

UNIVERSITY OF ZIMBABWE



SCHOOL OF BUSINESS MANAGEMENT

POST GRADUATE PROGRAMME

PROJECT TOPIC

**A CRITICAL ANALYSIS OF THE FACTORS THAT INFLUENCE QUALITY OF
SERVICE PROVISION AT ZESA**

A DISSERTATION BY T.P. MUNYANDURI R860785K

**A DISSERTATION SUBMITTED TO THE SCHOOL OF BUSINESS
MANAGEMENT IN PARTIAL FULLFILMENT OF THE REQUIREMENTS FOR
THE AWARD OF THE MASTERS DEGREE IN BUSINESS ADMINISTRATION**

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DECLARATION PAGE

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Student

Date.....

Signature.....

I have supervised this project and am convinced that it is of Masters level standards.

Lecturer

Date.....

Signature.....

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

Incisive thoughts dictates that I indeed express my gratitude to a man of undisputable probity, Dr. Maravanyika , my project supervisor for his untiring effort in supervising this dissertation. Throughout this dissertation, the author needed a lot of guidance which I feel Dr. Maravanyika perfectly did either through the presentation of high quality lecture material that as a class we all venerated, and also by recommending superior literature material. He also facilitated ephorus plagiarism checks for this dissertation before final submission. His presentations and lectures formed the core phloem and xylem for this project which resulted in this perspicacious work. He helped in molding the heart and structure of this dissertation.

In fact, I would like to thank all the MBA program's lecturers who directly or indirectly made inputs to this distilled byproduct of two and a half years of hard work whose prognosis points towards first class material. I thank all of them for the intellectual performance in this dissertation which I owe to them in one way or another. They helped in repackaging and branding of these thoughts and in their presentation including creating an intellectual perspective. The likes of Professor Hawkins, Mrs Tsikirai , Dr Kaseke and the list goes on, deserve special acknowledgements for these distilled and refined technocratic thoughts, fashioned and branded as academic and intellectual thunder!

Indeed it was Dr . Ruturi of the University of Zimbabwe who said,` The moment of truth when quality is expected, must be perfected.' It is my fervent hope that this dissertation which sends one's heart hammering against one's ribs with excitement , just does that justice for this course which culminated in this refined academic and intellectual product. The prominence of fashioned knowledge acquired through the Masters program is easily distinguishable from just mere common sense.

I would also like to thank my wife, children and my work superiors, who also allowed me to embark on this course and allowed me free access to their facilities e.g. computers for typing this project. Without their support this course could have been a total failure.

Lastly but not least , I would like to thank all those who participated in this dissertation, in particular the MBA office, markers of this dissertation and questionnaire respondents whose contributions were invaluable to this dissertation of repute !

ABSTRACT

This project intended to do a situational and scenario analysis for ZESA in order to identify and analyze factors that affected quality of service in the power utility. It also intended to have sampled customers rate the various dimensions of quality, which results would then help to form an opinion on the level of quality in ZESA. Performance gaps and preconditions needed for corporate excellence were identified and a solution statement formulated whose implementation would either obliterate or reduce the problems highlighted in the problem statement. It also attempted to identify gaps between electricity market aspirations and corporate performance. A program of action was then recommended.

Research in the form of desk research was carried out in ZESA library, University Of Zimbabwe library, City Of Harare Libraries, various websites and Chinhoyi University Of Technology library. Primary, field research using observations and the survey(using the questionnaire method) was also used to extract customers' perceptions and opinion of ZESA service. The SERVQUAL was used in the questionnaire.

The main findings in the dissertation were that ZESA had performance gaps in all the five dimensions of quality namely responsiveness, assurance, reliability, tangibles and empathy performance criteria. The customer-satisfaction strategy or programme of action recommended were to bridge gaps identified in each of the five dimensions of quality. The conclusions were that ZESA needs to implement a number of tactics and strategies to bridge these gaps in order to guarantee profitability and its survival. As a corporate entity, it needs to exude quality. The quality chain, needs to have solid links and so also the internal and external customer chain.

Strategies and tactics such as building new offices, ring fencing and improving the quality of management, customer contact staff and customer service areas

and customer contact areas were then recommended to address some of these performance gaps. The ambience of offices as well as equipment was critical for an impression of quality.

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CHAPTER ONE

INTRODUCTION AND BACKGROUND TO THE STUDY

1.0 INTRODUCTION

Kotler(2002:56) says that quality is the best assurance of customer allegiance , the strongest defense against foreign competition and the only path to sustained growth and earnings. What this then calls for is customer intimacy and an obsession for quality as the only tool for electricity market excellence. One can therefore conclude from this observation that companies need to exude quality to eliminate the possibility of extinction.

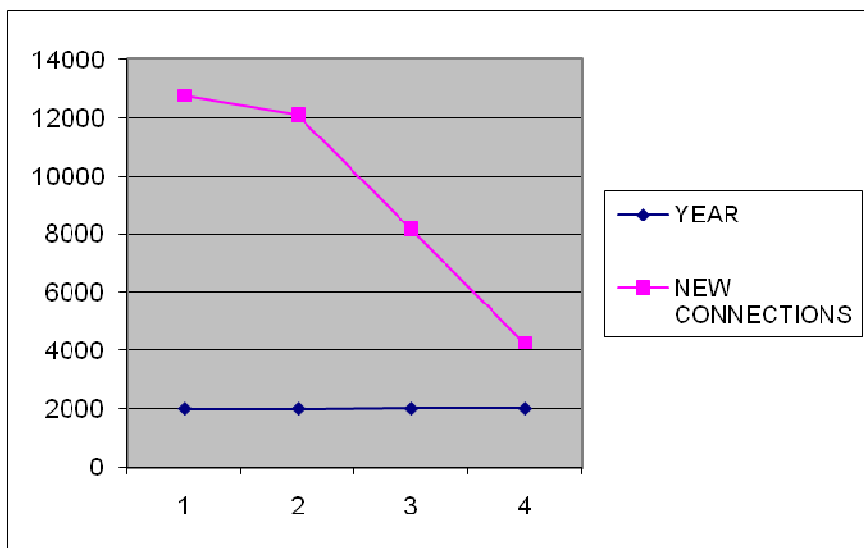
Various literature including Jobber (2010), Lovelock (2001), Zethmal, Bitner and Cremler (2006) emphasize the importance of high service quality as it is the best guarantee of customer satisfaction and customer delight. Tracy(2008), says that,` beyond customer delight , there is customer surprise.” Tracy(2008) further posits that customer satisfaction is one of the 100 absolutely unbreakable laws of business.

Although the literature covers issues on high service quality, it does not cover service quality specifically for ZESA ZEDC. The experiences in literature are European and American experiences which may have little meaning for developing countries like Zimbabwe and hence need for this dissertation. This study aims at examining service quality from Zimbabwean electricity customers' perspectives. It is customers' perceptions , customers' cumulative perceptions and total customer experience from their point of view, that is a key enabler for business success according to Tracy(2008). It therefore becomes necessary to probe and interrogate these perceptions through a questionnaire in the electricity market served by ZESA.

This study comes against a background of indications of poor quality of product and service by the power utility, ZESA. These indications and pointers include customer complaints, adverse newspaper articles, litigations and high electrical accidents involving members of the public with some fatal. The aim of the study is to analyze the factors affecting service quality in ZESA from customers' perspective, being guided by relevant literature theories and to recommend a solution statement that will minimize if not eliminate problems experienced by ZESA customers, and simultaneously enhance corporate image and the ZESA corporate brand.

1.1. BACKGROUND TO THE STUDY

Figure 1.1. NEW CONNECTIONS OF ELECTRICITY



On x-axis,

1=2005;2=2006;

3=2007; 4=2008

Source :ZESA

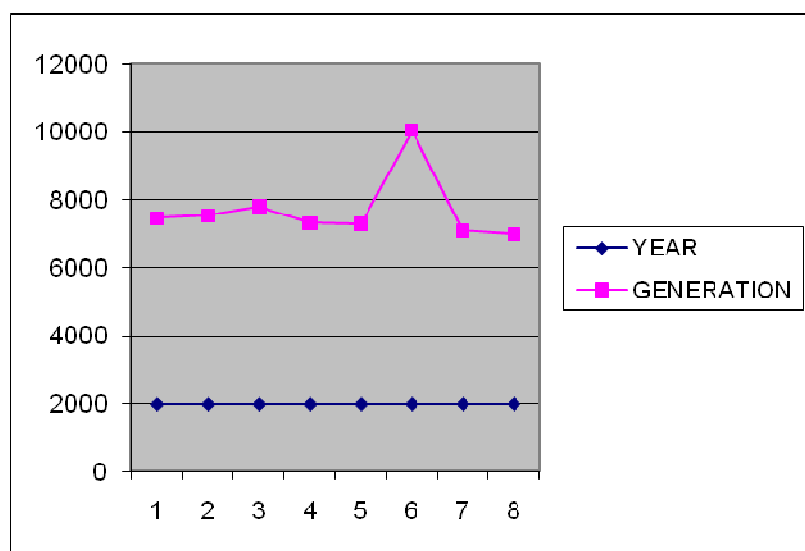
REPORTS

YEAR	2005	2006	2007	2008
NEW CONNECTIONS	12742	12094	8162	4257

The above graph shows plummeting performance in new connections.

Figure1.2Generation Capacity

YEAR	1993	1994
GENERATION	7467	7534



On graph on the x-axis, 1=1993,2=1994,3=1995, 4=1996.....,8=2000

Figure 1.2 Source: ZESA Annual corporate reports

shows declining generation Capacity trend from 1993 to 1997

Figure 1.1 and Figure 1.2 assist in explaining the degree of service quality collapse at ZESA and as indicated both new connections and generation capacity have plummeted..

ZESA was formed through an Act of Parliament in 1985 by the merger or amalgamation of the former Electricity Supply Commission (E.S.C.), Central African Power Co-operation (CAPCO) and electricity Departments of City of Harare, City of Bulawayo and City of Mutare. About 16 years later in 2001, people saw the reversal of the above setup that was repackaged and rebranded as the unbundling of ZESA into five units or companies, namely Zimbabwe Electricity Transmission and Distribution Company (Z.E.T.D.C), ZESA Enterprises (Z.E.N.T.), Rural Electrification Agency (R.E.A.), Powertel and the Zimbabwe Power Company (Z.P.C.). In 2013 the ZETDC was further unbundled into the Grid Services Supply Company and the Zimbabwe Electricity Distribution Company-ZEDC although this process is now waiting for the Presidential assent to the Electricity Act for it to be operationalised. Many of the brilliant-on-paper performance improvement initiatives were undertaken in ZESA but never achieved the intended goals as witnessed by the reversals and the print and electronic media headlines. These endeavors date back into the 1980s, 1990s and early 2000s namely :

ELECTRICITY INDUSTRY CONSOLIDATION:

1. Amalgamation of the Electricity industry (1985-1990)
2. Performance Improvement Programme (PIP)-(1990-1995)
3. Power Sector Improvement Programme (PSIP)-(1995-2000)

UNBUNDLING OF THE ELECTRICITY INDUSTRY:

4. The Power Sector Reform, Unbundling and Restructuring programmes (2001-2003)
5. Dismantling of ZESA into five subsidiary companies ZPC, Zesa Enterprises(ZENT), REA, ZETDC and Powertel with ZESA Holdings being the holding company.
- 6 Further Unbundling of ZETDC into Grid Services Supply Company and ZEDC(2013)-this is still in progress.

The ZESA Strategic Plan (1995-2000) shows that the benefits that were expected to accrue as a result of the above programs were imagined to be immense before implementation as the programs looked beautiful on paper. An audit, with special focus on customer satisfaction to evaluate these achievements need to be carried out to ascertain whether benefits were indeed realized from a customer's perspective and if not, why? The pointers and indicators seem to highlight that the intended gains were not realized. Findings by the author in 2012 and 2013 have revealed that all customers interviewed have confirmed the newspapers' assertions that service delivery has continued to decline compared to the 1980s and 1990s despite a series of reforms.

ZESA's first ever Corporate Business Plan was published in 1995 and circulated to top management. The evolution of performance management culminated in business slogans such as, 'customer focus', 'corporate image', 'product adequacy', 'quality of supply' and so on. These fashionable brand words with a business appeal were key words in any recruitment, appraisal and appointment process. The five year strategic plans and these efforts seemed to straight-jacket staff behavior into a trajectory for achieving customer delight .

One of the most profound vision in the Corporate Business Plan which was indeed the precursor of the PIP (Performance Improvement Program) was, 'We want all stakeholders to proclaim with pride that ZESA is a world class company and a home of prosperous employees.' ZESA Strategic Plan(1995:6). The rating of the dimensions of quality by ZESA customers ,which is the focus of this dissertation , will give an indication whether this vision was actually achieved 18 years down the line.

The initial great achievements that trailed these great efforts demonstrated the importance of using strategic planning, strategic management and strategic marketing as key performance improvement tools in the public sector such as ZESA. ZESA Annual Reports(1996-1999).

This becomes the background from which this dissertation is carried out.

This project intends to do customer sensing to establish whether there were any gains in the ZESA brand from the customers' point of view. The current and rampant load-shedding, the frequent dismissal or forced resignation of top management, even before interrogating customers, clearly highlights that the product adequacy business slogan was not pursued religiously. The 'quality of supply' business slogan was also given lip service!

ZESA had a mission statement which reads, 'We are committed to the total electrification of Zimbabwe at world class standards and competitive prices.' Zesa Corporate Plan(1995-2000). This mission was further pursued with the establishment of the Rural Electrification Agency (R.E.A) as a separate company to spear-head full-time electrification-ministry in the lighting up of rural areas in Zimbabwe. The end-use infrastructure development was meant to stimulate electricity demand in rural areas.

Although there was commitment to electrification of Zimbabwe as demonstrated by the formation of REA, ZESA seemed to lack focus on building more power stations and hence power inadequacy. Consumers were and are charged rural electrification levy, but no power station development levy is being charged on customers. The last power station to be built by ZESA was Hwange Power station which was built around 1977, ZESA Corporate Plan(1995-2000). This meant that ZESA was increasing connections on a dwindling generation base as the generation capacity of these power stations declined with age. The demand for electricity is now around 2100 MW against a generation capacity of 1900 MW. To meet the shortfall, ZESA has been importing power from regional power utilities like ESKOM South Africa, ZESCO of Zambia, SNEL of DRC and EDM of Mozambique. This imported power has not been enough to meet the demand and hence rampant load-shedding by ZESA.

The situation in ZESA, clearly demonstrates the end result of pursuing a 'customer focus' strategy without also complimenting it with a 'product adequacy' business strategy.

RATIONALE OF PRESENT RESEARCH

This project will help companies from the former ZESA to understand the factors affecting quality of service and rating of the five dimensions of quality by their customers.. For business excellence, ZESA needs to improve the quality of service to its customers so that it may be able not only to satisfy but delight its customer base. This will ensure increased profits, better corporate-brand image and positive press coverage. After execution of this project, companies from the former ZESA particularly ZEDC will be able to appreciate how they are rated by various customers on the various dimensions of quality. After this dissertation , the former ZESA group of companies will be able to analyze each dimension of quality and see how much they need to improve on each for business excellence. The dissertation will involve desk research, field research, analysis and interpretation of results , recommendations and finally conclusions.

It is hoped that if ZESA implements the recommendations in this dissertation, it will exude quality, support National development and stop being a drain on the fiscus.

1.2 STATEMENT OF THE PROBLEM

As mentioned earlier, various literature including Jobber (2010), Lovelock (2001), Kotler (2002) , Zethmal, Bitmer and Cremler (2006) emphasize the importance of high service quality as it is the best guarantee of customer satisfaction, high profitability and sustainable growth.

The situation in ZESA is such that in spite of the implementation of four(4) brilliant performance management systems in ZESA in the years 1980 to 2003, the quality of service at ZESA has drastically deteriorated. This is manifested through negative publicity by print and electronic media, increased customer complaints, unscheduled and intermittent power cuts(outages), frequent breakdown of machinery, numerous electrical accidents involving members of the public, inability to connect new customers and generally poor financial performance due to faulty billing and inappropriate electricity tariffs. The billing problem is partly being solved by the introduction of the pre-payment meters.

The consequences of the above situation is that ZESA(ZEDC) has been incurring heavy losses, unable to connect new customers and implementing rampant load-shedding. Customers have been frustrated with ZESA services as highlighted by demonstrations by organizations like HOZA and articles by residence associations reported in the media. If the above situation is not solved, this may result in ZESA going bankrupt, folding up, being liquidated or being bought by private players.

The research problem is therefore to find out the impact of service quality in ZESA on customer perceptions, with a view of making recommendations to improve the situation.

1.2 RESEARCH OBJECTIVES

- 1.To research, investigate and identify factors that influence service quality at ZESA(ZEDC).
- 2.To establish the current level of service quality on each dimension of quality at ZESA(ZEDC).
- 3.To recommend strategies that will positively impact on the provision of service quality at ZESA(ZEDC).

1.4 RESEARCH QUESTIONS

1. From research and investigations, what are the factors that influence service quality at ZESA(ZEDC)(dimensions of quality)?
2. What is the current level of service-quality on each dimension of quality at ZESA(ZEDC) from the customers' perspective?
3. What are the strategies that will positively impact on the provision of quality at ZESA(ZEDC)?

1.5 PROPOSITION

There is poor service quality in ZESA as a result of management incompetence, non-implementation of relationship marketing and the non-implementation of key projects timeously.

1.6 PROJECT JUSTIFICATION

It is hoped that the current level of ZESA(ZEDC) service quality to external customers will be determined if the project is carried out. Factors that influence service quality(dimensions of quality), in ZESA would be identified and strategies that will positively impact on the provision of service quality at ZESA would be recommended. This would benefit ZESA(ZEDC) which will become more profitable and enhance its corporate image amongst its stakeholders. Consumers will also benefit from improved service by ZESA(ZEDC) and will enjoy reduced tariffs , and employees will also benefit as ZESA will be able to pay better salaries due to increased profitability. According to Jobber (2010,p833), Improving service quality will increase customer satisfaction leading to higher sales and profits. Thus internal and external customer satisfaction and delight will be achieved by pursuing the project and ensuring implementation of its recommendations.

The importance of the study , is that it will act as a prescription for enhanced quality in ZESA. Recommendations will enlighten management on key issues to improve quality and ensure sustainability of profits and corporate excellence. The

study is necessary because ZESA is one of the parastatals that is causing fiscal stress due to non-profitability, causing hardships on industries that are closing due to unreliable power supplies and therefore needs turn around so that it may positively contribute to the National economy.

1.7 RESEARCH SCOPE

This research covers ZESA(ZEDC) Northern Region where the author works and Harare Region where there is ZESA(ZETDC) Head Office. These areas were found to be convenient for research given time and budgetary constraints that faced the author of this dissertation.

1.8 DISSERTATION STRUCTURE

Chapter one included Background to the study, Statement of the Problem, Research Objectives and Questions, Proposition, Justification , Research Scope and Dissertation Structure.

Chapter two contains Literature Review. Issues to do with service quality are explored in-order to identify grounding theory. Great authors like Lovelock(2000), Tracy(2008), Zeithaml et al are consulted. A definition of a service is provided including service characteristics. Reasons are given why it is difficult to manage services. Gaps in service provision are identified. Techniques are proposed of measuring service quality which would then guide the questionnaire format.

Chapter three explores Research Philosophy, Research Design, Population size, Sampling procedure, data collection methods, reliability and validity, ethical considerations and data analysis and presentation were covered.

Chapter four covered presentation and analysis of research results.

Chapter five includes conclusions and recommendations.

CHAPTER CONCLUSION

The reversal of the amalgamation strategy by ZESA as illustrated by the unbundling strategy seems to point towards strategy failure. Frequent dismissal or forced resignation by ZESA top management , numerous electrical accidents involving members of the public , negative print and electronic media publicity , rampant load-shedding, demonstrations by pressure groups e.g. HOZA and huge financial losses seems to indicate that all is not well in the power utility from a quality perspective.

Research objectives and research questions therefore laid the groundwork that necessitated the carrying out of this dissertation. These will be reviewed in the conclusions section. This was further supported by research justification. ZESA has been making financial losses in addition to poor service quality. As a result, a number of industries have closed down due to lack of adequate power, resulting in high unemployment rates in Zimbabwe. It was concluded that the research was necessary in order to give a turnaround prescription to ZESA so as to reverse these negative trends.

