Exploring customer satisfaction with the healthier food options available at fast-food outlets in South Africa

by

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University of South Africa

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DECLARATION

I declare that "*Exploring customer satisfaction with the healthier food options available at fast-food outlets in South Africa*", submitted in fulfilment of the requirements for the degree of Master of Commerce in the subject of Business Management with specialisation in Marketing at the University of South Africa (UNISA), is my own work and that all sources utilised within this research study have been acknowledged by means of complete references.

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Melanie Gopaul

December 2013

DEDICATION

To my parents, Sharen and Christopher Gopaul, who have always inspired and encouraged me to pursue my dreams – thank you for all the unconditional love, guidance and support that you have given me throughout my studies.

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"Challenges are what make life interesting;
overcoming them is what makes life meaningful."
– Joshua J. Marine –

ABSTRACT

The South African fast-food industry is growing steadily, and so is the trend towards healthy eating. South Africans are becoming more aware of what they put into their bodies and not only do they want to consume meals that are quick and convenient, but they also want to ensure that what they are eating offers nutritional benefits. Although fast-food outlets have responded to customer demand by adding healthier food options to their menus, customer satisfaction regarding these options has not been investigated sufficiently in South Africa.

The purpose of this study was to explore customer satisfaction with the healthier food options available at fast-food outlets in South Africa. An extensive literature review was conducted on the South African fast-food industry (the link between fast-food and obesity was noted, followed by a discussion on the trend towards healthy eating) and customer satisfaction. An empirical study was conducted, in which data was collected from students studying at the University of Pretoria by means of self-administered questionnaires. The study followed a mixed method approach, incorporating both qualitative and quantitative research in order to satisfy the research objectives.

The results of this research study indicate that there is a high level of satisfaction amongst South African customers with the healthier food options available at fast-food outlets.

<u>Key terms</u>

Fast-food, fast-food outlets, fast-food industry, customer satisfaction, obesity, healthy eating, healthier food options, marketing, marketing research

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CHAPTER 1

INTRODUCTION TO THE STUDY

1.1 INTRODUCTION

This chapter serves as an introduction to the study. Firstly, the purpose of the study is explained, followed by a background sketch of the fast-food industry and the importance of customer satisfaction. The research question and objectives are then discussed, followed by a brief discussion of the research methodology employed. Lastly, the orientation to the study will be identified.

1.2 PURPOSE OF THE STUDY

The purpose of this study was to explore customer satisfaction with the healthier food options available at fast-food outlets in South Africa, with the aim of contributing to the field of marketing, specifically within the fast-food industry.

This research study followed a consumer-centred approach in an attempt to determine how satisfied customers are with the healthier food options available at fast-food outlets in South Africa, an area that has, up until now, received limited attention in academic literature (as searched on Google Scholar and databases such as Emerald, EBSCOhost, ScienceDirect and SAGE). The study provides fast-food outlets with a better understanding of their customers and the customers' views regarding the healthier food options offered, thereby enabling marketing managers to improve their existing marketing strategies and their offerings to the market.

1.3 BACKGROUND SKETCH

The worldwide growth of the fast-food industry has been phenomenal (Van Zyl, Steyn & Marais, 2010:124). The fast-food industry has become one of the fastest growing industries in the world (QSR, 2008) due to the tremendous increase in money spent on fast-food (Van Zyl *et al.*, 2010:124), the rise in the number of fast-food outlets (Sipahi, 2010:74) and the global expansion of this sector (Freemark, 2010:444).

The United States population is one of the major consumers of fast-food (DeRocco, 2006:122), with approximately one-quarter of the population eating fast-food every day (MacDonald, 2012).

Within the American fast-food industry, the three leading popular fast-food outlets in terms of sales are McDonald's, Subway and Starbucks (Technomic report, 2011; Marketing Charts, 2013). McDonald's comes in at number one with the typical American consumer eating about three hamburgers and four orders of chips every week (Cordo, 2007:1; Marketing Charts, 2013). Surprisingly, statistics indicate that Americans actually spend more money on fast-food than they do on computers, cars and higher education. They even spend more on fast-food than they do on newspapers, magazines, movies, music, videos and books combined (Walker, 2009:5).

Americans, however, are not the only major consumers of fast food. In Australia, fast-food represents one of the biggest segments within the commercial food service sector (Australian Food & Grocery Council, 2010) with the average Australian eating out about four times a week (National Heart Foundation of Australia, 2011:2). Canada's restaurant and foodservice industry has grown immensely, generating more than $60 billion in annual sales with fast-food outlets accounting for $20.4 billion (Canadian Restaurant and Foodservices Association, 2010). In the United Kingdom, the market for fast-food was £10.13 billion in 2009, an increase of 4.3% from 2008 (Thompson, 2011:9).

Fast-food is not just a phenomenon in the developed countries but also in many developing countries (Misra & Khurana, 2008:20; Bhuian, 2000:40). The acceptance of fast-food is swiftly spreading throughout many African countries, including South Africa (Bockle, 2009:8). In fact, the results of a South African study (Feeley, Pettifor & Norris, 2009:122) indicate a higher fast-food consumption pattern among the South African adolescent group when compared with American statistics. Results show that the amount of fast-food outlet visits was almost double that of the United States teenage group surveyed. However, the nutrition transition (shifts in dietary patterns with an increased consumption of fats, sugars and refined foods) provided insight as to why this is the case (Feeley *et al*., 2009:122). There is evidence that South Africa has been experiencing a transition at a rate faster than in higher income countries which went through such a transition over many decades (Feeley *et al*., 2009:122). It appears that South Africans' love for fast-food is growing (Analytix Business Intelligence, 2012a). A brief overview of the South African fast-food industry is given below.

1.3.1 The South African fast-food industry

Fast-food appears to be loved by people everywhere and South Africans are no exception. South Africans have been described as "…fast-food junkies who are embracing affordable, large-portioned and immediate consumption fast-food" (Franchise Association of South Africa, 2012).

According to Maumbe (2010:1), South Africa's fast-food consumption patterns reveal that the custom of eating home-cooked meals has decreased, and as income and standards of living rise, more individuals are consuming fast-food. Fast-food is everywhere and is essentially unavoidable (Mike, 2007), whether we go to an airport, petrol station, shopping mall, casino, university or on a cruise, we are surrounded by fast-food outlets. According to the Franchise Association of South Africa, the fast-food franchise industry is one of the fastest growing and most successful divisions of the retail sector (Bizcommunity, 2013). This is further confirmed by the fact that, despite macroeconomic conditions such as inflation, income in the South African food and beverage industry showed an increase of 10.8% in June 2012 compared with June 2011, with fast-food outlets being the dominant contributor to this annual growth rate (Franchise Association of South Africa, 2012).

According to Moorad (2012) the fast-food industry in South Africa is growing rapidly, however, the industry has also received considerable attention with regard to food being deemed unhealthy and lacking in nutritional value (Analytix Business Intelligence, 2012a). Since fast-food has been described as energy-dense foods, high in fats and low in micronutrients (Isganaitis & Lustig, 2005:2451), the fast-food industry has frequently received criticism for contributing to the obesity problem (Maumbe, 2010:11; Binkley, 2006:373). Obesity refers to excessive fat-ness in the body (He, Chen & Feng, 2011:206) and it is commonly referred to as gaining a body mass index (BMI) of 30.0 or higher (Flegal, Carroll, Ogden & Curtin, 2010:235). A BMI is utilised to identify overweight and obesity in adults and is calculated by taking a person's weight and dividing it by height (Flegal *et* *al*., 2010:236). Obesity (discussed in more detail in chapter 2) is considered a problem worldwide (Tomer, 2011:24; Houttuin, 2012). Over the years, however, more consumers have realised the dangers of obesity and its associated health risks. This has resulted in an increasing interest of the nutritional value of fast-food and a demand for foods that are fat-free, low in salt and carbohydrates (Hwang & Cranage, 2010:81; Maumbe, 2010:11; Van Zyl *et al*., 2010:128). In response to this trend, fast-food outlets have been modifying their menus to include a range of healthier food options (Analytix Business Intelligence, 2012a; Euromonitor International, 2011).

However, although many fast-food outlets have adapted to the healthy food trend, very little research has been conducted in South Africa regarding customer satisfaction with the healthier food options available at fast-food outlets. It is essential that managers and owners of fast-food outlets treat the concept of customer satisfaction with their product range with the significance it deserves and from the viewpoint of the customer. As Andaleeb and Conway (2006:3) state, the customer is the final judge of "…how much to spend and where, when and what to eat".

1.3.2 The importance of customer satisfaction

Customer satisfaction refers to the degree to which customers are happy with the products or services offered by an organisation (Kim, Joung, Yuan, Wu & Chen, 2009:281; Rai, 2008:107). Satisfaction is the key to building strong customer relationships (Humphrey, 2011:54). Satisfied customers will generally repurchase the product, buy other products from the organisation, spread positive word-of-mouth, show less interest in the competitors' products (Kotler & Armstrong, 2012:178; Machado & Diggines, 2012:150; Cant, Van Heerden & Ngambi, 2010:438) and are more likely to remain customers (Gelinas, Dull & Wheeler, 2011:348). Sulek and Hensley (2004:236) highlight the importance of customer satisfaction by emphasising that 90% of unsatisfied customers never return to the fast-food outlet or restaurant.

Customer satisfaction determines the prolonged existence and financial success of a company (Harrington, Ottenbacher & Way, 2010:81). It is therefore important that fast-food outlets exhibit a strong customer-driven orientation and satisfy their customers' needs in order to survive in this fast-paced environment (Harrington *et al*., 2010:81). With this in mind, fast-food outlets need to ensure that customer satisfaction is measured on a regular basis to determine how successful they are at providing products and services to the satisfaction of their customers (Nimako & Azumah, 2009:3). Having a better understanding of how their customers feel will enable fast-food outlets to assess their capabilities and therefore take the necessary steps to improve and manage customer satisfaction effectively (Nimako & Azumah, 2009:3). The following research question was thus formulated for this research project.

1.4 THE RESEARCH QUESTION

The research question formulated from the preliminary literature review was as follows: How satisfied are customers with the healthier food options available at fast-food outlets in South Africa? From this research question, primary and secondary research objectives were formulated and are presented below.

1.4.1 Primary objective

The primary objective of this study was to explore customer satisfaction with the healthier food options available at fast-food outlets in South Africa.

1.4.2 Secondary objectives

The secondary objectives of the study were:

- To determine the proportion of customers who have purchased the healthier food options at fast-food outlets.
- To determine the level of customer satisfaction with the food quality of the healthier food options available at fast-food outlets.
- To determine the level of customer satisfaction with the atmosphere at fast-food outlets with reference to the healthier food options.
- To determine the level of customer satisfaction with the service quality at fast-food outlets with reference to the healthier food options.
- To determine the level of customer satisfaction with the convenience of fast-food outlets with reference to the healthier food options.
- To determine the level of customer satisfaction with the price and value of the healthier food options available at fast-food outlets.

- To determine the overall customer satisfaction with fast-food outlets with reference to the healthier food options.

In order to achieve the above research objectives, sound research methodology needed to be considered.

1.5 RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

In this section, a brief discussion of the methodology employed in this study is provided. A more detailed discussion can be found in chapter 4.

1.5.1 Research design

For the purpose of this study the researcher opted to follow an exploratory and descriptive research design. Exploratory research creates insight into the research question and increases the understanding of customer behaviour (Hair, Bush & Ortinau, 2009:51), while descriptive research aims to describe the characteristics of people and attempts to paint a picture of a given situation (Zikmund & Babin, 2010:51). The study further utilised a mixed method approach, whereby both quantitative and qualitative research was incorporated in order to provide a better understanding of the research question.

1.5.2 Population of the study

The target population for this study were students registered at the University of Pretoria. The University of Pretoria was specifically chosen based on convenience and ease of access. In addition, only one university was selected as the goal of the study was not to be representative but to enable other researchers to transfer the findings. Students were chosen as the target population for this study as, according to Student Village (2010), students enrolled at tertiary institutions spent R28.5 billion annually in 2010 and food, groceries and eating out accounted for their main expenditure (Student Village, 2010). Furthermore, it was found that the average student spent more in total than the average South African individual per year. This is illustrated in figure 1.1.

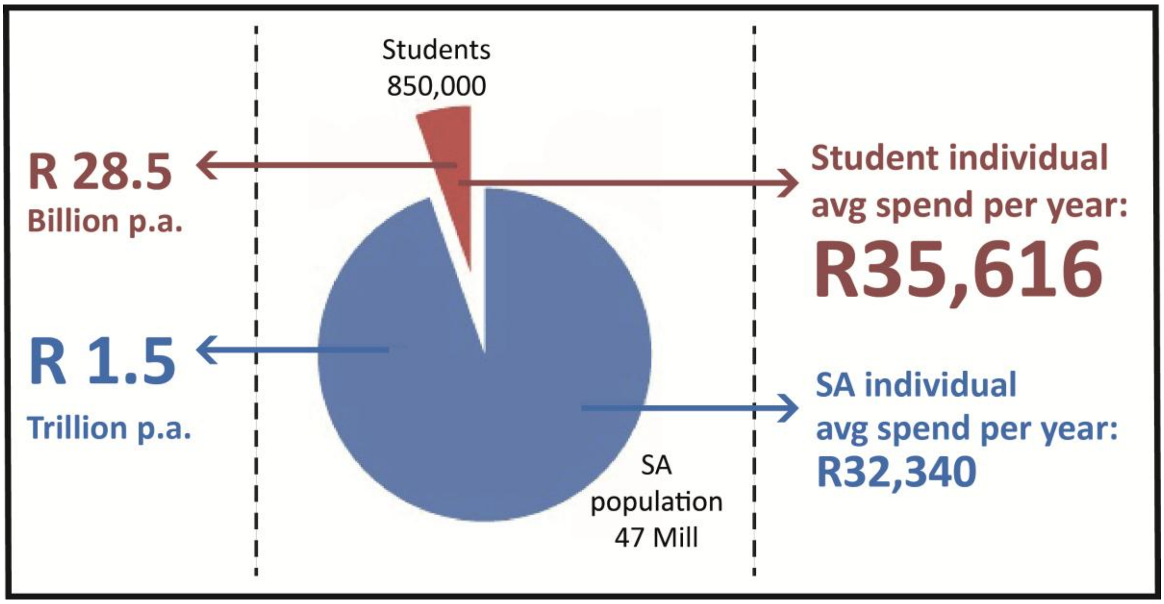


Figure 1.1: South African spending (student individual and South African individual)
Source: Student Village (2010)

1.5.3 Sampling

A non-probability, convenience sampling method was employed in this study, in which the researcher selected respondents on the basis of accessibility. A main limitation of using a non-probability sampling method is that the results may not be generalised to the larger population (Iacobucci & Churchill, 2010:285). However, given the nature of this study, the purpose was not for the results to be representative of the larger population, but rather to enable other researchers to transfer the findings (further limitations of this study are discussed in chapter 6).

Based on the total population size of the University of Pretoria, which is approximately 60 000 students (Cant, Bothma & Aires, 2012:3), a sample size of 382 respondents at a confidence level of 95% would have been considered sufficient (Research Advisors, 2006). This study, however, increased the sample size to 400 respondents in order to accommodate for possible dropout (e.g. incomplete questionnaires) and was therefore deemed adequate by the Academic Research Support Unit (ARSU) and the Bureau for Market Research (BMR).

1.5.4 Data collection

Data was collected through the use of self-administered questionnaires which included closed-ended, open-ended and scaled-response questions. The initial questionnaire was pretested amongst ten students at the University of South Africa (UNISA) in order to determine their opinions regarding question clarity and ease of answering. The main aim was to minimise errors that could potentially occur and to fix any questions that respondents might have found difficult to respond to. Once the questionnaire had been revised and edited, the final questionnaires were distributed to students at the University of Pretoria over a period of two days. Students who agreed to participate in the study were required to fill in the questionnaire and return it immediately on completion.

