

**COMMUNITY EXPECTATIONS AND PERCEPTIONS OF
MUNICIPAL SERVICE DELIVERY: A CASE STUDY IN
THE EMFULENI LOCAL AREA**

ANNIE MOJAESI MOLETSANE

**A dissertation submitted in fulfillment
of the requirements for the degree**

**MAGISTER of COMMERCE
BUSINESS MANAGEMENT**

**in the
SCHOOL OF ECONOMIC SCIENCES
at the
VAAL TRIANGLE CAMPUS**

**of the
North-West University**

Vanderbijlpark

Supervisor: Dr N de Klerk

Vanderbijlpark

2012

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

I want to give thanks to the following individuals who made this work worth my undertaking:

- God, Heavenly Father, Lord Jesus, I glorify your holy name. I would not have managed on my own, having you by side made me who I am. You gave me the courage and ability to complete this degree: Master of Commerce.
- My loving husband, David, you are a pillar of strength, a shoulder to lean on. Thank you for the love and support you have given me, especially during the challenging times of this study.
- My son, Thabo, and my daughter, Rearabetsoe, thank you for your consideration. I hope my achievements will be your inspiration to study.
- My late mother and father, I wish you were here to share this, but I know you are proud of me. My brother Ramolamu Joseph, thank you for your prayers, encouragement, support and care.
- Dr N de Klerk, my supervisor and Prof. A.L. Bevan-Dye, my co-supervisor, both from North West University (Vaal Campus). This dissertation would not have been a success without your academic support and professional advice.
- Emfuleni Local Municipality, I salute you for providing me the opportunity to carry out this study.
- All the respondents of the Sedibeng District, particularly Emfuleni and Lesedi Local Municipalities, who completed the questionnaires. This study would not have been possible without you.
- Ms Amanda Smith, M and PHD office, North West University (Vaal Campus) you are a pillar of strength. Thank you for your unwavering support and advice.
- Ms Aldine Oosthuyzen from North-West University (Vaal Campus), without you I would have been adrift. Thank you for your professional assistance with regard to the analysis of the completed research questionnaires.

- Ms Linda Scott, language specialist, thank you for professionally editing the dissertation and tolerating the pressure you were put under.
- My field workers, thank you for the crucial role you played in this study, particularly Edwin Mabelane, you ensured the success of this study.

OPSOMMING

GEMEENSKAPSVERWAGTINGE EN PERSEPSIES VAN MUNISIPALE DIENSLEWERING: 'N GEVALLESTUDIE IN DIE EMFULENI PLAASLIKE GEBIED

SLEUTELWOORDE: Diensgehalte, SERVQUAL, dienstebemarking, persepsies, verwagtinge, munisipale dienslewering, Suid-Afrika

Die tekort aan dienslewering deur Suid-Afrikaanse munisipaliteite het baie aandag ontvang in die afgelope paar jaar. In Suid-Afrika word diensgehalte binne die plaaslike regering oor die algemeen as swak bestempel. Volgens die Suid-Afrikaanse Grondwet is die mandaat van 'n munisipaliteit om dienslewering te verseker deur aan die basiese benodighede van inwoners te voldoen. Derhalwe is begrip van kliënte se verwagtinge en persepsies noodsaaklik vir die sukses van enige diensorganisasie. Die navorsing wat deur hierdie studie onderneem is, is nodig aangesien dit algemeen aanvaar word dat dienslewering deur Suid-Afrikaanse munisipaliteite in verskillende gebiede tekort skiet. Die navorsing is teen die agtergrond van die Witskrif op Plaaslike Regering aangevoer, wat vra vir die voorsiening van dienste aan gemeenskappe op 'n volhoubare wyse.

Die primêre doelwit van die studie was om 'n voorstelling van die gemeenskap se verwagtinge en persepsies van die gehalte van die dienslewering van die Emfuleni Plaaslike Munisipaliteit te bied, ten einde enige potensiële gapings ten opsigte van dienslewering te identifiseer. Die studie maak gebruik van 'n beskrywende navorsingontwerpbenadering.

Die literatuuroorsig bevat gepubliseerde navorsing met betrekking tot diensgehalte en diensgehaltemodelle. Die literatuuroorsig verskaf inligting oor diensgehalte vanuit die perspektief van algemene diensbedrywe, asook 'n oorsig van die huidige Suid-Afrikaanse regering se plaaslike sfere. Die uitkomstes van die literatuurstudie dien om die teoretiese raamwerk vir die empiriese studie te verskaf.

'n Vraelysopname is gebruik om die nodige data vir die empiriese gedeelte van die studie in te samel. Inwoners van die Emfuleni Plaaslike Munisipaliteit het die streekproefraamwerk van die studie gevorm. Die vraelys het die SERVQUAL-meetinstrument ingesluit. Vraestelle wat selftoegedien is en gebruik maak van die winkelsentrumonderskeppingmetode, is gebruik as 'n data-insamelingsmetode. Ingevolge die afgetekende omvang van die studie, is die studie beperk tot die Vereenigingse en Vanderbijlparkse betaalpunte van die Emfuleni Plaaslike Munisipaliteit. Die studie is dwarsnit van aard (data is gedurende Desember 2010 ingesamel) en gevolglik verteenwoordigend van die betrokke tydstip.

Die bevindinge dui daarop aan dat die Emfuleni Plaaslike Munisipaliteit se kliënte negatiewe persepsies het van die gehalte van die dienste wat deur die munisipaliteit gelewer is. 'n Beduidende statistiese en praktiese verskil is bereken tussen die verwagtinge en die persepsies van al die diensgehalte dimensies wat diensgehalte-lewering deur die Emfuleni Plaaslike Munisipaliteit behels. Daardeur word gapings ten opsigte van diensgehalte aangedui wat aandag moet geniet.

Die aanbevelings wat in die studie verskaf word stel moontlike maniere voor waarop munisipaliteite in Suid-Afrika, oor die algemeen en die Emfuleni Plaaslike Munisipaliteit spesifiek die gehalte van hul dienslewering kan verbeter en sodoende die tevredenheid van hul kliënte kan laat toeneem. Aanbevelings om moontlike gapings te oorbrug sluit onder meer in die toename van marknavorsing, die opgradering en instandhouding van fisiese fasiliteite, verbetering van medewerking, koördinerings- en samewerking tussen departemente, die hou van opgedateerde rekords, die verbetering van kommunikasieprogramme, en die uitvoering van bestuurs- en leierskapopleiding vir die bemerkingspan. Verder word die aanbeveling gemaak dat munisipaliteite bevoegde personeel werf, wat bereid is om te help, en dat hulle deelneem aan voortdurende personeelopleiding en motiveringsinisiatiewe.

ABSTRACT

COMMUNITY EXPECTATIONS AND PERCEPTIONS OF MUNICIPAL SERVICE DELIVERY: A CASE STUDY IN THE EMFULENI LOCAL AREA

KEY WORDS: Service quality, SERVQUAL, services marketing, perceptions, expectations, municipal service delivery, South Africa

The lack of service delivery by South African municipalities has received much attention in recent years. In South Africa, service quality within local government is perceived as being generally poor. According to the South African Constitution, the mandate of a municipality is to ensure service deliveries through satisfying citizens' basic needs. Therefore, an understanding of customers' expectations and perceptions is vital for any service organisation's success. The research undertaken in this study was deemed necessary, given that service delivery by South African municipalities is widely considered to be lacking in various areas. The research was conducted against the backdrop of the White Paper on Local Government that calls for the provision of services to communities in a sustainable manner.

The primary objective of the study was to provide a view on the community's expectations and perceptions of the service quality delivery by the Emfuleni Local Municipality in order to identify any potential service quality gaps. The study follows a descriptive research design approach.

The literature review comprised published research relating to service quality and service quality models. The literature review provides information on service quality from the perspective of general service industries, as well as an overview of the current South African local spheres of government. The outcomes of the literature review served to provide the theoretical framework for the empirical study.

A questionnaire survey was utilised to gather the required data for the empirical portion of this study. Residents of the Emfuleni Local Municipality formed the sampling frame of this study. The questionnaire included the

SERVQUAL measuring scale. Self-administered questionnaires using the mall-intercept survey method were employed as the data collection method. In accordance with the delineated scope of the study, this study was confined to the Vereeniging and Vanderbijlpark pay points of the Emfuleni Local Municipality. The study is cross-sectional in nature (data were collected in December 2010) and, as such, the results are representative of that point in time.

The findings indicate that customers of the Emfuleni Local Municipality have negative perceptions of the quality of services delivered by the municipality. A statistical and practical significant difference was computed between expectations and perceptions on all of the service quality dimensions concerning service-quality delivery by the Emfuleni Local Municipality, thereby indicating service quality gaps that need to be addressed.

The recommendations provided in this study focus on suggesting possible ways in which municipalities in South Africa in general, and in the Emfuleni Local Municipality in particular, may improve their service-quality delivery in order to decrease the gaps between expectations and perceptions, and doing so, increase customer satisfaction. Recommendations for closing these gaps include increasing marketing research, upgrading and maintaining the physical facilities, improving collaboration, co-ordination and co-operation between departments, keeping up-dated records, improving communication programmes, and implementing management and leadership training for management team. In addition, it is recommended that municipalities recruit qualified personnel who are willing to help, and that they engage in ongoing staff training and motivation initiatives.

TABLE OF CONTENTS

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS	ii
OPSOMMING	iv
ABSTRACT	vi
TABLE OF CONTENTS	viii
LIST OF TABLES	xvi
LIST OF FIGURES	xvii
CHAPTER 1	1
INTRODUCTION AND PROBLEM STATEMENT	1
1.1 INTRODUCTION	1
1.2 PROBLEM STATEMENT	4
1.3 OBJECTIVES OF THE STUDY	5
1.3.1 Primary objective	5
1.3.2 Theoretical objectives	6
1.3.3 Empirical objectives	6
1.4 RESEARCH DESIGN AND METHODOLOGY	6
1.4.1 Literature review	6
1.4.2 Empirical study	7
1.4.2.1 Target population	7
1.4.2.2 Sampling frame	7
1.4.2.3 Sample method	7

1.4.2.4	Sample size.....	8
1.4.2.5	Data collection method and measuring instrument.....	8
1.4.3	Statistical analysis.....	9
1.5	ETHICAL CONSIDERATIONS.....	9
1.6	DEFINITIONS OF TERMINOLOGY.....	10
1.7	CLASSIFICATION OF CHAPTERS.....	11
1.8	LIMITATIONS OF THE RESEARCH STUDY.....	12
1.9	SYNOPSIS.....	12
	CHAPTER 2.....	14
	SERVICE QUALITY.....	14
2.1	INTRODUCTION.....	14
2.2	INTRODUCTION TO SERVICES.....	15
2.2.1	Defining services.....	15
2.2.2	Characteristics of services.....	16
2.2.2.1	Intangibility.....	17
2.2.2.2	Inseparability.....	18
2.2.2.3	Heterogeneity.....	18
2.2.2.4	Perishability.....	19
2.3	SERVICE QUALITY.....	20
2.3.1	Service quality defined.....	22
2.3.2	Dimensions of service quality.....	23
2.3.2.1	Tangibility.....	23

2.3.2.2	Reliability	24
2.3.2.3	Responsiveness	24
2.3.2.4	Assurance	25
2.3.2.5	Empathy	25
2.3.3	Customer satisfaction	26
2.3.3.1	Defining customer satisfaction.....	26
2.3.3.2	Customer satisfaction versus service quality	27
2.3.4	Customer expectations	28
2.3.4.1	Customer expectations defined	29
2.3.4.2	Understanding customer expectations	29
2.3.4.3	Determinants of service expectations.....	30
2.3.5	Customer perceptions	32
2.3.5.1	Customer perceptions defined.....	32
2.3.5.2	Understanding customer perceptions.....	33
2.3.6	Measuring service quality	34
2.4	SERVICE QUALITY MODELS.....	35
2.4.1	SERVQUAL model	36
2.4.2	Gap Analysis Model.....	38
2.4.2.1	Gap 1: Customers' expectations – Managements' perceptions gap.....	40
2.4.2.2	Gap 2: Management's perceptions – Service quality specifications gap.....	40

2.4.2.3	Gap 3: Service quality specifications – Service delivery gap.....	41
2.4.2.4	Gap 4: Service delivery – External communications gap	41
2.4.2.5	Gap 5: Customer’s expectation – Perceived service gap	42
2.5	HISTORICAL OVERVIEW OF THE CURRENT SOUTH AFRICAN LOCAL SPHERES OF GOVERNMENT	42
2.5.1	Status of local government.....	44
2.5.2	Local government and service delivery	45
2.5.3	White paper on local government	46
2.5.4	Functions of municipalities.....	46
2.5.5	Responsibilities of Local Government.....	47
2.5.6	Municipal service delivery in South Africa	48
2.5.7	Challenges facing South African municipalities	49
2.6	SYNOPSIS	50
	CHAPTER 3	52
	RESEARCH METHODOLOGY	52
3.1	INTRODUCTION.....	52
3.2	FORMULATING THE RESEARCH OBJECTIVES AND RESEARCH DESIGN.....	52
3.3	DATA REQUIREMENTS.....	54
3.4	RESEARCH INSTRUMENT.....	54
3.4.1	Development of questionnaire items	55
3.4.1.1	Dimension 1: Tangibility	56

3.4.1.2	Dimension 2: Reliability	56
3.4.1.3	Dimension 3: Responsiveness	56
3.4.1.4	Dimension 4: Assurance	56
3.4.1.5	Dimension 5: Empathy	57
3.4.2	Question format	57
3.4.3	Questionnaire specifications and design	58
3.4.4	Determining the measurement scale.....	59
3.4.5	Pre-testing of questionnaire	60
3.5	SAMPLING PROCEDURE.....	62
3.5.1	Defining the target population	63
3.5.2	Data collection method selection	63
3.5.3	Sampling frame, sampling method and sample size selection	63
3.5.4	Operational procedure for sample element selection	64
3.5.5	Sample plan execution	65
3.6	STATISTICAL ANALYSIS	66
3.6.1	Reliability analysis	66
3.6.2	Validity analysis	68
3.6.3	Factor Analysis	69
3.6.4	Descriptive analysis	70
3.6.4.1	Measures of central tendency	70
3.6.4.2	Measures of dispersion	70

3.6.4.3	Measures of skewness.....	71
3.6.5	T-test.....	71
3.7	SYNOPSIS.....	72
CHAPTER 4.....		73
ANALYSIS AND INTERPRETATION OF EMPIRICAL FINDINGS.....		73
4.1	INTRODUCTION.....	73
4.2	PILOT TESTING OF QUESTIONNAIRE.....	73
4.3	MAIN STUDY: PRELIMINARY DATA ANALYSIS.....	77
4.3.1	Coding.....	77
4.3.2	Tabulation: All variables.....	78
4.3.3	Data gathering process.....	82
4.4	DEMOGRAPHICAL INFORMATION.....	82
4.5	VALIDITY AND RELIABILITY OF THE SCALE.....	87
4.6	FACTOR ANALYSIS ON COMMUNITY EXPECTATIONS AND PERCEPTIONS.....	89
4.7	DESCRIPTIVE ANALYSIS.....	94
4.7.1	Descriptive statistics pertaining to the dimensions.....	94
4.8	TEST OF SIGNIFICANCE.....	100
4.9	SYNOPSIS.....	101
CHAPTER 5.....		103
CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATIONS.....		103
5.1	INTRODUCTION.....	103

5.2	OVERVIEW OF STUDY	104
5.2.1	Primary objective	104
5.2.2	Theoretical objectives	105
5.2.3	Empirical objectives	105
5.3	CONTRIBUTIONS OF THE STUDY	106
5.4	RECOMMENDATIONS	107
5.4.1	Customer expectations and perceptions.....	108
5.4.1.1	Dimension 1: Tangibility: Appearance of physical facilities, equipment, personnel and communication materials	108
5.4.1.2	Dimension 2: Reliability: Ability to perform the promised service dependable and accurately	109
5.4.1.3	Dimension 3: Responsiveness: Willingness to help customers and provide prompt service.....	110
5.4.1.4	Dimension 4: Assurance: Knowledge and courtesy of employees and their ability to convey trust and confidence	111
5.4.1.5	Dimension 5: Empathy: The caring, individualised attention the municipality provides to each customer.....	112
5.4.2	Recommended implementation approach.....	113
5.5	FUTURE RESEARCH OPPORTUNITIES.....	114
5.6	CONCLUDING REMARKS	114
	BIBLIOGRAPHY	116
	ANNEXURE A	132
	COVER LETTER	132
	ANNEXURE B	134

SURVEY QUESTIONNAIRE – SECTION A.....	134
ANNEXURE C	136
SURVEY QUESTIONNAIRE – SECTIONS B & C	136

LIST OF TABLES

Table 4.1:	Reliability: Expectations and Perceptions.....	75
Table 4.2:	Dimensions of customer expectations and perceptions of service quality and service delivery at the pilot stage	76
Table 4.3:	Coding information	77
Table 4.4:	Frequency table for customers' expectations of service quality in municipal service delivery.....	79
Table 4.4:	Frequency table for customers' expectations of service quality in municipal service delivery (continued...).....	80
Table 4.5:	Frequency table for customers' perceptions of service quality in municipal service delivery.....	80
Table 4.6:	Reliability analysis: Section B.....	88
Table 4.7:	Eigenvalues for the five dimensions: Expectations and perceptions.....	90
Table 4.8:	Rotated factor loadings on community expectations and perceptions on municipal service delivery	92
Table 4.9	Descriptive statistics: Total sample.....	95
Table 4.10:	SERVQUAL Gap Score.....	98
Table 4.11:	Priorities for improvement.....	99
Table 4.12:	Difference of means between expectations and perceptions on the five dimensions	101

LIST OF FIGURES

Figure 2.1	Perceived service qualities (Berry <i>et al.</i> , 1985:47).....	34
Figure 2.2	Integrated Gap Analysis model of service quality (Parasuraman <i>et al.</i> , 1985:48).....	39
Figure 3.1	Sampling plan procedure (Iacobucci and Churchill, 2010:449)	62
Figure 4.1:	Gender classification	83
Figure 4.2:	Racial groups.....	83
Figure 4.3:	Age classification.....	84
Figure 4.4:	Residential area.....	85
Figure 4.5:	Years of occupancy	86
Figure 4.6:	Number of occupants living in residence	87
Figure 4.7:	Aggregate mean rating of the five dimensions: Expectations.....	96
Figure 4.8:	Aggregate mean rating of the five dimensions: Perceptions.....	97
Figure 4.9:	Overall gaps between expectations and perceptions in five dimensions.....	100

CHAPTER 1

INTRODUCTION AND PROBLEM STATEMENT

1.1 INTRODUCTION

Following South Africa's first democratic local government elections in 1996, the government realised there was a need to rethink the manner in which services were being delivered (De Villiers & Kalema, 2005:80). The local government system of the transitional phase needed to mature into a new system of local governance. The White Paper on Local Government (RSA, 1998) states that, in order to realise the vision, goals and objectives of the new democracy, an array of institutional and political interventions by government is required.

According to the White Paper on Local Government (RSA, 1998), national government, provincial government and local government were established as the three elected spheres of government, each with distinctive functional responsibilities. In terms of Chapter 4 of the Constitution (1996) (hereinafter referred to as the Constitution) the three spheres of government are required to function as a single system of cooperative government for the country as a whole. Although transformation has been the defining characteristic of the structures and institutions of all three spheres of government, the process followed different paths for provincial government and local government.

Local government came into being much later than the other two spheres of government. Although this sphere has generated new opportunities for a more responsive and efficient government, incorporating local government into the system of cooperative governance has proved to be complex. The White Paper on Local Government (RSA, 1998) highlights the absence of a definite policy on provincial government. This has generated uncertainty about the role of this sphere in reconstruction and development. Schacter (2000:8) concurs with this and states that there is intransigence in the relationship between the different spheres of government. In order to facilitate and

improve service delivery, there should be a coordinated effort from all spheres of government.

Municipalities are important role players in service delivery (Boshoff & Mazibuko, 2008:14). They are required by law to find innovative methods to involve communities in all their affairs. The mandate of a municipality, according to the Constitution, is to ensure that the service deliveries for which it is responsible satisfy citizens' basic needs. These include water supply, sewerage collection and disposal, refuse removal, electricity and gas supply, health services, roads and storm water drainage, street lighting, and municipal parks and recreation (Boshoff & Mazibuko, 2008:14). Nealer and Raga (2007:173) concur with this, stating that the Constitution is a contract between the South African Government and citizens of the country, established by the structuring of the three spheres of government legislature and execution of public policies. Therefore, the government is under moral obligation to identify and address the needs of the country's citizens, and in order to add value to the respective communities and society as a whole, needs to determine which services should be addressed through more effective, efficient and economical public administration and management. Wisniewski and Stewart (2001:540-555) elaborate, stating that there is a need to improve the quality of local democracy and the degree of municipal responsiveness and accountability to the stakeholders. The National Government has set out the criteria for best value services, requiring the understanding of the needs, expectations, and priorities of all stakeholders.

According to Curtis (1999:261), the White Paper on Municipal Service Partnerships offers support to the views of the role of municipalities and the case for nationally set standards for municipal service delivery, monitored within a national framework for performance management. From the customers' perspective, expectations of services have shifted upwards, with greater emphasis placed on the quality of service. From a best value perspective, the measurement of service quality is that the public sector should take into account customer expectations and perceptions of services (Robinson, 1999:21). A regularly used method is the utilisation of gap scores

that enable service managers to assess current service quality and quantify gaps that exist. Hence, the service quality dimensions may assist in an understanding of the broad areas where customers have particularly high or low expectations, and an assessment of where there may be relatively large service gaps (Wisniewski & Stewart, 2001:380-388).

Governments strive to determine how much should be spent on public services, what components of a public service programme are most valuable, and whether service delivery can be measurable and thereby allow the development of a performance plan (Rodriguez, Vazquez & Edwards, 2009:1). In order to address service delivery backlogs, especially in previously disadvantaged communities, it is necessary to improve the leadership and governance framework to accelerate service delivery at the pace needed in South Africa (Naidoo, 2009:104).

The emergence of the new South African democracy in 1994 brought with it expectations of equalisation across racial, gender, socio-economic and geographic boundaries, fair and just delivery of services, access to basic services and the hope that all citizens could have freedom and dignity (Van der Wal, Pampallis, & Bond, 2002:324). Pretorius and Schurink (2007:19) agree with this, stating that post-apartheid South Africa faces a challenge in ensuring that municipalities provide optimal and professional services to citizens of heterogeneous cultures. Municipalities are the vehicle selected by national government to address the dual water service-delivery challenge and to reduce the apartheid backlog, whilst concurrently raising the level of services delivered (Hemson, 2004:10). The leadership and governance framework should be manifested through a set of techniques and methods related to effective policy implementation, monitoring and evaluation (Van der Wal, 2004:2).

According to Van der Wal *et al.* (2002:324), the ultimate aim of any modern government is to create conditions in the country in order for every stakeholder to enjoy good quality of life, and furthermore, to be able to achieve the aim, government has to identify priorities in relationship to formulated objectives, targets, services and strategies. However, according to

Farnham and Horton (1996:25), recent challenges facing public organisations globally have led to a new public management which is different from traditional public administration and which is now focusing more on business management, as is the case in private sector management.

Service delivery and service quality can provide an organisation with a lasting competitive advantage (Van der Wal *et al.*, 2002:325). Curry and Sinclair (2002:198) state that service quality is determined by the disparity between the expectations of the community and its perceptions of the service actually delivered. The quality of services provided by organisations can make the difference between success and failure. Service quality, customer satisfaction and customer value have become the main concerns in service organisations and, as a result, many organisations are paying more attention to improving service delivery and service quality (Wang, Hing-Po & Yang, 2004:325).

1.2 PROBLEM STATEMENT

The notion of service quality has produced considerable debate with regard to defining it, as well as measuring it – unfortunately, with a lack of emerging consensus. Parasuraman, Zeithaml & Berry, (1988:12) developed the well-known SERVQUAL instrument to measure customer expectations and perceptions of service quality. The instrument has become the most prominent scale in attempting to operationalise service quality (Van der Wal *et al.*, 2002:324; Wisniewski & Stewart 2001:380).

Despite services being a large and important segment of the world economies, the concepts and practice of service quality and service delivery are less developed compared to those concerning quality in the manufacturing industry (Ghobadian, Speller & Jones, 1994:43; Douglas & Fredendall, 2004:393). Service organisations are lagging behind their manufacturing counterparts in terms of the effective use of Total Quality Management (TQM) practices aimed at achieving organisational objectives (Yasin, Alavi, Kunt & Zimmerer, 2004:377).

Once the quality issues are delegated to the subordinate hierarchy, it is no longer considered vital for top management to participate personally in managing quality and this leads to negative effects on quality (Kruger, 2001:146). The citizen deliberation is at the core of public service delivery (Denhardt & Denhardt, 2003:123; Mintrom, 2003:52).

Municipalities have been experimenting with new forms of community engagement, recognising that a sense of engagement is critical to effective service delivery and democratic management (Osborne & Plastrik, 1997:28; Crocker, Potapchuck & Schechter, 1998:17). Furthermore, mixed delivery (service delivery from both public and private sectors) is part of an innovative and dynamic decision-making process where city managers recognise the need to balance the benefits of the need for citizen engagement in service delivery (Borins, 2001:5).

This study, therefore, focuses on the following three specific research questions:

- What are the customers' expectations of service-quality delivery by the Emfuleni Local municipality?
- What are the customers' perceptions of service-quality delivery by the Emfuleni Local municipality?
- What service quality gaps exist in the municipal services delivered by the Emfuleni Local Municipality?

1.3 OBJECTIVES OF THE STUDY

The following objectives have been formulated for this study:

1.3.1 Primary objective

The main aim of this study was to determine the community expectations and perceptions of the quality of municipal services delivered by the Emfuleni Local Municipality in order to identify potential service quality gaps.

1.3.2 Theoretical objectives

In order to achieve the primary objective, the following theoretical objectives were formulated for this study:

- Outline the fundamental principles of service delivery.
- Conduct a review of the relevant service quality literature.
- Outline the importance of service quality in municipalities.
- Conduct a review of the relevant literature pertaining to the different service quality models

1.3.3 Empirical objectives

In accordance with the primary objective of the study, the following empirical objectives were formulated for the study:

- Measure the community customers' expectations of municipal service–quality delivery in the Emfuleni Local Municipality.
- Measure the community customers' perceptions of municipal service–quality delivery in the Emfuleni Local Municipality.
- Identify the gaps between community customers' expectations and perceptions of municipal service–quality delivery in the Emfuleni Local Municipality
- Identify priorities for improvement in an attempt to improve service–quality delivery within the Emfuleni Local Municipality.

1.4 RESEARCH DESIGN AND METHODOLOGY

The research undertaken in this study encompasses both a literature review and an empirical study. Quantitative research, using the survey method, was used for the empirical portion of the study.

1.4.1 Literature review

A literature review of secondary data sources was undertaken to achieve the theoretical objectives of the study. Secondary data sources included government publications, local and international journal articles, relevant textbooks and full-text online academic databases. Specific emphasis was

placed on literature pertaining to the South African local spheres of government. The Harvard method of source referencing and acknowledgement was applied in this study.

1.4.2 Empirical study

The empirical portion of this study concentrates on addressing the empirical objectives and comprises the following methodology dimensions:

1.4.2.1 Target population

The target population is defined as a collection of the elements or objects that possess the information sought by the researcher and regarding which inferences are to be made (Malhotra, 2010:372). The target population relevant for this study is residents of communities who have either the right of occupancy or other informal status to land within the Emfuleni Local Municipality. Included are those residents who currently do not have legal occupancy right but who receive services on the land on which they reside. The research was conducted in the form of the mall intercept survey carried out at the Emfuleni Local Municipality pay points.

1.4.2.2 Sampling frame

The sampling frame for this study consists of residents of the Emfuleni Local Municipality. Given that this was a mall intercept, the sampling frame for this study comprised residents that were at the Vereeniging and Vanderbijlpark pay points on the day that the fieldwork for the study was undertaken. The reason for selecting these pay points is because they are the largest pay points that currently serve the residents of the Emfuleni Local Municipality.

1.4.2.3 Sample method

From the sampling frame, a non-probability convenience sample of 400 residents was selected, irrespective of sex, race and/or location, ensuring an equal opportunity for all residents in the area to be included in the study. A non-probability convenience sample was used for this study as it allows a large number of respondents to be reached and is suitable for respondents

who are geographically dispersed (Churchill, 2001:453). A structured format was applied, whereby the Municipal Manager of the Emfuleni Local Municipality was contacted with a request to carry out the survey. Permission to conduct the survey was subsequently obtained. Thereafter, a hand delivered self-administered questionnaire was distributed to the residents of the Emfuleni Local Municipality at the Vereeniging and Vanderbijlpark pay points.

1.4.2.4 Sample size

In establishing an appropriate sample size, an analysis was undertaken of the sample size used by previous researchers in similar studies such as Ngubane (2005:78) (sample size of 300) and Mncwango (2004:29) (sample size of 400). Based on these studies, a sample of 400 respondents was deemed sufficient.

1.4.2.5 Data collection method and measuring instrument

The survey method was applied to collect the data in this research study. Primary data was collected by means of a structured questionnaire. The self-administered questionnaire using the mall-intercept survey method was used as the data collection method.

