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## **IMPACT OF FIELD ENGINEER SERVICES ON OVERALL CUSTOMER SATISFACTION IN CALL CENTRE OF A FIELD SERVICE COMPANY A CASE STUDY: CURRYS, IRELAND**

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## **DECLARATION BY CANDIDATE**

I hereby declare that this dissertation is entirely my own work, and has not been submitted to any other institution for any award. Where other sources of information have used, each have been acknowledged.

Signed: \_\_\_\_\_

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May 22, 2015

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## **Abstract**

Customer satisfaction is an important term for every business today. Field service industry has witnessed a drastic growth in recent years. Several self-employed and contract field engineers are increasing by leaps and bounds. The strategic goal of every field service organisations is customer satisfaction. In this dissertation, the reader finds an in-depth literature review and primary data through self-administered surveys and interviews conducted with the customers and managers of Currys, Ireland. The aim of this research is to provide insights and recommendations to field service organisations with regards to the services of their field engineers. This study analysis the influence of field engineer services on customer satisfaction level. The research topic of this dissertation is:

*“Impact of field engineer services on overall customer satisfaction of an IT call centre: A Case Study, Currys, Knowhow Department, Dublin”*

This research has taken a qualitative, inductive, interpretive and cross-sectional design in the form of a survey which was the most appropriate methodology for this research because the goal of achieving excellent customer satisfaction in field service organisations is a social phenomenon which has now become dynamic in nature. Gaps that were identified in the literature review and primary data are later discussed in data analysis and conclusion. Based on the findings in this dissertation, the researcher has assessed the existing performance of field engineers with relation to delivering services to customers. Also, a study was conducted with 55 customers of Currys, Ireland using survey through self-administered questionnaires and an interview with the manager who recruits field engineers and manages customer satisfaction.

# **CHAPTER 1: INTRODUCTION**

## **1. Background**

**Customer satisfaction** is a strategic goal of every organisation. Neal (1998) defines customer satisfaction as a stage where customers' expectations were met completely with no complaints. All customers have needs and expectations so it is very important for an organisation to identify their needs and expectations so as to fulfil them. According to Tripathi (2014, p. 124) customer satisfaction is the results of meeting or surpassing customers' expectations by the products and services of a company. Due to a cut-throat competition in the market, customer satisfaction has become a key differentiator and an integral part of a business strategy. So it makes eminent sense for a company to develop metrics to keep a tab on customer satisfaction. He also added that it helps to loyal customers who in turn could become customer evangelists spreading the good word to others. Customer satisfaction brings customer loyalty. A Satisfied customer will come back to you again. Raab *et al.* (2008, pp. 60-62) highlight some key factors in order to achieve customers satisfaction. First of all, it is very important to be aware of his expectations followed with the knowledge of his likes and dislikes. Companies have to identify the real need and desires of the customers. Companies have to see their products and services from the perspective of the customers. If they fail to understand the expectations of the customers then it may bring a huge loss to their business. As per the statistics, only four percent of unsatisfied customers complain, the rest 96 percent keep to themselves and switch to other companies.

Satisfied customers always stay with the company in long run and they have a huge impact on the profitability of the company. They will not give a second thought to come back to you again. (Hill, Brierley and MacDougall, 1999.p. 104).According to Szwarc (2005, p. 12) Satisfied customers always promote the company. On the other hand, more dissatisfied customers tend to ease their dissatisfaction by telling to other people about their service experience. Hence dissatisfied customers are a cost to a company because they criticize the company to others. A company has to understand the fact that dissatisfied customers have a huge impact on its market share in long run. In fact, it costs far less to retain a happy client than it does to find a new client. Customer satisfaction matters more to the business, besides the customers, as it directly impacts the company's bottom line profits. Businesses that have been successful

in retaining their existing customers have shown an increase in profits consistently. ('Why Customer Satisfaction Matters, no date')

All the departments of a company should strive towards achieving maximum customer satisfaction. If one of the departments fails, it will impact the overall customer satisfaction level of the company.

## **1.2 What is a Field Engineer?**

Field Engineer is a professional authorized/licensed person who works at clients' homes or business location. Field engineers have growing demand in the market today. They are basically experienced and qualified technicians who can work in variety of fields. They are mainly responsible for diagnosing the problem, repairing and servicing a machine, installing software and hardware. A field engineer should be willing to travel every day in order to repair specialized equipment. They usually carry required tools and maintenance kit in order to perform the tasks at clients' location. A field engineer has to consider lot of things before choosing a work. Distance to be travelled, time involved in troubleshooting and fixing the machine, fuel price, profit margin, nature of the job, weather forecast, tools and kits and more than visit, if requires. Acquiring a bachelor's degree and learning advanced engineering techniques are prerequisites to obtain a field service engineer position. Field engineers are basically of two types:

**Self-employed/Freelancer:** They are basically independent field engineers who don't work for any company. They directly deal with clients. With their experience and skills, they earn a good reputation in the market so clients call them directly in order to get their problem fixed. They register themselves in websites like workmarket.com in order to get jobs from different companies involved in sending engineers at customers' location. They charge fee according to the nature and time involved in the work. They have their own tools and transportation facilities. They make their schedules depending on the work flow. "There is a significant growth in online staffing so it is easier for them to find jobs online. Companies are now posting jobs online so field engineer can choose the job accordingly. Companies can also see their ratings and reviews for their work in order to select a right technician". (Forbes, 2014) Due to the miserable economy, the ranks of self-employed have been growing. It is predicted that the self-employment is likely to accelerate in the future. (Forbes, 2012)

**Contract/full time job:** They are the full time or contract based field engineers who work for an organisation. They have fixed salary and they only work for a company. They get the required tools and transportation from the company. They completely work on the basis of data provided by the company.

### 1.3 Overview of Currys, Ireland

Currys is the one of the oldest retailer in the Irish market which deals with home electronics, household appliances and Computing. It was founded by Henry Curry in 1884. In the beginning, Currys was involved in the manufacturing and retailing of bicycles and related items. The first shop was opened in Leicester in 1888. They rapidly captured the market by expanding their stores in different parts of the country. Later on, the company acquired many subsidiary companies and continued its expansion especially in its electrical sections. This side of the business eventually became dominant. The mission statement of Currys is “We can help”.

One of the major departments of Currys is KNOWHOW which deals with providing field engineers for the installation and repair of electrical appliances like Washing machines, dishwashers, Laptops and fridge freezers. KNOWHOW helps the customers in solving the technical issues by setting up, installing, repairing, protecting and providing plenty of advice and lots of reassuring. The KNOWHOW team has experts in all areas of technology, whether it is kitchen appliances, computers, music players or gadgets. KNOWHOW has got a team of 500 field technicians on the road visiting people at home.



**Figure1: Knowhow Department (Currys.ie)**

#### **1.4 Aim of this Research**

The aim of this research is to identify the key factors that affect the overall customer satisfaction of a company with relation to the field engineer services. With the growth in field engineer sector, the importance of field engineer services has become more critical for customer satisfaction. This study will focus on the application and how to adopt it in field service industry. The researcher will also try to identify gap and discrepancies by conducting elaborate literature review and surveying customers and interviewing managers from the industry. The researcher is also going to analyse the techniques being used in Currys, Ireland in order to contribute the existing store of knowledge.

#### **1.5 Research Question**

According to Saunders and Lewis (2012, p. 19), a research question should fit the specifications and meet the standards set by the examining institution. It should also provide clear link to the relevant literature and fresh insights into the chosen topic. The research question of this dissertation is defined as:

How does a field engineer services impact on the customer satisfaction in technical field service department (call centre) of a company?

Case Study: Currys, Ireland (KNOWHOW)

#### **1.6 Research Objectives**

According to Saunders and Lewis (2012, p. 21), research objectives should be clear, specific statements that identify what the research process seeks to achieve as a result of doing the research. Research questions also add an element of precision to research questions. With this in mind, the researcher defines the following objectives:

1. To identify the key factors those contribute to maximise the overall customer satisfaction level by the services of a field engineer in a field service company.
2. To assess the existing performance of company's field engineers in delivering satisfaction.

3. To get a better understanding of those factors which a company needs to consider while recruiting, training and managing field engineers from a service and satisfaction perspective.

### **1.7 Research Hypothesis**

According to Kumar (2014, p. 99), Hypothesis brings clarity, specificity and focus to a research problem. They tell a researcher what specific information to collect, and thereby provide greater focus. The hypothesis presented by the researcher is:

1. Field engineer services positively support the overall customer satisfaction when it is managed well.
2. Appropriate selection, training and management of field engineers can enable better service and satisfaction.
3. There is a skill gap between among employees who are currently in the field and candidates who are looking to work in field service.

### **1.8 Interest in the Subject**

Field service industry is a growing sector in the market today and there are limited studies on field engineer services in spite of the fact that it plays a vital role in overall customer satisfaction of a company. Most of the studies on customer satisfaction focus on customer service, employees' training and sales. This has motivated the researcher to select this particular topic for the dissertation. Every technical company has field service department today in order to serve their valuable customers and to withstand in the competition. With the use of advanced technology in field service industry, there is a very less emphasis on key performance indicators such as 'site responses time' and 'first-time fix rate'. Field service organisations should put more emphasis on aspects that are more relevant to their customers today such as customer satisfaction, field technician utilisation and service revenue. In 21<sup>st</sup> century, customers have a lot of awareness so they understand the fact that there are numerous options in the market. This study will help us to assess the performance of field services department in delivering satisfaction from a

service perspective. Further, it will help us to identify the gap which will be addressed in this study.

Customer satisfaction, a field which has always been of a great interest for the researcher, and the desire and willingness to learn and understand has increased considerably. Also, the researcher was previously employed in an IT call centre for many years and he worked as an On-ground support executive there. The researcher has witnessed a lot of changes recently in field service department which inspired him to conduct this study related to field service department. The professional background of the researcher has always been related to the service sector which will enable him to analyse and examine the minute details of this research. The researcher is presently working in Currys which has KNOWHOW department that deals with field engineers' support so it will enable him to carry out this research effectively and efficiently. Also, this study could serve as a possible source for future research on field engineer services in Ireland.

### **1.9 Approach to the dissertation**

In the first stage, the researcher will go through the recent and previous study to attain a clear scope of the problem area. The critical review of literature will make a platform for the researcher to achieve the research objectives. This will cover the following subjects:

1. The definitions of customer satisfaction along with a review of previous studies done on customer satisfaction.
2. The factors influencing the customer satisfaction in field service industries.
3. Various components of field service industry
4. Analysis of methods being used to recruit and train field engineers.

The second stage of dissertation includes research methodology and data collection. Data collection will be done by adopting qualitative approach by distributing self-administered questionnaires to the customers of Currys and by conducting interview with the Manager of field service department who manages customer satisfaction. The data obtained from the questionnaires and interviews would then be critically analysed and then a conclusion would be drawn from the data obtained. Some recommendations would be provided related to the dissertation topic.

## **1.10 Organisation of the Dissertation**

This dissertation is organised into 6 chapters and they are listed and briefly described below.

### **Chapter 1: Introduction**

This is the first and current chapter of the dissertation. This chapter gives a brief overview of the background and its academic justification, field service industry and customer satisfaction and the researcher's interest in the topic.

### **Chapter 2: Literature Review**

This chapter begins with an overview of customer satisfaction, and then is followed by a discussion of the available academic literature, topics, concepts and theories considered as relevant to fulfil the aims of this thesis.

### **Chapter 3: Research Methodology**

This chapter focuses on the methodology chosen for this subject that includes the research philosophy, data collection methods and the questionnaire and techniques used to analyse the data. Therefore, the chapter provides a broad explanation of the methods used in order to reach the agreed objectives of the investigation.

### **Chapter 4: Data Analysis and Findings**

The chapter consists of the data analysis obtained from the self-administered questionnaires.

### **Chapter 5: Conclusions and Recommendations**

This chapter provides a review about the main findings obtained in the previous chapter, and its relation to the original aim of the investigation as well as the answer of the investigation's research question.

### **Chapter 6: Self Reflection on Own Learning**

This chapter consists of the broad analysis of the author's self-reflection on learning and evaluation of the skills acquired by the researcher during the

dissertation period and the master degree program.

### **1.11 Limitations of the research**

This study was originally intended to focus exclusively on the population of the United States of America. The researcher has previously selected an Indian company which provides field engineer support in the USA. But it was difficult to access customers' data due to data confidentiality policy. So the researcher had to change the focus to Ireland, where he is residing presently, which helped him` to conduct this research effectively. Also, due to the time and travel factors, the researcher finally decided to conduct this study in Ireland.

### **1.12 Major Contribution to the study**

The current literature suggests that there is an impact of field engineer services on the overall customer satisfaction of a company. The pressure seems to be placed on getting work done immediately with no special focus on achieving maximum customer satisfaction due to time and travel involved in the job. This study shows that the impact should not only be placed on getting work done as this may sometimes leads to overlooking other vital components of customer satisfaction. Companies should focus on every aspect of field engineer services in order to achieve maximum satisfaction level in field support department. Also, companies need to hire people with balanced skills of customer centricity and technical knowledge. Field service companies need to focus on "how the relationship between a technician and customer can impact the organisation".

# **CHAPTER 2: LITERATURE REVIEW**

## **2.1 Literature Introduction**

In order to construct a literature framework, relevant studies have been thoroughly reviewed and analysed in order to explain the conceptual framework of all the elements examined in the study. A literature review provides the foundation on which research is built. It helps us to develop an understanding and insight in relevant previous research about a particular topic. It involves gathering and analysing the data of a particular area in order to understand and grasp to carry out a further research in that area.(Saunders et al. 2009 pp. 59-60).Customer satisfaction is a key term for an organisation. It is directly related with the services of a company. The services of a field engineer have a huge impact on customer satisfaction level. Field support is a progressing industry in the market. With its increasing popularity, there is a great need to identify and determine the key factors which would lead this industry to a next level. The literature review chapter will explore the theoretical side of the relationship between field engineer services and customer satisfaction. The first part will explain the definition of the customer satisfaction and past researches that have been done in this area. Final part focuses on the various aspects of field engineer services which have a direct impact on overall customer satisfaction.

