 45,107).

2.2.4 Customer Loyalty

Customer loyalty is defined as a commitment to re-purchase a certain product or service consistently in the future without competition and other influences trying to change a customers' mind (Sambasivan, Guan Cheng, Kasiri & Sidin, 2016). Customer loyalty is usually referred to as a consequence of the different experiences that a customer has with an organization and also as the link between a customers' attitude, their way of re-purchasing and their financial performance (Ngo & Nguyen, 2016). A study done by Lee, Lee and Kang (2012), proved that an organization can improve customer satisfaction and loyalty by making their operations more efficient, employee engagement and service quality. They found that a higher work performance can stimulate consumer reaction and the quality of their services.

In other words, customer satisfaction and customer loyalty go hand in hand and loyalty, in turn, is linked to the performance of an organizations services. Customers will continue to increase the use of a product or service from a certain organization due to their loyalty and the good services they receive from the organization and then, in turn, will they recommend that same organization to other potential customers.

2.2.5 Consumer behaviour

In short, consumer behaviour is defined as dealing with how consumers purchase products and services and also why. Lautiainen (2015) states that consumer behaviour studies when a customer selects, purchases, uses and disposes products, ideas and services. According to Solomon, Bamossy, Askegaard and Hogg (2006), consumer behaviour is the study of a process focusing on what customers select, purchase, use or dispose of in regards to products and services to satisfy their needs and desires. They also state that a consumer is a person who identifies a need or desire and then purchases and exposes a product or services during the consumption process.

2.2.6 Consumer perception

Consumer perception is defined as apprehending by means of the senses and the mind of consumers. In other words, perception relates to all basic senses as well as formed experiences and it incorporates aspects of consumer behaviour. Consumer perceptions can be changed and are not guaranteed to stay the same and it is difficult to predict how and when it will change (Troy & Kerry, 2010). Perception is the process of gathering, processing and interpreting information from the environment and the ability to understand the true nature of a product or service (Hornby & Turnbull, 2010). How a customer perceives a specific product or service is important for an institution like CSH in the sense that it will affect a consumers decision.

Customers have many needs and desires that are very similar. They try to satisfy their needs in various ways, depending on how they perceive their needs and the environment in which they operate in. Perceptions that customers have on a corporate company will have a dramatic effect on their buying behaviour, in other words, their choice of retail or wholesale shopping. Corporate companies like CSH spend a lot of money marketing themselves and doing whatever it takes to influence the perceptions of their potential customers.

2.3 DETAILS OF THE PROBLEM/ISSUE BEING INVESTIGATED

Unitrade Management Services (UMS) commenced trading in September 2001 with 9 employees and one member. Over the years they have grown to 122 employees, 275 member outlets, 4 division and 106 members in June 2016. Since then, UMS has taken over other smaller companies and bought them over which comprises the 12 stores under CSH. CSH is the corporate division of UMS. These stores assists UMS in hitting their targets and reaching higher pay outs from suppliers (Our History - UMS, 2020).

As time goes by and technology changes, organizations like CSH have to continuously be on the lookout for new inventions and ideas to keep their consumers happy with the services that they provide. Organizations like CSH can look at introducing more

technology at their head office to increase the overall quality within their services offering. There is a deficiency of research done in the area of service quality at CSH. Service industries in South Africa are playing an increasingly vital role in the economy. Service quality in the corporate environment is increasingly important as service quality promotes customer satisfaction, encourages recommendations and repeat customers. Customer preferences and expectations and their demand for better quality is constantly on the rise, which means that providing the best quality services is the main goal (Devnarrian, 2011: 7). Since the 1980's the importance of great service quality has been directly related with increased profitability and superior competitive advantage. Service quality, the most important aspect of any organization has been suggested as a way of gaining a competitive advantage over other National institutes (Landrum, Prybutok & Zhang, 2007: 104).

Service quality in all corporate environments can be defined as a way that consumers measure how services are delivered to them and if the quality of these services matches their expectations (Zungu & Lekhanya, 2018). This means that the quality of services delivered is defined by the consumers receiving it and not by CSH itself.

South African organizations like CSH are increasingly attracting foreign customers to South Africa which helps them acquire income from foreign sources, which in turn forces organizations like CSH to have a competitive edge. This competitive edge that they need can easily be service quality. CSH needs to focus on enhancing and maintaining a high level of service quality that will attract and retain international customers to its wide range of product offerings (Naidoo, 2012: 54).

Quality dimensions within the corporate environment refers to quality in terms of how skilled staff is, the good facilities, equipment, offices, board rooms, good administration and the safety of (Naidoo, 2014). Quality in the corporate environment refers to a set of attributes, dimensions and characteristics that relates to retail and wholesale services. If quality is present then the organization will have a bigger opportunity to fulfil an customers' needs based on their traits and desires (Saif, 2014).

It is very important for management to understand that there are different service quality expectations in the corporate environment and they need to know which strategies to develop to attract the attention of their target market and to also retain their loyal consumers.

Naidoo (2012: 52-53), cited four types of market segment strategies that are great to be utilized by organizations, these are:

1. The market penetration strategy which is where the organization focuses on already existing markets and services. The main aim of this strategy is to exploit their current consumer segments with services that already exist.
2. The service development strategy focuses on market segments that already exist that have new services. These new services can be sold to already existing customers.
3. The market development strategy is where the service provider makes sure to focus on only new markets that have services that already exist.
4. The diversification strategy is achieved by paying close attention to both new markets and new services.

The corporate environment is used as way of giving back to the community and people living in rural areas. CSH has done this over many years and still continue to do so. CSH runs a 'Back to School' competitive where children get the opportunity to colour in a picture provided by the company from which 5 of the best are chosen and CSH pays for their school uniform and stationary for one whole school year. Recent examples of CSH and their Corporate Social Responsibility is shown where they provided food for people that lost their homes in fires that broke out in Khayelitsha and the 'Feeding the Poor' campaign to help feed those in need during the Covid-19 Pandemic our country and the rest of the world is facing (Save A Lot, 2020)

At UMS and CSH, they prescribe to a culture of "Life-long Learning" and believe that by engaging their employees in internal training, they are investing in the future of their own

organization. Their academy offers all employees at UMS the opportunity to participate in:

- Online and Introduction training
- Formal, Outsourced Learning
- New Hire On-boarding
- Group training and workshops

Through all of those initiatives their employees are able to improve on their current skills, stay updated on new industry trends and give them the opportunity to build relationships with other employees (UMS Academy Advantage - UMS, 2020). With employees and staff constantly being trained and updated on new ways of working, consumers will always have access to great services.

It is important for marketers at CSH to identify the correct way of offering great services. An organization like CSH needs to gather a lot of data on the expectations of their consumers all the time. Surveys can be carried out to identify the behaviour of consumers in the specific target market (Naidoo, 2012: 51).

According Parasuraman, Berry and Zeithaml (1991), understanding consumer expectations is a prerequisite for delivering great service. Consumers compare perceptions and experiences with expectations when they judge an organizations services. They also stated that consumers all expect service basics, that the service process in any institute is key to exceeding consumer expectations and that consumer service expectations are dual levelled and dynamic. The expectations of consumers at UMS is their viewpoints around the actual services delivered. It is important for UMS and all their stores to note that not all consumers have the same expectations and desires and they all differ when it comes to tolerating the lack of good service quality (Zungu & Lekhanya, 2018). Retail and wholesale in the corporate environment is a service, which is why CSH needs to pay large amounts of attention to their service quality. Service quality, when focusing on the satisfaction of consumers, is new field of concern (Devnarrian, 2011: 13).

If a consumer at CSH or any organization has a lot of knowledge on how services should be delivered and the quality thereof, their expectations of quality might be sky high. Zungu and Lekhanya (2018), states that meeting consumer expectations and satisfying all their needs and desires are the most important aspects of an organization. They also define perception as a process of selecting, organizing and presenting information to produce a meaning and paint a picture.

Global competition between service providers is to render services to satisfy the desires of consumers. Service quality, also known as SERVQUAL has become very important in developing countries. Retail and wholesale services all over the world attempt to measure service quality for the purpose of improving their services and to stay in the competitive market. Quality is an issue that cannot be avoided in the retail and wholesale environment at present. What organizations do to ensure high quality is what will keep attracting consumers.

According to Bunoti (2011), in developing countries, retail and whole sale services in the corporate environment is recognized as a key force for modernisation and development. Research done by (Bunoti, 2011) stated that consumers shopping at organizations in Uganda reported having limited access to the proper technology to make purchases and the appearance of the stores were not up to par with regulations. Consumers agreed that managers and staff at these organization were not skilled and trained enough to deal with simple consumer queries.

The retail and wholesale environment is a resource that earns the most revenue for many nations including Malaysia. According to Ansary, Jayashree & Malavizhi (2014: 115), studies have proved that organizations in Malaysia should improve their services in terms of responsiveness from different consumer perspectives. This may lead to more foreign consumers doing business with these organizations.

3 METHODOLOGY

3.1 RESEARCH PARADIGM

According to Du Plooy-Cilliers (2014), a paradigm represents what the researcher thinks about the world. All the actions, including the ones taken as inquiries in the world, cannot occur without referencing paradigms. The paradigm best suited for the research of service quality is postpositivism. Postpositivists accept that values, theories and knowledge of the researcher. To their belief, reality is mentally constructed by individuals (Du Plooy-Cilliers, 2014). Maree (2016: 59) has described postpositivism and critical theory as being research traditions that occupy the space between positivism and constructivism. Postpositivists say that objective reality can only be seen as one aspect of reality (Maree, 2016: 59). The service quality of CSH can be seen in this light because it is the reality of consumers and their perceptions and expectations on how or how not services should be delivered.

In order for this research to be conducted in an appropriate manner, the researcher has to understand the various paradigms that are needed within this study, namely: ontology, epistemology and axiology (Du Plooy-Cilliers, 2014: 23-24).

In this study, a postpositivism research paradigm will be used to come up with new strategies to improve on the already existing service quality.

An ontological approach to research is necessary because students perceptions change dramatically in this tradition. This tradition understands that people's perceptions change as reality changes. Once new perceptions and factors are brought forward, it can be used to UMSs' advantage to make the most of changing their strategies to accommodate employees (Du Plooy-Cilliers, 2014: 23).

Epistemology or empathy is important because common sense and reality is what guides people daily. The researcher can make use of this tradition to challenge the views and knowledge of different consumers. This tradition will be helpful to the researcher as it will bring to light objective views and knowledge (Du Plooy-Cilliers, 2014: 23).

Axiology is important and used to measure the uniqueness of the realities and consists of the understanding of value and things that are valuable. The researcher will take advantage of the opportunity to discuss the values that make up their whole sample without passing judgement (Du Plooy-Cilliers, 2014: 31). The main reason the researcher is gathering and making use of this research is to fully understand and be able to describe the perceptions and expectations of consumers at CSH stores in Johannesburg and to further evaluate their behaviour and satisfaction to the service quality they receive.

