

Investigating restaurant customer complaints in Polokwane Malls,
Limpopo Province

By

T.P. Phaswana.



A Mini-Dissertation submitted in partial fulfilment of the requirements for the degree

MASTERS OF BUSINESS ADMINISTRATION (MBA)

In the

Turfloop Graduate School of leadership

FACULTY OF MANAGEMENT AND LAW

At the

UNIVERSITY OF LIMPOPO

Supervisor: Ms M.F. Rangongo

May 2017

DECLARATION

I, Tinyiko Patience Phaswana, declare that this mini-dissertation submitted to the University of Limpopo, for the degree of Master of Business Administration has not been previously submitted by me or any other person known to me for a degree, and material contained therein has been duly acknowledged.

Tinyiko Patience Phaswana

Date

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

I would like to give praise to God Almighty for the strength and perseverance he gave me throughout my study.

To my supervisor, Ms M.F. Rangongo, for the support, inputs and guidance on each and every chapter and for the understanding and patience she has shown me throughout the study.

To the language editor who assisted in writing this document in a proper language, acceptable grammar and all the necessary editions which were required in the study Mr Nico Nel.

To my family members, my parents, siblings, and children for encouragement and allowing me time; for the sacrifices, love and support they gave me and not allowing me to give up.

To the restaurants' management and owners who allowed me space and time, and gave me information, and for working with me throughout the study.

To my employer for giving me support and allowing me to take study leave during my research and consultations.

The friends and relatives who encouraged and supported me and gave inputs

ABSTRACT

The research was qualitative, where groups of restaurants managers/owners were interviewed in the three Polokwane Malls namely Limpopo Mall, Savannah Mall and Mall of the North. The purpose of the interviews was to find out what customers complain about in restaurants. To find how the customers in restaurants lodge their complaints; how the businesses deal with complaints; how customers bring forth their complaints in different ways; and to identify which groups complain the most. Further, to find out how restaurant owners handle customer complaints and to whom customers lodge those complaints, and the ways which restaurants use to respond to the customers' complaints.

The research results show that restaurant customers complain mostly verbally to the managers. Females are the ones complaining more than their male counterparts. Levels of education make no difference to how customers complain. Waiters need to render quality service as product knowledge is not the only product customers prefer; they actually value service more.

The study recommends that restaurants need to pay careful attention to services such as a clean eating area to avoid complaints as most complaints come about this area; verbal and nonverbal skills of employees should be developed in order to avoid complaints from customers. Managers should be equipped to handle customers' complaints as they are the people to whom such complaints are addressed and waiters/waitress should be made aware that customers are important and their complaints are always valued in the business in order to improve service

TABLE OF CONTENTS

Certificate from the language editor

Declaration

Acknowledgements

Abstract

List of acronyms/abbreviations

1. CHAPTER 1: INTRODUCTION TO THE STUDY

1.1 Introduction

1.2 Background information

1.3 Problem Statement

1.3.1 Sub-problem

1.4 Rationale/Motivation of the study

1.5 Aim of the Study

1.6 Objectives of the study

1.7 Research Questions

1.8 Significance of the study

1.9 Brief Literature review

1.9.1 Customer Complaints

1.10 Definitions of Terms

1.10.1 Customers

1.10.2 Customer Complaints

1.10.3 Restaurants

1.11 Structure of the study

2. CHAPTER 2: LITERATURE REVIEW

2.1 Introduction

2.2 Business Complaints

2.2.1 Definition of Business complaints

2.3 Restaurants

2.3.1 Definition of Restaurants

2.3.2 Customers' behaviour in a restaurant

2.3.3 Types of restaurants

2.3.4 Restaurant ownership

2.4 Types of business complaints

2.4.1 Types of business complaints in the restaurants business

2.5 Reporting Complaints

2.5.1 Mechanism by which complaints are reported in general

2.5.2 Reporting system in South Africa as a country

2.6 Handling Complaints

2.6.1 How Complaints are handled by owners/ managers

2.6.2 Complaints management by other institutions

2.6.3 How complaints are handled in restaurants

2.7 Summary

3. CHAPTER 3: RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

3.1 Introduction

3.2 Study Design

3.3 Study Area

3.4 Targeted Population

3.5 Sampling and Sample size

3.6 Data Collection

3.6.1 Research Instrument

3.6.2 Method of data collection

3.7 Data Analysis

3.8 Ethical Considerations

3.9 Summary

4. CHAPTER 4: RESULTS

4.1 Introduction

4.2 Biographical information of the study

4.2.1 Location

4.2.1 Participants who were interviewed

- 4.2.3 Number of fast-food outlets vs Sit-down Family Restaurants
- 4.2.4 Number of fast food outlets vs family restaurants
- 4.3 Results on customer complaints
 - 4.3.1 Methods in which the complaints are lodged
 - 4.3.2 Person receiving the complaints
 - 4.3.3 The types of people who complain more
 - 4.3.3.1 Complaints according to gender
 - 4.3.3.2 Complaints according to race
 - 4.3.3.3 Complaints according to level of education
 - 4.3.3.4 Complaints according to social class
 - 4.3.3.5 Complaints according to age
 - 4.3.4 Things customers complain about in Restaurants
 - 4.3.4.1 Complaints about the restaurant environment
 - 4.3.4.2 Complaints about service
 - 4.3.4.3 Complaints about food and service
 - 4.3.4.3 Taste, price and freshness
 - 4.3.5 Comparison of customer complaints in similar restaurants across the malls
 - 4.3.5.1 King pie
 - 4.3.5.2 KFC
 - 4.3.5.3 Wimpy
- 4.4 Summary

5. CHAPTER 5: SUMMARY OF RESULTS, RECOMMENDATIONS AND CONCLUSIONS

5.1 Introduction

5.2 Summary and discussion of the results

5.2.1 Biographical results

5.2.2 How customer complaints are lodged

5.2.3 Group of people complaining the most

5.2.4 Things Customers Complain about when they are in a restaurant

5.2.5 Comparison of customer complaints in similar restaurants across the malls

5.3 Conclusions

5.4 Recommendations

CHAPTER 1

INTRODUCTION TO THE STUDY

1.1 INTRODUCTION

This first chapter focuses on introducing the topic at hand. It gives the background on what customer complaints are in restaurants. It gives the problem statement which the research wants to answers. The chapter explains the rationale of conducting the study. It explains the aim and the objectives of the study, the research questions as well as the significance of the study.

1.2 BACKGROUND INFORMATION

A customer is the most important aspect of any business. Without customers a business will not exist or succeed. A happy satisfied customer will carry a business to a brighter future (Chintan, 2010). According to Chintan (2010), a happy customer will tell two to three people about their good experience while an unhappy one will tell ten. There are many ways by which organisations can deal with customer complaints in order to reduce these dissatisfactions (Landon, 1980). A customer complaint is an informal way of expression of dissatisfaction on a customer's behaviour to a responsible party (Landon, 1980).

Customer complaints can also be described positively as a report from a customer providing documentation about a problem with a product or service. If the grievance is not addressed in a satisfactory way to the customers, the customers may register their complaints in a formal legal way. Organisations that are considerate as the third party accept the customer's complaint or can assist the people with customer service. In South Africa such organisations include the South African complaints body regulated by the Consumer Protection Act (No 68 of 2008).

There is much competition between the restaurants and strategically for them to survive they need to outsmart others in order to attract and retain customers. One of the ways of retaining customers is by addressing customer complaints and handling customer complaints satisfactorily to provide better service (Micheal, Bowen & Johnston, 2008). Using customer complaints is a very useful measure for measuring overall customer satisfaction (Munford, 2012).

In order to outsmart rivals, an organisation needs to constantly assess the organisational environment, for threats such as loss of sales, shift in buyer's needs, constant new regulations, and increased intensity of the competitors. A company has to be constantly watching and addressing these threats as customers are constantly judging companies for service failures big or small. Business service failures can weaken the brand name or reputation or may lead to an organisation's losing its market share. Increasing customer satisfaction has become a guiding principle in order to maximise profits for many organisations. Restaurants are a group of businesses that rely heavily on recurring monthly revenue. So responding to customers' complaints becomes one of the important responsibilities, whether it is by fixing faults or by helping customers understand the issues of their systems (Koufman, 2012).

Research reveals that for every person that complains about service there are quantum numbers of others who do not complain, who go off and tell everybody else or complain online, and take their business elsewhere. According to Koufman (2012), for every customer who complains there are hundred more who would not tell. Those few that complain should be valued as they represent hundreds of customers who do not complain.

Research has shown that customers need to have as many as twelve positive experiences with a service provider in order to overcome the negative effect of one bad experience (Le Boeuf, 2007). Service failure and recovery encounters provide opportunities for organisations to communicate commitments to customers and strengthen bonds (Smith & Bolton, 1998). It is therefore critical for organisations, especially those whose offering involves servicing, to ensure that complaints are

kept to the minimum level. The internal factors that contribute to improving customer satisfaction in order to reduce customer complaints and bettering service compared to competitors are response time to customer problems and resolving them (Martgraf, 2013). Prompt action needs to be taken in order to address complaints.

1.3 PROBLEM STATEMENT

Polokwane has many institutions that offer service to customers, including restaurants. To date there is no literature or study that talks about customer satisfaction as indicated by the type of customer complaints that are handled in Polokwane. This study intended to investigate the type of complaints within specified Polokwane restaurants, as well as the method of handling such complaints.

1.3.1 Sub-problems

- This study will analyse what customers complain about in restaurants; will aim to discover how those complaints are brought about in an organisation and their source.
- The second problem is how the customers in restaurants lodge their complaints. Customers may deal with matters differently and they may bring forth their complaints in different ways. Further, to identify which groups complain the most.
- The third problem investigated is how restaurant owners handle customer complaints and to whom customers lodge those complaints. Restaurants may have preferred ways which they employ in resolving customer complaints, so it is not clear as to which way do these restaurants use to respond to the customer complaints.

1.4 RATIONALE/MOTIVATION FOR THE STUDY

Customers are crucial for all businesses to thrive and to survive. Customer complaints can be an indication of whether customers are satisfied with the services they receive from any business or not. Thus it is important to find out if there are customer complaints, the types of complaints, as

well as the methods of handling such customer complaints. The eventual rationale is to improve customer service and thus customer satisfaction.

1.5 AIM OF THE STUDY

The aim of the study is to explore the kind of complaints of restaurant customers and how these complaints are handled by restaurant owners in Polokwane.

1.6 OBJECTIVES OF THE STUDY

The study wants to:

- Find out what customers complain about in the restaurants in the shopping malls of Polokwane
- Investigate ways by which customers in the identified restaurants lodge their complaints and to whom they lodge those complaints.
- Identify the group of customers which complain the most.

1.7 RESEARCH QUESTIONS

The study wants to answer the following questions:

- What do restaurants customers in the shopping centres of Polokwane complain about?
- How do customers lodge these complaints and to whom?
- Which group of customers complain most?

1.8 SIGNIFICANCE OF THE STUDY

The results of this study envisage being of benefit to restaurant owners/managers who will be able to determine how customers feel about their services, improve on negative experiences of customers, keep on doing the positive things, and thereby improve the way they render services. Improved service rendering will hopefully improve their overall businesses as well as their policies on handling customers in the future. Thus it is hoped that the study will benefit the customers as awareness will be raised in matters such as their rights to complain and they will know better how

the business perceives their complaints. The restaurant owners will likely benefit from the findings by using them to minimise dissatisfaction in their restaurants, by reducing areas with challenges.

The study is important to provide ideas which can be employed in addressing customer complaints to reduce further complaints and to avoid litigations which may occur when customers feel their rights are violated. It will assist managers to improve the services which they offer to their customers in order to outsmart their competitors. Furthermore, if customer complaints are addressed well and minimised as a result, it may be unnecessary for government to intervene in business-customer disputes. Overall policies may also benefit as they will be informed by information that comes directly from the customers.

1.9.CONTEXTUALISATION OF THE PROBLEM

1.9.1 Customer Complaints

A customer complaint has been considered to be primarily determined by the degree or extent of dissatisfaction. This means that the more intense the degree of dissatisfaction the higher the probability for customers to complain (Day, 1984). It is estimated that about fifty percent of an organisation's customers are lost every five years. In addition, statistics indicate that negative effects are caused by word of mouth resulting from dissatisfied customers compared to many new positive referrals from those satisfied customers (Mark, 2000). Organisations must thus welcome and handle customers who complain, as an unhappy customer presents a serious risk to organisational reputation (Chelminski & Coulter, 2011). A customer is more likely to forgive service failure if it is a reputable organisation. Organisations need to maintain a good reputation and that should be one of the key priorities in an organisation (Bracey, 2017).

According to Day (1981), the emotional state is the one that pushes the customer to complain, but the decision to complain is mainly triggered by dissatisfaction motivated by failure to answer the following questions:

- (i) What product features or aspects of the situation were responsible for feelings of dissatisfaction?
- (ii) To whom (Salesperson, Store, Manufacturer, self) does one attribute responsibility for the failure of the product to perform as expected?
- (iii) What can the provider of the product or service do to "make things right" for you?
- (iv) What actions are you able to take to get the provider to take the appropriate action?
- (v) How much do you estimate it would cost you to take each of the actions mentioned, including a monetary value, for the time you would have to spend?
- (vi) What is your estimate of the monetary value of the settlement you expect to obtain as a result of each of the possible actions mentioned above?
- (vii) After comparing your costs against the expected settlement, which actions, if any, should you actually take?

The above-mentioned questions do not necessarily always occur to dissatisfied customers but some decision making process occurs on whether or not to ignore or lodge any complaint procedure. Restaurants with limited promotion budgets mostly rely on a positive word of mouth (PWOM). Therefore, restaurants with limited promotions use mainly word of mouth as their way of marketing their businesses (Petro, 2010). It is important to note that other customers can change the level of expectations by giving information through his/her behaviour or verbally, about what will or might happen during the process. They may increase or lower the level of expectation by giving tips about how to obtain the best possible service or giving information about what can go wrong with the service (Camelis, Dano, Hamon and Llosa, 2011)

1.10 DEFINITION OF TERMS

1.10.1 A Customer is a purchaser, client or a buyer and is a recipient of goods, services or products or ideas obtained from seller, supplier or vendor in exchange for money or other valuables (Juran, 1988). There are two groups of customers, the first group called entrepreneurs/traders which are dealers who purchase goods for resale. The second group is the end users or ultimate customers who do not resell the things they bought but they are the end user of the product or service. According to Smith and Bolton (1998), there are two other categories a customer can be in, known

as Not-customers or Non-customers. Not-customers are either past customers or potential customers who choose to interact with the competition. While non-customers are people who are active in a different market segment entirely. A customer is a person who comes to the restaurant to buy food or drinks.

1.10.2 Customer Complaints are an expression of dissatisfaction on customer behaviour (Landon, 1980). It is a report from a consumer providing documentation about a problem with a product or service. Customer complaints are usually informal complaints directly addressed to a company or public service provider and often customers manage to resolve problems through complaints but sometimes require persistence to be able to resolve them. Any dissatisfaction which is expressed by the customer to the restaurant is often seen as the key to company success (Fornell, Mithas, Morgan and Krishnan, 2006). Resolving customers' complaints is an important strategy because resolving customer complaints early avoids unnecessary frustration and preserves the direct buyer-seller relationship (Fan, Mion and Wu, 2003). According to Barlow and Moller (2008), a complaint is a gift as it is an important feedback mechanism, especially negative feedback. Complaints can give ideas for new products, as well as valuable information about what is important to customers. In addition, complaints give an indication that customers still want to do business with you, otherwise they would not bother themselves about your business. They would simply move on to another business.

1.10.3 Restaurant is a place where people pay to sit to eat meals that are cooked and served on the premises, usually inside an established building (Marcus, 2015). It is a business which prepares and serves food and drinks to their customers in exchange for money. Meals are generally catered on the premises but take-aways or deliveries can be arranged. Restaurants vary greatly in appearance and offering; they can be categorised by prices, from high to low cost prices; they can be classified by speed such as fast foods; they can be grouped by traditions and customs such as customers which are sitting at tables and served by waiters or cafeterias where there are no waiters and the offering is a buffet. Restaurants can offer different meals such as breakfast, lunch or supper. They can offer one or all the meals.

1.11 STRUCTURE OF THE STUDY

The study is structured as follows:

- Chapter 1: This chapter introduces the research topic briefly by outlining the background information, highlighting the motivation of the study, the aim, objectives, research questions, significance of the study, giving a brief literature review, ethical considerations, definitions of terms and the structure of the research.
- Chapter 2: This section is for the literature review, the literature revealing what has already been researched in relation to this study, such as literature on what complaints are all about, how they come about, how they are handled and managed.
- Chapter 3: This section describes the research methodology which will be applied to the study. How the processes will be carried through.
- Chapter 4: This section is about presentation and analyses of the study results, and explanations made on data found. The results will be discussed and interpretation made about the findings.
- Chapter 5: This final chapter will present the summary of results, conclusions and recommendations.