CHAPTER 2

LITERATURE REVIEW

2.0 INTRODUCTION

This chapter covers literature review. It is important to do literature review in order to locate the studies within existing and prior literature and also to demonstrate familiarity with the background literature. The study has to be located in the correct intellectual perspective as articulated by recent and existing literature. Various authors and websites were consulted in order to construct an intellectual and technocratic point of view on quality and services and therefore service quality. This perspective, whose prognosis points towards the structure and format of the dissertation, would be the core phloem and xylem of the project.

Kotler (2002) says that quality is the best assurance of customer allegiance , the strongest defense against foreign competition and the only path to sustained growth and earnings. B. Tracy(2008) says that the total experience portfolio the customer enjoys is all part of the impression on quality. He further says that companies are profitable in direct proportion to their quality ranking as customers perceive it. B. Tracy(2008) further posits that the companies with the highest quality are the companies that earn the highest profits. According to Kotler(2001), quality is the battle for the customer's mind-share and heart share compared to competitors. Quality helps in positioning of the company's brand favorably compared to competitors in the mind of the customer.

Definition of Quality

Juran(2010) defines quality as fitness for intended purpose. From this definition , we may conclude that if a service is available in the right quantities, at the right time, at the right place and served in the right manner, we may deduce that the service is fit for the intended purpose. If there is any adverse deviation from any of the above criteria, we may deduce that the service is not fit for the intended purpose and therefore there is no quality.

The British Standard 4778(British Standards Institution(1991)) defines quality as the totality of features and characteristics that bear on the ability of a product or service to satisfy a given need. From this definition we may conclude that the totality of the product, product packaging, color of product, color of packaging, the appearance and personality of the person giving the service, and personality and appearance of the other customers they rub shoulders with in the customer service area, including the ambience of the customer-service-area and roads to the service area, in so far as they satisfy the customer, delight the customer or positively surprise the customer, constitute quality.

Website www.thefreedictionary.com/personality defines personality as,` the totality of qualities and traits that are peculiar to a person.' The same website also defines personality as `the pattern of collective character, behavioral, temperamental, emotional and mental traits of a person.' Good personality for customer contact staff, is therefore key to achieving customer satisfaction and therefore quality.

Feigenbaum (1961) says that quality is `the total composite product and service characteristics of marketing, engineering, manufacture and maintenance through which the product or service will meet the expectations of the customer. From this definition, one may conclude that to achieve product and service quality, one needs to employ the total marketing concept which involves the whole organization. Departments like Marketing, engineering, manufacturing and

maintenance need to be actively involved with satisfying the customer need. Customer intimacy , customer focus and an obsession for customer satisfaction whether internal or external and delight need to possess the whole organization. The marketing culture that traverses the whole organization is key in achieving the total composite product and service characteristics.

From Feigenbaum(1961) definition, one needs to capture customer expectations in order to deliver quality. One may therefore conclude that there is need for 'customer intelligence' in order to decisively capture customer expectations.

Crossby(1979) says quality is conformance to requirements. From this definition, we may conclude that to achieve quality, we need to know customer requirements. Conformance to these requirements will then constitute quality. These requirements are normally captured by the Marketing Department through customer need research, customer intelligence and market intelligence. These customer requirements are then communicated to the whole organization which includes engineering and manufacturing. The marketing culture that traverses the whole organization is also key in achieving conformance to customer requirements.

Graeme Knowles(2011) says that if 'Quality' is the end point, then 'Quality Management' is the approach and process for getting there. He further posits that if we are concerned with providing 'value' to customers, we must consider how we can improve customer value. From this author we may conclude that quality management is a strategic activity. It is 'that' which must be done to achieve the end result, which is quality. This requires top management commitment to quality. The quality chain from top management to the shop floor , need to be intact. The internal customer concept need also to be adopted. By this we mean all staff must exude quality. They must perceive and exude quality for the ultimate external customer to get quality. They must see quality , smell quality, taste quality and feel quality from other employees or departments within

the organization. This will ensure that their brand and products are venerated in the marketplace.

Knowles(2011) says that there are a number of principles which are central to the practice of Quality Management namely:-

- Customer focus-customer intimacy and an obsession for customers
- Strategic focus- Quality management must be a strategic undertaking and strategy to be central to all activities.
- Leadership focus- management commitment to quality and quality must be given top priority
- Process focus-ability to continually improve production and service delivery processes. The Japanese Kaizen principle of continuous improvement on processes may assist in that respect.
- People focus-motivated and an empowered workforce.
- Scientific focus- decisions based on evidence and data. A scientific perspective and a scientific eye to issues and challenges helps in achieving quality.
- Continual improvement, innovation and learning. Continuous improvement in research and readership helps managers develop ability and capacity to continuously train , coach and mentor subordinates i.e. achieve 'managerial value'. Innovation brings new ideas, new methods and new approaches to work and hence achieve continuous enhancement of quality.
- Systems thinking-to create synergy. We may deduce that this helps achieve a holistic approach to issues. Effectiveness and creation of synergy is therefore the end result. Resource pooling may also result. Resources may be equipment, personnel or cash.. The benefit of pooling is that a problem which can bring ruin on an individual becomes insignificant on the shoulders of many.

Brian Tracy(2008) talks of the ,`The Law of Customer Satisfaction,` as one of the 100 Absolutely Unbreakable Laws of Business Success. This author says that beyond customer satisfaction and customer delight is customer service-surprise. The customer who is surprised by a service which he did not expect, is more than a delighted customer. Only through `customer focus` , `customer intimacy,` and an obsession for customer delight can we achieve the above.

Now that we have briefly covered the definition of quality, we now turn our focus on literature review on services. When we have achieved a technocratic point of view on both quality and on services, we can then locate our study on,` quality of service` in the correct literature context.

2.1 SERVICES

Website http://tas_wiki.com/tw3078.html points out that a service is defined as a type of economic activity that is intangible, cannot be stored and does not result in ownership. (Htt//www.investorwords-com.6664/service.html says . Also according to Zeithaml, Bitmer &. Cremler (2006:4) – services are deeds, processes and performances. Lovelock (2001:3) defines a service as an act or performance offered by one part to another. Website <http://tas-wiki.com/tw3078.html> ``defines a service as economic activities that create value and provide benefits for customers at specific times and places as a result of bringing about a desired change in or on behalf of the recipient of the service .”

We can define goods as physical objects or devices whereas services are performances or actions as described by Lovelock (2001). According to Jobber (2010), we can consider services as a special kind of a product.

Lovelock (2012) further points out that goods differ from services because of four generic differences referred to as perishability, intangibility, heterogeneity(variability), of output, and simultaneity of production and consumption. Jobber(2010) defines these four as intangibility, inseparability,

variability and perishability . Website http://tas_wiki.com/tw3078.html highlights that, `` services make up the bulk of today's economy , not only in the United States and Canada, where they account for 73 % and 67 % of the Gross Domestic Product(GDP) respectively, but also in developed industrial nations throughout the world.” If we consider electricity service, it can be provided in what may be considered as homogeneous quality according to electricity specifications such as voltage, frequency, power levels and harmonic content.

Lovelock(2012) also posit that customer-service staff are part of the service or product . He further says that in many `high-contact services', customers not only come into contact with service personnel , but also rub shoulders with other customers- thereby creating a complete service experience portfolio. In this endeavor Lovelock (2012) agrees with Jobber (2010) who also points out that enjoyment of the service is dependent not only on the service provided, but also on the behavior of service providers and the behavior of other customers. Thus the whole service package includes rankings of customer-service-areas, customer- contact-staff as well as experiences with other customers. This maybe the reason why certain businesses e.g. some hotels insist on jacket and tie or formal dressing on all customers to exclude street vagrants into customer contact areas(i.e. customer-service-areas).

According to the same Lovelock (2001), the difference between one high-contact service and another often lies in service experiences whose components include the quality of customer-service-areas, the quality of customer service equipment, the quality of employees who service the customers and the quality of other customers who interact with this customer. Because of this observation, other companies employ security guards in service areas to maintain order and to filter out undesired prospective customers. Jobber (2010) posits that as a result, service providers need to identify possible sources of nuisance (e.g. noise, smoke, queue jumping) and make adequate provisions to avoid inter-customer conflict in customer service areas. From this perspective, Lovelock (2001) and Jobber (2010) agree that total customer experience as fashioned by customer

contact staff, customer contact customers, customer contact equipment and customer contact areas affect quality. It is these observations that can greatly enrich quality of service for companies and create memorable occasions for customers, the so-called 'pleasurable-customer-experiences'.

According to the above authors, it can be a challenging task to manage service encounters between customers and service personnel in ways that will create a satisfactory experience or a delightful encounter. They say that the scenario is further complicated by the fact that other customers become part of the product in many services. Imagine a customer in a Banking Hall where there are other customers who may jump the queue ahead of another customer or becomes violent to another customer! A customer who vomits in a restaurant or hotel dining room or service area can therefore indeed adversely affect the quality of service in that restaurant or hotel dining area.

Kotler (2002) says that firms need to pay special care to selecting, training and motivating those employees who will be serving customers directly. In addition to possessing the relevant technical skills required by the job, service personnel also need to possess good interpersonal skills, good emotional intelligence and superior social intelligence. Website <http://nonaa.org/intelligence/social-intelligence.htm> defines social intelligence 'as the mental ability to understand the motives, emotions, intentions and actions of other people and to motivate and influence the behavior (group of) people to produce socially successful outcomes.' Website www.karlalbrecht.com/siprofile/siprofiletheory.htm defines social intelligence as, 'the ability to get along well with others, and to get them to cooperate with you. Sometimes called, 'people skills.'" From the above two definitions of social intelligence it is clear that customer-contact-staff need training in social intelligence as a strategic objective to enhance service quality.

Lovelock(2012) agrees with Jobber(2010) who also highlights that selection, training and rewarding of staff who are the frontline service people are of fundamental importance in the achievement of high standards of service quality. At the same time, firms have to manage and shape customer behavior so that the misbehavior of a few does not spoil the experiences for everybody else. The need for plain clothes customer-intelligence-gathering-personnel or security guards in customer service areas becomes obvious.

Jobber(2010) alludes that service marketers can assist customers overcome some of the unease that they feel before purchasing a service by helping them to match their needs to specific service features and educating them as to what to expect both during and after service delivery.

Kotler (2002) posits that a firm that builds an excellent reputation for superior and ethical treatment of its customers will gain the trust of its existing customers and also benefit from positive word-of-mouth referrals. An important task for service marketers therefore, is to discover ways of smoothening demand levels to match capacity through price incentives, promotions e.t.c.. This technique is normally employed by cell=phone companies or power utilities

According to website [en.wikipedia.org/wiki/service_\(economics\)](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/service_(economics)) 'in economics, a service is an intangible commodity. Services are an example of intangible economic goods.'

Lovelock(2012) posits that services must be delivered with acceptable speed. In this regard Lovelock agrees with Jobber(2010) who says that the service must be provided not only at the right time and in the right place but also in the right way. Busy customers expect service (e.g. electricity service) to be available at times when it suits them rather than when it suits the service company. Companies need to appreciate customers' time constraints and priorities, which may change from one segment to another according to Kotler (2002) and hence need for empathy.

Website [http://www.citeman \(18/07/2011\)](http://www.citeman (18/07/2011)) says that,` World Bank statistics show that the services sector accounts for more than half the gross National Product (GNP) and employs more than half the labor force in many Latin American and Caribbean nations.` http://tas_wiki.com/tw3078.html gives examples of intangible products as accounting, banking, cleaning, consultancy, education, insurance, expertise, medical treatment, or transportation.”

Website [http://www.citeman \(18/07/2011\)](http://www.citeman (18/07/2011)) points out that,`` sometimes services are difficult to identify because they are closely associated with a good. The website highlights that no transfer of possession or ownership takes place when services are sold, and they (1) cannot be stored or transported, (2) are instantly perishable, and (3) come into existence at the time they are bought and consumed. This can be contrasted with ownership of an electricity supply that changes at the meter from the power utility to an electricity consumer.”

[www.citeman \(18/07/2011\)](http://www.citeman (18/07/2011)) observes that,`` services are all economic activities whose output is not a physical product or construction, is generally consumed at the time it is produced and provides added value in forms (such as convenience, amusement, timeliness, comfort or health) that are essentially intangible concerns of its first purchaser. “

2.2 Service characteristics

http://akhimbanotes.hpage.in/service_marketing_7043831.html says services can be paraphrased in terms of their generic key characteristics as follows:-.

1. Intangibility

http://akhmbanotes.hpage.in/service_marketing_7043831_html says that services are insubstantial and intangible in that they cannot be touched, tasted, handled, looked at, smelled, or heard.

2. Perishability

According to website [http://wn.com/Service \(economics\)](http://wn.com/Service (economics)), and website http://akimbanotes.hpage.in/service-marketing_7043831.html services are perishable

3. Inseparability

The service customer is inseparable from service delivery..

4. Simultaneity

According to websites [http://wn.com/Service \(economics\)](http://wn.com/Service (economics)), and website http://akimbanotes.hpage.in/service-marketing_7043831.html services are rendered and consumed during the same period of time.

5. Variability

Service is variable in nature. This means a that a service given to a customer now is different from that given to another customer an hour later.

Website [http://wn.com/Service \(economics\)](http://wn.com/Service (economics)) points out the following:-

Human resource management is important. The human factor is often the key success factor in service economies. There are demand fluctuations and it can be difficult to forecast demand. Demand e.g. for services can vary by season, time of day and business cycle. Price incentives at off-peak can help smoothen demand.

According to Jobber (2010) and website [www.wn.com/services\(economics\)](http://www.wn.com/services(economics))

``many services depend on direct personal interaction between customers and a firm's employees. The nature of these interactions strongly influences the

customer's perception of service quality. Customers will often judge the quality of the service they receive based on their assessment of the people providing that service. They may also make judgments about other customers they encounter within the service area of the service provider e.g. another customer vomiting in a restaurant where others are enjoying their meals or the presence of a beggar may influence the perception of service quality by other customers..”

Physical evidence.

According to Lovelock (2001), the appearance of buildings , landscaping, vehicles, interior furnishing, equipment, staff members, signs, printed materials, and other visible cues all provide tangible evidence of a firm's service quality. For ambience, the service ecosystem needs to be superior and admirably outstanding for perceptions of high service quality by customers.

According to website http://tas_wiki.com/tw3078.html , “service delivery is concerned with where, when and how the service product is delivered to the customer .Because service performance are intangible, physical evidence gives clues as to the quality of the service and in some cases will strongly influence how customers evaluate the service.”

According to Harrell, Gary and Frazier (1998:310), goods and services often go hand in hand. Goods are more valuable when accompanied by excellent service.

The above authors say that the Global Forces For Creating Growth in Services are technology, quality of life, government deregulation of services, competition in professional services, privatization, the need for specialization and access to knowledge.

According to website

en.wikipedia.org/wiki/service_quality#Dimensions_of_servicequality, Harrell , Gary and Frazier(1998) says that, ' Dimensions of Service Quality are:-

1. Tangibles
2. Reliability
3. Responsiveness
4. Assurance
5. Empathy

Harrell, Gary and Frazier (1998) says that it is important for marketers to consider each of these as they evaluate the quality of the services they provide. The questionnaire used in this dissertation had questions under these headings in order to capture ratings on each of the dimension of service quality from the customer's point of view.

According to the above authors and website http://tas_wiki.com/tw3078.html , the above is elaborated as follows:-

Tangibles

Since services are intangible, they are normally associated with physical facilities leading to and in the customer-service area, equipment, personnel, other customers met in the customer-service-area and promotional materials. These tangibles have a very important outcome on customers' perceptions of service quality. Firms that provide tangibles of superior quality communicate an impression of their non-tangible services as well e.g. the way an office is designed and equipped, its cleanliness and the personnel appearance of employees and other customers in the customer-service area, all play a major role in conveying quality of service.

Reliability

The above authors says the capacity to carry out the promised service dependably and accurately is essential to service quality. Reliability involves e.g. meeting deadlines and returning calls . It also means performing activities exactly as outlined, such as sticking to the chronology of items in training programs,

doing a task correctly the first time and producing credit card statements free of errors.

Responsiveness

The above authors says that the desire of providers to be helpful and give quick service is very important to buyers. Waiting time is critical to buyer satisfaction ,buyer delight and evaluation of service quality. What managers view as a short wait may seem long to customers according to Jobber (2010). It is important to respond in a timely manner to customer requests and needs.

Assurance

According to Jobber (2010), the knowledge and courtesy of employees and their ability to convey trust and competence are essential for services which have high credence qualities. A very important factor is whether customers are treated with dignity and respect. Another is credibility-whether the provider conveys sufficient knowledge , experience and trustworthiness in the performance of the service. Finally assurance is related to securing the belief that the services will be performed safely and confidentially and that a free exchange of ideas between the provider and the consumer is possible. By focusing on the needs of customers , well developed and long term relationships can be established. Providing assurance is a major component in a company's ability to build and maintain these relationships.

Empathy

According to the above authors, the caring, individualized attention that a firm provides its customers, encompass a number of dimensions. It is particularly important for service providers to demonstrate that they understand the customer. It is through their ability to listen , communicate clearly and relate well to the client that they transmit empathy.

According to Harrel, Gary and Frazier (1998), service providers need to do a good job in the areas of tangibles, reliability, responsiveness, assurance and empathy. This becomes the core phloem of the project research- to find out whether ZESA is doing well in these five areas. He posits that companies that invest resources and energy in building strong service quality are most likely to be winners.

According to the above authors , services usually occur as a mix. They often rely on branding to communicate uniqueness.

According to Jobber (2010:835), there are Ten (10) Criteria that may be used when evaluating the outcome experience of a service encounter:-

1. Access-accessibility of desired services and or service portfolio plays an essential role for service quality.
2. Reliability-consistence and dependability of service has a strong bearing on service quality.
3. Credibility-everything associated with the brand by the customer has to be credible or believable.
4. Security-can the service be used without risk and danger
5. Understanding the customer-empathy and a clear demonstration that customer-contact staff understand the customer is also key for service quality.
6. Responsiveness-quick response to customer needs based on an obsession for customer delight greatly enhances quality.
7. Courtesy-do service staff act in a friendly and polite manner
8. Competence:- do the service staff have the required skills and knowledge. Where self-service by customers is done, customer competence is also critical e.g. money-link in banks, eco-cash facilities on the cellphone. Customer training may also be necessary in theses instances.
9. Communication:- is the service described clearly and accurately. This can be best described on the contract forms. Another good example of good

communication with customers is whereby banks send messages to customer cellphones each time a transaction occurs on a customer account. Any deposit or withdrawal generates a cellphone message on the customer's cellphone.

According to Jobber (2010), these 10 criteria form a useful checklist for service providers wishing to understand how their customers judge them and hence why they were used in the questionnaire for this dissertation in Appendix 1.

Jobber (2010:839) says that there are factors that customers may use to judge a service. They are the following:-

Accessibility, reliability, Credibility, Security, Responsiveness, Courtesy, Competence, Confidence, Value, Prestige, Guarantees, Credit and Comfort.

Effort was made to incorporate these in the questionnaire used for this dissertation in Appendix 1 whose findings are on the Chapter on Research Results and presentation-Chapter Four.

2.3 Service specification

According to website [http://wn.com/Service \(economics\)](http://wn.com/Service (economics)) website http://akhimbanotes.hpage.in/service_marketing_7043831.html, and website <http://en.wikipedia.org/w/index.php?title=service+%28economics%29&oldid=557426725> `` any service can be clearly, completely, consistently and concisely specified by means of the following 12 standard attributes:-

1. Service Consumer Benefits
2. Service-specific Functional Parameters
3. Service Delivery Point
4. Service Consumer Count
5. Service Delivering Readiness Times

6. Service Support Times
7. Service Support Languages
8. Service Fulfillment Target
9. Service Impairment Duration per Incident
10. Service Delivering Duration
11. Service Delivery Unit
12. Service Delivering Price”

An electricity service can be specified in terms of voltage, frequency, harmonic content, type of waveform such as alternating current(a.c). or direct current(d.c).

