The Relevance of Contact Centre Service Quality to Customer Satisfaction in Business: A Case Study of ZESCO Limited

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A Thesis Submitted to the University of Greenwich in Partial Fulfilment of the Requirements of MBA in International Business

Augsut 2016 Starters

Pathway Specialisation Project BUSI 1359
Supervised by : Dr Kwesi Ata Sakyi

15th September 2018

Word Count: 10,990

Abstract

Purpose- The aim of this study is to examine the relevance of Contact Centre service quality to customer satisfaction in business. The study is done as a comprehensive case study of ZESCO, the Zambian Electricity Supply Company.

Research design and methodology- The study is guided by a positivist paradigm, using both qualitative and quantitative research approaches. The study is based on secondary and primary data. A total of 231 people participated in this research, broken down as 191 ZESCO customers and 40 ZESCO employees. Purposive random sampling was employed in selecting ZESCO employee participants, whereas random sampling was employed in selecting ZESCO customer participants.

Findings -The study established a number of significant themes. A significant relationship was established between Contact Centre service quality and customer satisfaction. The study reveals that attitude of Contact Centre employees is the major cause of poor performance at Contact Centres. The research concludes that Contact Centres help to repair company breach of trust as they act as buffer zone or shock absorbers. Furthermore, service quality is the key determinant of customer satisfaction.

Limitations- This study would have been more advantageous if the research was extended to a National level in order to have a broader view on the relevance of Contact Centre services to customer satisfaction. However, this limitation does not compromise the validity of the research findings.

Recommendations - The study recommends that service providing companies must employ standard service quality dimensions in Contact Centres and adhere to them.

Value – In consideration of the scarcity of studies on the relevance of Contact Centres to customer satisfaction, this study adds value to the knowledge of Contact Centres and Customer satisfaction in international business.

Key words: Contact Centre, Customer service, service quality, customer satisfaction, ZESCO.

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Acronyms Used

ACSI: American Customer Satisfaction Index.

ANOVA: Analysis of Variance.

ASA: Average Speed of Answer.

EDT: Expectancy Disconfirmation Theory.

FCR: First Call Resolution.

ICMI: International Customer Management Institute.

RATER: Responsiveness, Assurance, Tangibility, Empathy, Reliability.

TQM: Total Quality Management.

SPSS: Statistical Packages for Social Sciences.

ZESCO: Zambia Electricity Supply Company.

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CHAPTER 1: INTRODUCTION

1.1Introduction

Chapter 1 provides an insight of the background to the study, research problem justification, research aim , purpose of the study and research objectives. It brings out the concept of the study by concisely detailing the explanatory and dependent variables. The contributions of the research and the research design together with the research approach and data collection techniques are presented. The Chapter also highlights the dissertation layout.

1.2 Background to the study

Success of every business rests on the company's ability to satisfy, attract and retain its customers (Calingo, 2001). Customers are the most important stakeholders for an organisation and their satisfaction is paramount. According to Matzler (2003), customer satisfaction is the determinant of business survival. Customer satisfaction holds the company's potential for customer base growth (Strickland *et al*, 2012).

Customer satisfaction is the major competitive advantage driver for companies to survive in a fiercely competitive global business world (Adams, 2006). To achieve customer satisfaction, most companies have employed customer service personnel through various means such as creating Contact Centres (Vavra, 2007).

ZESCO supplies electricity to more than nine hundreed thousand people in Zambia. ZESCO established the National Contact Centre in 2001, offering various services such as technical and customer support (ZESCO, 2001). The Contact Centre is the most important department of the company on a day-to-day business basis. It is a link between the company and its customers (Best, 2005). The Contact Centre hugely influences customers' point of view (POV) for the company.

The rise in ZESCO customer base has led to a struggle in balancing demand and supply (ZESCO, 2016). Zambia records multiple electricity faults such as power cuts, which have led to a high traffic of calls channelled to the Contact Centre (ZESCO, 2017). The services of the Contact Centre to the public have a significant impact on customer satisfaction. There is a big cloud hanging on service quality which has spurred scholarly debate. The extent of the literature reveals the absence of consensus on service quality measurement, owing to service heterogeneity, intangibility and multidimensionality (Navarro *et al*, 2005).

1.3 Research problem and justification

There is a high trend of widespread customer dissatisfaction in the service industry precisely at the Contact Centres (Strickland *et al,* 2012). The principal research problem addressed in this study is the apparent poor services of Contact Centres for business firms. Very few companies have realized that Contact Centres are relevant to customer satisfaction (Best, 2005).

Contact Centres are the main means of communication for the company and customers (Heintzman *et al,* 2003). More than two thirds of customer interaction with the company takes place through Contact Centres. Relationships between the customer and the company are created and reinforced through the Contact Centres (Bakker *et al*, 2003). Performance of a Contact Centre is a concern to organizational management because it represents the face of the company.

Customer satisfaction is fundamental to the success, survival and growth of every company (Grigoroudis *et al,* 2004). ZESCO has recorded an increase in the traffic of calls channeled to the national Contact Centre due to numerous electrical faults across the country. The first stop for customers to inquire on any faults is the Contact Centre (ZESCO, 2014). It is therefore important to know whether the services customers receive from ZESCO Contact Centre affect their overall satisfaction.

According to Dulskis (2010), customer satisfaction has become a central issue in service providing companies. The major focus for customers is "service quality". This study is mainly anchored on service quality and consumer behaviour models. Service quality is antecedent to customer satisfaction, although service companies compromise on service quality, which consequently results in creating a customer gap.

Today, most companies operate under ignorance bliss, having little or no clue about their impact of services on customers (Fuller *et al,* 2004). For Contact Centres to effectively and efficiently meet the needs of customers, they have to adhere to service quality standards. The service quality gap model by Parasuraman *et al* (1988) presents the dilemma of a service manager in ignorance of what a customer needs from the company.

Quality customer service is amongst the most pressing and hottest issues pursued and discussed in the corporate and public arena, because customers have become increasingly quality-conscious and sophisticated (Strickland *et al,* 2012). Customers now want service and value which they can depend on. The ingredient of quality customer service in business is now a necessity. Alves and Raposo (2010) posit that service quality has emerged as an impetus to managerial strength and competitiveness. Studies reveal that the service quality (SERVQUAL) model which was pioneered by Parasuraman, Berry, and Zeithaml in 1985 is widely used in the measurement of service quality.

1.4 Research aim, questions and objectives
1.4.1 Research aim

This study has two principal aims, distinguished as practical and theoretical. The practical aim is to contribute information on the relevance of a Contact Centre to customer satisfaction and provide a guidance to practitioners and business firms on the service quality dimensions to adopt in their companies in order to achieve enhanced customer satisfaction. The theoretical aim is to contribute to academic pursuit for students who will in future be interested in a similar research topic and to add knowledge to close the literature gap.

1.4.2 Purpose of the study

The purpose of this study is to indicate the relevance of Contact Centre service quality to customer satisfaction. This is done by determining the factors which are important in delivering quality customer service in a Contact Centre for business firms. Such services in turn enhance overall customer satisfaction. It also seeks to determine the main factors which lead to poor customer service in a Contact Centre thereby affecting customer satisfaction.

1.4.3 Research questions

This study attempts to answer the following questions from the ZESCO case study.

1) What is the relevance of a Contact Centre to customer satisfaction?
2) What factors influence customer satisfaction in a Contact Centre?
3) What are the main service quality dimensions that customers look for in a Contact Centre?
4) What factors influence service quality in a Contact Centre?

1.4.4 Research objectives

RO1. To determine the relevance of the Contact Centre to customer satisfaction.

RO2. To determine the factors which influence customer satisfaction in Contact Centres.

RO3. To determine the main service quality dimensions customers look for in Contact Centres.

RO4. To determine the factors which   influence service quality in Contact

Centres.

1.4.5 Research hypothesis

Hypothesis 1: Responsiveness is relevant and has a significant influence on Contact Centre customer satisfaction.

Hypothesis 2: Assurance is relevant but has no significant influence on Contact Centre customer satisfaction.

Hypothesis 3: Tangibility is relevant but has no influence on Contact Centre customer satisfaction.

Hypothesis 4: Empathy is relevant and has an influence on Contact Centre customer satisfaction.

Hypothesis 5: Reliability is relevant and has a significant influence on Contact Centre customer satisfaction.

1.5 Explanatory variables and dependent variables
1.5.1 Independent variables

The independent and explanatory variables identified in this research study are derived from service quality drivers. The service quality drivers identified for Contact Centres include Responsiveness, Assurance, Tangibility, Empathy and Reliability (RATER) (Ronald, 2010).

1.5.2 Dependent variables

Customer satisfaction is the dependent variable identified in this research. Ronald (2010) assertains that customer satisfaction is dependent on Contact Centre service quality. Figure 1 gives a visual expression of the independent and dependent variables.

$Y = bX_1 + bX_2 + bX_3 + bX_4 + bX_5 + e$

Where Y is customer service satisfaction

X_1 is explanatory variable RESPONSIVENESS

X_2 is explanatory variable ASSURANCE

X_3 is explanatory variable TANGIBILITY

X_4 is explanatory variable EMPATHY

X_5 is explanatory variable RELIABILITY

e is residual or error term or unexplained variable in the model

and the bs are coefficient estimates of the strength of the variables or their predictability

of the model.

Figure 1: Independent and dependent variables

Independent variables   **Dependent variable**

Service Quality

Responsiveness

Assurance   Customer
                                                          Satisfaction
Tangibility

Empathy

Reliability
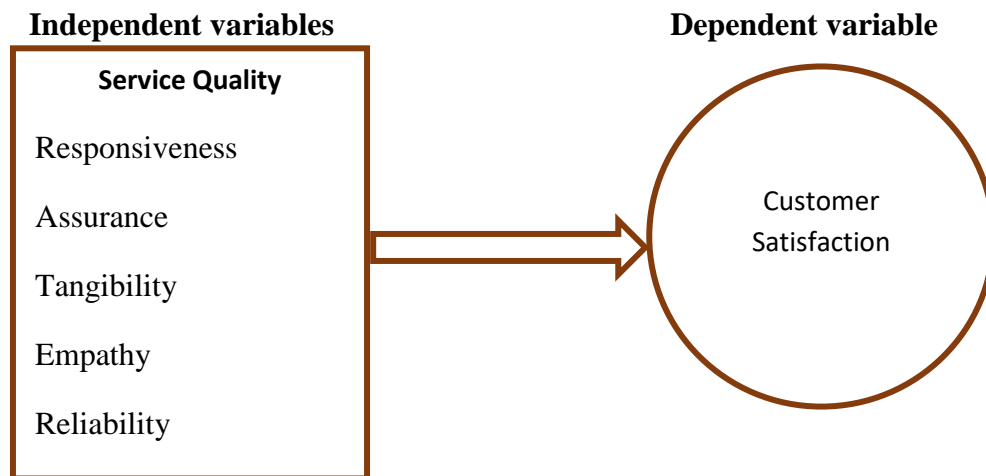
Source: Own Survey 2018

1.6 Research contribution or value of the study

This research contributes to coporate strategy, international business, and the work of academicians by providing knowledge in the context of Contact Centre service industry. The study establishes one important factor that is ignored by researchers that Contact Centre service quality is relevant to customer satisfaction as proven in this study. This study will prompt companies to improve their Contact Centre service provision for customers in order to enhance customer satisfaction.

1.6.0 Research design

1.6.1 Research approach and method

The research approach for this study is mixed methods collecting both primary and secondary data. The qualitative reasearch approach was inductive.

1.6.2 Data collection and analysis techniques

Data was collected using questionnaire which consisted of structured and semi-strutured questions. Data was analysed using SPSS, STATA and ANOVA.

1.7 Dissertation layout

Chapter 1- Introduction and background. This chapter provides a research problem, aim, questions, objectives, hypothesis, research contribution and research design. Chapter 1 also presents the research approach, data collection techniques and layout of the dissertation.

Chapter 2- Literature review. Chapter 2 puts together relevant literature relating to the topic of research. The Chapter also presents a detailed literature discussion on independent and dependent variables.

Chapter 3- Research methodology. This chapter provides a detailed view of the research methodology, research sample, sampling procedure, and identification of the target population. The data collection tools and techniques are explained. Furthermore, the chapter details the data analysis tools and processes used.

Chapter 4 – Findings and analysis. This provides the presentations of findings in detail, based on research feedback in accordance with research objectives and hypothesis.

Chapter 5 – Conclusion and recommendations. This chapter presents a brief explanation of the results from the research in a conclusive manner. Future improvements in the study area and limitations of work are also discussed.

1.8 Chapter summary

Chapter 1 explained the problem statement and the justification of the problem. It highlighted the research aim, questions, objectives and the dependent and independent variables. It has given an overview of the entire dissertation layout .

