

**Customer's perception of service quality in the commercial
banking sector of Nigeria:**

A case study of Skye Bank PLC. Nigeria

**Dissertation submitted in part fulfilment of the requirements for the degree
of Masters in Business Administration (International)**

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DECLARATION

I declare that all the work in this dissertation is entirely my own unless the words have been placed in inverted commas (“ ”) and referenced with the original source. A full reference section is included with this dissertation.

No part of the work has previously been submitted for assessment, in any form, either at Dublin Business School or any other Institute.

Signed:.....

Date:.....

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4.9: Do you feel the bank has convenient hours of operation (24 hours a day, seven days a week)?

4.10: Are you satisfied with the manner with which the staffs approach prospective customers?

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4.12: Do you feel the bank processes your transactions efficiently (so you do not need to wait for long)?

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4.14: On a scale of 1 to 5, where 1 stands for very poor and 5 for excellent, what is the level of your satisfaction with the chosen service(s)?

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ABSTRACT

The research study is an investigation into customer perceptions of service quality in the commercial banking sector of Nigeria: A case study of Skye Bank Plc. The overall goal of the study is to identify the level to which customers perceive service quality currently practised in Nigerian banking industry.

Both secondary and primary research methods were employed. About 120 Questionnaires were administered to customers of Skye Bank Plc. Nigeria. About 101 respondents mainly customers cooperated for this study. Analyses are presented in charts using Survey Monkey software.

The data collected through the questionnaire showed that the majority of the customers have positive perception towards bank services and are immensely satisfied with the quality of service except that the bank does not provide special services for the disabled and the elderly.

The sample size was limited to only a state in Nigeria and may not be entirely representative.

The study provides a meaningful insight into the efficacy of customer's perception of service quality in the Nigerian banking industry and a useful platform for future studies of service quality in financial services industry in developing countries.

CHAPTER 1: INTRODUCTION

CHAPTER ONE

Introduction

1.1 Background to the study

prior to the adoption of service quality in Nigerian banks, the Nigerian banking sector has been known to be characterised by many issues that have adversely affected the manner to which customers perceive service quality. This was due to frequent changes in economic policies made by the Nigerian government during the mid 1980's. A known fact was the introduction of the structural adjustment programme (SAP) in 1986 which led to a floodgate of banking licenses within the financial services industry.

Between the period of 1985 and 1993 merchant and commercial (licensed) banks operating in Nigeria increased from 41 to 120 (Central Bank of Nigeria, 1995). By 2004, there were 89 banks operating in Nigeria with many banks having capital base of less than US\$ 10 million, and about 3300 branches compared to 8 banks in South Korea with 4500 branches or one bank in South Africa with larger assets than all the 89 banks in Nigeria (Soludo .C., Central Bank of Nigeria 2004).

In order to revive the Nigerian banking industry, the Central Bank of Nigeria (CBN) on July 6th 2004 enacted a decree for banks in Nigeria to increase their share holder capital from the initial N2 billion to N25 billion with a deadline of December 31,2005. By the end of December 2005, 25 banks emerged from the 89 banks either through mergers and acquisitions or by means of organic growth.

Nevertheless, the study seeks to determine customer perception of service quality in the retail banking sector of Nigeria. To achieve the purpose of this study, one bank: Skye Bank Plc. that was involved in a merger during the bank consolidation of 2004 and 2005; will be used as a case study.

1.2 THE EVOLUTION OF THE NIGERIAN BANKING INDUSTRY

The first bank in Nigeria was established in 1892, the bank was known as the African Banking Corporation. The bank was under the control of the British Colonial masters and by the 1930s, several wholly or partially home-grown banks were established, but the majority of these banks collapsed subsequently. Banking legislations were nonexistent until 1952, at which point Nigeria had three foreign banks (the Bank of British West Africa presently known as First Bank PLC, Barclays Bank now known as Union Bank, and the British and French Bank presently known as United Bank of Africa) and two indigenous banks (the African Continental Bank and National Bank of Nigeria). The Central Bank of Nigeria was established by the CBN act of 1958 and by July 1, 1959 commenced operation and was authorised to regulate the Nigerian banking industry.

In the 1970s, the Nigerian government initiated direct controls in the banking system, through the means of ownership, as well as through credit controls and interest rate. As part of an “indigenisation wave” that had the goal of securing domestic majority ownership of strategically significant sectors, a number of foreign-owned banks were nationalised, since no indigenous purchaser could be found (Beck, *et al*; 2005).

Following the introduction of the Structural Adjustment Programme (SAP) in 1986, the Nigerian government embarked on a broad programme of financial liberalisation. Interest rates and entry requirement (in terms of granting bank licenses) were liberalised, and credit allocation quotas were loosened. The outcome was the dramatic expansion in the amount of banks operating in Nigeria. However, some of these banks attracted a significant share of banking industry and have brought benefits for customers in terms of greater contribution and improved services. Lewis and Stein, (2002) stressed that the number of banks tripled from 40 to nearly 120 in the late 1980s to 90s, employment in the financial services sector doubled and the contribution of the financial system to GDP almost tripled.

The boom in the financial services sector was accompanied by financial disintermediation. Deposits in financial institutions and credit to the private sectors, both relative to GDP, decreased over the period 1986 to 1992. The increasing number of banks and human capital in the financial industry was thus channelled into arbitrage and rent-seeking activity rather than financial intermediation (Beck, *et al*; 2005).

By the 90s, the Nigerian banking industry went from boom to burst; this was as a result of the increase in non-performing loans (NPL) and insider lending. Especially the merchant banking

sector where most of the foreign exchange speculators were concentrated- and the government owned banks showed increasing signs of distress. The central bank in 1991 introduced new prudential guidelines and also imposed a suspension on new licenses. Towards the end of the 90s, a number of the banks were liquidated either voluntarily or as result of actions of failed bank tribunal established in 1994 by the military government to prosecute cases of misconduct and fraud in the banking industry (Beck, *et al*; 2005).

However, the Nigerian banking industry has been transformed by the Central Bank of Nigeria's (CBN) July 16th 2004 introduction of the recapitalisation program. Through this process the numbers of banks were reduced from 89 to 25 by 2005 ending. Presently, the number of banks has now reduced to 24 following Standard Bank's takeover of IBTC. The banking licenses of 14 banks were revoked. Nevertheless, the objective of the policy thrust was to build and foster a competitive and healthy financial system to support development and to avoid systematic distress in the Nigerian banking sector (NPC, 2004; Soludo, 2006). The reform was to address: shallow dept of the Nigerian capital market, over-dependence of banking institutions on public sector and foreign exchange trading as sources of funding; somewhat erroneous returns made by banks to the monetary authorities, and noticeable lack of harmony between fiscal and monetary policies (NPC, 2004).

1.3 OVERVIEW OF SKYE BANK PLC

Skye Bank PLC has evolved into one of the top financial institutions in Nigeria, after its very seamless consolidation exercise in January 2006. It is a medium size bank comprising the merged Prudent Bank, EIB International Bank, Reliance Bank, Cooperative Bank and Bond Bank. Building on the legacy of two of its largest constituent banks, Skye Bank has become an active mid-sized operator, with full service operations (Afrinvest, 2009).

The bank operates as a group that provides facets of financial products and services powered by a purpose built technological framework that supports the service delivery process to customers.

With a historical ownership and business relationship with the Lagos State Government, the bank remains an active player in the sub-national public sector space, particularly regarding revenue collection and public sector financing business (Afrinvest, 2009).

The bank is publicly quoted with over 300,000 shareholders that have shareholding structure that puts no more than 5% in the control of any one individual or company. To date the group operates out of over 250 branches and transaction centres across Nigeria serviced by over 6000 professional bankers and business experts within N1 Trillion (\$7 Billion) balance sheet size (www.skyebankng.com). In addition, Skye Bank also operates in the traditional corporate and commercial banking space including exposure to telecommunications, oil and gas, power, manufacturing, transportation and infrastructure financing business. As part of its full-service ambitions, the group operates mid-sized subsidiary companies focused on insurance, capital markets, mortgage origination and trustees/asset management.

In respect of the groups' growth and expansion strategy, Skye bank began the process of exploring commercial and business opportunities in other African countries. The group concentrated mainly on West African countries. The following are the countries currently covered under the expansion project Sierra Leone, The Gambia, Liberia, Sao Tome and Principe, Angola, Congo (DRC), Guinea and Equatorial Guinea. The primary focus is to develop competencies in countries with similar business culture as Nigeria.

1.4 RESEARCH OBJECTIVE

Saunders, *et al.*, (2007) emphasised that a research may begin with a general focus research question that generates more detailed research questions, or the general focus research question as a base from which research objectives could be written. The research objectives of this study are:

- To identify the factors influencing customer perception of service quality in the Nigerian retail Banks.
- To evaluate how well the bank satisfies its customers
- To assess the perception of the retail bank customers towards bank service quality.

1.5 RESEARCH QUESTION:

It is of great importance of defining clear research questions at the beginning of the research process. The importance of this cannot be overemphasised. The key criteria of successful research will be whether you have a set of clear conclusions drawn from the data collected (Saunders *et al.*, 2007). However the research question of this study is:

- How do retail bank customers perceive service quality in Skye Bank PLC.?

1.6 RESEARCH HYPOTHESES:

A hypothesis can be defined as the testable proposition about the relationship between two or more events or concepts Saunders *et al*; (2007). Therefore the research hypotheses for this research are:

- There is a relationship between service quality to customer satisfaction
- customer satisfaction has a positive significant impact on customer loyalty

1.7 RECIPIENT FOR THE RESEARCH

The principal recipient of this dissertation entitled: “Customer Perception of Service Quality in the Commercial Banking Sector of Nigeria”: A case study of Skye Bank Plc.

- Dublin Business School.
- Business Research Methods Module Tutor.
- The Liverpool John Moore University.
- Skye Bank Plc Nigeria.

However, the research would be of immense importance to all stakeholders in the retail banking sector.

1.8 SCOPE AND LIMITATIONS OF THE RESEARCH

The research project aims to study customer’s perception of service quality in the Nigerian retail banking sector: Skye Bank Plc was adopted as a case study. The scope is to determine whether customers are satisfied with the level of service quality that is been provided by the bank.

The research would involve surveying customers of Skye Bank PLC. Furthermore, an analysis of existing literature and data available on the topic of service quality will be undertaken. This would involve Journals, books, and internet articles that relate to this topic.

Limitations

There are few limitations in relation to the study. These limitations are outlined below-

- Firstly, is that the research was focused only on Skye Bank PLC Nigeria as a representative of the banking industry.
- The study was delayed as approval had to be acquired from the management, which led to cutting of the planned sample size as a result of time constraint.

1.9 ORGANISATION OF THE DISSERTATION

The dissertation is divided into six chapters and they are listed below.

1.9.1 Chapter 1: Introduction

This chapter presents a brief background of the intended research topic, and it also defines the research objective and question. In this chapter, the hypotheses are highlighted, as well as the research scope and limitations, and contribution of the research.

1.9.2 Chapter 2: Literature Review

This chapter starts with an introduction on the general research and further discussions on the topics that relate to the topic of the research. It also outlines the views of key theorists in services marketing and it will also discuss the limitations related to their works.

1.9.3 Chapter 3: Research Methodology

This chapter outlines the details and explanation of the term research methodology, critical review of the methodology and the underlying principle for selecting it will be outlined in this chapter. The research philosophy for the dissertation would be discussed in this chapter, as well as the population selection and sampling process for the primary research.

1.9.4 Chapter 4: Data analysis and finding

This chapter presents the data analysis and the findings from the primary research conducted during the study.

1.9.5 Chapter 5: Conclusion and Recommendation

The chapter highlights and gives a summary of the main findings in relation to the original aim of the study, and also gives the appropriate recommendations based on the results obtained.

1.9.6 Chapter 6: Self Reflections

This chapter gives an analysis of self reflection on learning. This section would also present an evaluation of the researcher's skills and development throughout the researcher masters degree programme.

1.10 Major contribution of the study

Relevant contributions are made in the different sections of the research work. The literature review emphasises on the factors influencing customer perception of service quality in the banking industry irrespective of the geographical location. Also, the research, establishes the relationship between service quality, customer satisfaction and customer expectation as well as providing tools for the Nigerian banking industry to improve on service quality.

CHAPTER 2: LITERATURE REVIEW

CHAPTER 2

LITERATURE REVIEW

2.1 Introduction

In this chapter, revision of the relevant literature is undertaken to provide an overview of the secondary data referred for the development of this research project. The chapter is divided into various sections. The first section starts on with the outlook pertaining to the meaning of services, service quality as well as the need for and impact of service quality in banks and the determinants of service quality and conceptual models in relation to the term service quality. The next presents the literature in reference to customer satisfaction, customer loyalty and customer expectations.

2.2 What are Services?

Concepts of service are of great importance, in developed countries as well as in the developing countries, this is because of the impact it has in businesses across the world. Kotler, *et al.*, (2006) defined services as a form of product that consists of activities, benefits, or satisfactions offered for sale that are essentially intangible and do not result in the ownership of anything. Examples are banking, hotel, airline, retail, tax preparation, and home repair services. Gronroos, (1990) was of the opinion that service is a process consisting of series of more or less intangible activities that normally, but not necessarily, take place in interactions between the customer and service employees and or physical resources or goods or systems of the service provider which are provided as solutions to customer problems. Zeithaml, *et al.*, (1985), summarised the distinct characteristics between goods and services in that services are heterogeneous, intangible, inseparable, and perishable which cannot be stored. This results in heterogeneity and high variability in supply and performance of services. Service delivery also depends on the producer (bank), who is not always able to guarantee homogeneity in service delivery, so that services performed may not be those promoted to consumers (Langeard, *et al.*, 1981).

Service has three basic attributes. The first are processes consisting of activities, second being the extent produced and consumed concurrently and thirdly the customer participation in the production process to an extent. The differences between goods and pure services are intangibility, simultaneous production, consumption and heterogeneity. At the designing stage, a proper service system keeps in view the organisations service specifications and competitors service specifications. Service organisations aim to keep their customers satisfied by delivering service according to the standards and functions on quality parameters.

Increase in the service industry across the world has made organisations realise the need to differentiate from the competitors in some form or the other by providing better service to its customers and at the same time focus on service quality to attain financial gain. Service quality has become a critical factor in enabling firms to achieve a differential advantage over their competitors, and it thus makes a significant contribution to profitability and productivity.

2.3 Service Quality

Nejati, *et al.* (2009) emphasised that service quality as a concept, has received much attention in service marketing literature because of its sustainability as a source of competitive advantage. The concept of service quality developed from the marketing discipline due to the difficulty in applying product quality definitions to services (Gronroos, 1982; Lehtinen and Lehtinen, 1982). Numerous researchers have given different definitions for service quality. Kasper, *et al.*, (1999) as cited by Nejati, *et al.*, (2009) defined service quality as “the extent to which the service, the service process and the service organisation can satisfy the expectations of the user”.

Parasuraman, *et al.*, (1988) defined service quality as “a function of the difference between service expected and customers’ perceptions of the actual service delivered”. Gronroos, (1978) suggests that service quality is built of two components-technical quality and functional quality. Technical quality refers to what the service provider delivers during the service provision while functional quality is how the service employee provides the service.

Parasuraman, *et al.*, (1985); Dawkins and Reichheld, (1990); Reichheld and Sasser, (1990) and Zeithaml *et al.*, (1990) are of the view that in this “customer age”, delivering quality

service is considered an essential strategy for success and survival in today's competitive environment.

Based on this notion, the relevance of service quality can be seen a key driver of growth to organisations, especially the banking industry.

2.3.1 The need for and Impact of Service Quality in banks

Banks in over the world offer similar kinds of services (Lim & Tang, 2000), quickly matching their competitors' innovations. Banks have understood the importance of concentrating on service quality as a means to increase customer satisfaction and loyalty, and to improve their core competence and business performance (Kunst & Lemmink, 2000; Stafford, 1996). This understanding stems from believing that service quality is difficult for competitors to copy (Reichheld & Sasser, 1990).

Johnston, (1995) stated that service quality is customers' overall impressions of an organisation's services in terms of relative superiority or inferiority. It should not only meet but also exceed customer expectations and should include a continuous improvement process (Lloyd-Walker & Cheung, 1998). Customers evaluate banks' performance mainly on the basis of their personal contact and interaction (Grönroos, 1990). Judgments are formed by comparing service expectations with the service actually received (Bloemer, et al., 1998).

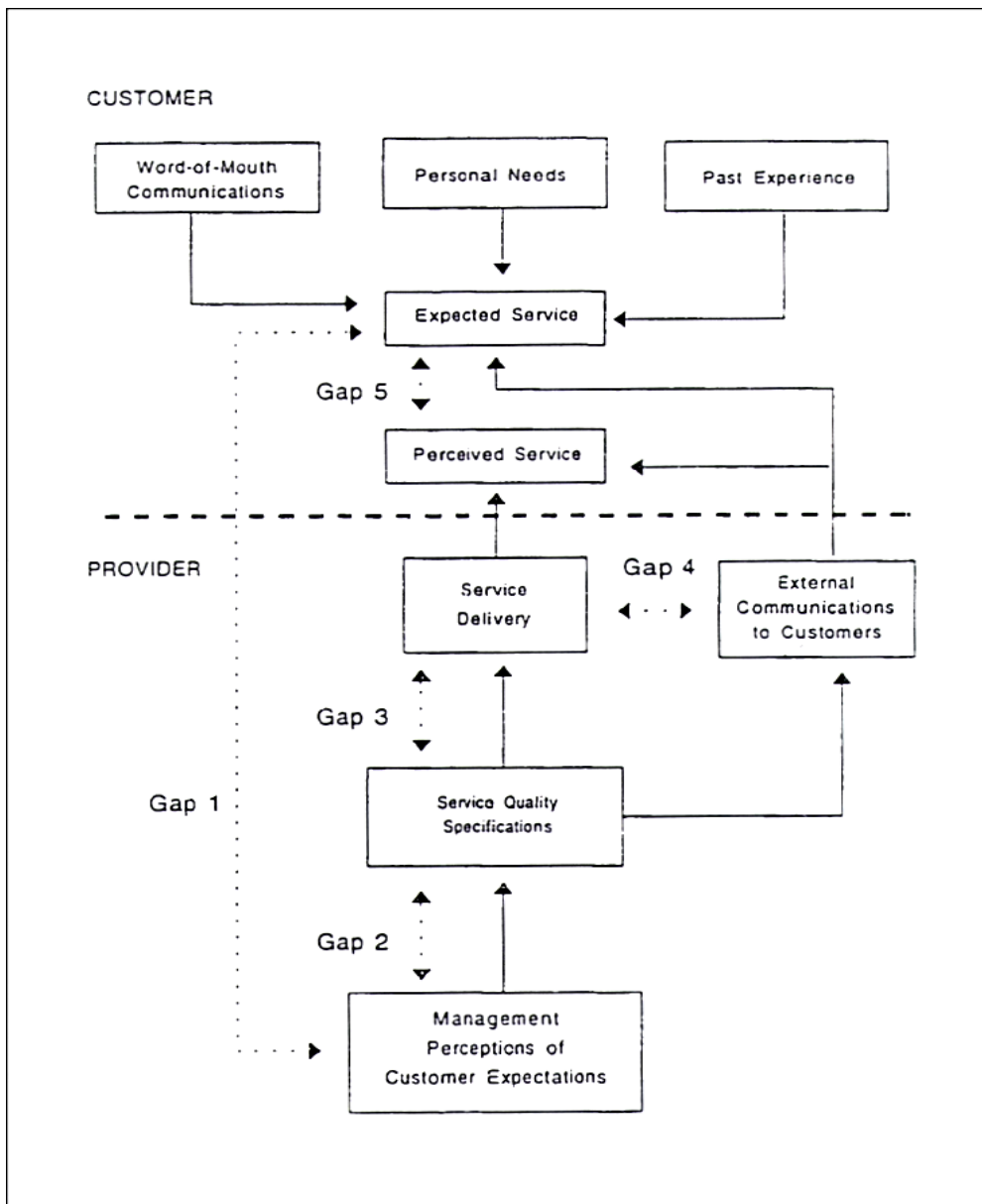
In terms of qualitative benefits, customer satisfaction and loyalty have been perceived as major concerns; it is widely accepted that a business must concentrate on pursuing service quality to achieve customer satisfaction because survival of the business greatly depends on that satisfaction (Naumann, 1995). Service quality determines the rate of customer satisfaction, customer loyalty and ultimately, the competitive advantage of an organisation. (Leonard and Sasser 1982; Cronin and Taylor, 1992; Gammie 1992; Hallowell, 1996; Chang and Chen, 1998; Gummesson, 1998; Lasser *et al.*, 2000; Silvestro and Cross, 2000; Newman, 2001; Sureshchander *et al.*, 2002; Guru, 2003; Seth, *et al.*, 2005) all agreed that "During the past few decades service quality has become a major area of attention to practitioners, managers and researchers owing to its strong impact on business performance, lower costs, customer satisfaction, customer loyalty and profitability".

