DELIVERING QUALITY SERVICE TO CUSTOMERS THROUGH

TOTAL QUALITY MANAGEMENT SYSTEMS IN

SERVICE ORGANISATIONS WITH PARTICULAR REFERENCE TO

PUBLIC SCHOOLS IN LIMPOPO PROVINCE

BY

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DEDICATION

I dedicate this study to my wife Selina, my beautiful girls, Rose-Mary, Sarah and the late Mokokobale, my mom Mosima, nephews Jacob, Paul, Tebogo, Lolo, and my niece Malefo for being there for me during hard times. You are all my inspiration. Thank you for your support.

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ABSTRACT / SYNOPSIS

Quality has always been a central concern in education. Parents are ready to pay more for the best value for their money, in order to give their children the quality education. The South African education system seems to have very sound policies, but one wonders if they are well implemented, and whether customers do in deed get what they expect (customer satisfaction) from the process.

The Department of Education department introduced Integrated Quality Management System in 2003 as a strategy to be used in order to improve the quality of education and improve on the performance of educators in the country.

The provincial department of education's attempts at implementing Integrated Quality Management System since early 2004 have not been without problems; however, more especially after the signing of the Agreement on the Occupational Specific Dispensation, there has been some uncertainty about the current status of Integrated Quality Management System.

The purpose of this research is to investigate the extent to which service organisations such as public schools in Limpopo Province particularly in the Mankweng cluster deliver quality service as expected by their internal and external customers.

GLOSSARY OF TERMS

IQMS   :   Integrated Quality Management

SMT   :   School Management Team

TQMS   :   Total Quality Management System

DoE   :   Department of Education

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CHAPTER 1: INTRODUCTION

1. INTRODUCTION

The concept of Total quality Management Systems is increasingly being adopted by organisations as the means of satisfying the needs and expectations of their customers. Quality programmes are the most powerful means of improving customer satisfaction, customer loyalty, competitiveness and, thus profitability. Quality is no longer a concern for specialist production engineers but it is now an issue that concerns everybody working in any organisation.

Total Quality Management techniques, if properly applied in schools, can benefit public schools immensely. Are schools practising this important management approach? It does not seem so. Many schools are not customer-driven, and rarely consult the stakeholders in defining a mission. Moreover, they are highly departmentalised with little communication across departments, and place little value on the opinions of persons outside administration circles. Further, they do not benchmark their performance against "the leaders", and approaching management through a system of control versus facilitation.

Total quality Management in effectively running the schools is necessary for the effective running of schools for the following reasons:

(1) We live in an extremely dynamic world with depleting resources. Since schools must equip learners so that they function to their fullest potential, then schools must be dynamic and flexible.

(2) The expectations of students, industry, parents, and the public in general vis-a-vis educational priorities, costs, accessibility, programmes, and relevancy, make it imperative for schools to undergo continual assessment and improvement.

(3) Economic conditions have created greater concern about economic well-being and career flexibility. Schools have to respond to this real fear of career obsolescence and career inadequacy.

(4) Funding resources for education are diminishing at a rapid rate. Schools have to find innovative ways of cutting costs without cutting quality. (Anonymous author)

1.1. BACKGROUND TO THE PROBLEM

The service received from schools can exceed every expectation or find us feeling disappointed, dissatisfied, or worse. Some schools excel at providing customer service, but many do not. Some schools make excellence part of their culture, adopting it as the organisation's core value, and norm, but many do not recognise its value. (Salas, 2005).

The recipients (customers) of the service normally decide whether the perceived quality of service delivered by the operations (public schools) is good or poor. This influences their decision when choosing the school to attend or work for. They have certain expectations from these operations. When customers feel that the quality of service is not what they expect, they often move to the next service provider with the hope of getting better quality service.

1.2. SIGNIFICANCE OF THE STUDY

The study could assist public schools as service organisations, in the effective implementation of Total Quality Management Systems with the hope of constantly improving the quality of service they offer and therefore increasing customer satisfaction, loyalty and retention. The study could also assist in effectively identifying the challenges or gaps in the school system, suggesting possible ways of dealing with such challenges so that quality is not compromised.

1.3.   AIMS OF THE STUDY

The aim of this research is to evaluate the effectiveness of public schools in Limpopo Province in delivering quality service to their customers (internal and external) through Total Quality Management System and make recommendations to improve the process.

1.4.   OBJECTIVES OF THE STUDY

The objectives of the study are to:

- Identify the expectations and perceptions of educators (as internal customers) with regard to the delivery of quality service to customers (learners).
- To test whether educators are satisfied with the quality management system/ process.
- Identify the expectations and perceptions of external customers (learners) with regard to quality of service they receive.
- To test whether external customers (learners) are satisfied with the quality of service they receive.
- Diagnose the quality gaps if they exist using a conceptual model of service quality
- Based on the findings from this study, make recommendations for improvements to the quality management system.

1.5. PROBLEM STATEMENT

The major research problem that guides this study is: *To find out what customers' expectations and perceptions are about quality service and determine the gaps that exist which influence customers' choice of schools.*

Based on the research problem above, the following sub-questions can be formulated:

- What are the internal and external customers' expectations from the service provider?
- Did customers get what they expected from these operations?
- How do customers perceive the quality of service as delivered by these operations?
- Why do customers prefer certain schools than others i.e. leaving neighbouring schools and travelling to far away schools?
- What quality gaps are in existence and how best can they be closed through implementation of Total Quality Management System?

1.6. RESEARCH QUESTIONS

The research question is: *How exactly do customers evaluate the quality of service?* From the research question, the following sub-questions can be raised:

- What are the expectations and the perceptions of educators, as internal customers in the process with regard to the delivery of quality service?
- What gaps exist in the operation?
- What are the external customers' expectation and their perception regarding quality?
- What do the external customers get from the process?
- Are there deficiencies in the process?

1.7.   DIVISION OF CHAPTERS

The chapters to follow are:

- Chapter 2: Literature review ,
- Chapter 3: Research methodology ,
- Chapter 4: Statement of findings and analysis of data ,
- Chapter 5: Discussion of findings and Linking to the literature review and
- Chapter 6: Conclusions and recommendations

1.8.   CHAPTER CONCLUSION

This chapter has explained the background to the study, defined the problem and motivated the research, and explained the significance of the study. The research aims and objectives were also highlighted. The next chapter reviews the literature.

CHAPTER 2: LITERATURE REVIEW

2. Introduction

The previous chapter gave a general introduction and background to the delivery of quality customer service by schools, identified the problem, aims and objectives of the study.

This chapter provides a theoretical framework within which this study will be based. It covers the evaluation of quality customer service by schools through Quality Management Systems, ways in which quality customer service can be improved as well as challenges or gaps that exist. The literature review is intended to contextualise the research work in relation to the previous research on the subject.

2.1. What is customer service quality?

(a) Customer.

According to Kendall (2003) a Customer is defined as "anyone who receives products or services; customers can be internal or external to the organisation and are the foundation of any business". In the public school, internal customers are educators or employees who work for the same organisation and depend on each other to carry out their work (Johnston, 1999). These are part of the service delivery chain, often working in different departments and reporting to different heads of departments (HODs), whereas external customers refer to learners, parents and the general public who are outside the organisation.

(b)   Customer satisfaction

Kendall (2003) defined customer satisfaction as a broad attitude about the organisation, taking into consideration service, but also products and available alternatives. This means the learner's attitude about the school taking into account the available alternative schools.

Similarly, Neal (1998) defined customer satisfaction as the attitude resulting from what customers think should happen (expectations) interacting with what customers think did happen (performance perceptions).

Besides the above factors, there are also factors outside the realm of service which influence customer perceptions and customer satisfaction, such as price, convenience and value, (Schneider, White and Paul, 1998).

(c)   Customer service

Customer service is the interaction between the customer and the representative of the organisation and is not limited to a single function or job type within the organisation.

Smith (1998) defined customer service as "meeting the needs and expectations of the customer". The customer is the judge of quality customer service, based on the expectations he or she has for the service.

Zeithaml, Parasuraman & Berry (1990:19) defined service quality as "the extent of discrepancy between customers' expectations or desires and their perceptions". Similarly Bittner and Hubbert (1994:77) defined it as "the consumer's overall impression of the relative inferiority/superiority of the organisation and its services".

Drawing on experiences from similar situations, the customer develops expectations for such things as institution's tangibles (physical resources), response time, courtesy, empathy, and reliability. If these expectations are not met during the service encounter, the customer is likely to judge the service as poor and is likely to feel dissatisfied, (Klose and Finkle, 1995).

From these two definitions, it becomes clear that the customers' judgement of high and low service quality depends on how they perceive the actual service performed in the context of their expectations.

In their study, Parasuraman, Zeithaml and Berry (1985, 1988) identified ten dimensions which for the purpose of this study, these dimensions are to be used in measuring service quality.

Exhibit 1.1. Descriptions of Service Quality (SERVQUAL) dimensions.

Reliability	The ability of the organisation to perform the promised service dependably and accurately.
Responsiveness	The organisation's willingness to help customers and provide prompt service.
Assurance	The knowledge and Courtesy of the employees and their ability to inspire trust and confidence in the customers of the organisations.
Empathy	The caring and individualized attention the organisation provides its customers.
Tangibles	The physical facilities, equipment, and appearance of personnel in the organisation.

To examine the relationship between service and quality gaps, Klose and Finkle (1995) identified ten key service components which are highly similar to the SERVQUAL dimensions;

- Friendly and caring employees.
- Employees who listen.
- Employees who have the ability to communicate.
- Employees who are able to make decisions.
- Employees who have the ability to make the customer feel special.
- Confidence in employees' abilities to solve problems.
- Appearance of personnel.
- Employees who are accurate.
- Confidence that the customer input helped solve the problems.
- Assurance that company policy is followed.

Although the pervious models focus attention on the dimensions for service delivery, Albrecht and Zemke (1985) identified a set of organisational practices and conditions needed to deliver high-quality service. These include; focusing on the customers and understanding their wants, needs, and expectations; developing and communicating a service strategy that defines excellent service and how it will be delivered; designing customer-friendly service systems; and having well trained, service-oriented people at all levels of the organisation.

2.2. What causes customer service quality problems? Diagnosing quality gaps

Slack et al. (2007) identified the following gaps:

Gap 1. The customer's expectation- Management-Perceptions gap

The perceived quality could be poor because there may be a mismatch between the organisation's own internal quality specification and the specification which is expected by the customer. Management's correct perception of customers' expectations is necessary, but not sufficient, for achieving superior quality service. Another prerequisite for providing high service quality is the presence of performance standards mirroring management's perceptions of customers' expectations.

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                    ┌────────────────────────────┐
              ┌────► │ Customer Expectations       │
              ┊      │ (Expected Service)          │
              ┊      │                             │
              ┊      └────────────────────────────┘
              ┊
   Gap 1      ┊      ┌────────────────────────────┐
              └────► │ Management    Perceptions    of │
                     │ Customer Expectations       │
                     └────────────────────────────┘
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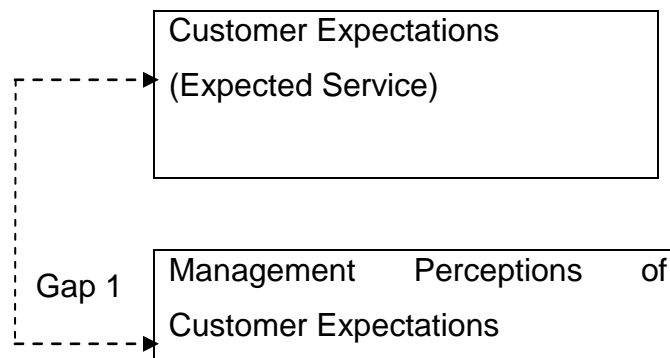
Exhibit 1.2. Gap 1: Between Customers' Expectations and Management's perceptions of those Expectations.

Source: Adapted from Parasuraman, A. *et al.* (1990). "Delivering quality service: balancing customer perceptions and Expectations" pp. 39-46.

Gap 2. The concept- specification gap

The perceived quality could be poor because there may be a mismatch between the product or service concept and the way the organisation has specified the quality of the product or service internally. Parasuraman *et al.* (1990: 41) pointed out that the quality of service delivered by customer-contact personnel is influenced by the standards against which they are evaluated and compensated. When service standards are absent or when the standards in place do not reflect customers' expectations, quality of service as perceived by customers is likely to suffer and in contrast, when there are standards reflecting what customers expect, the quality of service they receive is likely to be enhanced. Although some managers may find it impossible for service organisations to set precise service specifications, those who set performance standards for their employees and also communicate them to the customers in the form of performance guarantees will reap the benefit.
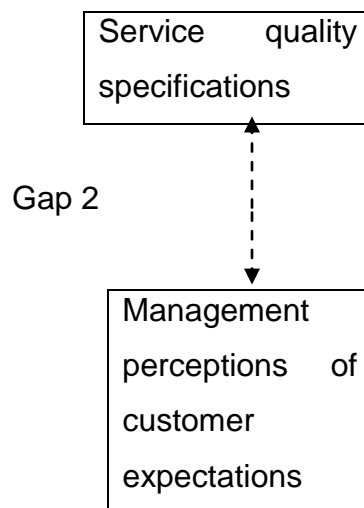
Exhibit 1.3. Gap 2: Between Management's Perceptions of Customers' Expectations and Service Quality Specifications

Source: Adapted from Parasuraman, A. *et al.* (1990). "Delivering quality service: balancing customer perceptions and Expectations" pp. 39-46.

Gap 3. The service quality specification – actual quality gap or [Service delivery gap]

The perceived quality could be poor because there may be a mismatch between the actual quality of the service provided by the operation and its internal quality specification. This may be the result of an inappropriate or unachievable specification, or of poorly trained or inexperienced personnel, or because effective control systems are not in place to ensure the provision of defined levels of quality. The unwillingness/ or inability of contact-personnel to meet the standards can be another contributing factor.

Parasuraman *et al.* (1990) found that even when guidelines exist for performing services well and treating customers correctly, high-quality service performance is not a certainty. They concluded that for organisations to be effective, service standards must not only reflect customers' expectations, but also be backed up by adequate and appropriate resources (people, systems and technology) and employees be measured and compensated on the basis of performance along those standards.

The South African education department introduced Integrated Quality Management System in 2003 as a strategy to be used in order to improve the quality of education and improve on the performance of educators in the country. The provincial department of education's attempts at implementing Integrated Quality Management System since early 2004 have not been without problems, however, According to the Integrated Quality Management System, Educators are expected to perform based on the number of performance standards. They must first do pre-evaluation self-assessment, draw up personal growth plan wherein areas which need development are identified, followed by formal evaluation by Development Support Group and finally rewarded. To date, no educator has been objectively rewarded according to the performance. Performance standards really need to have achievable, measurable standards which can be used to measure their performance and be rewarded.

To be effective, School Management Team must also strengthen these standards, i.e. facilitate, encourage, and require their achievement.

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┌─────────────────────────┐
│ Service delivery        │
│                         │
└─────────────────────────┘
            ▲
            ┊
Gap 3       ┊
            ┊
            ▼
┌─────────────────────────┐
│ Service quality         │
│ specifications          │
│                         │
└─────────────────────────┘
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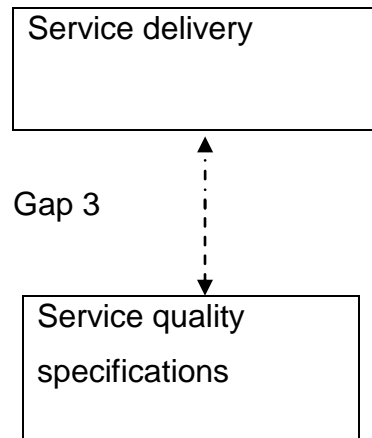
Exhibit 1.4 Gap 3: Between service-quality specifications and service delivery

Source: Adapted from Parasuraman, A. *et al.* (1990). "Delivering quality service: balancing customer perceptions and Expectations" pp. 39-46.