2.4 Service delivery

According to website [http://wn.com/Service_\(economics\)\(_18/07/2011\)](http://wn.com/Service_(economics)(_18/07/2011)) and website http://akimbanotes.hpage.in/service-marketing_7043831.html argues that,“ the delivery of a service typically involves six factors:

- The accountable service provider and his service suppliers (e.g. the people)
- Equipment used to provide the service (e.g. vehicles, cash registers, technical systems, computer systems)
- The physical facilities (e.g. buildings, parking, waiting rooms)
- The requesting service consumer
- Other customers at the service delivery location
- Customer contact”

According to website [http://wn.com/Service_\(economics\)](http://wn.com/Service_(economics)) ,“ideally every customer encounter must bring a customer experience that is memorable and outstanding.. In other words , perceptions must be pleasurable. This means beautiful music and words to remember, executive smells, pleasurable sensations, unforgettable tastes and executive sights to the customer or that the customer associates with the brand, “ Customer delight is key in customer

retention Literature says that it is easier to retain an existing customer than to acquire a new one Kurtz (2001)

2.5 THE SERVICE GOODS CONTINUM (From website www.citeman.com274-services (2011))



Source: www.citeman.com274-services(18/07/2011)

Figure 2.1 THE SERVICE-GOODS CONTINUM

The website above says that services and goods are on a continuum varying from pure services to a mixture and ultimately to pure goods or products. Teaching and preaching for example are pure services. A restaurant provides both a good and a service whilst salt is a pure good. A car is a pure good.

2.6 HOW SERVICE QUALITY CAN BE ENHANCED.

According to Lovelock (2000) service quality can be increased in companies by:-

- Productivity and quality improvement programs
- People improvement programs through proper selection criteria and training
- Customer training where self-service is involved e.g. eco-cash facilities on a cellphone.
- Quality promotions ,high quality advertisement and superior education specifications
- Sprucing up of physical evidence
- Realistic and low price and user costs (value for money)
- Service quality has to be explicitly linked to customer satisfaction and delight
- Identifying and mending service quality shortfalls
- Building a `Service Quality Information System.
- Identifying and correcting failure points

According to Lovelock(2000), there are hard and soft measures of quality. Hard measures of service Quality include:-

- Control charts to monitor a single variable
- indexes for service quality
- Root-cause analysis: Fishbone Chart
- Nil defects : A new Quality Goal

According to Kotler (2002), to increase service quality, the service product must be tailored to customer needs, priced realistically, distributed through convenient channels, and actively promoted to customers. There is need for market segmentation, targeting and positioning. Today many new market entrants are positioning their services to appeal to specific market segments through their pricing, communication efforts and service delivery, rather than trying to be all things to all people. In situations where customers are part employees for instance ATMs, it is much useful to try to train customers so as to make them

more competent and productive. Replacement of service employees with automation may hold the key to cheaper and consistent performances. Introducing 24 hour, 7 days a week service may also enhance service quality.

The service provider has to perform certain activities in order to enhance the confidence of the customer. The provider can focus the discussion on the benefits of the service rather than just describing the features. Service marketers have to develop task-related , technical competence of service personnel or customers where self-service is involved , and require a great input of skilled personnel to improve their marketing, interpersonal skills, emotional intelligence and social intelligence. The marketer should effectively utilize the capacity without deteriorating the quality to meet demand.

According to Lovelock (2000), to improve service quality, service corporate entities should make effort to deliver superior and consistent quality in their service , and this is achieved by choosing superior and qualified personnel for delivering the service. Service quality can be further improved by enhancing the facilities (i.e. sprucing up of customer-service/contact-areas and customer-contact-equipment).The equipment that is used to provide services should be kept tide and new if possible. As much as possible customer-contact-staff should be neat and look executive, nicely dressed and clean. Staff should be responsive to customer needs, friendly and approachable. Customer-contact- staff should be taken through customer care courses, emotional intelligence and social intelligence training, marketing and public relations courses. Customer-care can enhance service quality. The tangibles should look new and clean. The buildings where service is delivered, the staff and equipment used to provide the service should look executive, brand new and clean. Reliability of services should be maintained and consistency in quality should also be maintained.

Lovelock (2000) advises that physical facilities should be visibly appealing for enhanced quality. Customer contact areas are normally equipped with new benches, television sets and bench-vertisements . Equipment must be modern

looking and services must be easily accessible .Kotler (2002) says that there must be good after sales service for high service quality and corporate colors must be appealing. Working quicker , more effectively and more efficiently to reduce costs can also enhance service quality. There is also need for linking productivity and improving quality to create better value for both customer and the firm. Linking service quality and customer satisfaction and delight is also strategic.

2.7 HUMAN RESOURCES PRACTITIONERS AND MARKETERS

Kotler (2002) argues that the task of value enhancement requires quality improvement programs to deliver and continuously enhance the benefits received by customers , at the same time, productivity improvement efforts must seek to reduce the associated costs.

The challenge is to ensure that quality enhancement programs in each sphere are mutually reinforcing and creating synergy in achieving common goals rather than operating at loggerheads with one another in pursuit of conflicting goals . Human Resources Practitioners , Marketers and operations managers need to engage in dialogue.

Implementing marketing strategies to improve customer delight with services can prove costly and disruptive for an organization if the implications for operations and human resources have not been carefully thought through-hence need to consider productivity and quality improvement strategies jointly rather than in isolation from one another. Service quality must be looked at in conjunction with service productivity and profitability, Lovelock (2000:361).

2.8 A role for Marketing to enhance Service Quality

What is the fundamental basis for marketing? Many theorists argue that it is to create customer value. Lovelock (2000) argues that the search for value often begins with market research , which seeks to identify the benefits sought by

customers or prospects for a given product category and the costs that they are willing to incur to obtain these benefits. But as Holbrook (1978) emphasizes, perceived value is highly personal and may vary widely from one client to another. In fact , fluctuations in the benefits desired often form the basis for customer segmentation.

Service design-embracing the core product , supplementary services, and the delivery system is a key element in the value equation and should be directed at enhancing desired benefits and reducing unwanted costs. Pricing decisions , are closely related to customer-perceived-value. Lowering monetary prices (often a function of improved productivity) while maintaining perceived benefits will serve to increase perceived value. A marketing input is important to advise operations experts on whether or not customers may be willing to make trade-offs, such as paying a higher price to obtain more benefits or avoid unwanted time and effort. Unless such a strategy is accompanied by either increased sales volume or lower costs from improved productivity, it may not increase profits.

Finally , advertising and other marketing communications may be needed to clarify service benefits (especially when research shows that prospective users misperceive the relevant costs and benefits), to encourage trial, and to educate customers on how to obtain the best value from that service.

2.9 Marketing and Quality

Lovelock (2000) argues that Marketing's interest in service quality is obvious when one thinks about it. Poor quality positions a firm at a competitive disadvantage in the customer's mind. Quality is a battle for the mindshare and heart-share of the customer. If clients perceive quality as unsatisfactory , they may be fast in taking their business elsewhere. Recent years have witnessed a

veritable explosion of discontent with service quality at a time when the quality of many manufactured goods seems to have improved significantly.

From a marketing standpoint , a key issue is whether or not customers notice differences in quality between competing brands and supplies. Gale (2000) puts it succinctly when he says , `value is simply quality, offered at the right price. Improving quality in the eyes of the customer pays off for the firms that provide it. Data from the Profit Impact Of Marketing Strategies(PIMS) show that a perceived quality advantage leads to higher profits.

There is the opportunity to secure the firm's long term future through investments in new quality technologies and research to create superior new services, improved features, and innovative delivery systems. These are opportunities for marketers themselves to help improve productivity by involving customers actively in the service production and delivery process(e.g. at Automatic Teller machines).

2.10 Identifying and Correcting Service Quality Shortfalls

If one accepts the view that quality entails consistently meeting customers' expectations , then the manager's task is to balance customer expectations and perceptions and to close any gaps between the two.

According to website <http://e-university.wisdomjobs.com/principles-of-service-marketing-management/chapter-1695-310/creating-value-through>, `` Service performance that surprise and delight customers by falling above their desired service levels will be seen as superior in quality. If service delivery falls within their zone of tolerance, customers will feel that service quality is adequate.”

2.10.1 Gaps in Service Design and Delivery

Parasuraman, Zeithmal and Berry (1988) identify four potential shortfalls-or gaps- within the service organization that may lead to fifth and most serious gap,

the difference between what customers expected and what they perceive was delivered.

The other shortfalls are:

- Not knowing what customers expect
- Specifying service quality standards that do not reflect what management believes to be customers' expectations.
- Failing to ensure that service performance matches specifications.
- Not living up to the levels of service performance that are promised or implied by marketing communications.

According to <http://e-university.wisdomjobs.com/principles-of-service-marketing-management/chapter-1695-310/creating-value-through>, "improving quality requires identifying the specific causes of each gap between customer expectations and actual perceptions (that results from the service) and then developing strategies to close them." Sometimes customers do not know exactly what they want most, but we can only conclude this when they are delighted or surprised by a new product. For example customers expected reliable a fixed telephone lines but where actually delighted by the invention of a cellphone.

Website <http://e-university.wisdomjobs.com/principles-of-service-marketing-management/chapter-1695-310/creating-value-through> has adapted and extended their framework to identify a total of seven (7) types of gaps that can occur at different points during the design and delivery of a service performance.

The gaps identified by website <http://e-university.wisdomjobs.com/principles-of-service-marketing-management/chapter-1695-310/creating-value-through> are:

1. **The knowledge gap**: the difference between what service providers believe customers expect and customers' actual needs and expectations.
2. **The standard gap**: the difference between management's perceptions of customer expectations and quality standards established for service delivery

3. **The delivery gap**: the difference between specified delivery standards and the service provider's actual performance on these standards.
4. **The internal communications gap**: the difference between what the company's advertising and sales personnel think are the product's features , performance, and service quality level and what the company is actually able to deliver.
5. **The perceptions gap**: the difference between what is actually delivered and what customers perceive they have received.
6. **The interpretation gap**: the difference between what a service provider's communications efforts (in advance of service delivery) actually promise and what a customer thinks was promised by the communications.
7. **The service gap**: the difference between what customers expect to receive and their perception of the service that is actually delivered.

Any of the seven quality gaps can damage relationships with customers . The service gap (number 7) is the most critical because it represents the difference between the customer's overall assessment of what was expected as compared to his or her perceptions of what was delivered. The ultimate goal in improving service quality is to narrow this gap as much as possible. But to achieve this , service providers may have to reduce or close the six other gaps. Improving service quality requires identifying the specific causes of each gap and then developing strategies to close them.”

2.10.2 Prescriptions for Closing Service Gaps

Parasuraman, Zeithmal and Berry (1988) and website <http://e-university.wisdomjobs.com/principles-ofservice-marketing-management/chapter-1695-310/creating-value-through> and website <http://www.powershow.com/view/150c39->

[MjQwM/customer satisfaction and service quality powerpoint ppt presentation](#)
n posits that,` there are gaps in service delivery.

Gap1: Prescription: learn what customers expect, understand customer expectations through research, complaint analysis and customer panels. Increase direct interactions between managers and customers to improve understanding. Improve upward communication from contact personnel to managers. Turn information and insights into action.

Gap 2: Prescription: Establish the right service quality standards. These standards should be set in conjunction with customers or with inputs from market research studies. Where new products are involved e.g. the invention of a cellphone, then empathy is the best guide or the biblical principle ,`do unto others what you would want them to do to you. ‘

Gap3: Prescription: Ensure service performance meets standards. This can best be achieved through employing `a total marketing concept’ where every employee is obsessed with quality and marketing issue. Internal customers have to insist on quality from internal suppliers. The quality-chain has to be solidly linked within internal departments and also from the company’s suppliers.

Gap 4: Ensure that communication promises are realistic. If promises are not realistic, then an investigation needs to be done to ensure that this is not due to management incompetence, employee incompetence or other nuisance customers. If it’s a question of incompetence , then training becomes imperative. If it is a question of impractical promises, then these have to be adjusted so that promises are always met.

There is no substitute to listening to the customer to enhance service quality. By this we also mean in the customer chain (from supplier, through internal customers to the ultimate external customer, there is no substitute to listening to the `customer’ be it internal or external’.

2.11 WHY IT IS DIFFICULT TO MANAGE SERVICES

According to website http://akhimbanotes.hpage.in/service_marketing_7043831.html, ``

Management problems are presented because service providers are not capable of regulating supply with variations in demand. Quality levels deteriorate during peak hours in electricity companies, banks or even restaurants. The other problem is that it is harder to standardize services since they vary with time, firm, nature of customer and experienced hand. Therefore this demonstrates that the characteristics of services makes them difficult to manage.”

Website <http://e-university.wisdomjobs.com/principles-ofservice-marketing-management/chapter-1695-310/creating-value-through>, identified ten determinants of service quality that may relate to any service: These are, ``

- **Competence** (The customer contact staff have to have the required competencies and knowledge to perform the services. In addition research competencies of the firm together with the knowledge and skill of the operational support staff is also key.) .
- **Courtesy** (Respect, politeness, friendliness, consideration of the customer contact staff,: consideration for the customer's property, clean and neat appearance of public contact is also key to quality)
- **Credibility** (Honesty, believability and trustworthiness,. It involves having the client's best interest at heart: company reputation, personal characteristics of the contact personnel)
- **Security** (Freedom from danger, risk or doubt: physical safety, financial security, confidentiality)

- **Access** (Approachability and ease of contact: Service should be easily accessible, waiting time to receive service should not be extensive, convenient hours of operation, convenient location of service facility)
- **Communication** (Customer friendly languages must be used (i.e. languages they can understand without a dictionary.. It may mean that the company has to adjust its language for different consumers: explaining the service itself, explaining how much the service will cost, explaining the tradeoffs between service and cost, assuring the consumer that the problem will be handled)
- **Understanding/ knowing the customer** (Making the effort to understand the customer's needs: understanding customer's specific needs, providing individualized attention, recognizing the customer)
- **Tangibles** (Physical exhibit of the service: appearance of physical facilities, tools and equipments used to provide the service, appearance of personnel and communication materials, other customers in the service facility)
- **Reliability** (The ability to perform the promised service dependably and accurately: service is performed right at the first time, the company keeps its promises in accuracy in billing, in keeping records correctly and in performing the services at the designated time)
- **Responsiveness** (The willingness and/ or readiness of employees to help customers and to provide prompt service, timeliness of service: mailing a transaction slip immediately, setting up appointments quickly)

Later they were reduced to five by Parasuraman, Zeithaml and Berry (1988): as follows:-

- **Tangibles** (Physical evidence of the service: appearance of physical facilities, tools and equipments used to provide the service, appearance of personnel and communication materials)
- **Reliability** (The ability to perform the promised service dependably and accurately: consistency of performance and dependability, service is performed

right at the first time, the company keeps its promises in accuracy in billing and keeping records correctly, performing the services at the designated time)

- **Responsiveness** (The willingness and/ or readiness of employees to help customers and to provide prompt service, timeliness of service: mailing a transaction slip immediately, setting up appointments quickly)
- **Assurance** (The knowledge and courtesy of employees and their ability to convey trust and confidence: competence (possession of the required skills and knowledge to perform the service), courtesy (consideration for the customer's property, clean and neat appearance of public contact personnel), trustworthiness, security (safety and confidentiality))
- **Empathy** (The provision of caring, individualized attention to customers: informing the customers in a language they can understand, Understanding customer's specific needs, Providing individualized attention)."

O'Neill et al (1998) highlight that it is inadequate to study perceptions of one element of service offer in isolation from the context in which it is offered. The above implies that customer contact staff and customer contact areas are of strategic value in enhancing quality. Bartlett (1932), Green (1995), observe that, 'Individuals differ in their memory processing capabilities and perceptions may be forgotten completely, or selectively retained. 'This observation is important as perceptions of quality by stakeholders is more important than quality actually delivered.

Crosby and Stevens (1987) have attributed the concept of relationship satisfaction with three dimensions, namely:-

1. Satisfactory interactions with personnel (customer contact staff & customer contact areas)
2. Satisfaction with the core service(e.g. electricity supply)
3. Satisfaction with the organization

Studies by the White House Office of Consumer Affairs (U.S) have indicated that complaints received are only the tip of the iceberg , a company could stand to lose up to 96% of its unhappy customers (Johnson , Jones and Schilling, 1992:985).

According to Kotler (2000), service firms can take three steps toward quality control . The first is investing in good hiring and training procedures , recruiting the right service employees and providing them with excellent training. Besterfield et al (2000) suggest that the culture and actions of the entire organization can only be changed through the actions of its top management.

Ross (1996) defines Total Quality Management (TQM) as an integration of all functions and processes within an organization in order to achieve continuous improvement of the quality of goods and services. Total quality management can be considered a prerequisite for strategic marketing. ISO 8402(1994) , cited in Ho and Fung(1998), views TQM as a management approach of an organization centered on quality based on the participation of all its members and aiming at long term success through customer satisfaction.

Feigenbaum (1983) defines quality as `the total composite product or service characteristics of marketing, engineering, manufacturing and maintenance through which the product and service in use will meet the expectations of customers. Ishikawa (1996), emphasizes on comprehensive quality that involves internal and external customers. All functions of an organization must contribute to product quality.

The above forms the theoretical paradigm or conceptual framework from which quality issues will be viewed.'

2.12 DEFINING AND MEASURING QUALITY

Garvin (2000) identifies five perspectives to quality:

- the transcendent view of quality is synonymous with innate excellence, a mark of uncompromising standards and high achievement Lovelock (2000).
- The product based approach sees quality as a precise and measurable variable. Differences in quality reflect differences in the amount of some ingredient or attribute possessed by the product.
- User-based definitions start with the premise that quality lies in the eyes of the beholder. Those definitions equate quality with maximum satisfaction.
- The manufacturing based approach, in contrast is supply based and primarily concerned with engineering and manufacturing practices(In services , we would say that quality was operations driven). It focuses on conformance to internally developed specifications , which are often driven by productivity and cost containment goals.
- Value-based definitions define quality in terms of value and price . By considering the tradeoff between performance (or conformance) and price , quality comes to be defined as `affordable excellence'

According to Parasuraman, Zeithmal and Berry(1988), manufacturing-Based component of quality encompass : –

1. Performance
2. Features
3. Reliability
4. Conformance
5. Durability
6. Serviceability
7. Aesthetics(how the product appeals to any or all of the user's five senses)
8. Perceived quality

Parasuraman, Zeithmal and Berry (1988) consolidated criteria used by consumers in evaluating service quality are :-

Tangibles(appearance of physical elements), Reliability(dependable , accurate performance), Responsiveness(promptness and helpfulness), Assurance(competence, courtesy, credibility and security), Empathy(easy access, good communications and customer understanding)

2.13 Measuring Satisfaction

According to website http://tas_wiki.com/tw3078.html , ``to measure customer satisfaction with different aspects of service quality, Parasuraman, Zeithaml and Berry (1988) developed a survey research instrument called SERVQUAL . It is based on the premise that customers can evaluate a firm's service quality by comparing their perceptions of its service with their expectations. SERVQUAL is seen as a generic measurement tool that can be applied across a broad spectrum of service industries. In its basic form, the scale contains 21 perception items and a series of expectation items, reflecting the five(5) dimensions of service quality just described “

Website http://tas_wiki.com/tw3078.html says that , ``we should note that for actual survey respondents , instructions are also included, and each statement is accompanied by a seven-point scale ranging from `strongly agree=7' to `strongly disagree=1'. Only the end points of the scale are labeled –there are no words above the numbers 2 through 6.”

Website http://tas_wiki.com/tw3078.html says that, `` the series of expectation items reflecting the five dimensions of service quality are as follows:-

Tangibles

Equipment need to be modern looking and the physical facilities visually appealing. The employees need to be neat in appearance and materials associated with the service also needs to be visually appealing.

Reliability

When there is a promise to do something by a certain time, the employees should try to do so. When customers have a problem there is need to show sincere interest in solving it. There is also need for performing the service right the first time and to provide services at the time they promise to do so. Insisting on error-free records.

Responsiveness

There is need to inform customers precisely when service will be performed, giving prompt service to customers, always being willing to assist customers. The employees or customer contact staff should never be too busy to respond to customer needs

Assurance

The behavior of customer-contact-staff need to instill confidence in clients and customers need to feel safe in their transactions. Customer-contact-staff need to consistently be courteous with customers. In addition customer-contact-staff need to have adequate knowledge to answer questions i.e. product knowledge, process knowledge, customer and market knowledge.