Parasuraman, *et al.*, (1985) proposes that service quality is a function of the differences between expectations and performance along the quality dimensions.

In the report by Lewis, (1991), an international comparison of bank customers' expectations and perceptions of service quality were made. It was found that in spite of the existence of very high expectations of service quality and high perceptions services received, gaps did exist.

Quality in the financial service industry (banks) entails focus on customer care and customer-centric attributes. The success of any business model depends not just on margins but more on ensuring the delivery of value based services to the customers. Delivery of quality service depends on identifying the gaps between the perceived service quality the customer receives and what they expect (Zeithaml, Parasuraman and Berry, 1990). Figure 2.1 shows these gaps.

Fig 2.1: Service Quality Gap Model



Source: Fig. 2.1 presents the service quality gap model by (Parasuraman, et al. 1985).

The gap identified in the Figure 1 identifies Gap 1 as the difference between what customers expect of a service and what management perceives customers to be expecting. Gap 2 shows the difference between what management perceives customers as expecting and the quality

specifications set service delivery. Gap 3 shows the difference between the quality specifications set for service delivery and the actual quality of service delivery. Even if Gap 1 is closed and customer expectations have been accurately determined, Gap 2 and 3 could probably create a problem. Gap 4 show the actual service delivery that is described in the organisations external communications. This gap is concerned with the actual performance of service and what the organisation promised to deliver in its external communications. Finally, the importance of Gap 5 is to evaluate the difference between customer's expectation of service and their perception of service actually delivered. The goal of Nigerian banks must be to close this bank or at least narrow them as far as possible (Owusu-Frimpong, 2008).

2.3.2 Perceived Service Quality in Banks

Perceived service quality is a consumers judgement (a form of attitude) that has an outcome based on comparisons consumers make between their expectations and their perceptions of the actual service performance (Lewis, 1989) as cited by Bahia and Nantel, (2000). It is also considered to be a dynamic phenomenon that changes with the receipt of various types of delivered service (Boulding, *et al*; Hamer *et al.*, 1999; Hamer, *et al* 2006).

Sureshchander, *et al.*, (2001) emphasised that perceived service quality portrays a general; overall appraisal of service and it could occur at multiple levels in an organisation for instance banks.

Bahia and Nantel, (2000), pointed out that, in the banking sector, perceived service quality results from the difference between customers' perceptions for the services offered by the bank (received service) and their expectations in comparison with the banks that offer such services (expected service).

Parasuraman, *et al.*, (1988) suggested a five dimension construct of perceived service quality:

- Tangibles
- Reliability
- Responsiveness
- Assurance; and
- Empathy

These five dimensions of dimensions of perceived service quality constitute the framework of SERVQUAL, probably the best known universal scale designed to measure perceived service quality in banks.

2.4 Customer Perception of Service Quality

Customer perception of service quality influences consumer behaviour (Bitner, 1990) and intention (Henning-Thurau and Klee, 1997; Dutta and Dutta, 2009). Organisations can provide the best services to their utmost capabilities but if the customer does not perceive them to be of quality, all is vain. Thus it is very essential for the service provider to understand how customers can perceive the service as quality service and carry a euphoric feeling (Dutta and Dutta, 2009). It is the task of the marketing people to understand the factors affecting customer perception, elements of service quality and satisfaction to have a competitive edge and to create a perceptual difference. If all these are considered and then the service provider targets the customers with a total service experience, the customer perceives the service as quality and spreads positive word of mouth. Thus perception is one of the factors affecting customer satisfaction (Zeithaml and Bitner, 2003; Dutta and Dutta 2009).

However, Customer perceptions are those processes that shape and produce what one actually experiences. Customer perceptions are influenced by many external and internal factors such as cultural, social, psychological and economic factors, making the way in which customer perceives products and service highly subjective (Reisinger and Wryszak, 1994). Therefore measuring customer perception of service is important as the customer's evaluation of service and future behaviour depends on the customer perception of service.

In a situation where there is a gap between perception of service and expectation, where perception falls completely short of expectation after comparison or where service meets or exceeds customer expectation, it can result in either a dissatisfied or a satisfied customer after the service encounter.

2.4.1 Factors influencing customer perception of service quality

Zeithaml and Bitner, (1996) identified four factors that influence customer perception of service quality: They are- service encounters, the evidence of service, image and price. These form customers overall perception of service quality, satisfaction and value.

1. **Service encounters:** Verbal and non-verbal behaviour are as important determinants of quality as tangible cues such as the equipment and physical settings (Zeithaml & Bitner, 1996).
2. **Evidence of service:** due to the intangibility of services and the simultaneity of production and consumption, customers are searching for clues to help them determine the level of service. Three major categories of evidence have been identified:
 - **Employees-** how they are dressed, their personal appearance and their attitude and behaviour
 - **Process-** whether the service is complex, bureaucratic; and
 - **Physical evidence-** all the tangible aspects of the service such as reports, equipment, statement, and in most cases the physical facility where the service is offered (the branch).
3. **Image and reputation.** The set of perceptions reflected in the associations held in the memory of the consumer (Keller, 1993; Kangis & Voulkelatos 1997). These can be specific (e.g. hours of operation, ease of access), or in terms of an intangible nature (e.g. trustworthiness, tradition, reliability). A favourable image can influence positively perceptions of quality, value and satisfaction.
4. **Price-** if the price is high, customers are likely to expect high quality, and their actual perceptions will be influenced accordingly. If the price is too low, customers might have doubts about both the ability of the organization to deliver quality and about the actual level of service received.

2.5 The Determinants of Service Quality

Table 2.1

1. Reliability- Reliability involves consistency of performance and dependability. It means that the firm performs the service right the first time. It also means that the firm honours its promises. Specifically, it involves:
 - Accuracy in billing;
 - Keeping records correctly;
 - performing the service at the designated time.
2. Responsiveness- This is concerned with the willingness and readiness of employees to provide service to the customers. It involves timeliness of service:
 - Mailing a transaction slip immediately;
 - Calling the customer back immediately
 - Giving prompt service (e.g., setting up appointments quickly).
3. Competence- this means the knowledge and skills required to provide services
 - Knowledge and skill of the contact personnel;
 - Knowledge and skill of operational support personnel;
 - Research capability of the organization, e.g., securities brokerage firm.
4. Access- This is related to easy accessibility of service people to people to contact and service location, in other words it involves approachability and ease of contact.
 - The service is easily accessible by telephone (lines are not busy and they don't put you on hold);
 - Waiting time to receive service (e.g., at a bank) is not extensive;

- Convenient hours of operation;
 - Convenient location of service facility.
5. Courtesy- Courtesy involves politeness, respect, consideration, and friendliness of contact personnel (including receptionists, telephone operators, etc). It includes:
- Consideration for the customer's property
 - Clean and neat appearance of public contact personnel
6. Communication- This is referred to as informing customers about service and process. In other words keeping them informed in a language they understand and listening to them. It may entail that the service organization has to adjust its language for different consumers-increasing the level of sophistication with a well-educated customer and speaking simply and plainly with a novice. It involves:
- Explaining the service itself;
 - Explaining how much the service will cost;
 - Explaining the trade-offs between service and cost;
 - Assuring the consumer that a problem will be handled
7. Credibility- Involves trustworthiness, honesty. It involves having the customer's best interests at heart. Contributing to credibility are:
- Company name;
 - Company reputation;
 - Personal characteristics of the contact personnel;
 - The degree of hard sell involved in interactions with the customers.
8. Security- this is the freedom from danger, risk, or doubt. It involves:
- Physical safety (will I get mugged at the ATM?);
 - Financial security (Does the company know where my stock certificate is?);

- Confidentiality (are my dealings with the company private?).
9. Understanding- this involves making an effort to understand the customer's needs. It also involves:
- Learning the customer's specific requirements;
 - Providing individualised attention;
 - Recognizing the regular customer.
10. Tangibles- it includes the physical evidence of the service.
- Physical facilities;
 - Appearance and personnel;
 - Tools or equipment used to provide the service;
 - Physical representations of the service, such as plastic credit card or a bank statement;
 - Other customers in the service facility.

Sourced from- Parasuraman, A., Zeithaml, V.A., Berry, L.L., (1985).

2.6 SERVQUAL MODEL

One of the notable models used in service quality framework is the SERVQUAL. It is a model that accounts for both expectations and perceived performance (Yu, *et al.*, 2008). The model proposes that customers evaluate the quality of a service on five distinct dimensions: reliability, responsiveness, assurance, empathy, and tangibles. The SERVQUAL instrument comprise of 22 statements for assessing consumer perceptions and expectations with their perceptions of service delivered by the service providers (Zeithaml, *et al.*, 1990; Munhurrun, *et al.*, 2010). It can also be argued that the factor underpinning the delivering of good perceived service quality is actually meeting the expectations of the customers. Thus, excellent service quality is exceeding the customers' expectations. Zeithaml and Bitner, (2000) suggested that customer expectations are beliefs about a service that serve as standards against which service performance is judged.

Parasuraman, *et al.*, (1988) as cited in Munhurrun, *et al.* (2010) suggested that customer expectations are what the customers think a service should offer rather than what might be on offer. Zeithaml, *et al.*, (1990) identified four factors that influence customer's expectations: word-of-mouth communications; personal needs; past experience; and external communications. A gap is created when the perceptions of the delivered service is not as per the expectations of the customer. This gap is addressed by identifying and implementing strategies that affect perceptions, or expectations, or both (Parasuraman *et al.*, 1985; Zeithaml *et al.*, 1990; Munhurrun, *et al.*, 2010). Parasuraman, *et al.*, (1988) stated that SERVQUAL had been designed to be "applicable across a broad spectrum of services" and the format could be adapted to fit specific needs, and that it would be most valuable when used to track service quality trends periodically. Parasuraman, *et al.*, (1988) proposed that the SERVQUAL model could be extended to measure gaps in quality and therefore be used as a diagnostic tool to enable management to identify service quality shortfalls. The gap score is calculated by the perception statement being deducted from the expectation statements. If any gap scores turn out to be positive then this implies that expectations are actually being exceeded. This would allow the service manager to review whether they need to re-deploy resources to areas of underperformance (Wisniewski, 2001; Munhurrun, 2010). The SERVQUAL model ascertains the level of service quality based on the five key dimensions and also identifies where gaps in service exist and to what extent.

- Reliability- the ability to perform the promised service dependably and accurately
- Responsiveness- the willingness to help customers and to provide prompt service
- Assurance- the knowledge and courtesy of employees and their ability to convey trust and confidence
- Empathy- the provision of caring, individualised attention to customers.
- Tangibles- the appearance of physical facilities, equipment, personnel, and communication materials.

Despite the fact that the SERVQUAL instrument has been widely adopted in service marketing research, it has received tremendous criticism from various authors. (Asubonteg, *et al.*, 1996; Buttle, *et al.*, 1996) argued that there has been concern about the central role of expectation and the significance of reductive "gap" as a measure of quality. (Babakus and

Mangold, 1989; Carman, 1990; Bresinger and Lambert, 1990; Finn and Lamb, 1991; Babakus and Boller, 1992; Spathis *et al.*, 2004) affirmed this by highlighting that the universality of SERVQUAL dimensions across different types of service has been questioned. Gilmore and Carson, (1992) criticised the SERVQUAL model by establishing that it lays emphasis on service and product dimensions and it neglects other dimensions of the marketing mix, especially price.

On the other hand, Bahia and Nantel, (2000) consequently came up with a model called bank service quality (BSQ). Their aim was to use it in measuring perceived service quality in retail banking. The (BSQ) model is an extension of the original ten dimensions of Parasuraman, *et al.* (1985). Bahia and Nantel, (2000) incorporated additional items such as courtesy and access and items representing the marketing mix of “7Ps” (product/service, place, process, people, physical environment, price, promotion).). Bahia and Nantel, (2000) also suggested that the instrument consists of 31 items of service quality relevant to the banking sector. These 31 items are distributed across six dimensions:

1. Effectiveness and assurance
2. Access
3. Price
4. Tangibles
5. Service portfolio and
6. Reliability

Effectiveness and assurance- effectiveness refers to the effective delivery (particularly the friendliness and courtesy of employees) of service and the ability of staff to inspire feeling of security. Assurance is the ability of staff to exhibit communication skills and to deal confidentially with the client’s requests. Access looks at the speed of service delivery. Price measures the cost of service delivery. Tangibles assess the appearance and cleanliness of a bank’s physical facility. Service portfolio assessed the range, consistency, and innovation of the bank’s products. Reliability measures the ability to perform the promised service accurately and without any form of error.

Although, the SERVQUAL approach has its shortcomings, it has important advantages among which are: acceptance as a standard for assessing different dimensions of service quality and validity for a number of service situations.

2.6.1 Application of SERVQUAL In the retail banking industry

The retail banking industry was one of five service categories that were used in the original development of the SERVQUAL scale (Parasuraman, *et al*, 1988; Ladhari, 2009). Studies by Parasuraman, *et al.*, (2009) as cited by Ladhari, (2009) reported that the SERVQUAL scale exhibited good reliability and validity in this context. However, relatively few subsequent studies have replicated the use of the SERVQUAL scale in banking industry (Arasli, *et al* 2005; Lam 2002; Zhou, *et al* 2002; Chi Cui, C., *et al* 2003; Zhou, L. 2004; Ladhari, 2009).

Lam, (2002) used SERVQUAL in the banking sector in Macau (China). Rather than the five generic SERVQUAL dimensions, the results of the Macau study suggested that six distinct dimensions existed: (i) ‘assurance’; (ii) ‘tangibles’; (iii) ‘reliability’; (iv) ‘responsiveness’; (v) ‘empathy 1’ (tacit understanding of need); and (vi) ‘empathy 2’ (convenient operating hours). Regression analysis showed that ‘assurance’ and ‘reliability’ were the most important dimensions in explaining overall service quality. Nevertheless, Lam, (2002) further reported that the items comprising the dimensions of ‘assurance’, ‘responsiveness’ and ‘empathy’ tended to load in an unstable manner.

Zhou, *et al.*, (2002) used data collected from surveys of Chinese bank customers to examine the dimensionality and predictive validity of SERVQUAL. The 22 items yielded a three-factor solution for ‘performance’ scores (and for ‘gap scores’), but a six-factor pattern emerged for the ‘expectations’ scores.

The result showed that neither the performance perception scores nor gap scores were significant determinants of customer satisfaction or switching behaviours.

Chi Cui, *et al.*, (2003) replicated SERVQUAL in the banking sector in South Korea and reported that the original five dimensions were not confirmed in their sample. They concluded that SERVQUAL scale should not be used without appropriate adaption in the banking sector in Korea.

Zhou, (2004) explored the multidimensional nature of the SERVPERF scale in the banking sector in China. The author found a three-factor pattern. The first dimension, 'empathy/responsiveness' was mainly composed of items related to the original dimensions of 'empathy' and 'responsiveness' from the SERVPERF scale. The second dimension, 'reliability/assurance' contained items from the original dimensions of 'reliability' and 'assurance'. The third dimension, 'tangibles' represented the 'tangibility' dimension of SERVPERF scale.

Arasli, *et al*, (2005) replicated SERVQUAL in the Cyprus banking sector and found a three-dimensional structure. The items for the 'responsiveness' and 'empathy' dimensions loaded on the same dimension, and the 'assurance' dimension was eliminated because of poor factor loading.

2.8 Customer Satisfaction

Gerpoortt, *et al.*, (2001) as cited by Hansemark, (2004) described customer satisfaction as a direct determining factor in customer loyalty, which in turn, is a central determinant of customer retention. Hansemark, (2004) description suggests that customer satisfaction is based on desired customer's service experience.

Moutinho and Brownlie, (1989) explored the nature and direction of the satisfactions that are delivered to consumers of bank services. The authors found out that respondents had high levels satisfaction with regard to the location and availability of branches and ATMs, and acceptance of the current levels of banking fees: but expressed some cautions in their evaluation of new and improved service.

Luo and Homburg, (2007) pointed out that customer satisfaction has emerged as a key variable in many firms, and it has been shown to affect many other performance-related variables. Customer satisfaction with an organisation's products or services is often perceived as a driver for the organisation's success and long-term competitive advantage. Management theorists and consultants have urged organisations to focus on their customer's needs and satisfaction. Over the past decades, the concern of managers has been the need to focus on customer satisfaction, as a route to sustained high performance. Burns *et al.*, (2006) regarded customer satisfaction as a primary determining factor of repeat patronising and purchasing behaviour. Owing to this, integration of customer satisfaction into service quality obviously contributes to the organisation.

Satisfaction has been conceived in numerous ways in literatures of marketing. Researchers such as Cronin and Taylor, (1992) as cited by Pappu *et al.*, (2006:5) have debated that satisfaction is a transaction-specific measure. Satisfaction is viewed by other researcher like Anderson *et al.*, (1994) as an overall evaluation based on the total purchase consumption and experience. Generally, satisfaction has been conceived in terms of whether the product or service meets the consumer's needs and expectation.