3.2 RESEARCH DESIGN AND APPROACH

This study is quantitative and descriptive by nature so the researcher will make use of a non-experimental survey design to evaluate service quality at CSH stores in Johannesburg. This research will be organized in a way to find the appropriate answers in an appropriate manner. Quantitative research aims to gather data and information using measurement, to analyse this found data and then to verify the measurements made. Quantitative research is considered a way of thinking about the present world. Quantitative research is preferred by the researcher as it is easily comparable and it carries a high amount of credibility. Surveys are very often used in the gathering of research and information and these frequently involve sending out questionnaires but can also be conducted by observation. Surveys are useful for gathering big amounts of data to describe specific samples and populations in greater detail.

Watson (2014) did research on surveys and found that surveys may be either cross-sectional or longitudinal. Cross-sectional studies are very easy to conduct, as they only have to be done once and never again. This information can then immediately be taken to be evaluated. Longitudinal studies are more complex as they require repeated surveys which can be conducted over several years. The researcher will make use of a cross-sectional study to conduct surveys as it is less time consuming and less costly.

To gather more data and information to complete this study, the researcher will make use of survey-based questions. The surveys will include questions by making use of two of the five different dimensions of the SERVQUAL instrument which are assurance, empathy, reliability, tangibles and responsiveness. Due to the worldwide Covid-19 pandemic and the South African government enforcing a nation-wide lockdown to keep South African citizens safe, the surveys will be adapted and be given to employees with their purchase and asked to fill it in. The surveys will be collected by the store manager from all the cashiers at the end of the day and then the researcher will be contacted to fetch all the surveys.

Conducting quantitative research in this particular field included the observation and investigation of the quality of service quality offered at CSH and how their consumers receive and perceive these services.

3.3 POPULATION AND SAMPLING

3.3.1 Population

A research population is a specific collection of individuals that have similar characteristics. The researchers assessable target population will be made up of consumers at CSH. The researcher has identified consumers at CSH stores in Johannesburg as having similar characteristics. A study will be conducted with the use of surveys that will be given to consumers at till points. Due to the Covid-19 pandemic South Africa and the rest of the world is facing, the researcher will not be able to have direct access to consumers and be in direct contact with those completing the surveys.

With reference to Du Plooy-Cilliers (2014), the following has been considered regarding the population in this study:

- The consumers at CSH will be the participants in this study.
- The target population is the consumers that fall within the population parameters of the study.

- The accessible population will be consumers at CSH stores in Johannesburg who will be included into the study.

3.3.2 Sampling

Sampling is known as the process of selecting a specific unit from a population that the researcher has chosen to study. The sample of this study will include consumers that mostly shop at CSH stores in Johannesburg. By making use of a sample, the researcher will be able to gain insight and generalise the results with respect to the rest of the population (Trochim, 2020). The sample size does not represent the population chosen by the researcher.

The researcher will make use of Convenience Sampling in the research of service quality and perceptions of consumers at CSH. Convenience Sampling refers to specific situations where the population elements are chosen based on the fact that they are easily and conveniently available (Maree, 2016: 197). Convenience Sampling will be used by the researcher as it is fast, efficient and cost effective. Samples need to be chosen carefully and accurately, as asking too many consumers that shop at CSH will not be suitable to this study to come up with an accurate answer. After getting permission from managers at CSH stores in Johannesburg to administer surveys and receive the ethical clearance needed, the researcher will engage with the with the help of managers by handing out the surveys at till points to complete surveys and gather the data needed (Quinlan et al., 2015). The sample age of this study ranges from 18 and above, reason being that there are many young customers as they are students who live alone or help their parents with shopping and all other ages of consumers that do shopping for their homes on a day to day basis.

The researcher made sure the participants met specific criteria needed to participate in the study. These criteria included:

- Being a consumer at CSH
- Being a consumer CSH stores in Johannesburg

- Having personally experienced the service quality and customer service quality of CSH

The researchers accessible target market was made up of the customers who currently shop at UMS stores in Johannesburg. Reasons for the researcher making use of consumers that shop at CSH stores in Johannesburg is that they are easily accessible and there are more stores.

3.4 DATA COLLECTION METHODS

Throughout the course of this study, both Primary and Secondary data collection methods will be used. Primary data is data that is created for the research project and is often used in studies that have limited information. After conducting a literature review, the researcher decided that primary data should be developed. The researcher will obtain the primary data with the use of surveys to gather data for the study. Primary data is used to answer specific questions and statements only.

Secondary research will be the existing information found by doing research on a specific topic. Secondary data is derived through information that has already been researched before and it is data that already exists, such as government statistics. (Du Plooy-Cilliers, 2014). While conducting the literature review, the researcher made use of the CSH website and academic articles that have already conducted research on Fast Moving Consumer Goods (FMCG) and service quality. This secondary information will be used to help the researcher conclude their research question.

The researcher will make use of a self-structured SERVQUAL questionnaire to determine consumers perceptions of service quality at CSH stores in Johannesburg. A survey is the assessment of current status, opinions and beliefs by questions from a known population (Maree, 2016: 174). CSH consumers are going to be used to administer the questionnaires. This data will be collected at the store and 10 – 15 questions will be used to assess consumers perceptions and expectations of service quality. A five-point Likert

scale will be used to measure the attitudinal variables with 1 being strongly disagree to 5 being strongly agree. SERVQUAL will be used as it made to develop reliable research which is what the researcher wants. The researcher will make use of surveys handed out by management of the store. Due to the current pandemic, the researcher will not be able to be in direct contact with CSH consumers (Quinlan C., 2015).

3.5 DATA ANALYSIS METHODS

Data analysis is the process of systematically applying logical techniques to illustrate and evaluate the data found. This is the step after all the data has been collected. For the purpose of this paper, data will be processed and analysed through a statistical programme called SPSS.

The data that the researcher will be gathering through the use of online surveys is going to be analysed with the use of a statistical package called SPSS. Each question or statement will be uploaded to SPSS and all data will be captured. From those findings, conclusions will be drawn with the motivation to explain the effects of service quality and the perceptions of consumers. This method of capturing data gives a high insight into what the researcher is asking in the research question and it also highlights the main findings.

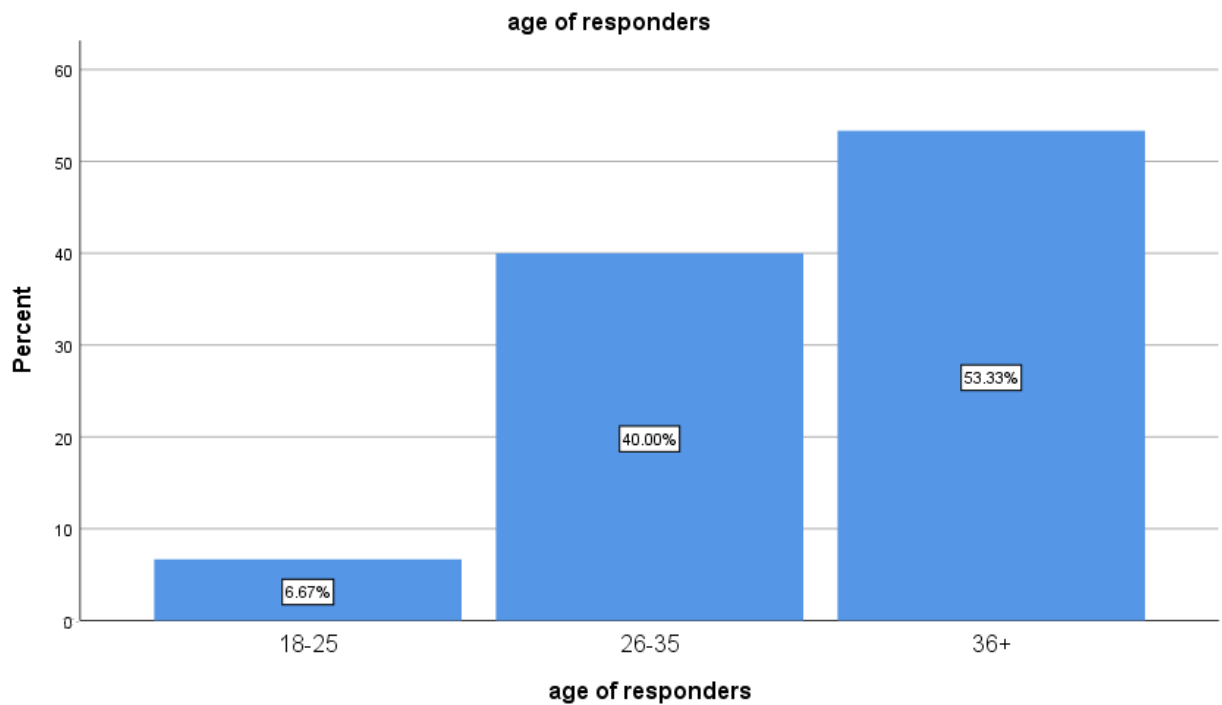
The results found by the researcher will be captured and then presented in the next with the use of descriptive statistics. Descriptive statistics is used to identify and summarise all the responses that are obtained. According to Devnarrian (2011: 46), descriptive statistics is used to describe things such as the results from a survey conducted. In this study, descriptive statistics such as frequencies and percentages will be used to explain the results. A frequency is a numerical value that represents the total of all the observations for the variable being studied. Frequencies are shown on pie charts or bar graphs. Percentages are used to simplify the found data into a numerical range which will interpret the data into a standard form that can then be compared (Devnarrian, 2011: 46).