CHAPTER 2: LITERATURE REVIEW

2.1 Introduction
Taylor (2014) ascertains that literature review provides a detail of existing literature drawn from creditable authors. Chapter 2 puts together relevant literature relating to the topic of research. It provides a thorough discussion of theoretical framework and puts together knowledge gaps in the existing literature.

2.2 Theoretical framework
A number of theories have been put forward to describe the relationship between disconfirmation, customer satisfaction, and customer service. The theories below were used during this research.

2.2.1 Expectancy Disconfirmation Theory
EDT is a theory used to measure customer satisfaction. It suggests that customers develop satisfaction judgments through an evaluation of actual service (Ekinci *et al,* 2004). It measures the satisfaction of customers through rating the difference between customer's experience and expectation in perceived services (Llieska *et al,* 2013). Figure 2 depicts the EDT model.

Figure 2:   EDT model
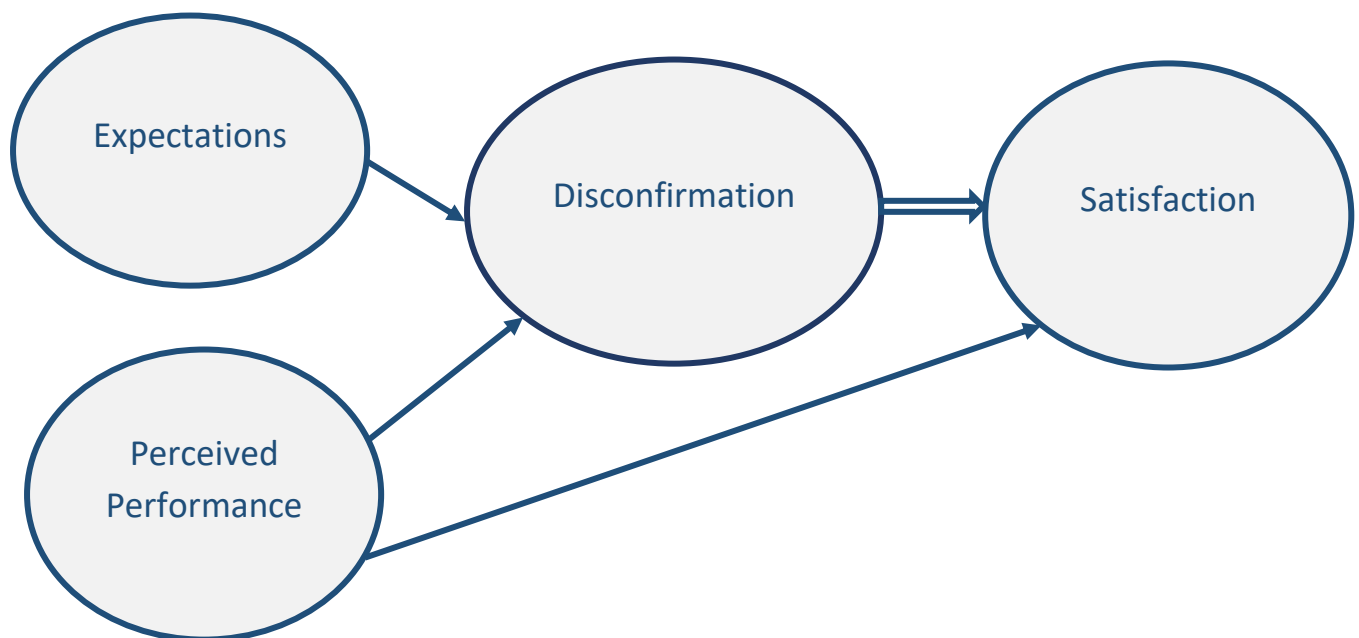
Source; Journal of Innovation in Information System 2006

The EDT model describes how customers tend to have multiple manners in the process of seeking a service (Kamery (2003). Firstly, customers have an initial expectation which is according to their previous or prior experience from using the service. The expectation of this kind of customer who repurchases from the same company is much near to reality.

Comparatively, new customers with no first-hand experience about performance of a service will be different. The initial expectation for such customers is reliant on testimonies received from other customers. When actual performance of service does not meet customer's expectation, a negative disconfirmation occurs, leading to customer dissatisfaction (Ekinci *et al,* 2004). When actual performance of a service meets customer's expectations, it leads to customer satisfaction which will result in positive disconfirmation (Cowley, 2004). When a perceived performance of a service fails to meet customer satisfaction and there is a difference between actual performance and customer's expectations regarding a service or product, it means the perceived performance is not equal to expectation and disconfirmation has occurred. This leads to a performance gap (Adee, 2004).

2.2.2 The Three-Factor Theory
According to Matzler and Sauerwein (2002), customer satisfaction is distinguished by three factors; as detailed in the paragraphs below.

Figure 3: Three-Factor Theory
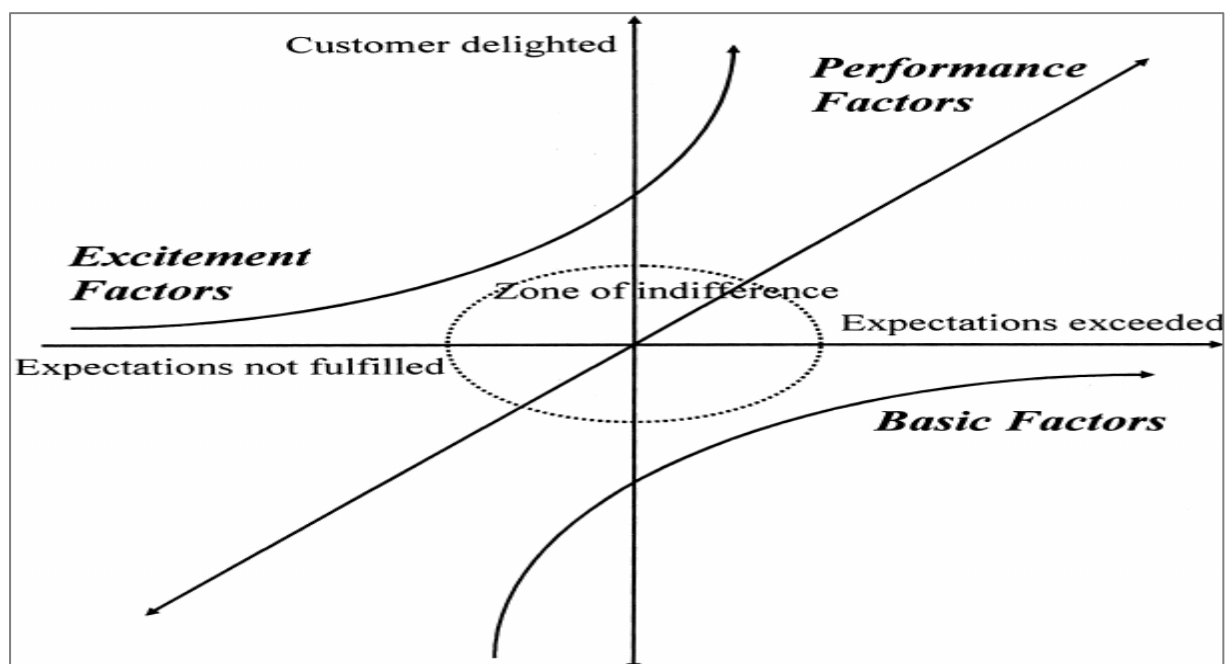
Source: Three-Factor Theory, 2002

Basic factors (Dissatisfiers) are the minimum factors which lead to dissatisfaction whenever they are not fulfilled (Matzler et al, 2002). Excitement factors (Satisfiers) are the minimum factors which lead to satisfaction once they are fulfilled. Performance Factors (Hybrid) bring about dissatisfaction once performance is low. This theory suggests that there is a symmetric and linear relationship between performance and overall satisfaction (Cowley, 2004). Given these points, it is important to understand a customer in detail.

2.3 Customer

A customer is a person who uses a service or product (Calingo, 2001). Customers are the end users of any product or service. Customers are categorized as internal and external. Customers are the lifeblood of every business, without a customer a business cannot exist. Customers dictate and run businesses. It takes time for a company to develop customer relations.

2.3.1 Customer loyalty ladder

Customer loyalty ladder consists of six stages (Llieska 2013). Firstly, a company will have a suspect. This is any person who comes across the company's products or service. Once the suspect is interested in the company's service, they climb the ladder and become a prospect. The prospect graduates to be a customer who will purchase the product or service. This is a critical stage to entice the customer to come back to the company and make a repurchase. If the customer comes back to make a repurchase they become clients. Clients make ongoing repetitive purchases. Clients graduate to be advocates, marketing the business to the public.

Figure 4: Customer loyalty ladder
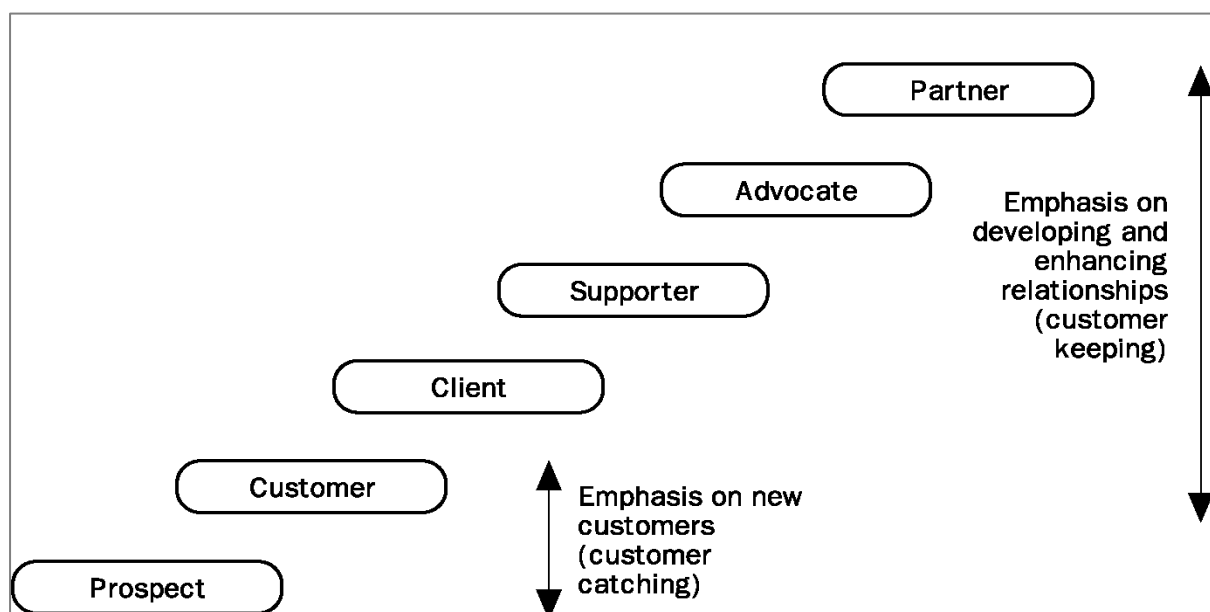
Source: The service industry Journal 2003

As can be seen in Figure 4, customer loyalty is a process. After the struggle to build customer loyalty, it is a total mess for a business to lose a customer as a result of poor services. Customers seek for a service at the right place, right time, and right quantity (Calingo, 2001). Globalization and intensity of business has caused a drastic shift in the customer's mindset. Customers have become more demanding, sophisticated and knowledgeable.

2.4 Customer service

Grigoroudis and Siskos (2004), defines customer service as the provision of service to the consumer before, during and after the purchase is made. It also entails serving the customer involving all manner of contact deliberately designed to enhance levels of customer satisfaction (Calingo, 2001). It can be expressed in interpersonal or personal skills which include communication, gesture, listening and posture skills, as well as telephone conversation handling techniques. Albeit a service without quality is useless. Achievement of service quality is the ultimate goal of every business because it leads to high customer satisfaction.

2.4.1 ZESCO customer service

ZESCO customer service is delivered either face to face in customer service centre outlets, on telephone through the Contact Centre (ZESCO, 2017). Services are not just mere, they must be good or superior services.

2.4.2 Good customer service

Good customer service meets basic expectation of a customer such as treating a customer kindly and respectfully. Additionally, answering customers' questions and proving to be knowledgeable and competent. It also entails delivering the service as promised in a speedy, timely, and convenient manner (Best, 2005).

2.4.3 Superior customer service

Superior customer service includes all the ingredients of good customer service, except this time, the service exceeds customers' expectations, and going an extra mile to assist and impress the customer (Cullen, 2001).

2.5 Contact Centre

Globally Contact Centres have become the key channel of communication between the company and customer, providing a mix of functionalities and services such as technical support, customer support, sales, telemarketing and administrative support (Ndungu et al, 2014). Contact Centres provide a direct link of services to customers. The Contact Centres

contributes to 50% of the world's GDP (World Bank, 2016). Figure 5 indicates the world's regional Contact Centre market break up.