The SERVQUAL measuring scale developed by three American academics, Parasuraman, Zeithaml and Berry in the 1980s, was applied in this study. The model was designed to measure customers' expectations and perceptions of service quality. The model was based on 12 focus groups and the three researchers developed a questionnaire comprising 22 criteria most commonly used by focus group participants to assess service quality. The 22 criteria were then grouped into five service quality dimensions, namely tangibility, reliability, responsiveness, assurance and empathy, to determine customers' expectations and perceptions of any service (Cram, 2001:266).

The perceptions and expectations that residents have of the Emfuleni Local Municipality were measured on a five-point Likert scale (1 = Strongly agree to 5 = Strongly disagree). The questionnaire comprises three sections, namely

community expectations of municipal service delivery and service quality, community perceptions on municipal service delivery and service quality, and a section designed to collect demographic details. The standardised SERVQUAL scale, developed and validated by Parasuraman, Zeithaml and Berry (1985) was utilised in order to elicit information on community expectations and perceptions of municipal service quality and service delivery.

The questionnaire included a covering letter describing the nature and purpose of the study, and a request for participation. The questionnaire was pilot tested on 54 respondents. These respondents did not form part of the sampling frame of the final study. The results of the pilot test were considered in the process of adopting the final questionnaire. Trained field workers were supervised during the data collection process.

1.4.3 Statistical analysis

Descriptive statistics were used to analyse the composition of the sample. Comparisons between the perceptions and expectations data were made using simple cross-tabulations and t-test to establish the relationship between variables in the study. Data are represented graphically using bar and pie charts. Factor analysis was used to establish municipal service quality dimensions. The statistical package for the Social Sciences (SPSS), Version 18.0 for Windows, was used to analyse the captured data. Validity and reliability analyses were also conducted.

1.5 ETHICAL CONSIDERATIONS

This study complied with the ethical standards of academic research. The following code of ethics was adhered to during the research process:

- Permission was obtained from the Emfuleni Local Municipality in order to conduct the interviews
- Each respondent was informed of the purpose of the study
- Respondents were assured of anonymity and confidentiality
- The questionnaire did not contain any questions detrimental to the self-interest of respondents

- Respondents were under no obligation to complete the questionnaire
- The results of the research were made available to the Executive Mayor and top management of the Emfuleni Local Municipality.

1.6 DEFINITIONS OF TERMINOLOGY

The following terminology and definitions are used in the study:

Municipality is a corporate body, has specific roles and responsibility areas, a political structure, political office-bearers and a municipal manager, and has jurisdiction in a defined geographical area as determined by the Local Government: Municipal Demarcation Act 1998 (Graythorne, 2006:119).

Local governance requires that institutions around local governments be engaged in the design and implementation of economic and social policy with business elites, community leaders, development corporations, training and enterprise councils, as well as voluntary groups.

Developmental local government is defined as local government committed to working with citizens and group within the community to find ways to meet their social, economic and material needs and improve the quality of their lives (RSA, Department of Local and Provincial Government, 1998:37).

Service is an activity or series of activities of more or less an intangible nature that normally, but not necessarily, take place in interactions between the customer and the service employee (Gabbortt & Hogg, 1998:21).

Policy is defined as a purposive course of action based on currently acceptable social values, followed in dealing with a problem or matter of concern, predicting the state of affairs, which would prevail when that purpose has been achieved (Hart, Ryan & Zille, 1995:5).

Delivery is defined by the World Book Dictionary (1996:551) as an act of carrying and giving out something to be, or a giving up. In this study, delivery is understood to be the manner in which service can be taken to the people.

Integration refers to inclusiveness of various components.

Components refer to various elements or options of development such as social facilities, physical facilities, infrastructure and basic services.

1.7 CLASSIFICATION OF CHAPTERS

Chapter 1 of this study serves as the introduction to the research. It introduces the concepts that will be discussed and it also lays out the importance and aims of the research. Primary and secondary sources relevant to the research are discussed. Limitations of the research study will also be discussed as well as the clarification of the terminology.

Chapter 2 of this study provides an in-depth review of the service quality literature and the fundamental principles of service marketing. A literature review pertaining to the various service quality models was conducted. The literature pertaining to the South African local spheres of government is briefly analysed.

Chapter 3 concerns itself with the research methodology used in the study. It focuses on the research design and methodology, as well as on the development and distribution of the questionnaires. Different statistical methods and techniques applied during the scope of the study are identified and discussed in detailed.

Chapter 4 presents the reported results of the empirical study. This chapter provides an analysis, interpretation, and evaluation of the research findings. The instruments used are reported and the statistical tests used to analyse the data are presented in this chapter. The chapter also aims to prove the reliability of the data gathered in the study.

Chapter 5 provides a final review of the study and presents the conclusion and recommendations based on the main objective and findings of the study. The implications and limitations of the study are discussed, and suggestions for further research are presented in this chapter.

1.8 LIMITATIONS OF THE RESEARCH STUDY

In order to keep the scope of the study within a manageable range, it was necessary to constrain the problem. One limitation imposed on the study is that the scope of the study was confined to Vereeniging and Vanderbijlpark pay points. The study was cross-sectional in nature (data was collected in December 2010 and, as such, the results are representative of that point in time).

1.9 SYNOPSIS

Municipalities are important role players in service delivery, ensuring that the service deliveries for which they are responsible satisfy citizens' basic needs through means of determining which services should be addressed through more effective, efficient and economical public administration and management. There is a need to improve the quality of local democracy, the degree of municipal responsiveness and the accountability to the stakeholders. Customer expectations and perceptions received from the public sector should be taken into account by means of utilising gap scores, enabling service managers to assess current service quality and quantify gaps that exist. Municipalities are the vehicles selected by national government to address the service delivery challenges. In order to address service delivery backlogs, it is necessary to improve the leadership and governance framework, to accelerate service delivery at the pace that is needed in South Africa.

Service delivery and service quality can provide an organisation with a lasting competitive advantage. The quality of services provided by organisations can be the difference between success and failure. Service quality, customer satisfaction and customer value have become the main concerns in service organisations and, as a result, many organisations are paying increasing attention to improving service delivery and service quality.

In this chapter, the study's problem statement, objectives, research design, methodology and chapter classifications were provided. In the next chapter,

Chapter 2, a discussion pertaining to service quality literatures will be discussed. Services, service marketing, service quality and service quality models will be reviewed.

CHAPTER 2

SERVICE QUALITY

2.1 INTRODUCTION

The provision of basic municipal services to all South African citizens is one of the primary goals of the South African government. The 1996 Constitution imposes developmental duties on municipalities with service delivery being central to the role of municipalities (Asmah-Andoh, 2009:101). South Africa as a post-apartheid country faces the major challenges of ensuring that municipalities deliver optimum and proficient services to inhabitants of diverse cultures (Pretorius & Schurink, 2007:19). Basic municipal services are there to enhance the health and safety of the citizens, and to contribute to the economy by increasing the liveability of an area, which, in turn, positively influences the productivity of the inhabitants. The post-1996 delivery of municipal services in South Africa has not been as effective and efficient as had been anticipated. Areas of concern include the appropriateness of the level of service provided, its affordability, cost recovery, operation and maintenance, service delivery, human resource capacity and skills, and service delivery in support of economic development (African Development Bank, 2000:29).

The service sector in South Africa is large and encompasses a wide variety of organisations, services and activities, including the South African government, for instance, who is a major service provider. In South Africa, service marketing is receiving the attention it rightfully deserves. Service organisations and the marketing of services are a vital part of the South African economy, although, as opposed to physical products, pose unique challenges for the service marketer (Du Plessis, Rousseau & Blem, 1995:255).

In order to shape the focus of this study on service quality, sufficient knowledge on the service sector is necessary. The first section of this chapter provides an overview of services with respect to the definition and

characteristics. Thereafter, the focus of this study, service quality, is discussed in detail. The discussion on service quality highlights the definition, dimensions, customer satisfaction, customer expectations and perceptions, as well as various service-quality measurement models. Furthermore, the brief discussion on the historical overview of the local spheres of government and the status of municipalities and service delivery in the current South Africa will provide a contextual background to service quality.

2.2 INTRODUCTION TO SERVICES

Services contribute to over 80 percent of gross domestic product (GDP) in developed countries, and 50 percent in developing countries (Sayeda, Rajendran & Lokachari, 2010:728), constituting the majority employer and source of income for developed economies (Piercy & Rich, 2009:54). For the purpose of this study, it is necessary to define the meaning of services and investigate the characteristics of services. A discussion on these concepts will illustrate the importance and relevance of service quality to municipalities.

2.2.1 Defining services

Kotler (1999:97) defines a service as "any act or performance that one party can offer to another that is essentially intangible and does not result in the ownership of anything". Reibstein (1997:617) reiterates this by indicating that a service is a product offering in the form of a performance, deed or act. According to Marx and Dekker (1998:52), services are intangible utilities applied for the satisfaction of needs of customers. Similarly, Esman (1997:44) defines services as intangible activities that provide want-satisfaction. According to Svensson (2004:278), the interaction between the service provider and the customer produces, distributes and consumes services. Theron, Bothma & du Toit (2003:3) concur stating that services can be distinguished from products and be defined as deeds, processes and performances.

Despite the difficulty in finding the proper definition for services, it is evident that the customer perceives services as either being of a high quality or a low

quality (Ukens, 2007:119). Customers react differently to what appears to be the same service. The perception of service, whether high quality or low quality, may be affected by factors such as the customer's disposition, culture, timing, environment, as well as previous experience (Wright, 1995:9).

Four generic key characteristics paraphrase services that differentiate them from products. These characteristics have implications to the service marketer concerning the manner in which services are marketed (Palmer, 2011:7). Brown, Fisk & Bitner (1993:78) add that while services and products are acknowledged as being different, there is less agreement regarding the way that services and products differ and the extent to which such differences are relevant and significant from a marketing perspective. In the next section, the characteristics of services will be explained.

2.2.2 Characteristics of services

Owing to the nature and characteristics of services, the concept of service quality is complex. Service quality is difficult to measure and this, in turn, has an impact on service quality (Woodruffe, 1995:105). Several characteristics distinguish services from products. These fundamental characteristics provide a rationale for considering the consumption of services as distinctive from the consumption of products (Gabbott & Hogg, 1998:26). Various researchers have identified four characteristics of service, which they believe distinguish a service from a product in marketing terms, and these include intangibility, inseparability, heterogeneity and perishability (Du Plessis, *et al.*, 1995:256; Theron *et al.*, 2003:3; Woodruffe 1995:18).

These characteristics create various challenges for service marketers and require specific strategies to overcome these challenges (Bateson, 1995:50). Boshoff and Du Plessis (2009:5) agree with this, stating that from a marketing perspective these four characteristics call for a unique approach. Therefore, a discussion of these four characteristics, including the unique challenges they pose to service marketers, follows.

2.2.2.1 Intangibility

Intangibility refers to that which cannot be seen or evaluated before receipt. The five senses perceive only the results of a service and not the service itself. Service levels are often uncertain and the benefits frequently unknown (Theron *et al.*, 2003:3). Gabbott and Hogg (1998:27) describe intangibility without a physical dimension as one of the most significant characteristics of services. They warn that services are often described using tangible nouns, thus obscuring the fundamental nature of the service, which remains intangible. Du Plessis *et al.* (1995:256) are of the opinion that services are conceptual and often challenging to describe and understand, resulting in a service being demanding to demonstrate, illustrate and promote. The Oxford Dictionary of Current English (1996:38) defines intangibility as “that which is difficult to define or describe which cannot be touched or seen, and which cannot be easily understood mentally”.

Owing to services being performances and experiences rather than objects, exact manufacturing specifications concerning quality can seldom be established (Fisk, Brown & Bitner, 1993:68). The intangibility of a service makes it difficult for customers to understand it mentally. A customer must experience a service before it can be visualised, making the marketing of the service more challenging (Ukens, 2007:119).

Challenges created by the intangible characteristic of a service are that services cannot be sampled prior to purchase, services cannot be stored and new services cannot be protected by patent rights. Prior to purchase, services cannot be displayed or demonstrated as entities. In addition, the price of a service is more complicated to determine than that of a product due to the difficulty involved in explaining quality to a prospective buyer prior to purchase (Du Plessis *et al.*, 1995:259).

A possible strategy for overcoming the difficulties posed by intangibility is to stress tangible cues such as the appearance of service personnel and cleanliness of waiting areas (George, 2011:25). The use of personal sources in preference to other sources in advertising, simulating or stimulating word-

of-mouth communication, creating a strong image, using cost accounting to set prices and initiating post-purchase communication are strategies that services marketers typically use to add tangible evidence to their service offering (Du Plessis *et al.*, 1995:260).

2.2.2.2 Inseparability

The degree of inseparability depends on the type of service delivered and the actual supplier. Fisk *et al.* (1993:68) indicate that a customer receiving a service is directly involved in the service delivery process and may therefore influence the process.

Services are produced and consumed at the same time, unlike products that may be manufactured and then stored for later distribution. Therefore, the service provider becomes an integral part of the service itself (Woodruffe, 1995:19). Owing to the production of a service being inseparable from the consumption, it is impossible for customers to pre-order a service experience (Theron *et al.*, 2003:3). Du Plessis *et al.* (1995:258) emphasise that employees providing services frequently are not separated from the services. Smith (1990:27) agree with this stating that unlike a product, which can be produced, sold and then consumed, a service is produced and consumed simultaneously.

Challenges created by the inseparability characteristic of a service include the customer being involved in the service production and the difficulty of having to mass produce services at a centralised location (George, 2011:26). Possible strategies to overcome the difficulties posed by the inseparability characteristic are to consider the selection and training of those service providers who are in direct contact with customers carefully, to manage customers and to use multi-site locations (Du Plessis *et al.*, 1995:259).

2.2.2.3 Heterogeneity

Owing to a service being produced and consumed simultaneously, and customers constituting part of the service offering, Woodruffe (1995:19) argues that a service only exists once and is never repeated exactly and is

therefore always unique, giving rise to concerns about service quality and uniformity issues. According to Gabbott and Hogg (1998:28), heterogeneity refers to a function of human involvement in the delivery and consumption. Individuals deliver services and, therefore, each service encounter will be different by virtue of the participants, the time of performance or the circumstances in which the service is being delivered.

Each service cannot be identically repeated and is therefore a new and unique event. Customers are inconsistent in their day-to-day lives, implying that the service received today may be very different from the service received tomorrow. The level of service provided may vary depending on the disposition, financial or social situation of the service provider (Theron *et al.*, 2003:4). Heterogeneity manifests in a number of ways. The quality of service performance varies from one service provider to another and may vary from one service employee to another. For example, South African Airways may use its most experienced pilots on international flights and can thus not maintain the same level of performance on local flights (Du Plessis *et al.*, 1995:258).

Heterogeneity poses important marketing implications to the service provider, of which standardisation and quality control are of the most challenging to achieve (Palmer, 2011:11). An important part of an organisation's service marketing programme should therefore involve reducing customers' perceived risk by means of the standardisation and customisation of service delivery (Du Plessis *et al.*, 1995:258).

2.2.2.4 Perishability

Perishability is the fourth service characteristic highlighted in the literature. Owing to services existing in real time, they cannot be stored (Palmer, 2011:12). Woodruffe (1995:19) indicates that because services are perishable, an empty seat on a commercial airplane, for example, is a lost opportunity. According to Theron *et al.* (2003:4), each service experience is unique and exists only for the duration of the transaction. Demand issues

develop when there are not sufficient service providers or resources to meet the customer's demand for a particular service.

Service perishability means that a dissatisfied customer has limited access to recourse in the case of receiving a low quality service. For example, a customer who is dissatisfied with a haircut cannot have his/her short hair replaced. Unlike products, the customer cannot store services and the lack of the ability to build and maintain a supply of the service, means that sudden demand cannot be accommodated in the same way as that for products (Du Plessis *et al.*, 1995:57). According to Gabbott and Hogg (1998:28), the customer cannot reserve services against possible future demands.

Owing to the loss of potential revenue that occurs when services are not sold on a particular day, restaurants are charging for reservations that are not kept and such charges may be made for a missed appointment at, for example, the dental clinic. Perishability is more challenging for the service marketer when demand for a service is inconsistent. During times of unusually high or low demand, perishability is a major challenge for service organisations (Woodruffe, 1995:19).

The perishability of services means that it is not possible to institute quality control between production and consumption and that it is not possible to record services. A possible strategy to overcome the difficulties of perishability is to attempt to influence demand levels in order to avoid or, at least, minimise fluctuations by attempting to match demand and supply (Du Plessis *et al.*, 1995:259).

This section provided an overview on the topic of services, including the various challenges that the unique characteristics of services pose for the service marketer. In accordance with the primary objective of this study, the following section provides a comprehensive discussion on service quality.

2.3 SERVICE QUALITY

Delivering quality service is essential for the success and survival of service organisations (Noone & Namasivayam, 2010:273). In a turbulent and

extremely competitive global business environment, organisations face considerable pressure to meet or exceed customer expectations by delivering services that are of the highest quality (Dorsch, Yasin & Czuchry, 1997:268). Jaiswal (2008:405) reiterates this by stating that for organisations to survive in a competitive business environment, delivering superior service and ensuring high customer satisfaction is critical. The increasingly competitive market for many services has led customers to become more selective in the services they choose. Conceptualising service quality is more complex than for products (Palmer, 2011:285),

The role of service quality is widely recognised as being a critical determinant for the success of an organisation in a competitive environment, where any decline in customer satisfaction due to poor service quality should be a matter of concern. Customers have high service expectations and are aware of rising standards in service, prompted by competitive trends in the business environment (Frost & Kumar, 2000:358). Service quality is a major area of attention for practitioners, managers and researchers due to its strong impact on business performance, costs, customer satisfaction, customer loyalty and profitability (Seth & Deshmukh, 2005:913).

Quality, when related to products, is defined as the conformance to specifications. The service perspective of quality focuses on the customer's specification of the service. This specification forms the customer's perceptions of quality service. Service has quality if customer' enjoyment of it exceeds the perceived value of the money that is paid for that service (Chakrapani, 1998:4). Frost and Kumar (2000:358) emphasise that service marketers need to understand how to enhance service quality between internal stakeholders within the marketplace in order to ensure a high level of service quality. In order to understand service quality, it is important to define services, understand the dimensions of services and investigate the influence of customer satisfaction on service quality.

2.3.1 Service quality defined

Service quality has been widely researched in multiple disciplines and, as such, a number of definitions exist to describe the phenomenon. Even though the definitions differ, the majority share some key concepts, which have become standard in the academic conceptualisation of service quality. Earlier research by Parasuraman *et al.* (1985:41) proposed that service quality is a function of the difference between expectations and performances along the quality dimensions. Parasuraman *et al.* (1988:16) later described service quality as a form of attitude related, but not equivalent to, satisfaction that results from the comparison of expectations with performances. Bolton and Drew (1991:376) concur with this emphasising that quality and satisfaction are two different concepts and cannot be regarded as synonymous. The distinction between these terms is consistent with the distinction between attitude and satisfaction.

Services differ from products because products are tangible objects produced to meet certain standards and which have great consistency. Services are dependent on the interaction between the customer and service provider (White & Abels, 1995:36). Lewis and Booms (1983:100) define service quality in terms of whether there has been confirmation or disconfirmation of expectations stating that the description of service quality is the measure of how well the service level delivered matches customer expectations. Bitner and Hubbert, (1993:77) define service quality as the customer's overall impression of the relative inferiority/superiority of the organisation and its service. Newman (2001:128) define service quality as the degree and direction between customer service expectations and perceptions, whilst Zeithaml, Parasuraman & Berry (1990:16) adopted the user-centred approach to defining service: "the only criteria that count in evaluating service quality are defined by customers and only customers judge quality, all other judgements are essentially irrelevant".

One of the first scholars who attempted a definition of service quality is Chrönroos (2000:15), who indicated that the quality of service is determined by technical quality, functional quality and the image of the service

organisation. The technical quality is the service the customer actually receives and the functional quality involves the manner of service delivery. The former being the outcome while the latter is the process of service delivery. Zeithaml *et al.* (1990:20) identified several dimensions of service quality, which are discussed in the following section.

2.3.2 Dimensions of service quality

Zeithaml, Bitner & Gremler (2008:111) state that customers do not perceive service quality in a uni-dimensional way but rather judge quality based on multiple factors relevant to the context. The dimensions of service quality have been identified through the pioneering research of Parasuraman, Zeithaml and Berry and originally consisted of ten dimensions, namely tangibility, reliability, responsiveness, competence, courtesy, credibility, security, access, communication and understanding the customer (Seth & Deshmukh, 2005:918). As the work on determining the dimensions of service quality advanced, the ten original dimensions of service quality were reduced to five unique dimensions (Boshoff & du Plessis, 2009:38). Cram (2001:266) reiterates this by identifying five specific dimensions of service quality, namely tangibility, reliability, responsiveness, assurance and empathy. According to Zeithaml *et al.* (2008:113), the dimensions of service quality represent how customers organise information about service quality in their minds. The five dimensions of service quality referred to by Parasuraman *et al.* (1985:41) are discussed in the following sections.

2.3.2.1 Tangibility

The definition of tangibility is the appearance of physical facilities, equipment, personnel and communication materials (Santos, 2002:292). Tangibility provides physical representations or images of the service that customers, particularly new customers, will use to evaluate quality. Service organisations often use tangibles to enhance their image, provide continuity and signal quality to customers. In contrast, organisations that do not pay attention to tangibility dimensions of the service strategy can confuse and even destroy a good strategy (Wilson *et al.*, 2008: 86).

Owing to the intangible nature of services, it is often difficult for customers to understand and evaluate services and, therefore, customers often rely on the tangible evidence that surrounds the service in forming evaluations (Jamal & Anastasiadou, 2009:402). The tangibility dimension of SERVQUAL compares customer expectations to customer perceptions regarding the organisation's ability to manage its tangibles. Comparing the perception scores to the expectation scores provides a numerical variable that indicates the tangibles gap (Bateson & Hoffman, 2011:334).

2.3.2.2 Reliability

The reliability dimension of service quality refers to the ability of service organisations to perform the promised service dependably and accurately, and thus reflects the consistency and dependability of an organisation's performance (Rodrigues, Bonar & Sacchi, 2011:633). Wilson *et al.* (2008:84) state that reliability means that the organisation delivers on its promises about service delivery, service provision and problem resolution. Even though unreliable service providers are extremely frustrating for customers, a disturbing number of organisations still fail to keep their promises regarding service delivery. In many instances, the customer is ready to spend money if only the service provider will show up and conduct the transaction as promised (Bateson & Hoffman, 2011:335). Reliability is consistently the most important determinant of perceptions of service quality (Wilson, Zeithaml, Bitner & Gremler, 2008:84).

2.3.2.3 Responsiveness

Responsiveness is the willingness to help customers and to provide prompt service (Jamal & Anastasiadou, 2009:400). This dimension emphasises attentiveness and promptness in dealing with customer requests, questions, complaints and problems. Responsiveness also captures the notion of flexibility and the ability to customise the service to customer needs. The organisation must view the process of service delivery and the handling of requests from the customer's point of view rather than from the organisation's point of view (Wilson *et al.*, 2008:85).

Responsiveness reflects a service organisation's commitment to provide services in a timely manner. As such, the responsiveness dimension concerns the willingness and readiness to provide a service. Occasionally, customers may encounter a situation in which employees are engaged in their own conversations with one another while ignoring the needs of the customer (Bateson & Hoffman, 2011:336).

2.3.2.4 Assurance

The assurance dimension of service quality addresses the competence of the organisation, the courtesy it extends to its customers and the security of its operations (Bateson & Hoffman, 2011:336). Jamal and Anastasiadou (2009:400) define assurance as employees' knowledge and courtesy, and the ability of the organisation and its employees to inspire trust and confidence. Bateson and Hoffman (2011:336) add that competence pertains to the organisation's knowledge and skills in performing the promised service and refers to how the organisation's employees interact with the customer and the customer's possessions. Wilson *et al.* (2008:85) warn that this dimension is likely to be particularly important for services that customers perceive as high risk or for services that customers feel uncertain about their ability to evaluate the outcomes.

2.3.2.5 Empathy

Jamal and Anastasiadou (2009:400) define empathy as the caring and individualised attention that the organisation provides its customers. Bateson and Hoffman (2011:337) explain that empathy is the ability to experience another's feelings as one's own. According to Wilson *et al.* (2008:86), the essence of empathy is conveying, through personalised or customised service, that the customers are unique and special and that their needs are understood.

Empathetic firms have not lost touch with what it is like to be a customer of their own organisation. As such, the organisation understands customers' needs and makes their services accessible to their customers. In contrast, organisations that do not provide the requested individualised attention to

their customers and offer, for example, operating hours convenient for the organisation and not its customers, fail to demonstrate empathetic behaviour (Bateson & Hoffman, 2011:337).

From the discussion above, the inference is that customers want to receive the service as promised in order to receive quality service. According to Brink and Berndt (2004:60), service quality is an antecedent of customer satisfaction and customer satisfaction exerts a stronger influence than service quality on buying behaviour. Zeithaml *et al.* (2008:111) are of the opinion that customer satisfaction is closely linked to service quality.

2.3.3 Customer satisfaction

Studies in services marketing have shown that service quality and customer satisfaction are closely related. Services marketers are involved in substantial campaigns to improve the quality of their organisations' services and profitability by ensuring customer satisfaction (Woodruffe, 1995:293). According to Zeithaml *et al.* (2008:103), customer satisfaction is a broad concept, whereas service quality focuses specifically on the dimensions of services and, therefore, perceived service quality is a component of customer satisfaction. According to Noone and Namasivayam (2010:273) and Palmer (2011:288), there is a strong relationship between customer satisfaction and service quality. Customer satisfaction affects assessments of service quality and assessments of service quality affect customer satisfaction.

2.3.3.1 Defining customer satisfaction

Kotler (2000:36) defines customer satisfaction as a customer's feelings of desire or disappointment resulting from comparing the perceived performance of a service to their expectations of that service. Customer satisfaction may also be defined as the customers' feelings, whether content or discontent, that ensue from comparing a service's perceived performance to their expectations (Ooi, Lin, Tan & Chong, 2011:411). Lewis and Mitchell (1990:11) define customer satisfaction as the extent to which a service meets customers' needs or expectations. Barnes (2001:52) states that customer satisfaction is the customer's fulfilment response. It is a judgment that the

service provided is providing a satisfactory level of consumption-related fulfilment, including levels of under- or over-fulfilment. According to Zeithaml *et al.* (2008:104), customer satisfaction is a dynamic moving target that evolves over time and that is influenced by a variety of factors. Therefore, when the service experience takes place over time, customer satisfaction may be highly variable, depending on the focus point in the usage or experience cycle.

What will satisfy one customer will not necessarily satisfy another, and what will satisfy a customer in one situation may not satisfy that same customer in a different situation. There is a difference between customer expectations and customer perceptions, as related to customer satisfaction. Customer satisfaction may develop quickly or may be cultivated over time. Satisfaction may be a customer's afterthought whereby the customer may think back on the experience and realise how satisfying or dissatisfying it was (Sureshchandar, Rajendran & Anantharaman, 2002:363). Wu (2009:311) concurs and states that customer satisfaction is an emotional state resulting from a customer's interactions with a service organisation over time. When the actual performance of the service provider exceeds customer expectations, positive disconfirmation occurs and leads to satisfaction, while actual performance below expectations results in negative disconfirmation and dissatisfaction.

2.3.3.2 Customer satisfaction versus service quality

Perceived service quality is one of the most highly debated and researched topics in marketing theories (Sureshchandar *et al.*, 2002:363). Crick and Spencer (2011:467) emphasise that service quality is a moving target rather than a fixed goal. While customer satisfaction is often the goal of service organisations, it often translates into merely meaning that customers are at ease but not necessarily excited about the organisation. Therefore, organisations should focus on service quality. Seth and Deshmukh (2005:914) state that the focus of service organisations changed from profit maximisation to maximising profits through customer satisfaction; therefore, owing to the importance of delivering a more superior service to that of competitors,

service quality needs to be a priority. Shemwell, Yavas & Bilgin (1998:155) are in agreement with this and state that the key to a sustainable competitive advantage lies in delivering high quality service that will in turn result in satisfied customers.

Cook (2002:86) believes that monitoring customer satisfaction is a pointless exercise unless management are committed to the process and are likely to act on the results. Managers must decide which areas of customer satisfaction to measure, since different customers have different expectations and, therefore, different satisfaction levels with the service provided by an organisation.

Bolton and Drew (1991:375) warn that service marketers should understand that service quality and customer satisfaction are two different concepts and cannot be regarded as synonymous. The distinction between these terms is consistent with the distinction between attitude and satisfaction.

Customer expectations of service performance do not remain constant. Organisations need to be aware of how expectations are changing and adapt their service offering accordingly (Zeithaml *et al.*, 2008:55).

2.3.4 Customer expectations

Service quality perceptions result from the customers' comparison of expectations of a service with actual service performance. This implies that, for an organisation to deliver quality service, it has to meet or exceed the customer's expectations of the service. It is possible to evaluate service quality on both the process of service delivery as well as the actual outcome of the service (Theron *et al.*, 2003:5). Among the aspects of expectations that need exploration and understanding for successful services marketing are the definition of customer expectations, an understanding of customer expectations and the expectation of different types of service.