3.6 FINDINGS AND INTERPRETATION OF FINDINGS

Data Presentation and Analysis

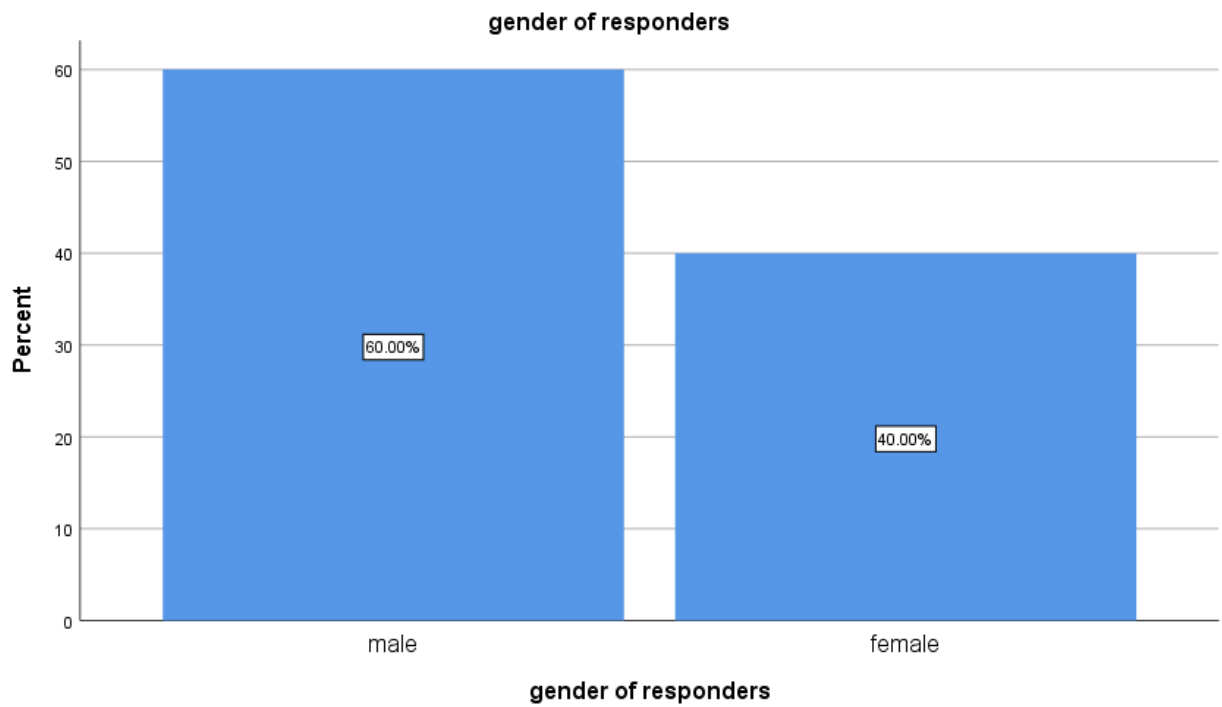
Bio Graphical Data

Question 1 Please indicate your age by crossing the appropriate box



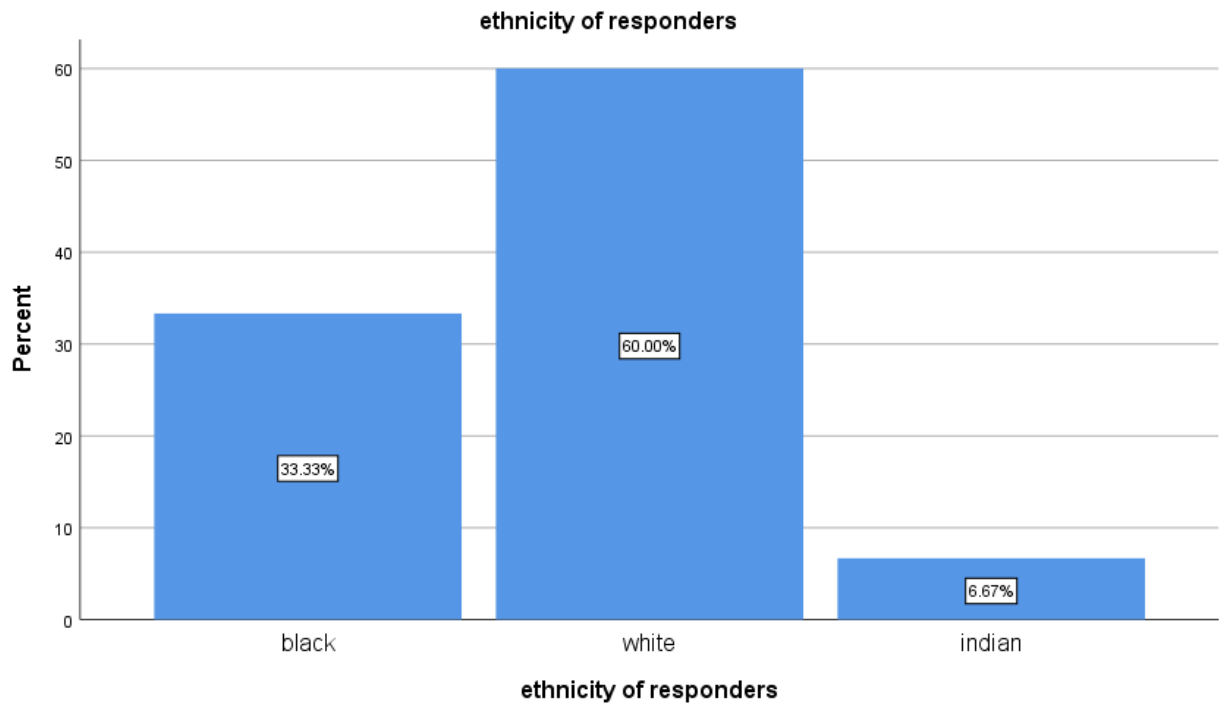
The graph above shows that a large percentage (53.3%) of the respondents were above the age of 35 years old. It can also be seen that 18-25 years old were a minority age in this group of respondents representing only 6.7% of all participants.

Q2



From the illustration above it can be seen that a large percentage (60.00%) of the respondents were male. It can also be seen that the rest of the 40.00% are female and were a slight minority in this group of respondents.

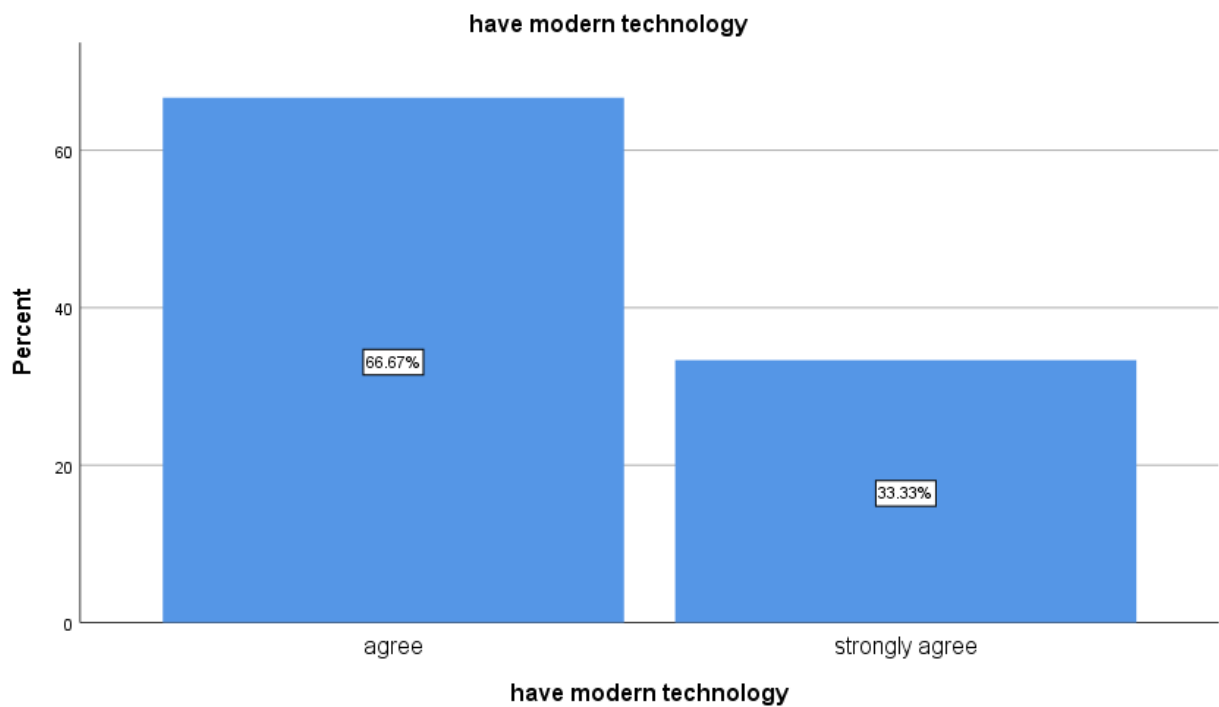
Q3



As one can see from the graph above, a large percentage (60.00%) of the respondents were white. One can also be seen that Indian is a minority ethnicity in this group of respondents representing only 6.67% of all participants.

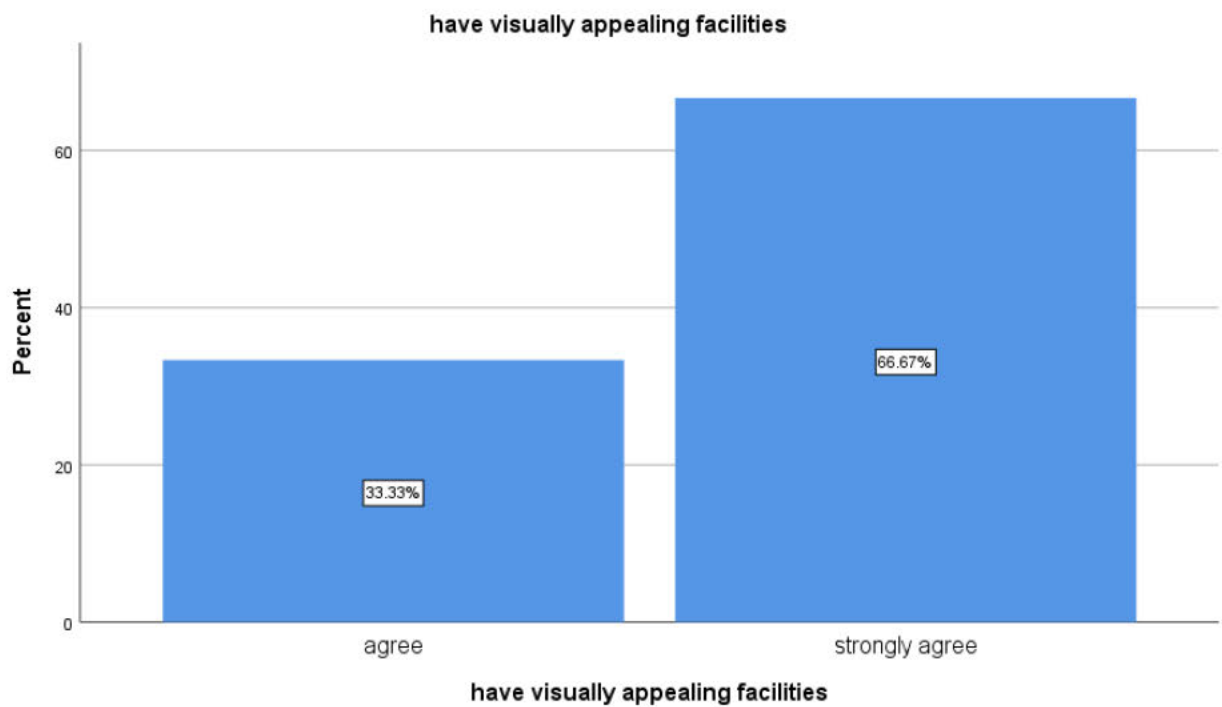
Perceptions of Service Quality

Q1



The illustration above shows that a large percentage (66.67%) of the respondents agreed that CSH has modern technology. It also shows that the rest of the participants (33.33%) strongly agreed that CSH has modern technology