## **2.2 Customer Satisfaction**

Satisfaction can be defined as a fulfilment of our needs and expectations. According to Oliver (1996, p. 11) the word satisfaction is derived from a Latin words 'satis' and 'facere' which means to get to the point of content or enough. It means to realise that a product or service is providing an enough level of fulfilment. Enough implies that it helps you to get back to normalcy. Oliver (2010) defined that satisfaction is the customer's fulfilment response. It is a judgement that a product or service feature, or the product or service itself, provides a pleasurable level of consumption-related fulfilment. Satisfaction is largely determined by the feelings or attitudes about a product or service generated post purchase or consumption. (Srivastava and Rai, 2013, cited in Solomon et al., 2002, p. 126-153).

According to Zhao (2009, p.18) Customer satisfaction is the most important factor of the service industry. Customer satisfaction brings customer loyalty. Satisfied customers always bring profit and value to a business in several ways. Their repeat business generates income for the company. Besides, there is too much cost involved in advertising, promotion and acquiring new customers so it is always advisable to retain the existing customers by providing them maximum customer satisfaction. Moreover, satisfied customers always spread the good news and recommend the services to several others. According to Szwarc (2005, p. 12) Satisfied customers always promote the company. On the other hand, dissatisfied customers are tend to tell more people about the dissatisfaction than satisfied customers. Hence dissatisfied customers are a cost to a company because they criticize about the company to others. Hill, Brierley and MacDougall (1999.p. 104) has analysed that a company has to understand the fact that dissatisfied customers have a huge impact on its market share in long run. A satisfied customer is very important for every organisation. If the customer is not satisfied then he will go elsewhere. There are hundreds of options in market and customer will only choose the product which meets his expectations. There is a link between customer satisfaction and loyalty. Satisfied customers always stay with the company in long run and they have a huge impact on the profitability of the company. They will not give a second thought to come back to you again. Oakley (2012, p. 1096) argued that the purpose of a business is to create satisfied customers by putting the customer first. This can only be done by customer focus. All the strategies and planning of a company should lead them towards achieving maximum customer satisfaction.

Thus a major goal of the organisation must be to satisfy its customers, both present and future, and create a product or services that the customer needs, wants and will use.`

### **2.3 Customer Satisfaction from a service perspective**

In the past, many definitions and theories had been defined already. Customer satisfaction from a service perspective is an inevitable subject in academics and many researchers have explained it broadly. Kotler and Armstrong (2006) consider that customer satisfaction is an emotional attitude generated towards a product, resulting from the comparison of what was expected and what was received. Customers compare their expectations of a product or service with

their perceptions of what they received. If perceptions meet or exceed expectations, the customer is generally satisfied. However, if expectations are not met, the customer is generally dissatisfied with the service.

*“Service quality is the result of human interaction between the service provider and the customer.”* (Malhotra and Mukerjee, 2003, p. 952). Services play a vital role in driving customer satisfaction. Services begin with the first encounter with the customers. Meeting and greeting are the essential ingredients of customer satisfaction. Conversation is the foremost step of building a rapport before moving into the actual subject. During conversation, it is advisable to jointly handle the complaints and problems of the customers about their products. Paying attention to the customers’ questions is very crucial as it will help the service employee to answer them correctly. (Jasmand, Blazevic and Ruyter, 2012, p. 34). The single most important skill you need to become truly customer-driven is the ability to listen (Quinn, 1999). Quinn (1999) also added that few companies truly listening to what their customers want even though many advertise that they do so, and companies need to have a system in place for listening rather than just principle for doing so.

Service employee or sales person plays a vital role in achieving customer satisfaction. Schmitz and Ganesan (2014, p. 73) stated that “When dealing with complex customer demands, highly self-efficacious salespeople are motivated to overcome hurdles and satisfy customer needs. Therefore, when customer demands are complex, companies may want to send their highly self-efficacious employee on the call because they will exert more effort and likely to perform better to resolve customer problems”. A study conducted by Tsiros, Mittal and Ross (2004) revealed the various factors related to the attributions of a service employee which affect the customer satisfaction. These factors are ability, effort, luck and difficulty which mean the ability to perform best to bring customer satisfaction, effort to work towards achieving customer satisfaction, luck in unpredictable and specific situations and difficulty of the task. Keh et al. (2013, p. 221) highlighted the fact that customer should feel that the service employee genuinely wanting to help the customers rather than just offering lip service. Merely talking to a customer and helping a customer are two different things. In addition, displaying positive emotion has a significant impact on customer satisfaction only when the level of employee helpfulness is high but not when it is low. This clearly concludes that external factors have their own place but a genuine service and a strong willingness to help are the key factors which drive customer satisfaction in service industry. According to Zeithaml,

Bitner and Gremler (2013), the evaluation of service quality is done by the customers so it should be researched from their point of view.

Panda and Das (2014, p. 63) observed that tangibility, assurance and responsiveness are the key influencers in generating customer satisfaction.

**Tangibility**- It includes the physical features, equipment and the appearance of the personnel.

**Assurance**- It is the ability of the employees to command trust and confidence from the customers based on their knowledge in the area in which the service is being provided.

**Responsiveness**- It is the will and the promptness with which a service provider provides the service.

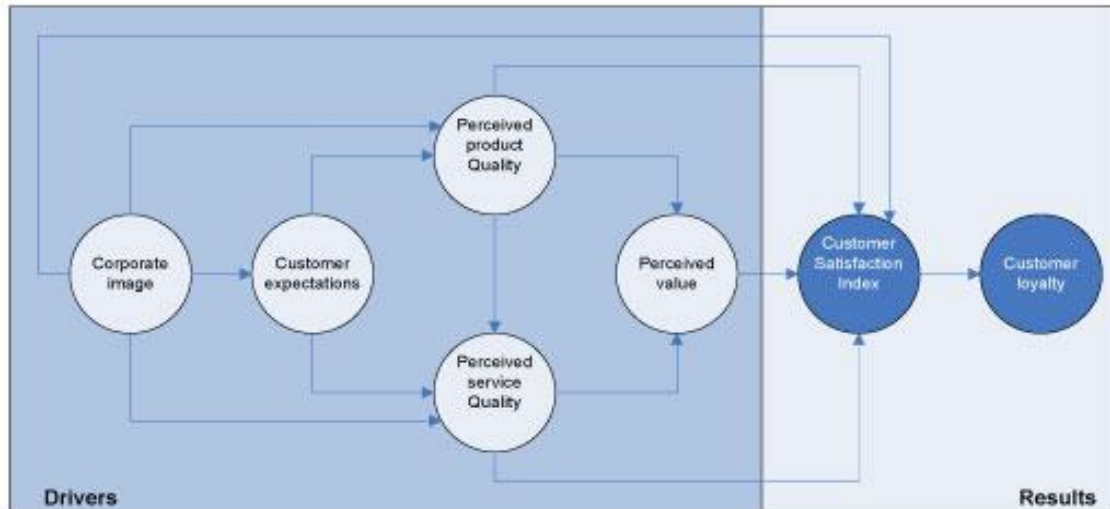
(Panda and Das, 2014, cited in Zeithaml *et al.*, 1990)

Many previous studies have made a well-established relationship between service quality and customer satisfaction. Service quality can enhance the customer satisfaction both directly and indirectly but service fairness is also considered along with service quality while forming satisfaction levels. (Srivastava and Rai, 2013, cited in Chen *et al.*, 2007, p. 399-421). These findings suggested that service quality acts as an antecedent to satisfaction. In other words, Service quality precedes customer satisfaction. Srivastava and Rai (2013, p. 99) also went on stating that there is a significant relationship between service quality and customer satisfaction and an excellent service can stimulate a satisfied customer to patronize the service provider as well as referring its services to others. This principle is same in all the industries.

The view proposed by Moyles (2001, p.27) explains that the eleven countries of Europe have come together to produce a harmonised and tightly coordinated national customer satisfaction surveys. It shows the importance that such countries now place on customer satisfaction at National and European level. The reason for the development of the European Customer Satisfaction Index (ECSI) is three fold (1) To provide companies, public services, consumers, investors, regulators and policy makers with an annual index of customer satisfaction (2) To provide the companies and public services surveyed with the means to analyse the perceptions of their customers to compare them with the perceptions of customers of other companies and public services at different levels (3) To introduce ECSI as a recognised economic macro indicator measuring the performance of the National and European economies. The figure

below is the ECSI theoretical model as to how customer satisfaction is undertaken and the intrinsic benefits it provides.

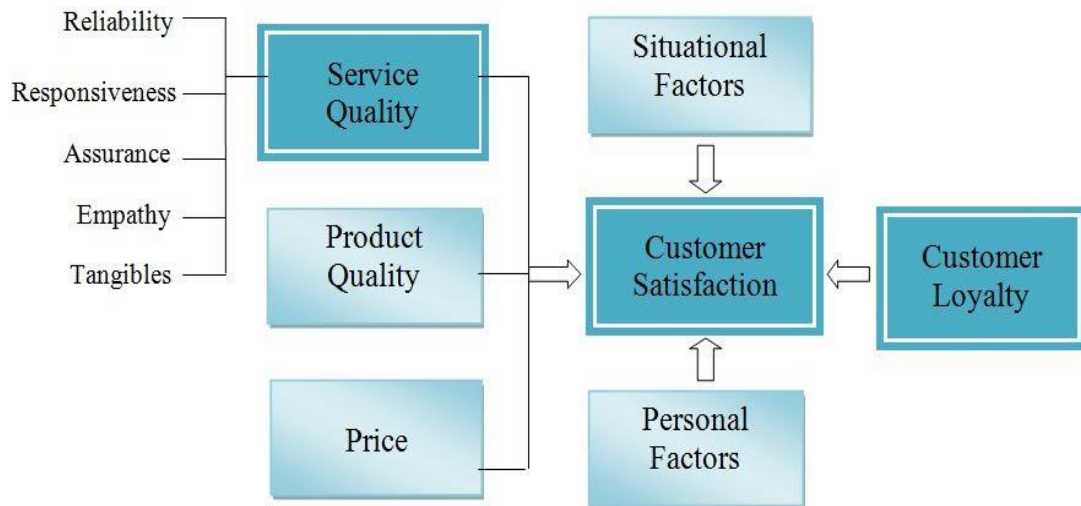
**Figure 2: ECSI Theoretical Model**



**Source:** <http://www.van-haaften.nl/customer-satisfaction/customer-satisfaction-models/137-the-european-customer-satisfaction-index>

The model gives the understanding of the importance of customer satisfaction in relation to service quality, loyalty and customer retention.

Service quality and satisfaction model introduced by Zeithaml et al. (2009, p. 103) will be the most appropriate model to carry out this research as it will help us to analyse the quality of service and product and how they affect the overall customer satisfaction.



Source: Zeithaml, Bitner and Gremler (2009)

### Figure 3: Service Quality and Satisfaction Model

The above model introduced by Zeithaml et al. (2009, p. 103) clearly says that the customer satisfaction is driven by various factors such as service and product quality, situational and personal factors. Service quality plays a vital role as it includes reliability, responsiveness, assurance, empathy and tangibles. They all are the important components of service quality. The research is all about exploring the impact of field engineer services on customer satisfaction so the researcher is not intended to concentrate on other factors such as price, personal and situational factors.

#### 2.4 Service Quality- Definition and Characteristic

According to Claridy (2009), service can be defined as the degree of courtesy and attention provided to those individuals who are pursuing an objective from an organisation. *“Service quality is the result of human interaction between the service provider and the customer”* (Malhotra and Mukerjee, 2003, p. 952). Albrecht & Zemke (1985) discussed that customers’ expectations have grown these days and they are extremely serious about the quality of services they receive. Service quality is defined as an integral part of customer satisfaction based entirely on perception. The perception in customer’s mind is created and influenced by various factors in the environment around which the service is being offered. Quality is defined as the customer’s judgement about an overall experience or superiority (Zeithaml, 1987; Zeithaml and Bitner,

1996; and Zammuto *et al.*, 1996). Service quality has caught the attention of both academicians and managers over the last couple of decades. It is one of the most important notions of service marketing (Ma *et. Al.* 2005). According to Sivakumar, Li and Dong (2014) Service delivery involves a series of events or stages of exchange between a service provider and its customers. The performance of service provider will impact the customer expectations at each stage. It can be met, exceeded or fall below the customers' expectations. A study conducted by Hara, Arai and Shimomura (2009) explains that service has two stages: the first one occurs at the moment when the interaction between the customer and the provider of the service is being held. Gronroos (1990) said "One of the most critical aspects of the customer's service experience occurs during the 'moment of truth' when the customer interacts with the organisation". The second stages occur when the visible actions are separated from the invisible ones performed by the service provider. So it is important for an organisation to achieve service quality at a higher level in order to achieve higher level of customer satisfaction.

Today, Service quality has gained such importance among all the companies in the world as it is able to provide the opportunity to achieve competitive advantages and therefore bringing customer satisfaction. Bogomolova (2011) said, service quality is very important for the fact that its measurement is the basis of performance for service providers. Ghylin (2008) also stated that those service companies who clearly understand a definition of service quality are capable of providing their service with a higher quality which is likely to bring a result an increased level of customer satisfaction, and with it customer loyalty and the its success.

The SERVQUAL approach is the most common method for measuring service quality. According to Parasuraman, Zeithaml and Berry (1985), Service quality is the difference or the gap between the expectations of the customers prior have the service and the perceptions of the customers of the services offered. They also added that organisations are trying to evaluate their service performances from the customers' perspective. They have developed few theories in order to measure the customers' evaluation of the service quality provided in different industries such as product repair and maintenance, retail etc. They also identified 5 different gaps that are capable for generate an impact on the way that customers evaluate the quality of a service. Parasuraman, Zeithaml and Berry (1985) have described the gaps one by one.

## **Gap 1**

The actual consumer expectation and management's idea gap: This gap arises when the management is unable to perceive the expectations of their customers correctly. Companies need to concentrate on providing high quality of services which should be related to the need of the customers.

## **Gap 2**

The management perception and service quality specification gap: Sometimes the management is able to perceive the needs of the customers but they are unable to find the perfect way to fulfil these needs and this is due to some factors like market conditions, resource constraints, lack of management commitment and ambiguous service design.

## **Gap 3**

The service quality specifications and service delivery gap: The third gap occurs when the service employees are not incapable to meet the service standard and finding it hard to get along the customers. In this case, companies have a good strategy but the high quality of service performance may not be assured.

## **Gap 4**

The service delivery and external communications gap: Customers' expectations are always influenced by the promises and statements made by the companies and this gap occur when the expectations are not fulfilled at the time of service delivery. Therefore, organisations must not use tools like media, advertising and public relations in order to raise the expectations which will never be fulfilled and which will result in lower perception of quality.