1.5.5 Data analysis

The qualitative data was analysed through content analysis using NVivo version 10. Categories were identified and thereafter presented through frequency counts. The quantitative data was analysed using SAS JMP version 10. The data was edited, coded and cleaned and presented through frequency counts (illustrated in bar, pie and table format) as well as mean scores. Furthermore, the reliability and validity of the research instrument were tested. The findings are presented in chapter 5.

1.6 ORIENTATION TO THE STUDY

The chapters of this study are highlighted below.

Chapter 1 – Introduction to the study

This chapter provides an introduction to the study. The purpose of the study is highlighted, followed by a background sketch, the research question and objectives and the research methodology employed.

Chapter 2 – The South African fast-food industry

In this chapter the South African fast-food industry is examined. The chapter covers the history and growth of the fast-food industry in South Africa. Furthermore, the link between fast-food and obesity is noted, followed by the trend towards healthy eating.

Chapter 3 – Customer satisfaction

The concept of customer satisfaction is discussed in this chapter. The importance of customer satisfaction is highlighted, followed by a discussion of the factors that influence customer satisfaction. Different models used to measure customer satisfaction are considered, with specific focus on the Institutional DINESERV Model.

Chapter 4 – Research methodology

The research methodology employed in this study is described in detail in this chapter. This chapter focuses on the research process and each step in the process is defined, with further explanation of the research design and methodology applied.

Chapter 5 – Research findings

This chapter presents the research findings of the study. Findings are presented for each question in the research instrument. Furthermore, the reliability and validity of the research instrument are discussed.

Chapter 6 – Conclusions and recommendations

This chapter is the final chapter focusing on the conclusions and recommendations of the study. The study’s contribution to the South African fast-food industry and the study’s limitations are highlighted and, lastly, suggestions for future research are made.

1.7 SUMMARY

This chapter provided an overview of the research study and highlighted what it aimed to achieve. The purpose of the study was stated, followed by a background sketch on the fast-food industry and customer satisfaction. The research question and objectives were then presented, followed by a brief description of the methodology employed. In the next chapter, the South African fast-food industry will be explored in detail by means of a comprehensive literature study.

CHAPTER 2

THE SOUTH AFRICAN FAST-FOOD INDUSTY

2.1 INTRODUCTION

The purpose of this chapter is to provide an overview of the history of fast-food and how it has developed throughout the years. Thereafter, an overview of the South African fast-food industry is given, followed by a discussion of the link between fast-food and obesity. The chapter concludes with a discussion of the trend towards healthy eating.

2.2 THE HISTORY OF FAST-FOOD

There was once a time when all meals were prepared and eaten at a place called “home” (Hyman, 2011). Meals were cooked from scratch (Economides & Economides, 2010:125), took a long time to prepare (Lambert, 2004) and took up most of the average housewife’s time and energy (Hybarger, 2007). A meal from a fast-food restaurant was a treat and mostly reserved for special occasions (Economides & Economides, 2010:125).

Today, however, all this has changed. With the development of fast-food outlets and the transformation of customer lifestyles, more and more people are eating out, making home-cooked meals almost non-existent (Homerick, 2011).

2.2.1 The fast-food concept

The term “fast-food” was first published in the Merriam-Webster dictionary in 1951 (Islam & Ullah, 2010:131), and defined as “…food that can be prepared and served quickly” (Merriam-Webster, 2012). Islam and Ullah (2010:131) describe fast-food as items sold in an outlet, served to customers in a packaged form for take-away with little preparation time. Other researchers have suggested that no universally accepted definition of what constitutes fast-food exists (Koplan, 2007:187; Thornton, Bentley & Kavanagh, 2009:35). However, Koplan (2007:187) states that there is evidence indicating that a large percentage of the foods purchased from restaurants and fast-food outlets tend to be served in larger portions and are higher in total calories and energy density than the foods consumers prepare and eat at home.

Fast-food and fast-food restaurants of some form have been around for centuries (National Restaurant Association, 2011:14). Although the term was only acknowledged in 1951, evidence shows that fast-food dates back to ancient times (Wilson, 2006; Olver, 2011; National Restaurant Association, 2011:14).

2.2.2 The beginning: how it all started

The discussion that follows relates to figure 2.1 below which shows a history timeline, highlighting the beginning of the foodservice industry and its development until the 20th century.

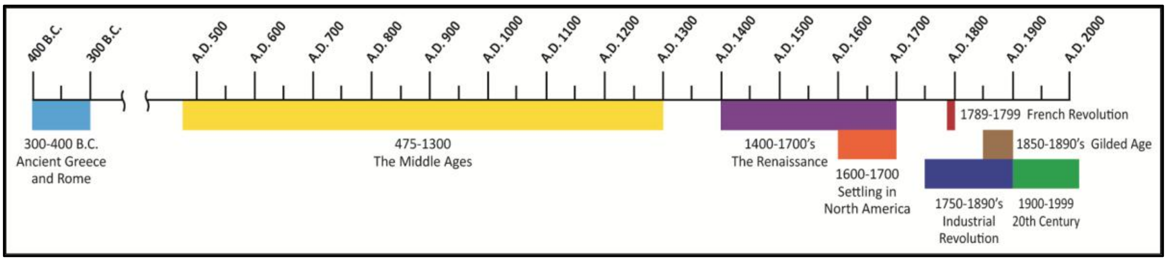


Figure 2.1: History timeline
Source: National Restaurant Association (2011:23)

The desire to travel, for both spiritual growth and commercial gain, stimulated the development of restaurants (Palacio & Theis, 2005:18). As far back as **ancient Greece and Rome (300–400 BC)** (figure 2.1) inns and taverns usually catered for individuals who had a motive to be away from home and needed a place to stop for food and shelter (Wilson, 2006).

The ancient Greeks seldom ate out, but they did enjoy the social aspect of eating and frequently got together for banquets (as shown in figure 2.2). There were also private clubs, called *lesche* (LES-kee) and *phatnai* (FAAT-nay) which offered food and catered for travellers and traders (National Restaurant Association, 2011:14). Meals in ancient Greece were regarded as a time to nourish the soul and body (National Restaurant Association, 2011:14).

Figure 2.2: Ancient banquet
Source: National Restaurant Association (2011:15)

General foods eaten at these banquets included dry fruits, cheese, fish, bread, pork and wine (National Restaurant Association, 2011:15).

The Romans mostly ate meals at home (National Restaurant Association, 2011:15). However, they did have a number of inns, taverns or tabernae (as shown in figure 2.3) which were found near the bathhouses and temples (Olver, 2011). There were different types, but all of them usually had an L or horseshoe-shaped bar made of stone and cement with about five clay pots bricked onto the bar containing ready-to-eat food or drink (Olver, 2011).

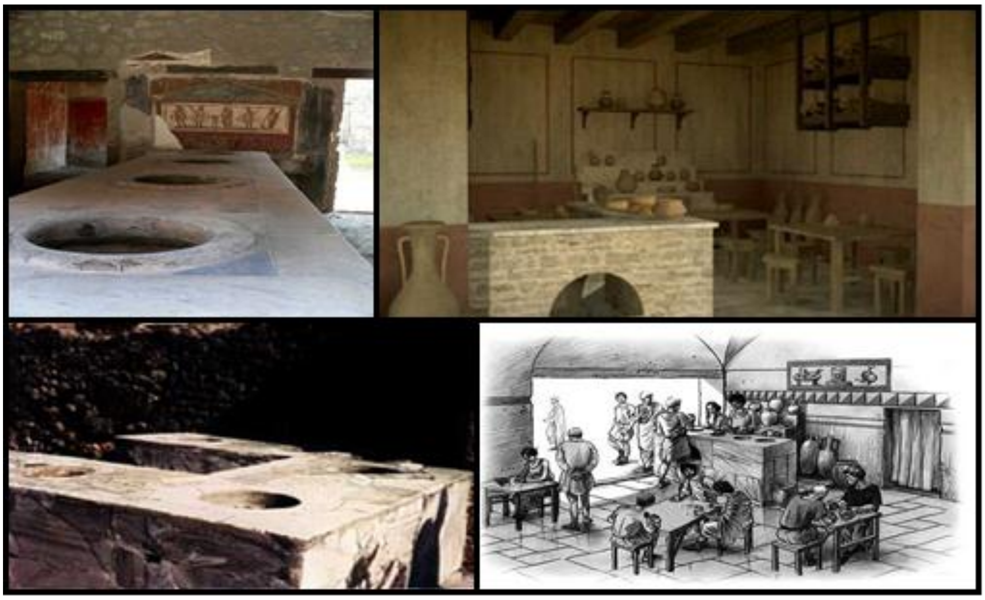


Figure 2.3: Ancient tabernae
Source: Romano Impero (2009) and The Ancient Standard (2007)

Some of the common dishes that were served in these public places included puls (a porridge-like meal), beans, peas and lentils (Olver, 2011). Other dishes also known to be served were roasted meat, cheese, poultry, dry fruits and fish (Olver, 2011).

Figure 2.1 further shows that after the fall of the Roman Empire came the beginning of the **Middle Ages (475–1300)**, a long, slow period of change in Europe (National Restaurant Association, 2011:16). During the Middle Ages, monasteries provided food and shelter for travellers (Kotschevar & Withrow, 2008:18). Inns and taverns, although originated in ancient Greece and Rome (Wilson, 2006), were revived in England during the 12th and 13th centuries (Matterer, 2004). According to FitzJames and Seaghdha (2009:5), London had 354 taverns in 1309 and 197 inns in 1384. Some of the original inns and taverns still stand today, including the New Inn situated in Gloucester (as shown in figure 2.4) and the King's Head at Aylesbury (Rose, 2012).

Figure 2.4: New Inn (Gloucester)
Source: Rose (2012)

The inns made accommodation available for travellers and usually served bread, meat and beer (FitzJames & Seaghdha, 2009:3). The taverns were drinking houses providing for the more wealthy individuals and were common meeting spots for lawyers and guilds (Matterer, 2004; FitzJames & Seaghdha, 2009:3).

The **Renaissance (1400–1700s)** followed the Middle Ages, as shown in figure 2.1. During this period, the European way of life was enhanced due to international trade (National Restaurant Association, 2011:17). The Europeans were introduced to coffee from Africa and this resulted in the first coffeehouse being opened in Oxford, England in 1650 (Liberles, 2012:69).

In 1760, a soup vender named Boulanger started serving hot soups called "restaurers", meaning restoratives, as they had properties to restore one's health (Kotschevar & Withrow, 2008:6). Boulanger called his establishment a "restorante", which is where the term "restaurant" as we know today originated from (Kotschevar & Withrow, 2008:7). However, during this time, there were guilds which were organised in France to increase the state's control over the economy (National Restaurant Association, 2011:18). They opened a court case against Boulanger as they believed he was moving in on their business, but they were not successful (National Restaurant Association, 2011:18). After the **French Revolution (1789–1799)**, a large number of cooks and guild members who were unemployed followed Boulanger's approach and opened their own restaurants. This led to hundreds of restaurants being opened in Paris during this time (National Restaurant Association, 2011:18).

It was in the mid-1600s when stagecoach routes were established and **settlers were moving across North East America (1600–1700)** which created the need for food as well as lodging for travellers (National Restaurant Association, 2011:19). The first American tavern "Cole's Ordinary" was opened in Boston, 1634 by Samuel Cole (Andrews, 2008:4). During this time, staging and coaching inns where travellers could meet, eat and rest became very popular (National Restaurant Association, 2011:19). Inns and taverns were the only places where people could eat a meal away from home (Olver, 2011). Not much care was given to the preparation of meals and if travellers arrived after dinner, they had no choice but to do without (National Restaurant Association, 2011:19).

During the **Industrial Revolution (1750–1890s)** and the **Gilded Age (1850–1890s)**, many factories were built and this resulted in families moving to the cities to work (Knox & Schacht, 2010:22). Many cooks designed horse-drawn kitchens on wheels which they drove to the entrances of factories to sell food, but after the invention of the railroad in 1825, many hotels, dining establishments and facilities began to open up around and near the railway stations (National Restaurant Association, 2011:20).

After the discovery of gold in California in 1848 (Gentile, 2011) a number of restaurants were established. However, with the increased number of people coming into California, it became difficult to cater for and meet everyone's demands (National Restaurant Association, 2011:23). This led to the development of the "cafeteria" which involved an assembly line procedure of serving food fast and cheaply without the need for waiters or waitresses (National Restaurant Association, 2011:23).

By the **20th century (1900–1999)**, people were moving into the cities in search of jobs, and cars became more popular and affordable enough for most families to own, thus enabling them to experience places they had never been before (Kids Health, 2010). Travellers, who once made use of horse, rail or boat were now travelling quicker by car and started to value aspects such as "speed" and "convenience" as part of their journeys (Woloson, 2002). Despite needing reliable and affordable places to stay, travellers also needed reliable places to eat (Woloson, 2002). Travellers, however, were not the only individuals eating on the run. Eating at home with friends and family was slowly diminishing while eating in public was becoming a common phenomenon (Woloson, 2002). The improved pace of life, particularly in urban areas, resulted in people no longer eating as a group around the table, but favouring foods that could be eaten fast and on the go (Woloson, 2002).

The 20th century gave rise to some of the more well-known fast-food outlets that we know today.

2.2.3 The start of fast-food outlets

Jeffery, Baxter, McGuire and Linde (2006) explain that a "fast-food outlet" is characterised by fast service, limited food preparation preferences, a limited menu, paying for a meal before receiving it, no waitrons and the opportunity to consume the meal at the premises or take it away.

It is generally said that the birth of the fast-food industry began when Walter Anderson and Billy Ingram opened up the first American fast-food outlet "White

Castle” (see figure 2.5) in Wichita, Kansas in 1921 (Pendrys, 2011:57). Selling hamburgers at five cents each (Smith, 2011:747), the company served food that was cheap, quick and easy to prepare (Pendrys, 2011:57). However, one of the major problems that was experienced even in those early days was that many people had a negative perception towards hamburger meat as they believed it came from slaughterhouse scraps and spoiled meat (Wilson, 2006). Founders Anderson and Ingram decided to change this perception by using an innovative concept, allowing their customers to see the food being prepared and painting their outlets white to resemble cleanliness (Wilson, 2006).

Figure 2.5: The first White Castle outlet
Source: National Restaurant Association (2011:25)

Due to this strategy, White Castle became very popular. Although it was never the largest of the fast-food chains, it was considered the first and most influential in the fast-food industry (Woloson, 2002). Its success not only gave hamburgers a good reputation (Wilson, 2006), but also inspired and led to many other players in the fast-food industry. In 1940, the first McDonald’s outlet (see figure 2.6) was opened up by brothers Richard and Maurice McDonald, in San Bernardino, California (Bianco, 2012:39). The business operated as a drive-in using carhops – waitrons who served people at their cars (Schlosser, 2012:19). However, the brothers found difficulty in running their business in that they continuously had to find new carhops and cooks because the old ones would leave to look for better paying jobs (Schlosser, 2012:19). They also had to replace the dishes (glassware and silverware) that teenage customers would break or steal (Schlosser, 2012:19). This led to the brothers firing all their carhops (Schlosser, 2012:19) and shutting down their operation in October 1948 (Juan Pollo, 2011). They redesigned the kitchen, added larger grills, simplified the menu, replaced dishes with disposable utensils and reopened a self-service outlet three months later with their new food preparation method called the “Speedee Service System” (Schlosser, 2012:19). This system was designed to create quicker service, lower prices and increase sales (Schlosser, 2012:19).