CHAPTER 2

LITERATURE REVIEW

2.1 INTRODUCTION

This chapter presents the literature that is relevant to the research problem at hand. The literature review focuses on: What a business complaint is, internationally, nationally and locally in regard to service in a business area. Types of business complaints that business are mainly faced with. Mechanisms employed by customers when reporting their complaints. To whom are those customer complaints reported. Lastly, how complaints are handled by businesses/managers.

2.2 BUSINESS COMPLAINTS

2.2.1 Definition of Business Complaint

A complaint is defined as an oral or written expression of dissatisfaction or concern you may have about facilities or service, or about lack of action (Landon, 1980). According to Hughes (2005), complaints can be positive, instead of avoiding them, rather consider them as an advantage because mainly complaints come about when there is service failure. Service failure is defined as a problem, mistake or error during service delivery (Colgate and Norries, 2001). According to Mark (2000), service failure may occur because of the way the employees provide reasonable service to employees such as the time they take to bill the customer. He says it may also be caused by the errors cause by staff members such as giving customers wrong orders, and/or spilling the customer's food or drinks.

Mark (2000) says the other reasons may be caused by cooking errors where people can prepare food which has hair in the food or the food itself may not be properly prepared. The error maybe due to management reasons such as when a computer messes up reservations. Other reasons may be caused by the special needs of customers such as customers' special preference in terms of

sitting arrangements or the way the food should be cooked. They may not be happy because there are customers that are disturbing them because they are noisy or drunk. The other reason can be because of the way employees responding to customers' needs.

It is believed that no matter how hard people may try to do things correctly, they are always bound to go wrong once in a while. Such as food getting burned, orders being forgotten or even spilling customers' food. The important thing is to send a customer home knowing that there was a problem but their comment is valued (Medley, 2013).

Today's customers are more demanding, better informed and more assertive than in the past. When there is a service problem people are more assertive. This is probably due to the fact that customers demand value focus on a combination of quality, fair price and good service in their purchases. They force an organisation to create a platform for its customers to complain, although traditionally many organisations view complaints negatively and most employees make customers feel they have no right to complain (Hoffman, Scott, & Holly, 1995). These create barriers that inhibit customers from receiving satisfaction to resolving their problems (Lebed, 2015).

Complaints occur in other organisations beside in restaurants such as in tourism. According to Ennew and Schoefer (2006), there are three main sources of service failure in tourism; first one being that tourism delivery of services relies on inputs coming from different parties such as airlines, hotels and tour operators which increase the potential for failure. The second one being that tourism is a people-based service, and thirdly a tourist's experience may have encounters such as poor weather, failure to spot tigers during a safari, can lead to a dissatisfying experience. In the Statistics index of the University of Michigan, Marx and Erasmus (2016) indicate that satisfaction has declined by 12 percent, between 1996 and 2001 for customers in retail stores from the USA.

In the health sector, according to Health Professional Council of South Africa (HPCSA, 2017), people have the right to good health and quality healthcare. This includes:

- i) Living in a health and safe environment.
- ii) Having access to quality healthcare that you can afford.
- iii) Choosing the healthcare service you prefer to use.
- iv) Receiving appropriate treatment from a qualified healthcare professionals.
- v) Knowing that your personal information is treated confidentially and kept private.
- vi) Being fully informed about any illness, diagnostic procedures, proposed treatment and the related costs.
- vii) Choosing to accept or refuse treatment.
- viii) Obtaining a second opinion, where appropriate.
- ix) Receiving on-going care from your chosen healthcare provider.

A Consumer therefore has a right to complain about healthcare services that are either violated or a breach of ethical standards.

There is gold in customer complaints, as they are the most meaningful information to a business (Sanes, 1993). The greatest pitfall of all is the unheard complaints, because when a customer complains it is unknown to the supplier. This can be as a result of customers themselves not sharing dissatisfaction or the supplier not hearing the complaints. Without feedback the supplier is unaware of product or service deficiencies and the supplier's revenues are potentially impacted (Sanes, 1993) Most customers are more likely to involve in private complaints such as word of mouth communication and ceasing to patronise the restaurant (Heung & Lam, 2003). Customer satisfaction was influenced by responsiveness of the frontline employees, followed by price and food quality (in that order). Physical design and appearance of the restaurant did not have a significant effect (Andaleeb & Conway, 2006). One of the most difficult to quantify is the cost of image a company suffers because of faults detected by its customers (Sansalvador & Brotons, 2017)

An inspection of existing publications indicates that specific individual attributes such as price, products variation and quality, store personnel, place, promotion and physical environment all affect customer satisfaction. These have been over researched in relation to promoting store loyalty

but the attributes toward service quality has been less researched (Marx and Erasmus, 2006). From literature studies the researcher has not found much evidence that show studies about complaints in restaurants in Polokwane.

2.3 A RESTAURANT

2.3.1. Definition of a Restaurant

A restaurant is a place where people pay to sit and eat meals that are cooked and served on the premises (Marcus, 2015). According to Erdis (2009), successful restaurants cater for children in areas such as menus and baby-care facilities. They also ensure that most languages are spoken, ensure that customers are comfortable and feel relaxed to socialise. Restaurants ensure that the atmosphere is clean, customers know about all the products in the restaurant, customers have positive experiences that are provided with good value for money in terms of food and charge prices that customers are willing to pay, and they cater for customers that need good interior and exterior aspects. Virtually everyone working in the food service industry will have to deal with customer complaints at some point in their careers (Thompson, 2008); whether it is something as simple as getting the wrong drink at a fast food restaurant or a service complaint at a high-end gourmet restaurant. How the business handles the complaint makes all the difference. Listening to the customer's concern, by being sympathetic and doing whatever is possible can resolve a problem immediately. Training employees to not assign blame or make excuses, but to simply be responsive to the customer, to take advantage of the experience to make improvements to the products or service as may be necessary.

A survey conducted shows that restaurant quality will be mainly influenced by the level of customer service received. More is known today than before as to why customers patronise certain service outlets and avoid others. Some reasons are product quality with a realistic price and they also want to be treated well (Erdis, 2009)

Restaurant customers are people and if restaurant managers/owners intend to be in control they need to acknowledge customer complaints. While some customers make fruitless complaints, most are well founded. The fact of the matter is the complaints which are received are not the ones that should make the managers/owners worry. Instead, more concern should be with the unregistered complaints which restaurant customers lodge each day. A verbal complaint can be dealt with but a complaint which has not been heard is a complaint which cannot be addressed and solved.

2.3.2 The Behaviour of Customers in a Restaurant

The food quality, primarily, but service and ambiance performance is used to influence customers' evaluation of a particular establishment (Wall & Berry, 2007). They say that diners use the following types of clues to judge a restaurant experience:

- i) Functional- the technical quality of food and service,
- ii) Mechanic – the ambiance and other design and technical elements,
- iii) Human – the performance behaviour and appearance of the employees.

While customers' perceptions of mechanic clues are positively related to their expectations of the service, human clues dominate the influence of mechanical clues. Ideally, managers should orchestrate both human and mechanical clues to deliver a consistent service message.

Defensive marketing example being complaints management can lower the total marketing expenditure by substantially reducing the cost of offensive marketing. The savings in offensive marketing are often high enough to offset the additional costs associated with compensating complaining customers, even if compensating exceeds the product's profit margin (Fornell & Wenerfelt, 1987). Promptness appears to have a stronger effect on procedural justice than that of facilitation, in addition, path analysis reveals that apology, explanation, attentiveness and efforts are the four organisational response dimensions influencing interactional justice (Osman, 2006).

The customer-based industry has different kinds of complaints such as rude and ungrateful customers. Sometimes people are quick to say something about a bad experience and a great experience is forgotten. The toughest part of a restaurant manager's duties is dealing with customer complaints. After all, things do go wrong when dealing with humans. The way people deal with these situations are not only saying "who they are" but "what their country is".

According to Osman (2006), many managers/owners believe customers usually are unreasonable and do not appreciate even the efforts to correct the mistakes made. The following are some examples of everyday complaints some managers have to deal with.

Many managers go through similar situations on a daily basis. Constant criticism and insults are levelled at the managers. Customers at times do not remember that as life continues all people can make mistakes. So it is important not to judge restaurant owners/managers as well as other people rendering service on their mistakes rather than on how they correct the mistakes. It is also important for customers to try to remain professional and tell the manager how they would like the mistake to be corrected. Numerous places will do anything that the customer asks in order to ensure that the customer is happy when he/she leaves (Fornell, 1990).

The restaurant business prepares and serves food and drinks to customers in return for money, either paid before the meal, after the meal, or with an open account. The idea of selling food for profit goes back as far as the earliest civilization. The need for public eaters was firmly established as far back as the Roman Empire and ancient China. The first restaurant in the world was opened in Paris in 1765. Many individual companies monitor customer satisfaction on a continued basis, but Sweden is the first country to do so on a national level (Fornell, 1992). For the American customer satisfaction index, it was found that customer satisfaction is greater for goods than for service and in turn greater for service than for goods for government agencies (Fornell & Micheal, 1996). The authors found that customisation is more important than reliability for determining satisfaction of customers. They also discovered that customer expectations are higher in businesses

where production and consumption has low variance, and lastly the satisfaction is determined by quality rather than value and price.

According to Chen & Kim (2017), the moderating function of first –time and repeated visitors has a significant impact on the relationship of positive emotion and negative emotion with overall satisfaction

2.3.3 Types of Restaurants

Restaurants can be classified according to menu style, pricing, preparation methods and how the food is served to customers. There are different types of restaurant offerings that exist:

- i) Buffet offers a selection food at a fixed price. The selection can be modest or extensive with menus such as salads, appetisers, soups, desserts and fruit. The role of a waiter or waitress in this case is to regulate the removal of finished plates and refilling of drinks.
- ii) A barbecue restaurant is a restaurant that specialises in barbecue style dishes.
- iii) Brasserie and Bistro is a restaurant serving moderately priced hearty meals, originally evolving from the US and comfort food from France respectively. The restaurants usually have refine décor, few tables, fine foods, and high prices.
- iv) Family style restaurants are a casual type of restaurants where food is usually served on a platter and the dinner usually served by themselves.
- v) Fine dining restaurants are restaurants which offer full service with special dedicated meals.
- vi) Fast casual restaurants are restaurants where food is prepared at the restaurant rather than as fast foods. They usually do not offer full table service. They offer non-disposable plates and cutlery, the quality of food tend to be higher than that of fast foods
- vii) Casual dining restaurants are restaurants that serve moderately prices food. In a casual atmosphere, they provide table services.
- viii) Fast food restaurants are the type of restaurants that emphasise speed of service. Food is ordered not from tables but from front counters. Drive-through and take-out services are usually available.

2.3.4 Restaurant Ownership

Restaurants can be classified as Franchises or non-Franchises.

A franchise: In South Africa franchises are registered under the Franchise Association of South Africa (FASA). It is the only recognised representative body for the franchise industry in South Africa. According to FASA Annual Report of 2015, franchises contribute 12.5% of the South African GDP, with an estimated R456.27 billion turnover. There are around 625 franchised systems in SA with 17 franchise business sectors. There is around 39 000 franchise outlets in SA with 329 245 people employed in the sector. It is estimated that 31% ownership is black people and 40% ownership in the sector is female. It is estimated that 61% of franchise systems have been in operation for longer than 10 years and 3 in 4 franchisors for more than 6 years. Fast foods outlets and restaurants contribute 24% of all franchises which exist.

In the FASA Annual Report, 2015, the business category franchises are as follows in South Africa with the percentages:

- i) Fast foods and Restaurants – 24%
- ii) Retailing – 12%
- iii) Building, offices and home services -11%
- iv) Automotive and products services – 9%
- v) Childcare, education and trading – 8%
- vi) Business to business service -7%
- vii) Health, beauty and care service- 6%
- viii) Real estate services – 6%
- ix) Construction and related – 4%
- x) Leisure and entertainment – 4%
- xi) Personal service – 3%
- xii) Printing, communication and media – 3%
- xiii) Computer, internet and cellular- 2%
- xiv) Other – 1%

In Africa, FASA spearheaded the formation of Pan-African Franchise Federation, established with the objective of cultivating franchises development on the African Continent. FASA is the oldest and most established franchise association in Africa and a valued member of the World Franchise Council. FASA was mandated to foster relations with countries keen to grow their franchise base and bring much needed economic development to their countries (FASA Annual Report, 2015).

2.4 TYPES OF BUSINESS COMPLAINTS

2.4 1. Types of Business Complaints in Restaurants

The customer complaints can be broken down into different types in order to help to understand them and to better control them.

- i) The first type of restaurant customer complaints: those who complain about everything. This group will encompass approximately 4% of the customer base and will account for the majority of complaints. The only remedy here is for the management to do its very best, with this customer, and not to take the situation personally.
- ii) The second type of restaurant customer complaints: those who are not comfortable with either the temperature inside the restaurant or the volume of the music. For this type of customer any distraction which has nothing to do with eating will be a problem and becomes a complaint. This has a simple fix.
- iii) The third type of restaurant customer complaints: those who have a problem with the preparation of their meal. Waiters/waitresses must listen very carefully to each customer as they order and make certain to note any special requests. This is a critical step in satisfying a customer and much training should be given in this area
- iv) The fourth type of restaurant customer complaints: that group which complains about the price. In these cases, the manager should listen very carefully to the each word of the customer in order to identify the real problem. Of course, the manager does not control the menu prices, however, in the mind of the customer, the price may not be in line with the quality of the food or service.

- v) The fifth type of restaurant customer complaints: the group who complains about other customers. For instance, a crying child will most times generate a complaint or two. How this complaint is handled is critical. If management is too sympathetic toward the parents of the child, the complaining customer will not be happy. If too sympathetic toward the complaining customer, the parents of the child will not be happy.

2.4.2 Matters that customers complain mostly about in restaurants

The top ten guest complaints in restaurants are:

- i) Service is slow.
- ii) Food is overpriced.
- iii) Portions are too small.
- iv) Food is bland, tasteless or flavourless
- v) Food is too salty, greasy, fatty or unhealthy.
- vi) Too noisy or can't hold a conversation.
- vii) Service is rushed.
- viii) Place, bathroom or kitchen not clean.
- ix) Food not fresh.
- x) Service is bad, unfriendly or not professional.

2.5 REPORTING COMPLAINTS

2.5.1 Mechanisms by which complaints are reported in general

There are at least four important reasons to look at the characteristics of people who feel harassed and how they want to express their concerns. These are the ways, according to Rowe (1990), with increasing diversity in the US work force, lawmakers, the corporate world, scholars, and the general public are all showing increasing interest in preventing. Customers viewed failure by restaurants and its influence on focal customer complaint intentions to organisation namely vent and voice. Other customer regard failures as commonplace and that it can have damaging effects on service organisations and thus need to be managed (Mc Quiken, Robertson and Polonsky, 2017)

There are different mechanisms by which customers bring forth their complaints. Organisations have a formalised way by which customers can bring forth their complaints such as the European Investment Bank which provides the following steps for customers to complain: the customer can either write a letter, email or put the complaint on the webpage, thereby providing reception for the complaint. The organisation then acknowledges receipt, registers the complaints, notifies the relevant stakeholders, assesses or investigates the matter, drafts a conclusion report with the following outlines, the complaint and background. Other customers complain online and the reasons why consumers complain on such sites include warning others consumers, altruism, venting negative feelings or seeking revenge against a firm by sharing experiences with others (Bacile, Fox, Wolter and Massa, 2017)

2.5 2 Reporting Systems in South Africa

The Consumer Protection Act, no 68 of 2008 is a distinct field of law and the concept is still relatively new in South Africa. With the promulgation of the Consumer Protection Act, No 68 of 2008, consumer law has suddenly become a new headache for businesses and they had to make a lot of adaptations to operate within the specific act (Legal Advice Office). The South African Consumer Protection Act, No 68 of 2008, the purpose of the Act is to protect the interests of all consumers, ensure accessible, transparent and efficient redress for consumers who are subjected to abuse or exploitation in the marketplace and also to give effect to internationally recognised consumer rights. The Consumer protection Act defines a consumer as any person to whom goods and services are marketed, who is a user of the supplier's goods, enters into a transaction with the supplier or service provider of any services and products (Government Gazette, 2009).

The interest of consumers in the Act has shown enormous growth in the last few months. It is believed that this will continue to escalate as consumers' awareness will increase and the National Consumer Council finds it feet. The core concept of the Consumer Protection Act is to disclose all necessary information pertaining to the services and goods as to allow the consumer to make an

informed decisions before purchasing a product or service. Business owners/managers have a responsibility to make clients to understand the basics of the Consumer Protection Act (CPA) as well as their rights in terms of the specific legislation, doing this and providing this information will be of interest and benefit to them.