Figure 5: Global Contact Centre market breakup
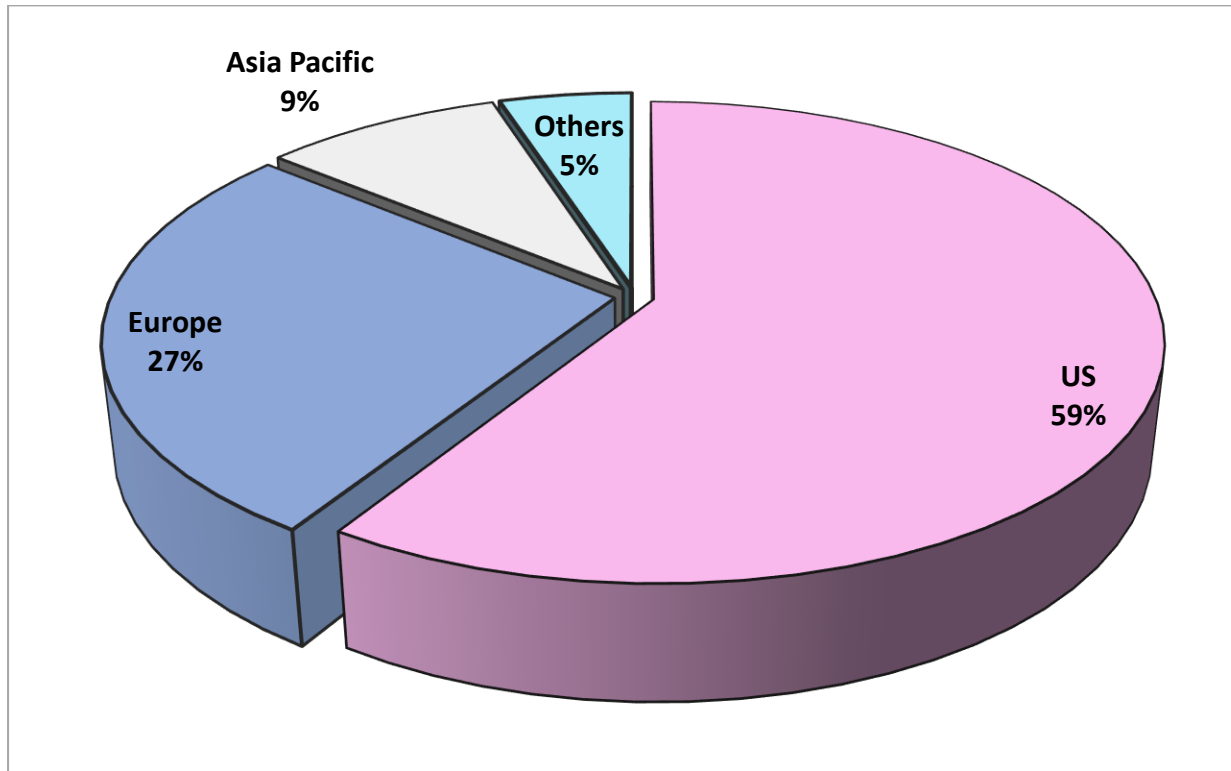
Source; World Bank 2016

Figure 5 indicates that Contact Centres are widely used across the globe in various business industries, such as Financial Services, Manufacturing, and Information Technology. The US largely uses the Contact Centre at 59% followed by Europe at 27% and the Asia Pacific Region at 9%. Other regions including Africa use the Contact Centre at 5%. Thus, there is a big market gap in the Contact Centre service sector in Africa (World Bank, 2016).

Contact Centres allow organisations to build, manage, maintain and satisfy customers. Previous studies have evidenced that successful implementation of Contact Centres helps to improve customer retention (Bhatnagar, 2013). If well managed, Contact Centres can help to repair company trust.

2.5.1 ZECSO Contact Centre
ZESCO Contact Centre offers several services to customers these include, complaint registration and faults follow –ups. ZESCO Contact Centre receives a high volume of calls amounting to ten million annually (ZESCO, 2017). The major reason customers contact

ZESCO Contact Centre is related to power outages. Other queries are related to billing and account balances as detailed in figure 6.

Figure 6: Queries channelled to ZESCO Contact Centre
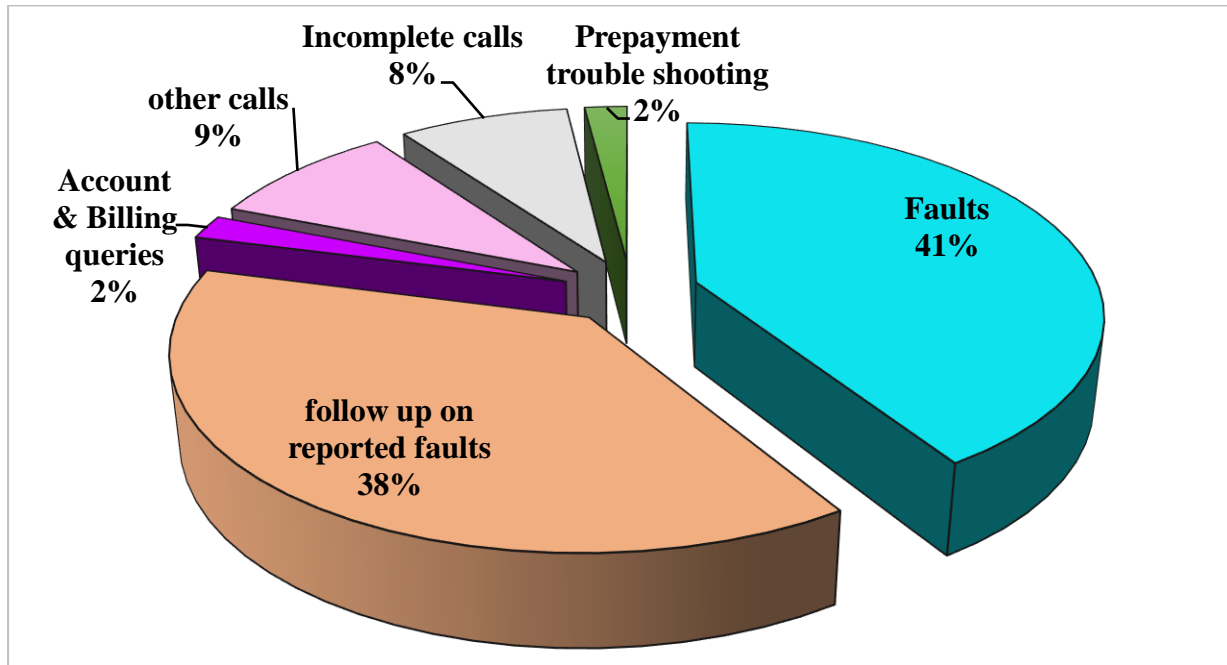
Source; ZESCO, 2017

Figure 6 indicates that ZESCO Contact Centre handles a high volume of queries. The quality of service customers receive through ZESCO Contact Centre has an impact on customers. Most Contact Centres focus on complaint resolution and neglect the quality part of the services (Anderson *et al*, 2000).   Service quality is the lifeblood of customer satisfaction.

2.6 Service Qaulity
A number of researchers have studied service quality for decades. Reeves (2004) ascertained that there is no direct, parsimonious, universal or encompassing definition of service quality. However, the most common definition of service quality is the customer's perception of excellent service. Customers mainly form a perception of service quality in accordance with the experience of the service performance based on experiences.

The disconfirmation paradigm states that service quality is the comparison of customer's expectations and their perception of service actually received (Kim *et al*, 2002). The formula for service quality is the comparison of perceived performance (P) with the perceived experience (E).

Table 1: Service quality formula

Service Quality = Perceived Performance – Perceived Experience
P< E = Unacceptable Service Quality
P> E = Excellent Service Quality

Source; Journal of service industry 2004

Service quality is today considered as an essential strategy for business survival and success in today's fiercely competitive global world (Anderson *et al*, 2000). Service quality enhances competitive advantage. Most importantly, service quality improves company profitability which directly relates to Return on Equity (ROE).

2.6.1 Customer perceived service quality
Customer Perceived Service Quality is the perception of a service for a customer. This perception is based on their expectation, which is as a result of different factors. The factors which trigger customer service quality perception are internal and external. Internal factors include lifestyle, knowledge and personality (Anderson *et al*, 2000). External factors include country economic and social -cultural issues. Customers particularly perceive quality as essential. Figure 7 details customer perceived service quality.

Figure 7: Customer perceived service quality
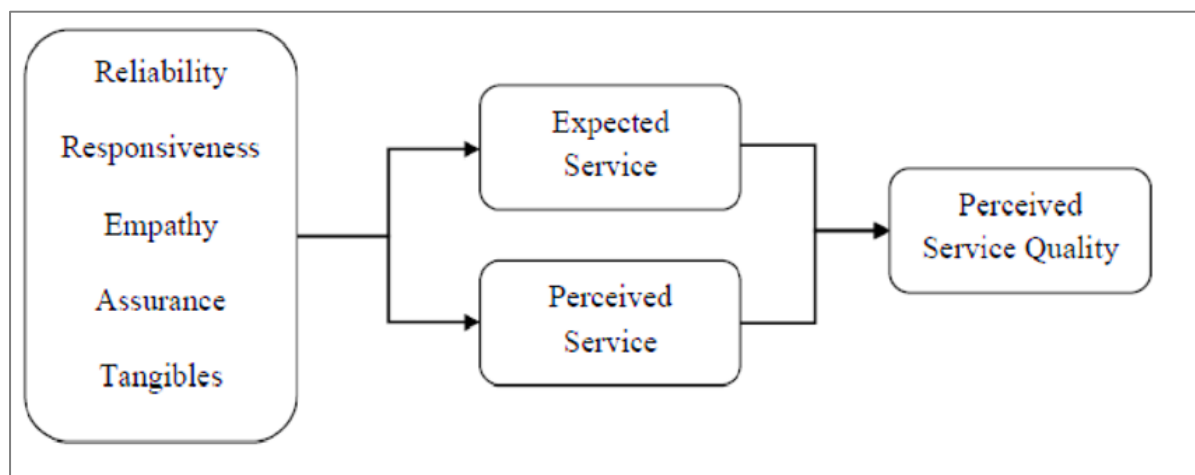
Source: TQM Magazine 2001.

Figure 7 depicts that expected and perceived services emanates from RATER. Parasuraman (1985) developed SERVQUAL as a tool to use for service quality measurement. SERVQUAL model was refined to the RATER (Zeithaml *et al,* 1990).

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a. **Reliability**-The ability of a company to provide a service which was promised accurately and dependably.

b. **Assurance**- The ability for a staff to convey competence, politeness, knowledge trust and confidence to a customer.

c. **Tangibility**- The physical appearance, equipment and facilities.

d. **Empathy**-The degree for a service provider to care and give individual attention to a customer.

e. **Responsiveness**- The willingness, desire and ability of a service provider to assist a customer promptly.

2.6.2 Assessing ZESCO Contact Centre service quality

ZESCO uses both quantitative and qualitative means to assess service quality. The quantitative service measure involves Average Speed of Answer (ASA). It measures how long an agent takes to answer a call. Average Waiting Time (AWT) measures how long it takes for the customer to wait on the queue to speak to an agent. ZESCO measures the qualitative part of Contact Centre services by evaluating agents' phone conversations with customers (ZESCO, 2017).

2.6.3 International Customer Management Institute Contact Centre KPIs

The International Customer Management Institute developed seven KPIs, which help to deliver better customer service in Contact Centres thereby enhancing customer satisfaction.

First Call Resolution: According to the ICMI (2006), no single KPI has a greater impact on customer satisfaction as the first call resolution. Every 1% of improvement in FCR results in to a 1% improvement in customer satisfaction.

Average Speed of Answer: ICMI states that a Contact Centre agent must answer a phone call within three seconds of ringing.

Quality of Calls: According to ICMI (2006), to satisfy a customer the quality of the call is important. Quality of call includes courtesy, professionalism, knowledge, reliability and timeliness.

2.6.4 Service Quality Measurement Models

Parasuraman, 1985 made a detailed analysis of service quality dimensions and came up with a GAP model providing an important framework for measuring and defining service quality (Cowley, 2004). The main gaps identified in the SERQUAL model include:

GAP 1: The Knowledge Gap. Customer expectation and management perception gap.

GAP 2: The Policy Gap. Management perception and service quality specifications gap.

GAP 3: The Delivery Gap. Service quality specifications and service delivery gap.

GAP 4: The Communications Gap. Service delivery-external communications gap.

GAP 5: The Service Quality Gap. Expected service and perceived service gaps.