Gap 4. The actual quality- communicated image gap

The perceived quality could be poor because there may be a mismatch between the organisation's external communications or market image and the actual quality of the service delivered to the customer. This may be the result of marketing function setting unachievable expectations in the minds of the customers, or the operations not providing the level of quality expected by the customer. This results in a broken promise by the organisation. Learners' poor performance, low educators' morale, rate of learner-drop out, transfers out to other schools and lack of commitment are the earliest signs of dissatisfaction. Hirschman (1971:21) suggested that:

When the performance of an organisation deteriorates so does the quality of its products and services, management is made aware of this through the actions of consumers who may employ their 'exit' or 'voice' options.

This is the result of the quality gap that the customer has identified and the management has not done anything to close it. It is evident in the school situation. Learners exercise their exit option by taking transfer letters from their local schools to the neighbouring schools that promise to offer better quality service.

It is therefore important for the managers to take responsibility to close the gaps. This creates a problem of some schools having many learners than others. As a result educators have to be redeployed from schools where the enrolment reduced to where customers are many. The exercise is costly and inconveniencing to the affected parties.

'Exit' means that the consumers are free to choose the alternative providers of a service in the open market. (Hirschman, 1971:21). In South Africa, parents take their children to private (former model C) schools where they pay high fees. They believe and regard the quality of education to be higher in those schools than in others. The question here is, "Do customers have financial power to exit from the public education service? The purchasing power of the education customer is limited. Riley (1994) argued that "only a *minority* have financial power to exit from the public education service, all the parents as 'customers' of education service supposedly have the right to choose a school, but not necessarily the possibility of exercising that choice"

The argument is if a minority of wealthier, most powerful and articulate parents decides to exit the public education services to buy private education service, will the majority of poor, less powerful parents be able to pressurise public sector management to improve the service?

Service delivery	Gap 4	External communications to the customers
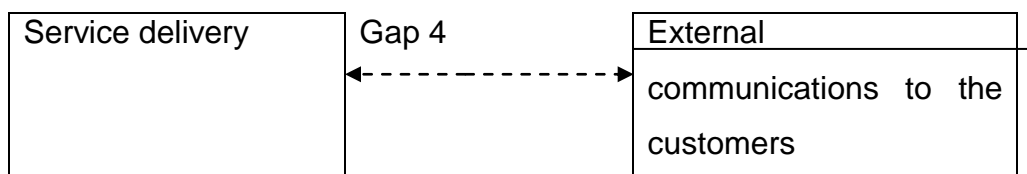
Exhibit 1.5 Gap 4: Between service delivery and external communications to customers.

Source: Adapted from Parasuraman, A. *et al.* (1990). "Delivering quality service: balancing customer perceptions and Expectations" pp.39-46.

Gap 5: Between Customers' Expectations and perceived service

Key determinants of the service expected by customers include word-of-mouth communications, personal needs, past experience, and external communications from the service provider. All four gaps discussed above contribute to Gap 5.

Customer's domain

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┌─────────────────┐   ┌─────────────────┐   ┌─────────────────┐
│ Word-of-mouth   │   │ Personal needs  │   │ Past experience │
│ communications  │   │                 │   │                 │
└─────────────────┘   └─────────────────┘   └─────────────────┘
        │                     │                     │
        │                     ▼                     │
        │            ┌─────────────────┐            │
        └──────────► │ Expected service│ ◄──────────┘
                     │                 │
                     └─────────────────┘
          Gap 5            ↕   ↑
                     ┌─────────────────┐
                     │ Perceived service│
                     └─────────────────┘
                             ↑
- - - - - - - - - - - - - - - - - - - - - - - - - - - - - - - - - - - - - - - -
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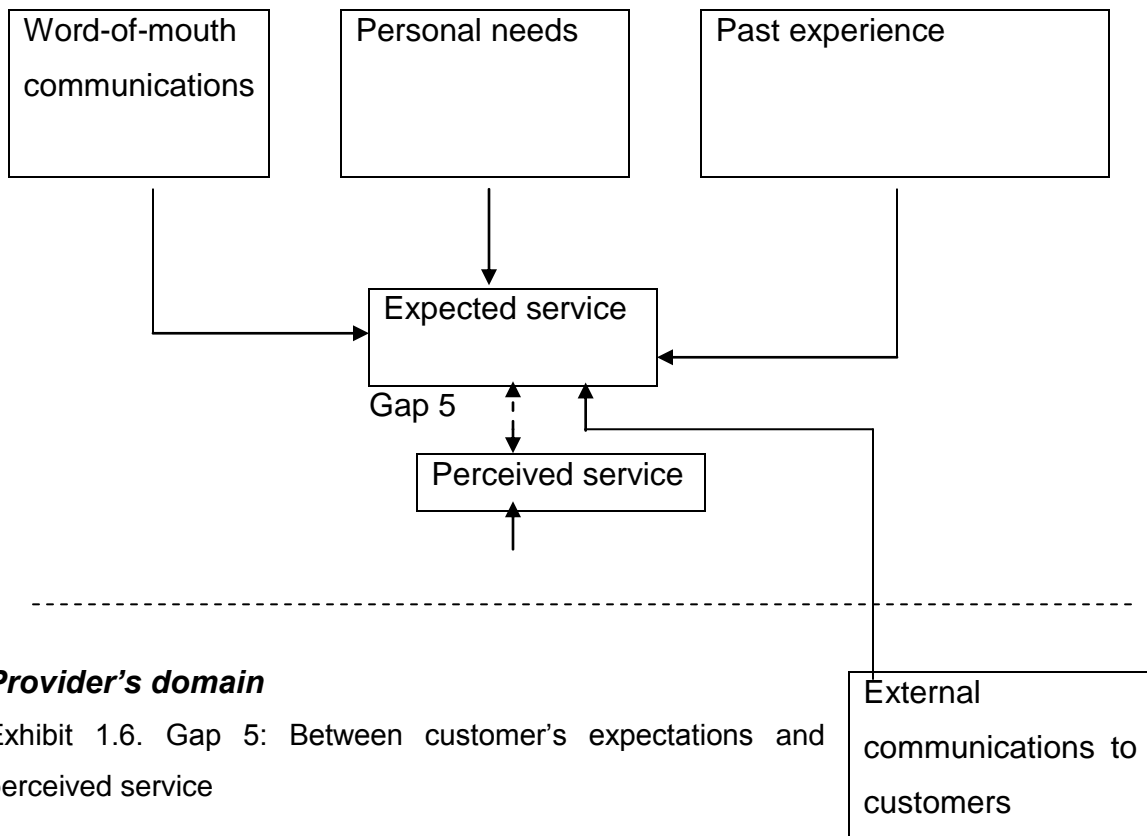
Provider's domain

Exhibit 1.6. Gap 5: Between customer's expectations and perceived service

┌─────────────────┐
│ External   │
│ communications to│
│ customers   │
└─────────────────┘

2.3.   A CONCEPTUAL MODEL ON SERVICE QUALITY

Customer's domain

Word-of-mouth communications	Personal needs	Past experience

Customer's expectations concerning service

Gap 5

customer's perceptions concerning service

Provider's Domain

The actual service delivery

Gap4

External communications to customers

Gap 3

Organisation's specification of quality

Gap 1

Gap 2

Management perceptions of customer expectations
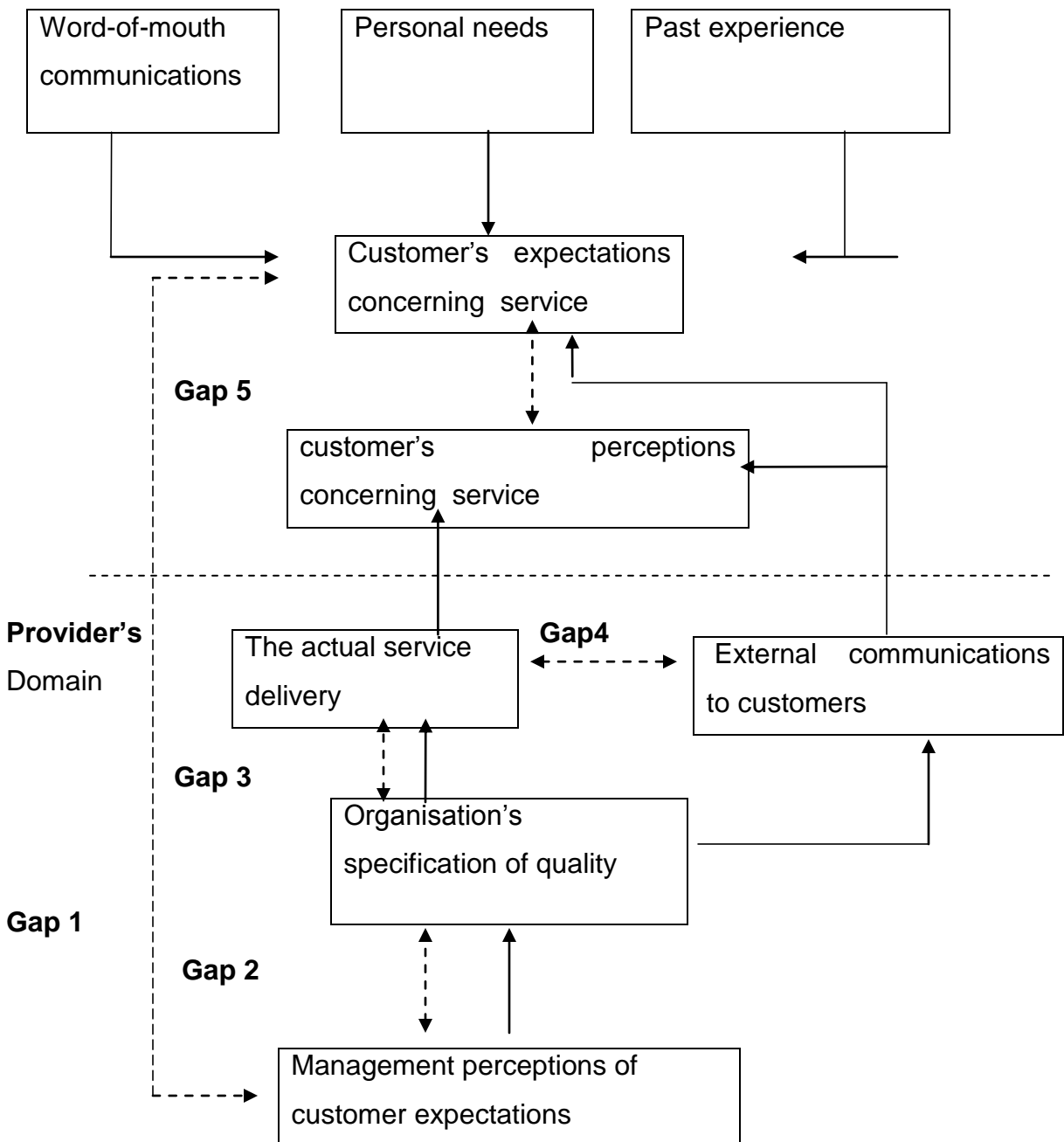
Source: Adapted from Parasuraman, A. *et al*. (1985). "A conceptual model of service quality and implications for future research" *Journal of Marketing*, 49(Fall): 41-50.

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From the above figure, both customers' expectations and perceptions are influenced by a number of factors, some of which cannot be controlled by the operation and some others, to a certain extent, be managed.

The bottom part of the model shows the operation's domain of quality and the top part shows the customer's domain. Within the operation's domain, the management of the organisation is responsible for designing the service and providing a specification of the quality to which the service has to be created. Within the customer's domain, his or her expectations are shaped by such factors as previous experiences with a particular service, the marketing image provided by the organisation and the word of mouth information from other users.

2.4 The theory of Quality Management Systems

Quality is defined as a consistent conformance to customers' expectations, in other words, 'doing things right'. (Slack, Chambers & Johnston, 40: 2007). Quality is therefore a major influence on customer satisfaction or dissatisfaction. The perception of high quality service means customer satisfaction and therefore the likelihood that the customer will return. High quality does not only lead to external customer's satisfaction, but makes life easier inside the operation as well. High quality reduces costs and increases dependability.

The concept of quality management began in the manufacturing sector, but a growing concern with quality in other areas of the economy has led to the adoption of the quality management systems in the service and non-profit making organisations. According to Williams (1994:18) quality is the product of an organisational culture that drives constant improvement and concern for producing high-quality goods and service. Hord (1995:71) defined Quality Management System as a "systematic approach to managing people, goals, measurement, feedback and recognition as a way of motivating employees to achieve their full potential, in line with the organisation's objectives."

Hale (2002:73-74) emphasised the importance of giving employees feedback by stating that "If the organisation wants people to develop and manifest hard or soft skills, then the behaviours must be rewarded or there must be consequences for not exhibiting them on the job, once the training is completed, people require feedback and support systems so they can adjust their old behaviours to move closely emulate those that are desired."

By the mid-1980s, many American corporations and some government agencies began to encourage quality approaches through integrated, multifaceted quality systems (Swiss, 1992).

These integrated quality systems quickly became identified by the rubric of Total Quality Management or its commonly used acronym, TQM. In his article, Romano (1994) quoted Deming, arguing that there is really no such thing as Total Quality Management - "It is a buzzword. I have never used the term, as it carries no meaning". Juran on the other hand, apparently did not have any difficulty with the term and eventually became a corporate advisor and consultant on Total Quality Management (Mani, 1995).

Cohen and Eimicke (1994) attached a particular meaning to each word making up the acronym TQM:" *Total* means applying to every aspect of work, from identifying customer needs to aggressively evaluating whether the customer is satisfied. *Quality* means meeting and exceeding customer expectations. *Management* means developing and maintaining the organisational capacity to constantly improve *quality*"

Littman (1993) described Total Quality Management as a fundamentally different approach from traditional management characterised by (1) Customer focus; (2) elimination of errors and does not add value to products and services; (4) prevention of problems; (5) Long term planning; (6) Team work; (7) Fact-based decision making; (8) Continuous improvement; (9) Horizontal and decentralised organisational structures, and (10) External partnering arrangement.

However, Mani (1995) questioned if Total Quality Management isn't really just old wine in new bottles. Stupak and Garrity (1993) suggested that Total Quality Management is the "Integrated totality of the theories of public administration", which makes it difficult to ascertain its boundaries.

2.5. QUALITY PLANNING AND CONTROL

Slack *et al.* (2007) identified the following benefits of higher quality:
- o Lower the service costs
- o Lower the inspection and test costs
- o Lower rework and scrap costs
- o Decrease inventory costs
- o Lower the complaint and warranty costs
- o Processing time is decreased
- o Productivity is increased
- o Capital costs are lowered
- o Lower the operation costs

2.6.   QUALITY - OPERATION'S VIEW

From the operation's point of view, quality is consistent with conformance to customers' expectation. The word '*conformance* 'implies that there is a need to meet a clear specification; ensuring that a service conforms to specification and '*consistent'* implies that conformance to specification is not an ad hoc event but the materials, facilities and processes have been designed and then controlled to ensure that product or service meets the specification using a set of measurable product or service characteristics. (Slack *et al.*, 2007).

2.7.   QUALITY - CUSTOMER'S VIEW

Identifying who the customers are, what they want, and examining the impact of services on particular groups is the starting point for quality improvement and customer care/ satisfaction. Improving quality requires the authorities to recognise the needs, background and experiences of individuals and also recognise that services are of value only if they are judged to be of value by recipients (Local Government Board: LGMB, 1991; Local Government Information Unit: LGIU, 1991a)

Similarly, Stewart and Walsh (1990:4) concluded that "Quality cannot be defined separately from use and user experience. This implies that a service that provides quality for one user may likely not provide quality for another, simply because needs, requirements and expectations may vary from one user to another."

Slack *et al*. (540: 2007) concluded that an individual customer's expectations may be different. Past experiences, individual knowledge and history will all shape their expectations and furthermore, customers, on receiving the product or service, may each *perceive* it in different ways.

Satisfaction levels may vary between those who have experienced targeted improvement and other groups. It has been argued that, in the late 1980's the growth of an 'enterprise culture' led public and private organisations alike to become obsessed with meeting the demands of 'sovereign consumers' (Keat and Abercrombie, 1991). The term "consumer" is used for shoppers or users of the services, but in the education sector, the term hardly resembles the supermarket shopper (Riley, 1994).