2.3.4.1 Customer expectations defined

Performance is evaluated against customer expectations, which are beliefs about service delivery that serve as standards or reference points. As customers compare perceptions of performance with these reference points when evaluating service quality, a thorough knowledge of customer expectations is critical to service marketers (Zeithaml *et al.*, 2008:75). Harris (2007:16) states that expectations are personal visions of the results that will come from experiences that may be either positive or negative. Brink and Berndt (2004:52) define expectations as customers' desires or wants. According to Zeithaml and Bitner (2000:256), expectations are pre-trial beliefs or desires about service delivery that serve as points of reference against which performance and quality are judged.

Quality implies a possible of a range of comparison standards that customers use to compare different experiences of quality attributes. However, customer expectations do theoretically form an important factor influencing perceived service quality, both on the service encounter level and on the customer relationship level. Service marketers have to understand how expectations develop throughout the relationship in order to understand how the perception of quality in an ongoing relationship evolves. This is important for various reasons, including because marketers have to know the inherent mechanisms of the dynamics of expectations to be able to manage expectations and because it is critical to understand that customers may not expect the same aspects of quality at a later stage in the relationship as they do in the beginning (Grönroos, 2000:89).

2.3.4.2 Understanding customer expectations

According to Zeithaml *et al.* (2008:75), understanding what the customer expects is the most critical step in delivering quality service. Service organisations that do not have a clear understanding of customer expectations are likely to lose customers to competitors, while wasting capital, time and other resources on aspects that are not important to their target market. According to Boulding, Kalra, Staeling & Zeithaml (1993:7),

expectations represent customer desires about the level of service they wish to receive. Intrinsically, expectations are relatively stable and endure over time. Zeithaml *et al.* (1993:70) maintain that customer expectations of services are a customer's normative beliefs about the level of service that will be delivered in a given service encounter. Normatively, expectations represent the level of service that customers believe an excellent service provider should deliver. Jayawardhena and Farrell (2011:207) indicate that positive perceptions of the service encounter lead to normative expectations of the overall quality of the service.

Customer expectations result from the perception of various parts of information that are relevant to a service industry or service organisation, which start from individual specific courses. It is possible to manage the service quality expectations of customers by socialising customers and making customers competent using employees who are able to assist and lead customers. Enhancing the competitive success of an organisation can be done by capitalising on the competencies of customers (Nicolaidis & Govender, 2003:7).

2.3.4.3 Determinants of service expectations

According to McKnight (2009:79), different customers have different service needs and expectations. Zeithaml *et al.* (2008:77) state that because customer expectations are critical to their evaluation of services, services marketers require a thorough understanding about the nature and determinants of expectations. Service marketers must recognise that customers have different levels of expectations about services. Wilson *et al.* (2008:57) warn that the level of expectation can vary widely depending on the reference point the customer holds. Various researchers (Parasuraman, 2004:47; Harris, 2007:17; Wilson *et al.*, 2008:57) state that customers have a range of expectations, rather than a single ideal level of expectations, which include a desired service, adequate service and a zone of tolerance.

Desired service refers to expectations based on customers' previous experiences that are enhancements to adequate service. Customers'

expectations change constantly and each customer has a unique set of expectations resulting in a challenging reality for service marketers, and providing a unique opportunity for enhancing customer satisfaction (Lucas, 2005:67). According to Zeithaml *et al.* (2008:77), desired service is defined as the level of service that the customer wishes for and hopes to receive. Although customers hope to receive a desired service, they recognise that this is not always possible. As such, customers hold another lower level of expectations for the threshold of acceptable service referred to as 'adequate service'. The adequate service expectation level may vary for different organisations within a category or subcategory.

Adequate service is the customers' most basic requirements of a service interaction (Lucas, 2005:67). It is the minimum tolerable expectation of performance acceptable to the customer (Boshoff & Du Plessis, 2009:38). Adequate service is partly influenced by the customers' 'predicted service' level, referring to the customers' perception of what the service is likely to be (Zeithaml & Bitner, 2000:257).

The zone of tolerance is the range in which customers do not particularly observe service performance. Boshoff and Du Plessis (2009:38) refer to the zone of tolerance as the difference between the adequate service level and desired service level. Zeithaml *et al.* (2008:80) state that the zone of tolerance is due to services being heterogeneous, in that service performance may alter across service providers, across service employees from the same service provider and even across service encounters with the same service employee. The extent to which customers recognise and are willing to accept this variation creates the zone of tolerance. Service performance inside or outside the customer's acceptable range, whether very low or very high, may acquire the attention of the customers in either a positive or a negative manner (Parasuraman, 2004:47). If, for example, a customer has to wait in a line for 15 minutes, the customer may begin to get frustrated. The longer the waiting time below the zone of tolerance, the more frustrated the customer becomes (Wilson *et al.*, 2008:58).

Customer expectations, types of expectations and the zone of tolerance have been discussed and the understanding of customer expectation was brought into the perspective of the service provider. According to Zeithaml *et al.* (2008:102), service quality and customer satisfaction are based on customers' perceptions of the service. Wu (2011:313) reiterates this by stating that customer perceptions are a major factor in narrowing the zone of tolerance.

2.3.5 Customer perceptions

According to Ukens (2007:51), customers' perceptions influence expected outcomes and customers expect reliability and trustworthiness from service providers. Aspects of customer perceptions that require an understanding for successful services marketing include the definition of customer perceptions, factors forming perceptions and the importance of perceptions.

2.3.5.1 Customer perceptions defined

Perception is the way in which customers see something based on their experience (Theron *et al.*, 2003:9). According to Boshoff and Du Plessis (2009:75), perception is the process of receiving, organising and assigning meaning to information or stimuli detected by a customer's five senses. Brink and Berndt (2004:59) concur with this, stating that perception is the result of a number of observations by the customer. According to Schiffman and Kanuk (2007:152), perception is an active, constructive process involving classification, interpretation and inference.

Theron *et al.* (2003:9) state that perceptions are frequently developed over time and that they reflect the ways in which customers have been treated, their values, priorities, as well as their sensitivity towards other customers. Different customers can share the same experience and then describe it differently. Customers may not remember every details of an experience but will retain an overall feeling about it. That 'feeling', in combination with others experiences, will create the perceptions of the organisation.

2.3.5.2 Understanding customer perceptions

Customers base the evaluation of the service received on their perceptions and not on reality. Customer perceptions are often influenced by disposition, something over which the service organisation has no influence. The customers' experiences or cultural background may influence their perceptions of the simplest of service experiences. When production and consumption occur simultaneously, several customers often share a common service experience and, as a result, demand often outpaces supply (Bateson & Hoffman, 2011:277).

Perception can change from day to day and from experience to experience. The service provider must always be aware of the power of perception. Perceptions are less rigid than attitudes and may be influenced and changed. The basis of customer perception is experience, knowledge, expectations, influences and interpretation, and not pure rational logic (Theron *et al.*, 2003:9). This is re-iterated by Harris (2007:16) who remarks that perceptions are not necessarily based on rational ideas but may be influenced by momentary frustration and anger.

Various variables in the customer's mind influence the perceived value of service and its quality, including perceived certainty of service delivery, expectations about characteristics of service and perceptions of need or desire for service (Groth & Dye, 1999:338). Parasuraman *et al.* (1988:13) define customer perceptions of service quality as a global judgment or attitude relating to the superiority of a service. According to Theron *et al.* (2003:54), customers' perceptions of service quality is determined by their experiences with the service, as well as the expectations they bring to the service situation and their perception of the quality of the service received. Sureshchandar *et al.* (2002:363) describe perceived service quality as one of the most highly debated and researched topics in marketing theories. There are two dimensions to the construct of perceived service quality; these are the perceived expectations of quality before purchase and the perception of quality delivered. The two dimensions are positively related to the extent that

would determine the customers' perceived service quality (Theron *et al.*, 2003:55). This relationship is depicted graphically in Figure 2.1.

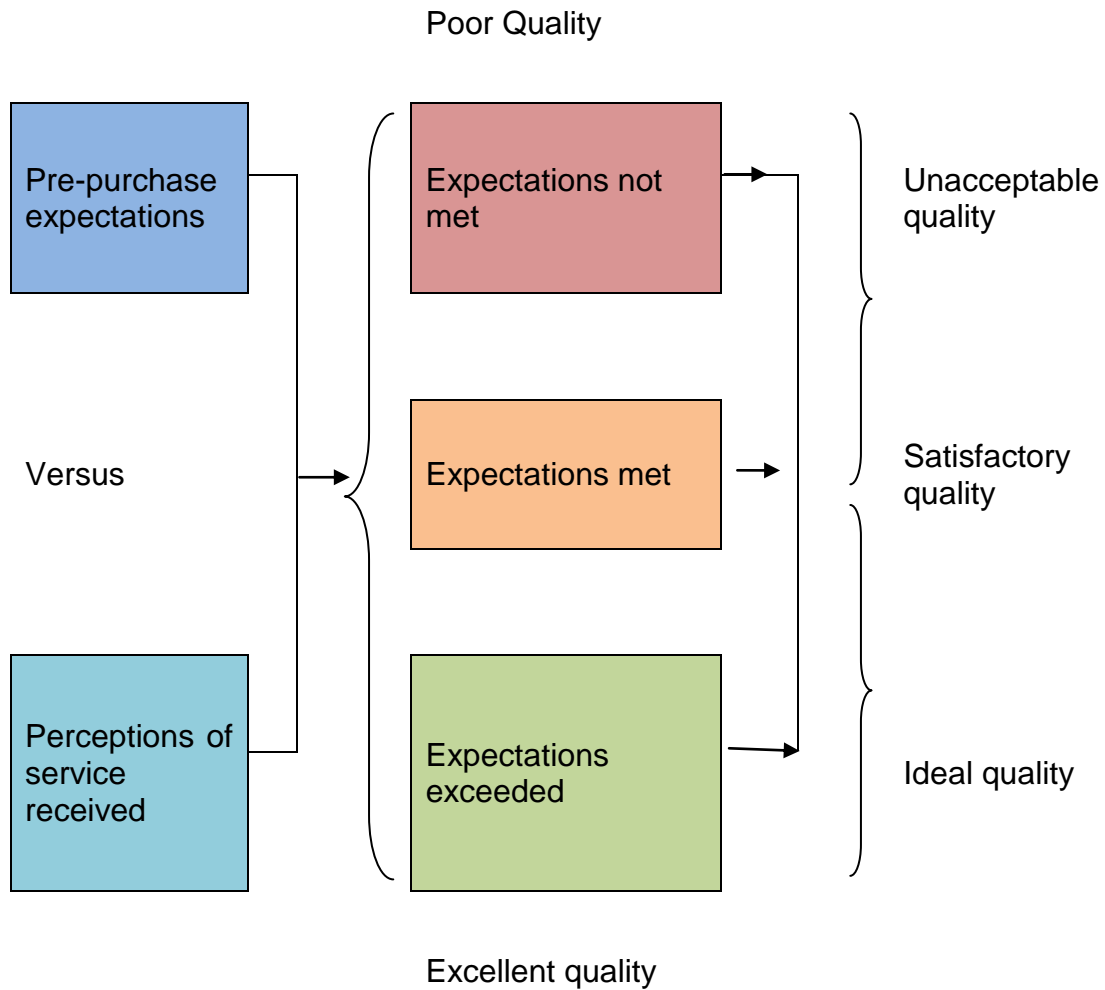


Figure 2.1 Perceived service qualities (Berry *et al.*, 1985:47)

Generally, service quality is used to measure customers' perceptions of services rendered. Customers are ideal for appraising how well employees have provided quality service given that they are able to observe employee performance (Brooks, Lings & Botschem, 1999:53). Measuring service quality is, although complex, critical to the service marketer. Measures of service quality can be derived by assessing the difference between customers' expectations and perceptions (Zeithaml *et al.*, 2008:293).

2.3.6 Measuring service quality

According to Dhurup (2003:66), receiving a high level of service is important to customers but understanding how to measure and evaluate the service

quality received is challenging. A reliable measure of service quality is critical for identifying the aspects of service needing performance improvement, measuring the degree of improvement needed on each aspect and evaluating the impact of improvement efforts (Zeithaml *et al.*, 2008:151). Seth and Deshmukh (2005:913) believe that for an organisation to gain a competitive advantage, marketers must collect information on market demand to enhance service quality. Zeithaml *et al.* (2008:151) warn that unlike products quality, which can be measured objectively by indicators such as durability and number of defects, service quality is abstract and is best captured by surveys that measure customer evaluations of service.

This section provided an overview of service quality. In order to gain a comprehensive understanding of service quality, the following section describes the various service quality models that are prominent in the literature.

2.4 SERVICE QUALITY MODELS

Given the complex nature of service quality, it is not surprising that there have been divergent views about the most suitable way to conceptualise and measure it (Palmer, 2011:293). Much of the research still uses some variant of the disconfirmation paradigm to measure customer satisfaction. Disconfirmation holds that satisfaction is related to the size and direction of the disconfirmation experience, where disconfirmation is related to the person's initial expectations. A customer's expectations are positively confirmed when a service performs as expected and negatively disconfirmed when the product or a service performs better than expected (Churchill & Suprenant, 1982:493).

While the literature on service quality identifies various service quality models by different researchers, there is little consensus and much disagreement about how to measure service quality (Robinson, 1999:21). According to Seth and Deshmukh (2005:934), the SERVQUAL model and the Gap Analysis model draw much support from researchers. Ooi *et al.* (2011:411) promote the use of these two models and state that they have been important in

attempting to conceptualise service quality. Therefore, a discussion on the SERVQUAL model and the Gap Analysis model follows.

2.4.1 SERVQUAL model

The SERVQUAL model, developed by Parasuraman *et al.* (1985), is a measurement model for service quality that has been extensively applied in many studies focusing on service quality assessment (Zeithaml *et al.*, 2008:154). Zeithaml *et al.* (2008:151) add that the SERVQUAL model is one of the first measures to be developed specifically to measure service quality. The SERVQUAL instrument is known to be the predominant method used to measure customers' perceptions of service quality (Lewis & Booms, 1983:100). Boshoff and Du Plessis (2009:43) believe that this model is arguably, the best-known instrument to measure customers' perceptions of service quality. According to Jabnoun and Khalifa (2005:375), the popularity of the SERVQUAL is because of the various advantages the model offers, namely that it:

- is accepted as a standard for assessing different dimensions of service quality
- is shown to be valid across various service industries
- has demonstrated reliability in that different respondents interpret the questions similarly
- is parsimonious in that it has a limited number of items and therefore it can be completed quickly
- has a standardised analysis procedure to aid in the interpretation of results.

The SERVQUAL model views service quality as the gap that exists between customer expectations and perceived performance. The model suggests that the greater the distance between the two variables where performance supersedes expectations, the greater the service quality (Crick & Spencer,

2011:467). Wilson *et al.* (2008:132) have identified the following purposes of the SERVQUAL model:

- Through identifying differences between customers' perceptions and expectations, service organisations may identify average gaps for each service attribute.
- The five SERVQUAL dimensions may be used to assess the service organisation's service quality.
- Service organisations may monitor customers' perceptions and expectations using individual service attributes or the SERVQUAL dimensions.
- Service organisations may compare the service quality ratings against those provided by competing organisations.
- The service organisation's service performance measurements may be used to identify and examine differences in customer segments.
- The SERVQUAL model may be used to measure the internal service quality offered by the service organisation's departments or divisions.

The SERVQUAL instrument involves a scale consisting of two sections, each of which contains 22 service attributes, grouped into the five service quality dimensions (refer to Section 2.3.2), namely tangibility, reliability, responsiveness, assurance and empathy (Cram, 2001:266). The model was designed to measure customers' expectations and perceptions of service quality. The first section of the instrument consists of perception items followed by expectation items (Boshoff & du Plessis, 2009:45). Comparing the customers' expectations before a service encounter and their perceptions of the actual service delivered has been the most often used approach for measuring service quality (Lewis & Booms, 1983:100).

The conceptualisation, dimensionality, operationalisation, measurement and applications of the SERVQUAL model have been subjected to some criticisms, which include the dimensions (reliability, assurance, tangibility,

empathy, responsiveness) not being universal and that the model fails to draw on established economic, statistical and psychological theory (Buttle, 1996:8). In spite of these criticisms of the effectiveness of SERVQUAL across different service settings, there is a universal agreement that the 22 items are reasonably good predictors of service quality in totality (Sureshchandar *et al.*, 2002:364). The model remains the most complete attempt to conceptualise and measure service quality. Nyeck *et al.* (2002:101) state that although the model has critics, it does not render the measuring tool moot, rather the criticism received may have more to do with how researchers use the tool. Parasuraman *et al.* (1991:420) argue that, with minor modification, SERVQUAL can be adapted to any service organisation. They add that information on service quality gaps can help marketers diagnose where performance improvement can best be targeted.

Based on the five SERVQUAL dimensions, the gap between customers' expectations for excellence and the perceptions of actual service delivered will be measured with the SERVQUAL instrument. The instrument helps service providers understand both customer expectations and perceptions of specific services as well as quality improvements over time (Parasuraman *et al.*, 1988:26). Hu *et al.* (2010:501) believe that the SERVQUAL model provides reasons why the service quality of the service industry cannot meet the customer demands, and consider that, in order to meet the customer demands, it is necessary to break through the five service quality gaps in the model. This has led to the development of the Gap Analysis model.

2.4.2 Gap Analysis Model

Parasuraman *et al.* (2004:45) developed the Gap Analysis model. Parasuraman *et al.* (1985:48) proposed that service quality is a function of the differences between expectation and performance along the quality dimensions and, therefore, developed a service quality model (Figure 2.2) based on gap analysis. The Gap Analysis model is, according to Skalen and Fougere (2007:110), the most important development in the field of customer perceived service quality and conceptualises service quality as a comparison between customer's expectations and perceptions.

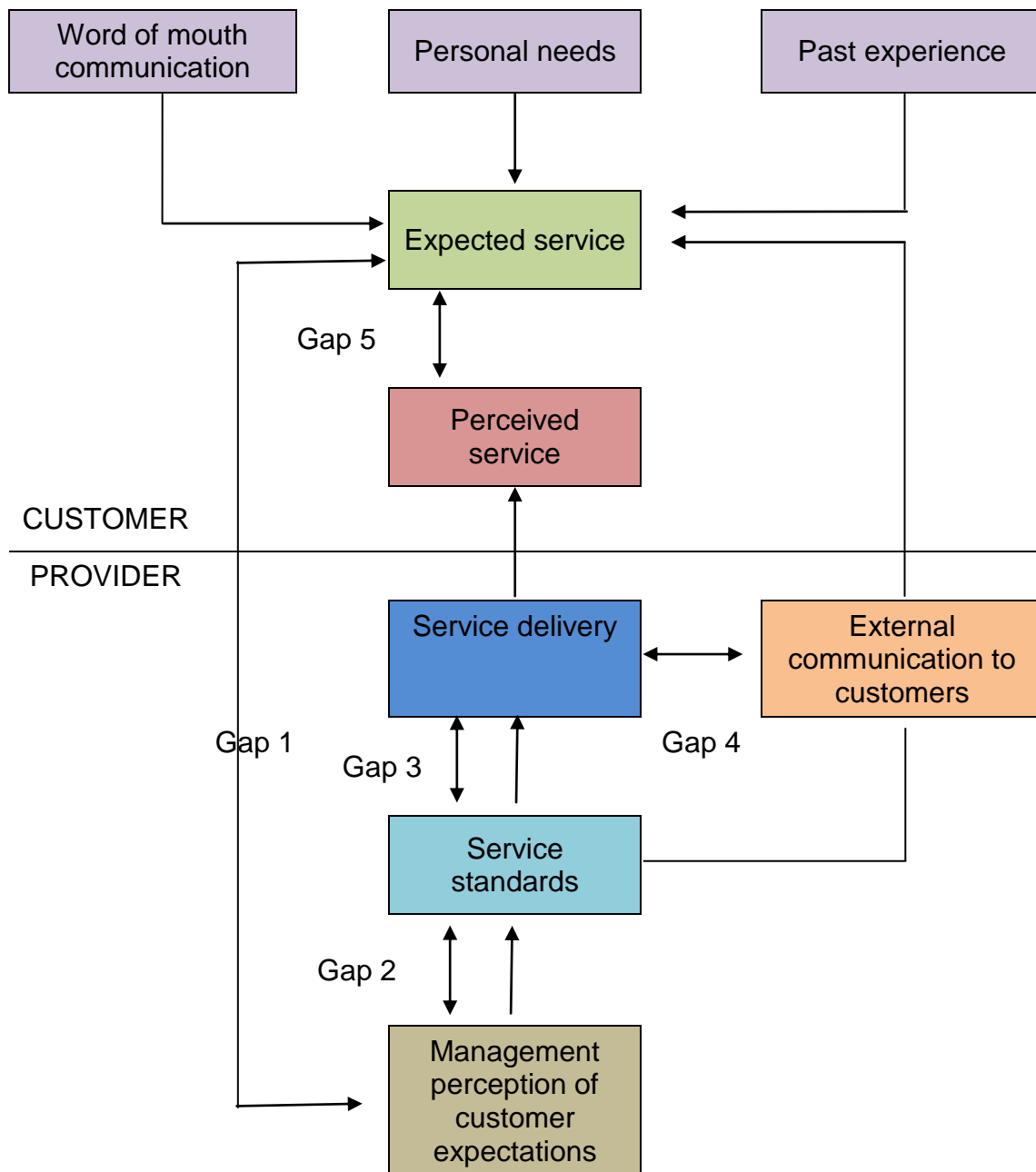


Figure 2.2 Integrated Gap Analysis model of service quality (Parasuraman *et al.*, 1985:48)

The Gap Analysis model is based on a set of techniques that identifies the difference between what is achieved and what needs to be achieved. The differences occur at different points in the system. The analysis of the various gaps between expectations and perceptions are not restricted to semantics differential or quadrant analysis (Chakrapani, 1998:172). The Gap Analysis model illustrates the level of quality, which is determined by subtracting the

perceived service score from the customer's expectation score for each of the items (Kurtz & Clow, 1998:105). The following are some common gaps used when measuring service quality:

2.4.2.1 Gap 1: Customers' expectations – Managements' perceptions gap

Gap 1 is the most immediate and obvious gap and is usually between what customers want and what management think customers want (Bateson & Hoffman, 2011:328). Wilson *et al.* (2008:106) state that Gap 1 is the difference between a customer's expectations of a service and the organisation's interpretation of the customer's expectations.

According to Wilson *et al.* (2008:107), in order to close Gap 1, formal and informal methods to capture information about customer expectations must be developed through marketing research techniques involving a variety of traditional research approaches, customer interviews, survey research, complaint systems and customer panels. Bateson and Hoffman (2011:329) concur, stating that closing Gap 1 requires minutely detailed knowledge of what customers desire and then building that response into the service operating system.

2.4.2.2 Gap 2: Management's perceptions – Service quality specifications gap

According to Kurtz and Clow (1998:112), Gap 2 is the difference between management's perception of customers' expectations and the translation of those perceptions into service quality specifications. Gap 2 is the difference between management's perception of what the customer expects and the translation of this perception into service standards (Chakrapani, 1998:172).

Closing this gap requires setting service quality objectives. The objectives must to set with the customer, the service contact provider and the management. Customer contact employees must understand management's perspective and the need to generate a profit. In exchange, management must understand what is and what is not possible in terms of operations. In

order to be effective, the objectives must be customer-oriented. Task standardisation will also help reduce the size of Gap 2 and this can be done through technology (Kurtz & Clow, 1998: 115).

2.4.2.3 Gap 3: Service quality specifications – Service delivery gap

Gap 3 is the discrepancy between development of customer-driven service standards and actual service performance by company employees. Even when guidelines exist for performing services well and treating customers correctly, high-quality service performance is not a certainty (Wilson *et al.*, 2008:110). Primary causes of this gap are the variable and inseparable nature of services. Most services are performed by people, and therefore the quality of service is highly dependent upon how well the service provider performs his or her job (Kurtz & Clow, 1998:115).

A common characteristic of successful service companies is teamwork. A feeling of teamwork is created when employees see other employees and management as key members of the team. There must be a fit between employee skills and job requirements if employees are to provide the services according to the job specifications. Computerised diagnostic equipment is essential to diagnose problems (Kurtz & Clow, 1998: 117).

2.4.2.4 Gap 4: Service delivery – External communications gap

Gap 4 is the difference between the service the organisation promises it will deliver through its external communications and the service it actually delivers to its customers. If advertising or sales promotions promise one kind of service and the customer receives a different kind of service, the communications gap becomes wider and wider (Bateson & Hoffman, 2011:333). According to Chakrapani (1998:172), Gap 4 is the gap between what is delivered and what is communicated to customers as being delivered.

In order to reduce the size of Gap 4, service providers must address two issues: horizontal communications and the propensity to over promise. Service contact employees should have input into the organisation's advertising and promotional plans, ensuring that messages conveyed to the

prospective customers can be operationally performed (Kurtz & Clow, 1998:119).

2.4.2.5 Gap 5: Customer's expectation – Perceived service gap

Gap 5 is the difference between what customers expect from the service provider and what they perceive they are getting. For example, when a customer goes to a retail location he/she may expect service within 15 minutes but may perceive the average service time to be close to 30 minutes (Chakrapani, 1998:172). The key to closing the customer gap is to close Gaps 1 through to 4, and to keep them closed (Wilson *et al.*, 2008:113). Each gap responds in the same manner - before the organisation can close Gap 5, it must close, or attempt to narrow Gaps 1 to 4 (Bateson & Hoffman, 2011:328). Gap 5, which is the difference between what customers received and what customers expected, is the sum of Gaps 1 to 4 and both the direction and the magnitude of the first four gaps affect Gap 5 (Kurtz & Clow, 1998:110).

Closing the gap between what customers expect and what customers perceived is critical to delivering quality service. Any organisation interested in delivering quality service must begin with a clear understanding of its customers' expectations (Wilson *et al.*, 2008:105).

This section provided an overview of the SERVQUAL model and the Gap Analysis model. A decision was made to employ the SERVQUAL model as the measuring instrument for this study in order to obtain the information required. In order to gain a comprehensive understanding of service quality in municipal service delivery, as the title of this study suggests, a background on the South African local spheres of government is vital, and this is addressed in the following section.

2.5 HISTORICAL OVERVIEW OF THE CURRENT SOUTH AFRICAN LOCAL SPHERES OF GOVERNMENT

National government, provincial government and local government were established as the three elected spheres of government, each with distinctive functional responsibilities. The Constitution requires the three spheres of

government to function as a single system of cooperative government for the country as a whole. While provincial administrations were amalgamated to become a single public service with national departments, local government went through a long process of transition (RSA, Department of Local and Provincial Government, 1998). This transition eventually saw the establishment of 283 municipalities and the first democratic elections in 2000 (Nealer & Raga, 2007:171).

Before conducting an examination of the history of local authorities in South Africa, a distinction should be made between a local authority and a local government. According to Wissink (1999:78), a local authority can be defined as a clearly demarcated territory with boundaries, a permanent population and at least one political government, which can act with a degree of sovereignty. Furthermore, local authorities can be classified as town councils, city councils or metropolitan councils.

Local government refers to the third, and separate, sphere of government. It exercises its legislative and executive authority by providing essential municipal amenities. Local government is subordinate to the higher spheres of government; however, it is allocated a limited degree of autonomy. Local government was created to bring democratic government to the grass roots population, giving them a sense of involvement in the political process that controls the citizens' daily lives (Reddy, 1996:51).

Schacter (2000:8) argues that there is intransigence in the relationships between the different spheres of government. In order to facilitate and improve service delivery, there should be a co-ordinated effort from all spheres of government. The South African public service ought to include clearly defined roles for all three spheres of government, thereby avoiding duplicating issues among the three spheres (Friedman, 2002:78). Naidoo (2005:104) agrees and indicates that policy implementations lack co-ordination among different departments at national, provincial and local spheres of the South African government. Mavhivha (2003:7) reiterates this, stating that there is inadequate co-ordination of policies between the three spheres of government in South Africa.

Naidoo (2005:103) argues that the South African public service requires faster response time to meet the needs and demands of South African society, better utilisation of available resources, improved policy implementation, monitoring of performance and a work culture conducive to maximising efforts by the departments.

In contextualising the present local government system in South Africa, it is imperative to examine the legislative foundations upon which the local government is founded. This includes The Constitution of the Republic of South Africa Act, 1996 (Act 108 of 1996), the Local government: Municipal Structures Act, 1998 (Act 117 of 1998) and the Local Government: Municipal Systems Act, 2000 (Act 32 of 2000). The specific role of the local government is looked at in terms of its functions and powers, some of which devolve from both the national and provincial governments.

The aim of this study is to add to the growing literature on expectations and perceptions of service delivery by service providers in the Emfuleni Local Municipality by measuring the service quality they offer to their customers. A review the status and service delivery of local government, the White paper on local government, and the functions, responsibilities and challenges of municipalities in South Africa will be conducted in the following section.

2.5.1 Status of local government

The Constitution of the Republic of South Africa, Act (108 of 1996) defines the status underlying developmental local government as:

- The Constitution grants local government original powers. Local government is no longer a function of provincial government, or a third level of government. It has become a sphere of government in its own right. It is part of a system of co-operative government and governance, which includes provincial and national spheres.
- Local government is no longer a site for the delivery of services only, but a crucial site for social and economic development. This requires local government to have a strong developmental focus.

- Local government, within its constraints, has to contribute to both economic growth and social redistribution.
- Local government is a key arena for the democratic participation of ordinary citizens.
- Municipalities constituting the new local government system have to be financially viable and sustainable.
- Over time and through appropriate negotiations, more powers and functions can be devolved to local government.