Figure 8: SERVQUAL Model
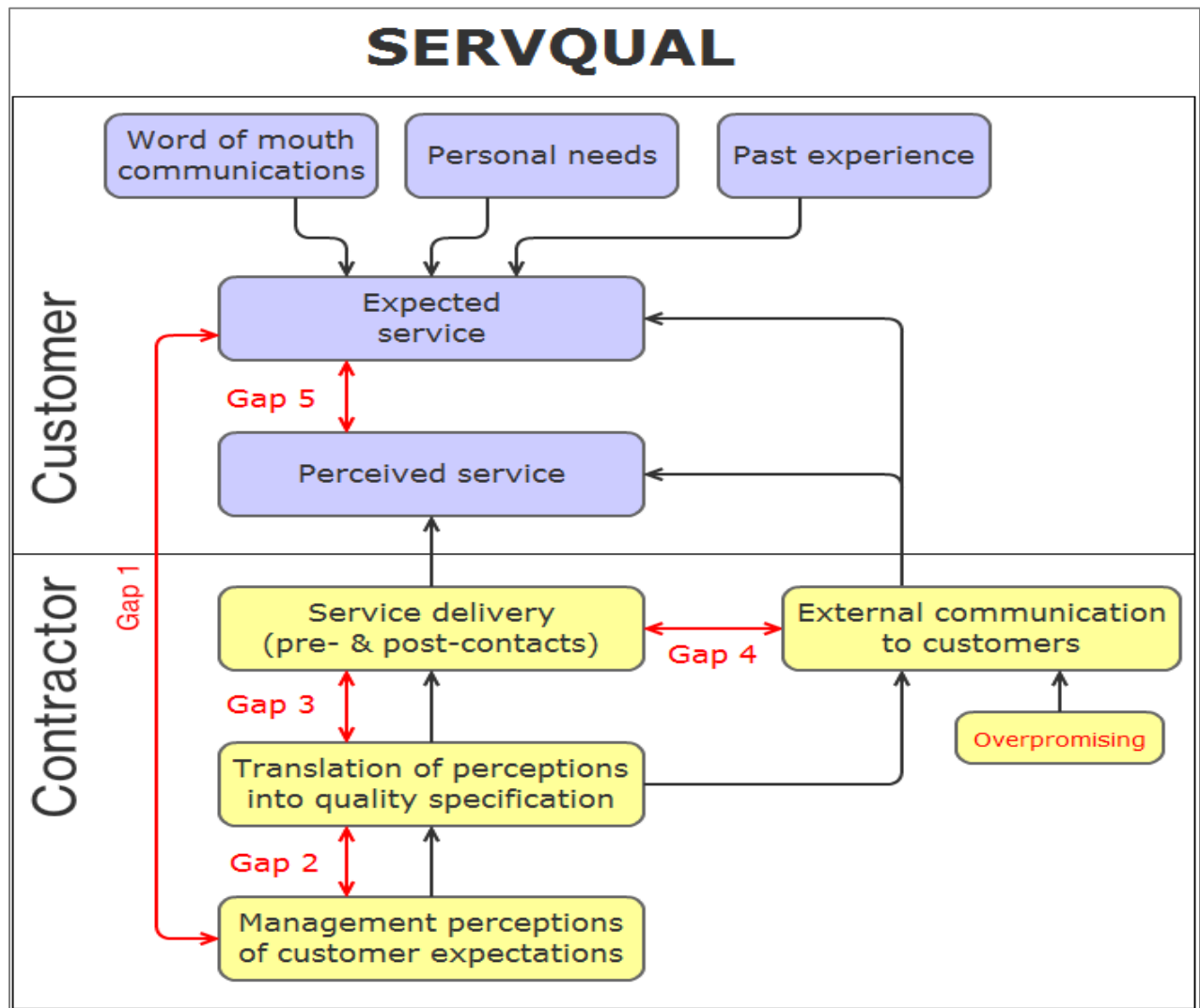
Source: Journal of Marketing 2003
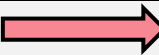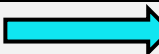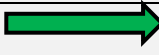
2.6.5 Criticism of SERVQUAL Model
A number of researchers have criticised the SERVQUAL model. Jein (2004) points out that it is wrong to judge customer satisfaction by simply comparing the perceived expectation with the perceived performance. The drawbacks in SERVQUAL are the main reasons why the model was refined to RATER. However, the gaps identified in the SERVQUAL model are today significantly affecting customer satisfaction. The SERVQUAL model is equally important and adds value to the customer satisfaction body of knowledge

2.7 Customer satisfaction

Customer satisfaction is the extent to which a product or service meets or surpasses customers' expectations (Kotler, 2016). Customer satisfaction is a business strategy. The main driver of customer satisfaction or dissatisfaction is experience from service quality encounter and the comparison of the encounter with what was initially expected (Vavra 2002).

Table 2: Customer satisfaction formula

Customer satisfaction = Experience - Expectation		
Experience <Expectation	⟶	Dissatisfaction
Experience =Expectation	⟶	Satisfaction
Experience >Expectation	⟶	High Satisfaction

Source: The service industry Journal 2003.

The customer satisfaction formula in table 2 is closely related to the EDT model which explains how positive disconfirmation leads to customer satisfaction and how negative disconfirmation leads to customer dissatisfaction. Once a customer is satisfied, they speak positively about the company hence negative word of mouth is reduced. Strickland (2012), pointed out that there is a positive relationship between company economic profit and customer satisfaction. Furthermore, Johnson *et al* (2012) strengthened that a company that does not satisfy its customers eventually ceases to exist.

2.7.1 Customer Satisfaction Index

Several customer satisfaction indexes were developed to enhance customer satisfaction in the service sectors. The American Customer Satisfaction Index has six variables to measure customer satisfaction. It compares the perceived overall quality and value with the customer's expectations (Llieska, 2013).   Once the perceived service quality and values exceed customers' expectations, this result in to customer satisfaction which enhances customer loyalty. Figure 9 details the ACSI.

Figure 9; American Customer Satisfaction Index
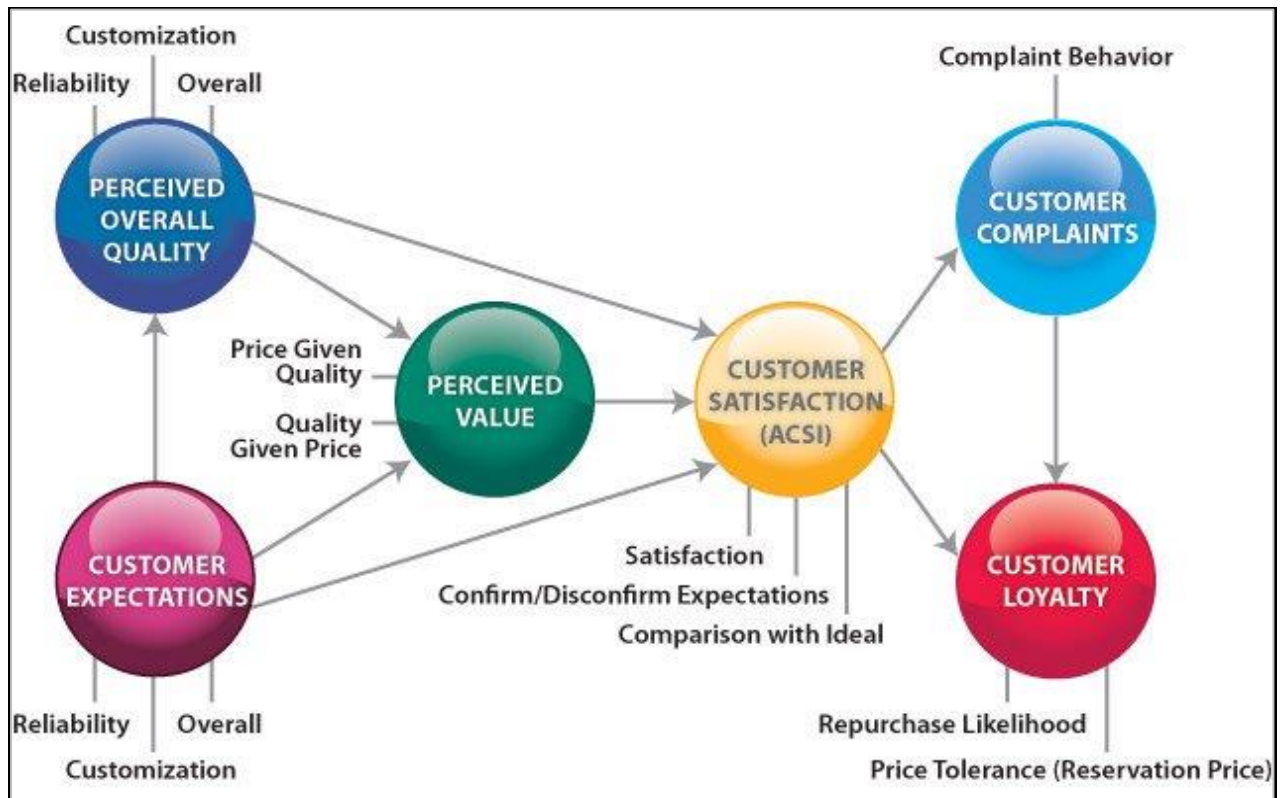
Source: Customer Satisfaction Index 2013.

Figure 9 implies that once the perceived quality and value exceed customer expectation it results in to customer satisfaction which then enhances customer loyalty. Customer loyalty will cause a repurchase pattern for customers.

2.7.2 Dimensions of Customer Satisfaction
According to Anderson (2000), customer satisfaction consists of ten main dimensions. These dimensions are as follows.

1. Access – Customers must easily access the service.
2. Security- The service must be danger and risk free.
3. Communication –The service provider must convey information to customers in a language that suits the customer's cultural background.
4. Courtesy – The service provider must be polite and friendly to the customer.
5. Competence –The service provider must be highly knowledgeable and skilled.
6. Credibility –The service provider must be trusted by customers.
7. Understanding –The service provider must understand the needs of the customer perfectly well.

8. Reliability – The service provider must be consistent and timely in providing a service to a customer.

9. Responsiveness- The service provider must be quick to respond to customer needs.

10. Tangibility – The service provider must provide physical evidence of existence to customers.

2.7.3 Barriers to customer satisfaction in Contact Centres

A number of barriers to customer satisfaction in Contact Centres have been identified, as discussed below.

Overworked staff

Vavra (2000), pointed out that overworked staff are not in a position to deliver exceptional customer service in the Contact Centre. An overworked staff in the Contact Centre will pay less attention to customers' queries. The energy for an overworked staff is low and hence the staff is not able to deliver a good service.

Insufficient systems

Most Contact Centres have been slow in responding to technology (Cavusgil et al, 2012). If a company is using obsolete systems which cannot perform sufficiently, to track customers' data, it leads to a serious challenge in meeting customers' needs.

Lack of knowledge

Contact Centre staff must be knowledgeable enough to be able to meet diverse customer needs. A lack of knowledge for Contact Centre staff is a total mess for the company, because then a staff cannot be able to perform their duties. This is the most frustrating experience for a customer to speak to a Contact Centre staff who is not knowledgeable about the company service (Earley, 2004).

Failure to deliver on brand promise

Companies tend to over promise in their marketing slogans, the danger is failure to meet the brand promise. ZESCO promises to respond to customer faults within 24hrs, with the brand promise of "quick response" (ZESCO, 2016). It is always better to "under promise and over deliver". Marketing claims should be aligned with customer's perceived experience. Adjectives and hyperbole can mess companies.

2.7.4 Relationship between service quality and customer satisfaction

Customer satisfaction continues to be dependent on customer's experience with regard to a particular encounter on a service (Ueltschy *et al,* 2007).   In line with the evidenced fact that service quality is the main determinant factor of customer satisfaction. Quality is a driver of customer satisfaction; hence the two are closely related because customer satisfaction cannot be achieved without service quality. Parasuraman *et al,* (1985) in their study, proposed that when perceived service quality is high, then it would lead to an increase in customer satisfaction.

2.7.5 ZESCO customer satisfaction

In a quest to improve on customer satisfaction, as one of the company's strategic objectives, ZESCO endeavors to respond quickly to customers. Furthermore, ZESCO ensures customers easily have access to company's information (ZESCO, 2017). ZECSO Contact Centre plays a huge role in the company's strategic objective by ensuring that customers have access to information through the Contact Centre.

2.8 Conceptual framework

Figure 5 depicts the conceptual framework for this study. The scheme has identified the RATER service quality model as an independent variable and customer satisfaction as the dependent variable.