Q2

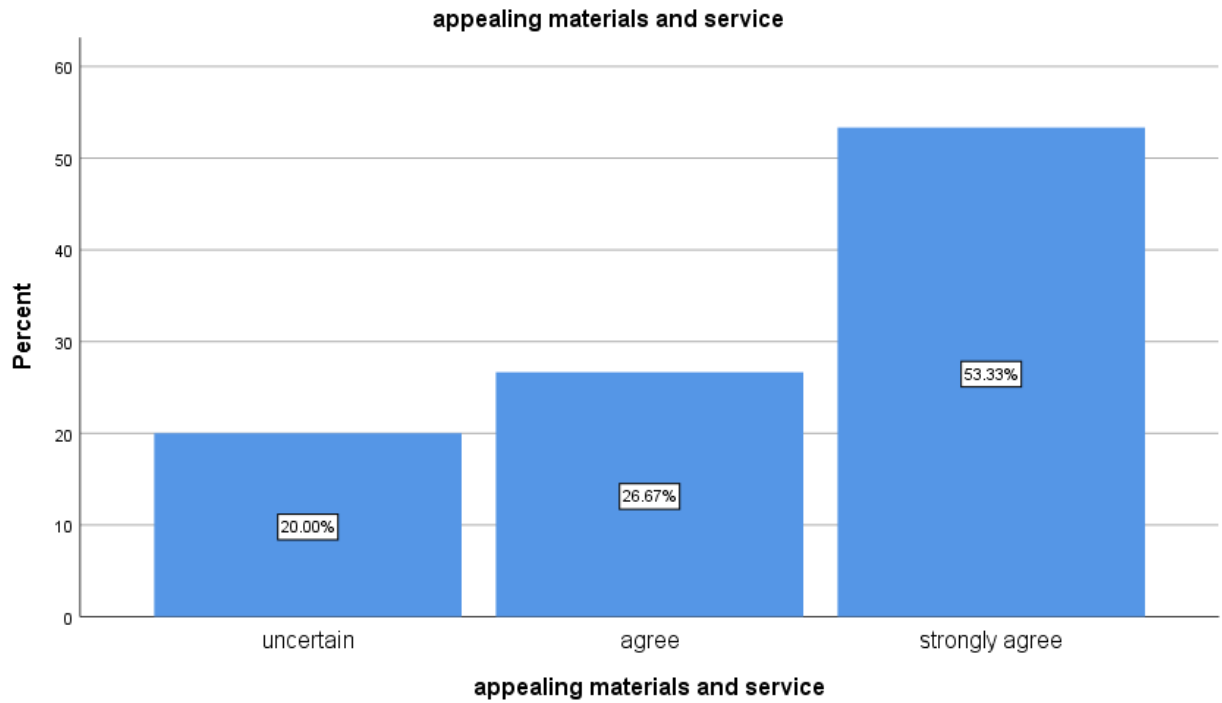


When looking at the graph above, it can be seen that a larger percentage (66.67%) of the respondents strongly agree that CSH has visually appealing facilities. It can also be seen that the rest of the participants (33.33%) agreed that CSH has visually appealing facilities.

Q3

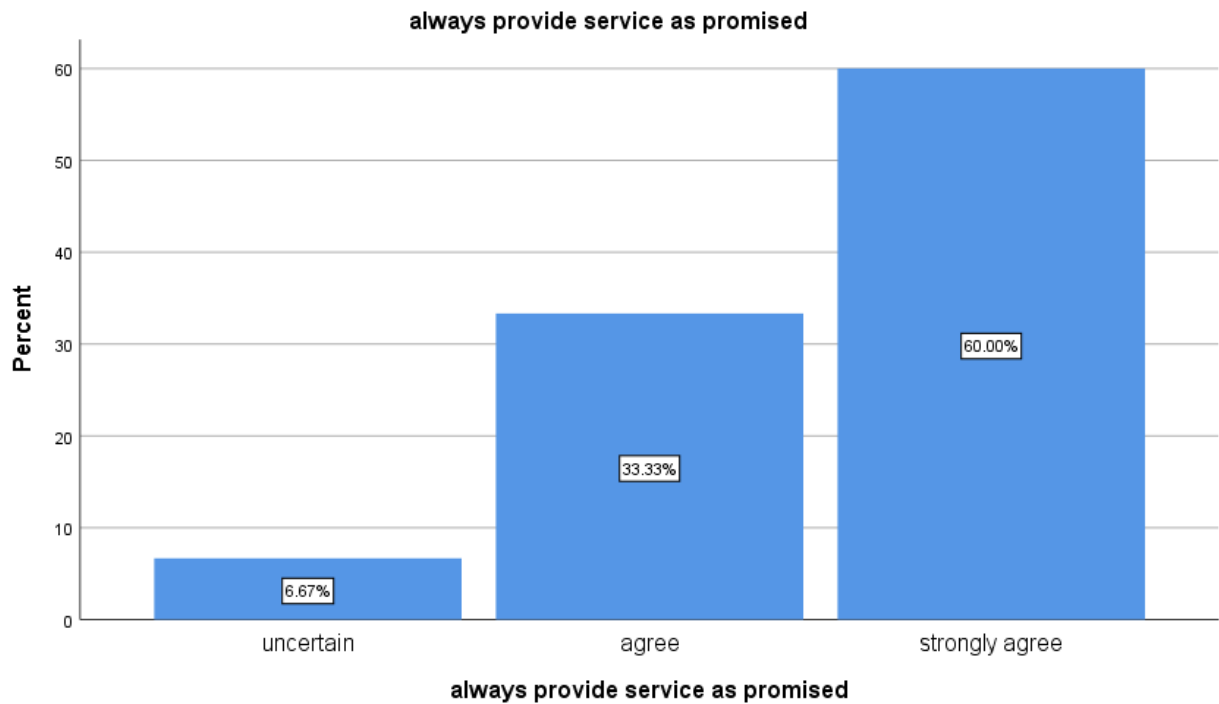
Employee Appearance Appeal

		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	uncertain	3	20.0	20.0	20.0
	agree	4	26.7	26.7	46.7
	strongly agree	8	53.3	53.3	100.0
	Total	15	100.0	100.0	



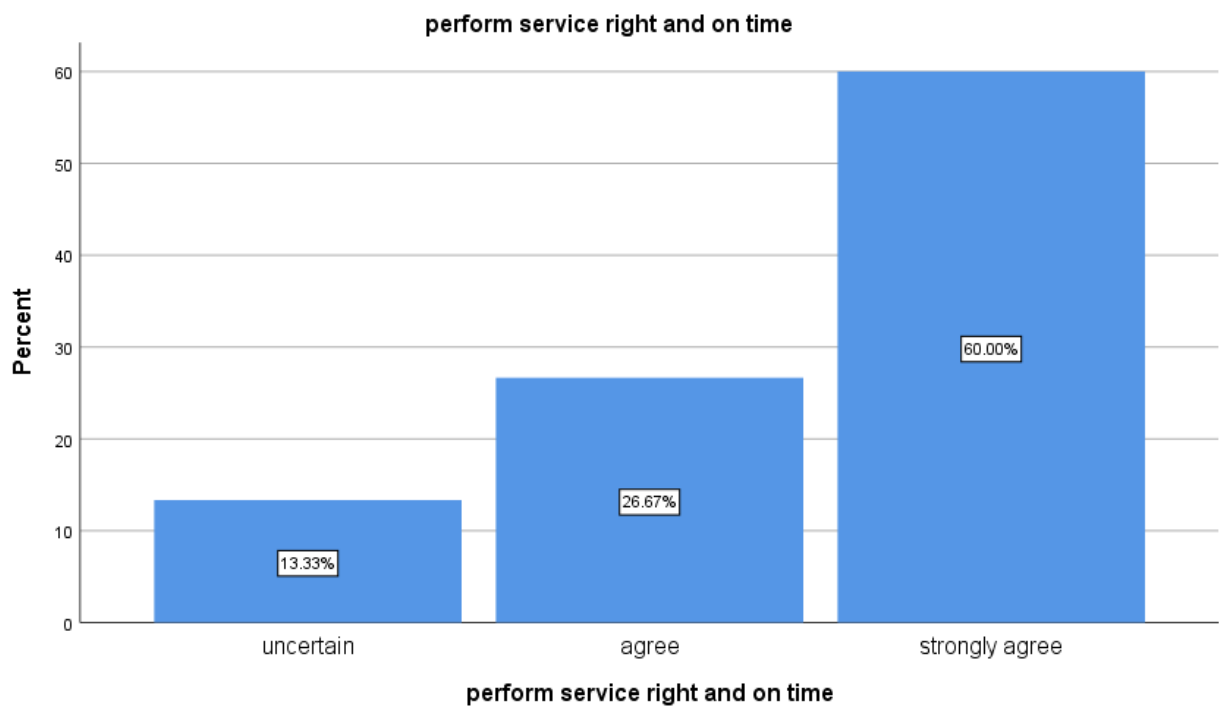
The graph above represents that a larger percentage (53.33%) of the respondents strongly agree that CSH has appealing materials and services. It can also represent that the minority of participants responded with “uncertain” which consisted of 20.00% of all participants.

Q4



From the graph above it is seen that a larger percentage (60.00%) of respondents strongly agree that CSH always provides services as promised. It can also be seen that the minority of participants responded with “uncertain” which consisted of 6.67% of all participants.