According to Section 151 of the Constitution (1996):

- The local sphere of government consists of municipalities, which must be established for the whole of the territory of the republic.
- The executive and legislative authority of a municipality is vested in its Municipal Council.
- A municipality has the right to govern, on its own initiatives, the local government affairs of its community, subject to national and provincial legislation, as provided for in the Constitution.
- The national or a provincial government may not compromise or impede a municipality's ability or right to exercise its powers or perform its functions.

The local government and service delivery are discussed next.

2.5.2 Local government and service delivery

Many organisations are investing in employee development to improve the quality of the services in line with that which customers expect (Jenkins 1992:13). Municipalities in South Africa have become focus points for service delivery. Local authorities are at the first line of service delivery institutions. The governance framework should be manifested through a set of techniques and methods related to effective policy implementation, monitoring,

performance evaluation and measurement by a set of values such as equity, productivity and quality (Van der Waldt, 2004:2).

Nuzvidziwa (2001:3) suggests that these attributes underpin institutional success stories. Naidoo (2005:103), who indicates that these features ensure a dynamic and effective organisation, reiterates this. The idea is to ensure that improved service delivery is a dynamic social activity out of which socio-economic, cultural and political imperatives integrate within the governance framework in the South African public service. It is important for the South African public service to take cognisance of the socio-economic, cultural and political perspectives of employees in the public service in order to create an environment that is conducive to the improvement of public service delivery (Van der Niekerk *et al.*, 2002:115).

2.5.3 White paper on local government

Section B of the White Paper on local government (RSA 1998:33) states that municipalities require the active participation of the community at four levels. At the first level, the community should participate as voters in order to ensure maximum democratic accountability of the elected political leadership for the policies they are empowered to promote. Participation at the second level should be as a community who can express, through different stakeholder associations, their views before and after the policies have been implemented, in order to ensure that such policies benefit the community. Participation at the third level should be as customers and end-users who expect value for money, affordable services and, courteous and responsive service. At the fourth level, the community should participate as partners, who are involved in the mobilisation of resources for development. It may be deduced from this argument that the concept of community participation needs to be clarified; surely, the municipal councillors are not expected to submit all their decisions to the community for approval.

2.5.4 Functions of municipalities

The Constitution of Republic of South Africa (1996) refers to the powers and functions of local municipalities as follows:

- A municipality has executive authority in respect of, and has the right to administer the local government matters and other matters assigned to it by national or provincial legislation.
- A municipality may make and administer by-laws for the effective administration of the matters which it has the right to administer
- Subject to Section 151 (4), a by-law that conflicts with national or provincial legislation is invalid. If there is a conflict between a by-law and national or provincial legislation that is inoperative because of a conflict referred to in Section 149, the by-law must be regarded as valid as long as that legislation is inoperative.
- The national government and provincial governments must assign to a municipality, by agreement and subject to any conditions, the administration of a matter, which necessarily relates to local government, if that matter would most effectively be administered locally; and the municipality has the capacity to administer it.
- A municipality has the right to exercise any power concerning matter reasonably necessary for, or incidental to, the effective performance of its functions.

A municipal council therefore has very specific functions and powers as an autonomous level of government.

2.5.5 Responsibilities of Local Government

The responsibilities of local government can be generally categorised as follows:

- Infrastructure and basic services, which includes water and sanitation, electricity and gas, reticulation, refuse removal, storm water management, municipal roads, municipal public transport, and street lighting, among others.

- Social and welfare services, which while primarily an area of provincial responsibility, municipal functions that fall in this category may include childcare facilities, municipal health services, establishment and maintenance of public parks and other recreational facilities. Other community-based social services are often, in practice, provided by municipalities (especially the larger municipalities).
- Administration and public order, which includes fire-fighting services, building regulations, control of nuisances, air and noise pollution, traffic and parking; larger municipalities often have established 'metro police' to assist with enforcement in these areas.
- Municipal planning, which involves the development plans of a municipality that are the basis for directing and managing land use and infrastructure provision, and that should help plan for public investment whether the particular service is provided directly by the municipality or by province. For example, the housing subsidy programme has been implemented by the province, but effective implementation relies on municipal planning.

2.5.6 Municipal service delivery in South Africa

In 2003, a review of the municipal service delivery was conducted by the South African government. This review reflected that, although South African public services have been successful in meeting immediate service delivery objectives, the current interventions, strategies and approaches are not effective in rapidly improving and redressing service delivery to the extent and at the pace that is currently needed in South Africa (Towards a Ten Year Review, 2003).

According to Naidoo (2009:105), there are also a number of interrelated variable hampering the effectiveness of the public service delivery. The most important of these variables were identified as human resource and financial constraints, the lack of technical skills, the lack of co-ordination, ineffective intergovernmental relations (IGR) among the three spheres of government, ineffective policy implementation, and the lack of effective monitoring and evaluation systems.

2.5.7 Challenges facing South African municipalities

Municipalities, the world over, face the challenge of managing viable and environmentally sustainable urban and rural systems (RSA 1998:10). The backlog in service provision and the transformation needs in South Africa have led to the adoption of a developmental approach to local government. The need to provide basic services to South Africa's population while still ensuring adequate service provision for economic development is vital for the development of the country and is the major challenge facing local government structures (African Development Bank, 2000:29).

The lack of integration of unique diversities and differences can lead to a lack of trust and a lack of confidence in government. Such values in South Africa should include the principle of *Ubuntu* (Humanness). Values can provide the basis for responsibility and accountability, and can ensure that the public service will exercise its authority in such a way as to serve the interests and welfare of society. Since there is an urgent need to improve service delivery by the South African public service, leaders should, therefore, motivate public servants to do more than they had originally expected and even more than they thought possible (Naidoo, 2005:103).

According to Pretorius and Schurink (2007:22), the post-1994 delivery of services has not always been as effective and efficient as had been anticipated. Areas of concern include the appropriateness of the level of service provided, its affordability, cost recovery, operation and maintenance. Other problem areas include expectations regarding service delivery, human resource capacity and skills, and service delivery in support of economic development. Capacity limitations, other than a direct shortage of funds, have proved to cause bottlenecks in many instances. Developmental local government will need to overcome the human resource capacity constraints that have hampered the transitional municipalities. These constraints have resulted in:

- under spent capital budgets
- poorly prepared applications for capital funds

- an absence of application for national capital funds
- weak co-ordination between capital budgets
- an inability to procure and manage consultants
- a lack of attention to the maintenance of existing plants and infrastructures
- the loss of senior technical staff.

According to the public press, most local governments lack the financial, technical and managerial capacity to take optimum advantage of municipal service partnerships, and this capacity will need to be developed. In many circumstances, there has been no substantive debate about alternative approaches to service delivery - only reaction and counter-reaction. Public sector leaders around the world face a common set of challenges if their services are to meet the increased expectations of their customers, both citizens and organisations. Challenges may be consistent but the ways in which they are being confronted and the results that are being achieved vary considerably.

Pretorius and Schurink (2007:23) further elaborates that one common challenge faced by every organisation is how to improve customer service. The public sector is no exception. Traditionally, it has been seen as a passive vehicle for executing social policy mandated by legislation. Increasingly, however, accustomed to enhanced service delivery from the private sector, citizens and organisations view the public sector as another provider of services. To address this, the public sector must find ways of improving the efficiency and effectiveness of its service delivery. This means providing value for money by improving quality of service for all and reducing the costs involved in providing those services.

2.6 SYNOPSIS

This discussion stressed that although public service transformation has been taking place in South Africa and fundamental changes have been achieved, it is imperative that the constant questioning and striving continue, in order to

discover better ways of delivering improved services. Various alternatives to deliver improved services may be pursued, including not underestimating the importance of effective representation, ensuring ongoing meaningful relationships between councillors and not just during local elections, and involving the relevant communities in shaping the viability of their municipalities.

The measurement of service quality is complex and difficult; the complexity of which is a product of the unique characteristics of services. Many factors play a crucial role in assessing service quality, with the customer being the most salient factor of all.

This chapter dealt with the definition and concept of service quality. An outline and discussion on the five dimensions of service quality, as well as the five critical aspects of service quality were presented. The advantages and disadvantages of the service quality model, including the SERVQUAL model were debated and the proposed service quality model used for this study was deliberated upon in this chapter. The following chapter describes the research methodology followed in the empirical study.

CHAPTER 3

RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

3.1 INTRODUCTION

The purpose of this chapter is to outline the methodology employed in the design of the empirical study. The preceding chapters have laid the foundation for the research instrument, based on previous studies of a similar nature.

Section 3.2 pinpoints the research objectives and research design, as stated in Chapter 1. Section 3.3 provides an overview of the data requirements for the study. Section 3.4 describes the development of the research instrument, including the development of the questionnaire items, question wording, questionnaire specifications and design, the determinants of a suitable measuring scale and the pre-testing of the questionnaire. Section 3.5 discusses the development of the sampling plan, which involved defining the population of this study, determining the sample size, deciding on the operational procedure for sampling and determining the execution of the sample plan. The statistical methods applied to the empirical data set are identified and discussed in Section 3.6. The statistical procedures used in the analysis of the data are also discussed.

3.2 FORMULATING THE RESEARCH OBJECTIVES AND RESEARCH DESIGN

The research objectives applicable to the empirical portion of this study were formulated in

Chapter 1 and are as follows:

- Measure the community customers' expectations of municipal service–quality delivery in the Emfuleni Local Municipality.
- Measure the community customers' perceptions of municipal service-quality delivery in the Emfuleni Local Municipality.

- Identify the gaps between community customers' expectations and perceptions of municipal service–quality delivery in the Emfuleni Local Municipality
- Identify priorities for improvement in an attempt to improve service-quality delivery within the Emfuleni Local Municipality.

The research instrument applied in this study was adapted from Parasuraman *et al.* (1985:41). The SERVQUAL model (refer to Chapter 2, Section 2.4.1) was specifically developed to measure service quality and is known to be the predominant method used to measure customers' service expectations and perceptions. Therefore, the measuring instrument employed in this study supports the attainment of the first three objectives stated above.

After the research instrument was adapted (refer to Section 3.4), two experienced researchers initially assessed it to check for any possible misunderstanding. The initial questionnaire was pre-tested on a small group of three respondents to clarify the questions. Refinements and the necessary adjustments were then made to the questionnaire. The questionnaire was piloted on 54 respondents to confirm the reliability of the instrument. Thereafter, the refined questionnaire was prepared for the main survey part of the study.

One group of respondents was selected for the study – customers of the Emfuleni Local Municipality. Two municipal pay points, namely Vereeniging and Vanderbijlpark, located in the Vaal region of the Gauteng Province were selected by means of a judgement sample. The reason for selecting these pay points is due to them being the largest to serve the residents of the Emfuleni Local Municipality. In line with previous studies conducted of a similar nature, such as Ngubane (2005:78) (sample size of 300), and Mncwango (2004:29) (sample size of 400), it was decided to draw a non-probability convenience sample of 400 respondents.

Permission, to carry out the survey was obtained from the Municipal Manager of the Emfuleni Local Municipality. Thereafter, a hand-delivered self-administered questionnaire was distributed to the residents of the Emfuleni Local Municipality at the Vereeniging and Vanderbijlpark pay points.

3.3 DATA REQUIREMENTS

The types of data required for the study were as follows:

- service quality dimensions data
- dimension data pertaining to service quality models
- demographical data

3.4 RESEARCH INSTRUMENT

The survey approach was selected as the means to gather the relevant data for this study. A survey is one of the tools used in the collection of research data (Tuckman, 1994:2; Gall *et al.*, 1996:289). According to Malhotra (2010:335), the questionnaire is an instrument used for gathering data about variables of interest in a study, and consists of a number of questions or items that a respondent reads and answers. Tuckman (1994:230) asserts that questionnaires are used to convert the data provided by respondents directly into information. According to Malhotra (2010:335), a questionnaire is a formalised set of questions used for obtaining information from the respondents. Van Rensburg (1994:504) maintains that the questionnaire is a set of questions dealing with a specific topic or related group of topics given to a selected group of individuals for the purpose of gathering information on a problem under consideration. Therefore, in this study, the survey approach using a structured questionnaire was employed to collect information pertaining to customers' expectations and perceptions of municipal services-quality delivery.

The research instrument applied in this study was an adapted version of the instrument developed by Parasuraman *et al.* (1985:41). This is in accordance with the general objective of this study as formulated in Chapter 1. As advised by Wolf (1997:422), the utilisation of questionnaires in this research was based on the following assumptions:

- Respondents read and understand the questions after the questionnaire is explained to the respondents.

- Respondents are presumably willing to answer the questions after being assured that the research is meant for improving the service delivered.
- Respondents are in the position to supply the information needed to answer the questions.

The aim of the research, the size of the research sample, the method of collecting data and the analysis of data were taken into consideration when preparing the questionnaire. Given that a questionnaire was selected as the research instrument for this study, a distinction between questionnaire content, question format, question order, type of questions, formulation of questions, and validity and reliability of the scale is required.

3.4.1 Development of questionnaire items

According to Tuckman (1994:225), questionnaire items must be developed carefully and in such a way that they measure a specific aspect of the study's objectives. Information pertaining to socio-economic and demographic descriptors is referred to as classification information and in studies involving human participants, relevant background information is essential in understanding the results of the final study (Pallant, 2010:53). Therefore, in order to obtain classification information particularly related to the main aims of the study, socio-economic and demographic information were collected.

In order to measure customers' expectations and perceptions of municipal service-quality delivery, the SERVQUAL scale was included in the questionnaire. This scale comprises 22 items divided into the five dimensions of tangibility (four items), reliability (five items), responsiveness (four items), assurance (four items) and empathy (five items). Each of the 22 items was measured in two ways, namely the expectations of customers concerning service quality and the perceived levels of service actually provided.

The SERVQUAL variables relating to the five service quality dimensions (refer to Section 2.3.2) are outlined as follows:

3.4.1.1 Dimension 1: Tangibility

This dimension refers to the appearance of physical facilities, equipment, personnel and communication materials and includes the following variables:

- Modern looking equipment
- Attractiveness of the physical facility
- Neatness of personnel's appearance
- Visually appealing promotional materials

3.4.1.2 Dimension 2: Reliability

This dimension refers to the service provider ability to perform the promised service dependably and accurately, and includes the following variables:

- Provide services as promised
- Sincere interest in solving problems
- Services performed right the first time
- Services delivered timeously
- Error-free records

3.4.1.3 Dimension 3: Responsiveness

This dimension refers to the service providers' willingness to help customers and provide prompt service and includes the following variables:

- Inform customers when services will be performed
- Prompt service
- Willingness to help customers
- Never too busy to respond to requests

3.4.1.4 Dimension 4: Assurance

This dimension refers to the knowledge and courtesy of personnel and their ability to convey trust and confidence and includes the following variables:

- Personnel's behaviour instil confident
- Feeling secure with transactions
- Personnel are consistently polite
- Personnel are knowledgeable

3.4.1.5 Dimension 5: Empathy

This dimension refers to the caring, individualised attention the organisation provides to each customer and includes the following variables:

- Give individual attention
- Convenient operating hours
- Give personal attention
- Have the customers' best interests at heart
- Personnel understand customers' specific needs

3.4.2 Question format

The integrated layout of sets of questions or scale measurements into a systematic instrument refers to the format of the measuring instrument (Hair, Bush & Ortinau, 2003:450). The format of questions can have a significant effect on the results and is particularly important for a self-administered questionnaire (Malhotra, 2010:353), such as the one used in this study. In addition, the wording of a question and the form of measuring responses should be carefully chosen. This will depend to some degree on the question's content and the method of data collection (Block & Block, 2005:160). According to Brace, (2008:489) self-administered questionnaires are data collection techniques in which respondents read and answer the same set of questions in a predetermined order without an interviewer being present.

One of the important aims in the construction of the questionnaire is to present the questions in as simple and straightforward manner as possible. The questionnaire should be designed in such a way that it eliminates ambiguity, biasness, technical language and prejudice (Block & Block, 2005:157). Structured questions are easy to apply due to them being pre-coded, and more economical and less time consuming

to implement (Wiid & Diggines, 2009:176). Structured questions specify the set of response alternatives and the response format, and are in the form of multiple-choice questions, dichotomous questions or a scale (Malhotra, 2010:349). Therefore, for the purpose of this study, the 22 variables examined in the section above were placed in the self-administered questionnaire in an undisguised, structured manner, as the research instrument contains specific mutually exclusive response categories from which the respondent chooses a category that best suits the response.

3.4.3 Questionnaire specifications and design

Three critical elements are discussed in this section, namely the layout, phrasing and length of the questionnaire.

In designing a questionnaire, due consideration should be given to the aesthetics and length of the questionnaire. The questionnaire should be attractive and not appear too long. This is intended to encourage the respondent to fill in and return the questionnaire (Saunders, Lewis & Thornhill, 2009:304). As advised by Brace (2008:43) and Malhotra (2010:350), an effort was made to arrange the questions in such a way that the questionnaire would appear logical from the respondent's perspective. The layout of the questionnaire used in this study comprises three sections, namely Section A (refer to Annexure B), Section B and Section C (refer to Annexure C). The first section (Section A) was designed to gather demographic data and includes questions on gender, group, age, area, years of residence and number of occupants in the household. The second section (Section B) consists of items relating to customers' expectations of the quality of service delivery by the municipality under study. The third section (Section C) consists of items relating to customers' perceptions of the quality of service delivery by the municipality under study.

Wiid and Diggines (2009:178) advise that questions be phrased using 'simple' vocabulary that can be easily understood by the respondents. In order to avoid potential problems of ambiguity, words with ambiguous meanings should be avoided (Brace, 2008:118). The questionnaire employed in this study was assessed to ensure that the language used was simple and without ambiguous meaning. Due care was taken to ensure that each question was formulated in a clear manner that

only asked about one variable. In order to prevent double-barrelled questions, the word 'and' was avoided in the body of all questions.

The length of the questionnaire relates to the average time it takes a single participant to complete the questionnaire. Iacobucci and Churchill (2010:223) advise that respondents may be discouraged from completing an extensive questionnaire as it takes too much time to complete and, as such, is being less appealing. As advised by Bevan-Dye (2005:218), the questionnaire was tested to ensure it could be completed in less than 20 minutes. The questionnaire used in this study is presented in Annexure C.

3.4.4 Determining the measurement scale

Once the type of research design has been determined and the information to be obtained specified, a decision must be taken on the measurement and scaling procedures. According to Cooper and Schindler (2003:250), a measurement scale is defined as a procedure for assigning numbers or symbols to a property of objects in order to impart some of the characteristics of the numbers to the properties in question. Malhotra (2010:354) indicates that scaling is an extension of measurement and involves creating a continuum upon which measured objects are located.

A number of forms of rating scales have been developed specifically to address responses to a series of attitudinal dimensions. The three most frequently applied itemised rating scales include the semantic differential scale, Staple scale and Likert scale. According to Block and Block (2005:83), technically, most scales are probably at best interval-level measurements due to the continuum being somewhat arbitrary and not necessarily standardised across individuals. In the itemised rating scale, the respondent is given a short description of each of the categories. The semantic differential scales, the Staple scale and the Likert scale are examples of itemised rating scales (Wiid & Diggines, 2009:166).

A semantic differential scale is a bipolar rating scale. It differs from the Likert scale in that opposite statements of the dimension are placed at the two ends of the scale and respondents are asked to indicate which they most agree with by placing a mark along the scale (Brace, 2008:76).

A Staple scale is an attitude measure that places a single objective in the centre of an even-number range of numerical values. The scale was originally developed in the 1950s to measure the direction and intensity of an attitude (Zikmund, 2000:296).

The Likert scale, also referred to as a summated scale (Malhotra 2010:276), is a technique used by researchers for the measurement of attitudes. According to Brace (2008:86), the Likert scale (frequently known as an agree/disagree scale) was first published by the psychologist Rensis Likert in 1932. The technique presents respondents with a series of attitude dimensions on which they are asked to indicate whether, and how strongly, they agree or disagree with a given statement. Likert scales consist of statements that express either a favourable or an unfavourable attitude towards the object of interest (Cooper & Schindler, 2003:252). Numerical numbers, usually ranging from one to five, are attached to each set of statements applied in the scale. Respondents are asked to rate their relative agreement or disagreement in accordance to the statement (McDaniel & Gates, 2006:328). The application of a Likert scale is very popular because it is simple to develop and monitor (Saunders *et al.*, 2009:296). Brace (2008:82) concurs and adds that the Likert scale is popular because it allows for sufficient discrimination between possible responses and because it is easily understood by respondents.

For the purpose of this study, the second section (Section B) and third section (Section C) of the questionnaire makes use of a Likert scale. A five-point Likert scale was applied to measure the respondents' agreement or disagreement towards the specific object being tested. The statements were related to numerical numbers, ranging from 1=strongly agree, 2=agree, 3=neither agree nor disagree, 4=disagree and 5=strongly disagree. The following section reports on the methods employed for the pre-testing of the questionnaire.

3.4.5 Pre-testing of questionnaire

Once a questionnaire is completed, it is important that the draft be tested and refined (Wiid & Diggines 2009:181). Martins, Loubser & van Wyk (1996:232) indicate that pre-testing is essential in order to ensure that the questionnaire will perform its various functions in the actual survey situation. According to Brace (2008:163), as an essential precaution, it is advisable to pre-test the questionnaire before committing to

a large-scale study. Wiid and Diggins (2009:181) state that during this step, the questionnaire should be tested on a small sample of respondents representing the group under investigation. Therefore, the respondents chosen for the pre-testing should be similar to the respondents employed to administer the final questionnaire. As advised by Wiid and Diggins (2009:181), initial pre-testing was undertaken in two stages in order to ensure the face validity and content validity of the research instrument.

First, two experienced researchers were requested to evaluate the questionnaire to check for any obvious mistakes or potential problems. Secondly, as advised by Bryman and Bell (2003:273), the debriefing approach to pre-testing was applied to ensure the understanding of the questionnaire. Three individuals who did not form part of the pilot test or main study were chosen to participate in the debriefing pre-testing of the questionnaire. Of these three respondents, only one had English as their first language, whereas the other two respondents had English as their second language. The questionnaire was presented to the respondents in exactly the same way, as it would be when presenting the final questionnaire. After the three respondents completed the questionnaire, they were asked about their thought processes while they were completing the questionnaire, as well as if they experienced any problems. The main aim for applying this approach to the study was to ascertain that the questionnaire could be understood by English and non-English speaking respondents, as this is in accordance with the multilingual context of the South African environment. The feedback obtained from these three interviews was used to refine the questionnaire and included simplifying the language used in the questionnaire.

Following the initial pre-testing and consequent adjustments and refinements, the questionnaire was then pilot-tested. Cooper and Schindler (2003:86) indicate that following a pre-test, the questionnaire should be pilot tested to detect weaknesses in design and instrumentation, and to determine the reliability of the instrument. It should draw subjects from the target population and simulate the procedures and protocols designated for data collection. For the pilot test, a non-probability judgement sample of respondents was drawn in order to test the reliability of the questionnaire. The sample employed within the pilot study included 54 residents of the Lesedi Local Municipality, who did not form part of the sampling frame. This pilot

study also provided the opportunity to do a trial analysis on coding and tabulating of the data. The results of this pilot study are reported on in Chapter 4. The same questionnaire as used in the pilot test, combined with a cover letter (refer to Annexure A), was then used in the main survey of this study.

3.5 SAMPLING PROCEDURE

In order to give effect to the primary purpose of the study, the procedure followed in the empirical design is outlined in this section. Figure 3.1 illustrates the steps followed in the sampling process.

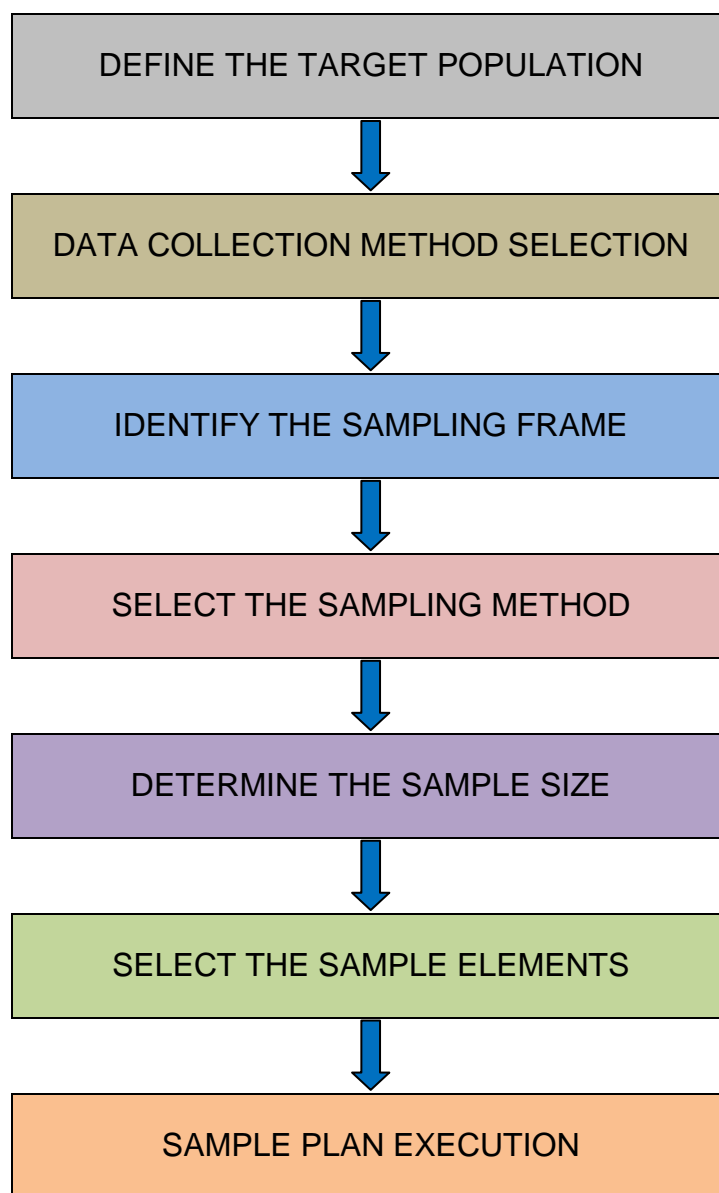


Figure 3.1 Sampling plan procedure (Iacobucci and Churchill, 2010:449)

3.5.1 Defining the target population

Wiid and Diggins (2009:195) define the target population as the total group of respondents from whom information is needed. Malhotra (2010:372) reiterates that the target population is the collection of elements or objects that possess the information sought and about which inferences are to be made. The target population selected in this study was the residents of the Emfuleni Local Municipality.

3.5.2 Data collection method selection

In this research study, the survey method was applied to collect the primary data by means of a structured questionnaire. The self-administered questionnaire, using the mall-intercept survey method, was selected as the data collection method. The mall-intercept survey method involves randomly approaching customers in a central location. Mall intercepts are especially appropriate when the respondents need to see, handle, consume or experience the product or service before providing meaningful information (Malhotra, 2010:793). The Emfuleni Local Municipality was contacted telephonically and permission to conduct the survey was obtained in writing from the municipal manager. Thereafter, a hand-delivered self-administering questionnaire was distributed to the residents of the Emfuleni Local Municipality at the Vereeniging and Vanderbijlpark pay points. The structured-undisguised design of the questionnaire conveniently enabled the researcher and two trained fieldworkers to distribute the questionnaire.

3.5.3 Sampling frame, sampling method and sample size selection

Following defining the target population and deciding on the data collection method, the next step is to assemble the sample frame. According to Bryman and Bell (2003:182), a sampling frame is the listing of all units in the population from which the sample will be selected. Malhotra (2010:373) indicates that the sampling frame should be a true representation of the target population. The sampling frame applied in this study comprised the residents of the Emfuleni Local Municipality. From this sampling frame, a judgement sample of two municipal pay points, namely the Vereeniging and Vanderbijlpark pay points, was selected. The reasons for choosing a judgement sample of these two pay points is due to them being the largest to serve

the residents of the Emfuleni Local Municipality. Thereafter, a convenience sample of residents of the Emfuleni Local Municipality was selected. Given that this was a mall intercept, the sampling frame for this study comprised residence that were at the Vereeniging and Vanderbijlpark pay points on the day that the field work for the study was undertaken.

Possible sampling methods that may be utilised are divided into two major categories - probability and non-probability sampling (Wiid & Diggines, 2009:198). For the purpose of this study, non-probability convenience sampling was used as the sampling method. A non-probability convenience sampling method was chosen because it allows a large number of respondents to be reached and because it is appropriate for a mail-intercept survey (Churchill, 2001:453; Malhotra, 2010:377).

A sample, as defined by Bryman and Bell (2003:182), is a segment of the population selected for investigation. According to Malhotra (2010:374), the definition of the sample size is the number of elements to be included in a study. The sample method employed for this study is a non-probability convenience sample of 400 residents.

3.5.4 Operational procedure for sample element selection

Wiid and Diggines (2009:214) highlight the need to develop a clear guideline and procedure for the selection of sampling elements. The operational procedures followed in this study were complete and precise. Wiid and Diggines (2009:214) add that a number of things can go wrong at the data-gathering stage and, as such, putting measures in place to minimise or eliminate potential problems is essential. First, the Municipal Manager of the Emfuleni Local Municipality was contacted in order to obtain permission to conduct the study. After permission had been obtained, a non-probability convenience sample of 400 residents of the Emfuleni Local Municipality was applied.