Empathy

Customer-contact-staff need to put themselves in the shoes of customers and apply the biblical principle of doing unto others what you would want them to do to you. Employees need to give customers individualized and personal attention. They need to understand the specific needs and preferences of their customers.”

The above will guide the design of the questionnaire to be used in the research in this dissertation. Website http://tas_wiki.com/tw3078.html says that,

“ respondents complete a series of scales that measure their expectations of companies in a particular industry on a wide array of specific service characteristics , subsequently, they are asked to record their perceptions of specific company whose services they have used on those same characteristics.

When perceived performance are lower than expectations this is a sign of poor quality; the reverse indicates good quality.”

2.14 Defining and Measuring Productivity in Services

Parasuraman , Valarie, Zeithaml and Berry(1988) point out that productivity measures the amount of output produced by an organization compared to the amount of inputs used. An improvement in productivity may result in an increase in service level where demand outstrips supply. Hence enhancement in productivity require an increase in the ratio of outputs to inputs. An improvement in this ratio might be achieved by reducing the resources required to create a given volume of output or by increasing the output obtained from a given level of inputs.

Input might include materials, energy, labor and capital(consisting of equipment, information systems, land, buildings, and financial assets). The intangible nature of service performances makes it more harder to measure productivity of service industries than that of manufacturing.

2.14.1 Output

In services, measuring productivity is harder when the output is difficult to define. In a people-processing undertaking, such as a clinic , we can look at the number of patients treated in the course of a year and at the clinic census, or average bed occupancy in the case of a hospital. But how do we account for the different types of interventions performed- treatment of diabetes, setting of broken bones or removal of cancerous tumors, - and the almost unavoidable variability between one patient and another? And how do we evaluate the inevitable differences in outcomes? Some patients get better, some develop complications, and sadly some even die.

2.14.2 Efficiency, Effectiveness and Productivity

Klassen, Rossell and Chrisman (1978) distinguish between effectiveness, productivity and efficiency. Efficiency involves comparison to a standard that is usually time-based – for example how long it takes for an employee to perform a particular job relative to a predefined standard. Efficiency is also defined as doing things right. Productivity however involves financial valuation of outputs compared to inputs. Effectiveness by contrast, can be defined as the degree to which an organization is meeting its goals-that is, is it doing the right things,.

A significant problem in measuring service productivity concerns variability. As Heskett (2000) points out , traditional measures of service output tend to ignore fluctuations in the value or quality of service . For example in freight transport , a ton-mile of output for freight that lately delivered is treated the same for productivity purposes as a similar shipment timely delivered. Noting the frequency of served customers , suffers from the same shortcomings. Patients that die and those who are cured cannot be similarly counted as treated patients in a hospital or clinic. The solution is to count the number of successfully treated customers as successful treatments and to count those that die separately as failed treatments.

The problem is that classical techniques of productivity measurement pay attention to outputs rather than outcomes, they stress efficiency but neglect effectiveness. In the long run organizations that are more effective in consistently delivering outcomes desired by customers should be able to command higher prices for their output. The need to focus on effectiveness and outcomes suggests that issues of productivity cannot be divorced from those of quality and value.

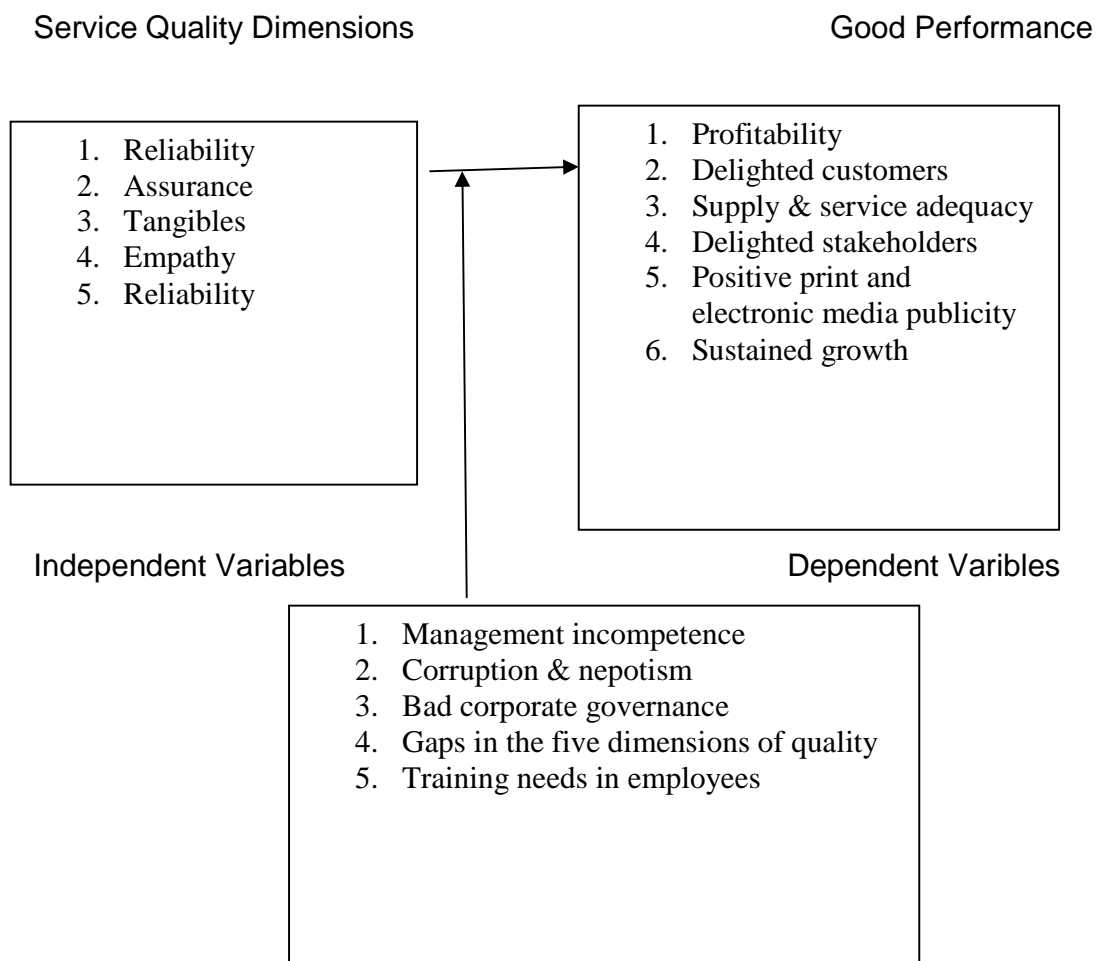
Loyal customers who remain with a firm tend to become more profitable over time, an indication of the payback to be obtained from providing quality service. Quality service ensures customer satisfaction or more still guarantees customer delight. In this vein, Shaw (2000) suggests that measures of productivity growth

in services should focus on customers as the denominator. He proposes the following units of analysis and comparison:-

1. Profitability by customer
2. Capital employed per customer
3. Shareholder equity employed per customer

These measures tell the firm how it is doing.”

Theoretical Framework



Intervening variables(Extraneous variables)

Figure 2.2 Theoretical Framework showing independent variables ,extraneous variables and dependent variables

Ideally the 5 dimensions of service quality(independent variables) should automatically lead to good performance(dependent variables), but this is not the case because of intervening or extraneous variables which deflect the 5 dimensions of service quality to lead to poor performance

CHAPTER CONCLUSION

This chapter critically analyzed literature on quality. The dimensions of quality were highlighted as tangibles, reliability, responsiveness, assurance and empathy. Customers may use the following to judge a service:- accessibility, reliability, credibility, security, responsiveness, courtesy, competence, confidence, value, prestige, guarantees and comfort..In order to give a quality service there was need to close service gaps that may exist. Kottler (2002:56) says that quality is the best assurance of customer allegiance , the strongest defense against foreign competition and the only path to sustained growth and earnings Although literature decisively discussed issues of service quality, it did not describe service quality for a power utility such as ZESA in Zimbabwe and hence need for this study.

CHAPTER THREE-

RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

3.1 INTRODUCTION

This chapter covers research methodology, that is the approaches and methods used in the research. The Research Philosophies given in this section guided the way in which this research was done. The weakness of each philosophy was overcome by triangulation of both philosophies.

3.2 Philosophies

Collis and Hussey (2003) suggests that there are three major research philosophies available to the researcher namely epistemology, ontology and axiology. Epistemology assumes the study of the nature of knowledge/philosophy and is usually said to be concerned with the study of knowledge and what is accepted as being valid. This research philosophy was relevant to this research as the author sought to gain valid knowledge from literature review and from questionnaires used as a research instrument. Ontology is concerned with what is the nature of reality? Is reality objective(quantitative) or subjective (qualitative). Two aspects of ontology are devoted to business management researches which are subjectivism and objectivism. Axiology is the study of ethics, values and aesthetics. This philosophy was important because the author had to understand the respondents' values and had to carry out the research ethically.

According to website <http://www.ukessays.com/essays/business/social-cultural-consumer.php> , "positivism and phenomenology are the two major philosophies that a researcher normally adopts. These two different approaches to research or research traditions have their own set of rules and standards to ensure that valid and reliable knowledge is

produced. Collis and Hussey (2003) suggested that the two paradigms are like two ends of a continuum, with one end being objective and scientific and the other subjective and humanistic.” This research used triangulation of both the phenomenology philosophy and the positivism philosophy. These research philosophies were relevant to this research as an attempt was made to obtain objective data which was then processed by statistical packages. Triangulation also ensured that qualitative data was sought. Reliability means that a test shall produce same results when repeated measurements are taken from respondents under the same conditions. The strategies used in this research were fairly reliable as different researches in ZESA point towards poor service quality. This is further reinforced by negative print and electronic publicity.

Finn (2000) posits that research instruments are considered valid if they measure knowledge and skills. Simple, unambiguous and clear words were used in the questionnaire used in this research to increase validity. Validity was also enhanced by a pilot test of the questionnaire that was carried out before the main research.

Website <http://www.ukessays.com/essays/business/social-cultural-consumer.php> says that, “Research that seeks to explain human behavior through cause and effect is called positivism and differs from research that aims to understand and interpret human actions through the individual’s own perspective which is called phenomenology. These two research philosophies should be viewed as two different paradigms as each makes different assumptions about the real world (Finn, 2000).”

According to website <http://www.ukessays.com/essays/business/social-cultural-consumer.php>, “Positivism is a research philosophy that is founded on the belief that investigations of the social world should be conducted in the same

way as those investigations that are conducted in the natural sciences (Remenyi *et al.*, 2003). It embraces a view of the world as being guided by scientific rules that explain the behavior of phenomena through causal relationships. “

According to Collis and Hussey (2003), positivistic approach seeks the facts or causes of social phenomena, with little regard to the subjective state of the individual. On the other hand, phenomenology research holds more diverse perceptions. Phenomenology is defined as a research philosophy that focuses on meanings and intuition of social phenomena (Lewis *et al.*, 2003). According to website <http://www.ukessays.com/essays/business/social-cultural-consumer.php>,

“A more literally definition by Cohen and Manion (1987) cited in Remenyi *et al.*(2003) is that “phenomenology as a theoretical point of view that advocates the study of direct experience taken at face value; and one which sees behavior as determined by the phenomena of experience rather than by external, objective and physically described reality.” It emphasizes the interactions as the source from which to gain information about the formation of social life (Finn, 2000).”

Triangulation involves using two or more philosophies. The positivistic approach is objective whilst the phenomenological approach is subjective. The positivistic approach believes in scientific measurements and objective data. The phenomenological approach is believed to give richness and the human side of things subjectively. It postulates that you cannot separate the researcher from research observations. For purposes of this dissertation, triangulation of the positivist and phenomenological methods was employed. Customers in suburbs and business entities that were serviced by ZESA were sampled and asked to complete the questionnaire.. A list of ZESA-ZETDC regions was prepared and drawn from a hat randomly and Gweru, Mutare, Chinhoyi, Kadoma, Bulawayo , Harare and Chegutu were selected. This was random sampling.

3.3 Research Design

The research design for this study adopted the case study approach using ZESA as a case complimented by the use of questionnaire survey. A case study enables a deep analysis of a section of the company under study and questionnaires were considered to give accurate responses. Research design can be viewed as the logical sequence that connects the empirical data to the study's initial research questions and ultimately to its conclusions (Yin, 2003). It also rail-roads or straight-jackets the researcher in the process of collecting, analyzing and interpreting observations, allowing them to draw inferences concerning causal relations among the variables under investigation Yin(2003). The author used a single case study of ZESA. ZESA in this case representing parastatals. The results of the research are applicable to other parastatals operating under similar government regulations.

3.3. Research Strategy

According to Manyeranyere (2011) and Yin(2003), research can be done in numerous ways which includes surveys, histories, experiments, case studies and archival information analysis. He posits that each of these strategies has unique advantages and disadvantages depending on three prevailing circumstances:-

1. The nature of research question
2. The ability to manipulate the actual behavioral events the investigator has
3. The attention on historical compared to contemporary phenomena.

This research seeks to investigate factors affecting quality of service in ZESA. The research involves 'how' and 'why' questions about factors affecting quality of service, over which the researcher has little or no control Yin(2003), hence the applicability of a case study.

3.3.1 Experiments

According to Manyerenyere (2011) and Yin(2003) experiments are done when an investigator can manipulate behavior directly, precisely and systematically. Experiments are done in a natural setting or scientifically in a laboratory in a methodical way whereby the experiment could pay attention to one or two isolated variables White(2000)

3.3.2. Survey

One of the research strategies where a sample of subjects is taken from a population and researched on to make inferences about that population is called Survey Wilson(2006) and Manyerenyere(2011).

According to Wilson(2006), a survey can be either descriptive or analytical. A descriptive survey involves identifying and counting the frequency of a specific population , either at one point in time or at various times for comparison.

3.3.3 Archival Analysis

Yin(2003) and Manyerenyere(2011) posits that archival analysis concerns answering the questions where , what, who and how many and how much research questions. Archival strategies describe the incidence or prevalence of a phenomenon.

3.3.4 History

One of the strategies called History applies when there is no control or access. History strategy assists when handling the ,` dead ` past , when there no relevant people are alive to tell us what happened and therefore the researcher relies on secondary documents, primary documents and archival and physical artifacts as the exhibit or source of evidence Yin(2003).

3.3.5 Case Study

According to Manyerenyere(2011) and Yin(2003) case study was found to be the most suitable strategy for this research. Yin (2003) posits that the case study is meant to provide answers to the 'how' and 'why' questions about a contemporary set of happenings , over which the researcher has little or no control. Yin (2003), also posits that a case study is an empirical inquiry that investigates a contemporary phenomena within its real-life context, particularly when the boundaries between context and phenomenon are not obviously evident. Case studies can take the form of quantitative or qualitative type of research which assumes an interpretive approach to data, studies things within the context and recognizes the subjective meanings that people carry to the situation.

Case study strategy facilitates an in-depth knowledge by the researcher Silverman(2000) of factors that affect quality of service in ZESA. The author chose the case study strategy because of time constraints to carry out the research and accessibility constraints to research information Anderson (1993).

3.4. Population

The population was considered to be the 510 000 connected ZESA customers in Zimbabwe. Questionnaires were distributed to various customers in residential, commercial and industrial areas of Harare, Kadoma, Chegutu, Chinhoyi, Bulawayo, Gweru and Mutare.

4.4 Sampling Techniques

According to Punch (2004), sometimes it may be desirable to identify a sample within the population on which to investigate then infer findings on the population. This was the case in this dissertation

Reasons for Sampling:

1. Pragmatic reasons
2. Budget and time

3. Accessibility
4. Cut cost and labor requirements

From the above reasons this study research identified ,Chinhoyi (where he works), Kadoma (where he stays) and Harare where there is the Head Office, Chegutu, Gweru, Mutare and Bulawayo. In all these conveniently chosen locations, the researcher adopted the simple random sampling technique. Over a number of days at one of the location during weekends, the researcher visited ZESA's customers . Questionnaires were administered to clients who were willing to participate in the study. A total of 8 000 questionnaires were administered in all the eight locations. Judgmental sampling method was used.

1.3 Data collection methods

According to [http://hafpages.com/hub/Data-Collection-methods\(18/09/2011\)](http://hafpages.com/hub/Data-Collection-methods(18/09/2011)), data collection is an important aspect of any type of research study. The questionnaire questions were derived from the SERVQUAL. The questionnaire was chosen because it was considered accurate in capturing respondents feelings, since they were filled at the respondents' convenience without strict time constraints compared with personal interviews.

Data collection methods are designed to give the researcher full data visibility, optimum handling speed, data security and ease of use.

3.6 Reliability and Validity

Validity is the strength of conclusions, inferences or propositions. More formally , Cook and Campbell(1979) define it as the `best available approximation to the truth or falsity of a given inference, proposition or conclusion.' In short were we right? To ensure both reliability and validity, the questionnaire derived its framework and content from the serviquial model as given by Lovelock (2000).

3.7 Ethical Consideration

When conducting research in an academic or professional setting, you need to be aware of the ethics behind your research activity.

Firstly a letter of introduction was given by the University. Permission was solicited and obtained from ZESA to carry out the research.

Here are some specific points that were considered by the researcher:-

1.He obtained the permission of the people whom he was going to be studying to conduct research involving them. Respondents were not forced to fill the questionnaires.

2 The author ensured that he did not do anything that would cause physical or emotional harm to subjects. This could be something as simple as being careful how he worded sensitive or difficult questions on the questionnaire.

3.Objectivity versus subjectivity in research is another important consideration. The researcher ensured that his own personal biases and opinions did not get in the way of his research and that he give both sides fair consideration.

4.Many types of research , such as surveys or observations, should be conducted under the assumption that you will keep your findings anonymous. Many interviews , however , are not done under the conditions of anonymity. You should let your subjects know whether your research results will be anonymous or not.

5.When reporting results he ensured that he accurately represented what he observed or what he were told. He did not take interview responses out of context and he did not discuss small parts of observations without putting them into appropriate context.

This research took all the above in conforming with proper ethical conduct.

3.8 CHAPTER CONCLUSION

Chapter three was mainly on Research Methodology and sampling procedure. Two philosophies were highlighted, the positivistic approach and the phenomenological approach. The questionnaire was used as a data collection instrument.

CHAPTER FOUR

ANALYSIS, PRESENTATION AND DISCUSSION OF RESEARCH RESULTS

4.1 Introduction

This chapter presents and discusses results of the research. Pie charts and bar graphs as well as narration were used as a way of presenting research results.

4.2 Overall Response Rate

Eight thousand questionnaires were administered to ZESA customers in the regions previously mentioned and 5 110 were returned, representing 63.7 % response rate. This was a good response rate because poor response rate is about 15%. Kotler (2002) says a sample of about 1% of the population is adequate. ZESA customer base is 510 000 and 1% is 5 100 and therefore a sample of 8 000 for ZESA was an adequate sample.

4.2 TANGIBLES

4.2.1 HOW DO YOU RATE ZESA OFFICES?

Very Good 34%	Satisfactory 42%	Poor 24%
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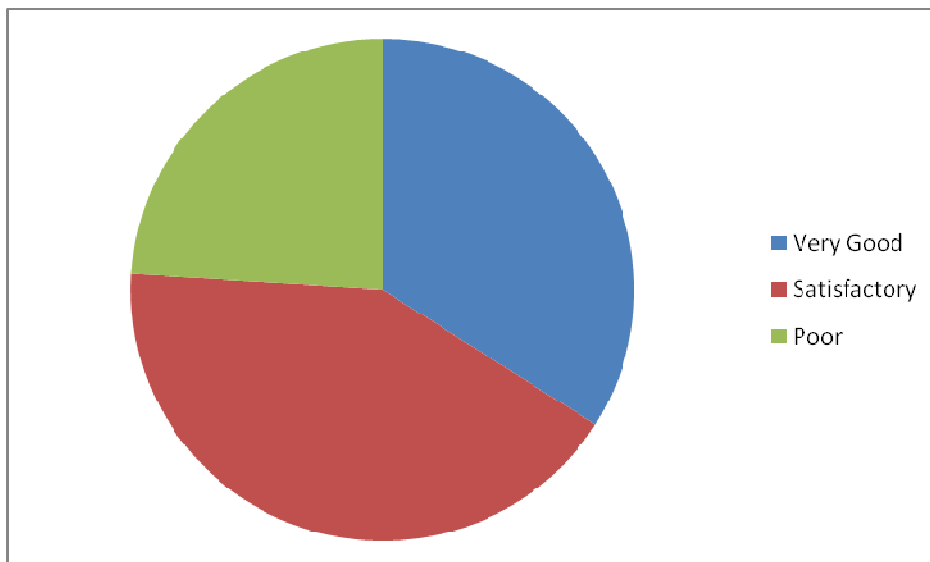


Figure 4.1 Rating Of ZESA Offices

Thirty four percent(34%) of respondents rated ZESA offices very good, 42 % rated

satisfactory and 24 % of the respondents rated ZESA offices poor. This points towards the need to spruce up buildings or need for constructing new offices for ZESA. World class buildings give a positive image and increases ambience. Lovelock(2012), observes that service quality can be further enhanced by improving the facilities(i.e. sprucing up of customer contact areas.). He goes on to say that physical facilities should be visibly appealing to create a positive image and increased ambience. A combined 66% rated ZESA offices satisfactory and poor compared to 34 % who rated ZESA offices very good. This shows a discrepancy indicating that offices require serious refurbishment. A new court of paint would inevitably enhance the ambience of offices.