In short, this commission offers a comprehensive solution to any type of consumer complaint covered by the South African Consumer Protection Act and the biggest advantage is that customers can lodge complaints online from anywhere in South Africa, thus saving on travelling and legal fees as the complaint gets evaluated online and submitted; a free of charge evaluation. The complainant will receive feedback by e-mail and will be guided and assisted.

2.6 HANDLING COMPLAINTS

2.6.1 How Complaints Are Handled by Owners/Management

How the complaints are dealt with determines whether the customer will come back or not. Customer satisfaction positively affects profitability as it leads to repeat purchase, brand loyalty and positive word of mouth (Angelova & Zeriki, 2011). Corporate social responsibility and service recovery have significant effects on customer satisfaction and trust, word-of-mouth recommendation and repeat patronage intentions in a casual-dining setting (Albus & Ro, 2017)

According Le Boeuf (2010), here are some guidelines on how to handle complaints. He says “every business should seek out and welcome complaints, people at the top should be actively involved in listening and resolving problems, every complain must be taken seriously, there should be a system to document and clarify complaints and the organisation should set up goals to resolve these complaints and a lesson should be learned for bettering the services from those complains.” Although organisations sometimes consider customer complaints beneficial, the study by Tao et al. (2016) shows that when customers complain in an angry tone, sales people often feel like providing poorer service both to those customers and to others (Tao, Karande & Arndt, 2016)

2.6.1.1 How Complaints are handled in Other Countries

Problems with customer service are not unique to the South African customer (Marx & Erasmus, 2006). Before 1994 in South Africa people were not encouraged to complain, but thereafter in 1996 the Bill of Rights in the South African Constitution, act 108 of 1996 was promulgated, which says people have the freedom of thought and speech that has opened up a platform for customers to complain. African countries are still far behind Western countries when it comes to customer rights protection; in many instances customers are not aware of their rights, such as the right to seek compensation when they have received product failure (Donoghue, De Klerk & Isaac, 2012)

Taking into account the needs of consumers in all countries, particularly those in developing countries, consumers often face imbalances in economic terms, educational level and bargaining power. Bearing in mind that consumers should have the right of access to non-hazardous products and the right to participate in cultural, civil and educational affairs, as well as the right to promote just, equitable and sustainable economic and social development and environmental protection. Therefore, the United National Guidelines for Consumer Protection, called Consumer International (CI), was established in 1960. It is the world's federation of consumer rights groups, with over 240 members

The United National Guidelines for Consumer Protection (UNGCP) act is an international reference point of the consumer movement. UNGCP is a set of principles for setting out the main characteristics of effective consumer protection legislature, enforcing institutions and redressing the system and for assisting interested members of the state in formulating and enforcing domestic and regional laws, rules and regulations that are suitable to their own economic and social and environmental circumstances. Also to promote international enforcement cooperation amongst member states and encouraging the sharing of experiences in consumer protection. These guidelines were adopted by the General Assembly in April 1985.

The UNGCP has guidelines which were adopted by the UN in 1985 after ten years of campaigning by CI. In 1990 they were updated with a new section on sustainable consumption and production to reflect environmental concerns emerging during the 1990s. The guidelines have been interpreted by CI into clear consumer rights as follows:

- i) The right to the satisfying of basic needs.
- ii) The right to safety.
- iii) The right to be informed.
- iv) The right to choose.
- v) The right to be heard.
- vi) The right to redress.
- vii) The right to consumer education.
- viii) The right to a healthy environment.

In the United States of America they have the Federal Trade Commission (FTC) protecting America's consumers. It stops unfair, deceptive and fraudulent business practices by collecting complaints and conducting investigations, suing companies and people that break the law, educating consumers and businesses about their rights and responsibilities. The FTC was created in 1914; its purpose was to prevent unfair methods of competition in commerce as part of the battle to break the trust. Over the years, congress passed additional laws giving agencies greater authority to police anti-competitive practices. This commission administers a variety of other consumer protection laws including the telemarketing sales rule, the pay-per-call rule and the Equal Credit Opportunity Act (codified at 15 U.S.C). In 1975, congress gave the authority to adopt industry wide trade regulation rules. The FTC benefits consumers, as it is the only federal agency with both consumer protection and competition jurisdiction in the broad sector of the economy. It pursues vigorously and effects law enforcement, advanced consumer's interest by sharing its expertise with federal and state legislatures and internal government agencies, develops policy, and researches tools through workshops and conferences.

In the United Kingdom (UK), the Office of Fair Trading (OFT) was established by the Fair Trading Act 1973, which enforces both consumer protection and competition law, acting as the UK's economic regulator. The OFT's goals are to make markets work well for consumers, ensuring vigorous competition between fair-dealing businesses and prohibiting unfair practices such as rogue trading, scams, and cartels. Its role was modified and its powers changed with the Enterprise Act 2013. Under the Enterprise and Regulation Reform Act 2013, the Competition and Market Authorities (CMA) were established on 1 April 2014 combining many of the functions of the OFT and Competition Commission and superseding both. Regulations for the consumer credit industry passed from the OFT to the new Financial Conduct Authorities (FCA) from April 2014. The independent police complaints commission (IPCC) oversees the police complaints in England and Wales and sets the standards by which the police should handle complaints. It is not part of the police. The IPCC considers appeals from people who are dissatisfied with the way the police force has dealt with their complaints.

A later study found that Ecuadorian customers were less likely to complain in the presence of other customers than when they were alone. Impression management and concern for others were shown to be more significant among women than men. Women were found to be more motivated to manage their public image and create a positive impression in other people's minds, leading to less intent to complain in the presence of other customers than when they are alone (Fan, Van Hoof, Loyola, Lituma and Granda, 2016)

2.6.1.2 Complaint management by the National Government

For a complaint management system customers who are not satisfied with service rendered or addressing a complaint by any organisation can be assisted by operators at the Government call centers and helplines. They can also call the relevant department or state agency. Contact details are accessible on contact information pages. The Presidential Hotline (17737) should be used when all attempts to get assistance from a government department, province, municipality or state agency have failed. It is not only a complaints line. They can call to share their views or provide

solutions to the challenges in their community. The publication ‘Know your Service Rights’ provides information on what people could expect from government.

The South African Constitution, Act 108 of 1996 has established the Human Rights Commission and gave it a pre-eminent role in the advancement and protection of human rights in South Africa. The investigation of complaints is one of the principal ways in which the Commission discharges its functions. The commission also has a manual that describes the administrative procedures for dealing with the complaints lodged with the South African Human Rights Commission (SAHRC). Given the range and complexity of issues that may give rise to a complaint, the manual does not lay down rigid rules to be strictly applied, but provides general guidance to decision makers. It counsels the exercise of judgment and discretion in complaint handling to ensure that, within available resources, matters are dealt with as efficiently and effectively as possible.

After detailing the relevant provisions in the South African Constitution, the Human Rights Commission Act No 54 (HRCA) of 1994 and the regulations dealing with complaints, and identifying the role of the Commission's Complaints Committee in determining policy issues, the manual is organised in four parts as follows:.

- 1) the determination of action on a matter; where this cannot be immediately determined, screening enquires (so-called to distinguish them from the formal investigative powers which may be exercised once a complaint is accepted) are
- 2)Part 2 (Accepted complaints): deals with the option for handling a complaint, once it has been decided that it should not be dismissed, referred or rejected in accordance with the regulations, and details a standard process of investigation.
- 3) Part 3: summarises the record keeping of complaints
- 4)Part 4: refers to reporting requirements.

The National Consumer Commission (NCC) is the chief regulator of customer business interaction in South Africa and was created by government under the Department of Trade and Industry (DTI) to ensure the economic welfare of customers. Customers play a vital role in the growth of the economy and thus contribute to the national focus and the development of the country.

The NCCs mere existence in terms of the Consumer Protection Act, Act 68 of 2008 which it administers, is to promote a fair, accessible and sustainable marketplace for customer products and services, establish norms and standards relating to consumer protection; to provide for improved standards of consumer information, unfair marketing and business practices, to promote responsible customer behaviour and to promote a consistent legislative and enforcement framework relating to consumer transaction and agreement. This simply means that the NCC registers and assesses complaints, investigates alleged misconduct by businesses, refers individual complaints to Alternative Dispute Resolution (ADR) agencies e.g. the Consumer Affairs Authorities and relevant ombudsman scheme for resolution, and represents consumers in the Consumer Tribunal, amongst other things.

The Consumer Protection Act recognises eight fundamental consumer rights, in line with the Constitution of the Republic of South Africa, and the United National guidelines on consumer protection, which every consumer of goods and service is entitled to, regardless of the monetary value of a transaction or the significance of the commodity a consumer buys, even if it is just a loaf of bread for daily use. The consumer has a right; any infringement of this right is an act of non-compliance with the provisions of the Consumer Protection Act.

These rights are in terms of the Consumer Protection Act, Act 68 of 2008 and are as follows:

- i) The right to equality
- ii) The right to privacy
- iii) The right to choose
- iv) The right to disclosure of information

- v) The right to fair and responsible marketing
- vi) The right to fair and honest dealing
- vii) The right to fair, just and reasonable terms and conditions; and
- viii) The right to safe and good quality goods.

The consumer may approach the NCC for guidance or assistance with dispute(s) that cannot be amicably resolved. In the interest of getting quick and cost free redress, it is advisable to first raise a complaint with the business or provider of goods and/or service. The NCC provides it free of charge to all consumers.

2.6.1.3 Management of customer complaints by other institutions

The National Department of Health

The National Complaint Management Protocol of the Department of Health is enshrined in the national Patients' Rights Charter. Everyone in South Africa has the right to complain about the health care they receive, to have such complaint investigated and to receive a full response on such investigation. This is enforced by Section 18 of the National Health Act and supported by requirements set out in the domain one of the National Core Standards for Health Establishments in South Africa. This National Complaints Management Protocol for the Public Health Sector of South Africa serves as a contribution towards upholding the right to complain and to improve the quality of health services. It aims at readily providing information to the public on how to complain within the public health sector and what to then expect in the event of complaining, and at providing guidance to the public health sector on how to manage complaints in view of resolving them as quickly as possible, particularly through immediate informal responses by frontline health workers, or through subsequent investigation and conciliation by staff empowered to deal with complaints as they arise. Furthermore, it guides a process whereby valuable information is gathered from which the health system could learn and to which it can positively respond by bringing about the required change. Although this protocol serves as a guideline for the public health sector in South Africa, the principles underlying the protocol are equally applicable in the private health sector.

The Objective of the Department of Health National Protocol, in setting up a National Complaints Management Protocol, the perspective of both the Complainant and the health sector should be considered, i.e. the health sector must be clear on why it needs a protocol and it must be understood why complainants make their grievances known.

a) The public health sector would like to attain the following key objectives through this protocol:

- To respect the user/patient's right to complain: Rights are the cornerstone of any democracy. Constitutionally, all South Africans have the right to health care services and legally they may complain about the manner in which these services are provided to them. The public health sector must therefore respect, protect, promote, and fulfil this right to complain, and not revert to any form of victimisation.
- To resolve problems and satisfy the concerns of the complainant: Concerns of complainants must always be taken seriously. The actions needed to address a complaint should always be geared towards resolving the problem.
- To provide a simple complaints procedure everybody can understand: All the steps of the complaints procedure must be clearly documented and must be made known to the public through various means of communication, for example, pamphlets, brochures and posters in the appropriate languages.
- To provide health service managers with a means to extract lessons on quality and to subsequently improve services for patients: Complaints should be recorded and classified in such a manner that they can be easily analysed, trends identified and lessons drawn from the information at hand.
- To ensure fairness for staff and complainants alike: When complaints are investigated, the views, opinions, experiences and observations of all concerned should be objectively obtained and assessed without any prejudice.
- To strive for honesty and thoroughness: Investigatory processes when instituted should promote thoroughness and not protect the health establishment or staff's own interest at the expense of the patient's autonomy and interest.
- To avoid unnecessary litigation: Long delays in resolving complaints often lead to great frustration and to subsequent litigation. Unnecessary litigation as a means to resolve a complaint is not cost-effective, thus innovative ways of avoiding such cases should at all times be sought.

b) The key objectives of complainants:

Complainants may have a variety of objectives when making their grievances known. These objectives need to be at least partially met during redress if the complainant is to be satisfied with the response he or she receives. These objectives can be one or more of the following:

- To receive acknowledgement: Complainants' views must be taken seriously. The mere fact that they had reason to complain must be acknowledged.
- To receive an apology: As a simple apology can be a very important objective for complainants, such an apology, if warranted, must be given without a too long delay.
- To receive an explanation: Information on what happened and why it happened needs to be provided to the complainant. This must be done in a language he/she understands. The explanation should not deny the complainant's experience of events and it should also not degenerate into a form of making excuses.
- To prevent recurrence: People often complain in an altruistic manner to ensure something is done to prevent their (bad) experience happening to others as well. Getting a commitment to action in this regard becomes the main objective. This commitment must be given and conveyed to the complainant, and all actions committed to must be carried through.
- To ask for compensation or special consideration: Often complainants want action to take place that has a more direct bearing on either their own care or the care received by the patient on whose behalf they are complaining. This may include preferential or additional treatment or even financial compensation.
- To seek retribution: Although seeking retribution is rather the exception than the rule, in some cases the complainant does want steps to be taken against individual health workers/ health establishments for their 'alleged' wrongful actions or where they (the complainants) feel there is a cover-up of mistakes.

c) Required actions for health establishments

All procedures relevant to the Complaints Management Protocol must be upheld by all health establishments. The manager of a health establishment will be responsible and held accountable

for ensuring complaints are managed according to this protocol. There is required adherence to the principles that guide this protocol. The following actions need to be taken:

A written Complaints Procedure: The health establishment must have a written procedure for the management of complaints. The procedure must include the following:

- The name and contact details of the Complaints' Manager and the location of his/ her office. These details must be displayed in a conspicuous manner throughout the establishment.
- The procedure for lodging a complaint (including telephonic complaints).
- The procedure around acknowledgement.
- The procedure for investigating a complaint.
- The procedure for determining the required action to be taken according to the severity of the complaint (risk rating).
- The procedure for identifying patterns in system failures (categorisation).
- The procedure around redress.
- Timelines to be adhered to.
- Monitoring mechanisms and their response timelines.

2.6.1.4 How complaints are handled in restaurants

Unhappy customers are bad news for any company and it only takes one of them to shatter a perfectly good day at work for anyone (Rosa, 2012). According to Rosa (2012), one needs to approach a customer as soon as they discover that the customer is unhappy and should use any of the following steps to resolve them:

- i) “Listen intently: Listen to the customer and do not interrupt him/her. They need to tell their story and feel that they have been heard.
- ii) Thank them: Thank the customer for bringing the problem to your attention. You can't resolve something you aren't completely aware of or may be making faulty assumptions about.
- iii) Apologise: Sincerely convey to the customer your apology for the way the situation has made them feel. This is not the time for preachy reasons, justifications or excuses; there must be an apology.

- iv) Seek the Best Solution: Determine what the customer is seeking as a solution. Ask them; often they'll surprise you for asking for less than you initially thought you'd have to give, especially when they perceive your apology and intention are genuinely sincere.
- v) Reach an Agreement: Seek to agree on the solution that will resolve the situation to their satisfaction. Your best intentions can miss the mark completely if you still fail to deliver what the customer wants.
- vi) Take Quick Action: Act on the solution with a sense of urgency. Customers will often respond more positively to your focus on helping them immediately than on the solution itself.
- vii) Follow-up: Follow-up to ensure the customer is completely satisfied, especially when you have had to enlist the help of others for the solution delivery. Everything up to this point will be for naught if the customer feels that "out of sight is out of mind. "Problems happen. It's how you honestly acknowledge and handle them which counts with people. Customers will remember you, and happily give you another chance to delight them when you choose to correct problems with the very best you can offer, proving you value them and their business." (Rosa, 2012)

According to Mendes and Stander (2011), it is important to train employees in order to empower them, provide skills, change their attitudes and behaviours for the better, and to encourage confidence in them. It is believed that training assists employees to put themselves in the customer's shoes. Mendes and Stander (2011) have listed some of the things customers do not want when they are complaining. They do not want to be ignored, made to feel guilty. They do not want the 'fight' to be heard, not to hear excuses or justification, to be passed from one person to another, to have to wait a long time for their complaints to be resolved. What they rather want is sympathy, understanding, quick action to resolve their complaint, to be made to feel valued and not just that they are complaining. So, according to Chang and Chin (2011), service organisations should encourage a culture of creating an atmosphere where customers can easily communicate when they have experienced service failure.