With the assistance of two trained fieldworkers, the distribution of questionnaires to the residents at the two pay points, through the course of one week, was undertaken. The planned operational procedure followed included the fieldworkers, together with the researcher, distributing questionnaires to potential respondents at the municipal pay points, and then waiting for the completed questionnaires. In order to establish cooperation with the municipal personnel, the purpose of the study and

the estimated duration of data collection process were explained. To encourage participation by potential respondents, an explanation of the purpose of the study, the questionnaire instructions and the estimated time for completing the questionnaire was given. In order to maintain the ongoing goodwill of respondents for future researchers, the respondents were thanked upon collection of a completed questionnaire.

Hair *et al.* (2003:179) warn that there is no best method for selecting potential respondents, although each respondent must be screened to ensure that they meet some set of specified criteria for being a suitable respondent. Therefore, in order to select the sample elements for the survey for this study, a screening question was asked to determine if the potential respondent was a resident of the Emfuleni Local Municipal area.

3.5.5 Sample plan execution

Execution of the sampling process requires a detailed specification of how the sampling design decisions with respect to the population, sampling frame, sampling unit, sampling techniques and sample size are to be implemented (Malhotra, 2010:375). The sample plan was executed according to the operational procedure established above.

The target population relevant to the study were residents of communities having permission to occupy rights to land or other informal status to land within the Emfuleni Local Municipality, as well as residents currently not having legal status but paying for services on the land on which they reside. Permission to carry out the survey at two of the Emfuleni Local Municipality's pay points was obtained telephonically and in writing from the municipal manager. With the assistance of two trained fieldworkers, using the mall-intercept approach, self-administered questionnaires were distributed throughout the course of one week to respondents waiting in line at the Vereeniging and Vanderbijlpark municipal pay points. Customers waiting in line were asked a screening question to determine if the potential respondent was a resident of the Emfuleni Local Municipal area. Thereafter, the purpose of the study, the questionnaire instructions and the estimated time for completing the questionnaire were explained to each qualifying

respondent. The respondents were requested to complete the questionnaire while waiting in line, after which these were collected and respondents were thanked for their participation. From the sample of 400, 367 completed questionnaires were received back. This translates into a 92 percent response rate.

The final data obtained from the study was then tabulated and analysed, in order to draw conclusions and make recommendations. The analysis of the data and consequent findings are discussed in Chapter 4. The next section will describe the statistical analysis techniques applied, in order to present the data obtained from the main survey questionnaire.

3.6 STATISTICAL ANALYSIS

The captured data was analysed using the Statistical Package for Social Sciences (SPSS), Version 19.0 for Windows, software package. The empirical data sets use the following statistical methods:

- Reliability analysis
- Validity analysis
- Factor analysis
- Descriptive analysis
- T-test

The following sections provide a description of these statistical methods.

3.6.1 Reliability analysis

Reliability refers to the extent to which a measurement is consistent and dependable (Block & Block, 2005:86). According to Malhotra (2010:318), reliability refers to the extent to which a scale produces consistent results if several measurements are made. Martin (2005:86) indicate that reliability is an important reflection of the extent to which the measurements are consistent and dependable, usually over time, and it is not directly related to validity.

Three major methods assess reliability, namely test-retest, internal consistency and alternative form.

- **Test-retest reliability:** Test-retest reliability involves administering a test twice, on identical or comparable respondents, and comparing the results. The degree of similarity between the two measurements is determined by computing a correlation coefficient (Block & Block, 2005:87). There are several problems associated with the test-retest approach to determining reliability. First, it is sensitive to the time interval between testing. For example, the longer the time interval, the lower the reliability. Secondly, the initial measurements may alter the characteristic being measured. For example, measuring respondents' attitude towards an object may cause them to change their attitude towards that object. Thirdly, it may be impossible to make repeated measurements. For example, the research topic may be the respondent's initial reaction to a new product (Malhotra, 2010:319).
- **Alternative-forms reliability:** In alternative-forms reliability testing, two equivalent forms of the scale are constructed. The same respondents are measured at two different times, usually two to four weeks apart, with a different scale form being administered each time. This approach has two problems. First, it is time consuming and expensive to construct an equivalent form of the scale. Secondly, it is difficult to construct two equivalent forms of a scale since the two forms should be equivalent with respect to the content (Malhotra, 2010:319).
- **Internal consistency reliability:** is the ability of an instrument to produce similar results when used on different samples during the same time-period to measure a phenomenon, (McDaniel & Gates, 2006:307). The internal consistency method uses only one administration of an instrument or test to assess the internal consistency or homogeneity among the items. The instrument is administered and the results are separated by item into even and odd numbers or into randomly selected halves (Cooper & Schindler, 2003:239).

For the purpose of this study, the internal consistency reliability was selected; that is, the Cronbach alpha coefficient. The Cronbach alpha coefficient is the average of all possible split-half coefficients resulting from different ways of splitting the scale items. This coefficient has the most utility for multi-item scales at the interval level of measurement. For the purpose of this study, the application of the internal consistency method, using the Cronbach coefficient alpha, was deployed. A pilot

study was conducted before the final study to ascertain its general consistency and to ensure that all the variables that were employed within the scale were generally reliable.

3.6.2 Validity analysis

Wiid and Diggins (2009:228) explain that data is valid if the survey measures that what it is supposed to measure. Martin (2005:85) add that validity represents the degree to which a measurement reflects the true meaning or true score of the variable or concept under consideration. Validity is compromised when there is some source of error or systematic bias in the way the study was conducted or the way a question was asked. Creswell and Miller (2000:191) indicate that validity is based on determining whether the findings are accurate from the standpoint of the research.

As with reliability, there are several methods available to assess the validity of a measuring instrument. For the purpose of this study, face validity, content validity and construct validity were the estimates of validity selected.

- **Face validity:** Face validity involves the subjective evaluation of the research instrument by an experienced researcher. Face validity is a simple form of validity in which a researcher determines if the research instrument seems to measure what it is intended to measure. Noticeably, face validity only means that the research instrument appears to be sufficient, it does not mean that the research instrument has been proven to work. However, in scientific studies, researchers generally prefer strong evidence because of the elusive nature of measuring attitudes and other cognitive phenomena, (Zikmund, 2000:282). For the purpose of this study, in order to ascertain face validity, the questionnaire was perused by an experienced researcher.
- **Content validity:** Content validity is a non-statistical type of validity that involves the systematic examination of the test content to determine whether it covers a representative sample of the behaviour domain to be measured (Pallant, 2010:7). The determination of content validity alone is not a sufficient measure of the validity of a scale, yet it aids in a common sense interpretation of the scale scores. If the measuring instrument contains a representative sample of the

population of interest, then content validity can be applied (Cooper & Schindler, 2003:233). The questionnaires content validity was determined by requesting two experienced subject experts to inspect the questionnaire.

- **Construct validity:** Construct validity is a manner of evaluating the specific measuring instrument in accordance to the theoretical foundations underlying the theory (Pallant, 2010:7). According to Cooper and Schindler (2006:351), construct validity consists of convergent and discriminant validity. Construct validity can be considered only after discriminant and convergent validity have been established. Convergent validity is measured by determining the extent to which items within a construct are positively correlated and, therefore, measure the same thing. Discriminant validity measures the extent to which items within one construct differ from items in the other constructs from which they are meant to differ (Malhotra, 2010: 255).

3.6.3 Factor Analysis

Factor analysis and principal component analysis are multivariate statistical methods designed to explore the correlations between the original variables and create a smaller set of new artificial variables that can be expressed as a combination of the original variables (Mazzocchi, 2008:219). Factor analysis is similar to multiple regression analysis in that each variable is expressed as a linear combination of underlying factors. The amount of variance the variables share with all the other variables included in the analysis is referred to as communality and co variation among the variables, and is described in terms of a small number of a common factors plus a unique factor for each variable (Malhotra, 2010:638).

In this study, factor analysis was employed to ascertain whether the 22 variables concluded on the five proposed dimensions. The key statistics associated with factor analysis used in the study are as follows:

- Correlation matrix
- Eigenvalue
- Factor loadings
- Factor matrix

- Percentage of variance

3.6.4 Descriptive analysis

Descriptive analysis enables a researcher to describe and compare variables numerically. Martin (2005:90) state that most research findings are in the form of quantitative information, which requires the use of statistics. In this study, descriptive analysis was used, as the research is quantitative in nature. The first stage of any analysis is to summarise the responses for each question. The descriptive analysis or statistics identifies the profile of sample data. These profiles are produced by condensing large volumes of gathered data on a random variable into a few summary profile measures, which describe the characteristics of the random variable (Wegner, 2000:8). Descriptive statistics are used to determine whether the data was normally distributed and includes measures such as the median, mean, standard deviation, skewness and kurtosis values.

3.6.4.1 Measures of central tendency

Willemse (1999:44) states that measures of central tendency indicate typical or middle data points or typical representative figures. For the purpose of this study, two measures of central tendency, namely the arithmetic mean and the median were applied.

- **Arithmetic mean:** The mean is used to determine the average value. It is calculated by taking the accumulated value of a specific variable applied within an observation and dividing the value by the number of observations employed within the study (Field, 2011:22).
- **Median:** The median, as a measure of location or central tendency, is the value that occupies the middle position of a group of numbers in a numerical order. Therefore, the median is the number of the items that lie above the point and is equal to the number that lies below it (Wegner, 2000:194).

3.6.4.2 Measures of dispersion

A measure of location or central tendency needs a measurement of dispersion to add value to the completion of the overall set of data and to emphasise the extent to

which the data is spread. The measures of dispersion refer to the scatter of the data points within a set of data (Bryman & Bell, 2003:359). In this study, the standard deviation was utilised.

- **Standard deviation:** A standard deviation is the square root of a variance. It is a statistical measure, which expresses the average squared deviations about the mean in the original units of the random variable in un-squared units of measure (Wegner, 2000:262).

3.6.4.3 Measures of skewness

According to Pallant (2010:57), descriptive analysis provides information concerning the distribution of scores on continuous variables, namely skewness and kurtosis. Pallant (2010:57) states that the skewness value provides an indication of the symmetry of the distribution. Cooper and Schindler (2003:476) add that skewness is a measure of a distribution's deviation from symmetry. Kurtosis is a final descriptive statistical measure to describe the behaviour of a random variable, relating to the 'peakedness' or 'flatness' of distribution (Wegner, 2000:273). The degree of concentration of data around the mode is referred to as the peakedness or kurtosis of a distribution. According to Willemse (1999:66), the flatter the curve is, the greater the spread of the data and the larger the standard deviation relative to the mean. Measures of kurtosis were used in this study to determine whether the normality assumptions are validated. Descriptive statistics were applied in this study to determine whether the data were normally distributed and to identify some form of characteristics on the large sets of data.

3.6.5 T-test

Parametric tests provide inferences for making statements about the means of parent population. T-tests are used to test the differences between groups or differences between variables (Malhotra, 2010:504). Once the data has been summarised, it is vital to interpret it and make inferences about the findings using significance tests.

This study sought to determine whether customers' expectations of municipal service delivery differed from their perceptions of municipal service delivery. In order to

determine whether the identified differences were significant, a paired sample t-test was conducted to determine whether the difference was statistically significant, whereupon Cohen's D-statistic was computed to determine whether the difference was practically significant. Cohen (1988:79) suggests that if D is 1.0, there is a large effect between the variables.

3.7 SYNOPSIS

This chapter discussed the methodology used within the empirical portion of this research study. The formulating of the research objectives and design, data requirements, the research instrument, developing a sample plan and statistical analysis procedures were discussed. Chapter 4 that follows, reports on the empirical research findings of the study in accordance with the research methodology laid out in this chapter (Chapter 3), thereby providing the foundation from which conclusions will be drawn and recommendations will be made, in the final chapter (Chapter 5). The results obtained from the pilot study are discussed in Chapter 4 - these lead the way for conducting a preliminary data analysis by means of tabulation and coding.

CHAPTER 4

ANALYSIS AND INTERPRETATION OF EMPIRICAL FINDINGS

4.1 INTRODUCTION

The purpose of this chapter is to report on and interpret the empirical findings of the study. This includes an overview of the results of the pilot study as a foundation for the results of the main survey, which are reported on in Section 4.2. Different statistical methods were used to analyse the data in the main survey. Data processing involved the coding and examination of the descriptive statistics obtained from the analysis. In order to determine whether the data were normally distributed, the preliminary data was examined. The preliminary data analysis is found in Section 4.3 of this chapter.

In order to summarise the sample data distribution, descriptive statistics were calculated. In addition, the data were tested for validity and reliability, and this is reported on in Section 4.5. The data pertaining to the demographical information of the respondents are reported on in Section 4.4 of this chapter. In order to examine the dimensionality of the scales, factor analysis was conducted and this is reported on in Section 4.6. In Section 4.7, the descriptive analysis of the data sets is reported on.

Comparisons were made between the customer expectations and perceptions to determine whether any significant differences existed between the two. The last section of this chapter, Section 4.8, reports on the results of the comparative analysis employed to determine if there were any statistical or practical significant differences between customers' expectations and perceptions of municipal service-quality delivery. Specifically, t-tests were used.

4.2 PILOT TESTING OF QUESTIONNAIRE

The research instrument applied in this study was adopted from Parasuraman *et al.* (1985:41). The SERVQUAL model (refer to Chapter 2 Section 2.4.1)

was specifically developed to measure service quality and is known to be the predominant method used for measuring service quality in the service sector. Malhotra (2010:301) warns that a questionnaire should not be used in the field survey without adequate pre-testing. As discussed in Chapter 3, the pilot test was used to test the reliability of the instrument and to check whether the instructions on the questionnaire were clear and understandable.

For the purpose of this study, the initial questionnaire was subject to pre-testing, utilising three experienced researchers, and three individuals receiving municipal services. Following the initial pre-testing and consequent adjustments and refinements, the questionnaire was then pilot tested on a non-probability judgement sample of 54 residents of the Lesedi Local Municipality. Lesedi Local Municipality did not form part of the main survey. The initial questionnaire consisted of Section A, biographical questions, Section B, 22 items dealing with customer expectations and Section C, 22 items dealing with customer perceptions. Sections B and C were measured on a five-point Likert-scale. As a result, of the pilot study, two questions were rephrased.

The reliability of the research instrument (Sections B and C) was determined through calculating the Cronbach alpha coefficient for the customers' expectations and perceptions. Reliability coefficients of less than 0.50 are deemed unacceptable (Nunnally, 1978:247), those above 0.70 satisfactory (Nunnally, 1978:247; Pallant, 2010:97), and coefficients greater than 0.80 good and preferable (Pallant, 2010:97). The results obtained in the pilot study provided a satisfactory indication of reliability. The five-point scale returned a Cronbach alpha of 0.860 for customer expectations (Section B) and 0.941 for customer perceptions (Section C), which exceeded the recommended level of 0.70. The reliability of the scales in the pilot test is presented in Table 4.1.

Table 4.1: Reliability: Expectations and Perceptions

	Valid N	Cronbach alpha	Average inter-item correlation
Section B – Expectations	54	0.860	0.258
Section C – Perceptions	54	0.941	0.432

The average inter-item correlation was computed to determine which items might be soliciting identical or very similar concepts. The inter-item correlation indicates that the correlations occurred within the recommended range of 0.15 to 0.50 (Clark & Watson, 1995:316). The inter-item correlation depicts that there is evidence of convergent validity as the variables in the scale are adequately correlated, yet not so highly correlated with measures from which they are meant to differ, indicating evidence of discriminant validity (Iacobucci & Churchill, 2010:412). The scale in the pilot study returned an inter-item correlation of 0.258 for customer expectations (Section B) and 0.432 for customer perceptions (Section C), implying that the research instrument does measure what it is intended to measure (refer to Section 3.6.1).

The questionnaire consisted of 22 variables pertaining to expectations and perceptions, respectively. The descriptions of the various variables and the dimensions are reflected in Table 4.2. These variables were then used to prepare the main survey questionnaire (refer to Annexure C), which was administered to a larger sample from the target population.

Table 4.2: Dimensions of customer expectations and perceptions of service quality and service delivery at the pilot stage

Code			
Expectations	Perceptions	Variables	Dimension
B1	C1	Modern looking equipment	1
B2	C2	Attractiveness of the physical facility	
B3	C3	Neatness of personnel's appearance	
B4	C4	Visually appealing promotional materials	
B5	C5	Provide services as promised	2
B6	C6	Sincere interest in solving problems	
B7	C7	Services performed right the first time	
B8	C8	Services delivered timeously	
B9	C9	Error-free records	
B10	C10	Inform customers when services will be performed	3
B11	C11	Prompt service	
B12	C12	Willingness to help customers	
B13	C13	Never be too busy to respond to requests	
B14	C14	Personnel's behaviour instils confidence	4
B15	C15	Feeling secure with transactions	
B16	C16	Personnel are consistently polite	
B17	C17	Personnel are knowledgeable	
B18	C18	Give individual attention	5
B19	C19	Convenient operating hours	
B20	C20	Give personal attention	
B21	C21	Have the customers' best interests at heart	
B22	C22	Personnel understand customers' specific needs	

4.3 MAIN STUDY: PRELIMINARY DATA ANALYSIS

Prior to analysing a data set, conducting a preliminary data analysis in the form of coding and tabulation is advisable. The first step in data analysis is to edit the raw data. According to Malhotra (2010:453), editing is the review of the questionnaires with the objective of increasing accuracy and precision, involving screening questionnaires to identify illegible, incomplete, inconsistent or ambiguous responses. Cooper and Schindler (2003:455) state that editing detects and corrects, when possible, errors and omissions, instilling minimum data quality standards.

4.3.1 Coding

According to Cooper and Schindler (2003:456), coding refers to the process of assigning values to various responses on the research instrument. The assigned code includes an indication of the column position and data record it will occupy (Malhotra, 2010:454). In the questionnaire, questions were classified into three sections: Section A, demographical data, Section B, customer expectations data and Section C, customer perceptions data. Table 4.3 summarises the variable codes and assigned values of all the sections in the survey instrument.

Table 4.3: Coding information

Section A: Demographical data		
Question	Dimension measured	Code
Question 1	Gender	A1
Question 2	Group	A2
Question 3	Age	A3
Question 4	Area	A4
Question 5	Years of occupancy	A5
Question 6	Number of occupants	A6

Table 4.3: Coding information (continued...)

Sections B & C: Customer expectations and perceptions data				
Question		Dimension measured	Code	
Section B	Section C		Section B	Section C
Question 1	Question 1	Tangibles	B1	C1
Question 2	Question 2	Tangibles	B2	C2
Question 3	Question 3	Tangibles	B3	C3
Question 4	Question 4	Tangibles	B4	C4
Question 5	Question 5	Reliability	B5	C5
Question 6	Question 6	Reliability	B6	C6
Question 7	Question 7	Reliability	B7	C7
Question 8	Question 8	Reliability	B8	C8
Question 9	Question 9	Reliability	B9	C9
Question	Question 10	Responsiveness	B10	C10
Question	Question 11	Responsiveness	B11	C11
Question	Question 12	Responsiveness	B12	C12
Question	Question 13	Responsiveness	B13	C13
Question	Question 14	Assurance	B14	C14
Question	Question 15	Assurance	B15	C15
Question	Question 16	Assurance	B16	C16
Question	Question 17	Assurance	B17	C17
Question	Question 18	Empathy	B18	C18
Question	Question 19	Empathy	B19	C19
Question	Question 20	Empathy	B20	C20
Question	Question 21	Empathy	B21	C21
Question	Question 22	Empathy	B22	C22

4.3.2 Tabulation: All variables

According to Cooper and Schindler (2003:505), tabulation is the simplest technique for presenting and comparing summary data. The technique involves using tables, having rows and columns that correspond to the levels or values of each variable's categories. Table 4.4 outlines the frequencies

pertaining to Section B (B1 to B22) of the questionnaire, which aimed to measure consumers' expectations of the municipal service-quality delivery. A low score indicates high customer expectations and a high score indicates low customer expectations of the quality of municipal services delivered.

Table 4.4: Frequency table for customers' expectations of service quality in municipal service delivery

Code	1 Strongly agree	2 Agree	3 Neither agree nor disagree	4 Disagree	5 Strongly disagree
Dimension 1: Tangibility					
B1	215	110	36	5	1
B2	80	241	40	5	1
B3	104	228	27	6	2
B4	109	228	26	4	2
Dimension 2: Reliability					
B5	145	190	25	5	2
B6	147	185	30	1	4
B7	152	181	29	1	4
B8	151	178	33	0	5
B9	186	138	36	3	4
Dimension 3: Responsiveness					
B10	220	111	29	1	6
B11	80	245	36	2	4
B12	118	210	33	4	2
B13	118	208	34	3	4
Dimension 4: Assurance					
B14	145	190	26	3	3
B15	142	187	32	2	4
B16	150	186	27	3	1
B17	151	183	28	1	4

Table 4.4: Frequency table for customers' expectations of service quality in municipal service delivery (continued...)

Code	1 Strongly agree	2 Agree	3 Neither agree nor disagree	4 Disagree	5 Strongly disagree
Dimension 5: Empathy					
B18	149	191	22	2	3
B19	162	165	35	1	4
B20	154	181	26	4	2
B21	161	178	22	1	5
B22	181	157	23	4	2

Table 4.5 outlines the frequencies pertaining to Section C (C1 to C22) of the questionnaires, which aimed to measure customers' perceptions of the municipal service-quality delivery in the Emfuleni Municipality. A low score indicates high customer perceptions and a high score indicates low customer perceptions of the quality of municipal services delivered by the Emfuleni Municipality.

Table 4.5: Frequency table for customers' perceptions of service quality in municipal service delivery

Code	1 Strongly agree	2 Agree	3 Neither agree nor disagree	4 Disagree	5 Strongly disagree
Dimension 1: Tangibility					
C1	12	5	72	197	81
C2	5	9	35	156	162
C3	6	8	16	177	160
C4	8	6	18	159	176

Table 4.5: Frequency table for customers' perceptions of service quality in municipal service delivery (continued...)

Code	1 Strongly agree	2 Agree	3 Neither agree nor disagree	4 Disagree	5 Strongly disagree
Dimension 2: Reliability					
C5	4	8	15	167	173
C6	6	7	16	149	189
C7	1	9	17	164	176
C8	4	6	10	152	197
C9	4	7	18	151	187
Dimension 3: Responsiveness					
C10	4	5	13	155	190
C11	0	5	61	144	157
C12	1	2	23	180	161
C13	1	1	12	195	158
Dimension 4: Assurance					
C14	0	2	13	154	198
C15	0	4	7	163	193
C16	0	3	14	159	191
C17	1	2	14	172	178
Dimension 5: Empathy					
C18	0	4	16	146	201
C19	0	6	23	146	192
C20	1	3	13	159	191
C21	2	1	14	158	192
C22	0	2	15	133	217

4.3.3 Data gathering process

Permission to carry out the survey was obtained from the Municipal Manager of the Emfuleni Local Municipality. Thereafter, in order to obtain the required sample size of 400 residents, using the mall-intercept approach, a hand-delivered self-administered questionnaire was distributed with the assistance of two trained fieldworkers to the residents of the Emfuleni Local Municipality at the Vereeniging and Vanderbijlpark pay points through the course of one week. From the sample of 400, 367 completed questionnaires were received back. This translates into a 92 percent response rate. Classification data pertaining to the sample group follows.

4.4 DEMOGRAPHICAL INFORMATION

Demographical information, also known as classification information, consists of demographic and socio-economic characteristics used to classify the respondents and understand the results (Malhotra, 2010:350). The biographical statistics of the sample, represented by pie charts, are set out below.

Section A of the research instrument related to the demographic information of residents of Emfuleni Local Municipality, including the following:

- gender
- racial groups
- age
- residential area
- years of living in residence
- number of occupants in residence

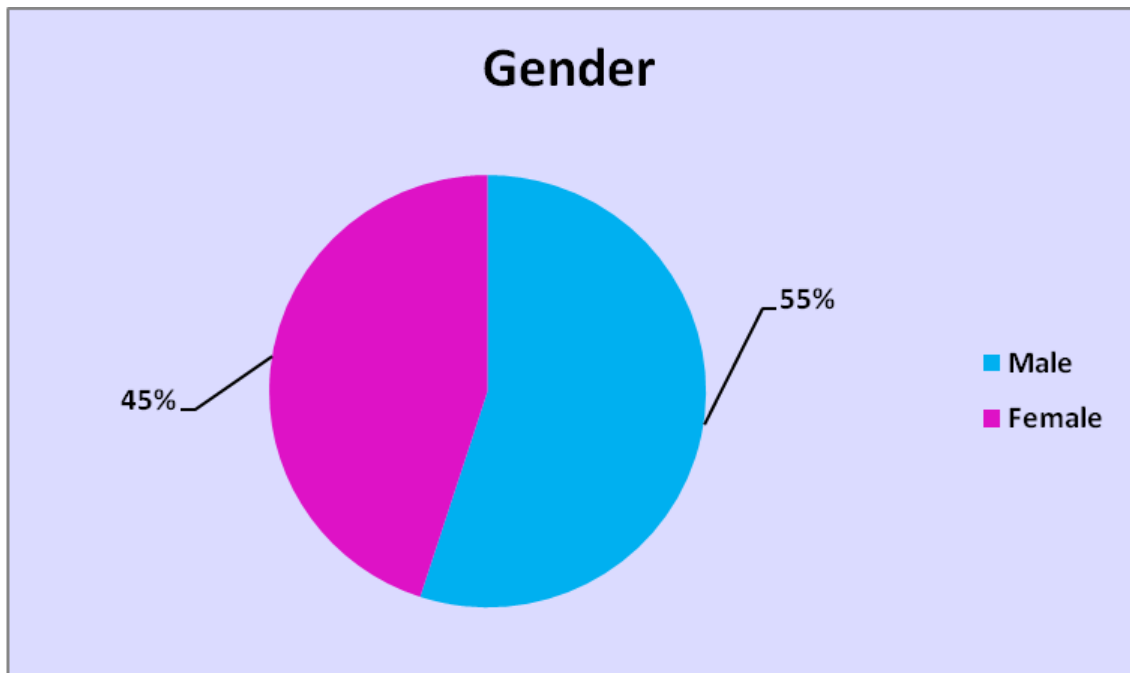


Figure 4.1: Gender classification

Figure 4.1 depicts the percentages in terms of the respondents' gender. Male respondents represented the majority of this group with a value of 55 percent. The female respondents held the minority with 45 percent. The difference of 10 percent indicates a relative even gender distribution.

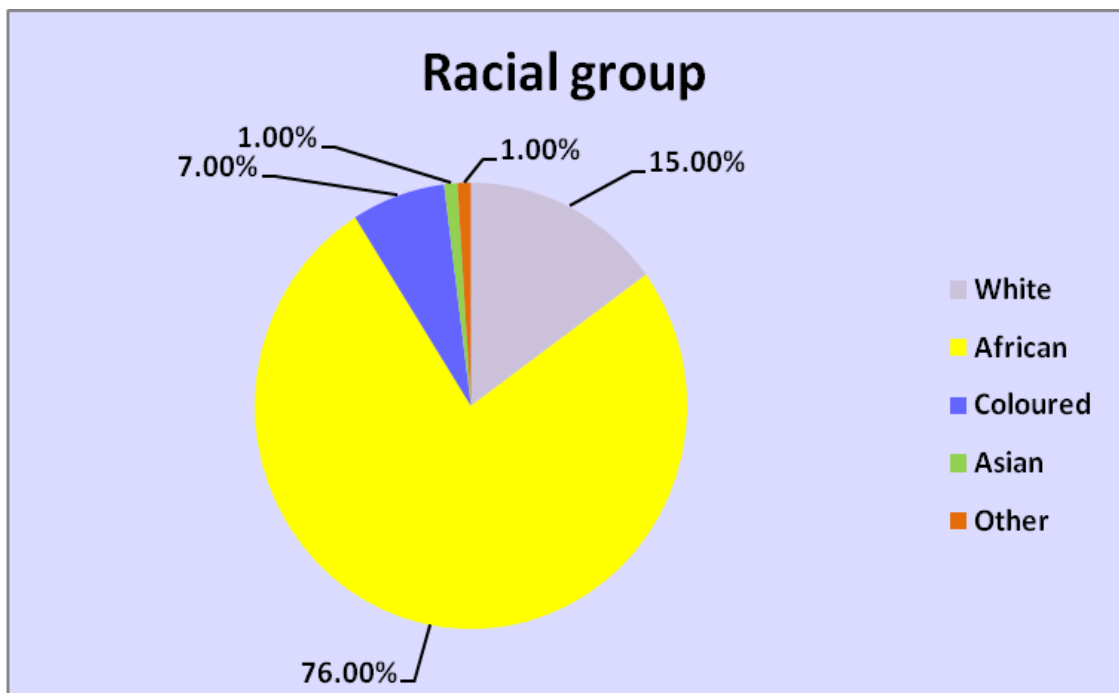


Figure 4.2: Racial groups

The results obtained from the respondents concerning their racial groups are presented in Figure 4.2. The majority of respondents were African (76%), followed by White (15%). Of the respondents, seven percent were coloured and one percent Asian. Where respondents marked the category 'other', it referred to those not listed in the survey categories, which made up one percent of the total sample.