Piercy, (1995) expresses that many management theorists and consultants urge companies to focus on their customer's needs and satisfaction – this is common to strategic management, the marketing concept, the pursuit of excellence, market-orientation, total quality management, relationship marketing strategies and service quality theorist's. In essence, the needs of customers and the extent to which they are met will have a significant impact on organisations.

Furthermore, authors like Grönroos, (1991) and Kotler and Armstrong, (2006) emphasized that customer satisfaction is an emotional attitude generated towards a product, resulting from the comparison of what was expected and what was received. That is, customers compare their expectations from a product or service with their perceptions of what they received eventually. The customers are satisfied if perceptions meet or exceed expectations while on the other hand; they are unsatisfied with the service if expectations are not met.

Blanchard and Galloway, (1994); Heskett *et al.*, (1990) as cited by Hallowell (1996) argues that customer satisfaction is the result of a customer's perception of the value received in a transaction or relationship – where value equals perceived service quality relative to price and customer. Customer satisfaction is an immensely important matter for marketing managers, especial those in the banking industry.

Bennett, (2004) states that the most mentioned outcome of the marketing process is a satisfied customer. Levesque *et al.* (1996) expresses that in banking, there is an ongoing relationship between the service provider and the customer. On the other hand, Bennett (2004) disagrees with the statement by suggesting that there is no positive relationship between customer satisfaction and repeat purchase in the banking industry. (Bloemer *et al.* 1998; Pont and Maquilken 2005; Leverin and Liljander 2006) agreed that customer satisfaction with a bank relationship is a good basis for loyalty, though it does not guarantee it, because even satisfied customers switch banks (Nordman, 2004). From the above, it can be affirmed that there exists a relationship between customer satisfaction, loyalty and marketing process in the banking industry.

2.9 Customer loyalty

The most widely accepted definition of loyalty is by (Jacoby and Kyner, 1973; McMullan and Gilmore 2008), who described loyalty as the biased (i.e. non-random), behavioural response (i.e. purchase), expressed over time, by some decision making unit, with respect to one or more alternative brands out of a set of such brands, and is a function of psychological (i.e. decision making, evaluation) processes.

However, Oliver (1999) criticises this with similar definitions (Dick and Basu, 1994), based on the collective failure to provide a unitary definition and the reliance on three phases; cognition, affect and behavioural intention. These three phases lead to a deeply held commitment, predicting that consumers develop loyalty in a linear fashion. Oliver, (1999) lays more emphasis on situational influences adding a fourth phase, action characterized by commitment, preference and consistency while recognising the dynamic nature of the marketing environment. Thus he defines customer loyalty as a deeply held commitment to rebuy or repatronize a preferred product or service consistently in the future, causing repetitive same brand or same brand-set purchasing, despite situational influences and marketing efforts (Oliver, 1999). He does not distinguish between proactive loyalty and situational loyalty calculated by frequency of purchase. The consumer frequently buying the brand and settling for no other determines proactive loyalty. Situational loyalty is exhibited when the consumer purchases a product or service for a special occasion. This is particularly important within services, which are purchased annually. Thus customer loyalty is not uniquely concerned with frequency and depth of purchase (behavioural dimensions) of one brand over another; rather as the situation or opportunity arises.

Syzmigin & Carrigan, (2001) as cited in Ehigie (2006) was of the opinion that customer loyalty is a feeling of commitment on the part of the consumer to a product, brand, marketer, or services above and beyond that for the competitors in the market-place, which results in repeat purchase. A research by Fisher (2001) on customer loyalty stated that a loyal customer to a bank is, thus, one that will stay with same service provider, is likely to take new products with the bank and is likely to recommend the bank services.

Evidence abounds (e.g. Duncan & Elliot, 2002; Kish, 2000; Ehigie, 2006) showing links between customer loyalty and organisation profitability, implying that any organisation with loyal customers has considerable competitive advantage.

2.10 Customer Expectation

Customers are the core focus of any organization and thus of prime importance to the marketers. It is important for the service providers to know the level of customer expectations so that they can meet and even exceed them to gain maximum customer satisfaction. Hence understanding customer expectations is a prerequisite for delivering superior service (Parasuraman *et al.*, 1991).

In a highly competitive industry like the financial service sector, expectation can thus rise quickly.

According to Zeithaml *et al* (2009), Customer expectations are beliefs about a service that serves as standards or reference points to which the performance of the service is judged. It was further affirmed that expectations have been viewed as benchmarks consumers use to determine satisfaction (Cadotte *et al.*, 1987; Churchill and Surprenant, 1982; Boulding *et al.*, 1993; Churchill and Surprenant, 1982; Parasuramnn *et al* 1985; 1988; Licata *et al* 2008).

However, Boulding *et al* (1993), maintain two principal conceptualisations of expectation exist. The first holds that customer expectations are viewed as predictions made by customers about what is likely to happen during an impending transaction or exchange. Alternatively the term expectation has been used to represent what customers ideally want which is known as - normative expectations. These are expressions of what the customer believe a service provider should offer rather than would offer. In broad terms, customer expectations are formed before a service is delivered and the performance of that service is based on if the service delivered meets or exceeds the customer expectations.

Knowing what the customer expects is the first and possibly most critical factor in delivering quality service. Getting what customers want wrong, can result in losing a customer to another company who meets the target, expending money and resources in wrong places and not surviving in a fiercely competitive market (Zeithaml, 2009).

2.11 Conclusion

This chapter described the literature reviewed for the purpose of this research, as there have been no studies conducted regarding to customer perception of service quality in Nigerian banks. A comprehensive study was undertaken. Following the finalisation of the literature review, it was understood that the concept of service quality is of great importance not only to financial service industries but also to all profit oriented organisations. It can be understood from the literature that enhancing service quality and making customers satisfied, leads to customer loyalty which in turn result in a successful organisation, despite the competition in the business world.

CHAPTER 3: RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

3.1 Introduction

This chapter presents a review of research methodology used in this study. The purpose is to highlight the key activities that were undertaken, and to indicate their relevance to the study. The research Philosophy, research approach, research strategy and design are discussed in this chapter.

3.2 Distinguishing between research method and methodology

Mayor and Blackmon (2005) described research as a process of finding out information and investigating the unknown to solve a problem, it involves identifying a problem and understanding what information is relevant to addressing that problem, getting the information and interpreting that information and its context.

Balnaves and Caputi (2001) refer to the term method as the actual techniques like questionnaire and procedures used to quantify and collect data. Research method can be described as techniques and tools employed in obtaining and analysing research data, which include questionnaires, observations, and interviews, statistical and non-statistical techniques (Saunders *et al.*, 2007).

Hancock, (2002) describes methodology as all these matters regarding the structure and design of the research study. It deals with issues like:

- The type of information required
- The research design
- The method of collecting data
- The source of information- also known as the sample

Saunders *et al.*, (2007) explained that research methodology is a theory of how research should be undertaken, including the theoretical and philosophical assumptions upon which research is based and the implications of these for the methods adopted. Research methodology embraces the research purpose, philosophy, research approach, research strategy, time horizons and data collection methods that are applied in the study. This is in relation to the comparisons by (Saunders *et al.*, 2007) on the different layers of research process in which is highlighted in the form of research onion (as shown in figure 3.1).

Figure 3.1: The Research Process Onion

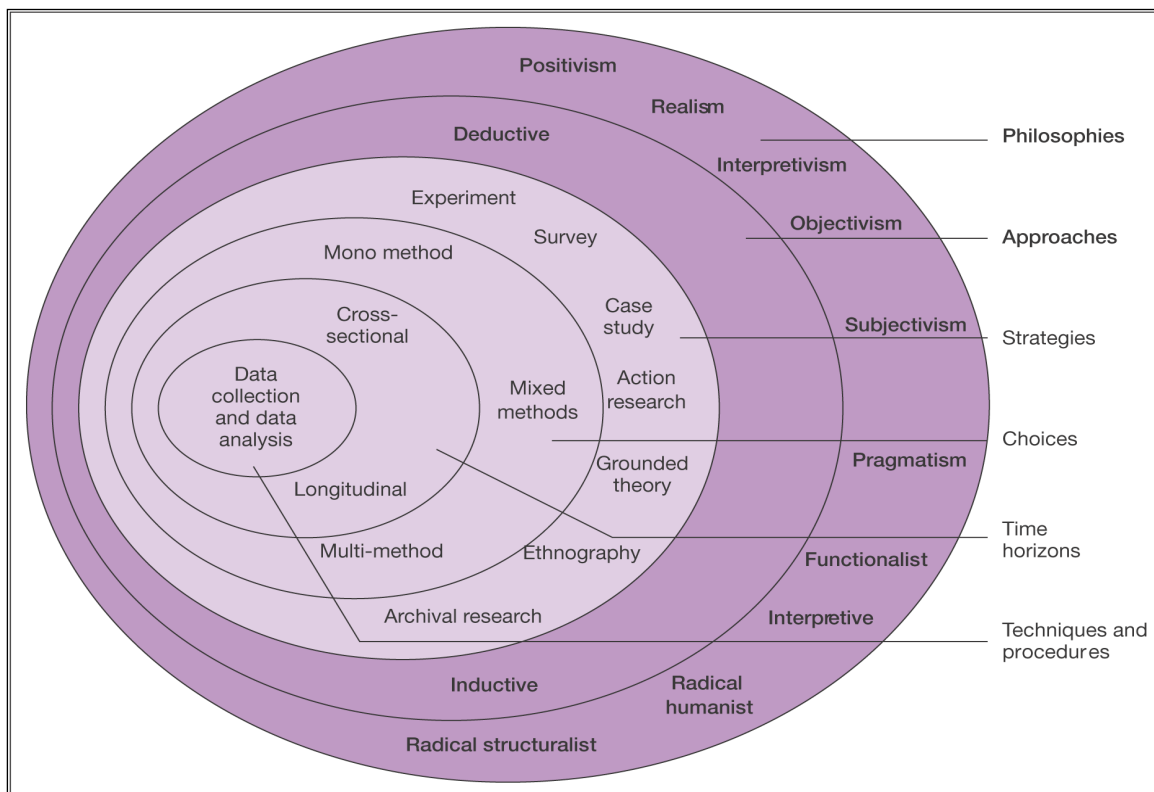


Figure 3.1 presents Research Process Onion by Saunders *et al.*, (2003).

3.3 RESEARCH PHILOSOPHY

Research philosophy relates to the development of knowledge and the nature of that knowledge. The research philosophy underpins the research strategy and the methods to choose as part of that strategy (Saunders *et al.*, (2007). Saunders *et al.*, (2007) highlighted

that the business management research is a mixture of positivism, interpretivism and reflects a stance of realism. The research philosophy contains important assumptions about the manner with which a research views the world. Depending upon the type of research question, the research philosophy is selected.

3.3.1 Positivism

Bryman and Bell, (2003) stated that positivism is an epistemological position that advocates the application of the methods of the natural sciences to the study of social reality and beyond. Saunders *et al.*, (2007) defines positivism as an epistemological position that advocate working with observable social entity. Positivism generally seeks to test theory, in an attempt to increase the predictive understanding of phenomena (Burke, 2007). According to Riley *et al.*, (2006), positivism embraces a number of assumptions which are as follows-

- There exists a real world of social and physical phenomena
- This real world is objective and tangible;
- This world can be analysed in an objective fashion in order to increase understanding of the phenomena of which it is comprised;
- The methods employed in such research are objective and impartial as well as immune from influence of human values and believes; and
- If research is taken objectively, then the gradual accumulation of knowledge should enable accurate description of the nature and behaviour of such phenomena, including the interrelationships between phenomena in terms of cause and effect, dependency and interdependency and so on.

Based on this research, the researcher preferred working with an “observable social reality and the end product of the research can be law-like generalisations similar to those produced by the physical and natural scientists” (Remenyi *et al.*, 1998 and cited Saunders *et al.*, 2007). The important element of the positivist approach is that the research is undertaken and the researcher is independent and the research is “conducted in a value-free way” (Saunders *et al.*, 2007).

3.3.2 Realism

Bryman and Bell, (2007) stated that realism is an approach that retains many of the ambitions of the positivism but recognises, and comes to term with the subjective nature of research and the inevitable role of values in it. The essence of realism is that what the senses show us as reality is the truth, that objects have an existence independent of the mind. Saunders *et al.*, (2007) defined realism as an epistemological position which relate to scientific enquiry. It is similar to positivism; it assumes a scientific approach to the development of knowledge. It reflects that reality is the truth: that objects are extremely independent of the human mind (Saunders *et al.*, 2007).

Realism can be divided in two further philosophies: *direct and critical realism*. Saunders *et al.*, (2007) described direct realism as primarily, the philosophy about what we experience through our senses, and it portrays the world accurately while critical realism makes allowance for perceptual errors in stimulus and argues that what we experience are sensations but not necessarily an accurate interpretation of our world.

3.3.3 Interpretivism

Interpretivism or Phenomenology is a term given to a contrasting epistemology. They share a view that the study of the social world requires a different logic of research procedure, one that reflects the distinctiveness of humans as against the natural order. It is predicated upon the view that a strategy is required that respects the differences between people and then objects of the natural sciences and therefore requires the social scientist to take hold of the subjective meaning of social action (Bryman and Bell, 2007).

However, In the case of the research, a combination of both positivism and Interpretivism was adopted because statistical analysis can be incurred from the researcher's interpretation of data based on the customer's perceptions towards bank services in Nigeria, attached with other authors view to the subject. Saunders *et al.*, (2007) emphasised that the complex and unique nature of business situations and a need to know that business situations are functions

and a need to know that business situations are functions of a particular set of circumstances and individuals. Due to avoiding generalisations of the researchers view on aiming to capture the complexity of social situations, the researcher therefore combined both approaches that were suitable for the research. Also the researcher adopted a positivist philosophy in order to use existing theory to develop hypothesis; which were tested and confirmed within the framework of service quality in the Nigerian banking industry. Hypotheses were developed from an assessment of the literature review created from research gathered from secondary sources like text books and academic journals.

Secondly, the researcher adopted Interpretivism philosophy based on the fact that he seeks to understand the differences that exist between humans and their world from their point of view. Saunders *et al.*, (2007) explained that Interpretivism involves carrying out research among people and not objects such as computers and trucks. Saunders *et al.*, (2007), emphasised that the Interpretivism is suitable in the case of business and management research, particularly in such fields as organisational behaviour, marketing and human resource management.

3.4 Research Approach

The research would employ a deductive approach which (Saunders *et al.*, 2003) describes as an approach which involves the testing of a theoretical proposition by the employment of a research strategy specifically designed for the purpose of its testing. Gill and Johnson, (2002) described the deductive approach as the development of a conceptual and theoretical structure prior to its testing through empirical observation. Lancaster, (2005) further affirms that “deductive approach develops theories or hypotheses and then tests these theories and hypotheses through empirical observation”. This approach was employed because the research project requires collection of qualitative data, necessary to select samples of ample size in order to generalise conclusions, the need to explain causal relationships between variables and other significant factors which the deductive approach emphasises.

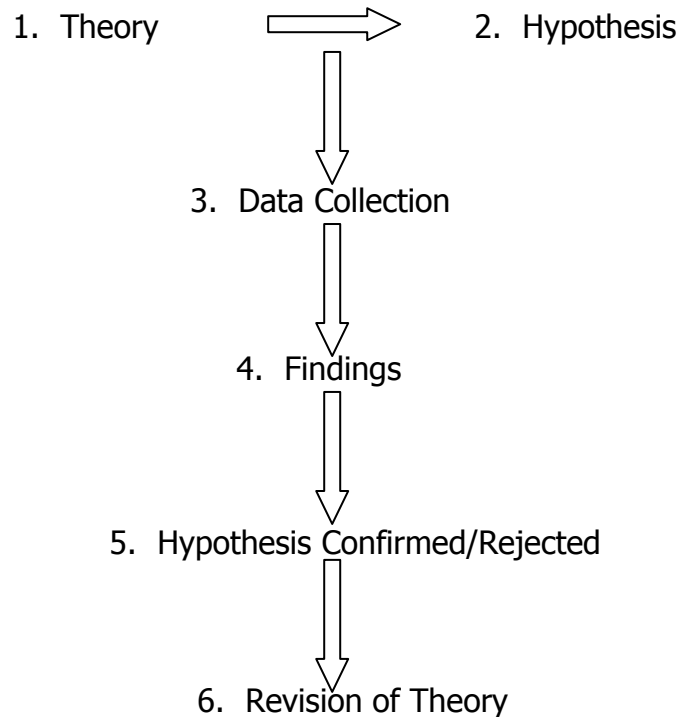
Robson, (2002) listed out five sequential stages through which a research using the deductive approach would advance. They are:

- Deducting a hypothesis about the relationship between two or more events,
- Expressing the hypothesis in operational terms,
- Testing the hypothesis

- Examining the outcome of the enquiry and
- Modification of the theory in light of the results obtained, if necessary.

The researcher followed the deductive process shown in the Figure 3.2

Fig 3.2 Deductive Process



Source: Bryman, (2001), Social Research Methods.

3.5 Research choice

Creswell, (2003) explains that different types of research problems call for different types of research approaches. According to Saunders *et al.*, (2007), the terms qualitative and quantitative are used widely in business and management research to differentiate both data collection techniques and data analysis procedures.

Bryman and Bell, (2007) suggest that qualitative research can be construed as a research choice that usually emphasises words rather than quantification in the collection and analysis of data.

Bryman and Bell, (2007) proposed that quantitative research entails the collection of numerical data and as exhibiting a view of the relationship between theories and research as deductive.

A single research study may use both quantitative and qualitative techniques and procedures in combination as well as use primary and secondary data (Curran and Blackburn, 2001). Saunders *et al.*, (2003) refers to this as a mixed method research strategy that uses both quantitative and qualitative data collection techniques and analysis procedures.

Mixed method research uses quantitative and qualitative data collection techniques and analysis procedures either at the same time (parallel) or one after the other (sequential). Tashakkori and Teddlie, (2003) as cited by Saunders *et al.*, (2003) argued that this method is useful if it provides better opportunities for the research questions to be answered.

John and Vicki (2007) argued that a mixed method is significant when a single research method is inadequate in tackling the research problem on its own. The combination of both qualitative and quantitative data provides with, information on both trends and generalisations as well as with a detailed knowledge, in the respondents point of view.

Tashakkori and Teddlie, (2003) as cited by Saunders *et al.*, (2007) stated there are two advantages associated with a mixed method of research.

- Different methods can be employed for different purposes in a study. This gives the researcher confidence that he is addressing the most important problems.
- It allows triangulation wherein data can be triangulated against each of the data collection technique used in getting satisfactory result.

Nevertheless, this research comprises of both quantitative and qualitative research strategies. Firstly, the researcher aimed at constructing statistical models based on the finding obtained from the self administered questionnaires to the retail bank customers of Skye Bank PLC.

Secondly, the researcher used this mixed research model in a manner that the quantitative data obtained would be converted into descriptive so that it can be re-examined qualitatively. This justifies the researcher's decision for using a mixed method research.

