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The Power of Leadership Influence and Communication on Quick Service Restaurants Sustainability

College of Law and Management Studies

Graduate School of Business and Leadership

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Abstract

The fast food industry in South Africa employs thousands of people each year and is a rapidly growing industry. Quickly served customers translate into better service which translates into growth. The current challenge that leaders face in the Quick Service Restaurants (QSR) industry is that they are not adequately equipped to lead and communicate in order to remain sustainable. The aim of this study was to understand the power of the leadership role, its influence and effective communication strategies in order to remain sustainable in the QSR industry in Durban, South Africa. This was a cross-sectional qualitative study conducted among eight restaurant managers who were selected purposefully. Data were collected using focus group discussions and analysed thematically using NVIVO software programme. Results showed that shift leaders had little knowledge about their competitor activities, also they lack computer skills. Further, it was also discovered that there is a need for more specific leadership training and in-depth customer service training. On the communication part, it was discovered that the current ways of communication are not effective enough since they use platforms like WhatsApp, which was believed to be not effective in transferring messages. More so, it was discovered that the leadership is still stuck in their old way of doing things and they are finding it a challenge to adapt to new technology and new ways of completing tasks. It is recommended that McDonald's leaders need to identify and prepare for the fourth industrial revolution. There is a demand for McDonald's to hire according to the new restaurant leader success profile created by succession planning. Focus on capacity building to increase the number of core curriculum courses and change from conventional to digital training platforms. Formalise mentorships programmes. Progress on talent development and management development programmes. Drive an international computer licence programme to allow our future leaders to uplift and grow computer literacy skills. Enhance the skills of restaurant leaders that lead others but more importantly, themselves. Build basic and enduring leadership skills. Deepen knowledge and leadership capabilities by using impactful business simulation systems in the training agenda. Drive leaner led programmes to remain relevant. Create a culture of engagement and support.

Table of Contents

CHAPTER ONE

Introduction

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1.1. Background

Due to a progressively unstable environment, technological advancements, fast flow of information and severe global competition, most organisation's problems are more intricate, no leader can solve matters alone. Sound leadership teams and communication have merged as the power house of sustainable organisations (Horney et al., 2010).

According to Casey (2014), the primary characteristic of any leader is to show the way forward. The Volatility, Uncertainty, Complexity And Ambiguity (VUCA) environment makes leading difficult as leaders need to scrutinise the environment to see something great when others don't see it. Yet the greater the VUCA environment, the more difficult it is for leaders themselves to recognise the state of businesses, let alone create a clear path ahead. VUCA environments as a result become a magnet for immobility, humans are confused when impacted by the turmoil and don't act. To succeed, you need to act (Casey, 2014).

McDonald's South Africa faces a constant challenge whereby restaurant leaders are human and only have so much intellectual capacity and emotional energy to expel. To be successful in a VUCA world, we must utilise our energy in areas that pay off the highest rewards. Our first lesson is to articulate and design a distinct vision to drive our restaurant actions and be excellent communicators. The clear cut leadership mentality is what leaders need to manage to improve their restaurants performance. They will be able to execute within the instability, vulnerability and unpredictability, of the prevailing global environment (Casey, 2014).

This chapter lays the foundation for introduction of the study. The motivation for the study will be outlined, followed by the focus for the study, problem statement and objectives. Research questions will also be given and limitations .The chapter will conclude with a summary.

1.2. Motivation for the study

The motivation of the study comes from an aspiration by the researcher to see the current and future leaders at McDonald's South Africa become the ambassadors of a high performance culture paving the way for other fast food organisations to follow. The researcher believes that in order for the fast food industry to remain relevant and be a sustainable business, acquiring agile leaders is fundamental to sustainability of this industry. It is also imperative for the current branch leaders or restaurant managers to be given the correct leadership mentoring, training and development tools to strengthen their skills to drive high performing teams and culture.

The research was embarked on, with uplifting the leadership propensity and communication skills in mind. Individuals who focus on high profitably, low people turnover and leaders that are visionaries will be the future of this organisation. The research was done with developing quality leaders in mind, who will be equipped to handle turbulent environments and grow the brand into Africa. Leaders will be given tools to assist them to overcome barriers in communication and sustainability of business. A focus on sustainable leadership development will be outlined.

Our economy benefits from more branches opening and more people being employed. McDonald's will be renowned to be an employer that places their heart and soul into the development of its people. McDonald's will be the preferred employer of the nation due to the sound structure of its leaders and people. By Mc Donald's opening more restaurants and hiring more people who pay taxes, the economy will benefit and can be used as an example to other organisations. This study is being conducted at a very crucial time for McDonald's KwaZulu-Natal as this region is booming due to the rapid reentry into the market.

1.3. Focus of the study

The focus of the study was to acquire an understanding of the challenges faced by leaders at restaurant level in McDonald's KwaZulu-Natal. Leaders exposed to best practices and tools will be guided to overcome opportunities. The researcher believes the numerous leadership traits, methods, and behaviors highlighted will expose the leaders to diverse thinking patterns. Issues around effective communication and sustainability will immensely give the leaders an advantage in building effective teams. This heightened focus on leadership development and communication skills will be highly appreciated by those leaders that have been in the organisation for many years. The researcher believes that this study will be revitalizing and a morale boost to those leaders.

1.4. Problem statement of the study

Highly effective leaders are the backbone in the fast food industry, these leaders either grow your business or cause business failure. Current branch leadership of McDonald's have been looking at everyday work as any typical food chain, taking results for granted. McDonald's is a quick service restaurant and its turnover and growth depends on how fast it can service its queuing customers.

Current branch leadership were observed to have one dimensional leadership approaches which is not a sustainable approach. Today's turbulent environment requires multiple layers of leadership and adaptability. Channels of communication are not consistent and effective. There is a greater need to examine the organisations leadership and communication strategy around the rate of adaption to meet the consumer's needs going forward. The study therefore commenced to research the opportunities leaders face in the VUCA environment in order to remain sustainable. The problem McDonald's is facing is losing customers to competitors daily due to inadequate levels of service. There are numerous complaints logged by customers regarding missing items on their purchases. Giving the customer the correct order is a basic requirement in the fast food industry. Also some marketing initiatives are not executed consistently across the restaurants. The communication is sent out from head office to restaurant's email regarding a promotion of a product; it is read by one leader and not filtered to the rest of the leadership team, like the shift managers and more importantly the crew. The impact of the promotion is lost, due to lack of communication regarding important launches and promotion of products or even a new concept. This results in lost sales and the customer losing confidence in the brand and this is not a sustainable model.

1.5. Objectives of the study

- To investigate the leadership knowledge around competitor action and how it impacts the Quick Service Restaurants Sustainability.
- To explore the challenges around effective communication from leaders to teams in Quick Service Restaurants Sustainability.
- To investigate the customer service training offered and its adequacy in Quick Service Restaurants Sustainability.
- To determine the leadership alignment of organizational culture at employee and leadership level and how this impacts customer service levels in Quick Service Restaurants Sustainability.
- To investigate leadership's perspective on the current customer service levels in Quick Service Restaurants Sustainability.

1.6. Research questions

- What do leaders understand about competitor actions in the Quick Service industry and how it impacts the Quick Service Restaurant Sustainability?
- How do leaders communicate to their teams and its effectiveness on the Quick Service Restaurant Sustainability?
- Customer service training offered, is it effective or not in the Quick Service Restaurant industry in order to remain sustainable?
- Is the current leadership aligned to the organizational culture at employee and leadership level and how does this impact customer service levels in Quick Service Restaurants Sustainability?
- Are the leaders satisfied with the current customer service levels or not in Quick Service Restaurants Sustainability?

1.7. Limitations of the study

Due to time and resource constraints, this study will be confined to Durban based restaurant leaders, therefore the sample is limited to the views in one market. Another factor is the time constraint, bearing in mind that the researcher is a full time employee and at the same time a part time student. It was a challenge to balance the time because research always requires full commitment. The geographical distribution of the restaurants was also another challenge, the restaurants are dispersed from each other and some leaders arrived late for the focus group discussion because they were travelling from long distances like Ballito in the North Coast.

1.8. Summary

Sustainable leadership is imperative to become market leaders. Market leaders are measured by opening more branches and increasing market penetration. This in turn translates to people being employed and therefore reducing unemployment levels. To achieve this objective leaders need to be well equipped and ready to face the challenges in their industry. Leaders face many hurdles when leading their teams such as communication breakdown, lack of knowledge around the VUCA environment and one dimensional leadership strategy. This hinders the growth opportunity of the organisation in order to remain sustainable.

The study embarked to investigate the difficulty when leading teams. The key to understanding where the leaders struggled when leading their teams was central to providing solutions to them. With that being said and uncovered it was motivating to see what literature indicated on the topic and this will be discussed in the next chapter.

CHAPTER 2

Literature review

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2.1. Introduction

The term "fast food" according to Mustapha, (2014) was first recognized by Merriam-Webster dictionary in 1951. It refers to food that can be easily prepared and served very quickly in an outlet to consumers. It can be served directly from oven to table (sit-in) or presented in form of take-out packages or containers (take-away). Common fast food menu found in outlets worldwide apart from drinks include pies, chips, fries, sandwiches, pizzas, noodles, chilies, salads, potatoes, rice, ice-cream, coffee, candies, hamburgers, fish, beef, chicken, turkey, hot dogs etc. In addition, various sizes, types and kinds of these types of restaurants exist worldwide for the purpose of retailing fast foods (Mustapha, 2014).

The idea of the Quick service industry (QSR) could be pinned down to the takeout food services popularized by the then automats restaurants, which flourished greatly in the U.S during and after the First World War (Farrell, 2007). The second Whitecastle hamburger restaurant founded in 1921 in Wichita, Kansas was regarded as the first fast food chain in America. Today the U.S. has the largest fast food industry in the world with locations in over 100 countries. The U.K. is also credited with the highest number of fast food per person, followed by Australia and the U.S. In 2008, England alone accounted for 25% of all fast food in the world. It is noteworthy that the business of fast food retailing is fast spreading and striving globally with numerous fast food ventures located all over the world (Mustapha, 2014).

McDonald's is considered as the largest operator of fast food in the world, with over 31,000 restaurants located in 120 countries, on six continents. The busiest fast food in the world is McDonald's in Moscow, which was opened on January 31, 1990. The growth of these type of restaurants and the speed with which they get franchised mean that strong leadership with foresight is what is always needed to take them to great heights and scale them worldwide (Mustapha, 2014).

Leadership's performance and communication skills are imperative while leading organisations and its followers to the organisations strategy or goal. Leaders however, become complacent and blinded by actions of the competitors through the years. There is not any exception to the QSR industry when considering the effect of poor leadership and lack of communication leading to an unsustainable organisation. The companies that are successful are those whose leaders are flexible, aware of the outside surroundings, has entrepreneurial mentality, creates a lifestyle of a learning culture and exude integrity in their organisations (Weymes, 2003).

This chapter is a thorough review of recent literature surrounding the topic of leadership influence and communication in a changing landscape. The review begins with elaborating leadership concepts, communication strategies and sustainability. This chapter will lay the foundation for effective leadership practices and communication approaches to remain sustainable. This chapter also describes the VUCA (volatility, uncertainty, complexity, ambiguity) environment and why leaders need to be at their "A" game to drive positive results in order to remain sustainable. Discussions around how effective leadership drives team performance will be outlined. Issues around leadership focus, accountability, communication skills and sustainability will be examined. Leadership influence and communication in order to remain sustainable is the pinnacle of organisations performance (Horney et al., 2010).

2.2 Definition of leadership

One leadership definition from Weymes (2003) suggests that, the concept of leadership throughout businesses has shifted from "leaders and followers to leaders as motivating support gurus". Businesses need sustainable partnerships in order to achieve success. Leadership is at the forefront driving the moods and atmosphere of the business and its people. Leaders drive passion which is the soul of a business (Weymes, 2003).

According to Kruse (2013) leadership is a practice of social influence, which takes full advantage of the strengths of followers, towards the achievement of a goal. Several key fundamentals come from social influence but not authority or power. Leadership needs followers or there is no leader. No personality traits are brought about, attributes or even entitlement. There are many styles and paths to effective leadership which include goals with

an intentional outcome. Engaged employees give leaders their greatest efforts, attention and support (Kruse, 2013).

Research from Ciulla (2009) argues that leadership is an exclusive type of relationship based on the qualities of authority and/influence. "Leadership is not about position or status." It is far more complex than that, it is a multifaceted ethical association among followers, built on confidence, appreciation, assurance and a common vision of the future. At the centre of this relationship lies ethics. Some attributes of leadership include obligation and accountability. Leaders who do not have ongoing dedication, execution and consistency allow standards of business ethics to fall and results cannot be achieved in any establishment. Leaders build the foundation , set the trend, and influence the behaviour of all its followers in the organisations culture (Ciulla, 2009).

Leadership belongs to all in an organisation and the leader must be courageous, bold and stimulate their followers which are traits needed throughout the business not just in the director's office. Leaders should push themselves constantly and take the opportunity to achieve greatness (Weymes, 2003).

2.3 Leadership in the Quick service industry (QSR)

Within the setting of the fast food industry Lord Mattke (2014) found that the wrong approach to leadership is used among those in management positions, which is affecting employees and customers . Sonic and Five Guys fast food cooperation was used in this study. Some concerns stemming from this study are when there are not enough employees, turnover rate is high, and classical leadership is used which discourages employees. Sonic and Five Guys have to every three months hire new individuals to work for them, management was known to stand in for employees if they are absent for that day. Everyone had to adapt to this situation by having to work longer hours until the previous shift could get released. Due to high levels of absenteeism food delivery became slow, and customers became upset having to wait for longer periods of time.