Figure 10: Conceptual framework
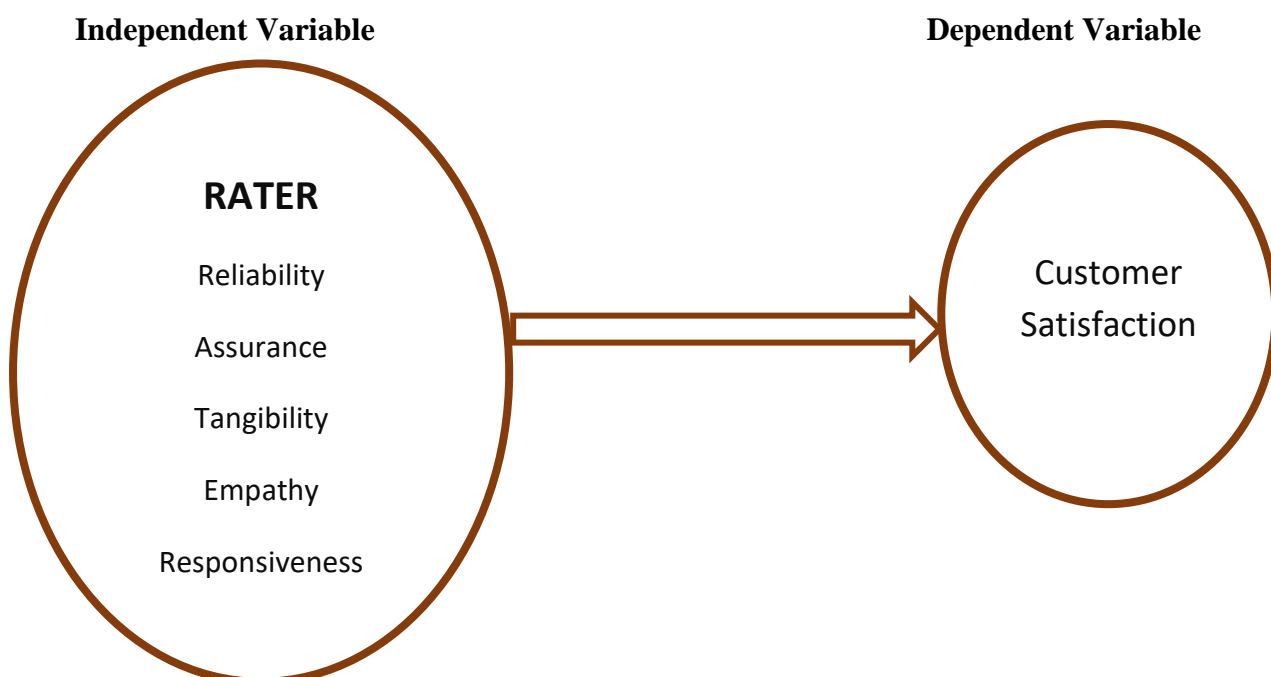
Source: Own Survey 2018

2.9 Gaps in the literature/theoretical framwork

A number of gaps have been identified from the review of literature. Despite a nunber of studies made in the service industry, service quality and customer satisfaction still lag behind. There still exist gaps on service quality which lie between expected service and perceived service. Furthermore, there is still delivery gap which lies between Service quality and service delivery. This leaves a major gap to be filled by researchers. Figure 11 gives a summary of gaps identified in the literature.

Figure 11: Summary of gaps in literature
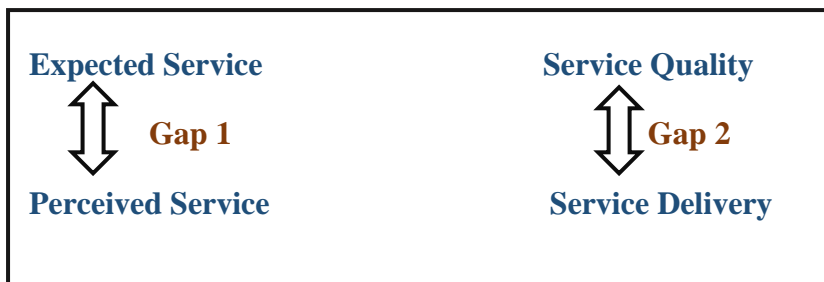
Source: Own analysis, 2018

2.10 Chapter Summary

Chapter 2 critically looked at the existing literature in the topic area. Chapter 2 also gave a summary on the knowledge gaps and the conceptual framework, which all manifested from the literature review. It is important to have a clear research methodology defined in order to have uncrompromised research findings in the topic area. The next chapter, guides the reader on the resaerch methodology employed in this study.

CHAPTER 3: RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

3.1 Introduction

Saunders (2012), points out that research methodology is a backbone to a successful research. Chapter 3 details the research methodology, by highligting on the resaerch approach and strategy justification . Furthermore, chapter 3 describes the sampling frame, sample size and the data collection tools employed in this reasearch. Additionally, the data analysis tools and techniques together with ethical considarations of this reasearch are all put together under this chapter.

3.2 Research approach and strategy justification

3.2.1 Research paradigm

This research was approached with a positivist paradigm. Drawing findings from ontology and espimetology. Using reality data from actual findings of the survey and comparing the reality findings with exiting literature. Both quantitative and qualitative research was employed. Quantitative research was done by testing a sample of 231 survey participants to teste the theories, whilst qualitative research was done by building theories from knowledge and words derived from smaller samples. Descriptive study design was used to describe the existing situation under study, explanatory study design was used to understand, explain and predict possible relationships between variables.

3.2.2 Inductive and deductive approaches

Nick and Lee (2008), define deductive approach as an approach drawn from general to specific, whilst inductive is defined as an approach drawn from specific to general. The research is both inductive and deductive in nature as the approach is done from the specific to general and genaral to specific point of view. Following both ontology and espitemology. The inductive approach of this resaerch was done by analysing information drawn from facts based on the hypothesis and research objectives. The inductive facts were drawn from feedback survey and gap analysis. The deductive facts were drawn from existing literature comparing relationships between survey facts and existing literature facts.

3.2.3 Time horizon

This research was cross sectional because the data was collected at a given time. The time horizon for this research is detailed in table 3.

Table 3: Research time horizon

Activity	May 2018	June 2018	July 2018	August 2018	September 2018
Research Problem Justification	xx				
Literature Review		xxx			
Methodology Design & Formulation of Data Collection Instruments			xxx		
Data Collection				xxxx	
Data Analysis					xxxx
Research Conclusion					xxxx

3.2.4 Research strategy

This research used grounded theory approch as a research strategy. This approach helped to take both deductive and abductive approach. Colletcing and analysing data simultenouslly. Data was also coded in order to organise and reorganise data in different categories. The coding strategies   employed include, open, axial and selective. Open coding helped to reorganise data in categories whilst selective coding helped to intergrete various categories to produce and relate a theory. Axial coding mainly helped to recognise existing relationships between categories. However, all these codings can be simplified in to two stages as: focused and initial coding (Charmaz, 2006).

3.3 Sampling proceedure, frame and sample size

The sample   of interest consisted of ZESCO customers and Contact Centre employees. Purposive and random sampling was employed in this study to determine the participants of the survey from the commercial and residencial customers. Whilst, convenience sampling was used to determin the research participants for ZESCO Contact Centre staff. The survey was done in both densley and non desley populated areas of Lusaka. The sample size and frame are detailed in table 4.

Table 4: Survey sample size

	Questionnaire distributed	Feedback questioner received	Response rate in percentage
Commercial customers	110	101	**92%**
Residential customers	95	90	**95%**
ZESCO Employees	40	40	**100%**
Total	**245**	**231**	**94%**

3.4 Data collection

Sauders (2009), points out that survey method is the most widely used technique to collect data. The collection of data was done by use of questionaire. The questionaire had both structured and semi structured set of questions. The questionaire for customers was divided in to three sections. The first section asked the participant to fill in personal data. The second part asked the participant about the relevance of the Contact Centre to customer satiafaction. Additionally the second part asked about the customers experience with ZESCO Contact Centre. The second part also requested the customers to give information about perceived performance and perceived expectectation. The third part of the questionaire asked customers to provide necessary information about the service quality dimensions customers look for in Contact Centres. The questionaire for ZESCO employees had two sections the first section provided personal data whilst the second section collected descriptive information about the factors which influence customer satisfaction in Contact Centres.

3.4.1 Wording of questionnaire

There was a careful considaration on the wording of the questionaire, wording was done whilst been mindful of the needs of the redear which is the survey participant. The questions were not more than 15, with a total word count of not more than 1000 words. Questions were designed in such a manner that they do not encourage a particular answer.

3.5 Data processing and analysis

Processing and analysis of data was done by use of grounded theory specifically for qualitative research by coding data findings according to themes. To analyse quantitative data, Statistical Packages for Social Sciences (SPSS) was used. Linear regresion was employed to teste the research hypothesis, whilst peasron correlation was employed to test the correlation between service quality dimensions and customer satisfaction. ANOVA was used as a tool for comparative analysis. To determ the power of service quality dimesions, hierarchical regresion analysis was employed. Explanatory Fator Analysis (EFA) helped to define the factors of service quality.

3.6 Reliability, validity, and generalisability of research findings

According to Lee (2008), reliability and validity are of essence in a positivist epistemology. The data collection instrument used in this research was pilot tested. The research instrument was administered to 10 ZESCO customers and were asked to pass a comment. The 10 all confirmed that the instrument was good to give credible information on the research topic. Additionally this research is internaly and externally reliable. Internal reliability was tasted by ensuring and maintaining consistency during the research. Reliability was also tested using Cronbachs alpha, to check on the consistence of responses to a set of questions in the questionaire.

Validity was tested using content validity by checking the validity of the contents of the questionaire before administering it to the survey participants. On the other hand convergent validity was employed to determin the validity of the correlation between different scales. Triangulation was used to teste validity of secondry data. The entire research avoided objectivity and subjectivity of findings. Figure 12 below, indicates the procedure employed in the data collection process.

Figure 12: Data collection process

Researcher gets a clear picture about the research problem, & data requirements and designs the questionaire

Decoding of questions by respondents as intended by the researcher

Answering of questions by respondents

Decoding of the answers by Resaercher in the manner the respondents intended
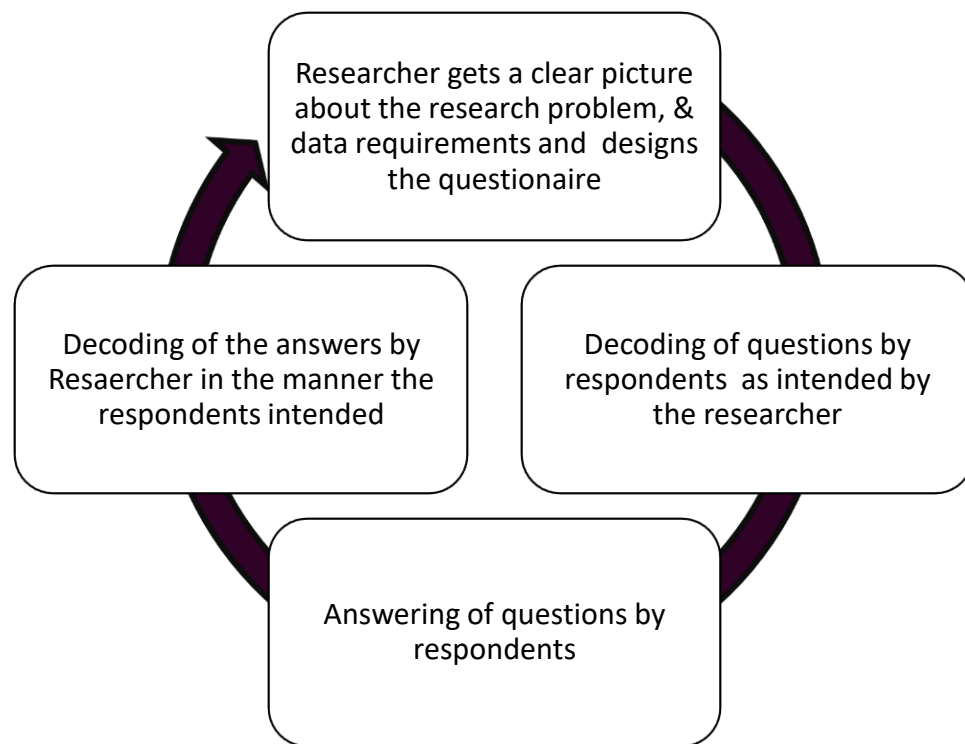
Source: Own survey, 2018.

3.7 Ethical and access issues

3.7.2 Research ethics and access

Research ethics were adheared to in this research, considering that ZESCO the case study under review is a bit skeptical about disclosing departmental information like that of the Contact Centre. Consent was sought from ZESCO to conduct the research, likewise consent was sought from every customer before administering the questionair. Research participants had their identity names hiden.

3.7.3 Evaluation of benefits and drawbacks of tools used

The tool for data collection used in this research is survey because of its well known advantage of representing a larger population base of response rate (Saunder ,2012). Survey provides a better feedback in research and provides good statistical significance. However its main drawback is the fact that it is time consuming and more costly. On the other hand survey has a limitation of questions to ask the research participants because questions always have to be designed in a manner which suits the participants. More especially on variables which deal with emotions.

Qualitative data prooved cumbersome to analyse. Quantitative data gave a clear satistical representation but time consuming to analyse.