3.6 Research Strategy

A Research Strategy can be described as a generic plan guiding the researcher to answer specific research questions (Saunders *et al.*, 2007). In other words, a research provides the overall direction of the research including the process in which the research is carried out. Saunders *et al.*, (2007) explained further that a research strategy should include clear objectives, methods and sources for data collection, and the constraints in the research like cost issues, access to information, time, money, location and ethical considerations.

There are different methods commonly employed in business and management project work, and the choice made may be different depending on the nature and scope of the research topic, the sources of the data to be employed, and the rationale for gathering them, the amount of control prepared to exert in obtaining these data and the assumptions prepared in analysing them (Jankowicz, 2000). To mention but not a few are different research strategies which are-

- Experiment
- Survey
- Case study,
- Action research
- Grounded theory and ethnography and archival research

3.6.1 Purpose for survey strategy

A survey research is basically an approach to data collection that involves collecting data from large numbers of respondents. Surveys can be used to investigate issues or problems within an organisation and outside of the organisation. It is a common strategy in business and management research as it allows the collection of a large number of data from a sizeable population in a low cost way through the use of interviews and questionnaire.

A survey strategy was adopted for the purpose of this research. This is because it supports in the collection of data by surveying customers of the bank, as the researcher examines customer's perceptions of service quality in Nigerian banks.

3.6.2 Advantages of Survey

1. Collection of data from a large number of respondents
2. it is perceived as authoritative by people and it is both straightforward to explain and understand
3. it can take all types of forms ranging from highly structured questionnaires to small scale surveys
4. data collected by survey is unlikely to be wide ranging than those collected by other research strategies
5. it allows for the collection of quantitative data which can be analysed using descriptive and inferential statistics
6. surveys are used to investigate any organisational issue or problem either inside, or both

3.6.3 Disadvantages of survey

1. survey imposes the language and logic of the researcher onto questionnaire respondents
2. wording the questions properly is difficult as the respondents are from different ethnic backgrounds
3. in most cases, respondents are unwilling to provide desired information
4. The fixed response alternative in the question may not only allow a fully correct question.

3.7 Time Horizon

There are two different approaches in terms of time horizon stipulated by Saunders *et al.*, (2003). Firstly is the longitudinal also referred to as the “Diary” time horizon, which entails gathering information over a long period of time. And the Cross sectional also known as “snap shot” time horizon.

However the time horizon that was employed for the purpose of this research was the cross-sectional studies, which can be described as the study of an exact phenomenon at a particular point in time. This type of design is appropriate for studies focused on finding out the

occurrence of a phenomenon, situation, problem or issue at a certain moment in time by taking a cross section of the population.

In conclusion, the researcher aimed at surveying a cross section of the population, identifying their perceptions towards service quality in the banking industry (Skye Bank Plc. Nigeria).

3.8 Research Design

This comprise of analysing and putting together data in order to arrive at a solution. Research designs are about organising research activity, including the collection of data, in ways that are most likely to achieve the research aims. The collection of data has to be carried out on a scientific basis in order to make sure that these data do reflect, as accurately as possible, the phenomena they measure (Saunders *et al.*, 2007). There are many potential choices to make when developing a research design, and many of these choices are quite closely related to different philosophical positions, and also awareness of this can at least ensure that different elements of a research design are consistent with each other (Saunders *et al.*, 2007).

Nevertheless, the research method used in gathering data was a well detailed questionnaire with a prepared set of questions. Even though, this is time consuming and it is difficult to control range of answers (Hussey & Hussey, 1997), the method was employed because it enabled the researcher to win the respondents' cooperation. Their detailed response allowed a good understanding of service quality improvements and initiatives throughout Skye Bank Plc. and the Nigerian banking sector.

3.9 Credibility of the Research Finding

The credibility of research findings depend on reducing the possibility of getting the answer wrong. For this reason, research design is very crucial. In order to reduce the possibility of getting an answer wrong means that attention has to be paid to two particular emphases on research design: reliability and validity (Saunders *et al.*, 2007).

Reliability refers to the extent to which data collection techniques or analysis procedures yield consistent findings. Researchers have to be careful of getting possible errors and faults during the research process for the reasons, when identifying the research population, use of wrong data collection method, interpretation of data, and developing the conclusions. The

reliability of this research was measured with the notion with (Easterby-Smith *et al.*, 2002) assessments. It will provide the same results on other occasions, similar observations could be observed by other researchers and the raw data gathered is presented in a transparent manner.

Validity is concerned with whether the findings are really about what they appear to be about (Saunders *et al.*, 2007). There are chances to get errors related to information gathering from secondary data, collection of primary data where data validity becomes a question. In this dissertation, each and every stage is carefully planned and the research is carried out according to the plans in a view to avoid errors and ambiguity. The credibility of this research finding is reliable and valid under all contexts.

3.10 DATA COLLECTION

Prior to the administration of questionnaires to the customers of Skye Bank P.L.C., senior management permission to administer the questionnaire was internally given. The researcher made use of survey monkey, an online tool for creating and publishing survey to send questionnaires to the mailboxes of the respondents.

3.10.1 Secondary Data collection

Saunders *et al.*, (2007) stated that secondary data can be a great tool to compare the findings of the primary data in a way that the researcher can place the primary findings within a more general context and triangulate it.

Brannick and Roche, (1997) suggested that secondary data is data that was developed for some purposes other than helping to solve the problem in hand. It should be relevant, available and accurate. Employing secondary data has the following advantages.

- Gathering data from secondary sources is significantly quicker than designing and conducting a new investigation.
- Secondary data can provide the researcher with broader view of the context for their study.

Bryman and bell, (2003) proposed that the secondary analysis of comparable data from two or more countries provide one possible model for conducting cross-cultural research.

Saunders *et al.*, (2007) suggested that the secondary data can be raw, where there has been little if any processing, or compiled data that have received some form of selection or summarising. Secondary data can be sub grouped into documentary data, survey-based data, and those compiled from multiple sources. Documentary secondary data includes written materials such as notices, correspondence; minutes of meeting, public records. Written documents also include books, journals, magazine articles and articles.

The secondary data for this research study was basically obtained from Textbooks, conference articles related to the banking industry especially Skye Bank PLC., newspaper articles and online journals. In addition, academic journals available on the emerald insight website, and ebsco database were used. All sources referenced proved to be invaluable in terms of developing the research proposal, the research objectives followed by the hypothesis. Academic Journals proved to be more important because it provided relevant information on service quality while the textbooks laid the foundation for the research. All the secondary research articles have been identified and thoroughly referenced using the Harvard referencing style.

3.10.2 Primary Data collection

3.10.3 Questionnaires

Questionnaires are efficient data collection mechanism in which the researcher knows exactly what is required and how to measure the variables of interest (Brannick *et al.*, 1997). A questionnaire can also be referred to as a series of questions designed to provide accurate information from every member of the sample. To achieve this, a questionnaire should be clear, easy to understand, unbiased and should maintain the respondent's interest, and motivations.

However, in order to conduct this research, the researcher designed a questionnaire for the retail customers of Skye bank Plc. Questionnaires can be administered through different methods such as personally (face to face), mailed electronically or distributed by post. Nevertheless, the researcher decided to adopt the mail questionnaire format, where the questionnaire is delivered to respondent's electronically.

3.10.4 Production of Internet Questionnaires

Firstly, the questionnaire was typed using the Microsoft Word Office. Once this was done, the data was then entered into survey monkey software that produces the questionnaire. A survey invitation was designed to invite respondents to participate. Also an appreciation note was designed to appear once the respondent had concluded the questionnaire.

3.10.5 Rationale for Internet Questionnaires

1. It covers a wide geographical area
2. It is convenient data collection mechanism
3. Most survey use this questionnaire to measure variables of interest
4. It is mostly used for organisational research

3.10.6 Questionnaire design process

The most common research instruments are the self-administered questionnaires. This is principally used to collect quantitative data but open-ended questions can be used for qualitative data. Williamson, (2007) was of the opinion that a systematic process in the design of the questionnaire must be followed to achieve a well-constructed questionnaire that is reliable and valid. Such steps include initial consideration followed by clarification of concepts, typology of question, presenting a questionnaire and finally administering the questionnaire (Hair *et al.*, 2003).

Domegan and Fleming, (2003) as cited in Saunders *et al.*, (2007) states that questionnaire design can be broken down into seven different steps which includes preliminary consideration, question content, response format, question wording, question sequence, physical characteristics and pre-test/pilot. From the preliminary consideration, the researcher answers questions relating to the largest respondents, the method of communication that will be used and the information that will be required during the process.

Questions asked should be simple, clear and unambiguous. As question sequence relates to the logical flow of the questions, related questions should be grouped together moving from general to specific with complicated and difficult questions placed within the questionnaire.

Physical appearance of the questionnaire should appear as short as possible but at the same time will look professional. Each question should be numbered and allowed for extra space for answers especially open-ended questions.

Thus, deciding on what information needed to be collected through the questionnaire is critical. Above all, data, collected must answer the general focus research question and meet research objectives in other to test the hypothesis.

With the relevant academic literature review, secondary data consulted (including the corporate internet/intranet websites, publications, e-mails, the researcher had to create this knowledge and produce a questionnaire that would supply the quantitative data to test the hypotheses.

3.10.7 Pilot test for the questionnaire

A pilot test was employed on the draft of the questionnaire. A pilot test is carried out in order to detect the weaknesses in design and instrumentation and to provide proxy data of a profitability sample.

It can be done to test the efficiency of the questions contained in the questionnaire and also detect if it would draw adequate comments from the respondents. When designing the questionnaire the characteristics of the respondents will be at all times considered in terms of wording, willingness to respond and the kind of questions formulated.

The researcher pilot tested the questionnaire amongst the retail bank customer's in Skye Bank PLC and in which he came up with modifications where necessary, it emerged that some of the words were difficult to understand, those words were eliminated and straightforward words were included.

3.11 POPULATION AND SAMPLING

3.11.1 Population

According to Cooper and Schindler, (2001), population is the total collection of elements about which we wish to some certain inferences.

On the other hand, Bryman and Bell, (2003), stated that population basically refers to the universe of units from which the sample is to be selected.

3.11.2 Research population defined:

Element: A population element is the subject on which the measurement is being taken. In this scenario, the element is the customers of Skye Bank Plc. Osolo Branch Lagos

Sampling Unit: is the total collection of elements about which we need to make inferences. A total number of 120 customers compose the population interest.

Extent: Skye Bank Plc. Osolo branch Lagos Nigeria

Time: April 2010

Based on these points, the researcher employed a sample to obtain information about population.

A sample survey is a survey which covers the only part of a population and the term sample usually refers to that part of a population studied for some research project. A sample is employed for a large population.

3.11.3 Sampling

According to Cooper and Schindler, (2001) the basic idea for sampling is that by selecting some of the elements in a population, one may be able to generalise about the entire population. Sampling is defined as the deliberate choice of a number of people, the sample, who are to provide the researcher with data from which he draws a conclusion about some larger group, the population, whom these people represent (Jankowicz, 1995).

Saunders *et al.*, (2003) stated that sampling provide a range of methods that enables a researcher reduce the amount of data he needs to collect by considering from a sub-group rather than all possible cases or elements. For the purpose of the research, it was not possible for the researcher to have surveyed all the 700 branches of Skye bank Plc in Lagos given the deadline and cost associated with it, as a result, this prompted the need for sampling.

Cooper and Schindler, (2001) highlighted that certain reasons compel a researcher to sampling they are:

- Lower cost
- Greater accuracy of results

- Greater speed of data collection
- Availability of population elements
- The impossibility of a census

According to Bryman and Bell, (2007) sampling frame is listing of all units in the population from which the sample is selected. The sampling frame for this research was drawn from a mailing list that contains the email addresses of 120 retail bank customers of Skye Bank Plc. Osolo Branch Lagos State Nigeria.

3.11.4 Sampling Technique

There are two main types of sampling design: Probability and Non-probability sampling methods. According to Saunders *et al.*, (2007), a probability sampling is most commonly associated with survey-based strategies where you need to make inferences from your sample about a population to answer your research question or to meet your objectives. On the other hand, Non-probability sampling is where the probability of each case being selected is not known and it is impossible to answer research questions or to address objectives that require the researcher to make statistical inferences about the characteristics of the population (Saunders *et al.*, 2007).

Nevertheless, the probability sampling technique was adopted for the purpose of this research. The technique facilitated the exploratory nature of the research. The researcher selected the probability sampling because probability samplings are employed when the representativeness of the sample is of importance in the interest of wider generalisation (Sekaran, 2003). The researcher sampled a portion of the population based on their perceptions on service quality and he came up with generalisations on the issue. Also in the probability sampling, elements in the population have known chance of being selected, as elements are selected by chance.

There are different methods under the probability sampling design; the researcher adopted the Stratified random sampling technique. This type of Random sampling was used as it was more appropriate for the course of the research. This technique of sampling is the type in which the population is divided into two or more relevant and significant strata based on one or a number of attributes. This gives out subsets and then a random sample is drawn from

each strata. This method has its advantages as well as its disadvantages; nevertheless, it was suitable to the researcher as it allowed the researcher to have more control over the sample size. Also, dividing the population into relevant strata also meant that the sample was likely to be representative of the population which would rule out any form of bias.

3.12 Research Ethics

Ethics in research arise when a researcher seeks to access information from an organisation for instance a bank and individuals on the subject of research. In research generally, the main issue on ethics, according to Saunders *et al* (2007), refers to how we prepare and elucidate our research design, collect and store the data, and analyse the write up of the finding from the analysis should not subject those being researched. Given the nature of sampling carried out in the course of study, the author found it relevant that confidentiality be maintained in the course of his study. As a result the names of those interviewed were not included in the dissertation. This was due to Nigerian data protection act in which every citizen, bank or any organisation must adhere to. This entails that every personal data on identifiable living persons must be protected by every organisation in question.

Nevertheless, the researcher ensured that the respondent's information was adequately protected, the outcome of the research promises to be of vast benefit to them and for future purposes.

3.13 Conclusion

This chapter described the research process that was chosen as there are different methods of carrying out research, the researcher made sure that the chosen method, approach, strategy and philosophy was appropriate and useful in answering the research question and drawing a general conclusion and as well as not changing the objectives of the entire research. Ultimately, in applying any one or several methods, ethics should be duly considered to ensure the privacy and confidentiality of respondents.

CHAPTER 4: DATA ANALYSIS AND FINDINGS

CHAPTER 4

4.0 DATA ANALYSIS AND FINDINGS

The aim of this chapter is to explain the analysis done on the data obtained by primary research. The findings obtained from these data are further explained in this chapter. Each section explains the research objective and hypotheses. For each section, a detailed explanation of the analysis obtained from quantitative research. That is, by self administered questionnaires which were completed by the respondents in this case, customers of Skye bank Plc.

4.1 Quantitative data analysis and findings- Questionnaire

The questionnaire administered to the customers was designed in order to find out customers perception of service quality in Skye bank Plc. Nigeria which was selected by virtue of its size and population of its customers as a representative of the banking industry. A sample frame of 101 customers of the bank participated in this research. The sampling technique employed was a probability sampling technique as the selection criteria was random. The classification of customers was done on the basis of age and the number of years they have patronised the bank. To convey the questionnaires to the customer's, the survey monkey software for creating web surveys was employed. The customer's were sent a direct link of the website to their email addresses in which they provided during the researchers visit to the bank.

Nevertheless, the questionnaire is divided into three sections namely: the demographic section which comprises of questions based on gender, age and how long the customers have patronised the bank (Skye Bank Plc.), the next section is the next section comprises question to know the perception of the customers towards the bank services, lastly, to determine the level of satisfaction of the customers.

Each questionnaire contains number of items aiming to measure the customer perception of service quality in Nigerian banks.

4.2 Gender

The survey results shown in table 4.1 and figure 4.1, indicates that 63.4% of the respondents that participated in the research were males and the remaining 36.6% were females.

Table 4.1

Gender		
Answer Options	Response Percent	Response Count
Male	63.4%	64
Female	36.6%	37
<i>answered question</i>		101
<i>skipped question</i>		0

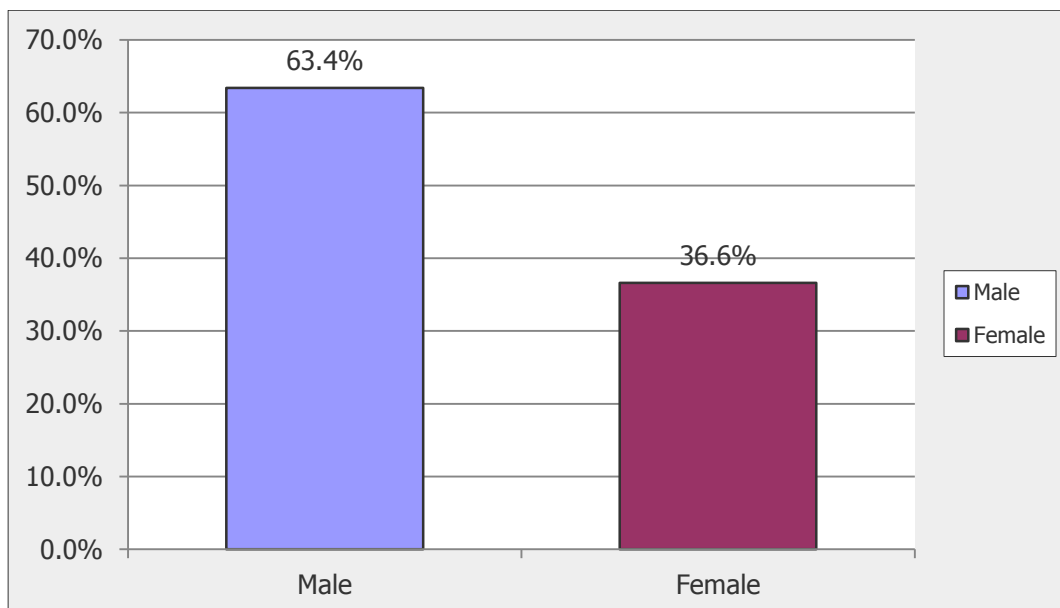


Figure 4.1: Gender

4.3 Age and Demographics

The survey result illustrated in table 4.2 and figure 4.2 shows that the majority of the respondents (36.6%) that participated in the research are between the age group of 20-30

years of age, 34.7% of respondents were between the age group of 31-40 years of age, the least amongst the survey are respondents between the ages of 41 and above.

