

**STRATEGIC GUIDELINES FOR CUSTOMER SATISFACTION WITH HEALTHIER
DIET MENU ITEMS IN FAST FOOD FRANCHISING OUTLETS IN SOUTH AFRICA**

by

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ABSTRACT

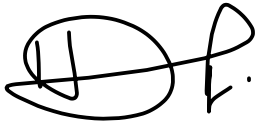
The trend towards healthy eating has been gradually growing in South Africa. Health consciousness has become more apparent with customers not only wanting to consume quick and convenient meals, but also meals that are nutritionally beneficial. Although fast-food outlets have risen to the occasion by providing for this demand, there are few studies in South Africa that focus on strategic guidelines for fast-food outlets to enable strategic planning for achieving customer satisfaction and the increase in profits with healthier food options on the menu. The purpose of this study was to explore strategic guidelines for customer satisfaction with healthier diet menu items in fast-food franchising outlets in South Africa. An extensive literature review was conducted on the South African fast-food industry and customer satisfaction. The study followed a quantitative method approach, and 400 respondents were selected using the convenience sampling method. An empirical study was conducted in which data was collected from 329 customers of fast-food outlets within the Capricorn Municipality, South Africa by means of self-administered questionnaires.

The findings of this study reveal that there is a general level of satisfaction amongst South African customers with the healthier food options available at fast-food outlets with areas of improvement for price, convenience and atmosphere pertaining to healthier diet meals. The study made recommendations on a variety of healthy menu items, interaction between managers and customers, price and value, extended service hours, safe parking and walking distance, cleanliness, staff appearance and dining-in feeling and provided a model on Strategic Sustainable Growth as a guideline to increasing customer satisfaction with healthier diet menu items.

DECLARATION

I declare that the full dissertation entitled: "Strategic guidelines for customer satisfaction with healthier diet menu items in fast food franchising outlets in South Africa" is my original work and that it has not been submitted and will not be presented at any other University for a similar or any other degree award. In addition, all the sources used or quoted have been indicated and acknowledged by means of complete references.

Name: Kagiso David Mahlatji

Signature: 

Date: 2021/09/29

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DEDICATION

I dedicate this dissertation to my love, Moshia Ennocentia, for her unconditional support, love, prayers and encouragement, my mother; Rachel Mahlatji, for being my pillar of strength, prayers and a friend, and my siblings, Kholofelo, Annette and Ditebogo Mahlatji, for always believing that I can do it.

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CHAPTER ONE INTRODUCTION

1.1. Introduction and background

The overall consumption of fast-food items has levelled off, yet the day-to-day energy intake derived from fast foods remains persistently high in most parts of the world (Larson, Hannan, Fulkerson, Laska, Eisenberg and Neumark-Sztainer, 2014). The consumption of such food is associated with diets that are rich in fats, higher calories intake, added sugars and carbohydrates (Powell and Nguyen, 2013).

Fast foods are a sustainable and profitable phenomenon in developed countries. The United States of America, for instance, is one of the highest consumers of fast foods in the world (Technomic Report, 2011; MacDonald, 2012; Marketing Charts, 2013). The Australian fast-food industry embodies one of the biggest market segments within the commercial food service sector (Australian Food and Grocery Council, 2010; National Heart Foundation of Australia, 2011:2). A report by the Canadian Restaurant and Foodservices Association (2010) indicated that fast-food outlets had grown immensely with sales then at \$20.4 billion. In developing countries, the consumption of fast food is high. A research study by Bockle (2009:8) indicates that acceptance of fast food is spreading throughout many African countries, including South Africa. A report by Analytix Business Intelligence (2012) indicated that South Africans' love for fast food is growing.

The Franchise Association of South Africa (2012) describes South African consumers as "...fast-food junkies who are embracing affordable, large-portioned and immediate consumption fast-food". Maumbe (2010:1) suggests that, as the income and standard of living rises, more and more individuals and families tend to seek the conveniences of fast-food meals. This is supported by a survey conducted by Salam on behalf of the Franchise Association of South Africa (FASA) (2019), which indicated that 865 franchise systems support over 45 000 outlets operated by franchisees who in turn employ 369 573 people. According to Stats SA (2018), the total income generated in the fast-food industry increased by 5.6% in March 2018 compared to March 2017.

Franchising is a popular and important tool for global expansion and entrance into markets for local and international businesses, with millions of franchisees recorded worldwide (Shaw 2009:33; Hsu, Jang and Canter, 2010:441; Wingrove and Urban, 2017:1). In South Africa, the franchise industry plays an important role in the economy. Within the franchising industry, the fast-food franchising sector is the biggest contributor to the GDP. Not only is the acceptance of fast food spreading, fast food consumption is also a sustained and profitable phenomenon in South Africa (Franchise Association South Africa, 2019).

The perception of consumers on product quality has generally become an important competitive factor in the market worldwide since no firm can survive without retaining a satisfied customer base (Liu and Jang, 2009). Consumers are supporting trusted product offerings that assure product quality, satisfaction, convenience and an affluence experience (García-Fernández, Gálvez-Ruíz, Fernández-Gavira, Vélez-Colón, Pitts and Bernal-García, 2018). The South African Customer Satisfaction Index (SAcsi) results for 2016, suggested that consumers of fast food products, with limited funds for spending, often decide on purchasing brands that provide exceptional taste and benefits (South African Customer Satisfaction Index, 2016).

The South African fast-food industry has received much critique and attention regarding the health aspect of fast-food meals; it is presumed to be lacking nutritional value and to be unhealthy (Analytix Business Intelligence, 2012). The fast-food industry is a cause of obesity within South Africa (Maumbe, 2010:11). The provision of healthy menu items in fast foods, therefore, represents an opportunity to the market. Mutea (2013) indicates that strategic planning guidelines for customer satisfaction include a deliberate search for intelligence and course of action to outwit the competition. In the fast food industry, guidelines for a customer satisfaction strategy is important to compete for customers (Sandada, 2013).

1.2. Problem statement

Despite the growth and importance of the fast-food sector within the franchising industry to the South African economy and fast-food outlet, little research has been conducted on the sustainability and profitability of offering healthier menu items by

fast-food outlets. For healthier menu items to be profitable for fast-food outlets, customers must be satisfied with the offering. Yet, not much research has been conducted in South Africa about enabling franchisers to increase customer satisfaction with the available healthier diet menu items available (Cant, Machado and Gopaul, 2014:4). The customer has the final say concerning “how much to spend and where, when and what to eat” (Saad and Conway, 2006:3; Cant et al., 2014:4).

The problem is that there are few strategic guidelines for outlets to enable strategic planning for achieving customer satisfaction and thus increased profits with healthier diet menus for fast-food outlets. This indicates a serious oversight into the growth and profitability of the fast-food sector (Hsu et al., 2010). It is therefore important that research is conducted on customer satisfaction and growth strategies in the healthier menu items market in South Africa (Terblanche and Boshoff, 2010:2; Gopaul, 2014).

1.3. Aim of the study

The aim of this study is to determine customer satisfaction with healthier diet menu items offered by fast-food outlets in South Africa with the intent to provide strategic guidelines for exploiting the market for healthier menu items by fast-food outlets in South Africa.

1.4. Objectives of the study

The objectives of this study are to:

- Identify the determinants of customer satisfaction with healthier diet menu items offered by fast-food outlets.
- Determine the level of customer satisfaction with healthier diet menu items offered by fast-food outlets.
- Determine strategic guidelines for fast-food outlets for exploiting the market for healthier menu items.

1.5. Research questions

- What are the determinants of customer satisfaction with healthier diet menu items offered by fast-food outlets?

- What is the level of customer satisfaction with healthier diet menu items offered by fast-food outlets?
- What are the strategic guidelines for fast-food outlets for exploiting the market for healthier menu items?

1.6. Definition of concepts

1.6.1. Fast-food outlets

Fast-food outlets are “chain outlets that have two or more of the following characteristics: expedited food, takeout business, limited or no wait staff, and payment tendered prior to receiving food” (Janssen, Davies, Richardson and Stevenson, 2018: 18).

1.6.2. Customer satisfaction

Customer satisfaction is defined as the perceived discrepancy that is associated with pre-purchase evaluation and the post-purchase evaluation when purchasing a product or service based on prior and post opinion and performance (Mohsan, Nawaz, Khan, Shaukat and Aslam, 2011).

1.6.3. Healthier diet menu items

Healthier diet menu items refer to food items that are low in fat and/or calories. Healthier diet menu includes items such as salads, grilled items (grilled chicken, grilled burgers, grilled wraps, grilled fish), muesli and yoghurt breakfasts (Cant et al., 2014).

1.6.4. Strategic planning guidelines

Strategic planning guidelines are the indicators that shape and guide what an organisation does, and why it does it. It is concerned with the actions organisations take to achieve competitive advantage and create value for the organisation and its stakeholders (Preciado, 2015; Bonekeh, 2018).

1.7. Literature review

This section of the study is an introductory discussion of the literature on customer satisfaction with healthier diet menu items and strategic guidelines for exploiting the market for healthier menu items by fast-food outlets in South Africa. The theory is fully discussed in chapter two

1.7.1. Theoretical framework

1.7.1.1. The Expectancy Disconfirmation Theory

To determine customer satisfaction with healthier menu items offered at fast-food outlets, the Expectancy Disconfirmation Theory (EDT) was used. This theory was developed by Oliver (Du Plessis, 2015). According to Du Plessis (2015), a positive confirmation occurs when the purchase experience surpasses the customer's expectation of the event while a negative disconfirmation occurs when the purchase experience does not exceed the customer's expectation; a zero disconfirmation or confirmation occurs when the purchase experiences meet the customer's expectations.

1.7.1.2. The Gap Model of Service Quality

The Expectancy Disconfirmation Theory is augmented using the Gap Model of Yadav and Dabhade (2013). This model suggests that customer service dissatisfaction is the gap between the expectations of a service and the perception of the service experienced. These gaps occur at five dimensions in the service delivery process. Gap 1 represents managers' expectations and perceptions of the service required of them. Service providers do not necessarily know what customers require. Gap 2 represents service quality specification defined by the translation of perceptions that the management have of customers' expectations. This gap results from the lack of the offer's specification, adjusted to what customers wish for. Gap 3 represents the service's actual performance of the specifications that were previously established. Gap 4 represents the actual provision of service and external communications. Gap 5 shows the establishment of the function of the four previous failures, namely; Gap 5 = f (gap 1, gap 2, gap 3, gap 4).

The gap between customer expectations of the service to be received and the perception of the service received will be used as the measure of customer satisfaction. According to Ha and Jang (2010:4), when the performance of a product or service meets or exceeds expectations, then expectation confirmation takes place and the customer is satisfied. However, dissatisfaction occurs when the expectation is disconfirmed. Gibson, McDowell and Harris (2011) proffer that it is important for all businesses to focus on meeting the customers' expectations. This study will apply the Expectations-Confirmation-Disconfirmation Model of consumer satisfaction on the current available healthier menu items offered by South African fast-food outlets.

1.7.2. Empirical literature review

1.7.2.1. Determinants of customer satisfaction

Only an overview of the literature is given here. A broad literature review is provided in Chapter two. Service quality models use different determinants to measure service levels (Forjoe, 2011:26). The model developed by Parasuraman, Zeithaml and Berry (1988:23) is the most widely and commonly used method to measure service quality (Urban, 2009). It measures five dimensions of service quality (Rodrigues, Barkur, Varambally, and Golrooy Motlagh, 2011). In 1992, Cronin and Taylor created a performance-based service quality measure, called the SERVPERF model (Cronin and Taylor, 1992; Tovmasyan, 2017). The SERVPERF model is a more discriminate and valid model than SERVQUAL in measuring the service quality of fast-food outlets and a better approach to measuring service quality than SERVQUAL (Al Khattab and Aldehayyat, 2011:229).

The DINESERV was developed by Stevens, Knutson and Patton (1995) to evaluate service quality in the outlet sector (Stevens, et al., 1995; Kim, Joung, Yuan, Wu and Chen, 2009). The variables that influence customer satisfaction with eating out experience are variables such as food quality, service quality, ambience or atmosphere, value/price ratio and convenience. The physical environment, cleanliness and speedy service are also important determinants (Lee and Hing 1995; Stevens, et al., 1995; Pettijohn 1997; Qu 1997; Wall and Berry 2007; Barber and Scarcelli 2009; Yoo, 2012).

The aforementioned variables have been tested in three outlet divisions, namely; fine dining, casual and quick service, and were found to have a high degree of reliability (Knutson, Stevens and Patton, 1996; Bujisic, Hutchinson and Parsa, 2014). A study by Thao (2014) found that the convenience of a shorter walking distance between the point of purchase and the distance is crucial. Convenience includes the option for customers to use telephones for reservations, ease of parking, and shorter walking distance from offices to the location of the outlets (Bujisic et al., 2014). In a study by Harrington, Ottenbacher and Way (2010:81); Gopaul (2015), the respondents rated price as the most significant aspect when making a decision to purchase from food outlets. Furthermore, food quality is also a key attribute of the diners' satisfaction with fast-food outlets, (Namkung and Jang, 2008; Van Rijswijk, Frewer, Menozzi and Faioli, 2008). According to Mohaydin, Chand, Aziz, Bashir and Irfan (2017), the perceived quality of a food meal, eaten during the day of shopping, will be different from the quality of that same meal, if it is served at an outlet.

The outlet's physical setting may, to a large extent, also affect the satisfaction of customers and their desire/intentions to make recurrent purchases (Ryu, Lee and Gon Kim, 2012). A study conducted by Sulek and Hensley (2004) indicated that the physical setting of the dining area is a significant determinant of the overall satisfaction of customers in their dining experience. The study further emphasised that outlets should explore different music, décor and lighting as selling points to customers as this will help to create an expectation for customers to the overall dining experience. Outlet managers need to understand the determinants of customer satisfaction for the purposes of retaining regular customers and also attracting new ones while at the same time remaining competitive and profitable (Walter, Edvardsson and Öström, 2010).

1.7.2.2. Customer Satisfaction

According to Mittal, Holbrook, Beatty, Raghubir and Woodside (2008:342), the cause of dissatisfaction or satisfactions with a product or service is "the performance of that product or service pre-purchase expectations concerning its performance, and as soon as the product or service has been bought and used, the results are compared

against those expectations". The primary aim of any business is to make profit and therefore, businesses exist to ensure that their customers are satisfied. According to Arden and Edwards (2009:19), businesses that strive to consistently delight and satisfy their customers are likely to succeed. In addition, for businesses to continue to exist, they have to act in the accordance with the basic truths of customer satisfaction (Gopaul, 2015; Cochran, 2003:2): *Customer satisfaction is the ultimate goal of the organisation*: Customer satisfaction is crucial for the survival, development, growth and success of the organisation (Brink and Berndt, 2010:58; Durai, 2010:435; Hill and Alexander, 2017:2). *Customer satisfaction is an investment*: Customer satisfaction needs a commitment and investment of organisational resource (DiMisa and Rinaldi, 2010). Therefore, these resources must be used to attain understanding and knowledge of customers and their needs, to attain information and data on customer perceptions and for such data to be analysed (Mukherjee and Kachwala, 2009:85). This will help to maximise the return on profit. *Everyone must be involved in customer satisfaction*: It is important that everyone in the organisation continually aims to surpass customer expectations and therefore, the management of the business should consistently communicate with their employees on how they are expected to contribute towards achieving customer satisfaction (Cochran, 2003:2). Fast-food outlets should therefore consider the outlined truths if they desire to satisfy their customers. The concept of customer satisfaction discussed in the subsequent paragraphs.

When the difference between customers' expectations and perceptions of a service is analysed, a gap is identified, known as the customer service gap (Yadav and Dabhade, 2013). The expectations of customers are based on their previous expectations, that is, what they are familiar with (Du Plesis, 2015). Customers perceive attributes of products in accordance with their individualised expectations, and it is therefore important that businesses determine the attributes of the product or service category that customers regard as important and as a need (Schiffman and Kanuk, 2010). Perception is "the process by which an individual selects, organises, and interprets stimuli into a meaningful and coherent picture of the world" (Schiffman and Kanuk, 2010:175).

A study on service quality by Grunert (2005) indicated that quality has a subjective and objective dimension; the subjective quality gives reference to how customers

perceive a product and the objective quality gives reference to physical characteristics that are built into the product. Scholars and researchers have studied the concept of customer satisfaction in relation to service quality models. Over the years, a number of service quality models have been used by the organisations in an effort to measure customer satisfaction.

1.7.2.3. Strategic planning guidelines

Strategy is defined as the “the pattern or plan that integrates an organisation’s major goals, policies and action sequences into a cohesive whole. A well-formulated strategy helps marshal and allocates an organisation’s resources into a unique and viable posture based upon its relative internal competencies and shortcomings, anticipated changes in the environment, and contingent moves by intelligent opponents” (Quinn 1978; Louw and Venter, 2011:10-13). Mintzberg (1987) emphasised that strategy is a process. Therefore, strategic guidelines between the internal capabilities and external relationship should be well-defined. Strategic guidelines on how to attract and meet customers’ needs, grow the franchise outlet and develop the necessary dynamic capabilities should be subsequently formulated (Louw and Venter, 2011:29).

1.7.3. Conceptual framework

The conceptual framework for this study is constructed in line with the formulated objectives of the study and all necessary constructs of the study. Conceptual literature considers the correlation of the study’s objectives in order to achieve the study’s significance and outcome(s). The conceptual framework model (figure 1 below), for this study is proposed as follows:

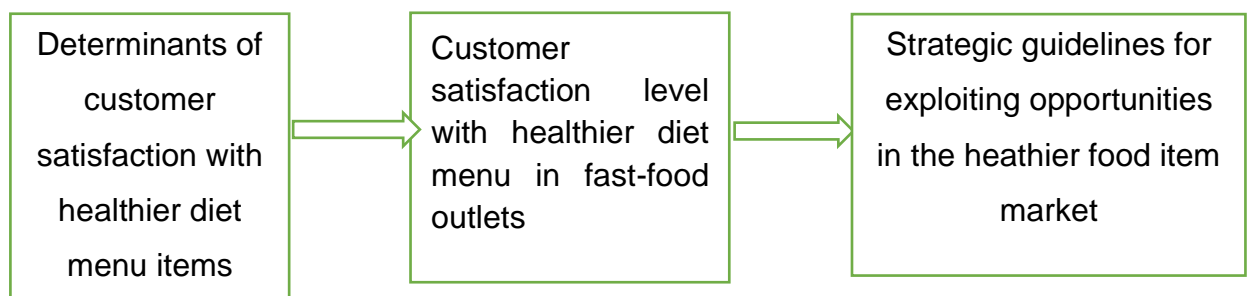


Figure 1: Conceptual framework model. Sources: Author’s own work

1.8. Significance of the study

This study is important because it identified the determinants of customer satisfaction with healthier diet menu items offered by fast-food outlets in South Africa. Therefore, it will enable fast-food outlets to exploit the healthier diet menu market for increased sales, enhanced performance, greater competitiveness and higher profitability. Moreover, the study will also contribute to the body knowledge on determining customer satisfaction as it can be used by other researchers in similar studies in the future.

1.9. Outline of the study

The outline of this study is as follows:

Chapter 1: Introduction to the study

This chapter introduces and contextualises this study.

Chapter 2: Literature Review

This chapter reviews existing literature on the trends related to customer satisfaction and service quality. The Expectancy Disconfirmation Theory together with the Gap Model, as theoretical lynchpins of this study, are discussed in detail. The chapter also discusses the empirical review from related studies on customer satisfaction concerning healthier menu items.

Chapter 3: Research Methodology

In this chapter, the research process is described. Research design, research approach and data collection tools and procedures as essential aspects of research methodology are also discussed. The chapter concludes with the reliability and validity of the research process and including ethical considerations.

Chapter 4: Data analysis and Interpretation

The results and analysis of the data collected from questionnaires are presented. The analysis is arranged and discussed in light of the objectives of the study.

Chapter 5: Summary of the findings, conclusions and recommendations for the study

The final conclusions, recommendations and limitations of the study are presented. These are also discussed and arranged according to purpose of the study.

CHAPTER TWO LITERATURE REVIEW

2.1. Introduction

This chapter provides a review of literature on customer satisfaction, the strategic guidelines and strategies for market growth and the development of healthy menu items offered by fast-food outlets. Bertram and Christiansen (2017:13) regard literature review “as a comprehensive overview of previous research studies on a subject providing background knowledge on studies that have been examined before”. Bless, Higson-Smith and Sithole (2013: 51) are of the view that the purpose of literature review is: (a) to identify gaps in knowledge and weaknesses in the previous studies; (b) to discover connections, contradictions or other relations between different research results by comparing various investigations; (c) to identify variables that must be considered in the research and eliminating variables that might be irrelevant. Thus, literature reviews are aimed at outlining relevant sources consulted while researching the topic under study and should demonstrate the link between the current study and those that have been conducted (Fink, 2014). One may therefore conclude that the literature review is aimed at putting a research project into perspective and determining what other scholars have written on the same or related topic.

To establish what previous studies covered in the past, library materials (books, journals), unpublished works (theses and dissertations), online databases (Ebscohost and Taylor & Francis), and other general websites such as Google scholar were consulted. Du Plooy-Cilliers, Davis and Bezuidenhout (2014:101) further state that the main purpose of literature review is also to “identify the main models and theories that are applicable to research topic”. In order to enhance clarity, appropriateness and effectiveness in research, literature review theories and models guiding research have to be identified (Creswell and Garrett, 2008). It is thus relevant to begin this section by discussing a relevant theoretical framework and its role to the study.

2.2. Theoretical literature review

Thomas (2017) indicates that a theoretical framework of a study serves to guide a researcher in the investigation of field of expertise by expounding on underlying principle(s), rationale, or foundation with respect to the research topic. A research theory might appear in a research as an argument, a discussion, or a rationale, and it helps to explain, predict, or confirm the phenomena that occur in the world (Creswell and Garrett, 2008). In this study, the researcher used theory to confirm customer satisfaction with healthier diet menu items in fast-food franchising outlets in South Africa. Thomas (2017:98) defines theory as a “generalising or explanatory model that tries to refine a range of specific findings or observations into general suggestions that explain these findings”. The author further indicates the importance of theory as intended “to formulate some sort of organising template through which the researcher can look at their readings and findings; and allows seeing the interconnections and trying to understand how and why they occur” (Thomas 2017:98). In this study, theory assisted the researcher to assess scientific findings in relation to the theoretical perspective from which it derives and to which it may contribute (Silverman, 2000; Ngulube 2020).

In order to situate customer satisfaction in fast food outlets, it is crucial to first discuss the theories relating to customer satisfaction. The theories were used to establish a theoretical grounding for investigating customer satisfaction for healthier diet menu items from fast food outlets in Limpopo province. “Service quality has earned a significant concern by many authors, business owners, and customers as well” (Abezie, 2019:22). Scholars and researchers have studied the concept of customer satisfaction in relation to service quality models. Service quality models were developed to measure customer satisfaction (Forjoe, 2011; Tovmasyan, 2017). A number of theoretical approaches have been utilised to explain the relationship between disconfirmation and satisfaction. For the purpose of this study some theories that relate to customer satisfaction and service quality are explained, namely, Assimilation-Contrast theory, Adaptive-level Theory, Cognitive Dissonance Theory, Expectancy-Disconfirmation Theory and the Gap Model of Customer Satisfaction quality.

2.2.1. Assimilation- Contrast Theory

The theory introduced by Anderson (1973) and it is a combination of both the assimilation and the contrast theories. “Assimilation-contrast theory proposes that if performance of the product is considered as acceptable in customer’s mind, even the product may slightly give less from what they expected but the differences will be neglected– assimilation will operate and the performance will be deemed as acceptable. On the other hand, if performance of the product is unacceptable in their mind, they will reject the product and also the difference will be exaggerated as well”, explained by Shen (2002). This theory posits that customer satisfaction is a function of the magnitude of the discrepancy between expected and perceived performance (Isac & Rusu, 2017). In this theory, perceived performance would be assimilated toward expectations while perceived performance would be contrasted against expectations. Simply stated, this theory indicates how consumers’ choices are influenced with assimilation and contrast effects.

2.2.2. Adaptation-level Theory

Adaptation-level theory was originated by Helson in 1964 and applied to customer satisfaction by Oliver (1977). Helson (1964) posits that one perceives stimuli only in relation to an adapted standard. The standard is a function of perceptions of the stimulus itself, the context, and psychological and physiological characteristics of the organism. Simply put may suggest that once created, the ‘adaptation level’ serves to sustain subsequent evaluations in that positive and negative deviations will remain in the general vicinity of one’s original position (Helson,1964). This theory is gaining acceptance, as it is able to explain some counterintuitive predictions made by assimilation-contrast theories (Oliver, 1977).

2.2.3. Cognitive Dissonance Theory

The phenomenon of cognitive dissonance, originally stated by Festinger in 1957, has been quickly adopted by consumer behaviour research. Cognitive dissonance is an uncomfortable feeling caused by holding two contradictory ideas simultaneously. The theory of cognitive dissonance proposes that people have a motivational drive to reduce dissonance by changing their attitudes, beliefs, and behaviours, or by justifying

or rationalising them (Festinger 1957). Festinger posits that a customer experiencing lower performance than expected, if psychologically invested in the product or service, would mentally work to minimise the discrepancy. This may suggest that customers might try to eliminate their committed and original service to an inferior product or service. This could be done either by lowering expectations after the customer experience and/or increasing the perception of performance. Festinger's Theory of Cognitive dissonance (1957) explains that the state of discomfort customers are often in after they made a purchase.

Even though, these customer satisfaction theories define customer satisfaction as the difference between consumer expectations and perceptions, the researcher contends that these theories are not an appropriate lens to study strategic guidelines for customer satisfaction for healthier menu items. The models are mainly focused to measure the service quality experienced by customers.

This study was underpinned by the Expectancy Disconfirmation Theory (EDT) and the Gap Model. The next section outlines what the EDT is and its relevancy to this study.

2.2.4. The Expectancy Disconfirmation Theory

As already stated, this study was grounded on Expectancy Disconfirmation Theory (EDT). This theory was introduced by Oliver in 1980 and was based on studies of customer satisfaction in the retail and service industries (Bhattacharjee and Premkumar, 2004). Van Ryzin (2013) states that the EDT originates from the study of consumer behaviour. The theory, adds Van Zyn, holds that consumers develop different expectations of the quality of service provided based on their personal experiences with the service providers, advertising and word of mouth. Hence, consumers are more likely to apply various standards in judging whether they are satisfied or dissatisfied. The EDT proposes that a user's satisfaction level is a result of the difference between expected and perceived product performance, and expectations as predictions of future performance (Oliver, 1980). It expresses consumer satisfaction as a function of expectation and expectancy confirmation/disconfirmation (Oliver, 1980; Bhattacharjee and Premkumar, 2004).

The Expectancy Disconfirmation Theory (EDT) is shown in Figure 2 below:

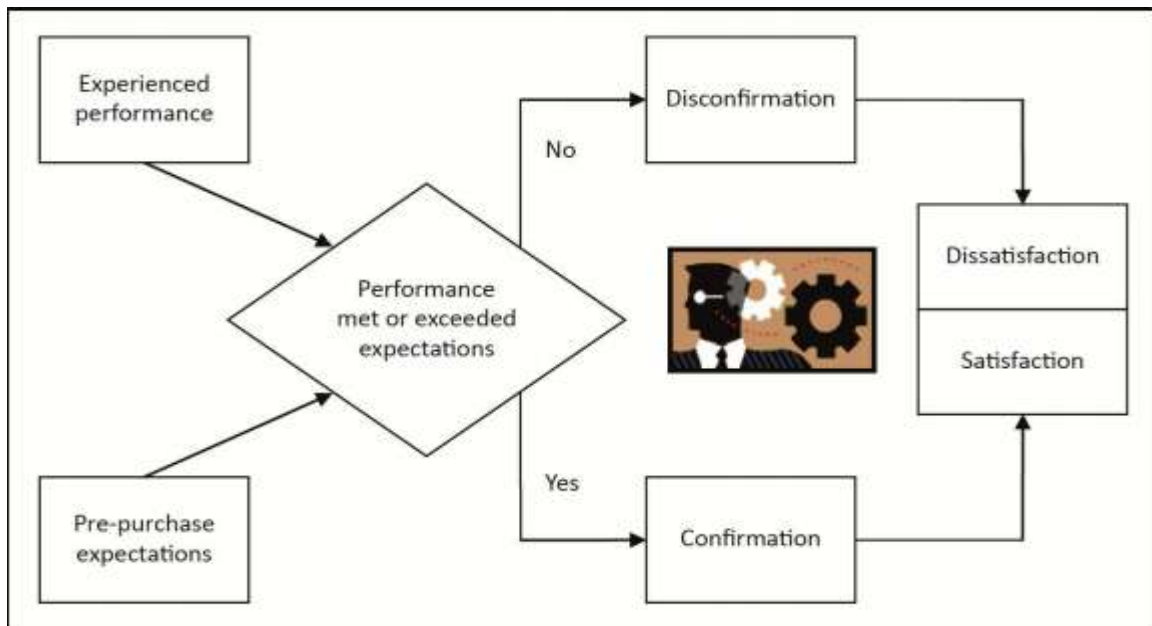


Figure 2: Expectations-confirmation-disconfirmation model of consumer satisfaction. Source: Mittal, Holbrook, Beatty, Raghurir and Woodside (2008)

The EDT is a theory which measures a customer’s satisfaction with the service(s) provided to him or her. Poister and Thomas (2011) agree with Serrano, Shahand Abràmoff (2018) that, EDT suggests that consumers would purchase goods and services with pre-purchase expectations about anticipated performance. “In this way, the expectation level becomes a standard against which the product is judged. That is, once the product or service has been used, outcomes are compared against expectations” (Elkhani and Bakri, 2012:95).

The EDT model elucidates a link between customer satisfaction and customer expectation (Oliver, 1980). The theory provides a comprehensive picture between the elements of customer expectation and confirmation/disconfirmation on the services offered by showing a link and dependence between the confirmation/disconfirmation dimensions of customer experience. Although the model is based on studies of customer satisfaction in the retail and service industries, customer satisfaction is still applicable in the fast-food industry regarding healthier menu items. The EDT comprises of the four components, namely; expectations, perceived performance, disconfirmation, and satisfaction. All these concepts are applicable to this study.

2.2.4.1. Expectations

The Expectancy Disconfirmation Theory (EDT) focuses on the customer's anticipations about the performance of products and services, taking into consideration multiple manners of customers in the purchase process (Elkhani and Bakri, 2012:97). The expectations of a customers are often based on their experiences with using a specific product or service. The expectation could be from a new customer or a customer who already has some previous experience with the service or product. New customers, on the other hand, would be without an experience about either the performance and the quality of the products or services as they would be purchasing from a specific business for the first time. On contrary, the customer who would have purchased in the past would have an initial expectation based on their previous experience with using a specific product or service.