4.2.2. HOW DO YOU RATE ZESA EQUIPMENT?

VERY GOOD	SATISFACTORY	POOR
21%	56%	23%

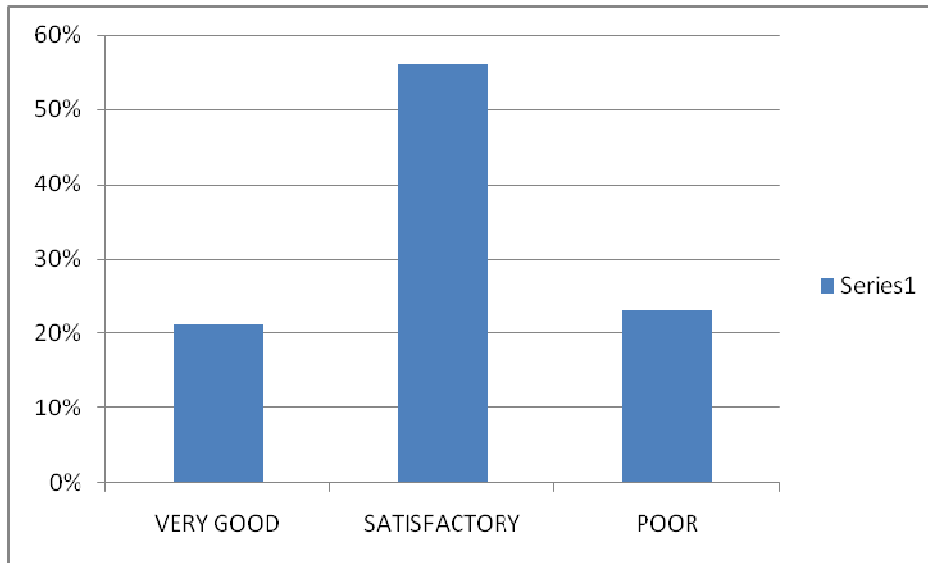


Figure 4.2 RATING OF ZESA EQUIPMENT

Twenty one percent(21%) of the respondents rated ZESA equipment very good, 56% satisfactory and 23% poor. This points towards the fact that ZESA equipment

is not right but needs improvement . If we combine those that rated ZESA equipment poor and satisfactory, we may conclude that 79% of the respondents

found gaps that needed filling in ZESA equipment. Lovelock(2000) highlighted that equipment used to provide service must be modern looking and must be kept clean and new if possible-Customer contact areas(facilities), customer

contact equipment and customer contact staff must be appealing for high perceptions of quality. ZESA needs automation of basic mechanical systems, intelligent and expert computer systems to enhance service delivery.

4.2.3. HOW DO YOU RATE ZESA BANKING HALLS?

Very Good 61%	Satisfactory 23%	Poor 16%
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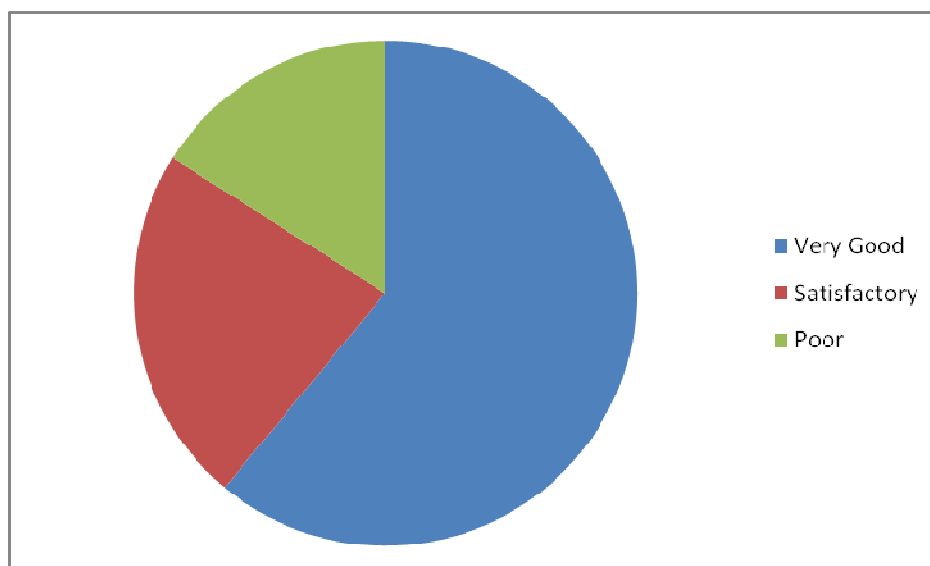


Figure 6.3 Banking Hall Ratings by Customers

Sixty one percent(61%) of the respondents ranked ZESA Banking Halls very good, 23 % satisfactory and 16% poor. This points to the fact that ZESA Banking Halls

seems to be up to expected standards. When we combine those that rated ZESA Banking Halls satisfactory and poor , we may conclude that 39 % found room for improvement in ZESA Banking Halls. This points towards need to spruce up the Banking Halls. Kotler (2002) says that physical facilities must be visually appealing for perceptions of high quality by stakeholders. As observed Lovelock(2012), mentions that service quality can be further enhanced by improving the facilities. He goes on to say that physical facilities should be visually appealing to create a positive image .

4.2.4 ARE ZESA SERVICES ACCESSIBLE?

Very Accessible	Satisfactorily So	Poorly So
15%	31%	54%

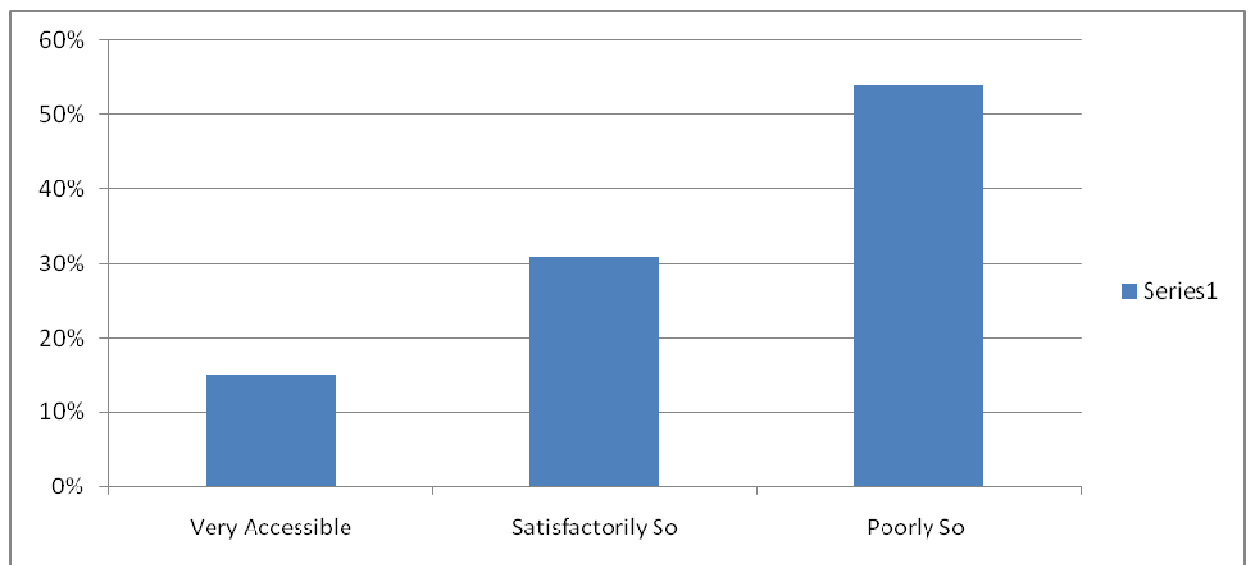


Figure 4.4. RATING OF ACCESSIBILITY OF SERVICES BY CUSTOMERS

Fifteen percent(15%) of the respondents said that ZESA services are very accessible, 31 % satisfactorily accessible and 54% poorly accessible. This points to the fact that ZESA needs to improve accessibility of its services. This may be due to supply inadequacy resulting in massive load-shedding. Kotler (2002) posits that services must be easily accessible for positive perceptions of quality by customers.. According to Lovelock(2012), to enhance service quality, the service product must be tailored to customer needs, priced realistically, distributed through convenient channels and actively promoted to customer to be easily accessible. If we combine those that rated accessibility satisfactory and those that rated accessibility poor, we may conclude that 85% of the respondents found gaps in terms of accessibility of ZESA services. This points towards great need to improve accessibility of ZESA services. Lovelock(2012) and also Parasuraman , Zeithmal and Berry(1998) say that there must be no gaps between desired accessibility by customers and actual accessibility of services.

4.2.8. HOW DO YOU RATE ZESA CORPORATE COLOURS?

Very Good	Satisfactory	Poor
21%	56%	23%

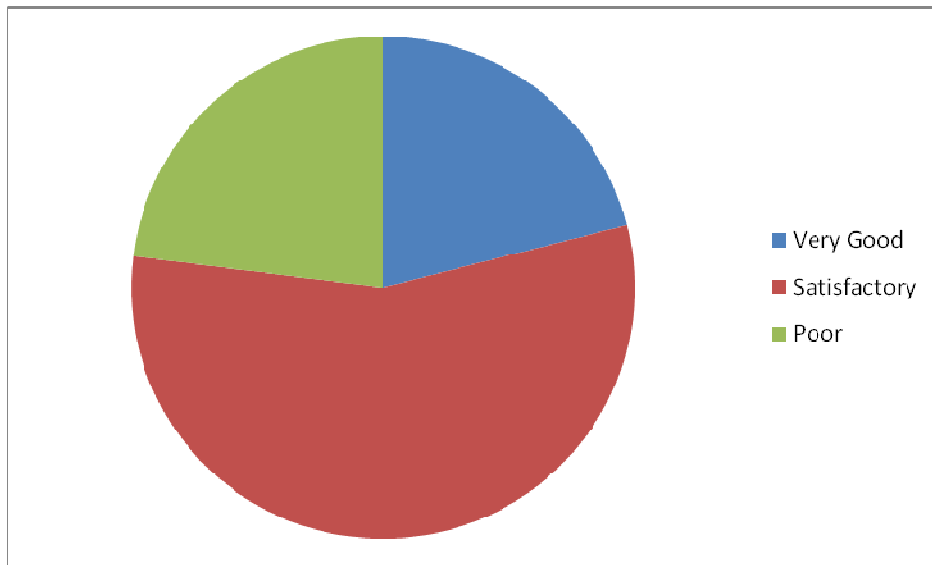


Figure 4.5 RATING OF CORPORATE COLOURS BY CUSTOMERS

Twenty one percent(21%) of respondents rated ZESA corporate colours very good, 56% satisfactory and 23 % poor. Kotler(2002), talks about brand equity and the above results points towards need to improve the corporate colours of ZESA.

4.2.6. OVERALL RATINGS ON TANGIBLES

ITEM	VERY GOOD	SATISFACTORY	POOR
OFFICES	34%	42%	24%
EQUIPMENT	21%	56%	23%
BANKING HALLS	61%	23%	16%
ACCESSIBILITY	15%	31%	54%
CORPORATE COLOURS	21%	56%	23%
TOTAL	152%	208%	140%
AVERAGE	30.40%	41.60%	28%

A greater percentage rated ZESA tangibles as satisfactory, followed by those that rated ZESA tangibles as very good and lastly those that rated them poor. Sixty nine point six percent(69.6 %) found gaps on ZESA tangibles .This points towards greater need for ZESA to improve its tangibles for enhanced ambience and image.

RESPONSIVENESS

4.3.1. HOW FRIENDLY IS ZESA STAFF?

VERY FRIENDLY	SATISFACTORY	POOR
15%	60%	25%

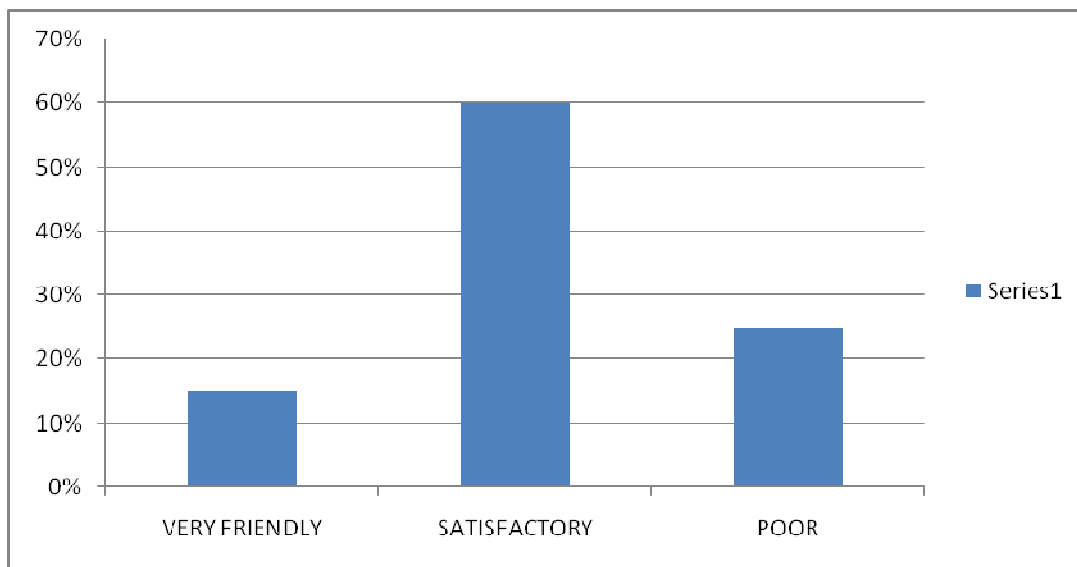


Figure 4.6 Level Of Friendliness Of ZESA Staff As Rated By Customers

Fifteen percent(15%) rated ZESA staff as being very friendly, 60 % satisfactorily so and 25% a poorly so. Lovelock (2012) and Parasuraman , Zeithmal and Berry (1998), together with website www.citeman.com/274-services(2011) say staff or employees have to be friendly to customers for an atmosphere of high service quality. If we combine those that rated ZESA staff friendliness as satisfactory and those that rated friendliness as poorly so, 85% of respondents found gaps in terms of friendliness. This demonstrates that there is great need to improve friendliness of ZESA staff.

4.3.2. HOW SATISFYING IS ZESA SERVICES?

VERY SATISFYING	SATISFACTORY	POOR
7%	9%	84%

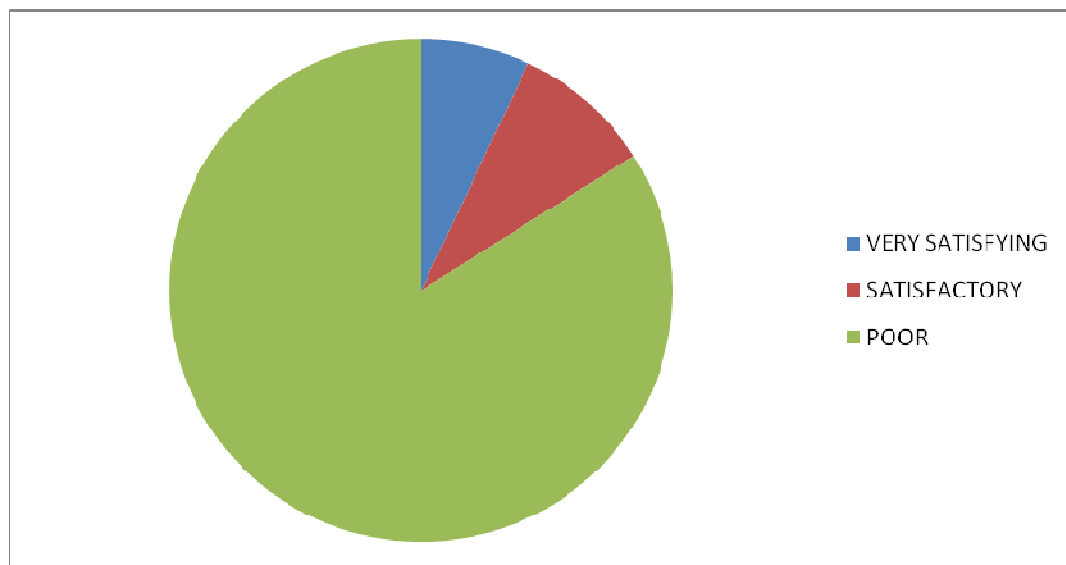


Figure 4.7 THE LEVEL OF SATISFACTION ZESA CUSTOMERS ARE WITH ZESA SERVICES

Seven percent (7%) of the respondents said that they were very satisfied with ZESA services, 9% said that the services were satisfactorily satisfactory and 84% rated poorly satisfied. If we combine those that said satisfactory and those that rated poor, 93% of the respondents found gaps in terms of satisfaction capability of ZESA services. Kotler(2002), Parasuram Zeithmal and Berry(1998) together with website www.citeman.com/274-services(2011), say that corporate entities need to satisfy their customers. To this end they need to undertake customer needs research, market segmentation ,targeting and positioning.

4.3.3. HOW RESPONSIVE IS ZESA TO YOUR NEEDS?

VERY RESPONSIVE	SATISFACTORY	POOR
8%	24%	68%

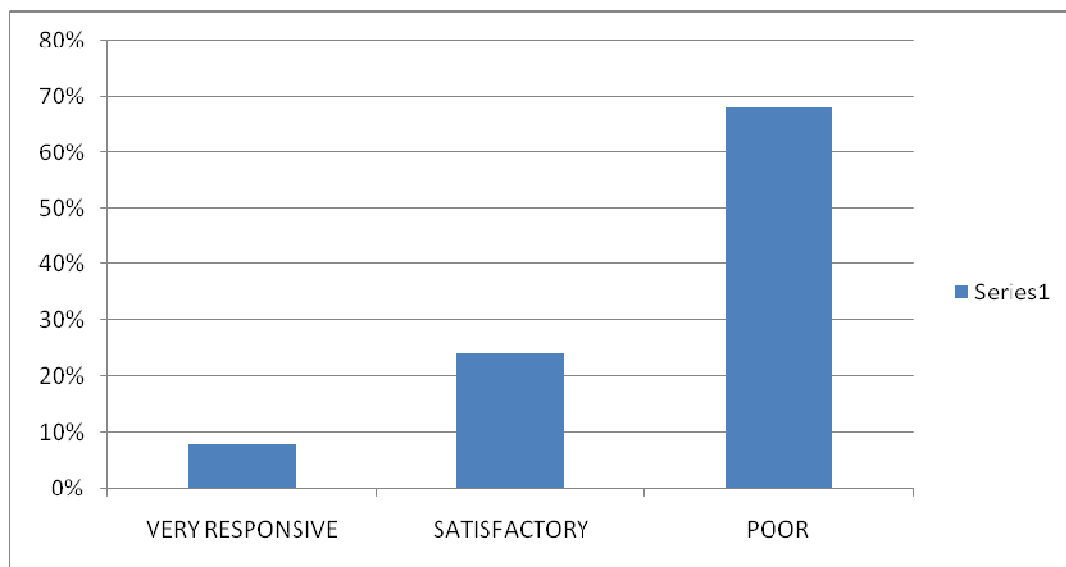


Figure 4.8 RESPONSIVENESS OF ZESA TO CUSTOMER NEEDS AS RATED BY SAMP CUSTOMERS

Eight percent(8%) of the respondents said that ZESA was very responsive to their needs, while 24% said satisfactory and 68% said they were poor at responsiveness to their needs.