Table 4.2

Age		
Answer Options	Response Percent	Response Count
20 – 30	36.6%	37
31 – 40	34.7%	35
41 and above	28.7%	29
<i>answered question</i>		101
<i>skipped question</i>		0

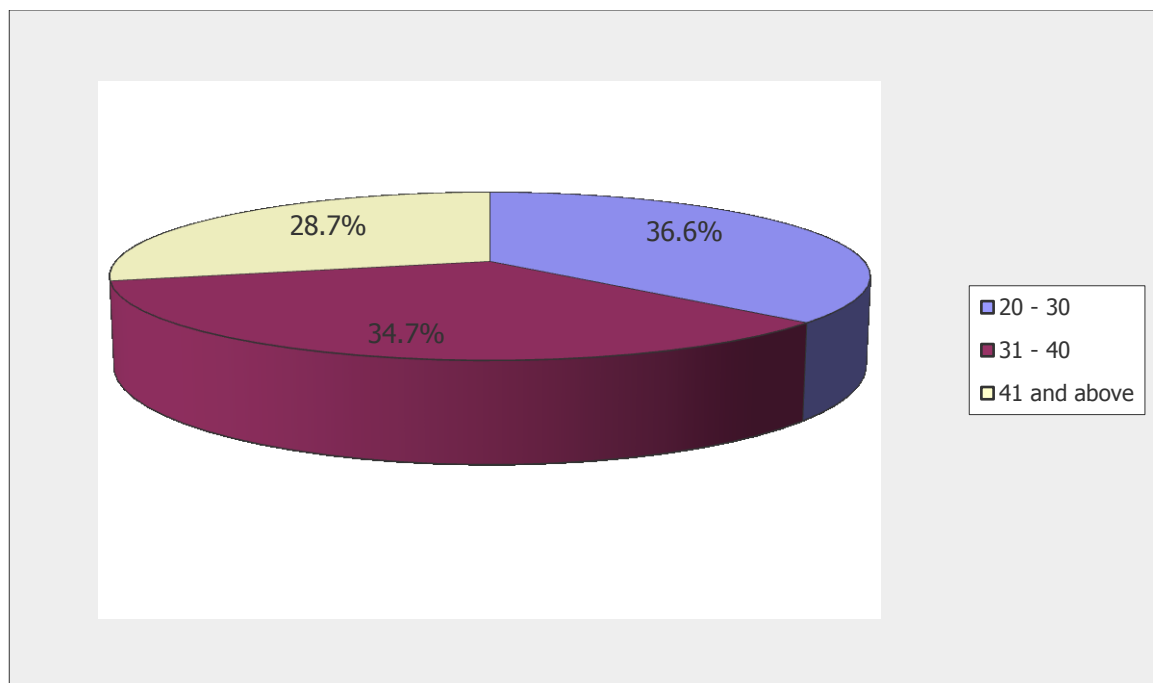


Figure 4.2: Age

4.4 Education

Table 4.3 and figure 4.3 shows that 82.0% of the respondents have a university degree, 15.0% have a secondary school education, about 3.0% of respondents responded by agreeing that they have primary school education.

Table 4.3

Education		
Answer Options	Response Percent	Response Count
Primary school	3.0%	3
Secondary school	15.0%	15
University	82.0%	82
<i>answered question</i>		100
<i>skipped question</i>		1

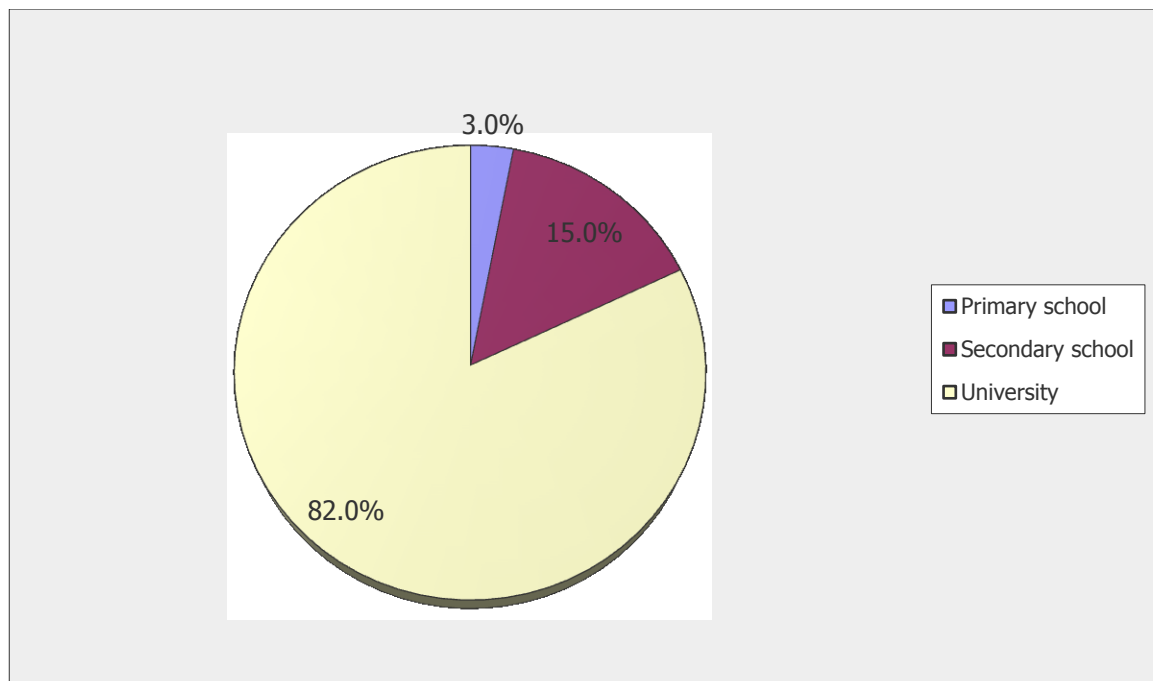


Figure 4.3: Education

4.5 Please specify how long you have patronised the bank?

The results from Table 4.4 and figure 4.4 indicates that 19.0% have patronised the bank for less than one year, about 22.0% of responds have patronised the bank for 1-2 years, 42.0% of respondents accepted that they have been customers for 3-5 years and about 17.0% have been with the bank for 6 years and above.

Table 4.4

Please specify how long you have patronised the bank?		
Answer Options	Response Percent	Response Count
Less than 1 year	19.0%	19
1 - 2 years	22.0%	22
3 - 5 years	42.0%	42
6 years and above	17.0%	17
<i>answered question</i>		100
<i>skipped question</i>		1

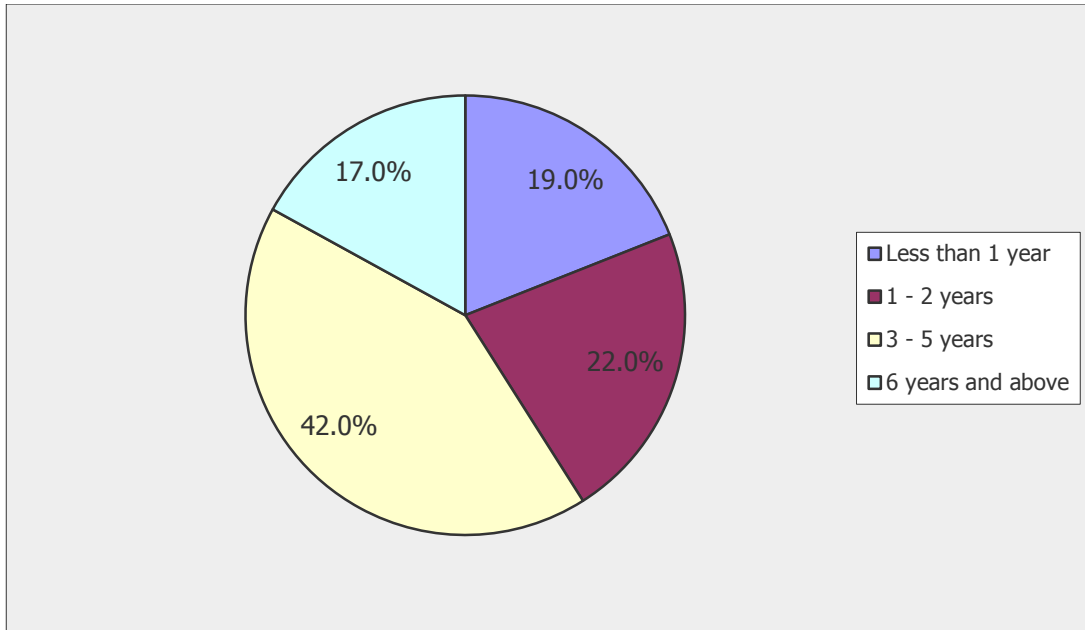


Figure 4.4: Please specify how long you have patronised the bank?

4.6 Objective 1: to identify the factors influencing customer perception of service quality.

A self administered questionnaire was used in this section. The statements were put forward to quantify the responses of the respondents' perception towards service quality.

Furthermore, to identify the factors influencing service quality, it was satisfactory for the majority of respondents (63.0%) to strongly agree with the statement put forward; that is, if they felt the bank provides accurate records of all transactions that have taken place, 17.0% of respondents slightly agreed with the sentence, 8.0% neither agreed nor disagreed, 5.0% slightly disagreed, whereas, 7.0% of respondents strongly disagreed to the statement. These figures are illustrated in table 4.5 and figure 4.5 below.

Table 4.5

Do you feel the bank provides accurate records of all transactions that have taken place?		
Answer Options	Response Percent	Response Count
Strongly Agree	63.0%	63

Slightly Agree	17.0%	17
Neither Agree nor Disagree	8.0%	8
Slightly Disagree	5.0%	5
Strongly Disagree	7.0%	7
answered question		100
skipped question		1

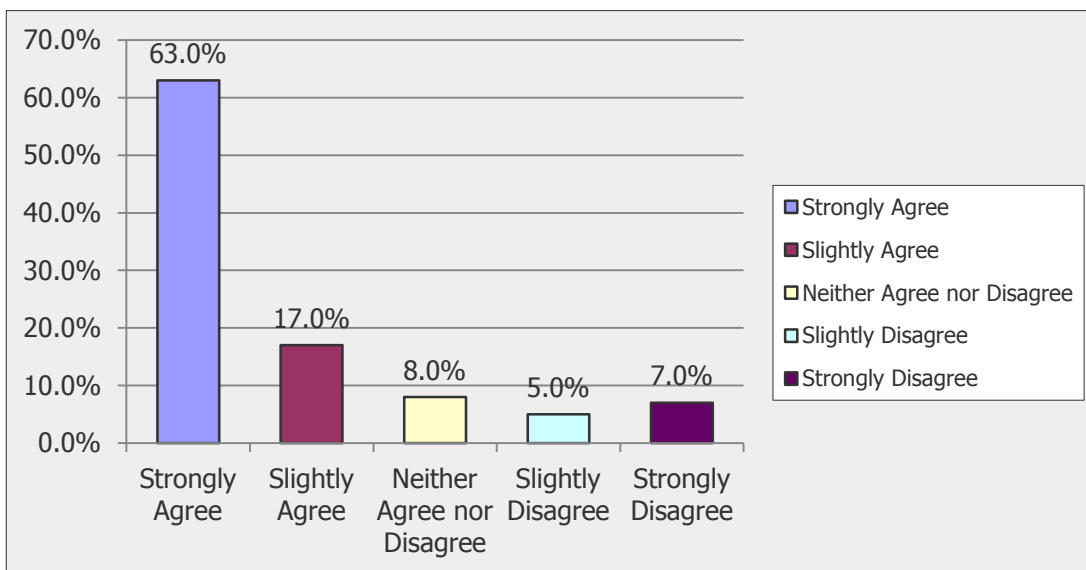


Figure 4.5: Do you feel the bank provides accurate records of all transactions that have taken place?

The figure above shows that the majority of respondents are pleased with the precision of account statements. Furthermore, the respondents were also asked if they feel the bank gives a well written guarantee of transactions that have taken place. Table 4.6 and Figure 4.6 shows that 63.4% strongly agreed to the statement, 16.8% slightly disagreed, 8.9% neither agreed nor disagreed, 5.05% slightly disagree, while 5.9% strongly disagreed.

Table 4.6

Do you feel the bank gives a well written guarantee of transaction that has taken place?		
Answer Options	Response Percent	Response Count
Strongly Agree	63.4%	64
Slightly Agree	16.8%	17
Neither Agree nor Disagree	8.9%	9
Slightly Disagree	5.0%	5
Strongly Disagree	5.9%	6
<i>answered question</i>		101
<i>skipped question</i>		0

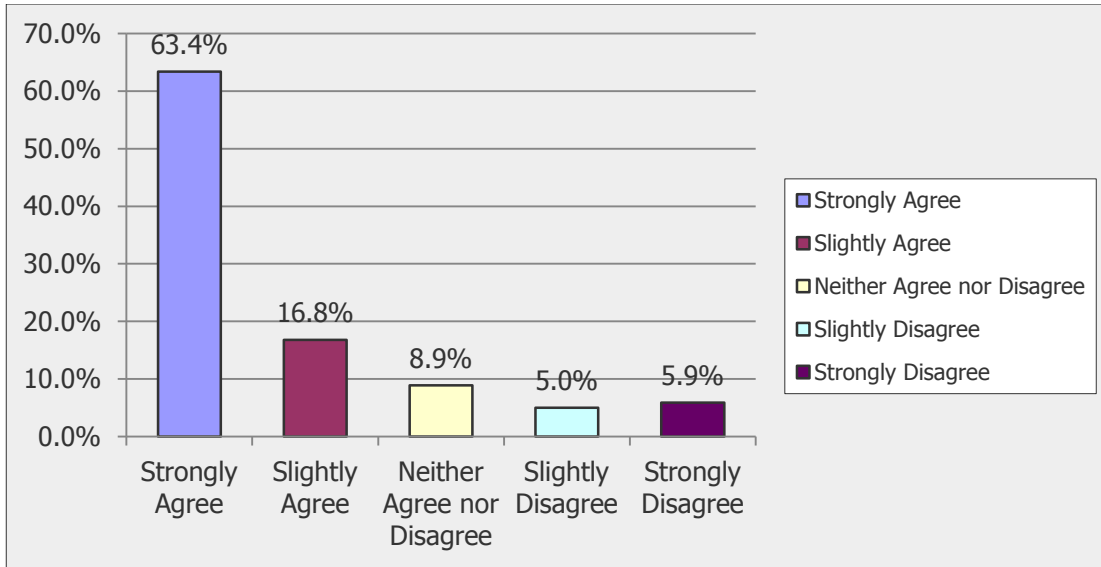


Figure 4.6: Do you feel the bank gives a well written guarantee of transaction that has taken place?

From table 4.6 and figure 4.6 it implies that most customers feel that the bank provides them with adequate security in terms of their transactions. Another question that was put forward to the customers to know if the bank informs them on a regular basis the products and services they have available. About 56.1% of customers strongly agreed with the statement, 23.5% of the respondents slightly agreed while about 8.2% neither agreed nor disagreed, 9.2% slightly disagreed whereas about 3.1% strongly disagreed. From the figure shown in table 4.7 and figure 4.7 indicates that the majority of respondents are satisfied with level of communication between customer's and bank staff.

Table 4.7

In your opinion do you think you were informed by the bank about all the product and services they have available at the bank at the time of opening the account?

Answer Options	Response Percent	Response Count
----------------	------------------	----------------

Strongly Agree	56.1%	55
Slightly Agree	23.5%	23
Neither Agree nor Disagree	8.2%	8
Slightly Disagree	9.2%	9
Strongly Disagree	3.1%	3
<i>answered question</i>		98
<i>skipped question</i>		3

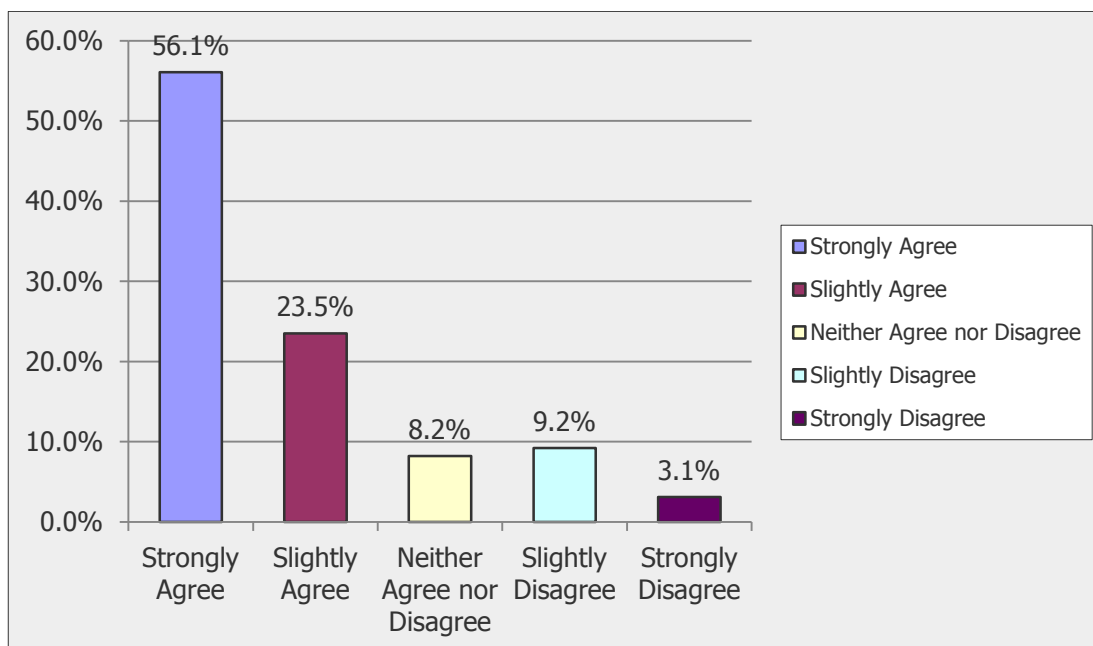


Figure 4.7 In your opinion do you think you were informed by the bank about all the product and services they have available at the bank at the time of opening the account?

Table 4.8 and figure 4.8 below shows the respondent's response towards security provided by the bank, in terms of well lit ATM's for night time bank or in a safe environment. The results

shows that 56.9% of customers strongly agreed to the sentence, 25.3% slightly agreed, 5.1% neither agreed nor disagreed; about 6.1% slightly disagreed while 4.0% of respondents strongly disagreed to the statement.