The work of Lord Mattke (2014) highlights that within the food industry, classical leadership style is prominent which uses 3 types of leadership methods. The first being Autocratic leadership whereby there is little or no input from the team which leads to poor team morale and low productivity. Autocratic leadership is beneficial when there is a project that has

strict deadlines like building projects. The second leadership method is Laissez-Faire that works well when the team is experienced and tasks can be completed without supervision. This style will not work when there are deadlines to meet or there is lack of skill within your team.

The third style is democratic leadership which is a great leadership style as it takes into account all members views. This makes your team feel engaged, increases production and enhance creative solutions. This style however, does not work when communication is an issue and minority groups are overridden.

Customer complaints are common in industries like Sonic and Five Guys, which discourages the workers. Sometimes the quality and timing is imperfect while seeking to meet customer needs. Some examples include items that are missing, or no condiments are provided and long waiting times for food. In spite of the difficulties, the franchises continue to grow and prosper under the given structure of Sonic and Five Guys (Lord Mattke, 2014).

A study carried out by Carmichael et al. (2011) highlights Nando's food cooperation strategy to remain sustainable. Some achievements for Nando's are that they achieved the maximum 3 stars awards for the best company accreditation award in the United Kingdom. Some key areas recognised, include personal growth, well-being and leadership. A year later the 3 star award was won again proving the consistency and sustained commitment to the leadership and management development programme across the organisation.

National training awards are the most prestigious awards at Nando's and they received awards for 5 of the in house training programmes. Nando's also have a system called the Buddy system whereby a Buddy is assigned to all new recruits. Some of Nando's training include new restaurant opening training, working in management teams (team building), induction and coaching programmes. Nando's restaurants were some of the first to be recognised as an investor in people organisation celebrating ten years of recognition. Nando's pride themselves on employees feeling a sense of belonging. Approaches used in leading great restaurants can be attributed to "hands on" action approach, situational and contingency leadership approaches.

Nando's have tight frame works ensuring consistency around the product and brand. The restaurant leader is responsible for recruitment, resourcing, motivation, training of employees, customer service and profitability of the restaurant. Other responsibilities include coaching and facilitation as well as developing profitability plans and the personal growth of the leader themselves. Leaders need to spot future talent within their restaurants and follow the comprehensive development process to support career paths. Other courses offered by Nando's cooperation entail coaching, people management, finance and leadership development. Investment in training is a number one priority and to be considered as a key enabler to the organisation success. With that being said, training cost take up to 75% of the human capital budget (Carmichael *et al.,* 2011).

Research undertaken by Jargon (2010) on KFC reveal a very articulated leadership behaviour. KFC opened in 1971 and is part of the YUM brands and the leaders saw Africa as a massive window of opportunity to increase market share to remain sustainable. Leadership at KFC aim to double its revenue on the continent to 2 billion dollars as they see Africa as an exploding jewel of opportunity. This is an excellent example of leadership that are willing to venture uncharted territory to remain sustainable by being bold in their decision making.

When McDonald's corporation arrived in South Africa in the mid 1990's, KFC was concerned about the impact McDonald's would have on their business and reacted with a strategy to penetrate the country with 300 more Restaurants. Apart from opening new restaurants, KFC began remodelling existing ones to make them modern, since McDonald's is a modern, contemporary business. KFC quickly outpaced McDonald's with more stores to capture market share and now own 44% of the 1.8 billion fast food market. These results are through the agility and flexibility of the leadership to react to its competitors(Jargon, 2010).

2.4 Setbacks in the QSR industry

According to the finding of Kumar et al. (2012) , some setbacks in the QSR industry is the rapid rate of employees who intend to quit. Crew turnover has increased recently in the fast food industry in general. Recruitment and selection costs are substantial to any organization. Businesses will benefit greatly when they keep the talented and highly skilled employees allowing organisations to perform. Other setbacks highlighted is when new candidates are positioned into restaurants with unfamiliar responsibilities and no proper induction.

These candidates are already overwhelmed, therefore it is important that these candidates are well integrated with the organisations culture, given a proper induction and understand the core values of the business. Individuality organisational suitability is another factor that is crucial when interviewing candidates. Individuality suitability allows the new candidate to be aligned to the business and feel welcome. It is important that the integration of new employees is handled professionally to prevent new employees from feeling like outcasts.

Highlighted by Kumar et al. (2012) to help overcome some setbacks, it's important for your employees to be dedicated and loyal to the business as this determines the amount of effort that will be put in. The greater the dedication and loyalty the more effort will be driven into the business and these employees tend not to leave. It is therefore imperative to ensure there is alignment with the employee and organisation's culture. Also highlighted by Kumar et al. (2012) is having a good environment consistent with employee's personal values and career goals. The employee can easily "adapt to the organization culture and perform better." Employees and leaders should have the ability to make decisions together. When the employees have more influence in decision making, employees will be more motivated as they had been given more independence with demanding tasks. Given more independence builds trust and encourages employees to move forward in developing their careers and achieve organisation goals *(*Kumar *et al*., 2012).

2.5 Types of leadership

2.5.1 Authoritarian leadership

As described by Wang *et al*. (2018), this leadership style behaviour "accentuates robust authority and domination" over employees and mandates conformity from employees. Authoritarian leadership stresses that leaders should come across as supreme to keep complete power. Authoritarian leadership can be seen as complete influence and power over employees and demands irrefutable obedience from subordinates, including five types of behaviour, namely, "powerfully pacifying, authority and control, intention hiding, discipline and rule". Employees generally seek cheerful conducive surroundings and avoid negative environments. Authoritarian leadership" is overwhelmingly related to employee turnover increasing (Wang *et a*l., 2018).

The outcome of a study by Cherian and Farouq (2013) reveal the restrictions related to "authoritarian leadership". When leaders are not hands on to coach and motivate the followers, they are not able to resolve problems and issues become worse. If there may be any change in the mind-set of the employees, they will not accept the dominating behaviour of the leader and the instructions. This could lead to followers taking on fewer tasks and as a result the leaders could be held accountable for business outcomes alone (Cherian and Farouq, 2013).

2.5.2 Democratic leadership

"A democratic leader is more than not being an autocratic leader" as stated by Ferguson (2011). "Democratic leadership" takes an immaculate path of its own that is independent, with direction. Many leaders in organisations who side step "autocratic leadership" to be democratic, mistakenly acquire an approach that creates the "laissez-faire style" which is independence without direction rather than the democratic style of independence with direction. Jointed decision making rules are established by all those who are affected by the rules. Democratic leadership allows the followers to keenly take part in the decision making process and lead employees to offer input towards winning organisational accomplishments through shared vision and values. Cherian and Farouq (2013) referred to this concept that no longer includes a stringent controlled way of doing things. This allows components of organisations to be linked through an integrator.

The key aspect of the control style is to provide guidance to growing "future potential leadership" and not giving precedence to the leaders only (Cherian and Farouq, 2013). Research coined by Page and Ferguson (2011) pointed out that the democratic process involves central ways for people to relate with each other allowing all interactions in a group to function "democratically". The leader can follow a "democratic style" and followers of the organisation can choose to adopt democratic ways of relating with one another. "A democratic leader" will enable positive working relationships in an organisation.

Another advantage of "democratic leadership" is problem solving, which becomes easier as it is guided with mutual respect when the organisational culture supports "democratic way" of leading and thinking. This "democratic way of thinking" also becomes the base for finding solutions due to everyone's involvement. With "democratic leadership", the organisations nurture individual's responsibility and accountability as well as group cohesion. Credit is given to all parties (Ferguson, 2011).

2.5.3 Transactional Leadership

Hu *et al*. (2016) refer to leadership as "a well-studied and well-stated construct" understood to have a deep impact on team performance. One leading "control theory" of "transactional leadership" is that "transactional leaders are task-centred, represented through "contingent reward" and manage through way of using exception, while such objective-focused leadership may achieve tasks every day, overall execution, or the transformation of inputs into outputs it could expose employees to exhaustion (Hu *et al*., 2016).

2.5.4 Transformational leadership

Research carried out by Fadhilah Abdul *et al*. (2018) indicate that transformational leadership is an approach where leaders take part in motivating his or her employees to achieve organisational goals and strategies as well as to perform beyond that organisations expectations which lead to effective and efficient management. Leaders who have transactional leadership styles are basically involved in maintaining employee routines, including individual management as well as group performance. This leadership style is more preferred in managing crisis or emergency situations of an organization.

This leadership style is also called managerial leadership, due to them stressing on task outcomes in the organisation, including administration responsibility and group performance. Those who perform will be rewarded and those contribute to the failure will get punishment. The transactional leadership exists between the leader and employee where there is focus on the exchange between the leader and subordinates (Fadhilah Abdul *et al*., 2018).

2.5.5 Servant-Leadership Theory

Investigations from Heyler and Martin (2018) reveal that "servant leadership was first coined by Robert Greenleaf in the early 1970's". "Servant leadership" has been exhibited as a selfless act because of the leader's inherent desire to make a helpful difference in others' lives. The servant leader is one who selects first to assist and then as an expression of that desire comes a desire to lead others. "Servant leadership theory" is dissimilar to other leadership theories, such as "transformational leadership." Servant leadership focuses on a desire to serve and encouraging others to serve too. On the other hand "transformational leadership" emphasises "a desire to lead and inspiring employees to perform well." The "servant leader" sees employees or followers as the primary reason for being in the position. The "servant leader" will want to do everything in their power to ensure they grow the follower and develop them so they eventually become servant leaders.

2.5.6 Contingency leadership

Contingency leadership theories assert that there can be no "one style for all" leadership suitable for all conditions, however rather that the form of control wanted for a business is relying on the exclusive situation and requirements of each organisations trading situation and position (Sang-Woo, 2017). Research from da Cruz et al. (2011) reveal that Contingency theories of leadership analyse how situational settings change the efficiency of behaviour and the "leadership style" of a particular leader. It is assumed that neither leader's characteristics or behaviour or styles form leaders automatically. The answer is the suitability of leadership styles to the circumstances confronted by leaders at the time.

"Fiedler's contingency theory of 1964 and 1967, the "paths goal theory" and the leader participation model, among the various contingency theories are most influential." The simple basis of "contingency theory" is that group performance is conditional, in that it depends on the interaction of "leadership styles" and situations that are complimentary to the leader. The first comprehensive model of contingency theory proposed that the efficiency of group performance depends on the combination of the leader's style in interacting with followers and the degree of control and influence the leader has over certain conditions. Leadership styles should be adapted towards both relationships and tasks (da Cruz *et al*., 2011).

2.6 Define sustainability

A study from Hargreaves and Fink (2003) on sustainability leadership imply that "sustainability" is not, if something can last or not. Sustainability of business is whether initiatives can be established not to the detriment or lack of development of others now and in the future. Advocates of sustainability encourage and reinvent a learning setting that retains the competence to fuel ongoing improvement in the whole organisation. Sustainable leaders allow people to grow and prosper in their increasingly complex environment.

"Sustainable improvement is continuing, not short term". Investing in a project and once launched, forget about it is not being sustainable. Sustainable improvement demands long term relationships, not short-lived infatuations. Embrace change and change for the betterment of self. "Sustainable improvement" provides to the growth and the good of all parties appose to nurturing the fortunes of a few at the cost of the rest (Hargreaves and Fink, 2003).

As investigated by Visser and Courtice (2011) sustainable leaders are persons who are bound to make a difference by self-awareness relative to their surroundings. Self-awareness allows a leader to find new points of view, thinking and interrelating which results in pioneering and "sustainable" results. According to Ian Cheshire (2010), "sustaining the sustainability agenda" and really entrenching it in the organisation, is the exclusive contemporary set of tasks on a ten year view. Outside of that, all being well it becomes much more business as normal. One can compare it to the quality revolution that we experienced in the eighties whereby companies died. Someday soon this is going to be the same for "sustainability". Several organisations probably got ten years or longer before there being a need for sustainability leadership to be applied in order to stay alive (Visser and Courtice, 2011).

2.7 Flexibility and adaptability to change

"Resilient leaders" reveal their competence to be great leaders when uncertainty exists and they decide the best way forward. "Resilient leaders" are good listeners from within and outside the company for new information that might require a change of path and they think innovatively about fresh ways of doing things. According to Hicks and Knies (2015), organizations survive and thrive when they can respond effectively to changing conditions, as faced in many organisations around the world. Research reveals findings on adaptability and mentions mostly resilience and responsiveness of employees, or to creativity and innovation in the time of change and need.

As discovered by Hicks and Knies (2015) encouraging an emphasis on flexibility , abilities vibrant capabilities and management capacity at the organisational level, as well as competencies at the work group and individual level, will provide a supporting environment which will enhance high performance at all levels (Hicks and Knies, 2015) .

2.8 Ethics and integrity

Ethics and integrity are the central characteristics of capabilities. Having ethical strategies is not enough, leaders need to demonstrate how ethics and integrity are rooted in the organisational culture. Historically, stakeholders were found in enormous organisations focusing only on specific issues, today's stakeholders are diverse, often represented by individuals with greater guidance due to the dominance of public onlookers. Many companies are now preparing their leaders to become more "digitally savvy" and to deal with media (Hoffmann, 2015).

Research from McCann and Holt (2013) reveal that ethics is an issue that is rising with importance among those in leadership positions. Leaders naturally set the standards for organisational objectives and behaviour that create structures impacting employee results. Research reveals that most leaders will exchange their personal value systems and encourage employees to stay in line based on a reward system. Followers look up to their "leaders" for direction when they encounter "ethical" issues. The conception is generally followers will walk in the footsteps of their mentors. There is generally three types of standards as they relate to leadership. The first is integrity, which refers to the norms of conduct or habits of actions, such as chastity, sobriety, cleanliness, honesty, and self-control. These develop early

in life and in the home as stemmed from parental leadership. The second, moral code, refers to more formal and transactional behaviours, such as integrity, promise keeping, trustworthiness, reciprocity and accountability classified as the 'golden rule'. Ethics are also the ways in which leaders and followers interact, as they influence each other or others. Third, transforming values are the noble principles, such as order, liberty, equality, justice and the pursuit of happiness (McCann and Holt, 2013).