Kotler(2002) and Parasuraman, Zeithmal and Berry(1998)say that a company needs to be

responsive to customer needs if it is to succeed .If we combine those that rated responsiveness satisfactory and poor, we may conclude that 92 % of the respondents found shortcomings in terms of ZESA's responsiveness .There is need to bridge this gap.

4.3.4 DO YOU THINK YOU GET VALUE FOR MONEY FROM ZESA?

VERY MUCH	SATISFACTOTY	POORLY
16%	21%	63%

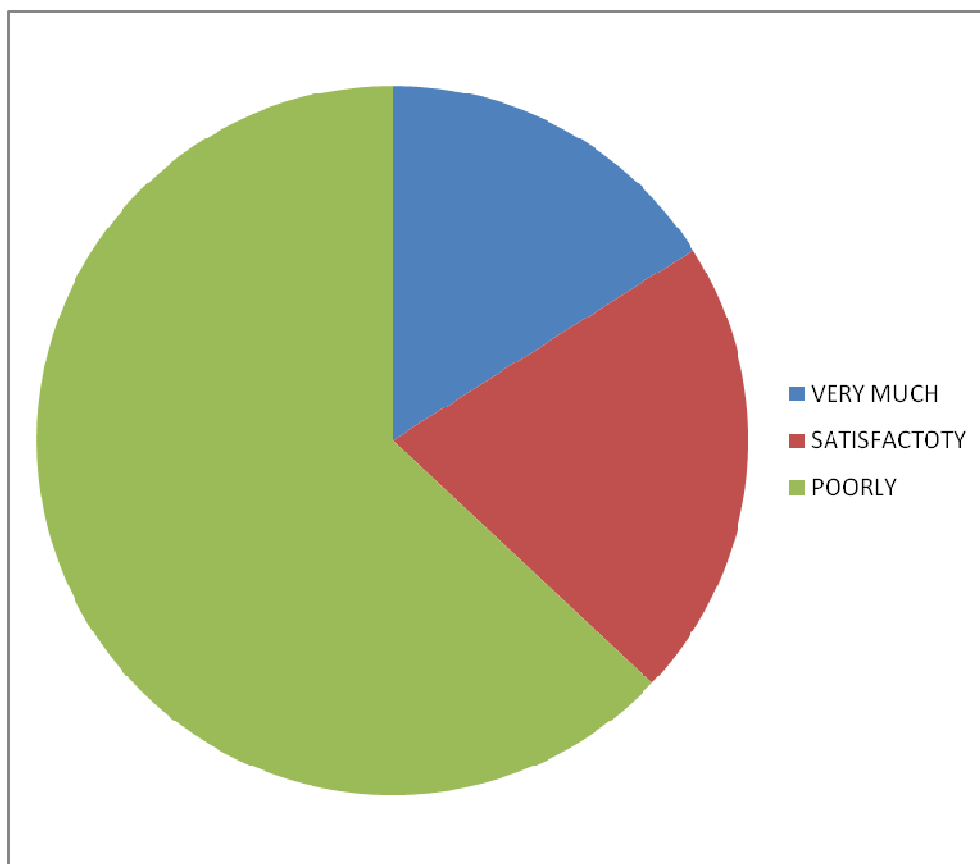


Figure 4.9 RATING OF VALUE FOR MONEY FROM ZESA

Sixteen percent(16%) of the respondents said that they get very much value for money from ZESA, 21% said satisfactory and 63% said poorly get value for money from ZESA. If we combine those that said satisfactory and those that said poor, we may conclude that 84% of the respondents found gaps in terms of value for money from ZESA services and products. Kotler (2002) together with Parasuraman, Zeithman and Berry (

1998)

emphasize that customers have to perceive value for money from transactions with a given company if it is to excel.

4.3.5. HOW DO YOU RATE SERVICES IN THE ZESA BANKING HALLS?

VERY QUICK	SATISFACTORY	SLOW(POOR)
21%	52%	27%

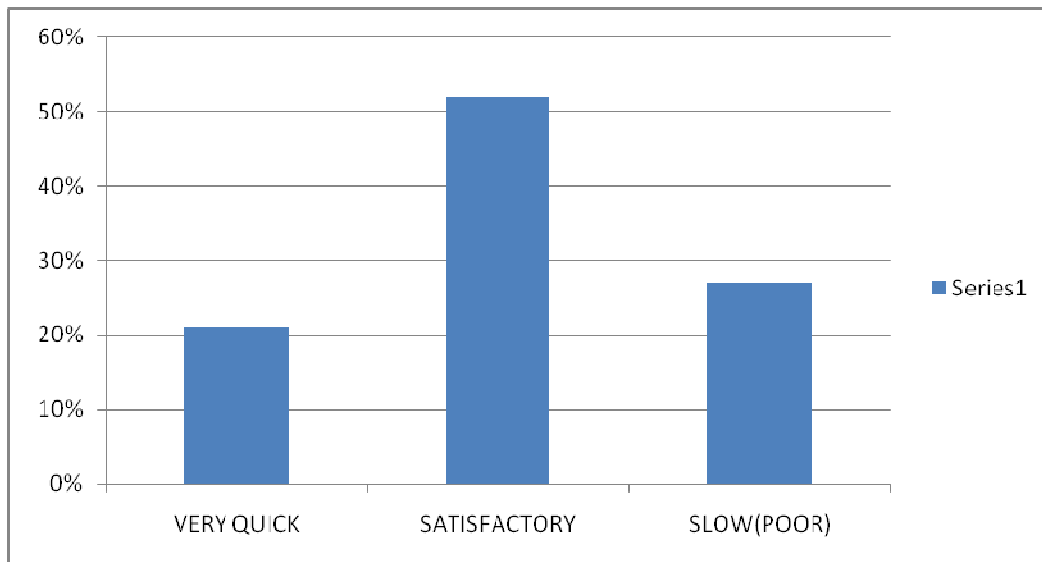


Figure 4.10 RATING OF THE SPEED OF SERVICE IN ZESA BANKING HALLS AS RATEE CUSTOMERS

Twenty one percent(21%) rated ZESA Banking Hall services as quick, 52% as satisfactory

27% as slow or poor. If we combine those that rated the Banking Hall service as satisfactory

and slow(poor), we may conclude that 79% of the respondents found gaps in terms of speed of service in ZESA Banking Halls. Lovelock(2000) says that service has

to be quick for high service quality.

OVERALL RATING FOR RESPONSIVENESS FOR ZESA

	VERY GOOD	SATISFACTORY	POOR
FRIENDLINESS	15%	60%	25%
SATISFACTION	7%	9%	84%
RESPONSIVENESS	8%	24%	68%
VALUE FOR MONEY	16%	21%	63%
SERVICE/HALLS	21%	52%	27%
TOTAL	67%	166%	267%
AVERAGE	13.40%	33.20%	53.40%

OVERALL COMMENTS ON RESPONSIVENESS

Most respondents rated the responsiveness of ZESA as poor(53.4%) , followed by those that rated it satisfactory(33.2%) and a minority said ZESA's responsiveness was very good.Kotler (2002) and Parasuraman, Zeithmal and Berry(1998) say that companies must be very responsive to customer needs for a perception of high service quality by customers. This demonstrates that ZESA is lacking greatly in terms of responsiveness.

4.4. ASSURANCE

4.4.0. HOW COMPETENT ARE ZESA STAFF?

Very Good	Satisfactory	Poor
14%	55%	31%

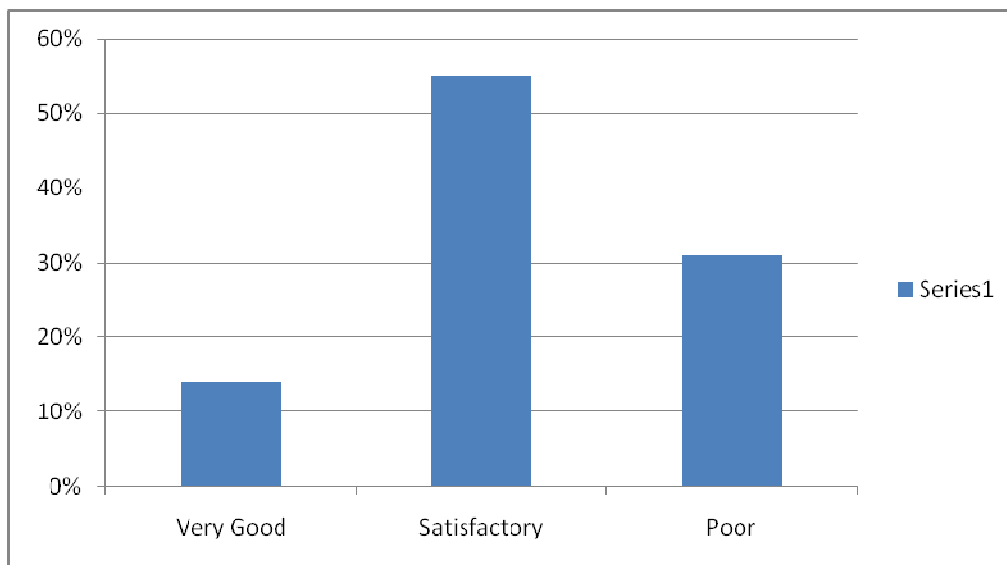


Figure 4.11 RATING OF COMPETENCIES OF ZESA STAFF BY CUSTOMERS

Fourteen percent(14%) of the respondents rated ZESA staff as very competent, 55% satisfactory

and 31% as poor. If we combine those that rated ZESA staff's competence as satisfactory and

those that rated them poor, we see that 86% of the respondents found gaps that needed filling in terms of competence among ZESA staff. Lovelock(2012) and Parasuraman, Zeithmal and Berry (1998) says that staff need to be highly competent for enhanced quality

perceptions by customers. The customer contact staff are highly critical for high service quality. This points towards the need for ZESA to increase staff competence by use of recruitment sciences and training.

4.2 HOW GOOD ARE GUARANTEES FOR GOOD SERVICE IN ZESA?

VERY GOOD	SATISFACTORY	POOR
21%	35%	44%

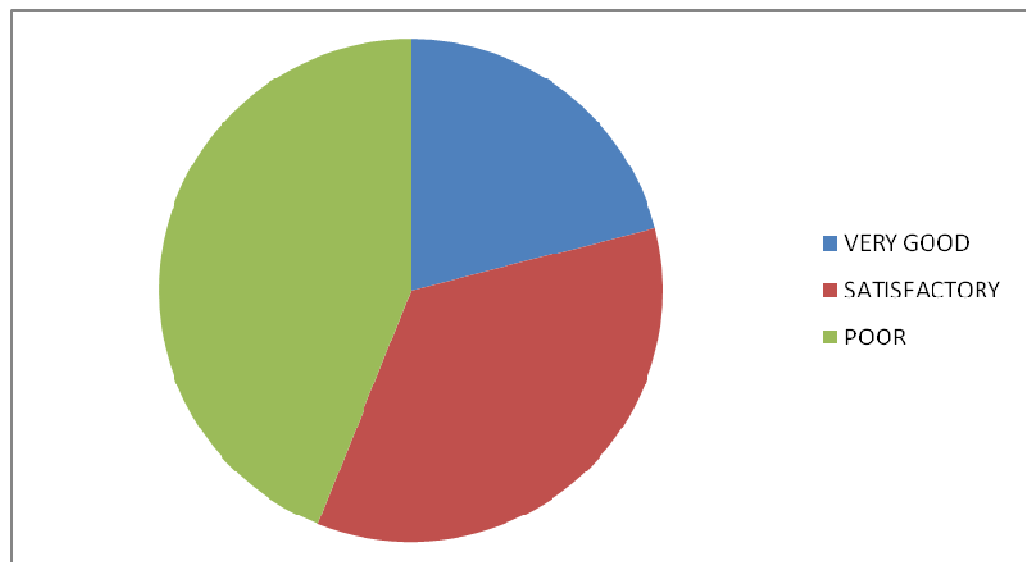


Figure 4.12 RATINGS FOR GUARANTEES OF GOOD SERVICE IN ZESA

Twenty one percent(21%) of the respondents said that guarantees for good service in ZESA are very good, 35% satisfactory and 44% rated them poor. If we combine those that said satisfactory and those that rated them poor, we may conclude that 79%

of the respondents found gaps that needed filling as far as guarantees for good service is concerned. Website www.citeman.com/274-services(2011) says that there must be very good guarantees for good performance. There is a discrepancy

between ZESA performance and theory.

4.3 DOES ZESA COMPENSATES FOR POOR SERVICE?

VERY MUCH	SATISFACTORILY	POOR
15%	23%	62%

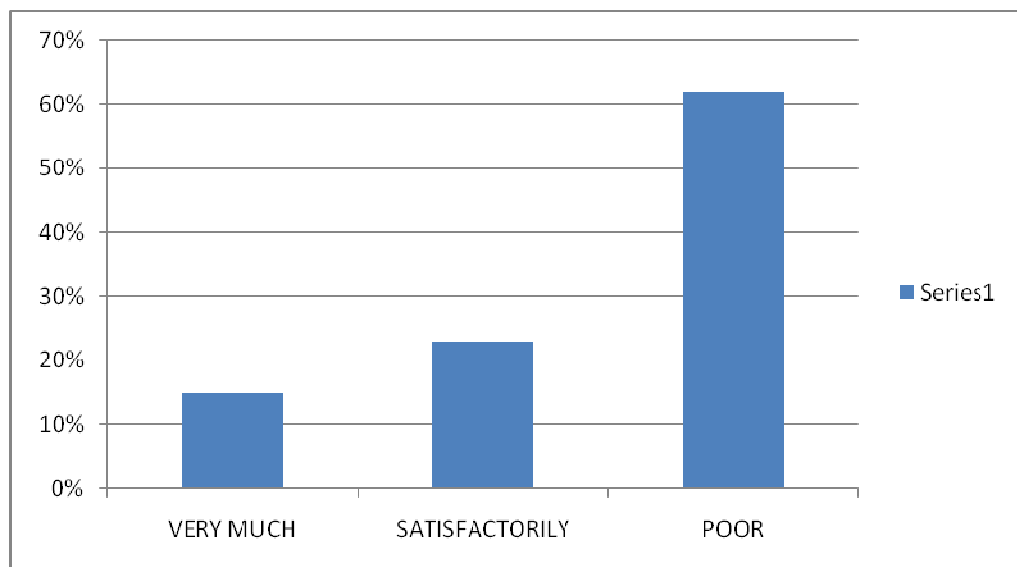


Figure 4.13 RATING OF COMPENSATION LEVELS FOR POOR SERVICE

Fifteen percent (15%) of the respondents said ZESA very much compensates for

poor service, 23 % said satisfactorily and 62% said poorly so. If we combine those that said satisfactory and those that rated poor, we may conclude that 85% of the respondents found gaps that needed filling as far as compensation for poor service is concerned. This means there is a discrepancy between ZESA performance and theory. Kotler(2002) says that companies need to compensate for poor service.

4.4 HOW GOOD IS ZESA AT PAYING WHEN SUED?

VERY GOOD	SATISFACTORILY	POOR
39%	38%	23%

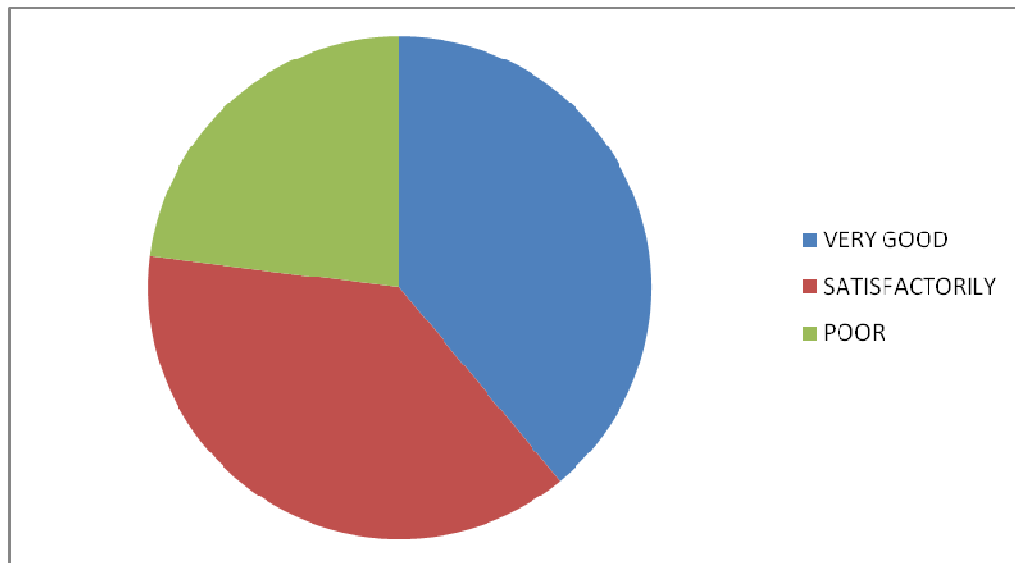


Figure 4.14 RATING AT PROMPTNESS AT PAYING WHEN SUED

Thirty nine percent(39%) rated ZESA very good at paying when sued, 38 % said satisfactory and 23 % said poor. Website www.citeman.com/274-services(2011) says that companies must be good at paying customers when sued for poor services for perceptions of high service quality. A sizable number found gaps, that is 61%.

4.4.1 HOW GOOD IS ZESA AT AFTER SALES SERVICE?

VERY GOOD	SATISFACTORY	POOR
11%	29%	60%

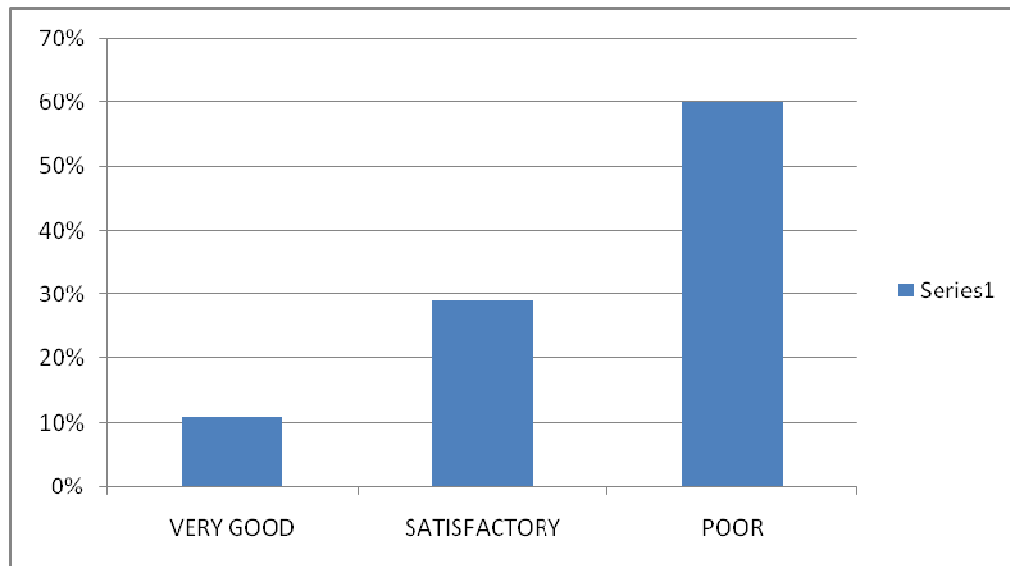


Figure 4.15 RATING OF AFTER SALES SERVICE IN ZESA BY CUSTOMERS

Eleven percent(11%) of the respondents rated ZESA after sales service as very good, 29% as satisfactory and 60% as poor. If we combine those that rated the after sales service as satisfactory and those that rated it as poor, we may conclude that 89% of the respondents found gaps in terms of after sales service. Kotler(2002) says that there must be excellent after sales service for high service quality. This demonstrates that there is a discrepancy between ZESA performance and theoretical requirements.