Table 4.8

Do you feel the bank provides secure services, for instance “well lit ATM’s for night time banking or in a safe environment”?		
Answer Options	Response Percent	Response Count
Strongly Agree	59.6%	59
Slightly Agree	25.3%	25
Neither Agree nor Disagree	5.1%	5
Slightly Disagree	6.1%	6

Strongly Disagree	4.0%	4
answered question		99
skipped question		2

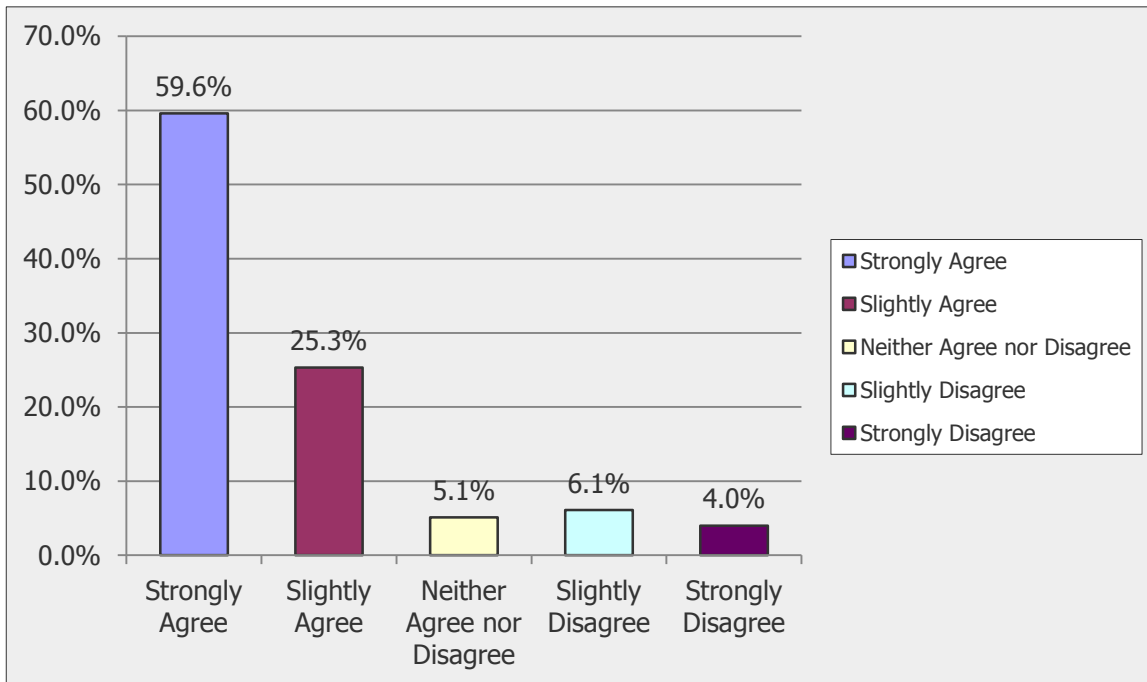


Figure 4.8 Do you feel the bank provides secure services, for instance “well lit ATM’s for night time banking or in a safe environment”?

Based on the aspect of convenience, the respondents were asked about their feeling towards the bank hours of operation. Table 4.9 and figure 4.9 shows that 54.5% of the respondents strongly agreed to this statement, 14.1% slightly agreed, 12.1% of customers neither agreed nor disagreed, 7.1% slightly disagreed, while 12.1% of the respondents strongly disagreed. This clearly indicates that the banks hour of operation is suitable to a majority of the respondents.

Table 4.9

Do you feel the bank has convenient hours of operation (24 hours a day, seven days a week)?		
Answer Options	Response Percent	Response Count
Strongly Agree	54.5%	54
Slightly Agree	14.1%	14
Neither Agree nor Disagree	12.1%	12
Slightly Disagree	7.1%	7
Strongly Disagree	12.1%	12
<i>answered question</i>		99
<i>skipped question</i>		2

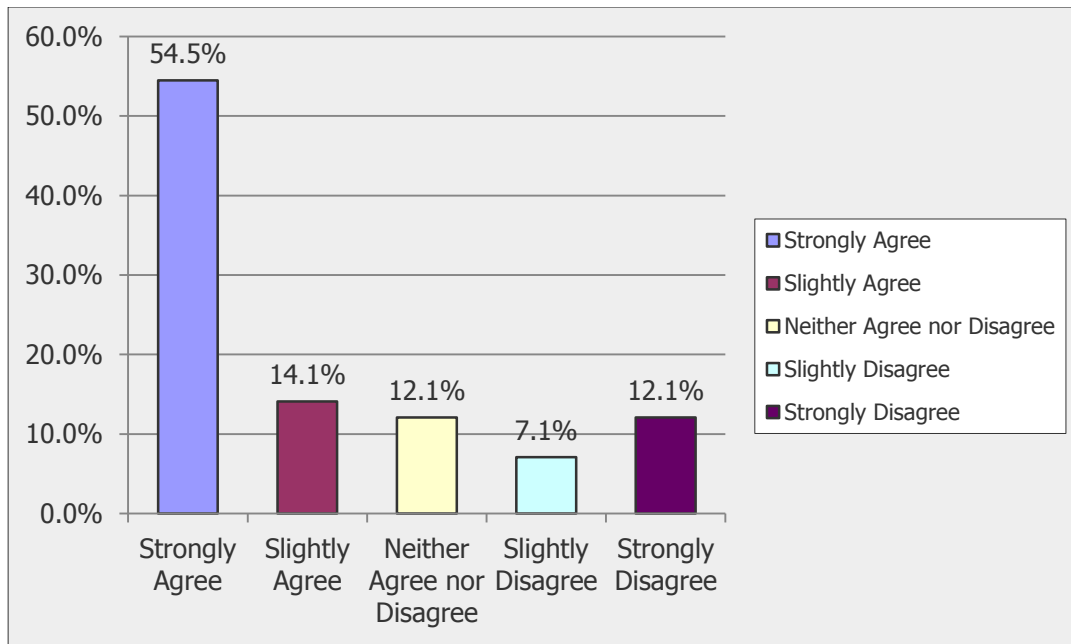


Figure 4.9 Do you feel the bank has convenient hours of operation (24 hours a day, seven days a week)?

4.7 Research Objective 2: To evaluate how well the bank satisfies its customers

Through the use of quantitative data, the respondents were asked if they were satisfied with the manner with which the staff approach prospective customers. Table 4.10 and figure 4.10 below shows that the majority of the respondents (60.6%) strongly agreed with the statement, 16.2% slightly agreed, while 11.1% neither agreed nor disagreed, about 9.1% slightly disagreed, whereas 3.0% of respondents strongly disagreed to the statement.

Table 4.10

Are you satisfied with the manner with which the staffs approach prospective customers?		
Answer Options	Response Percent	Response Count
Strongly Agree	60.6%	60
Slightly Agree	16.2%	16
Neither Agree nor Disagree	11.1%	11
Slightly Disagree	9.1%	9
Strongly Disagree	3.0%	3
<i>answered question</i>		99
<i>skipped question</i>		2

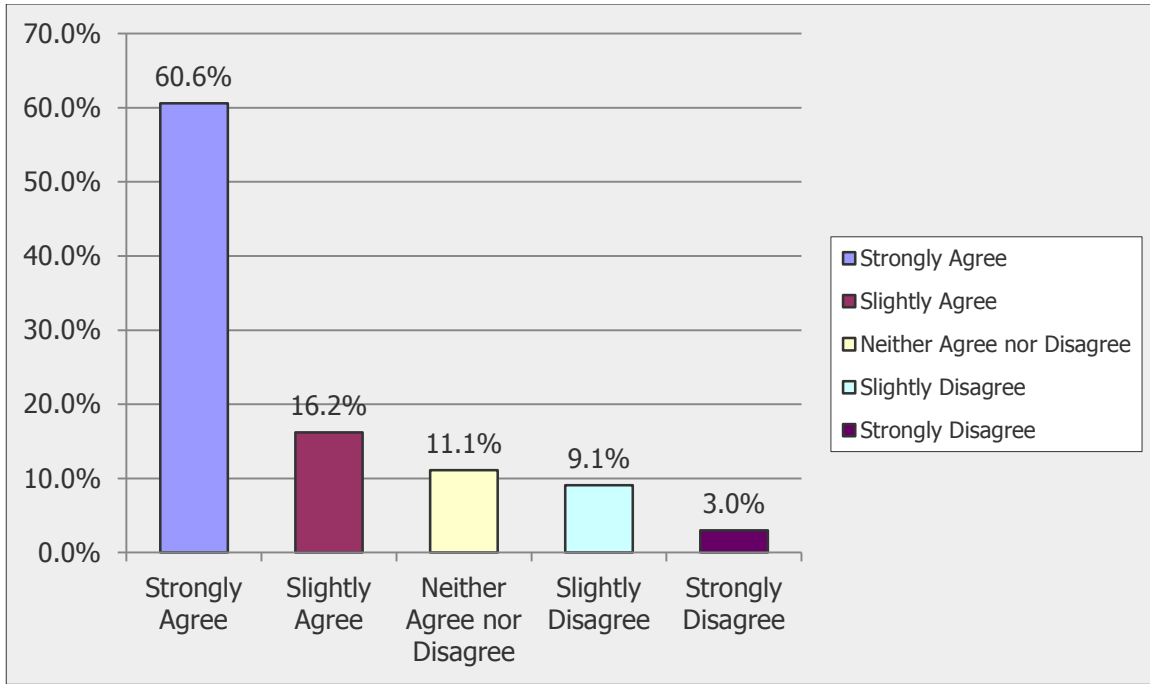


Figure 4.10: **Are you satisfied with the manner with which the staffs approach prospective customers?**

In terms of the bank staff ability to handling customer complaints, the respondents were asked if they were satisfied with the way the bank deals with their complaints, table 4.11 and figure 4.11 shows that the majority of the respondents (56.0%) strongly agreed to the statement which indicates that they are satisfied. 29.0% slightly agreed, 8.0% of neither agreed nor agreed, 2.0% slightly disagreed, then the remaining part of the sample strongly disagreed.

Table 4.11

Are you satisfied with the way the bank deals with your complaints?		
Answer Options	Response Percent	Response Count
Strongly Agree	56.0%	56
Slightly Agree	29.0%	29
Neither Agree nor Disagree	8.0%	8
Slightly Disagree	2.0%	2
Strongly Disagree	5.0%	5
<i>answered question</i>		100
<i>skipped question</i>		1

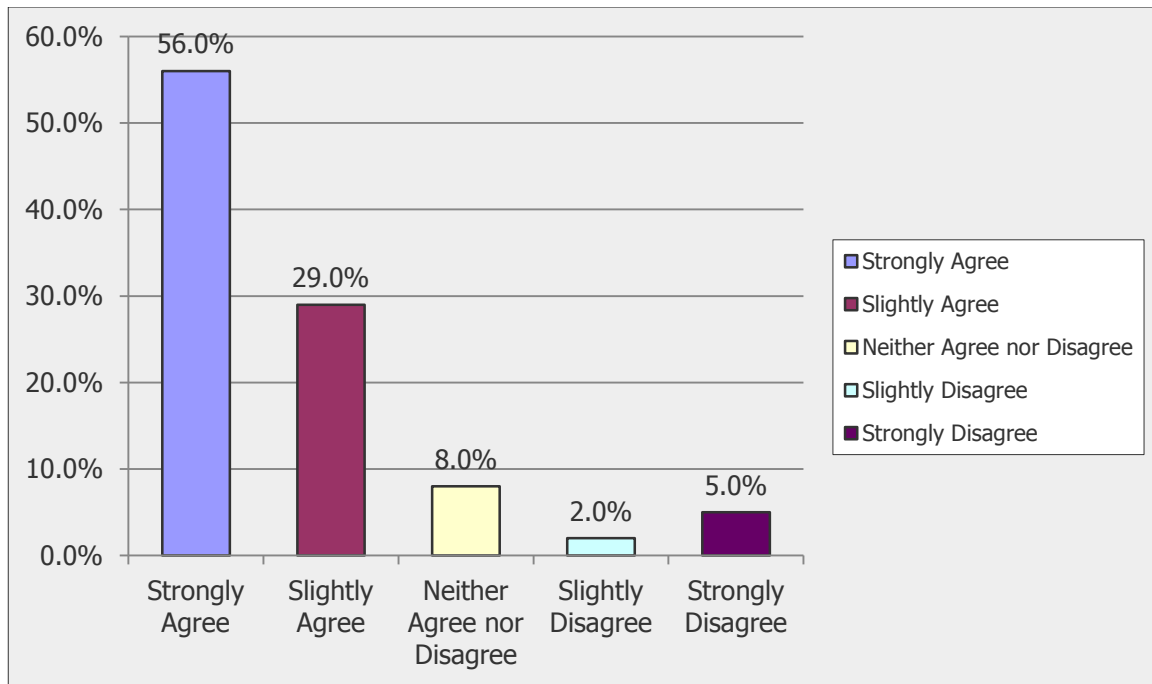


Figure 4.11: **Are you satisfied with the way the bank deals with your complaints?**

Table 4.12 and figure 4.12 below shows the response of the respondents that is if they feel the bank processes their transactions (so they do not need to wait for long), about 59.6% of the respondents strongly agreed that the bank processes their transactions efficiently, 26.3% slightly agreed, 7.1% neither agreed nor disagreed, 3.0% slightly disagreed, while 4.0% of respondents strongly disagreed with the sentence. This implies that the respondents are satisfied with the bank staff capability of delivering services on time.

Table 4.12

Do you feel the bank processes your transactions efficiently (so you do not need to wait for long)?		
Answer Options	Response Percent	Response Count
Strongly Agree	59.6%	59
Slightly Agree	26.3%	26
Neither Agree nor Disagree	7.1%	7
Slightly Disagree	3.0%	3
Strongly Disagree	4.0%	4
<i>answered question</i>		99
<i>skipped question</i>		2

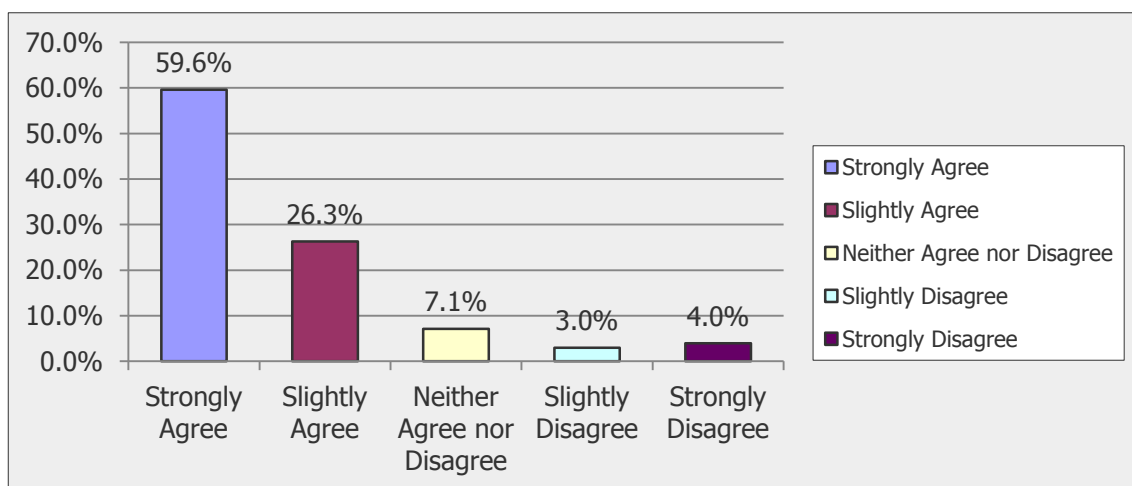


Figure 4.12: Do you feel the bank processes your transactions efficiently (so you do not need to wait for long)?

4.8 Objective 3: To access the perception of the retail bank customers towards bank service quality.

The results indicated in table 4.13 and figure 4.13 shows the bank services that are applicable to the respondents that participated in the survey. The statement was put forward in a manner so that the respondents can specify the bank services applicable to them. From the sample tested, 64.4% of the respondents make use of the bank current account. 56.4% of respondents specified that they make use of the savings account, 23% use fixed deposit, 10.9% personal loan, 9.9% of respondents overdraft, 9.9% housing loan, 16.8% foreign exchange, while 22.8% make use of the bank remittance service. It is clearly illustrated in table 4.13 and figure 4.13 below that a majority of the respondents make use of the bank current account.

Table 4.13

Please specify any of the bank service(s) applicable to you.		
Answer Options	Response Percent	Response Count
Savings Account	56.4%	57
Current Account	64.4%	65
Fixed deposit	23.8%	24
Personal loan	10.9%	11
Overdraft	9.9%	10
Business loan	12.9%	13
Housing loan	9.9%	10
Foreign exchange	16.8%	17
Remittance	22.8%	23
<i>answered question</i>		101
<i>skipped question</i>		0

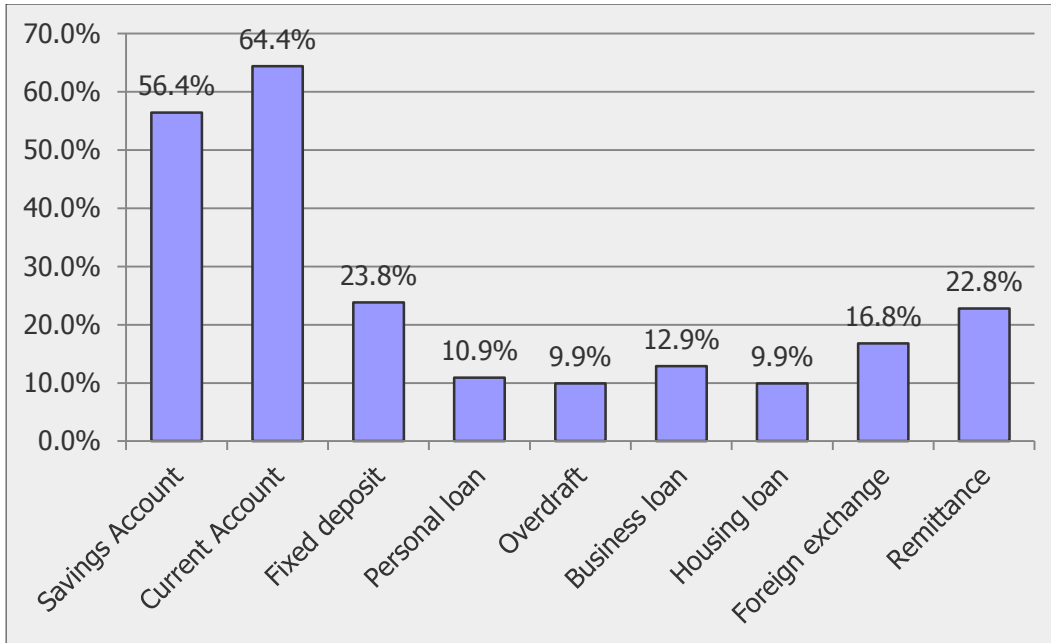


Figure 4.13: Please specify any of the bank service(s) applicable to you?

In order to access the perception of the retail bank customers towards bank services demonstrated in table 4.13 and figure 4.13, the respondents were asked to rate their level of satisfaction on a scale of 1 to 5, where 1 stands for very poor and 5 for excellent. From the sample tested, table 4.14 and figure 4.14 below shows that 70.3% of respondents are satisfied with the bank services, whereas 15.8% of respondents opined that the services are very poor. This reveals that the majority of the respondents are satisfied with the bank services they use.