The rise of consumerism, particularly in the USA, has shifted attention to the customer voice. Quality is everyone's business. This was supported by theorists Peters and Waterman (1982) who argued that "Being closer to the customer is a fundamental attribute of a successful company."

This clearly indicates that the starting point for the quality improvement initiatives should be to identify the customers, what they want and examining the impact of services on particular groups. Potter (1988:149) defined '*consumerism*' as "Attempts to redress the imbalance of power that exists between those who produce goods and services, and those for whom they are produced." Parents should be given the opportunity to judge the effectiveness of schools through the provision of information about school performance on attainment of targets examination results.

In their study, Cohen and Eimicke (1994) found that "Some managers attempted to use Total Quality Management Systems to further their own private agendas, whereas others misunderstood how to use Total Quality Management Systems effectively and others openly tried to sabotage quality initiatives".

2.8.   Does quality management work in the Public Sector?

In the public sector, quality implies the supply of facilities and services in time, within budget (efficient) and to conformance of scope and requirements. South Africa's education policy documents have been peppered with the terminology of "quality" and "excellence" associated with total quality management.

Quality services, quality education and total quality management are becoming a major concern by educational professionals, politicians, individuals, groups and organisations that are stakeholders in the educational services. Nevo (1995:45) highlighted the importance of total quality management in the public sector by stating that "The success of the public service in delivering its operational and developmental goals depends primarily on the efficiency and effectiveness with which employees carry out their duties." He further argued that managing quality is a key Human Relations Management tool to ensure that (1) Employees know what is expected of them; (2) Managers know whether the employees' performance is delivering the required objectives;

(3) Poor performance is identified and improved and (4) Good performance is recognised and rewarded.

Cohen and Eimicke (1994) found little problems in adapting the approaches to the production of goods and services delivered by government. They argued that government's performance can be improved if human capital is leveraged more effectively through continuous improvement of operating processes and more effective group processes.

However, Swiss (1992) and Rago (1994) countered that it is a serious mistake to attempt to implement Total Quality Management in public institutions. The two opposing views define the forum within which the applicability and effectiveness of quality management in government is discussed.

Swiss (1992) believed that total quality management can have a useful role to play in the government, but only if it is: "substantially modified to fit the Public sector's unique characteristics."
He based his conclusion on Total Quality Management's roots in statistical quality control and industrial engineering among other factors. Limiting Total Quality Management's usefulness, Swiss pointed to its stress on products rather than services, insensitivity to the problems of defining government customers, an inappropriate emphasis on inputs and process rather than results, and demands for top-level leadership that can rarely be met by the governmental culture.

Swiss (1992) pointed out that taxpayer evaluate public services not only on the result but also on the behaviour and even the appearance of the individuals delivering the service. He argued that quality metrics for the government are extremely complex to develop and apply in a meaningful way.

Swiss made a strong argument about the difficulty in defining the government customer, which in many cases can be challenging and even politically controversial issue. Hyde (1995) identified finding consensus on customers as one of government's biggest challenges in implementing Total Quality Management.

In contrast to these potential difficulties, several observers suggested benefits or advantages in adopting Total Quality Management in the government sector. These include: (1) producing better and more goods and services with the same or fewer resources (Cohen and Brand, 1993); (2) motivating and empowering employees (Rago, 1996);

(3) Developing strong leadership among senior management (Rago, 1996); (4) reducing layers of organisational hierarchy (Cohen and Brand, 1993; Rago, 1996); (5) competing more effectively against privatisation threats (Osborne and Gaebler, 1992); (6) helping organisations achieve goals and objectives (Cohen and Brand, 1993); (7) meeting customer (taxpayer) expectations (Carr and Littman, 1993).

Similarly, White Paper 6 on Human Resource Management in the Public service (1997:6) highlighted the following benefits of effective implementation of QM practices:

- Increased job satisfaction among employees and improved attendance
- Increased reliability and on-time delivery of the products or service and reduced errors;
- Greater customer satisfaction, based on the consumer's overall perceptions;
- Customer retention rates, and
- Improved market share and profitability.

The schools can expect the following from a Total Quality approach to education. (1) Increased customer satisfaction, (2) Improved programmes, (3) Improved responsiveness to changes in the economic environment, (4) Cost reductions, (5) Improved student performance, (6) Increased educator motivation, (7) Increased flexibility, (8) Improved cooperation between educators and administration, (9) Greater parental and public involvement in our schools. (Anonymous)

Hord (1995:181) confirmed this by arguing that "Quality Management plays a vital role in helping the organisation achieve its goals by providing a link between strategic planning and performance appraisal".

However Bacal (1998:1) believed that "When managers put away 'blaming stick' in appraisals and move to a cooperative, dialogue approach, the whole process can become more comfortable and effective, and managers will be able to be on the same side with employees and working together towards the same goals".

2.8. Assessing the effectiveness of total quality management in the public sector

There is a mixed reaction by scholars to TQM's efficacy in improving government's performance. Some scholars have enthusiastically concluded that TQM shows great promise for the public sector management (Milakovich, 1990 and 1991; Davis and Hyde, 1992; Cohen and Brand, 1993; Kravchuk and Leighton, 1993; White and Wolf, 1995a) whereas other scholars are less enthusiastic and some are highly critical of its success (Swiss, 1992; Chang, 1993; Walters, 1992 and 1994; Connor, 1997)

Grant, Shani, and Krishman (1994) shared similar opinions about TQM's unsuitability for rapid implementation in the public sector. They argued that: "TQM cannot simply be templated over existing public agency organisational structures. For it to function properly and completely, TQM requires major changes in the public management practices, redefinition of senior leader and manager roles, changes in organisational goals and objectives, and significant work and organisational redesign.

Government officials and practitioners also had mixed reactions to the effective implementation of TQM. Others believed that it is merely another passing managerial fad; that it is not well suited to a particular kind of work done by their organisations; that it increases paperwork, meetings and training time; and that it takes away from the overall time available to do the "real work" (Zeitz, 1996) There is also a concern for cost-benefits associated with TQM programmes and whether quality management really delivered meaningful organisation improvement(Romano, 1994) .

This creates unrest in the government sector as they begin to worry and question whether they are getting real value from their programmes (Poister and Harris, 1997). Harari (1997) identified ten specific reasons why he believes TQM is likely not to succeed: (1) TQM focuses on people's attention on internal processes rather than on external results; (2) TQM focuses on minimum standards; (3) TQM develops its own cumbersome bureaucracy; (4) TQM delegates quality to quality czars and experts rather than to real people; (5) TQM does not demand radical organisational reform; (6) TQM does not demand changes in management compensation; (7) TQM does not demand entirely new relationships with outside partners; (8) TQM appeals to faddism, egotism and quick-fixism; (9) TQM drains entrepreneurship and innovation from corporate culture; and (10) TQM has no place for love (passion).

Walsh (1991) argued that "Under quality assurance, public services like manufactured goods would have to conform to technical standards and specifications and, in the process, offer value for money." To ensure that these quality objectives are achieved, elaborate systems of performance measurement and external audit must be established throughout the public sector. (Carter, 1989, 1991)

2.10. Quality of education of private sector versus public sector

There is a need for authorities to have clarity on the differences between quality in the public and private sectors. Skelcher (1992) has argued that the differences between the way that public and commercial sectors approach quality spring from their structural characteristics, further arguing that local authorities have not been sufficiently customer-oriented in the past, nor had a clear enough focus on quality.

Skelcher further made the following comparisons:

Table 1.1. Comparison of local government (public) and commercial (private) sectors

Local government	Commercial sectors
Accountability Extensive open	 Limited Closed
Choice Wide value base Political process Customer also citizen	 Narrow value base Managerial process Limited influence customer
Purpose Multiple	 narrow

Source: Skelcher (1992)

These differences are in the *accountability* (i.e. public sector has a wider and more public range of accountability structures than the private sector), *choice* (choice in commercial enterprises is linked to market concerns) and *purpose* (for local authorities – range of purposes and private enterprises are geared to profit) (Skelcher, 1992).

2.11. Employees' attitude towards TQM in the public sector

In a study conducted by Connor (1997), the author concluded that a frequently overlooked but fundamentally important aspect of the implementation of Total Quality Management in public organisations is the human factor. He identified the lack of concern for human factor as the Total Quality Management's most serious downside. He observed that Total Quality Management enthusiasts don not really care about employees, the people who do the work, they care about the customers, process improvement, cycle time, performance, but they tend to ignore people - people are only a "means to an end"

Hargreaves (1998:120) pointed out that " The reasons why educational change is difficult to bring about, is that the change is poorly conceptualized or not clearly demonstrated, that is, there is a lack of clarity on who will benefit, how they will benefit, and what the change will achieve. " The case study of IRS implementation of Total Quality Management (Mani, 1995) revealed that Implementation of Total Quality Management is a long-term commitment. It rarely produces lasting results over the short term. Improvement in quality not only does not cost more, but that they indeed can reduce costs, and hence lower real prices to consumers in both the corporate and public sectors (White and Wolf, 1995b).

Many employees see Total Quality Management system as a fad, remembering past quality assurance strategies such as Whole School Evaluation, Performance Management System and Developmental Appraisal System. Quality Management System should be viewed in relation to key organisational problems, needs, and outcomes (Kganyago, 2004: 26).
 Employees must understand the importance of Total Quality Management well before engaging themselves in the process. Some employees are doing it for the sake of money and promotions. This is wrong as the ultimate aim of Total Quality Management is performance and quality improvement.

The managers are responsible for setting an appraisal tone and climate. Basal (1999:3) concluded that " Employees who come at the process with a negative or defensive approach are not likely to gain from the process or to prosper in the long run, Performance appraisal is about positive open communication between employee and manager." Sheal (1999:162) argued that success of assessment programmes and competence-based training depends upon having a reliable, consistent and constructive assessment system and trained assessors and verifiers to implement it.

2.12. FRAMEWORK FOR THIS STUDY

External Customers' expectation and perception of service quality

| Tangibles | Reliability | Responsiveness | Assurance | Empathy |

Gap 5

Management's perception of service quality

Internal Customers' perception of service quality

Marketing Research Orientation

Teamwork

Gap 1

Upward Communication

Employee-Job Fit

Levels of Management

Technology-Job Fit

Gap 3

Perceived Control

Management Commitment to Service Quality

Supervisory Control System

Role Conflict

Gap 2

Goal Setting

Role Ambiguity

Task Standardisation

Role Conflict

Gap 4

Perception of Feasibility

Role Conflict

2.13. Chapter conclusion

This chapter has provided a theoretical review within which the research will be based. It examined what the customer service quality is, the causes of customer service quality problems (gaps), and the theory of Quality Management System, quality planning and control, quality from operation and customers' point of view as well as the employees' attitude towards Total Quality Management in the public sector. Chapter three will outline the selected research approaches, design, data collection procedures, techniques, and data analysis, in order to reveal the most effective approaches to the delivery of quality service to customers by public schools.

CHAPTER 3: RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

3. Introduction

The previous chapter has provided a theoretical review within which the research will be based. It has examined what customer service quality is, the cause of customer service quality problems (gaps), and the theory of Quality Management System, quality planning and control, quality from operation and customers' point of view as well as employees' attitude towards Total Quality Management in the public sector. Chapter three will outline the selected research approaches, design, data collection procedures, techniques, and data analysis, in order to reveal the most effective approaches to the delivery of quality service to customers by public schools.

The present chapter provides an outline of the research methodology employed in the evaluation of effective implementation of the process of Total Quality Management System and its implementation will result in the improvement of quality of service and increased customers' satisfaction. The selection of the sample, measuring instruments, procedure for data collection and the statistical techniques utilized relating to the research are delineated.

The research design is described below as well. The research variables, the type of research and the methods are discussed below. The research design reflects the type of study undertaken to provide acceptable answers to the research problem (Mouton, 2001). According to Kerlinger (1973), the research design has two main purposes, i.e. to provide answers to research questions and control variance. Research designs are invented to enable the researcher to answer research questions as validly, objectively, accurately, and economically as possible. Adequately planned and executed research design helps greatly in permitting one to rely both on his /her observations and inferences.

3.1. Rationale for study

The aim of this research is to evaluate whether effective implementation of Total Quality Management System in public schools in Limpopo Provincial department of education will lead to the improvement of quality of education (service) and evaluate the customers' expectation and their perception about quality of service they receive from these operations, identify gaps using the conceptual model and to make recommendations to effectively improve the implementation of Total Quality Management System in order to close these gaps.

3.2. Research design

3.2.1. The type of research and reasons for choosing this method [quantitative research approach]

According to Mouton (2001:74), a research design can be defined as a plan or blueprint of how one intends to conduct the research. He further highlights that a research design focuses on the end product (research finding), formulates a research problem and focuses on the logic of research. The researcher will embark on quantitative research design paradigm that will ensure an exploratory and descriptive form of research (Maykut and Morehouse, 1998:64).

Quantitative research is a form of conclusive research involving large representative samples and fairly structured data collection procedures. Quantitative research tends to measure constructs through the use of questionnaires and / or some form of structured observation.
Questionnaire as a research instrument will be used in this study.

Target population

The research focuses on secondary schools in Mankweng Cluster (area). The population for this study is the schools that will be sampled. Huysamen (1994, 38) defines a population as encompassing "the total collection of all members, cases or elements about which the researcher wishes to draw conclusions." The population for this research includes Level 1 Educators, Principals and School Management Teams, and grade 10 to 12 learners in Mankweng Cluster of the Capricorn District in Polokwane, South Africa.

Selection of the sample

According to Sekaran (1992), sampling is "the process of selecting a sufficient number of elements from the population, so that a study of the sample and an understanding of its properties or characteristics would make it possible for us to generalize such properties or characteristics to the population elements". The sample for this research is therefore drawn from this population and consists of subjects from three high schools which are randomly selected from three clusters, i.e. rural schools, semi-rural schools and township schools, to participate in the research project.

Therefore, the cluster sampling method was used to select the sample of schools to ensure representativity of the population. The sampling method utilized is outlined below.

Bless & Higson-Smith (1995:89) states that the first means of ensuring a representative sample is the use of a complete and correct sampling frame, which is the list of all units from which the sample is to be drawn. For the purposes of this study the researcher therefore decided on a probability sampling design, cluster sampling. Stratification consists of the population being divided into a number of groups called strata. The researcher will divide the universe into different groups, called strata. Then within each stratum, random sampling takes place using the simple random sampling method.

The population targeted for this research are educators and learners in Mankweng Cluster in the Limpopo Department of Education.

The advantage of this method is that it is representative of the population in the sense that it does not favour one unit of analysis over another. Representativity of the targeted population will thus be ensured.

A sample of 46 level 1 educators from three (3**)** secondary schools (i.e.15 from each school) and 300 learners, 11(eleven) School Management Team members (three) from each school.

A total of 357 respondents, obtained by random sampling technique from clustered schools will be used as a sample for this research. Representativity of the targeted population will thus be ensured.

The School Management Teams, educators, and learners will provide their expectations and their perceptions on the quality of service delivery and how they think the practice of Total Quality Management Systems in their schools will help to improve quality service delivery and increase customer satisfaction, loyalty and retention. Data were collected using questionnaires and were analysed using descriptive methods, i.e. tables, graphs, and statistical methods.

Research instrument

In this research, the focus will be on the questionnaire as an instrument to be used for data collection. To guide this empirical study, a structured questionnaire is used to collect data. De Vos (1998:152) defines a questionnaire as a set of questions in a form to be completed by respondents in respect of a research project. The aim of this instrument is to measure the perceptions of educators, school managers or School Management Teams about the quality of service offered to their learners, their expectations concerning improvement of quality and customer satisfaction.

Response scales that include *strongly disagree to strongly agree*, seven point Likert - type scale that measures the extent of responses was used.

The questionnaires containing a variety of questions were used to collect data from the respondents. An instrument [SERVQUAL] questionnaire consisting of two sections: Section A- an expectation section containing 22 statements to ascertain the general expectation of customers concerning a service, and

Section B-perception section containing: matching set of 22 statements to measure customers' assessments of a specific school. The instructions and statements for two sections of SERVQUAL are presented in Annexure A-B.