2.9 Sustainability in the QSR industry

According to South Africa's Food and Beverages Sector (2019) statistics reveal that in January 2008, restaurants and coffee shops contributed 56.5% of total income earned by the industry. By November 2008 they contributed just under 50% of total income earned by the industry. Fast food and take-always contributed 25.6% of total income earned by the industry in January 2008. By November 2018 the Fast food and take-away outlets contributed 36.0% of total income earned by the industry. So in summary, people tend to go to bars and pubs less while they spend more on take-always.

Income earned in the food and beverages sector in South Africa is dominated by income from food sales of Restaurants and coffee shops, with it making up almost 45% of all income earned in the sector. The second biggest income generator is income earned from food sales from Take-away and Fast food outlets, with it generating just over 35% of income earned in the industry in February 2018. Catering services food sales came in a distant 3rd place in terms of income generated in this sector with it earning just under 11% of the income in the food and beverages sector in February 2018 (South Africa's Food and Beverages Sector, 2019).

The above shows that the industry is clearly under significant pressure, with income earned in the sector in total only growing by 1.2% compared to the figures of a year ago. While bar sales (alcoholic and non-alcoholic drinks) showed stronger growth of 2.6% compared to the year before, it remains a very weak number considering inflation for the period was sitting at 4.4%. This income earned in this sector is well below inflation, suggesting profit margins are being eaten into in this industry, making stocks such as Famous Brands (FBR), Spur (SUR) and Taste (TAS) less attractive investments on the JSE (South Africa's Food and Beverages Sector, 2019).

From these numbers, we suspect more people are choosing to rather eat in at home and make their own food instead of going out to grab something to eat. A clear sign of struggling times for South African consumers. From the above it is clear that Total Income of R61.95billion is not a lot more than total expenditure of R60.3billion, signalling very thin profit margins in the industry. This might be due to strong competition in the market or depressed consumer spending in the current economic climate. Small and micro enterprises contribute by far the most to both employment and income in the food and beverages sector in South Africa. The medium sized companies only contribute around 10% to the total employment level of the industry and close to 12% of the income of the industry (South Africa's Food and Beverages Sector, 2019).

Research by Ng and Kelloff (2013) describe that" fast food thinking" as being reactive rather than proactive has transmitted into the manner in which we shape and spear head our organisations. According to Ng and Kelloff (2013) leaders should invest in developing a long-term view in order to remain sustainable. Leaders should be compelled to understand how their actions influence results.

In order to understand the effects of "fast food leaders" in organisations and to capitalise in a sustainable future, leaders and employees should have mentors that model reflective decision making, meticulous articulation and transparency."

Organisations need to invest in training and development today before leaders become engrained in these unhealthy practices of "fast food thinking". Our environment is constantly evolving, and the skills that are needed to compete in this field is continually changing too (Ng and Kelloff, 2013).

2.10 Relationship between leadership and sustainability

Studies from Hargreaves and Fink (2003) highlight sustainability as a way of thinking that is amalgamated and complete. Leaders need to be multi-faceted in their thought process in order to remain sustainable. We live in a "knowledge society" and to add we have the intricate nature of humans, a system that is particularly crucial to addressing complicated issues.

Today's "knowledge society has three facets", that of expanded scientific information, technical and educational spheres. Secondly, involves intricate ways of processing and

circulating knowledge and information in a service oriented economy. Third, entails basic changes in how organizations function so that they enhance continuous innovation in products and services, by creating systems, teams and cultures that maximize the opportunities for mutual, impulsive learning. "Knowledge society" depends on having a "cutting edge infrastructure" of information and communication technology that makes all this learning quicker and hassle free. Leaders must remain relevant by acquiring skills and keep up to date with the latest high tech equipment and tools. The "knowledge society" opens up massive "economic opportunities" as knowledge is at the soul of more of what we produce and how we produce it (Hargreaves and Fink, 2003).

Research by Mumford (2002) refer to global competition, new production techniques, and rapid technological change that have placed spotlight on creativity and innovation. There are various factors that influence creativity and innovation in organisations, leaders and their behaviour must represent a particularly powerful influence. Leader's behaviours need to be scanned as contributing factors to creativity and innovation in organizational settings. "Leadership" of innovative employees requires skill. A successful leader must embark on a number of "direct and indirect influence strategies" aligning to the needs of creative people working in an organisational environment in order to remain relevant (Mumford, 2002).

Research undertaken by Beghetto (2015) reveal that "creative leaders" identify that creativity is not limited to employees in leadership positions only, it is something all people in an organisation have the capacity to exercise. Creative leaders establish conditions and expectations for everyone in an organization to consider, try out and learn from the implementation of new possibilities. Creative leaders lead the way by their engagements and the "creativity-supportive environments" they institute. Creative leaders are able to acknowledge and maximise on the opportunities that such opportunities provide. "Creative" action helps ensure the wheel is always turning in your organisation to remain sustainable (Beghetto, 2015).

According to Weymes (2003) some characteristics to help you remain sustainable is to understand that reliability is the foundation of "all leadership". In order to gain trust the leader must first participate in a process of "self-discovery", understanding and "control" their values, behaviours and aspirations. Through this process of "self-management" compassion and genuineness surface which builds the trust and confidence followers look for in a leader.

Leaders must inspire, challenge, motivate and encourage followers and these are some characteristics that are required throughout the organisation not just in the CEO's office. A Challenge should be an opportunity to achieve excellence as there is no taking breaks in organisations. It's a continuous cycle so organisations need "leaders who challenge the status quo" as this drives the energy to focus on the future. Ambition and drive are linked to leadership. Affection is the soul of leadership. Make your team feel special and they will deliver results because you believe in them. Inspire your followers to achieve more than they ever thought possible (Weymes, 2003).

2.11 Factors affecting sustainability in the QSR industry

In the era of globalization, disruptive technologies and emergence of the fourth industrial revolution, Zuliawati Mohamed *et al*. (2018) states that many companies are undergoing organisation transformation to sustain and remain competitive in the market. In the process, highly engaged employees could be the most valuable asset for organisations to manage change more effectively. Effective employee engagement is seen as a tool for organisations to gain competitive edge over rival companies and organisations going through changes should therefore involve their workforce as much as possible.

Engaged employees are deeply committed to their employer, leading to key improvement in business outcomes, including reduction in absenteeism, turnover, shrinkage, safety incidents and product defects. Various factors can contribute to the increased level of employee engagement in organisations and some key behaviours which are associated with "employee engagement" include "effective leadership, two way communication, high level of internal cooperation, a focus employee development, a commitment to employee wellbeing and clear, accessible human resource policies and practices to which managers at all levels were committed. A combination of powerful leadership and faithful employees can lead organisations into success and remain sustainable (Zuliawati Mohamed *et al.,* 2018).

Another factor detrimental to an organisations sustainability is "destructive leadership.'' "Destructive leadership behaviour" as defined by Einarsen *et al*. (2007) is methodical and recurrent behaviour by leadership that infringes the genuine interest of the organisation. These leaders are found to be undermining or sabotaging the organisation's goals, tasks,

resources, effectiveness, motivation, well-being or job satisfaction of his/her subordinates. Examples of "destructive leadership" are identified as" tyrannical, derailed, and supportive– disloyal leadership behaviour". This destructive leadership style can also be associated with "bullying, counterproductive behaviour, and aggression". Research indicates "sabotage, theft, and corruption among managers have also been found" (Einarsen et al., 2007).

According to Einarsen et al. (2007) there is plenty of support to the theory that "negative events" at the work place have a destructive effect than positive incidents. It is critical to understand   and prevent destructive leadership. Even more important is to understand and enhance positive aspects of leadership. Some concepts that fall within the domain of destructive leadership that is aimed at followers include abusive supervisors, health endangering leaders, petty tyrants, bullies, derailed leaders, intolerable bosses, psychopaths and harassing leaders (Einarsen *et al.*, 2007).

2.12 Communication Defined

Research by Whipple (2010) elaborates that you have one opportunity to make a first impression. This is true for our guests as well. We believe that long-lasting impressions are made within the first few seconds of entering our restaurant.

As a result, organizations' invest time, energy and resources to ensure that those first impressions are meaningful, positive and memorable. On the other hand, visitors are not the only ones who are influenced by first impressions. Employees are also judging their first impression when they enter the organisation during their orientation program (Whipple, 2010).

As described by Fiske (2010) "Communication is the verbal interchange of a thought or idea." The notion in this theory is that a concept or plan is successfully swapped. This definition does not critic whether the outcome is successful or not, communication is the transmission of information. Information is transmitted, but it is not necessarily received or understood. Communication is the handover of a message from person to person (Fiske, 2010).

Communication as defined by Balser (2017) " is the exchange of information between two or more people or things." When transmitting information to employees it's important to

comprehend the problem and explain it effectively to followers. "Communicating" is imperative as knowledge is exchanged and we can "expand that knowledge." Communication" in the organisation is critical when addressing a challenge. "If we do not talk, there is no hope for a solution. It is crucial to watch for the interconnectedness that exists among the people. We need to be open minded to the "systems thinking" that will offer opportunities in the future. As leaders we work with real people with real issues, so if we want to help, we better engage in a very real way (Balser, 2017).

Results of a study from Nancarrow *et al.* (2013) reveal good communication is including team members emotions . Leaders must have the capacity to engage and resolve difficulties within the team. Communication is hindered in large teams due to limiting the "two-way" communication and some people's views do not travel upwards.

"Respecting or understanding" roles in your teams include importance of respecting and understanding the weaknesses and restrictions of each task as well. Leaders need to have an understanding of how the roles have the ability to influence the rest of the team. Leaders should also be aware of how their own role fits within the team dynamic and how it differs from that of other team members and that roles and responsibilities are made clear to all members (Nancarrow *et al.*, 2013).

2.13 Types of communication

Findings from Martin *et al.* (2004) in his research established two general communicative styles or behaviours in organizations, association and control or power. Association refers to actions that establish and maintain a positive relationship between the manager and follower including communicating interest, friendliness, empathy, warmth, and humour. Being in charge refers to behaviours that establish and maintain the manager's control in the collaboration process. Leaders who are more connecting produce better results and leaders with a more forceful communication style produced poor results.

"Communication style research" suggests that the style or pattern enacted by managers or subordinates in an organisational setting has an impact on both the sender and the receiver. Humour plays an important role in organisations. Jokes, stories, and anecdotes allow organisational subordinates to build group cohesiveness, reduce tension, and alleviate boredom (Martin *et al.*, 2004).

Another type of communication style discovered by Myers *et al.* (2002) is that first communication is "goal directed" in that individuals are motivated to engage in communication for a specific reason. Second, people generally use "six motives" for communicating. These motives are pleasure, affection, inclusion, escape, relaxation, and control. "Pleasure" reflects a need to communicate for enjoyment, excitement or amusement. "Affection" is the need to express compassion and gratitude. "Inclusion" reflects a need to give out and coexist with others. "Escape" is used when communicating to pass time while avoiding work tasks. "Relaxation" expresses the need to relax, slow down or take a breather. "Control" reflects a need to gain agreement of others.

Third, individual's intentions for communicating influence, why they talk to others, who they talk to, how they talk, and what they talk about. "Communicator style" is defined as the way an individual verbally, nonverbally, and Para verbally interacts to signal how literal meaning should be taken, filtered or understood and can be comprised of any combination of ten communicative attributes such as friendly, impression leaving, relaxed, contentious, attentive, precise, animated, dramatic, open, and dominant.
"Friendly people" identify others in an optimistic manner and are considered to be kind and caring. "Impression leaving communicators" have a "notable style" which rests on their "affiliative expressiveness" and use of "data-seeking behaviours." "Relaxed communicators" are "concern-free" and remain tranquil and comfortable when engaged in interactions with others. Contentious individuals are highly "challenging" and may get "somewhat hostile, quarrelsome or confrontational. "Attentive communicators" are attentive and pay attention with sympathy. They appear as good listeners who are concerned with understanding others. "Precise communicators" tend to be precise, using "well-defined arguments" and specific proof or evidence to clarify their positions. Animated communicators use eye contact, facial expressions, gestures, body movement and posture to exaggerate content.

"Dramatic communicators" use "stylistic devices" such as exaggerations, voice, rhythm, stories to highlight the content. Open communicators are talkative, frank, and forthright and do not have problems directly communicating their thoughts or emotions. "Dominant communicators" take charge of the situation by talking louder, longer, and more frequently than others with fewer interruptions, less compliance, and more needs (Myers et al., 2002).

Traditionally, conversation among leaders and followers' influences the connection among leaders and participants, their satisfaction ranges and common organisational performance. Furthermore, leaders' spoken language and communicative abilities are critical factors in motivating followers. In other words, leaders' communicative strategies can effect member's motivation levels (Sang-Woo, 2017).

2.14 Factors affecting communication

An outcome of a study from Weymes (2003) indicates "old-school hierarchical" organisations, with their "functional silos" have the predisposition to hold back communication. Information is protected and success is defined by the ability of one silo to outperform the rest. Competition is focused on the inside (Weymes, 2003). Uncovered by Bates (2006) who states that poor communications can make the difference between motivated (productive employees) and less motivated (unproductive ones). It is to be found that in many organisations leaders receive only "vague feedback" on their communication skills and it's usually related to "interpersonal skills". Very little if any information is fed back on how leaders portray their ideas, other than receiving some basic feedback.

Communication is often described as a "soft skill," although organisations can measure its people on effective pointers on how to stand, what to do with their hands and how to use PowerPoint. Communication coaching programs should offer a formal and organised approach to improving communication skills and strategies. Leaders should be given the opportunity to rate themselves as this will allow people to appraise their performance.