Expectations of such customers who repurchase from a specific business is closer to reality (Elkhani and Bakri, 2012). For example, fast food outlets customers might have some expectation about healthier menu items from a fast-food outlet from the experience of their first purchase. While there would be new customers who would have expectation based on feedbacks received from other customers, advertisement, and mass media. Cohen, Prayag and Moital (2014) state that customer's expectations are determined by such factors as previous experiences with a particular service, the marketing image provided by the organisation and the word of mouth information from other users (Yadav and Dabhade, 2013). These expectations from both new and old customers form an important part of this study. The next section outlines the perceived performance of the product or service with regards to customer satisfaction.

2.2.4.2 Perceived performance

Customer satisfaction depends on what the customers experience when they receive or use the product or service. Consequently, customer experience determines customer expectations. According to Elkhani and Bakri (2012:97), "perceived performance investigates the customer's experience after using products or services that can be better or worse than customer's expectation". Mattila and Wirtz (2015)

posit that the customer's experience could either be better or worse depending on customer experience after having used the service and/or product. Cohen, Prayag and Moital explain that whether the customer has had prior experience or not, the customer will still realise the quality of the service provided. One may deduce that what the customers expect to get will have an impact on the experience and also the satisfaction from the products or services provided.

In this study, customers' s perception on provision of healthier menu items would only realise the actual menu items available and the decision to revisit the outlets might be worse or better after having experienced the services. Customers will either confirm or disconfirm their expectation when purchasing food or offered services irrespective of whether they have had first-hand experience or not before purchasing actual foods or offered services. Hence, the next section focuses on the third component of EDT, that is, disconfirmation.

2.2.4.3 Disconfirmation

It is necessary to begin the explanation to this section by defining the concept 'confirmation'. "A confirmation is when service performance is as expected, there is a confirmation between expectations and perceptions that results in satisfaction" (Du Plessis, 2015:45). This suggests that confirmation occurs when the outcome matches the expectation. These expectations can either be confirmed or disconfirmed. Disconfirmation is the difference between the customer's initial expectation and observed actual performance (Bhattacharjee and Premkumar, 2004). Literature shows that disconfirmation is divided into three types, namely; positive disconfirmation, negative disconfirmation and simple disconfirmation (Du Plessis, 2015).

Positive disconfirmation occurs when the perceived performance exceeds the customer satisfaction, negative disconfirmation is a state where the product/service provided cannot meet the expectations of the customer, while simple disconfirmation occurs when there is no difference between customer's expectation and perceived performance (Oliver, 1981; Du Plessis, 2015; Guerguis, 2018). In other words, negative disconfirmation leads to dissatisfaction since expectations are not met. Positive disconfirmation leads to satisfaction. One of the objectives of this study is to determine customer satisfaction on healthier menu items from the fast-food outlets.

When actual menu items available from fast-food outlets exceed the customer's expectation, positive disconfirmation occurs and leads to customer's satisfaction. Hence, this study also focuses on factors determining customer satisfaction on healthier menu items from fat food outlets. This suggests that whenever the service is performed better than it was initially expected, there will be a positive disconfirmation between expectation and the performance that would have resulted in satisfaction.

2.2.4.4 Satisfaction

The Expectancy-Disconfirmation Theory (EDT) considers customer satisfaction as the major component of the success of businesses. From the consumer's perspective, "satisfaction refers to any judgement that a product / service feature, or the product or service itself is providing; a pleasurable level of consumption-related fulfilment including levels of under or over fulfilment" (Oliver, 1997:13). The author adds that satisfaction can be the individual pursuit of a goal to be attained from the consumption of products and/or provision of service. Satisfaction can play a role in influence or change of attitude towards consumers' intention to purchase or service. A customer may be either satisfied or dissatisfied as a result of a positive and/or negative expectations and perceptions (Yüksel and Yüksel, 2008).

Oliver (1980, 2010) avers that satisfaction is simple confirmation and that customers would always make purchases based on their expectations, attitudes and intentions. This stage of satisfaction or dissatisfaction plays a major role in the study. The EDT was used as a theoretical framework of this study because it afforded the researcher the latitude to investigate the consumers' expectations and their perceptions of all service quality factors with intentions to measure customer satisfaction in the fast-food industry. This information would then indicate how the service offering met consumers' expectations and how the service offering could be improved to enhance consumer satisfaction.

After a review of the Expectancy-Disconfirmation Theory and the Gap Model of service quality, they were found to be relevant to the study because they yielded an understanding of customer satisfaction and health diet menu dimensions that may be relevant to the fast-food industry. Although Yüksel (2001) agreed that the EDT has

been a dominantly used framework in assessing customer satisfaction. The author points out that there are still some unaddressed issues pertaining to customer experience services provided by businesses, and customers' actual perception of the performance of businesses (cf. Yadav and Dabhade, 2013). To address this gap, the Expectancy Disconfirmation Theory was augmented by the Gap Model proposed by Yadav and Dabhade (2013). The next section elucidates the Gap model.

2.2.5. GAP Model and Customer Satisfaction

The Gap Model was proposed by Parasuraman, Zeitham and Berry in 1985 as an extended model of service quality to address the gaps between customer expectations of the outcomes of a service and what they perceive they received as outcomes of a service (Fourie, 2015) This model was further reviewed and refined as an important customer-satisfaction framework to review and identify gaps and strengths of businesses' service quality (Parasuraman et al., 1991; Guerguis 2018). The Gap Model proposes five gaps that are identified when measuring service quality (Parasuraman et al., 1985) as shown in Figure 3 below.

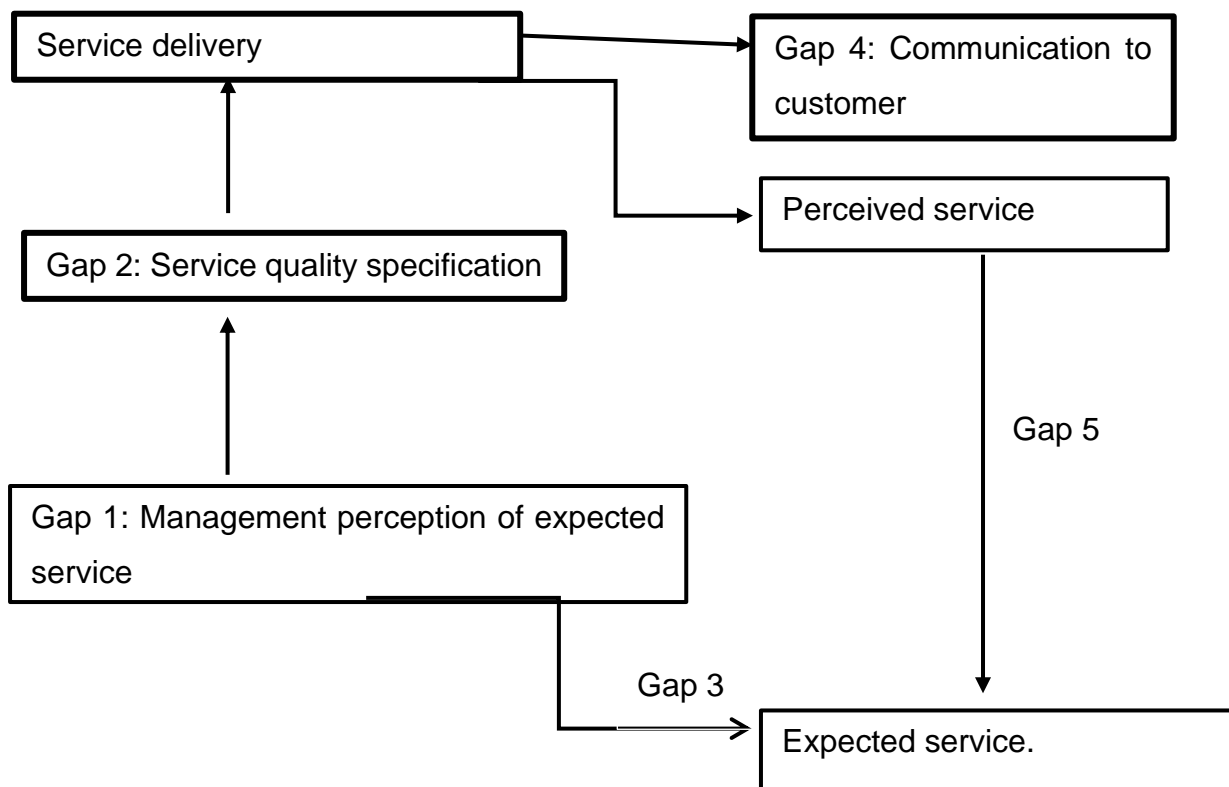


Figure 3: Gap model. Source: Yadav and Dabhade (2013)

Many organisations face major gaps in measuring service quality to meet their customer's expectations and experience (Parasuraman et al., 1985). The gaps are summarised in the paragraphs below (Parasuraman et al., 1985, 1988, 1990; Yadav and Dabhade, 2013; Faasen, 2015; Guerguis, 2018; Alsaffar, 2020).

- **Gap1: The Knowledge Gap**

Gap 1 represents managers' expectations and perceptions of the service required of them. This Gap 1 posits that there is a mismatch between what the customer might perceive as poor or good while that management would have a different perception from that of their customers. This may suggest that the perceived quality of performance is not in line with the specification of internal quality. To achieve customer satisfaction, management should hold the correct perception of what the customers expect. Parasuraman et al. (1990:39) identified three important factors that result in this Gap 1, namely; "(a) Lack of marketing research orientation; (b) Lack of communication between employees and management; and (c) Management without service vision".

Fast food outlets' management should provide services with customers' expectations. According to this Gap1, if the fast food management is not communicating with their staff about the standard of service to be provided and provision of healthier menu options, the customers' expectation will not be reached. If a fast-food outlet's management perceives service quality to be good, while the customers perceive the opposite, there will be no customer satisfaction and that will be detrimental to the outlet's quality performance (Parasuraman et al., 1991). Put succinctly, Gap 1 is a result of the management of an organisation not being aware of the customer's expectations due to inaccurate and/or insufficient information from their market research, and poor communication amongst staff of the organisation. To achieve quality service, this gap should be addressed and fast-food outlets should conduct a variety of activities to seek information about what their customers need and most importantly, communicating the expectations to the staff as they are directly involved with the customers.

- **Gap 2: The Service Design and Standards Gap**

Parasuraman et al. (1990: 41) pointed out that, "the quality of service delivered by customer-contact personnel is influenced by the standards against which they are

evaluated and compensated". In Gap 2, the management is aware of customers' expectations but could not translate those to service quality specification. The gap will grow whenever there is a lack of correct service specifications adjusted to what customers expect. In other words, Gap 2 indicates that "the perceived quality could be poor because there may be a mismatch between the product or service concept and the way the organisation designs the service quality of the product or service internally" (Parasuraman et al., 1990: 40; Yadav and Dabhade, 2013).

When fast-food outlets have identified that the customers expect healthier menu items, the management should commit to preparing menu items that reflect customers' expectations. Alsaffar (2020) indicates that the quality of service as perceived by customers is likely to suffer if the quality of service they receive is not what they expected. This gap could also be as a result of customers not clearly communicating their expectations and as such, an outlet would fail to match the design specifications with the customers' specifications (Guerguis, 2018; Alsaffar 2020).

- **Gap 3: Service Quality Delivery gap**

Gap 3 represents the actual performance of the service/products that were established, which may be the result of an inaccurate information for specification, or staff not well-trained to perform the standards or levels of desired quality. (Yadav and Dabhade, 2013; Guerguis 2018). This gap postulates that "the perceived quality could be poor because there may be a mismatch between the actual quality of the service provided by the operation and its internal quality specification" (Parasuraman et al., 1990: 40). Fourie (2015:42) indicates that, "Gap 3 occurs when there is a discrepancy between specifications and service delivery".

Gap 3 focuses on the relationship between expectation and experience. For example, a fast food outlet could have the right product for the users, but have unfriendly staff, operating hours and an unclean environment. It is thus important that organisations design clear guidelines on the performance and good treatment of the customers correctly as well as the maintenance of high-quality service performance. Hence, one of this study's objectives are to determine the level of customer satisfaction and factors that determine customers' satisfaction. Organisations need proper resources such as committed staff and delivery systems, in the case of fast food deliveries.

- **Gap 4: External Communication Gap**

Faasen (2015:30) indicates that “Gap 4 is the difference between what is communicated to customers versus their actual experience”. Alsaffar (2020) and Yadav and Dabhade (2013) agree that the main factor in this gap is when a consumer is not given an opportunity to be aware of the service delivered and what levels of quality are associated with it. This could be the result of market communication which did not match with what is offered in the store. Fast food outlets should not communicate healthier menu options that are not available for customers to choose from in the store. Personnel responsible for advertising the service and products should be held responsible for lack of external communications or inappropriate communication to the customers (Frost and Kumar, 2000).

- **Gap 5: Customer Gap**

Customer gap is the central focus of the Gaps Model (Renganathan, 2011:159) and it is “the difference between customer expectations and perceptions” (Zeithaml et al., 2009:32). Organisations should ensure that there is no disconnection between them and the customers. Hsieh and Yuan (2021) highlighted that the more the disconnection between customers and organisations, the more the gap will be widened between them and their customers. All the four gaps discussed above contribute to Gap 5 (Pena, Da Silva, Tronchin and Melleiro, 2013).

The Gap model suggests that customer service dissatisfaction is the gap between the expectations of a service and the perception of the service experienced. The gap between customers’ expectations of the service to be received and the perception of the service received can be used as the measure of customer satisfaction. In addition, the Gap Model is used to identify strategies that may be needed in exploring the market for healthier diet menus in fast-food outlets.

It suffices to mention that the theories that were adopted, provided guidance to many studies on customers’ satisfaction in various fields around the world. The theories are more focused on expectations, experiences and satisfaction and focus very little on strategies to mitigate the dissatisfaction and the disconnection between customers and fast-food outlets. It is in lieu of this weakness that the present researcher developed a conceptual model for this study (See Figure 4 below). It is significant to

explore and where possible, to develop strategic guidelines in marketing healthier menu items in fast-food outlets. To account for the application of these models, the next section discusses the conceptual model of this study.

2.2.6. Conceptual model for this research

“A conceptual model is a framework that is initially used in research to outline the possible courses of action or to present an idea or thought” (Elangovan and Rajendran, 2015:1). These authors further indicate that a conceptual model acts like a map that gives consistency to an empirical inquiry. The use of models in research is well appreciated by many researchers. Briggs (2007), for instance, asserts that the model of any research is used to analyse and make decisions on the relevance of key research concepts, and by presenting an extended empirically-based example.

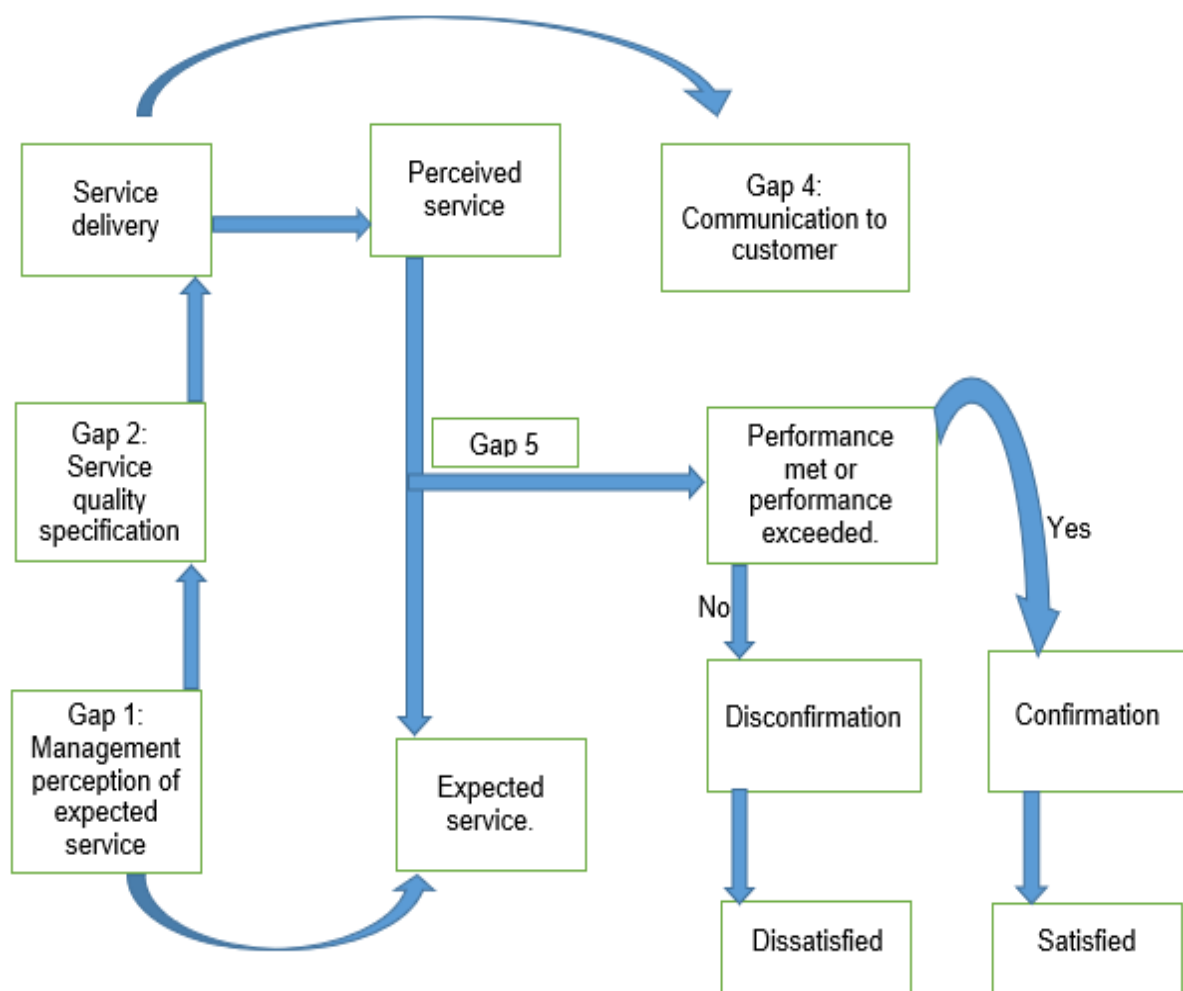


Figure 4: Conceptual model for the study (author's own work)

The management's perception has a substantial impact on the expected service to be delivered to customers. Service quality specifications would have been outlined to highlight the expectations of the management. The criteria will also determine the perceived service that will be communicated to customers. The perceived service should be a match to the expected service. The service performance expected, and the performance received will either lead to disconfirmation (dissatisfaction) or confirmation (satisfaction).

2.3. Empirical literature review

Customer satisfaction is the most important factor, if a fast-food restaurant is to be competitive. This section discusses literature related to this subject and is based on previously published studies on customers' satisfaction with the fast-food industry. The discussion is grounded on a theoretical framework and is provided with the objectives of the study borne in mind.

2.3.1. Determinants of customer satisfaction

Customers are an important part of any business, including fast-food outlets. Customer satisfaction is the cornerstone of the success of any business organisation. For the purpose of this study, it is necessary to review literature on factors that influence customer satisfaction. It is therefore relevant to start the discussion with the determinants of customer satisfaction and operational definitions.

2.3.1.1. Definition of customer satisfaction

"Customer satisfaction refers to the degree to which customers are satisfied with the products or services that an organisation offers", (Kim et al., 2009:281). On the other hand, Mohsan, et al (2011) define customer satisfaction as the perceived discrepancy that is associated with pre-purchase evaluation and the post-purchase evaluation when purchasing a product or service based on prior and post opinion and performance. It is thus important for fast-food outlets to maintain customer satisfaction to ensure the growth and success of their businesses. To achieve that, it is necessary to identify determinants of customer satisfaction.

Customer satisfaction is essential to the success of any business. Numerous authors agree that customer satisfaction is significant for the survival, growth and success of the organisation (Durai, 2010:435). Amoako, Arthur, Bandoh and Katah (2012:17) emphasise that a business exists because it has consumers to provide for and can only attain competitive advantage through delivering superior service to the consumer that ensures and enhances customer satisfaction. Additionally, Cochran (2003:2) propounds the view that an organisation should act in accordance with main features of customer satisfaction.

2.3.1.2. Features of customer satisfaction

Cochran (2003:2) submits that “an organisation should act in accordance with three basic truths regarding customer satisfaction” (Cochran, 2003; Mukherjee and Kachwala, 2009; DiMiisa and Rinaldi, 2010). Customer satisfaction encapsulates the following features:

- i. Customer satisfaction is the goal of the organisation. The only higher accomplishment of any organisation is satisfying the customers to whom it is committed to serve (Cochran, 2003:2).
- ii. Customer satisfaction is an investment in organisational resources (DiMisa and Rinaldi, 2010). To gain an understanding of customers, data should be collected and analysed regarding customer’s perceptions of the services/products of the organisation. “An Investment into customer satisfaction with the optimisation of resources will enable an organisation in attempting to maximise its return on investment” (Mukherjee and Kachwala, 2009:85).
- iii. Everyone must be involved in customer satisfaction. Management, especially the top ones, should always communicate with the employees on how they are expected to play their role towards achieving customer satisfaction (Cochran, 2003:2). Goeldner and Ritchie (2009) emphasise that it is critically important for all employees to aim to exceed customers’ expectations.

Fast-food outlets should uphold these basic truths if they intend to achieve customer satisfaction. An organisation’s past, present and future performance can only be

indicated by customers' satisfaction (Nimako and Azumah. 2009). It is thus critical for foodservice managers to understand customer satisfaction and service quality in order to ensure that it has been achieved in their businesses.

2.3.1.3. Customer satisfaction service quality models

“Service quality has earned a significant concern by many authors, business owners, and customers as well” (Abezie, 2019:22). Scholars and researchers have studied the concept of customer satisfaction in relation to service quality models. Service quality models were developed to measure customer satisfaction (Forjoe, 2011; Tovmasyan, 2017). The SERVQUAL model developed by Parasuraman, Zeithaml and Berry (1988) became the most and commonly used method in measuring of service quality (Urban, 2009). SERVQUAL includes five dimensions, namely; “tangibles: appearance of physical equipment, personnel, and communication materials; reliability: ability to perform the promised service dependably and accurately; responsiveness: willingness to help customers and provide prompt service; assurance: knowledge and courtesy of employees and their ability to convey trust and confidence; and empathy: caring, individualized attention the firm provides to its customers” (Parasuraman et al., 1990: 25; Rodrigues, et al., 2011).

The SERVPERF model was developed Cronin and Taylor in 1992 intended to enhance the SERVQUAL model to evaluate performance-based service quality (Tovmasyan, 2017). The model is a more valid model and a better approach measure service quality of fast-food outlets (Al Khattab and Aldehayyat, 2011). The SERVPERF model is used by organisations to assess the performance of the services provided. In 1995, Stevens, Knutson and Patton developed the DINESERV as a tool for evaluation of service quality in the outlet sector (Kim, et al., 2009). The model posits that, “there is a relationship between customer satisfaction and its independent variables of service quality, food quality, physical environment, convenience, customer-facing technology, price and value, order accuracy, and speed of service” (Parasuraman et al., 1988:23; Cronin and Taylor, 1992; Yoo, 2012; Tovmasyan, 2017). Various studies have been conducted on customer satisfaction in relation to this model.

2.3.1.4. Customer satisfaction and service quality models

Studies conducted by Abdullah (2013), Nasir, Ahmed, Zafar, and Zahid (2014), and Kabir (2016) investigated the determinants of customer care in the fast-food industry focusing on price and service quality as the main attributes of customer satisfaction in fast-food outlets. The study aimed to identify factors that are important in customer satisfaction at a fast-food restaurant in Pakistan (Abdullah, 2013). A five-point Likert Scale questionnaire was used to collect data from 225 customers from Pizza Hut, Hardees, KFC, McDonald's and Subway located in Lahore, Pakistan. The result showed that most respondents regard adequate price as a valuable factor before purchasing and visiting a fast-food restaurant. The results relate with a study conducted in South Africa by Gopaul (2015), who found that customers rated price as the most significant aspect when deciding to buy from fast-food outlets. Cardello (2013) emphasised that some customers are willing to pay more for eating healthier food options while others are passionate about eating healthier diet menu items but are price sensitive.

Some people consider price as an important factor in selecting a restaurant while some prefer quality and do not consider whether the price is high or not. Steenhuis, Waterlander and De Mul (2011) and Nasir et al. (2014) found that price is the main determinant of customer satisfaction and that low price increases satisfaction. Another study by Kabir (2016) investigated the relationship between customer satisfaction and factors such as convenience, price and value, order accuracy, and speed of service. The study used the questionnaire to collect data from 1,042 customers at the subject hamburger chain. The results indicated that price and value remained the most important variable of customer satisfaction at the subject hamburger chain. The recommendation was that the subject hamburger chain should focus on serving customers with speed, maintain food quality, and keep the price competitive to attain and sustain the satisfaction of its customers. Other variables such as food quality, service quality and atmosphere play a major role in determining customer satisfaction. Various scholars conducted studies to assess the role of these variables in customer satisfaction of fast-food outlets (see Khan, Hussain and Yaqoob, 2013; Petzer and Mackay, 2014; Datsane and Franklin, 2017; Rana, Lodhi, Butt and Dar, 2017; Nguyen, Nguyen and Do, 2019; Uddin, 2019).

A study aimed at finding the success factors pertinent to fast food outlets was conducted by Khan et al. (2013) in Peshawar Pakistan. The study targeted 120 customers at KFC, CHIEF, ARBAIN CHICK, and PIZZA HUT when they visited the outlets for refreshment. A questionnaire was used to collect data. The results revealed that service quality and branding are the most significant factors of satisfaction in the fast-food industry. Sabir, Ghafoor, Hafeez, Akhtar and Rehman (2014) also found that there is a positive and significant relationship between service quality and the customer's satisfaction.

Petzer and Mackay (2014) conducted a quantitative and descriptive study at restaurants in urban areas of the North-West Province, South Africa. Two hundred and fifty (250) sit-down restaurant diners completed self-administered questionnaires. The study found out that the perception of customers on food and service quality predicts customer satisfaction at restaurants, when controlled. Recommendations on how dining atmospherics, food quality and service quality can be enhanced to improve customer satisfaction at sit-down restaurants were made.

In their study, Datsane and Fazlin (2017) investigated factors of customer satisfaction affecting customer retention in the Malaysian fast-food industry. The study used a Likert-Scale questionnaire to collect primary data from 180 Malaysian fast-food customers. The study also used Cronbach's Alpha and Principal Components Analysis to ensure reliability and validity of the questionnaire. Product quality, service quality, and emotional factors were selected as the key factors of customer satisfaction. Descriptive statistics show that the emotional factor and facility play a significant role in customer satisfaction in ensuring the retention of customers in the Malaysian fast-food industry. Rana et al. (2017) also found out that there is a strong relationship between positive customer satisfaction and healthy brand image in the minds of customers. These indicate that good customer satisfaction would result in positive behaviour of the fast-food chains. Convenience sampling was used to select 166 respondents in the cities of Sahiwal, Lahore, and Gujranwala Pakistan. The study recommended that fast food managers should prioritise focus on various factors of satisfaction of customers on food quality, price value ratio and service quality.

Nguyen, Nguyen and Do (2019) conducted a study at KFC in Vietnam to assess the determinants of customer satisfaction. Data was collected from KFC's customers in Ho Chi Minh City, Viet Nam. The study found out that food quality, ambience, price, service quality were the main determinants of customer satisfaction. This is in line with Polas, Hossain, Asheq, Hossain, Javed and Nianyu's (2019) results which revealed that there is a positive relationship between product quality, service quality, and store attributes with customer satisfaction. A sample of 211 from three outlets in Malaysia completed questionnaires. In the Akure metropolis Ondo State, Nigeria, Anifowose and Olaleye (2016) explored customer satisfaction and service quality and revealed that despite all other poor services offered, customers are still concerned about selected outlets because of their location and food quality.

An investigation on factors influencing customer satisfaction was conducted in 2019 by Uddin. The study also assessed factors influencing customer loyalty in the fast-food restaurant industry. Uddin (2019) used the convenience sampling method to select 204 respondents who completed questionnaires. The results show that there is a positive relationship between food quality and service quality and customer satisfaction. The results also reveal a contrary association between the location and environment of restaurant and customer satisfaction. Uddin (2019) also found out that not only food quality and service quality were the determinants of customer satisfaction, price was another determinant of customer satisfaction. On the other hand, Eresia-Eke, Stephanou and Swanepoel (2018) found out that there was a weak but positive correlation exists between price and service quality perceptions.

Studies by Sulek and Hensley (2004), Thao (2014), Phan and Nguyen (2016), and Zhong and Moon (2020) emphasised the role played by atmosphere and physical environment of fast-food outlets in customer satisfaction. Sulek and Henslet (2004) found that the physical setting of the dining at fast-food outlets is positively linked to the satisfaction of customers in their dining experience. The study recommended that restaurants should consider exploring different music, décor and lighting as attracting and selling points to customers. According to Sulek and Hensley, improving the dining environment would assist in creating an improved expectation for customers. Walter, et al.,(2010) add that the managers of fast-food outlets should understand factors

influencing the retention of customer satisfaction and ensure ways to attract new customers and thus continuously remain competitive and always profitable.

According to Mohaydin et al. (2017), customers perceive the quality of food served at restaurants to be different from the meals served elsewhere rather than the restaurant. According to Bujisic, et al. (2014), convenience in the context of customer satisfaction would include options such as the availability of telephones to access service/products, ease of parking, and shorter walking distance from their location to the location of the restaurants. Thao (2014) found out that convenience of a shorter walking distance between fast-food outlets and the distance is crucial. The physical setting of the restaurants may affect the satisfaction of customers and their desire/intentions to make revisit the outlets (Ryu et al., 2012).

Phan and Nguyen (2016) employed a mixed-method approach to ascertain customers' perceptions of determinants that impact on their satisfaction at Vietnamese fast-food restaurants. Phan and Nguyen purport that it is essential for any business to retain existing customers while attracting new customers. The findings from the study revealed useful strategies, i.e. price, service quality, product quality and environment, as well as customer satisfaction could be improved and develop in Vietnamese fast-food restaurants as well as the satisfaction level from customers. Zhong and Moon (2020) explored the factors that influence customer satisfaction, loyalty, and happiness. Online survey was completed by customers of Western fast-food restaurants such as KFC and McDonald in China. Results showed that although price, food, service, and physical environment have a positive effect on customer satisfaction. Price seems to significantly influence customers' acceptance or lack of customer's perception of quality of the restaurant. These results relate well with the study conducted by Neale, Slack, Singh, Fiji, Ali, Lata, Mudaliar, and Swamy, (2020). The study was conducted in Fiji and data was collected from 400 fast-food restaurant customers. The results revealed food quality and physical environment quality are significant determinants of customer perceived value. Neale, et al (2021) confirmed that customer perception is the significant determinant of customer satisfaction and customer satisfaction is a significant determinant of behavioural intentions.

Literature shows that all the five dimensions, namely; product quality, service quality, atmosphere, price and value, and physical environment play an important role in determining the satisfaction of customers at a fast food level. It is also relevant to discuss studies related to EDT and customer satisfaction as the theory underpinning this study.