A seven-point scale ranging from 5-7 (strongly agree) to 1-3 (strongly disagree) accompany each statement.

The instrument is administered to 357 respondents
 (Both internal and external) divided between males and females. The instrument consists of 22 items, spanning the five dimensions of service quality: (1) Tangibles, (2) Reliability, (3) Responsiveness, (4) Assurance and (5) Empathy

3.3.1. Composition of the questionnaire

The questionnaires consist of items that are indicators of the five dimensions, namely: Tangibles, Reliability, Responsiveness, Assurance and Empathy. [Assessing gap 5]

3.3.2. Questionnaire items

Annexure A.1 was filled by the external customers to measure their expectations about quality service, and consists of 22 questions or items.

SERVQUAL statements (in both the expectations and perceptions sections) are grouped into five dimensions as follows:

Dimension	statements pertaining to the dimension
Tangibles	statements 1-4
Reliability	statements 5-9
Responsiveness	statements 10-13
Assurance	statements 14-17
Empathy.	Statements 18-22

Annexure A.2 consists of only five items or features and the respondent is requested to rate the features to indicate their importance.

Annexure A.3 consists of 22 items which measure external customers' perceptions about the quality of service.

Annexure B.1 Part 1 consists of 22 items. This instrument is used to measure School Managers' perceptions of customers' (learners') expectations about service quality and

Annexure B.1, **Part II** measures how important each of the five features is to their customers when evaluating the school's quality of service.

Part III with five items, measures the extent to which performance standards are formalised in their schools,

Part IV consists of five items measuring the degree to which their schools and their employees are able to meet the performance standards established, and

Part V also with five items measures the extent to which they believe that their schools and employees deliver the level of service promised to customers (learners) **Annexure B.2** measures the school managers' perceptions about their schools and their operations. It consists of 20 items. These statements pertain to the potential antecedents of the two managerial gaps (i.e. gap 1 and 2).

Antecedents of gap 1	**corresponding statements**
Marketing research orientation	statements 1-4
Upward communication	statements 5-8
Levels of management	statement 9
Antecedents of gap 2	**corresponding statements**
Management's commitment to	
Service quality	statements 10-13
Goal setting	statements 14-15
Task standardization	statements 16-17
Perception of feasibility	statements 18-20

Annexure B.3 was used by contact-personnel (educators) and consists of 30 items (statements) which measure their perceptions about their schools and their operations. These statements pertain to potential antecedents of the two gaps representing performance shortfalls on the part of contact personnel (educators) i.e. gaps 3 and 4)

Antecedents of gap 3	**corresponding statements**
Team work	statements 1-5
Employee-job fit	statements 6-7
Technology-job fit	statement 8
Perceived control	statements 9-12
Supervisory control systems	statements 13-15
Role conflict	statements 16-19
Role ambiguity	statements 20-24
Antecedents of gap 4	**corresponding statements**
Horizontal communication	statements 25-28
Propensity to over promise	statements 29-30

3.3.3. Pilot study

The project was piloted at the school where the researcher is currently working at to test whether the questionnaire is properly formulated.

3.4. Research process and procedure

At first, letters asking for permission were drafted and hand delivered to the Various Circuit Managers. The researcher continued collecting data from schools after receiving permission. The three high schools identified for the purpose of this study were Hwiti High school in Mankweng Circuit, Mothimako High School in Kgako-Tlou Circuit, and Seolwana High school in Mamabolo Circuit.

Letters asking for permission were hand delivered to the principals of these schools. The letters explained the nature of the study, and an indemnification clause assuring respondents of the confidentiality of any information provided was sent together with a sample questionnaire.

Respondents were also provided with detailed instructions as to how the questionnaires were to be completed and returned. The rationale behind providing clear instructions and assuring confidentiality of information is based on the fact that this significantly reduces the likelihood of obtaining biased responses (Sekaran, 1992).

Dessler in Luddy (2005) indicates the following in terms of using questionnaire as a method of collecting data-

- It is a quick and efficient way to obtain information from a large number of individuals;
- it is less costly than interviewing a vast number of people, and
- Questionnaires secure participants' anonymity.

However, Bless and Higson-Smith in Luddy, identified the major drawbacks of using questionnaires as follows:

- the response rate for questionnaires tend to be low;
- the literacy levels of respondents are not known to the researcher in advance, and
- The researcher runs the risk of receiving incomplete questionnaires that will have to be discarded.

3.4.1. Administration of questionnaires

Three hundred and fifty Seven (357) questionnaires were distributed to the three sampled high schools in Mankweng Cluster (Area). The researcher chose to have them hand-delivered to respondents. Of the 357 questionnaires distributed, 335 were returned and this represents a return rate of 94%, which is regarded as a good return rate which contributes to the validity of this study.

3.4.2. Collection of questionnaires

Completed questionnaires were collected two days after distributing them to the respondents to allow them enough time to complete them. The entire process of distribution and collection and analysis took three weeks, after the approval from the department to visit schools and collect data was granted.

3.4.3. Data analysis

Data collected by means of structured questionnaires was analysed using different statistical methods. The results obtained from inferential statistics will be presented in this section.

3.4.4. Data measurement and statistical techniques

The research data was statistically analyzed by means of the statistical methods used to analyse data. The data analyzed include descriptive and inferential statistics. The Moon stats programme was used to analyse data collected by means of questionnaires. Sekaran in Luddy (2005) assert that inferential statistics allows the researcher to infer from the data through analyzing the relationship between two variables; differences in a variable among different subgroups and how several independent variables might explain the variance in a dependent variable.

Descriptive statistics in the form of arithmetic means, mode, skewness, kurtosis, median and standard deviations have been computed for the various dimensions of the questionnaire. The results were thereafter presented in table form. Tables and graphs have been used in the analysis of data.

3.5. Methods to ensure validity and reliability

The researcher obtained data from questionnaires that were personally hand delivered and collected without positive identification to ensure anonymity of respondents to all sampled schools. Bless and Higson-Smith (1995:130) state that reliability is concerned with the consistency of the measure and contend that an instrument which produces accurate scores every time it is used to measure an unchanging value, has high reliability.

Concerning Validity of the content, De Vos (2002:167) states that it is concerned with the representativity or sampling of the content of the instrument. Therefore, the items on the questionnaire come from the literature overview.

3.6. Limitations of the study

According to Sekaran (1992), in the management and behavioural areas, it is not always possible to conduct investigations that are 100 percent scientific. He asserts that we are likely to encounter problems in the measurement and collection of data in the subjective areas of feelings, emotions, attitudes and perception. The other problem that he identified was that, we might also encounter difficulties in obtaining a representative sample, which would restrict generalizability of the findings.

THE FOLLOWING LIMITATIONS ARE ANTICIPATED IN THIS STUDY:

- Time constraints (to visit each school for clarity and collection of questionnaires);
- Financial constraints and distance between the three schools sampled, and
- Since the study is primarily going to focus on the experiences and perceptions of human beings, this poses a threat of validity and reliability of the research

3.7. Special ethical considerations [Elimination of bias]

The researcher is to follow the ethical measures of the University of Limpopo and undertakes to ensure that:

- Analysis of data will be done based on the questionnaire collected from respondents and he will be unbiased when analysing the data collected;
- Participants' anonymity will be respected at all times;
- He accepts accountability for the research and will act in a responsible manner;
- integrity will be ensured by being fair and honest;
- Individuals' participation in this research will be on a voluntary basis without undue influence, and
- The researcher will treat the information as confidential as possible.

3.8.   Chapter conclusion

This chapter examined the methodology used in the collection and analysis of data in order to arrive at the conclusions. It outlined the manner in which the sample for the study was derived and the population in which the sample was drawn. It also indicated the way in which data were collected and the questionnaire used for the collection of data, including its psychometric properties.

4. CHAPTER 4: ANALYSIS AND INTERPRETATION OF SELECTED SAMPLE OF EMPIRICAL DATA

4. Introduction

Chapter three outlined the research methodology used in this study, rationale for the study, research design, research instrument; composition and items of questionnaires, and research process and procedure. This chapter will present the finding from empirical data collected by means of questionnaires, and analysing data in the form of frequency tables and graphs.

4.1 . PRESENTATION OF FINDINGS IN GRAPHIC FORM AND TABLES

Frequencies for External customers' [Learners]' expectations and perceptions about service quality measuring gap 5

Frequency histogram for TANGIBLES

Figure 4.1. Frequencies of respondents' expectations of Tangibles

Figure 4.1. Presents a histogram of frequencies on customers' expectations of quality dimension: Tangibles, i.e. appearance of physical facilities [equipment, educators, and learning material]. The graph illustrates that the largest number of respondents, 81 %, expects an excellent school to have tangibles that are visually appealing,

11% of the respondents showed a moderate feeling about tangibles and only 8 % ,which is the smallest number of the respondents had less strong feeling about the tangibles.

Figure 4.2. Frequencies for respondents' perceptions about Tangibles

Figure 4.2. Presents a bar chart of frequencies for customers' perceptions of quality dimension: Tangibles i.e. appearance of physical facilities [equipment, educators, and learning material]. The graph illustrates that the largest number of respondents, 58 %,perceive their schools' tangibles to be visually appealing, 26% of the respondents showed a moderate feeling about tangibles and only 16% which is the smallest number of respondents perceived tangibles to be less visually appealing.
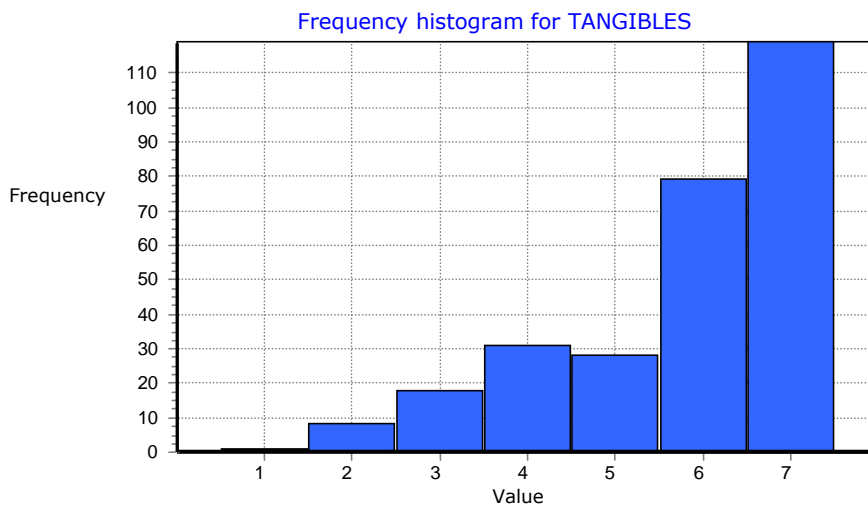

Figure 4.3. Frequencies for respondents' expectations: Reliability

Figure 4.3. Presents a histogram of frequencies for customers' expectations of quality dimension: Reliability i.e. the schools' ability to perform the promised service dependably and accurately. The graph illustrates that the largest number of the respondents, 73 %, expect an excellent school to perform the promised service dependably and accurately. Only 11%, which is the smallest number of the respondents showed a moderate feeling about reliability and 15 % of the respondents had less strong feeling about reliability.
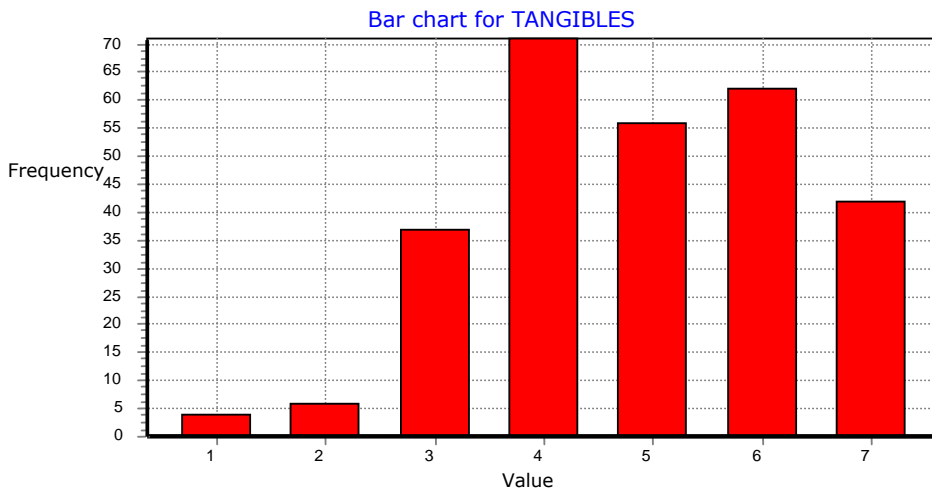

Figure 4.4. Frequencies for respondents' perception of Reliability

Figure 4.4. Presents a bar graph of frequencies for customers' perceptions about quality dimension: Reliability i.e. the schools' ability to perform the promised service dependably and accurately. The graph illustrates that the largest number of the respondents, 64 %, perceived their schools to be performing the promised service dependably and accurately. Only 14%, which is the smallest number of the respondents showed a moderate feeling about reliability and 22 %of the respondents had less strong feeling about reliability.
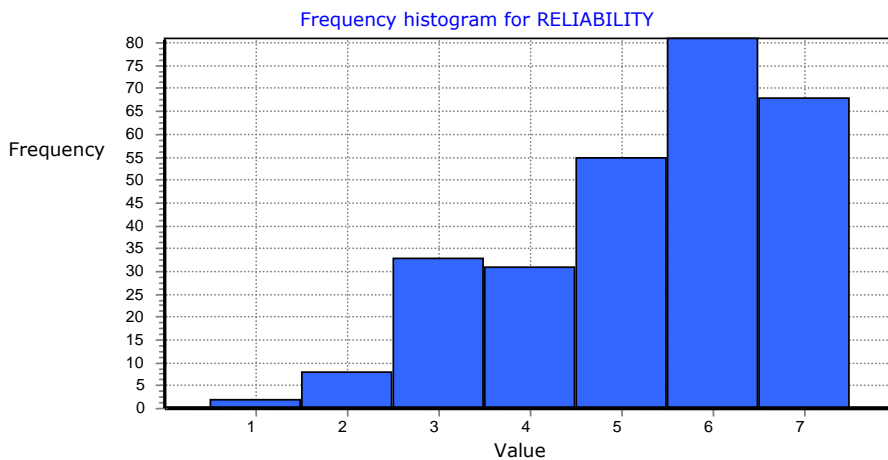
Figure 4.5. Frequencies for respondents' expectations of Responsiveness

Figure 4.5. Presents a histogram of frequencies for customers' expectations of quality dimension: Responsiveness i.e. the schools' willingness to help learners and provide prompt service. The graph illustrates that the largest number of respondents, 83 %, expect an excellent school to be willing to help learners and provide prompt service, 12 %of respondents had a moderate feeling about responsiveness and only 5%, which is the smallest number of the respondents showed less strong feeling about responsiveness.
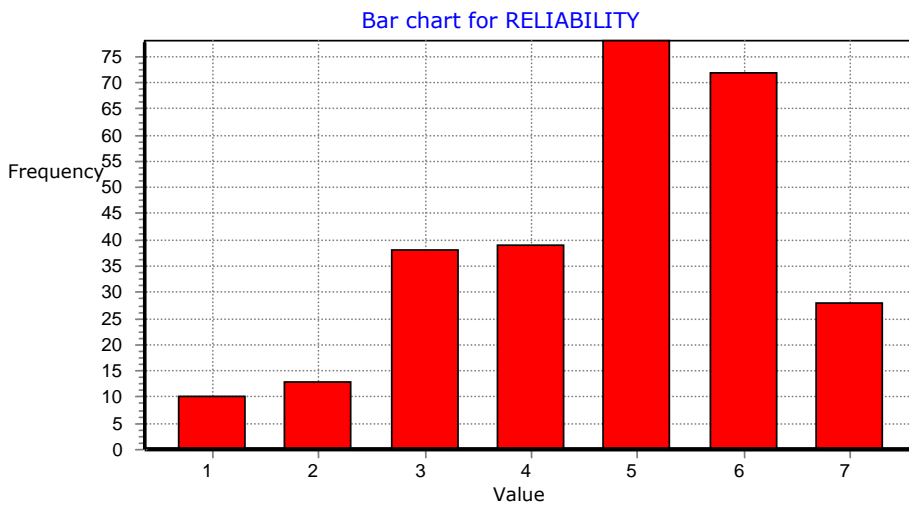

Figure 4.6. Frequencies for respondents' perceptions of Responsiveness

Figure 4.6. Presents a bar graph of frequencies for customers' perceptions of quality dimension: Responsiveness i.e. the schools' willingness to help learners and provide prompt service. The graph illustrates that the largest number of respondents, 68 %, had a strong feeling that their schools were willing to help learners and provide prompt service, 18 % of the respondents had a moderate feeling about responsiveness of their schools and only 14%, which is the smallest number of the respondents showed less strong feeling about responsiveness.