In different organisations complaints can be managed using different processes to increase retention of customer satisfaction. According to Sherth and Kellatardt (1992), some of the ways that some organisations use to manage customer complaints include:

- i) A Corporate culture that reflects the organisational values and basic beliefs of the organisation. Example is, “a customer always comes first”, that is what the Nordstrom departmental store chain believes in.
- ii) Responsiveness which refers to the speed and courtesy with which an organisation responds to customer requests. An example of an organisation that values this is American Express which is legendary in the process of replacing lost travellers checks and how they respond to inquiries related to charges very quickly.
- iii) Competency and professionalism - Walt Disney and McDonalds
- iv) Quality obsession which is “doing it right the first time”. Motorola and most Japanese companies are good examples of this obsession.
- v) Value Migration refers to improving the performance.
- vi) Mass customisation is a flexible operation.
- vii) Proactive innovation is another one which refers to development of new products. Good examples being Sony Corporation and 3M Company.
- viii) Frontline information system. Federal Express is a good example with its state-of-the-art portable scanner technology.
- ix) Market based organisations.
- x) Customer based compensation: - an example of an organisation that applies this is Hyatt and Marriott.

There are different ways by which organisations handle customer complaints in the different fields which exist, for example, in the hospital sector a customer complaint procedure for public hospitals is followed, according to the provincial service delivery standards set in 2009, are that a complaint is first received by the complaints manager. The complaint is then recorded, then acknowledged within three (3) days, then investigation commences within five (5) days, response to the complaint within 12 days, then either remedial action or referral to other structures within 14 days. They will

then analyse the complaint and feedback is given to the institution. Customers mostly attribute blame of product failure to retailers and manufactures.

In truth, a customer is not always right and it is tempting to engage in heated arguments, especially when it comes to defending one's business, employees, even the self (Cooper, 2009). However, if customer retention is the end goal, managers need to listen intently and should try to remain calm and collected, as it will help to troubleshoot even the toughest complaints (Cooper, 2009). Results show that role overloading has significant negative effects on quality interaction with customers. The effects on interaction quality on branch sales are fully mediated by customer satisfaction (Jha, Balaji, Yavas & Babakus, 2017). Feedback is a gift according to Thomas (2009).

According to Cooper (2009), here are some of the ways for handling customer complaints:

- i) "Shut up and listen": As simple as it sounds, the first and most important step to take when dealing with a complaining customer is to be quiet and listen. Often customers feel the need to argue when there is frustration with a product or service before even considering a proactive solution. "Acknowledge the customer's emotional state," Thomas (2009) says. Remember that a good empathy statement does not imply ownership of the problem.
- ii) Another key communication tip involves asking open-ended questions that involve the customer, Thomas (2009) says. This technique will not only divert focus from emotional frustration but also generate copious information about the problem at hand and help to arrive at the appropriate solution. "Rather than getting defensive ... I need to simply listen to the customer, accept the feedback, thank the person, and then decide what to do," she adds. As a bonus, the customer might feel appreciated, and cared about, alleviating some of their emotional frustration.
- iii) Do not take anything personally: As frustrating as it is to be the customer with a complaint, it's no delight being the business representative who gets yelled at for a problem likely caused by something or someone else. However, Morgan cautions, don't

- take it personally. "People say stuff, and they call us names, and they say we're incompetent. Listen to them fully without interrupting, if possible, and then help them."
- iv) Further, do not respond to accusations or offensive complaining in a way that perpetuates the argument. Comments like "You did it wrong! That's why you're having a problem!" will only escalate the issue rather than deflate anger. Don't be defensive. Instead, try a tactic Morgan (Fornell et al., 2006) advises: Point some of the blame on an inanimate object, such as an entry form or confusing instruction manual - problem-causing devices that, most importantly, can't yell at you. This way, Morgan says, you acknowledge there's a problem and, without finger pointing or putting anyone on the defensive, can work with the customer to agree on a mutually satisfactory solution.
 - v) Ditch the formalities: because the last thing unsatisfied customers want to hear is a recitation of your company's return policies. "Today's customer expects to be treated as an individual, not as just another number who's complaining," Thomas says.
 - vi) Consider the case of a department store with a 90-day deadline for returning an item. If there is a customer who just got married, returned from her honeymoon and, at day 100, realised that a gravy plate adorned with doves is actually not her style, it's worth looking into alternative options rather than sending her home right away. Your company should know that occasionally bending the rules will ultimately cost less than it would to lose the customer or, worse, if the customer leaves and relays a negative story about your company.
 - vii) Avoid overcompensating: A particular four-letter word usually does the trick when seeking a solution to a customer's complaint: fair. "One of the key phrases, which not a lot of people use, is: what would you think would be fair?" Morgan says. "That word fair does seem to bring out in people a sense of, OK, this is reasonable" (Cooper, 2009: 1- 9). Otherwise, Morgan cautions, customers may jump at the opportunity to demand inappropriate freebies, like a fully compensated meal when a free dessert would be enough. Besides, the customer's main priority is resolving the issue. Once that's done, extra benefits or compensation are just filigree - albeit important measures to take if you want the customer to come back. Thomas adds that if you ask the customer to propose a "fair and reasonable" solution, acting as a partnership with you to find a resolution, chances are it will consist of less than what you would have thought to offer.

- viii) Patrol customers' conversations on the web: In today's digital age, there's no way of knowing exactly where a customer will choose to voice a complaint using traditional hotline numbers and online feedback.
- ix) Messages to Facebook, Twitter, user-review sites such as Yelp, and the Internet are the customer's oyster as far as retaliation is concerned.
- xi) Customer service clientele should monitor as many media sites as possible to make sure all the bases are covered and no complaint goes unnoticed. Consider the case of Comcast, whose employees are authorised to use Twitter to respond to customers' complaints online. "It shows the public that you're listening," says Morgan, who encourages employees to take advantage of these public forums and post responses on message boards.
- xii) Of course, direct communication is always the ideal, and if a customer's contact information is given, the issue should be dealt with on a personal basis.
- xiii) Once the complaint is resolved, it is worth asking the customer to post again on the original message board and update readers - and potential customers - who may visit the site in the future.
- xiv) Responding in Writing: When drafting a written statement to respond to a customer's concern, the same basic rules apply as when talking to a customer over the phone or face-to-face. Start with something positive, Morgan says, and be sure to thank the customer for bringing the problem to your attention. Answer politely and affirmatively and, if the situation merits it, ask appropriate questions that will help to investigate where a service went sour, how to smooth things over with the customer and, finally, how to prevent the problem from reoccurring. However, Thomas warns, pay careful attention to the tone of your letter. "If you find that the little hairs on the back of your neck are standing up, or you're clenching your jaw as you write the email," it's probably worth your while to have a colleague edit the document before sending it. Also, always follow up with verbal communication. Provide the best way(s) for the customer to get in touch with you - the more information you provide, like a cell phone or personal email, the more serious your troubleshooting efforts will appear to the customer. Thomas adds, "You can get a lot more done verbally than you can through writing." Remember that when penning a response, be it on formal letterhead or in a 140-

character tweet, you are representing your company. Do not write anything that you wouldn't feel comfortable saying in person.

- xv) **Additional Resources:** Turn upset customers into satisfied loyal customers. You may need to organise a seminar on how to calm, please and retain customers from a customer service expert, books and audio. **Pay Attention!:** Learn how to listen, respond and profit from Customer Feedback.

In order for restaurants to mend the damage caused by service or product delivery, restaurants employ different methods and strategies such as replacing or giving free food or making corrections such as re-cooking or bringing the correct drink, giving a coupon, or giving discount while others may opt to doing nothing (Mark, 2000)

2.6.2 Types of Consumer Complaints Management

According to Insight magazine (2016), consumer complaints management guidelines and consumer complaints management take many forms, from preventive to internal complaints-handling, external dispute resolution and comprehensive approaches. Preventive Consumer Complaints Management initiatives help build and maintain relationships by reducing the chances that problems will arise in the first place that may lead to complaints. Initiatives include educational activities directed at both consumers and businesses, improvements in the design of products and services, customer service guarantees and policies, and codes that set out service commitments and consequences for failure to meet those commitments. Internal complaints-handling initiatives are techniques employed within a firm to address problems, complaints and conflicts. Examples include toll-free complaints assistance and in-house customer service representatives, published returns policies, ombudsmen and adherence to complaints-handling standards. External private dispute resolution techniques are used when complaints cannot be adequately handled within the firm. Although there may be legal implications flowing from the use of such techniques, they operate outside the public court system. Examples include industry association ombudsmen, third-party mediation, arbitration, and private tribunals and councils.

A complaint is a second chance to earn guests' business back. The only true negative comment or complaint is the one that you do not hear and cannot react to effectively. It means that the guest

likes you enough to give you a chance to fix the situation. Virtually everyone working in the food service industry will have to deal with customer complaints at some point in their career. Whether it is something as simple as getting the wrong drink at a fast food restaurant or a service complaint at a high-end gourmet restaurant. Restaurant complaints seem to come when service is at its busiest and it's tempting to take only the minimal action necessary to address the complaint. Handling complaints effectively, however, provides an opportunity to strengthen customer relationships. How you handle the complaint makes all the difference. You may or may not believe the customer is always right but the customer is always the customer. They pay the bills and provide your income. Right or wrong they deserve to have you listen patiently to what they have to say. Unresolved customer complaints can have a devastating impact on restaurants, making it essential to address customer complaints quickly. A study by the Technical Assistance Research Programs Institute (2013) reveals that up to 70% of complainers will return to your business if the complaint is resolved, and up to 95% will return if the problem is resolved in a timely fashion. From a management perspective, training is the key. Train staff members on how to handle complaints so that each employee follows the recommended procedure no matter how swamped the restaurant is at the time. Complaints are handled differently by different institutions.

According to Petzer and De Meyer-Heydenrych (2017), it is evident from the findings that retail banks should utilise the service encounter that follows a customer complaint as a desirable prospect to implement strategies to recover from service failure in an effort to bring about perceived justice that will ultimately influence the customer's level of services satisfaction.

2.7 SUMMARY

This chapter explained the South African system of handling customers' complaints generally and how restaurants handle customers' complaints; how those complaints are brought about; the most common mechanisms employed when complaining by restaurant customers; how complaints are handled by the owners and managers. Complaints in a restaurant are a common challenge which threatens businesses on their success or failures. Businesses such as restaurants need to know how to better handle this challenge in order to succeed.

CHAPTER 3

RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

3.1 INTRODUCTION

In this chapter, the research methodology used in this study is presented. The chapter presents the study design, study area where the research was conducted, the targeted population as well as the selected sample, the instrument and method used in collecting the data, and the ethical considerations.

3.2. STUDY DESIGN

The study conducted is quantitative in nature. The reason for choosing this approach for this study is that a quantitative study will give more information that will be quicker to collect without taking too much time from the participants. Qualitative data collection needs more time to collect in-depth information, time that some restaurant owners/managers may not be able to afford a researcher. In addition, a quantitative study gives a numeric description of matters that are being studied without the researcher manipulating the data. If used in a quantitative study it is easy to set standards to validate theories and this avoids being biased (Creswell, 2013). The study is descriptive, implying that the researcher will only explain data as given by the participants without influencing or manipulating it in any way.

3.3 STUDY AREA

The study was conducted in Polokwane, the capital city of Limpopo Province in South Africa. Limpopo is the northern-most province of South Africa having five districts namely Sekhukhune, Waterberg, Mopani, Vhembe and Capricorn in which Polokwane is situated. Limpopo had a population of 5.8 million in 2016. It is the fifth largest province in the country.

There are three (3) main languages spoken in Limpopo, the largest group being Sepedi at 52.9%, Xitsonga at 17% and Tshivenda at 16.7%. The other languages make up 13.4%. Black people constitute 96.7% compared to 2.6% of Whites, 0.3% Coloureds and 0.3% Indian/Asians. Limpopo Province is one of the poorest regions of South Africa. However, it has shown great improvement over the past years. Poverty is at 72.5% in the Province. Poverty and unemployment are still major issues in the province. Tourism is one of the three pillars of the economy in the province along with mining and agribusinesses (Statistic South Africa, 2016)

Capricorn is the district which contains most whites in the province, it has 92.7% Black people, 5.2% Whites, the remaining 1.9% is made up of Indians, Coloureds and others. It has a 628 999 population density. Polokwane city is under Polokwane Local Municipality located within the Capricorn District Municipality covering 3 766 km square. It is a city with phenomenal growth and prosperity. It covers 3% of the surface area of Limpopo. It has the highest population density in the province. For every 100 females there are 93 males, 17.9% of the population is aged 20 years and older and has some form of higher education, whereas 29.6% has completed matric and only 6.8% has no schooling. The municipality has a 2.13% growth rate (Statistics South Africa, 2016).

Polokwane has a few shopping centres/malls. The following were the targeted malls for the study:

- Limpopo mall is the oldest of the three malls used in the current study. It is the oldest and busiest mall because of its proximity to the taxi ranks. It caters mainly for low to middle class people who come from surrounding townships and villages by buses, taxis and own vehicles. Businesses in Limpopo Mall operate from 07h00 to 18h00 during weekdays and between 07h00 and 17h00 on Saturdays.
- Savannah mall was established in 1990 and extended in 2010 to 100 shops. It caters mainly for middle class people who use taxis and mostly own vehicles. It is situated along one of the main roads in Polokwane coming from one of the university in the province, University of Limpopo. Most students and other commuters from surrounding villages and townships have easy access

to the mall as the taxis pass by there. The students tend to work part-time as waiters in the restaurants that are in the mall.

- Mall of the North is the largest and newest with 180 shops. It was established in 2011, with unique retail offerings which were not offered in Polokwane before. It caters mainly for middle to high-class customers.

3.4 TARGETED POPULATION

The study targeted the restaurants found in the above three malls or shopping centres in Polokwane City. There are a total of 32 restaurants found in these identified malls and all these restaurants were involved in the study. The numbers of restaurants per mall are divided as follows:

- In Limpopo mall there are five restaurants, three of which are fast food outlets and two sit-down/family style restaurants. The restaurants are Debonairs, King Pie, Nandos, Wimpy and KFC
- In Savannah Mall there are twelve restaurants, six of which are fast food restaurants, namely Cafe Rossini, KFC, King Pie, Sausage Salon, Fish and Chips Co. The others non-fast-food restaurants are Nandos, CO.FI, Mugg and Bean, Ocean Basket, Panarotti's, Spur and Wimpy.
- The Mall of the North has 16 restaurants with nine fast food outlets and seven others namely Cappuccinos, Karoo Cattle & Land, Maxis, Mugg & Bean, NINO's, Spur and Wimpy. The nine fast food outlets are Dagwood's delights, Debonair's pizza, Delhi delicious, King Pie, Mr Pie, Sausage Saloon and The Fish Co.

Thus the total targeted population is 32 restaurant managers/owners.

3.5 SAMPLING AND SAMPLE SIZE

This study took place in all restaurants found in all the three malls in Polokwane, namely in Limpopo Mall, Savannah Mall and Mall of the North. Thirty-three restaurants in total were targeted. As this is a qualitative study, all 32 managers/owners were included in the study.

3.6 METHOD OF DATA COLLECTION

3.6.1 Research Instrument

A research questionnaire was designed and used as a data collection instrument. The questionnaire was divided into sub-sections as follows (see Appendix B for questionnaire):

- i) Section A: Biographical information
- ii) Section B: How complaints are lodged and resolved
- iii) Section C: Which group of people complain the most
- iv) Section D: What do customers complain about mostly

3.6.2 Method of Data Collection

The restaurant owners/managers were first contacted to explain the study, asked for permission to conduct the study and appointments to collect data made. The designed questionnaires were used to conduct either individual face-to-face interviews with those participants who preferred interviews, or left with those who preferred self-administration of the questionnaires. The face-to-face interviews were conducted in the participants' offices or, in some instances, at the restaurant tables that customers use. The interviews were conducted during non-peak hours, mainly in the mornings, to avoid noise from customers and to have the full attention of the managers/owners. With those who self-administered the questionnaires, follow-up appointments were made to firstly take a few minutes to ask if there were any issues that needed clarification and then to collect the completed questionnaires.

3.7. DATA ANALYSIS

Data from questionnaires were analysed using Excel to generate descriptive information, which are presented in tables and diagrams (pie charts and graphs) in the results chapter. The few open-

ended questions were grouped into themes that are presented in a narrative also in the results chapter.

3.8 ETHICAL CONSIDERATIONS

Ethical issues were considered as follows:

- Permission to conduct the study: permission was obtained from the restaurants' ownership or management, from all the restaurants who agreed to be part of the study.
- Informed consent: a detailed explanation of the study was offered to the participants, giving information about the purpose of the study.
- Confidentiality: specific information about which information was obtained specifically from which restaurants will be kept confidential.
- No harm: The study results will not be used in any way to harm the restaurants' reputation or the participants who participated in the study. Instead it is hoped that the feedback the study will give to them will be helpful in improving customer service.
- The research results will be made available to the participants.