## **Gap 5**

The expected service and perceived service gap: The last gap occurs when a company is able to provide what it has promised and the expectations of the customers are met. It supports that the best way to achieve a good service quality is when the expectations of the customers are actually met or even exceeded, and hence the customer's judgement of a high or a low service quality will always depend on the way of how customers perceive the real presentation of the service and how they were expecting it.

**This study only focuses on this gap because this one is related to customers, while the fourth previous gaps focus on the organization.**

## **Conclusion**

There is a gap between customer expectations and the services being offered to them. For example, Customer always expects the field engineer to help him to order the new parts which is unlikely to happen sometimes because it is a time consuming process and field engineer has to reach to the next location on scheduled time.

According to Meirovich and Little (2013, pp. 16), expectations is an experience-based predictions or anticipation of what likely will happen in the future. They further said that expectations are the standards set by customers to assess provider's performance. Customer expectations drastically increased in the past few years. In field service industry, customers now want instant response to queries, engineer visit, repairs and replacement to book immediately. So for all the field service companies have the pressure to get it right and fix it correctly at the first visit itself. ('Top 5 Challenges of Field Service', 2015).

### **2.5 Factors that influence Customer Satisfaction in Field Service Industry**

A study conducted by (Unyathanakornet *al.*, 2014) highlights that quality and services of an organisation have a great impact on satisfaction. They also added that providing information and creating customer awareness – which leads to customer expectations – may not directly affect customer satisfaction but may affect this indirectly through perceived quality and perceived value. In order to gain a good understanding of the factors that influence customer satisfaction, the researcher has identified the following findings.

**Customer Aspect:** Customer experience, unlike customer satisfaction, measures a more holistic consumer construct by taking into account the sum of all direct and indirect interactions with a service provider. For example, a hotel stay was satisfactory does not necessarily mean that the entire experience was satisfactory. The total experience includes searching for the room, booking online, travel to the hotel, checking out and getting from the hotel to the next destination. Unlike customer satisfaction's unidirectional question of how happy you were with the service offered, customer experience assesses the

influence of other customers and other service providers on consumer behaviour. (Klaus and Maklan, 2013). In a world of 24 hours service, customer service remains at a top strategy for every small and big businesses. Customers' expectations are rising day by day so it is extremely important for every business to put in extra time and efforts to serve customers. (Bredeson, 2013) Characteristics of different customers also influence customer satisfaction such as age, income and variety of seeking. Demographics variables such as education and age have also been found to good predictors of the level of customer satisfaction. (Homburg and Giering, 2001)

**The Waiting time:** The waiting time plays a crucial role in customer satisfaction. Today, a wide range of sectors such as banking, health care, fast food and distribution offer time guarantees to their customers (Hart 1988; Hayden 1989; Jaff 1990; Kumar and Sharman 1992). This clearly says that time guarantee has an impact on customer satisfaction. According to Katz, Larson and Larson (1991), customer satisfaction decreases with an increase in the duration of the waiting time. Taylor (1994) asserts that delay in services adversely affect the overall customer satisfaction as customer is sitting back home waiting all day for the field engineer to show up. Furthermore, Clemmer and Schnieder (1989) highlights that informing customers in advance regarding busy periods can improve their satisfaction while waiting. Being polite and on-time arrival characterize today's field engineers. Gone are the days of 4 to 8 hours times' slot, field engineers have to be on time as time is money today. Having precise job details and engineer job time slots enable the company to manage the customer satisfaction and ensure more efficient job scheduling and dispatch in the field. (ez Management, 2015)

**Technology:** "With mobile applications linked to the company databases, technicians have all the information they need in their hands. Field service staff can access the information they need in real time on customer history, parts, routes and inventory that lets them to their job more efficiently." ('10 Reasons why you should digitise your field service business', 2015). It can be further understood by an instance where a customer is being offered an appointment that could be scheduled within 2 hour time slots. It can be further improved if the field engineer would provide customers with updates via mobile phones to keep them informed about his arrival times or delivery delays. It can further be improved if technologies would give the real time feedback on customer satisfaction and allow dealing with issues swiftly. Field service organisations

who don't embrace this trend and invest in technology to improve customer service will be left behind in an already competitive market place. (Pullen, 2012). Field service organisations need to ensure that they incorporate advanced technology in order to enhance the customer satisfaction level.

**First Visit Resolution:** A study conducted by Dutta (2014) revealed that the inability to resolve the issues on a first-visit basis is very likely to cause customer dissatisfaction. Companies have to empower their field engineers to improve the first visit resolution rates as it will enhance the overall customer satisfaction. "Reducing the number of visits required to resolve a problem by fixing it properly the first time can lead to significant savings, not to mention a bump in customer satisfaction" ("Turning field service workers into knowledge workers", no date) The first visit resolution can further be improved by knowing the problem before they start work. It can be done by providing job details, repair history and job parts required to field engineers well in advance. This will not only enhance the customer satisfaction but also avoid scheduling costly second visits. (EZ Management, 2015)

**Motivated Field Engineers:** Kotler and Levy (1969) highlighted that the success of an organisation does not only depend on its products and customers but the employees play a crucial role in carrying out the tasks assigned in order to achieve the organisational goals. It is very important to allow the field engineers to work without jumping through operational and administrative hoops keeping them happy and satisfied. Companies should mobilise their field engineers with all knowledge they need and the ability to get help quickly if things go wrong. Field engineers should be provided with the tools to optimise their routes and bringing down their drive times and ensure they have the correct parts. Companies should strive hard to minimise their paperwork to let them concentrate on the job they were hired to do. ("Top 5 challenges of Field Service", 2015).

Oakley (2012) also highlighted that employees are responsible for delivering products and services that customer's value. Highly motivated employee is an asset for an organisation as he will work towards common goals including the goals of customer service.

**Knowledge Management:** Dutt (2014) in his study emphasis the role of a field engineer. They are no longer being viewed as 'issue fixers'. They are now

viewed as ‘customer ambassadors’ or ‘solution providers’. Knowledge comprises of two things- Information and Know-how. There is a great need to manage information and know-how. (Mciveret *al.*, 2013, cited in Becker, Huselid, Pickus, & Spratt, 1997). For instance, a technician with a lot of head knowledge about a problem is inefficient unless he knows how to fix it. “To drive top-notch field service strategy, high-performing organisations are increasing the availability of service knowledge which in turn results in faster diagnosis and repairs”. (Field Service Digital University, no data)

## **2.6 Previous and Recent Studies on Field Engineer Services from a Satisfaction Perspective**

Field service industry has seen a drastic development in the first decade of the twenty first century. The technological advancements in the 21<sup>st</sup> century have brought a revolution in field service industry. Field service has numerous benefits in a world where all our business appliances and household devices are smart and able to communicate when they begin to deteriorate or faults are beginning to appear. (Field Service News, 2015) Besides this, a lot of new softwares have been introduced in field service which helps field engineers to perform the task more effectively than before. With the usage of new softwares, field service organisations are able to coordinate with their field engineers very easily and they can see exactly when and where the engineer was when they sent the messages and hence making the entire process very transparent. (Voxer, 2014) According to Korte (2015) one of the most impactful innovations in field service is streaming videos. A field engineer just needs a mobile device and internet connection to troubleshoot problems with company experts from anywhere. This also helps technicians to resolve issues quickly and minimize the risks of downtime. Together, these benefits improve the service quality, revenue and most importantly customer satisfaction.

“Mobile and cloud technology is giving Field service organisations the opportunity to meet and surpass their KPIs through efficient job scheduling and detailed reporting”. (GeoPal, 2015) According to Field Service Management (2014) the most strategic action of field service organisations are to invest in mobile tools to support field engineers. “Technology has brought a revolution in field service industry. The task of achieving of field service excellence is

getting tougher in today's market place as customers' expectations are very high". (Fleet News, 2013).

Field service industry is growing through a drastic development like never before. Field engineers act as the only touch point between brand and the customer and therefore customer interaction with field engineers is the primary way to measure the credibility, integrity and overall brand promise of customer satisfaction. (Field Service USA, 2015) "Technology has brought a revolution in field service industry. The task of achieving of field service excellence is getting tougher in today's market place as customers' expectations are very high. Besides, rise in fuel prices and restricted budgets continue to impact business. However, the technological advancement has the potential to transform the way work is performed". (Fleet News, 2013). This clearly tells that due to the cut-throat competition in the market, customers' expectations have risen up and the task of achieving maximum customer satisfaction is getting tougher day by day. The best way to meet their expectations for a field engineer is by having the access to the customer information, letting him easily track their contacts and see a complete picture of their service history, warranties and expiration dates. ('10 Reasons why you should digitalize your field service business', 2015).

Dutt (2014) highlights that field service organisations are now increasingly focussing on customer satisfaction by identifying the factors leading to higher resolution rates. "Customers put their trust on the service providers by accepting their promises. They are expecting on the company to provide them with a dependable service that will keep their business functioning to its maximum capability which is why it very important to provide them with the excellent services in areas such as depot repairs and field service operations."(Field Technologies Online, 2015). Companies are looking to for improving customer satisfaction and retention level by improving their first-time fix rates. A higher first-time fix rate would undoubtedly be a boom for organisations. (Field Service USA, 2015)

Delivering service is a the main goal of every field service organisations but delivering service which not only resolve the issue but also enhances the relationship with a customer is the key to success in the future. "In this age of customer, organisations need to empower technicians with tools, information and skills to efficiently resolve issues without asking too much of the customer

in the process. In order to reach this level of excellence, organisations must ensure their service teams are provided with the following capabilities:

- a) Real-time visibility into the work force
- b) Automated dispatching capabilities
- c) Integrated mobility tools and technology” (Aberdeen Group, 2015)

A study conducted by Puccinelli et al. (2013) discovered that there is a significant relationship between the service employees’ ability to read the faces or expressions and customer perceptions of that service employees’ service quality. This ability of a service employee will help him to understand the customer needs and deliver high-quality service. A field engineer has to understand the need of the customer accurately so as to provide him the correct solution. A field engineer has to visit at the customers’ location so customers should feel comfortable with the people they allow into their space. So one of the major tool of achieving customer satisfaction is customer service and customer comfort. So the need of the hour is to arm the field workers with the appropriate customer service tools and information. (Field Service Digital, 2014) Frank and Enkawa (2009) highlight the various factors that influence the customer expectations. For example, economic growth has a positive influence on customer expectations. Their focus shifts from low prices to high prices products and from low brand to reputed brand. “Customer expectations are based on a diversity of elements, and they can be arranged in two categories: expectations 1 and expectations 2. The first group is composed by customer previous experience, word of mouth, customer perceived service, customer needs, firm communications, brand and price; while the second group is simply an update of the first one plus experiential clues”. (Brandt, 2014, pp. 35, cited in Trisga, 2013).

Kotler and Levy (1969) rightly acknowledged the fact that the success of an organisation does not depend on its products and customers only but an organisation’s employees are a major source of supply for completing the tasks for its marketing efforts. So there is a need to bridge the gap between employees and customers. Oakely (2012) highlighted that company should make the efforts to improve employee satisfaction which is valuable to improve the employee motivation.

“The success of business is entirely depends on the company as they have to plan out each task in order to accomplish the goal on time. Companies need reliable systems to optimize their operations so that they can have real time

visibility into the work schedules and activities of their field workers. Companies should collect the information about dispatch efficiency and field service workers' activities which will allow them to compare planned work with jobs that are actually completed. Subsequently, work schedules can be adjusted, reassign work to ensure quality of service, worker productivity and this will eventually enhance customer satisfaction".(Trimble,2014)

## **2.7 Components of Field Services Management**

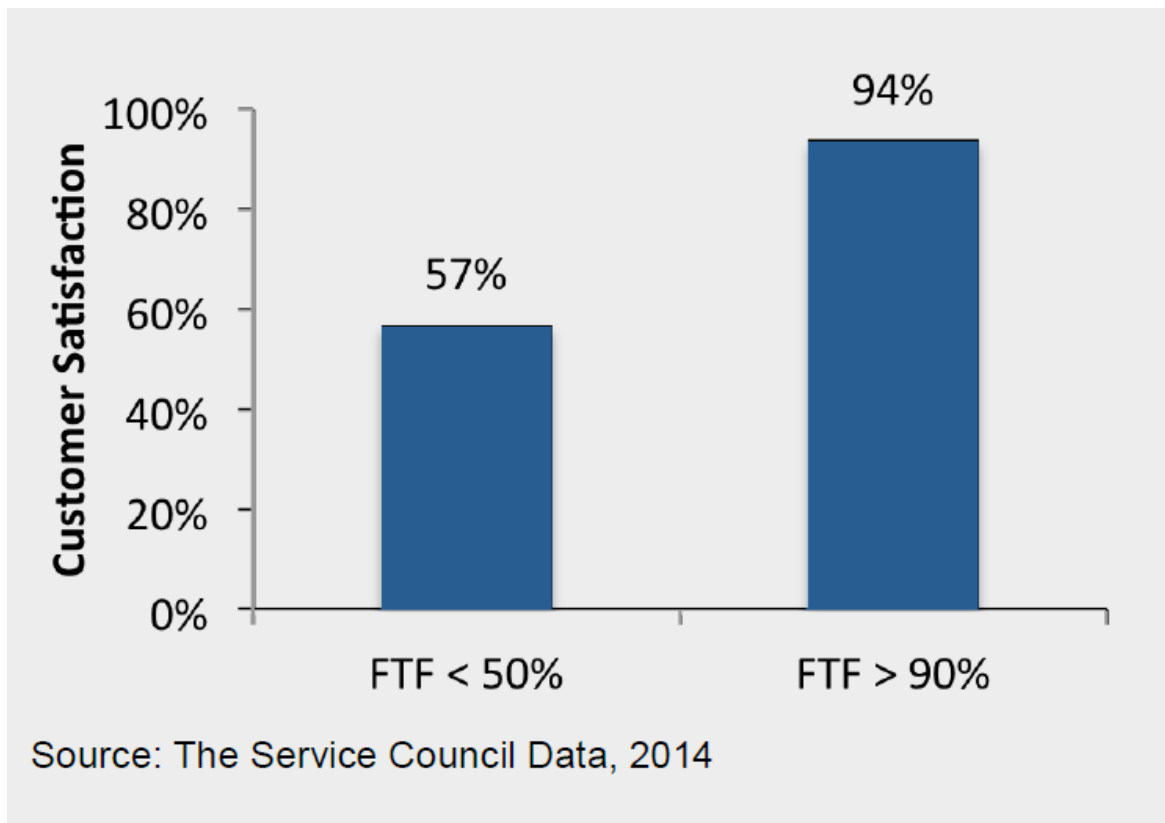
To understand the concept of field services more deeply, we need to first look into the various components of field services management. A key aim of every organisation is to operate as efficiently as possible.