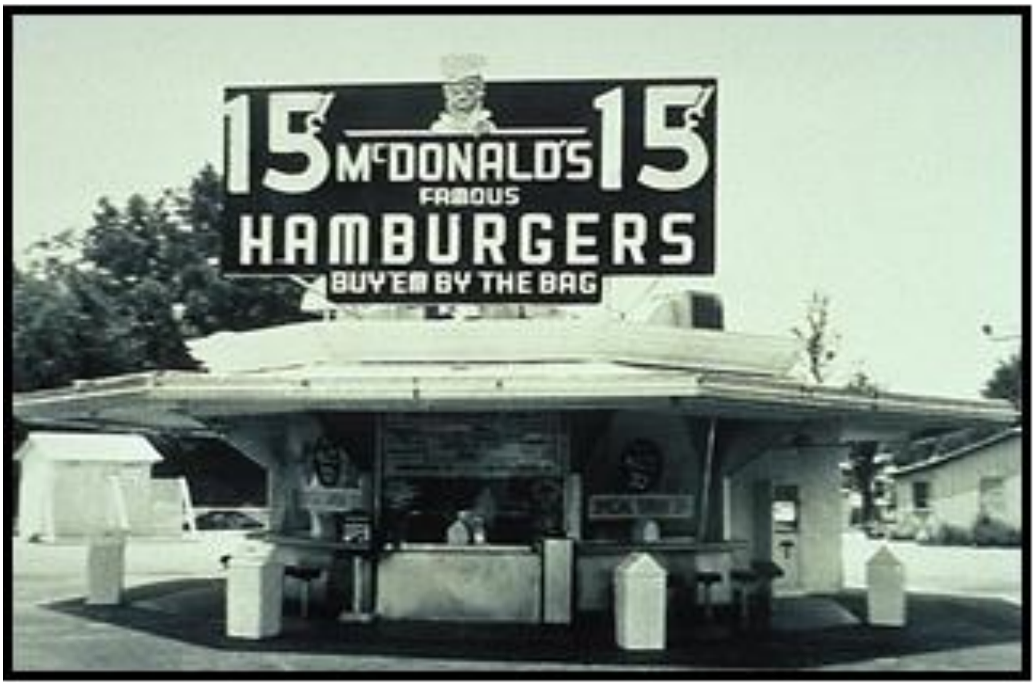


Figure 2.6: McDonald’s outlet in San Bernardino, California
Source: Amusing Planet (2013)

The McDonald brothers experienced great success (Pendrys, 2011:58) and in 1954, they were approached by Ray Kroc (see figure 2.8), a multimixer salesman who found out that the brothers were using several of his high-tech multimixers (Barrow, 2011:19). His curiosity led him to San Bernardino to observe the McDonald’s outlet and he was fascinated by their operation. He joined the company as a franchise agent and in 1955 opened up his first McDonald’s outlet in Des Plaines, Illinois, near Chicago (McDonald’s, 2010) (see figure 2.7).

Figure 2.7: Ray Kroc's first restaurant
Source: Brown (2010)

By 1959, there were already 100 McDonald's outlets established in the United States (Green, 2010). However, problems arose between Kroc and the McDonald brothers. Kroc then decided that he wanted full control over McDonald's and bought them out in 1961 for $2.7 million in cash (Burger, 2008). Since then, the McDonald's Corporation has grown to be the world's biggest chain of fast-food outlets, operating more than 31 000 outlets in 119 countries worldwide (Abdullah, 2009).

It is said that White Castle might have started the fast-food industry, but "…it was Kroc who had the ability to grasp all the complexities of the fast-food concept and deliver it in the best possible way" (Burger, 2008).

Figure 2.8: Ray Kroc – founder of McDonald's Corporation
Source: Leadership With You (2011)

Fast-food outlets spread rapidly after the success of McDonald's (Wilson, 2006), even throughout the African countries, including South Africa (Bockle, 2009:8).

2.3 THE SOUTH AFRICAN FAST-FOOD INDUSTRY

The South African fast-food industry began during the 1960s, when South Africa started to experiment with the fast-food concept (Van Zyl *et al*., 2010:124). Wimpy, which was originally an American company but which sold international rights to J. Lyons & Co in the United Kingdom, opened its first outlet in South Africa in Durban in 1967 (Smith, 2011:654). The company was sold in the late 1970s to Bakers SA Ltd and then later to Famous Brands Limited, previously known as Steers Holdings (Tassiopoulos, 2008:93). Wimpy has been very successful in South Africa and has flourished since then (Smith, 2011:654) with over 500 outlets located throughout the country (Entrepreneur Franchise Zone, 2013).

The South African fast-food industry has increasingly developed since the 1960s with more and more people eating fast-food (Maumbe, 2010:1).

2.3.1 Fast-food consumption in South Africa

As mentioned in chapter 1, South Africa's fast-food consumption patterns have shown a decrease in the ritual of eating home-cooked meals (Maumbe, 2010:1). More people are eating fast-food as both income and standards of living rise (Maumbe, 2010:1). Furthermore, De Klerk (2008:17) states that due to individuals experiencing busier lifestyles, more consumers are purchasing fast-food as it is convenient and less time consuming.

The total income for the South African food and beverages industry was R39.9 billion for 2009 (Statistics South Africa, 2009). Figure 2.9 shows that the largest contributor to the total income was restaurants, coffee shops and tearooms accounting for R18.7 billion, followed by fast-food outlets accounting for R11.5 billion and caterers accounting for R9.7 billion of the total income (Statistics South Africa, 2009).

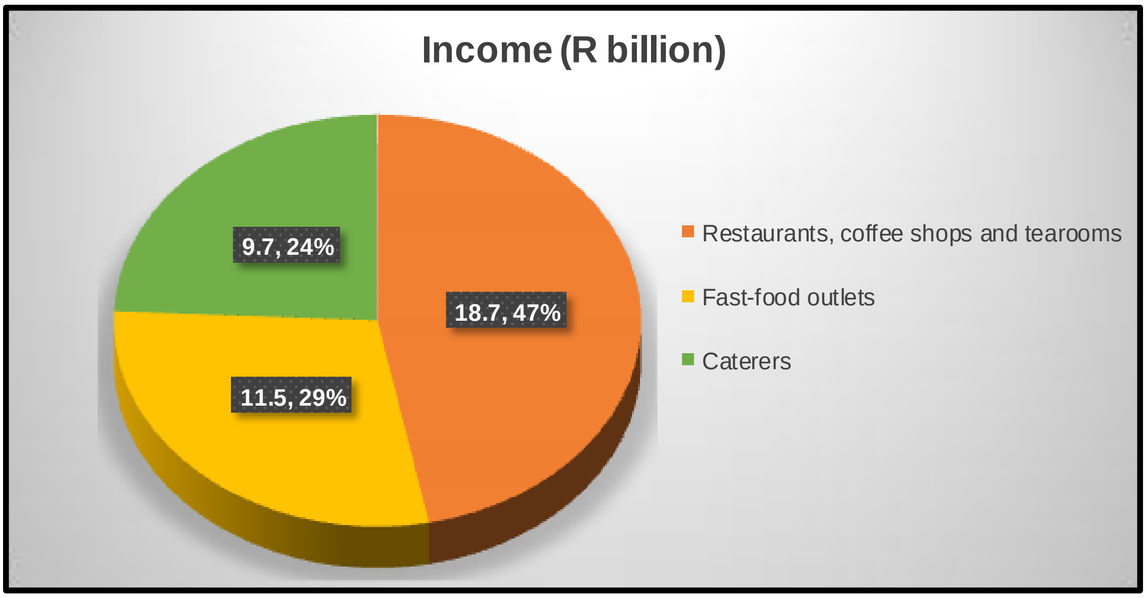


Figure 2.9: Income for the food and beverages industry (2009)
Source: Statistics South Africa (2009)

If these statistics are compared with the income produced by the food and beverages industry in 2007, as shown in table 2.1, it can be observed that the industry has grown considerably. The total industry income from 2007 to 2009 increased by R12.9 billion. More specifically, the income for fast-food outlets as indicated in table 2.1 was R7.7 billion in 2007 and rose to R11.5 billion by 2009, an increase of R3.8 billion (Statistics South Africa, 2007; 2009).

Table 2.1: Food and beverages industry statistics for 2007 and 2009

Type of enterprise	Income 2007 (R billion)	Income 2009 (R billion)	Increase from 2007 to 2009 (R billion)
Restaurants, coffee shops and tearooms	12.6	18.7	6.1
Fast-food outlets	7.7	11.5	3.8
Caterers	6.8	9.7	3.0
Total industry	27.0	39.9	12.9

Source: Statistics South Africa (2007; 2009)

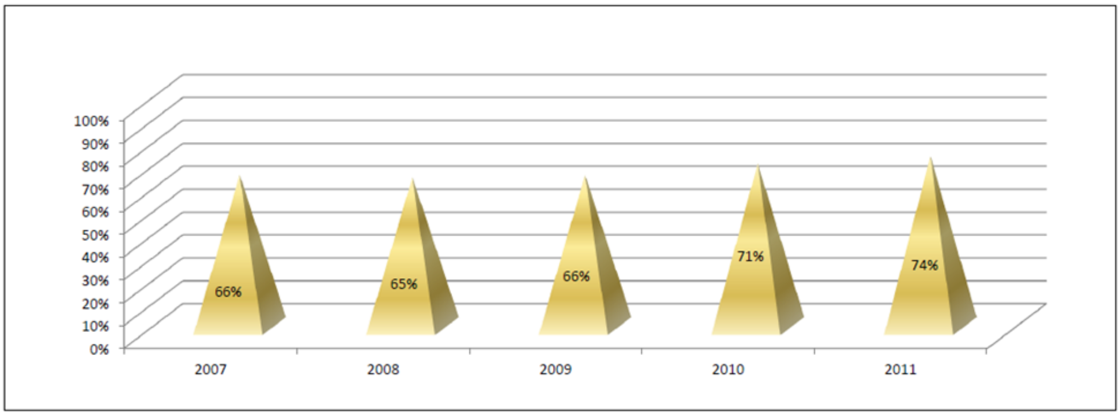
Evidence of growth in the industry can further be seen from statistics for the three months ended January 2012 compared with the three months ended January 2013, in which income increased by 8.8% (see table 2.2). The largest contributor to the 8.8% increase was fast-food outlets (13.6% and contributing 4.6 percentage points) (Statistics South Africa, 2013).

Table 2.2: Food and beverages industry statistics for Nov 2011 – Jan 2012 and Nov 2012 – Jan 2013

Type of enterprise	Income Nov 2011-Jan 2012 (R billion)	Weight	Income Nov 2012-Jan 2013 (R billion)	% change between Nov 2011 - Jan 2012 and Nov 2012-Jan 2013	Contribution (% points) to the total % change
Restaurants and coffee shops	5.8	49.6	6.1	6.6	3.3
Fast-food outlets	3.9	34.0	4.5	13.6	4.6
Caterers	1.9	16.4	2.0	5.5	0.9
Total industry	11.6	100.0	12.6	8.8	8.8

Source: Statistics South Africa (2013)

According to a report by Analytix Business Intelligence (2012a), South Africans' love for fast-food is growing. The growth in its popularity is attributed to fast-food outlets intentionally offering large portions at affordable prices, which appeals to customer desire for value for money (Analytix Business Intelligence, 2012a). Furthermore, accessibility and efficient service delivery of fast-food outlets play a crucial role in the increased consumption of fast-food, since customers' value efficiency and convenience (Analytix Business Intelligence, 2012a). In 2011, three out of four South Africans, 16 years and older (25.3 million), purchased food from a fast-food outlet in a four-week period (Analytix Business Intelligence, 2012b). The results are presented in figure 2.10.



	2007	2008	2009	2010	2011
Total adults (16+ years)	31 109 074	31 305 016	31 418 675	32 962 328	34 037 887
Personally Bought Fast Food from Fast Food Outlet Past 4 Weeks	20 563 668	20 361 619	20 726 348	23 442 703	25 258 122
% of Fast Food Buyers (16+ years)	66%	65%	66%	71%	74%

Figure 2.10: Personal purchase of fast-food from a fast-food outlet
Source: Analytix Business Intelligence (2012b)

Figure 2.10 shows that the percentage of South Africans, 16 and older, who had purchased fast-food within a four-week period increased from 66% (20.6 million) in 2007 to 74% (25.3 million) in 2011. Another interesting finding of the report is related to the fast-food consumption frequency, shown in figure 2.11.

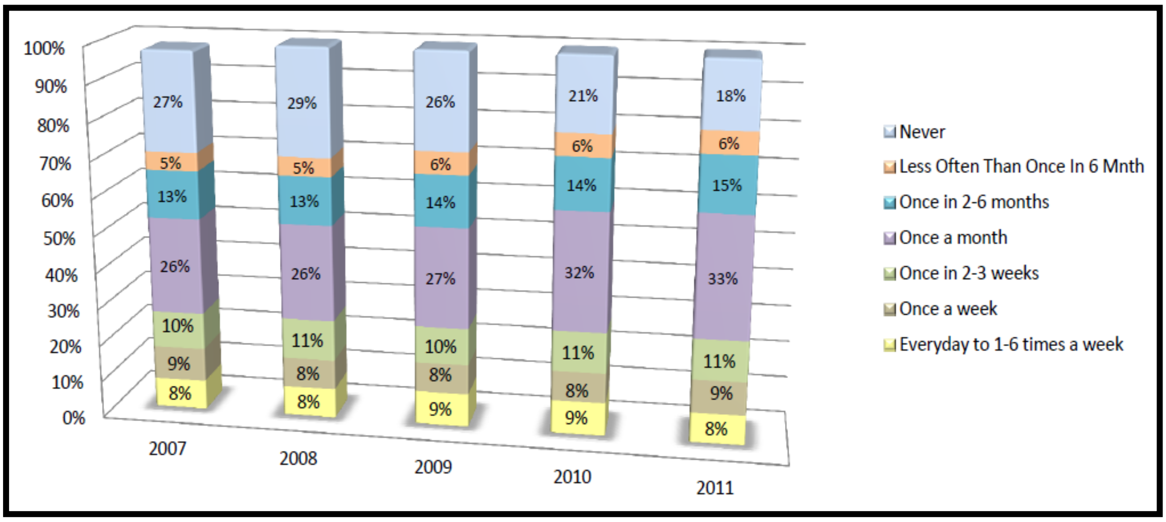


Figure 2.11: Frequency of purchase: 2007–2011
Source: Analytix Business Intelligence (2012a)

Figure 2.11 shows that the percentage of consumers that bought fast-food once a month increased from 26% in 2007 to 33% in 2011. The percentage of consumers who had never purchased fast-food decreased from 27% in 2007 to 18% in 2011. From these results, it is evident that the popularity of fast-food is increasing (Analytix Business Intelligence, 2012a).

As is the case in the United States, a study conducted by Euromonitor in 2007 found that as South Africans are becoming wealthier, they are also becoming pressured for time (De Klerk, 2008:16). Trends such as the increasing number of working women and changes in family structure have made it difficult for South Africans to prepare their own meals at home (De Klerk, 2008:17). As a result, there has been an increased opportunity for fast-food outlets to serve such customers (De Klerk, 2008:17).

Fast-food appeals strongly to customer demand for convenience (Euromonitor International, 2011). A global online customer survey conducted by ACNielsen (2006) revealed that 74% of customers selected convenience as their main reason for purchasing ready-to-eat meals (as shown in figure 2.12). These results are also consistent with previous research, emphasising that customers highly value the concept of convenience (De Klerk, 2008:16; Euromonitor International, 2011; Analytix Business Intelligence, 2012a).

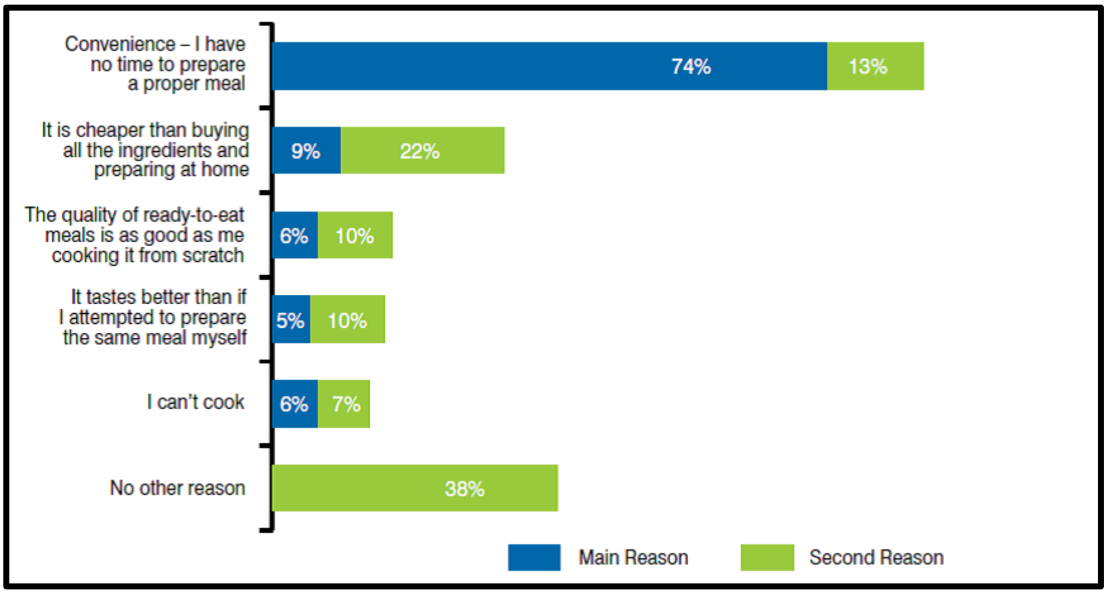


Figure 2.12: Main and second reasons for purchasing ready-to-eat meals
Source: ACNielsen (2006)

It appears that the South African fast-food industry is continuing to accelerate and has established many strong brands in this process, both home-grown and global.