Frequency histogram for ASSURANCE

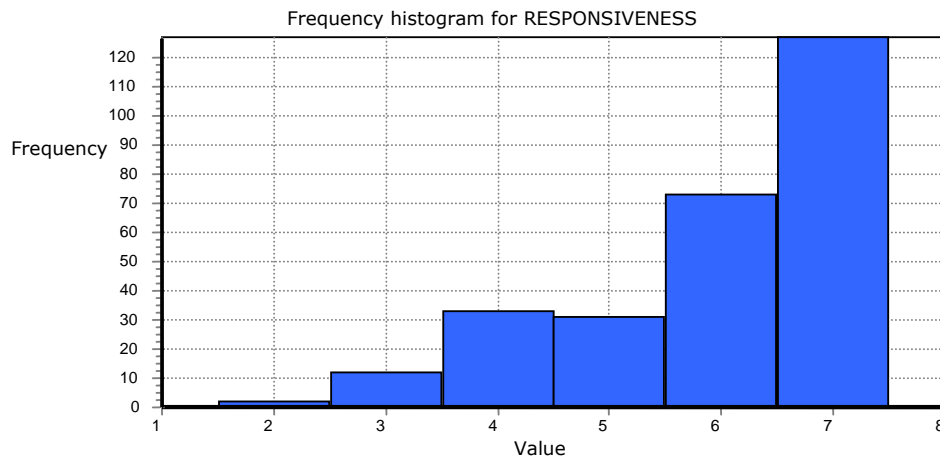**Figure 4.7. Frequencies for respondents' expectations of Assurance**

Figure 4.7. Presents a histogram of frequencies for customers' expectations of quality dimension: Assurance i.e. the knowledge and courtesy of educators and their ability to convey trust and confidence. The graph illustrates that the largest number of the respondents, 83 %, expect an excellent school to have educators who have knowledge and courtesy with the ability to convey trust and confidence, only 12% of the respondents showed a moderate feeling about assurance and only 5% of respondents, which is the smallest number of the respondents had less strong feeling about assurance.
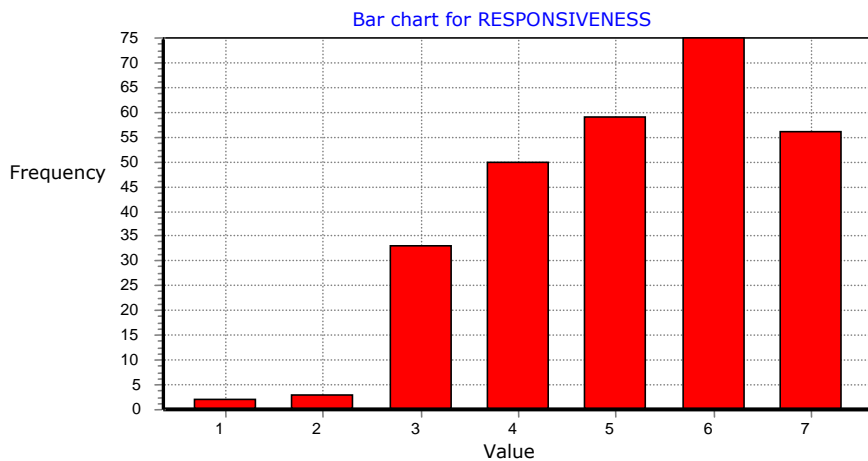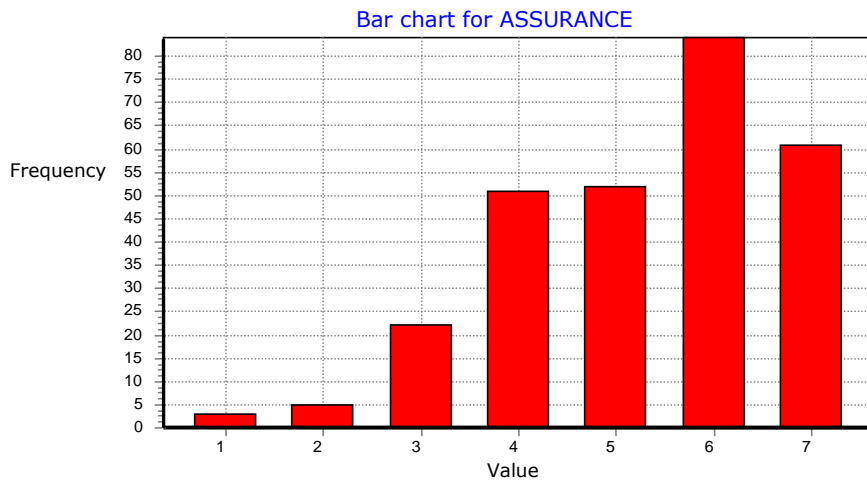
Figure 4.8. Frequencies for respondents' perceptions of Assurance

Figure 4.8. Presents a bar graph of frequencies for customers' perceptions of quality dimension: Assurance i.e. the knowledge and courtesy of educators and their ability to convey trust and confidence. The graph illustrates that the largest number of respondents, 71 %, perceived their schools to have educators who have knowledge and courtesy with the ability to convey trust and confidence, only 18% of the respondents showed a moderate feeling about assurance and only 11% of the respondents, which is the smallest number of the respondents had less strong feeling about the assurance.
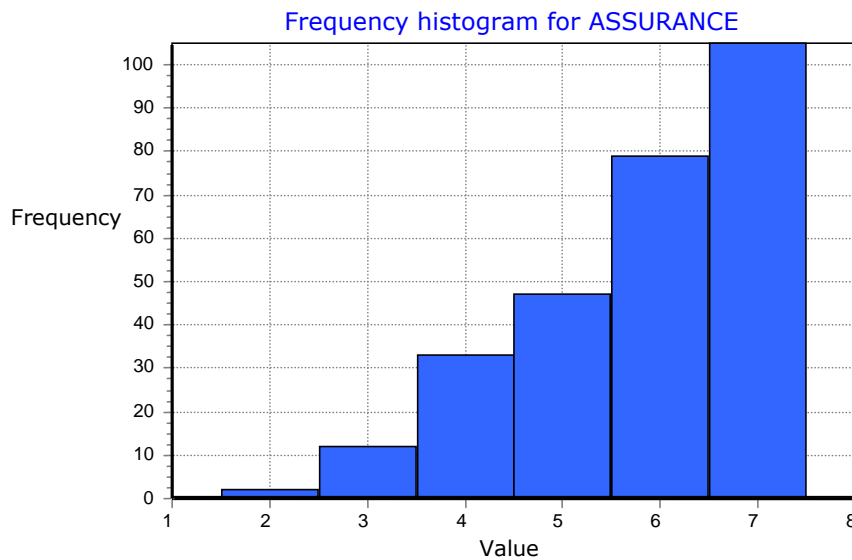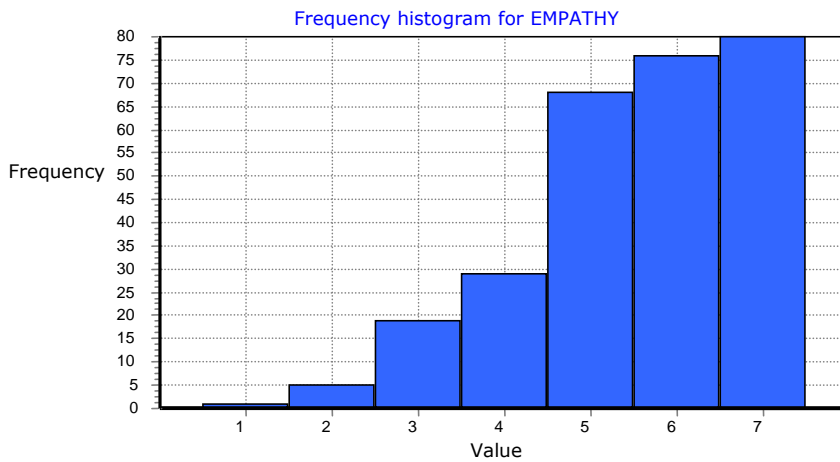

Figure 4.9. Frequencies for respondents' expectations of Empathy

Figure 4.9. Presents a histogram of frequencies on customers' expectations of quality dimension: Empathy, i.e. the caring, individualized attention the schools provide their customers (learners).

The graph illustrates that the largest number of respondents,
81 %, expects an excellent school to offer caring, individualized attention to their customers, 10 % of the respondents had moderate feeling about reliability and only 9%, which is the smallest number of the respondents showed a less strong feeling about Empathy.
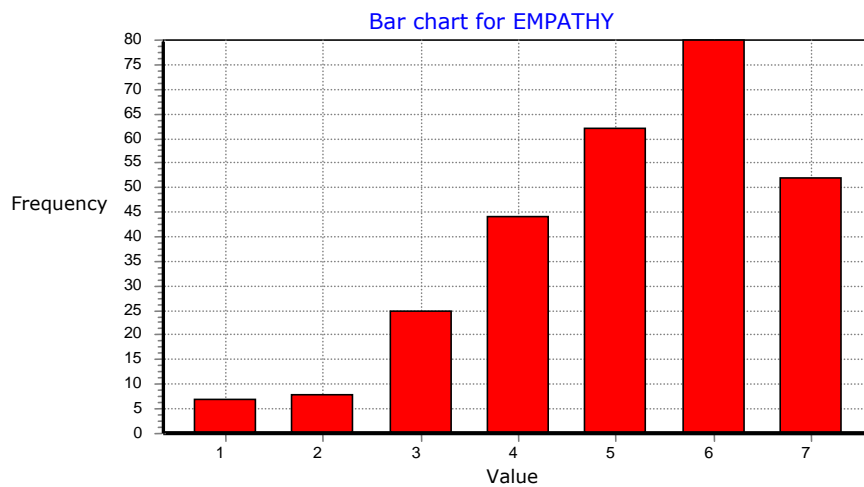
Figure 4.10. Frequencies for respondents' perceptions of Empathy

Figure 4.10. Presents a bar graph of frequencies for customers' perceptions of quality dimension: Empathy i.e. the caring, individualized attention the schools provide their customers (learners). The graph illustrates that the largest number of respondents,70 %, had a very strong feeling that their schools are able to offer caring, individualized attention to their customers, 16 % of the respondents had moderate feeling about reliability and only 14% ,which is the smallest number of the respondents showed a less strong feeling about Empathy.

Frequency histogram for AVERAGE
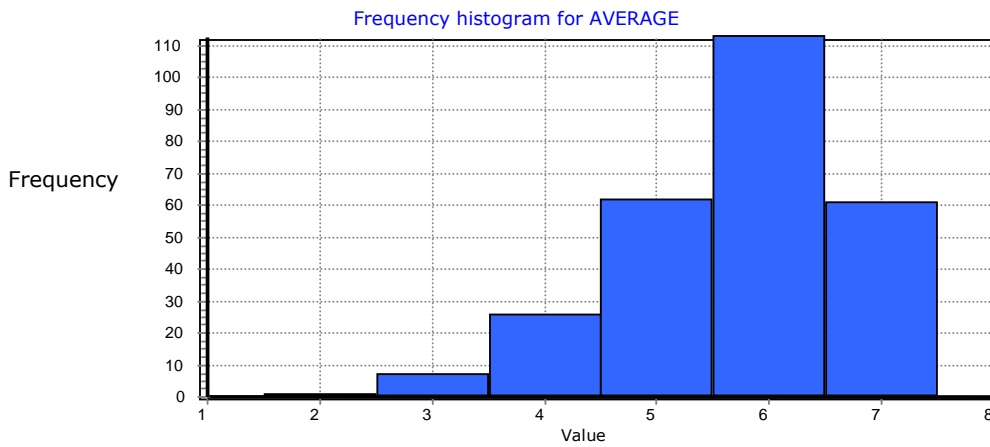
Figure 4.11. Frequencies for respondents' expectations of service quality: Average

Figure 4.11. Presents a histogram of frequencies for customers' overall expectations of the five quality dimensions: Tangibles, Reliability, Responsiveness, Assurance and Empathy. The graph illustrates that the largest number of respondents ,87 %, expect excellent schools to have visually appealing physical facilities, perform the promised service dependably and accurately, be willing to help their customers and provide prompt service and have staff that is caring, has knowledge, courtesy i.e. they are more concerned about high quality service. Ten percent of the respondents showed a moderate feeling about the five dimensions and only 3 % of respondents had less strong feeling about the five dimensions.

Bar chart for AVERAGE
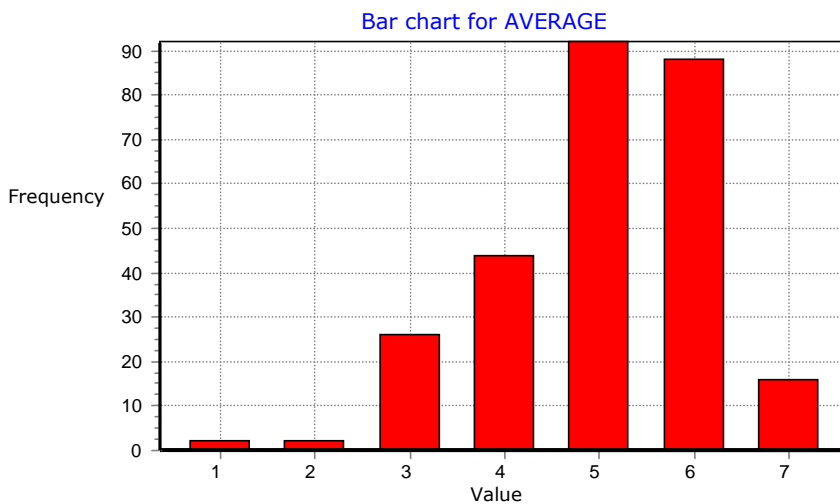
Figure 4.12. Frequencies for respondents' perceptions of all five dimensions: Average

Figure 4.12. Presents a bar graph of frequencies for customers' perception about overall service quality: the average of five quality dimensions: Tangibles, Reliability, responsiveness, Assurance and Empathy. The graph illustrates that the largest number of respondents, 73 %, perceived their schools to be having visually appealing physical facilities, performing the promised service dependably and accurately, willing to help their customers and providing prompt service and with staff that is caring, having knowledge and courtesy i.e. they are more concerned about high quality service.

Sixteen percent of the respondents showed a moderate feeling about the five dimensions and only 11 % of respondents had less strong feeling about the five dimensions.