**Workforce Performance (Carlawet *al.*, 2003):** Field Engineers are the face of their company. So it is important to try and keep the workforce motivated. Companies should invest in improvement programmes and allow the staffs to share suggestions and ideas to improve the service. An engaged and motivated workforce will be capable of achieving well beyond simply boosting productivity. A study conducted by Smith and Futrell (2014) highlights that organizations should devote substantial resources to fostering environments to sustain a motivated workforce. Substantial resources should be devoted at the organizational level to try to inspire services employee to be motivated to consistently perform their jobs effectively and efficiently.

**First-time fix rates (Aberdeen Group, 2013):** With the rise in competition and increasing demands to satisfy customers, the number one resolution of the companies is to improve customer satisfaction rates. According to industry research, the main complaint of customer is that technician did not fix the problem the first time. So the need of the hour is to improve first-time fix rates in order to improve customer satisfaction. ('5 Field Service Resolutions to Jumpstart 2014', 2013).

Field Service 2013: Workforce Management Guide has clearly explained that only 17% of organizations do not measure or unaware of their first-time fix performance. Field Service 2013: Workforce Management Guide also added that the average first-time fix performance across all companies is at around 75% Indicating that three out of every four service calls in the field is resolved on a first-visit basis. The area of concern is the fact that 25% of all service calls require at least one more additional visit to solve customer needs. This is a significant challenge for service organizations looking to improve customer satisfaction level. (Aberdeen Group, 2013).A study conducted by

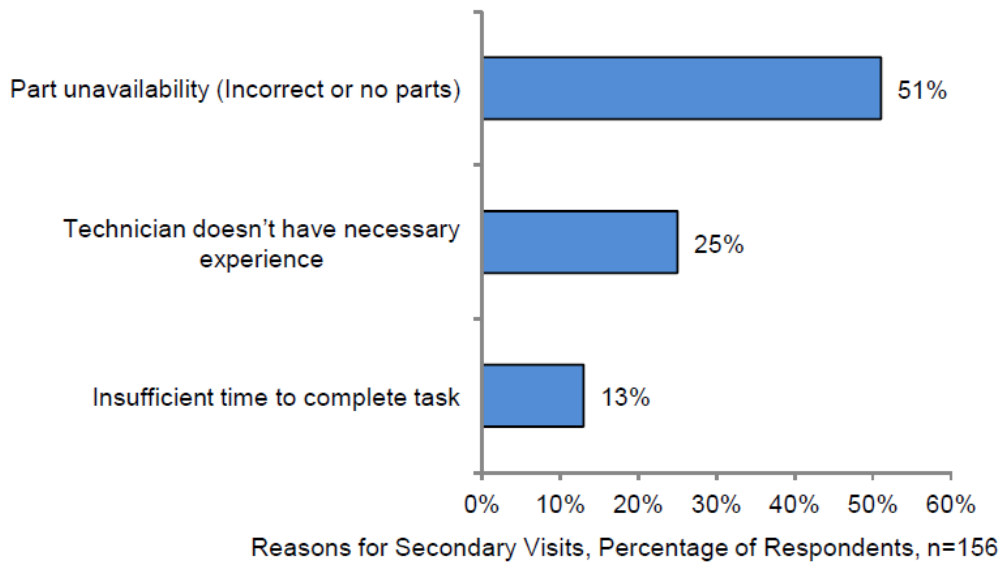
Dutta (2014) revealed that the inability to resolve the issues on a first-visit basis is very likely to cause customer dissatisfaction. As per the below figure, organizations with around 57% first-time fix really struggle in driving customer satisfaction whereas organizations with greater than 90% level of first-fix are able to gain higher level of customer satisfaction.



**Figure 4: The Service Council Data (2014)**

**Reason for a Second (or Third) Visit (Aberdeen Group, 2013):** As discussed above, first-time fix is an essential factor leading to higher customer satisfaction. But sometimes due to the nature of the problem, a second or third visit is required. A survey conducted by Aberdeen Group (2013) helps us to understand the fact that there are many reasons for second and third visit which may in longer run cause harm to the image of a company. For instance, if a technician does not have necessary experience then the company has to send a different technician which will surely hamper the customer satisfaction level as customer has to again schedule an appointment and wait for an another technician.

### Reasons for a Second (or Third) Visit



Source: Aberdeen Group (2013)

### Figure 5: Aberdeen Group (2013)

It is clearly evident that one of a reason of second or third visit is due to incompetency of technicians to solve the problem. So companies are expected to send a right technician to the job in order to avoid second visit.

**Technology:** Technology is an essential component of field service industry. As per a survey conducted by Field Service Europe (2015) utilizing the technology makes a real difference in field service industry. As per a survey, 67 percent of respondents stated that uses of smart phones are more prevalent in field service industry followed by laptops (61%) and tablets (42%). At the same time, it is predicted that the tablets would become an essential device for field service companies in future. The world is going through a digital revolution and use of digital technology has become an integral part of field service industry. Smart phones are the most popular device being used by field engineers in order to enable them to complete their assignment without any chaos. Companies are providing more than one device to their field engineers in order to carry out the tasks effectively. Traditional laptops have been replaced by convertible and detachable laptop. (Field Service News, 2015).

**Weather:** One of a problem in field service industry is weather. Field services engineers usually have to deal with the inconveniences of weather especially during winters, snowfall, windy and rainy season. They have to drive slow and

even more careful than usual. The best way to tackle these situations is preparation. Field engineers have to prepare themselves to work during those times of difficult situations. Furthermore, if an appointment is going to be delayed or cancelled because of a storm or flood, the field engineer must communicate the news to the customer. This will surely save a lot of time of a customer as he now does have to sit back at home waiting for the field engineer to show up. Many places is experiences the type of weather that has never seen before but not paying attention to it can be dangerous. Nobody can predict the weather but we can manage how field forces operate and how it is impacting customer satisfaction when it gets bad. (BTR, 2014)

**Resolution Rates:**Dutt (2014) emphasis on the customer satisfaction by relating it to resolution rates. Aberdeen group (2013) conducted a study and came with following outcomes in order to improve the resolution rates.

1. Visibility
2. Service history
3. Knowledgebase of resolution steps for similar service issues
4. Step-by-Step resolution information.

These points will help a company to focus on achieving higher resolution rates which simply means fixing the customer's issue successfully.

**Revenue:** The new emerging trend in field services is to train field engineers not only as solution provider but also to directly sell products and services. Companies are exploring new ways of achieving their profit goals and encouraging field engineers not only to provide exceptional customer service but also to up-sell and cross-sell while on the site. So the scope of field engineers' responsibilities goes far beyond break-fix these days. (Field Service, 2015) Field engineers are the face of their companies as they are at the front line to face the customers so they are expected to sell additional products and services on site while they are with the customers. This will surely increase the revenue of the companies. (ez Management, 2015).

## **2.8 Recruitment and Training**

Recruitment is an important component of field service industry. According to Galovski (2014) with the advancement in the technology, there is a great need to hire a talented workforce. But due to the aging workforce and a diminishing talent pool for new hires, field service industry has to pay special attention on the retention of key talent in field services. The field engineers need to acquire new business skills, business process troubleshooting and the ability to drive increased adoption and consumption within the client's site. Field service organizations are searching for skilled engineers but they are

struggling to hire qualified engineers. “More than half of the companies have open positions for which they can’t find capable talent to fill, according to a Career Builder Study”. Field service organizations need to address how to educate the rising workforce. (Field Service Digital University, 2014). As per the Manpower Survey, a technician role was the third-most difficult to fill in 2014. As per the interview conducted with Steve Nave, a field engineer recruiter, there are three things to be considered while hiring a field engineer. The first is solid general technical skillset. Next, a candidate’s critical thinking, logical skills and his ability to troubleshoot problems. The last but not the least is someone who has a customer-first attitude and can make customers feel valued and loyal. (Upadhyay,2015) There is a skill gap between among employees who are currently in the field and candidates who are looking to work in field service. Due to the aging workforce and loss of knowledge, there is a huge loss of revenue and poor business performance. Field organizations are now educating their employees to prepare them for the field of the future. Organizations need to work with Human Resource team to understand the present scenario and to understand the needs of the future. Organizations then focus on a good field engineer profile to support those needs and have the HR team hire for these skills. (Buchanan, 2014). According to Farrar (2015) field services have endless job opportunities. Electrical engineers who don’t want to be tied to a desk can be great field service engineers.

**Self-employed/ Freelancer:** There is an estimate of \$300 billion spends on contingent labor today worldwide. This figure is going to explode over the next decade as more companies have started realizing the benefits of leveraging an on-demand workforce. (Forbes, 2015) There is a new pool of talent available on an on-demand basis which is rapidly shifting businesses to an extended workforce model. There is a dramatic growth in freelance economy because of the growing number of onsite engineers. This is particularly true in IT and tech services where a physical presence is required to complete an assignment. By using this extended workforce, companies can achieve maximum customer satisfaction by tapping into extraordinary talent on as-needed basis. (Field Service, 2014) A survey conducted in December 2013 by work market which explains that 65 percent of companies planned to use more freelancers in 2014. Scaling their business at a rapid pace was cited as main reason for increasing freelancer usage.

Gone are the days when employees typically worked a full time, 9 to 5 schedule with little variation or flexibility. But a new generation of workers are pursuing more flexible career paths. They are available 24\*7 with more flexibility. They have updated themselves with the latest smart phones and other digital technologies. Therefore, companies are looking to take advantage of a flexible

workforce to fill critical skill gaps and to optimise their labour models. (Wald, 2015)

## **2.9 Conclusion**

The literature review has created the backbone for the data collection by identifying where there are gaps in the existing literature in relation to the impact of field engineer services on customer satisfaction. This study will help us to assess the services of field engineers from a satisfaction perspective. Also, certain components like first-time fix rates, issue resolution rates and weather factor have been discussed in the literature review which will help the researcher to address the gap by doing a case study on Currys, Ireland. There are many factors which influence the customer satisfaction so this research will address the gap by identifying how the field services companies are organising and managing their field engineers in order to achieve maximum customer satisfaction. Also, exploration in how to select the right field engineers who are constantly able to deliver outstanding services is also necessary.

On-time arrivals and fixing the problems are important but field service companies need to focus on “how the relationship between a technician and customer can impact the organisation”.

# **CHAPTER 3: RESEARCH METHODOLOGY**

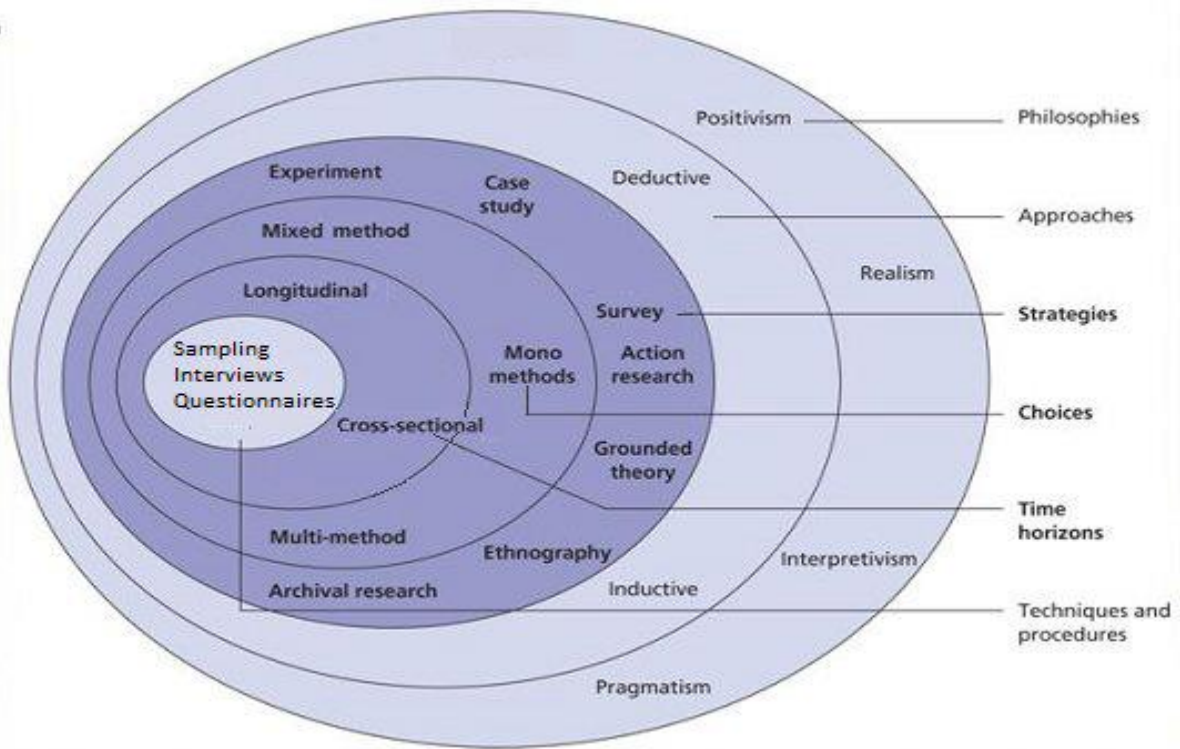
## **3.1 Introduction**

This section explains the methodology used to analyse the impact of a field engineer services on customer satisfaction. Research Methodology helps us to understand how research should be undertaken with theoretical and philosophical assumptions upon which the research is based and the implications of these for the method or methods adopted. It is important for the researcher to have some understanding of this in order to make an informed choice about the research. (Saunders et al 2009, p 3)

The purpose of this study is to describe how the services of field engineers have an impact on overall customer satisfaction in a company. This chapter will cover the points to get all this information. These points are going to be the methodology of the design, selection of the sample, the method of collecting the data and the way it will be analysed and the ethical issues to successfully accomplish the research's purpose. The research philosophy adopted is interpretive within the inductive approach using qualitative data obtained through questionnaire and interview. The above choice can be explained using the "research onion" which is used to compare the various layers of research processes (Saunders et al 2009, p 108). There are six layers of the research onion. All the layers are equally important to a successful research.