2.3.1.5. The Expectation Disconfirmation Theory (EDT) and customer satisfaction

Studies use different service quality models to determine customer satisfaction. Du Plessis (2015) conducted a study aiming at determining the perceptions of consumers on the quality of service of the fast-food outlets. Self-administered questionnaire was completed electronically by 477 respondents. The study found out that consumers' expectations to be higher than their perceptions. The study indicated there is an opportunity to improve the services to provide better quality services to meet consumer's expectations. Gogoi (2020) used EDT as a theoretical base to find out whether a variety of products, food quality, services speed, price and nutrition impact on consumer perception. Consumer perception influences the decision of consumers to purchase. The study concluded that there was a positive relationship between customer expectations with a variety of menu items offered at fast-food outlets.

The EDT was applied by many researchers in different fields for a better understanding of the customer's expectations and determinants of their satisfaction. Chow, Krishnapillai and Lee (2019) used the theory to guide their study in order to assess the interaction between consumers' expectations and their experience on hygienic food service in Malaysia. The study targeted the Indian Muslim eateries who are part of the Malaysian food culture. Findings indicated that hygiene expectation and hygiene experience are the main source of the determinants of diner satisfaction.

Another study by Serrano, et al. (2018) employed EDT to investigate the satisfaction of patients with telemedicine services. Two hundred and twenty (220) adult subjects with diabetes were recruited from rural Iowa. A pre-survey was completed to determine the perceptions of telemedicine prior to using the services. A post survey was completed after their experience with telemedicine services. Results showed that

patients' expectations and disconfirmation influenced patient satisfaction. The study thus concluded that there is a positive relationship between patients' preferences for telemedicine services and patient satisfaction. The results confirm that EDT is the relevant framework to study customer satisfaction and customer expectation.

Gierczak, Englisch and Bretschneider (2015) examined reward-based crowdfunding intentions by applying EDT. The aim of the study was to explore how funding experiences influence funding intentions. The study revealed that there was a relationship between expectations and experiences. The study by Ryzen (2013) also provided evidence that EDT is an important framework to determine customer satisfaction. Ryzen used EDT to assess citizen satisfaction with public services. The Experimental method was used, and 964 citizens participated in an online survey.

Mormer (2012) tested satisfaction with healthcare settings purchases and consumer services. Results revealed that disconfirmation is a strong predictor of satisfaction in Chinese first-time hearing aid users. Mormer's study provided empirical evidence that EDT can be used as a framework to study customer satisfaction from first time hearing aid customers in the United States. Schwarz (2011) used EDT to understand customer satisfaction in IT outsourcing. Schwarz confirmed the importance of expectations in relation to satisfaction.

Another study by Poister and Thomas (2011) examined the effects of expectations and expectancy confirmation/disconfirmation on motorists' satisfaction with road conditions, traffic flow, and safety on state highways in Georgia. The effects on satisfaction and perceived performance and expectancy confirmation/disconfirmation were found to support the expectancy disconfirmation model. Serenko and Stach (2009) investigated the impact of expectation disconfirmation on user loyalty in an online travel and tourism services. Findings showed the lack of a clear link between expectation disconfirmation and user loyalty from customers.

EDT seems to be the best means to measure determinants of customer satisfaction. This study employed EDT models to determine factors that influence customer satisfaction on healthier menu items from in fast-food outlets.

2.3.1.6. Determinants of customer satisfaction for this research

Literature revealed that drawing on experiences from similar situations, the customer develops expectations of service quality, food quality, convenience, and atmosphere for fast food outlets. These dimensions derived from service quality models have a greater impact on customer satisfaction. If expectations from services offered from fast-food outlets are not met during performance experience, the customer is likely to judge the service as poor and is likely to feel dissatisfied. It also revealed that customer correct perception of services provided by fast-food outlets will not be sufficient without managements' correct perception on customer expectations and customer satisfaction.

Table 1: Determinants of customer satisfaction

Determinant	Description	Name and date of author
Features of customer satisfaction	Customer satisfaction as a goal and an investment	Cochran (2003); DiMisa and Rinaldi (2010); Mukherjee and Kachwala (2009); Goeldner and Ritchie (2009); Ng (2005); Nimako and Azumah (2009); Namkung and Jang (2007).
Price value	Fair prices, value for money and expensiveness of meals	Rana et al. (2017).
Food quality	Food Taste, freshness of the food and good appeal of the food offered	Petzer and Mackay (2014); Polas et al. (2019); Uddin (2019); Cardello (2013); Nasir et al. (2014); Kabir (2016); Phan and Nguyeni (2016); Zhong and Moon (2020).
Service quality	Friendliness of the staff and managers, staff	Petzer and Mackay (2014); Phan and Nguyeni

Determinant	Description	Name and date of author
	knowledge of menus and promotions.	(2016); Mohaydin et al. (2018); Khan, et al. (2013); Sabir et al. (2014).
Convenience	Extended service hours, safe parking and walking distance from the outlets.	Thao (2014); Ryu et al. (2012); Bujisic, Hutchinson and Parsa (2014); Mormer (2012).
Atmosphere	Outlet cleanliness, staff uniform, comfort and security and dinning in feeling.	Datsane and Fazlin (2017); Sulek and Hensley (2004); Serenko and Stach (2009).

Literature revealed that customer satisfaction is closely linked to factors such as food quality, service quality, price and physical environment. Additionally, what a customer perceives and expects from fast-food outlets will influence their satisfaction. It is important to also consider the extent to which customers are satisfied. Hence, the next section focuses on the level of customer satisfaction.

2.3.2. Level of Customer Satisfaction

Improving customer satisfaction should be the main objective of any business, including fast-food outlets. As indicated earlier in this study, according to Arden and Edwards (2009:19), businesses that strive to consistently delight and satisfy their customers are likely to succeed. In addition, for businesses to continue to exist, they have to act in accordance with the basic truths of customer satisfaction, as discussed under section 2.2.1 (Gopaul, 2015; Cochran, 2003:2). These include *customer satisfaction is the ultimate goal of the organisation* (Brink and Berndt, 2010; Hill and Alexander, 2017), *Customer satisfaction is an investment* (DiMisa and Rinaldi, 2010), and *Everyone must be involved in customer satisfaction* (Cochran, 2003:2). It is thus necessary for businesses to assess and evaluate how well they satisfy their customers.

2.3.2.1 Satisfaction and service quality

According to Mittal, et al. (2008:342), “the cause of dissatisfaction or satisfactions with a product or service is the performance of that product or service pre-purchase expectations concerning its performance, and as soon as the product or service has been bought and used, the results are compared against those expectations”. Businesses exist to ensure that their customers are satisfied and are profitable. Various scholars such as Grunert (2005), Ghimire (2012), Cant, et al. (2014), Adewale, Moradeke and Adegoke (2014), Deivanai (2016), Leelavathy (2017), Karki and Panthi (2018), and Chun and Nyam-Ochir (2020) investigated the level of customer satisfaction in fast-food outlets.

A study on service quality by Grunert (2005) indicated that the quality of service can either be subjective and objective. The subjective quality refers to how the customers perceive a product/service while the objective quality considers physical characteristics of the product. Ghimire (2012) conducted in Vantaa, in the Nepalese restaurant Sagarmatha located in Helsinki. The study investigated quality service and customer satisfaction to office workers, travellers, tourists, free movers and business from more than fifty ethnic restaurants. A quantitative with a questionnaire survey and qualitative with a structured interview were used in the study. The results revealed that even though customers were satisfied, they were not happy with other variables such as staff friendliness. Findings indicated that staff from the restaurant need improvement on friendliness, updating of the menu list to ensure the outside the door and inside were the same. Recommendations to market the restaurant through television, newspaper and radio to attract more customers.

2.3.2.2 Satisfaction and Food Quality

Food quality is one of the determinants of customer satisfaction. It is significant for business to consider how well are customers satisfied. Cant, et al. (2014) explored customer satisfaction with the healthier food options available at fast-food outlets in South Africa. An empirical study which applied mixed method approach was conducted and self-administered questionnaires were used to collect from students at the University of Pretoria. The results of the study indicated that there was a high level

of satisfaction amongst South African customers with the healthier food options available at fast-food outlets.

2.3.3.3 Level of Satisfaction and price value

Deivanai (2016) had an analysis that the customers' intention to purchase and its continuity depend on the satisfaction level of customers towards fast-food products in Madurai district. The main objective of the study was to study the purchase intention of customers, and to find out the supportive factors that influence the purchase behaviour of consumers. The survey was conducted and a questionnaire with some five-point Likert scales assessing the attitudes of customers towards fast food was used. The study found out that the service quality, pricing and convenience, taste of the product, place factors were responsible for satisfying nature and thus had a close relationship to customer satisfaction. Findings also reveal that some of the factors such as staff cooperation had a weak impact on customer satisfaction.

2.3.2.4. Level of Satisfaction and service quality models

Adewale, Moradeke and Adegoke (2014) assessed the factors affecting customer satisfaction and its effect on repurchase intention at selected Fast-Food Restaurants (FFRs) in Ibadan metropolis, Nigeria. A structured questionnaire was administered to 147 customers from FFRs the respondents' satisfaction level towards FFRs was obtained on Five-point Likert scale. Results revealed that customers' satisfaction with services the FFRs increased with increase in customer's perception of the service quality, empathy, responsiveness, and assurance. The study recommended that service providers of fast-food restaurants should improve on their empathy by providing caring and personalised service to customers in order to enhance customers' satisfaction.

The expectations of customers are based on their previous expectations, with what they are familiar with it (Du Plessis, 2015). Du Plessis reflected on customer perceptions on quality services offered at fast-food outlets. A structured, self-administered questionnaire was completed electronically by 447 respondents. Consumers' expectations were found to be higher than their perceptions. Findings also

indicate that there is room to improve their services so that they could excel in their business.

2.3.2.5. Customer Satisfaction and Atmosphere

The study by Leelavathy (2017) revealed that consumers were not fully satisfied with fast-food outlets in and around Thanjavura. Interviews were conducted randomly with customers of selected Fast-foods, and the study indicated that the owners of a fast food in Thanjavur has to improve the cleanliness, taste and quality of the food that make the most significant contributions on customer satisfaction.

In their study, Honicky, Schwarz, Vieira, Freire, and Gatti (2017) evaluated diners' satisfaction with services offered from self-service restaurant. Hundred and forty-eight individuals participated in the study. Factors such as food appearance; buffet presentation; variety, temperature of salads, desserts and hot meals; taste of meals; seasoning; service; hygiene and cleanliness of the premises, were used to evaluate the quality of the service and the extent of customer satisfaction. Honick et al. (2017) emphasised that the conditions of the self-service restaurant, should endeavour to improve.

Customers perceive products offered according to their individualised expectations (Schiffman and Kanuk, 2010). It is therefore important that businesses determine the attributes of their products or services according to what customers would regard as important. A survey research design was conducted by Raduzzi and Massey (2019) examined the effects of the marketing mix on customer satisfaction and brand loyalty. A quantitative method was used, and the results of the study indicated that the marketing mix does indeed influence customer satisfaction and brand loyalty. Raduzzi and Massey concluded that if customer satisfaction is achieved, brand loyalty often results. On the other side, Karki and Panthi (2018), at the Nepalese restaurants of Finland, explored to what extent customers were satisfied with those restaurants. Results showed that food quality, price, ambiance and service quality had an effect on customer satisfaction.

It is important that customers be acknowledged. “Customers who visit the same fast food outlet at the same time, purchase the food item at the same time and receive the same quality service from the fast food outlet, will therefore, each recognise, select, organize and interpret the service quality offered to them differently” (Schiffman and Kanuk, 2010:175; Du Plessis, 2015). Chun and Nyam-Ochir (2020) analysed how satisfaction levels influence a customer’s intention to revisit and recommend a restaurant to others. The study examined factors affecting customer satisfaction for Mongolian fast-food restaurants. Using the DINESERV scale, the study compared two competing brands in Ulaanbaatar. The results show that factors affecting customer satisfaction and revisit intention were different. However, customers were found to have had an excellent experience at a restaurant and might recommend the restaurant to others by spreading positive information, and/or became a loyal customer.

2.3.2.5. Level of customer satisfaction for this research

The purpose of this study is to analyse how satisfaction levels influence a customer’s intention to revisit fast food outlets to purchase healthier menu items. Customer satisfaction is dependent on the perceived performance, expected and experienced services offered from fast food outlets.

Table 2: Level of customer satisfaction

Determinant	Description	Name and date of author
Satisfaction Level and service quality	Perception on service provision and quality and other service model dimensions.	Oyewale (1999); Deivanai (2016); Adewale et al. (2014); du Plessis (2015); Karki and Panthi (2018); Yadav and Dabhade (2013).
Satisfaction Level and Food quality	Food taste, food freshness, food eye appeal and Actual Performance/service received and satisfaction.	Grunert (2005); Ghimire (2012); Leelavathy (2017); Lovelock et al. (2012).

Determinant	Description	Name and date of author
Satisfaction Level and Price and Value	Fair price, desirable quality and organic food price	Mittal et al. (2008); Cant, et al. (2014); Karki and Panthi (2018); Chun and Nyam-Ochir (2020); Gopaul (2013); Honicky et al. (2017).
Customer satisfaction and service quality models	dimensions of service quality	Adewale et al. (2014); Du Plessis (2015).

Most studies focused on the level of satisfaction in relation to service quality dimensions. Generally, the literature reviewed indicates some level of satisfaction and improvement has been notably recommended. Literature reviewed highlighted customer expectation levels which were sometimes higher than their perceptions in various factors such as service quality, food quality and atmosphere (DINSERVE model). Positive confirmation was also revealed in some studies. Literature also argued that food choices and satisfaction level are also dependent on gender even though there was a contradicting study to that fact.

2.3.3. Strategic planning guidelines

Fast food restaurants have increasingly offered healthier menu items choices to reduce criticisms of nutritionally poor menu in their outlets (Choi and Reid, 2018). It has thus become significant for these outlets to adopt various strategies in marketing their healthier menu items. Strategy is defined as the “the pattern or plan that integrates an organisation’s major goals, policies and action sequences into a cohesive whole” (Louw and Venter, 2011:10). A well-formulated strategy “assists an organisation’s resources into a viable posture based upon its relative internal competencies and shortcomings, anticipated changes in the environment, and contingent moves by intelligent opponents” (Quinn, 1978; Louw and Venter, 2011:10).

The essence of a strategy is to help achieve a sustainable competitive advantage that leads to increase profitability (Louw and Venter, 2011:31). Successful strategies should be implemented in order to achieve and sustainable competitiveness. These

strategies, according to Louw and Venter, can be implemented at corporate level, business level, and functional level. This study focuses only on the business level strategy. Business level strategy relates to how the organisation competes in its area of business (Mathews, Bianchi, Perks, Healy and Wickramasekera, 2016). In the fast-food industry, a competitive advantage can only be achieved when businesses provide consumers with food they want or need, at a desired price that is perceived to be better than its competing fast-food outlets (Du Plessis, 2015). This requires that the strategic guidelines between the internal capabilities and external relationship are well-defined. Strategic guidelines on how to attract and meet customers' needs, grow the franchise outlet and develop the necessary dynamic capabilities should be formulated (Louw and Venter, 2011:29).

Madiba and Roberts-Lombard (2011) emphasised the influence of the extended marketing mix elements on their intention to purchase at a fast-food retailer. All visitors to a fast-food retail brand in the Metropolitan region in Gauteng were sampled using a convenience sampling technique and 209 participants were selected. Both personal interviews and questionnaires were used to collect data. The study established that there is a difference in the relationship between marketing mix and consumers' intention to purchase from a KFC fast-food retailer based on race, gender and age. The study recommended that the KFC management should consider improving their marketing strategy to encompass demographic variables such as race, gender and age.

An online questionnaire was used to assess attitudes of the Danish population in relation to the healthier fast food. The questionnaire was distributed to 819 McDonald's customers to determine whether there was a need for healthier fast food and the behaviour towards purchasing and consuming fast food. The results indicated that a healthier menu was not a priority among those consuming fast-food outlets. The study also revealed that even though there was a desire for healthier concepts, a majority was not willing to compromise reasonably priced food. Gopaul (2015) pointed out that many fast-food outlets have introduced healthier food options to their menu items even though there is a perception that healthier menu items are more expensive.

Claasen, van der Hoeven, and Covic (2016) focused on existing research and policies related to food environments with the aim to identify gaps for the new Centre of Excellence in Food Security. These authors stated that it is a considerable change in the South African consumer food environments since the mid-1990s, and also increased consumption of processed and fast foods. South African research and policy documents addressing the eating behaviour/food choices were reviewed. The study concluded that there is a need to conduct more research on food environment to address the prevalence of over and undernutrition. This study is an addition to fast food industry in determining the strategies that can be explored to market health menu diet to customers.

Public health in Guatemala should advocate and encourage healthier choices within fast food restaurants (Mazariegos, Chacón, Cole and Barnoya, 2016). These authors conducted a study to assess the use of toy giveaways and price incentives as a marketing strategy in fast food restaurants. Hundred and fourteen children's fast food combo meals were assessed as a marketing strategy to encourage eating of healthier diets. The study concluded that there is a need for policy that should include fruit and vegetable options for meal side dishes, and also provision of accessible and easy to read nutrition information. From a related study by Khadka and Maharhan (2017) recommended that improvement on feedback system, staff training and regular advertising campaign to attract new customers and retain the existing customers as well as to increase level of customer satisfaction.

Survey to assess customer satisfaction regarding food aspects was conducted by Tarro, Aceves-Martins, Tiñena, Parisi, Blasi, Giralt, Llauroadó and Solà (2017). The main purpose of the study was to promote healthy diets and a restaurant-based intervention was implemented at 16 food establishments at 2 resorts. The study concluded that restaurant-based intervention expanded the healthy and allergen-free foods to encourage healthy food choices, and as such, increased customer satisfaction.

Sun (2018) explored the motivation for consumers to make healthy menu item choices. Results showed that consumers have a clear preference towards eliminating and/or substituting meals rather than resizing. Recommendation marketing practices could

be used to educate consumers about new low-calorie alternatives to create the demand and promote these items. Choi and Reid (2018) examined how consumers respond to advertisements for healthier foods from fast food outlets. Findings indicate that there is positive link between advertisements placed by healthy restaurant brands, and consumer perception.

Nguyen (2018) aimed at creating a marketing plan for fast food restaurants in Helsinki. The study analysed the internal and external environment of the business in order to raise awareness and attract more customers. Both quantitative and qualitative research methods were applied and the results highlighted that fast-food outlets should use the right tools and channels to raise awareness of the business among the targeted customers. The study concluded that right marketing strategies would build customer relationships and increase customer loyalty and satisfaction. The study by Carelse (2017) found out that when customers are satisfied with service experience, they would return and repurchase the service and even refer others to the business, hence increased customer loyalty.

The study by Izquierdo-Yusta, Gómez-Cantó, Pelegrin-Borondo and Martínez-Ruiz (2018) addressed the external validation of Western-based marketing concepts and theory in the East. DINESERV model was used as framework to understand the relationships between service quality, perceptions, customer satisfaction, and repurchase intentions in the Malaysian fast-food industry. In South Africa, Mhlanga (2018) aimed to determine the influence of the micro-environment on the fast-food industry. The study was mainly quantitative. Questionnaires were distributed to 227 key restaurant personnel. The results indicated that the threat of new entrants and the bargaining power of suppliers did not have influence on restaurant performances.

The study by Czarniecka-Skubina, Górska-Warsewicz, and Trafiałek (2020) focused on the attitudes of employees toward food offered in staff canteens, to analyse their eating behaviour and the factors determining the choice of meals in staff canteens. Six hundred respondents from canteens in Warsaw, Poland, participated in the study. The results revealed that staff were satisfied with the function of the canteens but needed an increase in the variety of meals, such as the inclusion of vegetarian and vegan dishes. Ninety-three restaurant chains' websites were analysed with a systematic

coding procedure by Yoon, Chung and Jun (2020). The study aimed to assist restaurant owners to gain an understanding of healthy sustainable measures within restaurant businesses. Findings contributed to restaurant/foodservice management and food marketing of U.S by promoting healthy and sustainable eating.

Mielmann(2019) stated that the successful strategic guidelines require as many interventions as possible that can be initiated by food retailers thus, engaging in more trial and error on low-risk interventions. Glanz, Bader and Iyer (2012), Claasen, van der Hoeven, and Covic (2016), Pereira and Drimie (2016) and Mielmann(2019) summarised the sustainable competitive strategies as follows:

- Change the store environment by revising the placement of food products and implement healthier shop alternatives.
- Nutrition education such as the employment of health professionals to ensure face-to-face interaction with consumers, is essential.
- In-store marketing methods to promote healthy product lines should be revised and implement more regularly.
- Community Outreach: This refers to participate more in outreach activities to promote healthy eating.

Several companies relied on customer complaints to determine customer satisfaction. Nimako and Azumah (2009:2) stated that, “about 96% of customers never complain, 91% will simply not go back and if they do, only 4% of customers will actually tell the company about their problem”. Lovelock et al. (2012) added that very few dissatisfied customers would report their complaints. This suggests that organisations are required to adopt improved techniques to measure customer satisfaction (Nimako and Azumah, 2009:2). When the difference between customers’ expectations and perceptions of a service is analysed, a gap is identified, known as the customer service gap (Yadav and Dabhade, 2013). Mielman (2019) concludes that to make a positive contribution in food stores, there is a need to deploy a wide range of interventions including portion control, reformulation, revise store layouts, adapt price promotion and marketing practices. The literature relating to strategic planning guidelines on marketing healthier menu items in fast food outlets, is limited. This justifies the purpose of this study to explore and recommend remedial interventions.

2.4. Conceptual framework

An academically sound research should be grounded on a conceptual framework. A conceptual framework is the idea of the researcher on the way the research problem will be explored (Adom, Hussein and Agyem, 2018; Ahma, 2019), and it is founded on the theoretical framework of a study (Maxwell, 2012). According to Ngulube (2018:11), “the conceptual framework is not ready made, instead, it is inductively developed by the researcher by combining various components of theories, various concepts embedded in the extant literature, sources and experiences”. One may thus conclude that the researcher should connect several parts to develop a conceptual framework for the investigation.

The nature of this study makes it necessary to generate a conceptual framework. A conceptual framework displays the relationship between concepts under investigation rather than just giving a theoretical explanation of the phenomenon (Jabareen, 2009:51). The purpose of a conceptual framework is to explain, clarify and justify methodological decisions (Ravitch and Riggan, 2017). Another exposition of the purpose of a conceptual framework provided by Shields and Rangarajan (2013:24) is that “it determines the organisation of ideas to achieve the research project’s purpose”. The conceptual framework provides a useful guide for both data collection and data analysis (Ngulube, 2018). To build a conceptual framework for this study, the Miles-Huberman (1994) model was followed (see Figure 5 below).

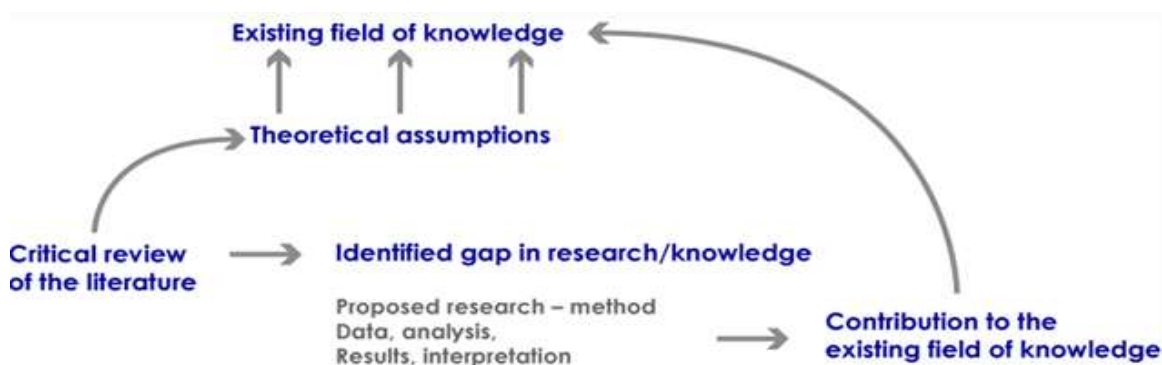


Figure 4: Source: Miles and Huberman (1994).

The concepts that constitute a conceptual framework support one another, articulate their respective phenomena, and establish a framework-specific philosophy

(Jabareen, 2009). Conceptual frameworks possess assumptions that relate to firstly, knowledge of the “way things are,” “the nature of reality,” “real” existence, and “real” action; secondly, to “how things really are” and “how things really work” in an assumed reality; and lastly, to the process of building the conceptual framework and assessing what it can tell us about the “real” world (Guba and Lincoln, 1994:440). According to Miles and Huberman (1994), a conceptual framework “lays out the key factors, constructs, or variables, and presumes relationships among them”. A generic framework developed by Miles and Huberman (1994) is adopted in this study to identify the determinants of customer satisfaction in exploring the market of healthier diet menus in fast-food outlets.

The conceptual framework of this study will be developed from the Expectancy Disconfirmation Theory (Oliver 1980, 1991) and the Gap Model (Parasuraman et al., 1985). The conceptual framework for this study is constructed in line with the formulated objectives of the study and all necessary constructs of the study. The conceptual literature considers the correlation of the study objectives in order to achieve the study significance and outcome. The conceptual framework model, figure 3 below, for this study is proposed as follows:

Conceptual research framework: Strategic guidelines for customer satisfaction with healthier diet menu items offered by fast-food restaurants in South Africa

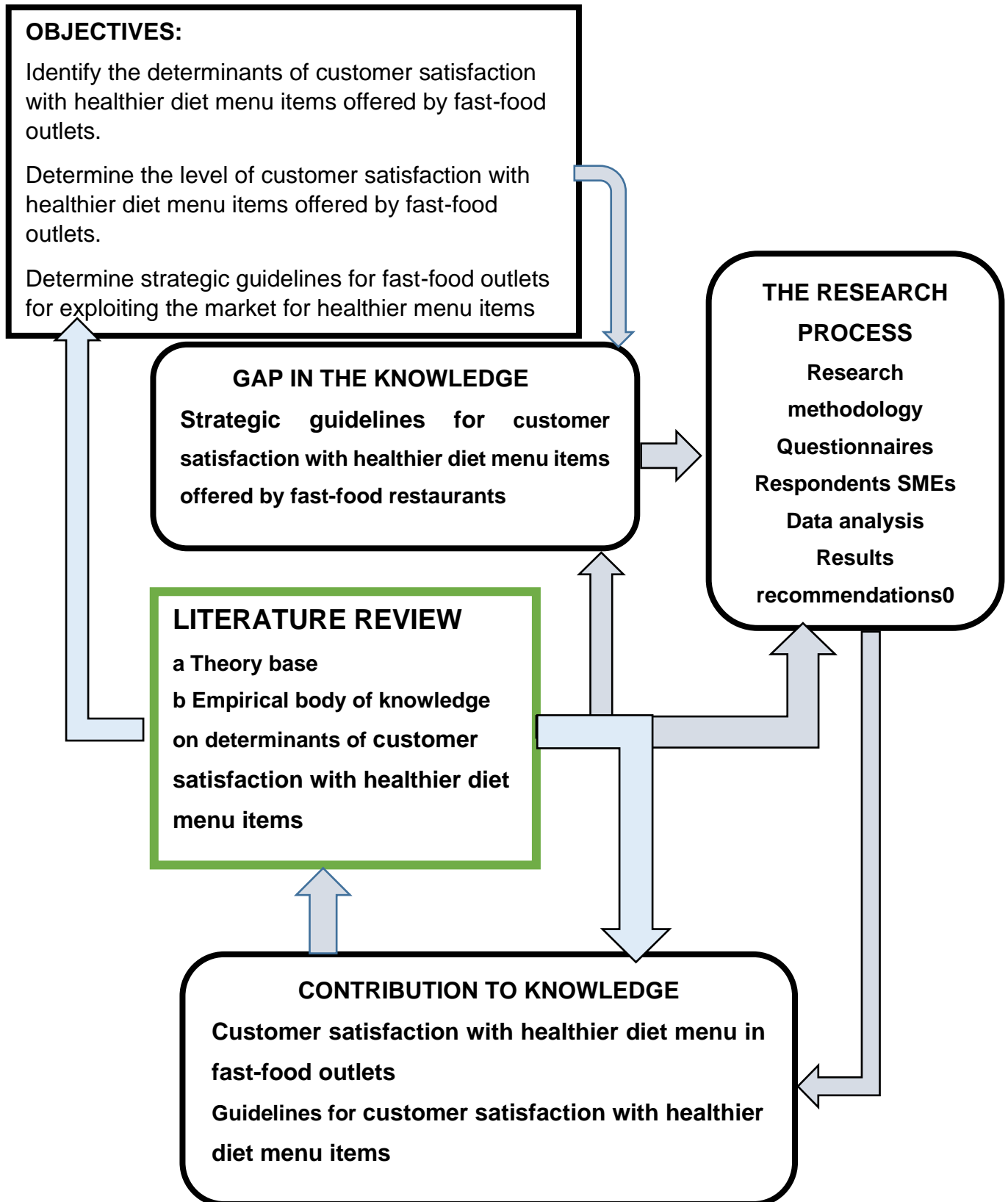


Figure 5: Conceptual framework. Source: (Authors own work)

Customers judge a service by comparing the quality and functions of the service. According to Arden and Edwards (2009:19), organisations that are likely to succeed are those that will continuously aim to satisfy and delight their customers. When an organisation measures customer satisfaction, it can gain hidden and useful feedback from customers, giving it an indication of how successful it is at providing products and services to the satisfaction of customers (Nimako and Azumah, 2009:3). Nimko and Azumah add that once organisations have a better understanding of how their customers feel, they can assess their capabilities and take the necessary steps to improve and manage customer satisfaction effectively (Nimako and Azumah, 2009:3). The concept of relationship marketing necessitates that organisations build and sustain long-term relationships with their customers. As such, one of the objectives of an organisation is to ensure customer satisfaction: ensuring that customers are satisfied with their market offering (Reid and Bojanic, 2010:75). Overall, a number of customer satisfactions have been developed in order to measure customer satisfaction in the food service industry. The EDT and GAP models, as discussed in the previous section, are suitable theoretical approaches to this study. In addition to the models, the conceptual framework for the study has been explained in line with this study's objectives.

2.5. Summary of the Chapter

This chapter provided the literature review in order to present what previous studies on customer satisfaction with fast-food outlets, identify and address the gaps in those studies. The literature covered a review of studies published in international and local contexts. Some of the countries that contributed to the literature review include Malaysia, Pakistan, Nigeria, India, Spain and South Africa. The literature review was guided by the objectives of the study. The discussion focused on the following subheadings: (a) determinants of customer satisfaction; (b) level of customer satisfaction, and (c) strategic guidelines for fast-food outlets for health menu items. The next chapter will address methodological aspects of the study..