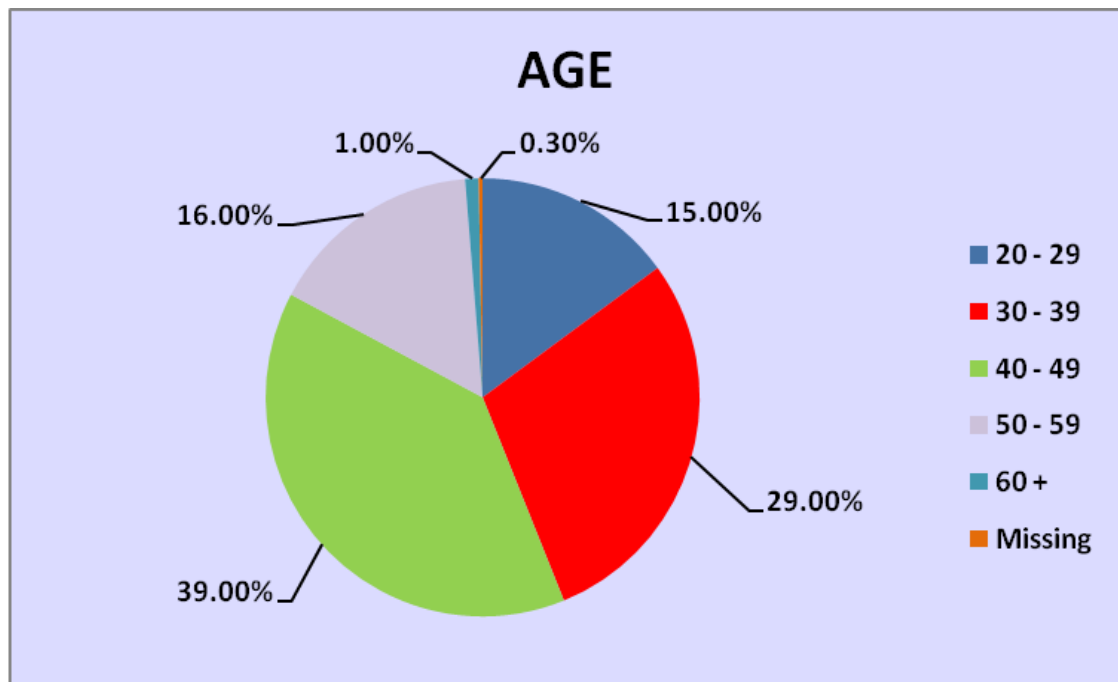


Figure 4.3: Age classification

The majority of the respondents in the sample (39%) were between 40 and 49 years old, followed by 29 percent indicating their ages as between 30 and 39 years old. Of the respondents, one percent were 60 years and older, 16 percent were between 50 and 59 years old and 15 percent were younger than 20 years old. Only one respondent failed to indicate his or her age, hence indicating a 0.30 percent of missing data. These results are illustrated in Figure 4.3.

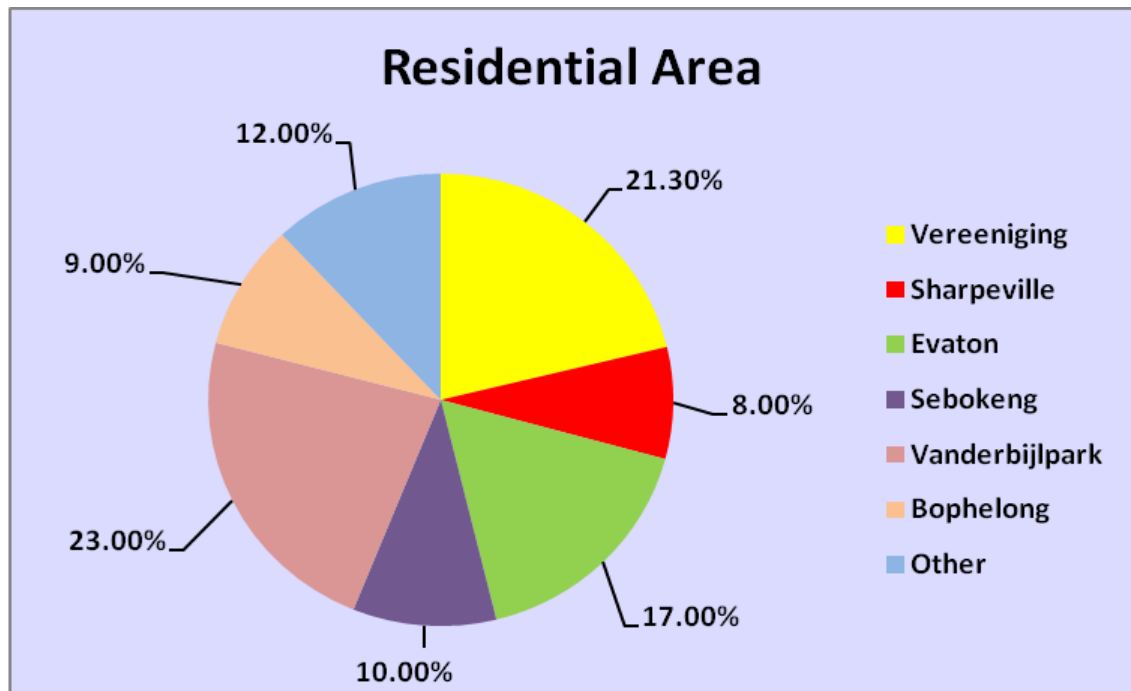


Figure 4.4: Residential area

Figure 4.4 depicts the percentages in terms of the respondents' residential areas. Most of the respondents (23%) indicated residing in Vanderbijlpark, followed by 21 percent in Vereeniging, and 17 percent in Evaton. Of the respondents, 10 percent reside in Sebokeng and nine percent reside in Bophelong. Only a small number, eight percent, reside in Sharpeville. This indicates that the respondents represent a spread of areas within the Emfuleni Local Municipality. Of the respondents, 12 percent marked the category 'other', indicating that they reside in areas not listed in the sample, such as Boitumelo and Polokong. These other areas still form part of the Emfuleni Local Municipality.

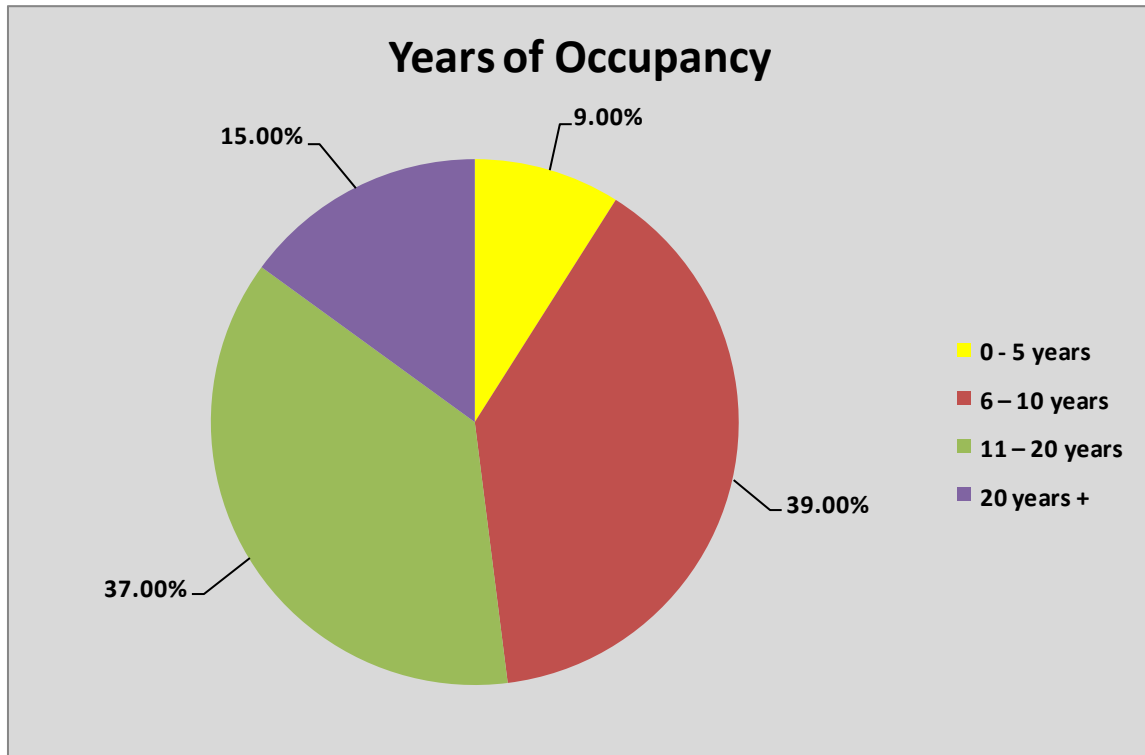


Figure 4.5: Years of occupancy

Regarding the years living in current residence, the majority of the respondents, 39 percent, indicated that they had been staying in their residence for the last 6 to 10 years. The percentage of respondents staying in their residence for the last 11 to 20 years amounted to 37 percent, which is indicative of their experience with dealing with the Emfuleni Municipality. Furthermore, 15 percent of the respondents indicated occupying their residence for more than 20 years. The minority of the group, namely nine percent, have been occupying their residence for five years and less. The distribution of the number of years of occupying the residence is outlined in Figure 4.5.

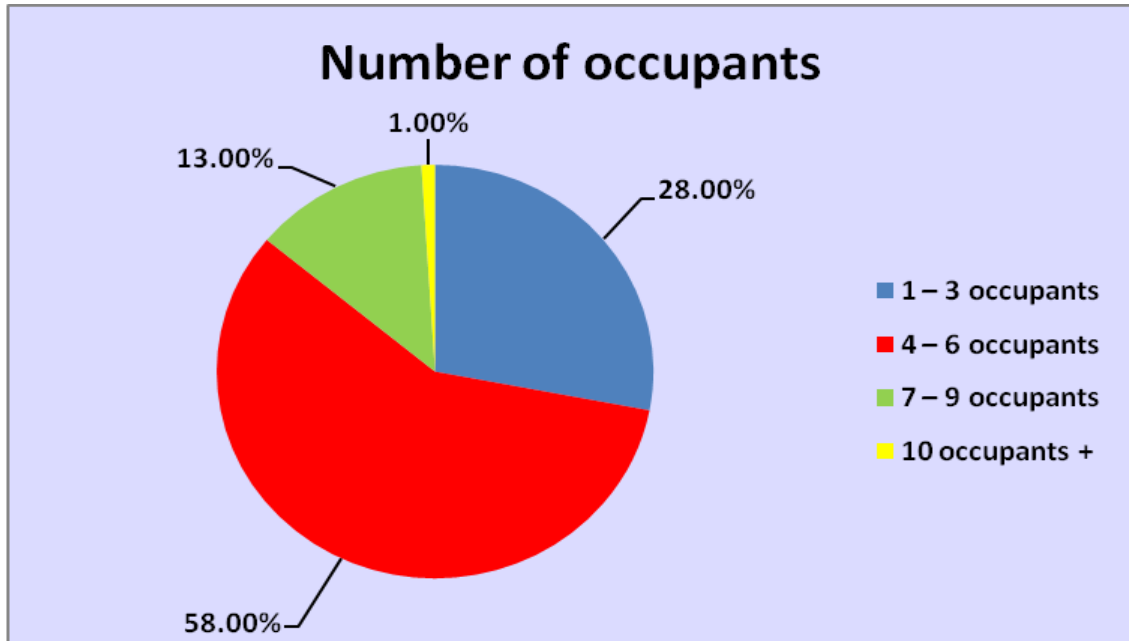


Figure 4.6: Number of occupants living in residence

Figure 4.6 illustrates the total number of occupants living in the residence. Of the respondents, 58 percent indicated that 4 to 6 residents share one residence. Furthermore, the residences with 1 to 3 residents and 7 to 9 residents occupying one residence amounted to 28 percent and 13 percent, respectively. Only one percent of the respondents indicated occupancy of more than 10 people in one residence.

The previous section described the biographical information regarding the sample group of the study. The following section reports on the results of the reliability and validity measures found within the main survey questionnaire conducted in this study.

4.5 VALIDITY AND RELIABILITY OF THE SCALE

Reliability and validity analysis were conducted for Section B pertaining to customer expectations, and Section C pertaining to customer perceptions and the results are presented in Table 4.6.

Table 4.6: Reliability analysis: Section B

		Expectations		Perceptions	
Dimensions	Number of items	Cronbach alpha	Inter-item correlation	Cronbach alpha	Inter-item correlation
Tangibility	4	0.787	0.485	0.863	0.612
Reliability	5	0.769	0.402	0.820	0.478
Responsiveness	4	0.818	0.535	0.594	0.273
Assurance	4	0.728	0.402	0.542	0.228
Empathy	5	0.774	0.407	0.657	0.276
Overall Score	22	0.912	0.320	0.884	0.245

The reliability and validity measures for each section and for each of the five dimensions of service quality within Section B (customers' expectations) and Section C (customers' perceptions) of the survey questionnaire are provided in Table 4.6. The coefficient alpha was first computed to assess the reliability of the scale. The coefficient varies from zero to one, and values less than 0.50 generally indicates unsatisfactory reliability, while those above 0.70 are deemed satisfactory (Malhotra, 2010:319).

A Cronbach alpha value of 0.912 was computed for Section B and a Cronbach alpha value of 0.884 was computed for Section C, which are well over the recommended value of 0.70. In addition, Cronbach alphas of above 0.50 were computed for each of the individual dimensions in Section B and Section C, which are deemed satisfactory (Pallant, 2010:98).

In order to test the construct validity, the average inter-item correlation was computed, which, according to Aaker, Kumar & Day (2004:565), needs to be between 0.15 and 0.50. An inter-item correlation value of 0.320 was computed for Section B and 0.245 for Section C. These values indicate that the items in the scale are both sufficiently correlated to suggest convergent validity, yet not so highly correlated from measures from which they are intended to differ, which indicates the presence of discriminant validity (McDaniel & Gates, 2007:262). This implies that the research instrument in the study does measure what it is supposed to measure (Malhotra, 2010:319), namely the

customers' expectations and perceptions of municipal service-quality delivery by the Emfuleni Local Municipality.

The average inter-item correlation was then computed for each of the five dimensions in Section B and Section C. For Dimension 1 (tangibility) it was computed as 0.485 for Section B and 0.612 for Section C. For Dimension 2 (reliability) it was computed as 0.402 for Section B and 0.478 for Section C. For Dimension 3 (responsiveness) it was computed as 0.535 for Section B and 0.273 for Section C. For Dimension 4 (assurance) it was computed as 0.402 for Section B and 0.228 for Section C. For Dimension 5 (empathy) it was computed as 0.407 for Section B and 0.276 for Section C. Although inter-item correlation for Dimension 3 (responsiveness) in Section B, and Dimension 1 (tangibility) in Section C exceeded the recommended 0.50, it was only by a marginal amount.

In order to determine the dimensionality of the scale, the data was then prepared for a confirmatory factor analysis.

4.6 FACTOR ANALYSIS ON COMMUNITY EXPECTATIONS AND PERCEPTIONS

The appropriate multivariate technique was used in this study to examine the dimensionality of the scale is factor analysis, as referred to in Chapter 3. Factor analysis was employed to ascertain whether the 22 variables concluded on the five proposed dimensions. Confirmatory factor analysis, using un-rotated principal axis factor analysis, was performed on 22 service quality variables in order to assess the inter-correlation amongst the scale component. The factor analysis matrix was rotated using Varimax rotation with Kaiser Normalisation. This resulted in an easy-to-interpret matrix. The extraction method of principal component analysis was also used. The aim was to establish a factor structure which had a sufficient number of variables in each factor and which gave factors that were usable and definable.

As advised by Iacobucci and Churchill (2010:809), for sample sizes of more than 100, loadings of greater than 0.30 are appropriate. Therefore, variable

loadings of 0.40 and above were retained. The key statistics associated with factor analysis used in the study included a correlation matrix, eigenvalues, factor loadings, a factor matrix and percentage of variance.

Five factors were extracted, which coincided with the number of conceptualised dimensions of the SERVQUAL scale. A combination of techniques was used to determine the number of factors to extract. Initially, the eigenvalues was used in factor extraction. The eigenvalues hold that the amount of variation explained by each factor must be greater than one (Aaker *et al.*, 2004:568). The same procedure was followed in Section B and in Section C. Eigenvalues was computed for customer expectations and customer perceptions. The dimension of the scale was examined. Five factors to be extracted were established. The results of the Eigenvalues are reflected in Table 4.7, followed by the factor-loading matrix.

Table 4.7: Eigenvalues for the five dimensions: Expectations and perceptions

Dimension	Initial Eigenvalues		
	Eigenvalue	Percentage of Variance (%)	Cumulative Percentage (%)
1 (Expectations)	7.779	35.357	35.357
2 (Expectations)	1.970	8.953	44.310
3 (Expectations)	1.298	5.902	50.212
4 (Expectations)	1.194	5.425	55.637
5 (Expectations)	1.012	4.599	60.236
1 (Perceptions)	6.545	29.749	29.749
2 (Perceptions)	2.538	11.538	41.287
3 (Perceptions)	1.313	5.970	47.257
4 (Perceptions)	1.165	5.296	52.554
5 (Perceptions)	1.071	4.866	57.420

Table 4.7 contains information regarding the five possible factors and their relative explanatory power expressed by their eigenvalues, which clearly supporting the use of five factors. The eigenvalues hold that the amount of variation explained by each factor must be greater than one (Iacobucci & Churchill, 2010:576). In respect of the five dimensions, the eigenvalues ranged from 7.93 to 1.00. These five factors accounted for 60 percent of the variance within the variables, which is satisfactory (Malhotra, 2010:604).

Eigenvalues represent the amount of variance in the original variables that is associated with a factor. When divided by the number of variables, an eigenvalue yields an estimate of the amount of total variance explained by the factor (Aaker *et al.*, 2004:568). From the factor analysis, community expectations and perceptions on municipal service delivery can be categorised in the following five factors:

- Factor 1: Tangibility (items 1 – 4)
- Factor 2: Reliability (items 5 – 9)
- Factor 3: Responsiveness (items 10 – 13)
- Factor 4: Assurance (items 14 – 17)
- Factor 5: Empathy (items 18 – 22)

Table 4.8 illustrates the results of the rotated factor analysis on customer expectations and perceptions on municipal service delivery quality.

Table 4.8: Rotated factor loadings on community expectations and perceptions on municipal service delivery

Variable	Factor loadings				
	Factor 1	Factor 2	Factor 3	Factor 4	Factor 5
B1	.575				
B2	.796				
B3	.800				
B4	.567				
B5	.554				
B6		.410			
B7		.611			
B8		.694			
B9		.734			
B10		.550	.579		
B11			.705		
B12			.778		
B13			.735		
B14			.559	.450	
B15			.596	.465	
B16				.768	
B17				.601	
B18				.608	
B19					.480
B20					.615
B21					.706
B22					.652

Table 4.8: Rotated factor loadings on community expectations and perceptions on municipal service delivery (continued...)

Variable	Factor loadings				
	Factor 1	Factor 2	Factor 3	Factor 4	Factor 5
C1	.697				
C2	.676				
C3	.729				
C4	.775				
C5	.738				
C6	.736				
C7	.708				
C8	.727				
C9	.681				
C10	.696				
C11		.692			
C12		.693			
C13		.604			
C19		.460			
C21		.543			
C16			.554		
C18			.754		
C20			.625		
C15				.754	
C17				.668	
C14					.723
C22					.590

Although five factors emerged from the data as expected, not all the items loaded on the same factor as in the SERVQUAL scale. The loadings on the correct factor are indicated by red in the table. The data does not contradict

the dimensions/factors of the SERVQUAL and therefore the standardised dimensions/factors from the SERVQUAL will be used for further discussion.

With regard to customer perceptions on service delivery quality, most of items loaded on one factor (Factor 1). Items for Factor 3 loaded on Factor 2 and most of the Factor 4 items loaded on Factor 3. Only one of the items that loaded on Factor 5 is placed correctly. The other item in Factor 5 is a Factor 3 item. Therefore, the standardised dimensions from the SEVQUAL will be used for further discussion. The following section presents the descriptive statistics of the data.

4.7 DESCRIPTIVE ANALYSIS

Descriptive statistics provide a broad overview of the profile of responses and provide insight by giving a set of numeric summary statistical measures (Wegner, 2000:191). In order to provide such a measure, some numerical description of the characteristic of a data set is needed. Summary statistics that are either typical of the data set or best describe it make faster and improved decisions possible because they eliminate the need to consult original observations (Wilemse, 1999:43). The following section reports on the descriptive statistics of this study. In addition, the validity and reliability measures of the scale are also reported on.

4.7.1 Descriptive statistics pertaining to the dimensions

The descriptive statistics measured in the main survey questionnaire of this study are presented in Table 4.9. The measures of central tendency and the measures of dispersion are calculated on the five pre-determined dimensions of service quality, namely tangibility, reliability, responsiveness, assurance and empathy, as well as for the gaps between expectations and actual perceptions for each of the dimensions. The number of the completed questionnaire is shown as the Valid *N* in Table 4.9.

Table 4.9 Descriptive statistics: Total sample

Dimension	N	Mean	Std. Dev	Skewness	Kurtosis	Inter-item	Cronbach Alpha
Expectations dimensions							
Tangibility	367	1.78	.529	1.676	5.048	0.485	0.787
Reliability	367	1.70	.527	2.515	11.435	0.402	0.769
Responsiveness	367	1.77	.574	2.242	8.486	0.535	0.818
Assurance	367	1.71	.522	2.255	9.895	0.402	0.728
Empathy	367	1.67	.515	2.465	10.433	0.407	0.774
Perceptions dimensions							
Tangibility	367	4.20	.699	-2.323	7.022	0.612	0.863
Reliability	367	4.39	.5739	-3.085	11.784	0.478	0.820
Responsiveness	367	4.35	.4645	-1.334	2.620	0.273	0.594
Assurance	367	4.47	.3935	-2.369	11.575	0.228	0.542
Empathy	367	4.47	.4153	-2.626	11.728	0.276	0.657

For customer expectations, a low score indicates high customer expectations and a high score indicates low customer expectations of the quality of municipal services delivered. For customer perceptions, a low score indicates high customer perceptions and a high score indicates low customer perceptions of the quality of municipal services delivered by the Emfuleni Local Municipality. Although the data set appeared slightly skewed, it was still within the acceptable parameters of normal distribution.

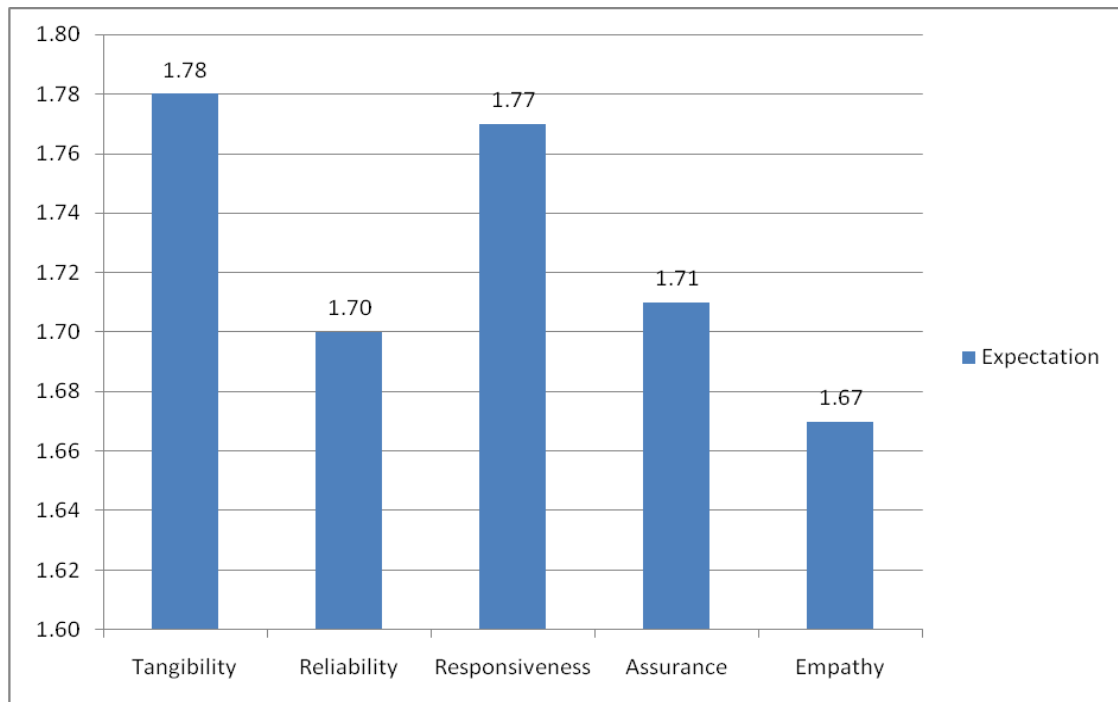


Figure 4.7: Aggregate mean rating of the five dimensions: Expectations

In examining, the areas that the municipality should concentrate on as priorities for improvement, five dimensions of service quality were examined in terms of their aggregate mean scores. Figure 4.7 reflects the relative ratings of the various dimensions in terms of their respective aggregate mean scores. For customer expectations, a low score indicates high customer expectations and a high score indicates low customer expectations of the quality of municipal service delivery. Empathy turned out to be the highest expected dimension from the customer point of view with an aggregate mean score of 1.67. Therefore, this indicates that, above all, customers feel that the municipality must exhibit empathy.

Tangibility turned to be the lowest expected dimension from the customer point of view with an aggregate mean score of 1.78. Although this dimension was considered the least important aspects of service delivery that comprise this dimension, should not be overlooked. The personnel at Emfuleni Local Municipality should strive to improve issues under this dimension in order to improve the overall service quality rating of the municipality, even though it is least important to the customers.

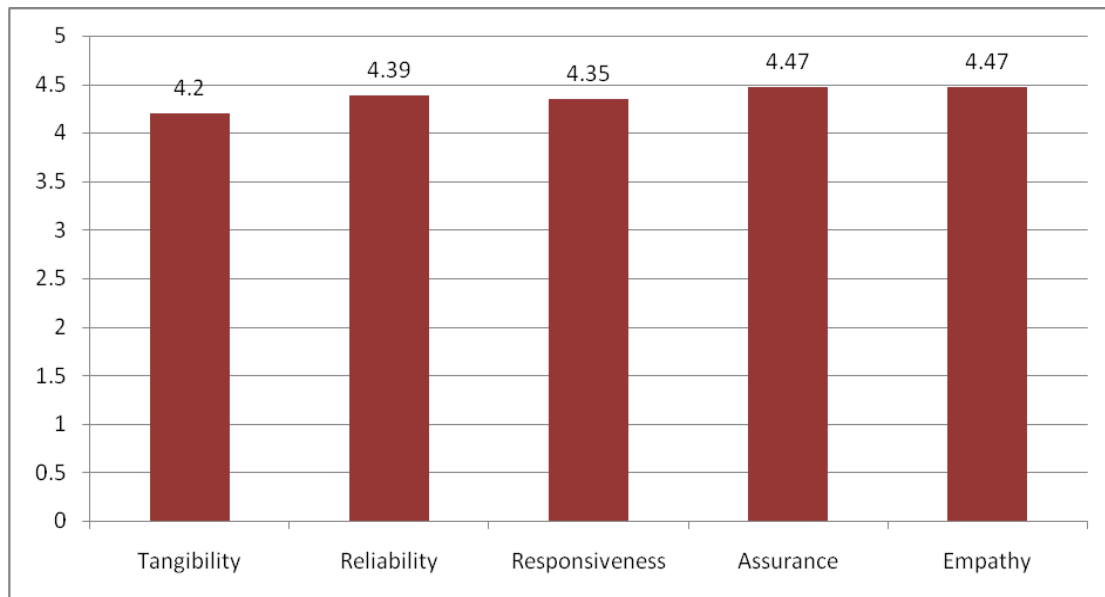


Figure 4.8: Aggregate mean rating of the five dimensions: Perceptions

Means above 4 were reported on all five dimensions indicating that the customers of the Emfuleni Local Municipality perceive service delivery quality as inadequate on all five dimensions. In examining the areas that the municipality should concentrate on as priorities for improvement, the five dimensions of service quality were examined in terms of their aggregate mean scores. Figure 4.8 reflects the relative ratings of the various dimensions in terms of their respective aggregate mean scores. For customer perceptions, a low score indicates high customer perceptions and a high score indicates low customer perceptions of the municipal service delivered by the Emfuleni Local Municipality.

In terms of perceptions, tangibility turned out to be the highest perceived dimension from the customer point of view, with an aggregate mean score of 4.20, which is in accordance with customers' expectations of tangibility. Assurance and empathy turned to be the lowest perceived dimensions from the customer point of view, with an aggregate mean score of 4.47 for both dimensions. This is in accordance with customers' expectations that empathy is what they rate as the highest expectation in a municipality. Aspects of service delivery, that comprise these two dimensions, should not be overlooked.