Table 4.14

On a scale of 1 to 5, where 1 stands for very poor and 5 for excellent, what is the level of your satisfaction with the chosen service(s)?		
Answer Options	Response Percent	Response Count
1	15.8%	16
2	2.0%	2
3	5.0%	5
4	6.9%	7
5	70.3%	71
answered question		101
skipped question		0

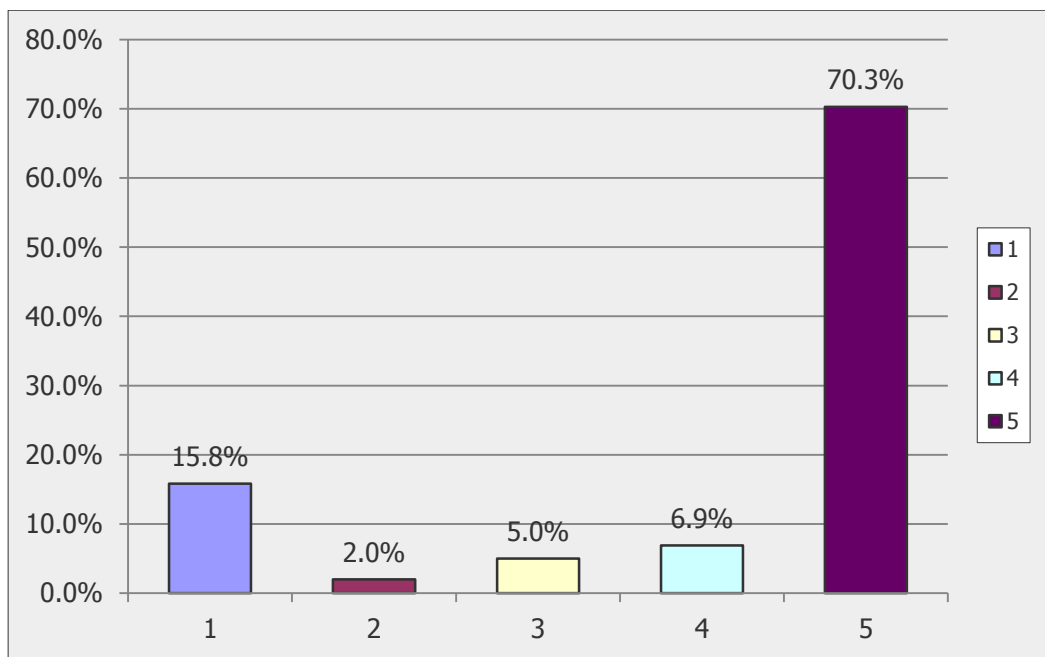


Figure 4.14: On a scale of 1 to 5, where 1 stands for very poor and 5 for excellent, what is the level of your satisfaction with the chosen service(s)?

Table 4.15 and Figure 4.15 below show the response of the respondents about contacting the bank on telephone or through the internet whenever they have queries. The majority of

respondents (77.0%) said yes that they contact the bank through telephone or through internet, whereas 23.0% of respondents said no the statement.

Table 4.15

Do you contact the bank on telephone or through the Internet when you have any queries?		
Answer Options	Response Percent	Response Count
Yes	77.0%	77
No	23.0%	23
<i>answered question</i>		100
<i>skipped question</i>		1

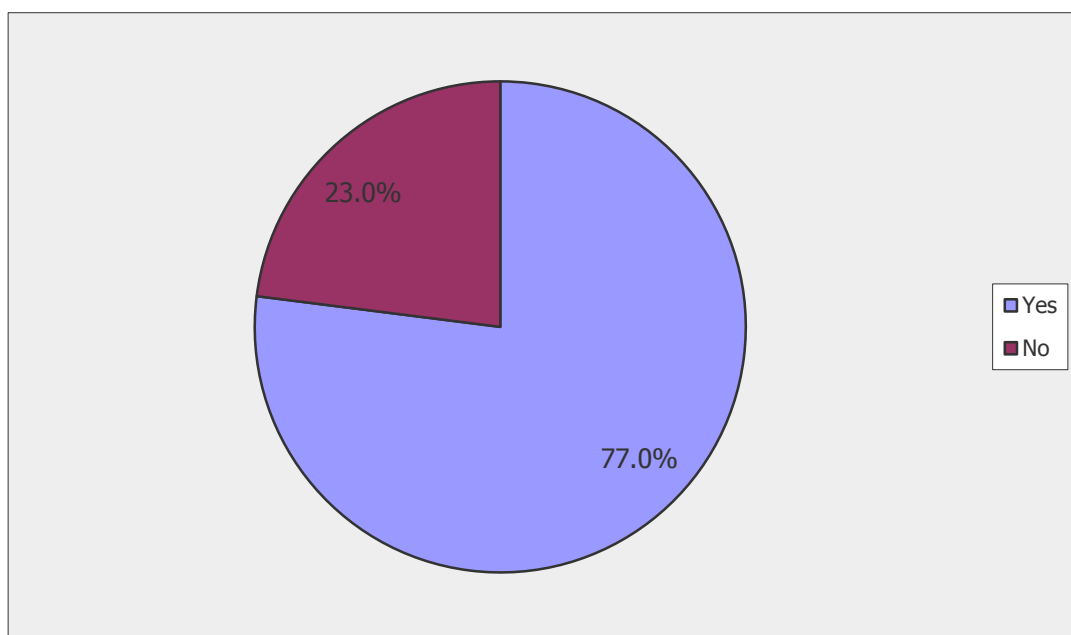


Figure 4.15: Do you contact the bank on telephone or through the Internet when you have any queries?

Table 4.16 and figure 4.16 demonstrates the response of the respondents about if they get connected to the service without a waiting time (telephone/internet connection). About 60.6% of respondents agreed that they get connected without a waiting time, while 39.6% of the respondents said no to the statement.

Table 4.16

Do you get connected to the service without a waiting time?		
Answer Options	Response Percent	Response Count
Yes	60.6%	60
No	39.4%	39
<i>answered question</i>		99
<i>skipped question</i>		2

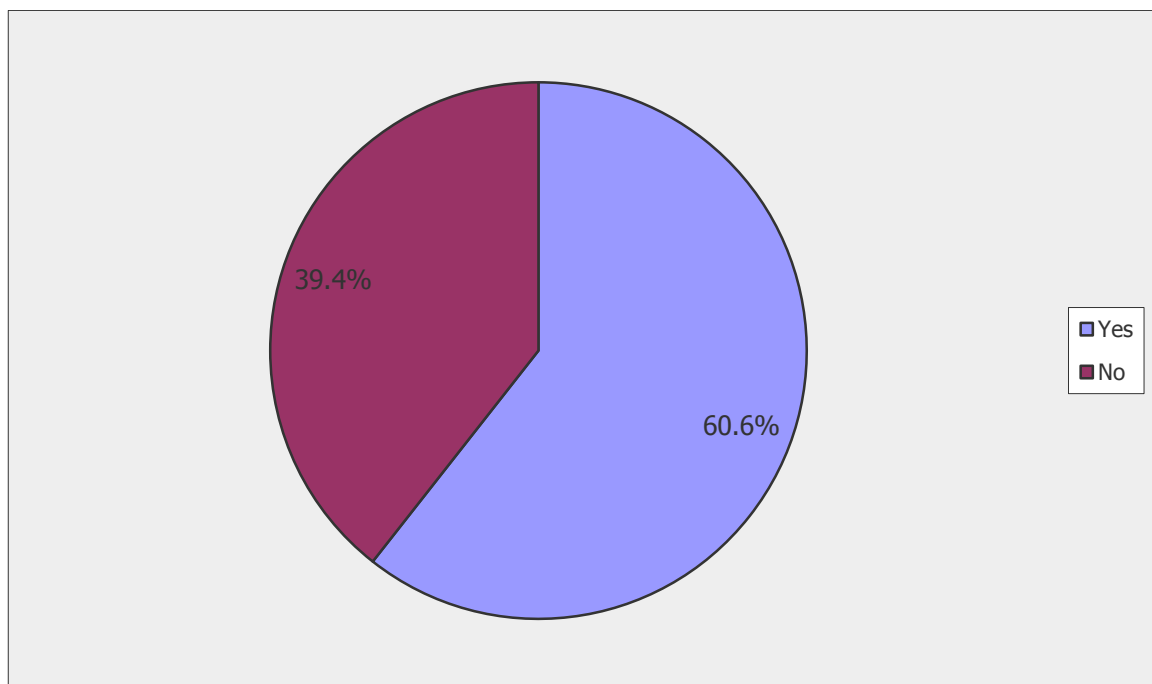


Figure 4.16: Do you get connected to the service without a waiting time?

Table 4.17 and figure 4.17 below shows the responses of the respondents as regards the bank provision of additional options for some customers (Customers with non-English speaking backgrounds/for sight and impaired/elderly, About 77.6% of respondents responded by saying yes to the statement, while 22.4% said no to the statement.

Table 4.17

Do you think the bank provides additional options for some customers (customers with non-English speaking backgrounds/for sight or hearing impaired/elderly?)		
Answer Options	Response Percent	Response Count
Yes	77.6%	76
No	22.4%	22
<i>answered question</i>		98
<i>skipped question</i>		3

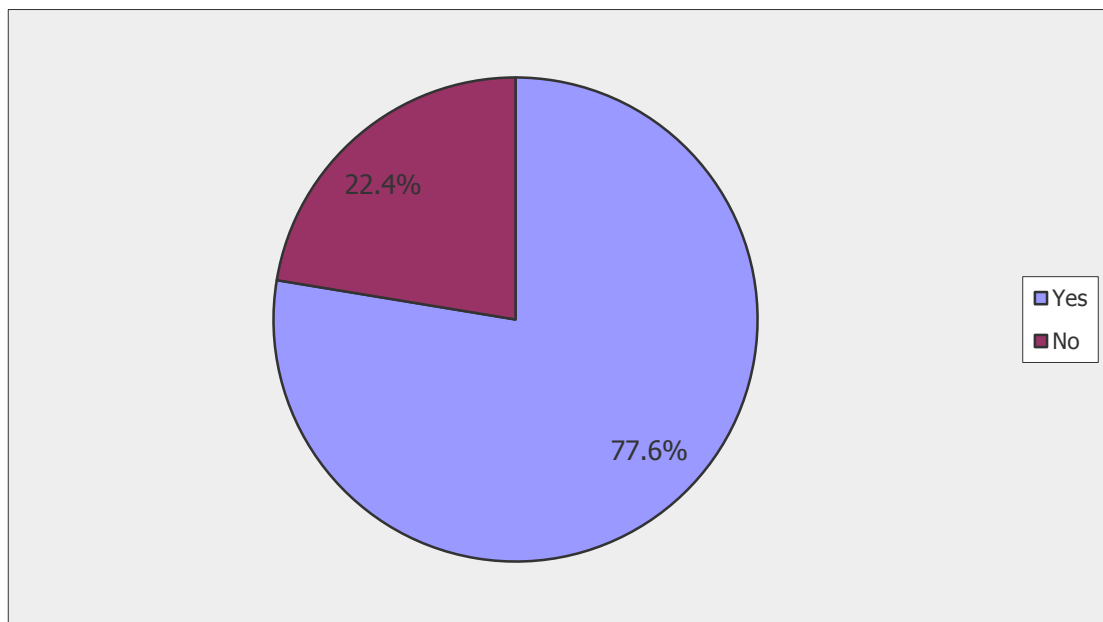


Figure 4.17: Do you think the bank provides additional options for some customers (customers with non-English speaking backgrounds/for sight or hearing impaired/elderly?)

4.9 Hypothesis

H1: There is a relationship between service quality and customer satisfaction in banks

Table 4.18 and figure 4.18 shows the responses of the respondents when they were asked if the bank contacts them about their needs and expectations. About 67.0% of the respondents said yes to the question, while 33.0% of respondents said no to the sentence.

Table 4.18

Has the bank ever contacted you about your needs or expectations?		
Answer Options	Response Percent	Response Count
Yes	67.0%	67
No	33.0%	33
<i>answered question</i>		100
<i>skipped question</i>		1

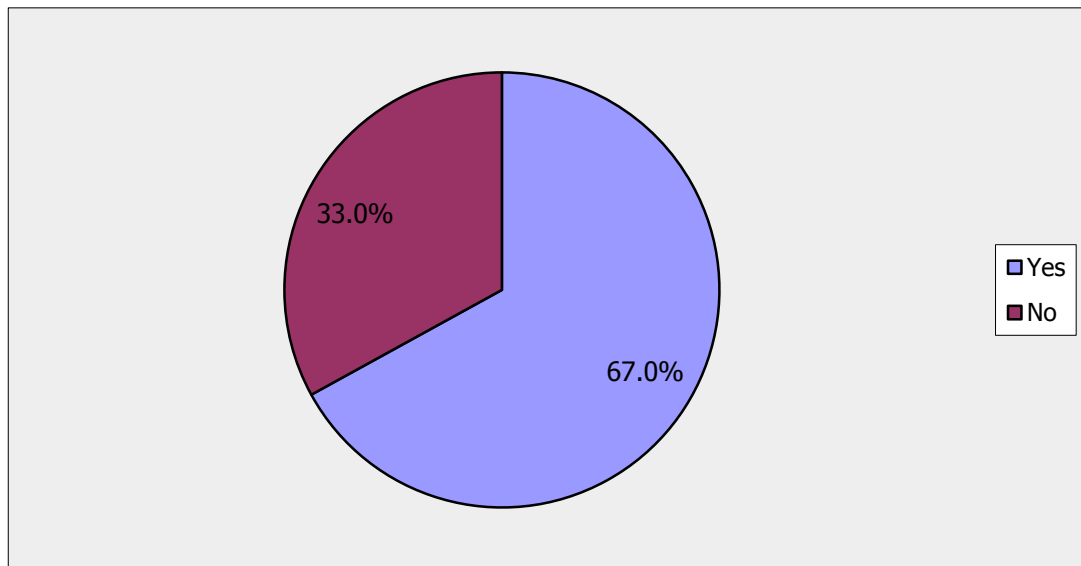


Figure 4.18: Has the bank ever contacted you about your needs or expectations?

Table 4.19 and Figure 4.19 shows that about 78.9% of customers said no when they were asked if they have ever stopped using the bank because of poor service. Whereas 21.1% of respondent said no to the question.

4.10 H2: customer satisfaction has a positive significant impact on customer loyalty

Table 4.19

Have you ever stopped using the bank because of poor service?		
Answer Options	Response Percent	Response Count
Yes	21.1%	20
No	78.9%	75
<i>answered question</i>		95
<i>skipped question</i>		6

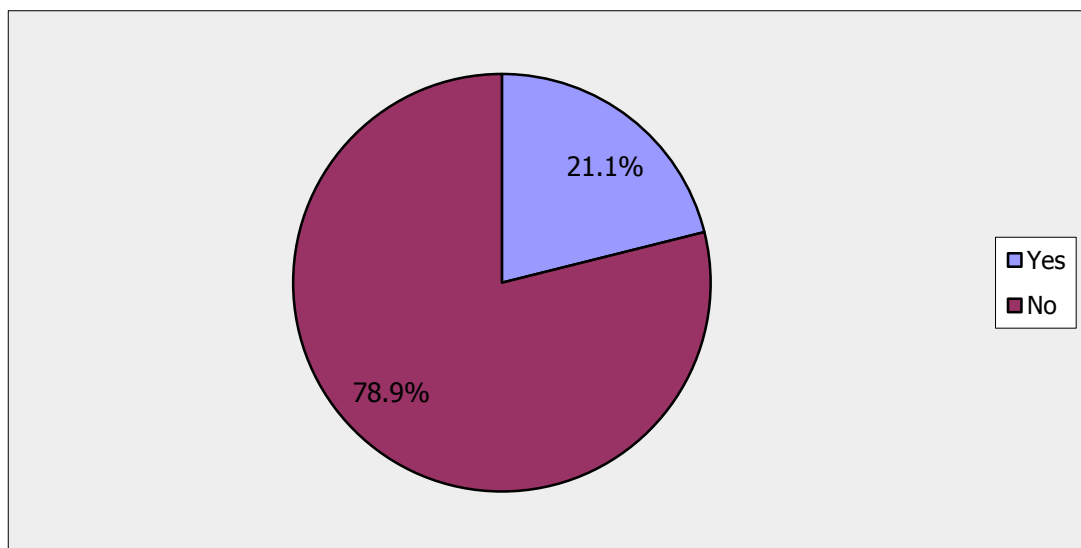


Figure 4.19: Have you ever stopped using the bank because of poor service?

CONCLUSION

This chapter presented the key findings based on the primary data collected by the researcher during the course of study.

The findings for the quantitative data were based on the questionnaire. However the next chapter would reflect how this analysis has helped achieve the objectives of the research, tested hypothesis and answer the research question. The researcher has also provided recommendations based on these findings.

CHAPTER 5: CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATIONS

CHAPTER 5

5.1 CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATIONS

Service quality is increasingly recognised as being strategic value by both “traditional” service-oriented industries such as restaurants and banking and increasingly by the manufacturing sector (Joseph and Stone, 2003). According to Lewis *et al.*, (2003), the major benefits of strong service include; satisfied and retained customers; opportunities for cross-selling; attraction of new customers; development of customer relationships; increased sales and market shares; enhanced corporate image; reduced costs and increased profit margins and business performance.

At this point in the literature, as well as the results obtained from the present study, there is little doubt that enhancing the service quality of the banking experience as defined by both the quality of personal interaction for instance friendly, courteous, efficient tellers, delivered while in the bank as well as the ease of use and security of the services provided by the bank will enhance the overall customer perception of the quality of service provided by the bank. This is to say that the higher the overall quality of services, the more positive the benefits for the bank and its management.

However, this chapter has drawn on a sample of 101 Skye Bank retail banking customers in exploring the dimensions of the relatively service quality construct, and evaluating how the survey respondents perceive services offered by their bank. Also, the conclusions are drawn in terms of research objectives and hypothesis derived at the beginning of this study and cross verifying them with the findings available as a result of primary and secondary research.

Initially in the study, three research objectives were drawn by the researcher. They are listed in a sequence and the analysis conducted thereon.

5.2 *Research Objective one: To identify the factors influencing customer perception of service quality.*

The aim of this objective is to identify the factors influencing customer perception of service quality. Zeithaml and Bitner, (1996) identified four factors influencing customer perception of service quality they are: service encounters, evidence of service, image and price. Zeithaml and Bitner, (1996) explained that these attributes form customers overall perception of

service quality, satisfaction and value. Having identified these characteristics, some important facts and perception came into the limelight. This was evident from the fact that 63.0% of the customers perceive their bank to provide accurate records of all transactions that have taken place. Based on the survey findings, it was revealed that the majority of the respondents are pleased with the precision of account statements. Furthermore, the majority of customers (63.4%) feel their bank gives a well written guarantee of transactions that have taken place. This indicates that the bank staff have the ability to perform the service dependably and accurately. This fact can be supported by one of the five dimensions (Reliability) of the SERVQUAL instrument proposed by Parasuraman *et al.*, (1988). The survey result also shows that most of the customers (56.1%) perceive their bank to inform them on a regular basis the product and services they have available. This signifies that the level of communication between the bank staff and customers is satisfactory.

5.3 *Research Objective 2: To evaluate how well the bank satisfies its customers*

After the analysis and discussion of the results of the primary research, the researcher can conclude that customers are satisfied with the level of service delivered by Skye Bank Plc. Nigeria. As regards the bank's ability to handling customer complaints, the majority of the customers shown in (table 4.11 and figure 4.11) were satisfied with the manner with which the bank deals with their complaints. The finding indicates that the bank pays attention to the different needs of its customers and as a result develops new services based on customer's needs. Furthermore, (table 4.12 and figure 4.12) revealed that the majority of the customers feel that the bank processes their transaction (so they do not need to wait for long). The finding reveals that the bank staff have a responsive attitude. This is to say that the bank staff show willingness to assist the customers in their needs and also they possess the ability to provide prompt service.