2.3.2 Top fast-food brands in South Africa

The Sunday Times Top Brands 2013 survey revealed that KFC was voted as South Africa's top fast-food brand, followed by Spur, Nando's, McDonald's, Wimpy, Debonairs, Steers, Ocean Basket, Mugg & Bean and Kauai (Sunday Times, 2013:15).

Nando's, one of South Africa's home-grown fast-food outlets, was first opened in 1987 (Nando's, 2013). Today they operate globally in over 30 countries and 5 continents (Nando's, 2013). Nando's appears to be as much loved in the United Kingdom as it is in South Africa (MWEB, 2013). According to Friend (2012), fast-food in the United Kingdom is dominated by three main outlets, namely Pret A Manger, Nando's and EAT, which claimed a combined 76% of market share in 2011.

Similarly, top global fast-food outlets Yum! Brands and McDonald's (Forbes, 2013) have also enjoyed their fair share of success within the South African fast-food industry. Yum! Brands have continued to dominate fast-food with their KFC brand. KFC's first fast-food outlet in South Africa was opened in Orange Grove, Johannesburg, in 1971 (Top brands survey, 2008:118). KFC is currently well established in the country with a total of 613 outlets as of 2011 (Euromonitor International, 2011). KFC was voted as one of South Africa's favourite fast-food outlets since 1988 (Sunday Times, 2013:22) and has experienced great success within the South African market. According to Payne (2011), it intends increasing its store base to 850 by 2015 and to 1 100 by 2020.

Chicken seems to be the most popular type of fast-food in South Africa (De Klerk, 2008:16; Forjoe, 2011:53; Euromonitor International, 2011) and accounted for a 42% share of total fast-food sales in 2010, with KFC and Nando's being the two dominant brands (Euromonitor International, 2011; Sunday Times, 2013:15).

McDonald's arrived in South Africa in 1995 (Smith, 2011:654). Today, it operates about 148 outlets in South Africa's nine provinces (McDonald's South Africa, 2012a). South Africa appears to be one of McDonald's most thriving markets in international history (McDonald's South Africa, 2012a). A record was set when they had established 30 outlets in 23 months and at one phase opened up 10 outlets in just 78 days (McDonald's South Africa, 2012a). It has already invested over R750 million into South Africa's economy (McDonald's South Africa, 2012a).

South Africa has embraced the fast-food culture (Analytix Business Intelligence, 2012a). However, over the years, fast-food and fast-food outlets have been blamed for the rise in obesity in South Africa. The link between fast-food and obesity will be discussed in more detail in the next section.

2.4 THE LINK BETWEEN FAST-FOOD AND OBESITY

Globally, there are approximately 1.46 billion overweight adults, 502 million of whom are considered obese (Lilja, 2011:1). At least 2.8 million adults worldwide are dying every year from conditions that are caused by or related to excess weight (Larson, 2013). Obesity is considered a problem worldwide (Tomer, 2011:24; Houttuin, 2012) and is increasing in nearly every country (Pediatrics, 2011:201). About one in every twenty adult women is considered obese in Japan, compared with one in three in Mexico and the United States, one in four in Jordan and up to seven in ten in Tonga (Miller, 2011). According to Hellmich (2012), about 36% of Americans were overweight in 2010. Hellmich (2012) cautions that if a major public health intervention is not carried out, the obesity problem in the United States is likely to get much worse and levels of obesity could rise to 42% by 2030. Similarly, obesity in South Africa is rapidly rising (Maumbe, 2010:11) and is a serious health problem in children and adults (Van Zyl *et al*., 2010:124).

Statistics indicate that the following percentages of South Africans are overweight or obese (Mail & Guardian, 2012):

- 61% of all South Africans.
- 70% of women over 35.
- 59% of black women 15 years and older.
- 55% of white men 15 years and older.
- 25% of teens and 17% of children under 9 years.

According to the World Heart Federation (2011), globalisation, urbanisation, economic and social developments and changes in transport and food production have transformed the way individuals live and eat in many areas of the world. Traditional diets have been replaced by fast-foods. Tomer (2011:27) has identified nine factors as the key causes of obesity as shown in figure 2.13.

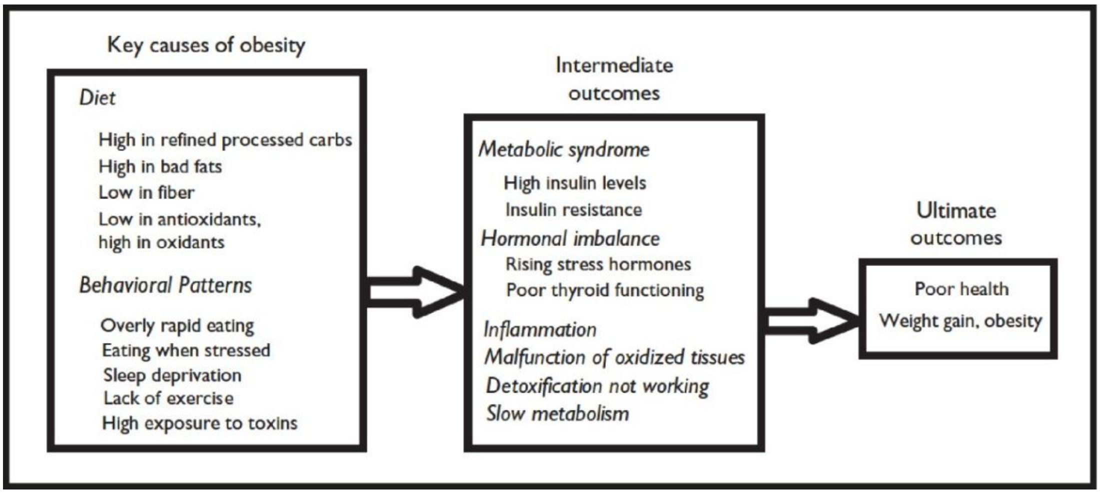


Figure 2.13: Causes of obesity and poor health
Source: Tomer (2011:29)

Figure 2.13 shows the specific dietary factors and behavioural patterns that are likely to cause intermediate outcomes such as metabolic syndrome, hormonal imbalance and inflammation. This in turn could result in poor health, weight gain and obesity.

Obesity is a problem and a major concern to fast-food customers and the fast-food industry itself, as fast-food has been described as energy-dense, low in fibre and micronutrients, high in glycaemic load and is usually served in large portion sizes (Isganaitis & Lustig, 2005:2451). Rosenheck (2008:544) indicates that there is a link between increased fast-food intake and increased caloric consumption, which makes people more vulnerable to weight gain and obesity. Furthermore, McAllister, Dhurandhar, Keith, Aronne, Barger, Baskin, Benca, Biggio, Boggiano, Eisenmann, Elobeid, Fontaine, Gluckman, Hanlon, Katzmarzyk, Pietrobelli, Redden, Ruden, Wang, Waterland, Wright and Allison (2009:869) state that restaurant dining and fast-food outlets have been considered as main contributors to obesity.

As indicated in chapter 1, the fast-food industry has frequently received criticism for contributing to the obesity problem (Maumbe, 2010:11; Binkley, 2006:373) and McDonald’s especially has faced many lawsuits because of this (Gregory, McTyre & Dipietro, 2006:49; Schroder & McEachern, 2005:213). In 2002, a lawsuit was filed against KFC, McDonald’s, Burger King and Wendy’s by Caesar Barber in attempt to hold these fast-food outlets accountable for their contribution to his obesity and health problems (Westover, 2004). Similarly, Jazlen Bradley and Ashley Pelman filed a lawsuit against McDonald’s for not displaying the health risks of Chicken McNuggets and other fast-food that made them overweight (Harris, 2010). Furthermore, a documentary by Morgan Spurlock showed the effects of fast-food, specifically McDonald’s, and its role on obesity. According to Robbins (2010), Spurlock ate only McDonald’s food for a month. The results were dreadful and showed that the then 32-year-old man gained about 11 kilograms. His cholesterol levels rose, accumulations of fat increased in his liver and he further experienced symptoms of heart palpitation, depression and sexual dysfunction (Robbins, 2010).

According to Health24 (2008), South Africans were facing an explosion in obesity already in 2008. As a result of this, many customers have become more health conscious over the years and are becoming increasingly concerned about what food they put into their bodies.

2.5 THE TREND TOWARDS HEALTHY EATING

As much as the fast-food industry has expanded, so has the move towards a healthier lifestyle. There remain growing concerns over health and wellness, as consumers become more aware of what they eat (Hwang & Cranage, 2010:81; Maumbe, 2010:11; Van Zyl *et al*., 2010:128; Euromonitor International, 2011). Not only do customers want to consume meals that are quick and convenient, but they also want to ensure that what they are eating is of high quality and offers nutritional benefits (Euromonitor International, 2011). Van Zyl *et al*. (2010:128), in their study, found that the majority of the respondents indicated that if fast-food outlets offered healthier food options such as salads, vegetables and grilled meat, they would choose these options. A total of 81% of women mentioned that they would opt for a healthier food option, while 73% of men shared that view. Only 12% were unconcerned about their health (Van Zyl *et al*., 2010:128).

Due to the trends and customers moving towards a healthier lifestyle, the fast-food industry has been taking steps to introduce healthier fast-food options to their menus (Euromonitor International, 2011).

2.5.1 Fast-food outlets and their healthier options

Fast-food outlets worldwide have introduced and added healthier food options to their fast-food menus in order to meet those customer demands for food that is low in salt, fat, sugar and carbohydrates. In the United States, McDonald's started offering adult Happy Meals that are carb conscious (Kim, Hertzmana & Hwang, 2010:350), especially for those customers wanting to reduce their portion sizes. They have also planned to provide healthier food for the younger children by adding apple slices to all happy meals, reducing the portion sizes of their French fries (chips) and offering new beverage choices, including fat-free chocolate milk (Usman, 2011).

McDonald's South Africa have made no decisions as yet to follow the United States example with regard to its Happy Meals. However, they do offer a green salad as shown in figure 2.14 and Veggie burger (McDonald's South Africa, 2012b).

Figure 2.14: McDonald's healthier salad
Source: McDonald's South Africa (2012b)

Wimpy shows its commitment to improving the health of South Africans by promoting the need for healthy nutrition and providing guidelines for healthy eating (Wimpy, 2011). Wimpy's healthier food options include their breakfast oats, grilled chicken and fish options, grilled wraps and range of selected salads (chicken fillet, calamari, 'chick n green' and Greek salad) (Wimpy, 2011). Figure 2.15 below shows their oat breakfast, grilled wrap and chicken fillet salad.

Figure 2.15: Wimpy's oat breakfast, grilled wrap and chicken fillet salad
Source: Wimpy (2011)

Steers' healthier food options include the nutritional muesli and yoghurt breakfast and their selected salads (Greek and chicken) as shown in figure 2.16 (Steers, 2012).

Figure 2.16: Steers' salad and muesli breakfast
Source: Steers (2012)

Kentucky Fried Chicken, now known as KFC, changed its name to combat customers' rising concerns about the health risks in eating fried foods (CBSNEWS, 2009). Their healthier food options include oats and muesli breakfast cups, grilled burgers and wraps (as shown in figure 2.17).

Figure 2.17: KFC's oats and muesli cups, grilled burger and wrap
Source: KFC (2011)

While many fast-food outlets have introduced healthier food options, not all have been seen as unhealthy and bad. Nando's is one example of this. When preparing their chicken, excess fat is first trimmed away, the chicken is then marinated and then grilled which further reduces the fat content (Marcus, 2010). Furthermore, no preservatives, artificial flavourings or chemicals are used in their products (Marcus, 2010). In contrast to many of the fast-food outlets, Nando's chickens are high in protein and low in fat (Marcus, 2010). Although their chips are deep fried, it may be substituted with rice and other alternatives. A number of fresh salads are also available to customers (Marcus, 2010).

In August 2010, Famous Brands secured its entry into the “chicken” fast-food category with the acquisition of “Giramundo” offering peri peri flame-grilled chicken (Bizcommunity, 2010). Flame-grilled chicken is becoming increasingly popular amongst customers, due to it being a healthier alternative to fried chicken (Bizcommunity, 2010). Since the acquisition, Famous Brands has improved the look and feel of the brand, and now has approximately 17 outlets across the country (Giramundo, 2013).

Kauai is a healthy fast-food outlet with approximately 45 branches located across South Africa (Kauai, 2011). Founders, John Berry and brothers Carl and Brett Harwin came up with the idea when they were exposed to the succulent fruits of the island paradise of Kauai and thought that “…one day, they would share this tastier, healthier way of life with the world” (Kauai, 2011). They opened up a juice bar that began to flourish. However, after a trip to Cape Town, these three individuals discovered great opportunities in South Africa, considering that healthy food options were limited (Boucher, 2011). In 1996, they opened up the first Kauai outlet in Cape Town that produced a variety of healthy food options (Boucher, 2011; Kauai, 2011). Figure 2.18 shows Kauai’s healthy wrap, yoghurt and smoothie (Kauai, 2011). Kauai is now South Africa’s number one healthy fast-food brand and is competing against the major retail brands (Boucher, 2011; Kauai, 2011).

Figure 2.18: Kauai’s healthy wrap, yoghurt and smoothie
Source: Kauai (2011)

As many countries attempt to address the crisis of obesity, the fast-food industry has taken measures to introduce healthier food options and win over health-conscious customers. Faced with such a trend, fast-food organisations must unquestionably take action to ensure their future (Bizcommunity, 2005).

2.6 SUMMARY

The history of fast-food and the growth of the South African fast-food industry were discussed in this chapter. The link between fast-food and obesity was then pointed out, followed by the trend towards healthy eating. The literature indicates that customers have become more health conscious and have shifted towards a healthier lifestyle. In this regard, fast-food outlets have introduced healthier food options to their menus.

In the chapter that follows, customer satisfaction and its importance will be discussed, with a focus on the fast-food industry.

CHAPTER 3

CUSTOMER SATISFACTION

3.1 INTRODUCTION

This chapter begins with a definition of customer satisfaction, followed by a discussion of its importance and the factors that influence customer satisfaction. Thereafter, the measures of customer satisfaction in a fast-food context are examined, with a focus on the Institutional DINESERV Model, the approach that was followed for this specific study.

3.2 CUSTOMER SATISFACTION

One of the aims of any organisation is to ensure that their customers are satisfied (Reid & Bojanic, 2010:75). Arden and Edwards (2009:19) state that only those organisations that continuously satisfy and delight their customers will succeed.

According to Amoako, Arthur, Bandoh and Katah (2012:17), businesses exist because they have customers to serve and the key to attaining a sustainable competitive advantage is through delivering superior service that result in satisfied customers. Cochran (2003:2) believes that organisations should act in accordance with three basic truths regarding customer satisfaction:

- **Customer satisfaction is the ultimate goal of the organisation:** Cochran (2003:2) states that there is no higher accomplishment than to satisfy the customers whom an organisation has committed itself to serving. Furthermore, many authors are in agreement that customer satisfaction is essential for the survival, growth and success of the organisation (Brink & Berndt, 2010:58; Faarup & Aabroe, 2010:33; Chandrasekar, 2010:132; Durai, 2010:435; Hill & Alexander, 2006:1).