CHAPTER THREE RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

3.1. Introduction

The previous chapter provided a review of literature related to the topic under study and further discussed the theoretical framework that underpinned the study. This chapter presents the research methodology adopted in the study. Research methodology outlines the procedure followed when conducting research. Brynard, Hanekom and Brynard (2014:38) state that “research methodology focuses on the process of research and the decisions that the researcher has to take to execute the research project”. According to Wagner, Kawulich and Garner (2012: 52), a research methodology is “a section where assumptions about the nature of reality and knowledge, values and theory and practice on a given topic come together”. Research methodology includes aspects such as research approach, research design, population, sampling, data collection, data analysis, quality criteria and ethical considerations.

3.2. Research paradigm

Paradigm plays an important role in research because it conveys the researcher's perspective on how the study will be carried out to address the research challenge. Thomas Kuhn coined the term paradigm, which he defined as an established model for investigating problems and finding solutions (Kuhn, 1962). “Paradigm is an essential collection of shared views among scientists, a set of agreements about how problems are to be understood” (Kuhn, 1962). Paradigm defines “entire constellation of beliefs, values, techniques, and so on shared by members of a given community” (Creswell & Poth, 2018:35). Paradigm influences research methodology from the theoretical perspective in which the study is placed. Guba and Lincoln (1994), in (Denzin & Lincoln, 2018:164) identify philosophical assumptions as against philosophical frameworks. Philosophical assumptions comprise of ontology, epistemology, axiology, and methodology. Philosophical frameworks include positivism, post positivism, interpretivism, and critical realism. This study was based on positivism which originated from positive, positivist had a very positive view of science as they believe that science could enlighten people and in the process make the world a better place

to live in. They believe that human could improve their own world and become better people through educating themselves (Lincoln & Guban 2005).

3.2.1. Ontological position of positivism

Positivists believe there is a single, objective and stable social and physical external reality that is governed by laws. The positivist believe in the existence of an external reality and are not interested in examining the unobservable internal motivations of an individual's behaviour (Lincoln & Guban 2005). Positivists are of the opinion that a given cause has the same effect on all people. They do not consider the effect that the social, psychological, historical, or cultural context can have on behaviour. Positivists believe that this reality can be observed and measured. For positivists, reality has order and regularity (du-Plooy-Cilliers, Davis Bezuidenhout 2018). In this study, through experience given by participants the researcher will know the shop with delicious food because customers buy regularly.

3.2.2. Epistemological position of positivism

Epistemology is concerned with what is regarded as valid knowledge whereas positivists believe that valid knowledge can only be gained from objectives and empirical evidence. du-Plooy-Cilliers et al (2018) explain that the view of positivists is that only knowledge confirmed by the sense can genuinely be considered as knowledge. Positivists also believe that knowledge is the result of empirical evidence only and is obtained through testing the hypotheses against the real world (Lincoln & Guban 2005). For the hypothesis to be supported or rejected, evidence must be presented. Positivists want to learn how the world works in order to predict and control events. In this study, knowledge will be gained on customer satisfaction and strategies to ensuring continues customer satisfaction on healthier diet menu options for fast food outlets.

3.3. Research approach

Research approach is a “plan and procedure for research that span the steps from broad assumptions to detailed methods of data collection, analysis, and interpretation” (Creswell, 2014: 3). There are three broad categories that scientific research is often

premised on, namely; qualitative, quantitative and mixed methods research approaches (Hammond and Wellington, 2013). Their distinction lies in the way the researcher chooses, collects, analyses and interprets the information (du Plooy-Cilliers, Davis and Bezuidenhout, 2014:14). The choice between these methods also depends on the nature of the study and the type of data required.

Bryman (2012: 392, 635) and Creswell (2014: 201) concur that qualitative researchers are mainly concerned with meaning, that is, how individuals or objects make sense of the world, how they experience events and what meaning they attribute to phenomena and that they are more concerned with the quality of the experience, rather than causal relationship. Quantitative studies, on the other hand, are inquiries into an identified problem, based on testing a theory, measured with numbers, and analysed using statistical techniques (Creswell, 2016). The present researcher employed the quantitative research approach. This research is quantitative and descriptive in nature because the aim is to test the research hypotheses and to determine whether there are correlations between research variables. Du Plooy-Cilliers, Davis and Bezuidenhout (2014:290) indicate that “quantitative researchers collect numerical data and therefore depend on data collection methods that will assist them in producing quantifiable result”. Quantitative research is research conducted using a range of methods which use measurement to record and investigate aspects of social reality, as stated by (Bless, Higson-Smith and Sithole, 2013:394).

3.4. Research design

Research design is a written plan of a study (Maree, 2012: 156). According to Punch (2014:114), the research design “provides the reader with the information, the strategy used, conceptual framework, study population and subject, as well as the tools and procedure adopted for data collection and analysis”. Essentially, research design appears as the strategy to be followed by the researcher. The present study adopted the descriptive survey research design. Fink (2014) underscores that the survey study aims to collect data from a large population about the population’s knowledge, feelings, values, preferences and behaviour of a particular society or individuals with the aim to compare, describe or explain it. Bless, Higson-Smith and Sithole (2013:57) add that “descriptive knowledge includes data, facts, empirical generalisations and provide truthful descriptions; and that the researcher will be provided with scientific

methods for analysing and examining the source materials, by analysing and interpreting data, and by arriving at generalisation and prediction". These authors indicate that figures and statistics can be used to describe patterns and trends such as population characteristics.

3.5. Study area

The study area was the Capricorn District in the Limpopo Province of South Africa. The Capricorn District was chosen based on its accessibility and convenience to the researcher and also because it provides a diversity of fast-food outlets.

3.6. Population

The population of a study is that group about whom the researcher wants to draw conclusions or every possible case that could be included in the study (Babbie, 2010). Thomas (2017:322) refers to population as the entire set of a clearly defined group of people, where samples may be drawn with the aim of generalising from the sample to the whole population. Gray (2014:688) regards a "population as the totality of people, organisations from which a focus and sample of the study are drawn". This involves any group of individuals that has attributes which are of interest to the researcher. In this study, the target population was consumers of fast-food at outlets in the Capricorn District of the Limpopo Province. According to Statistics South Africa (2011), the current Polokwane municipal population is approximately 628999. 64.8% of the population are of working age (15-64) and this working age group was considered as potential respondents in this study. The working age is calculated to be approximately 407591 citizens. However, this study focused on those fast-food outlets where consumers order the food at the purchase counters and pay for it before purchase. The target population for this study consists of individuals who purchased food from fast food outlets such as McDonalds, Burger King, Kentucky Fried Chicken (KFC), Nandos, Fish and Chip Co., Wimpy, Chicken Licken, Debonairs, Fishaways and Steers.

It must be mentioned that with inadequate time and money, investigators are unlikely to study the whole body of relevant facts about the whole group of people under a research study. When the population of a study is too large to be included, a sample

is drawn (du Plooy-Cilliers, Davis and Bezuidenhout, 2014:135). Thereafter, the findings and conclusions of the study are generalised based on data gathered from a limited number of people. The researcher draws the conclusions about the entire population from the sample (Thomas, 2017:322).

3.7. Pilot Study

The researcher deemed it fit to pilot the data collection instrument in order to identify advantages and disadvantages. Blaxter, Hughes and Tight (2010: 138) define a pilot study as the process of checking if what the researchers have in mind can work in practice. A pilot study was conducted to pre-test the questionnaire, as advocated by Bless, Higson-Smith and Sithole (2013:394).

Survey research study must often be subject to a pilot study before the main survey can be conducted (Leedy, Ormrod and Johnson, 2019). A pre-test is a “small-scale trial of the data-collection instrument to determine clarity of questions and whether the instrument elicits the desired information” (Polit and Beck, 2006:296). The pilot study aims to assess whether questions are relevant to all members of the certain sample, whether the respondents understand all the questions, whether any of the questions have a double meaning or not, and whether any useful ideas arise to develop the survey instrument (Bryman and Bell, 2015). Essentially, pretesting is conducted in order to identify possible weaknesses in the research instruments. In this study, the questionnaire was pre-tested to check the clarity of questions and identify vague or non-acceptable questions. To do this, the researcher distributed the questionnaire to be completed by ten (10) individuals who were known to make purchases at fast-food outlets through email.

The selected sample shared the same features with the population of the study. A pilot study was conducted to check on several aspects so as to improve on the quality of data collection instruments. The participants specified that the response time for the questionnaire was approximately 20 minutes. Through the pilot study, the survey instrument was modified based on the comments and suggestions made by the pre-test subjects. Rewording some of the questions was necessary in order to remove difficult words, inconsistencies or leading questions. The variances of this nature and other information obtained from the “pilot study assisted the researcher to refine the

questionnaire” (De Vos, Strydom, Fouche, and Delport, 2005). The data collected from the pre-test did not form part of the study. In other words, pre-testing of instruments was done only to determine their validity and reliability.

3.8. Data collection

Yin (2010) indicates that data collection is one of the fundamental processes observed in scientific research by experience, observation, experiment or similar situations external to the researcher. Bertram and Christiansen (2015:44) posit that “data collection method encapsulates the procedures, techniques and tools used when collecting data from the sampled participants”. The study collected its data by means of administering a questionnaire which served as a primary source while secondary sources were drawn from the literature that was reviewed in line with the study. According to Leedy and Ormrod (2015), primary data are “those that are collected afresh and for the first time and original in their makeup while secondary data are those which have already been collected by someone else and which have passed through the statistical processes”. Instruments used in collecting the data for the study are discussed briefly in the next section.

3.8.1. Data Collection Instrument

Data collection instruments assisted the researcher to collect data from the population of interest to achieve the purpose of the study. Leedy and Ormrod (2015 :161) explain that “researchers often collect data through data collection techniques which include systematic observation, interviews or questionnaires”. This study used the questionnaire within the quantitative approach. “A questionnaire is a list of questions to be answered by the respondents” (Bertram and Christiansen, 2017:73). The questionnaire consisted of a standardised series of close-ended questions and open-ended questions relating to the research purpose. Scholars agree that this mixture of questions minimises biases in the actual study (Creswell, 2016; Bryman, 2012). Jain, Dubey and Jain (2016) explain that fairly inarticulate people will not struggle to answer close-ended questions, hence respondents can answer close-ended questions quickly.

Table 3: References for Questions

Question	Reference	Paragraph in Chapter 2
How often do you buy at a fast-food outlet?	Du Plessis (2015); Gopaul (2015)	p38 .1, p.36.2,
When you eat at a fast-food outlet, what type of food do you normally choose? & How would you describe the variety of foods on the menu offered by fast-food franchises?	Cant et al. (2014); Gopaul (2013); Mormer (2012); Gogoi (2020)	p.45.2, p.46.1, p.41.3, p.42.2
What Beverages do you expect to find on the menu of fast-food outlets? & What Beverages did you actually find on the menu of fast-food outlets?	Cant et al. (2014); Mormer (2012)	p.45.2, p.41.3
What meal items do you expect to find on the menu of fast-food outlets? & What meal items did you actually find on the menu of fast-food outlets?	Cant et al. (2014); Gopaul (2015)	p.45.2, p.36.2
What frozen treats/Desserts do you expect to find on the menu of fast-food outlets? & What frozen treats/Desserts did you actually find on the menu of fast-food outlets?	Cant et al. (2014); Choi and Reid (2018); Nguyeni (2018)	p.45.2, p.54.1, p.55.2
What meal preparation method do you expect to find on the menu of fast-food outlets? & What meal preparation method did you actually find on the menu of fast-food outlets?	Nguyeni et al. (2019); Nasir et al. (2014)	p.55.2, p.37.1
Are you generally satisfied with the “food” being sold at fast-food outlets?	Cant et al. (2014); Karki and Panthi (2018)	p.45.2, p.48.2

How satisfied/dissatisfied are you with the “variety of the menu” being sold at fast-food outlets?	Poister and Thomas (2011); Gopaul (2015); Chun and Nyam-Ochir (2020)	p.40.1, p.36.2, p.48.2
Before you make your purchase from fast-food outlets, what are your expectations about the quality of service?	Anifowose and Olalaye (2016); Kabir (2016); Polas et al. (2019); Deivanai (2016)	p.36.1, p.37.2, p.35.2, p.46.3
Before you make your purchase from fast-food outlets, what are your expectations about the quality of the food?	Zhong and Moon (2020); Mohaydin (2019); Uddin 2019; Polas et al. (2019)	p.37.2, p.38.1, p.35.3
Before you make your purchase from fast-food outlets, what are your expectations about the prices/value of the meals?	Kabir (2016); Gopaul 2015; Nasir et al. (2014); Abdullah (2013); Cardello (2013)	p.37.2, p.37.1, p.36.2, p.36.2
Before you make your purchase from fast-food outlets, what are your expectations about the convenience of the outlet?	Kabir (2016); Bujisic et al. (2014); Ryu et al. (2012); Thao (2014)	p.37.2, p.39.2, p.39.2
Before you make your purchase from fast-food outlets, what are your expectations about the atmosphere in the outlet?	Petzer and Mackay (2014); Sulek and Hensley (2004); Walter et al. (2010); Honicky et al. (2017)	p.35.2, p.39.3, p.39.3, p.48.2
What other expectations do you have when purchasing at fast-food outlets?	Ryzen (2013); Serrano et al. (2018); Mittal et al. (2005)	p.41.2, p.41.4, p.45.2

After your purchase from fast-food outlets, what was your experience with the quality of service rendered?	Thomas and Mills (2006); Van Rijswijk, et al (2008); Grunert (2005); Ghimire (2012); Khan, et al. (2013)	p.35.3,, p.45.3
Before you make your purchase from fast-food outlets, what are your expectations about the quality of the food?	Namkung and Jang (2008); Van Rijswijk, et al (2008); Cant et al. (2014)	p.35.1, p.35.3, p.45.2
Before you make your purchase from fast-food outlets, what are your expectations about the prices/value of the meals?	Uddin (2019)	p.35.2
Before you make your purchase from fast-food outlets, what are your expectations about the convenience of the outlet?	Knutson et al. (1996); Bujisic et al. (2014); Grunert (2008)	p.41.3, p.42.1, p.43.3
Before you make your purchase from fast-food outlets, what are your expectations about the atmosphere in the outlet?	Du Plessis (2015); Chun and Nyam-Ochir (2020); Gogoi (2020); Polas et al. (2019); Chow et al. (2019)	p.26.1, p.47.2, p.41.2, p.41.4
If you could improve at least two things that fast-food outlets are not doing right to guarantee that you continually purchase menu items and that you remain satisfied, what would they be?	Zhong and Moon (2020); Uddin (2019); Datsane and Fazlin (2017); Gopaul (2015); Adewale et al. (2014)	p.36. 2, p.35.1, p.37.1

3.9. Sampling and sampling methods

Sampling of the study can be defined as a process of selecting cases to be observed from a study population with the belief that the findings will be valid to the population from which the sample is drawn (Mukherji and Albon, 2015). Sampling procedures are usually categorised into probability and non-probability samples. According to Bless, Higson-Smith and Sithole (2013:166), probability sampling refers to the probability of each element of the population being able to be determined or chosen for study, whereas non-probability sampling has to do with the probability of each element of the population in a sample being mysterious. Sample size is also an important element to consider when sampling the population. Sometimes, the population is too large to be included in the study, and a sample should, therefore, be drawn (du Plooy-Cilliers, Davis and Bezuidenhout, 2014:135).

3.9.1. Sampling method

The researcher used convenience sampling to collect data. According to Bryman (2012:710), convenience sampling can be regarded as “non-probability sampling technique where subjects are selected because of their convenient accessibility and proximity to the researcher”. Convenience sampling involves selecting haphazardly those cases that are easiest to obtain for a sample. Convenience sampling enabled the researcher to select subjects based on their convenient accessibility and proximity. This means that only customers who were available during the time of data collection participated in the study. The advantages of using convenience sampling are that;

- the researcher uses whoever is available (Wagner, Kawulich and Garner, 2012:92).
- samples are easy to obtain, and
- it is “mostly used, less expensive and there is no need for a list of all the population elements” (Acharya, Prakash, Saxena and Nigam, 2013:332). In this study, the sample frame was unknown. Researchers visited various fast-food outlets and used a sample size of 400 customers who were available during the visit to the store. Bertram and Christiansen (2017) support that sample size of more than 300 in a quantitative study is acceptable.

3.9.2. Data Collection Procedure

The researcher sought and obtained ethical clearance (see Appendix B) from the University of Limpopo's Research Ethics Committee. The questionnaire was accompanied by a cover letter that elaborated the purpose of the research, procedure and ethical considerations followed by the researcher (see Appendices A and C). The researcher personally visited various fast-food outlets to ask emails of the customers who wished to participate in the study. Due to the lockdown restrictions imposed by Government because of the COVID-19 pandemic, the researcher collected data using Google Form. Respondents were sent the link via their email to complete the questionnaire that was designed and converted into Google Form.

3.10. Data analysis

According to Uden, Wang, Pei Hong and Chang Yang (2013: 4), data analysis refers to statistical analysis and data mining in quantitative research. These authors add that data analysis is "the process of making sense of the data collected which involves consolidating, reducing, and interpreting the information that has been collected". The data was analysed using descriptive methods to determine the mean, median, mode, standard deviation, skewedness and kurtosis from the coded data and inferential statistics such as regression analysis, Pearson's correlations coefficient and comparisons of means. Descriptive analysis provides a statistical summary of data and the primary aim is to provide a coherent picture of a large amount of data while the use of inferential statistics helps the research to infer conclusions from the data (Struwig and Stead, 2013:165). The normality of the data was tested using the Kolmogorov-Smirnov test. This enabled all close-ended and open-ended questions to be analysed accurately and to be free from either error or misrepresentation. The assistance of a statistician was also sought for this purpose to ensure that the analysis process was accurate and free from neither error nor misrepresentation. This is in line with De Vos et al. (2005:333) who assert that "the purpose of data analysis is to manage and classify data, as well as to structure the findings so as to reach a conclusion".

3.11. Reliability, validity and objectivity

According to Yin (2009), reliability and validity tests can play a pivotal role in ascertaining the quality of any empirical social research by providing accurate and

repeatable measures of the research hypotheses when a data collection tool such as a questionnaire is used.

3.11.1. Reliability

The manifestation of consistency in repeated measurements of the same phenomenon is referred to as reliability (Bryman, 2012). This essentially refers to consistency with which a single construct can be measured repeatedly at different points in time, obtaining the same result each time (Bhattacharjee, 2012). According to Bryman and Bell, (2015), the four most common ways of measuring reliability for any empirical method are inter-rater reliability, test-retest reliability, parallel forms reliability, and internal consistency reliability. Internal consistency refers to the extent to which all of the items in a scale measure the different aspects of the same attribute (Bailey, 1987). “Internal consistency is typically measured using Cronbach’s Alpha (α). Cronbach’s Alpha ranges from 0 to 1, with higher values indicating greater internal consistency (and ultimately reliability)” (Cho and Kim 2015; Taber 2018). Cortina (1993) and George and Malley (2003) indicate that the common guidelines for evaluating Cronbach’s Alpha are:

- .00 to .69 = Poor
- .70 to .79 = Fair
- .80 to .89 = Good
- .90 to .99 = Excellent/Strong

For the purpose of the study, the researcher used the internal consistency (Cronbach’s alpha) reliability test. Cronbach’s alpha is often used in assessing the reliability of tests for knowledge with questions that have more than two possible responses (Bhattacharjee, 2012). This study used Cronbach’s alpha to assess the reliability of knowledge on customer satisfaction on health menu items since most questions had more than two responses. Figure 9 below shows the reliability test results:

Reliability Statistics

Cronbach's Alpha	Cronbach's Alpha Based on Standardized Items	N of Items
.920	.919	36

Figure 6: Internal consistency (Cronbach's alpha) reliability test

As indicated in figure 7, Cronbach's alpha coefficient was greater than 0.7. Cronbach's alpha ranges from $r=0$ to 1, with $r=0.7$ or greater considered as sufficiently reliable (Deniz and Alsaffar, 2013). Taber (2018) adds that Cronbach values of 0.7 or higher indicate acceptable internal consistency. This affirms that this study's results were reliable and that there was an internal constancy of measures. Refer to Appendix D (Items Total Statistics), which outlines Cronbach results as per the questions on the questionnaire.

3.11.2. Validity

Validity refers to the potential of a design or an instrument to achieve or measure what it intends to achieve or measure (Kumar, 2014:21). Brynard et al. (2014: 50) identified the following types of validity measures taken into consideration in research, namely; face and content, concurrent validity and construct validity.

3.11.2.1. *Face validity*

Face validity is concerned with the way in which an instrument appears to the participants (Brynard et al., 2014:50). For example, do they view it as so simple, boring or does it appear too difficult? In essence, face validity is based on the subjective judgment of the researcher and respondents. Face validity was maintained by designing a questionnaire pleasant to an eye and constructing only questions relevant to the study.

3.11.2.2. *Content validity*

Content validity refers to the correctness and appropriateness of the questions included in a questionnaire (Brynard et al., 2014:50). Content validity is judged on the basis of the extent to which statements or questions represent the issue they are supposed to measure as judged by the researcher, readership and experts in the field. The judgment that an instrument is capable of measuring what it is supposed to measure is primarily based upon the logical link between the research questions and objectives of the study (Kumar, 2014:213). This requires the justification of each question in relation to the objectives of the study. "There is no statistical test to determine whether a measure adequately covers a content area as content validity usually depends on the judgment of experts in the field. Unclear and obscure questions can be amended, and ineffective and non-functioning questions can be

discarded by the advice of the reviewers” (Haradhan, 2017). The researcher, together with the supervisor closely examined the questions on the instruments to ensure that they measured the desired variables. The correctness, relevance and lucidity of the questions were tested in a preliminary investigation. This helped the researcher to determine whether or not the questions included were relevant to the research problem.

3.11.2.3 *Construct validity*

Construct validity refers to the degree to which a measurement technique uncovers the information which it was designed to uncover (Brynard et al., 2014:50). To meet this criterion, the researcher ensured that questions in the questionnaire were specifically designed to largely obtain quantitative data, through closed- and open-ended questions. The researcher standardised the data collection instruments by comparing and contrasting them with the relevant literature review. Additionally, the construct validity of the instrument was checked by factor analysis (Pett, Lackey and Sullivan, 2003). Factor analysis shows how the correlations between the questionnaire items can be explained by correlations between each questionnaire item and an underlying latent construct, the factor (Onwuegbuzie and Johnson, 2006).

According to Fink (2010), construct validity is the extent to which the measure ‘behaves’ in a way that is consistent with theoretical hypotheses and represents how well scores on the instrument are indicative of the theoretical construct. The research instrument used for this study proved to be reliable and valid. The discussion regarding validity of the instrument will be presented in Chapter 4.

3.11.3. Objectivity

According to Harding (2015), a study can be objective if it is precise, unbiased, open, honest and receptive to criticism. The researcher did not in any way manipulate the participants into taking part in the study. Participants were not coerced in any way and the research findings represent the actual data collected from the participants.

3.12. Ethical Considerations

According to the University of Limpopo Manual and Guidelines for Postgraduate Students (2019: 23), there are several ethical issues that should be considered when

conducting a scientific study. This is in line with Welman, Kruger and Mitchell (2005: 181) who point out that ethical considerations in research are important and come into play in three stages of research projects: firstly, during the recruitment of participants, secondly, measurement procedure during which participants are subjected to and finally, in the release of the results obtained.

3.12.1. Permission to Conduct the Study

Alemu (2010: 119) indicates that it is important to obtain permission from the relevant statutory bodies such as the University prior to collecting data if the researcher aims to embark on a scientific study. For this study, there was no need for the researcher to obtain gatekeeper hence the study was targeting independent customers of the various fast-food outlets. Permission to proceed with the study was granted by the Research Ethics Committee at the University of Limpopo. This is in line with the provisions contained in the University of Limpopo Manual and Guidelines for Postgraduate Students (2019).

3.12.2. Informed Consent

According to Kumar (2011: 244), informed consent implies that subjects are made adequately aware of the type of information the researcher wants from them, why the information is being sought, what purpose it will be put to and how they are expected to participate in the study. The study complied with this assertion by informing all the participants about the purpose of the study prior to data collection. The informed consent was attached to the questionnaire during the online survey for the purposes of indicating that the participants were taking part in the study voluntarily.

3.12.3. Anonymity and Confidentiality

According to Leedy and Ormrod (2015: 107), research involving human beings should guard against infringing the right to the privacy of the respondents. The respondents were promised that their identity will not be disclosed. In line with this assertion, anonymity was ensured by requesting the respondents to not record their names on the questionnaires. As pointed out by Hoyle, Harris and Judd (2002:59), the researcher ought to explain to the respondents the features that can easily identify the respondents and that those features should not be recorded on the data. The

confidentiality of the respondents was upheld, as advocated by Hoyle, et al., (2002:59) and Oliver (2004). Collected data was strictly restricted to the researcher only.

3.12.4. Scientific Integrity

According to Burns and Grove (2011), it is imperative that researchers adhere to principles of scientific integrity. The researcher presented the data raw as it was collected. All the data that was analysed and reported was not fiddled with, misrepresented, falsified, or fabricated. There was no influence, direct or indirect, from the researcher to the participants aimed at dictating the way they answered the questions. Furthermore, the researcher ensured that cited works are duly acknowledged using the Harvard Referencing Style. This style of referencing is acceptable in terms of the University of Limpopo's Manual and Guidelines for Postgraduates Students (2015). Plagiarism can be defined as academic dishonesty where one presents other people's ideas as his/her ideas (Ferro and Martins, 2016). The researcher ensured that plagiarism is not committed by submitting the document to the Turnitin software to detect any levels of similarities with other people's works.

3.13. Summary of the Chapter

Firstly, this chapter focused on the scientific research methodology employed by the researcher in the study. Secondly, the research design and approach adopted in the study were also discussed in detail. Lastly, ethical considerations which guided the study were also discussed as well as how this study met the requirements of the quality criteria prescribed for research outputs. The next chapter focuses on the analysis and interpretation of the collected data from the respondents.

CHAPTER FOUR DATA ANALYSIS AND INTERPRETATION

4.1. Introduction

The previous chapter focused on the research methodology employed by the researcher in this study. This chapter focuses on the analysis and interpretation of the collected data from the respondents. It aims to present and interpret the empirical findings of this research. This chapter presents the data analysis and interpretation in relation to the respondents' satisfaction with healthier menu items from fast-food outlets. Data analysis is the mechanism for reducing and organising data to produce findings that require interpretations by the researcher (Burns and Grove, 1998:744). A questionnaire (Appendix C) was used to solicit data from the respondents who were fast-food outlets customers.

4.2. Response rate

Response rate is the proportion of all sample members who are eligible to participate in the survey from which complete and usable data are collected (Kviz, 1977; Lavrakas 2008). Lavrakas further indicates that response rate is used as a tool to understand the degree of success in obtaining completed questionnaires from a sample, thus reflecting the degree of cooperation from all respondents in a sample (Kviz, 1977; Fincham, 2008). Surveys that have high response rates provide a measure of reassurance that the findings that are obtained can be projected to the population from which the sample was drawn (Yosephine and Agustini, 2018). Accordingly, Baruch (1999) posits that a response rate of 70% is reasonably acceptable. Leedy and Omrod (2010) confirm that the minimum required response rate for a quantitative study is 70%.

Out of 400 respondents, 329 questionnaires were completed and returned, meaning that this study has achieved a response rate of 82%, which is still a high response rate. Lupu and Michelitch (2018) explain that a response rate greater than 60% is probably more acceptable and important for the purpose of the study. Table 4 below depicts the response rate of the distributed questionnaire.

Table 4: Questionnaire response rate

Sample size	No of Questionnaires returned	Response rate
400	329	82%

4.3. Data Management

Data management focuses on the acquisition and preparation of data for the purpose of the study. This includes uploading data to data stores, creating backup copies of data files, data cleaning, that is, to prepare data for inclusion in the study (Osborne, 2010; Karp, 2016; Allen 2017). For the purpose of this study, this section will focus on data capturing, reliability and validity for the data collected.

4.3.1. Data Capturing

In preparing data for inclusion in this study, the quantitative data collected were initially coded into numerical representations, so that a score of statistical analysis could be performed using the Software Package for Social Sciences (SPSS) 26 Software. A code was developed for various question items in the questionnaire, and numerical codes were assigned for each response. These responses were turned into a series of numbers for capturing the data using the SPSS for further statistical analysis. The researcher checked and cleaned the data by examining the coded data for any incorrectly assigned codes and corrected the errors by reviewing the original data. It was then imported into Microsoft Excel Workbook-format. A written report with explanations of all variables and their outcome was compiled. A Cross Analysis of variables, where necessary was performed, attaching statistical probabilities to indicate the magnitude of differences or associations. The researcher also made use of the following:

- the calculation of frequencies per categories expressed in tables and figures.
- percentages per categories.

The calculations enabled the researcher to describe trends in the data and also to determine whether relationships existed between variables. The results are presented using tables and figures and discussed accordingly below each table and/or figure.

4.3.2. Reliability

As explained in Chapter 3 (cf. 3.10.1), it is important to test the reliability of the data collection tool to ensure that the study remains valuable. As such, the Cronbach's Alpha was used to test the internal consistency. Table 5 shows the reliability results for each of the Institutional DINESERV dimensions used in this study.

Table 5: Reliability results

Dimension	Cronbach Alpha	
<i>Service Quality</i>	.880	Good
<i>Food quality</i>	.807	Good
<i>Price value</i>	.702	Fair
<i>Convenience</i>	.710	Fair
<i>Atmosphere</i>	.706	Fair

4.3.3. Validity

Validity refers to the ability of the instrument to measure what it intends to measure (Kumar, 2014). Factor Analysis is used to ensure that the variables they have used to measure a particular concept are measuring the concept intended (Kumar, 2014). To measure the validity of this study, Factor Analysis, which focuses on the principal component analysis, was conducted to determine whether the five dimensions were arranged appropriately to measure the determinants and level of customer satisfaction towards healthier menu items offered by fast-food outlets. Factor Analysis for this study was measured by the Kaiser-Meyer-Olkin (KMO) measure of sampling adequacy and Bartlett's test of sphericity (Williams, Onsman and Brown, 2010). KMO test allows the researchers to ensure that the data they have are suitable to run a Factor Analysis and therefore determine whether or not they have set out what they intended to measure (Williams et al., 2010).

Table 6: The Kaiser-Meyer-Olkin (KMO) measure of sampling adequacy and Bartlett’s test of sphericity

KMO and Bartlett’s Test		
Kaiser-Meyer-Olkin Measure of Sampling Adequacy.		.801
Bartlett's Test of Sphericity	Approx. Chi-Square	664.785
	Df	6
	Sig.	.000

“The KMO index ranges from 0 to 1.0, with a minimum value of 0.50 being acceptable”, (Williams, et al., 2010:5). This study also conducted Bartlett’s test of sphericity in order to determine whether there is a relationship between the variables (Sozer, 2008:99) and should prove significant ($P < 0.05$) in order for Factor Analysis to be acceptable (Williams et al., 2010). The results for this study show that the KMO value was .801, and Bartlett’s test of sphericity was significant ($X=664.785$, $df= 6$, $Sig.=.000$), indicating that the use of Factor Analysis was appropriate. “Small values (less than 0.05) of the significance level indicate that a factor analysis may be useful with data”, indicated by Williams et al. (2010).