Leaders do not decide to spend resources on what they should do, they spend resources on what they must do. Organizations' must enable funds for training and development programs (Bates, 2006).

2.15 Reasons why communication fails

According to Bates (2006) organisations are not investing time and money on communication strategies. Communication strategies are talked about in the "development plan," however leaders may not have the "right resources," Communication is overlooked due to other "business priorities" and the topic of lack of communication is only mentioned once the problem has occurred and is often too late. Many organisational leaders' skills are not up to the requirements of the role. Some leaders are found to be excellent at offering information, however, they lack vision which leads to inadequate explanations to their teams

on how to communicate the goals and vision which is an enabler for togetherness in teams. Human capital specialists should provide the "necessary support and coaching for senior managers.

Human capital specialist should design training programmes to assist leaders develop and communicate their vision and values in a way that will drive business results. "Speech coaches" are highly recommended and "speech writers" so that measurements can be made to gage the return on investment on this type of initiative so management see the benefit of the investment if they are unsure about the investment of resources initially (Bates, 2006).

2.16 Impact of communication on sustainability

Addressing numerous and challenging needs of an organisations multifaceted audience during crisis is a fundamental component of crisis resolution for both the organisation and its participants. Much of the crisis communication work suggests that an organisation can minimize losses to its credibility if it can provide rapid and accurate communication to its stakeholders (Ulmer and Sellnow, 2000).

Defined by Mohr and Spekman (1994) the "Communication processes" is an activator of organisational functioning therefore "communication behaviour" is vital to organisational success (Mohr and Spekman, 1994). When there is effective communication between co-workers, organisations reap the rewards of collaboration. A determinant of associate's dynamism is measured by how information is heard and received. Exchange of information must be insightful and of quality, leaders are to ensure that sufficient preparation is done before dissemination of information.

Another guideline is to set goals of when you expect a response or feedback. Some quality traits of communication includes aspects such as accuracy, timeliness, adequacy, and credibility of information exchanged. Timely, accurate and relevant information is needed if the goals of the individuals are to be reached. In order to sustain growth of good relationships between individuals it is important to have honest and open lines of communication. Parting information is often private, confidential and significant so it is important to maintain good relationships with your employees so they feel comfortable to discuss matters with you more frequently. When information is available to employees, they feel empowered and complete tasks efficiently which forms great partnerships. Employees feel a sense of appreciation and work independently (Mohr and Spekman, 1994).

As highlighted by Liebowitz (2006) some effective tools to communicate successfully is to utilise a portal with a primary source which may include cheat sheets, power point briefing slides, minutes of the meetings or key documents. Application of a "Google-type search engine" within the "portal" for search and retrieval can be used to create ease. Design a "knowledge locator system" to make acquaintances with individuals within the organisation in order find help with a situation or a problem. Ensure "knowledge sharing" is encouraged in reviews by offering incentives which in turn creates a "culture of continuous learning." Make available an "online community" whereby "best practices" can be shared, experiences imparted so that employees broaden their level of thinking. Break-down the functional silos and integrate across departments through cross training, cross-functional teams, restructuring and mentoring programs. Organisational leaders conduct a "task analysis" of individuals in order to improve and analyse how to enable communication (Liebowitz, 2006).

According to Solomon and Ertel (2014) some points to assist leaders in the communication process is to ensure you are in an energetic room that has light as small details make a difference. Make sure that everyone is comfortable and have the materials they need to stay focused. Use a white board to capture new ideas. Shape your session like an experience with a beginning, middle and end. Utilise the best thoughts of your team and encourage conversations. Be a leader that embraces change when dealing with "strategic challenges." Positive energy and confidence is contagious. Restaurant leaders will start spending more time designing and planning what to do next. Meeting and planning "great strategic conversations" is one of the most significant "leadership skills to have in today's world" (Solomon and Ertel, 2014).

Numerous organisations do not gain the rewards from on the ground leaders as they're not organized to lead adequately. When dealing with teams, an important notion is to test if there is a clear route set by the leaders for the followers to pursue. Working in groups activates shared responsibility and attachment. Coexisting with each other is vital, as it helps with excelling in your role. It is critical that groups cope with the intrinsic stress between them and getting past it to improve levels of morale, cohesiveness, trust among individuals and the way conflict is overseen. This sets the stage for healthy team dynamics and alignment and teams function well (Overfield, 2016).

Lord Mattke (2014) highlighted that the skills of a listening leader is one who deeply listens to others with much interest while seeking to understand the individual. A leader with empathy seeks to understand through compassion, so that they are accepted through much recognition for their follower's uniqueness. A leader that has healing abilities is the leader that seeks to heal others as well as themselves and is aware of general and self-awareness makes the leader stronger. Persuasion is another skill which is used more so than one's authority through their position, so that a consensus is found within groups. Conceptualization is when the leader aspires to wants to help others achieve their dreams and having that balance with the current day's focus. Foresight is a form of intuition by learning from the past, present and the future (Lord Mattke, 2014).

2.17. Theoretical Framework

The QSR Industry thrives on leaders that exude service to its stakeholders due to the nature of the business. The business requires leaders who are multifaceted and are able to deal with various aspects of the business from sourcing supplies to managing and leading the human resources. Reference back to the types of leadership approaches reflect this to me more of Servant Leadership qualities. The Servant Leadership Theory is what underpins this study as it more realistically reflect what leaders the QSR industry usually benefit from.

Findings from Carter and Baghurst (2014) on Servant-Leadership Theory is believed to be that a person should get put first before oneself within an organisational setting. Anyone that is a servant leader desires to focus on the well-being and developmental growth of others is important. This includes the communities in which one lives. In traditional leadership, the accumulation and use of power is a top-down approach, however, with this notion, the power is shared by putting others needs first, so that they can perform and do their tasks effectively. The problem occurs when individuals are arrogant and care about the money more than the person. This can become an issue real quick with employees in an organization because they need support and not a lack of it. Commitment to people is intrinsically valued and the servant leader is devoted to help and develop them (Carter and Baghurst, 2014) .

The long chains and hierarchy of work needs leaders who serve people and who place a strong emphasis on leadership. One way of testing for servant leadership style is to verify if those led by this leadership style grow as individuals while being served and become fitter, astute, more liberated and self- sufficient. Then they are more likely themselves to become servants (Heyler and Martin, 2018). We are able to witness this in the industry as many

leaders and managers usually grow from within through the formalised succession plans and training interventions.

2.18 Summary

The above chapter looked at leadership, the different types of leadership that exist in the QSR industry. Additionally, it looked at sustainability in the QSR industry. Further, it looked at the relationship between leadership and sustainability as well as factors that affect sustainability. Also, it looked at communication and the different types of communication as well as the factors that affect communication. It went on to look at the impact of communication on sustainability. The next chapter will be looking at research methodology.

CHAPTER 3

Research methodology

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3.1. Introduction

The assessment inside the previous chapter recognized exceptional degrees of management and verbal exchange together with sustainability strategies desired for an enterprise to reach capabilities. In this instance the techniques to conduct the study steps taken is to ensure the research generates the best results to enhance the literature at the area of study.

The chapter starts by looking at research viewpoints and hypothesis and study techniques used to describe the research format and approach. The facts collection strategies and ranges taken to make sure worthy and dependable outcomes are formed. The researcher will take into account the location of study and participants. Research design, research approaches and data collection strategy will then be discussed. The researcher will further discuss the population sample size and sampling technique. Thereafter the data collection instruments comprising of questionnaires to be used in the focus group. Data quality control will then be discussed. An overview will be given on the reliability and validity of the research process. A discussion on the data analysis is next discussed. Ethical considerations and limitations will be highlighted. The chapter concludes with the association of the main sections of the research methodology. Lastly steps might be taken to make certain any possible unfairness of the outcomes will be actioned.

3.2 Research Paradigm

Studies from Golafshani (2003) show that qualitative studies are "naturalistic." This type of research tries to investigate the ordinary existence of diverse companies, human beings and companies within their organic location, which is particularly beneficial to examine instructional scene and techniques. According to Qualitative studies it channels to discover and to find out problems at hand. Findings by Myers (2009) state that qualitative studies are designed to assist researchers understand humans and the social and cultural contexts inside which they live. In qualitative studies, ideal data claims, enquiry techniques and records collection methods and evaluation are used Creswell and Creswell (2003).

Qualitative records assets, include announcement and participant observation (fieldwork), interviews, questionnaires, documents texts and the researcher's impressions and reactions (Myers, 2009). Data is drawn from direct assertion of behaviours from interviews, from written evaluations and or from public documents.

3.3 Study Area

This research was carried out in and around the province of KwaZulu-Natal. The current population in KwaZulu-Natal is roughly 11 000 000 million. Agriculture, mining and quarrying, manufacturing, utilities generally referred to as "electricity", construction, trade, transport, storage and communication, financial and business services, social and community services and tourism are some of the main economic activities. KwaZulu-Natal's capital city is Pietermaritzburg and its largest city is Durban with these coordinates of 28.5306 S, 30.8958 E and a land size 94.361 square kilometres. McDonald's has 35 branches currently located in Newcastle, Ladysmith, Pietermaritzburg, Durban, Empangeni, Richards bay and Sundumbile. This province has different factors that affect their business and they experience different working environments in the sense that some are located in busy places while some are located in places that are not so busy.

3.4 Target Population

Target population is defined as a group of individual persons, things, or items from which samples are taken for statistical measurement purposes. Target population is an entity which possesses the statistics required for the research to attract a finding (Malhotra and Dash, 2011). Therefore, for this study the target population are the management teams i.e. Managers of all of the restaurant outlets throughout the province of KwaZulu-Natal.

3.5 Sampling techniques

Defined by Kumar (2019) sampling, is due to the fact the technique of selecting some (a pattern) from a larger organisation "the sampling population" to emerge as the concept for estimating the prevalence of an unknown final result concerning the larger organisation. As "Emphasised" by Saunders (2011) "it is not possible to collect data for the whole population because of the disadvantage outcomes which incorporates, time and monetary constraints." "Sampling" is an end result used to reduce the quantity of information needed instead of using the total population of the business agency or sub-business enterprise.

Noted by Bhattacharyya and Jha (2012) the two techniques of sampling designs are probability sampling and non-probability sampling. Probability sampling is random sampling giving all members of the whole population a seemed equivalent opportunity of preference whereas non-probability sampling is a manner which does not offer the target population the same opportunity of being selected. In order to gather the respondents in this research, the researcher used non-probability sampling.

3.5.1 Probability Sampling technique

Systematic sampling includes choosing a component of the population starting with a random start and following the sampling fraction to select each nth term (Trochim et al., 2011). Simple Random Sampling supported by Saunders (2012) is the type of sampling in which everyone inside the target population has an equal chance of being selected into the sample. This type of sampling somehow has some bias involved. Cluster sampling population is divided into heterogeneous classes. Some are randomly decided on for similarity check (Cooper *et al*., 2012). Stratified sampling in line with Cooper *et al*. (2012) is similar to random sampling, besides that, during this sampling approach the researcher to begin with, divides population into strata that represents the number one attributes or trends of the population.

3.5.2 Non- Probability Sampling

Indicated by Saunders (2012) non-probability sampling is frequently the selected type of sampling used in qualitative researches and has no aim of taking a broad view of the findings of the population from which the pattern was decided on. Every now and then it could be the best sensible alternative because the complete population won't be available or easy to discover.

Snowball sampling approach is used mainly because the identity of participants of the study is problematic to find. Research from Saunders (2012) define snowballing as the documentation of one or more participants. The findings are then utilised to find different "subjects" who have the same traits. Convenience sampling gives the researcher the freedom to select out whoever is to be chosen for inclusion within the sample (Cooper & Schindler, 2012).

Although, on no account a reliable research layout, often chosen but one of the most suitable and effective methods, judgement sampling is a type of purposive sampling. Purposive sampling is described as an unsystematic selection of sampling units within the area of the population with the highest level of information on the characteristic of concern (Guarte and Barrios, 2006). Quota sampling in line with Greetham (2014) entails the selection of people or objects from a population using a criteria whereby, a certain number of objects or people in each age group or band are selected to be part of the population under study. This population sample includes multiple bands which include gender, age of respondents and marital status as they'll be identifiable within the target population (Greetham, 2014). The "nature" of this research is "qualitative and exploratory" and consequently "non-probability sampling" is appropriate. The researcher used purposive sampling technique to gather the respondents for the focus group in this research.

3.6 Sample size

Research by Grazier et al. (2013) defines sample size as the number of objects chosen from the whole population with the purpose of finding out something about the whole population from which they are taken from. An accessible "sample" of eight (8) respondents were chosen for the purpose of the study.

3.7 Research instruments

Emphasised by Kumar (2019) research instrument is a measurement device (survey, test and questionnaire). It is used to help distinguish between instrument and instrumentation. Instruments are classified in two broad categories, researcher-completed and subject-completed, distinguished by those instruments that researchers administer versus those that are completed by participants. The method of collection device selected might be an interview schedule. The required information can be gathered each through gathering or through extracting (Information which is already obtained).

3.8 Instrument pre-test

A pre-test is one of the essential ranges in studies we have a look at. According to Kumar (2019), a pre-test check is a tribulation run performed in guidance of the whole research. This may be executed to make sure reliability, preciseness and suitability of the interview questionnaire to allow amendments earlier than the final interview questions. A pre-test may even deliver the researcher a possibility to discover how long the interviews will take.

3.9 Reliability and Validity

Reliability in its exceptional form measures the consistency of the results. Data is deemed reliable if the outcomes generated may be repeated. Reliability is used to examine the degree to which empirical indicators or measures are consistent across two or more attempts to quantify the theoretical idea (Creswell and Creswell, 2003).