3.8 Chapter summary

Chapter 3 indicated that the research is purely qualitatitive and quantitative in nature. Adopting primary and secondry research methodoloy and purely using inductive and deductive approches. This chapter also highlights that the main tool used in primary data collection is the questionaire. Furthermore, chapter 3 has highlited the data analytical tools adopted in this research.

CHAPTER 4: FINDINGS AND ANALYSIS

4.1 Introduction
Chapter 4 gives findings and analysis of the reaserch. The findings are based on the given case study of ZESCO with a focus on the the research objectives and hypothesis.

4.1.1 Research objectives
RO1. To determine the relevance of the Contact Centre to customer satisfaction.

RO2. To determine the factors which influence customer satisfaction in Contact Centres.

RO3.To determine the main service quality dimensions' customers look for in Contact Centres.

RO4. To determine the factors which affect and influence service quality in Contact Centres.

RO5. To determine the relationship between service quality dimensions and Customer satisfaction.

4.1.2 Research hypothesis
Hypothesis 1: Responsiveness is relevant and has a significant influence to Contact Centre customer satisfaction.

Hypothesis 2: Assurance is relevant but has no significant influence to Contact Centre customer satisfaction.

Hypothesis 3: Tangibility is relevant but has no influence to Contact Centre customer satisfaction.

Hypothesis 4: Empathy is a relevant and has an influence to Contact Centre customer satisfaction.

Hypothesis 5: Reliability is relevant and has a significant influence to Contact Centre customer satisfaction.

4.1.3 Response rate

Table 5; Response rate

	Survey Participants
Commercial customers	101
Residential customers	90
ZESCO Employees	40
Total	**231**

Source; Own survey, 2018

4.1.4 Distribution of respondents by Sex

Table 6;   Respondents by Sex

	FREQUENCY	Percentage
Male	101	41%
Female	130	53%
Total	**231**	**94%**

Source; Own Analysis from survey, 2018

Table 6 above reveals that 41% (101) of the respondents were male whilst the remaining 53%(130) were female.

4.1.5 Respondents educational level

Figure 13; Respondents education level
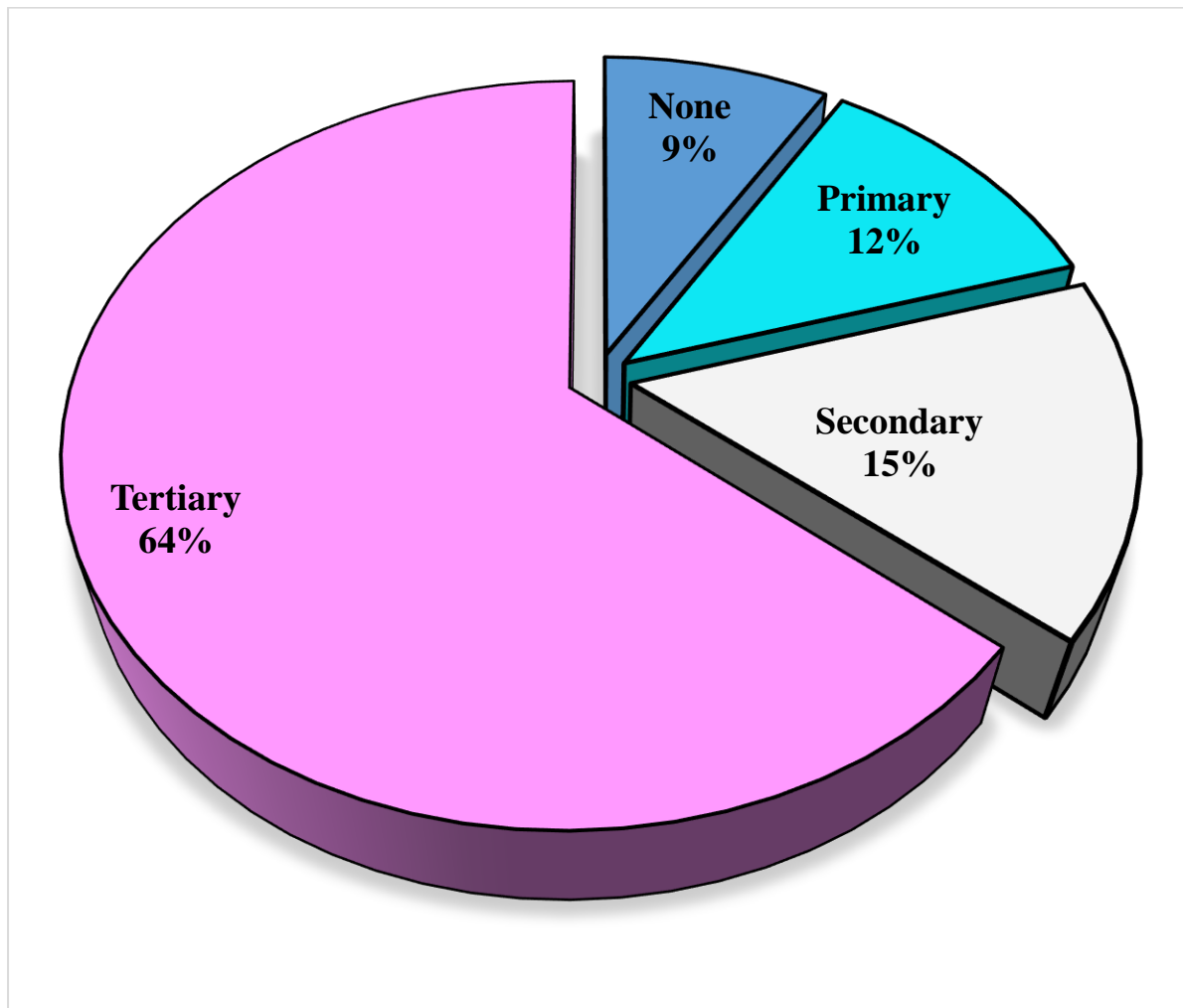
Source; Own Analysis from survey, 2018

Figure13 reveals that 8% (20) of respondents are non educated. 12% (27) of respondents underwent primary school education, 16% (36) underwent secondary school education. The majority respondents 64% (148) underwent tertiary education.

4.2.0 Findings and analysis from ZESCO customers and employees
With the guide of research quetsions, objectives and hypothesis this section presents findings from the reaserch conducted.

4.2.1 RO1: To determine the relevance of the Contact Centre to customer satisfaction

Figure 14; Customers view on whether ZESCO Contact Centre is relevant to customer satisfaction

	Relevant	Not Relevant	Not Sure
☐ Total	110	70	11
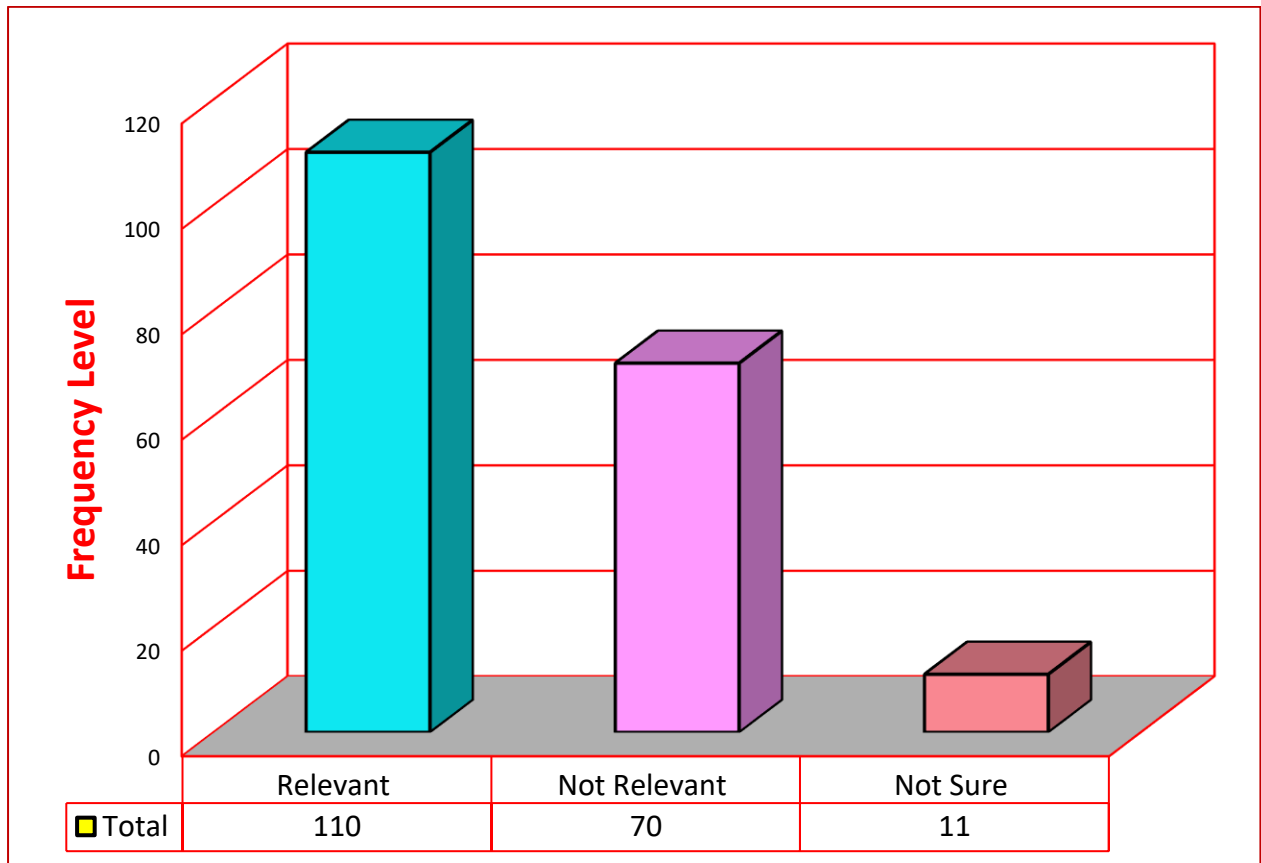
Source; Own survey, 2018

Figure 14 indicates that majority of the respondents 58% (110) suggested that the Contact Centre is relevant to customer satisfaction. 36% (70) of the respondents indicated it was not relevant and the least of the respondents 6% (11) indicated they were not sure whether it was relevant or not relevant. Customers were asked to state the reasons why they indicated that the Contact Centre is relevant or not relevant to customer satisfaction, the findings on the reasons are detailed in table 7 below.

Table 7; Customer reasons on why the Contact Centre is relevant or not relevant to customer satisfaction

Item	Frequency			Factor
	1	2	3	
It is the first stop for all queries	70			Why the Contact Centre is relevant to customer satisfaction
It is the face of the company	10			
Fault resolution takes place in the Contact Centre	10			
A negative or positive service in the Contact Centre affects my satisfaction	20			
Fault resolution does not take place in the Contact Centre		56		Why the Contact Centre is not relevant to customer satisfaction
It is not the first stop for all queries		2		
It is not the face of the company		2		
A negative or positive service in the Contact Centre does not affect my satisfaction		10		
I have never experienced Contact Centre service			3	Why I am Not sure if the Contact Centre is relevant to customer satisfaction
I do not understand how I can get satisfaction of service through the Contact Centre			8	

Source; Own survey, 2018

37% (70) suggested that the Contact Centre is relevant to customer satisfaction because it is the first stop for all queries, 5% (10) of the respondents sugested that the Contact Centre is relevant to customer satisfaction because it is the face of the compay where most customer and company interaction take place. 5% (10) of the respondents suggested that the Contact Centre is relevant to customer satisfaction because fault resolution takes place in the contact centre. Whilst 10% (20) of the respondents sugested that the Contact Centre is relevant to customer satisfaction because a negative service in the contact centre affects their satisfaction.

RO1 findings analalysis educates that Contact Centre is relevant to customer satisfaction, because it is the first stop for customer queries. Cascio (2006), ascertains that Contact Centre services remains to be a driver of customer satisfaction because it is the main means through which company repair and trust is mended and gained.