- **Customer satisfaction is an investment:** Customer satisfaction requires an investment in organisational resources (DiMisa & Rinaldi, 2010). Resources must be applied in order to gain an understanding of customers and their requirements, to collect data on customer perceptions and to analyse this data (Cochran, 2003:2). Cochran (2003:2) believes that one of the most important investments that an organisation can make is to invest in customer satisfaction. Investing in customer satisfaction with the optimisation of resources will enable an organisation in attempting to maximise its return on investment (Mukherjee & Kachwala, 2009:85).

- **Everyone must be involved in customer satisfaction:** Keeping customers satisfied is part of everyone’s job in an organisation and all employees should aim to exceed customer expectations (Goeldner & Ritchie, 2009). It is therefore extremely important for top management to continuously communicate to their employees as to how they will be expected to contribute towards achieving customer satisfaction (Cochran, 2003:2).

Fast-food outlets should consider these basic business truths if they wish to satisfy their customers. Ng (2005:2) points out that many studies have indicated customer satisfaction to be an important topic for foodservice managers. Customer satisfaction is frequently used to determine whether customers will revisit a restaurant. Although it cannot be guaranteed that satisfied customers will go back to a specific restaurant, it is almost certain that dissatisfied customers will not (Ng, 2005:2). Customer satisfaction is a critical indicator of an organisation’s past, present and future performance and has for a long time been an important focus amongst academics and marketing practitioners (Nimako & Azumah, 2009:2; Namkung & Jang, 2007:389). It is therefore important to understand the concept of customer satisfaction and how it has been defined.

3.2.1 Customer satisfaction defined

As mentioned in chapter 1, customer satisfaction refers to the degree to which customers are happy or satisfied with the products or services that an organisation offers (Kim *et al*., 2009:281; Rai, 2008:107). However, customer satisfaction has been defined in various ways by different authors. To exemplify, Lovelock, Chew and Wirtz (2012) define customer satisfaction as “…an attitude-like judgement following a purchase act or series of consumer product interactions”. Mittal, Holbrook, Beatty, Raghubir and Woodside (2008:342) consider customer satisfaction as the positive feeling customers get with the outcome of product or service consumption. Ryu, Han and Jang (2010:420) refer to customer satisfaction as "…an evaluation rendered that the product or service experience was at least as good as it was supposed to be".

Although there are many definitions of customer satisfaction, most authors are in agreement as to what it entails. Furthermore, Ha and Jang (2010:3) state that the most generally accepted theory explaining customer satisfaction is based on the classic theory of Lewin's expectancy-disconfirmation model (as shown in figure 3.1).

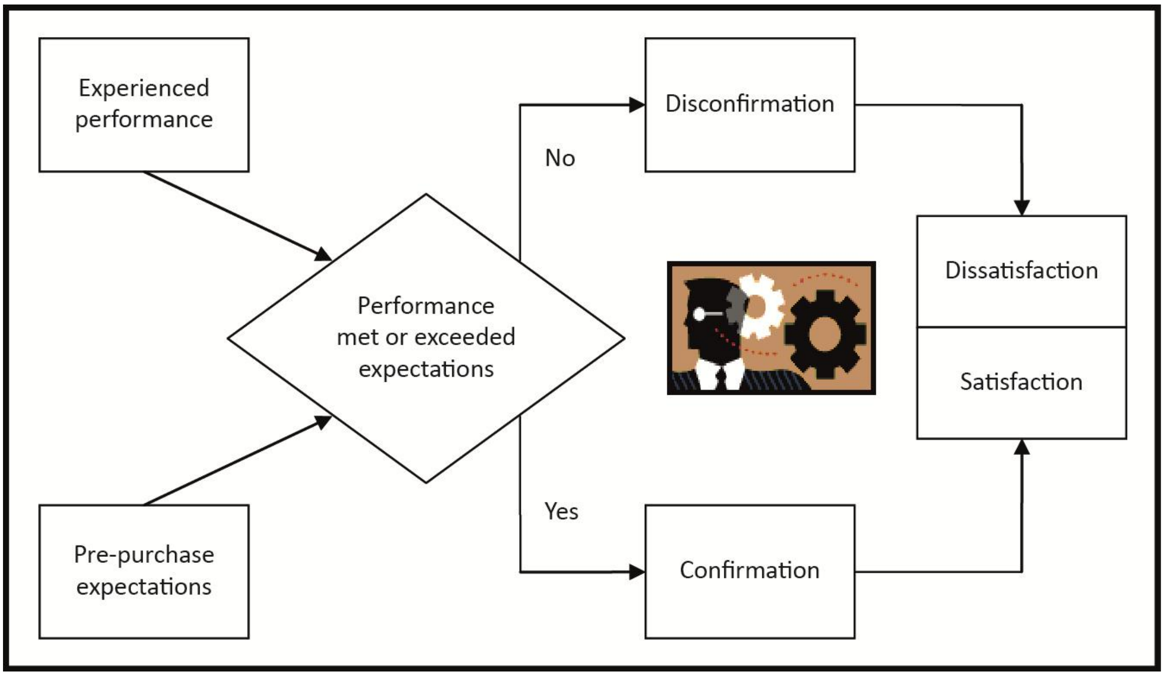


Figure 3.1: Expectations-confirmation-disconfirmation model of consumer satisfaction
Source: Mittal *et al*. (2008:343)

According to the expectancy-disconfirmation theory, the cause for satisfaction or dissatisfaction with a product or service is the performance of that product or service relative to the customer's expectations (Mittal *et al*., 2008:342). Customers obtain products or services with pre-purchase expectations concerning its performance, and as soon as the product or service has been bought and used, the results are compared against those expectations (Mittal *et al*., 2008:342). Figure 3.1 shows that when performance meets or exceeds expectations, expectation confirmation takes place and the customer is satisfied. However, when performance fails to meet expectations, expectation disconfirmation occurs and the customer is then dissatisfied (Ha & Jang, 2010:4). For example, a customer enters a fast-food outlet, orders a grilled chicken salad and expects to receive a fresh salad with crispy lettuce. Instead, the customer receives a salad with lettuce that tastes soggy and old. In this case, the customer's expectations were not met and this will lead to dissatisfaction. It is therefore extremely important for organisations to focus on how well their customers' expectations are being met, as dissatisfied customers will simply take their business elsewhere (Gibson, 2011:89). Mittal *et al*. (2008:341) identify five different levels of satisfaction, represented in figure 3.2 below.

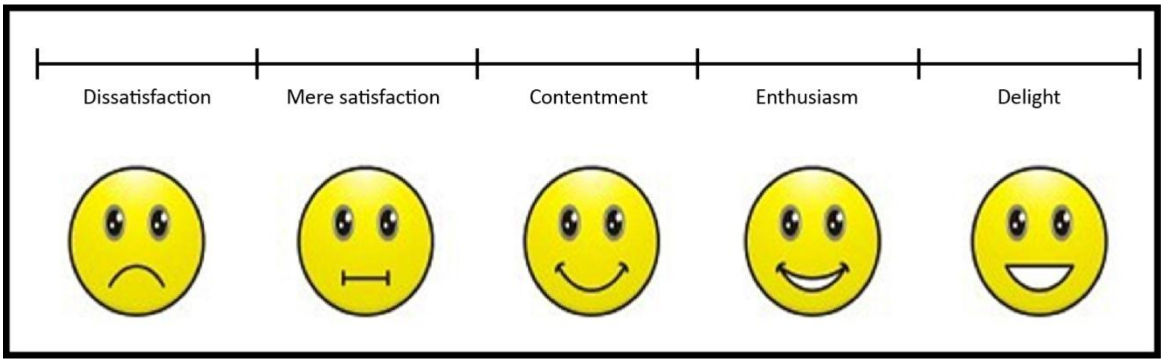


Figure 3.2: The satisfaction continuum
Source: Mittal *et al*. (2008:347)

As already mentioned, **dissatisfaction** results when the performance of a product or service fails to meet the customers' expectations (Ha & Jang, 2010:4). However, as expectations are met, different levels of satisfaction are experienced (Mittal *et al*., 2008:348):

- **Mere satisfaction** results when product or service performance barely meets the customers' expectations. In this case, there is no guarantee that the product or service will be repurchased, as the consumer is more likely to switch to a competitor. Brinkman (2013) points out that organisations need to go beyond mere customer satisfaction in order to create loyal customers.

- **Contentment** is the result of the customers' expectations being well met. Customers who experience contentment do not really bother to search for alternatives and are less likely to switch to a competitor compared with those customers who are merely satisfied.

- **Enthusiasm** occurs when customers' expectations have been exceeded. In this case, customers are more loyal, more likely to purchase the product or service in future and less willing to switch to a competitor.

- **Delight** occurs when the customer is really surprised in a positive way (Wilson, Zeithaml, Bitner & Gremler, 2012:75). A surprise, as described by Mittal *et al*. (2008:348) can take two forms. Firstly, customers can experience surprise when performance is better than what they might have ever thought about or might have considered feasible. Secondly, customers might experience surprise when the product or service offers an attribute that they never expected from that product category at all. Delighting the customer creates an emotional connection to a product or service and not just a rational preference (Govindarajan, 2007:7).

Mittal *et al*. (2008:341) assert that the more the performance of a product or service exceeds the customers' expectations, the higher the satisfaction. For this reason, organisations should focus on the importance of exceeding their customers' expectations and thus creating "highly satisfied" customers. Cacioppo (2000) points out that there is a great difference between "satisfied" and "highly satisfied" customers in terms of loyalty. A "satisfied customer" is not necessarily a loyal customer (Henderson, Beck & Palmatier, 2011:3) and will easily switch to another supplier if a better offer comes along (Kanji, 2002). Research shows that 70% of customers who claim they are satisfied with a product or service will still be willing to switch to a competitor (Kanji, 2002). However, a "highly satisfied" customer is less likely to switch (Kanji, 2002) and will bring in other customers through positive word-of-mouth (Sarshar & Pitt, 2009:402). Hofmeyr and Rice (2000:22) mention that a customer who is less satisfied with a brand has a lower probability of being committed to that brand. However, a customer who is more satisfied with a brand has a higher probability of being committed to that brand and therefore less likely to switch. Figure 3.3 illustrates the loyalty of customers based on their satisfaction level (Bierbaum, 2011).

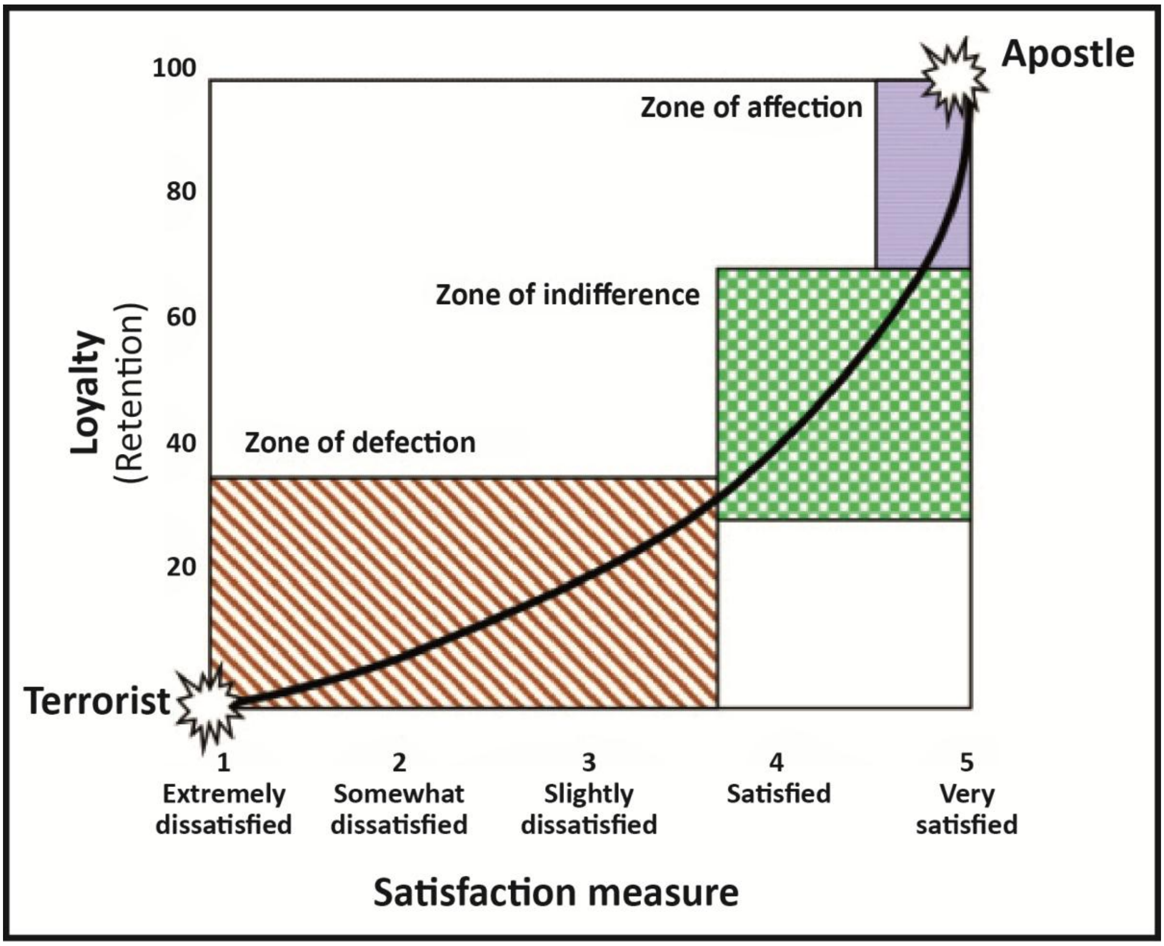


Figure 3.3: Customer loyalty and satisfaction
Source: Bierbaum (2011)

As shown in figure 3.3, there are three main zones, namely defection, indifference and affection. The zone of defection occurs at low levels of satisfaction whereby customers are more likely to switch to a competitor (Lovelock *et al*., 2012). Extremely dissatisfied customers may turn into terrorists which according to Bierbaum (2011) may spread negative word-of-mouth about the organisation. The zone of indifference occurs at moderate levels of satisfaction and customers in it are willing to switch if better choices come along (Lovelock *et al*., 2012). The zone of affection occurs at high levels of satisfaction whereby customers in the zone are less likely to switch to a competitor. Bierbaum (2011) states that apostles, who are at the upper end of the zone, are those consumers who are really satisfied with the organisation's product or service, resulting in increased customer loyalty.

The benefits of satisfying customers and the consequences of dissatisfied customers will be discussed further in the section that follows.

3.2.2 The importance of customer satisfaction

To achieve organisational goals, it is important that the needs and wants of customers be satisfied (Fyall & Garrod, 2005:26). As stated by the legendary Mahatma Gandhi (in Ghavami & Olyaei, 2006:16), "…the customer is the most important visitor on our premises. He is not dependent on us – we are dependent on him. He is not an outsider in our business – he is part of it. We are not doing him a favour by serving him – he is doing us a favour by giving us the opportunity to do so". This quote expresses the importance of customers to an organisation and emphasises the point that if organisations want to stay in business and survive, they need to satisfy their customers (Humphrey, 2011:54; Cochran, 2003:2). By satisfying their customers, organisations can also gain a number of benefits as highlighted below.

3.2.2.1 The benefits of satisfying customers

Satisfying customers offer a number of benefits to an organisation which should not be discounted. As mentioned in chapter 1, satisfaction is the key to building strong customer relationships (Humphrey, 2011:54). Satisfied customers will generally repurchase the product, buy other products from the organisation, spread positive word-of-mouth, show less interest in the competitors' products (Kotler & Armstrong, 2012:178; Machado & Diggines, 2012:150; Zairi & Duggan, 2005:52; Cant *et al*., 2010:438) and are more likely to remain customers (Gelinas *et al*., 2011:348). Furthermore, Machado and Diggines (2012:150) point out that by satisfying customers, failure costs are reduced, more time can be spent on improving services instead of wasting time sorting out the problems that were the result of bad service and a better working environment can be created since satisfied customers equal happy customers, which therefore makes the interaction between the customer and service employees more relaxed.