They are as follows:

- Research Philosophy
- Research Approach
- Research Strategy
- Research Choice
- Research Ethics



**Figure 6: Saunders's Research Onion source: Saunders et al (2009 p 108)**

### **3.2 Research Philosophy- Interpretivism**

Research Philosophy helps us to develop the knowledge and to understand the nature of that knowledge in relation to research. It also includes assumptions and theories that will support the research methods and strategy chosen as part of that strategy. (Saunders et al 2009, p 108)

According to Saunders et al. (2012, pp. 104-107) there are four types of research philosophy: positivism, interpretivism and realism and pragmatism. According to (Saunders et al 2009, p. 116) "Interpretivists hold the view that it is necessary for the researcher to understand differences between humans in their role as social actors. This emphasises the differences between conducting research among people rather than objects such as trucks and computers".

Blumberg et al (2011, p. 17) highlights "Interpretivists hold the view that the social world cannot be understood by applying research principles adopted from the natural sciences and propose that social sciences require different research philosophy". Blumberg et al (2011, p. 17) further adds that there are three guiding principles to interpretivism.

1. It is subjective
2. It is a part of what is observed
3. It is driven by interest.

This research is subjective because the researcher is going to acknowledge the findings and conclusions that are subject to interpretation and completely dependent on the interviewee's personal experience and opinions.

According to Bryman and Bell (2007) "positivism is an epistemological position that advocates the application of the methods of the natural sciences to the study of social reality and beyond". Realism includes the principals of interpretivism and positivism. It is believed that social sciences can rely on the research approach dominant in the natural sciences. It also accepts the existence of a reality independent of human beliefs and behaviour, which is the main essence of realism. (Saunders et al 2009 p 114).The research is people-based, and when looking at people, nothing is black-and white. That is why a scientific approach could not be taken. Rather, the philosophy behind this dissertation was interpretivism.

### **3.3 Research Approach- Qualitative**

Mathews and Ross (2010, p. 113) highlights that research approach does not depend on whether the researchers is indented to use qualitative or quantitative methods of data collection. The decision to take a qualitative or quantitative should be based on the research question and the nature of data needs to be collected in order to address the question.

Qualitative Approach basically deals with any data collection techniques or methods that use non-numeric data. It includes interviews, face to face interview, telephonic interview etc. (Saunders et al 2012, p 546). Quantitative Approach basically deals with the data collection techniques or procedure that uses numeric data. It includes graphs, charts and statistics that help us to examine, analyse, describe and interpret relationships and trends without the data. (Saunders et al 2012, p 472).Furthermore Lancaster (2012) explains that the both methods of data collection and data analysis will be determined by whether or not the researcher was interested in qualitative or quantitative data. One method is not better than other. Both the methods are important when it comes to the data collection and data analysis of the research.

The researcher has taken the qualitative approach to conduct this study. This research offers interpretative explanations based on the literature review and primary data in order to identify the field services that can be improved in order to achieve maximum satisfaction level. The researcher is working in Currys, Ireland which will help him to deal with the customers on real-time basis. This will also allow the researcher to collect data through in-depth interviews from the customers.

According to Saunders and Lewis (2012) the inductive approach is more suitable for qualitative research while the deductive approach is the most appropriate for quantitative research. In qualitative research, the theory is produced in an inductive way once the data has been collected and analysed on the other hand quantitative research is usually associated with deductive approach where the focus is on using data to test theory. There is a strong link between interpretivism and inductive research. This research includes the conclusion drawn from the findings that are open to interpretation that every individual has different experiences and opinions. The research is people based and therefore findings are not black and white. Keeping in mind the nature and subject of the study, researcher has decided to conduct the research using inductive approach.

### **3.4 Research Strategy- Survey**

A research strategy refers to the general plan of how a researcher will answer the research questions (Saunders et al., 2009 p. 600). The most commonly used research strategies are as follows:

- Experiment
- Survey
- Case Study
- Action Research
- Grounded Theory
- Ethnography
- Archival Research(Saunders et al, 2009)

All these strategies are equally important and they have their advantages and disadvantages.

**Experiment:** Experiments emphasis on scientific research and it involves the study of materials and cases which can be manipulated by the researcher in some way so that some change or difference can be measured.(Mathews and Ross, 2010, p. 116).“Experiments are studies involving intervention by the researcher beyond that required for measurement.” (Blumberg et al 2011 p 308).Experiment is not a suitable strategy to conduct this research as it is best suited to a social and scientific research where participants meet each other and share their views.

**Survey:** Saunders et al. (2009) say that the survey method is feasible and fit for an inductive approach and it is popular method in business and management research. It is most frequently used to answer who, what, where, how much and how many questions. It is used for exploratory and descriptive study. Survey method enables us to learn about opinions, attitudes, expectations and intentions of the participants. Also, information about past events such as the services of field engineers during home visit can be obtained accurately through surveying. (Blumberg et. all 2011, p 207).Survey method will give the researcher more control over the research process. Survey method also enables to collect a large amount of data in an economical way. So keeping in mind the nature of the dissertation, survey method has been adopted in this dissertation in the form of self-administered questionnaires distributed to the customers of Currys, Ireland.

**Case Study:** Mathews and Ross (2010, p. 128) define case study as a single case or a small number of cases which is explored in detail and great depth. The subject of the case may be a person, an organisation, a situation or a country. According to Burns (2000, p. 460) a case study must involve the collection of very extensive data to produce understanding of the entity being studied. This clearly says that case study is different from other research approaches and it usually takes a broader view on a problem. The researcher is conducting survey to understand the different aspects of research problem whereas case study generally focuses on one entity which can lead to bias in data collection.

**Action Research:** “Action-research is the application of fact-finding to practical problem-solving in a social situation with a view to improving the quality of action within it”. (Burns, 2000, p. 443) Burns (2000) further says that the focus in action research is on a specific problem in a defined context. Action research is situational, collaborative, participatory and self-evaluative.

**Grounded Theory:** Grounded theory is a systematic research which generates theory from data. (Mathews and Ross, 2010 cited in Glaser and Strauss, 1967). Grounded theory starts with the data, not with a theory or even predefined research projects. The researcher never read the existing and previous literature on the topic and not even conducts interviews or talk with others about the emerging theory during the research process. This is to eliminate any influence of preconceptions that distract the researchers from the data collected. (Blumberg et al 2011, p. 300-301). This clearly defines that the grounded theory is not suitable for this dissertation.

**Ethnography:** “Ethnography compasses any study of a group of people for the purpose of describing their socio-cultural activities and patters”. (Burns, 2000, p. 393). Ethnographical study involves the relationship of the researcher and the data that is collected. The researcher spends time (sometimes a number of years) immersed within the research context, seeing and hearing the data at first hand. Mathews and Ross (2010, p. 135). This type of research strategy will not be suitable for this dissertation as ethnography is a very time-consuming strategy wherein the researcher needs to be immersed in the social world as much as possible.

**Archival Research:** According to Saunders et al (2009 p. 150) archival research makes use of administrative records and documents as the principal sources of data. This method of research allows answering the research questions which focus upon the past and which is changing. Archival research allows the researcher to extract the evidence from original archival records. Archival research is different in terms of scope and methods so it will not be suitable for this dissertation.

**It is crucial to choose a research strategy that correlates with interpretivism, inductive and qualitative method in order to bring out the best conclusions. Therefore, researcher is going to use the survey method in order carry out this research.**

### **3.5 Research Choice**

Research has a choice to choose mono method or multiple methods to answer the research question. Mono method is also called single collection technique and corresponding analyses procedure whereas multiple methods are also

known as more than one data collection technique and analysis procedure. (Saunders et al 2009, p 151)

Mixed methods approach includes both qualitative and quantitative data collection techniques. This approach uses quantitative and qualitative data collection techniques either parallel or sequential but does not combine them. (Saunders et al 2009 p 152)

“This choice is increasingly advocated within business and management research where a single research study may use quantitative and qualitative techniques and procedures in combination as well as use primary and secondary data” (Curran and Blackburn 2001 cited in Saunders et al 2009 p 151).

Most of the data which will be obtained from this study will be qualitative in nature and qualitative analyses will be required so the choice for this study in mono method.

### **3.6 Time Horizon- Cross-sectional**

This is an important part of research methodology. While planning the research, researcher has to identify whether the research is to be a “snapshot” taken at a particular time or should it be more akin to a diary or a series of snapshots and be a representation of events over a given period. (Saunders et al 2009, p 155)

Time Horizon is categorized into two principals which are cross-sectional studies and longitudinal studies. So the researcher has to choose whether the research is cross-sectional or longitudinal.

- a) **Cross-sectional** will be feasible and suitable for this study because of the time constraints. This study involves the study of particular phenomenon at a particular time. Besides. Majority of the academic research are time constrained. (Saunders et al, 2009 p 155)
- b) The main strength of **longitudinal research** is the capacity it has to study change and development. It also includes observing people or events overtime to measure variables being studied. (Saunders et al, 2009 p 155) On the other hand, time is a huge drawback to a longitudinal study so this method of research is not suitable for this study.

### **3.7 Data Collection Methods**

There are two types of data collection: Primary data and Secondary data. Secondary data can be defined as those data that have already been collected for some other purpose and the researcher will reanalyse and examine the data to carry out his research. Secondary data includes both raw data and published summaries. Many companies collect and store data for many other operations so access will need to be negotiated. (Saunders et al 2009, p. 256-257). The Primary data consists of the information collected from respondent in the form of interviews. Interviews are the most appropriate form of data collection for qualitative exploratory dissertation.

**Interviews** which are used for this study will be conducted individually so as to obtain more specific results. According to Kumar, 2011 cited in Monette et al. (1986, p. 156) “an interview involves an interviewer reading questions to respondents and recording their answers”. According to Kumar (2011, p. 144-145) Interviews are of three types which are Structured, Unstructured and Semi-structured. The unstructured interviews have complete freedom in terms of content and structure. But in a structured interview, the researcher asks a predetermined set of questions.

The researcher has decided to carry out structured interviews as it will help to obtain more specific and accurate information. The main advantage of the structured interview is that it provides uniform information which allows the comparability of data. Also, there is rigidity in interview questions and their wording. The researcher is intended to conduct interview of the field service manager who is responsible for the selection, training and management of field engineers.

**Questionnaires** are a written list of questions which is distributed to participants in order to record their answers. In a questionnaire respondents read the questions, interpret what is expected and then write down the answers. (Kumar, 2011, p. 144) “Surveys using questionnaires are popular because they allow the collection of standardized data from a sizable population in a highly economical way.”(Saunders et al, 2009, p. 177) In questionnaire method, the respondents may be asked to choose from a set of answers. Sometimes they are asked open questions which allow them to answer the question in their own way. All the participants are asked the same questions, in the same order and using the same wording and having the same set of answers to choose from.

(Mathews and Ross, 2010, p. 201-202).The researcher found it more valuable and beneficial as it is a cheapest and efficient method of primary data collection.

**Observation** is the collection of data through the use of human senses which means the researcher records what he or she observes. “This is an act of watching social phenomena in the real world and recording events as they happen” (Matthews and Ross, 2010, p. 255)

Observations were not used because they do not explain the rationale behind actions, which is what the researcher needed to form conclusions. Furthermore, observation is highly subjective. Interpretivism is already subjective and using observation would make it even more so.

**Sampling:** According to Sekaran and Bougie (2010) a sample is composed of a group of some members that are selected from a whole population to provide the researcher the ability to describe conclusions about the population studied. In order to collect and analyse the data, the researcher needs to consider studying a sample of the whole population which in this case are the customers of Currys located in Ireland. According to Saunders et al. (2009) there are two types of sampling technique which are probability or representative sampling and non-probability or judgemental sampling. In the probability sampling, the probability of each case being selected from the population is known as is usually equal for all cases. In the non-probability sampling, the probability of each case being selected from the total population is not known. So there is no guarantee of the credibility of the results obtained with non-probability sampling.

### **3.8 Population**

Saunders et al. (2007) explain the population as the full set of cases from which a sample is taken. The researcher is intended to select the population which has experienced the services of field support.

The researcher is presently working in Currys, Ireland. So he is going to research the customers of Currys who have previously experienced the field support services. The researcher is also going to research the managers who manage the customer satisfaction in field service department of Currys. The researcher has already taken the permission from the management of Currys to conduct this research

### **3.9 Research Ethics**

According to (Saunders et al. 2009, p 183-184) there is a strong possibility of ethical issues while planning the research. It could be related to seeking access to organisations, collect, analyse and report the data. Burns (2000, p. 16) says that ethical problems are basically related to the subject matter of the research and the methods and procedures which can go well beyond courtesy or etiquette regarding appropriate treatment of a person in a free society. It basically means the behaviour of the researcher in relation to the right of those who become the subject of the work. This means that the researcher has to ensure that the research should be designed keeping in mind the morality and security of all those who are involved.

“The goal of ethics in research is to ensure that no one is harmed or suffers adverse consequences from research activities”. (Cooper and Schindler 2008, p 34). Matthews and Ross (2010, p. 78-79) highlights that the researcher should be honest with the participants and not mislead or deceive them about his methods or purpose.

There are number of ethical issues arise at different stages of the research project. These relate to the:

- Privacy of participants
- Voluntary nature of participation
- Consent and possible deception of participants
- Data confidentiality
- Reactions of participants
- Attitude and behaviour of you as researcher(Saunders et al 2009, p 185-186)

## **CHAPTER 4: DATA ANALYSIS**

### **4.1 Introduction**

The purpose of this chapter is to present the data collected through the primary research method, which in this case was through the self-administered questionnaire and Interviews. According to Cooper and Schindler (2001) Data analysis involves reducing the accumulated data to a manageable size, developing summaries, looking for patterns, and applying statistical techniques.

### **4.2 Structure of Data analysis**

Customers are the pivotal group of this study. A questionnaire was administered to the customers of Currys who have previously experienced the services of field service department. The questionnaire consists of nineteen questions to collect customers' opinion. Questionnaires were distributed to the customers in order to get them answered the questions. A special permission was required to conduct this research in Currys. Also, an interview with the KNOWHOW manager was suggested for this research to understand the various factors of recruitment, training and management of field engineers. All the questions are equally important to achieve the research objectives and to test the hypothesis. The findings are based on the research question and research objectives discussed in introduction chapter. The researcher has linked the primary data obtained from the questionnaire and secondary data from the literature review to understand and determine the research question and research objectives. Data obtained from the survey were analysed using **Likert scale**.