It is also significant to consider the communalities for this study. “Communalities refers to the percentage of a variables variance that contributes to the correlation with other variables” (Yong and Pearce 2013). Yong and Pearce further indicates that the initial communalities are, “for correlation analyses, the proportion of variance accounted for in each variable by the rest of the variables”, while “extraction communalities are estimates of the variance in each variable accounted for by the factors in the factor solution”. Small values indicate variables that do not fit well with the factor solution, and should possibly be dropped from the analysis.

Table 7 Below shows that the extraction communalities for this study are acceptable, and they do fit well with others. This is because all the items were above 0.4, showing that the items correlate with one another (Wiid and Diggines, 2013:241).

Table 7: Communalities

Communalities		
Service quality	Initial	Extraction
I expected friendly staff	1.000	.794
I expected a friendly manager	1.000	.662

I expected that the staff to be knowledgeable about the food and promotions	1.000	.685
I expected the staff to be attentive and energetic/vibrant	1.000	.749
Atmosphere		
I expected the outlet to be clean	1.000	.938
I expected a dining-in feeling	1.000	.565
I expected staff to be in uniform	1.000	.746
Food quality		
I expected tasty food	1.000	.585
I expected the food to have good eye appeal (the food must be presentable)	1.000	.621
I expected the food to be fresh	1.000	.700
Convenience		
I expected extended service hours	1.000	.832
I expected safe parking	1.000	.826
I expected it to be a walking distance away	1.000	.785
Extraction Method: Principal Component Analysis.		

According to Wiid and Diggins (2013:241), “a loading equal to or greater than 0.40 can be considered meaningful”. From Table 7 above, it can be seen that the factor loadings in this study for the items range from 0.662 to 0.794, above the minimum threshold of 0.40. The items loaded significantly on the five factors (dimensions) as conceptualised and no items loaded highly on more than one factor (dimension). These results indicate the factors that are considered to be the real determinants.

4.4. Empirical Findings

Data analysis is arranged according to the questions asked on the questionnaire and where necessary, responses are categorised according to the dimensions relevant for the questions asked.

4.4.1. Respondents' Background Information

To have a better understanding of the respondents' perspective, it was necessary to collect their background information. Demographic variables such as gender, age, the frequent number of purchases from fast-food outlets and the respondents' descriptions of various foods offered on the menu by fast-food outlets were provided. For interpretative convenience, the results were grouped, interpreted and presented based on the distributed questionnaires. Figures 8,10,11, and 12 show the results relating to background information of the respondents.

4.4.1.1 Gender of the respondents

Respondents were asked to indicate their gender. This was meant to determine gender distribution of the respondents who participated in the survey on customer satisfaction from fast food outlets. Figure 8 below illustrates the gender. Out of the 329 respondents, 182 (55%) were male respondents and 147(45%) were females.

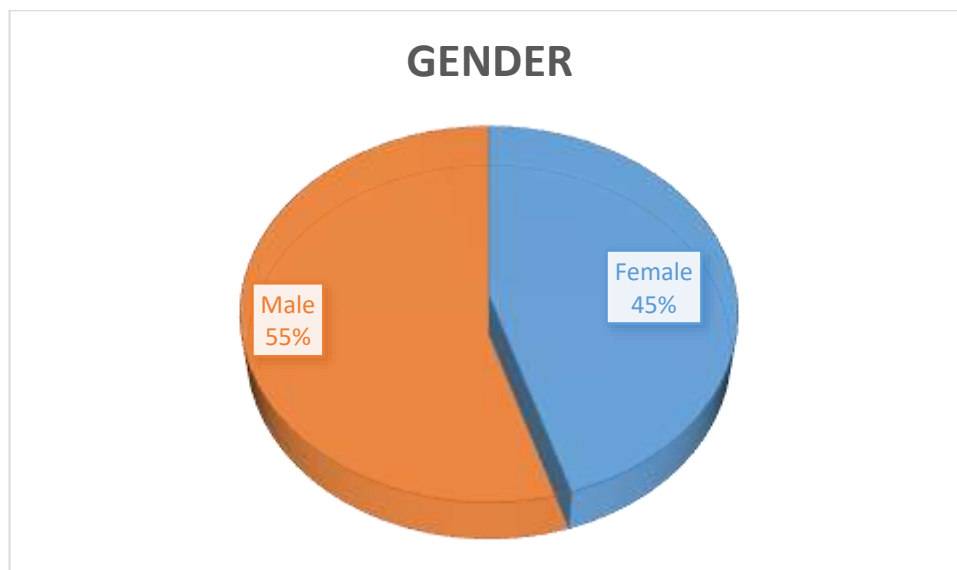


Figure 7: Gender of the respondents (n=329)

Figure 8 above shows that there were considerably more male respondents than female ones. The large number of females could be attributed to gender equity preferences. More men than women reported eating at fast-food restaurants because they thought these restaurants were inexpensive and economical (Driskel and Morse, 2009). According to Kayisoğlu and İçöz (2014), a significant relationship between gender and fast-food choice type exist. Even though the results show that the male

respondents were more than female respondents, there was a satisfactory balance of gender distribution in that both male and female consume fast foods.

4.4.1.1. Age categories of the respondents

Respondents were asked to indicate their age categories. The question intended to show age groups of the respondents who made purchases from fast-food outlets. Janssen, et al. (2017) indicate that there is contrasting effects and a lack of consensus regarding age as determinants of fast-food purchases. The results indicate that the age categories of the respondents ranged from 18 years and above 26 years. Figure 9 below depicts age of respondents divided into three groups that were fairly represented.

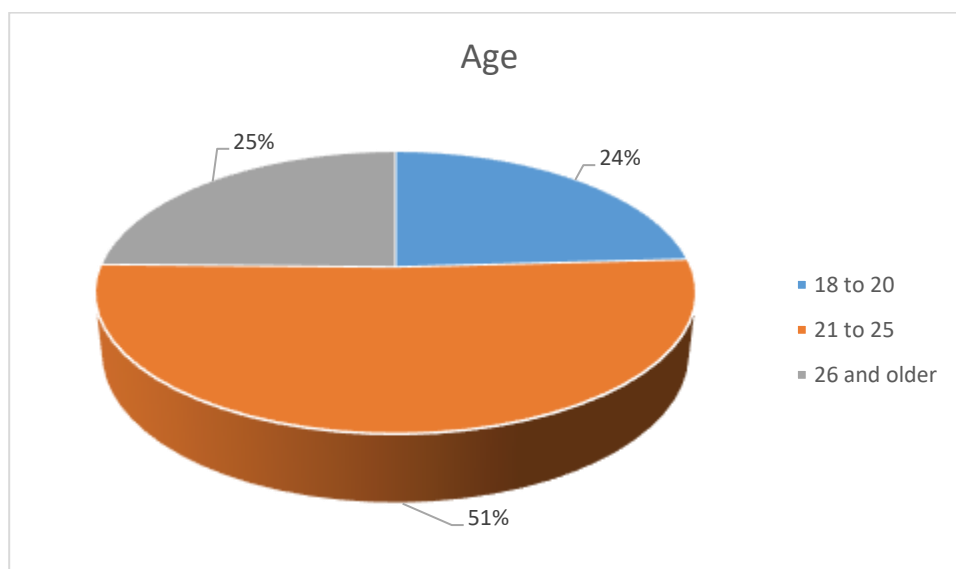


Figure 8: Age of the respondents (n=329)

Seventy-nine (24%) of the respondents were aged from 18 -20 years, 169 (51%) aged from 21 - 25 years, while 81(25%) were 26 years old and above. This illustrates that more than half of the respondents surveyed were amongst the age group of 21-25 years.

4.4.1.2. Frequency of purchases from fast-food outlets by respondents

Question on how many times did the respondents usually eat in a fast-food outlet, was asked. The intention was to determine how frequent the respondents purchased from fast-food outlets, thus soliciting knowledge and experiences that the respondents possessed with regard to fast-food outlets. This question was necessary to confirm

that the respondents were capable of participating and provided data for this study. Figure 10 below illustrates the frequency of purchases made by the respondents from fast-food outlets. The respondents were asked to indicate the number of times they are likely to purchase from fast-foods outlets within a week according to three purchase categories, namely; more than three times a week, up to three times a week and hardly ever.

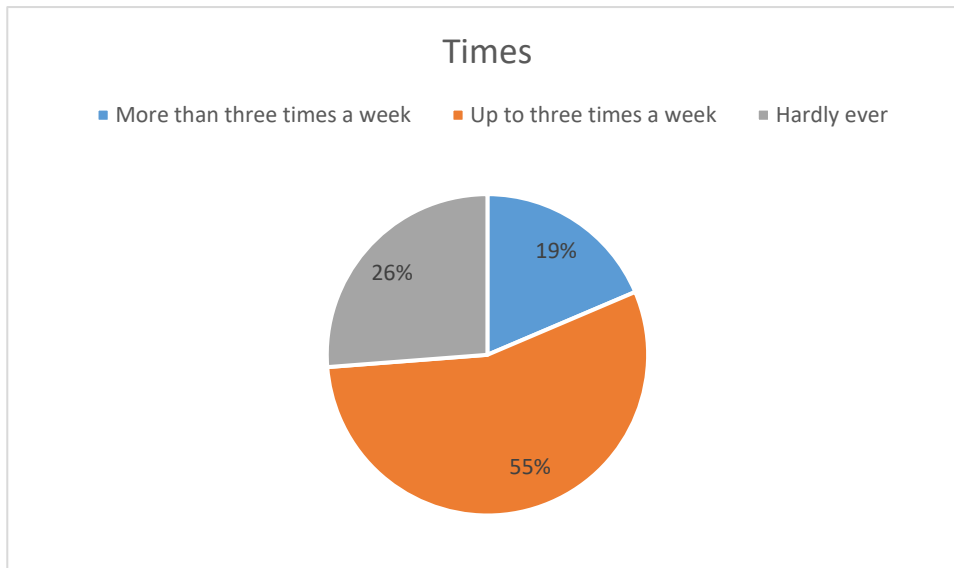


Figure 9: Frequent number of purchases from fast food outlets

The results reveal that 61(19%) out of 329 respondents made more than three purchases weekly from fast food outlets, 182 (55%) up to three purchases a week and 86 (26%) indicated that they hardly ever made purchases from fast food outlets. This suggests that all the respondents had at least made a purchase at fast-food outlets. Research shows that 70% of the consumers go for takeaways once a month (Lindberg, Salomonson, Sundström and Wendine, 2018). South Africa has shown an increased consumption of fast food (Manohar and Rehman, 2018). The results revealed that the respondents were making purchases at fast-food outlets.

Respondents were asked to explain their answer on the frequency of purchases from fast-food outlets. One hundred and ninety-eight (60%) answered the question. Out of 198 respondents, 33 (17%) forwarded the following reasons:

- Convenient as it is faster and easier to access meals.

- Meals are tastier.
- Preference of eating out.
- Availability whenever a need arises. Reasons such as always travelling or staying alone, and laziness to prepare meals were given.

The respondents who indicated that they made purchases up to three times and those who hardly ever made purchases provided similar reasons on the frequency of their purchases at fast-food outlets. These reasons are summarised as follows and are listed according to the respondents' frequency in making purchases at fast-food outlets:

- Health and dietary constraints were mentioned, with some respondents indicating that they cared about their health and fitness while others stated their intention to lose weight.
- Financial constraints (i.e. no budget) were stated as reasons for not purchasing at fast-food outlets while others pointed out that fast food meals were expensive.
- Staying far away from fast food outlets.
- Preference of home cooked meals and avoiding a lot of spices used at fast food outlets.

Some respondents indicated that they just did not like fast food meals but could not explain further.

4.4.1.3. Food choices from fast food outlets by respondents

On this aspect, the respondents were requested to indicate the type of food they would normally choose when purchasing from fast-food outlets. Nine categories, namely; yogurt, salads, fried food, vegetables, meat/chicken/fish, desserts, fresh fruit, and grilled food, were listed and the respondents were to tick as many appropriate food choices as possible. The results are presented in Figure 11.

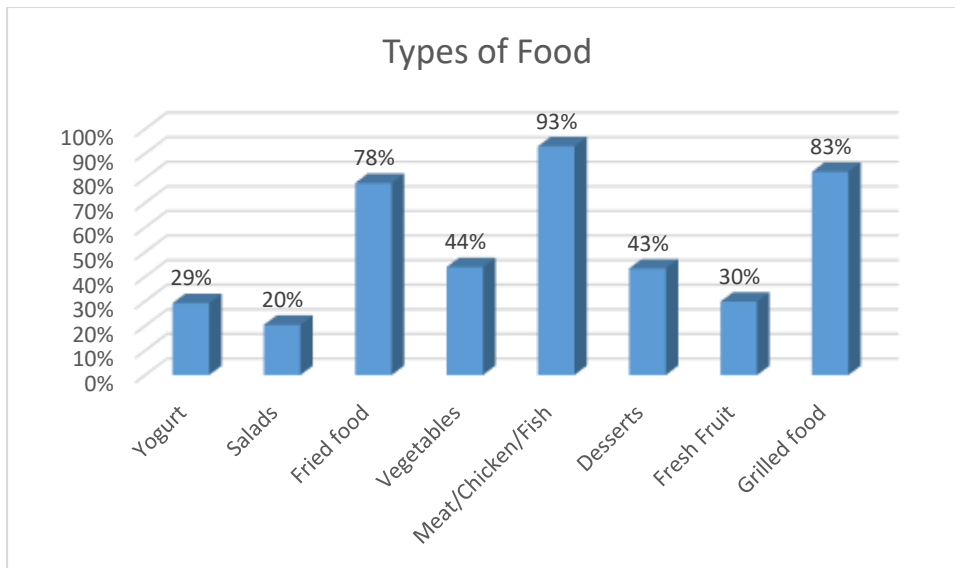


Figure 10: Food respondents chose at fast food outlets (N=329)

As shown in Figure 11, the results indicate that 307(93%) respondents normally chooses meat/chicken/fish, 273 (83%) chose grilled food, 258 (78%) chose fried food, 145 (44%) salads, 143 (44%), 103 (31%) fresh fruit, and lastly, 98 (29) chose yoghurt. This indicates that the respondents are marginally prone to purchase grilled food more than fried food. Healthier diet menu items are identified to be food items that are low in fat and/or calories. Cant et al. (2014) state that healthier diet items included a menu such as salads, grilled items (e.g. grilled chicken, grilled burgers, grilled wraps, grilled fish), muesli and yoghurt breakfasts.

4.4.2. The menu variety of foods offered by fast-food outlets.

Respondents were asked to describe the variety of foods on the menu offered by fast-food outlets. A 4-point scale of poor, fair, good and excellent was used to indicate their responses. Figure 12 represents the respondents' response to the variety of foods on the menu offered by fast-food outlets.

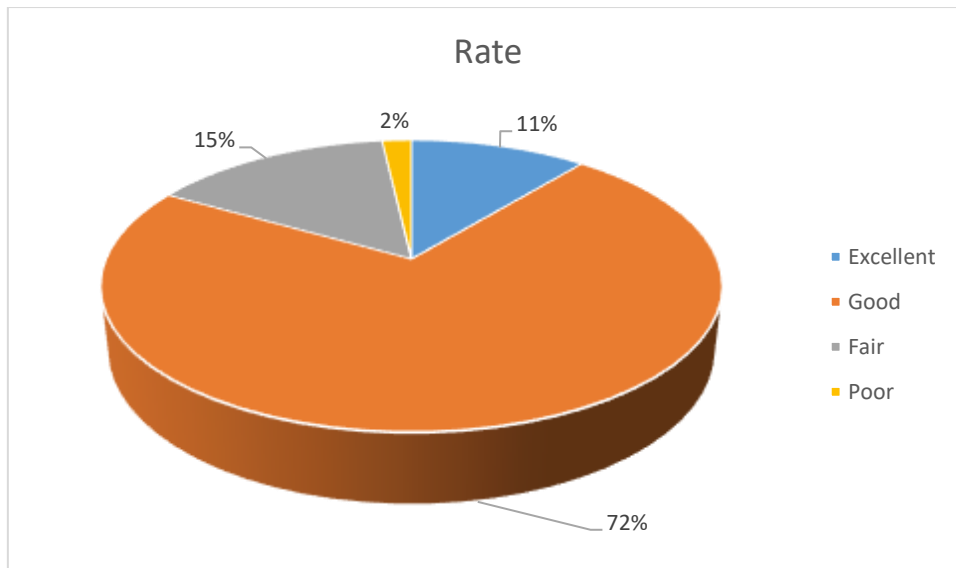


Figure 11: Menu variety offered from fast food outlets

Figure 12 indicates that 6 (2%) respondents described the variety of foods on the menu offered by fast-food outlets as poor, 49 (15%) as fair, 238 (72%) as good, and only 36 (11%) as excellent. The majority described the menu variety offered at fast-food outlets as being good. This relates well with Figure 14 on frequent purchases which indicated that a sizeable number of 55% were making purchases up to three times. This shores up the notion that the respondents were happy with the meals, although there is still room for improvement to yield full satisfaction. Other reasons forwarded included issues such as expensive meals and healthy diets.

4.4.3. Healthier food options

Data was collected on healthier diet menu items variables on the questionnaire. For analytical convenience, the results were grouped and presented based on the distributed questionnaires. Healthier diet menu items variables included beverages, meal items, frozen treats/desserts on the menu of fast-food outlets and the satisfaction with the variety of the menu.

4.4.3.1. Expected Beverages on the menu of fast-food outlets

The question, “What beverages do you expect to find on the menu of fast-food outlets?”, was asked with the intention to identify beverages that were found on the menu of fast-food outlets and to determine if the beverages were provided as the respondents expected. A list of beverages was given and the respondents were given

the latitude to select those applicable to them. Figure 13 illustrates the beverages that the respondents expected to find on the menu of fast-food outlets.

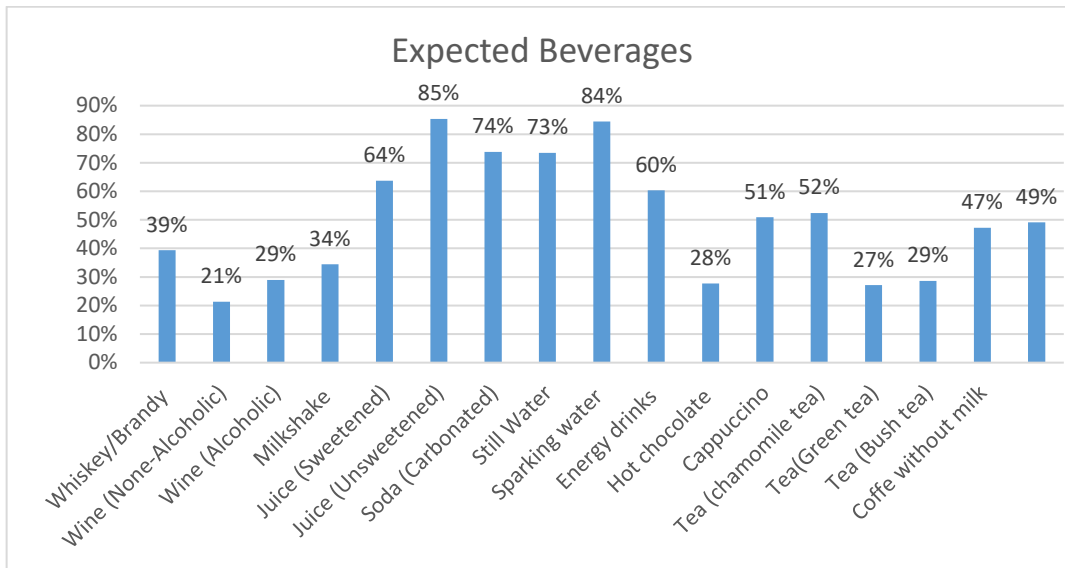


Figure 12: Respondents' Expected Beverages (n=329)

Figure 13 indicates that 129 (39%) respondents expected to find beers on the menu of fast-food outlets, 70 (21%) expected whiskey/brandy, 95(29%) wine (non–alcoholic), 113 (34%) wine (alcoholic), 209 (64%) milkshake, 280 (85%) juice (sweetened), 242 (74%) juice (unsweetened), 241 (73%) expected soda (carbonated), 277 (73%) still water, 198 (60%) sparkling water, and 91 (28%) expected energy drinks on the menu of fast-food outlets. The results also show that 167 (51%) expected hot chocolate, 172 (52%) cappuccino,161 (49%) coffee without milk, while 155 (47%) expected bush tea, 94 (29%) while 89 (27%) expected Chamomile tea on the menu of the fast-food outlets.

4.4.3.2. Expected beverages found on the menu of fast-food outlets

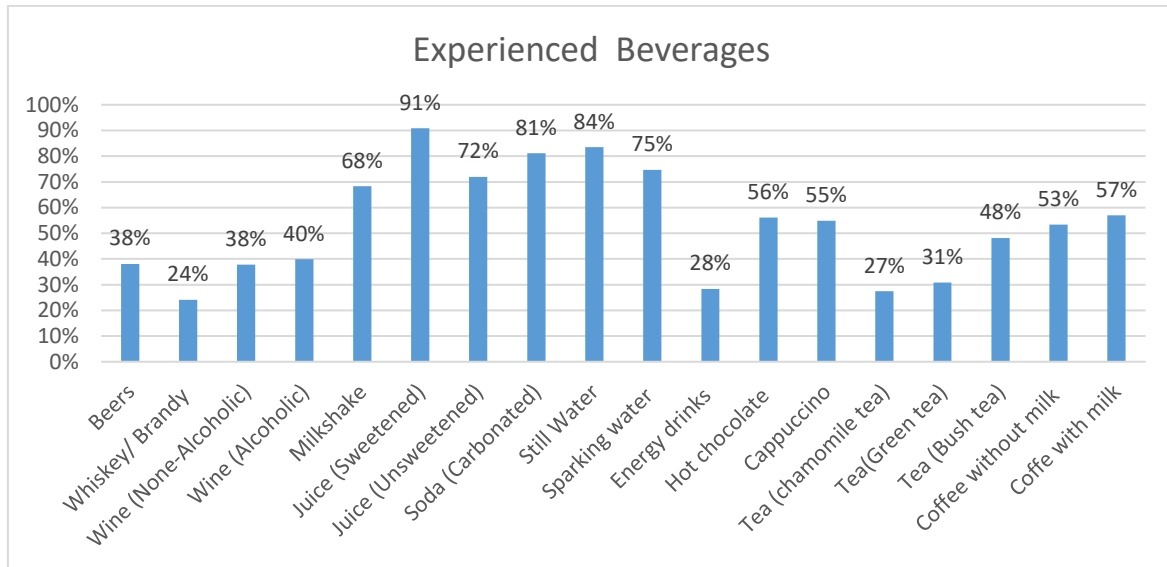


Figure 13: Beverages on the menu of fast food outlets

Hundred and twenty-four (38%) stated that they found beers on the menu of fast-food outlets, 78 (24%) found whiskey/brandy, 128 (37%) wine (non-alcoholic), and 130 (40%) indicated that they found wine (alcoholic) on the menu. Figure 16 also reveals that 222 (68%) respondents found milkshake on the menu, 299 (91%) juice (sweetened), 237 (72%) juice (unsweetened), 267 (81%) soda (carbonated), and 92 (28%) found energy drinks on the menu of fast-food outlets. The results also show that 275 (84%) respondents found still water on the menu, 246 (75%) sparkling water, 188 (56%) hot chocolate, 181 (55%) cappuccino, 188 (57%) coffee with milk, 176 (54%) coffee without milk, 159 (48%) bush tea, 103 (31%) while 88 (27%) found Chamomile tea on the menu of fast-food outlets.

From the Figure 14 above, there is a slight difference in the number of respondents who indicated what they expected on the menu compared to what they actually found on the menu. For example, Figure 16 reveals that 94 (28%) respondents expected to find wine (non-alcoholic) on the menu while 130 (40%) respondents indicated that they actually found wine (non-alcoholic) on the menu of fast-food outlets. This is an example of expectancy confirmation/disconfirmation which indicates that a pre-purchase can be matched or mismatched with performance experience.

4.4.3.3. Expected Meal items on the menu of fast-food outlets

Figure 15 below presents expected meal items on the menu items of fast food outlets.

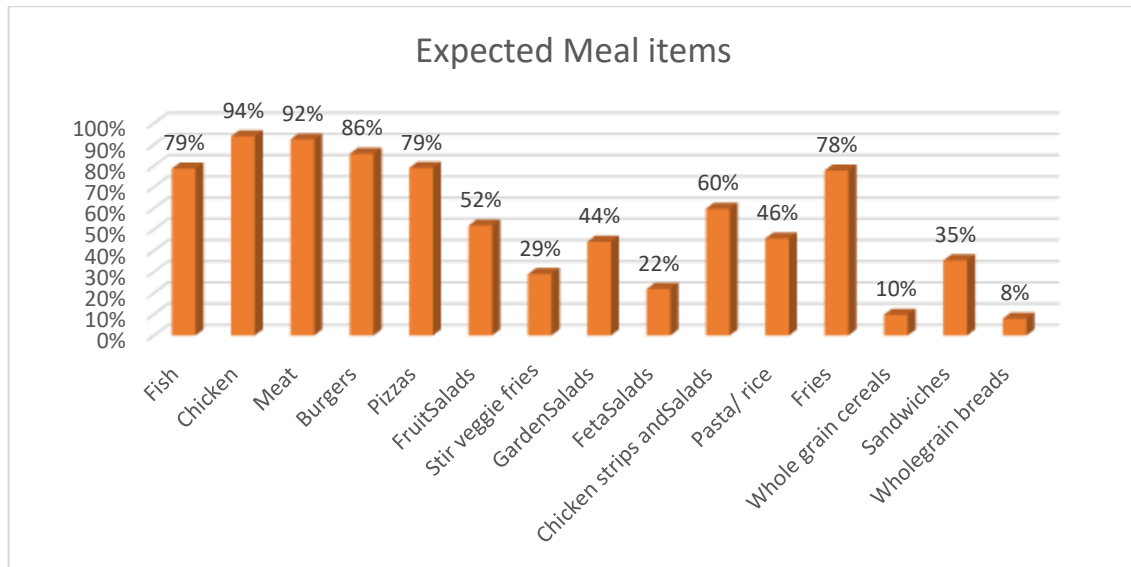


Figure 14: Respondents' expected meal items on the menu of fast-food outlets

Out of 329 respondents, 309 (94%) stated that they were expecting to find chicken on the menu items of fast-food outlets, 304 (92%) were expecting meat, 282 (86%) burgers, 260 (79%) pizzas, 256 (78%) fish, 256 (78%) were expecting fries, 195 (59%) chicken strips and salads, 169 (51%) fruit salads, 151 (46%) pasta/rice, 143 (44%) garden salads, 115 (35%) sandwiches, 94 (29) stir veggies fries, 71 (22%) feta salads, 32 (10%) whole grain cereals while 26 (8%) were expecting wholegrain breads. When coming to "Other option", only two respondents indicated that they were expecting to find porridge on the menu of fast-food outlets.

4.4.3.4. Experienced meal items on the menu of fast food outlets

Respondents were also asked to indicate the meal items found on the menu of fast-food items.

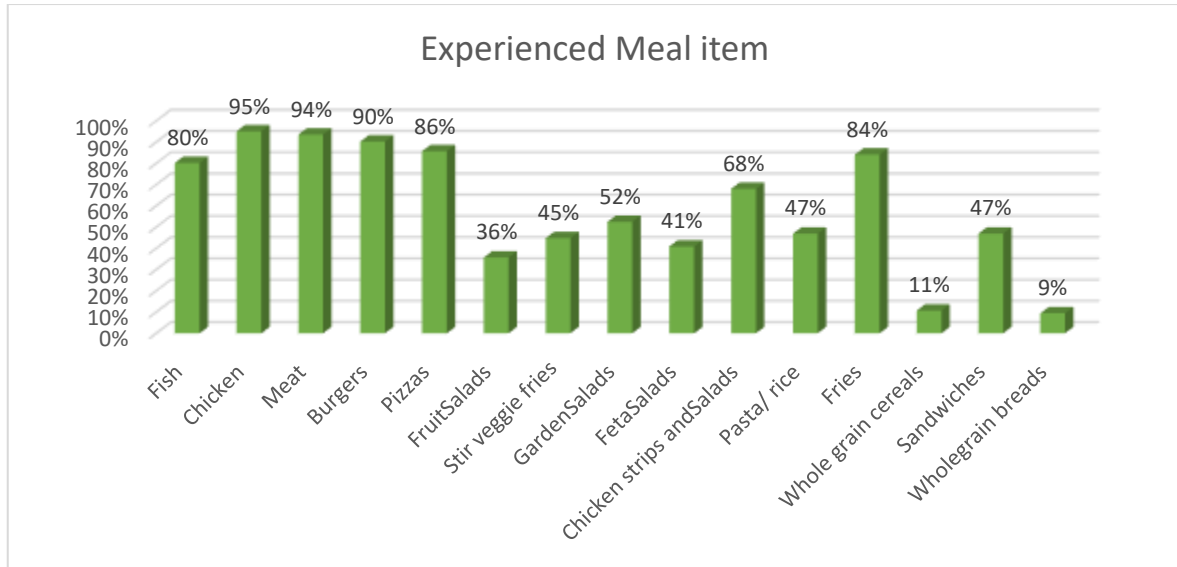


Figure 15: Respondents' experienced meal items on the menu

When coming to what the respondents actually found on the menu of fast-food outlets, 313 (95%) actually found chicken on the menu, 308 (94%) meat, and 261 (79%) actually found fish on the menu. Figure 18 also shows that 297 (90%) actually found burgers on the menu, 282 (86%) found pizzas, 116 (35%) found fruit salads, 149 (45%) found stir veggie fries, 173 (53%) found garden salads, 132 (40%) found feta salads, 225 (68%) found chicken strips and salads, 152 (46%) found pasta/rice, 277 (84%) found fries, 35 (11%) found whole grain cereals, 156 (47%) found sandwiches, and lastly, 31 (9%) actually found whole grain breads on the menu of fast-food outlets. One respondent actually found porridge as 'another option', while others found "kota".

4.4.3.5. Frozen treats/desserts the menu of fast-food outlets

Figure 17 below presents the results on frozen treats/desserts that the respondents were expecting to find on the menu of fast-food outlets.