Frequencies for [internal customers] educators' perceptions

About service quality offered by their schools

[MEASURING GAP 3]

Frequency histogram for TEAMWORK
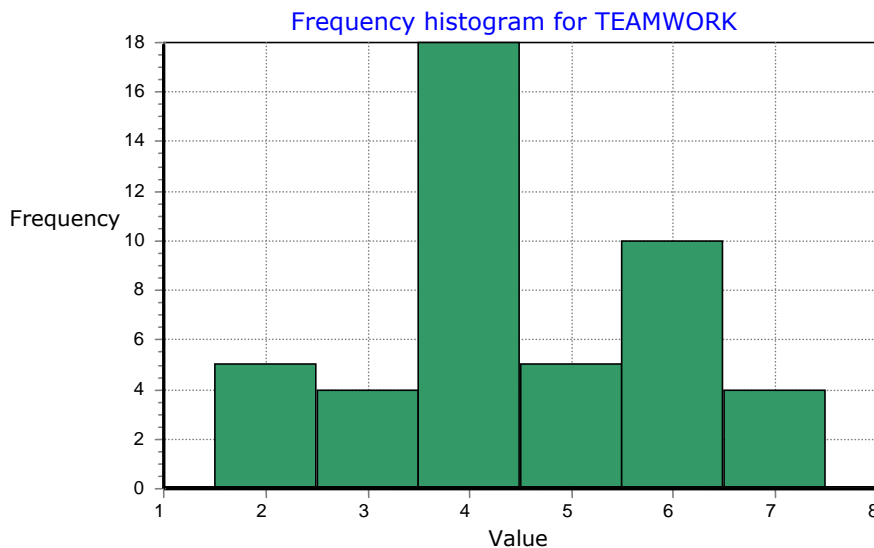
FIGURE 4.13 FREQUENCIES FOR INTERNAL CUSTOMERS' PERCEPTION OF: TEAM WORK

Forty-two percent of educators strongly feel that they pull together with managers for a common goal, 19% of the respondents had a less strong feeling that they pull together with managers for a common goal, and 39% of the respondents had a moderate feeling that they pull together with managers for a common goal.
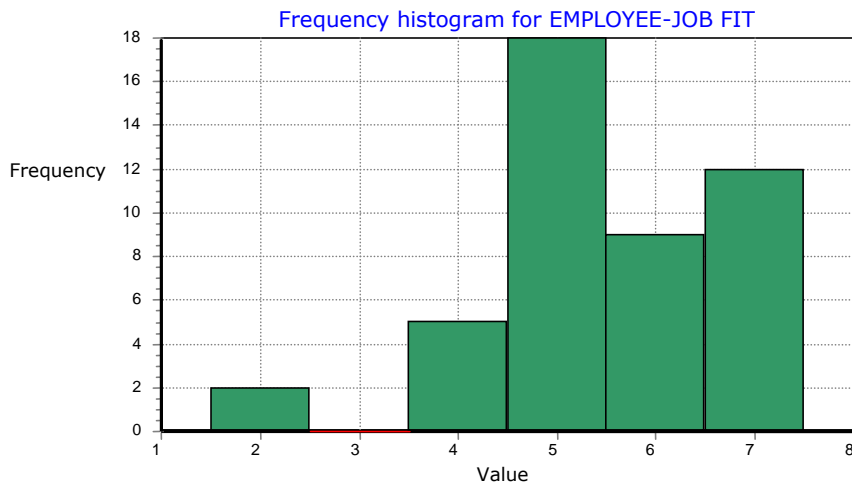
FIGURE 4.14 FREQUENCIES FOR INTERNAL CUSTOMERS' PERCEPTION OF: EMPLOYEE-JOB FIT

Eighty - five percent of educators strongly feel that there is a match between their skills and their jobs, 4% of the respondents had a less strong feeling that there is a match between their skills and their jobs, and 11% of the respondents had a moderate feeling that there is a match between their skills and their jobs.
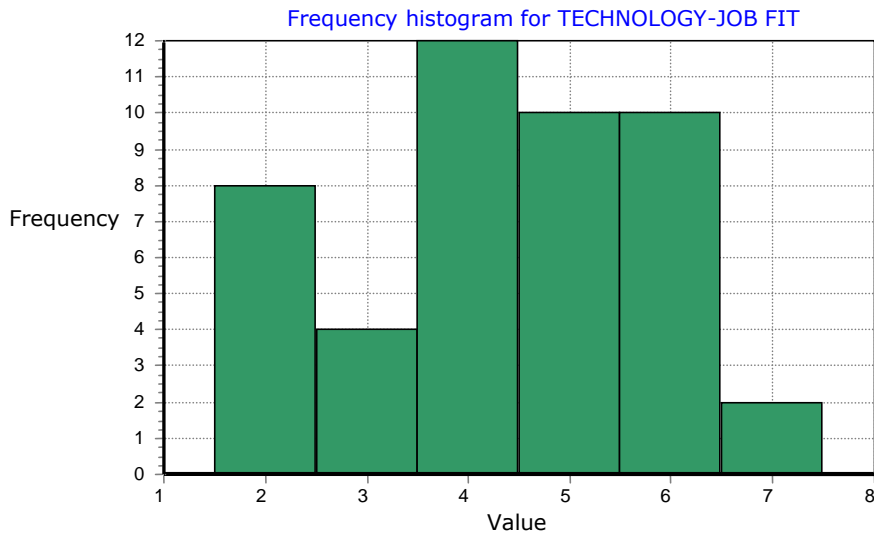
FIGURE 4.15 FREQUENCIES FOR INTERNAL CUSTOMERS' PERCEPTION OF: TECHNOLOGY-JOB FIT

Forty- eight percent of educators strongly feel that the tools and technology they use to perform their jobs are appropriate, 26% of the respondents had a less strong feeling that the tools and technology they use to perform their jobs are appropriate, 26% of the respondents had a moderate feeling that the tools and technology they use to perform their jobs are appropriate

Frequency histogram for PERCEIVED CONTROL
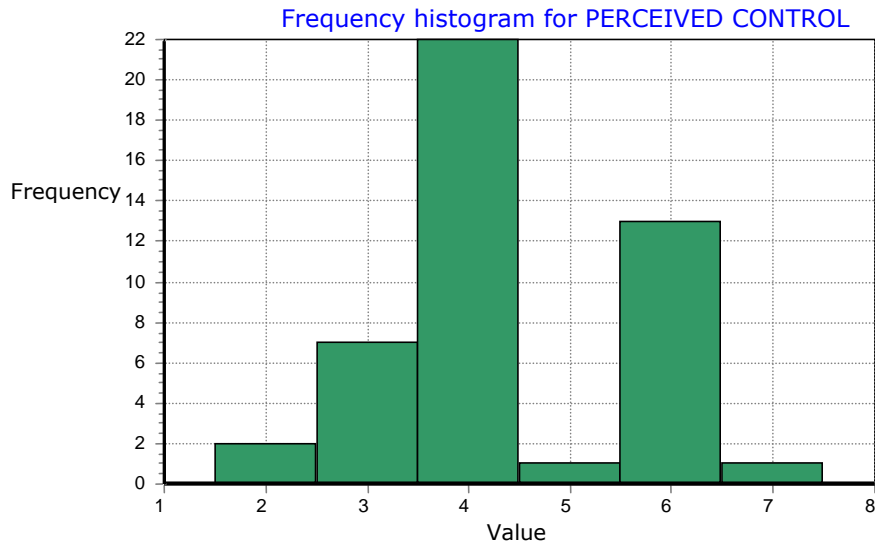
FIGURE 4.16 FREQUENCIES FOR INTERNAL CUSTOMERS' PERCEPTION OF: PERCEIVED CONTROL

Thirty –two percent of educators strongly feel that they could act flexibly rather than by rote in problem situations encountered in providing services, 20% of respondents had a less strong feeling about perceived control, and 48% of respondents had a moderate feeling that they could act flexibly rather than by rote in problem situations encountered in providing services.

Frequency histogram for SUPERVISORY CONTROL SYSTEMS
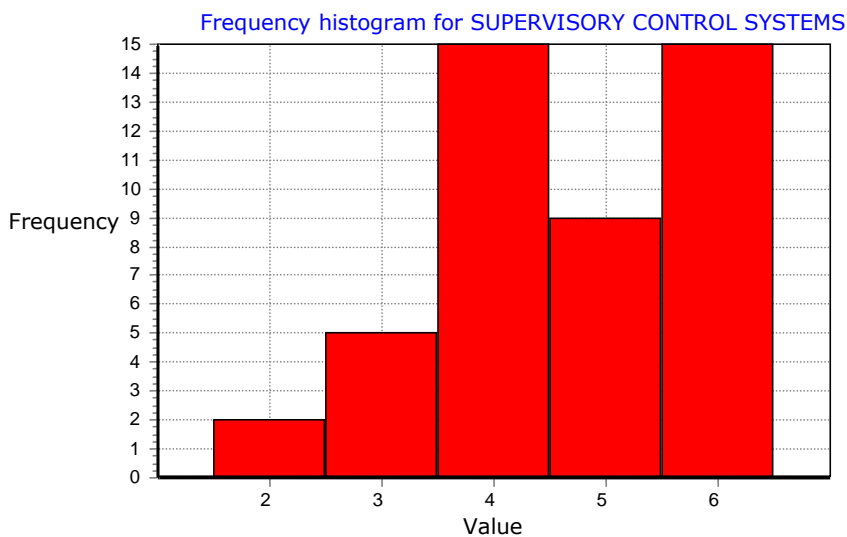
FIGURE 4.17 FREQUENCIES FOR INTERNAL CUSTOMERS' PERCEPTION OF: SUPERVISORY CONTROL SYSTEMS

Fifty- two percent of educators strongly feel that the evaluation and reward system in the school are appropriate, 15% of the respondents had a less strong feeling about supervisory control systems, and 33% of the respondents had a moderate feeling that the evaluation and reward systems are appropriate.

Frequency histogram for ROLE CONFLICT
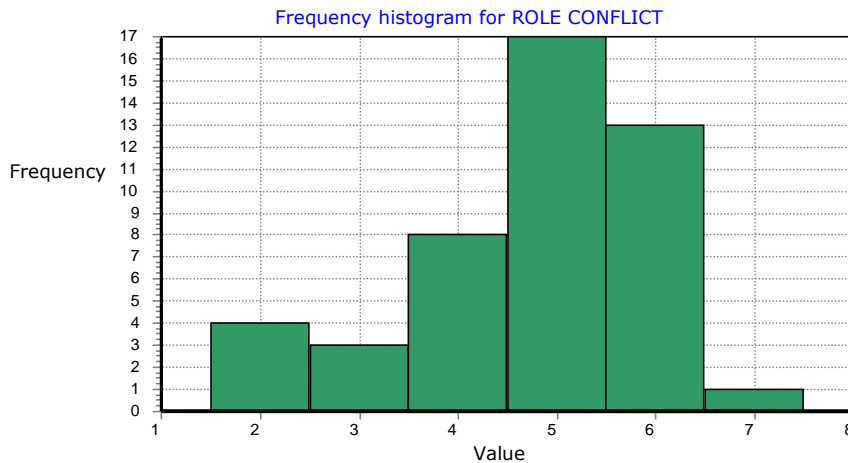
FIGURE 4.18 FREQUENCIES FOR INTERNAL CUSTOMERS' PERCEPTION OF: ROLE CONFLICT

Sixty-eight percent of educators strongly feel that they cannot satisfy all the demands of all individuals they must serve, 15% of the respondents had a less strong feeling that they cannot satisfy all the demands of all individuals they must serve, 17% of the respondents had a moderate feeling that they cannot satisfy all the demands of all individuals they must serve.

Frequency histogram for ROLE AMBIGUITY
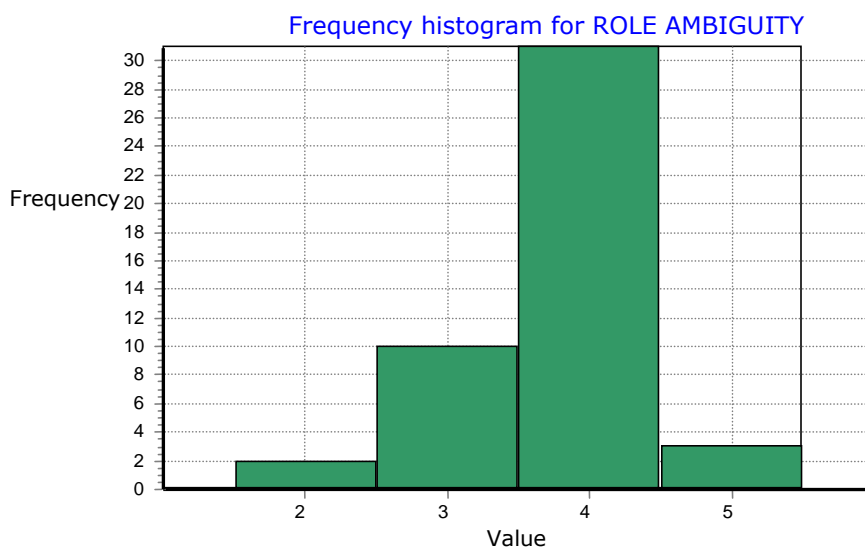
FIGURE 4.19 FREQUENCIES FOR INTERNAL CUSTOMERS' PERCEPTION OF: ROLE AMBIQUITY

Seven percent of educators strongly feel that they are uncertain about what managers or supervisors expect from them and how to satisfy those expectations, 26% of respondents had a less strong feeling that they are uncertain about what managers or supervisors expect from them and how to satisfy those expectations, 67% of respondents had a moderate feeling that they are uncertain about what managers or supervisors expect from them and how to satisfy those expectations.

[MEASURING GAP 4]

Frequency histogram for COMMUNICATION
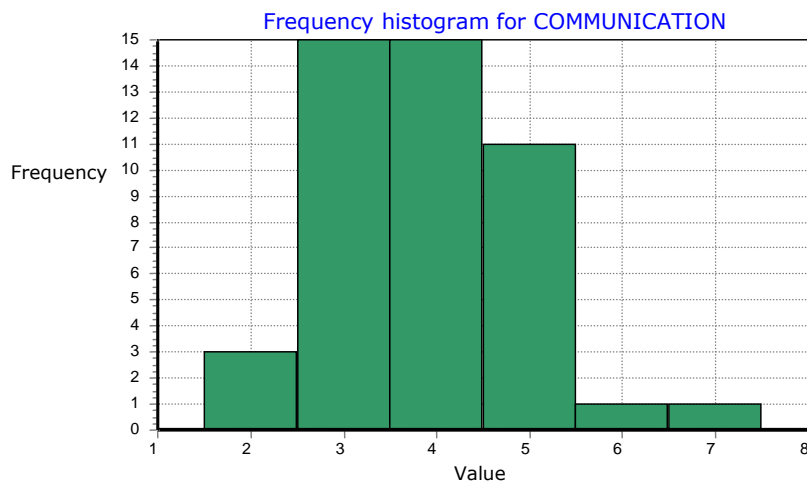
FIGURE 4.20 FREQUENCIES FOR INTERNAL CUSTOMERS' PERCEPTION OF: HORIZONTAL COMMUNICATION

Twenty-eight percent of educators strongly feel that communication occurs both within and between different departments in the school, 39% of respondents had a less strong feeling about horizontal communication, 33% of respondents had a moderate feeling that communication occurs both within and between different departments in the school.

Frequency histogram for PROPENSITY TO OVERPROMISES
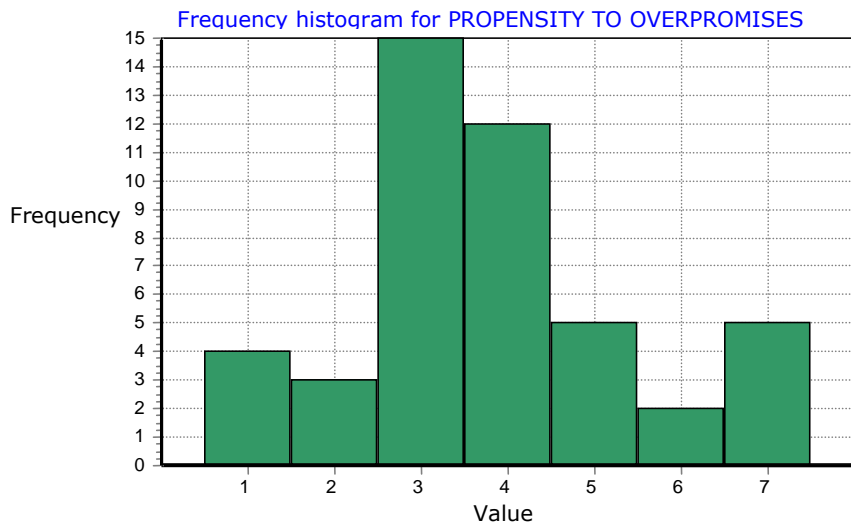
FIGURE 4.21 FREQUENCIES FOR INTERNAL CUSTOMERS' PERCEPTION OF: PROPENSITY TO OVERPROMISE

Twenty-Six percent of educators strongly feel that the schools' external communications do not accurately reflect what customers receive in the service encounter,48%, of the respondents had a less strong feeling about propensity to over promises ,26%, of the respondents had a moderate feeling about propensity to over promises.