Satisfied customers will also benefit the organisation in terms of profitability. Several authors have proposed that increased customer satisfaction can lead to increased profitability for the organisation (Zairi & Duggan, 2005:52; Machado & Diggines, 2012:150; Maher, Stickney & Weil, 2012:431; Lamb, Hair & McDaniel, 2011:297; Singh, 2006:2; Hoffman & Bateson, 2011:92; Ahmed & Rafiq, 2002:20). Satisfied customers purchase more products more often, which in turn increases sales and adds to an organisation's profitability (Machado & Diggines, 2012:150).

Furthermore, Singh (2006:2) in his research reveals that in terms of customer monetary spend:

- A completely satisfied customer will spend 2.6 times more than a somewhat satisfied customer.
- A completely satisfied customer will spend 17 times more than a somewhat dissatisfied customer.

Another benefit of satisfying customers is that it reduces the cost of acquiring new customers. Acquiring a new customer can cost about five times more than it does to retain an existing customer (Boone & Kurtz, 2013:318; Rai, 2008:40; Miller & Miller, 2007:10). Therefore organisations should focus on retaining their customers and the best way to do this is by satisfying them (Kotler & Armstrong, 2004:201).

It is clear that satisfying customers will enable organisations to survive and reap a number of benefits. One of the main aims of any organisation is to ensure that the customer who purchases its product or service is satisfied (Lombard, 2009:73). If customers are not satisfied, this could lead to serious consequences for the organisation.

3.2.2.2 The consequences of not satisfying customers

If an organisation does not satisfy its customers, there can be severe consequences or implications. Singh (2006:2) states that dissatisfied customers may decide to complain to the organisation, return the product, stop buying from the organisation and spread negative word-of-mouth. Furthermore, McKain (2005:3) highlights the following statistics indicating the reasons customers take their business elsewhere:

- 3% leave because they move to another area.
- 5% leave as they develop relationships with other organisations.
- 9% leave due to competitive reasons.
- 14% leave due to dissatisfaction with the product.
- 68% leave because they are put off by an employee’s attitude.

The fact that 68% of lost customers are due to bad employee attitude highlights the critical importance for organisations to provide excellent service and satisfy their customers through engaged employees. As indicated at the beginning of this chapter, one of the basic truths of customer satisfaction that all organisations should act upon is that everyone must be involved in customer satisfaction (Cochran, 2003:2). Employees should be trained on how to provide excellent customer service and management should continuously communicate with employees as to what they expect from them (Cochran, 2003:3). If customers are unhappy with the service they receive, this could lead to serious consequences for the organisation. Figure 3.4 shows how dissatisfied customers react after a service failure has occurred (Wilson *et al*., 2012:343).

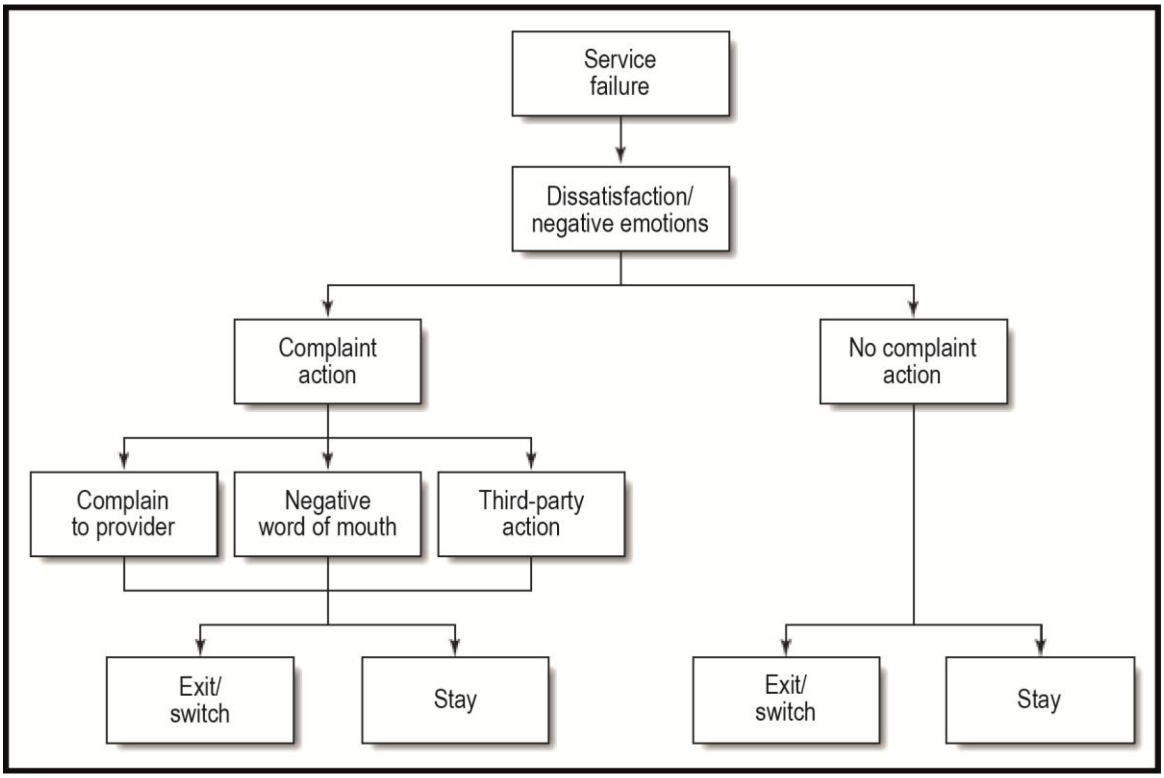


Figure 3.4: Customer complaint actions following service failures
Source: Wilson *et al*. (2012:343)

As shown in figure 3.4, customers can either be passive about their dissatisfaction by not complaining, or they can take action and complain to the service provider, spread negative word-of-mouth or turn to a third party. However, irrespective of whether customers take action or not, they can decide if they want to stay with the organisation or switch to a competitor (Wilson *et al*., 2012:343).

According to Lovelock *et al*. (2012), a very small percentage of dissatisfied customers will actually complain to the organisation. Research confirms this by indicating that on average, approximately 5–10% of dissatisfied customers will voice their complaints (Lovelock *et al*., 2012). Rather than complain to the organisation, customers are more likely to spread negative word-of-mouth (Priluck & Lala, 2009:45), which could prove harmful for the organisation. While satisfied customers are likely to spread positive word-of-mouth, telling around five people about their good experience, dissatisfied customers will share their negative experience with about ten people, double the amount of a satisfied customer (Singh, 2006:2). Furthermore, TechWise Research (2011) emphasises that with the extensive use of social media platforms such as Twitter and Facebook, negative word-of-mouth has the potential to spread virally to a larger group of people, thereby compounding the effect it will have. An example of the potentially disastrous effect of negative word-of-mouth through social media is the United Airlines case (Notter & Grant, 2012:101). Musician, Dave Carroll, a passenger on United Airlines claimed that his custom-built Taylor guitar had been severely damaged by the airline's baggage handlers. After the airline consistently declined to reimburse him for the damage, he wrote and filmed a video of a song titled “United Breaks Guitars”, criticising the company’s customer service and their brand. Carroll posted this video on YouTube which received about 150 000 views on the first day (Notter & Grant, 2012:101) and now has over 12 million views (Dooley, 2012). His video gained extensive exposure and was the subject of thousands of tweets, Facebook comments and blogs (Mannoni & Erkkila, 2012). Due to the power of social media, the airline’s reputation suffered and the company experienced a great financial loss, losing 10% of its share value (Klososky, 2011:116). United Airlines eventually apologised, but by this time the organisation had already suffered the consequences.

Negative word-of-mouth travels much quicker than positive word-of-mouth and can easily damage customer attitudes about an organisation and its products (Kotler & Armstrong, 2012:178). Erdis (2009:8) points out, for example, that a customer who is dissatisfied with a restaurant and does not frequently complain will avoid that restaurant in future and spread negative word-of-mouth. In addition, research by Tork (2011:1) indicates that 46% of diners will not go to a specific restaurant, based only on the negative comments they receive from their friends and family. Fast-food outlets must therefore ensure that they understand their customers’ needs and manage customer satisfaction effectively to avoid the negative effects of not making their customers happy. To be able to do this, they need to understand the factors that influence customer satisfaction, which in turn will guide them in better designing and delivering the right offering to their customers (Kabir & Carlsson, 2010:5).

3.2.3 Factors influencing customer satisfaction

Although customer satisfaction can be influenced by a number of factors, Machado and Diggines (2012:152) identify five specific factors, as indicated in figure 3.5.

Figure 3.5: Factors that influence customer satisfaction
Source: Adapted from Machado and Diggines (2012:152).

Figure 3.5 shows that customer satisfaction is influenced by the features of a product or service, customer emotions, perceived cause of events, perception of fairness and the influence of family members, colleagues as well as other customers. These factors are critical to an organisation and are therefore discussed in more detail next.

3.2.3.1 Product and service features

Customer satisfaction with a product or service can be greatly influenced by the customer's evaluation of its specific features (Wilson *et al*., 2012:75). Customers will evaluate a product or service that they received based on what was delivered in terms of their expectations (Machado & Diggines, 2012:152). For example, in evaluating a fast-food outlet, customers may look at factors such as location, food, cleanliness of facilities and service speed as being important. It is therefore essential for organisations to determine what features are important to customers in order to fulfil their expectations.

3.2.3.2 Customer emotions

Customer emotions refer to the state of the customer's mind (Peters & Mazdarani, 2008:29) and can either be positive (happiness and pleasure) or negative (sadness and anger) (Wilson *et al*., 2012:75). These emotions can significantly affect the customer's satisfaction levels towards a product or service (Peters & Mazdarani, 2008:29). The way customers feel on the day of purchasing a product or service can influence how satisfied they are with that product or service (Machado & Diggines, 2012:152). For example, a customer purchasing fast-food from McDonald's might be satisfied with the service received on that day, but on another day might be dissatisfied with exactly the same service, simply because the customer has had a bad day.

3.2.3.3 Perceived cause of events

The way customers perceive the causes of events may affect their satisfaction with the product or service (Wilson *et al*., 2012:76). More specifically, if a customer is surprised (positively or negatively) with the service encounter, they will try to find reasons for it and these reasons will influence their satisfaction (Cant *et al*., 2010:437). For example, if a customer orders a well-done steak burger at a fast-food outlet and receives a medium-rare steak burger, the customer will blame the waiter for not listening well enough to take the correct order and will be more dissatisfied with the service. However, had the customer forgotten to mention that the steak burger should be well done, then the customer would most likely take blame for the service failure and not be as dissatisfied.

3.2.3.4 Perception of fairness

Perception of fairness refers to the customers' perception of how fairly they have been treated by the organisation (Peters & Mazdarani, 2008:29). Satisfaction levels will differ based on whether customers feel that they have been treated fairly compared with others who have purchased the same product or received the same service (Machado & Diggines, 2012:152). For example, if a customer orders a Steers burger but only receives his burger after someone else who ordered the exact same product after him, the customer may feel that he was treated unfairly, which could lead to dissatisfaction.

3.2.3.5 Family, colleagues and other customers

Customer satisfaction can be influenced by family members, colleagues and other customers (Wilson *et al*., 2012:76). For example, if a customer smokes in a non-smoking area of a fast-food outlet or restaurant, this may affect other patrons and their overall satisfaction level. Word-of-mouth also plays an important role here as friends, family members and colleagues often share their experiences with one another and customers will therefore base their level of satisfaction on the information that was received (Machado & Diggines, 2012:152).

As indicated earlier, by understanding the factors that influence customer satisfaction, organisations will be better able to design and deliver the right offering to their customers (Kabir & Carlsson, 2010:5) and by doing so, will more likely satisfy their customers. It is important, however, for organisations to bear in mind that customer satisfaction is a continuous process (Kamrani & Nasr, 2010:90) and therefore should be measured on a regular basis.

3.3 MEASURING CUSTOMER SATISFACTION

When an organisation measures customer satisfaction, it can gain hidden and useful feedback from customers, giving it an indication of how successful it is at providing products and services to the satisfaction of customers (Nimako & Azumah, 2009:3). Once organisations have a better understanding of how their customers feel, they can assess their capabilities and take the necessary steps to improve and manage customer satisfaction effectively (Nimako & Azumah, 2009:3).

A number of companies may have relied on customer complaints to determine customer satisfaction. However, as indicated earlier, only about 5–10% of dissatisfied customers will voice their complaints (Lovelock *et al*., 2012). Furthermore, Nimako and Azumah (2009:2) state that about 96% of customers never complain, 91% will simply not go back and if they do, only 4% of customers will actually tell the company about their problem. This has led organisations to adopt better techniques by using quantitative and qualitative approaches to measure customer satisfaction (Nimako & Azumah, 2009:2). A number of service quality models have been developed in order to measure customer satisfaction in the foodservice industry. These models will be discussed in the next section, along with the Institutional DINESERV Model, the approach that was followed for this study.

3.3.1 Service quality models

For many decades researchers and scholars have studied the concept of customer satisfaction and the ways of measuring it (Inkumsah, 2011). A number of service quality models have been used by organisations in the foodservice industry to measure customer satisfaction, including SERVQUAL, SERVPERF and DINESERV (Forjoe, 2011:26; Rodrigues, Barkur, Varambally & Motlagh, 2011:630; Cao, 2011:16).

3.3.1.1 SERVQUAL

SERVQUAL, a model developed by Parasuraman, Zeithaml and Berry (1988:23), is the most commonly used measure of service quality (Cao, 2011:16). It is based on the gap between customers' expectations and their perception of performance (Rodrigues *et al*., 2011:630) and measures five dimensions of service quality as shown in figure 3.6 below.

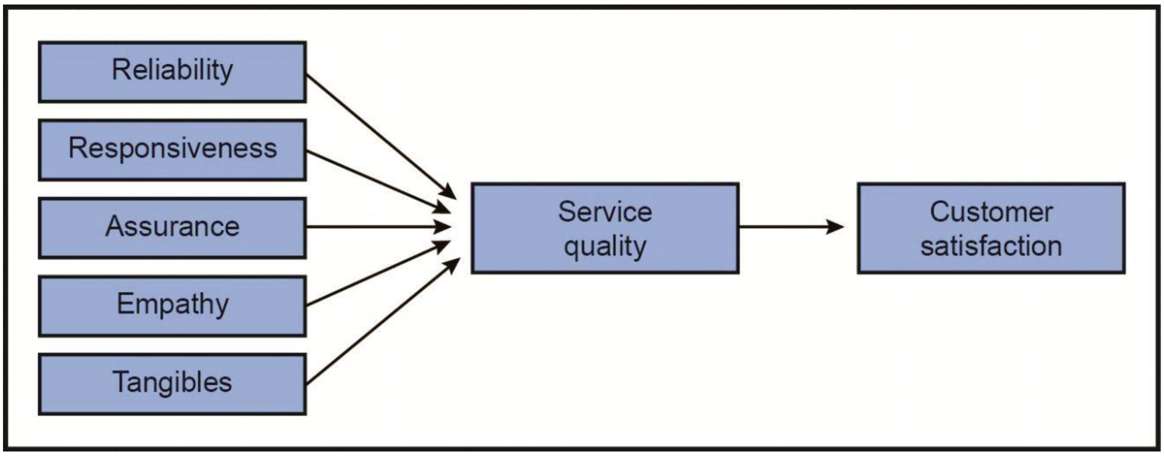


Figure 3.6: The SERVQUAL model
Source: Adapted from Parasuraman *et al*. (1988:23) and Wilson *et al*. (2012:118).

In figure 3.6, the five dimensions of service quality which influence customer satisfaction are as follows (Wilson *et al*., 2012:79):

- **Reliability:** to deliver the promised service to the customer in an accurate manner.