3.10 Data collection techniques

3.10.1 Focus group discussions

With focus groups, a moderator asks some questions with the intention of gaining an insight about the way the group sees the "brand, product, related images, concepts or symbols and slogans. A "sample" of respondents was selected by the organisation, as a focus group to offer some insights similar with those of respondents targeted by the company, a focus group can offer some insights that are consistent with those that are shared by the target market. Focus-group moderators should ask questions in such a way that he or she does not lead the group members to provide the desired responses, but rather insightful and honest answers. In most cases, one has to offer some incentives to his/her focus group members to ensure their active and honest participation. If one has to hire a research organisation to conduct the focus group, the firm will have to handle the disbursement of the incentives, whether it is monetary payment or some type of free product or service (Heiskanen et al., 2008).

3.10.2 Advantages of focus groups

A focus group is typically extra useful whilst results of research are very unpredictable and you're searching out more open remarks instead of comparisons of potential results as in a quantified research approach. A focus group also permits respondents to specific clean thoughts and "share feelings" that do not usually come out in a quantified survey or paper test, due to the open verbal exchange among institution members, subjects and discussions are freer flowing and contributors can use remarks from others to stimulate and be reminded.

Another benefit is that the moderator can observe the dynamics among participants of the focus group as they speak their critiques. In a lot of those groups, the moderator will leave the room to allow cognisant group individuals to communicate with each other without feeling self-conscious. This sort of honest remark can frequently yield nuggets that you can later use to in addition refine your advertising and marketing strategy and your messaging (Kellmereit, 2015).

3.10.3 Disadvantages of focus groups

"Groupthink" is a number one challenge associated within focus groups. When you convey a group of people collectively to talk about a brand, the tendency thus exists for some influential group individuals to have an effect on the expressions of others within the group.

Additionally, respondents are regularly reluctant to explicitly express negative thoughts in a face-to-face environment than in a greater implicit research format when they recognise the organisation is doing research.

Another major disadvantage of a focus group is that if one does fail to hire a good moderator, it can be difficult for one to discover the full range of thoughts, views, desires and needs of the group. On the other hand, if your moderator is weak, some focus group members may not feel comfortable in the environment to make their opinion (Kellmereit, 2015).

3.11 Data Analysis

The data was analyzed according to the eight steps for qualitative data analysis as proposed by Tesch (MKHONTO, 2016) . After the focus group discussions were done, the audio recording together with the notes which were being captured by the secretary were taken for analysis. Transcriptions were done on the audio recordings and the codebook was drafted. The researcher identified themes and sub-themes, patterns that have emerged from the coded data. Themes can emerge from patterns, such as conversation topics and vocabulary. Other factors could include the frequency of occurrence, occurrence only when certain factors are present and time of the day, week or month. The researcher was able to define each theme sufficiently so that it is clear to others exactly what the theme is. The researcher finalises the name of each theme, writes its description and illustrates it with a few quotations from the original text to help communicate its meaning to the reader" (MKHONTO, 2016).

3.12 Ethical considerations

Ethics are norms of behaviour that guide ethical options about people`s behaviour and relationships with others. Its aim in studies is to ensure that no person is "harmed" or "suffers" unfavourable outcomes from the study activity. Therefore, this study goes to assure that the subsequent ethical issue for it to be considered moral (Eide and Kahn, 2008).

Protection - harm is multi folded as it includes a number of facets together with physical harm, damage to members' improvement or conceitedness, strain, damage to career

possibilities and inducing the contributors to carry out unacceptable acts. Though the trouble of damage may be linked to confidentiality and anonymity, for this research, it is modified into dealing with one after the other. For this dissertation to be moral, then there must be no damage to the members and this was communicated to all of the respondents. Due care was taken as a way to make sure that no participant was subjected to any danger associated with risky practices (Dickson- Swift et al., 2005).

Scientific Dishonesty- that was viewed as a very important moral obligation at the time of doing the study. Dishonesty behaviour includes manipulation of format and techniques and retention or manipulation of the information itself. As such, to render the research moral, the researcher modified into recording the information in an apparent way. Also, to check that the records entered and were modified correctly and the moderator monitored the closed questions (Agar, 2006).

Informed consent- defined due to the fact the viable subjects` agreements to participate voluntarily in this research are reached after assimilation of essential facts about the test. In this study, participants were informed of their rights to voluntarily consent or decline to participate and withdraw participation at any time without penalty. The respondents were furthermore made aware of the motive of the studies, techniques of information collection and that no risks are involved (Hoeyer et al., 2005).

Privacy - this aspect pertains to the problem of the invasion of privacy that may be overlooked. The "Market Research Society (MRS) `s (2009)" message is well defined, in this aspect because it states that the aim of any research is to avoid giving unique rights to researchers on another respondent`s private information (Van den Hoonaard, 2002).

Anonymity and confidentiality- Respecting of the participants' privacy and confidentiality is one of the major principles used in research. The notion of confidentiality is associated with anonymity, insofar as anonymity is one way to put into effect (or apply) confidentiality by ensuring that individuals cannot be identified. However, 'confidentiality is a multifaceted practice that involves more than merely concealing the identities of research participants or sites and also anonymising data does not necessarily fully address all aspects of confidentiality. It is also important to note that the contracts of confidentiality and anonymity, as well as notions of vulnerability, harm and privacy which support them, are not that static and also have been both flexibly employed and critiqued within the qualitative

methods literature. One principal challenge faced by qualitative researchers is that of balancing the faithful reporting of findings with potentially exposing respondents' identities or choosing not to share information to reduce the risk of harm to participants, but possibly bringing into question the accuracy of the study (Richards and Schwartz, 2002).

CHAPTER 4

Results and Discussion

4.1 Introduction

This chapter deals with information analysis and presentation of results. The information had been gathered using questionnaires in the focus groups. The findings are put into themes, which were then supported by direct quotations made from the respondents during the focus group discussions. The findings are intently connected to the findings said within the literature assessment.

4.2 Demography

The demographic analysis presented below is a representative of age, level of education, marital status and the years of experience at work.
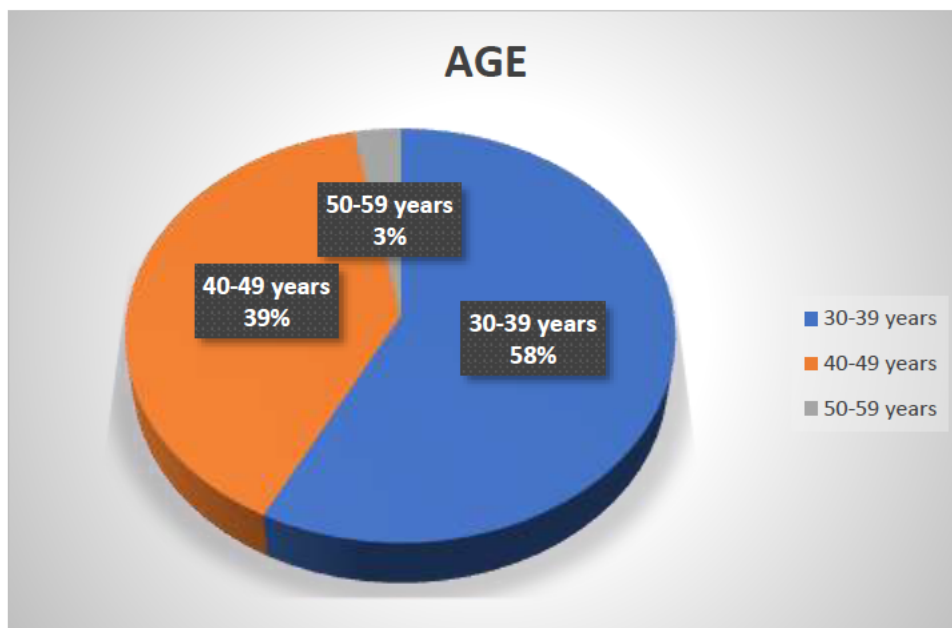
According to age the data reflects that about 58% of the respondents were of the age group of 30-39 years, where as those of the age group 40-49 years constituted about 39% and lastly about 3% were of the age group 50-59 years.

This result was further supported by information from some findings. Argued by Hoch *et al*. (2010), age difference is a significant predictor variable with regard to leadership.

4.2.1 Age

Age diversity has been defined as a double edged sword as it bears both positive as well as negative impacts on team results. Positive effects of age difference has been classically explained via an information processing approach here, differences in age may relate to a broader range of required skills, abilities and knowledge, which improves the quality of explanation and decision making and thus improving performance in teams. Some of the "negative direct effects" has been clarified through "a social identity paradigm" to which disagreements possibly will lead to conflicts, challenges in communication and social categorisation, reducing the levels of team effectiveness (Hoch *et al.*, 2010).

4.2.2 Educational level
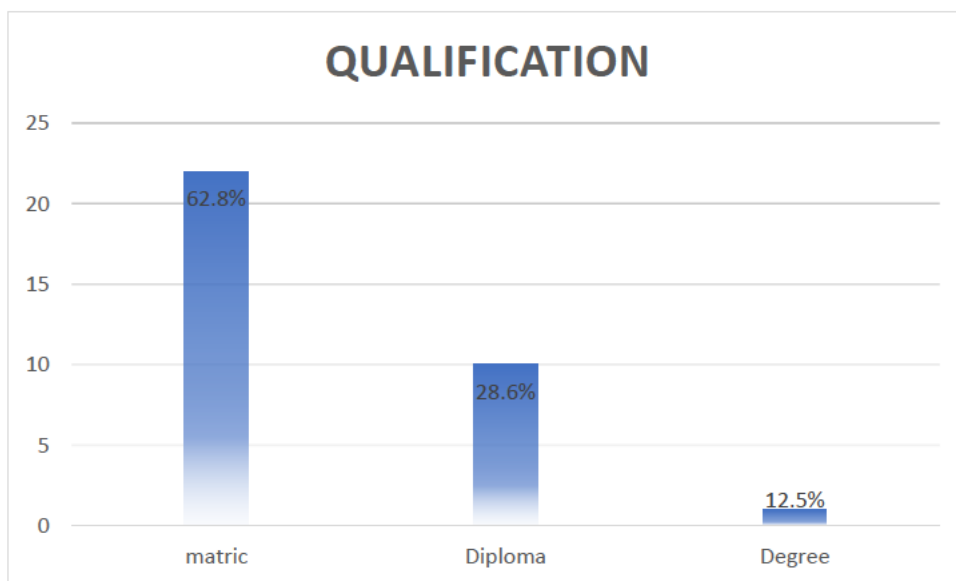
In terms of educational qualifications, the results from the employees of McDonalds reflect that five (62.8%) respondents out of the eight respondents consulted managed to reach matric as their highest level of qualification. Those with a diploma constituted only about 28.6% and only one (12.5%) respondent indicated that he/she has a degree. This reflection has an impact on the day-to-day running of the business.

This result is further supported by a research by Kumar et al. (2012) who said that businesses will benefit greatly when they keep the educated and highly skilled employees allowing organisations to perform.

4.2.3 Marital status
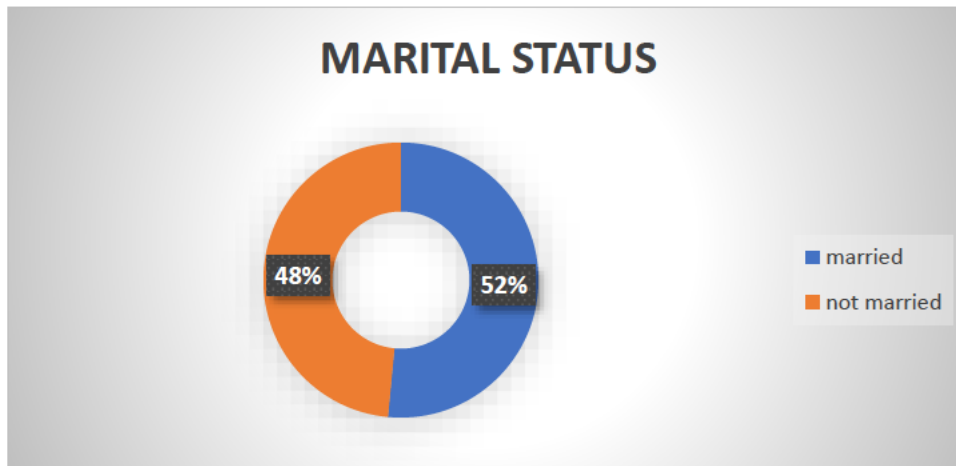
The researcher went on to ask the respondents about their marital status during the survey and results indicate that about 52% of the respondents are married whereas about 48% are not married. This also has a direct impact on the sustainability of business at McDonalds, generally an organisation with young blood is more sustainable in the sense that, when it comes to shifts it is always a challenge to put married women on a night shift. Sometimes, married people have a challenge of pressure from home, and when they get to work they fail to perform well due to that pressure so this is also one of the factors that might be related to some poor performances reported during some shifts.

Further to that, the aspect of absenteeism has always been a challenge at McDonalds whereby single parents always call in to report that they are unable to report for duty because of family responsibilities for example the child getting sick. Sometimes they don't call which leaves gaps in the levels of customer service due to an area of service not being covered. This result is further supported by information from literature review that pointed out that due to high levels of absenteeism food delivery became slow, and customers became upset having to wait for longer periods of time (Lord Mattke, 2014).