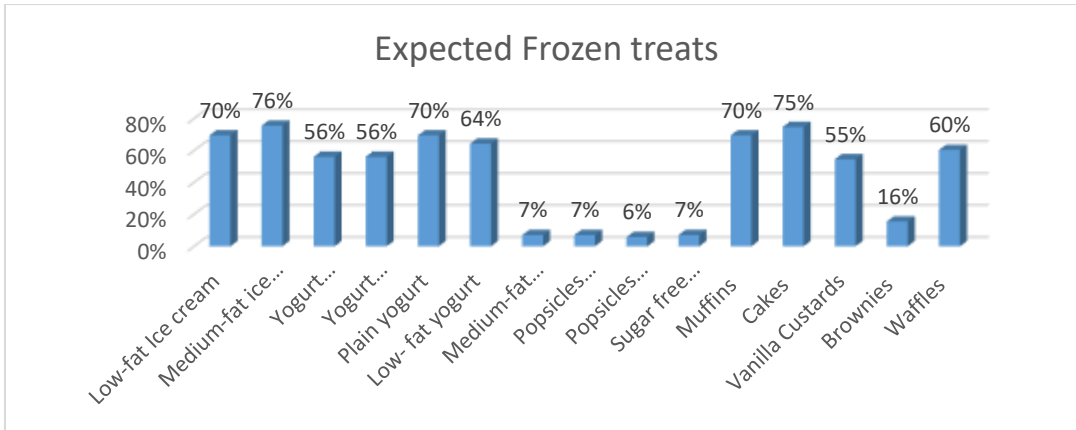


Figure 16: Respondents' expected frozen treats /desserts

Results reveal that the respondents who were expecting to find low fat ice cream were 226 (69%) in number, 249 (76%) were expecting medium fat ice cream, 249 (76%) yogurt (sweetened), 182 (55%) yogurt (unsweetened), 229 (70%) plain yogurt, 209 (64%) low fat yogurt, and 221 (67%) were expecting to find medium fat yogurt on the menu of fast-food outlets. Only 23 (7%) were expecting to find popsicles (sweetened), 23 (7%) sugar free popsicles, and 19 (6%) were expecting popsicles (unsweetened). 226 (69%) were expecting to find muffins on the menu, 243 (74%) cakes, 178 (54%) vanilla custards, 51 (16%) brownies, and 196 (60%) were expecting to find waffles on the menu.

4.4.3.6. Experienced frozen treats/desserts on the menu

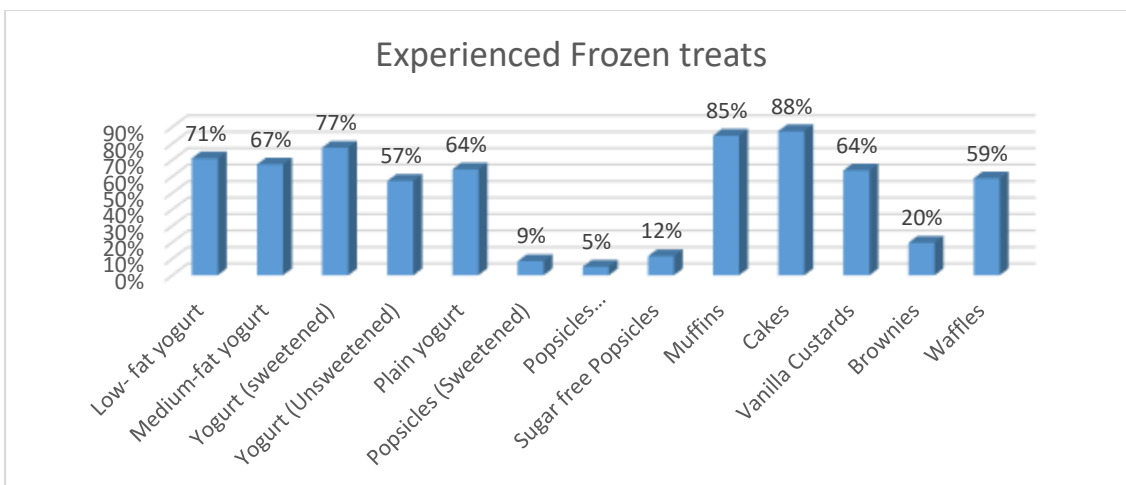


Figure 17: Respondents' expected frozen

Results show that 220 (70%), 265 (81%) and 255 (78 %) respondents were expecting to find low-fat ice cream, medium-fat ice cream and yogurt (sweetened) on the menu items of fast-food outlets. On the other hand, 186 (57%) respondents were expecting to find yogurt (unsweetened), 209 (64%) plain yogurt, 234 (71%) low fat yogurt, while 222 (66%) were expecting to find medium fat yogurt on the menu items of fast-food outlets. Figure 20 also reveals that 28 (9%) were expecting popsicles (sweetened) on the menu, 17 (5%) unsweetened popsicles, 38 (12%) sugar free popsicles, while 279 (85%) were expecting muffins, 288 (88%) cakes, 211 (64%) vanilla custards, 69 (21%) brownies, and 193 (59%) were expecting waffles on the menu of fast-food outlets. Two respondents added smoothies as an expected item on the menu while one respondent expected full cream ice cream on the menu.

4.4.3.7. Expected meal preparation

Meal preparation is important for ensuring healthier menu items. Respondents were requested to indicate which meal preparation they expected from fast-food outlets. Six options were given the respondents to choose from. The type of meal preparation will assist to identify their satisfaction with fast-food outlets. Results are presented in Figure 19 below.

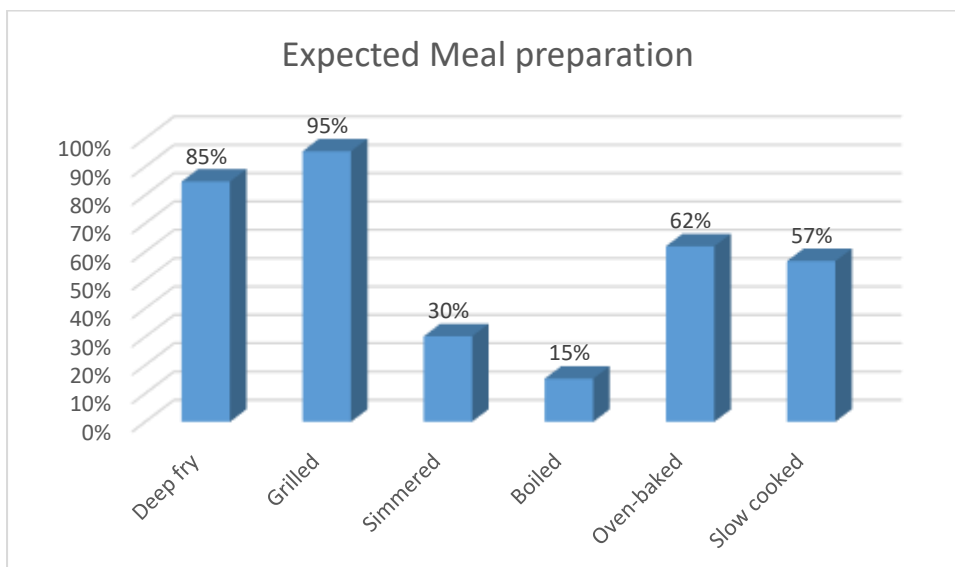


Figure 18: Respondents' expected meal preparation (328)

Out of 328 respondents, 278 (85%) expected deep fry meal preparation, 313 (95%) grilled, 99 (30%) simmered, 50 (15%) boiled, 203 (62%) oven-baked and lastly, 186 (57%) expected slow-cooked meal preparation.

4.4.3.8. Experienced Meal preparation

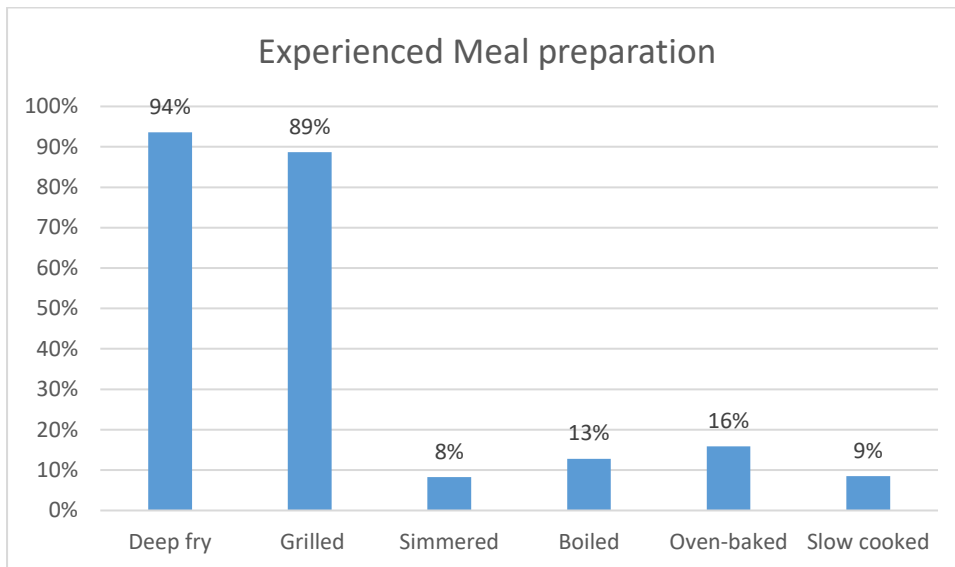


Figure 19: Respondents' experienced meal preparation

Figure 20 depicts that 307 (94%) respondents experienced deep fried meal preparation, 291 (89%) grilled, 27 (8%) simmered, 42 (13%) boiled, 52 (16%) oven-baked and 28 (9%) slow-cooked meal preparation from fast-food outlets. There is a significant difference between expected and experienced oven-baked meals, where most respondents (62%) expected oven-baked while only 16% indicated to have experienced oven-baked meals from fast-food outlets.

4.4.4. The satisfaction with the variety of the menu

Customer satisfaction is important for every business, including fast-food outlets. Respondents were asked whether they were satisfied with the variety of menu items offered by fast-food outlets, and also to indicate to what extent are they satisfied. Figures 21 and 22 show the results of the respondents' satisfaction with the variety of the menu offered by fast-food outlets.

4.4.4.1. Respondents satisfied/dissatisfied with the variety of menu items

Respondents had to agree whether they were satisfied or not with the variety of menu items offered at fast food outlets.

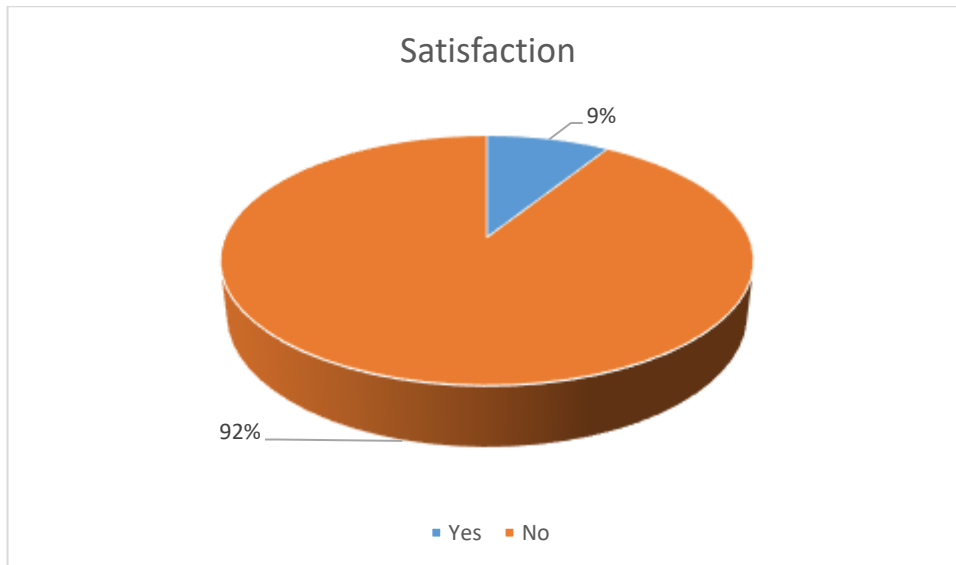


Figure 20: Respondents satisfaction with variety of menu items

Results show that a sizeable number of 307 (92%) were satisfied while 27 (9%) were dissatisfied with the variety of the menu offered by fast-food outlets. A variety of food appeals to the consumers (Embling, Pink, Lee and Wilkinson, 2020). Embling et al. (2020) argue that food variety allows and made it easier for the consumers to choose the product.

4.4.4.2 Level of Satisfaction

Respondents were further requested to indicate on a scale of 1-5, the extent to which they were satisfied with the variety of menu items offered by fast-food outlets.

Key: 1= Very satisfied, 2= Satisfied, 3= unsure, 4= Dissatisfied, 5= Very Dissatisfied

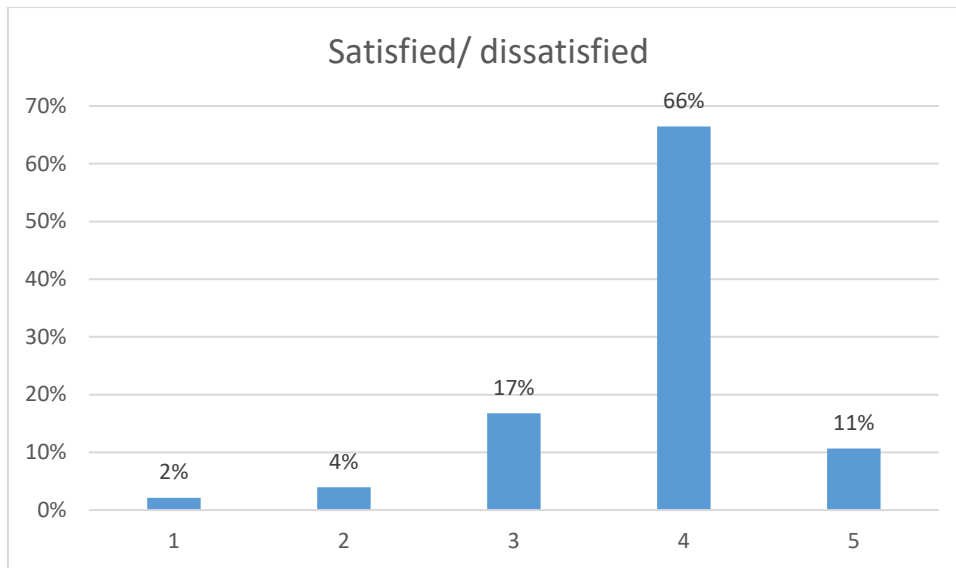


Figure 21: Extent of satisfaction with menu items

Seven (2%) respondents were very satisfied with the variety of menu items, 13 (4%) were satisfied, 55% were unsure, 218 (66%) were dissatisfied while 35 (11%) were very dissatisfied. This relates well with Figure 21 above which illustrates that most respondents were not satisfied with the menu items sold at fast-food outlets.

4.4.5. Empirical findings: Customer satisfaction on fast food outlets

A number of questions were asked to determine the level of customer satisfaction with fast-food outlets. Customer satisfaction is dependent on the match between the expectation and performance experience (Oliver, 1990). The respondents were given the opportunity to indicate their level of expectation of and satisfaction with each menu item. The said statements were categorised following the five dimensions of the Institutional DINESERV Model, namely; food quality, atmosphere, service quality, convenience and price and value. These dimensions were measured on a Likert Scale ranging from (1) very low expectations, (2) low expectations, (3) unsure, (4) high expectations to (5) very high expectations. The respondents were also given a chance to indicate their level of satisfaction and dissatisfaction based on the scales ranging from (1) very dissatisfied, (2) dissatisfied, (3) unsure, (4) satisfied to (5) very satisfied.

4.4.5.1 Service Quality

Wan and Cheng (2011:58) refer to service quality as a “form of attitude, resulting from the evaluation of customer expectations and perceived performance”. Respondents

were asked to state the expectations they had before they made a purchase at fast-food outlets. Table 4 and Table 5 below present the results.

a) Expectation on service quality

It is very essential for any organisation to ensure the provision of good service. Table 8 indicates the respondents' expectations regarding the service provided by staff at fast-food outlets. Respondents were asked to state their level of expectation to each statement about the service provided by staff at fast-food outlets.

Table 8: Respondents' Expectation on service quality from fast-food outlets (n=328)

Item	Very low expectation		Low expectation		Unsure		High expectation		Very High expectation	
	F	%	F	%	F	%	F	%	F	%
<i>I expect friendly staff</i>	4	1%	2	1%	22	7%	51	16%	249	76%
<i>I expect friendly manager</i>	3	1%	4	1%	88	27%	41	13%	193	59%
<i>I expect staff to be knowledgeable about the food and promotions</i>	2	1%	2	1%	24	7%	47	14%	253	77%
<i>I expect the staff to be attentive and energetic/vibrant</i>	2	1%	5	2%	43	13%	52	16%	227	69%

As indicated in Table 8, a total of 249 (76%) respondents had very high expectations concerning the friendliness of staff with regards to the healthier food options available at fast-food outlets, 51 (16%) had high expectations, 22 (7%) were unsure, while 4 (1%) had very low expectations on staff friendliness and only 2 (1%) had low

expectations. When coming to manager friendliness, 193 (59%) had very high expectations, 41 (13%) had high expectations, 88 (27%) unsure, 4 (1%) had low expectations and 3 (1%) had very low expectations. Table 4 also reveals that 253 (77%) had very high expectations of staff knowledge on the food and promotions, 47 (14%) had high expectations, 24 (7%) were unsure, 2 (1%) had low expectations while the other 2 (1%) had very low expectations on the said statement. Lastly, on the statement that the respondents expected staff to be attentive and energetic/vibrant, 227 (69%) had very high expectations, 52 (16%) had high expectations, 43 (13%) were unsure, 5 (2%) had low expectations, and 2 (1%) had very low expectations on the said statement. Many respondents have high expectations while 29.18% have no or little expectations of a friendly manager. This could be because customers rarely want to interact with the manager because they expect speedy service and the purchase experience to be uninterrupted to point of managerial intervention.

b) Experienced on service quality

Another aspect that was considered was the respondents' level of satisfaction based on the service provided by staff at fast-food outlets. It is shown in Table 9 below that 136 (41%) respondents were very satisfied with staff friendliness at fast-food outlets, 109 (33%) were satisfied, 69 (21%) unsure, 10 (3%) dissatisfied and 4 (1%) were very dissatisfied. With regard to experience with a friendly manager, 148 (45%) were very satisfied, 68 (21%) satisfied, 103 (31%) were unsure, 6 (2%) dissatisfied and 3 (1%) were very dissatisfied with the manager's friendliness. Results also show that 142 (43%) were very satisfied with staff knowledge about food and promotions, 98 (30%) satisfied, 7 (3%) were unsure, 10 (3%) dissatisfied while 4 (1%) were very dissatisfied with the said experience. 119 (36%) respondents were very satisfied with staff being attentive and energetic, 108 (33%) satisfied, 79 (24%) unsure, 16 (4%) dissatisfied and 6 (2%) were very dissatisfied.

Table 9: Respondents Experienced on service quality

Item	Very Dissatisfied		Dissatisfied		Unsure		Satisfied		Very Satisfied	
	F	%	F	%	F	%	F	%	F	%
<i>I experienced friendly staff</i>	4	1%	10	3%	69	21%	109	33%	136	41%
<i>I experienced friendly manager</i>	3	1%	6	2%	103	31%	68	21%	148	45%
<i>I experienced staff to be knowledgeable about the food and promotions</i>	4	1%	10	3%	7	3%	98	30%	142	43%
<i>I experienced the staff to be attentive and energetic/vibrant</i>	6	2%	16	5%	79	24%	108	33%	119	36%

For those respondents who were unsure about the knowledge of staff concerning healthier food options and the promotions available in store, one may assume that they might not have asked staff for information or enquired about the healthier food options. The study by Ukandu and Ukpere (2013) confirms that most employees at the fast-food outlets in Cape Town did not receive enough training as they should have.

It is a concern, as shown in Table 9, that 22% of the respondents were not satisfied with staff at fast-food outlets. It could be that the customers' requests or complaints were not handled effectively by staff, resulting in 24% of the respondents who were unsure about the staff's attentiveness. "A customer will not be satisfied with his/her experience if staff are perceived as inattentive", (Shock, Bowen and Stefanelli, 2004:108; Kotler, Bowen and Makens, 2010:36). It is therefore important for fast-food outlets to always employ various training programmes to encourage staff to remain helpful and attentive to customers. Staff members who continuously receive training

and are kept informed about the description and nutritional content of healthier menu items offered at their outlet would always satisfy the customers.

The relationships between service quality, customer satisfaction, and repurchase intentions are core to any business (Bougoure and Neu, 2010). This study found that 76% of the respondents had expectations of friendly staff and staff's knowledge about food and promotions. Some respondents (59%) had high expectations of friendly managers while 69% expected attentive and energetic staff. The study by Sabir et al. (2014) also found out that there is a positive and significant relationship between service quality and the customer's satisfaction. Izquierdo-Yusta et al. (2018) also found that service quality remained the main factor in customer satisfaction. It is a concern in this study that 27% were unsure about their expectations from the managers. Nguyen et al. (2018) found that there was a relationship among service quality, consumer satisfaction, and purchase intentions. Service quality was found to be essential as a determinant of satisfaction.

4.4.5.1. Food quality

As mentioned in Chapter 2, "food quality can be defined as the combination of a products features that are significant in determining the degree of acceptability of that product to the consumer" (Otegbayo, Samuel, Kehinde, Sangoyomi, and Okonkwo, 2010:541). As shown in Table 6 below, three items of food quality were measured.

a) Expectation on food quality

Food taste, the appeal of the food to the eye and food freshness were listed and the respondents were asked to indicate the expectations they had of food quality at fast-food outlets. Table 10 presents results on the expectation level of the respondents of food quality from fast-food outlets.

Table 10: Expected food quality (n=329)

Item	Very low expectation		Low expectation		Unsure		High expectation		Very High expectation	
	F	%	F	%	F	%	F	%	F	%
<i>I expect tasty food</i>	2	1%	3	1%	20	6%	43	13%	260	79%
<i>I expect the food to have a good eye appeal (the food must be presentable)</i>	2	1%	4	1%	23	7%	51	16%	248	76%
<i>I expect the food to be fresh</i>	2	1%	3	1%	25	7%	34	10%	265	81%

“Taste has been considered as the most significant component of food attributes in fast-food studies” (Sriwongrat, 2008:14; Harnack, French, Oakes, Story, Jeffery and Rydell, 2008). A total of 303 (92%) respondents either had high or very high expectations of the taste of the healthier food options available at fast-food outlets. Only 1% had either low or very low expectations and 6% were unsure. These results indicate that more respondents prefer healthier food options offered by fast-food outlets to be tasty.

Another total of 299 (92%) respondents had high or very high expectations of the appeal of the healthier food items offered at fast-food outlets, and 7% were unsure. These results indicate that more respondents prefer healthier food options offered by fast-food outlets to be presentable and appealing to the eye. Table 10 further reveals that a total of another 299 (92%) respondents had high or very high expectations of the freshness of the healthier menu options available at fast-food outlets, only 5 (2%) respondents had low or very expectations and 7% were unsure. These results indicate that more respondents prefer healthier food options offered by fast-food outlets to be fresh.

b) Satisfaction on food quality

Table 11 indicates the respondents' satisfaction level with the quality of healthier food options offered by fast-food outlets.

Table 11: Experienced food quality

Item	Very Dissatisfied		Dissatisfied		Unsure		Satisfied		Very Satisfied	
	F	%	F	%	F	%	F	%	F	%
<i>I experienced tasty food</i>	2	1%	14	2%	46	14%	194	59%	72	22%
<i>I experienced the food to have good eye appeal (the food must be presentable)</i>	3	1%	18	5%	74	23%	190	58%	43	13%
<i>I experienced the food to be fresh</i>	5	2%	10	3%	66	20%	116	35%	131	40%

Table 11 shows that a total of 81% of the respondents were satisfied or very satisfied with the taste of the healthier menu items available at fast-food outlets. Only 4% were dissatisfied and 14% were unsure. These results indicate that more respondents liked the taste of healthier food items offered by fast-food outlets and their expectations regarding the taste of food were met.

Results also indicate that a total of 233 (71%) respondents were satisfied or very satisfied with the way the healthier menu items were presented. Only 6% of the respondents were dissatisfied and did not find the healthier food items appealing, while a further 74 (23%) were unsure. Although these results reflect positively on fast-food outlets since much of the respondents found the healthier food options appealing, a significant total of 29% were not satisfied. Kleynhans (2003:30) pointed out that "fast-food outlets need to ensure that their healthier food options are always presented in a

way that is visually appealing because "...one eats with one's eyes first". Therefore, "the more appealing the healthier food looks, the more customers will be willing to consume it" (USDA, 2004:4).

Table 11 indicates that while 246 (75%) respondents were satisfied or very satisfied with the freshness of the healthier food options, 15 (%) were dissatisfied and 66 (20%) respondents were unsure. Although (75%) respondents indicated they were satisfied with the freshness of the healthier food options, it is very concerning that 25% were not satisfied. Shaharudin, Mansor and Elias (2011:206) assert that "fast-food outlets not using high-quality, fresh ingredients and serving food that is not freshly cooked, lead to customer dissatisfaction". Therefore, fast-food outlets should focus on serving healthier food options that is freshly cooked. Fresh and well-prepared food creates a positive experience for the customer, both physically and emotionally (USDA, 2004:6). Generally, it is crucial that fast-food outlets prepare tasty and appealing food items to encourage customers to purchase at the outlets. According to Kara et al. (1995), ease of preparation, taste, and appeal to customers dominate the decision to purchase (Kara et al., 1995).

The relationships between service quality, customer satisfaction, and repurchase intentions are core to any business (Bougoure and Neu, 2010). This study found that 76% of the respondents had expectations of friendly staff and staff's knowledge about food and promotions. Some respondents (59%) had high expectations of friendly managers while 69% expected attentive and energetic staff. The study by Sabir et al. (2014) also found out that there is a positive and significant relationship between service quality and the customer's satisfaction. Izquierdo-Yusta et al. (2018) also found that service quality remained the main factor in customer satisfaction. It is a concern in this study that 27% were unsure about their expectations from the managers. Nguyen et al. (2018) found that there was a relationship among service quality, consumer satisfaction, and purchase intentions. Service quality was found to be essential as a determinant of satisfaction.

4.4.5.2. Price value-ratio

Lamb, Hair and McDaniel, (2011:26) defined price as “what the buyer gives up in order to acquire a specific product or service”, while value refers “to the sum of perceived benefits (tangible and intangible) and costs to the customer” (Kotler and Keller, 2009:8). This study measured three items of price and value, as shown in Table 8.

a) *Expectation level on price for value*

Table 8 shows the respondents’ expectation level with the price value of the healthier food options at fast-food outlets.

Table 12: Expectation Price (n=328)

<i>Item</i>	<i>Very low expectation</i>		<i>Low expectation</i>		<i>Unsure</i>		<i>High expectation</i>		<i>Very High expectation</i>	
	F	%	F	%	F	%	F	%	F	%
I expect fair prices (the food should not be much expensive from its competitors)	2	1%	4	1%	17	5%	77	23%	229	70%
I expect desirable quality to be associated with the meal (the higher the price, the bigger the meal)	3	1%	4	1%	19	6%	78	24%	224	68%
I expect organic meals to be more expensive of all meals	5	2%	7	2%	66	20%	92	28%	158	48%

Regarding good value for price, 229 (70%) had very high expectations, 77 (23%) had high expectations, 17 (5%) were unsure, and a total of 6 (2%) had a low and very low expectations on the fair price of healthier menu items from fast-food outlets. When coming to the desirable quality associated with the meal, 224 (68%) had very high expectations, 78 (24%) had high expectations while 19 (6%) were unsure. Table 8 reveals that 158 (28%) had very high expectations that organic meals would be more expensive, 92 (28%) had high expectations, 66 (20%) were unsure while 5 (2%) and 7(2%) had low expectations and very low expectations, respectively.

The foregoing findings are a cause for concern that some respondents did not have a positive view of the price value paid. This may suggest that customers might think that there are some fast-food outlets that are overpriced and are seemingly not providing enough value for the price they charge, which may further have a negative impact on the healthier food options. Price appeared to be an important factor which influenced the respondents' decision to purchase. It is therefore concerning to find such a high dissatisfaction rating among respondents, as it may negatively affect the sales of the healthier menu options at fast-food outlets.

b) Satisfaction level on price value

According to Table 13, only 65% of the respondents felt that healthier food options were reasonably priced. A total of 14% of the respondents were either dissatisfied or very dissatisfied with the price of healthier food options and 22% were unsure, revealing that 35%, did not have a positive view of the price and desirable quality of healthier menu options. Fast-food outlets may need to consider the pricing of the healthier menu options as it relates to food portions.

The results indicate that a total of 7 (12%) of the respondents felt that organic healthier food options were more priced. Only 6% were dissatisfied or very dissatisfied with the price of organic healthier food options while 22% were unsure. This indicates that less than half of the respondents did not have a positive view of the price of organic healthier diet options. This suggests that the customers may consider the organic

healthier diet options to be value-bundled meals and convey a better value-for-money message.

Price plays a vital role in customer satisfaction as the charges of a product directly affect the customer. If the price is affordable, then the customers will be satisfied and would be willing to purchase the product again and again in future (Gustafsson Gustafsson, Johnson and Roos, 2005). Research shows that the growth of the market for fast-food outlets is low price, ease of preparation, and promotions (Tiwari and Verma, 2008). Respondents indicated that they had high expectations of less expensive food from fast-food outlets. On the other hand, most (78%) of the respondents had very high expectations when it came to the desirable quality associated with the meal. The results show that price and value are high determinants of customers' decisions to purchase from fast-food outlets. This in line with Gopaul (2015) whose South African respondents rated price as the most significant aspect when making a decision to purchase at fast-food outlets. Cardello (2013) indicates that some consumers are passionate about eating healthier food options and are willing to pay more while others want to eat healthier diet menu items, but are sensitive to the menu items offered. This appears to be the case with the respondents in this study.

Table 13: Respondents' satisfaction level on price-value

<i>Item</i>	<i>Very Dissatisfied</i>		<i>Dissatisfied</i>		<i>Unsure</i>		<i>Satisfied</i>		<i>Very Satisfied</i>	
	F	%	F	%	F	%	F	%	F	%
I experienced fair prices (the food should not be much expensive from its competitors)	7	2%	117	36%	78	24%	96	29%	30	9%
I experienced desirable quality to be associated with the meal (the higher the price, the bigger the meal)	7	2%	37	11%	71	22%	178	54%	35	11%
I experienced organic meals to be more expensive of all meals	9	3%	10	3%	77	23%	88	27%	31	9%

4.4.5.3. Convenience

“Convenience can be described as the state of being able to proceed with something without difficulty” (Obitz, 2009:20; Vera and Trujillo, 2013). The Institutional DINESERV Model employed in this study measures three items of convenience, as shown in Table 10 below.

a) *Expectation level on the convenience of the fast-food outlets*

Table 14: Convenience expectation (n=329)

Item	Very low expectation		Low expectation		Unsure		High expectation		Very high expectation	
	F	%	F	%	F	%	F	%	F	%
I expect extended service hours	6	2%	11	3%	90	27%	54	16%	167	51%
I expect safe parking	6	2%	16	5%	79	24%	108	33%	119	36%
I expect a store to be a walking distance away	10	3%	46	14%	39	12%	76	23%	157	48%

167 (51%) respondents indicate that they had very high expectations regarding extended service hours of the fast-food outlets, 54 (16%) had high expectations, about 90 (27%) were unsure, 11 (3%) had low expectations, and 6 (2%) with very low expectations. Results also show that 119 (36%) had very high expectations of safe parking, 108 (33%) had high expectations, 79 (24%) were not sure, 16 (5%) had low expectations while 6 (2%) had very low expectations on the said statement. Table 10 indicates that a sizeable number of 157 (48%) had very high expectations of outlets being situated at a walking distance, 76 (23%) high expectations, 39 (125) unsure, 46 (14%) had low expectations and lastly, 10 (3%) had very low expectations of fast-food outlets being at a walking distance.

b) *Satisfaction level on convenience of fast food level*

Table 11 below reveals the respondents' satisfaction level with the service hours of fast-food outlets.