4.3.0 RO2:To Determine factors influencing customer satisfaction in Contact Centres

Figure 15; **Customers who were satisfied and not satisfied as a result of Contact Centre services**

	Yes	NO
☐ Customers Satisfied with the company contact center	93	98
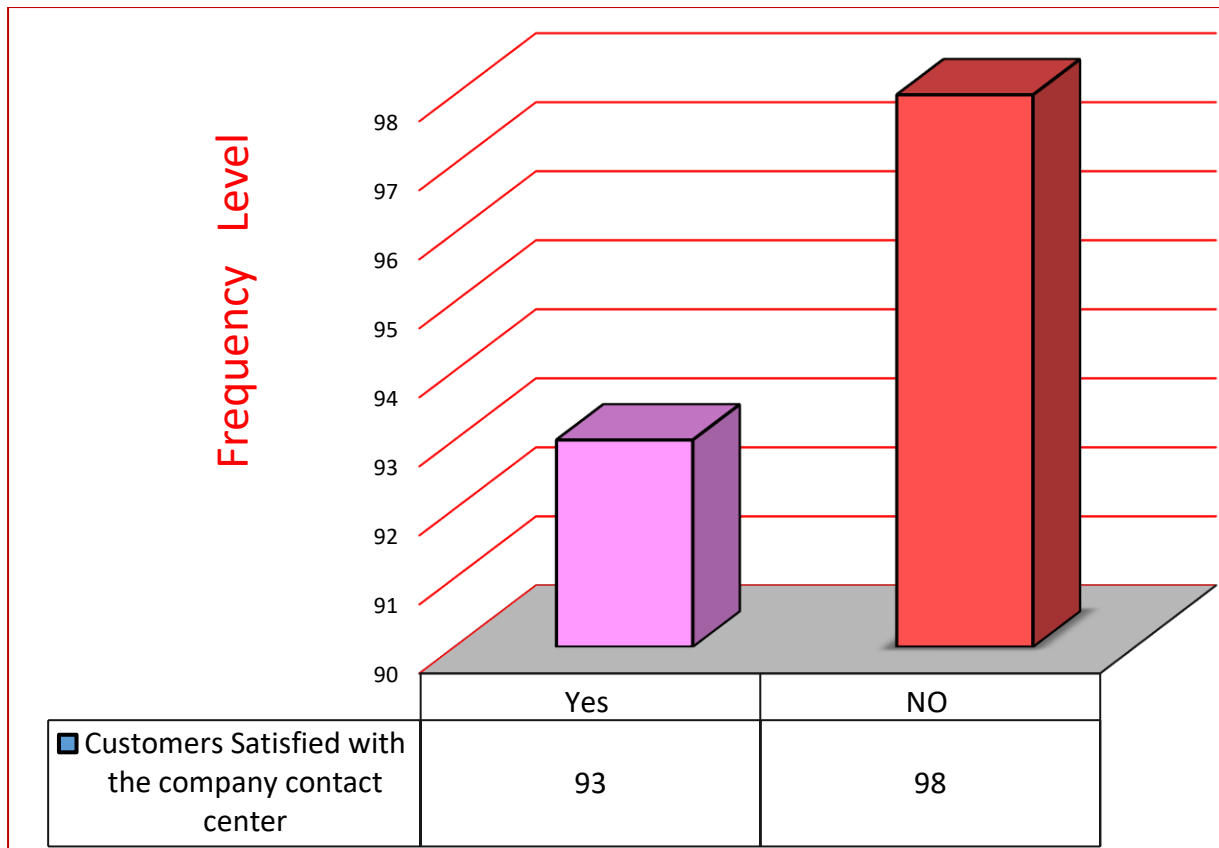
Source; Own survey, 2018

49% (93) of respondents indicated that they were satisfied with ZESCO Contact Centre services and 51% (98) indicated that they were not satisfied with Contact Centre services. According to Vavra T. G. (2002), Customers who are satisfied with Contact Centre services are more likely to be satisfied with the company overall services, because most of the interaction between the customer and the company is through the Contact Centre. Customer who experience disatisfaction are mainly faced with three options express disatisfactio (voice), switch to competitor (exit) or express loyalty which is passive perserverance of disatisfaction (Chase *et al,* 2006).

Table 8; **Factors which influence customer satisfaction in ZESCO Contact Centre**

Factors Influencing Customer Satisfaction	Frequency	Percentage
Long waiting time to speak to staff	92	48%
Put off by rude or unhelpful staff	52	27%
Annoyed by lack of staff knowledge	30	16%
Fade up of speaking to multiple agents	17	9%
Total	191	100

Source; Own survey, 2018

Table 8 indicates the main factors which influence customer satisfaction in the Contact Centre. 48% (92) of respondents are dissatisfied because of the long time they encounter to speak to an available staff (agent). This represented the majority of the respondents. 27 % (52) of respondents indicated that they were dissatisfied once put off by a rude or unhelpful staff, 16% (30) indicated that they are dissatisfied because of the lack of knowledge by staff and 9% (17) revealed that they were fed up of speaking to multiple agents.

Table 8 indicates that customers are more dissatisfied with the overall company once they spend time waiting in a call queue without being able to speak to an agent. Customers calling the Contact Centre expect to speak to an agent the minute they call the Contact Centre. For most companies, customers stay on the queue for more than ten minutes waiting to speak to the next available agent (Mwendwa *et al,* 2009). In some cases, customers will remain on the queue and remain unattended to. Annually ZESCO Contact Centre records an average of ten million calls received, out of which only 16% of calls are served (ZESCO, 2017).

RO2 analysis of findings highlights that the main factors influencing customer satisfaction in Contact Centre services include, long waiting time to speak to available agents, unhelpful staff and lack of knowledge of Contact Centre staff. Furtheremore, the resolution rate of faults in Contact Centre have a linear influence to overall customer satisfaction.

4.4.0   RO3: To determine the main service quality dimensions customers look for in Contact Centres

Table 9; Gap analysis on service quality dimensions customers look for in Contact Centres

Service quality Dimension	Perceived Performance	Expected Performance	Gap Score
Responsiveness	3.68	4.88	-1.2
Assurance	3.72	4.56	-0.84
Tangibility	3.40	4.05	-0.65
Empathy	3.69	4.62	-0.93
Reliability	3.65	4.67	-1.02
Average Score	*3.63*	*4.56*	*-0.93*

Source; Own survey, 2018

Table 9 indicates that the average score of expected performance is 4.56, whilst the average for perceived performance is 3.63. This indicates a performance gap of -0.93. This entails that the expectations for customers is higher than the perceived service. Customers have higher expectations rating at 4.88 on responsiveness, followed by reliability at 4.67 and empathy at 4.62. The least expectation for customers is tangibility at 4.05. The gap score in table 9 is closely related to EDT earlier discussed in Chapter 2 where satisfaction is judged as a result of expected performance and perceived performance.

The highest performance gap score is responsiveness at -1.2, this is the highest expectation for customers. The second highest performance gap score is reliability at -1.02, followed by empathy at -0.93 then assurance at -0.84. Tangibility records the lowest gap score. This entails that customer's highest quality dimension expectation is responsiveness followed by reliability, then empathy and assurance. Table 10 ranks the service quality dimensions.

Table 10: Hierarchical regression. Service quality dimensions and its influence on Customer Satisfaction

	Service Quality Dimension	Score	Factor	Relationship with Customer Satisfaction
	Responsiveness	32%	Hybrid Factor	Significant influence to customer satisfaction.
	Reliability	22%	Hybrid Factor	Significant influence to customer satisfaction.
	Empathy	19%	Excitement Factor	Moderate influence to customer satisfaction
	Assurance	16%	Basic Factor	Minimal influence to customer satisfaction.
	Tangibility	11%	Excitement Factor	No influence to customer satisfaction.

Source; Own survey, 2018

Table 10 has ranked service quality dimensions according to research findings in table 9. Table 10 confirms that the three-factor theory is applied in overall customer satisfaction judgment. Responsiveness is a hybrid performance factor, as it would bring about satisfaction once fulfilled. Similary, reliability is a hybrid factor because it affects overall satisfaction. Responsiveness accounts for 32%, whilst reliability accounts for 22% of the overall customer satisfaction in Contact Centre services. These factors are therefore considered to be of high importance on the service quality dimension of RATER.

Empathy is an excitement factor because once it is fulfilled can increase the rate of customer satisfaction (Grigoroudis, 2004). Empathy accounts for 19% whilst tangibility accounts for 11% of the overall satisfaction in Contact Centre services.

4.4.1 Hypothesis Test Findings

Hypothesis 1: Responsiveness is relevant and has a significant influence to Contact Centre customer satisfaction.

Hypothesis 1 Findings: Table 10 shows that responsibility is relevant and has a significant influence to Contact Centre customer satisfaction.

Hypothesis 2: Assurance is relevant but has no significant influence to Contact Centre customer satisfaction.

Hypothesis 2 Findings: Table 10 shows that assurance is relevant but has no significant influence to Contact Centre customer satisfaction.

Hypothesis 3: Tangibility is relevant but has no influence to Contact Centre customer satisfaction.

Hypothesis 3 Findings: Table 10 shows that tangibility is not relevant and has no significant influence to Contact Centre Customer satisfaction.

Hypothesis 4: Empathy is a relevant and has an influence to Contact Centre customer satisfaction.

Hypothesis 4 Findings: Table 10 shows that empathy is relevant but has no influence to Contact Centre customer satisfaction.

Hypothesis 5: Reliability is relevant and has a significant influence to Contact Centre customer satisfaction.

Hypothesis 5 Findings: Table 10 shows that reliability is relevant and has a significant influence to Contact Centre customer satisfaction.

Figure 15 Responses on quality of interaction encountered by customers at ZESCO Contact Centre
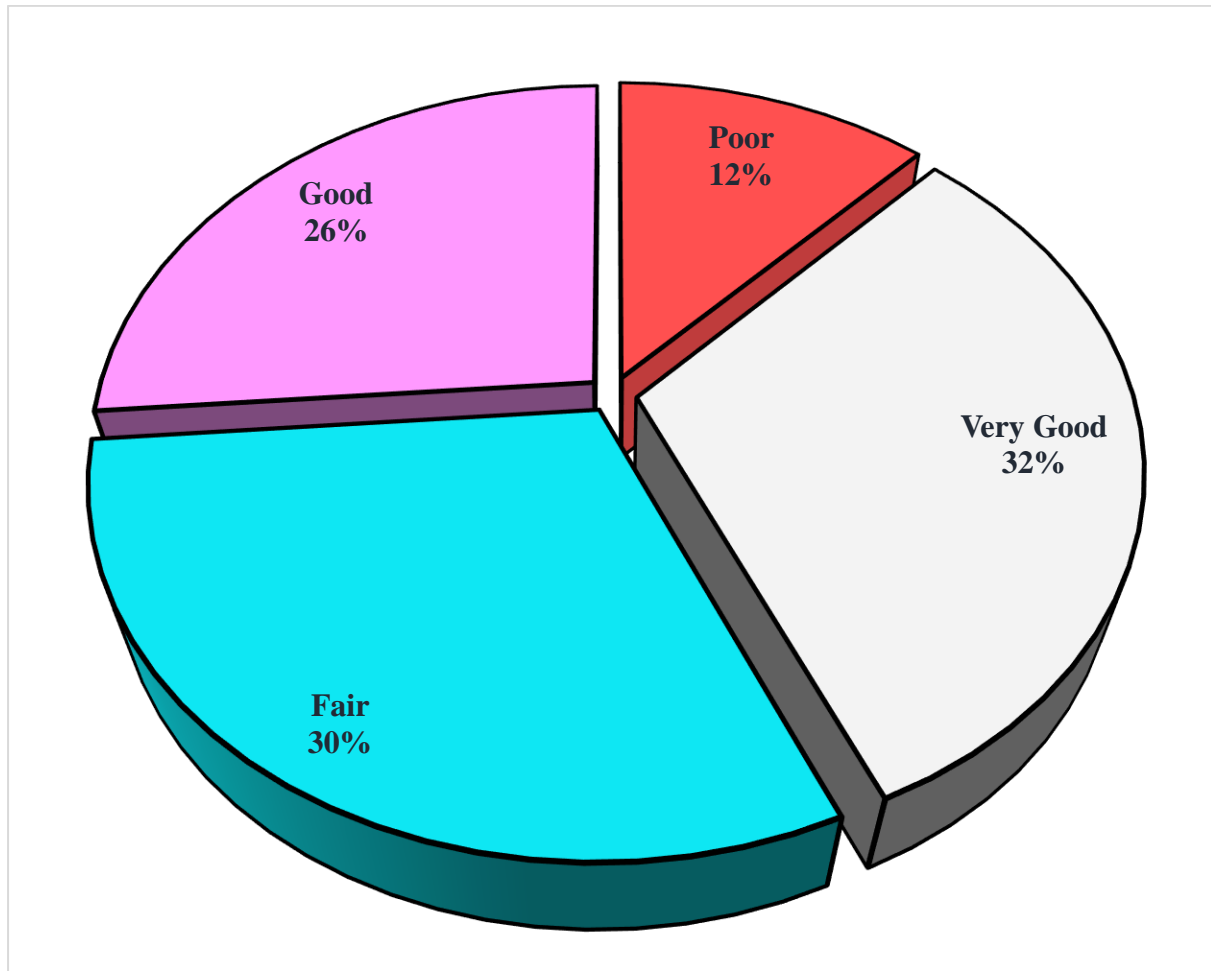
Source; Own survey, 2018

The majority of the respondents 31% (60) indicated their quality of interaction encountered with ZESCO Contact Centre was very good, 30% (59) suggested the inetraction was fair based on the service quality dimensions. 26% (49) indicated they encountered a good interaction and 12% (23) indicated they encountered poor interection with the Contact Centre at ZESCO limited. The suggestions on the quality of interaction are based on the factors in table 11 below.