4.2.4 Experience at work
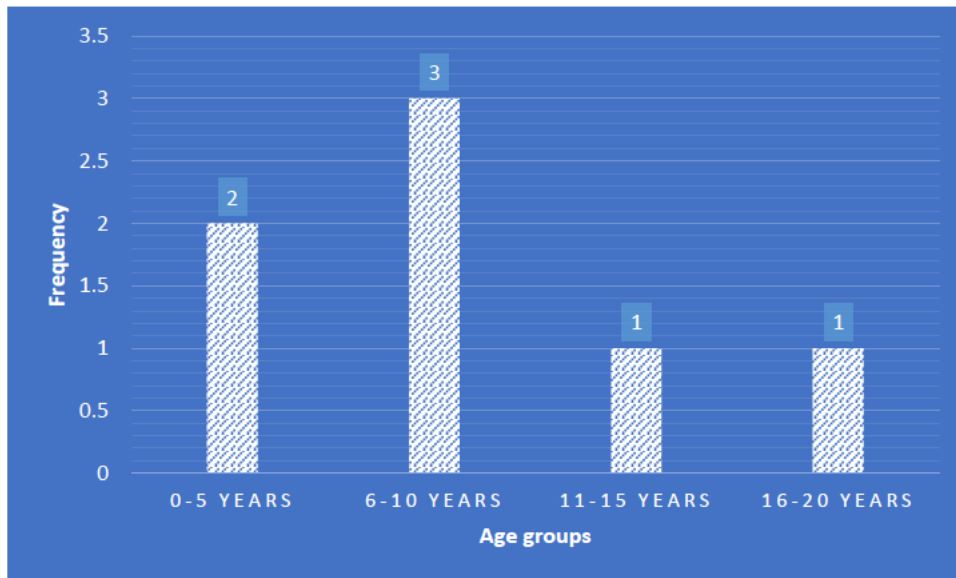
The results displayed in the fig above show that about 2 (25%) of the respondents have been working at McDonalds for not more than five years now, about 37.5% of the respondents have been working for McDonalds for the time frame between 6 to 10 years, while on the other hand those who have been working for McDonalds between 11 to 15 years constitute about 12.5%. Lastly, those who have been with McDonalds for 16 to 20 years constitute around 12.5% as well. This data is of help for one to understand the impact of being in one organisation for long.

During the discussion with the participants who fall in the category of less than five years, were complaining that the challenge they are facing is failing to communicate well with those managers who have been with the organisation for long. Most of the long serving managers do not want to be told what to do hence affecting the way business is running in McDonalds. They are refusing to adapt to new ways of doing things. They are also internally focused and not concerned about the rate of change externally that impacts McDonald's sustainability.

4.3 Thematic Analysis

4.3.1 Theme 1: Leadership Knowledge around Competitor Action

Poor information dissemination

There is little knowledge about McDonalds' competitors within the shift manager's role in restaurants, all that they are aware of is to run their shifts but not aware of competitor action. This is due mainly for the reason that restaurant managers are not brining competitor awareness to the shift managers. This was suggested during the discussions where one of the respondents had this to say:

"To be honest with you, there is little knowledge within our shift manager's level about our competitors and us as restaurant leaders there is nothing that our brand is doing to bring awareness to our shift runners."

Another respondent said: *"As said before, there is no proper channels of communication of information between the shift leaders and the restaurant managers and this is the reason why shift leaders have less knowledge about competitor action."*

In a nutshell, another respondent said: *"Though not pleasing but that is the truth, there is little knowledge in our shift leaders about competitor action."*

An outcome of a study from Weymes (2003) indicate "old-school hierarchical" organisations, with their "functional silos" have the predisposition to "hold back communication". Information is protected and success is defined by the ability of one silo to outperform the rest. Competition is focused on the inside (Weymes, 2003). Uncovered by Bates (2006) who states that poor communications can make the difference between motivated (productive employees) and less motivated (unproductive ones). It is found that in many organisations, leaders receive only "vague feedback" on their communication skills and it is usually related to "interpersonal skills." Very little if any information is fed back on how leaders portray their ideas, other than receiving some basic feedback.

4.3.1.1 Sub Theme 1: Competitor Action

Competitor Activity

In order to ascertain whether the restaurant leaders were aware of the current competitors' action, a focus group was held where the restaurant leaders were asked on their perception about their competitor actions. The results from the focus group reflect that most leaders are aware of their competitors' action. During the discussions one of the respondents highlighted that some leaders from their competitors are doing mystery shopping on the services offered at McDonalds. The direct words from one respondent were:

"I just want to say two things, specifically directing it to KFC, one thing that I know for sure is what they are trying to do, based on my observation on what I have seen is, we are regarded as the leaders in this Fast food industry compared to others because they are trying to copy what we are doing. In most cases like I am just across there I have never found myself going to KFC and observe or do mystery shopping to see what's happening but most of the time they come across, they just sit there order something and make notes."

Another respondent also said *"KFC is copying us on some of the services we are offering and see what promotions we offer our customers. KFC also observe who are customers are what they buy from us."*

Lastly another respondent said *"their leaders are doing mystery shopping on us because they know we are always ahead in the industry but I fail to go see who their customers are."*

This result is further supported by information from literature review, as investigated by Visser and Courtice (2011) who defined sustainable leaders as individuals who are compelled to make a difference by deepening their awareness of themselves in relation to the world around them. In doing so, they adopt new ways of seeing, thinking and interacting that result in innovative, sustainable solutions.

Competitor action duplicating of drive-thru concept

On the other hand, Nando's, one the competitors in the field is opening up with drive thru concept as they are opening new restaurants. This is also one of the ideas they copied from McDonalds, they are trying to create an environment that is conducive for business and they understand now that a drive-thru is a winning concept as it offers convenience. During the discussions one of the respondents had this to say:

"*Recently Nando's is trying to keep up with us, all of their stores they are opening right now they are coming up with the drive thru concept, McDonalds was the first in the country to come up with drive through, I mean to introduce the drive thru, we are the pioneers.*"

Another respondent said *"the issue of drive-thru was copied from us because we were the first to introduce it and 60 -70% of our sales are from our drive- thru. They obviously know how successful the concept it so why not copy it."*

Still stressing on the issue of copying the idea of drive-thru, the other respondent had this to say: *"Some competitors are just doing what they saw McDonalds doing for example the drive-thru, this shows us that we are watched all the time and they take every chance to imitate our concepts."*

The result discovered above was further supported by information from literature review, as discussed how Nando's copied the idea of drive-thru as a way of trying to remain competitive in the market. In the era of globalization, disruptive technologies and emergence of the fourth industrial revolution, Zuliawati Mohamed *et al.* (2018) state many companies are undergoing organisation transformation to sustain and remain competitive in the market.

4.3.1.2 Sub Theme 2: Marketing Strategies

Market Penetration Strategy

Some competitors are opening food outlets at a rapid rate to get as close as they can to their customers. Some of the competitors like KFC make sure that they have their restaurants in every shopping centre, example they have nearly six outlets in Pinetown. This aspect was raised by one of the respondents who had this to say:

"If you look in KZN there are over 400 KFCs in KZN alone, how many McDonalds do we have? They are not afraid to go into rural areas."

On supporting the issue of market penetration, another respondent said: *"they are everywhere, at every shopping centre, town and street and they are also worldwide and in Africa."*

Another respondent also said: *"they definitely out number us and we need to catch up with them."*

The results from the research is further supported by information from literature review that says When McDonald's corporation arrived in South Africa in the mid 1990's, KFC was concerned about the impact McDonald's would have on their business and reacted with a strategy to penetrate the country with 300 more Restaurants. Apart from opening new restaurants, KFC began remodelling existing ones to make them modern, since McDonald's is a modern, contemporary business. KFC quickly outpaced McDonald's with more stores to capture market share and now own 44% of the 1.8 billion fast food market. These results are through the agility and flexibility of the leadership to react to its competitors(Jargon, 2010).

Promotion Campaigns

Furthermore, some of the competitors are coming up with promotions, just to attract more customers into their business, for example the Tuesday promotions done at KFC. As a matter of fact, promotions have the ability to attract more guests, this is well supported by the information gathered in this research, where one of the respondents pointed out that some of McDonalds' competitors are having promotions. The respondent had this to say:

"They are trying to bring back all these Idhlanati for R30, basically they are trying to copy what McDonald is doing, offer value meals."

Another respondent also said: *"some of our competitors are now using promotions as a tool to compete with us where they are charging very low prices as well and some promotions are better value than us."*

Another respondent said: *"Some of the restaurant have gone to the extent of doing some great adverts to attract customers."*

Research from Hoffmann (2015) states that "robust leaders" display the capability to take the lead in the environment even in turbulent times. A solution is found around the "best way forward," These leaders display effective listening skills and are found to be creative in their thought processes. Information is taken from within the organisation and externally and they adapt to the change of direction (Hoffmann, 2015).

Driving value

Apart from the above, some of the competitors are offering food at a very low price just to attract more clients. They are using low prices as a fighting tool against their rivals and most people have a tendency of going for what's cheap. This idea has been implemented by competitors of McDonalds like Spar which is offering their food at a very cheap price. This was even raised by one of the respondents during the focus group discussions who said:

"I am going to say Spar, because if you think about it, you can walk into Spar and get a meal for 30 bucks, you get curry and rice and get anything within seconds."

Another respondent also said *"Even though it's not giving them much profit some competitors are now charging very low prices just to attract more customers and once they in your restaurant they will buy more food. "*

Further said: *"Reducing of prices is another way some restaurants are using as a way to fight competition especially with us as when times are tough, customers look at where I can get the cheapest meal from."*

The result above was supported by information from literature review that indicated, "More people are choosing to rather eat in at home and make their own food instead of going out to grab something to eat. A clear sign of struggling times for South African consumers. From

the above it is clear that Total Income of R61.95billion is not a lot more than total expenditure of R60.3billion, signalling very thin profit margins in the industry. This might be due to strong competition in the market or depressed consumer spending in the current economic climate" (South Africa's Food and Beverages Sector, 2019).

4.3.1.3 Sub Theme 3: Speed and Agility or Failure

Speed and Agility

Another aspect that is of importance when it comes to Fast Foods business is that of speed and accuracy, this action was identified with Spar and Nando's. Respondent one had this to share: *"Nando's tells you that your order is going to be 15 minutes and they give you your order in 10 minutes. So they under promise and over deliver, at least they don't overcommit"*

Yet another respondent also said: *"At Spar they are quick and fast, not to mention their delicious fresh dishes, meals are prepared already, we must never take Spar lightly, and they mean business. You order, receive and pay. "*

Just to support the same view about competitor action, another respondent said: *"in terms of accuracy, some restaurants are trying their best to be accurate when it comes to their service delivery, I have never received a wrong food item from Wimpy ever in my life, and they always get my order right."*

This result is also supported by the literature review that points out, sometimes the quality and timing are imperfect while seeking to meet customer needs. Some examples include items that are missing, or no condiments provided and long waiting times for food. Yet in spite of the difficulties, the industry continues to grow and prosper. Customers always remember how you make them feel, as much as you want to serve the customer off with speed , do not forget to make your customer feel special so they come back (Lord Mattke, 2014).

Restaurants closing down

Some of the competitors are closing down due to the fact that there is no more business. The recent economic melt-down in South Africa has seen so many business closing down while some are cutting down their production and labour. One respondent said:

"In Pietermaritzburg, there is one Nando's which closed down because business was not there anymore. And there is another one that is most likely to close down as well because of business is not there anymore, prices have gone up."

In support of the same point of closing down of competitors another respondent said: *"Some competitors are closing their restaurants just because there is no more business, people are buying food and preparing home meals because the cost of living is high. We really have to try to remain open by offering good customer service and sell value."*

According to Ian Cheshire (2010), "sustaining the sustainability agenda" and really entrenching it in the organisation, is the exclusive contemporary set of tasks on a ten year view. Outside of that, all being well it becomes much more business as normal. One can compare it to the quality revolution that we experienced in the eighties whereby companies died. Someday soon this is going to be the same for "sustainability." Several organisations probably got ten years or longer before there being a need for sustainability leadership to be applied in order to stay alive (Visser and Courtice, 2011).

4.3.2 Theme 2: Communication Between Leaders and Teams

4.3.2.1   Sub Theme 1: Communication Challenges
Language Challenges

Another aspect that is very important in the Fast Foods industry is that of communication. For any business to be, successful communication is very vital and during the research, it was discovered that one of the first challenges faced in most branches of McDonalds across the country was that there is poor communication mainly because of language barriers. Some shift workers especially those who speak IsiZulu find it a challenge to communicate with clients who speak in English whereas also, when a Zulu client comes to the shop, some of them find it a challenge to communicate in English. In other words, language barrier is one of the greatest challenges to the communication in McDonalds. One of the respondents said:

"The level of communication is poor, one of the reasons being that some of the shift workers lack confidence to speak in another language."

To support the same issue another respondent said: *"For example if you take a person who works in Pinetown where most people speak Zulu, and place him in Ballito that person won't be able to communicate well."*

Further, another respondent said: *"English is the business language of South Africa, end of story, so as an organisation we should be able to hire who can communicate well."*

This result is further supported by research by (Fiske, 2010) who defined communication as the transmission of information. Here information is transmitted, but it is not necessarily received or understood. It is assumed basically that communication is the transfer of a message from A to B.