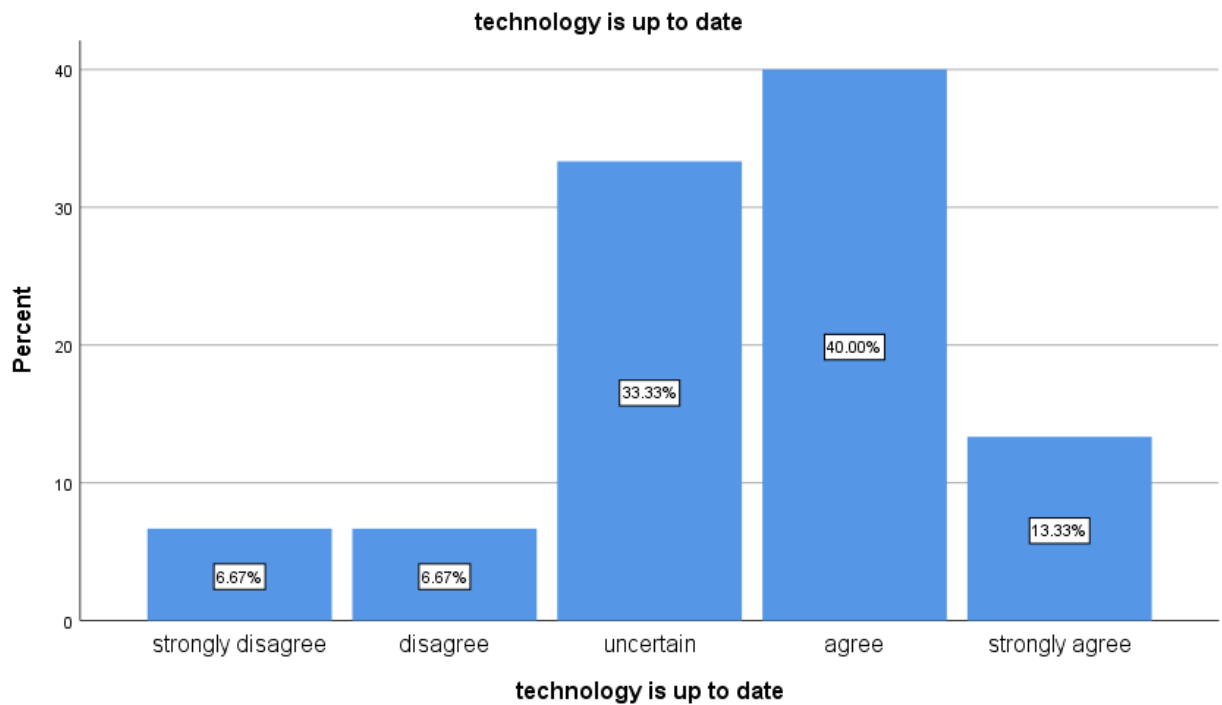
Q5



From the illustration above it is seen that a larger percentage (60.00%) of respondents strongly agree that CSH always performs services right and on time. It can also be seen that the minority of participants responded with “uncertain” which consisted of 13.33% of all participants.

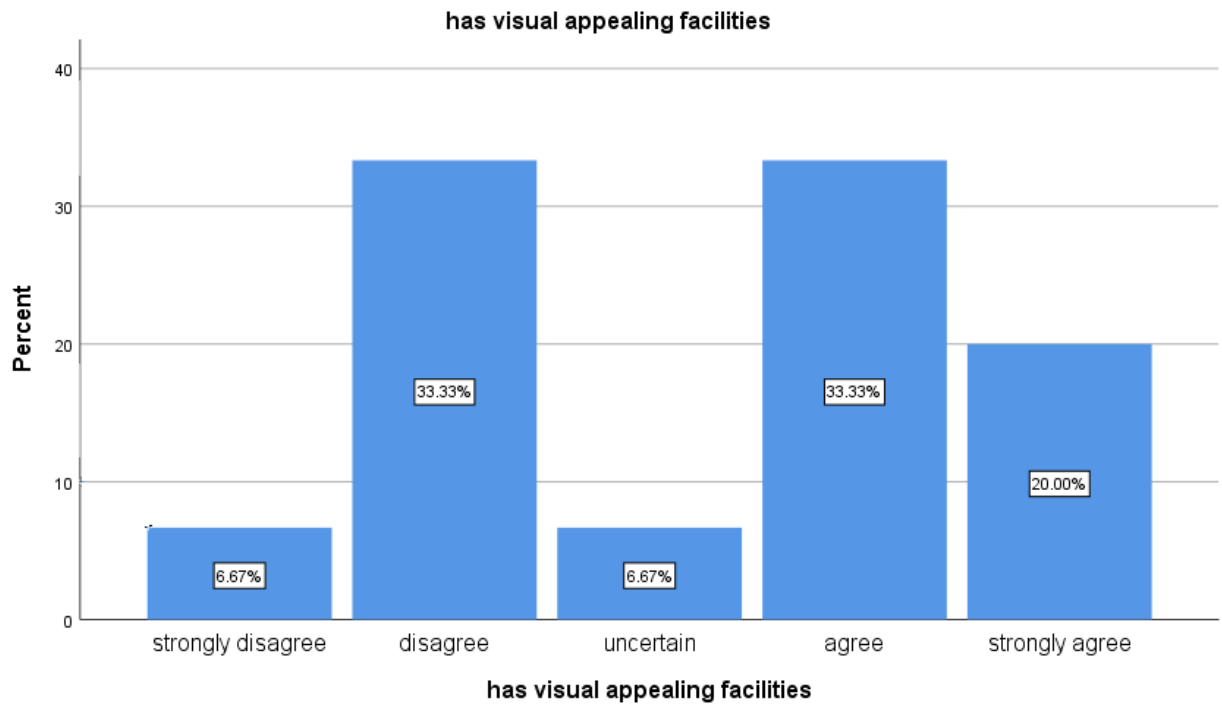
Expectations of Service Quality

Q1



From the illustration above it is seen that a larger percentage (40.00%) of respondents agree that CSH's technology should be up to date. It can also be seen that the minority of participants responded with "strongly disagree and disagree" which each individually consisted of 6.67% of all participants.

Q2

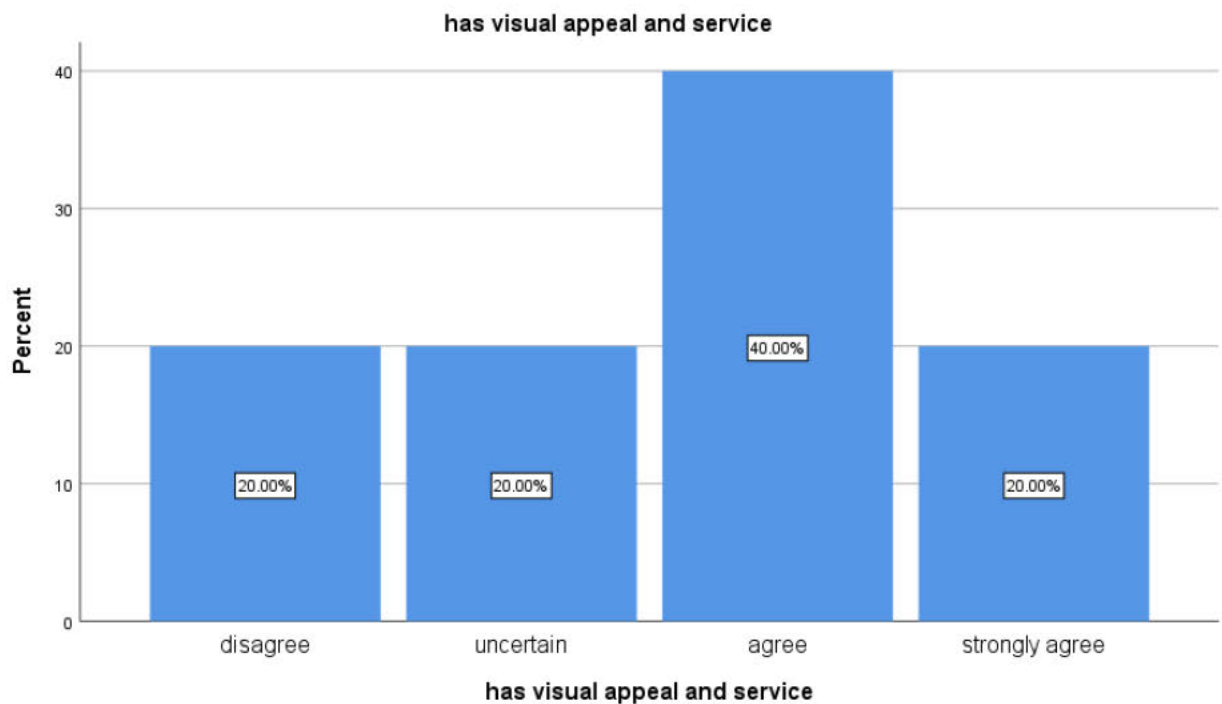


The illustration above shows that a larger percentage (33.33%) of respondents agree and (33.33%) disagree that CSH should have visually appealing facilities. It also shows that the minority of participants responded with “strongly disagree and uncertain” which each individually consisted of 6.67% of all participants.

Q3

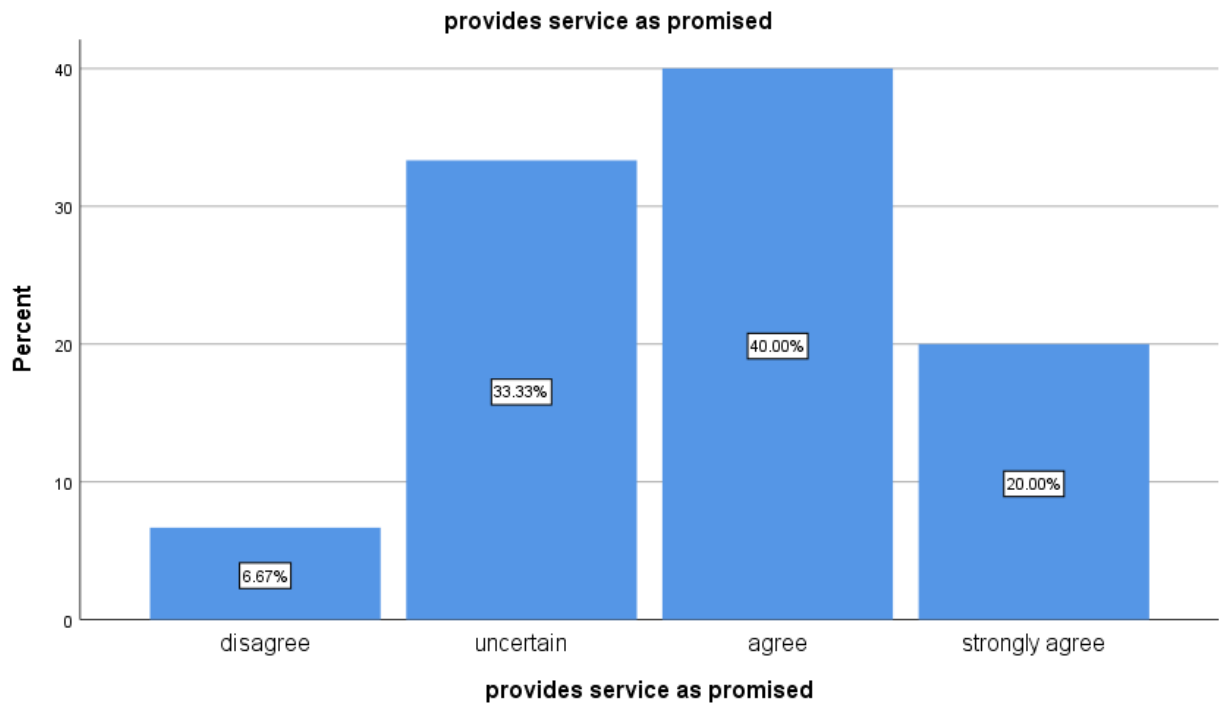
Neat Employee Appearance

		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	disagree	3	20.0	20.0	20.0
	uncertain	3	20.0	20.0	40.0
	agree	6	40.0	40.0	80.0
	strongly agree	3	20.0	20.0	100.0
	Total	15	100.0	100.0	