- **Responsiveness:** the willingness to respond to and resolve customer problems.
- **Assurance:** the ability to instil confidence and trust in the customer.
- **Empathy:** the ability to empathise with and understand the customer.
- **Tangibles:** the appearance of staff, equipment and the physical facilities.

Even though SERVQUAL has been commonly used by researchers, it has also received extensive criticism in that measuring customer expectations in service quality research is unnecessary (Joung, 2009:11). As a result of this, Cronin and Taylor (1992) created a performance-based service quality measure, the SERVPERF model.

3.3.1.2 SERVPERF

While SERVQUAL measures performance based on the difference between customer expectations and perceptions, SERVPERF measures the actual performance on the basis of customer satisfaction (Al Khattab & Aldehayyat, 2011:227) using the SERVQUAL performance items (Carrillat, Jaramillo & Mulki, 2007:476). SERVPERF postulates that participants provide their scores by comparing performance expectations with performance perceptions (Culiberg & Rojsek, 2010:153). Some researchers are in agreement with the view that SERVPERF is a better approach to measuring service quality than SERVQUAL (Al Khattab & Aldehayyat, 2011:229; Carrillat *et al*., 2007:476; Vanniarajan & Meenakshinathan, 2007:13; Jain & Gupta, 2004:25). Furthermore, Jain and Gupta (2004:25) in their study found that SERVPERF was a more discriminate valid model than SERVQUAL in measuring service quality of fast-food outlets.

3.3.1.3 DINESERV

Although some researchers have criticised SERVQUAL as a measurement tool, many researchers are still utilising and modifying it in several industries in order to measure service quality (Joung, 2009:14). An example of one such modification is DINESERV, developed by Stevens, Knutson and Patton (1995) to evaluate service quality in the restaurant sector (Joung, 2009:14). DINESERV has been tested in three restaurant divisions, namely fine dining, casual and quick service, and was found to have a high degree of reliability.

Although SERVQUAL, SERVPERF and DINESERV have been used in the foodservice industry, they have limitations in that they do not comprehensively cover food quality (related to the product itself), which proved to be a significant dimension in the fast-food segment (Cao, 2011:34). As a result of this limitation, the current study has focused on the Institutional DINESERV Model (as shown in figure 3.7 below) proposed by Ng (2005:22) which was based on the DINESERV model proposed by Stevens *et al*. (1995) and includes a food quality dimension.

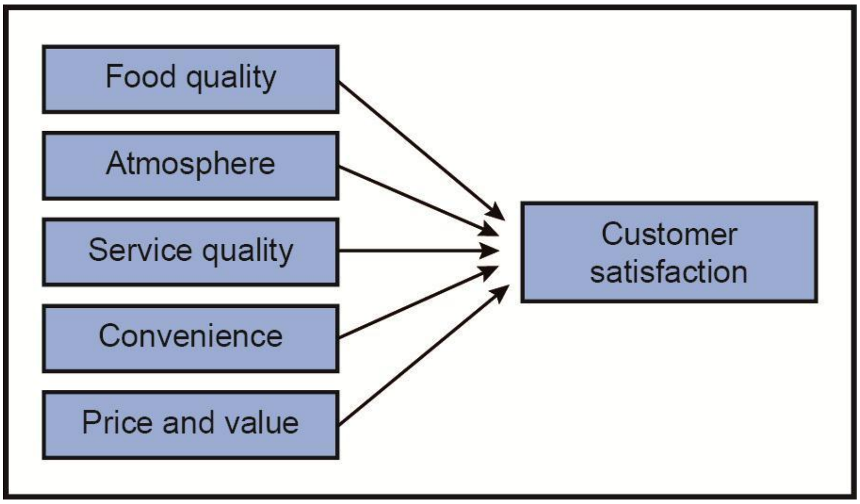


Figure 3.7: The Institutional DINESERV Model
Source: Adapted from Ng (2005:22).

3.3.2 Institutional DINESERV Model

The Institutional DINESERV Model, as shown in figure 3.7, measures food quality, atmosphere, service quality, convenience as well as price and value. Ng (2005:22) shows that these dimensions influence customer satisfaction in the fast-food industry. They are therefore the focus of this study and are discussed in more detail next.

3.3.2.1 Food quality

Food is the tangible element of the dining experience, and as such the part that is more easily evaluated (Kasapila, 2006:24). Otegbayo, Samuel, Kehinde, Sangoyomi and Okonkwo (2010:541) define food quality as the combination of a products features that are significant in determining the degree of acceptability of that product to the consumer.

Studies have found food quality to be the most important attribute of customer satisfaction (Sulek & Hensley, 2004:242; Ng, 2005:48; Kasapila, 2006:112).

Kasapila (2006:24) states that the quality of food expresses a restaurant's character and greatly affects its reputation. Food quality has been commonly accepted as an essential component of the overall dining experience (Sulek & Hensley, 2004:236). However, Yüksel and Yüksel (2002:54) agree that food plays a key role but point out that it is by no means the only part in satisfying the consumer. For example, a consumer might be very satisfied with the food quality of a particular fast-food outlet. However, if the customer experiences a poor atmosphere, such as overly loud music or unhygienic conditions, then the level of satisfaction is reduced (Kasapila, 2006:15). Namkung and Jang (2007:387) believe that one of the critical challenges that the fast-food industry faces is to serve food of quality that is not only inducing for their customers, but better than that of its competitors.

When customers evaluate the quality of the food offered by fast-food outlets, a number of factors may be considered. However, Namkung and Jang (2007:393) state that the common description of food quality amongst researchers accentuate six factors, namely taste, presentation, variety, nutritional value, temperature and freshness. Each of these are briefly discussed below, as the combination of these factors constitutes the food quality.

- **Taste**

  Taste refers to the ability of the taste organs to perceive the four basic tastes, namely sweet, salty, sour and bitter (Sivasankar, 2005:96). Taste is considered as a very important factor in the foodservice industry. It is viewed as the most significant component of food attributes in numerous fast-food studies (Sriwongrat, 2008:14).

  Harnack, French, Oakes, Story, Jeffery and Rydell (2008) in their study found that taste was rated as the most important factor, with 76.9% of the respondents rating taste as very important when purchasing food from a fast-food outlet. Similarly, Goyal and Singh (2007:188) discovered that taste is one of the most important factors that customers consider when selecting a fast-food outlet. Researchers have highlighted the importance of taste by stating that tasty food will increase loyalty and keep customers coming back for more (Kleynhans, 2003:31; Shaharudin, Mansor & Elias, 2011:206).

- **Presentation of the food**

  Presentation refers to the way food is decorated and how attractively it is presented to customers (Sriwongrat, 2008:15). Shape, colour, texture and size are considered to be the key elements of presentation (Styler, 2006:88). It has been said that "…one eats with one's eyes first" (Kleynhans, 2003:30). Therefore, if the food looks good, customers will more likely assume that it tastes good (Kleynhans, 2003:30). For example, in figure 3.8 below, Burger 1 looks well presented, fresh and the colours make the burger look tastier. However, Burger 2 does not look as tasty as Burger 1 and the burger seems dry even though this might not be the case. It is therefore vital for fast-food outlets to ensure that their food is always well presented. Shaharudin *et al*. (2011:201) point out that well-presented food can create the mood and feeling towards consuming that food.

Burger 1 Burger 2

Figure 3.8: Food presentation
Source: Fandrich (2011) and The Burger Review (2010)

  Presentation is a key food factor in creating customer satisfaction. The study by Namkung and Jang (2007:401) on food quality found that the presentation of food was the most significant contributor amongst the attributes of food quality in determining customer satisfaction in restaurants. Similarly, Aaijaz and Ibrahim (2011:76) found that in fast-food outlets, the most important factor rated by customers was food quality and that fast-food outlets need to pay further attention to taste and presentation.

- **Food variety**

  Food variety refers to the quantity or assortment of different menu items (Namkung & Jang, 2007:303). According to Namkung and Jang (2007:303), previous studies have indicated that a variety of food options is a fundamental attribute of food quality. Furthermore, Palacio and Theis (2005:155) highlight that providing a wide variety of food options is essential as customers of foodservice organisations usually comprise of individuals from diverse ethnic, economic and cultural backgrounds, most of whom have different preferences in terms of food. McDonald's menus for example, differ around the world and include several unfamiliar food options that reflect local taste preferences (Africano, 2010). More specifically, McDonald’s South Africa offers a wide variety of menu items ranging from breakfast options to an assortment of burgers (chicken, beef and fish) and desserts (McDonald’s South Africa, 2012b). They have also recently introduced their new Veggie burger (McDonald’s South Africa, 2012b) to satisfy their vegetarian customers. However, healthier food options seem to be limited (as shown in section 2.5.1 of chapter 2) and should certainly be a consideration if they wish to cater for the increasing health-conscious consumers.

- **Nutritional value**

  As discussed in chapter 2, there are growing concerns over health and wellness and customers have become more aware of what they eat. Not only do customers want to consume food that is quick and convenient, but they also want to ensure that what they are eating is of high quality and offers nutritional benefits (Euromonitor International, 2011). In a South African survey, the majority of the respondents stated that they would choose nutritional options such as vegetables, salads and grilled meat if fast-food outlets offered such options (Prepared Foods, 2011). A total of 81% of women specified that they would opt for a healthier food option, while 73% of men shared that opinion (Prepared Foods, 2011).

  Providing customers with food that is nutritious has been considered as one of the key elements in dining satisfaction and return patronage (Namkung & Jang, 2007:393). Bhuyan (2011:209) argues that health-conscious consumers would rather choose to visit restaurants that offer healthy and nutritious food and, if satisfied, are more likely to return. As a result, fast-food outlets should ensure that they cater for such customers by providing healthy and nutritious food that will keep them coming back for more.

- **Temperature of the food**

  Food temperature refers to the degree of hotness or coldness of the food and the customers' expectations to this effect. Customers are satisfied when food is served at the temperature they expect it to be (Kasapila, 2006:29). Therefore, foods that are meant to be hot (e.g. burgers) should be served hot, and foods that are meant to be cold (e.g. salads) should be served cold.

  Temperature influences how the perceived flavour of the food is evaluated and therefore can be seen as an element that enhances pleasure in the food experience (Namkung & Jang, 2007:394). Lubbe (2003:120) emphasises that it is essential for restaurants and fast-food outlets to serve their customers food at the correct temperature as if this is not the case, it may instil negativity (resentment, disappointment, anger) in the mind of the customers and prevent them from coming back.

- **Freshness**

  Freshness is generally referred to as the fresh state of food and is related to aspects such as aroma, taste and texture (Péneau, Hoehn, Roth, Escher & Nuessli, 2006:9). As Namkung and Jang (2007:394) report, previous studies have indicated freshness of food as a fundamental core quality sign of food. Shaharudin *et al*. (2011:206) in their study found that freshness was regarded as the most important food attribute by respondents. Furthermore, these authors suggest that restaurants and fast-food outlets can maintain food freshness by improving the delivery of raw materials to their outlet through just-in-time (JIT) deliveries on an hourly basis. If the raw materials are delivered regularly, the freshness of the food can be preserved at the highest level possible (Shaharudin *et al*., 2011:206).

Atmosphere is now discussed, the second element of the Institutional DINESERV Model shown in figure 3.7.

3.3.2.2 Atmosphere

Atmosphere refers to the overall mood of the fast-food outlet and is determined by both practical and aesthetic elements such as temperature, lighting, artwork, noise levels and aroma (Katsigris & Thomas, 2008:579).

According to Ryu *et al*. (2010:324), atmosphere is highly valued by customers during their dining experience. Their study showed that atmosphere was an important factor in determining customer satisfaction with fast-food outlets and in order to satisfy customers, aspects such as an attractive interior and exterior design, enjoyable music, comfortable seats and pleasant lighting should be considered (Ryu *et al*., 2010:324). A good atmosphere can make the food, the service and the entire dining experience come across as being better and therefore increase customer satisfaction (Kleynhans, 2003:21; Shaw, 2013).

Service quality, the third element of the Institutional DINESERV Model shown in figure 3.7, will be discussed next.

3.3.2.3 Service quality

Service quality can be defined as a form of attitude, resulting from the evaluation of customer expectations and perceived performance (Wan & Cheng, 2011:58).

Service quality depends to a degree on employee behaviour. The way employees behave or their actions within fast-food outlets have an effect on customers and their satisfaction levels (Harrington, Ottenbacher, Staggs & Powell, 2011:435). For example, if a customer finds that the staff members at KFC were rude and unfriendly, this could lead to dissatisfaction. Yüksel and Yüksel (2002:64) in their study found that service quality had the greatest influence on dining satisfaction. Furthermore, the results of Cao (2011:29) revealed service quality as one of the most significant dimensions of fast-food outlets. Delivering a service of high-quality is the key to success and survival in today’s increasingly intense competitive environment (Cao, 2011:1).

Cao (2011:9) states that service quality is an abstract concept composed of four characteristics that is unique to services which make it more difficult to manage, namely inseparability, intangibility, perishability and variability (Wilson *et al*., 2012:16; Kotler, Bowen & Makens, 2010:35). These characteristics are represented in figure 3.9 and discussed briefly.

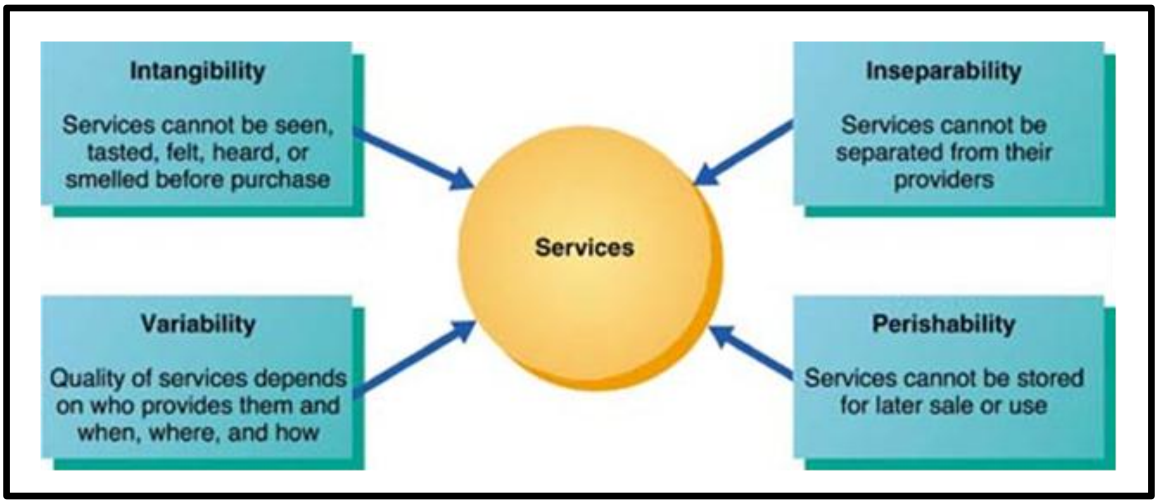


Figure 3.9: Characteristics of services
Source: Kotler *et al*. (2010:35)

- **Inseparability**

  Inseparability implies that production and consumption occur simultaneously. Interaction must take place between the producer and consumer in order for the service to be carried out (Singh, 2008:53). Kotler and Armstrong (2012:185) state that services cannot be separated from their providers, regardless of whether the provider is a person (employee at a fast-food outlet) or machine (vending machine). At a fast-food outlet, for example, the consumer is present when the service is being produced (Kasapila, 2006:33). When dining out at a fast-food outlet or restaurant, the level of interaction between the consumer and service employee is considerably high (Sriwongrat, 2008:9). If the service employee has a bad attitude or comes across as inattentive, the customer will not be satisfied with his/her experience and will down-rate the overall experience (Shock, Bowen & Stefanelli, 2004:108; Kotler *et al*., 2010:36).

  The resulting marketing implication related to inseparability is that it is difficult for services to be mass produced since production and consumption occur simultaneously (Luke, 2007:4). In addition, inseparability forces the customer into close contact with the production process, which can affect the customer either positively or negatively with regard to the outcome of the service transaction (Wilson *et al*., 2012:16). Fast-food outlets must ensure that they recruit the right people as well as train their service providers and customers to understand the service delivery system (Tan, Tse & Wong, 2009:8).