4.4.2 HOW COURTEOUS IS ZESA STAFF?

VERY COURTEOUS	SATISFACTORY	POOR
21%	25%	54%

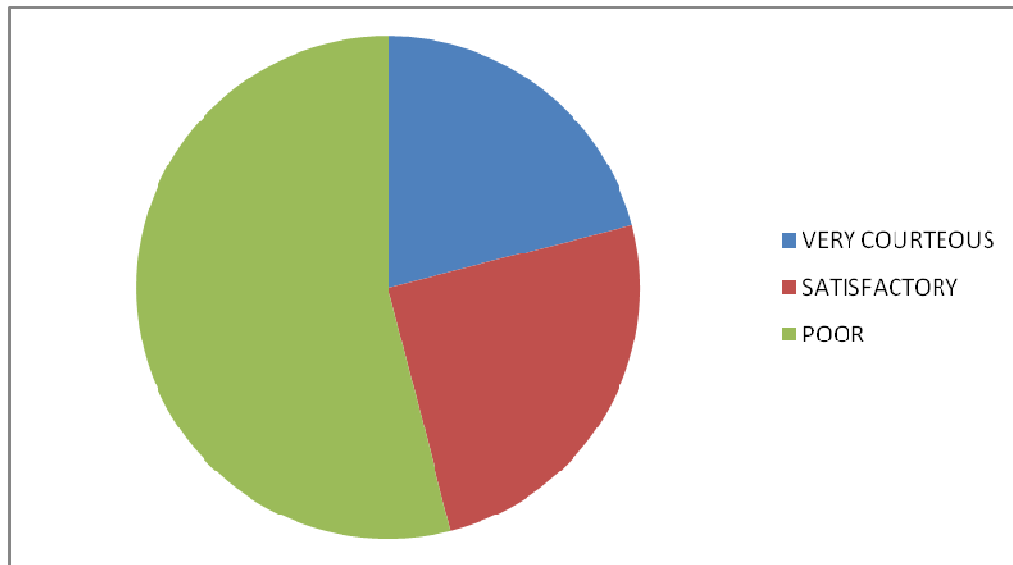


Figure 4.15 RATING OF COURTEOUSNESS OF ZESA STAFF BY CUSTOMERS

Twenty one percent(21%) of the respondents rated ZESA staff as very courteous, 25% as satisfactory and 54% as poorly so. Kotler(2002) and Parasuraman, Zeithmal and Berry (1998) say that staff must be courteous to customers for high service quality. If we combine those that rated the courteousness of ZESA staff as satisfactory(25%) and those that rated them poor(54%) , we may conclude that 79% of the respondents found shortcomings of ZESA staff in terms of courteousness. Thus theory and ZESA practices seems to be at variance.

4.4.3 OVERAL RATINGS ON ASSURANCE

ITEM	VERY GOOD	SATISFACTORY	POOR
COMPETENCE	14%	55%	31%
GUARANTEES	21%	35%	44%
COMPENSATION	15%	23%	62%
PAYMENT WHEN SUED	39%	38%	23%
AFTER SALES SERVICE	11%	29%	60%
COURTEOUSNESS	21%	25%	54%
TOTAL	121%	205%	274%
AVERAGE	20.10%	34.10%	45.80%

Most respondents rated ZESA assurance poor(45.8%). This was followed by those that rated them satisfactory(34.1). If we combine those that rated assurance as satisfactory and those that rated assurance as poor, we may conclude that 79.9% of the respondents found gaps in the quality dimension of assurance in ZESA. Lovelock(2012) says that the level of quality is also indicated by the assurance dimension of quality. This demonstrates that there is variance between ZESA performance and theory and hence need for improvement.

4.5 RELIABILITY

4.5.1 ARE ZESA ELECTRICITY SERVICES RELIABLE?

VERY GOOD	SATISFACTORY	POOR
12%	19%	69%

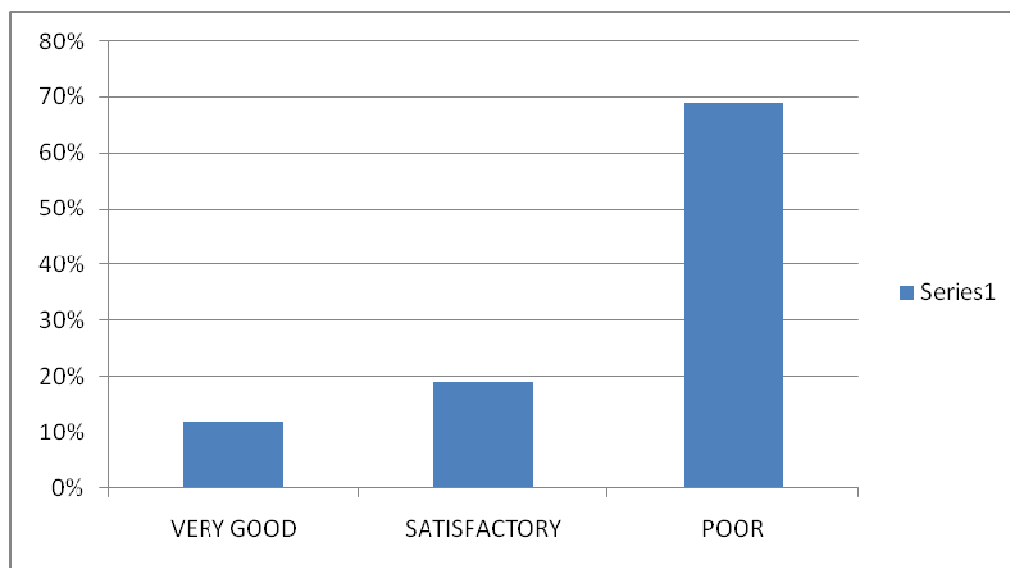


Figure 4.16 RATING OF RELIABILITY OF ZESA SERVICES BY CUSTOMERS

Twelve percent(12%) of the respondents rated ZESA electricity services as very reliable,19% as satisfactory and 69% as very unreliable(poor). This shows that

the majority said that ZESA services were very unreliable. If we combine those that said satisfactory and very unreliable, we may conclude that 88% of the respondents found gaps that needed filling in terms of electricity reliability. Lovelock (2012), say that services must be reliable for high service quality.

This demonstrates that there is a discrepancy between ZESA's performance and theory.

4.5.2 ARE ZESA BANKING HALL SERVICES RELIABLE?

VERY RELIABLE	SATISFACTORY	POOR
31%	24%	45%

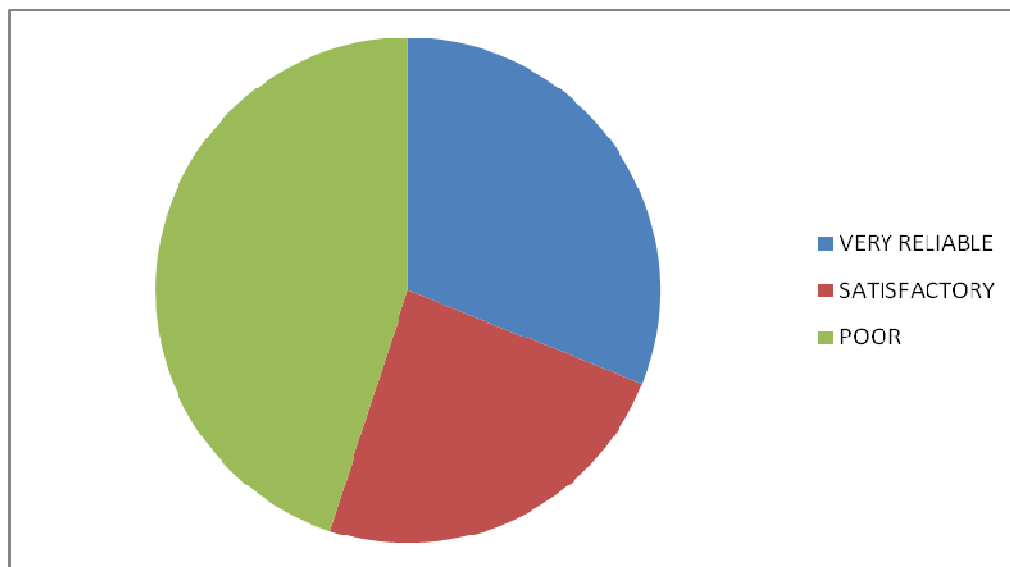


Figure 4.17 RATING OF RELIABILITY OF BANKING HALL SERVICES BY CUSTOMERS

Thirty one percent(31%) of the respondents said ZESA Banking Hall services were very reliable, 24% said satisfactory and 45% said poor. Lovelock(2012), and Parasuraman , Zeithmal and Berry(1998), points out that services must be reliable for high service quality. Most respondents rated ZESA Banking Hall services as being very unreliable. If we combine those that rated Banking Hall services as satisfactory and those that rated them poor, we may conclude that 69% of the respondents found gaps that needed filling in terms of Banking Hall services reliability.

4.5.3. HOW CONSISTENT IS ZESA ELECTRICITY SERVICES?

VERY GOOD	SATISFACTORY	POOR
9%	15%	76%

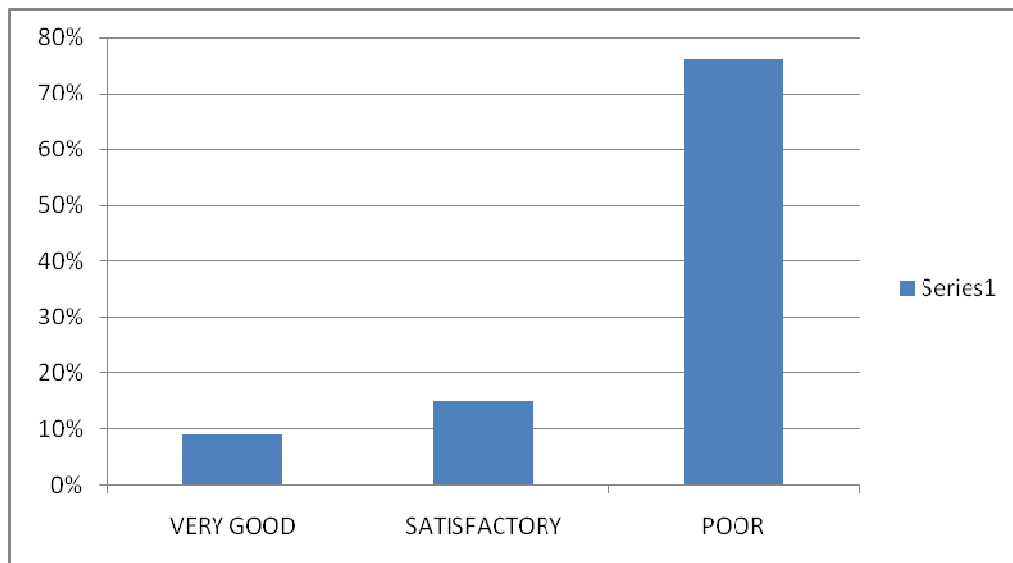


Figure 4.18

CONSISTENCY

The majority (76%) of the respondents rated the consistency of ZESA electricity services as being very poor, while 15% rated satisfactory and the minority(9%) rated these services as being very consistent. If we combine those that rated electricity services as satisfactorily consistent and those that rated them poor , we may conclude that 91% of the respondents found gaps or shortcomings in terms of consistency of service. Parasuraman , Zeithmal and Berry (1998) and Kotler (2002), posits that services must be consistent for high service quality. This means that there is a discrepancy between theory and ZESA practices.

4.5.4 HOW CONSISTENT IS ZESA BANKING HALL SERVICES?

VERY CONSISTENT	SATISFACTORY	POOR
19%	26%	55%

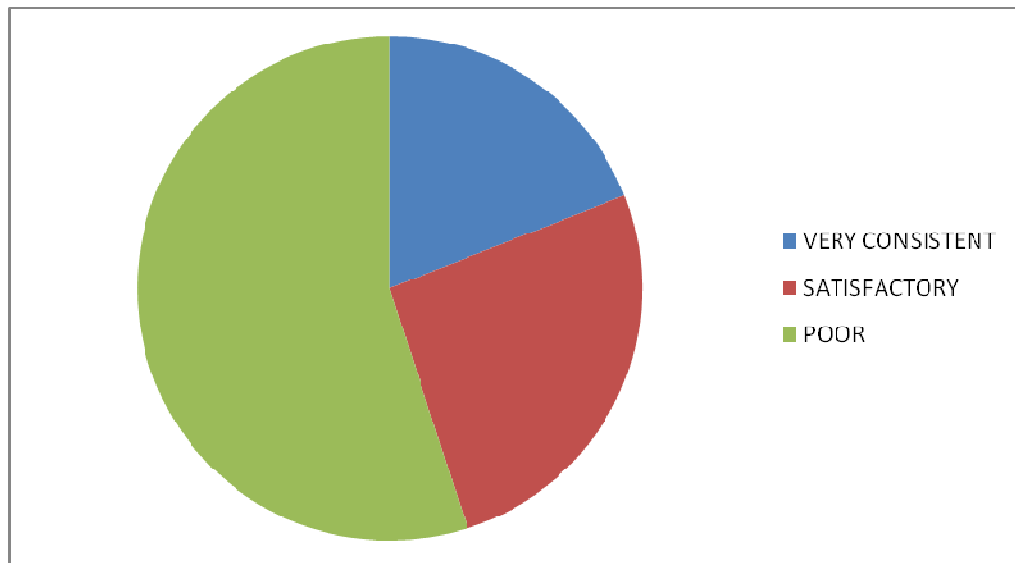
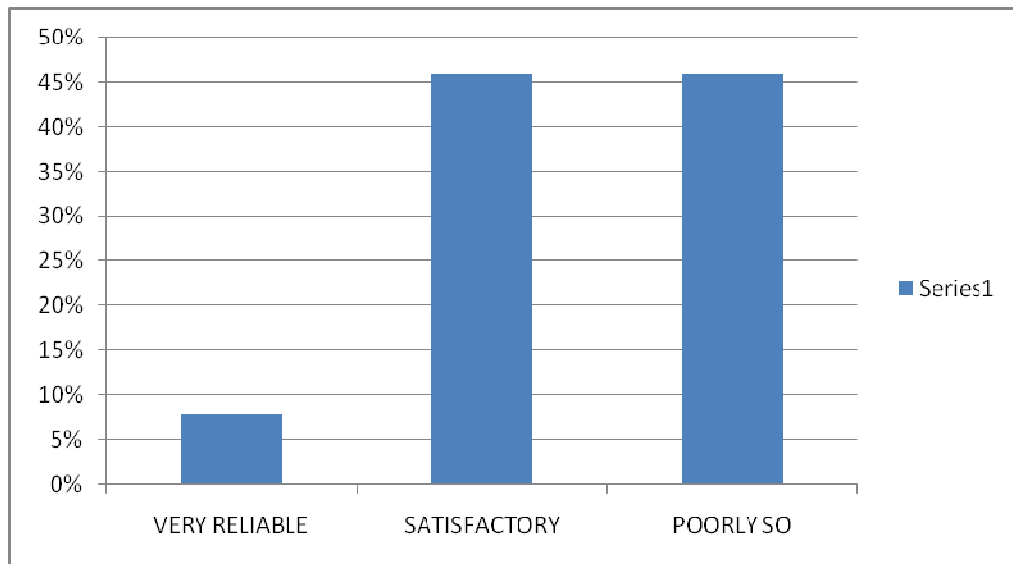


Figure 4.19 RATING OF THE CONSISTENCY OF BANKING HALL SERVICES BY CUSTOMERS

Nineteen percent(19%) of the respondents pointed out that the consistency of ZESA Banking Hall services was very good. The majority(55%) said that the consistency was poor and 26% said satisfactory. If we combine those that said satisfactory and poor , we may conclude that a huge number(81%) of the respondents found gaps in terms of consistency of ZESA Banking Hall services. This demonstrates that there is a discrepancy between ZESA performance and theory. Bunnel (1995) and other authors say that services must be consistent.

4.5.5 IS ZESA EQUIPMENT RELIABLE?

VERY RELIABLE	SATISFACTORY	POORLY SO
8%	46%	46%



Eight percent (8%) of the respondents rated ZESA equipment as being very reliable, 46% rated them satisfactory and another 46% rated them poor. If we combine those that rated satisfactory and those that rated them poor , we may conclude that 92% of the respondents found gaps that needed filling as far as reliability of ZESA equipment is concerned. Lovelock(2012) says that equipment need to be reliable for high service quality. This demonstrates that there is variance between ZESA equipment performance and theory.

4.5.6. OVERAL RATING FOR RELIABILITY

ITEM	VERY GOOD	SATISFACTORY	POOR
RELIABILITY OF ELECTRICITY	12%	19%	69%
RELIABILITY OF BANKS	31%	24%	45%
CONSISTENCY OF ELECTRICITY	9%	15%	76%
CONSISTENCY OF HALLS	19%	26%	55%
RELIABILITY OF EQUIPMENT	8%	46%	46%
TOTAL	79%	130%	291%
AVERAGE	15.80%	26%	58.20%

The majority 58.2% of the respondents rated reliability dimension of quality as poor , followed by 26% that rated the reliability dimension satisfactory.

The minority 15.8% rated the reliability dimension of quality in ZESA as being very good. Parasuraman, Zeithmal and Berry(1998) together with website [www.citeman.com/274-services\(2011\)](http://www.citeman.com/274-services(2011)) says that the reliability dimension of quality needs to be very good for high quality.This demonstrates that there are gaps that needs filling as far as the reliability dimension of quality.

4.6 EMPATHY

4.6.1 HOW CARING IS ZESA STAFF?

VERY MUCH	SATISFACTORY	POOR
7%	39%	54%

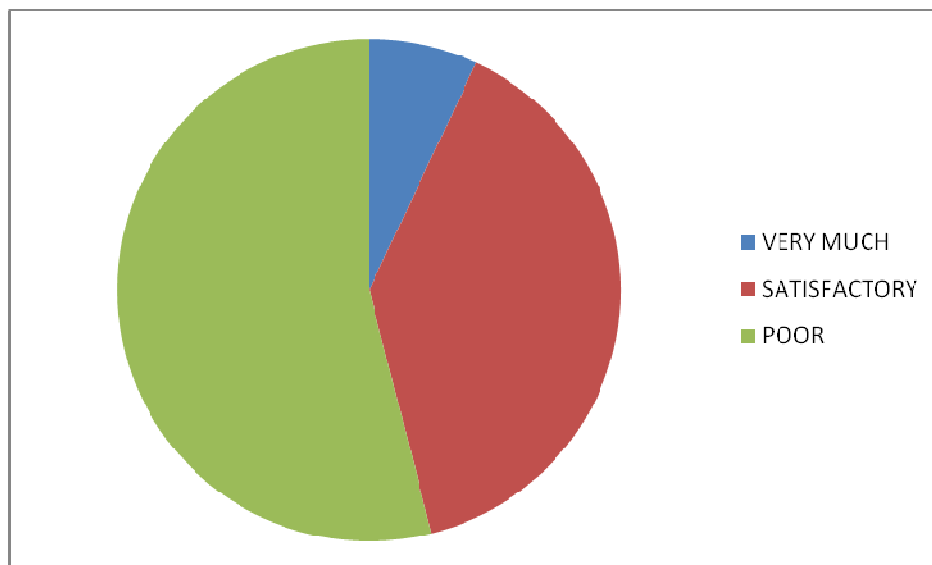


Figure 4.21 A PIE CHART OF THE LEVEL OF CARE GIVEN BY ZESA STAFF TO CUSTOMERS

Seven percent (7%) of the respondents said ZESA staff is very much caring, 39%

said satisfactory and 54% said ZESA staff are not caring at all (poor).

Parasuraman,

Zeithmal and Berry (1998), say that staff must care for customers for high service quality. Most respondents (54%) rated ZESA poor at caring for them.

If we combine those that rated satisfactory and those that rated poor, we may conclude that 93% of the respondents found gaps that needed filling as far as caring is concerned in ZESA. This demonstrates that there is a variance between ZESA performance and theory!