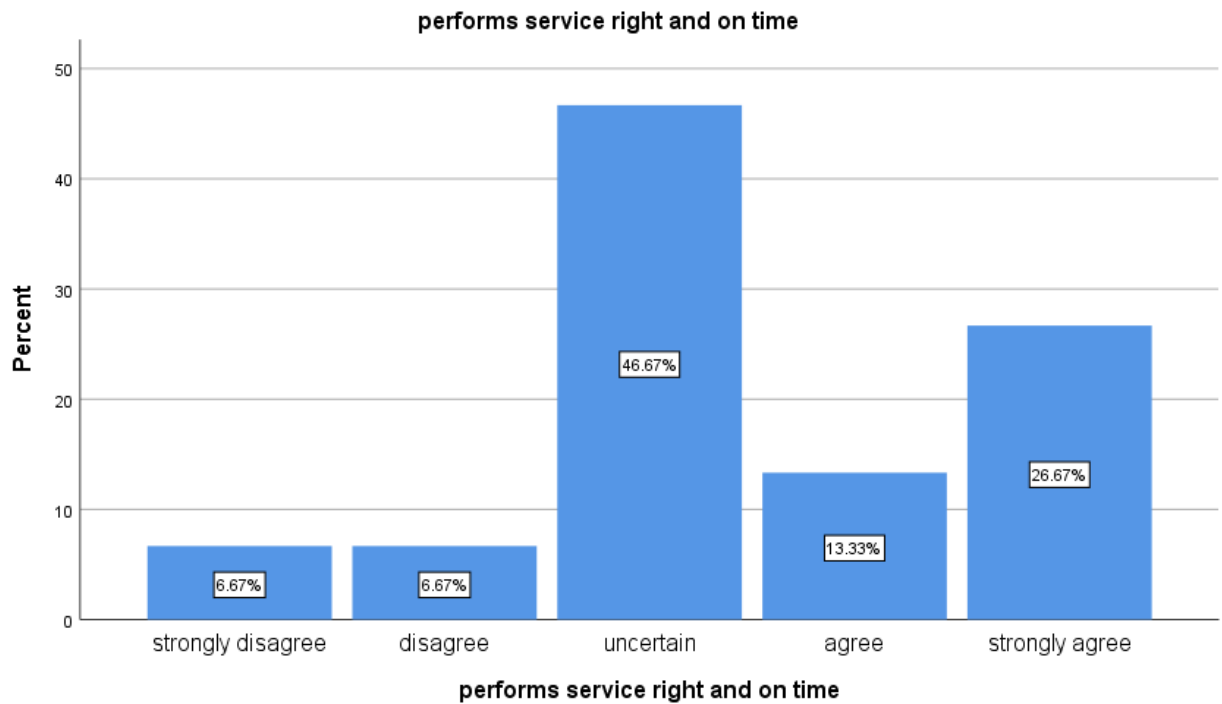
As seen in the graph above, a larger percentage (40.00%) of the respondents strongly agree that CSH should have visually appealing facilities. It can also be seen that the rest of the participants “disagree, are uncertain and strongly agree” which each individually consisted of 20.00% of all participants.

Q4



The illustration above shows that a larger percentage (40.00%) of respondents agree that CSH should always provide services as promised. It also shows that the minority of participants responded with “disagree” which each individually consisted of 6.67% of all participants.

Q5



The graph above shows that a larger percentage (46.67%) of respondents are uncertain whether or not CSH always perform services right and on time. It can also shows that the minority of participants responded with “strongly disagree and disagree” which consisted of 13.33% of all participants.

Cronbach Alpha

Case Processing Summary

		N	%
Cases	Valid	15	100.0
	Excluded	0	.0
	a		
Total		15	100.0

Reliability Statistics

Cronbach's Alpha	N of Items
.905	10

The table above shows the Cronbach Alpha score based on the SPSS calculation.

The Cronbach test is ranged from 1 to 0. The closer the score is to being 1, the more accurate the data will be and the closer the score is to 0 the data will be less accurate and reliable. There were no cases excluded hence a Zero% loss in data. The Cronbach score was calculated using the 10 questions that formed the questionnaire. The test yielded a score of .905 which is an excellent reliability score. The implication is that the items correlate well and that the data extracted is reliable.

Gap Scores Analysis

Gap Scores	= P-E	= P-E
Service quality sections	Mean	Std. Deviation
Tangible gap score	-0.97	0.55
Reliability Gap score	-0.40	0.10
Valid N (listwise)		

The table above shows the descriptive statistics of gap scores for the Tangibles and Reliability sections for service quality. From the graph above it was found that all the mean for gap scores were negative which indicates that the expectation score was higher than the perception score, as these scores were calculated with the equation $P - E$. A negative gap score is the result of expectations exceeding perceptions. This negative score is indicative of dissatisfied consumers and that services quality exists in CSH. Tangibles had a higher gap (-0.97) score than reliability (-0.40). This indicates that participants perceived the service quality received regarding reliability as slightly better than service quality received in terms of tangibles. Both dimensions scores a negative result which denotes the need for improvement.

3.6.1 Validity

Validity refers to how logical, sound, reasonable and useful the research is. Validity is the extent of the measurement made by a certain instrument to measure what certain participants are interested in (Watson, 2014). Quinlan (2015) stated that validity is the accuracy of a measure or the extent to which the found score is a truthful representation of the concept under study. Devnarrian (2011: 48) found research that SERVQUAL is a statistically valid instrument to use due to it undergoing extensive field testing and refinement. SERVQUAL is a universally applicable instrument that can be administered on a regular basis. The researcher has made use of statistical tests throughout this research report to ensure validity.

3.6.2 Reliability

Maree (2016: 238) states that Reliability is the extent to which an instrument makes the same measurement each time it is used. It is known as an indicator of a measure's internal consistency and the dependability of the research, to the degree to which the research can be repeated while obtaining consistent results (Quinlan, 2015).

A Cronbach test is ranged from 1 to 0. The closer the score is to being 1, the more accurate the data will be and the closer the score is to 0 the data will be less accurate and reliable. The researcher has made use of the Cronbach score which was calculated using the 10 questions that formed the questionnaire. The test yielded a score of .905 which is an excellent reliability score. The implication is that the items correlate well and that the data extracted is reliable.

Both reliability and Validity involves estimating and minimising the level of errors made within a measurement. Both can be tested and improved on by adjusting the instruments used by the researcher if the levels of both reliability and validity are too low (Watson, 2014). The researcher decided to make use of the SERVQUAL survey as it is proven to be the most extensively used instrument in the field of service quality (Devnarrian, 2011: 48).

4 ANTICIPATED CONSIDERATIONS

By doing research on the service quality at CSH, the researcher will identify gaps in the quality of services offered at this organization. The gaps in service quality and customer satisfaction will be clear and the researcher will then be able to bring forward recommendations as to how CSH can change the way they offer their services, if it is needed to do so. The data in the research from the survey will provide a deeper understand of the service quality and the perceptions thereof. Problems that consumers are facing with the service quality, if any, at CSH will be clear and the organization will be

able to put systems and guidelines in place to solve issues regarding their service quality to keep all consumers satisfied with their services.

5 ETHICAL CONSIDERATIONS AND LIMITATIONS

5.1 ETHICAL CONSIDERATIONS

There are many different ethical considerations for research studies namely, informed consent, dealing with sensitive information, avoiding deception and harm and lastly, dealing with confidentiality versus anonymity (Du Plooy-Cilliers, 2014: 264).

An essential ethical aspect to focus on when dealing with participants answering surveys is the issue of protection of their identities if they feel the need to be kept anonymous (Maree, 2016: 44). The researcher has obtained ethical clearance from CSH as well as from each participating consumer at CSH. The researcher has also made sure that no harm would come to any of the participants that are volunteered willingly.

The researcher has generated an informed consent document that was given to participants before completing any survey. This document stipulated the following:

- The information that was discussed
- The reason for this research study
- Assurance of anonymity of the participants given information
- Assurance of protection of their identity
- Ensuring participants that their time would be used wisely

The researcher was truthful and honest regarding the research being conducted and did not distort any information found. The following ethical considerations were consistently applied and maintained throughout the survey process:

- Ethical clearance from CSH was acquired
- Ethical and moral concerns regarding participants was consistently monitored and maintained

The researcher sent out surveys to the store managers who then handed out the surveys to customers at till points. Once the researcher received all the completed surveys, the data was gathered and concluded.

5.2 LIMITATIONS

Limitations are the potential restrictions or challenges that the researcher may experience and that could affect the research (Maree, 2016: 44). This study is limited to CSH stores in Johannesburg only and cannot be generalised to service quality at CSH stores nationwide. The results from the surveys will only be valid for the time in which the research will be conducted due to all the fluctuations in the environment that this research is taking place (Devnarrian, 2011: 3).

This research study did have certain limitations present:

- The data that the researcher is gathering will only come from CSH stores in Johannesburg. The study could possibly then contain information specific to only the CSH stores in Johannesburg and their current consumers. Thus, the results that will be gathered cannot be generalised to the all retail and wholesale stores of CSH nationwide.
- The results that the researcher will find and analyse may not be representative of the whole population as convenience sampling will be used to conduct the data.
- Time restraints will be a limitation due to the fact that the researcher will be dealing with consumers that also have time restrictions on their own work and day to day life. Time restrictions in terms of completing the research and all the surveys by the due date will be challenging.
- Ethical considerations need to be kept in mind as it is a very important aspect of the researcher work. If there is no ethical clearance, research cannot be conducted.

The researcher made sure to state that all information gathered was for CSH stores in Johannesburg only and that the retail and wholesale stores of CSH Nation cannot be

compared to the Johannesburg stores being researched. Convenience sampling was used as it is easier and more cost effective than any other sampling methods. The researcher knows and stated that the data conducted was not a representative of the whole population. Time restraints were dealt with following a check list to make sure that the researcher was on track with the due date but also respecting the time restraints of the consumers who participated in the study. The researcher made sure to stick to all ethical guidelines set out by CSH and ensured the privacy of all participants.

6 RECOMMENDATIONS

This study investigated consumers' perceptions of service quality at CSH stores in Johannesburg. The study made use of an adapted form of the SERVQUAL model to research the retail and wholesale industry. BY making use of this model, the researcher was able to measure consumers perceptions and expectations of two dimensions from the model, namely tangibles and reliability.

The researcher had three objectives in mind being:

1. To investigate how service quality at CSH affects their consumers
2. To identify the different consumer perceptions of the service quality at CSH
3. To measure the service quality at CSH by making use of an adapted version of a SERVQUAL questionnaire

As seen in the data collected, a negative score was calculated which means that consumers were dissatisfied with the service quality at CSH. Dissatisfied consumers could mean a lost customer as they won't want to come back to receive the same services that they weren't happy with. All consumers had different perceptions of the service quality at CSH. The SERVQUAL model helped the researcher identify all the different consumer perceptions on service quality at CSH. From the data collected it was found that all the mean for gap scores were negative which indicated that the expectation score was higher than the perception score.