Frequencies for SMT measuring management's perception of customers' expectation about service quality

Frequency table for SMT's perception of customers' expectation of TANGIBLES

```
-----------------------------------
Value     N      %   Cum. %
-----------------------------------
3         1    9.09    9.09
4         2   18.18   27.27
5         1    9.09   36.36
6         2   18.18   54.55
7         5   45.45  100.00
-----------------------------------
TOTAL    11  100.00
-----------------------------------
```

Seventy-three percent of School management Teams strongly feel that their customers expect tangibles to be visually appealing, 18% have moderate feeling, whereas only 9% had a less strong feeling about Tangibles.

Frequency table for SMT's perception of customers' expectation of RELIABILITY

```
------------------------------------
Value      N       %    cum. %
------------------------------------
5          2    18.18    18.18
6          4    36.36    54.55
7          5    45.45   100.00
------------------------------------
TOTAL     11   100.00
------------------------------------
```

One hundred percent of School Management Teams strongly feel that customers expect their schools to be reliable, .i.e. be able to perform the promised service dependably and accurately.

Frequency table for SMT's perception of customers' expectation of RESPONSIVENESS

```
------------------------------------
Value      N       %   Cum. %
------------------------------------
5          3    27.27    27.27
6          4    36.36    63.64
7          4    36.36   100.00
------------------------------------
TOTAL     11   100.00
------------------------------------
```

One hundred percent of School Management Teams strongly feel that customers expect their schools to be responsive, i.e. the schools should be willing to help learners and offer prompt service to them.

Frequency table for SMT's perception of customers' expectation of ASSURANCE.

```
------------------------------------
Value      N      %    Cum. %
------------------------------------
5          4    36.36   36.36
6          2    18.18   54.55
7          5    45.45   100.00
------------------------------------
TOTAL     11   100.00
------------------------------------
```

One hundred percent of School Management Teams strongly feel that customers expect their schools to have educators with the necessary knowledge and courtesy and abilities to convey trust and confidence to learners.

Frequency table for SMT's perception of customers' expectation of EMPATHY

```
------------------------------------
Value      N      %    Cum. %
------------------------------------
5          4    36.36   36.36
6          6    54.55   90.91
7          1     9.09   100.00
------------------------------------
TOTAL     11   100.00
------------------------------------
```

One hundred percent of School Management Teams strongly feel that customers expect their schools to give learners caring and individualized attention.

Frequency table for SMT's perception of customers' expectation of AVERAGE.

```
------------------------------------
Value      N      %    Cum. %
------------------------------------
5          2    18.18   18.18
6          5    45.45   63.64
7          4    36.36   100.00
------------------------------------
TOTAL     11   100.00
------------------------------------
```

On average, 100% of School management Teams have a strong feeling that all five dimensions are important in order to provide high service quality.

Frequencies for SMT part III measuring the extent to which performance standards are formalized in the schools

Frequency table measuring the extent to which performance standards for TANGIBLES are formalized.

```
-----------------------------------
Value     N       %    Cum. %
-----------------------------------
0         1     9.09    9.09
3         2    18.18   27.27
4         1     9.09   36.36
5         4    36.36   72.73
6         1     9.09   81.82
7         2    18.18  100.00
-----------------------------------
TOTAL    11   100.00
-----------------------------------
```

Sixty-four percent of School Management Teams strongly feel that their schools have performance standards which can either be formal or informal, 27% of the respondents had a less strong feeling that performance standards are present, and only 9% of the respondents had a moderate feeling about the existence of performance standards pertaining to Tangibles

Frequency table measuring the extent to which performance standards for RELIABILITY are formalized.

```
-----------------------------------
Value     N       %    Cum. %
-----------------------------------
0         1     9.09    9.09
1         1     9.09   18.18
3         1     9.09   27.27
4         5    45.45   72.73
5         2    18.18   90.91
7         1     9.09  100.00
-----------------------------------
TOTAL    11   100.00
-----------------------------------
```

Twenty-seven percent of School Management Teams strongly feel that their schools have performance standards which can either be formal or informal, 27% of respondents had a less strong feeling that performance standards are present, and 46% of the respondents had a moderate feeling about the existence of performance standards pertaining to Reliability

Frequency table measuring the extent to which performance standards for RESPONSIVENESS are formalized.

```
-----------------------------------
Value      N      %    Cum. %
-----------------------------------
2          1    9.09    9.09
4          1    9.09   18.18
5          3   27.27   45.45
6          4   36.36   81.82
7          2   18.18  100.00
-----------------------------------
TOTAL     11   100.00
-----------------------------------
```

Eighty-two percent of School Management Teams strongly feel that their schools have performance standards which can either be formal or informal, 9% of respondents had a less strong feeling that performance standards are present, and 9% of the respondents had a moderate feeling about the existence of performance standards pertaining to Responsiveness.

Frequency table measuring the extent to which performance standards for ASSURANCE are formalized.

```
-----------------------------------
Value      N      %    Cum. %
-----------------------------------
0          1    9.09    9.09
3          1    9.09   18.18
4          1    9.09   27.27
5          2   18.18   45.45
6          3   27.27   72.73
7          3   27.27  100.00
-----------------------------------
TOTAL     11   100.00
-----------------------------------
```

Seventy-three percent of School Management Teams strongly feel that their schools have performance standards which can either be formal or informal, 18% of the respondents had a less strong feeling that performance standards are present, and only 9% of respondents had a moderate feeling about the existence of performance standards pertaining to Assurance.

Frequency table measuring the extent to which performance standards for EMPATHY
 are formalized.

Value	N	%	Cum. %
0	1	9.09	9.09
3	1	9.09	18.18
4	3	27.27	45.45
5	4	36.36	81.82
6	2	18.18	100.00
TOTAL	11	100.00	

Fifty-five percent of School Management Teams strongly feel that their schools have performance standards which can either be formal or informal, 18% of the respondents had a less strong feeling that performance standards are present, and 27% of the respondents had a moderate feeling about the existence of performance standards pertaining to Tangibles.

Frequency table measuring the extent to which performance standards for
 are formalised : AVERAGE.

Value	N	%	Cum. %
1	1	9.09	9.09
4	2	18.18	27.27
5	6	54.55	81.82
6	1	9.09	90.91
7	1	9.09	100.00
TOTAL	11	100.00	

Seventy-three percent of School Management Teams strongly feel that their schools have performance standards in place which can either be formal or informal that addresses the five dimensions of service quality. Only 9% of the respondents had a less strong feeling that performance standards are present, and only 18% of the respondents had a moderate feeling about existence of performance standards pertaining to service quality.

Frequencies for SMT part IV measuring the extent to which the schools and the staff are able to meet the performance standards established

Frequency table for measuring the extent to which the schools are able to meet performance standards established for TANGIBLES

```
------------------------------------
Value     N       %   Cum. %
------------------------------------
0         1     9.09    9.09
3         4    36.36   45.45
4         2    18.18   63.64
5         1     9.09   72.73
6         1     9.09   81.82
7         2    18.18  100.00
------------------------------------
TOTAL    11   100.00
-------------------------------------
```

Thirty-seven percent of School Management Teams strongly feel that their schools meet performance standards established, 45% of the respondents had a less strong feeling that performance standards are met, and only 18% of the respondents had a moderate feeling about meeting existing performance standards pertaining to Tangibles.

Frequency table for measuring the extent to which the schools are able to meet performance standards established for RELIABILITY.

```
------------------------------------
Value      N       %    Cum. %
------------------------------------
1          1     9.09    9.09
2          1     9.09    18.18
3          1     9.09    27.27
4          2    18.18    45.45
5          2    18.18    63.64
6          3    27.27    90.91
7          1     9.09    100.00
------------------------------------
TOTAL     11   100.00
------------------------------------
```

Fifty-five percent of School Management Teams strongly feel that their schools are able to meet performance standards established, 27% of the respondents had a less strong feeling that performance standards are met, and only 18% of the respondents had a moderate feeling about meeting existing performance standards pertaining to Reliability.

Frequency table for measuring the extent to which the schools are able to meet performance standards established for RESPONSIVENESS.

```
------------------------------------
Value      N       %    Cum. %
------------------------------------
1          1     9.09    9.09
2          1     9.09    18.18
4          1     9.09    27.27
5          4    36.36    63.64
6          3    27.27    90.91
7          1     9.09    100.00
------------------------------------
TOTAL     11   100.00
------------------------------------
```

Seventy-three percent of School Management Teams strongly feel that their schools are able to meet performance standards established, 18% of the respondents had a less strong feeling that performance standards are met, and only 9% of the respondents had a moderate feeling about meeting existing performance standards pertaining to Responsiveness.

Frequency table for measuring the extent to which the schools are able to meet performance standards established for ASSURANCE.

Value	N	%	Cum. %
0	1	9.09	9.09
2	1	9.09	18.18
3	2	18.18	36.36
4	1	9.09	45.45
6	4	36.36	81.82
7	2	18.18	100.00

TOTAL   11   100.00

Fifty-five percent of School Management Teams strongly feel that their schools are able to meet performance standards established, 36% of the respondents had a less strong feeling that performance standards are met, and

only 9% of the respondents had a moderate feeling about meeting existing performance standards pertaining to Assurance.

Frequency table for measuring the extent to which the schools are able to meet performance standards established for EMPATHY.

Value	N	%	Cum. %
0	1	9.09	9.09
2	1	9.09	18.18
3	1	9.09	27.27
4	3	27.27	54.55
5	3	27.27	81.82
6	2	18.18	100.00

TOTAL   11   100.00

Forty-six percent of School Management Teams strongly feel that their schools are able to meet performance standards established, 27% of the respondents had a less strong feeling that performance standards are met, and 27% of the respondents had a moderate feeling about meeting existing performance standards pertaining to Empathy.

Frequency table for measuring the extent to which the schools are able to meet performance standards established for: AVERAGE.

```
-----------------------------------
Value      N      %    Cum. %
-----------------------------------
1          1     9.09    9.09
2          1     9.09   18.18
3          1     9.09   27.27
5          6    54.55   81.82
6          1     9.09   90.91
7          1     9.09  100.00
-----------------------------------
TOTAL     11   100.00
-----------------------------------
```

Seventy-three percent of School Management Teams strongly feel that their schools are able to meet performance standards established, 27% of the respondents had a less strong feeling that all performance standards are met

Frequencies for SMT part V measuring the extent to which the Schools Management Teams believe that the schools and the staff deliver the level of service promised to learners

Frequency table for measuring the extent to which the SMT believe that the schools and staff deliver the level of service promised to learners on AVERAGE.

```
------------------------------------
Value     N       %    Cum. %
------------------------------------
2         1     9.09     9.09
3         2    18.18    27.27
4         3    27.27    54.55
5         3    27.27    81.82
6         1     9.09    90.91
7         1     9.09   100.00
------------------------------------
TOTAL     11   100.00
------------------------------------
```

Fifty-five percent of the Schools Management Teams strongly believe that their schools and the staff deliver the level of service promised to learners, 27% of the respondents had a less strong feeling that their schools and the staff deliver the level of service promised to learners, and only 18% of the respondents had a moderate feeling that their schools and staff deliver the level of service promised to learners.

Frequencies for school management teams for measuring

Gap 1 and 2

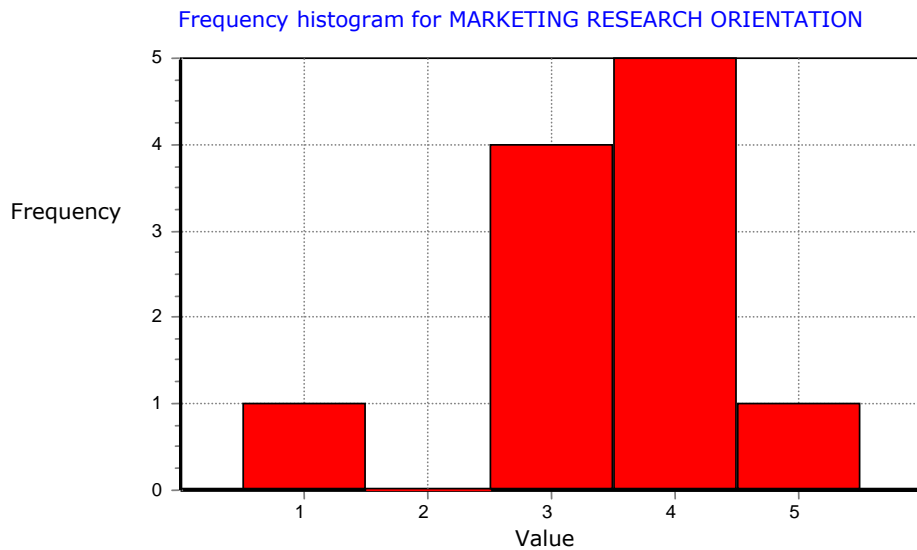Frequency histogram for MARKETING RESEARCH ORIENTATION

FIGURE 4.22 FREQUENCIES FOR MEASURING THE PERCEPTION OF SCHOOL MANAGEMENT TEAMS ON: MARKETING RESEARCH ORIENTATION.

Forty-five percent of School Management Teams had a less strong feeling that management make an effort to understand customers' needs and expectations through formal and informal information-gathering activities, 45% of respondents had a moderate feeling about Marketing Research Orientation and only 10% of the respondents felt strongly about management making an effort to understand customers' needs and expectations through market research.
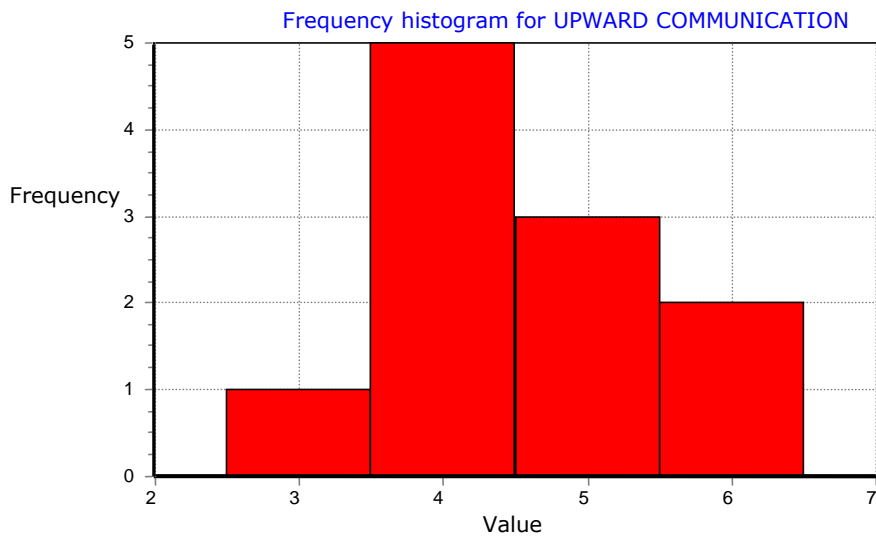
Frequency histogram for UPWARD COMMUNICATION

FIGURE 4.23 FREQUENCIES FOR MEASURING THE PERCEPTION OF SCHOOL MANAGEMENT TEAMS ON: UPWARD COMMUNICATION.