### 4.3 Questionnaire

**Table 1- Gender**

	<b>Frequency</b>	<b>Percent</b>
<b>Male</b>	37	67.3
<b>Female</b>	18	32.7
<b>Total</b>	<b>55</b>	<b>100</b>

Of the 55 participants in the survey, 37 were male and 18 were female, all were the customers of Currys, Ireland. The researcher observed that the all the participants were straightforward and honest and they actively participated in the survey.

**Table 2- Age**

	<b>Frequency</b>	<b>Percent</b>
<b>20-30 years</b>	15	27.3
<b>31-40 years</b>	17	30.9
<b>Above 40 years</b>	23	41.8
<b>Total</b>	<b>55</b>	<b>100</b>

Table 2 shows that most of the participants were above 40 years old. The researcher tried to contact many people but there were only 55 people who showed their interest in filling this survey. 15 people were very young falling into the age category of 20-30 years. There were 17 respondents within the age limit of 31-40. Fortunately, the researcher was able to collect data from the old generation and new generation which gave him a scope in differentiating the customers' expectations.

**Table 3- Number of years with the company**

	<b>Frequency</b>	<b>Percent</b>
<b>Less than one year</b>	28	50.9
<b>1-3 years</b>	15	27.3
<b>3- 5 years</b>	12	21.8
<b>Total</b>	<b>55</b>	<b>100</b>

Of the 55 participants in the survey, 28 were new customers with less than one year experience of shopping with Currys. Besides, 15 participants have been shopping in last 1-3 years and 12 participants were very loyal customers with 3-5 years of shopping experience with Currys, Ireland.

**Table 4**

Please rate your satisfaction level with the response time to your initial call for service.

	<b>Frequency</b>	<b>Percent</b>
Very Satisfied	39	70.9
Somewhat Satisfied	11	20
Neither Satisfied nor Dissatisfied	3	5.45
Somewhat Dissatisfied	2	3.6
Very Dissatisfied	0	0
<b>Total</b>	<b>55</b>	<b>100</b>

Table 4 depicts that the majority of respondents are ‘very satisfied’ with the response time of initial call for service which includes 39 customers, it possesses 70.9%. 11 customers are ‘somewhat satisfied’ which possesses 20%. Further, 3 and 2 customers are ‘neither satisfied nor dissatisfied’ and ‘somewhat dissatisfied’ respectively. The data shows that customers are quite satisfied with the response time to their initial call for service which means service employees are very quick and assertive in call handling.

**Table 5**

Please rate your satisfaction level with the ability of field engineers to arrive on-site as scheduled/on time.

	<b>Frequency</b>	<b>Percent</b>
Very Satisfied	9	16.3
Somewhat Satisfied	16	29.0
Neither Satisfied nor Dissatisfied	22	40
Somewhat Dissatisfied	2	3.6
Very Dissatisfied	6	10.9
<b>Total</b>	<b>55</b>	<b>100</b>

Table 5 shows that 16.3% respondents are very satisfied with the ability of field engineers to arrive on-site as scheduled. 29.0% respondents are somewhat satisfied. On other hand, 40% and 3.6% of respondents are neither satisfied nor dissatisfied and somewhat dissatisfied respectively. Furthermore, 10.9% respondents are not satisfied at all. In other words, majority of respondents are not satisfied which means field engineers are not able to show up on time. On-time arrival is a crucial aspect of field service industry. It basically means that an appointment has been scheduled with the customer and the field engineer has to show up within the scheduled time. As per the survey, it is evident that most of the time field engineers are not able to show up on time which causes customer dissatisfaction. Sometimes, field engineers don't show up at all which leads to high customer dissatisfaction. Late show up or no shows are all the major causes of customer dissatisfaction.

**Table 6**

Please rate your level of satisfaction with professional appearance of field engineers. For example tidy uniform and authorized licensed card.

	<b>Frequency</b>	<b>Percent</b>
Very Satisfied	33	60
Somewhat Satisfied	19	34.5
Neither Satisfied nor Dissatisfied	1	1.8
Somewhat Dissatisfied	1	1.8
Very Dissatisfied	1	1.8
<b>Total</b>	<b>55</b>	<b>100</b>

Nearly all the respondents are satisfied with appearance of field engineers. There are only two respondents who were dissatisfied with the appearance of field engineers. First impression is the last impression in service sector. Field engineers are basically trained in this area so that they can make a better impression in front of their customers. It basically includes tidy and neat uniform with authorized licensed card. Table 6 clearly shows that companies pay quite attention on this area so as to maintain excellent customer satisfaction level.

**Table 7**

Please rate your level of satisfaction with the availability of all the required tools with the engineer.

	<b>Frequency</b>	<b>Percent</b>
Very Satisfied	32	58.1
Somewhat Satisfied	11	20
Neither Satisfied nor Dissatisfied	5	9.1
Somewhat Dissatisfied	5	9.1
Very Dissatisfied	2	3.7
<b>Total</b>	<b>55</b>	<b>100</b>

Table 7 displays that 58.1% respondents are quite satisfied with the availability of all the required tools with the engineers. In other words, field engineers are carrying all the required tools on-site. Sometimes they need to carry several heavy tools and equipment as per the nature of the work. The survey clearly says that most of respondents are very satisfied as field engineers always ensure to bring all the tools along with them. 9.1% respondents are somewhat dissatisfied and 3.7% respondents were very dissatisfied as they did face the scenarios where field engineers did not bring the required tools to carry out the repair and maintenance. This may be due to carelessness or unavailability of the tools. It is advisable to go through the essence of the work so that field engineer carries all the required tools to complete the assignment efficiently.

**Table 8**

Please rate your satisfaction level with the technical knowledge of field engineers with regards to the diagnosing and repairing of the product?

	<b>Frequency</b>	<b>Percent</b>
Very Satisfied	18	32.7
Somewhat Satisfied	23	41.9
Neither Satisfied nor Dissatisfied	4	7.2
Somewhat Dissatisfied	6	10.9
Very Dissatisfied	4	7.2
<b>Total</b>	<b>55</b>	<b>100</b>

Table 8 depicts that 32.7% and 41.9% of respondents are satisfied with the technical knowledge of field engineers. Field service is a technically-oriented field. A field engineer should be technical savvy. The first step is to diagnose the problem correctly. According to the literature, this aspect can be deemed as the component of field service industry. This is the minimum requirement from customer. Further, 7.2% respondents are very dissatisfied with the technical knowledge of field engineers as they were unable to diagnose and fix the issue. In other words, field service organisations need to hire qualified and experienced technicians to enhance the customer satisfaction level. Besides, it may be because of sending wrong technicians who have no expertise in that particular field. The result shows that customers are quite satisfied with the high level performance of understanding the problems corresponding to the machines and providing accurate solutions.

**Table 9**

Please rate your satisfaction level with the timeliness of resolution.

	<b>Frequency</b>	<b>Percent</b>
Very Satisfied	18	32.7
Somewhat Satisfied	27	49.1
Neither Satisfied nor Dissatisfied	6	10.1
Somewhat Dissatisfied	3	5.45
Very Dissatisfied	1	1.8
<b>Total</b>	<b>55</b>	<b>100</b>

The data finding in table 9 shows that 32.7% and 49.1% of respondents are very satisfied and somewhat satisfied with the timeliness of resolution respectively. Oppositely, 10.1% of respondents feel neither satisfied nor dissatisfied and 5.45% of respondents are somewhat dissatisfied. One of the major component field service industries is timeliness. Every step has to be completed at right time. It basically saves time of customers and allows them to focus on their routine. Further, it is helpful for field engineers as well. The results of data finding shows that the most of the respondents are quite satisfied with the timeliness of resolution.

**Table 10**

Please rate your satisfaction level with the quality of resolution.

	<b>Frequency</b>	<b>Percent</b>
Very Satisfied	3	5.4
Somewhat Satisfied	11	20
Neither Satisfied Nor Dissatisfied	13	23.7
Somewhat Dissatisfied	11	20
Very Dissatisfied	17	30.1
<b>Total</b>	<b>55</b>	<b>100</b>

Table 10 suggests that only 5.4% and 20% respondents are very satisfied and somewhat satisfied respectively with the quality of resolution. On the other hand, 30.1% respondents are highly dissatisfied with the quality of resolution. In other words, the issues fixed by field engineers reoccurred after a while. It was a temporary fix. This is a major threat in field service industry. All other components of field service are important and but if the quality of resolution is poor, it will surely hamper the customer satisfaction level. The results of data finding shows that the field service organisations need to put extra efforts on the quality of resolution. This calls for grooming competent field engineers through proper training and development essential for providing quality resolution. Most of the respondents are dissatisfied only because the issue was not fixed the way it should be. As mentioned in chapter two, quality of work determines if the customer is going to be loyal with the company.

**Table 11**

Please rate your satisfaction level with the ability of field engineers to resolve your issue on the first visit.

	<b>Frequency</b>	<b>Percent</b>
Very Satisfied	6	11
Somewhat Satisfied	15	27.2
Neither Satisfied Nor Dissatisfied	4	7.2
Somewhat Dissatisfied	21	38.1
Very Dissatisfied	9	16.3
<b>Total</b>	<b>55</b>	<b>100</b>

First visit resolution is an important component of field service industry. The results of data finding clearly explain that only 11% respondents are very satisfied with the ability of field engineers to resolve the issue on the first visit. Oppositely, 38.1% and 16.3% respondents fall into the category of somewhat dissatisfied and very dissatisfied respectively. This clearly says that first visit resolution has a direct impact on customer satisfaction level. Field service organisations have to ensure that the issue is fixed in first visit itself so that the cost of re-sending field engineers and creating complications to the valuable customers is avoided.

**Table 12**

Please rate your satisfaction level on courtesy and professionalism of field engineers.

	<b>Frequency</b>	<b>Percent</b>
Very Satisfied	28	51
Somewhat Satisfied	13	23.7
Neither Satisfied nor Dissatisfied	10	18.1
Somewhat Dissatisfied	3	5.4
Very Dissatisfied	1	1.8
<b>Total</b>	<b>55</b>	<b>100</b>

Table 12 depicts that more than half of the respondents are very satisfied with the courtesy and professionalism of field engineers. This is a good sign. Only 1.8% of respondents are somewhat dissatisfied, that signifies scope of

improvement in this area. Professionalism and courtesy are the important ingredients of customer satisfaction. Field engineers should provide courteous, respectful, responsive and knowledgeable service to their customers.

**Table 13**

Please rate your satisfaction level with the ability of field engineers to treat you like a long-term valued customer.

	<b>Frequency</b>	<b>Percent</b>
Very Satisfied	4	7.2
Somewhat Satisfied	13	23.6
Neither Satisfied nor Dissatisfied	29	53
Somewhat Dissatisfied	5	9
Very Dissatisfied	4	7.2
<b>Total</b>	<b>55</b>	<b>100</b>

Table 13 displays that the number of very satisfied and very dissatisfied respondents is same. 7.2% of respondents feel satisfied with the ability of field engineers to treat them like a long-valued customer. But the interesting fact is that 53% respondents are neither satisfied nor dissatisfied followed with 9% respondents who are somewhat dissatisfied. This is not a good sign for any company. It is bit hard to win a new customer every time so field service organisations should strive hard to maximise customer retention.

**Table 14**

Please rate your satisfaction level with the ability of field engineers to avoid communication gap For example: Do they call you before they come? Do they inform you if they are late? Do they inform you if they are not able to show up due to any reasons?

	<b>Frequency</b>	<b>Percent</b>
Very Satisfied	8	14.5
Somewhat Satisfied	18	32.7
Neither Satisfied Nor Dissatisfied	9	16.4
Somewhat Dissatisfied	12	21.9
Very Dissatisfied	8	14.5

<b>Total</b>	<b>55</b>	<b>100</b>
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Table 14 clearly shows that the numbers of respondents who are satisfied are very less with relation to the ability of field engineers to avoid communication gap. 21.9% and 14.5% respondents are somewhat dissatisfied and very dissatisfied respectively with the field engineers because of one of the following reasons. Field engineers don't call the customers before they arrive. Future is uncertain and sometimes when field engineers are late because of bad weather, traffic or breakdown, they don't inform the customers which really makes a bad impression. As discussed in chapter two, there are many reasons that causes delay in doing the job but field engineers should be prompted to call their customers if they are getting late or for not showing up on scheduled day. Pre-informing the customers makes a huge difference on the customer satisfaction level.

### **Table 15**

Please rate your satisfaction with the ethical behaviour of field engineers. For example asking for extra money and selling products for their personal profit.

	<b>Frequency</b>	<b>Percent</b>
Very Satisfied	12	21.8
Somewhat Satisfied	29	52.7
Neither Satisfied Nor Dissatisfied	5	9.0
Somewhat Dissatisfied	3	5.5
Very Dissatisfied	6	10.9
<b>Total</b>	<b>55</b>	<b>100</b>

Table 15 displays that many respondents are quite satisfied with the ethical behaviour of field engineers. It simply means that most of the field engineers are being honest and transparent to their companies. They are not associated with any unethical means of getting working done for their own profit. On the other hand, the matter of concern is that 5.5% respondents feel somewhat dissatisfied and 10.9% people are extremely dissatisfied which means that few of the field engineers are still using unethical methods of doing the job. Field service organisations must deal with the unethical issues of field engineers very

seriously as this hampers the image of the company in the long-run. Also, it kills the overall customer satisfaction level of a company.

**Table 16**

Please rate your satisfaction with the helping attitude of field engineers. For examples providing valuable advises and helping customers in ordering parts.

	<b>Frequency</b>	<b>Percent</b>
Very Satisfied	11	20
Somewhat Satisfied	26	47.2
Neither Satisfied Nor Dissatisfied	3	5.5
Somewhat Dissatisfied	8	14.5
Very Dissatisfied	7	12.7
<b>Total</b>	<b>55</b>	<b>100</b>

Table 16 depicts that 47.2% of respondents are somewhat satisfied with the helping attitude of field engineers on site. In other words, field engineers are very helpful to customers when it comes to providing valuable advises or helping them to order hardware parts. These are very minute things that make a huge difference in enhancing customer satisfaction. Further, 14.5% of respondents are somewhat dissatisfied and 12.7% are very dissatisfied because of non-helping attitude of field engineers. Field engineers should go an extra mile helping their customers to maintain a better customer satisfaction level.