Table 4.10: SERVQUAL Gap Score

Dimensions	Items	Expectations		Perceptions		Gaps
		Mean	Std.	Mean	Std.	
Tangibility	1	1.55	0.75	3.90	0.88	2.35
	2	1.93	0.63	4.26	0.83	2.33
	3	1.84	0.67	4.30	0.79	2.46
	4	1.81	0.65	4.33	0.83	2.52
Reliability	5	1.72	0.69	4.35	0.76	2.63
	6	1.72	0.72	4.38	0.80	2.66
	7	1.70	0.72	4.38	0.71	2.68
	8	1.72	0.74	4.38	0.71	2.66
	9	1.64	0.78	4.44	0.73	2.80
Responsiveness	10	1.53	0.79	4.39	0.76	2.86
	11	1.92	0.66	4.42	0.74	2.50
	12	1.81	0.68	4.23	0.77	2.42
	13	1.82	0.72	4.36	0.65	2.54
Assurance	14	1.72	0.70	4.38	0.59	2.66
	15	1.74	0.73	4.49	0.59	2.75
	16	1.69	0.67	4.49	0.59	2.80
	17	1.70	0.71	4.47	0.61	2.77
Empathy	18	1.69	0.68	4.43	0.62	2.74
	19	1.69	0.74	4.48	0.63	2.79
	20	1.69	0.70	4.43	0.68	2.74
	21	1.67	0.72	4.46	0.63	2.79
	22	1.61	0.70	4.46	0.64	2.85

In order to determine the service quality of the Emfuleni municipal service delivery, the SERVQUAL gaps were determined by subtracting customer perception from customer expectation scores ($Q = P - E$). The SERVQUAL score is equal to the perception's score minus the expectation's score. As such, a lower score indicates lower customer perception of actual service delivery. The dimension scores for each respondent were computed by averaging the gap score over the relevant number of statements (either 4 or 5 statements). Based on the item-by-item analysis (Table 4.10), all of the items

of perceptions were perceived as negative, as compared to customers' expectations. The mean gaps indicate a negative score, representing an unenthusiastic assessment of municipal service delivery quality. All 22 items yielded negative gap scores.

Table 4.11 illustrates aspects of service quality that are worth noting as priorities for improvement by Emfuleni Local Municipality.

Table 4.11: Priorities for improvement

Dimension	Item	Question/Statement
Reliability	9	Error-free records
Responsiveness	10	Time of performing service
Assurance	15	Customers should feel safe in their dealings with
	16	Personnel should be consistently polite to customers
	17	Have knowledge to answer customers' questions
Empathy	18	Customer individual attention
	19	Operating hours convenient to all municipal
	20	Give customers personal attention
	21	Have customers' best interests at heart
	22	Understand specific needs of their customers

The overall gaps between customers' expectations and perceptions are graphically illustrated in Figure 4.9.

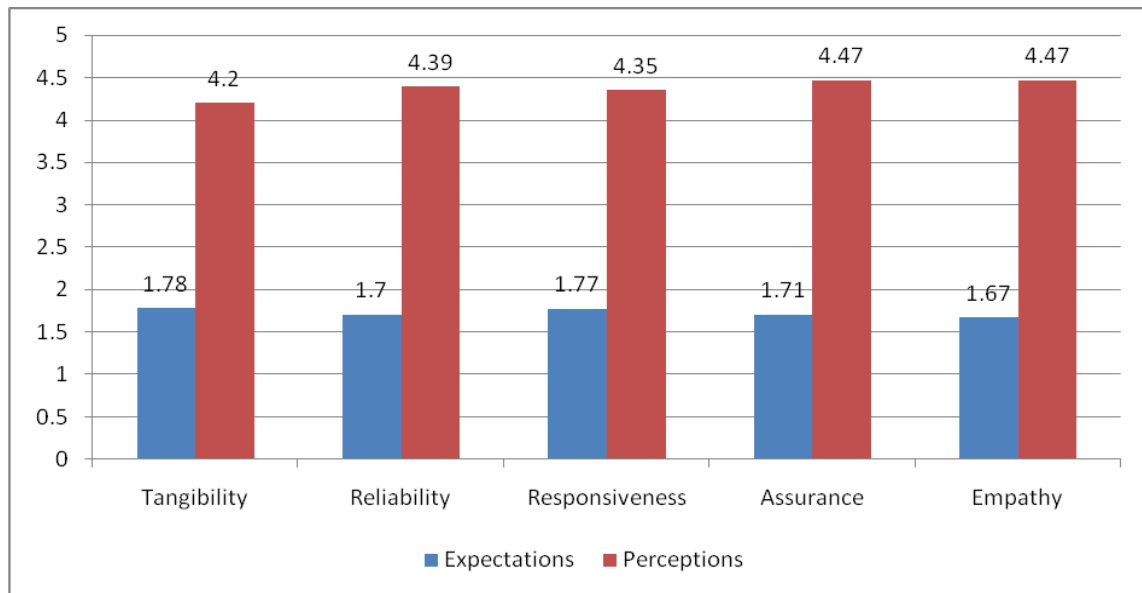


Figure 4.9: Overall gaps between expectations and perceptions in five dimensions

In examining the different gaps between expectations and perceptions of the customer concerning service quality provided by Emfuleni Local Municipality, the five dimensions of service quality were examined and illustrated in Figure 4.9 in terms of the differences between the dimensions' gaps.

After subtracting the overall mean score of customer expectations from the overall mean score of customer perceptions, there was a large gap between expectation and perception on the empathy dimension with the gap score of 2.80, followed by the assurance dimension, with the gap score of 2.76. With regard to the reliability dimension, the gap score was 2.69. For the responsiveness dimension, a gap score of 2.58 was computed, and the lowest gap score was computed on the tangibility dimension, with the gap score of 2.42.

4.8 TEST OF SIGNIFICANCE

The statistical significance testing of difference of means between customers' expectations and perceptions of the five dimensions is outlined in Table 4.12.

Table 4.12: Difference of means between expectations and perceptions on the five dimensions

Dimension N=367	Expectations		Perceptions		t	Sig	Cohen's D	Effect size
	Mean	Std. Dev.	Mean	Std. Dev.				
Tangibles	1.78	.529	4.20	.699	-49.850	.000*	3.46	Large
Reliability	1.70	.527	4.39	.574	-66.399	.000*	4.68	Large
Responsiveness	1.77	.574	4.35	.465	-63.669	.000*	4.491	Large
Assurance	1.71	.522	4.47	.394	-78.379	.000*	5.28	Large
Empathy	1.67	.515	4.47	.415	-74.376	.000*	5.44	Large

A paired sample t-test was used to determine whether there is a statistically significant difference between the sample's expectations and perceptions of the Emfuleni Local Municipality's service quality delivery. The significance level was set at the conventional 5 percent level; that is $\alpha=0.05$. As is evident from Table 4.12, statistically significant differences at $p<0.05$ were recorded for all five dimensions. Cohen's D statistic was then used to assess the practically significant difference in the means between expectations and perceptions of the five dimensions. Practically significant differences with a large effect size were computed between expectations and perceptions on the five dimensions. Therefore, these differences are real and have practical implications. It is concluded that the perception's gap are much more to the right-hand side of the scale than the expectation's gap. Based on the dimension-by-dimension analysis, all of the dimensions of perceptions were perceived as negative as compared to customers' expectations. The greatest difference is for the dimension empathy, followed by the dimension assurance.

4.9 SYNOPSIS

This chapter reported on the empirical findings of the study. The pilot study was discussed, including reliability. The coding information was also discussed. The results of the main survey were then tabulated. The chapter also provided a statistical overview of the data obtained from the research

process. The information was analysed and summarised using descriptive statistics and multivariate measures. Graphic illustrations and tables were used to explain the results.

The data were tested for reliability, and descriptive statistics were used in the study, this includes the mean, standard deviation, and frequency distributions. These were calculated to summarise the sample data distribution. Finally, the difference between the variables was tested. Cronbach alpha were computed and factor analysis were loaded in the data. The weighted gap score were also computed.

The study now progresses to Chapter 5, which will provide a general overview of the study against the literature review and objective from the previous chapters. In addition, research questions will be re-examined to determine whether they have been answered. Furthermore, the final recommendations and conclusions pertaining to the study will be discussed.

CHAPTER 5

CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATIONS

5.1 INTRODUCTION

Municipalities in South Africa exist primarily for improving the welfare of the local communities they serve. Local government in South Africa is undividable from the events that have shaped the South African socio-economic and political landscape. The South African 1996 Constitution stipulates that all spheres of government are responsible for ensuring the delivery of basic services to all South Africans. Local authorities particularly face a massive task, as there is a huge backlog in access to basic services in South Africa. Municipalities in South Africa are important role players in service delivery and are required by law to find innovative methods to involve communities in all their affairs. Although municipalities face many challenges concerning service delivery, one of the major concerns among South Africans is slow service delivery by municipalities. Many municipalities find it challenging to find ways to accomplish their requirement to deliver quality services to their communities.

The service sector in South Africa is large, and encompasses a wide variety of organisations, services and activities. This includes the South African government, for instance, who is a major service provider. Service organisations and the marketing of services are a vital part of the South African economy but this, as opposed to the marketing of physical products, poses unique challenges for the service marketer because of the unique characteristics of services, namely intangibility, inseparability, heterogeneity and perishability. Delivering quality service is essential for the success and survival of service organisations and, therefore, municipalities need to take steps to improve the service quality they provide to their customers. In a turbulent, extremely competitive global business environment, organisations face considerable pressure to meet or exceed customer expectations by delivering services that are of the highest quality. The five dimensions of

service quality, namely tangibility, reliability, responsiveness, assurance and empathy are the key drivers of service quality offered to customers (Chapter 2).

In this study, comparisons were made with regard to customer expectations and perceptions of the service quality offered by Emfuleni Local Municipality and the results are presented in Section 5.4. In addition, this section includes a discussion on findings of the research study on different dimensions of service quality. Section 5.5 outlines the future research opportunities, and this is set against the overview of the study in Section 5.2 and the contribution made by the study in Section 5.3.

5.2 OVERVIEW OF STUDY

Based on the input of all previous chapters in this study, a comparison was made between customer expectations and perceptions on the quality of municipal services delivered to customers, as presented in Section 2.4. For additional clarity on the comparison, this section contains an overview of these inputs.

The purpose of this study was to determine the customer expectations and perceptions of the quality of municipal service delivered by the Emfuleni Local Municipality in order to identify potential gaps that may exist. This study utilised customer-based data to provide actual expectations and perceptions of quality service, thereby resulting in the dimensions of service quality.

The objectives of the study were stated as follows (refer to Section 1.3):

5.2.1 Primary objective

The primary objective of this study was to measure the community expectations and perceptions of the quality of municipal services delivered by the Emfuleni Local Municipality in order to identify potential service quality gaps.

5.2.2 Theoretical objectives

In order to achieve the primary objective, the following theoretical objectives were formulated for the study:

- Outline the fundamental principles of service delivery
- Conduct a review of the relevant service quality literature
- Outline the importance of service quality in municipalities
- Conduct a review of the relevant literature pertaining to the different service quality models

5.2.3 Empirical objectives

The following empirical objectives were formulated to support the primary and theoretical objectives:

- Measure the community customers' expectations of municipal service–quality delivery in the Emfuleni Local Municipality.
- Measure the community customers' perceptions of municipal service–quality delivery in the Emfuleni Local Municipality.
- Identify the gaps between community customers' expectations and perceptions of municipal service–quality delivery in the Emfuleni Local Municipality
- Identify priorities for improvement in an attempt to improve service-quality delivery within the Emfuleni Local Municipality.

The empirical objectives were addressed by investigating and answering the following research questions:

- What are the customers' expectations of service-quality delivery by the Emfuleni Local municipality?
- What are the customers' perceptions of service-quality delivery by the Emfuleni Local municipality?

- What service quality gaps exist in the municipal services delivered by the Emfuleni Local Municipality?

In accordance with the specified objectives of the study, Chapter 2 addressed theoretical objectives one and two, which provided a theoretical foundation describing the service quality literature and the fundamental principles of service marketing. A literature review pertaining to the various service quality models and the South African local spheres of government was conducted. Chapter 3 outlined the methodology of the study and provided an overview of the data gathering and analysis processes (Section 3.2), together with an outline of the study's data requirements (Section 3.3). The design of the research instrument was discussed (Section 3.4) and the sampling procedure was also explained (Section 3.5). This chapter also outlined the statistical methods used in the empirical study (Section 3.6). Chapter 4 reported on the empirical findings of the study. The findings indicated a statistical and practical significant difference between the customers' expectations and perceptions of the quality of services delivered by the Emfuleni Local Municipality.

Chapter 5, as a concluding chapter, provides an overview of the research conducted in Chapters 1 to 4, with recommendations on how municipalities can improve service delivery and service quality to their customers.

5.3 CONTRIBUTIONS OF THE STUDY

As a legislative requirement, local government in South Africa is required to become more entrepreneurial, to be performance orientated, to provide excellent service to their customers and to be customer-focussed. One common challenge faced by every municipality is how to service its customers better. Customers perceive service quality as essential for enhancing their satisfaction and loyalty. Municipalities need to update and keep abreast of methods to deliver quality service to their customers continuously. Current and continuing resource pressures and firm policy directions from central government give added urgency for local government decision makers to understand and manage the needs and expectations of their customers, and to be aware of customers' perceptions as they apply to current service quality.

The findings of this study are important to the understanding of the service delivery quality in the municipal context and service organisations in general. Identifying the differences in customers' expectations and perceptions concerning service-quality delivery by the Emfuleni Local Municipality contributes to determining the success or failure of customer experiences, which have significant effects on customer satisfaction. This study provides an understanding of customers' expectations as well as their perceptions, thereby allowing managerial judgement to be exercised from a position of knowledge rather than guesswork in the important task of managing public expectations and resources. Not only will such knowledge facilitate more informed prioritisation, improved strategic resource allocation and improved value for money, it will also serve as a platform for providing better services for citizens, in the sense that the services more closely match customers' expectations. This study make a significant contribution by indicating which of the different service quality dimensions influence customer satisfaction and providing possible strategies on how municipalities can effectively and efficiently design their service delivery process, thereby ultimately providing better customer service. By better understanding customers' expectations and perceptions, municipalities will be better placed to improve service quality. In highlighting the service quality gaps, this study makes a significant contribution to aiding in the bridging of the gaps identified.

5.4 RECOMMENDATIONS

The following recommendations are based on the literature review of service quality together with a statistical analysis of the feedback received from the customers of the Emfuleni Local Municipality. These recommendations represent the customers' expectations and perceptions of the quality of services delivered, as well as the service quality gaps identified between customers' expectations and perceptions.

Five dimensions of service quality, namely tangibility, reliability, responsiveness, assurance and empathy were identified in the literature portion of the study, which utilised previous empirical studies on the subject. Section 4.4.1.1 represents these five dimensions.

5.4.1 Customer expectations and perceptions

This study indicates that customers of the Emfuleni Local Municipality have negative perceptions of the quality of services delivered by the municipality, as customers' expectations were not met in the performance of services delivered. In all of the service quality dimensions, customer expectations differ from customer perceptions with regard to service quality delivered by the Emfuleni Local Municipality. Therefore, customers were dissatisfied with the quality of services delivered on all of the five service quality dimensions. One of the most important causes for feeling this dissatisfaction could be explained by the gap theory suggesting that the difference between customers' expectations of the expected service, and their assessment of the actual service received, drive the perception of service quality (Parasuraman *et al.*, 1985:41). In light of these five dimensions in the overall sample, the following service quality dimensions require attention in order to increase customer satisfaction.

5.4.1.1 Dimension 1: Tangibility: Appearance of physical facilities, equipment, personnel and communication materials

The smallest service quality shortfall was in the tangibility dimension. From the customers' expectations, tangibility ranked the lowest expected dimension compared to the other dimensions, indicating the least importance of all the dimensions. From the customers' perceptions, tangibility ranked the lowest perception scores resulting in it being perceived as negative. Coverage of the content of this dimension includes the following topics (refer to Section 3.4.1.1):

- Modern looking equipment
- Attractiveness of the physical facility
- Neatness of personnel's appearance
- Visually appealing promotional materials

The smallest discrepancy between customers' expectations and perceptions of the quality of municipal service delivery was in terms of the tangibility

dimension. Although this was the smallest gap of all of the five dimensions, the gap was still large. In terms of tangibility dimension, it is recommended that the municipality should upgrade the existing infrastructure, provide sufficient physical facilities, and improve the maintenance of the physical facilities in order to allow efficient service delivery. In contributing to closing this gap, personnel should be encouraged to behave more responsively by using customer names more often, offering greetings, saying 'please' and 'thank you', and providing customers with undivided attention.

5.4.1.2 Dimension 2: Reliability: Ability to perform the promised service dependable and accurately

After empathy and assurance, the third largest quality shortfall was on the reliability dimension. From the customers' expectations, reliability ranked the second highest expected dimension compared to the other dimensions, indicating high expectations. From the customers' perceptions, reliability ranked the third highest perception score, resulting in it being perceived as negative. The item that recorded the highest gap score for this dimensions and for all of the items overall, was error-free records, indicating that customers find this very important. The error-free records item coverage of the content of this dimension includes the following topics in 3.4.1.2:

- Excellent municipalities provide service as promised
- Excellent municipalities shows a sincere interest in solving customer problems
- Excellent municipalities get things right the first time
- Excellent municipalities provide services at the time they promised to do so
- Excellent municipalities have error-free records

The third largest discrepancy between customers' expectations and perceptions of the quality of municipal service delivery was in terms of the reliability dimension, which reflects a negative gap in the needs of customers. Therefore, in order to enhance customer satisfaction, the municipality should

focus on closing this gap through implementing various strategies such as improving collaboration, co-ordination and co-operation between departments, integrating planning processes between departments, keeping updated records, up-to-date and modern electronic technology and improving communication programmes. Ensuring that there are adequate, well-trained personnel to deliver services timely through providing information accurately by means of up-to-date information technology is critical to closing this gap.

5.4.1.3 Dimension 3: Responsiveness: Willingness to help customers and provide prompt service

The fourth largest service quality shortfall was on the responsiveness dimension. From the customers' expectations, responsiveness ranked the fourth highest expected dimension compared to the other dimensions. From the customers' perceptions, responsiveness ranked the fourth highest scores, resulting in it being perceived as the fourth most important dimension pertaining to service quality of municipal service delivery. The item that recorded the highest gap score for this dimension and the second highest for all the items overall, was the time of performing the service, indicating that it is important for customers to know exactly when services will be performed. Coverage of the content of this dimension includes the following topics in 3.4.1.3:

- Personnel at excellent municipalities tell customer exactly when services will be performed
- Personnel at excellent municipalities should give customers prompt service
- Personnel at excellent municipalities should always be willing to help customers
- Personnel at excellent municipalities should never be too busy to respond to customers' request

The fourth largest discrepancy between customers' expectations and perceptions of the quality of municipal service delivery was in terms of the

responsiveness dimension reflecting a negative gap in the needs of customers, which indicates that their customers mistrust the municipality. Customers indicated that they do not receive services on time and doubted that they will receive the right service the first time. Although this gap was the second smallest of all of the five dimensions, the gap itself was still large. In order to enhance customer satisfaction, the municipality should focus on closing this gap through implementing various strategies. These should include continuous management and leadership training for management team, on-going staff training and motivation, improved collaboration, co-ordination and co-operation between departments, improved up-ward communication, up-to-date and modern electronic technology, and employing qualified personnel who are willing to help.

5.4.1.4 Dimension 4: Assurance: Knowledge and courtesy of employees and their ability to convey trust and confidence

The second largest service quality shortfall was in the assurance dimension. From the customers' expectations, assurance ranked the third highest expected dimension compared to the other dimensions, indicating high expectations. From the customers' perceptions, assurance ranked the second highest, perception scores resulting in this dimension perceived as the second most important dimension pertaining to service quality of municipal service delivery. Three items that recorded the highest gap scores for this dimension were customers should feel safe in their dealings with the municipality, personnel should be consistently polite to customers and personnel should have knowledge to answer customers' questions. Coverage of the content of this dimension includes the following topics in 3.4.1.4:

- Behaviour of personnel at excellent municipalities should make customer feel confident
- Customers should feel safe in their dealings with excellent municipalities
- Personnel at excellent municipalities should be consistently polite to customers

- Personnel at excellent municipalities should have the knowledge to answer customers' questions

The second largest discrepancy between customers' expectations and perceptions of the quality of municipal service delivery was in terms of the assurance dimension, which reflects a negative gap in the needs of customers. Therefore, in order to enhance customer satisfaction, the municipality should focus on closing this gap through implementing various strategies, such as employing the right people in the right positions, developing and continuously providing staff training and motivation, providing personalised and courteous service, improving service recovery, product knowledge and sensitivity expressed towards the needs of customers. In contributing to closing this gap, personnel dealing directly with customers should be empowered to provide service recovery as stipulated and previously agreed upon by management.

5.4.1.5 Dimension 5: Empathy: The caring, individualised attention the municipality provides to each customer

The largest service quality shortfall was in the empathy dimension. From the customers' expectations, empathy ranked the highest expected dimension compared to the other dimensions, indicating high expectations. From the customers' perceptions, empathy ranked the highest perception scores, resulting in it being perceived as the most negative of all the dimensions. Coverage of the content of this dimension includes the following topics in 3.4.1.5:

- Excellent municipalities should give customers individual attention
- Excellent municipalities should have operating hours convenient to all their customers
- Excellent municipalities should have personnel who give customers personal attention
- Excellent municipalities should have the customers' best interests at heart

- The personnel at excellent municipalities should understand the specific needs of their customers

The largest discrepancy between customers' expectations and perceptions of the quality of municipal service delivery was in terms of the empathy dimension, which reflects a negative gap in the needs of customers. Therefore, in order to enhance customer satisfaction, the municipality should focus on closing this gap through implementing various strategies such as providing individual customer attention, providing personalised and courteous service, being sensitive towards customer's needs, employing qualified personnel who are empathetic, providing continuous staff training and motivation, and having convenient operating hours.

5.4.2 Recommended implementation approach

Municipalities in South Africa should be aware of their customers' expectations and perception of service quality, as evaluated in this study. The findings of the study indicate that from the customers' perspective expectations and perceptions should be taken into account when municipalities deliver services. Driven by these differences in expectations and perceptions of service delivery and service quality, Emfuleni Local Municipality is increasingly required to redefine its role, strengthen its customer focus as the core value of the organisation, and build integrated service delivery models based on meeting customer needs more efficiently and more effectively.

The municipality must also ensure the encouragement of active participation by the community on the municipal decision-making processes, from strategy formulation and design, through to execution. Based on the five SERVQUAL dimensions, the survey instrument was used to measure the gap between customers' expectations for excellence and their perceptions of actual service delivered. Recommendations for closing these gaps in order to allow efficient service delivery include increasing marketing research, upgrading and maintaining the physical facilities, improving collaboration, co-ordination and co-operation between departments, keeping up-dated records, improving

communication programmes, having management and leadership training for management team, training and motivating staff, and recruiting qualified personnel who are willing to help.

5.5 FUTURE RESEARCH OPPORTUNITIES

The study has evaluated customer expectations and perceptions on municipal service delivery and service quality and identified the gaps that exist in service quality. Future research may be undertaken to complement the findings of this study by developing the service delivery model that municipalities can employ to deliver the required services. The study was confined to the Emfuleni Local Municipality. Future research should be expanded to all local municipalities throughout South Africa.

Future research should be undertaken on customer satisfaction and service quality improvement. This study found that there is a significant difference between the five service quality dimensions regarding customer' expectations and perceptions of service quality. Therefore, further research involving an in-depth analysis of the reasons why customer expectations and perceptions differ, especially regarding the dimension on empathy should be conducted.

5.6 CONCLUDING REMARKS

The significant problem worldwide is the failure of the municipalities to deliver quality of services expected. Typically, municipalities focus on projects and administration rather than their customers. Greater emphasis should be placed on providing customers with required service at the time they need it. To keep customers satisfied, municipalities have to find unique ways of providing a service that will boost customers' morale.

Municipalities are under increasing pressure to demonstrate that their services are customer-focused. Given the financial and resource constraints under which municipalities are managed, it is important that customer expectations are properly understood and measured, and that from the customers' perspective, any gaps in service quality are identified. This will help

municipalities to prioritising which gaps to focus on, and identify ways of closing service quality gaps.

BIBLIOGRAPHY

AAKER, D.A., KUMAR, V. & DAY, G.S. 2004. Marketing research. 8th ed. New York: Wiley. 565 p.

ACTS **see** SOUTH AFRICA.

AFRICAN DEVELOPMENT BANK. 2000. African Development Report. New York: Oxford University Press. 29 p.

AFRICAN DEVELOPMENT BANK. 2000. African Development Report. New York: Oxford University Press. 29 p.

ASMAH-ANDOH, K. 2009. Implementation of developmental local government for alleviating poverty and inequality. *Journal of Public Administration*, 44(1):100-110. [Sabinet Online, SA ePublications, Full Display : <http://www.sabinet.co.za>] [Date of access: 6 June 2011].

BARNES, J.G. 2001. Secrets of customer relationship management. New York: McGraw-Hill. 52 p.

BATESON, J.E.G. 1995. Managing service marketing: text and readings. 5th ed. Fort Worth: Dryden Press. 50 p.

BATESON, J.E.G. & HOFFMAN, K.D. 2011. Services marketing: international edition. 4th ed. Canada: South Western Cengage Learning. 277 p.

BERRY, L.L., ZEITHAML, V.A. & PARASURAMAN, A. 1985. Quality counts in services too. *Business Horizons*, 28(3):44-52. [In Science Direct, Full Display : <http://www.sciencedirect.com>] [Date of access: 30 June 2010].

BEVAN-DYE, A.L. 2005. Identifying Internet marketing principles relevant to generic marketers. Vanderbijlpark: PU vir CHO. (Thesis – PhD) 218 p.

BITNER, M.J. & HUBBERT, A.R. 1993. Encounter satisfaction versus overall satisfaction versus quality: the customer's voice. (In Rust, R.T. & Oliver, R.L.,

ed. 1993. *Service quality: new directions in theory and practice*. London: Sage. p. 77-94).

BLOCK, M.P. & BLOCK, T.S. 2005. *Business-to-business: marketing research*. 2nd ed. Mason: Thomson South Western. 83 p.

BOLTON, R.N. & DREW, J.H. 1991. A multistage customers' assessments of service quality and value. *Journal of Consumer Research*, 17(4):375-384.

BORINS, S. 2001. Public management innovation: toward a global perspective. *American Review of Public Administration*, 31(1): 5-21. [In Sage Journal, Full Display : <http://online.sagepub.com>] [Date of access: 27 January 2011].

BOSHOFF, C. & DU PLESSIS, F. 2009. *Services Marketing: a contemporary approach*. Juta: Pretoria. 5 p.

BOSHOFF, C. & MAZIBUKO, E.N. 2008. Measuring customer satisfaction with a municipality's waste management service: a preliminary instrument. *Management dynamics*, 17(2): 14-26. [Sabinet Online, SA ePublications, Full Display : <http://www.sabinet.co.za>] [Date of access: 6 January 2011].

BOULDING, W., KALRA, A., STAELING, R. & ZEITHAML, V.A. 1993. A dynamic process model of service quality: from expectations to behavioural intentions. *Journal of Marketing Research*, 30(1):7-27. [In EBSCOHost : Business Source Premier, Full Display : <http://www.sa.ebsco.com>] [Date of access: 23 June 2010].

BRACE, I. 2008. *Questionnaire design: how to plan, structure and write survey material for effective marketing research*. 2nd ed. London: Kogan Page. 76 p.

BRINK, A. & BERNDT, A. 2004. *Customer relationship management and customer service*. Pretoria: Juta. 60 p.

BROOKS, R.F., LINGS, I.N. & BOTSCHEM, M.A. 1999. Internal marketing and customer driven waterfalls: *The Service Industry Journal*, 19(4): 49-67.

BROWN, S.W., FISK, R.P. & BITNER, M.J. 1993. Tracking the evolution of the service marketing literature. *Journal of Retailing*, 69(1):78-103. [In Science Direct, Full Display : <http://www.sciencedirect.com>] [Date of access: 30 January 2010].

BRYMAN, A. & BELL, E. 2003. Business research methods. 2nd ed. New York: Oxford University Press. 273 p.

BUTTLE, F. 1996. SERVQUAL: review, critique, research agenda. *European Journal of Marketing*, 30(1):8-32. [In MCB – Emerald Online, Full Display : <http://www.emerald-library.com>] [Date of access: 25 March 2011].

CHAKRAPANI, C. 1998. How to measure service quality and customer satisfaction: the informal field guide for tools and techniques. Chicago: South Western Educational Publications. 172 p.

CHURCHILL, G. A. 2001. Basic marketing research. 4th ed. Ohio: Thompson Learning. 453 p.

CHURCHILL, G.A. & IACOBUCCI, D. 2002. Marketing research: Methodological foundations. 8th ed. USA: South-Western. Thomson Learning. 449 p.

CHURCHILL, G.A. & SUPRENTANT, C. 1982. An investigation into the determinants of customer satisfaction. *Journal of Marketing Research*, 19(4):491-504.

CLARK, L.A. & WATSON, D. 1995. Construct validity: basic issues in objective scale development. *Psychological assessment*, 7(3):309-316.

COHEN, J.W. 1988. Statistical power analysis for the behavioral sciences. 2nd ed. Hillsdale: Lawrence Erlbaum Associates Publishers. 79 p.

CONSTITUTION **see** SOUTH AFRICA.

COOK, S. 2002. Customer care excellence: how to create an effective customer focus. 4th ed. London: Kogan Page. 86 p.

COOPER, D.R. & SCHINDLER P.S. 2006. Marketing research. McGraw-Hill. Irwin: New York. 351 p

COOPER, D.R. & SCHINDLER, P.S. 2003. Business research methods. 8th ed. New York: McGraw-Hill. 252 p.

CRAM, T. 2001. Customers that count. London: Pearson Education Limited. 266 p.

CRESWELL, J.W. & MILLER, D.L. 2000. Determining validity in qualitative inquiry. *Theory into practice*. 39 (3): p 124-191.