With regards to tangibles and reliability, the perceptions of service quality at CSH had negative scores for both dimensions which denotes the need for improving. Tangibles had a much higher gap score than reliability which indicated that participants perceived the service quality regarding reliability to be better than service quality received in terms of tangibles. The service quality expectations exceeded the perceptions.

By measuring service quality, it will be easy for Consolidated Store Holdings (CSH) to identify any gaps that may be present and be able to close these gaps that exists in their service quality. Regular measurement of Service Quality at CSH and the perceptions of their customers will help management improve customer satisfaction and customer loyalty. This will in turn make CSH more competitive in the Retail and Wholesale market in South Africa. Below are suggested recommendations for CSH:

- CSH management has to consistently collect and evaluate customer needs, expectations and opinions on a regular basis in order to pinpoint areas of concern and help to eliminate any current problems.
- CSH should look into benchmarking, which means to compare their organization to other organizations and learn from what they do differently without copying them.
- It is very important for CSH to focus on reliability in the interest of all their customers. CSH may do this by solving problems as soon as they arise, sticking to deadlines and being completely faultless.
- Every worker and manager at CSH has their own knowledge, authority and the resources to provide the right quality of services all the time. All staff members need to attend formal training in service quality so they know how to deal with different customers' needs, desires and complaints. This can be done by CSH staff attending Product Knowledge Workshops, Interpersonal Skills Workshops or Customer Service Improvement Workshops.
- CSH staff should be well trained to be customer-centered and not only task-driven. Employees need to adopt customer orientation instead of only sticking to

the rules and regulations of CSH. Short term measures like encouraging positive mental mindsets must be developed in order to sustain long-term service quality

6.1 SCOPE FOR FUTURE STUDY

It is suggested that SERVQUAL should be used to evaluate the performance of CSH stores in Johannesburg and possibly all over South Africa in the future. The use of this model will help management of CSH to understand what their consumers expect and perceive. This research should be done yearly so that management can compare data from previous years and determine how they can improve on their service quality. This study mainly focuses on the perceptions of CSH consumers on service quality. Future research should focus on gathering data on perceptions of service quality from other stakeholders, like internal customers. CSH should also ensure to increase the sample size for future research and conduct a longitudinal study over a longer period of time. This will ensure that CSH will have all the knowledge needed to keep their service quality up to date and of high standards.

7 CONCLUSION

This study investigated customer perceptions of service quality at Consolidated Store Holdings (CSH) stores in Johannesburg. The data gathered when doing the surveys revealed that participants perceived the service quality received regarding reliability as slightly better than service quality received in terms of tangibles. Both these dimensions scored a negative result which denoted the need for improvement in the service quality at CSH. There are many players in the Retail and Wholesale industry in South Africa who are all competing for an increased market share. Service Quality in this market is of paramount importance. The business current environment in South Africa and the rest of the world is fluid and unstable, which is why it is extremely important to provide superior service quality which can give CSH as a company a competitive market.

8 LIST OF REFERENCES

- Ansary, A., Jayashree, S. and Malavizhi, C., 2014. The Effect of Gender and Nationality on Service Quality in Malaysian Higher Education. *Journal of Developing Areas*, 48(4), pp.97-118.
- Bunoti, S., 2011. *The Quality Of Higher Education In Developing Countries Needs Professional Support*. Kyambogo University, Kampala, Uganda.
- CESSDA Training Team, 2017. *CESSDA Data Management Expert Guide*. [online] CESSDA. Available at: <<https://www.cessda.eu/Training/Training-Resources/Library/Data-Management-Expert-Guide/8.-Contributors>> [Accessed 29 June 2020].
- Csh-group.co.za. 2020. Save A Lot. [online] Available at: <<http://csh-group.co.za>> [Accessed 1 August 2020].
- Devnarrian, P., 2011. *Service Quality At Varsity Colleges In Westville And DurbanNorth: Student Perceptions*. Masters Degree. Durban University of Technology.
- Du Plooy-Cilliers, F., Davis, C. and Bezuidenhout, R., 2014. *Research Matters*. Cape Town: Juta and Company Ltd.
- Grönroos, C., 1984. A Service Quality Model and its Marketing Implications. *European Journal of Marketing*, [online] pp.36-44. Available at: <https://s3.amazonaws.com/academia.edu.documents/50660143/A_Service_Quality_Model_and_its_Marketin20161201-12233-e8mi7a.pdf?response-content-disposition=inline%3B%20filename%3DA_service_quality_model_and_its_marketin.pdf&X-Amz-Algorithm=AWS4-HMAC-SHA256&X-Amz-Credential=AKIAIWOWYYGZ2Y53UL3A%2F20200316%2Fus-east-1%2Fs3%2Faws4_request&X-Amz-Date=20200316T200230Z&X-Amz-Expires=3600&X-Amz-SignedHeaders=host&X-Amz-Signature=7aea6b59619b4d6c1552f69c0c44c77bc818b0a81b0a55ec0bda3032948289b3> [Accessed 25 May 2020].
- Hornby, A. and Turnbull, J., 2010. *Oxford Advanced Learner's Dictionary Of Current English: International Students's Edition*. Oxford: Oxford University Press, p.1087.

- Kotler, P. and Keller, K., 2006. *Marketing Management*. 12th ed. New Jersey: Pretentice-Hall.
- Landrum, H., Prybutok, V. and Zhang, X., 2007. *A Comparison Of Magal'S Service Quality Instrument With SERVPERF*. Information & Management, p.104.
- Lautiainen, T., 2015. *Factors Affecting Consumers' Buying Decision In The Selection Of A Coffee Brand*. Masters. Saimaa University of Applied Sciences.
- Lee, S., Lee, D. and Kang, C., 2012. The impact of high-performance work systems in the health-care industry: employee reactions, service quality, customer satisfaction, and customer loyalty. *The Service Industries Journal*, 32(1), pp.17-36.
- Lehtinen, J. and Lehtinen, U., 1982. *Service Quality: A Study Of Quality Dimensions*.
- Lovelock, C. and Wirtz, J., 2007. *Services Marketing People Technology, Strategy*. New York: Pearson Prentice Hall., 6th edition.
- Lovelock, C. and Wright, L., 2002. Principles of service marketing and managemen. *Upper Saddle River, New Jersey: Prentice-Hall, Inc.*, (2nd ed).
- Maree, K., 2016. *First Steps In Research*. 2nd ed. Pretoria: Van Schaik Publishers, p.4.
- Naidoo, V., 2012. *INVESTIGATING SERVICE QUALITY PERCEPTIONS IN TERTIARY INSTITUTIONS – THE CASE OF UNIVERSITY OF KWAZULU-NATAL*. Ph.D. UNIVERSITY OF KWAZULU-NATAL.
- Naidoo, V., 2014. Service Quality Perceptions of Students at a South African University. *Mediterranean Journal of Social Sciences*, 5(27).
- Ngo, M. and Nguyen, H., 2016. The Relationship between Service Quality, Customer Satisfaction and Customer Loyalty: An Investigation in Vietnamese Retail Banking Sector. *Journal of Competitiveness*, 8(2), pp.103-116.
- Oh, H., 1999. Service quality, customer satisfaction, and customer value: A holistic perspective. *International Journal of Hospitality Management*, [online] pp.67-82. Available at:
<<http://citeseerx.ist.psu.edu/viewdoc/download?doi=10.1.1.452.7598&rep=rep1&type=pdf>> [Accessed 25 May 2020].
- Oliver, R., 1981. Measurement and evaluation of satisfaction processes in retail settings. *Journal of Retailing*,.

Parasuraman, A., Berry, L. and Zeithaml, V., 1991. Understanding Customer Expectations of Service. *Loan Management Review*, p.39.

Quinlan, C., Babin, B., Carr, J., Griffin, M. and Zikmund, W., 2015. *Business Research Methods*. 1st ed.

Saif, N., 2014. The Effect of Service Quality on Student Satisfaction: A Field Study for Health Services Administration Students. *International Journal of Humanities and Social Science*, 4(8).

Sambasivan, M., Guan Cheng, K., Kasiri, L. and Sidin, S., 2016. Integration of standardization and customization: Impact on service quality, customer satisfaction, and loyalty. *Journal of Retailing and Consumer Services*, pp.91-97.

Solomon, M., Bamossy, G., Askegaard, S. and Hogg, M., 2006. *Consumer Behavior: A European Perspective*. 3rd ed. Harlow: Financial Times/Prentice Hall.

Trochim, W., 2020. *Research Methods Knowledge Base*. [online] Conjointly. Available at: <<https://conjointly.com/kb/sampling-in-research/>> [Accessed 28 June 2020].

Troy, D. and Kerry, J., 2010. Consumer perception and the role of science in the meat industry. *Elsevier*, [online] Available at: <http://ssu.ac.ir/cms/fileadmin/user_upload/Mtahghighat/tfood/ARTICLES/meat/Consumer_perception_and_the_role_of_science_in_the_meat_industry.pdf> [Accessed 26 May 2020].

UMS. 2020. Our History - UMS. [online] Available at: <<https://www.unitrade.co.za/our-history/>> [Accessed 1 August 2020].

UMS. 2020. UMS Academy Advantage - UMS. [online] Available at: <<https://www.unitrade.co.za/ums-academy-advantage/>> [Accessed 1 August 2020].

Watson, R., 2014. Operationalisation of concepts and Selection of participants. *Journal of Advanced Nursing and Professor of nursing*,.

Zeithaml, V., Bitner, M. and Gremler, D., 2006. *Services Marketing: Integrating Customer Focus Across The Firm*. 4th ed. New York: McGraw-Hill Irwin.

Zungu, N. and Lekhanya, L., 2018. Service Quality of Public Technical Vocational Education and Training Colleges in South Africa: Customer Expectations and Perceptions. *Journal of Economics and Behavioral Studies*, 10(6), pp.182-190.

APPENDIX A

Concept Document table

PROVISIONAL TITLE: Investigating service quality perceptions of students at Varsity college.