**Table 17**

Please rate your level of satisfaction with the follow up calls of KNOWHOW department of Currys. Do they follow up to check if the issue has reoccurred?

	<b>Frequency</b>	<b>Percent</b>
Very Satisfied	8	14.5
Somewhat Satisfied	21	38.1
Neither Satisfied Nor Dissatisfied	16	29
Somewhat Dissatisfied	7	12.7
Very Dissatisfied	3	5.4
<b>Total</b>	<b>55</b>	<b>100</b>

Table 17 shows that 14.5% of respondents are very satisfied whereas 38.1% respondents are somewhat satisfied with the follow up done by KNOWHOW department of Currys. KNOWHOW department is the field engineer department of Currys who does the follow up once the issue has been fixed. They call the customers very next day to double check if the issue is fixed. If the same issue reoccurs, they are responsible for sending the field engineer second time free of cost. As per the survey, customers are quite satisfied with the follow up calls of KNOWHOW department. Interestingly, 29% of respondents are neither satisfied nor dissatisfied. Field service organisations must ensure maximum customer satisfaction by following up their customers but for this they need to put in an extra effort in order to make sure that the customers remain satisfied.

**Table 18**

Please rate your level of satisfaction with the sympathetic nature of field engineers.

	<b>Frequency</b>	<b>Percent</b>
Very Satisfied	2	3.6
Somewhat Satisfied	6	10.9
Neither Satisfied nor Dissatisfied	29	52.7
Somewhat Dissatisfied	12	21.8
Very Dissatisfied	6	10.9
<b>Total</b>	<b>55</b>	<b>100</b>

Table 18 shows that the level of customer satisfaction with the sympathetic nature of field engineers is quite low. Only 3.6% of respondents are very satisfied with the sympathetic nature of field engineers. On the other hand, more than half of the respondents are neither satisfied nor dissatisfied which possess 52.7%. It is a major area of concern for field service organisations. 21.8% and 10.9% respondents are somewhat dissatisfied and very dissatisfied, that is also not a good sign.

**Table 19**

Please rate your satisfaction with detail-oriented approach of the field engineers.

	<b>Frequency</b>	<b>Percent</b>
Very Satisfied	6	10.9
Somewhat Satisfied	10	18.2
Neither Satisfied nor Dissatisfied	24	43.6
Somewhat Dissatisfied	8	14.5
Very Dissatisfied	7	12.7
<b>Total</b>	<b>55</b>	<b>100</b>

Table 19 shows that respondents are not quite satisfied with the approach of the field engineers that means most of the field engineers are not detail oriented. Only 10.9% respondents were satisfied with this aspect of field service. Oppositely, 14.5% and 12.7% of respondents are not satisfied with this aspect. Interestingly, 43.6% of respondents are neither satisfied nor dissatisfied.

#### **4.4 Interview**

##### **Interviewee Background**

The interviewee is in management position and has led many other field service organisations efficiently. Therefore the interviewee proficiently gave in-depth opinions and views. The interviewee is designated as a KNOWHOW manager in Currys, Dublin He recruits suitable field engineers and manages them properly. He also analyses and evaluates customer satisfaction, customer retention, customer complaints and customer loyalty.

##### **Hiring a Right Field Engineer**

The manager was asked to share the process of hiring a qualified and customer centric field engineer. The manager was quick to answer that they basically get in touch with the HR department and advertise the job online and in the company. Work experience is not essential as they make sure to provide training as per company standards so that the engineers are confident and skilful in fixing the issues. He further added that Induction is an important phase of training for field engineers because they get to learn about each product one by one like Laptops, Televisions, and Big kitchen appliances. After completion of

the training, the engineers are required to clear a test. Based on the test result, the field engineers are screened according to their competence to start with the field job. The engineers are trained throughout the year. If any new product comes in the market, they train them immediately so that they are able to fix the issues. The manager believes that right individual needs to be found and hired so that they may bring value and profit to the business. They also provide them with special training on customer satisfaction through case studies. It gives the engineers a better understanding to deal with customers in different scenarios.

### **Handling Customer Complaints**

The manager was asked several questions on his experience in dealing with customer complaints. He believes that the best way to avoid customer complaints is by doing follow up once the issue is fixed. They send a text message to their customer within 24 hours after completion of the job. They ask them to rate the service and get a basic knowledge of how happy the customers are with the services. If a complaint is registered like field engineer could not fix the issue or wrong parts ordered by the field engineer they will get into the issue to see if there is a way to resolve the issue. Then they send a field engineer on their cost to re-diagnose the issue and fix it promptly. According to the manager, each complaint is different so it has to be dealt differently. Field engineers prepare a field report which includes the step by step procedure of fixing the issue. If they are unable to fix the issue, they will mention the same in the report. Sometimes customers are not happy with the field engineers' attitude. In that case, they investigate the entire matter thoroughly and the issue will be escalated to him. He believes that "customer satisfaction will keep the customer coming back to them".

### **Overall Customer Satisfaction of the company**

The manager was asked if there is any impact of field engineer department on overall customer satisfaction of the company. The manager believes that the field service department has a massive impact on overall customer satisfaction of the company. All the departments are interconnected and interdependent to each other in delivering satisfaction. Customers come to store to buy a product and it is the sales staff that provides all the information and persuades them to buy the product. But it is their field engineer who goes to customers' home to set up, install or repair the product. How they present themselves to someone

else's house is lot more personal and that prompts the customers to tell their friends about the services received. He further added that it is a customer who allows them to be at his house so they make sure to deliver excellent customer satisfaction as they are representing the each department of their company. They need to be professional, timely, polite, and efficient. Also they have to make sure that their engineers on the field are very keen to deliver excellent customer service.

## **CHAPTER 5: DISCUSSION**

In this chapter, the results of the data collection will be reviewed, and interpreted. The implications of the findings will be discussed.

**5.1 Research Objective 1:** To identify the key factors those contribute to maximise the overall customer satisfaction level by the services of a field engineers.

As discussed in literature review, the various components of field service industry contribute to maximise the overall customer satisfaction level, when they are delivered well. Those components are motivated field engineers, first-time fix rates, reasons for the second visit, technology and resolution rates. While the interviewees had different perspectives and experiences which make it evident that every customer is different and degree of problem may vary from one customer to another. The findings of the interviewees' response say that all the factors are equally important to deliver an excellent customer satisfaction. As per the survey, on-time arrival was a major reason of dissatisfaction among customers. According to Katz, Larson and Larson (1991), customer satisfaction decreases with an increase in the duration of the waiting time. Taylor (1994) also said that delay in services adversely affect the overall customer satisfaction as customer is sitting back home waiting all day for the field engineer to show up. Moreover, the KNOWHOW manager also added that the field engineers need to be timely.

According to Mciver et al., 2013 (cited in Becker, Huselid, Pickus& Spratt, 1997) there is a great need to manage information and know-how. Dutt (2014) also stated that field engineers are no longer being viewed as 'issue fixers'. They are now viewed as 'customer ambassadors' or 'solution providers'. As per the survey of 55 customers, it is clearly evident that customers always want someone who can first diagnose the issue correctly and make a successful attempt to fix the issue.

According to Dutt (2014) Companies have empowered their field engineers to enhance first-visit resolution rates which enhance the customer satisfaction level. It can be seen from the survey that customers were not quite satisfied as they had to schedule second appointment with the field engineer. In this fast paced world, no one wants to wait. As clearly discussed in Literature review,

one of the major factor which influences customer satisfaction is first visit resolution because it makes their life smoother. So the need of the hour is to equip the field engineers with latest technology and tools in order to maximise the first visit resolution rates.

There were also some key similarities between the literature review and primary data. Pullen (2012) highlighted that field service organisations who don't embrace the latest trend and technology to improve customer satisfaction will be left behind. Companies are adopting advanced technology to serve their customers more effectively. As per the data findings, it is quite clear that customers are very satisfied with the latest tools and technology being used to serve them. This is a good sign as it will continue to encourage field service organisations to invest in new technology and development. Korte (2015) highlighted that one of the most impactful innovations in field service is streaming videos which help engineers to troubleshoot problems with company experts from anywhere. The manager has mentioned in the interview that they provide the field engineers with all the latest equipment and tools which enable them to troubleshoot problems with company experts. The manager also highlighted that they provide on the job training to their field engineers which enable them to learn to make optimum utilization of the available resources. Furthermore, the manager of Currys also mentioned in the interview that they train the field engineers throughout the year and if any new technology or a product comes into the market, they make sure that their field engineers are being trained immediately to use that new technology.

**5.2 Research Objective 2:** To assess the existing performance of company's field engineers in delivering customer satisfaction.

According to Carlaw *et al.* (2003) there is a great need to motivate field engineers to deliver excellent customer satisfaction. The manager also highlighted it by saying that they send a text message to their customers in order to record their feedback which helps them to evaluate the performance of their field engineers. The data analysis shows us that customers are not quite satisfied especially when it comes to treat them as a long-valued customer. Field engineers are the brand ambassadors of their companies. They should be trained in a way which would enable them to focus on customer centricity and customer retention instead of just completing their assignment. As it was discussed in

literature review, field service organisations should focus on how the relationship between a technician and customer can impact the organisation.

As discussed in the literature review, the performance of field engineers is assessed by the resolution rates. Resolution rate is a significant component of field service industry. Companies always try to maintain highest resolution rates. It basically means the number of cases being resolved. The results of data findings shows that customers are more interested in getting their issue fixed in first visit. But majority of field engineers are ignorant about the quality of resolution. As per the survey, the interviewees are not quite satisfied with the quality of resolution which means the issue might have reoccurred. Companies evaluate the performance of their field engineers on the basis of quality of resolution. An efficient field engineer always believes in quality. If the same problem reappears, it means the field engineer was not competent enough to fix the issue permanently. It could also happen because of showing very careless attitude towards the nature and history of the job. The survey has revealed the fact that majority of field engineers don't have detail-oriented approach which means they are not probing with the customers regarding the history of the problem. Asking probing questions is an effective way of finding out more details which would eventually help the field engineer to fix the issue.

When taking into account what most of the interviewees said about technical understanding of field engineers, it could be concluded that they are satisfied with the field engineers' technical knowledge and helping attitude in providing extra information. The data finding also shows that quite many of the interviewees are satisfied with professionalism, attitude, courtesy and response of field engineers. These are the basic etiquettes which they all should have while dealing with customers. Each and every customer is important as they bring value and profit to the business. Field engineers should move out of their comfort zone in order to maximise the customer satisfaction level.

Parasuraman, Zeithaml and Berry (1985) explained five gaps related to service quality. The first four gaps (discussed in the literature review) focus on organisations but this study focuses on the fifth gap because it is related to customers. The last gap occurs when a company is able to provide what it has promised and the expectations of the customers are met. It supports that the best way to achieve a good service quality is when the expectations of the customers are actually met or even exceeded. This gap is filled by field engineers who are responsible for dealing with customers face-to-face and providing them

solutions. Their performance will either break or make the relationship with customers. So the need of the hour is to assess the existing performance of field engineers regularly not once in a blue moon.

**5.3 Research Objective 3:** To get a better understanding of those factors which a company needs to consider while recruiting, training and managing field engineers from a service and satisfaction perspective.

Recruiting, training and managing field engineers have a positive influence on customer satisfaction level. There is a skill gap between the employees who are currently in the field and candidates who are looking to work in field service. Galovski (2014) highlighted that there is a great need to hire a talented workforce due to the aging workforce. The manager said they get in touch with the HR department and advertise the job online. The notable point is that they provide training as per the company's standards which means no matter if the candidate has any previous experience, they all will be trained keeping in mind the norms and standards of the company. The second important key factor is induction. The manager further added that induction is a mandatory phase of training which actually help the field engineers to apply the acquired skills on real-time basis scenarios. Furthermore, he added that they conduct an exam post completion of the training. Exams are conducted to evaluate their theoretical and practical knowledge. There are situational basis case studies which will help them to understand how much they know. It is a mandate test which everyone has to clear. They will be given 2 attempts to clear the exams and if they don't, then they will be politely asked to leave.

According to the previous and recent theoretical studies as well as the surveys and interviews in chapter four, the researcher has identified the following factors as the most considerable points that a company needs to consider while recruiting, training and managing field engineers from a service and satisfaction perspective.

The first factor is considered as customer centric, which is a key point for every field service organisations today. As we have discussed before, technical aspects can be taught to field engineers with time via trainings and induction programmes but customer centric attitude has to be developed from within. A customer-centric approach adds value to a company by differentiating themselves from their competitors. In other words, putting customer above

everything else is the need of the hour. A field engineer with customer centric approach can alter the level of customer satisfaction.

The second significant factor is considered as communicative which plays a crucial role in field service industry. A person is communicative if he is willing to talk or impart information. A sound technical understanding is an essential ingredient of becoming a successful field engineer but if he is not willing to communicate any information, it is futile. As per the data finding, many interviews were quite dissatisfied because the field engineers never communicate prior to the visit. Sometimes, they don't communicate if they are not able to show up on time. In some instances, they don't communicate at all if they are not able to pay visit on scheduled time. This attitude will drastically bring down the level of customer satisfaction. It is therefore an important factor to be considered while recruiting and training field engineers.

The third major factor is considered as critical thinking. A field engineer should possess a strong critical thinking skill which means he is self-disciplined, self-directed, self-monitored and self-corrective. Many jobs require a lot of analysing, assessing and application.

## **CHAPTER 6: CONCLUSIONS**

### **6.1 Conclusions**

In this chapter, the researcher draws general conclusions by summarising the findings and critically analysing these findings with the issues and concepts raised in the literature review section of this research. The nature of this research is interpretive so the findings and conclusions are highly dependent on the individual.

With the rapid rise in the workforce and advanced technology, the field service industry has developed rapidly during the past few decades. But customer satisfaction is still the major key to sustain and grow in the competitive market. Even though the technology is advancing day by day, customer satisfaction is the major differentiator in today's market. Field engineers act as the brand ambassadors of their company because they directly face their customers. Their services have a direct impact on customer satisfaction. As discussed in the literature review, the need of the hour is to focus on the relationship between field engineers and customers. The services offered by field engineers can make

and break the relationship with their customers. The focus should be on creating a long-lasting impact on the minds of the customers not just a temporary impact.