Lack of confidence

Apart from the above, one of the aspect that has been seen to be affecting or causing communication to be poor is that of attitude, some of the shift workers have a negative attitude towards their seniors. The shift workers are not ready to take orders from the shift managers, this was put forward by one of the respondents during the focus group discussions who had this to say: *"Sometimes what some shift leaders lack is confidence, they cannot confront a team member when an issue has risen mainly because some of the team members have a negative attitude towards their leaders"*

Another respondent also said: *"lack of confidence, is one of the reason why restaurant leaders find it difficult to communicate well."*

Commenting on the level of communication, another respondent said: *"Some restaurant leaders are not confident enough to face their team members and tell them boldly what need to be done."*

Findings from Martin *et al.* (2004) in his research established two general communicative styles or behaviours in organizations, association and control or power. "Association" refers to actions that establish and maintain a positive relationship between the manager and follower including communicating interest, friendliness, empathy, warmth, and humour. Being in charge of or power refers to behaviours that establish and maintain the manager's control in the collaboration. Leaders who are more connecting produce better results and

leaders with a more forceful communication style produced poor results. Also highlighted by Kumar et al. (2012) is having good environment consistent with employee's personal value and careers goals then the employee can easily adapt to the organization culture and perform better. Employees and leaders should have the ability to make decisions together. When the employees have more influence in decision making, employees will be more motivated as they had been given more independence with demanding tasks. Given more independence builds trust and encourages employees to move forward in developing their careers and achieve organisation goals *(Kumar et al., 2012).*

Information dissemination challenges

Information dissemination at McDonalds is still poor, especially between the restaurant managers and the shift managers. During discussions it was discovered that it is difficult to filter information from the top management to the shift workers mainly because of the fact that the shift managers does not know to check for example or the managers news and the customer care portal where customers file a complaint, some shift managers are also not trained on how to handle customer complains using the customer care portal. The other reason that was discovered was that most of the old workers have challenges with the use technology for example google, skype, etc. One of the respondents said: *"There are many times when customer complaints are not closed due to the fact that some shift managers do not know how to navigate the portal later on to read and reply emails."*

Another had this to say: *"The complaints remain the portal, only when I get back from my day off I see the complaint logged and only then react."*

Another respondent added: *"This is a critical area of customer service which is not being dealt with urgently and this could lead to poor brand image."*

A review to support that above statements from Hargreaves and Fink (2003) state that leaders must remain relevant by acquiring skills and keep up to date with the latest high tech equipment and tools. The "knowledge society" opens up massive "economic opportunities" as knowledge is at the soul of more of what we produce and how we produce it (Hargreaves and Fink, 2003)

4.3.2.2 Sub Theme 2: Methods Communication

Use of emails

McDonalds use emails to communicate most of their business news and tasks, but the challenge put forward was that most shift leaders are only taught how to open and read mails and that is all they know. This however is one of the reasons why communication at McDonalds is very poor. When shift managers read the messages, they do not communicate the message read instead they were reported to be deleting them. Restaurant leaders discover that they have not seen the messages after the consultant asks for tasks to be actioned. Furthermore, some of the old Restaurant leaders are not computer literate and they feel embarrassed to ask for help. This was reported by one of the respondents during the discussion when she said:

"One of the major challenges we face at McDonalds is that most leaders are not computer literate, on the other hand, some employees do not know how to open emails"

In support of the mentioned issue another respondent said: *"due to lack of computer skills, some of the shift leaders only know how to open and read emails and really you can see there is need for McDonalds to establish basic computer skills training."*

Also, another respondent said: *"sometimes some of the shift leaders will try and take advantage of checking emails and they will go and spent most of their time in the office yet they are supposed to be on the floor."*

Studies from Hargreaves and Fink (2003) highlight sustainability as a way of thinking that is amalgamated and complete. Leaders need to be multi-faceted in their thought processes in order to remain sustainable. We live in a "knowledge society" and to add we have the intricate nature of humans, a system that is particularly crucial to addressing complicated issues. Today's "knowledge society has three facets," that of expanded scientific information, technical and educational spheres. Secondly, involves intricate ways of processing and circulating knowledge and information in a service oriented economy. Third, entails basic changes in how organizations function so that they enhance continuous innovation in products and services, by creating systems, teams and cultures that maximize the opportunities for mutual, impulsive learning. "Knowledge society" depends on having a "cutting edge infrastructure" of information and communication technology that makes all

this learning quicker and hassle free. Leaders must remain relevant by acquiring skills and keep up to date with the latest high tech equipment and tools. The "knowledge society" opens up massive "economic opportunities" as knowledge is at the soul of more of what we produce and how we produce it (Hargreaves and Fink, 2003).

Ways of communication

Restaurant leaders do use some of the current technology to communicate like the use of WhatsApp to send messages, this however have been reported not to be the most effective since some people will only see the messages late, some are reported not to be taking WhatsApp messages so serious hence affecting the level of communication. Furthermore, some of the leaders due to pressure of work don't get time to check their messages on time due to the fact that they have so many groups, while others say that sometimes the phone battery dies during working hours or they do not have data.

"In our restaurants we have WhatsApp groups but it's not always effective, since they messages that are send on WhatsApp are not considered to be urgent, when people are free they will read and respond. If you want something to be communicated urgently I have to make a phone call."

In trying to support the same point another respondent said: *"The challenge with the use of WhatsApp is that most people do not consider the messages send via WhatsApp to be urgent and as result most people open the messages late."*

On the other hand, another respondent said: *"In as much as WhatsApp is good, the only challenge is most people have a tendency of just typing "noted" yet they will not cooperate with the leadership, noted does not mean the message is understood."*

Engaged employee are deeply committed to their employer, leading to key improvement in business outcomes, including reduction in absenteeism, turnover, shrinkage, safety incidents and product defects. Various factors can contribute to the increased level of employee engagement in organisations and some the key behaviours which are associated with "employee engagement" include effective leadership, two way communication, high level of internal cooperation, a focus employee development, a commitment to employee wellbeing and clear, accessible human resource policies and practices to which managers at all level were committed. A combination of powerful leadership and faithful employees can the lead organisations into success and remain sustainable (Zuliawati Mohamed *et al.,* 2018).

4.3.3 Theme 3: Training and Development

4.3.3.1 Sub Theme 1: Restructuring of the Training Process

Training at McDonalds is done in batches, whereby the shift workers are trained in groups in a class environment. The main challenge with such trainings is that not all employees will be participating during the training sessions and yet at the end of training they are given certificates to prove that they have done the training. So their judgements are not based on the aspect of individual participation by the employees to show that they have understood what's required of them when it comes to service provision.

One Respondent said: "*McDonalds training is still very old-fashioned in the sense that we have classroom training instead of virtual training and to gauge the level of understanding from the training cannot be quantified*"

Another respondent said: "*The training of employees together with leaders has to be improved in order to improve the quality of leadership at McDonald's*"

In support of the restructuring of the training another respondent said: "*I think there is need for some changes to be made especially on the part of leadership training, individual assessments must be introduced*"

This findings go hand in hand with the information from literature review that emphasizes Leaders should be given the opportunity to rate themselves as this will allow people to appraise their performance. Leaders do not decide to spend resources on what they should do; they spend resources on what they must do. Organizations must enable funds for training and development programs (Bates, 2006).

4.3.3.2 Sub Theme 2: Management Oriented Training

McDonalds is offering customer service training to its employees but the trainings seem to be ineffective in most cases because when it comes to the execution of duties most of the employees struggle. Some team members give wrong orders to guests, while some take time to process the orders for guests' due to the problem of inadequate trainings received by these restaurant leaders.

During the discussions one of the respondents suggested that McDonalds should come up with leadership and management focused training, this will enhance the skills and abilities of the leaders which in turn results in better running shifts. This approach was seen to have an impact in the sense that all people will feel to be part of what is happening:

"McDonald's offers operations based training on how to run restaurants, there is no focus from manager training to leadership based training"

Another respondent also said: *"McDonalds must focus on management training, in order to equip its leaders with necessary skills because the shift leaders will become the future restaurant leaders"*

In support of the subject of training, one of the respondents also said: *"There is great need for training of all the shift workers not only service delivery but also equipping them with necessary computer skills as well as business ethics in case one day they will be leaders."*

Research by Ng and Kelloff (2013) describe that" fast food thinking" as being reactive rather than proactive which has been transmitted into the manner in which we shape and spear head our organisations. According to Ng and Kelloff (2013) leaders should invest in developing a long-term view in order to remain sustainable. Leaders should be compelled to understand how their actions influence results. In order to understand the effects of "fast food leaders" in organisations and to capitalise in a sustainable future, leaders and employees should have mentors that model reflective decision making, meticulous articulation and transparency. Organisations need to invest in training and development today before leaders become engrained in these unhealthy practices of "fast food thinking." Our environment is constantly evolving, and the skills that are needed to compete in this field is continually changing too (Ng and Kelloff, 2013).

4.3.3.3 Sub Theme 3: Lack of Computer Skills

Most shift workers of McDonalds are not computer literate, they only know how to check emails so it was also emphasized that it is the duty of restaurant managers to teach their shift managers and shift workers. Further, some employees don't even know how to close customer complaints and it is of great need that shift managers be empowered with such skills. Respondent one had this to say: *"Some leaders are scared to work on the computer because they embarrassed to admit that they don't know how to operate a computer."*

Another respondent also said: *"there is need for all the employees of McDonald's to be trained on the basic computer skills since the greatest number of employees are not computer literate"*

Further, another respondent also supported the idea of computer training when she said: *"the challenge we have is most team leaders are not computer literate and there is great need for them to be empowered to deliver better results and be industry relevant"*

Studies from Hargreaves and Fink (2003) highlight sustainability as a way of thinking that is amalgamated and complete. Leaders need to be multi-faceted in their thought processes in order to remain sustainable. We live in a "knowledge society" and to add we have the intricate nature of humans, a system that is particularly crucial to addressing complicated issues. Today's knowledge society has three facets, that of expanded scientific information, technical and educational spheres. Secondly, involves intricate ways of processing and circulating knowledge and information in a service oriented economy. Third, entails basic changes in how organizations function so that they enhance continuous innovation in products and services, by creating systems, teams and cultures that maximize the opportunities for mutual, impulsive learning. "Knowledge society" depends on having a "cutting edge infrastructure" of information and communication technology that makes all this learning quicker and hassle free. Leaders must remain relevant by acquiring skills and keep up to date with the latest high tech equipment and tools.

The "knowledge society" opens up massive "economic opportunities" as knowledge is at the soul of more of what we produce and how we produce it (Hargreaves and Fink, 2003).

4.3.4 Theme 4: Leadership Alignment Of Organizational Culture

4.3.4.1 Sub Theme 1: Meeting for alignment

One of the culture observed at McDonalds is that of having daily routine checks before any shift starts work, the shift manager and his/her team meet for about 5 minutes before the shift starts just to have some team alignment. This culture was reported to be observed by very few teams, hence the reason why there has been some inconsistency when it comes to services delivery. One of the respondents had this to say: *"Currently there is a challenge with teams meeting for those 5 minutes for briefing, not all branches are doing it nowadays and hence why certain members keep on repeating the same mistakes."*

Another respondent also said: *"If the teams fail to have team briefs or a huddle session before the shifts, how will the shift leader communicate to his employees on the floor what needs to be corrected and what is the goal for that shift?"*

In the same view another respondent said: *"If teams are to improve in their service delivery, that briefing moment is always needed just for the shift leader to motivate and encourage his team mates to deliver quality services, the team will not be energised."*

The above result is supported by literature review findings where it was emphasised by Mohr and Spekman (1994) the Communication processes sets of aspects of organisational functioning therefore "communication behaviour" is vital to organisational success (Mohr and Spekman, 1994). When there is effective communication between co- workers, organisations reap the rewards of collaboration. A determinant of associate's dynamism is measured by how information is heard and received. Exchange of information must be insightful and of quality, leaders are to ensure that sufficient preparation is done before dissemination of information. Another guideline is to set goals of when you expect response or feedback. Some quality traits of communication includes aspects as the accuracy, timeliness, adequacy, and credibility of information exchanged.

Timely, accurate, and relevant information is needed if the "goals" of the individuals are to be reached. In order to sustain growth of good relationships between individuals it is important to have honest and open lines of communication. Parting information is often private, confidential and significant so it's important to maintain good relationships with your employees so they feel comfortable to discuss matters with you more frequently. When information is available to employees they feel empowered and complete tasks efficiently

which forms great partnerships. Employees feel a sense of appreciation and work independently (Mohr and Spekman, 1994).

4.3.4.2 Sub Theme 2: Value and respect

At McDonalds, shift employees are expected to value and respect the guests as well as the overall structure. However according to the research findings it has been discovered that some of the shift leaders do not conform to this which has been also supported by some of the complaints filed by some guests(customers). This has been attributed to the fact that the shift leaders are supposed to serve a guests in about 180 seconds which makes it difficult for some guests to be acknowledged, hence they feel like they are not being valued. This has turned out to be affecting the number of loyal guests to the McDonalds brand. One respondent said: *"Shift leaders do not interact with guests in the lobby, they are often found in the back area of the restaurant, yet they are expected to interact with guests and motivate employees on the shift."*

Another respondent further said: *"Due to attitudes of the shift workers, some of the guests are complaining that they are not being respected, our customers feel ignored as they hear the shift manager screaming at the employees to hurry up with the order, if you do nor respect your employees they will not serve your customers well."*

In support of the issue of treating guests with respect and value another respondent also said: *"Most of the complains laid by guests have something to do with respecting the guests, one guest complained that the shift workers do not have respect, furthermore the shift managers do not respect their employees, the leaders do not thank them for their hard work and effort."*

Research by Whipple (2010) further support the above results when it elaborates that you have one opportunity to make a first impression. This is true for our guests as well. We believe that long-lasting impressions are made within the first few seconds within entering our restaurant. As a result, organizations invest time, energy, and resources to ensure that those first impressions are meaningful, positive and memorable. On the other hand visitors are not the only ones who are influenced by first impressions. Employees are also judging their first impression when they enter the organization during their orientation program (Whipple, 2010).