Table 15: Respondents' satisfaction with convenience (N=329)

<i>Item</i>	<i>Very Dissatisfied</i>		<i>Dissatisfied</i>		<i>Unsure</i>		<i>Satisfied</i>		<i>Very Satisfied</i>	
	<i>F</i>	<i>%</i>	<i>F</i>	<i>%</i>	<i>F</i>	<i>%</i>	<i>F</i>	<i>%</i>	<i>F</i>	<i>%</i>
I experienced extended service hours	7	2%	13	4%	212	65%	65	20%	31	9%
I experienced safe parking	5	25	20	6%	190	58	66	20%	47	14%
I experienced the store to be a walking distance away	8	2%	56	17%	148	45%	79	24%	37	11%

As illustrated in Table 15, only 96 (29%) respondents were satisfied or very satisfied with the service hours of fast-food outlets, while 6% were very dissatisfied or dissatisfied. A further 65% of the respondents were unsure about the service hours. As shown, most of the respondents were unsure of the service hours of the fast-food outlets which could be attributed to the Covid-19 restrictions imposed on the country that affected operational hours. Fast-food outlets would have to conduct research and perform a cost-benefit analysis in order to determine whether extending their service hours would be profitable, as 72% is a significant number of unhappy or uncertain customers. Before the lockdown restrictions in South Africa, some outlets like McDonald's opened 24/7, which has created somewhat a competitive advantage and could further increase the sales of the healthier food options.

Table 15 further indicates that only 34% were satisfied or very satisfied and found the parking to be safe at fast-food outlets, while a total of 8% were dissatisfied or very dissatisfied with the parking available. A further 58% were unsure, revealing that altogether 66% did not have a positive view of parking availability. This could be attributed to the fact that most fast-food outlets now have delivery services or that

some respondents may have only walked to a specific fast-food outlet and were therefore unaware of parking availability. The management of fast-food outlets need to expend extra effort in trying to highlight problem areas at their outlets. According to the Environmental Protection Agency (2008:10), “parking availability may determine a customer’s willingness to visit an organisation which may reduce the chances of customers returning”. Furthermore, an organisation that is “difficult to visit due to inadequate parking may decrease customers’ overall satisfaction and this may have a negative impact on the sales of the healthier food options” (Illinois Institute for Rural Affairs, 2003:5).

Table 15 also illustrates the respondents’ level of satisfaction with the walking distance of fast-food outlets. Concerning the walking distance, the respondents were either unsure or unhappy with the walking distance of fast-food outlets. The respondents may have had limited time during their day’s activities, which might have led to their dissatisfaction with the walking distance. Still, the 45% might be that, because of the delivery system of fast-food outlets, and/or the respondents are indifferent to the distance. Further research may need to be conducted in terms of how far customers are willing to walk to the desired fast-food outlet.

Convenience includes the option for customers to use telephones for reservations, ease of parking, and shorter walking distance from offices to the location of the outlets (Bujisic,et al., 2014). In this study, there is a lower percentage of 36% of the respondents who had high expectations of ease of parking while 24% were unsure whether to expect safe parking or not. The results also reveal that only 48% had very high expectations of the outlet being a walking distance away from their point of departure. Thao (2014) emphasised that the convenience of shorter walking distance between the point of purchase and the distance is crucial. Findings reveal that safe parking and shorter walking distance were not determinants of customer satisfaction to most of the respondents

4.4.5.4. Atmosphere

Katsigris and Thomas (2008:579) define atmosphere as “the overall mood of the fast-food outlet and is determined by both practical and aesthetic elements, such as temperature, lighting, artwork, noise levels and aroma”.

a) *Expectation level on atmosphere of fast food outlets*

Table 16: Respondents' expectation on atmosphere (N=329)

<i>Item</i>	<i>Very low expectation</i>		<i>Low expectation</i>		<i>Unsure</i>		<i>High expectation</i>		<i>Very High expectation</i>	
	F	%	F	%	F	%	F	%	F	%
I expect the outlet to be clean	0	0%	5	2%	23	7%	69	21%	232	71%
I expect to have a dinning-in-feeling	5	2%	8	2%	94	29%	46	14%	175	53%
I expect staff to be in uniform	5	2%	13	4%	27	8%	41	13%	242	74%
I expect to feel comfort and security	0	0%	7	2%	24	7%	94	29%	203	62%

The results highlighted in Table 16 indicate that 232 (71%) had very high expectations of the cleanliness of the fast-food outlet, 69 (21%) had high expectations, and on one indicated to have had very low expectations with the cleanliness of the fast-food outlets. On the other hand, a reasonable number of 203 (62%) respondents had very high expectations on the comfort and security of the fast-food outlets. This may suggest that customers had a high expectation concerning the fast-food outlet environment.

b) Satisfaction level on atmosphere of fast food outlets

Table 17: Respondents satisfaction level on atmosphere (N=329)

<i>Item</i>	<i>Very Dissatisfied</i>		<i>Dissatisfied</i>		<i>Unsure</i>		<i>Satisfied</i>		<i>Very Satisfied</i>	
	<i>F</i>	<i>%</i>	<i>F</i>	<i>%</i>	<i>F</i>	<i>%</i>	<i>F</i>	<i>%</i>	<i>F</i>	<i>%</i>
I experienced outlet to be clean	3	1%	10	3%	41	13%	109	33%	165	50%
I experienced to have a dining-in feeling	5	2%	16	5%	132	40%	87	27%	95	29%
I experienced staff to be in uniform	3	1%	11	3%	132	40%	87	27%	95	29%
I experienced to feel comfort and security	1	1%	15	5%	134	41%	112	31%	76	23%

Table 17 shows that only 50% of the respondents were very satisfied with the fast-food outlet environment. Given that many of the respondents were not satisfied or unsure, “their feelings could be the result of undesirable temperature levels, colours, lighting, noise levels or unpleasant odours within the fast-food outlet which may negatively influence their satisfaction level with the healthier food options” (Ng, 2005:14). It could be that some respondents may prefer to eat from the comfort of the homes, offices or social gathering places rather than at the fast-food outlets. It may be necessary for fast-food outlets to conduct research on customer perceptions regarding the outlet environment in order to improve and increase the satisfaction ratings. According to Ng (2005:14), “customers are more likely to spend money and time at a place where the environment stimulates a feeling of pleasure”. Dissatisfied customers may decide to purchase elsewhere in order to experience such a feeling.

The appearance of staff of any organisation can have a great effect on customer satisfaction. The results presented in Table 13 indicate that 56% of respondents were satisfied or very satisfied with the appearance of staff at fast-food outlets, while 4% were dissatisfied and 40% were unsure. 44% of the respondents either happy or unsure about staff appearance. This could be attributed to the fact that some of the respondents order their food online. However, any negative perception of staff attire and hygiene could be perceived as an indicator of quality and may also impact on the negative perceptions regarding healthier food options. It is advised that the management of fast-food outlets continue to ensure that staff members maintain their best appearance and conform to the outlets' uniform standards.

Lastly, the negative response from the respondents could be due to the layout of the fast-food outlet. Fast food could have had lesser space to allow customers to move around freely or the comfort of the furniture or the fact that some respondents order online and were never exposed to the facilities at fast-food outlets. However, management should explore the layout dynamics such as temperature levels, noise levels, lighting aromas in the fast-food outlet could also affect the respondents' comfort levels and the issues surrounding security (Omari et al., 2016).

Convenience includes the option for customers to use telephones for reservations, ease of parking, and shorter walking distance from offices to the location of the outlets (Bujisic,et al., 2014). In this study, there is a lower percentage of 36% of the respondents who had high expectations of ease of parking while 24% were unsure whether to expect safe parking or not. The results also reveal that only 48% had very high expectations of the outlet being a walking distance away from their point of departure. Thao (2014) emphasised that the convenience of shorter walking distance between the point of purchase and the distance is crucial. Findings reveal that safe parking and shorter walking distance were not determinants of customer satisfaction to most of the respondents

4.4.5.5. Other expectations on purchasing at fast food outlets

Respondents were asked about the expectations they had when purchasing at fast-food outlets. The intention was to solicit expectations other than those outlined by the

DINESERV dimensions, and also to put more emphasis on the expectations. Out of 329, 181 (55%) answered the question. 74 (41%) out of 181 respondents stated the same expectations as in the questionnaire. Table 18 below presents the results from 107 (59%) respondents.

Table 18: Other expectations from the respondents

Item	Frequency	Percentage
<i>Display of menu items</i>	8	7%
<i>Health Information</i>	4	4%
<i>Increase Delivery distance</i>	18	17%
<i>Increase Online Service</i>	23	21%
<i>Rewards, Competitions and Discounts</i>	5	5%
<i>Speed of service</i>	16	15%
<i>None</i>	31	29%
<i>Unsure</i>	2	2%
Total	107	100%

Table 18 reveals that 8 (7%) out of 107 respondents indicated that they expected an improved display of menu items from the fast-food outlets, 4 (4%) expected health information from the outlets, 23 (21%) expected increased online services, 5 (5%) expected rewards, competitions and discounts, 16 (15%) speed of service, while 31 (29%) indicated that they are satisfied with the services, as such, there was nothing more they expected and 2 (2%) were unsure. On the other hand, a total of 74 respondents restated the expectations related to DINEServe dimensions, 18 (15%) indicated that they were expecting fair price before purchasing from a fast-food outlet, another 18 (15%) were expecting friendly staff, 25 (23%) were expecting a variety of menu items, 5 (5%) were expecting improved meal preparation, 4 (4%) tasty food, 1 (1%) fresh food, another 1 (1%) staff knowledge about food and promotions, 1 (1%) clean outlet, and lastly, 1 (1%) were expecting staff to be attentive and energetic.

4.4.5.6. Improvement of fast food outlets to continue with purchases

On the last question, the respondents were asked to indicate at least two things that fast-food outlets were not doing right to guarantee continually purchasing of menu items for them to remain satisfied. 203 (62%) respondents answered this question. Out of the 203 respondents, 51(25%) indicated that there is nothing to improve even though they added that fast-food outlets should review the prices. 152 (75%) out of 203 respondents forwarded suggestions which are summarised as follows:

Table 19: Things to be improved from fast food outlets (n=152)

Item	Frequency	Percentage
Variety of menu items	27	18%
Promotion of healthy menu	26	17%
Staff knowledge	16	11%
Meal preparation	15	10%
Clean outlet	14	9%
Desirable quality	12	8%
Customer suggestions	11	7%
Fair Price	11	7%
Fresh food	8	5%
Friendly staff	4	3%
Staff being attentive and energetic	3	2%
Walking distance away	2	1%
Comfort and security	2	1%
Food appeal	1	1%

Twenty-seven (18%) respondents indicated that a variety of menu items needed improvement. They also indicated that there was a need for adding healthier menu items from the outlets. Suggestions such as adding more vegetables and fruits were forwarded while some suggested traditional food to be included in the menu items. 26 (17%) respondents indicated that the fast food should be improving the promotion of healthy menus. Promotion from the respondents' perspective referred to fast-food outlet informing customers about healthier menu available at the fast-food outlets. This included even displaying menus on promotions and also the ingredients of

various menus. One respondent wrote that sometimes the menu displayed different items from what is sold from the fast-food outlets. Educating customers about what healthy menus are and what healthy eating would be could also yield customer satisfaction. In essence, there is a need for fast-food outlets to provide health information in general.

In terms of meal preparation, respondents stated reasons such less salt in the menus, less fried meals and inclusion of more vegetables as part of the menus. One of the respondents cited an inclusion of more water as opposed to more soda drinks. Lastly, respondents stated long queues, slow and mismatching of orders at *Drive Thrus*, and long queues in-store and slow services should be addressed by fast-food outlets.

Other suggestions were:

- Consider discounts and more promotions.
- Increase delivery distance.
- Prices to match the service (organic food expensive).
- Food freshness (e.g. sometimes salads taste and oil has eerie smells).

4.5. Empirical findings: Gaps

The Gap Model was used in this study. It is thus necessary to discuss the gaps identified in this study.

Gap 1: The knowledge gap

Gap 1 represents managers' expectations and perceptions of the service required of them. Whenever there is a mismatch between the organisation's own internal quality specification and the specification which is expected by the customer, the perceived quality could be poor (Yadav and Dabhade, 2013). Results indicate a mismatch between the perceived service on service quality and the experienced service quality. Management's correct perception of expected service on healthier menu items is important. The results reveal very high expectations of staff's friendliness, staff's knowledge followed by staff's attentiveness which was not fully matched as there were

few (41%) respondents who were very satisfied. This compares with 77% of the respondents who had very high expectations of service quality.

Gap 2: The service design and standards gap

This gap represents service quality specification in relation to that management have of customers' expectations into operations specifications (Yadav and Dabhade, 2013). This gap results from the lack of the offer's operations specification to be adjusted to what customers wish for. The results showed disconfirmation between expected convenience and what the fast-food outlet provided. This is shown from the dissatisfaction with the atmosphere, cleanliness, security and parking. Ryzen (2013) conducted a study aimed to test the Expectancy-Disconfirmation Theory of citizen satisfaction with public services using an experimental method. The author found that there was a significant relation between expectation and satisfaction. Respondents were unsure of the managers, which suggested they had never met or communicated with the management of fast-food outlet. One may be concerned about the management's perception of customers' expectations and whether the managers are even aware of such expectations.

Gap 3: Service Delivery

This gap postulates that the perceived quality could be poor because there may be a mismatch between the actual quality of the service provided by the operation and its internal quality specification. The overall service delivery for any fast-food outlet is important. Respondents highlighted speedy services as one factor lacking from fast-food outlets. Respondents were asked about the variety of healthier menu items expected and to what extent are they satisfied with the menus offered by fast-food outlets. Comparing the overall services, there are some variations of the results, moving from low satisfaction to very satisfied. For example, not all expected beverages were matched with what was available from fast-food outlets. Even though there is some level of satisfaction, fast-food outlet still need to work towards the betterment of their services.

Gap 4: Communication Gap

Alsaffar (2020) describes this gap as the discrepancy between service delivery and external communication. One of the factors that play a role in Gap 4 is when the consumer is not given an opportunity to be aware of the delivered service and the quality levels associated with it. This was evinced by the respondents' recommendations that promotions and displays of menu items should be reviewed. They added that fast-food outlets should allow customer suggestions to that effect. These findings linked with the lower level of service quality where the respondents were unsure about the manager's friendliness while very few (45%) were satisfied with the manager.

Gap 5: Performance gap

This gap is the central focus of the Gaps Model. The distance between companies and their customers depicts the degree of disconnection companies have with their customers (Hsieh and Yuan, 2021). This suggests that the more the disconnection between customers and companies, the wider the Customer Gap will be. This Gap 5 represents the difference between what customers expect and what they receive. In short, Gap 5 shows the establishment of the function of the four previous failures (Pena, et al., 2013). Results indicate the general confirmation which suggests that the respondents were happy with services offered by fast-food outlets even though there are areas of improvements (e.g. relating to extended hours, fair price, friendliness of managers).

4.6. Chapter Summary

This chapter presented the results of this study. Tables and graphs were also used to present the results. Through its analysis, this chapter shed some direction towards the findings of the study that would determine whether the research objectives were achieved or not. The findings from each of the sections above will be discussed in the next chapter.

CHAPTER FIVE SUMMARY, RECOMMENDATIONS AND CONCLUSIONS

5.1. Introduction

The previous chapter analysed, discussed and interpreted the findings of the study. This chapter provides a summary of the research findings, makes recommendations based on the findings of the study, and areas for future study. Conclusions drawn and recommendations made in this chapter were guided by the objectives of this study as outlined in Chapter 1 (Ch. 1.4). The aim of this study was to determine customer satisfaction with healthier diet menu items offered by fast-food outlets in South Africa. The intent was to subsequently provide strategic guidelines for exploiting the market for healthier menu items by fast-food outlets in South Africa. The objectives of the study were to identify:

- Determinants of customer satisfaction with healthier diet menu items offered by fast-food outlets.
- Level of customer satisfaction with healthier diet menu items offered by fast-food outlets.
- Strategic guidelines for fast-food outlets for exploiting the market for healthier menu items.

5.2. Research Findings from Literature

Literature revealed that customers develop expectations of aspects such as the food price, food quality, service quality, atmosphere and convenience at a fast-food outlet. Most studies had been conducted using the Institutional DINEServe model's dimensions, namely; service quality, food quality, price/value, convenience and atmosphere. Service quality, food quality and price value were the most expected by customers. Whenever these expectations are not met during the service experienced, the customer is likely to feel dissatisfied.

It also revealed that the perception of fast food outlets towards customers' expectation is necessary, even though it is not the main focus of customer satisfaction. This is aligned with the Gap Model which emphasises that the mismatch between the management's perception of customers' expectations and the customers' actual

expectation would result in customers not being satisfied. Hence, the EDT holds the view that if expectation is disconfirmed, it will lead to dissatisfaction.

The presence of expected performance from staff towards the provision of quality services plays an important role in customer satisfaction. Literature also revealed that staff who are not willing or unable to meet customers' expectations could contribute to poor service quality. To be effective, fast food outlets' managers should work towards achieving customer satisfaction. For the most part, literature revealed that fast-food outlets that adopt service quality models such as DINEServe are likely to achieve a higher level and/or increased customer satisfaction. Furthermore, the literature revealed that even in instances where there was customer satisfaction, there was still some measure of dissatisfaction, which suggested that there is always room for improvement. The perceived service quality, expectations, and disconfirmation thus result in satisfaction or dissatisfaction (Oliver, 1989).

The satisfaction of the respondents remained different. The findings indicate a satisfaction amongst respondents with the quality of healthier food from fast-food outlets. On the other hand, the satisfaction level was low with regard to services such as price value and convenience. In some instances, the respondents were unsure with the dimensions. Respondents indicate not being satisfied with the food variety on the menu of fast-food outlets. Contrary to that, they rated the food variety offered at fast-food restaurants as good. For the customer, it is not always the case that a better quality automatically means a better taste, if a customer likes the taste of food, he/she will be willing to pay for it (Lim, 2010). Literature also revealed that the good taste of food has a positive influence on customer's satisfaction and that it also increases the customer's retention rate, which also depends on the customer's satisfaction.

5.3. Summary of findings

This section outlines the summary of the findings, conclusions and recommendations of the study. Conclusions and recommendations in this chapter were discussed in line with the research objectives outlined in Chapter 1. The summary of the findings is made following the order of the study's objectives.

5.3.1. Findings on the level of customer satisfaction with healthier diet menu items offered by fast-food outlets

The expectation level determines the satisfaction level. The EDT posits that customer satisfaction is judged once the product or service has been used, and outcomes are compared against the customer's expectations. Customers may be satisfied and/or dissatisfied as a result of positive or negative differences between expectations and perceptions. Findings on the level of satisfaction are arranged as follows:

5.3.1.1 Features of customer satisfaction

The service provided will always influence the customers' decision-making about the outlet. Variety and meal preparation are important factors in the choice of a fast-food outlet by consumers (Kara et al., 1995). The meal items offered by fast-food outlets create a positive perception and are an important factor in customer satisfaction. (DiMisa and Rinaldi, 2010). Findings shows that the respondents were satisfied. Out of 329 respondents, 78% described the variety of menu items offered by fast-food outlets as good. This may suggest that the respondents were satisfied to a certain level with the availability of choices they had on healthier menu items.

Findings also reveal that there was a slight difference between expectations of beverages, meal items and frozen treats as opposed to what the respondents experienced at fast-food outlets. When asked whether they were satisfied with the variety of menu items, 92% agreed whereas 8% were dissatisfied with the variety of the menu.

5.3.2.2 Price value

Findings indicate that there was a low level of satisfaction on price value. Only 9% of the respondents were very satisfied with the fair price while another 91% was very dissatisfied with the pricing of organic meals. It is therefore concerning to find such a high rate of dissatisfaction among the respondents, this may negatively affect the sales of the healthier food options. "Price is the key element in the customer satisfactions in any industry", (Sabir et al., 2014). These authors add that, "price fairness lead to the

customer satisfaction because price is that element which directly customers are paying for particular product which they are availing against the price". The findings for this study are a cause for concern, particularly because some respondents did not have a positive view of the value received for the price paid.

5.3.2.3 Food quality satisfaction

Findings indicate that 71% of the respondents were either satisfied with the taste of their food, the presentation of their food or the freshness of the food. Only 6% of the respondents were dissatisfied and did not find the healthier food options appealing, while a further 74 (23%) were unsure. Although these results reflect positively on fast-food outlets, a significant portion of 29% were not satisfied. These results suggest that respondents may lack knowledge of the nutritional contents of the healthier food options. Fast food outlets may need to improve on this by providing consumers access to information, especially at the time of purchase. Cant et al., (2014) also observed that several fast food outlet menus do not offer a wide variety of healthier food options, which may be the reason for the respondents negative response.

5.3.2.4 Service quality satisfaction

Findings indicate that 74% of the respondents were satisfied with the service quality at fast food outlets. However, with regards to staff knowledge respondents, 21% indicated that there were unsure of the staff's knowledge about healthier food. This is a concern as it is extremely important for staff to understand the menu and the components of each item in order to provide customers with suggestions and significant information on the nutritional content of the food. According to Myrick (2012:283), knowledge adds value, which, in addition to providing good service, gives customers an incentive to return. With regards to the managers' friendliness regarding healthier options on the menu, 31% were unsure of the managers' friendliness. This may indicate that managers of fast-food outlets are either unwilling to assist customers or are just outright unfriendly. However, it might also be that some of the respondents did not observe or interact with the manager during their last visit to the fast-food outlet. It is important that managers, always appear friendly and always willing to assist customers. Ultimately, the good behaviour of service providers develops a positive

relationship and impression on the customers, which ultimately contributes towards customer satisfaction (Soderlund and Rosengren, 2008). Bujisic, et al. (2014) posit that it is crucial to increase the level of customer satisfaction by maintaining a positive perception of the quality of services offered. Staff friendliness is thus an important factor because it ensures customer satisfaction and a propellant of customers continually making purchases at fast-food outlets.

5.3.2.5 Convenience

Many researchers such Mattila and Wirtz (2015), Ryu, Han and Jang (2010) and Samah, Rashid, Rani, Rahman, and Ali (2015) argued that convenience is one of the influencing factors of eating experience and repeated eating intentions to (re)visit hotels and restaurants. Regarding convenience, it was determined that the level of satisfaction was very low with reference to short walking distance, safe parking and extended service hours. When asked what could be improved at fast-food outlets, the respondents mentioned extended service hours. Results on all aspects of convenience generally illustrate the respondents' non-satisfaction, although there were very few who were satisfied or very satisfied (e.g. only 11% were very satisfied with short walking distance, 9% very satisfied with extended service hours, and 14% were very satisfied with safe parking). The respondents were either unsure or unhappy with the walking distance to or from fast-food outlets. This means that there is a gap between what customers expected and what they experienced during their fast-food visits, hence a mismatch between the perceived and experienced services.

5.2.3.6 Atmosphere

According to the Lim (2010), the atmosphere of the restaurant entails aspects such as music, setting arrangement, decoration, etc. These aspects create a positive image of the restaurant in the mind of customers and consequently, satisfaction. Lim adds that there is a link between atmosphere, service quality, price and food quality. Satisfaction levels of the respondents with regard to the atmosphere were significantly different. Findings reveal that 56% of the respondents were either satisfied or very satisfied with the appearance of staff at fast-food outlets, while a worrying number of 40% were unsure. (44%) of the respondents appeared either unhappy with or unsure of staff

appearance. Generally, 41% of the respondents remained unsure of comfort and security, 41% were unsure about clean outlets, and 40% were unsure of the dining-in feeling.

5.3.2. Findings on the strategic guidelines for fast-food outlets for exploiting the market for healthier menu items

Based on the responses from 329 returned questionnaires, there is a discrepancy between expectations (what the customers expected fast-food outlets to offer) and confirmation (qualities of the performance experienced) at fast-food outlets. When asked about what other expectations they had, the respondents forwarded the following expectations: rewards, competitions and discounts, speed of service, fair price, friendly staff, and variety of menu items before purchasing from a fast-food outlet. When asked about the two things that could be improved to make the respondents to continue purchasing, a number of suggestions were made. For instance, promotion of healthy menu items was forwarded amongst the suggestions for improving fast-food outlets. Huang (2011) notes the importance of promotions as a way of attracting customers to purchase the product or service.

The best way to build a relationship with customers is through the promotion of products or services offered because customers always look out for the best deals that are suitable or preferable to them. (Kurniawan, 2010). The findings reveal that there is a gap between perceived performance and expectation confirmation/disconfirmation. To address the gaps a strategic model is developed as part of recommendations in the next section 5.4.

5.3.4 Findings on the Variables

Customers' views on healthier menu items offered by fast-food outlets are crucial. As mentioned earlier, customer satisfaction depends on various factors, such as service quality, price, food, convenience and atmosphere. In light of this, hypotheses were formulated and discussed in this section.

5.3.4.1 Determinants of customer satisfaction

Several studies were conducted on the association between customer satisfaction and DINESERV dimensions as determinants of customer satisfaction (see Chapter 2). Tinoco and Ribeiro (2008) compared the consumer's expectations and perceived performance and found out that these lead to consumers' perception of the quality. Table 20 reveals that consumers perceive local food as more fresh, healthy and of a better quality (Jones et al., 2003). Customers are therefore more concerned about the quality and services of products. This study found that customers prefer to purchase good quality food and not just for its taste. Cleanliness and quality of food matter most to South Africans when they purchase menu items at fast-food outlets. Price is determined inside the marketplace in line with the demand and delivery of a selected service or product (Bujisic, Hutchinson and Parsa, 2014). "Price sensitivity and level of satisfaction and dissatisfaction is related (Kotler and Keller, 2016). Kotler and Keller also indicated that customers would be satisfied and/or dissatisfied because of value for money, fairness of the price, special offer, and discounted price.

On the other hand, fast food owners and managers are concerned about customer satisfaction (Martin et al., 2009). Measuring expectations in this study revealed that customers expected a variety of services from fast-food outlets, namely; healthier meal items, beverages and frozen treats. Expectations were either confirmed or disconfirmed. What customers expected and what they actually found remains a matter of contention.

5.3.4.2 Customer satisfaction for healthier diet menu items

The difference between customers' expectations and the real experience may be reflected as service quality of the fast food outlets" (Uddin and Akhter, 2012). Fast-food outlets should try to satisfy their customers by offering higher benefits to them. Generally, satisfied customers become loyal customers, which is indicated by repeated purchases, and positively recommending the outlet to others (Ali et al., 2018; Saleem and Raza, 2014). To show the overall satisfaction of the customers with the services rendered at fast-food outlets, the respondents scored each item to indicate their satisfaction level. The study by Dan et al. (2008) revealed that some of the

customers considered services of fast-food outlets as satisfactory while others considered the services as ideal.

The measures used in this study to determine customer satisfaction range from customers' dissatisfaction to being very satisfied. The dependent variable was customer satisfaction of healthier menu items offered at fast food outlets. The independent variables included service quality, food quality, price value, convenience, and atmosphere of fast-food outlets. There were variations in terms of customer satisfaction. Some dimensions were positively related to customer satisfaction, while some respondents were unable to make a judgment about their satisfaction, resulting in their responses being 'unsure'. Customer satisfaction in the context of the fast-food industry in South Africa is worth examining thoroughly, as this study shows that the customer's level of satisfaction is quite a complex aspect to determine.

5.3.4.3 Strategic guidelines exploiting the market for healthier menu items.

When the difference between customers' expectations and perceptions of a service is analysed, a gap is identified, known as the customer service gap (Yadav and Dabhade, 2013). The expectations of customers are based on their previous expectations, with what they are familiar with it (Du Plesis, 2015). Customers have individualised expectations on products or services. It is therefore important that businesses determine the attributes of the product or service category that customers regard as important and as a need (Schiffman and Kanuk, 2010). It is important for fast-food outlets to acknowledge that customers who visit the same fast-food outlet at the same time, purchase the food item at the same time and receive the same quality service from the fast-food outlet, will, therefore, recognise, select, organise and interpret the service quality offered to them differently (Du Plessis, 2015). These gaps should be identified to ensure customer satisfaction with healthier menu items. Customers may perceive the quality of service immediately after receiving it, during the service or later, where they compare their experiences with their expectations. Perception regarding the quality of service expected and the gap between these two leads to either satisfaction or dissatisfaction (Ruy and Han, 2010).

5.4. Conclusions and Recommendations

The conclusions and recommendations were made based on the findings of the study. Factors such as the variety of healthy menu items price value, food quality, environment and convenience of an outlet were borne in mind when the conclusions and recommendations were made (cf. Morano et al., 2018). The following conclusions are drawn:

- *Variety of healthy menu items*

Even though the respondents found what they expected from the fast-food outlets, some still indicated that they were not satisfied. Therefore, fast-food outlets still need to add healthier menu items on their list. Variety of menu items meeting customers' expectations can only be achieved through customers' suggestions. This requires the RD to be applied to exploit this potentially profitable market.

- *Interaction between managers and customers*

From the findings, it is clear that there is a minimal interaction between managers and customers. Customers were unsure of their level of satisfaction with the managers' friendliness, which could mean that they never had any experience with managers. For fast-food outlets to meet customers' perceived quality services effectively, managers should familiarise themselves with what customers expect. There is still a need to improve communication channels between customers and fast-food staff and managers.

- *Price and value*

Everyone wants to save money from purchases done. It would be great if fast-food outlets review their pricing on fast food menu items, especially on healthier menu items. Respondents suggested that fast-food outlets should improve their pricing, offer discounts and organise promotions. Fast-food outlets should also consider having some menu items sold at a discount.

- *Extended service hours, safe parking and walking distance away*

Service managers should try to improve, not only the quality of services, but also to identify and address factors which lead to customer satisfaction. Extended service hours, safe parking and walking distance are some of the factors that fast-food outlets still need to address in order to attain customer satisfaction. This may lead service managers to spend relatively more on increasing customer satisfaction. Some fast-food outlets, such as McDonalds, adopted the 24-hour operation tactic. Thus, each fast-food brand can explore this option by means of customer survey, to increase its profitability.