Table 11; Reasons for response on quality of interaction received at the Contact Centre

Item	Frequency		Percentage	
	Yes	No	Yes	No
Did you feel the agent was knowledgeable about the company products?	116	75	60%	40%
Did the agent resolve your issue competently?	108	83	56%	44%
Did the agent resolve your issue promptly?	98	93	51%	49%
Was the agent professional and Courteous?	122	69	63%	37%
Did the agent make you feel like a valued customer?	129	62	67%	33%
Are you satisfied with how the agent handled your inquiry?	99	92	51%	49%
Was the agent empathetic?	108	83	56%	44%
Was the agent responsive?	101	90	52%	48%

Source; Own survey, 2018

RO3 findings therefore reveal that responsiveness, reliability, empathy and assurance are the main service quality dimensions customers look for in Contact Centres.

4.5.0   RO4 Factors which affect and influence service quality in Contact Centres

Table 12; ZESCO Contact Centre employee responses on factors which affect service quality in Contact Centres

Item	Yes		No	
	Frequency	%	Frequency	%
Overworked staff	36	90	4	10
Underworked staff	0	0	0	0
Motivation	38	95	2	5
Lack of adequate training	22	55	18	45
Poor work culture	33	82	7	18
Multicuturisim	26	65	14	35
Insufficient system	15	38	25	63
Poor understanding of customer needs	17	43	23	58
Employee mood	22	55	18	45
Service encounter stress	15	38	25	63
Team support	12	30	28	70
management support	28	70	12	30

Source; Own survey, 2018

Table 13; Ranking of factors, which influence customer satisfaction in Contact Centres

Item	Yes	
	Frequency	**%**
Motivation	38	95
Overworked staff	36	90
Poor work culture	33	82
Management support	28	70
Multiculturalism	26	65
Lack of adequate training	22	55
Employee mood	22	55
Poor understanding of customer needs	17	43
Insufficient system	15	38
Service encounter stress	15	38
Team support	12	30
Underworked staff	0	0

Source; Own survey, 2018

Findings of RO4 reveal that several elements have an influence on service quality in Contact Centre services. 95% (38) of respondents indicated that motivation has a direct and significant influence to Contact Centre service Quality. Motivation of staff remains to be an important attribute to staff performance (Johnson et al, 2011). Demotivated staff have low energy and desire to work towards satisfaction standards of a company. Lack of motivation for staff cause employees to be disinterested and less helpful to customers. 90 % (36) of respondents indicated that overworked staff had a direct influence on Contact Centre service quality. Overworked staff prove to render poor quality of services to customers, because quality is compromised due to a lack of concentration to customer needs resulting in failure to attend to a customer. Roberts (2014) ascertains that overworked staff have ripple negative effects on quality of services for front line staff.

70% (28) of respondents indicated that management support has a direct influence on service quality rendered in the Contact Centre. A lack of management support leads to poor staff motivation. Multiculturalism is a growing workplace concern, which if not managed can affect workplace performance (Cavusgile *et al,* 2012). 65% (26) of respondents indicated that multiculturalism had a direct influence to service quality.

The service industry continues to record knowledge gap (Ueltschy *et al,* 2009). 55% (22) indicated that lack of training influenced service quality in the Contact Centre. Poor understanding of customer needs also has an influence on service quality, respondents agreeing to this represent 43% of the employees who participated in the survey. Poor understanding of customer needs is linked to poor training of staff, which roots from lack of knowledge. Once management fails to identify training gaps for employees, staff remain under trained, which affects the delivery of service quality. Lack of knowledge is a service gap, which falls under Assurance on the RATER service quality model. Lack of knowledge also falls under Gap 1 in the SERVQUAL service quality model discussed in Chapter 2.

RO5. To determine the relationship between service quality dimensions and Customer Satisfaction in Contact Centres
Table 14; Pearson Correlation

Variable	No.	Correlation	Sig
Customer Satisfaction	191	0.304	0.001
Reliability	191		
Variable	No.	Correlation	Sig
Customer Satisfaction	191	0.255	0.005
Responsiveness	191		
Variable	No.	Correlation	Sig
Customer Satisfaction	191	0.239	0.008
Assurance	191		
Variable	No.	Correlation	Sig
Customer Satisfaction	191	0.226	0.012
Empathy	191		
Variable	No.	Correlation	Sig
Customer Satisfaction	191	0.336	0.001
Tangibility	191		

Source; Own survey, 2018

Pearson Correlation results in table 14 indicate a significant and positive correlation between customer satisfaction and reliability (p<0.01, r=0.304). There is also a significant correlation between customer satisfaction and responsiveness (p<0.01, r=255). The correlation between customer satisfaction and assurance is equally positive (p<0.01=0.239). Table 14 also indicates a significant relationship between customer satisfaction and empathy (p<0.01=0.226). Customer satisfaction and Tangibility have a positive relationship (p<0.01=0.336).

4.6.0 Chapter Summary

Chapter 4 presented the findings of the research in detail, and gave an analysis using various statistical packages such as SPSS, excel and STATA. It is evident that Contact Centre service quality is relevant to customer satisfaction. The main factors which influenced customer satisfaction in Contact Centres was the lack of knowledge by Contact Centre staff and the time customers spent waiting to be connected to speak to an agent. The findings also reveal that poor motivation and lack of knowledge have an effect on Contact Centre service quality.

CHAPTER 5: CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

5.1 Introduction

Chapter 5 details the conclusions of findings typically drawn from chapter 4, based on the research objectives and hypothesis of this research. Furthermore, this chapter presents implications of findings and gathers recommendations for future use. Chapter 5 has also highlights on the limitations of the study.

5.2 RO1: To determine the relevance of the Contact Centre to customer satisfaction

Ndungu (2014), points out that Contact Centres play an essential role in keeping customers satisfied. The result of this research objective suggested that the Contact Centre is relevant to customer satisfaction, this is according to figure 14. The major reason to this finding based on respondents indicates that the Contact Centre is the first stop for all queries and as such services recived through the Contact Centre would affect customer satisfaction. Contact Centres can form a heart and strong foundation for customer satisfaction (Calingo, 2001).

5.3 RO2: To determine the factors which influence customer satisfaction in Contact Centres

This research objective has revealed that few factors are of influence to customer satisfaction in the Contact Centre. There is a strong indication that average waiting time for a customer to speak to an agent has a strong influence to customer satisfaction. Unhelpful staff in the Contact Centre also prove to have an influence to customer satisfaction as indicated in table 8. Similarly, Contact Centre staff who lack knowledge have a high influence to customer satisfaction. According to Anderson (2000), a Contact Centre agent must be knowledgeable enough to handle customer queries.

5.4 RO3: To determine the main service quality dimensions customers look for in Contact Centres

RO3 reveals that responsiveness and reliability are the main service quality dimensions customers look for in Contact Centres. Customers expected performance on responsiveness is high compared to the perceived performance.

5.5 RO4: To determine the factors which affect and influence service quality in Contact Centres

RO4 reveals that overworked staff, poor staff motivation, lack of knowledge among staff, and inadequate training are some of the factors that affect and influence Contact Centre service quality. Table 12 clearly indicates these factors according to research findings. Vavra (2000), points out that overworked staff are not in a position to deliver exceptional customer service in the Contact Centre. Cascio (2006), indicates that staff motivation is the main driver to quality work in a work place.

5.6 RO5: To determine the relationship between service quality dimensions and customer satisfaction

Llieska, K (2013) points out that Service quality is one of those factors that contribute to customer satisfaction. RO5 concludes that there is a significant positive relationship between responsiveness and customer satisfaction. Furthermore, there is a positive relationship between reliability and customer satisfaction. Table 14 indicates that there is a positive correlation between the service quality dimensions and customer service. Service quality is a driver to customer satisfaction (Ueltschy *et al,* 2007).

5.6 Recommendations

To achieve Contact Centre customer satisfaction, certain measures must be put in place and implemented. Based on the research findings the following are the recommendations.

5.6.1 Contact Centres must improve on accessibility

The first source of frustration leading to dissatisfaction according to this research is the time the customer spends waiting to speak to an agent. Managers must ensure that customers easily access Contact Centres.

5.6.2 Contact Centre managers must invest in training Staff

Inadequate training of Contact Centre staff directly leads to poor knowledge. Contact Centres must routinely train their staff.

5.6.3 Contact Centres must improve on service quality dimensions

Contact Centres must focus on improving service quality dimensions especially responsiveness and reliability which are of much importance to customers.

5.7 Limitations of the study

This study would have been more advantageous if the research was conducted at a National level. Furthermore, the study was limited to only one company, comparison of findings for two companies would have been advantageous.

5.8 Directions for future research

    i.   Future research must extend the study to a National level

   ii.   Future research must extend the study to other companies

5.9 Chapter summary

It is evident from the research conclusions that the Contact Centre is relevant and is of essence to keeping customers satisfied. Furthermore, service quality dimensions are of essence to Contact Centre services in keeping customers satisfied.

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Appendices

APPENDIX A

Permission to conduct research

Our Ref: A200/HRD/1299/2017

13 November 2017

Ms. Esnart M Tayali
C/O ZESCO Limited,
National Call Centre
P O Box 33304
LUSAKA

Dear Ms. Tayali,

PERMISSION TO CONDUCT RESEARCH

Reference is made to your letter to us dated 26th October 2017, in which you requested ZESCO Management to grant you permission to carry out a research study on **"Relevance of Call Centre to Customer Satisfaction"**.

This serves to inform you that permission has been granted to you on the following terms and conditions:

1. That all information regarding the research should be handled with all the confidentiality it deserves and shall be used for academic purposes only.
2. The final report should be availed to the office of the undersigned before submission to your school for a go ahead in writing.
3. A copy of the final report shall be retained by ZESCO Limited for future reference.

The Call Centre Manager will be available to assist you with the necessary information.

Please fill in the attached form to indicate whether or not you are agreeable to these Terms and Conditions and return a copy to the office of the undersigned.

Yours Sincerely,
ZESCO LIMITED

CHILESHE M LUPUTA (MRS)
SENIOR MANAGER - HUMAN RESOURCE DEVELOPMENT

cc: Director – Human Resources and Administration
        Senior Manager – CS
        Call Centre Manager
        Training file

cml/cm

All correspondence to be addressed to the Managing Director
ZESCO Limited, Stand No. 6949 Great East Road, P.O. Box 33304, Lusaka-Zambia
Tel: +260-211-361111, Fax: +260-211-222753, E-mail: zesco@zesco.co.zm
www.zesco.co.zm

/2...

13 November 2017

Ms. Esnart M Tayali
C/O ZESCO Limited,
National Call Centre
P O Box 33304
LUSAKA

PERMISSION TO CONDUCT RESEARCH – ESNART M TAYALI

....

I ...~Esnart~ ~M.~ ~Tayali~.... *agree/~do not agree~, to the above Terms

and Conditions. Phone No: .....0965 22 3746...............................

Signature: ...~Λ~.................................... Date: ...17/11/2017...

*Delete that which is not applicable.

Witness: ~George Nkande Mfota~ .... Phone No: ....

APPENDIX B

Introductory letter

25th October, 2017

RE: **CONDUCTING AN ACADEMIC RESEARCH**

This serves to inform you that Ms. Esnart Tayali is our student at ZCAS. She is pursuing MBA International Business in association with the University of Greenwich in her last level.

Our student would like to conduct an academic *research* **on the relevance of the call center to Customer Satisfaction**. The research will enable her to develop a detailed thesis as a partial fulfillment of the MBA programme. The information gathered will be purely used for academic purposes.

It is our hope and trust that an opportunity will be availed to our student in order to enable her complete and adhere to the course requirements for the research project.

Your assistance will be highly appreciated.

Yours faithfully
ZCAS University

KELVIN ESIASA
ASSISTANT REGISTRAR

ZCAS University
Dedan Kimathi Road | P.O. Box 35243 LUSAKA, ZAMBIA | T: +260 211 232 093/5 | F: +260 211 222 542, | E: infozcasu@zcas.edu.zm
Registered with the Higher Education Authority - HEA/039

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APPENDIX C
Consent Form

CONSENT FORM

Dear Respondent,

My name is Esnart Tayali I am a currently a student at ZCAS University pursuing an MBA in international Business under Greenwich University. I am conducting a research, which is a requirement for the completion of the program. I seek your consent to participate in this research.

1. **Purpose**

   The purpose of this research is to determine the relevance of Contact Centre service quality to customer satisfaction in business.

2. **Right of Respondents**

   You have the right to agree or disagree to participate in the survey

   You have the right of confidentiality- not to reveal your name

   You have the right to be protected and respected during the survey

   You have the right to ask for any clarification during the survey

3. **Declaration of Consent**

   I have read and fully understood this document. I therefore agree/ disagree to participate in this exercise.

Signature   **Date**

.... /....... / 2018