4.6.2 DO YOU THINK ZESA STAFF ARE GOOD AT EMPHATHIZING WITH YOUR PLIGHT?

VERY GOOD	SATISFACTORY	POOR
14%	22%	64%

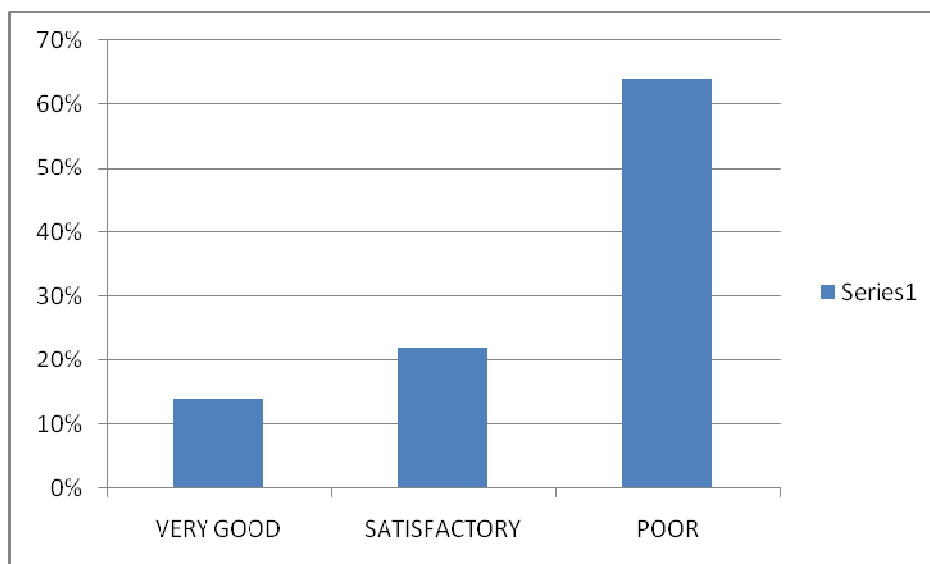


Figure 4.22 RATING OF EMPHATHY OF ZESA STAFF BY CUSTOMERS

Fourteen percent(14%) of the respondents rated ZESA empathy very good, 22% rated satisfactory and 64% poor. Lovelock(2012) says that staff must emphasize with customers for high service quality. The above figure

demonstrates that ZESA performance is at variance with theory.

4.6.3 DO YOU RATE ZESA STAFF AS BEING GOOD AT POLITENESS?

VERY GOOD	SATISFACTORY	POOR
21%	25%	54%

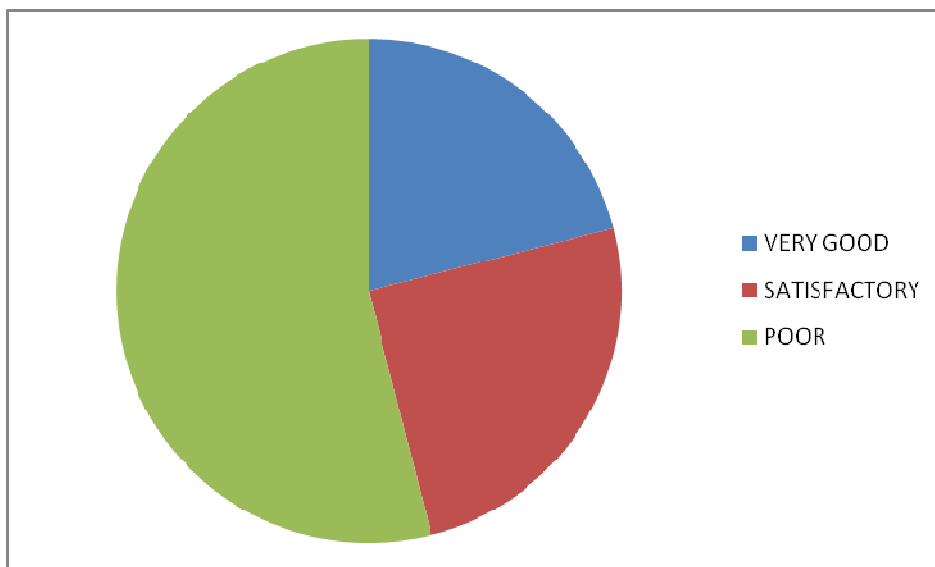


Figure 4.23 A PIE CHART SHOWING LEVEL OF POLITENESS OF ZESA STAFF

Twenty one percent(21%) of the respondents rated ZESA staff's politeness as very good, 25% as satisfactory and 54% as being very poor at politeness. Website www.citeman.com/274-services says that staff must be polite to customers for high service quality. Seventy nine percent(79%) of the respondents found gaps that need filling in terms of politeness of ZESA staff demonstrating that there is need to reconcile ZESA's performance with theory.

4.6.4 HOW GOOD ARE ZESA STAFF AT SMILING WHEN OFFERING SERVICE?

VERY GOOD 23%	SATISFACTORY 24%	POOR 53%
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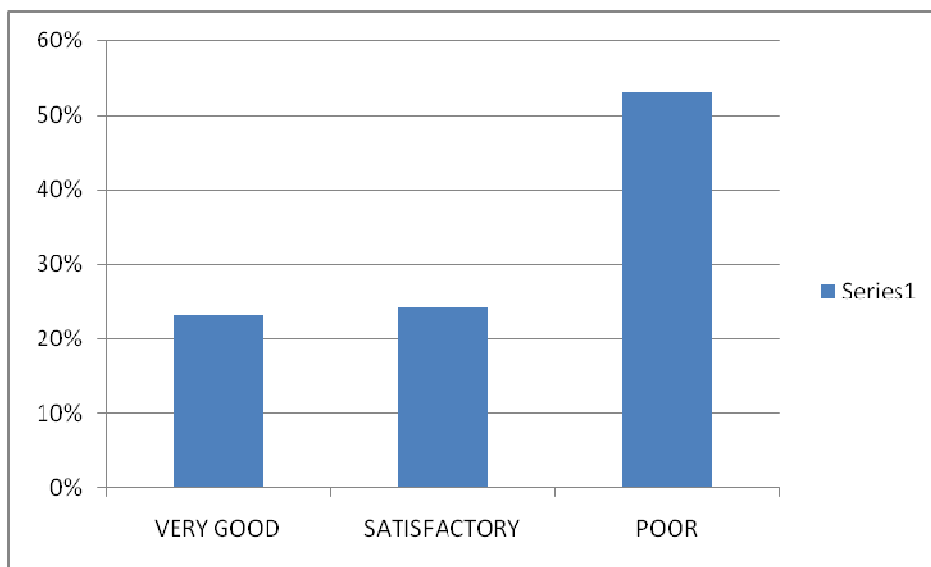


Figure 4.24 A BAR GRAPH SHOWING RATING OF ZESA STAFF SMILES

Twenty three percent(23%) of the respondents rated ZESA staff as being very good at smiling, 24% as satisfactory and 53% as being very poor at smiling. Lovelock (2012) says that staff must be good at smiling when giving service for high quality. The results show that ZESA staff's performance is at variance with theory.

4.6.5 HOW DO YOU RATE THE HELPFULNESS OF ZESA STAFF?

VERY GOOD 16%	SATISFACTORY 25%	POOR 59%
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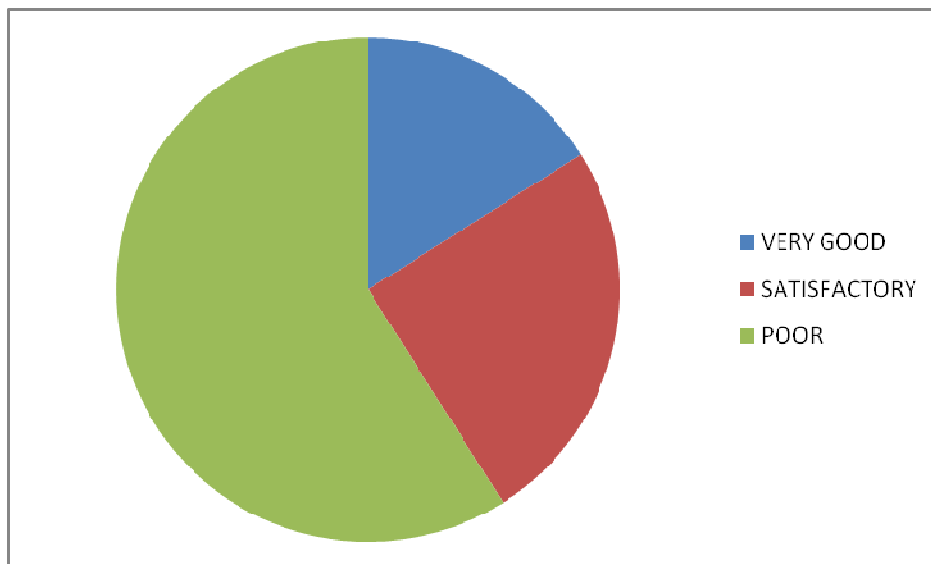


Figure 4.25 A PIE CHART SHOWING RATING OF THE HELPFULNESS OF ZESA STAFF

Sixteen percent(16%) of the respondents rated ZESA staff as being very helpful,
25% as satisfactory and 59% as being poor at helpfulness. If we combine those that rated satisfactory and those that rated ZESA staff as being poor at helpfulness we may conclude that 84% of the respondents found gaps in terms of being helpful among ZESA staff. Cundiff and Govoni(1980) say that staff should be

helpful to customers for high service quality.

4.6.6 OVERALL RATING ON EMPHATHY

ITEM	VERY GOOD	SATISFACTORY	POOR
CARING	7%	39%	54%
EMPATHY	14%	22%	64%
POLITENESS	21%	25%	54%
SMILING	23%	24%	53%
HELPFULNESS	16%	25%	59%
TOTAL	81%	135%	284%
AVERAGE	16.20%	27%	56.80%

4.6.7 OVERALL COMMENTS ON EMPATHY

Most respondents rated empathy dimension on quality poor (56.8%). If we combine those that rated satisfactory and poor we may conclude that 83.8% of the respondents found gaps in terms of empathy dimension. Parasuraman, Zeithmal and Berry(1998) together with website www.citeman.com/274-services(2011), say that empathy must be very good for perceptions of high quality by customers. The results shows that ZESA's performance is at variance with theory.

4.7 OVERALL COMMENTS ON THE FIVE DIMENSIONS OF QUALITY-TANGIBLES, ASSURANCE, RELIABILITY RESPONSIVENESS AND EMPATHY

ITEM	VERY		
	GOOD	SATISFACTORY	POOR
TANGIBLES	30.40%	41.60%	28%
RESPONSIVENESS	13.40%	33.20%	53.40%
ASSURANCE	20.10%	34.10%	45.80%
RELIABILITY	15.80%	26%	58.20%
EMPATHY	16.20%	27%	56.80%
TOTAL	95.90%	161.90%	242.20%
AVERAGE	19.18%	20.23%	48.40%

Considering all the five dimensions of quality, most respondents (48.4%) have rated quality of ZESA products and services poor. If we combine those that rated satisfactory and poor, we may conclude that a huge number(68.63%), found gaps in terms of performance on the five dimensions of quality. Lovelock (2012), Parasuraman, Zeithmal and Berry(1998) and Kotler(2002), highlight that overall service quality must be high. The above demonstrates that there is a lot to be done in ZESA in terms of bridging the performance gaps since there is a discrepancy between ZESA's performance and theory. The above results could be due to rampant load-shedding occurring in Zimbabwe. The print and electronic media articles seem to agree with research results that quality has deteriorated in ZESA on virtually all five dimensions of quality. ZESA needs to

craft a system development plan that will translate to building more power stations, substations and lines. It also needs to use recruitment sciences to profile the best people to fill management posts together with training programs that will empower staff with requisite knowledge in customer care.

CHAPTER CONCLUSIONS

The research found out that ZESA is performing badly on all the five dimensions of quality namely tangibles, responsiveness, assurance, reliability and empathy. There is need to improve this areas for perceptions of high quality by customers.

CHAPTER 5

5.1 CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

We now go back and review the original objectives at the start of the dissertation in Chapter one, and see what conclusions were reached on each objective after perusal of the relevant literature and findings in the dissertation.

Conclusions

Objective 1:To identify the factors that influence service quality at ZESA.

Conclusion 1: There are five dimensions of quality namely reliability, assurance, tangibles, empathy and responsiveness. Any gap identified in the research on any dimension of quality reflected low quality of service on that dimension These five dimensions of quality influenced service quality at ZESA.

Objective 2:To establish the current level of service on each dimension of quality at ZESA

Conclusion: There were gaps identified on each dimension of service as highlighted in the discussion of the results of the research. For absolute quality, all respondents should rate each of the five dimensions of quality as very good pointing to the fact that there are no performance gaps. If any respondent answered satisfactory or poor, this was taken to mean that that respondent identified a gap in that particular dimension of quality. Sixty nine point six (69.6%) of the respondents highlighted that there were gaps on tangibles at ZESA meaning that tangibles are not up to expectations of customers. Eighty six point six percent(86.6%) of the respondents pointed out that there were gaps on responsiveness meaning that ZESA was slow at responding to customer needs This has a negative impact on quality.

Seventy nine point nine percent(79.9%) of the respondents demonstrated that there were gaps on assurance at ZESA meaning that customers are not assured

of good service by ZESA. This points towards low quality of service at ZESA. Eighty four point two percent(84.2%) of the respondents pointed out that there were gaps on reliability of service at ZESA. This means that customers were not getting electricity service when they needed it-supply inadequacy. Eighty three point eight percent (83.8%) of the respondents indicated that there were gaps on empathy by ZESA. This means that ZESA staff have training needs on customer intimacy, customer care, emotional intelligence, social intelligence and customer delight. This may also indirectly point towards incompetence on the part of ZESA management. Sixty eight point six percent(68.6%) on average found gaps on the five dimensions of quality in ZESA meaning that there is low service quality at ZESA! This demonstrates that there is poor service quality in ZESA.

Test of Proposition:

The proposition that ZESA has poor service quality has been confirmed by huge gaps identified on each of the dimensions of quality as shown in the discussion of the results.

The main conclusions are that there were gaps identified between literature requirements and realities in ZESA(ZEDC). Tracy(2008) says that customer satisfaction is one of the Absolutely Unbreakable Laws Of Business. The extraneous variables(or intervening factors) deflected the five dimensions of quality(independent variables) from leading to good performance to leading to very poor performance in ZESA(dependent variables).The gaps were identified in all the five dimensions of quality as mentioned above.

Recommendations

1.To address the issue of reliability of services, ZESA needs to attend to the 'product adequacy' business slogan and ensure that more power stations are built. It is therefore recommended that a 'power station development levy' or 'product adequacy' levy , be charged on all customers just like the rural electrification levy. Load forecasts need to be done so that all equipment which includes power stations, substations , lines and cables are adequately dimensioned.

2.To address the issue of assurance, there has to be product adequacy, customer intimacy and staff competence. Staff need to have an obsession for customer delight. The total customer experience has to be pleasurable as advocated by Lovelock(2001). The electricity service has to be fit for the intended purpose by customers every time as per the Juran(2010) definition of quality.

3.To address the dimension of tangibles ZESA has to modernize its buildings, replenish its equipment such as vehicles and office furniture and improve its corporate colors. This will enhance the ambience of its assets and improve the corporate image.

4.The empathy dimension can be improved through customer satisfaction research, reading and educating staff on issues of quality. Training of staff on customer care, customer intimacy, emotional intelligence and social intelligence may also assist. The Bible's recommendation that ,`do unto others what you would want them to do for you,' when serving customers would also help in fulfilling the empathy dimension. It is also recommended that `customer intelligence' be set up in ZESA.

5.The responsiveness dimension can be improved through customer intimacy and having a culture of being quick to attend to customer needs. Building of more power stations and network integrity would also assist. ZESA should aim not only for customer satisfaction and delight, but also `positive customer surprise' with the level of quality of service as advocated by Tracy(2008)!

6.It is also recommended that ZESA implements relationship marketing to enhance service quality. The strategies that would positively impact on the provision of quality at ZESA included bridging the gaps identified in the project research and also between theoretical requirements and realities at ZESA.

7 ZESA should recruit more competent managers, train customer contact staff in emotional intelligence and social intelligence.

In order for ZESA to avert its current situation it is recommended:-

8. That ZESA improves the tangibles, reliability, responsiveness, assurance and empathy with acronym RATER if it is to improve service quality.

9. Introduce a quality program, business excellence models, ethical systems as well as a strategic marketing program that will guarantee evaporation of problems identified by the research! These problems vary from staff incompetence, lack of psycho-social skills to delight customers and gaps between theory and ZESA business performance. Quality system in recruitment and promotional processes to guarantee quality managers and quality customer-contact staff that will be rated highly by customers.

10. Recommending that ZESA crafts a system development plan that will translate to building more power stations, upgrading substations and lines.

11. That ZESA employs recruitment sciences to attract and appoint the best people into management positions and also for customer contact staff.

12. That ZESA increases the ambience of its premises

Customer contact premises, customer-contact staff and customer contact equipment are paramount in enhancing quality.

AREAS OF FUTURE RESEARCH

- An investigation into how ZESA can obtain greater value from recruitment and promotional sciences.
- Internal customer sensing on motivation (employee motivation research)
- An investigation into why projects for supply adequacy are not being implemented timeously in ZESA.

Chapter Summary

The chapter included conclusions, recommendations and areas of future research . It was concluded that there are gaps between literature utopia and ZESA's performance. It was also concluded that ZESA services were not reliable and consistent. ZESA staff was rated as unskilled and therefore needing training.. Recommendations were given e.g. building new state of the art buildings and modernizing ZESA equipment. It was recommended that ZESA needs to build more power stations to increase supply adequacy, reliability and consistency. Areas of future research included how ZESA can benefit from recruitment and promotional sciences, and an investigation into why projects for power adequacy are not being implemented timeously in ZESA. It was noted that ZESA had a `product adequacy' business slogan in the early 90's but to-date nothing has been done to that effect except for agreements with independent power producers.

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APPENDIX 1

I am a Chinhoyi University Of Technology student and am carrying out a research in which your honest responses to questions below is invaluable. Tick in the box for the response which tallies or best explains what you think about ZESA.

Tangibles

1. How do you rate ZESA buildings?
very good ☐ satisfactory ☐ poor ☐
2. How do you rate ZESA equipment and tools
very good ☐ satisfactory ☐ poor ☐
3. How do you rate ZESA banking halls
very good ☐ satisfactory ☐ poor ☐
4. How accessible are ZESA services
Very accessible ☐ satisfactory ☐ poor ☐
5. How do you rate ZESA corporate colours
very good ☐ satisfactory ☐ poor ☐

RESPONSIVENESS

1. How friendly is ZESA staff?
Very friendly ☐ satisfactory ☐ poor ☐
2. How satisfied are you with ZESA service?
Very satisfied ☐ satisfactory ☐ poor ☐
3. How responsive is ZESA to your needs?
Very responsive ☐ unsatisfactory ☐ poor ☐

1. Do you think you get value for money from ZESA

very much ☐ satisfactory ☐ poor ☐

2. Service in the banking halls is :

very good ☐ satisfactory ☐ poor ☐

ASSURANCE

1. How do you rate competence of ZESA STAFF?

Very Competent ☐ satisfactory ☐ poor ☐

2. How good are the guarantees for good service in ZESA

very good ☐ satisfactory ☐ poor ☐

3. Does ZESA compensate for poor service?

Very much ☐ satisfactorily ☐ poor ☐

4. How good is ZESA at paying when sued?

very good ☐ satisfactory ☐ poor ☐

5. How good is ZESA's after sales service?

Very good ☐ satisfactory ☐ poor ☐

6. How courteous is ZESA staff?

Very good ☐ satisfactory ☐ poor ☐

RELIABILITY

1. Are ZESA electricity services reliable?
very good ☐ satisfactory ☐ poor. ☐
2. Are ZESA banking hall services reliable
Yes ☐ No. ☐
3. Does ZESA offer consistent electricity services
very good ☐ satisfactory ☐ poor ☐
4. Does ZESA offer consistent Banking Hall services
very good ☐ satisfactory ☐ poor. ☐
5. Is ZESA equipment reliable
very good ☐ satisfactory ☐ poor ☐

EMPATHY

1. Are ZESA staff caring?
very good ☐ satisfactory ☐ poor ☐
2. Do you think ZESA staff empathize with customers' plight?
very good ☐ satisfactory ☐ poor ☐
3. Do you rate ZESA staff as being polite?
very polite ☐ satisfactory ☐ poor ☐
4. Does ZESA staff smile when giving service?
very much ☐ satisfactorily ☐ poor ☐
5. How do you rate the usefulness of ZESA staff?

very useful ☐ satisfactory ☐ poor ☐