CRICK, A.P. & SPENCER, A. 2011. Hospitality quality: new directions and new challenges. *International Journal of Contemporary Hospitality Management*, 23(4):463-478. [In MCB – Emerald Online, Full Display : <http://www.emerald-library.com>] [Date of access: 2 December 2011].

CROCKER, J., POTAPCHUCK, W. & SCHECHTER, W. 1998. Systems reform and local government: improving outcomes for children, families and neighborhoods (working paper / program for community problem solving). Washington: Program Community Problem Solving. 17 p.

CURRY, A. & SINCLAIR, E. 2002. Assessing the quality of physiotherapy services using Servqual. *International Journal of Health Care Quality Assurance*, 15(5):197-205. [In MCB – Emerald Online, Full Display : <http://www.emerald-library.com>] [Date of access: 12 January 2011].

CURTIS, D. 1999. Performance management for participatory democracy: thoughts on the transformation process in South African local government. *International Journal of Public Sector Management*, 12(3):260-273. [In MCB – Emerald Online, Full Display : <http://www.emerald-library.com>] [Date of access: 22 November 2010].

DE VILLIERS, A. & KALEMA, R. 2005. Challenges and opportunities for local government development with reference to the Polokwane Municipality in the Limpopo Province of South Africa. *Journal of Public Administration*,

40(1):78-90. [Sabinet Online, SA ePublications, Full Display : <http://www.sabinet.co.za>] [Date of access: 12 July 2011].

DENHARDT, J. V. & DENHARDT, R.B. 2003. The new public service: serving, not steering. New York: M.E. Sharpe. 123 p.

DEPARTMENT OF LOCAL AND PROVINCIAL GOVERNMENT **see** SOUTH AFRICA.

DEPARTMENT OF PUBLIC SERVICE AND ADMINISTRATION **see** SOUTH AFRICA

DHURUP, M. 2003. Consumer perceptions of supermarket service quality: scale development, measurement and validation. Vanderbijlpark: PU vir CHO. (Thesis – PhD) 66 p.

DORSCH, J.J., YASIN, M.M. & CZUCHRY, A. 1997. Application of root cause analysis in a service delivery operational environment: a framework for implementation. *International Journal of Service Industry Management*, 8(4): 268-289. [In MCB – Emerald Online, Full Display : <http://www.emerald-library.com>] [Date of access: 13 January 2011].

DOUGLAS, T. J., FREDENDALL, L.D. 2004. Evaluating the Deming management model of total quality in services. *Decision Science*, 35(3):393-423. [In MCB – Emerald Online, Full Display : <http://www.emerald-library.com>] [Date of access: 21 January 2011].

DU PLESSIS, P.J., ROUSSEAU, G.G. & BLEM H. 1995. Buyer behaviour: strategic marketing applications. Halfway House: Southern Book Publishers. p. 255.

ESMAN, M.J. 1997. “Good governance and devolution of power” in Africa Notes. May. 1-3.

FARNHAM, D. & HORTON, S. 1996. Managing the new public services. London: Macmillan Press. 25 p.

FIELD, A. 2011. *Discovering statistics using SPSS*. 3rd ed. London: Sage. 22 p.

FISK, R.P., BROWN, S.W. & BITNER, M.J. 1993. Tracking the evolution of the services marketing literature. *Journal of Retailing*, 69(1): 61-103. [In Science Direct, Full Display : <http://www.sciencedirect.com>] [Date of access: 30 March 2011].

FRIEDMAN, L.G. 2002. *Go-to market strategy: advanced techniques and tools for selling more products, to more customers, more profitably*. Boston: Butterworth-Heinemann. 78 p.

FROST, F.A. & KUMAR, M. 2000. INTSERVQUAL-an internal adaptation of the GAP model in a large service organisation. *Journal of Service Marketing*, 14(5): 358-386. [In MCB – Emerald Online, Full Display : <http://www.emerald-library.com>] [Date of access: 21 January 2011].

GABBOTT, T. & HOGG, G. 1998. *Consumer and service*. England: Wiley. 26 p.

GALL, M.D., BIRG, W.R. & GAKK, J.P. 1996. *Educational research: An introduction*. 6th ed. White plain, NY: Longman. p 289.

GEORGE, R. 2011. *Marketing tourism in South Africa*. 4th ed. Cape Town: Oxford University Press. 25 p.

GHOBIADIAN, A., SPELLER, S., & JONES, M. 1994. Service quality concepts and models. *International Journal of Quality & Reliability Management*, 11(9):43-66.

GRAYTHORNE, D.L. 2006. *Municipal administration: the handbook*. Kenwyn: Juta. 119 p.

GRÖNROOS, C. 2000. *Service management and marketing: a customer relationship approach*. 2nd ed. New York: John Wiley and Son. P. 89.

GROTH, J.C. & DYE, R.T. 1999. Service quality: guidelines for marketers. *Managing Service Quality*, 9(5): 337-351. [In MCB – Emerald Online, Full Display : <http://www.emerald-library.com>] [Date of access: 10 January 2011].

HAIR, J.F., BUSH, R.P. & ORTINAU, D.J. 2003. Research marketing. New York: McGraw-Hill. 450 p.

HARRIS, E. 2007. Customer service: a practical approach. Upper Saddle River: Prentice Hall. 16 p.

HART, T., RYAN, C. & ZILLE, H. 1995. Building policy skills in South Africa: A resource document on policy analysis. Johannesburg: Centre for Development Enterprise. 5 p.

HEMSON, D. 2004. South African's poverty by numbers. *Mail and Guardian*: 10-11, 25 June.

HU, H.Y., CHIU, S.I., CHENG, C.C. & HSIEH, Y.F. 2010. A study on investigating patient satisfaction of medical centers using Taiwan customer satisfaction index in Taiwan. *Africa. Journal of Business Management*, 4(14): 3207-3216.

IACOBUCCI, D. & CHURCHILL, G.A. 2010. Marketing research : methodological foundations. 10th ed. Mason: South Western Cengage Learning. 223 p.

JABNOUN, N. & KHALIFA, A. 2005. A customized measure of service quality in the UAE. *Managing Service Quality*, 15(4):374-88. [In MCB – Emerald Online, Full Display : <http://www.emerald-library.com>] [Date of access: 14 February 2011].

JAISWAL, A.K. 2008. Customer satisfaction and service quality measurement in Indian call centres. *Managing service quality*, 18(4): 405-416. [In MCB – Emerald Online, Full Display : <http://www.emerald-library.com>] [Date of access: 10 January 2011].

JAMAL, A. & ANASTASIADOU, K. 2009. Investigating the effects of service quality dimensions and expertise on loyalty. *European Journal of Marketing*, 43(3/4):398-420. [In MCB – Emerald Online, Full Display : <http://www.emerald-library.com>] [Date of access: 14 February 2011].

JAYAWARDHENA, C. & FARRELL, A.M. 2011. Effects of retail employees' behaviours on customers' service evaluation. *International Journal of Retail & Distribution Management*, 39(3): 203-217. [In MCB – Emerald Online, Full Display : <http://www.emerald-library.com>] [Date of access: 18 December 2011].

JENKINS, K.J. 1992. Service quality in the skies. *Business Quarterly*. 57(2): 13-18. [In Sage Journal, Full Display : <http://online.sagepub.com>] [Date of access: 14 February 2011].

KOTLER, P. 2000. Marketing management: the millennium edition. 6th ed. Upper Saddle River: Prentice Hall. 36 p.

KOTLER, P. 1999. Marketing management: analysis, planning, implementation and control. New Jersey: Prentice Hall. 97 p.

KRUGER, V. 2001. Main schools of TQM: the big five. 13(3):146-155.

KURTZ, D.L. & CLOW, K.E. 1998. Services marketing. New York: Wiley. 105 p.

LEWIS, B.R. & MITCHELL, V.W. 1990. Defining and measuring the quality of customer service. *Marketing Intelligence and Planning*, 8(6):11-17. [In MCB – Emerald Online, Full Display : <http://www.emerald-library.com>] [Date of access: 2 February 2011].

LEWIS, R.C. & BOOMS, B.H. 1983. The marketing aspects of service quality. (In Berry, L., Shostack, G. & Upah, G. eds. 1983. Emerging perspectives on services marketing. Chicago: American Marketing p. 99-107).

LUCAS, R.W. 2005. Customer service: building successful skills for the twenty-first century. 3rd ed. New York: McGraw-Hill. 67 p.

MALHOTRA, N.K. 2010. Marketing research: an applied orientation, 6th ed. Upper Saddle River: Pearson. 255 p.

MARTIN, S.J. 2005. Public service improvement: current developments and future research agendas. *Local Government Studies*. 31 (5): p 531-540.

MARTINS, J.H., LOUBSER, M.G. & VAN WYK, H. DE J. 1996. Marketing Research: a South African approach. Pretoria: Unisa Press. 232 p.

MAVHIVHA, E. 2003. Leadership and governance perspectives in local government administration in South Africa: Limpopo province. Pretoria: University of Pretoria. (Thesis – PhD) 195 p.

MAZZOCCHI, M. 2008. Statistics for marketing and consumer research. London: SAGE. 219 p.

MCDANIEL, C. & GATES, R. 2007. Marketing research essentials. 6th ed. New York: Wiley. 262 p.

MCDANIEL, C. & GATES, R. 2006. Marketing research: the impact of the Internet. 7th ed. New York: Wiley. 328 p.

McDANIEL, C.J.R. & GATES, R. 2002. Marketing research: The impact of the internet, 5th ed. South Western. Thomson. 328 p.

MCKNIGHT, S. 2009. Bridging the gap between service provision and customer expectations. *Performance Measurement and Metrics*, 10(2):79-93. [In MCB – Emerald Online, Full Display : <http://www.emerald-library.com>] [Date of access: 10 January 2011].

MINTROM, M. 2003. Market organizations and deliberative democracy: choice and voice in public service delivery. *Administration & Society*, 35 (1):52-81. [In Sage Journal, Full Display : <http://online.sagepub.com>] [Date of access: 27 January 2011].

MNCWANGO, Z.R. 2004. A sustainable delivery approach for peri-urban and rural areas. Durban: University of Kwazulu-Natal. (Dissertation – M.Sc) 151 p.

NAIDOO, G. 2009. Corporate governance: essential guide for the South African companies. 2nd ed. Pretoria: Juta. 104 p.

NAIDOO, G. 2005. A transformative African leadership and governance framework to improve public service delivery in South Africa. *Journal of Public Administration: Conference proceedings*: 102-117. [Sabinet Online, SA ePublications, Full Display : <http://www.sabinet.co.za>] [Date of access: 12 March 2011].

NEALER, E. & RAGA, K. 2007. Nature and extent of local governance in South Africa. *Journal of Public Administration: Conference proceedings*, 42(5):171-182. [Sabinet Online, SA ePublications, Full Display : <http://www.sabinet.co.za>] [Date of access: 12 July 2011].

NEWMAN, K. 2001. Interrogating SERVQUAL: a critical assessment of service quality measurement in a high street retail bank. *International Journal of Bank Marketing*, 19(3):126-39. [In MCB – Emerald Online, Full Display : <http://www.emerald-library.com>] [Date of access: 10 January 2011].

NGUBANE, M.B. 2005. An evaluation of service delivery at Endondakusuka Local Municipality. Durban: University of Zululand. (Thesis – PhD). 78 p.

NICOLAIDES, A. & GOVENDER, K., ed. 2003. Service quality excellence: an operational guide to customer care. Johannesburg: Helderkruijn. 7 p.

NOONE, B.M. & NAMASIVAYAM, K. 2010. Examining the application of six sigma in the service exchange. *Managing Service Quality*, 20(3):273-293. [In MCB – Emerald Online, Full Display : <http://www.emerald-library.com>] [Date of access: 14 February 2011].

NUNNALLY, J.C. 1978. Psychometric Theory. 2nd ed. New York: McGraw-Hill. 247 p.

NUZVIDZIWA, V.N. 2001. Making a difference: African traditions, cultural values and leadership. Social Anthropology and Sociology Department, National University of Lesotho. Paper presented to the leadership project IEMS, Maseru.

NYECK, S., MORALES, M., LADHARI, R. & PONS, F. 2002. 10 years of service quality measurement: reviewing the use of the SERVQUAL instrument. *Cuadernos de Diffusion*, 7(13):101-107.

OOI, K.B., LIN, B., TAN, B.I. & CHONG, A.Y.L. 2011. "Are TQM practices supporting customer satisfaction and service quality?". *Journal of Services Marketing*, 25 (6): 410-490.

OSBORNE, D.E., & PLASTRICK, P. 1997. *Banishing Bureaucracy: the five strategies for reinventing government*. Reading: Addison Wesley. 28 p.

OXFORD DICTIONARY OF CURRENT ENGLISH. 1996. New York: Oxford University Press. 551 p.

PALLANT, J. 2010. *SPSS survival manual*. 4th ed. New York: McGraw-Hill. 53 p.

PALMER, A. 2011. *Principal of services marketing*. 6th ed. Berkshire: McGraw-Hill. 7 p.

PARASURAMAN, A. BERRY, L.L. & ZEITHAML, V.A. 1991. Refinement and reassessment of the SERVQUAL scale. *Journal of Retailing*, 67(4):420-450.

PARASURAMAN, A., GREWAL, D. & KRISHNAN, R. 2004. *Marketing research*. Boston: Houghton Mifflin Company. 47 p.

PARASURAMAN, A., ZEITHAML, V.A. & BERRY, L.L. 1988. SERVQUAL: a multiple-item scale for measuring perceptions of service quality. *Journal of Retailing*, 64(1):12-40.

PARASURAMAN, A., ZEITHAML, V.A. & BERRY, L.L. 1985. Conceptual model of service quality and its implications for future research. *Journal of marketing*, 49:41-50.

PIERCY, N. & RICH, N. 2009. Lean transformation in the pure service environment: the case of the call service centre. *International Journal of Operations & Production Management*, 29(1):54-76.

PRETORIUS, D. & SCHURINK, W. 2007. Enhancing service delivery in local government: the case of a District Municipality. *SA Journal of Human Resource Management*, 5(3):19-29. [In SAJHRM, Full Display : <http://www.sajhrm.co.za>] [Date of access: 23 June 2011].

REDDY, P.S. 1996. Readings in local government management and development: a Southern African perspective. Kenwyn: Juta. 51 p.

ROBINSON, S. 1999. Measuring service quality: current thinking and future requirements. *Journal of Marketing Intelligence & Planning*, 17(1):21-32. [In MCB – Emerald Online, Full Display : <http://www.emerald-library.com>] [Date of access: 14 February 2011].

ROBINSON, S. 1999. Measuring service quality: current thinking and future requirements. *Journal of Marketing Intelligence & Planning*, 17(1):21-32. [In MCB – Emerald Online, Full Display : <http://www.emerald-library.com>] [Date of access: 14 February 2011].

RODRIGUEZ, I., BONAR, D. & SACCHI, M. 2011. *Microseismic record denoising using a sparse time-frequency transform*: 81 International Conference, SEG, Expanded Abstracts. 633 p.

RODRIGUEZ, P. G., VAZQUEZ BURGUETE, J.L., VAUGHAN, R. & EDWARDS, J. 2009. Quality dimensions in the public sector: municipal services and citizen's perception. *International Review on Public and Non-profit Marketing*, 6(1):75-90. [In IRPNM, Full Display : <http://www.springerlink.com>] [Date of access: 2 January 2011].

SANTOS, J. 2002. From intangibility to tangibility on service quality perceptions: a comparison study between consumers and service providers in four service industries. *Managing Service Quality*, 12(5):292-302. [In MCB – Emerald Online, Full Display : <http://www.emerald-library.com>] [Date of access: 6 2011].

SAUNDERS, M., LEWIS, P. & THORNHILL, A. 2009. Research methods for business students. 5th ed. Upper Saddle River: Prentice Hall. 296 p.

SAYEDA, B., RAJENDRAN, C. & LOKACHARI, P.S. 2010. An empirical study of total quality management in engineering educational institution of India: perspective of management. *Benchmarking: An International Journal*, 17(5):728-767. [In MCB – Emerald Online, Full Display : <http://www.emerald-library.com>] [Date of access: 26 February 2011].

SCHACTER, M. 2000. Evaluation Capacity Development. Sub-Saharan Africa: Lessons from experience in supporting sound governance. ECD Working Paper Series, No. 7 February. World Bank Operations Evaluations Department. 8 p.

SCHIFFMAN, L.G. & KANUK, L.L. 2007. Consumer behavior. 9th ed. Upper Saddle River: Prentice Hall. 152 p.

SETH, N. & DESHMUKH, S.G. 2005. Service quality models: a review. *International Journal of Quality & Reliability Management*, 22(9):913-949.

SHEMWELL, D.J., YAVAS, U. & BILGIN, Z. 1998. Customer service provider relationships: an empirical test of a model of service quality, satisfaction and relationship oriented outcome. *International Journal of Service Industry Management*, 9(2):155-168. [In MCB – Emerald Online, Full Display : <http://www.emerald-library.com>] [Date of access: 26 February 2011].

SKALEN, P. & FOUGERE, M. 2007. Be(com)ing normal – not excellent: service management, the gap-model and disciplinary power. *Journal of Organisational Change Management*, 20(1):109-125. [In MCB – Emerald Online, Full Display : <http://www.emerald-library.com>] [Date of access: 2 December 2010].

SMITH, A.M. 1990. Quality aspects of services marketing. *Journal of Marketing Intelligence & Planning*, 8(6):25-32. [In MCB – Emerald Online, Full Display : <http://www.emerald-library.com>] [Date of access: 9 November 2010].

SOUTH AFRICA (Republic). 2003. Towards a ten year review. Pretoria: Government Printer.

SOUTH AFRICA (Republic). 2000. Local Government: Municipal Systems Act, 2000 (Act No. 32 of 2000). Pretoria: Government Printer.

SOUTH AFRICA (Republic). 1998. Local Government: Municipal Structures Act, 1998 (Act No. 117 of 1998). Pretoria: Government Printer.

SOUTH AFRICA (Republic). 1998. White Paper on Local Government, 1998. Pretoria: Government Printer. 37 p.

SOUTH AFRICA (Republic). 1996. Constitution of the Republic of South Africa Act, 1996 (Act No. 108 of 1996). Pretoria: Government Printer.

SURESHCHANDAR, G.S., RAJENDRAN, C. & ANANTHARAMAN, R.N. 2002. The relationship between service quality and customer satisfaction: a factor specific approach. *Journal of Services Marketing*, 16(4):363-379. [In MCB – Emerald Online, Full Display : <http://www.emerald-library.com>] [Date of access: 9 November 2010].

SVENSSON, G. 2004. Interactive Service quality in service encounters: Empirical illustration and models. *Managing service quality*. 14(4) 278-287.

THERON, D.P., BOTHMA, C.H. & DU TOIT M.N. 2003. Focusing on customer service in Southern Africa. Helderkruijn: Red Pepper Books. 3 p.

TUCKMAN, B.W. 1994. Conducting educational research. 4th ed. Fort Worth: Harcourt Brace College Publishers. p. 548.

UKENS, L.L. 2007. 101 Ways to improve customer service: training tools, tips, and techniques. San Francisco: Wiley. 51 p.

VAN DER WAL, R.W.E., PAMPALLIS, A. & BOND, C. 2002. Service quality in a cellular telecommunications company: a South African experience. *Managing Service Quality*, 12(5):323-335. . [In MCB – Emerald Online, Full Display : <http://www.emerald-library.com>] [Date of access: 12 March 2011].

VAN DER WALDT, G. 2004. Managing performance in the public sector: concepts, considerations and challenges. Paarl: Juta. 2 p.

VAN RENSBURG, L.J.J. 1994. Basic concepts in education. Doornfontein: Orion. 504 p.

WANG, Y., HING-PO, L. & YANG, Y. 2004. An integrated framework for service quality. Customer value and satisfaction: evidence from China's telecommunication industry. *Information Systems Frontiers*, 6(4):325-40. [In MCB – Emerald Online, Full Display : <http://www.emerald-library.com>] [Date of access: 2 December 2010].

WEGNER, T. 2000. Quantitative methods for marketing decisions. Pretoria: JUTA. 8 p.

WHITE, M.D. & ABELS, E.G. 1995. Measuring service quality in special libraries: lessons from service marketing. *Special Libraries*, 86(1):36-45.

WIID, J.W. & DIGGINES, C. 2009. Marketing research. Pretoria: Juta. 176 p.

WILLEMSE, I. 1999. Statistical methods & financial calculations. 2nd ed. Pretoria: Juta. 44 p.

WILSON, A., ZEITHAML, V.A., BITNER, M.J. & GREMLER, D.D. 2008. Services marketing. London: McGraw-Hill. 86 p.

WISNIEWSKI, M. & STEWART, D. 2001. Using the statutory audit to support continuous improvement in Scottish local authorities: *International Journal of Public Sector Management*, 7(3):540-55

WISSINK, H.F. 1999. Understanding municipal government and administration. Pretoria: Vista University. p. 78. (Study manual MNA5001).

WOLF, J. 1997. Client needs and quality of life: *Journal of Psychiatric rehabilitation*. 20(4):416-425.

WOODRUFFE, H. 1995. Services marketing: financial times. Salford: Pitman Publishing. 105 p.

WRIGHT, R.E. 1995. Logistic regression. (*In* Grimm, L.G. & Yarnold, P.R. eds. Reading and understanding multivariate statistics. Washington: American Psychological Association. p. 9.).

WU, W.Y., BAI, C. & GUPTA, O.K. 2009. An appraisal system for monitoring performance of convenience stores in Taiwan. *Journal of Industrial Engineering*, 20 (2): 163-177. November.

YASIN, M.M., ALAVI, J., KUNT, M., ZIMMERER, T.W. 2004. Total quality management (TQM) practices in service organizations: an exploratory study into the implementation, outcome and effectiveness. *Managing Service Quality*, 14(5):377-89. [In MCB – Emerald Online, Full Display : <http://www.emerald-library.com>] [Date of access: 18 February 2011].

ZEITHAML, V. BERRY, L.L. & PARASURAMAN, A. 1993. The nature and determinants of customer expectations of service. *Journal of the Academy of Marketing Science*, 21(1):1-12. [In Sage Journal, Full Display : <http://online.sagepub.com>] [Date of access: 27 January 2011].

ZEITHAML, V.A., BITNER, M.I. & GREMLER, D.D. 2008. Services marketing: integrating customer focus across the firm. 5th ed. London: McGraw-Hill. 111 p.

ZEITHAML, V.A., PARASURAMAN, A. & BERRY, L.L. 1990. Delivering quality service: balancing customer perceptions and expectations. New York: Free Press. 16 p.

ZEITHAML, V.A. & BITNER, M.J. 2000. Service Marketing 2nd ed. New York: McGraw-Hill. p. 256.

ZIKMUND, W.G. 2000. Business research methods. 6th ed. Forth Worth: Dryden Press. 282 p.

ANNEXURE A

COVER LETTER

North West University
Vaal Triangle Campus
Private Bag X 1174
VANDERBIJLPARK
1900

30 November 2010

Dear Respondents

I am conducting a research project as part of the requirements for completing my MCom: Business Management.

The purpose of this research project is to evaluate the community expectations and perceptions of the municipal service delivery: A case study in the Emfuleni Local Area.

It would be greatly appreciated if you could assist me by completing the attached questionnaire. The questionnaire is user-friendly and should take approximately 10 minutes to complete. Completion of the questionnaire should be done anonymously to ensure the objectiveness of the results.

After completion of the questionnaire, please give it back to the fieldworker. I guarantee that the responses will remain confidential and will only be used for the purpose of this study.

Your assistance and contribution will be highly appreciated.

Yours faithfully

ANNIE M. MOLETSANE

ANNEXURE B

SURVEY QUESTIONNAIRE – SECTION A

**Community Expectations and Perceptions of Municipal Service Delivery:
A Case Study in the Emfuleni Local Area**

Section A: Demographical information

Please mark each question with a cross (X).

1. Gender:

Male	Female
1	2

2. Designated group:

White	1	African	2
Coloured	3	Asian	4
Other (specify):	5		

3. Age:

Younger than 20	20 – 29	30 – 39	40 – 49	50 – 59	60 +
1	2	3	4	5	6

4. Residential Area:

Vereeniging	1	Sharpeville	2
Evaton	3	Sebokeng	4
Vanderbijlpark	5	Bophelong	6
Other (specify):	7		

5. Years of living in residence:

0 – 5 years	6 – 10 years	11 – 20 years	More than 20 years
1	2	3	4

6. Number of occupants in residence:

1 – 3	4 – 6	7 – 9	More than 10 occupants
1	2	3	4

ANNEXURE C

SURVEY QUESTIONNAIRE – SECTIONS B & C

Section B: Expectations of an excellent municipality

Please mark each question with a cross (X).

Based on your experiences as a customer of a municipality, please indicate your expectations of service quality and service delivery by indicating whether you agree or disagree with each of the following statements. There are no right or wrong answers, just your opinion as to what would make an excellent municipality.

		Strongly Agree	Agree	Neither Agree nor Disagree	Disagree	Strongly Disagree
1	Excellent municipalities should have modern looking equipment	1	2	3	2	5
2	The physical facilities at excellent municipalities should be attractive	1	2	3	2	5
3	Personnel at excellent municipalities should be neat in appearance	1	2	3	2	5
4	Materials associated with the service (such as pamphlets or statements) should be clear and attractive at excellent municipalities	1	2	3	2	5
5	When excellent municipalities promise to do something by a certain time they should keep to that promise	1	2	3	2	5
6	When a customer has a problem, excellent municipalities should show a sincere interest in solving it	1	2	3	2	5
7	Excellent municipalities should get things right the first time	1	2	3	2	5
8	Excellent municipalities should provide their services at the time they promise to do so	1	2	3	2	5
9	Excellent municipalities will have error-free records	1	2	3	4	5
10	Personnel at excellent municipalities should tell customer exactly when services will be performed	1	2	3	4	5

		Strongly Agree	Agree	Neither Agree nor Disagree	Disagree	Strongly Disagree
11	Personnel at excellent municipalities should give customers prompt service	1	2	3	4	5
12	Personnel at excellent municipalities should always willing to help customers	1	2	3	4	5
13	Personnel at excellent municipalities should never be too busy to respond to customers' requests	1	2	3	4	5
14	The behaviour of personnel at excellent municipalities should make customers feel confident	1	2	3	4	5
15	Customers of excellent municipality should feel safe in their dealings with the municipality	1	2	3	4	5
16	Personnel at excellent municipalities should be consistently polite to customers	1	2	3	4	5
17	Personnel at excellent municipalities should have the knowledge to answer customers' questions	1	2	3	4	5
18	Excellent municipalities should give customers individual attention	1	2	3	4	5
19	Excellent municipalities should have operating hours convenient to all their customers	1	2	3	4	5
20	Excellent municipalities should have personnel who give customers personal attention	1	2	3	4	5
21	Excellent municipalities should have the customers' best interests at heart	1	2	3	4	5
22	The personnel of excellent municipalities should understand the specific needs of their customers	1	2	3	4	5

Section C: Perceptions of the Emfuleni municipality

Please mark each question with a cross (X).

The following set of statements relate to your perceptions about the Emfuleni Local municipality. Crossing a 5 means that you strongly disagree that the municipality has this feature and crossing a 1 means that you strongly agree. You may cross any of the numbers in the middle that show how strong your feelings or perceptions are.

		Strongly Agree	Agree	Neither Agree nor Disagree	Disagree	Strongly Disagree
1	The Emfuleni municipality has modern looking equipment	1	2	3	4	5
2	The physical facilities at the Emfuleni municipality are attractive	1	2	3	4	5
3	Personnel at the Emfuleni municipality are neat in appearance	1	2	3	4	5
4	Materials associated with the service (such as pamphlets or statements) are clear and attractive from the Emfuleni municipality.	1	2	3	4	5
5	When the Emfuleni municipality promises to do something by a certain time they keep that promise	1	2	3	4	5
6	When a customer has a problem, the Emfuleni municipality shows a sincere interest in solving it	1	2	3	4	5
7	The Emfuleni municipality gets things right the first time	1	2	3	4	5
8	The Emfuleni municipality provides their services at the time they promised to do so	1	2	3	4	5
9	The Emfuleni municipality have error-free records	1	2	3	4	5
10	Personnel at the Emfuleni municipality tell customers exactly when services are performed	1	2	3	4	5

		Strongly Agree	Agree	Neither Agree nor Disagree	Disagree	Strongly Disagree
11	Personnel at the Emfuleni municipality give customers prompt service	1	2	3	4	5
12	Personnel at the Emfuleni municipality are always willing to help customers	1	2	3	4	5
13	Personnel at the Emfuleni municipality are never too busy to respond to customers' requests	1	2	3	4	5
14	The behaviour of personnel at the Emfuleni municipality makes customers feel confident	1	2	3	4	5
15	Customers of the Emfuleni municipality feel safe in their dealings with the municipality	1	2	3	4	5
16	Personnel at the Emfuleni municipality are consistently polite to customers	1	2	3	4	5
17	Personnel at the Emfuleni municipality have the knowledgeable to answer customers' questions	1	2	3	4	5
18	The Emfuleni municipality gives customers individual attention.	1	2	3	4	5
19	The Emfuleni municipality have operating hours convenient to all their customers	1	2	3	4	5
20	The Emfuleni municipality have staff members who give customers personal attention	1	2	3	4	5
21	The Emfuleni municipality have the customers' best interests at heart.	1	2	3	4	5
22	Personnel at the Emfuleni municipality understand the specific needs of their customers	1	2	3	4	5

THANK YOU!