4.3.4.3 Sub Theme 3: Leaders running exceptional shifts

According to the research results gathered during the focus group discussions it was established that McDonald's cooperation is focused on the experience of the future deployment. In saying that the leaders are expected to consolidate their learning by focussing on the skills, techniques and knowledge they require as leaders to lead their restaurant team in the delivery of enhanced customer experiences but unfortunately most of them are not fully skilled. It was also discovered that leaders are not able to run smooth shifts resulting in poor customer services. Respondent one said: "*Our shift managers are not planning the shifts properly, often you find too much people or less people running the shift, this results in a lot of confusion whereby items are not packed or wrong items given to customers.*"

Also, during the focus group discussions, one of the respondents said: "*Sometimes you come across a situation where by guests come into the restaurants and they are told that their order is not ready whereby the customer waits longer that McDonald's service times and this is a sign of poor planning on shift leader.*"

Further to that, one of the respondents said: *"The issue of stock not available e.g. ice-cream cones is as result of the shift leader not doing pre shift checklist and the restaurant leader not ordering the inventory according to usage."*

Information from chapter two further supports the above result regarding leader's from da Cruz et al. (2011) who reveals that Contingency theories of leadership analyse how situational settings change the efficiency of behaviour and the leadership style of a particular leader. It is assumed that neither leader's characteristics or behaviour or styles form leaders automatically. The answer is the suitability of leadership styles to the circumstances confronted by leaders at the time. "Fiedler's contingency theory" of 1964 and 1967, the "paths goal theory" and the leader participation model, among the various contingency theories are most influential. The simple basis of "contingency theory" is that group performance is conditional, in that it depends on the interaction of "leadership styles" and situations that are complimentary to the leader. The first comprehensive model of contingency theory proposed that the efficiency of group performance depends on the combination of the leader's style in interacting with followers and the degree of control and influence the leader has over certain conditions. Leadership styles should be adapted towards both relationships and tasks (da Cruz *et al*., 2011).

4.3.5 Theme 5: Leadership and Customer Service Levels

4.3.5.1 Sub Theme 1: Lack of Proper Planning

When the respondents were asked about the perspective on the current customer service levels, most of them said that they are not happy with the customer levels currently. One of the reasons that was put forward was that some customers come and ask for certain products which were not available in certain branches and as a result, most customers are not happy with the customers' service levels. The respondent had this to say: *"Our shift managers are not ordering stock according to plan, they sometimes under order and other times over-order which leads to very unhappy customers when there is no stock of the product. There is a high probability of losing the customer forever to our competitor"*

Also, another respondent said: *"In some shifts, teams are not balanced with employees and this is attributed to the fact that the shift manager fail to plan, it's also the restaurant leader to blame as the schedule needs to be signed off by them, it not most of the time, that's why restaurants do not have the correct amount of people on the floor"*

During discussions another respondent also said: *"It is a requirement that shift managers plan their shift in advance to avoid poor service delivery, but again the restaurant leader needs to coach the shift managers and correct the behaviour as they are ultimately responsible."*

Numerous organisations do not gain the rewards from on the ground leaders as they're not organized to lead adequately. When dealing with teams, an important notion is to test if there is a clear route set by the leaders for the followers to pursue. Working in group activates shared responsibility and attachment. Coexisting with each other is vital, as it helps with excelling in your role. It is critical that groups cope with the intrinsic stress between them and getting past it to improve level of morale, cohesiveness, trust among individuals, and the way conflict is overseen. This sets the stage for healthy team dynamics and alignment and teams function well (Overfield, 2016).

4.3.5.2 Sub Theme 2: Poor Customer Service

Apart from the above, one of the respondents was concerned about the number of complaints logged by guests, the numbers are too high, meaning that the customers are not satisfied with the services offered by McDonalds. This can all be traced back to poor customer service. The respondent said:

"Our customers are not happy when they have to wait in long queues and when they receive the order they are products missing"

Another respondent said: *"One of the most often complain by guest is that of poor customer service where guest receive wrong orders"*

In support of poor service delivery at McDonalds, one of the respondent said: *"Most of our guests are not impressed with our service when we don't have the product to serve them, especially if they drove to get a Mcflurry or an ice-cream which a popular seller."*

Furthermore, the result gather during the focus group is supported by some findings from literature review from Söderlund and Julander (2003) who feel that it is important for service providers to manage expectations" when a promise is made and not delivered there are serious negative consequences. Employees and leaders create an expectation beyond what is "realistically possible to achieve". Lack of service delivery has a strong negative effect on customer satisfaction, especially when trust is high, it is important for the organisations to find ways of monitoring poor service experiences and respond quickly to do damage control. Deliver what you promise as customers need to trust brands and brands must deliver as promised. Trust will serve as a cushion or 'glue' for the effects of service performance on satisfaction, however if satisfaction repeatedly differs from what is promised the customer is expected to lose trust (Söderlund and Julander, 2003).

CHAPTER 5

Conclusions and Recommendations

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5.1 Introduction

This chapter looked into the results from literature review as well as those from chapter 4 and come up with some conclusions and recommendations based on the results. Recommendations on the study are made and further conclusions made based on the results gathered in this research.

5.2 Conclusion

After the review of the past researches and this current research a conclusion has been reached that is, there is need for restaurant leaders to have adequate knowledge about their competitors and have an action plan for the McDonald's business to remain viable and competitive. It was found that restaurant leaders and shift mangers are not aware of competitor activity. The results from the research have suggested that McDonalds uses certain methods of communication like WhatsApp, emails and telephone calls. However, some of these ways of communication have been reported not to be effective especially the use of WhatsApp. Apart from the above, it was discovered that there is no consistent communication method between restaurant managers and shift managers to employees. Communication channels are blurred, not concise and not two way.

The results from the research indicated that McDonald offers training and orientation of its employees on customer service issues, however the training principles and orientation is not executed 100%. Also, it was discovered that most of the shift managers only know how to open and read mails, they lack computer skills. It was also found that there is a demand for leadership programmes as the current training programmes contain aspects of hard skills and leaders are lacking soft skills. It was concluded that there is no in depth formal customer service training offered at McDonald's. After all the information gathered, it can be concluded that most team leaders are aware of cultivating a culture of selling at McDonalds, however this is not done to the expected capacity. There are flaws in the alignment of leaders and crew on shifts, whereby shift leaders were found to be inconsistent with regular meetings to be held as part of McDonald's daily routine before running your shift.

This lack of consistency around aligning your teams translated directly into poor customer service and was picked up in the complaints portal made by customers. According to the results gathered in this research, most restaurant managers were not satisfied with the current customer service levels at McDonald's. It was found apart from customers receiving incorrect orders and long queuing times during peak periods, employee motivation levels was a contributing factor. It was also discovered that some of the employees face a challenge when it comes to communicating with guests due to language barriers which resulted in poor customer service delivery.

5.3 Recommendations

5.3.1 Recommendations related to objective 1

From our findings, one respondent said: *"some of our competitors are now using promotions as a tool to compete with us where they are charging very low prices as well and some promotions are better value than us."*

Another respondent said: *"Some of the restaurant have gone to the extent of doing some great adverts to attract customers."*

Based on the conclusions and these findings, the following recommendations were made when dealing with leadership within the branches of McDonald's:

- Leaders need to have a thorough knowledge about the competitors in order for them to remain competitive and sustainable in the market.
- It is hereby recommended that leaders from all teams and level should have knowledge of competitor actions, for example the key activities like promotions, and the different types of menus offered so we can offer a similar value offer to retain our customers within our brand.
- Restaurant leaders should also be able to mystery shop their competitors so as to keep up to date with the current trends in the market and learn best practices.
- Leaders need to know when a competitor opens their doors next to them how to react and have a relevant marketing strategy available.

5.3.2 Recommendations related to objective 2

Gathered from the findings it was clear that communication was ineffective, the study recommends that leaders should be effective, this could be achieved through simple training. This is also anchored by one of the respondents that said: *"McDonalds must focus on management training, in order to equip its leaders with necessary skills because the shift leaders will become the future restaurant leaders".*

Based on the results gathered in this research the following recommendations were made:

- Leaders should be effective communicators all the time as this helps the business to run smoothly with no confusion around missing.
- Leaders should take time to listen to their team members' grievances and should be able to resolve every issue to their satisfaction so that the matter doesn't escalate which leads to demotivated crew which translates to poor customer service.
- Communication must be a two-way channel whereby the leaders should disseminate information to their team members and allow the team members to have a say at any time they have anything to communicate, they will feel empowered and respected.
- Democratic leadership is the best approach recommended to be used by restaurant leaders as this gives all the employees confidence and a sense of belonging to the organisation.
- Also, leaders in the organisation should find time to listen to the concerns of their fellow employees and give them room to contribute towards the positive movement of the organisation.

5.3.3 Recommendations related to objective 3

The QSR Industry thrives on Customer Service. Without adequate monitoring and improvement of customer service levels, they will not succeed. Staff need to be trained in Customer Service Management. Even from our respondents, one said: *"If teams are to improve in their service delivery, that briefing moment is always needed just for the shift leader to motivate and encourage his team mates to deliver quality services, the team will not be energised."*

Also, during the focus group discussions, one of the respondents said: "*Sometimes you come across a situation where by guests come into the restaurants and they are told that their*

order is not ready whereby the customer waits longer that McDonald's service times and this is a sign of poor planning on shift leader."

With reference to the results gathered in this research, the following recommendations have been made:

- For any business to succeed customer service training is very important as it builds a good brand image for the business.
- In order for McDonalds to remain competitive in the QSR industry, in depth customer service training should continue to be offered to its teams so as to attract and retain more guests.
- Due to technological advancements, it is hereby recommended that McDonalds must offer basic computer training to its employees so as to enhance their communication ability.
- In-depth leadership focused programs are highly recommended to upskill leadership structure at restaurant level.

5.3.4   Recommendations related to objective 4

The QSR Industry operates on some common organisational culture. This culture needs to be aligned with the leadership styles so that it influences customers positively. Hence, we recommend that:

- Organisational culture is a very important attribute and team leaders must maximise efforts in cultivating the McDonalds hospitality to set them apart from competitors.
- In the fast food industry, employees must be groomed to practice the culture of selling their products and become brand ambassadors.
- A culture of continuous learning and communicating is recommended for alignment and consistency and employees will feel appreciated and inspired.

5.3.5 Recommendations related to objective 5

Some findings of the study indicate quite a number of complaints logged by guests, the numbers are too high, meaning that the customers are not satisfied with the services offered by McDonalds. This can all be traced back to poor customer service. The respondent said:

"Our customers are not happy when they have to wait in long queues and when they receive the order they are products missing"

In support of poor service delivery at McDonalds, one of the respondent said: *"Most of our guests are not impressed with our service when we don't have the product to serve them, especially if they drove to get a Mcflurry or an ice-cream which a popular seller."*

Based on these findings, the study recommends:

- That good customer service promotes increased sales therefore team leaders must make sure that a system that promotes gold standard experience to the guests all the time is in place.
- To promote good customer service, leaders need to ensure that employees are energized to deliver exceptional service "every customer, every time."
- When giving out orders, the restaurant employees must be able to issue out correct orders, a "checker" should be put in place to avoid this.

5.4 Recommendations for further Research

This research was carried out in the province of KwaZulu-Natal which carries restrictions when making national decisions. In the future, the research can be done around the whole of South Africa. Furthermore, the research can be done including all the employees of McDonald's since this research was mainly limited to team leaders. Inclusion of all the employees will make it easy for the aspect of communication and training to be understood much better. Resources permitting, it will also be helpful for the research to include the customers of McDonald's since they are also major stakeholders in the profitability of the business.

5.5 Limitations of the study

The scope of the research is limited to the South African context with emphasis on the fast food industry. It is not representative of the entire Fast food sector of the country. The research is also limited to the province of KwaZulu-Natal therefore it is valid for the above mentioned departments. The research results and findings should be duplicated and extended to various other branches within the province and country. The sample size is representative of a small population of the management teams of McDonald's South Africa. Larger trials are merited so as to prevent generalization of findings. The research instrument was administered in English which then turned to pose a challenge to some of the respondents in the sense that they were not able to understand the questions asked. Nine official languages exist in South Africa encompassing various ethnic backgrounds. Finally, due to limited time and resource constraints, the depth of the study and research findings may touch the surface of the subject and further investigations are merited.

5.6 Summary

Discussions were made on the results gathered in this research and it was highlighted that sound communication strategies and vigilant leadership is crucial in the operating of restaurants in the QSR industry. Leaders need to understand the potential impact of the competitor as organisations need to be proactive to remain sustainable. The chapter also looked at all the objectives and their conclusions. McDonald's corporation has an aggressive business plan which is to focus on talent management and succession planning. This step is inevitable as the market share is growing. McDonald's plan to leverage talent through global employment programmes and a key strategic driver is to retain talent and help leaders grow the business. Swift growth plans aiming at a 100% execution. A solid Message from middle management is "our people are our blood line." Some means to stay relevant is to integrate digital platform with IT (Technology). Reduce complexity by doing fewer things better.

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Abstract

The fast food industry in South Africa employs thousands of people each year and is a rapidly growing industry. Quickly served customers translate into better service which translates into growth. The current challenge that leaders face in the Quick Service Restaurants (QSR) industry is that they are not adequately equipped to lead and communicate in order to remain sustainable. The aim of this study was to understand the power of the leadership role, its influence and effective communication strategies in order to remain sustainable in the QSR industry in Durban, South Africa. This was a cross-sectional qualitative study conducted among eight restaurant managers who were selected purposefully. Data were collected using focus group discussions and analysed thematically using NVIVO software programme. Results showed that shift leaders had little knowledge about their competitor activities, also they lack computer skills. Further, it was also discovered that there is a need for more specific leadership training and in-depth customer service training. On the communication part, it was discovered that the current ways of communication are not effective enough since they use platforms like WhatsApp, which was believed to be not effective in transferring messages. More so, it was discovered that the leadership is still stuck in their old way of doing things and they are finding it a challenge to adapt to new technology and new ways of completing tasks. It is recommended that McDonald's leaders need to identify and prepare for the fourth industrial revolution. There is a demand for McDonald's to hire according to the new restaurant leader success profile created by succession planning. Focus on capacity building to increase the number of core curriculum courses and change from conventional to digital training platforms. Formalise mentorships programmes. Progress on talent development and management development programmes. Drive an international computer licence programme to allow our future leaders to uplift and grow computer literacy skills. Enhance the skills of restaurant leaders that lead others but more importantly, themselves. Build basic and enduring leadership skills. Deepen knowledge and leadership capabilities by using impactful business simulation systems in the training agenda. Drive leaner led programmes to remain relevant. Create a culture of engagement and support.