In this research, the researcher has critically analysed the previous and recent studies related to the significance of customer satisfaction. Then the factors influencing customer satisfaction in field service industry were argued. On the other hand, the researcher discussed the various components of field service industry. The researcher also mentioned about the various aspects of recruitment and training of field engineers. In the end of the literature review, the researcher has identified the gap in field engineer services in delivering satisfaction. In the next section, the researcher has conducted the primary research using the form a self-administered questionnaire and structured interviews. The primary results show that the field engineer services have a positive and negative impact on customer satisfaction level. As per the survey, it is evident that the need of the hour is to be more customer-centric and putting customer above everything. In other words, put yourself in the shoes of the customers. Sympathy is one of the missing links of customer satisfaction today. “A sympathetic field engineer can be quite as dear as a relative”. Field engineers have to go extra mile beyond their comfort zone in order to bring up the level of customer satisfaction because it is all about customers.

The primary objective of this study was to testify the impact of field engineer services on overall customer satisfaction of a company. After much analysis and discussion of the results of the primary research, the researcher acknowledges that field engineer services have a direct impact on overall customer satisfaction of a company because field engineers are the face of their company. Also, it is evident that there is a significant relationship between recruitment and training of field engineers and customer satisfaction levels. Therefore, the hypothesis mentioned before has been tested:

Field engineer services positively support the overall customer satisfaction when it is managed well.

Appropriate selection, training and management of field engineers can enable better service and satisfaction.

This clearly says that each and every components of field service industry is important in achieving an excellent overall customer satisfaction. Also, selection and training of field engineers enable better service and satisfaction.

## **6.2 Limitations of the research**

The researcher has a limited academic knowledge of customer satisfaction and field service industry. Also, the critical analysis of the literature review and secondary data might not be deep and up to the mark due to limited skills and experience of analysing literature. English is the second language of the researcher so it might have impacted the sentence formation and expression of meaning. The research was conducted within the field service department of Currys, Ireland. The researcher has used 55 questionnaires and 1 personal interview with the field service manager. The researcher could not access all the details of the customers as the company provided only limited information. Therefore the sample population does not fully represent all the customers of Currys. So it is bit difficult to make accurate predictions and interpretation which makes it more complicated. There is only one field service manager in Currys thereby making it more difficult to draw accurate conclusions. The long term data could not be assessed as this study had a time restriction.

## **6.3 Recommendations**

Based on the results of the study, the researcher has observed that field engineer services have both positive and negative impact on customer satisfaction. Field service industry is growing day by day. Number of freelancer and contract field engineers is rapidly moving into this industry. Technology is also advancing day by day. In this modern era, the key to success lies in achieving customer satisfaction. The researcher finds that the technology can be adopted, training can be replicated, advertising and promotions can be duplicated but the key to success in market is achieving customer satisfaction through excellent field engineer services. All things should work for achieving maximum customer satisfaction level.

The research has also revealed the fact that customers are not satisfied with the communication gap between them and field engineers. In other words, field engineers need to be more informative and communicative. Future is unpredictable. In the case of emergency or any unforeseen situations which can cause delay in reaching on scheduled time, field engineers are expected to communicate to their customers well in advance. This will surely prevent a lot of chaos and confusion. So communication gap has to be eradicated from field service industry.

The researcher also uncovered an issue of lack of sympathy. Field engineers lack sympathy. Sympathy is a part of their emotions. They are often overlooked

in field service industry. Field service is a personalised service. In order to solve this issue, there is a great need of introducing psychological training and programme in field service industry. This will help to develop a conviction within them. This will also help them to overcome stress caused by excessive travelling and work pressure. Sympathy is an essential ingredient of customer satisfaction.

Finally, the researcher has devised a model structuring the three most important elements in achieving customer satisfaction in field service industry. The model is called the ABC of providing excellent field engineer services.

Attitude	Our attitude determines our altitude. Field engineers' should have customer-first attitude.
Be real time	Field service departments should have real time approach as it will enable them to get up to the minute details of field engineers and customers. This will also ensure a smooth flow of business and enable them to assess field engineers' performance from a satisfaction perspective.
Consistency	A consistent effort in delivering excellent services will always help the company to be on top from a customer satisfaction perspective. It is not about how many customers you have served, but how many customers are willing to come back to you.

Figure 7 The ABC of delivering excellent field engineer services

#### 6.4 Recommendations for Future Work

Interviewing field engineers of different companies could add another perspective to this research in determining the challenges faced by field engineers in field. It could be further investigated by contacting the trainers and Human resource department to understand the various aspects of training and development in field service industry.

## **CHAPTER 7: SELF-REFLECTION**

Process: During my MBA programme, I developed an interest in service sector mainly because of the subject performance driven marketing. Also, I have previously worked in field service sector industry for two years which helped me to learn the elementary and advanced skills of marketing in field service industry. My special interest was in customer satisfaction and customer retention because I had personally gone through many situations where I had seen lack of customer satisfaction resulted in losing valuable customers. Other discovery that I made was through analysing the data and feedback of the customers. I have realised that the field engineers are the backbone of their company. Their services have a direct impact on customer satisfaction level. However, it took me several weeks to finalise my research subject after much research and discussion with my lecturer. The process of conducting secondary research was not difficult as there is already a vast amount of published material about customer satisfaction. However, there is not much written about field service industry because it is still a growing industry in 21st century. My secondary research helped me to learn the various components of field service industry and the challenges faced by field engineers while in field. Another discovery that I made was that field service industry is embracing the latest technology in the market but most of the times, the performance of the field engineers are not up to the mark from service and satisfaction perspective. This is where my primary research began, asking directly from the customers to share their views and opinions regarding the services of field engineers.

**Use of sources:** In the early stages of my dissertation, I have gone through many academic journals and books to gain a deep understanding in significance of customer satisfaction in service industry. There is a huge amount of material available in DBS library related to customer satisfaction but there was not much about field service industry. I started reading magazines like field news in order to gain more insights on field service industry. However, once the research question and research objectives became clear to me, I started spending more time learning the current scenario of field service industry worldwide. Throughout researching the literature, I realised that there is much more the

providing excellent services to customers and I wanted to go beyond those general theories of achieving customer satisfaction.

**Dissertation formulation:** While going through my secondary research, I learnt that many companies have their own field service department which is interdependent with the other departments of their company like sales and marketing, public relations and Finance. This helped me to understand the fact that the services of field engineers have an impact on the overall customer satisfaction of the company. So I decided to choose a company which may help me to understand the impact of field engineer services on other departments. The most surprising discovery was that field engineers are not just representing their department but they are representing their company including other departments like sales and marketing, finance, public relations, call centre etc. In other words, they are the face of their company.

**Own learning:** Pedler, Burgoyne & Boydell (1986) suggest that a record of reflective learning should, in addition to learning itself, include feelings, thoughts, ideas and behaviour. However, the process still needs to remain analytical, rather than descriptive. During the first semester of MBA programme, we were introduced to the subject Personal and Professional Development. Self-reflection was an important part of our written assessment. Initially, I had faced several difficulties in understanding and learning this new style of learning but now I found that I am a reflective learner. This also enabled me to work on other assignments effectively. I have become more thoughtful and logical. I have always been a detail oriented person who is not quick to jump to conclusions.

**Research Skills:** The researcher has a Bachelor's degree in hotel management from Punjab technical university, India which was completed in 2010. The researcher has no experience in conducting a research before. In the early stages of the dissertation, the researcher had to spend all day in library studying previous dissertations and consulting with the library staff. The researcher was not aware of how to collect and analyse primary and secondary data for research purposes especially conducting surveys in the form of self-administered questionnaires, this was "uncharted territory" for the researcher. The researcher took it as a challenge as it was an opportunity to learn something new.

The questionnaire for this study was formulated using likert scale. The title of this study is "Impact of field engineer services on overall customer satisfaction

in a company”. Therefore a large amount of data was required for the questionnaire and interview. The questionnaire contained 18 questions and 5 open ended interview questions. The number of respondents and the data obtained from the survey was satisfactory.

**Interpersonal Skills:** During the MBA programme, there were a number of individual assignments, group assignments, group discussions and presentation. This means working with people from different countries and background which has greatly enhanced the interpersonal and communication skills of the researcher. The researcher has also learnt to work in a team with one accord. These skills will surely contribute to the professional development of the researcher especially in the areas such as team leader and people management.

**Time Management Skills:** Working on this dissertation and the MBA programme has helped the researcher to improve his time management skills. The researcher had been in full time employment for three years which enabled him to learn the basic aspects of time management. My previous experience has helped me to plan out this dissertation along with other course work like assignments, primary research were done by breaking up tasks into smaller ones. At the same time, the researcher was doing a part-time job in Dublin during his MBA programme. The researcher could prioritise his work effectively which helped him to complete his dissertation within the stipulated time.

**Conclusion:** In conclusion, the MBA and the dissertation have enormously helped the researcher to develop and polish management skills within him. However, the dissertation was the major challenge for the researcher especially because of a gap of 5 years after his full time bachelor’s degree. By the grace of God, determination and faith, the researcher could complete the dissertation and this extraordinary experience will remain a valuable asset for the researcher.

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## **Appendix A- Questionnaire**

### **Questionnaire for Customers**

Dear Customer,

My name is Albin Jose, and I am doing MBA in Marketing from Dublin Business School, Ireland. I am conducting a research into the area of customer satisfaction in field service department of a company. The title of my research is “Impact of field engineer services on the overall customer satisfaction of a company”. All the information provided by you is completely confidential and under no circumstances any of it will be linked to any person or company. It would take around 5-10 minutes to complete questionnaires. Please be as accurate as possible. I would like to thank you for your valuable time in filling out this questionnaire.

If you need further information, please feel free to contact me by email [joseisalice@gmail.com](mailto:joseisalice@gmail.com).

Kindest Regards

Albin Jose

## **Section 1: Personal Details**

### **1. Gender**

- Male       Female

### **2. Age**

- 20-30 years  
 31-40 years  
 +40 years

### **3. How long you have been with the company?**

- Less than one year  
 1-3 years  
 3- 5 years

### **4. Please rate your satisfaction level with the response time to your initial call for service.**

- Very Satisfied  
 Somewhat Satisfied  
 Neither Satisfied nor Dissatisfied  
 Somewhat Dissatisfied  
 Very Dissatisfied

### **5. Please rate your satisfaction level with the ability of field engineers to arrive on-site as scheduled/on time.**

- Very Satisfied  
 Somewhat Satisfied  
 Neither Satisfied nor Dissatisfied  
 Somewhat Dissatisfied  
 Very Dissatisfied

### **6. Please rate your level of satisfaction with professional appearance of field engineers. For example tidy uniform and authorized licensed card.**

- Very Satisfied  
 Somewhat Satisfied  
 Neither Satisfied nor Dissatisfied  
 Somewhat Dissatisfied

Very Dissatisfied

**7. Please rate your level of satisfaction with the availability of all the required tools with the engineer.**

Very Satisfied

Somewhat Satisfied

Neither Satisfied nor Dissatisfied

Somewhat Dissatisfied

Very Dissatisfied

**8. Please rate your satisfaction level with the technical knowledge of field engineers with regards to the diagnosing and repairing of the product?**

Very Satisfied

Somewhat Satisfied

Neither Satisfied nor Dissatisfied

Somewhat Dissatisfied

Very Dissatisfied

**9. Please rate your satisfaction level with the timeliness of resolution.**

Very Satisfied

Somewhat Satisfied

Neither Satisfied nor Dissatisfied

Somewhat Dissatisfied

Very Dissatisfied

**10. Please rate your satisfaction level with the quality of resolution.**

Very Satisfied

Somewhat Satisfied

Neither Satisfied nor Dissatisfied

Somewhat Dissatisfied

Very Dissatisfied

**11. Please rate your satisfaction level with the ability of field engineers to resolve your issue on the first visit.**

Very Satisfied

Somewhat Satisfied

- Neither Satisfied nor Dissatisfied
- Somewhat Dissatisfied
- Very Dissatisfied

**12. Please rate your satisfaction level on courtesy and professionalism of field engineers.**

- Very Satisfied
- Somewhat Satisfied
- Neither Satisfied nor Dissatisfied
- Somewhat Dissatisfied
- Very Dissatisfied

**13. Please rate your satisfaction level with the ability of field engineers to treat you like a long-term valued customer.**

- Very Satisfied
- Somewhat Satisfied
- Neither Satisfied nor Dissatisfied
- Somewhat Dissatisfied
- Very Dissatisfied

**14. Please rate your satisfaction level with the ability of field engineers to avoid communication gap For example: Do they call you before they come? Do they inform you if they are late? Do they inform you if they are not able to show up due to any reasons?**

- Very Satisfied
- Somewhat Satisfied
- Neither Satisfied nor Dissatisfied
- Somewhat Dissatisfied
- Very Dissatisfied

**15. Please rate your satisfaction with the ethical behaviour of field engineers. For example asking for extra money and selling products for their personal profit.**

- Very Satisfied
- Somewhat Satisfied
- Neither Satisfied nor Dissatisfied
- Somewhat Dissatisfied

Very Dissatisfied

**16. Please rate your satisfaction with the helping attitude of field engineers. For examples providing valuable advises and helping customers in ordering parts.**

Very Satisfied

Somewhat Satisfied

Neither Satisfied nor Dissatisfied

Somewhat Dissatisfied

Very Dissatisfied

**17. Please rate your level of satisfaction with the follow up calls of KNOWHOW department of Currys. Do they follow up to check if the issue has reoccurred?**

Very Satisfied

Somewhat Satisfied

Neither Satisfied nor Dissatisfied

Somewhat Dissatisfied

Very Dissatisfied

**18. Please rate your level of satisfaction with the sympathetic nature of field engineers.**

Very Satisfied

Somewhat Satisfied

Neither Satisfied nor Dissatisfied

Somewhat Dissatisfied

Very Dissatisfied

**19. Please rate your satisfaction with detail-oriented approach of the field engineers.**

Very Satisfied

Somewhat Satisfied

Neither Satisfied nor Dissatisfied

Somewhat Dissatisfied

Very Dissatisfied

**I would like to thank you again for taking the time to complete the questionnaire.**

## **Appendix B- Interview Questions**

**Question 1:** How do you ensure maximum customer satisfaction level in field engineer department?

**Question 2:** How difficult it is to find a qualified and customer centric field engineers today?

**Question 3:** How do you deal the customer complaints in field engineer department?

**Question 4:** Briefly state your opinion on importance of maintaining excellent customer satisfaction in field engineer department.

**Question 5:** Does field engineer department impact the overall customer satisfaction of a company? Does it have an impact on other departments too? If yes, then how?