3.9 SUMMARY

This chapter outlined the research methodology for the study, how the data were collected and analysed. The research design was outlined and the targeted population was defined. Chapter four will outline the findings of the research.

CHAPTER 4

RESULTS

4.1 INTRODUCTION

This chapter presents the findings from the data that were collected for the study. Data were analysed using Excel and are presented in this chapter using tables and diagrams. All restaurants that were targeted for the study were visited and either the managers or owners were interviewed, which represents 100 percent response rate. First, the biographical information of the participants that were visited are presented, followed by the type of complaints they normally receive and then how they would ordinarily address those complaints.

4.2 INFORMATION ON THE RESTAURANTS

The restaurants in the three malls have been operating ranging from 1 to 15 years. The restaurants that have been in operation for 1 to 5 years are 17, those with 6 to 10 years are 9. Those that have been 11 to 15 years in operation are 5 and there was only one which had been operating for over 15 years.

Most of the restaurants in this study are open between 08h00 and 23h00.

4.2.1 Location

The restaurants are located in the three malls, Limpopo Mall, Savannah Mall and Mall of the North. The interviews took place with owners/managers of 16 restaurants located in Mall of the North, 11 restaurants in Savannah Mall and 5 of them located in Limpopo Mall. The location distribution is represented in figure 4.1.

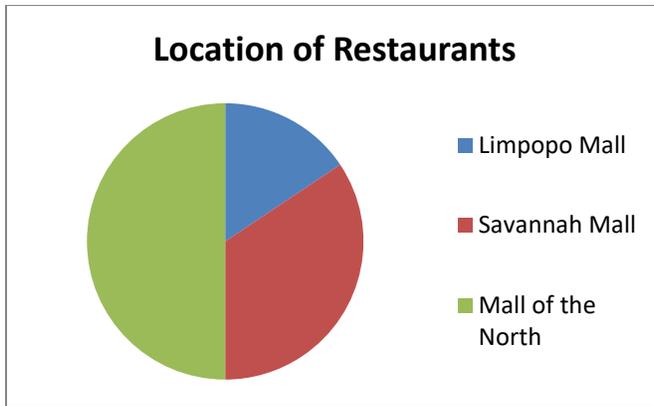


Figure 4.1: Location of Restaurants

Half the number of restaurants is located in Mall of the North, Limpopo Mall has the least number of restaurants, having around one eighth of the number of restaurants and Savannah Mall has around two thirds in number of restaurants

4.2.2 Participants who were interviewed

All the people who were interviewed in the 32 restaurants were managers. No owners were interviewed.

4.2.3 Number of Franchises vs. Non-Franchises

From the 32 restaurants whose managers were interviewed, all (100%) of them were franchises.

4.2.4 Number of Fast-food outlets vs. Family Restaurants

From the 32 restaurants that were involved in the current study, 13 were family restaurants while 19 were fast food outlets. They are represented in figure 4.4 below.

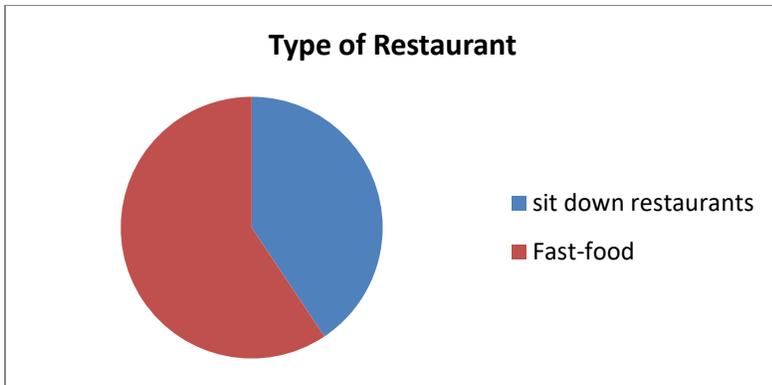


Figure 4.4: Fast Foods vs. Sit-Down/Family Restaurants

4.3 RESULTS ON CUSTOMER COMPLAINTS

4.3.1 Method in which the Complaints are lodged

The participants reported that customer complaints are presented telephonically, verbally or customers can write their complaints either to the person providing service, to management or other third parties like customer care. Figures 4.5 to 4.8 present the methods of presenting customer complaints, firstly per mall and then with all the malls combined.

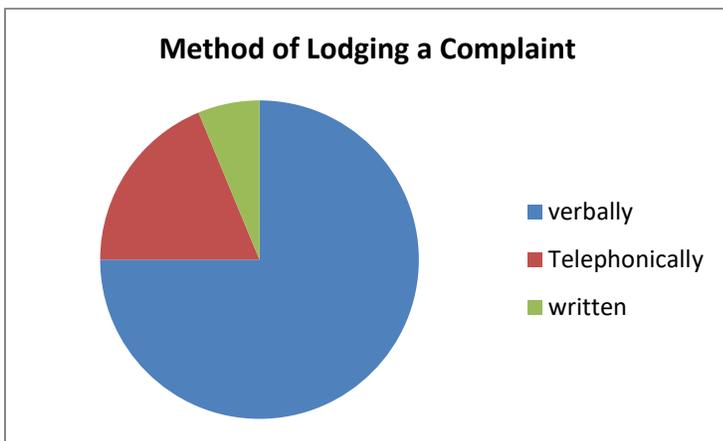


Figure 4.5: How Customers report in Mall of the North

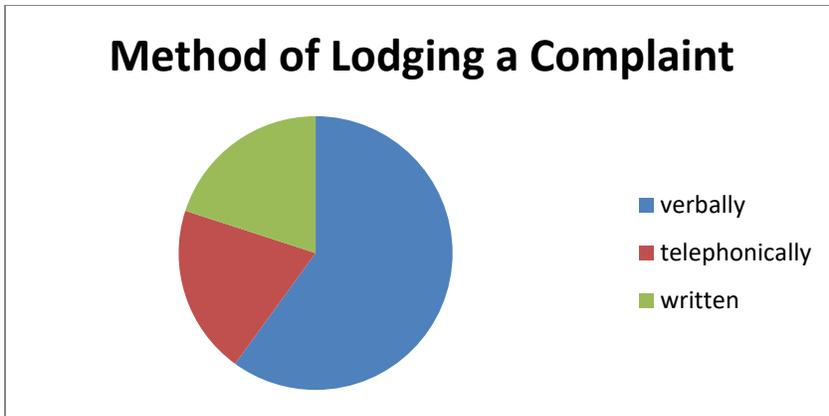


Figure 4.6: How Customers Report Complaints in Limpopo Mall

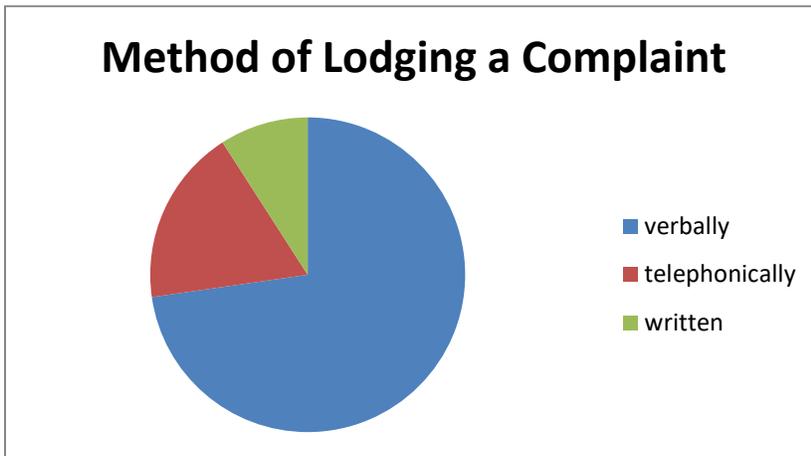


Figure 4.7: How Customers report Complaints in Savannah Mall

Figures 4.5 to 4.7 show that the preferred method of reporting complaints is verbal. This may imply that customers prefer to report complaints immediately as is mostly the case with verbal reporting. Figure 4.8 further illustrates the preferred method of reporting clearly.

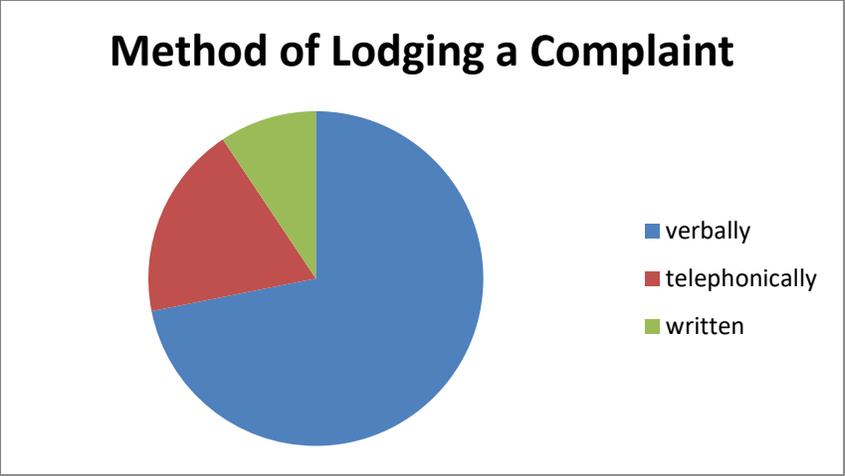


Figure 4.8: How Customers Report Complaints in all the restaurants involved in the study

The second preferred method of complaint reporting is telephonically and very few people prefer writing down their complaints.

4.3.2 Persons Receiving the Complaints

The results of the current study indicate that customers report their complaints to the person providing service (i.e. the waiters in this case), to the managers of the shop, owners of the shops and/or third party. The third parties include head office for that particular business, the customer hotlines such as the Customer Complaint Commission or the police. Figure 4.9 shows the preferred persons the customers complain to.

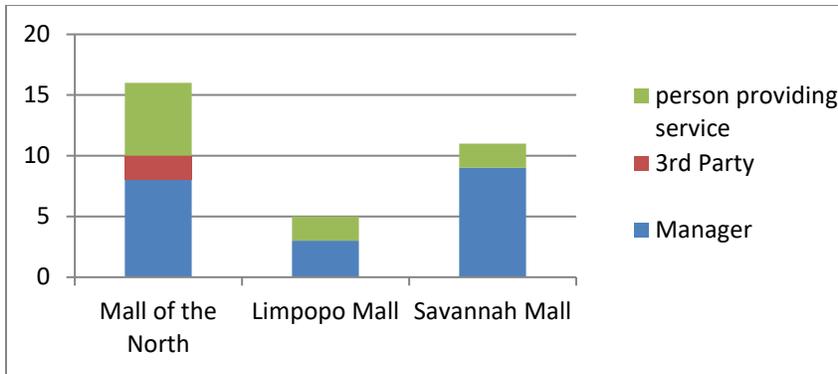


Figure 4.9: Who the Customers complain to in restaurants in different Malls

In all the malls the customers seem to prefer to report to the managers when they have complaints, followed by complaints to the waiters. Only in Mall of the North are customers who reported to third parties.

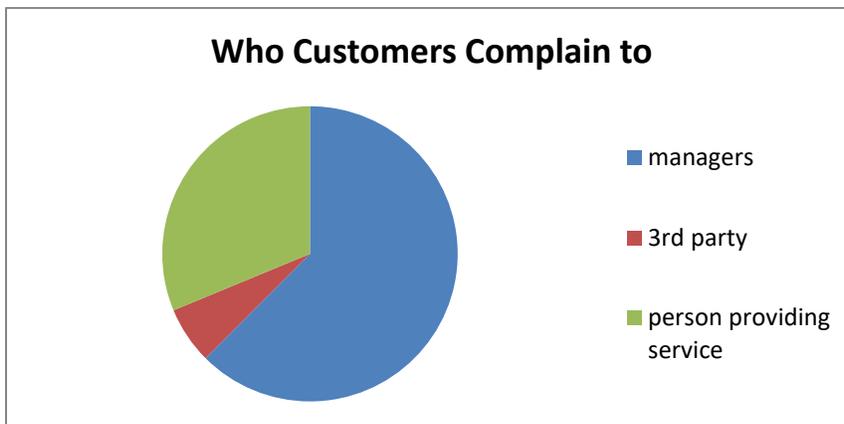


Figure 4.10: People to whom Customers complain to in all the restaurants interviewed

4.3.3 The Type of People Who Complain More

4.3.3.1 Complainants According to Gender

From the graphs below the study shows that females tend to complain more than their male counterparts (as indicated in both figures 4.11 and 4.12). Limpopo Mall has no record of male customers lodging complaints.

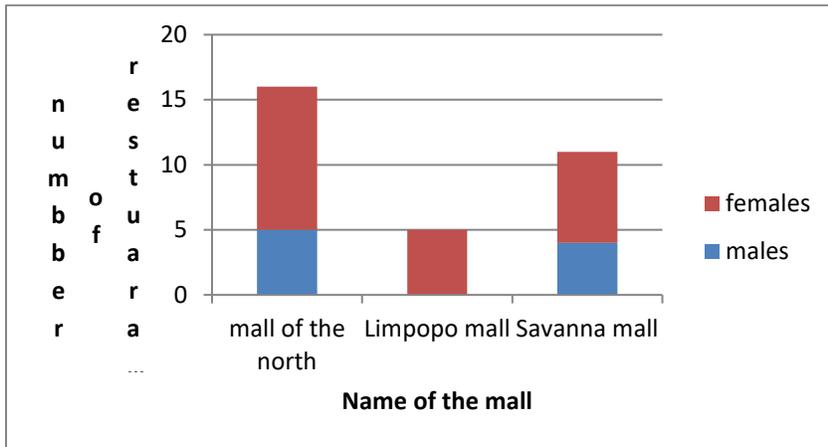


Figure 4.11: Complainants in Restaurants According to Gender

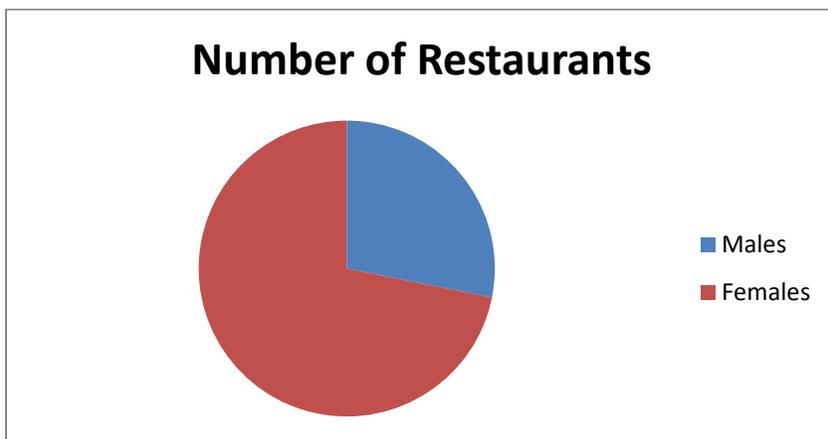


Figure 4.12: Summary of Complaints According to Gender in all the Restaurants

4.3.2.2 Complainants According to Race

Limpopo Mall is the one shopping centre that is frequented by people from mostly surrounding villages and townships. Most of its customers are black people who visit towns by taxis and buses as well as a few who use their own cars. As shown in figure 4.13, only black people complain in this mall. This is likely more a representation of the demographics of this mall rather than the type of people who complain. Figure 4.13 further shows that people of Indian/Asian descent complain more in Mall of the North while black people complain more in Savannah Mall.