Research Purpose/Objective	Primary Research Question	Research Rationale	Seminal Authors/Sources	Literature Review - Conceptual Framework	Paradigm	Approach	Data Collection Methods	Ethics	Anticipated Findings	References
Investigating the effect of service quality of consumers. Identifying consumer perceptions and expectations. Measuring service quality using SERVQUAL	To what extent does the service quality at CSH affect how a consumers perceive these services to be like?	Service quality is a big part of any organization. When organizations grow, competition rises and service quality has to be re-evaluated.	Books, internet, journal articles.	Theme 1: Service quality Theme 2: Customer satisfaction and consumer behaviour. Theme 3: Customer Loyalty and consumer perceptions.	The paradigm best suited for investigating service quality perceptions is postpositivism.	Quantitative research Approach.	Primary and Secondary data collection methods was used.	Informed consent, dealt with sensitive information. Deception was to be avoided and dealt with confidentiality versus anonymity.	The researcher found gaps in the service quality at CSH.	(Maree, K., 2016), (Lehtinen, 1982), (Quinlan, C., Babin, B., Carr, J., Griffin, M. and Zikmund, W., 2015), (Du Plooy-Cilliers, F., 2014), (Oliver, R., 1981), (Oh, H., 1999), (Grönroos, C., 1984), (Devnarrian, P., 2011)
						Population				
						Consumers at CSH with a focus on honours students at Varsity College				
Research Problem	Secondary Questions/	Key Concepts	Key Theories			Sampling	Data Analysis Methods	Limitations	Anticipated Contribution	
There is a deficiency of research done on service quality at this organization. The study will measure the service quality at CSH head office.	Which strategies are being used to ensure good service delivery at CSH??	1) Service quality dimensions. 2) Service quality	1) Service Quality. 2) Customer Satisfaction. 3) Customer loyalty.			Convenience sampling was best suited for obtaining primary sources.	SPSS was used to analyse data.	Limited to CSH head office. Results cannot be generalized Nation Wide.	The data revealed where CSH can improve on their service quality by making use of the information found in surveys filled in by consumers	

APPENDIX B
Example of Consent Form



Consent form for participants											
I, _____, agree to participate in the research conducted by LUCIA SABRINA DOS SANTOS PESTANA about Critically exploring the responses of consumers at Consolidated Store Holdings (CSH) on the service quality of their company. This study will go into depth on how the service industry at CSH can be improved if needed. This research has been explained to me and I understand what participation in this research will involve. I understand that: <table border="1"><tbody><tr><td>☐</td><td>I agree to be interviewed for this research.</td></tr><tr><td>☐</td><td>My confidentiality will be ensured. My name and personal details will be kept private.</td></tr><tr><td>☐</td><td>My participation in this research is voluntary and I have the right to withdraw from the research at any time. There will be no repercussions should I choose to withdraw from the research.</td></tr><tr><td>☐</td><td>I may choose not to answer any of the questions that are asked during the research interview.</td></tr><tr><td>☐</td><td>I may be quoted directly when the research is published, but my identity will be protected.</td></tr></tbody></table>		☐	I agree to be interviewed for this research.	☐	My confidentiality will be ensured. My name and personal details will be kept private.	☐	My participation in this research is voluntary and I have the right to withdraw from the research at any time. There will be no repercussions should I choose to withdraw from the research.	☐	I may choose not to answer any of the questions that are asked during the research interview.	☐	I may be quoted directly when the research is published, but my identity will be protected.
☐	I agree to be interviewed for this research.										
☐	My confidentiality will be ensured. My name and personal details will be kept private.										
☐	My participation in this research is voluntary and I have the right to withdraw from the research at any time. There will be no repercussions should I choose to withdraw from the research.										
☐	I may choose not to answer any of the questions that are asked during the research interview.										
☐	I may be quoted directly when the research is published, but my identity will be protected.										
Signature	Date										

APPENDIX C

Survey

SECTION A
QUESTIONNAIRE

GENERAL DEMOGRAPHIC INFORMATION

1. Please indicate your age by crossing the appropriate box.

18-25	26-35	Above
--------------	--------------	--------------

2. Please indicate your gender by crossing the appropriate box.

Male	Female	Other
-------------	---------------	--------------

3. Please indicate your ethnic background by crossing the appropriate box.

Black	White	Coloured	Indian	Asian	Prefer not to answer
--------------	--------------	-----------------	---------------	--------------	-----------------------------

SECTION B

EXPECTATIONS AND PERCEPTIONS OF SERVICE QUALITY

- Please read through each statement carefully before giving your opinion.
- Cross only one number for each statement.
- Please do not discuss statements with other students.
- Please return questionnaire immediately after completion.
- The rating guide is as follows:

	RATINGS
1	STRONGLY DISAGREE
2	DISAGREE
3	UNCERTAIN
4	AGREE
5	SRONGLY AGREE

For each of the following statements, please indicate your level of agreement by crossing the appropriate box with an “X”, as they apply to your perceptions of CSH.

	STATEMENTS	PERCEPTIONS (How do you rate the service level you RECEIVE)				
	TANGIBLES	Strongly Disagree	Strongly Agree	Uncertain	Agree	Strongly Agree
1	CSH's technology is up to date.	1	2	3	4	5
2	CSH has visually appealing facilities.	1	2	3	4	5
3	CSH has employees who have a neat appearance.	1	2	3	4	5
	RELIABILITY					
4	CSH provides services as promised.	1	2	3	4	5
5	CSH performs services right and on time the first time.	1	2	3	4	5

For each of the following statements, please indicate your level of agreement by crossing the appropriate box with an “X”, as they apply to your expectations of CSH.

	STATEMENTS	EXPECTATIONS (How do you rate the service level you EXPECT)				
	TANGIBLES	Strongly Disagree	Strongly Agree	Uncertain	Agree	Strongly Agree
1	CSH should have modern technology.	1	2	3	4	5
2	CSH should have visually appealing facilities.	1	2	3	4	5
3	CSH's employees should always have a neat appearance.	1	2	3	4	5
	RELIABILITY					
4	CSH should always provide services as promised.	1	2	3	4	5
5	CSH should always perform services right and on time the first time.	1	2	3	4	5

APPENDIX D
Permission Letter

Gatekeepers Approval

Consent form to conduct research at my company

Give my permission that Sabrina may conduct research at my company.
This research has been explained to me and I understand what participation in this research will involve. I reserve the right to withdraw this permission at any time. I also understand that research reports are available in the library and IIE Repository unless I indicate below that I would not

Select below:

- ☐ I request that my company's identity be kept confidential.
- ☐ My company can be identified in the study
- ☐ The study may never be available on the repository.
- ☐ The study may be made available on the repository.
- ☐ The study may be made available on the repository after months.

Signature

Date

20/07/20

APPENDIX E
Ethics Clearance Letter



11/08/2020

Student name: Lucia Pestana

Student number: 14018008

Campus: IIE Varsity College Pretoria

Re: Approval of Bcom Honours Research Proposal and Ethics Clearance

HONOURS/PGDIP ETHICAL CLEARANCE LETTER

Your research proposal and the ethical implications of your proposed research topic were reviewed by your supervisor and the campus research panel, a subcommittee of The Independent Institute of Education's Research and Postgraduate Studies Committee.

Lucia Pestana Your research proposal posed no significant ethical concerns and your supporting documents and instruments are in order to proceed. We hereby provide you with permission to proceed with your research.

In the event of you deciding to change your research methodology in any way, kindly consult your supervisor to ensure all ethical considerations are adhered to and pose no risk to any participant or party involved. A revised ethical clearance letter will be issued.

We wish you all the best with your research!

GENERAL CONDITIONS TO BE FULFILLED IN RELATION TO RESEARCH

Permission is granted to proceed with the above study subject to the conditions listed below being met and may be withdrawn should any of these conditions be flouted.

Please note: The panel has not considered the merits, accuracy or ethical soundness of the research. The only merits examined are the use of The IIE as a sample.

Permission is granted subject to the following conditions:

1. The researcher(s) will need to obtain informed consent in writing from all of the participants in his/ her sample if the study is not anonymous.
2. The researcher(s) may only use the data collected for research purposes and in no other way.
3. Photographs of human subjects may only be taken if relevant to the research, informed consent was obtained, and even with informed consent, the photographs may not be published on any online platforms.

APPENDIX F
Originality Report

SafeAssign Originality Report

RESM8419p_VCPT1 • Research Report (not negotiable)

[View Originality Report - Old Design](#)

Lucia Pestana

Total Score:  High risk 72 %

Submission UUID: 2ffdc507-797c-4697-430d-29cd9d24711c

Total Number ...	Highest Match	Average Match	Submitted on	Average Word ...
1	72 % Lucia Pestana Res...	72 %	25/10/20 00:45 GMT+2	11,728 Highest: Lucia Pes...

 Attachment 1 72 %Word Count: 11,728
Lucia Pestana Research Report FINAL.docx

Institutional database (6)

69 %

- | | | |
|-----------------|-----------------|-----------------|
| ① My paper | ④ Student paper | ③ Student paper |
| ⑧ Student paper | ⑥ Student paper | ⑨ Student paper |

Global database (4)

2 %

- | | | |
|-----------------|-----------------|-----------------|
| ① Student paper | ① Student paper | ① Student paper |
| ③ Student paper | ④ Student paper | ① Student paper |
| ⑦ Student paper | | |

Scholarly journals & publications (2)

0 %

- | | |
|-------------------|-------------------|
| ⑤ ProQuest doc... | ① ProQuest doc... |
| | ① ProQuest doc... |

Internet (2)

0 %

- | | |
|--------------------|--------|
| ① betterevaluat... | ② rand |
| ② betterevaluat... | |

Top sources (3)

- | | | |
|------------|-----------------|-----------------|
| ① My paper | ④ Student paper | ③ Student paper |
|------------|-----------------|-----------------|

Excluded sources (0)

① TABLE OF CONTENTS

APPENDIX G

Motivation for High Similarity

Motivation for high similarity

DATE and TIME: 25 OCTOBER 00:49

STUDENT NAME AND SURNAME: LUCIA PESTANA

STUDENT NUMBER: 14018008

PROGRAMME and MODULE: IIE BCOMM HONOURS MANAGEMENT

ASSIGNMENT NUMBER: 4

ASSIGNMENT DUE DATE: 25 OCTOBER 2020

I, LUCIA SABRINA DOS SANTOS PESTANA hereby declare a high percentage on the similarity report on SafeAssign/Turnitin with a valid reason.

Application for high similarity percentage:

Plagiarism is the use of words, ideas or images of another person, as one's own without adequately or appropriately acknowledging the source. The Independent Institute of Education (The IIE) view plagiarism as an act of academic dishonesty and will handle it accordingly.

1. I am aware of the approach of The IIE to plagiarism and intellectual integrity.
2. I am aware that the Intellectual Integrity policy and the Student Code of Conduct prescribe the consequences of plagiarizing.
3. I am aware that the quick referencing guide is available on the Student Portal as well as in the Library and Student Support, and following them is a requirement for the successful completion of my assignment.
4. I am aware that should I require support or assistance in using the correct referencing techniques and/or guide to avoid plagiarism, I should approach the lecturers, Librarian or the Student Support team for assistance.

I declare that I have read and understood the 4 points as stated above. I declare that the assignment was written in my own words and there is a valid reason for the high similarity percentage as stated below. (Please motivate the reason in the section provided below.) I also understand that if the reason is not valid and plagiarism is detected that the Intellectual Integrity Policy IIE023 will come into effect.