5.4 *Research Objective 3: To access the perception of the retail bank customer's towards bank service quality.*

Bahia and Nantel, (2000) pointed out that, in the banking sector, perceived service quality results from the difference between customers' perceptions for the services offered by the bank (received service) and their expectations in comparison with the banks that offer such services (expected service). The stated objective was achieved based on the findings from Table 4.13 and figure 4.13 which was in regards of the retail bank services applicable to the

bank customers that participated in the survey. The findings revealed that a majority of the customers (64.4%) specified that they make use of the bank current account services. based on the findings from table 4.14 and figure 4.14 revealed that the majority of customers perceive these services offered by the bank to be off high quality. From all indications, it is obvious that the expectations of the customers were met/exceeded while making use of the bank's services. Furthermore, the findings revealed that the majority of respondents contact the bank either by telephone or via the internet. Table 4.15 and Figure 4.15 revealed that 60.6% of the customers got connected to the service without a waiting time. The present study implies that the general population appears generally satisfied with the technological aspects of the bank.

Hypothesis

5.5 H1: There is a relationship between service quality and customer satisfaction in banks

The hypothesis can be perceived from several angles as it relates to a general behaviour in banks. The research hypothesis can either be accepted or rejected based on available literature and general observation. Wong *et al.*, (2008) states that service quality and satisfaction are constructs resulting from the comparison of expectation and performance. They are thus very strongly related. however, the difference between these two constructs, is that perceived service quality is a form of attitude and is a long run overall evaluation, while customer satisfaction is more of a transaction-specific measure (Chadee and Mattson, 1996; Cronin and Taylor, 1992; Bolton and Drew, 1991; Bitner, 1990; Wong *et al.*, 2008). Despite these differences, the link between service quality and satisfaction is an important one in this research. Mattson, (1992) found that service quality is the outcome of the satisfaction process; Spreng and Mackoy, (1996) connect the constructs of perceived service quality and customer satisfaction derived from expectations, perceived performance and desires.

Nevertheless, the research finding and analysis for this research have established that there is indeed a relationship between service quality and customer satisfaction in banks. This was for the fact that the majority of customers (67.0%) agreed to the statement when they were asked if the bank has ever contacted them about their needs and expectations. Zeithaml *et al.*, (2009) posited that customers are satisfied if service meets or exceeds their expectation of desired service but are dissatisfied if service drops below their expectation.

5.6 H2: customer satisfaction has a positive significant impact on customer loyalty

Satisfaction is referred to be the outcome of individual service transactions and the overall service encounter, Oliver, (1999) defined customer loyalty as a deeply held commitment to re-buy or re-patronize a preferred product or service consistently in the future, causing repetitive same brand or same brand-set purchasing, despite situational influences and marketing efforts. Nevertheless, the findings from the present study revealed that the majority of the customers perceive the bank service quality to be of high quality. Table 4.19 and Figure 4.19 indicate that 78.9% of customers said no to the statement that is if they have ever stopped using the bank because of poor services.

The results of the survey indicates that the management of Skye Bank Plc. is committed to offering the best service to its customers and develops new methods to improve service quality in other to satisfy its customers.

5.7 Recommendation

From the research analysis, it was however evident that a number of initiatives could be taken into consideration by Skye Bank Plc in order to ensure customers perceive the services offered to be of high quality.

- Further research should be carried out on customer perception of service quality in the financial services sector of Nigeria as there is not much existing literature on the topic. This will help to ensure improvement in consumer satisfaction and ultimately the provision of bank services that will help meet and satisfy the needs of the customers adequately.
- The bank should introduce 24 hours banking to resolve customers complaints and attend to their needs promptly
- The bank needs to provide special services on the ATM for the elderly and the disabled. Also the bank should provide more ATM's as well placing the ATM's in a convenient area for customers to access easily.

- Banks should pioneer new service delivery techniques to strengthen their relationships with customers and to suit the underlying dimensions of quality of service and returns.
- The management of the bank should provide the necessary logistics to staff because they help achieve customer satisfaction.
- The bank should reengineer their processes on a regular basis in order to allow customers have greater control over their banking transactions. This could be a capital intensive decision but in the long-run, it would enhance speed of banking operation as well as service quality.
- The bank should ensure that a user-friendly system is in place to make ATM transactions. Also the bank management should provide adequate brochures to new users to educate them on how to use the services.
- Improvements in the efficiency of the telephone and the online site will assist in developing trust in using the website. The bank should continually monitor the fulfilment of personal needs and satisfaction with the organisation of the site if they wish customers to remain loyal to online service.
- Last but not least, there is a need to look beyond simply providing good service quality to put up strong relationship with customers. This research provides further confirmation that it is only through human interaction that strong relationships are built. Hence if managers wish to retain customers through strong relationships, they need to do this via person to person contact.

5.8 Main Limitations of the study

Due to time constraint and ease of access, the researcher was unable to gain access to all the retail bank customers. As a result the majority of the retail bank customers that participated in this research are customers that were present at the bank during the researcher's visit to the bank.

Due to the Nigerian data protection act law adhered to by Nigerian banks; the researcher was unable to gain full access to the respondent's details as to carrying out this research. Gaining access to the customer's details would have aided the researcher to gain a more holistic view of responses to participation.

This study covered only one region of Nigeria. The researcher acknowledges that Skye Bank Plc. Nigeria operates in several regions in Nigeria and the sample from one region (Osolo Lagos, state) may not be representative of the whole country.

CHAPTER 6: SELF REFLECTION AND LEARNING

CHAPTER SIX

6.0 SELF REFLECTION AND LEARNING

6.1 Introduction

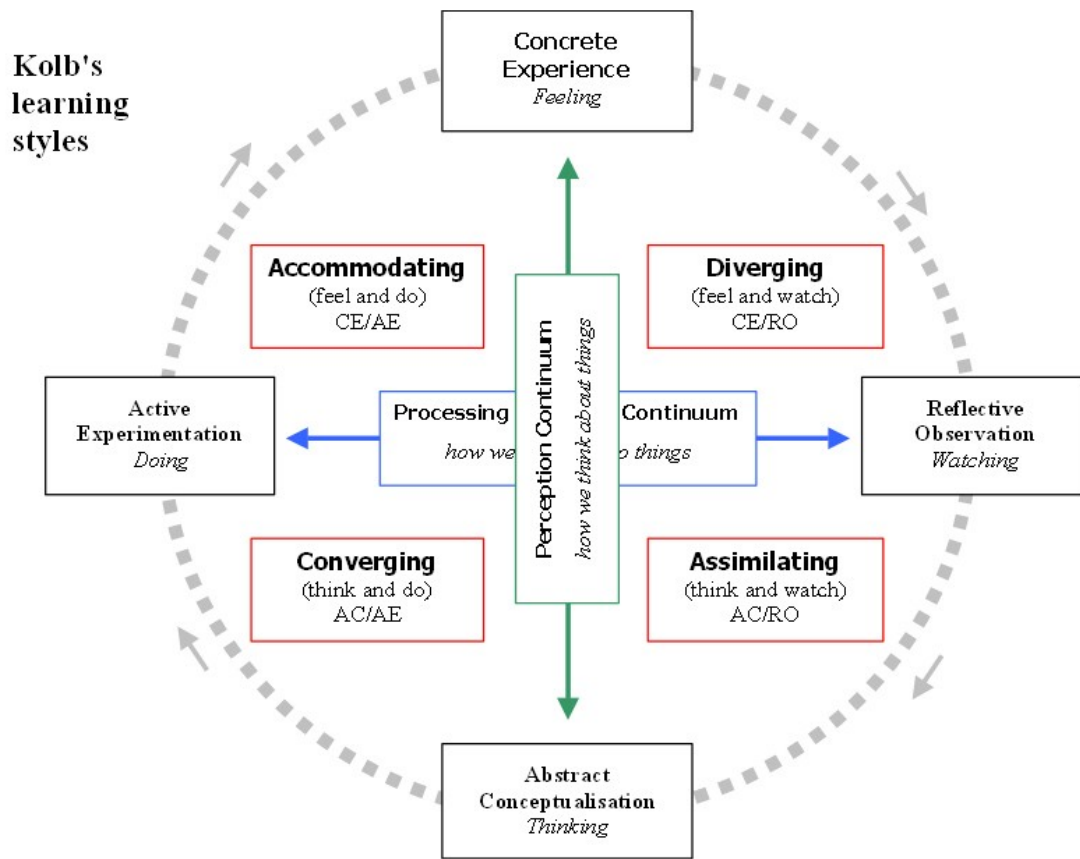
This chapter explains the personal development plans that have been made over the course of undergoing a Masters in Business Administration programme. This section also highlights an assessment of the academic and professional Skills acquired during the completion of the MBA programme and how the learning has helped to improve certain skills that certainly benefit the researcher in future employment.

6.2 Learning style

Learning style refers to a learner's pattern of behaviour in approaching a learning experience taking in new information, developing new skills, retaining new information and applying new skills to life situations (Kolb, 1985; Palmer and Goetz, 1988; Sarasin, 1999; Yacizi 2005). It has been proven that determining a learning style enhances learning. (Buch and Bartley, 2002). In order to realise this potential, it is necessary to establish and understand what preference a researcher has for a learning style. Bearing this in mind, the researcher discovered his learning style by employing the two most popular learning styles model: Kolb- the learning style inventory and Honey and Mumford- the learning styles questionnaire.

Kolb, (1984) as cited in Reid *et al.*, (2004) defines learning as cyclical experience, "immediate concrete is the basis of observations and reflection. These observations are assimilated into a theory from which new implications for action can be deduced. These implications or hypotheses can serve as guides in acting to create new experiences". Thus, Kolb, (1984) described the process in four stages: Concrete experience, reflective observation, abstract conceptualisation and active experimentation; this shown in (figure 6.1). He argues that cyclical learning should be approached as a continuous ring and he suggests that this learning ring process usually begins with a person performing a particular action (i.e concrete experience).

Figure 6.1: Kolb's Learning Style



© concept david kolb, adaptation and design alan chapman 2005-06, based on Kolb's learning styles, 1984
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In similar context, Honey and Mumford (1986) as cited in Reid *et al.*, (2004) identified four individual learning styles based on Kolb's four learning cycle stages (Reid *et al.*, 2004):

6.2.1 Concrete Experience (Kolb)-Activists (Honey and Mumford): Activist prefer doing and experiencing; they are impulsive, imaginative, emotional; they enjoy the “here and now”, they seek new challenges and immediate experience. They prefer working in groups; they are interested in people and are open minded.

6.2.2 Reflective Observation (Kolb) - Reflectors (Honey and Mumford): These individuals prefer to “stand back”, they observe, listen, and gather data from experiences. They tend to be very thoughtful and cautious and usually postpone conclusions.

6.2.3 Abstract (Kolb)- Theorists (Honey and Mumford): Theorist see things through in logical steps, assimilate unlike facts into coherent theories, they rationalize objectively, and rejects subjectivity.

6.2.4 Active Experimentation (Kolb)- Pragmatists (Honey and Mumford): these individuals seek and try out new ideas, they tend to be practical. They are experimenters; they enjoy trying to solve a problem and tend to make decision quickly. They tend to get bored with long discussions.

With the use of the Honey and Mumford learning style assessment, it was discovered that the researcher has a learning style of a Reflector. Reflectors perceive information (apprehend) concretely and process (comprehend) through reflective observation. Research by Yacizi, (2005) has shown that Reflectors enjoy idea generation activities such as brainstorming, reflective activities and rhetorical questions and some evidence that reflectors are “social learners” who regard feedback highly, and thus tend to feel isolated when working on-line. Using the Honey and Mumford learning styles, the researcher also discovered that he learns by observing and thinking about what has happened, which also match to his learning style of a diverger. Honey and Mumford portrayed reflectors as people who like observing before they offer their own opinion and like to look at a situation from different perspectives. These learning styles were shown in the manner the researcher searched through information (reflection and brainstorming) especially in the dissertation stage.

6.3 Masters Experience

Enrolling on the Masters in Business Administration (MBA) programme is one of the biggest challenges the researcher has ever faced. This is because when he embarked on the programme, he did not realise how diverse, extensive and demanding the programme was. Another difficulty was as a result of the differences in writing styles during the researcher’s first degree and the MBA programme. The academic writing during his first degree, involved less of searching for relevant articles and referencing the articles. The MBA program brought him into the reality of these form of academic rigour, as he did a total of five modules that involved taking up the task of finding articles and referencing it. He was also able to manage and adopt the new way of academic writing.

The MBA programme has provided a sound basis upon which to build a career in international business. So far, the programme has allowed the researcher to acquire the

necessary skills to make immediate, effective contribution upon employment in the area of international business.

As an MBA graduate, the researcher will be able to combine new knowledge with past experience and apply it to new circumstances. The Masters programme has empowered him with skills that will enable the researcher to thoroughly analyse, synthesize and solve complex unstructured business problems in his chosen career.

The MBA international course through its rigorous academic programme has done great value addition to the researchers learning and knowledge base.

6.4 Learning outcomes

6.4.1 *Research skills*

Since commencing the MBA programme, the researcher has been able to notice that his research skills have improved immensely. This was as a result of the modules that were taught during the programme. The majority of the module assessment required a critical review of academic literature because most of them were mainly case studies. At the initial stage of the MBA programme, analysing case studies appeared to be something strange to the researcher; this was due to the fact that his undergraduate course did not require much research work. Most of the case studies analysed were based on real life scenarios that occurred in business environments. And these are likely issues that a business manager might encounter and would be needed to come up with a solution. In most cases, the case studies require use of primary research through administering of questionnaires and conducting personal interviews. For instance, the Service Marketing assessment (MGTMKM028) completed in the first semester of the MBA programme. This aspect of development would be of great relevance to the researcher in his quest to becoming a business manager because he will be able to conduct business research and make business analysis in a bid to solve business issues in the future.

6.4.2 *Data analysis*

At the initial stage of writing the dissertation, the researcher thought he would use the SPSS software to analyse the data he acquired from primary research without the knowledge that he

can also use the Survey Monkey software. Before then these software's were unknown to him but in the long run he started learning how to go about it, he later on discovered that with the Survey Monkey software, he would be able to analyse data and create charts. The Survey Monkey is an online survey tool which is used to create, collect and analyse data. The primary research has allowed him to have knowledge of both the SPSS software and the Survey Monkey, which would be of great benefit to him in future as he would like to have a career that would involve carrying out research, the knowledge of both SPSS and Survey Monkey and other available tools of the same nature would really be of immense importance to the researcher.

6.4.3 *Decision making skills*

The MBA programme has also sharpened the researcher's decision making skill. The course has been taught bearing in mind that the manager should be able to make right decisions in the highly competitive business environment. This skill has been developed throughout the course in which the researcher have been required to analyse various case studies and make decisions, suggesting possible solutions to real world business problems. For instance, was one of the courses the researcher undertook (International Business and Trade), in which the researcher was given a real life case study to analyse the business strategy of an organisation. One of the challenges for doing this type of assessment was that the researcher has to make the decisions on applying appropriate business models in order to analyse the organisations business environment. Nevertheless, the researcher was able to analyse the business strategy and environment of the organisation and he also made recommendations as to factors that are affecting the company's business strategy and environment.

Furthermore, the development of the decision making skill has required the researcher to make decisions based on sound logic and rationale and be objective in the decision making process without too much concern about if the decision made is right or wrong. This skill developed during the course would facilitate the researcher when he starts his career, as he is planning to work with a multinational company where he would be able to put the skill into practice.

6.4.4 Team working skills

Learning as a group was unknown to the researcher till he started the MBA programme. Despite the fact working as a team have its strengths as well as its weaknesses. This was based on the difficulties the researcher encountered while working with others in a group. Certain individuals in the group put up a nonchalant attitude whenever a group assessment was assigned. The researcher on his own part understood that people do have their shortcomings; this could be a member of the group not having a clear knowledge of the group assessment, in most cases, a group member finding it difficult to work with other people. The researcher on his own part tried as much as possible to make the group members understand the implications of not completing a task before the due date, as well as assisting the group members in completing the task.

The researcher found the group learning method used during the programme very helpful because it helped to enhance his team working skills. Working together with people from different cultural background is very challenging because we all have different cultures, attitudes, beliefs and behaviour and this normally have an impact on the way that we work. The right attitude is to be accommodating to other people's view in order to have an effective team and the researcher was able to learn this virtue. He was able to develop his leadership skill during this period because most of the time that he had group assessment, the researcher takes it upon himself to coordinate the group work and seek for the commitment of every team member in order to achieve a good result.

6.4.5 Time management skills

Since commencing the MBA course, the researcher would maintain the fact that he has improved with the way he manages time compared to the way he did in the past. The researcher realized that in order for him to be successful in a Masters Degree programme he must be able to make use of any minute he has for studying and carrying out extensive research on business related subjects. The researcher was able to work with deadlines during his study. This was as a result of the compulsory set times for the submission of module assessments.

The researcher would also say that he is more organised with the manner he does things now. The researcher was able to keep things in an appropriate manner especially documents and also handouts issued in the lecture room in a bid to reach them when needed. In conclusion to this, the researcher would say that developing this skill will be of great relevance in his quest for being a business manager.

6.5 Going Forward

In conclusion to this, the researcher would suggest that the experience he acquired undergoing an MBA programme is of great relevance to him in today's business environment. Especially, the team working skills developed as a result of module assessments that required working in groups, communication and presentation skills, time management and ultimately, analysing case studies has also helped the researcher to develop his analytical skills and this aspect would be very useful to the researchers' career goals. The researcher is now capable to study issues more objectively and perform critical analysis of issues before making decision this is to say that the researcher was able to improve in his decision making skills.

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APPENDICES

APPENDIX 1

Questionnaire Request

Dear Sir/Madam,

I am a post graduate student in Dublin Business School (Dublin, Ireland) pursuing an international MBA. Presently, I am conducting a research on customer's perception of service quality in the commercial banking sector of Nigeria. It is expected that this research will provide the useful information to discover how customers perceive service delivery in bank.

I kindly ask for your support by dedicating some time to take part in this online based questionnaire. A space is provided where you can fill in your answers. These questions would take approximately 5 to 10 minutes. Please answer these questions in the space provided. If you wish to add further comments, please feel free to do so.

I would really appreciate if you take part in this questionnaire. I firmly believe that your experiences with the bank would provide an invaluable input to my research.

If you have any queries, please do not hesitate to contact me either by phone (+353876560347) or by email (chucky17ng@yahoo.com). Please be rest assured that your response are treated anonymously and your reviews will be strictly confidential. I would analyse the data on an aggregated level without reference to individual respondents.

I am looking forward to your response.

Yours faithfully,

Okoroafor Chukwuemezuo