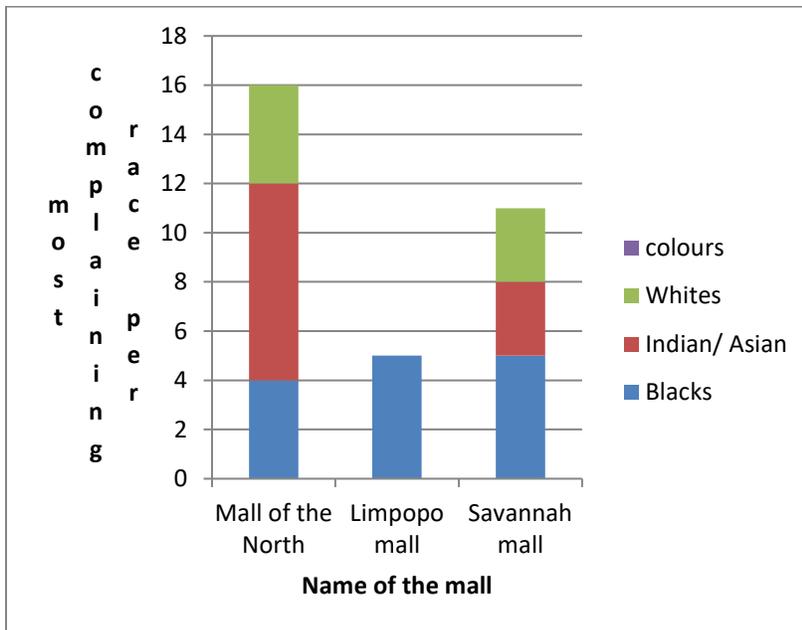


Figure 4.13: Complaints According to Race

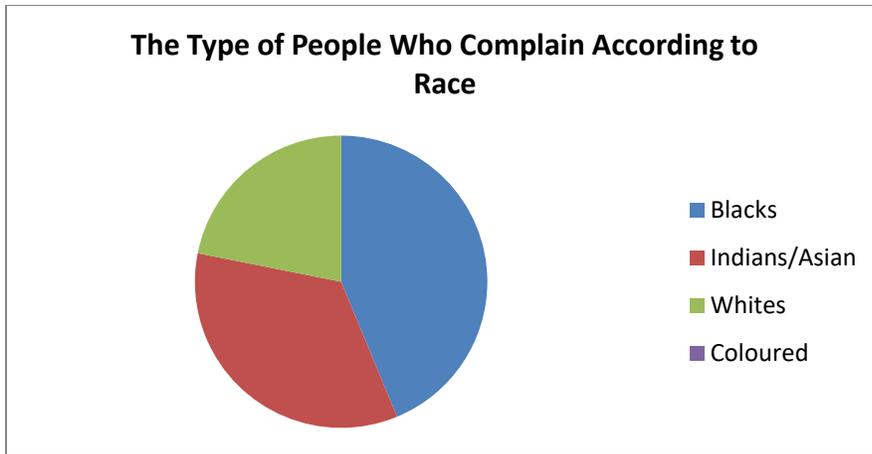


Figure 4.14: Summary in All Restaurants According to Race

According to race, between blacks, Indians/Asian, coloured and whites, from the graph above, the study shows that blacks complain the most as it is the highest followed by Indians, Whites then lastly Colouredes. Again this fact may be a representation of the demographics given that one mall has only blacks as its complainants. None the less, in Mall of the North Indians are the highest group complaining with blacks and whites almost equal.

4.3.2.3 Complainants According to Level of Education

From the graphs below it is interesting to note that in Mall of the North, the non-educated group complain more than the educated group, in Limpopo Mall the educated complain more than the non-educated and in Savannah Mall they complain equally. Overall, when all the complaints from all restaurants are combined, educated people complain as much as non-educated customers represented by 50/50 percentages on the findings. The difference between educated and uneducated persons is their thought processes, mentality and their behaviour.

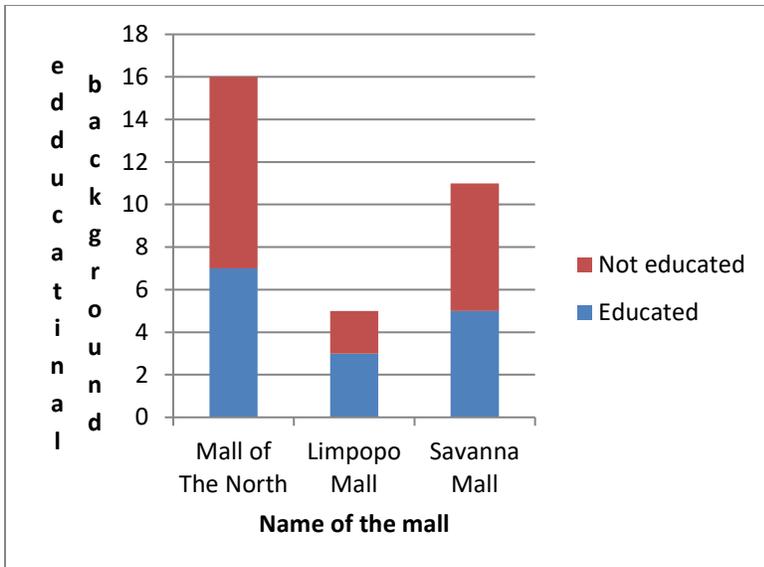


Figure 4.15: Complaints According to Level of Education

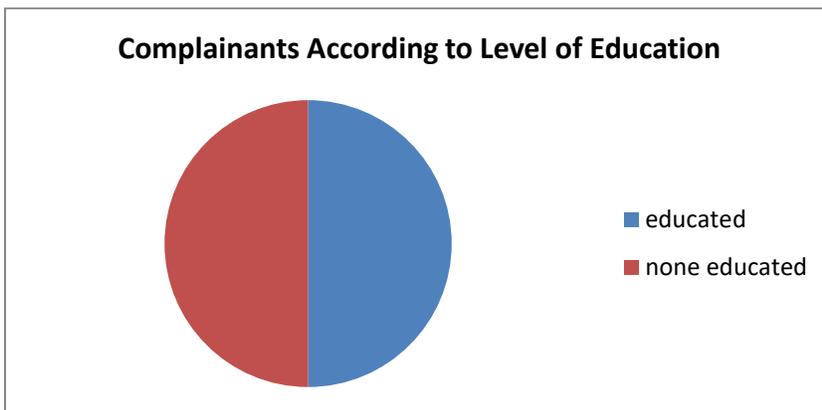


Figure 4.16: Complaints according to level of education in summary

4.3.2.4. Complainants According to Social Class

Lower class means, those who dress not so expensively, earn less money and drive smaller cars. Middle class means those who can afford more and earn much more than an average person. High class means those extra wealthy people driving expensive cars, and wearing extra expensive clothes. According to class, i.e. low, medium and high classes, as shown on the graphs below, it

should be noted that the low class is the highest complaining group, followed by high class and middle class being the least complaining group.

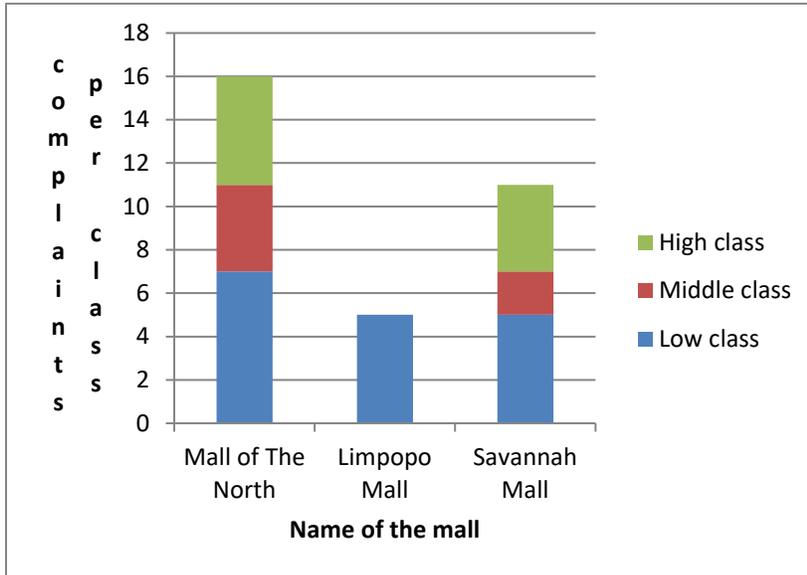


Figure 4.17: Complainants According to Socio-Economical Class

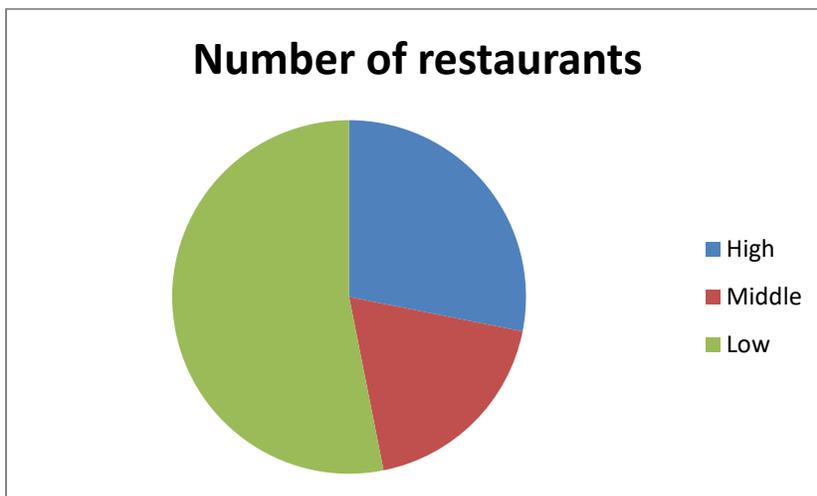


Figure 4.18: Complaints in all the Restaurants According to Socio-Economic Class

4.3.2.5. Complainants according to age

According to age, customers who complain the most are those in the age group above 35 years, followed closely by those between 18 and 34 years, while the group below 18 years hardly complain. The group above 35 years complains the most in Mall of the North. In contrast, the group between 18 and 34 years are the ones complaining the most in Limpopo and Savannah Malls.

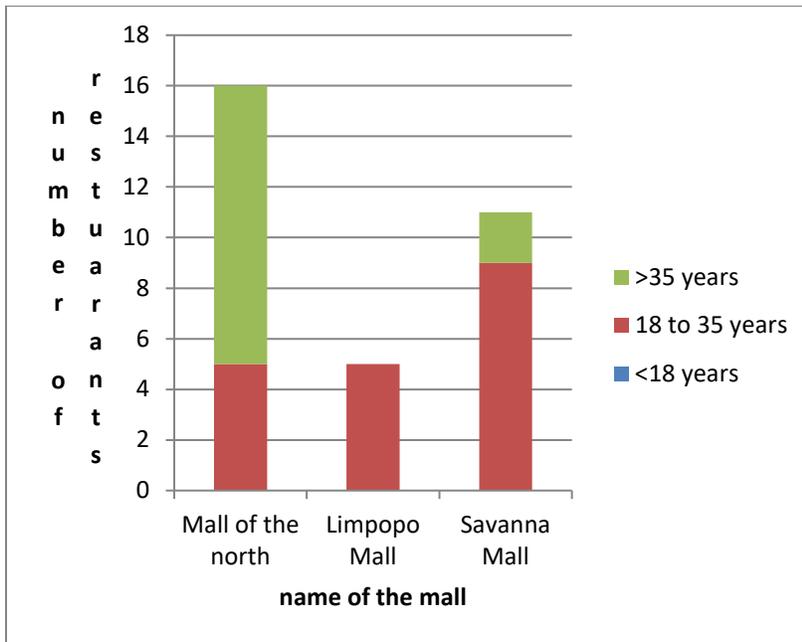


Figure 4.19: Complainants According to Age

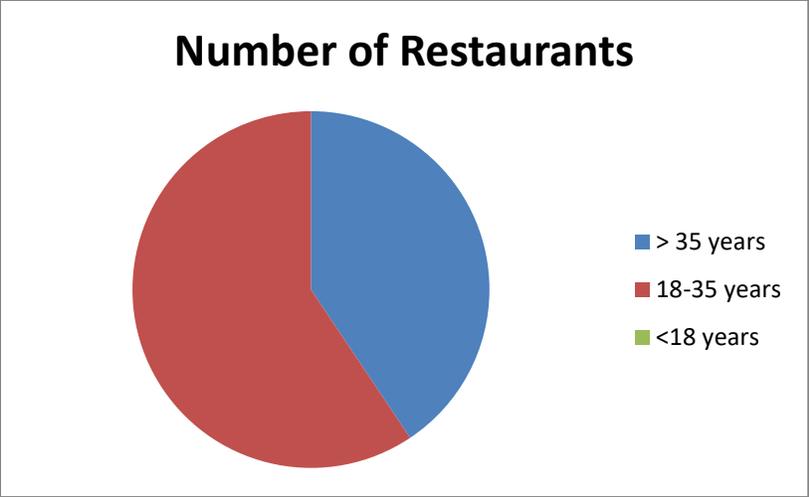


Figure 4.20: Complaints according to age

4.3.3 What Customers Complain About

4.3.3.1. Complaints about the restaurant’s environment

The complaints about the restaurant environment included a dirty place, loud music/noise or uncomfortable temperature within the restaurant. These complaints are presented in figures 4.21 (per mall) and 4.22 (all the restaurants). As indicated in the figures, for both Mall of the North and Limpopo Mall the major complaints are about the unclean environment while for Savannah Mall the complaints are mostly about noise.

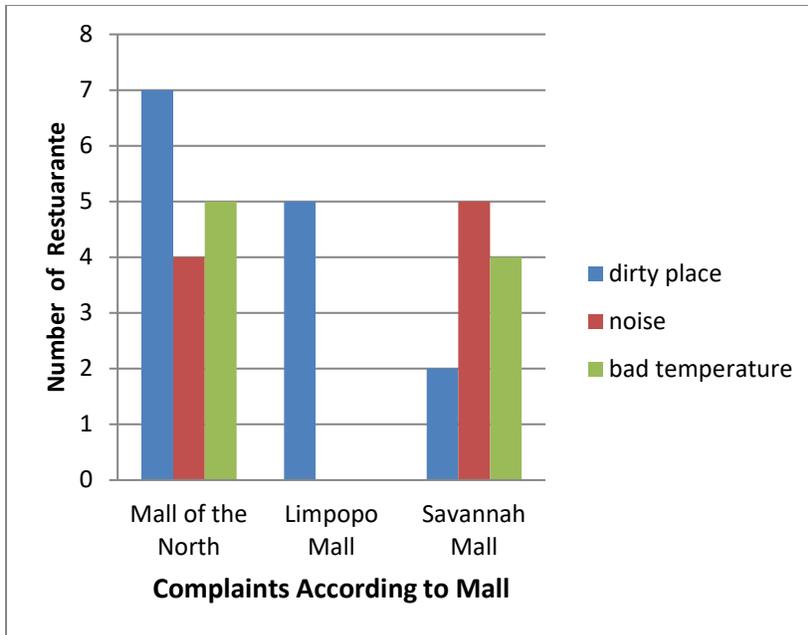


Figure 4.21: Complaints According to Ambiance

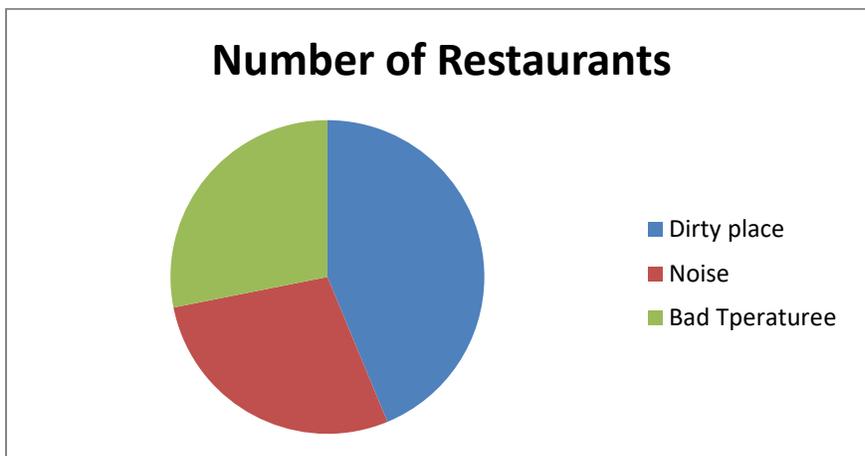


Figure 4.22: Complaints in all the Restaurants about Ambiance

4.3.3.2. Complaints about Service

Customers also complained about service, which include orders taking too long before they are delivered to customers, negative attitude from waiters and/or unfriendly service. The figures (4.23

and 4.24) below display the percentage of customers complaining when compared amongst the three malls.