Nine percent of School Management Teams had a less strong feeling that top management seeks, stimulates, and facilitates the flow of information from employees at lower levels, 45% of the respondents had a moderate feeling about Upward Communication and 46% of the respondents felt strongly about top management stimulating, and facilitating the flow of information from employees at lower levels.
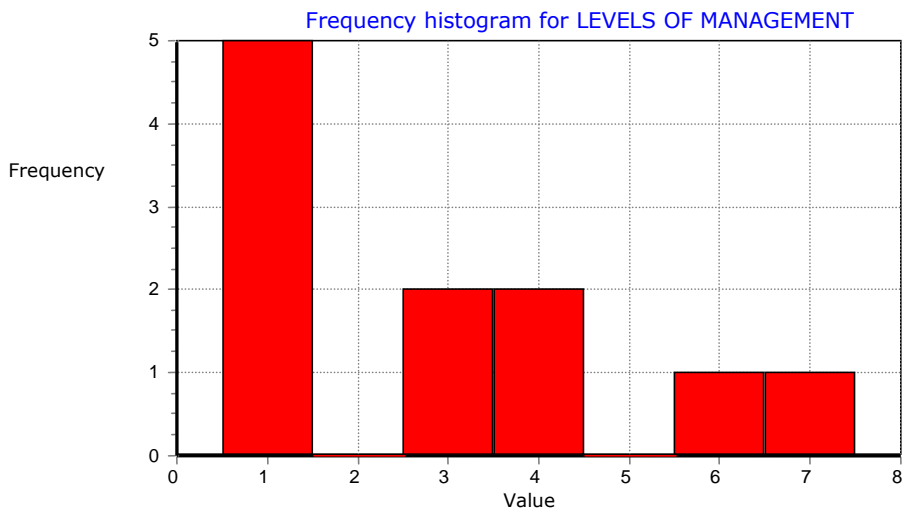
Frequency histogram for LEVELS OF MANAGEMENT

FIGURE 4.24 FREQUENCIES FOR MEASURING THE PERCEPTION OF SCHOOL MANAGEMENT TEAMS ON: LEVELS OF MANAGEMENT.

Sixty-four percent of School Management Teams had a less strong feeling that there are too many Managerial Levels between the top most and bottom most positions, 18% of the respondents had a moderate feeling about Levels of Management and 18% of the respondents strongly felt that there are too many managerial levels between the top most and bottom most positions.

Frequency histogram for MANAGEMENT 'S COMMITMENT TO QUALITY
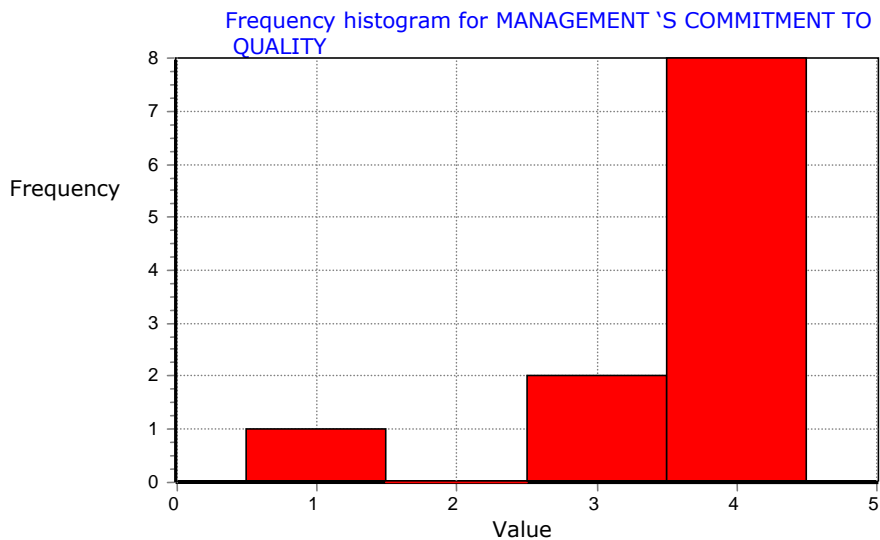
FIGURE 4.25 FREQUENCIES FOR MEASURING THE PERCEPTION OF SCHOOL MANAGEMENT TEAMS ON: MANAGEMENT'S COMMITMENT TO SERVICE QUALITY.

Twenty-seven percent of School Management Teams had a less strong feeling that management views service quality as a strategic goal, 73% of respondents had a moderate feeling that management views service quality as a strategic goal

FIGURE 4.26 FREQUENCIES FOR MEASURING THE PERCEPTION OF SCHOOL MANAGEMENT TEAMS ON: GOAL SETTING.

Nine percent of School Management Teams had a less strong feeling that the service quality goals are based on customer standards and expectations rather than schools' standards, 9% of the respondents had a moderate feeling about service quality goals that should be based on customer standards and expectations rather than schools' standards, and 73% of the respondents strongly felt that service quality goals are based on customer standards and expectations rather than on schools' standards.
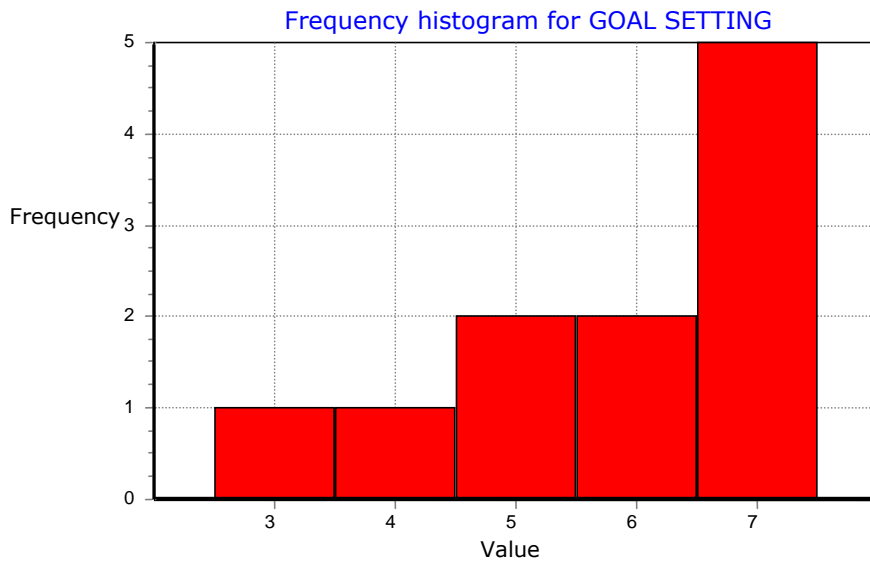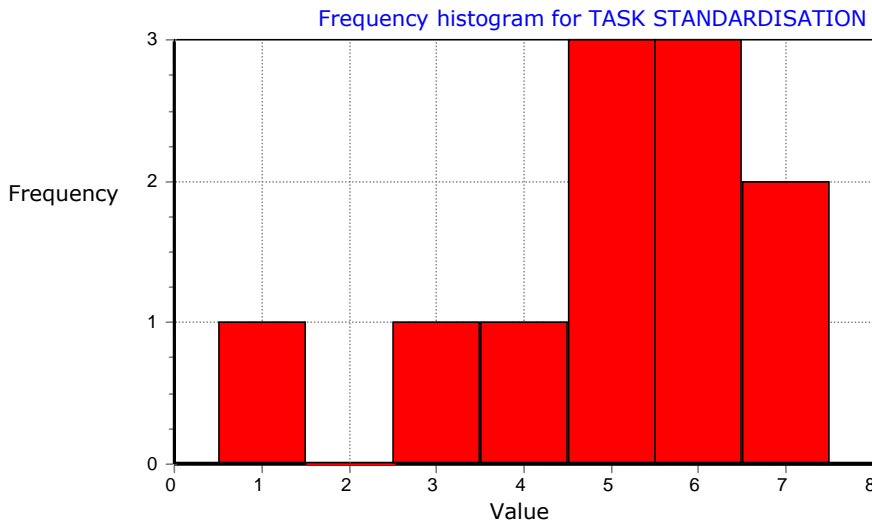
FIGURE 4.27 FREQUENCIES FOR MEASURING THE PERCEPTION OF SCHOOL MANAGEMENT TEAMS ON: TASK STANDARDISATION.

Eighteen percent of School Management Teams had a less strong feeling that the hard and soft technology are used to standardize service tasks, 9% of the respondents had a moderate feeling about Task Standardisation, and 73% of the respondents strongly felt that the hard and soft technology are used to standardize service tasks .
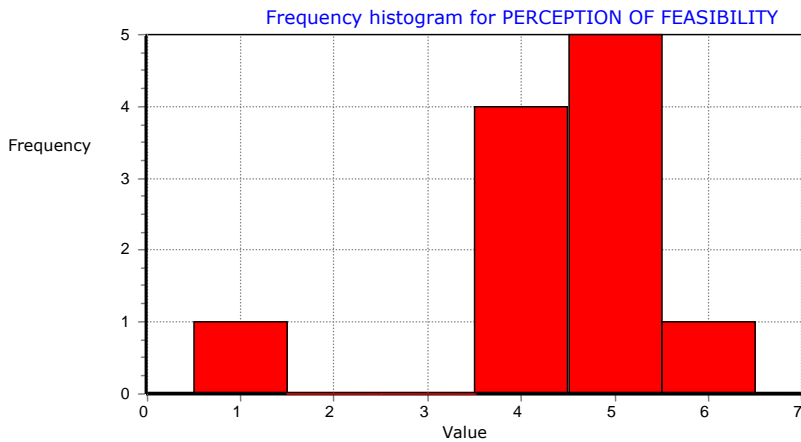
FIGURE 4.28 FREQUENCIES FOR MEASURING THE PERCEPTION OF SCHOOL MANAGEMENT TEAMS ON: PERCEPTION OF FEASIBILITY.

Nine percent of School Management Teams had a less strong feeling and believe that customers' expectations can be met,36% of the respondents had a moderate feeling that customers' expectations can be met , and 55% of the respondents strongly felt that customers expectations can be met.

4.3   CHAPTER CONCLUSION

The focus of this chapter was on data analysis and graphical presentation of findings, providing the background for the discussion and recommendations based on the findings about service quality. Chapter 5 will focus on the discussion of the findings and link them to literature review.

CHAPTER 5: SUMMARY, FINDINGS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

5.   INTRODUCTION

The previous chapter presented the empirical data and analysed it in the form of graphs and Tables. Further, the previous chapter discussed the findings from the study, linked primary findings with secondary findings; this chapter will draw on conclusions and summarise the findings, and give some recommendations for improving the quality management systems in schools. Each test item will be interpreted, discussed and analysed. The primary findings from the research will be linked to the secondary data or findings i.e. literature review

5.1. Review of the research

The samples averaging about 100 hundred customers of each of the 3 three secondary schools from various circuits, indicated their expectations and perceptions about the service quality provided by their schools guided by the five dimensions of service quality: Tangibles, Reliability, Responsiveness, Assurance, and Empathy.

Based on the responses from 278 (two hundred and seventy eight) returned questionnaires, the average allocations received by the five dimensions was 87% for expectations (what they think the schools should do or have) and 73% for their perception (what they get). This shows a discrepancy between what the customers expect and what they get from service providers. There is a difference of 14%, which is relatively not too much. This creates Gap 5: the customers' expectation- customers' perception gap. To close this gap, schools need to improve their performance on dimension Tangibles (23%) difference and Responsiveness (15%).

The management should try to close this gap by focusing attention on the marketing research in order to better understand the needs and expectations of their customers. Ten percent of the School Management Teams indicated that little effort had been made by management to understand customers' needs and expectations through market research and building team work.

On the other hand, comparison between the management's perception and customers' expectations reveals that 100% of School Management Teams indicated that performance standards are in place. However, schools should still strive to meet performance standards for Tangibles (37%),and Empathy (46%) in order to improve the overall service quality.

Management need to communicate the standards to the customers in order to reap the benefits. Employees willing to meet these standards should be measured and compensated on the basis of performance along these standards. Management should give teeth to these standards, by facilitating, encouraging and requiring that they set achievable standards and making sure that these standards are, in fact, achieved.

From the findings, the schools were doing better to close Gap 2 by having management which is committed to service quality, setting service quality goals based on customers' standards rather than on schools standards.

Only 28 % of the sampled educators believed that there was an adequate horizontal communication in the schools, i.e. the extent to which communication occurs both within and between the different departments in the school, and 33% had a moderate feeling on this dimension, which creates a Gap 4. Effective communication is necessary to achieve the common goals of the school. In situations where communication across functions/ departments, are not open, perceived service quality is in jeopardy. Poor communication would lead to poor learners' performance, low educators' morale, high rate of learner drop-out, and learners exiting by taking transfers out. It is the responsibility of management to close this gap

5.2. Important research findings emerging from
Literature

Literature revealed that drawing on experiences from similar situations, the customer develops expectations for things such as the schools' tangibles, response time, courtesy, empathy, and reliability. If these expectations are not met during the service encounter, the customer is likely to judge the service as poor and is likely to feel dissatisfied. It also revealed that management's correct perception of customers' expectation is necessary, but not sufficient. The presence of performance standards mirroring management's perceptions of customers' expectations is also important.

Literature also revealed that the quality of service delivered by personnel, i.e. educators, is influenced by the standards against which they are evaluated and compensated. Those organisations which set performance standards for their employees and also communicate them to the customers in the form of performance guarantees will reap the benefit of doing so.

Further, the literature revealed that employees who are not willing or unable to meet standards can contribute to poor service quality. To be effective, schools managers should set achievable standards and give teeth to these standards, i.e. facilitate, encourage, and require their achievement. Good performance should be recognised and rewarded.

For the most part, literature revealed that schools that adopt Total Quality Management principles are likely to have (1) increased customer satisfaction, (2) Improved programmes, (3) increased educator motivation, (4) improved cooperation between educators and administration, (5) greater parental and general public involvement in schools and (6) increased flexibility.

5.3. Empirical findings

From the study, it was found that 100% of School Management Teams had a correct perception of customers' expectations. The study revealed a number of areas of congruence between dimensions/ characteristics customers considered as indicators of high-quality service and those management believed were critical to customers. The performance standards were found to be in place in most schools.

 Only 10% of School Management Teams indicated that management made little effort to understand customers' needs and expectations through marketing research, 55% of school managers believed that promised service had been delivered by schools to their customers, and 73% of managers indicated that employees were willing to meet performance standards that are formalised in the schools.

The customers' expectations averaged 87% on all dimensions, whereas customers' perceptions about service quality are 73%, which makes a difference/ discrepancy of 14%. Seventy-three percent of managers are found to be committed to service quality, setting service quality goals based on the customers' standards, and using hard and soft technology to standardise tasks.

5.4. Conclusions and recommendations

5.4.1. Conclusions

The study revealed that educators as internal customers showed a great amount of satisfaction about their jobs and are willing to meet the set performance standards. External customers (learners) are generally satisfied about the quality service they receive from schools. Management is also moving in the right direction to ensure that performance standards are formalised and met in the schools to improve service quality.

Internal customers are also satisfied about the service quality service. Generally schools are effective in delivering quality service to their customers.

5.4.2. Recommendations

The schools need to improve on Tangibles and Responsiveness.

Schools managers should set achievable standards and strengthen these standards. i.e. facilitate, encourage, and require their achievement.

Management need to communicate the standards to the customers in order to reap the benefits of doing so.

Good performance should be recognised and rewarded. Therefore, educators meeting performance standards should be measured and compensated on the basis of performance along the performance standards.

School Management Teams should focus on conducting and using the marketing research findings to better understand the needs and expectations of their customers, to avoid learners moving from one school to another in search of better service and educators redeployed. Team work and horizontal communication should be encouraged in order to improve service quality.

5.5.   Limitations and shortcomings of the research

THE FOLLOWING LIMITATIONS MIGHT HAVE AFFECTED THIS STUDY:

- Time constraints (to visit each school for clarity and collection of questionnaires).
- Financial constraints and distance between the three schools sampled.
- Since the study primarily focused on the experiences and perceptions of human beings, this posses a threat of validity and reliability.
- The research was conducted in some schools in Mankweng. This might not have provided a true reflection of the level to which service quality has been provided by schools.
- The research was conducted by a novice researcher with no previous research experience; as a result, many unintentional errors might have occurred.

5.6.   Chapter conclusion

The study focused on the internal and external customers' expectation and perceptions on service quality offered by schools, determining the service quality gaps that might exists, better ways that management can follow in order to close these gaps to improve service quality. It is recommended that further studies focusing on the perceptions of other stakeholders in education such as parents, educator unions and departmental officials be undertaken. It is through such studies that quality service can be provided, leading to improvement in the provision of quality education.

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