- *Cleanliness, Staff appearance and dining-in feeling*

Hygiene, cleanliness and security matters most to South Africans while purchasing fast food. Customer satisfaction level for this dimension is a concern. Since the demand for online delivery is increasing, it is unlikely that customers will directly interact with the staff or the franchise. Therefore, it is important for managers and staff at fast-food outlets to ensure that their customers are satisfied with the provision of service, among other things. Generally, fast-food outlets fail to meet most of the customers' expectations. There is a discrepancy between customers' expectations and customers' experience, as evinced by the findings of this study. This is a matter of concern. Hence, this study recommends the following:

5.4.1 Increased Managers' interaction with customers

Fast food outlets managers should focus on marketing research in order to better understand the needs and expectations of their customers. Managers should improve their interaction strategies with customers. The implementation of healthier menu management strategic initiatives in an organisation should be a matter of urgency to the management of various fast-food outlets. To that end, the following model summarises the recommendations for this study:

5.4.2. *Developing a strategic guideline to grow the fast-food outlet and develop the necessary dynamic capabilities*

The model below is derived from Ambrosini and Bowman (2009), Furlan and Grandinetti (2011) and includes the author’s analysis. The module is centred on Strategic Sustainable Growth as a guideline to increasing customer satisfaction with healthier diet menu items.

Guidelines for customer satisfaction with healthier diet menu items

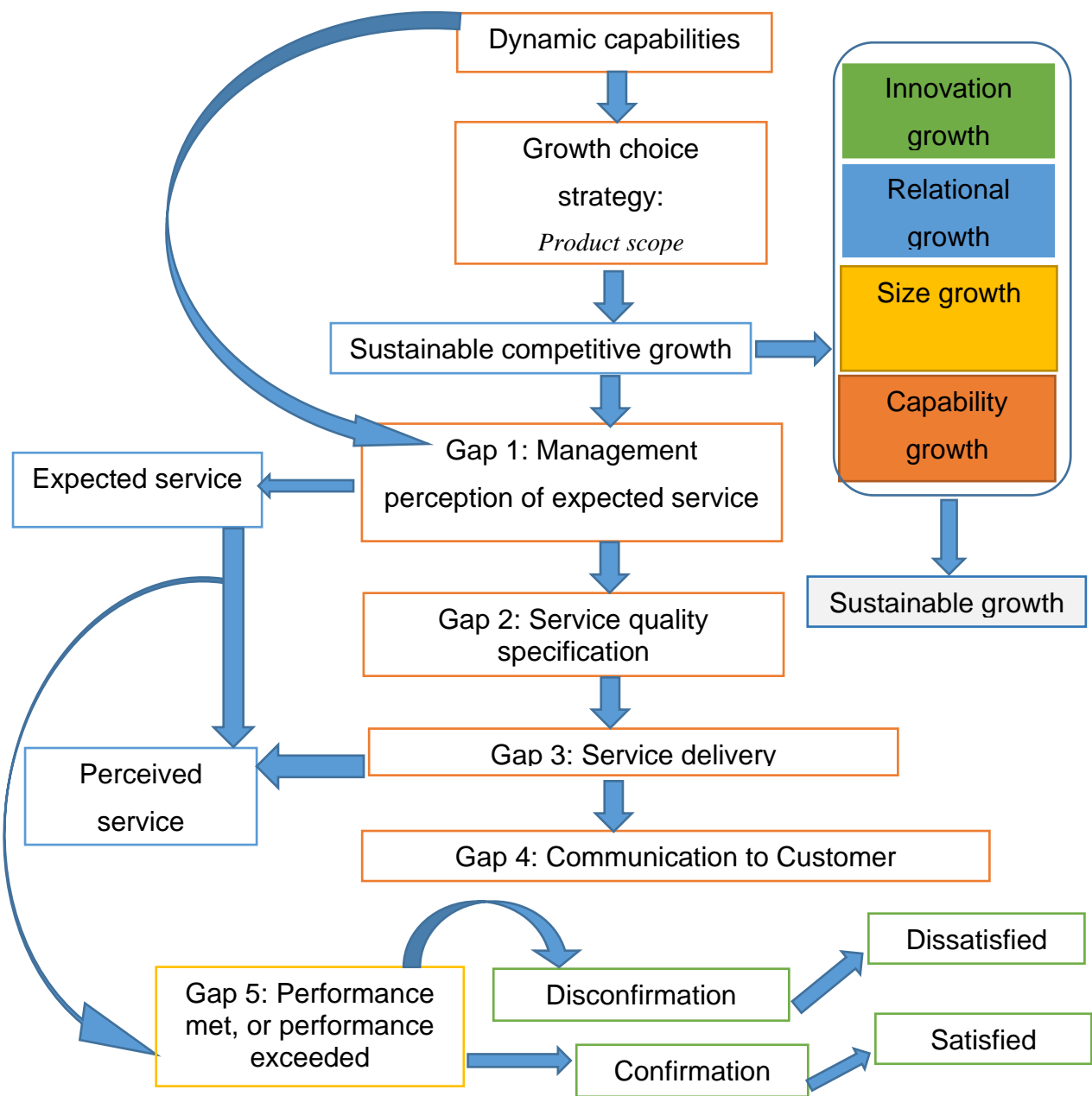


Figure 22: Strategic guideline from Ambrosini and Bowman (2009), Furlan and Grandinetti (2011) and includes author’s analysis.

Dynamic capabilities

According to Pettus (2001), strategic sustainable growth is about extracting the maximum value possible through the existing resource base, which includes, maintaining growth in a dynamically changing environment. Teece et al. (1997) aver that the dynamic capability perspective emphasises the capacity of a company, which faces a rapidly changing environment, to create new resources, to renew or alter its resource base (Teece et al., 1997). It is a company which acknowledges that “the top management team and its beliefs about organizational evolution may play an important role in developing dynamic capabilities” (Rindova and Kotha, 2001:1274).

Management perception of customers’ expected service is influenced by the dynamic capabilities that directly impact the resource base of the organisation, which in turn remain the source of the organisation’s competitive advantage. It is important that fast-food outlets understand that their dynamic capabilities focus on the processes that “use resources – specifically the processes to integrate, reconfigure, gain and release resources – to match or even create market change” (Eisenhardt and Martin, 2000). In order to grow a franchise, the behavioural orientation “constantly must be integrated, reconfigured, renewed and recreate its resources and capabilities and, most importantly, upgrade and reconstruct its core capabilities in response to the changing environment to attain and sustain competitive advantage” (Eisenhardt and Martin, 2000:1107). The dynamic capabilities are a first and important step for the management of fast-food outlets.

Choice of growth strategy

Several scholars and strategic consultants (Broquist and Kratzert, 2011; Zhou, Park, and Ungson, 2013; Polunin, 2013) firmly indicate that the key to sustainable growth, from an economic point of view is the right choice of strategy, its accurate development and execution. According to Grant (2013), all the strategies can be divided into corporate, business and functional, depending on the scope of strategy. Corporate strategy defines “the scope of the firm in terms of the industries and markets in which it competes” and business strategy is concerned “with how the firm competes within a particular industry or market”. Zhou et al. (2013) and Prats et al. (2012) indicate that

emerging markets' environment require very specific strategic choices in order to resist the turbulence and adapt to rapid changes. They argue that high-growth companies in emerging markets tend to select only specific strategies or use their combination.

Zhou et al. (2013) identify product diversification as entering a new business in search of new growth opportunities deriving from traditional definition of Ansoff (1957). The market for healthier food items at fast-food outlets needs to select strategies of organic product diversification, niche specialisation and scaling because these are emerging markets. Ambrosini and Bowman (2009) suggest that firms that invest in R & D do so in the expectation that resource advantages. In order to grow the market for healthier food items, fast-food outlets should focus on growth by scaling. Growth by scaling works best when: the market is potentially large enough for rapid growth in a focused product line, the product creates unique value in the customers' view, and the company can distribute products widely at low cost (Grant, 2013). All of these satisfy the current need to grow need by fast-food outlets.

Sustainable competition growth

Sustaining growth is concerned with "the task of preserving rapid pace of growth appears to be one of the most challenging for high-growth private companies from strategic viewpoint in emerging markets" (Prats et al., 2012). According to Grant (2013), in order to sustain growth, a firm needs to concentrate on sustaining competitive advantage. The sustainability of competitive advantage depends on whether the competitors can imitate it or introduce innovation which undermine its value since a company is more likely to control imitation as a direct form of competition rather than the ability of competitors to innovate, the significant barriers to imitation should exist (Furlan and Grandinetti, 2011).

The profitability of healthier diet menu items by a fast-food outlet may be dependent on the fast-food outlet becoming more efficient in evaluating transferability, durability and replicability of its competitive advantage in providing its menu items and positioning in the market.

The linkage between dynamic capabilities, growth strategy and competitive advantage

Porter (1985) reasoned that achieving competitive advantage results from a firm's ability to cope with the five forces better than its rivals. As defined by Grant (2013: 211), derived from Porter's theory, "competitive advantage is a disequilibrium phenomenon that is a consequence of change". The concept of dynamic capabilities assumes the company possesses capabilities to respond to external changes by changing the internal resource base with the help of, beside others, its innovative potential. However, the link between the development of dynamic capabilities depends on the strategic choices and sustainable competitive advantage. Griffith and Harvey (2006: 597) argue that "a global dynamic capability is the creation of difficult-to-imitate combinations of resources that can provide a firm competitive advantage" and Lee et al. (2002:734) suggest that "dynamic capabilities are conceived as a source of sustainable advantage in Shumpeterian regimes of rapid change".

The deployment of dynamic capabilities may have 4 possible outcomes (Ambrosini and Bowman, 2009). Firstly, it can lead to sustainable competitive advantage if the resulting resource base is not imitated for a long time and the rents are sustained, i.e. the chosen strategy allows outperforming competitors (Rindova and Kotha, 2001: 1275). Secondly, it can lead to temporary advantage that can only be enjoyed for a short period of time if the company is unable to shift or review its choice of dynamic capabilities deployment (Helfat, Finkelstein, Mitchell, Peteraf, Singh, Teece, and Winter, 2007). Thirdly, it may only give competitive parity if the effect on the resource base simply allows the firm to operate in the industry rather than to outperform rival firms (Rindova and Kotha, 2001:1275). Finally, the deployment of dynamic capabilities may lead to failure if the resulting capabilities are irrelevant to the market (Rindova and Kotha, 2001:1275).

Size growth

Furlan and Grandinetti (2011:198) define size growth as "broadening of the boundaries of the firm over a given period of time". Penrose (1959) says size growth may be internal or external. In the case of internal growth, which McKelvie and Wiklund (2010) call "organic", the company enhances its boundaries through investments that

increase the size of existing organisational units or through greenfield investments, i.e., creating new production, logistics or commercial units or subsidiaries. It goes in line with the product and organisational scope of strategies clarified earlier. External growth or acquisitive growth occurs when two or more firms merge together to become one bigger firm, or when one firm acquires the entirety or a share of the equity of another firm (Furlan and Grandinetti, 2011:198).

Relational growth

McKelvie and Wiklund (2010) also argue that cooperation between firms in its various forms (strategic partnerships, according to Zhou et al., 2013 is a specific mode of firm growth, which they call “hybrid, along with organic and acquisitive growth”. Deriving from this argument as well as Håkansson and Snehota’s (1989) statements, Furlan and Grandinetti (2011) view relationship growth as a specific way to grow, which they define as “increment of the extent to which a firm uses external resources over a given period of time”. External resources are identified as those assets (physical or otherwise) over which the firm has no direct ownership, but that are accessible through the relationships with other organisations.

Capability growth

Furlan and Grandinetti (2011:197) define capability growth as “the development of new capabilities of a firm over a given period of time”. The development of new capabilities can be based either on internal development, on external resources from the market and on their integration. Growing firm capabilities triggers and sustains size growth which, in turn, generates a further growth of firm capabilities. Companies need to develop appropriate capabilities to build a valuable portfolio of relationships, to select partners and build a cooperation mechanism.

Innovation growth

Innovation growth can be considered as a sole dimension that is also interlinked with other dimensions. According to Sawhney et al. (2007; Urban and Kongo,2015), business innovation is a far broader in scope than just product or technological

innovation. Instead, business innovation is defined as “creation of substantial new value for customers and the firm by creatively changing one or more dimensions of the business system”.

The researcher hopes that the recommendations will assist fast-food outlets in the Limpopo Province to effectively and efficiently offer services in order to improve customer satisfaction on healthier menu items. The next section also makes recommendations on future areas of study which could not be covered in this study.

5.4 Recommendations for future study

Some implications for further research stem from the need to overcome the limitations of the current study. The data collection and research design procedure employed in this study focused on customers of fast-food outlets in general, some of whom might have had a limited experience and knowledge about the healthier menu items as they themselves do not follow healthy issues.

The need for healthier menu depends on the various reasons such as the adoption of a healthy lifestyle, following dietary processes due to illness or avoiding obesity. Future research could aim to measure customer satisfaction with specific healthier food options available at fast-food outlets by selecting a specific fast-food outlet. This may increase the consistency of the findings and provide more insights on the topic.

Secondly, this study adopted quantitative approach. Another study should be conducted following a qualitative approach to also understand the behaviour and perception behind expectation and satisfaction in relation to fast-food outlets.

A study focusing on managers and/or staff of fast-food outlets is deemed necessary. This will provide a different perspective on customer satisfaction with services offered at fast-food outlets.

Due to price and value, convenience and atmosphere received the lowest satisfaction rating compared with the other dimensions. Therefore, additional research may be

conducted in order to further explore respondents' perceptions and expectations in this regard.

5.4. Limitations of the study

"Limitations are inherent in academic work. No researcher can do it all and do it perfectly" (Hofstee, 2006:87). In this study, the researcher deployed convenience sampling, and therefore, the findings cannot be generalised to the larger population. Additionally, the study was limited to fast-food outlets only. This meant that respondents' attitudes, beliefs, degree of truthfulness, cooperation and experiences could greatly jeopardise research results, hence, the researcher tried to guard against these attitudes, beliefs etc., by developing neutral questions and allowing the respondents to have a wider scope choice.

Due to the Covid-19 pandemic and lockdown regulations imposed in South Africa, not only was the researcher working under time and financial constraints, but also had restricted interaction with the consumers in terms of face-to-face/close engagements with the respondents because of the regulations that necessitate social distancing, not sharing resources such as pens etc. Nevertheless, the researcher had to sample the population and complete the study within the stipulated time. Perhaps when the pandemic is no longer prevalent, other researchers might gain more perspectives on issues pertaining to customers' expectations and experiences at fast-food outlets due unrestricted interactions.

5.5. Chapter summary

This chapter presented a summary of the results and drew conclusions based on the findings and review of relevant literature. The summary of findings and recommendations of this study were based on the three research objectives. The chapter has also suggested areas that need further research. This chapter concludes with notions of customer satisfaction with healthier food options offered at fast-food outlets in South Africa. The study further highlighted strategic guidelines that can be followed when marketing healthier menu items at fast-food outlets. Even though the research found that there was some satisfaction amongst customers, there were also notable dissatisfactions with healthier food options available at fast-food outlets.

Dissatisfaction was more visible within the price for value and food quality. A considerable gap between expectations, satisfaction and service quality should therefore be considered.

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**APPENDIX A
– COVER LETTER –**



University of Limpopo
School of Economics and Management
Department of Business Management
Private Bag X1106, Sovenga, 0727, South Africa
Tel: (015) 268 2646, Fax: (015) 268 3523, Email: olawale.fatoki@ul.ac.za

Dear Participant

I am Mahlatji K.D, doing Masters research in Business Management at the University of Limpopo. The title of the study is: "*Strategic guidelines for customer satisfaction with healthier diet menu items in fast food franchising outlets in South Africa*" under the supervision of Prof. G. Pelser.

My aim is to gather information about your views on the subject. Please be assured of the following:

- Your identity will be kept confidential and anonymous throughout the study.
- Your participation is voluntary. You can withdraw and discontinue participation without penalty.
- You may also refuse to answer any questions you do not want to answer and still remain in the study.
- I may also withdraw you from this research if circumstances arise that warrant doing so.

If you volunteer to participate in this study, I expect you to do the following things:

- Sign the consent form that is attached
- Participate in filling in the questionnaire

Please do not write your name of any of the pages or documents you submit.

Thank you for your co-operation.

Yours Sincerely

APPENDIX B
– ETHICAL CLEARANCE –



University of Limpopo
Department of Research Administration and Development
Private Bag X1106, Sovenga, 0727, South Africa
Tel: (015) 268 1935, Fax: (015) 268 2206, Email: rmaoetja.ramusi@ul.ac.za

TURFLOOP RESEARCH ETHICS COMMITTEE
ETHICS CLEARANCE CERTIFICATE

MEETING: 30 December 2020

PROJECT NUMBER: TREC/387/2020: PG

PROJECT:

Title: Strategic guidelines for customer satisfaction with healthier diet menu items in fast food franchising outlets in South Africa
Researcher: KD Mahlati
Supervisor: Prof GJJ Pelzer
Co-Supervisor/s: N/A
School: Economics and Management
Degree: Master of Commerce in Business Management

PROF P MNGOMEZULU

CHAIRPERSON: TURFLOOP RESEARCH ETHICS COMMITTEE

The Turfloop Research Ethics Committee (TREC) is registered with the National Health Research Ethics Council, Registration Number: REC-0330511-031

Note:

- i) This Ethics Clearance Certificate will be valid for one (1) year, as from the abovementioned date. Application for annual renewal [or annual review] need to be received by TREC one month before lapse of this period.
- ii) Should any departure be contemplated from the research procedure as approved, the researcher(s) must re-submit the protocol to the committee, together with the Application for Amendment form.
- iii) PLEASE QUOTE THE PROTOCOL NUMBER IN ALL ENQUIRIES.

**APPENDIX C
– QUESTIONNAIRE –**

University of Limpopo
School of Economics and Management
Department of Business Management
Private Bag X1106, Sovenga, 0727, South Africa
Tel: (015) 268 2646, Fax: (015) 268 3523, Email: olawale.fatoki@ul.ac.za

Dear Respondent,

I am Mr. Mahlatji K.D., a Master's student from the Department of Business Management at the University of Limpopo. I kindly invite you to participate in my academic research study. The purpose of my research study is to explore customer satisfaction with healthier diet menu items at fast-food outlets within South Africa with the intent to providing a strategic tool for fast-food outlets.

Please be advised that:

- Your participation in this survey is strictly confidential. Your participation in this survey is anonymous and all your answers will not and cannot be used to identify you.
- You are free to withdraw your participation in the study at any time.
- The results of this study will be used academic research purposes only. This will take only about **10 minutes** of your time.
- You give your consent to participate in the study voluntarily.

Respondent's signature

Date:

Section A: Demographic and General information

Please mark your answer with an X.

1.	What is your gender?	Female		Male	
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2.	What is your age?	18-2		21-25		26 or older	
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3. How many times do you usually buy the fast-food outlet?

More than three times a week Up to three times a week

Once a week Hardly ever (Please specify why)

4. When you eat in the fast-food outlet, what type of food do you normally choose? (Tick each one as appropriate)

Yogurt Vegetables Fresh Fruit

Salads Meat/Chicken/Fish Grilled food

Fried food Desserts Other (please specify)

5. How would you describe the variety of foods on the menu offered by fast-food franchises?

Excellent Good Fair Poor

(Please specify why)

Section B: Healthier food items

Healthier diet menu items refer to food items that are low in fat and/or calories. Healthier diet menu items include items such as salads, grilled items (grilled chicken, grilled burgers, grilled wraps, grilled fish), muesli and yoghurt breakfasts (Cant et al., 2014).

Based on your last visit to a fast-food outlet, please answer the following questions:

6. What **Beverages** do you **expect** to find on the menu of fast-food outlets? (*Please indicate the following with an (X) on drink choices you expect*) Mormer (2012); Cant et al. (2014).

<i>Coffee with milk</i>		<i>Milkshake</i>		<i>Soda (Carbonated)</i>	
<i>Coffee without milk</i>		<i>Hot chocolate</i>		<i>Juice (Sweetened)</i>	
<i>Tea (Green tea)</i>		<i>Cappuccino</i>		<i>Juice (Unsweetened)</i>	
<i>Tea (chamomile tea)</i>		<i>Still water</i>		<i>Beers</i>	
<i>Tea (Bush tea)</i>		<i>Sparkling Water</i>		<i>Wine (Alcoholic)</i>	
<i>Energy drinks</i>		<i>Whiskey/Brandy</i>		<i>Wine (Non- Alcoholic)</i>	

Other (please specify)

6.1. What **Beverages** did you **actually** find on the menu of fast-food outlets? (*Please indicate the following with an (X) on drink choices you found*) Mormer (2012); Cant et al. (2014).

<i>Coffee with milk</i>		<i>Milkshake</i>		<i>Soda (Carbonated)</i>	
<i>Coffee without milk</i>		<i>Hot chocolate</i>		<i>Juice (Sweetened)</i>	
<i>Tea (Green tea)</i>		<i>Cappuccino</i>		<i>Juice (Unsweetened)</i>	
<i>Tea (chamomile tea)</i>		<i>Still water</i>		<i>Beers</i>	
<i>Tea (Bush tea)</i>		<i>Sparkling Water</i>		<i>Wine (Alcoholic)</i>	
<i>Energy drinks</i>		<i>Whiskey/Brandy</i>		<i>Wine (Non- Alcoholic)</i>	

Other (please specify)

7. What **meal items** do you expect to find on the menu of fast-food outlets? (*Please indicate the following with an (X) on meal expectations*) Cant et al. (2014); Gopaul (2015).

<i>Fish</i>		<i>Fruit salads</i>		<i>Pasta/rice</i>	
<i>Chicken</i>		<i>Stir veggie fries</i>		<i>Fries</i>	
<i>Meat</i>		<i>Garden Salads</i>		<i>Wholemeal cereals</i>	
<i>Burgers</i>		<i>Feta Salads</i>		<i>Sandwiches</i>	
<i>Pizzas</i>		<i>Chicken strips and salads</i>		<i>Wholegrain breads</i>	

Other (please specify)

7.1. What **meal items** did you **actually find** on the menu of fast-food outlets? (*Please indicate the following with an (X) on mal items you found*) Cant et al. (2014); Gopaul (2015).

<i>Fish</i>		<i>Fruit salads</i>		<i>Pasta/rice</i>	
<i>Chicken</i>		<i>Stir veggie fries</i>		<i>Fries</i>	
<i>Meat</i>		<i>Garden Salads</i>		<i>Wholemeal cereals</i>	
<i>Burgers</i>		<i>Feta Salads</i>		<i>Sandwiches</i>	
<i>Pizzas</i>		<i>Chicken strips and salads</i>		<i>Wholegrain breads</i>	

Other (please specify)

8. What **frozen treats/Desserts** do you expect to find on the menu of fast-food outlets? (*Please indicate the following with an (X) on the appropriate treats*) Cant et al. (2014); Choi and Reid (2018); Nguyeni (2018).

<i>Yogurt (sweetened)</i>		<i>Low-fat Ice cream</i>		<i>Waffles</i>	
<i>Yogurt (Unsweetened)</i>		<i>Medium-fat ice cream</i>		<i>Brownies</i>	
<i>Plain yogurt</i>		<i>Popsicles (Sweetened)</i>		<i>Vanilla Custards</i>	
<i>Low- fat yogurt</i>		<i>Popsicles (Unsweetened)</i>		<i>Cakes</i>	
<i>Meduim-fat yogurt</i>		<i>Sugar free Popsicles</i>		<i>Muffins</i>	

Other (please specify)

8.1. What **frozen treats/Desserts** did you actually find on the menu of fast-food outlets? (*Please indicate the following with an (X) on the appropriate treats*) Cant et al. (2014);Choi and Reid (2018); Nguyeni (2018).

<i>Yogurt (sweetened)</i>		<i>Low-fat Ice cream</i>		<i>Waffles</i>	
<i>Yogurt (Unsweetened)</i>		<i>Medium-fat ice cream</i>		<i>Brownies</i>	
<i>Plain yogurt</i>		<i>Popsicles (Sweetened)</i>		<i>Vanilla Custards</i>	
<i>Low- fat yogurt</i>		<i>Popsicles (Unsweetened)</i>		<i>Cakes</i>	
<i>Meduim-fat yogurt</i>		<i>Sugar free Popsicles</i>		<i>Muffins</i>	

Other (please specify)

9. What **meal preparation method** do you expect to find on the menu of fast-food outlets?

<i>Deep fried</i>		<i>Grilled</i>		<i>Simmered</i>	
<i>Boiled</i>		<i>Oven-baked</i>		<i>Slow cooked</i>	

Other (please specify)

9. 1. What **meal preparation method** did you **actually find** on the menu of fast-food outlets?

<i>Deep fried</i>		<i>Grilled</i>		<i>Simmered</i>	
<i>Boiled</i>		<i>Oven-baked</i>		<i>Slow cooked</i>	

Other (please specify)

6.	Are you generally satisfied with the “ food ” being sold at fast-food outlets? <i>(Please indicate with (Xs))</i>			
Yes, I am.			No, I am not.	

6.1.	How satisfied/dissatisfied are you with “ variety of the menu ” being sold at fast-food outlets? <i>(Please indicate with (Xs))</i>			
I am Very satisfied	I am just satisfied	I am Unsure	I am dissatisfied	I am Very dissatisfied

SECTION C: Rating of customer expectations of fast-food outlets

Please indicate the following with an (X) to indicate your level of expectation with each of the statements of the dimensions below on a scale of 1–5; 1 being “Very low expectation” and 5 being “Very high expectation”.

7. Before you make your purchase at fast-food outlets, what are your expectations about the service quality?						
7.1.	I expect friendly staff	1	2	3	4	5
7.2.	I expect a friendly manager	1	2	3	4	5
7.3.	I expect staff to be knowledgeable about the food and promotions	1	2	3	4	5
7.4.	I expect the staff to be attentive and energetic/vibrant	1	2	3	4	5

8. Before you make your purchase from fast-food outlets, what are your expectations about the food quality?					
8.1. I expect tasty food	1	2	3	4	5
8.2. I expect the food to have good eye appeal (the food must be presentable)	1	2	3	4	5
8.3. I expect the food to be fresh	1	2	3	4	5

9. Before you make your purchase at fast-food outlets, what are your expectations about the prices/value of the meals?					
9.1. I expect fair prices (the food should not be much expensive from its competitors)	1	2	3	4	5
9.2. I expect desirable quality to be associated with the meal (the higher the price, the bigger the meal should be)	1	2	3	4	5
9.3. I expect organic meals to be most expensive of all the meals offered.	1	2	3	4	5

10. Before you make your purchase from fast-food outlets, what are your expectations about the convenience of the outlet?					
10.1. I expect extended service hours	1	2	3	4	5
10.2. I expect safe parking	1	2	3	4	5
10.3. I expect the store to be a walking distance away	1	2	3	4	5

11. Before you make your purchase from fast-food outlets, what are your expectations about the atmosphere in the outlet?					
11.1. I expect the outlet to be clean	1	2	3	4	5
11.2. I expect to have a dining-in feeling	1	2	3	4	5
11.3. I expect staff to be in uniform	1	2	3	4	5
11.4. I expect to feel comfort and security	1	2	3	4	5

12. What other expectations do you have when purchasing at fast-food outlets?

SECTION D: Rating of customer satisfaction of fast-food outlets

Based on the fast-food outlet that you have selected in Section B, please indicate the following with an (X) to indicate your level of satisfaction with each of the statements of the dimensions below on a scale of 1–5; 1 being “Very dissatisfied” and 5 being “Very satisfied”.

13. After your purchase from fast-food outlets, what was your experience with the service quality rendered?					
13.1. I experienced friendly staff	1	2	3	4	5
13.2. I experienced a friendly manager	1	2	3	4	5
13.3. I experienced that the staff is knowledgeable about the food and promotions	1	2	3	4	5
13.4. I experienced the staff to be attentive and energetic/vibrant	1	2	3	4	5

14. Before you make your purchase from fast-food outlets, what are your expectations about the food quality?					
14.1. I experienced tasty food	1	2	3	4	5
14.2. I experienced the food to have good eye appeal (the food must be presentable)	1	2	3	4	5
14.3. I experienced the food to be fresh	1	2	3	4	5

15. Before you make your purchase from fast-food outlets, what are your expectations of the prices/value of the meals?					
15.1. I experienced fair prices (the food should not be much expensive from its competitors)	1	2	3	4	5

15.2. I experienced desirable quality to be associated with the meal (the higher the price, the bigger the meal should be)	1	2	3	4	5
15.3. I experienced organic meals to be most expensive of all the meals offered.	1	2	3	4	5

16. Before you make your purchase from fast-food outlets, what are your expectations about the convenience of the outlet?					
14.1. I experienced extended service hours	1	2	3	4	5
14.2. I experienced safe parking	1	2	3	4	5
14.3. I experienced the store to be a walking distance away	1	2	3	4	5

15. Before you make your purchase from fast-food outlets, what are your expectations of the atmosphere in the outlet?					
15.1. I experienced the outlet to be clean	1	2	3	4	5
15.2. I experienced to have a dining-in feeling	1	2	3	4	5
15.3. I experienced staff to be in uniform	1	2	3	4	5
15.4. I experienced to feel comfort and security	1	2	3	4	5

16. If you could **improve at least two things** that fast-food outlets are not doing right to guarantee that you continually purchase menu items and that you remain satisfied, what would they be?

THANK YOU FOR YOUR TIME!

APPENDIX D
- RELIABILITY STATISTICS-

Item-Total Statistics

	Scale Mean if Item Deleted	Scale Variance if Item Deleted	Corrected Item-Total Correlation	Cronbach's Alpha if Item Deleted
H1	143.40	255.990	-.302	.922
H2	140.68	242.869	.418	.918
SQ1	139.84	240.449	.541	.917
SQ2	140.38	235.089	.618	.915
SQ3	140.22	234.251	.621	.915
SQ4	140.41	232.859	.671	.915
SQ5	139.81	240.300	.589	.916
SQ6	140.37	234.387	.631	.915
SQ7	139.97	236.624	.633	.915
SQ8	140.51	233.738	.623	.915
FQ1	139.78	239.688	.630	.916
FQ2	140.50	242.903	.416	.918
FQ3	139.84	239.875	.585	.916
FQ4	140.71	240.846	.495	.917
FQ5	139.78	240.354	.582	.916
FQ6	140.39	234.495	.639	.915
PV1	139.88	239.933	.603	.916
PV2	141.41	252.017	.009	.924
PV3	139.91	240.451	.543	.917
PV4	140.88	237.194	.554	.916
PV5	140.29	235.841	.582	.916
PV6	140.42	236.652	.500	.917
C1	140.37	234.533	.561	.916
C2	141.18	245.353	.305	.919
C3	140.25	234.968	.602	.916
C4	141.09	244.761	.294	.920
C5	140.49	235.037	.462	.918
C6	141.24	242.938	.323	.919
A1	139.87	240.760	.576	.917
A2	140.19	235.527	.645	.915
A3	140.33	235.783	.531	.917
A4	141.06	245.698	.270	.920
A5	139.95	240.250	.435	.918
A6	140.68	251.156	.047	.923
A7	139.98	240.682	.543	.917
A8	140.75	248.522	.148	.921