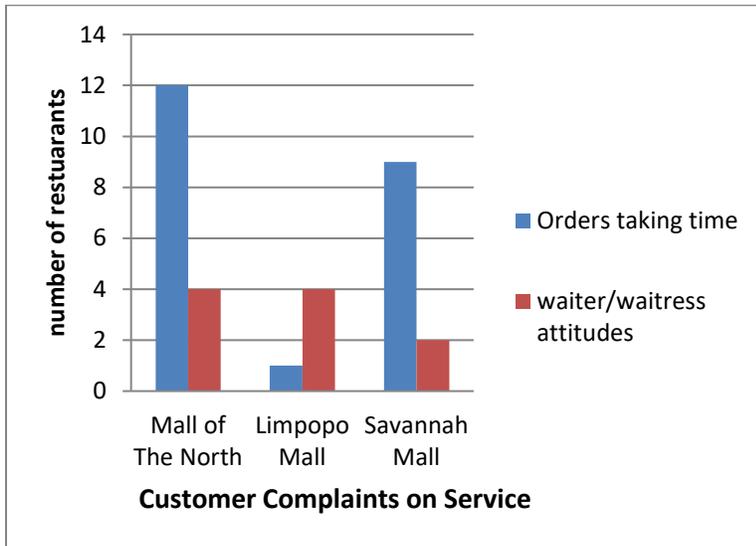


Figure 4.23: Complaints about Service

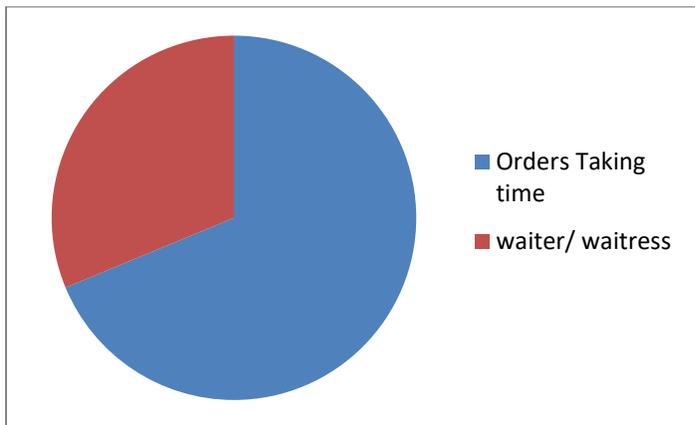


Figure 4.24: Complaints about Service for all the Restaurants

Figure 4.23 indicates that customers from the both Mall of the North and Savannah Mall complain about their orders taking too long, while those customers from Limpopo Mall complain more about the negative attitude of waiters who serve them.

4.3.3.3 Complaints about the Food and Service

The results of the current study indicate that the customers of the three malls tend to complain more about service rendered rather than about the food that is served. The results are presented in figure 4.25.

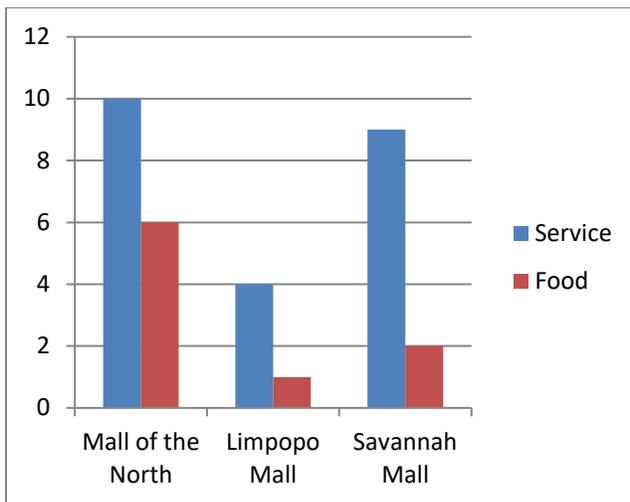


Figure 4.25: Customer complaints about Food vs. Service for all the Restaurants

4.3.3.3 Complaints about food

Even though the customers tended to complain less about the food, the study still wanted to find out what about the food the customers complained about. The results are presented in figure 4.26.

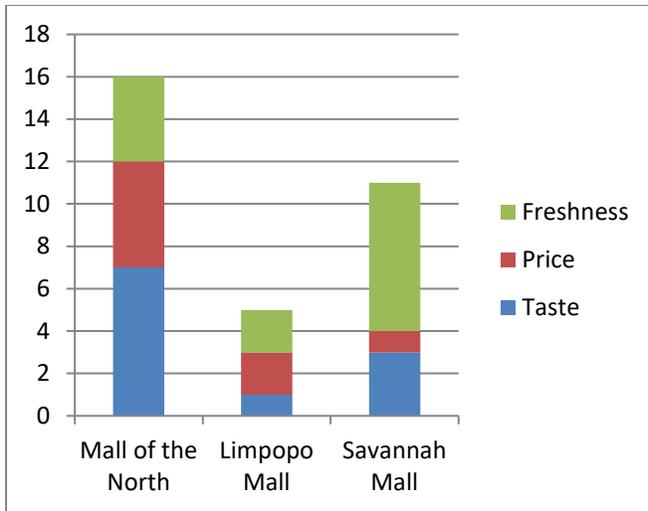


Figure 4.26: Customer Complaints about Food

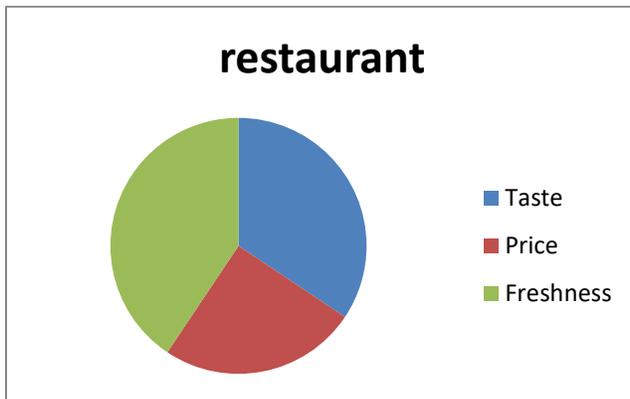


Figure 4.27: Customer Complaints about Food across all the Malls

From figures above, particularly figure 4.27, it would appear that the complaints about food taste and freshness are almost equally distributed.

4.3.4 Comparison of Customer Complaints in Similar Restaurants across the Malls

4.3.4.1 King Pie outlet

Table 4.1 shows the complaints in all King Pie outlets in the three malls.

Table 4.1: Comparison of Complaints about King Pie

Complaint	Limpopo Mall	Savanna Mall	Mall of the North	Majority
Price /Taste /Freshness	Price	Price	Price	Price
Order taking time/ waiters attitudes	Waiters attitudes	Waiters attitudes	Waiters attitudes	Waiters attitudes
Noise/ dirty place/bad temperature	Dirty place	Dirty place	Dirty place	Dirty place
Food/ service	Service	Service	Service	Service
Communication	verbally	verbally	verbally	Verbally
To whom	Person providing service	Person proving service	Person providing service	Person providing service
Male/female	Females	Females	Females	Females
Race	Blacks	Blacks	Blacks	Blacks
Educated or non- educated	Not educated	Not educated	Educated	Not educated
Class	Low	Low	High	Low
Age	18-35	18-35	Above 35	18-35

From table 4.1 it can be seen that all King Pie customers complain verbally to the people rendering service, which will imply people taking orders and preparing the food due to the nature of the way this outlet functions. In addition, in most instances managers are hardly ever visible in these outlets,

hence the reason for all complaints going to those the customers come into contact with. Low classes are the ones complaining the most in the three malls and high class is only in the Mall of the North. In the Mall of the North which is visited mainly by people from high class most complaints come from that class. In Limpopo Mall the most people visiting that mall are from low class and they are the ones complaining the most about service in King Pie. The majority of customers are between 18-35 years in Savannah Mall and in Mall of the North it is the age group above 35 years. It is interesting to note that in Limpopo Mall old people dominate, but they complain less while in Mall of the North young people dominate but old people complain more. Only black people are the ones complaining in the King Pie outlet mainly because it is visited by black people. Females are the ones complaining in King Pie outlets in all three malls

4.3.4.2 KFC outlet

Table 4.2 shows the complaints in all KFC outlets in the three malls.

Table 4.2: Comparison of Complaints in the KFC outlets

Complaint	Limpopo Mall	Savanna Mall	Mall of the North	Majority
Price /Taste /Freshness	Freshness	Freshness	Freshness	Freshness
Order taking time/ waiters attitudes	Order taking time	Order taking time	Order taking time	Order taking time
Noise/ dirty place/ bad temperature	Dirty	Dirty	Dirty	Dirty
Food/ service	Service	Service	Service	Service
Communication	Verbal	Verbal	Verbal	Verbal
To whom	The manager	The manager	The manager	The manager
Male/female	Females	Males	Males	Males
Race	Blacks	Blacks	Whites	All
Educated or not	Not educated	Educated	Educated	Educated
Class	Low	High	Middle	All
Age	18-35	Above 35	Above 35	Above 35

The table above shows that all the customers of KFC complained verbally to the managers about the freshness of the food, dirty place and order taking time. They complain mainly about service more than about food. Black people are the ones complaining more from the black dominated malls and white people complain more at the Mall of the North which has the most white people between the three malls. In Mall of the North and Savannah Mall the educated people are the ones complaining more compared to Limpopo Mall which has blacks complaining more. The low class people complain more in Limpopo Mall, middle class complain more in Limpopo Mall and high class complain more in Savannah Mall. Savannah and Mall of the North have more people above the age of 35 years complaining compared to Limpopo Mall which has youth (18-35 years) complaining customers. It is interesting to note that males are the ones complaining more than females in KFC outlets.

4.3.4.3 Wimpy outlets

Table 4.3 shows the complaints in all Wimpy outlets in the three malls.

Table 4.3: Wimpy

Complaint	Limpopo Mall	Savanna Mall	Mall of the North	Majority
Price /Taste /Freshness	Price	Freshness	Freshness	Freshness
Order taking time/ waiters attitudes	Order taking time	Waiter's attitudes	Order taking time	Order taking time
Noise/ dirty place/ bad temperature	Dirty place	Noise	Bad temperature	All
Food/ service	Service	Service	Service	Service
Communication	Written	verbally	Verbally	verbally
To whom	The manager	The manager	The manager	The manager
Male/female	Females	Males	Females	Females
Race	Blacks	Blacks	Whites	Blacks
Educated or non-educated	Educated	Educated	Educated	Educated
Class	Low	High	Middle	All
Age	18-35	Above 35	18-35	18-35

From the table above it can be seen that the complaints were lodged with the managers and only Limpopo Mall clients complained in writing. The type of issues the customers complained about varied across the malls. The educated people are the ones complaining in Wimpy outlets, 18- 35 years is the group complaining more than the other groups, only Savannah has above 35 years old complainants. Females complain more compared to males, only in Savannah do males complain more.

4.5 SUMMARY

This chapter presented results from the information that was collected. The information of the restaurants that were involved in the study was given first, followed by information on the type of issues customers in the identified malls complain about, to whom they complain and whether they complain verbally or in writing. The next chapter will present the summary of results, conclusions and recommendations for future research.

CHAPTER 5

RECOMMENDATIONS AND CONCLUSION

5.1 INTRODUCTION

This chapter presents a summary of results of the study and conclusions that are made based on the findings and also recommendations. The summary of the results will start with the information followed by an outline of findings in line with the objectives of the study as delineated in chapter one. The overall purpose of this study was to find out what customers complain about in the restaurants in the shopping malls of Polokwane, investigate ways by which customers in the identified restaurants lodge their complaints to the restaurant owners/managers, and to identify the groups of people who complain the most

5.2 SUMMARY AND DISCUSSION OF RESULTS

5.2.1 Information

The restaurants in three malls have been operating ranging from 1 to 15 years. The restaurants are located in the three malls, Limpopo Mall, Savannah Mall and Mall of the North. The interviews took place with managers of 16 (50%) restaurants located in Mall of the North, 11 (34%) restaurants in Savannah Mall and 5 (16%) located in Limpopo Mall. Of the 32 restaurants whose managers were interviewed, all of them were franchises. Of the 32 restaurants where interviews were conducted in the current study, 13 were family restaurants (40%) while 19 (60%) were fast food outlets.

5.2.2 How Customer Complaints are Lodged and to whom

The participants reported that customer complaints are presented verbally, telephonically and/or they are written out. The majority (70%) of the customers complain verbally in all the three malls, with 19% complaining telephonically and only and 9% complaining in writing.

In Limpopo Mall 6 (60%) complain verbally, 1 (20%) complain telephonically and the same percentage complain in writing. In Savannah Mall 8 (73%) customers complain verbally, while 2 (18%) complain telephonically and 1 (9%) complains in writing. In Mall of the North 12 (75%) customers complain verbally while 3 (19%) complain telephonically and 1 (6%) complain in writing. In most instances verbal complaints are immediate, perhaps due to the fact that complainants tend to be emotional and people may not be able to wait to write or make a phone call. The few people who voice their complaints telephonically may be due to the fact that they were unable to voice the complaint immediately due to emotions or the product or service they are complaining about was noticed after leaving the restaurant and those who wrote are mainly directed to higher bodies when they feel that the higher body should be the ones handling the complaint.

5.2.3 To whom are Complaints Lodged

The customers usually lodge their complaints to different people. They may lodge it to the person providing service, they may feel they need to report to someone else or even to higher authorities. The study reveals that most customers prefer to report their complaints to the managers of the restaurants. This is represented by the 20 (60%) restaurants where customers reported their complaints to managers compared to 10 (31%) restaurants whose managers felt that customers prefer to report their complaints to the person providing service and only a small fraction (around 6%) who felt that the customers prefer to report to the third party.

5.2.4 Group of People who tend to complain the most

- **Gender:** The study found that females (72%) tend to complain more than their male counterparts.
- **Race:** The study showed that black customers complain the most, which as indicated earlier (in chapter four) comes from the fact that 100% of complaints from Limpopo Mall are by black people, perhaps a point about demographics rather than anything else. In addition, statistically

speaking there are around 92.9% black people in Polokwane city. There was no manager of any of the restaurants that were involved in the study who indicated that Coloureds complain a lot.

- **Level of education:** the study reveal that educational level plays no role in a customer complaining because it was found that half the restaurants believe that non-educated customers complain the most and half of them believe the opposite.
- **Social class:** The findings of the study reveal that social class plays a role in customers complaining as it is evident that the customers from a low social class tend to complain more in restaurants compared to those from the middle and high classes. The middle class appears to be the most content group of all.
- **Age of complainants:** The study shows that the group of customer who are between 18 and 35 years of age (i.e. youth) is the group which seems to complain the most. The province has more adults than youth.

5.2.4 Matters that Restaurant Customers Complain About

- The study found that most restaurants believe that the customers complain mostly about a dirty place, when compared to noise and an unpleasant temperature environs shown by the 14 restaurants making up 44% of the restaurants, the remaining 66% is shared equally between noise and uncontrolled or unpleasant temperature.
- Customers complain more about the order taking time (69%) compared to waiter or waitress attitudes.
- Customers complain more about service rendered than the food which they are given. These suggest that the food preparation, menus, and presentation of foods are not such a challenge as compared to the services the restaurants are offering. This fact may point towards the need to train service providers (i.e. waiters) in customer care and the importance of having a positive relationship with customers. This is crucial as restaurants may lose customers, not because of their products that are on offer, but because of customer service that is poor.
- The study also shows that when taste, freshness and price are compared with each other, the majority of the restaurants feel that customers complain about freshness of food. Of the 32 restaurants involved in the study, 13 (41%) feel that customers complain mainly about food

freshness, 11 (34%) complain about the taste being not the way they expect it to be and 8 (25%) complain about the price of the food.

5.2.5 Comparison of Customer Complaints in Similar Restaurants across the Malls

i) Complaints in all King Pie Outlets in the three malls

It can be seen that all King Pie customers complain verbally to the people rendering service, which will imply people taking orders and preparing the food due to the nature of the way this outlet functions. In addition, in most instances managers are hardly ever visible in these outlets, hence the reason for all complaints going to those with whom the customers come into contact. Low classes are the ones complaining the most in the three malls and high class is only present in the Mall of the North. In Mall of the North, which is visited mainly by people from high class, most complaints come from that class. In Limpopo Mall most people visiting that mall are from low class and they are the ones complaining the most about service in King Pie. The majority of customers are between 18-35 years in Savannah Mall and in Mall of the North it is the age group above 35 years. It is interesting to note that in Limpopo mall old people dominate but they complain less while in Mall of the North young people dominate but old people complain more. Only black people are the ones complaining in King Pie outlets mainly because it is visited by black people. More females complain in King Pies outlets in all three malls than males.

ii) Complaints in KFC Outlets in all the Three Malls

The results show that the customers of KFC complained verbally to the managers. They complain about the freshness of the food, dirty place and order taking time. They complain more about service than about food. Black people are the ones complaining more in the black dominated malls and white people complain more in Mall of the North which has the most whites of the three malls, Indians do not complain in these outlets probably because they sell food not preferred by their race. In Mall of the North and Savannah Mall the educated people are the ones complaining more compared to Limpopo Mall which has the blacks complaining more. The low class people complain more in Limpopo Mall, middle class complain more in Limpopo Mall and high class complain more in Savannah Mall.

Savannah and Mall of the North have more people above the age of 35 years complaining compared to Limpopo Mall which has youth (18-35 years) complaining customers. It is interesting to note that males are the ones complaining more than females in KFC outlets.

iii) Complaints in Wimpy Outlets in all Three Malls

Wimpy outlets' results reveal that complaints are lodged with the managers, and only Limpopo Mall clients complained in writing. This may be because of the nature of the restaurant as floor managers are available to check if customers are happy with service. The type of issues the customers complained about varied across the malls. The educated people are the ones complaining in Wimpy outlets probably because the Wimpy prices are more than KFC and King Pie so people who are educated have money to afford more expensive food. The people aged 18-35 years are the group complaining more than the other groups, this may be like this because young people are the dominating people in savannah. Females complain more compared to males; it is only in Savannah where they complain more.

5.3 CONCLUSION

The current study reveals that customers complain either verbally, telephonically or in writing. Those customers who complained as shown in this study mostly preferred the instant, verbal way of complaining. The study reveals that female customers tend to complain more than their male counterparts and that youth complain more. Social class and level of education make no difference in whether customers are likely to complain or not.

The fact that more customers complain about the service rendered rather than the product offered or even its price is especially important in restaurants. This is because restaurants, being in the service industry, rely on good quality service to retain customers and remain competitive. If customers are unhappy with their service they are not likely to come back to the restaurant. In addition, the unhappy customers may spread the word and thus the restaurant may lose business from potential as well as previously loyal customers.

Customers, being unhappy with service rendered, also indicate that the waiters should be knowledgeable about not only the products they offer, but also the importance of rendering quality service to customers.

The fact that customers do not complain about price may imply that they are willing to pay for whatever product as long as it is accompanied by quality service.

5.4 RECOMMENDATIONS

The following recommendations are offered as possible ways to improve management of customer complaints in restaurants:

- Service providers, i.e. waiters in the case of restaurants, as well as the managers, should be made aware of the importance of the customer, as well as the importance of customer relationship management for survival and sustainability of their businesses.
- Customers can also be made aware that complaining is not necessarily wrong as it helps the service provider to improve. However, the emphasis of the awareness can be on how the complaint is lodged and the sensitiveness that should accompany lodging of a complaint as much as possible. It should not be forgotten that customers have the right to complain about services or products that are not of the quality that is expected.
- The restaurant owners may equip the managers on how to handle customers' complaints as the customers prefer to complain immediately and mostly to managers.
- It is recommended that to minimise dissatisfaction in their restaurants, the restaurants can attempt to reduce areas with challenges such as ensuring that the restaurants' cleanliness are up to acceptable standards as customers are more likely to complain about a dirty place.
- It is also recommended that food/order processing be as quick as possible according to acceptable standards because customers cannot tolerate delivery of food that takes longer than expected.
- Generally there should be training and development of the waiters and managers on:

- Service delivery and customer relationship management, as well as the importance thereof,
 - Communication skills, verbal and non-verbal,
 - Role identity, i.e. make the waiters as well as cleaners aware of their overall role and contribution towards the eventual success or failure of any business and that survival of any business depends on each and every individual in that business.
- Overall, there should be policies on customer care. If these are available, whether newly crafted or already in existence, they should be communicated to all employees of the businesses.

5.4 SUMMARY

Customers are crucial for all business to thrive and to survive. A report from a customer provides information about a product or service. Restaurants do receive complaints from customers and restaurants need to be on the lookout for such to outsmart rivals. The purpose of the study was to find out what customers complain about in restaurants of Polokwane, investigate ways by which customer complaints are lodged and identify which group of people complains the most.

The study results reveal that demographic features such as gender, race and age affect the level by which customers complain. It was also evident that customers valued service offered compared to the quality/quality of food offered. The study recommends that restaurants need to give more attention to the way they render service and be more sensitive to certain groups when serving their customers

Customer complaints can be an indication of whether customers are satisfied with the services they receive from any business or not. Thus, it is important to find out if there are customer complaints, the types of complaints as well as the methods of handling such customer complaints. The eventual rationale is to improve customer service and thus customer satisfaction.

REFERENCES

Albus, H. and Ro, H. 2017. Corporate social responsibility: The effects of green practices in service recovery, *Journal of Service Marketing* 41(1). pp23

Andalaeab, S.S. and Conway, C. 2006. Customer satisfaction in the restaurants industry: an examination of the transaction. *Journal of Services Marketing*, 2(1), pp3-11.

Angelova, B. and Zeriki, J. 2011. Measuring customer satisfaction with service quality using American customer satisfaction model. *International Journal of Academic Research Business and Social Science*, 1(3), pp 12-30

Assaf, A.G., Josiassen, A. and Cvelbar, L.K. 2015. The effects of customer voice on hotel performance: *International Journal of Hospital Management*, 44(1), pp 77-83

Bacile, T.J., Fox, A.F., Wolter, J.S. and Massa, F. 2017. Structured abstract: all online complaints are not created equal, corporate social media pages as customer service channels. *Journal Creating Marketing Magic and Innovative Future Marketing Trends*, 10 (1), pp 23-28

Baker, H.F., Singleton, J.C. and Veit, E.T. 2011. *Survey research in corporate finance: Bridging the gap between theory and practice*. New York: Oxford Publishers

Barlow, A. and Moller, C. 1996. *A Complaint is a Gift. Using a customer feedback as a strategic tool*. Australia, Berretta-Koehler publisher.

Bracey, L. 2017. Business reputation: The importance of business reputation. *Business in focus magazine*. Pp4-7

Camelis, C., Dano, F., Hamon, V. and Llosa, S. 2011. *How other customers influence customer satisfaction during the service delivery*. France. Springer publishers

Chelmiski, P. and Coulter, R.A. 2011. An examination of customer advocacy and complaints behaviour in the context of service failure. *Journal of Services Marketing*, 25(5), pp 361-370

Chen, P. and Gugkim, Y. 2017. Role of the perceived justice of service recovery: a comparison of first time and repeat visitors. *Sage Journal*. 3(2), pp 1-5

Chintan, B. 2010. 10 tips for building customer loyalty, *marketing professionals*. 13(1) pp23-25

Cook, S. and MaCaulay, S. 1997. Customer service: what's a smile got to do with it. *Business and Economics Journal*, 7(5) pp 248-252.

Colgate, M. and Norries, M. 2001. Developing a comprehensive picture of service failure, *International Journal of Service Industry Management*, 12 (3), pp215-233

Cooper, R. 2009. Design thinking and design management: *A Research and Practical Perspective*, *Design Management Review Journal*, 20(2), pp46-55

Day, R.L. 1984. Modelling choices among alternative responses to dissatisfaction. *Advanced in consumer research journal* .11(1), pp496-499

Donoghue, S., De Klerk, M. and Isaac, B. 2012. Emerging customers' appraisals, emotions and complaints behaviour concerning products performance failures. *Journal of Family Ecology and Customer Science*, 20(1), p1-21

Erdis, C. 2009. Investigating customer service in selected restaurants in Tshwane area- an exploratory study, p22. Master's thesis. University of South Africa

Fan, A., Van Hoof, H.B., Loyola, S.P., Lituma, S.C. and Granda, M.J.2016. The impact of the customers and gender on customer complaint behaviour in Ecuadoria restaurants setting. *European Journal of Tourism, Hospitality and Recreation*. 7(1), pp1-7

Franchise Association of South Africa annual report. 2015.
<https://www.fasa.co.za/documents/FASA-2016-ANNUAL-REPORT>. Accessed 20.03.2016

Fornell, C. 1992. A national satisfaction barometer: The Swedish experience, *Journal of Marketing*, 56(1), pp6-21

Fornell, C., Mithas, S., Morgeson, F.V. and Khirshnan, M.S. 2006. Customer satisfaction and stock prices: High returns, low risk. *Journal of Marketing Value*. 70(1), pp3-14

Fornell, C. and Wernerfelt, B. 1987. Defensive marketing strategy by customer complaints management: A theoretical analysis. *Journal of Marketing Research*, 24(4), pp337-346

Fornell, C., Johnson, M.D., Andreson, E.W., Cha, J. and Brynant, B.E. 1996. The American customer satisfaction index: Nature, purpose and findings, *Journal of Marketing*, 60(4), p 7.

Fornell, C. and Micheal, M. 1996. American customer satisfaction index: *Journal of Marketing*, 431(10), pp9-18

Government Gazette. 2009. Consumer protection act. vol 526 Cape Town, no. 32186, pp186.

Heung, V.S. and Lam, T. 2003. Customer complaints behaviours towards hotel restaurants service, *International Journal of Contemporary Hospitality Management*. 15 (5), pp 283-289

Hoffman, K.D., Kelley, S.W., and Rastalske, H.M. 1995. Tracking service failures and employee recovery effects. *Journal of Service Marketing*, 9(2), pp49-61,

Honeyman, C. 2013. *Labour relation and conflict: The handbook of conflict resolution*. San Francisco. Jossey-Bass publishers

Hughes, T. 2005. Testing the effect of nonverbal behaviour training on accuracy in deception detecting with the inclusion of bogus training control group

Jha, S., Balaji, M.S., Yavas, U. and Babakus, E. 2017. Effects of frontline employee role overload on customer responses and sales performance: moderator and mediators. *European Journal of marketing*. 51(2), pp282-303

Juran, J.M. 1988. *Who are the customers? Juran on planning for quality*, p17-34. London. Collier Macmillan publishers

Koufan, R. 1980. Responding to customer complaints can help empower business: The director of consumer complaints research. *Advanced in Customer Research Journal* 7(2), pp 335-338,

Landon, E.L. 1980. Customer satisfaction, dissatisfaction and complaining behaviour as indication market performance. *Advanced in customer research* 7(1), pp186-191.

Le Boeuf, M. 2013. *How to win customers and keep them for life, Organisational excellence a culture of discipline*. Pp20-33. Lagos. Pastoral care publishing

Lebed, 2015. 3 factors driving customer satisfaction the most in customer service, *Info-graphic Journal*. 4(1) pp2-4

Lorgart, P. 2005. Behavioural and brain function. *International Journal Of Contemporary Hospital Management*, 13(1), pp: 121 - 128

Marcus, S. 2015. *Engels, Manchester, and the working class. Condition of working class*. New York. Radom House publishers

Mark, R. 2000. The coming revolution in marketing through strategy. *Managing service quality journal*, 10 (6), pp: 339-346, MCB UP.

Marx, N.J.M.M. and Erasmus, A.C. 2006. Customer satisfaction with customer service and service quality in supermarket in a third world content, *Association for Consumer Research Journal*, 7(7), pp77-85

Mc Quilken, L., Robertson, N. and Polonsky, M.2017. Recovering from other customer caused failure: the effect of focal customer complaining. *Journal of Hospitality Marketing and Management*, 26(1), pp83-104

Mendes, F. and Stander, M. 2011. The role of leadership behaviour in the work engagement and retention, *South African Journal of Industrial Psychology*, 37(1), pp1-4

Micheal, S., Bowen, M.D. and Johnston, R. 2008. Marking the most of customer complaints. *The wall street journal*. 4(1)pp10-15

Munford J. 2015. Customer complaints-they are just the tip off the iceberg. Available from: <https://www.linkedin.com/pulse/customer-complaints-just-tip-iceberg-juliet-mumford>. [Accessed on 15 May 2016].

Mwegerano, A. 2014, Handling customer complaints during the after service: *Mobile Terminals, Quality and Reliability Engineering International Journal* 2(4) pp60

Nikbin, D., Ishmail, I., Marimuth, U.M. and Abu-arad, I .Y. 2011. The impact of firm reputation of customer's response to service failure: the role of failure attributes. *Business strategy series journal*. 12(1) pp19-29

Oh, H. and Kim, K. 2017. Customer satisfaction service quality and customer value: year 2000 to 2015. *International Journal of Contemporary Hospitality Management*. 29(1), pp2-29

Osman, M.K. 2006. Customer complaints and organizational responses: the effects of complaints perceptions of justice on satisfaction and loyalty. *International Journal of hospitality management*. 25 (1) pp 69-90

Petzer, D.J. and De Meyer-Heydenrych, C.F. 2017. Perceived justice, service satisfaction and behaviour intentions following service recovery effects in a South Africa retail banking context. *International Journal of Bank Marketing*. 35(2) pp241-253

Pizan, A., Shapoval, V. and Ellis, T. 2016. Customer satisfaction and its measurement in hospitality enterprises. *International Journal of Contemporary Hospitality Management*, 28(1).pp2-25

Rowe, M.P. 1991. The ombudsman's role in the dispute resolution system. *Negotiation Journal*. 7(4), pp353-362

Sanes, C. 1993. Complaints are hidden treasures. *The Journal for quality and Participation*, 16(5) pp78

Sansalvador, M.E. and Brotons, M. 2017. Development of a quantification model for the cost of loss of image with customer complaints. *Total Quality Management and Business Excellence Journal*, 37(1), pp-115

Schoefer, K. 2006. The role of cognition and effects in the formation of customer satisfaction judgement concerning service recovery encounter. *Journal of consumer behaviour, an international research review*. 7(3) pp210-221

Shakir, H., Lin, H.L., Bin, S.B. and Bilal, A. 2017 Customer knowledge management as a success driver for business in mobile sector of Pakistan. *Review of management and Marketing Journal*, 7(1), pp.6

Sherth, J.N. and Kellatardt, M. 1992. *A normative model of retaining customer satisfaction*. Malasia. Urbana publishers

Smith, A.K. and Bolton, R. 1998. An experimental investigation of customer reaction to service failure and recovery encounters, paradox or Peri? *Journal of Service Research*.3 (3) pp23

Smith, D.B.H. 2002. The design of delivery of quality service: a paradigm shift. *Acta commercii Journal*, 2(1).pp54-64

South African labour guide. 2010. consumer protection act-useful information. Available from: www.labourguide.co.za/consumer-protection. [Accessed 30.3.2016].

South African consumer Protection council. 2008. Available from: www.wipo.int/edocs/lexdocs/laws/en/za/za054en.pdf. [Accessed 30.3.2016].

Statistics South Africa. 2016. Available from: www.statssa.gov.za/publications/SAStatistics/SAStatistics2006.pdf. [Accessed 30/3/2016].

Tao, K., Karande, K. and Arndt, A.D. 2016. How angry customers complaints influence salesperson commitment to service quality. *Journal of Marketing Theory and Practice*, 24(3) pp265-282

Thompson, M. 2008. How to handle complaints in food services industry, small business. Pp15
Hearst newspaper

Verma, R.T.R. 2012, Enhancing and empowering: customer experience, *SCMS Journal of Indian Management*, 9(3), pp71-78

Wall, E.A. and Berry, L.L. 2007. The combined effects of the physical environment and employed behaviour on customer perceptions of restaurant service. *Science direct journal*. 48(1) pp21

APPENDIX A

REQUEST FOR PERMISSION TO CONDUCT RESEARCH

Dear Participant

I am a registered masters' student in Turfloop Graduate of Leadership (TGLS) at the University of Limpopo. I am required to conduct a research study in partial fulfilment of the requirements of my degree. The topic of my research is: "Investigating Restaurant customer complaints in Polokwane malls". The study wants to find out what customers complain about in the restaurants and who they complain to and evaluate how the restaurants owners/managers handle and resolve customer complaints.

I hereby seek your consent to interview you. Kindly note that your participation is voluntary and will not be remunerated in any way. It is hoped that the results and experiences communicated in the study will help in improving customer service. The study will not be used to harm you or your restaurant in any way. You are free to withdraw at any time from the study should you wish to. The results of the study will be made available to you upon completion of the study.

Should you require any further information, please do not hesitate to contact me at mhangwanaus@yahoo.com or 0727922784

Your participation in this study will be greatly appreciated.

Yours sincerely

Ms T.P. Phaswana.

RESEARCH QUESTIONNAIRE

SECTION A: Information on the restaurant

1) At which mall is the restaurant

- a) Mall of the North b) Savannah c) Limpopo mall

2) Person interviewed

- a) Manager b) Owner c) other

3) Is the business a franchise or not

- a) Franchise b)

4) Is the business a fast food or sit-down restaurant

- a) Fast foods b) Sit-down

SECTION B: How complaints are lodged and to whom

5) How do people report complaints

- a) Verbally b) written c) Telephonically

6) To whom do customers mainly report in the business

- a) Manager b) person serving them c) 3rd party

SECTION C: Which Groups of people complain the Most?

7) According to gender

a) Males

b) females

8) According to race

a) Blacks

b) whites

b) Indians/
Asians

d) Coloured

9) According to level of education

a) Educated

b) not edu.

10) According to class

a) low

b) medium

c) high

11) According to age

a) >35 years

b) >18, < 35

c) < 18 years

SECTION D: What Customers Mainly Complain About

12) Most likely ambiance to complain about, between a dirty place, loud/ noisy place or unpleasant temperatures

a) Dirty

b) noisy

c) unpleasant

13) The most likely to complain about orders taking time or waiter/waitress' attitude

Waitress' attitudes a) Taking time b) waiter/

14) Customers complaints are mostly about taste, price or freshness

a) price b) taste c) freshness