- **Intangibility**

  Intangibility implies that services cannot be felt, tasted, seen, smelt or heard before they are purchased, unlike products. Services are intangible and it is therefore more difficult to evaluate customer satisfaction (Pride, Hughes & Kapoor, 2012:220). As a result of service intangibility, customers of fast-food outlets and restaurants will often consider both tangible cues (the food, facilities, cleanliness, decor, lighting, colour, music) as well as intangible cues (service quality, price) when choosing and evaluating the service experience (Sriwongrat, 2008:8).

  The resulting marketing implication related to intangibility is that services cannot be easily patented and therefore competitors may copy new service concepts (Wilson *et al*., 2012:16). Pricing is difficult as the certain costs of a 'unit of service' are difficult to establish (Wilson *et al*., 2012:16). Furthermore, the service quality might be difficult for customers to assess since services cannot be easily displayed or communicated to customers (Luke, 2007:3). Fast-food outlets should aim to provide appealing tangible evidence to customers in order to strengthen their confidence in purchasing the service, for example employees with neat uniforms, well-designed promotional material and physical buildings that are decorated in such a way as to convey a high level of service.

- **Perishability**

  Perishability relates to the fact that services cannot be returned, stored or resold (Wilson *et al*., 2012:17). For example, a customer dissatisfied with the service received at a fast-food outlet cannot return that service.

  The resulting marketing implication related to perishability is the fact that services cannot be resold or returned, which therefore creates a need for strong recovery strategies if any problems are experienced (Luke, 2007:5). Furthermore, services cannot be stored, therefore highlighting the critical importance of forecasting demand and careful planning for optimum capacity utilisation (Wilson *et al*., 2012:18). Fast-food outlets can manage the demand level by using differential pricing to shift some demand from peak to off-peak periods such as weekday specials. They can also manage the supply level by using part-time employees during peak demand period (Tan *et al*., 2009:9).

- **Variability**

  Variability refers to the fact that no two services will be entirely the same. Services may differ across service providers, customers and service encounters (Sriwongrat, 2008:9). Employees may differ in the way they perform from day to day (Wilson *et al*., 2012:16). Similarly, no two customers are exactly the same and each may have specific demands or experience the service in a different way (Wilson *et al*., 2012:16). A customer at a fast-food outlet can receive excellent service on one day and receive terrible service the next day from the same person. This could be due to the service person having a bad day or experiencing an emotional problem.

  The resulting marketing implication related to variability is that it is more challenging for organisations to ensure consistent service quality as services differ across time, organisations and people (Luke, 2007:4). Furthermore, Wilson *et al*. (2012:17) state that because quality depends on a number of factors, some of which the service provider may have no control over (e.g. the presence or absence of other customers), the service manager will not always know whether the service being delivered is consistent with what was initially planned. By recruiting the right people and training them effectively, fast-food outlets can increase quality consistency (Tan *et al*., 2009:8). In addition, fast-food outlets should monitor their customer satisfaction levels periodically.

In the next section, convenience, the fourth element of the Institutional DINESERV Model shown in figure 3.7, is discussed.

3.3.2.4 Convenience

Convenience can be described as the state of being able to proceed with something without difficulty (Obitz, 2009:20). Jekanowski, Binkley and Eales (2001:59) define convenience, with regard to food away from home, as "…arising from the time saved by avoiding meal preparation".

Convenience has been found to be an important factor in affecting customers' satisfaction with fast-food outlets (Law, Hui & Zhao, 2004:548; Cheng, Chiu, Hu & Chang, 2011:5128). Rydell, Harnack, Oakes, Story, Jeffery and French (2008: 2069) conducted a study on the reasons why customers eat fast food. They found that a total of 92% of the respondents ate at fast-food restaurants because it was quick, and 80% because it was convenient (Rydell *et al*., 2008:2066). Furthermore, Bagwell and Doff (2009:10) in their study found that 46% of respondents decided where they should eat based on convenience attributes such as operating hours and location. In addition, 43% of the respondents rated speed of service as an important factor. Verma (2012:116) states that customers expect fast-food to be accessible when the need arises and are not motivated to spend time and effort to reach out to one.

Price and value, the final element of the Institutional DINESERV Model shown in figure 3.7, is now discussed.

3.3.2.5 Price and value

Price can be defined as that which the buyer is prepared to give up in order to acquire a specific product or service (Lamb *et al*., 2011:26), while value refers to the sum of perceived benefits (tangible and intangible) and costs to the customer (Kotler & Keller, 2009:8). Value can be seen as a combination of price, service and product quality which is known as the "customer value triad" (see figure 3.10) (Kotler & Keller, 2009:8). Kotler and Keller (2009:8) highlight that "value increases with quality and service and decreases with price, although other factors can also play an important role in perceptions of value". In this regard, it may be beneficial for organisations to increase product quality, provide better service and charge reasonable prices.

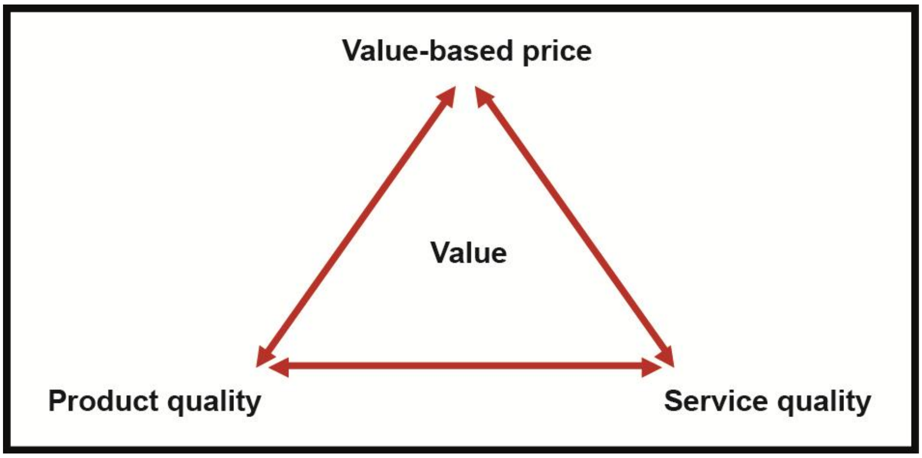


Figure 3.10: Value triad
Source: Adapted from Kotler & Keller (2009:8).

Value may mean something different to each and every person. Cant *et al*. (2010:55) point out that value can be considered by a customer in four different ways:

- low price
- what the customer wants in a specific product or service
- the quality that the customer receives for the price paid
- what the customer receives for what is given

Yüksel and Yüksel (2002:55) indicated that despite good food and service, most consumers visit a specific restaurant as they believe that the price they pay represents value for money. Similarly, Baek, Ham and Yang (2006:696) found that university students take price into consideration when they select fast-food outlets. In a survey conducted in 2003, 30% of the respondents indicated that “value for the price paid” was their main reason for eating out at certain food places (Perlik, 2003:44). Furthermore, the results of a study by Klassen, Trybus and Kumar (2005:586) show that 62% of the respondents rated price as the most significant aspect when making a decision to purchase from a food outlet. If the price is considered too high, customers may choose to eat elsewhere (Law *et al*., 2004:555). It is therefore necessary for restaurants and fast-food outlets to understand value criteria and to have a clear value proposition that is perceived as having been delivered.

The literature review has shown that service quality, atmosphere, food quality, price and value and convenience can greatly influence customer satisfaction (Kleynhans, 2003; Sulek & Hensley, 2004; Ng, 2005; Kasapila, 2006; Namkung & Jang, 2007; Ryu *et al*., 2010; Cao, 2011). Therefore, the researcher believed that it was important to focus on all these dimensions as the main concepts of this study in order to determine customer satisfaction with the healthier food options available at fast-food outlets.

3.4 SUMMARY

This chapter provided a theoretical background of customer satisfaction and its importance to organisations. For organisations to survive in the competitive global market, they need to focus on and satisfy their customers. The determinants of customer satisfaction in the fast-food industry were discussed and theories postulated by other researchers were highlighted. The chapter revealed that the dimensions of the Institutional DINESERV Model, namely food quality, atmosphere, price and value, service quality and convenience, have a major influence on customer satisfaction, and so therefore were chosen as the focus of this study.

CHAPTER 4

RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

4.1 INTRODUCTION

The focus of this chapter is on the design of the research methodology. The research process and each of the steps in this process are discussed (based on McDaniel and Gates (2010:50), Wiid and Diggines (2013:32) and Tustin, Ligthelm, Martins and Van Wyk (2005:76)). The research design and methodology employed in this study are further explained.

4.2 THE RESEARCH PROCESS

Organisations are constantly faced with making various decisions, and whether big or small, every decision is better informed with the use of marketing research (Iacobucci & Churchill, 2010:3). Marketing research can be defined as the systematic design, collection, analysis and reporting of information, with the purpose of solving specific problems or taking advantage of opportunities (Pride & Ferrell, 2012:128). For example, several fast-food outlets have uncovered opportunities in the market arising from customers' concerns regarding health, weight and diet and have thus introduced healthier food options to their menus (Cant, 2010a:63). Market information increases the organisation's ability to respond to customer needs, which in turn leads to improved organisational performance (Pride & Ferrell, 2012:128).

According to McDaniel and Gates (2010:6), marketing research has three functional roles:

- A descriptive function – involving the collection and presentation of factual statements.
- A diagnostic function – whereby data is explained.
- A predictive function – utilising the descriptive and diagnostic function in order to predict the results of proposed marketing decisions.

Marketing research is implemented by following a sequence of steps referred to as the research process (Bose, 2010:258). The research process provides researchers with a systematic, planned procedure for the research task and ensures that all elements are consistent with one another (Kotabe & Helsen, 2009:115). However, Zikmund and Babin (2010:57) point out that the steps in the research process can overlap and therefore may differ between researchers. For this specific study, the steps in the research process are highlighted in figure 4.1 and forms the entire discussion of this chapter.

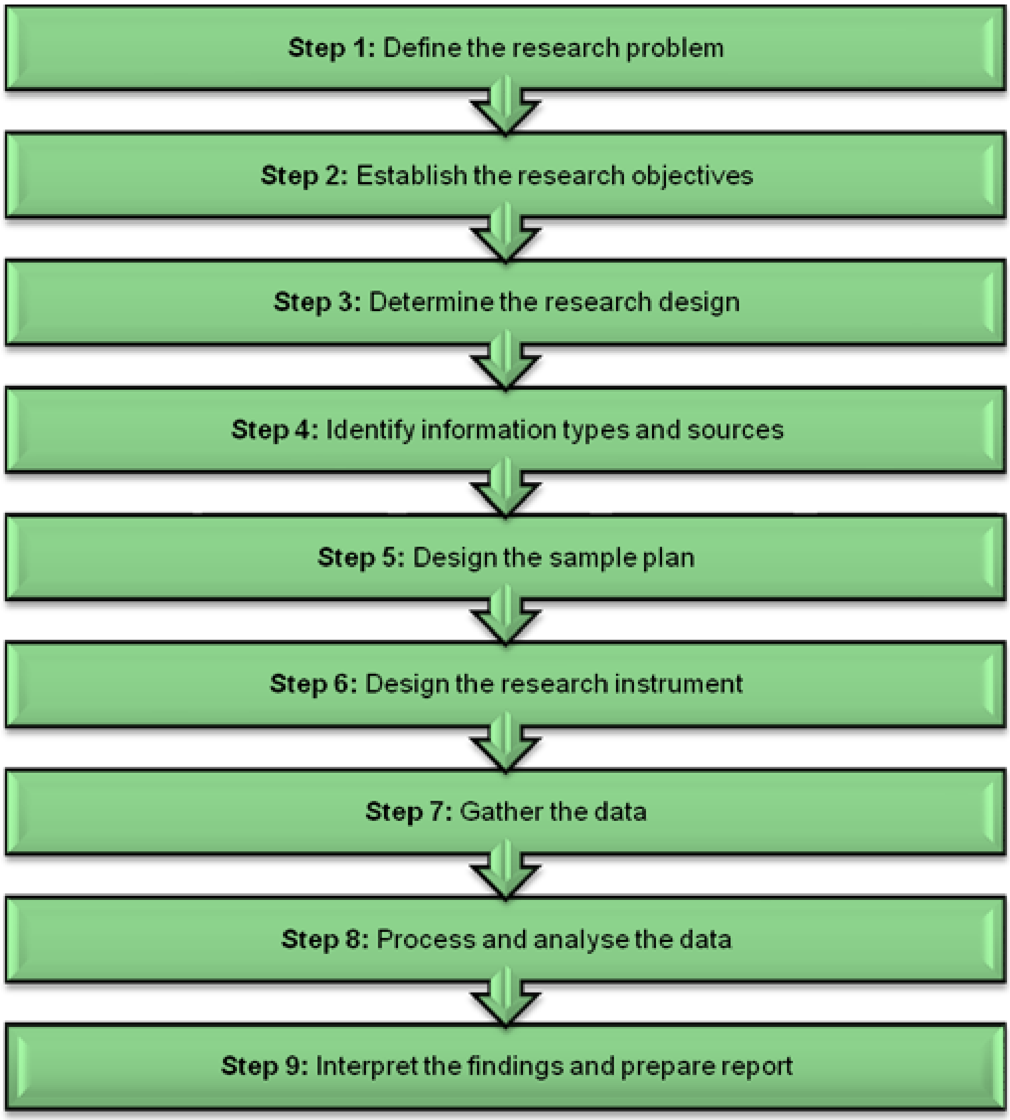


Figure 4.1: Steps in the marketing research process
Source: Adapted from McDaniel and Gates (2010:50), Wiid and Diggines (2013:32) and Tustin *et al*. (2005:76).

Each of these steps as shown in figure 4.1 is discussed next, providing a theoretical basis, followed by application to the current study.

4.2.1 Step 1: Define the research problem

As shown in figure 4.1, the first step in the research process is to define the research problem. The research problem is essentially the topic to be explored or what needs to be known (Connaway & Powell, 2010:26). Godshall (2010:213) refers to the research problem as an area of concern where there is a gap in the knowledge or literature that requires a solution. According to McDaniel and Gates (2010:46), the research problem indicates what information is necessary in order to solve the problem at hand and how that information can be acquired effectively. Defining the research problem is considered to be the most crucial step in the research process (Wiid & Diggines, 2013:42). When the problem is defined accurately, the probability of designing the research to provide relevant information is increased (Iacobucci & Churchill, 2010:29).

In this study, customer satisfaction with the healthier food options available at fast-food outlets was explored. In chapter 2 it was revealed that many customers have become increasingly concerned about their health and the food that they consume (Euromonitor International, 2011). As a result of this trend, fast-food outlets have been taking steps to introduce healthier fast-food options. In chapter 3 the importance of customer satisfaction was emphasised, with a focus on the fast-food industry. The problem is that existing literature (as searched on Google Scholar and databases such as Emerald, EBSCOhost, ScienceDirect and SAGE) fails to recognise the level of customer satisfaction with the healthier food options available at fast-food outlets in South Africa. Determining and understanding the satisfaction level of customers will enable fast-food outlets to improve, design and deliver the right offering to their customers.

Due to the lack of information available regarding customer satisfaction with the healthier food options offered at fast-food outlets in South Africa, the following research question was formulated:

How satisfied are customers with the healthier food options available at fast-food outlets in South Africa?

This research question guided the development of the research objectives, the second step as shown in the research process (figure 4.1).

4.2.2 Step 2: Establish the research objectives

The research objectives should flow from the definition of the research problem, as they determine the precise information that is necessary in order to address the research problem (McDaniel & Gates, 2010:48; Tustin *et al*., 2005:81). Research objectives can be seen as the goals that the researcher wishes to achieve by conducting the research (Zikmund & Babin, 2010:58) and, if well prepared, objectives may serve as a road map in pursuit of the research project (McDaniel & Gates, 2010:48).

Research objectives can be categorised as (Avasarikar & Chordiya, 2007:112):

- The primary objective – the focus of the study and the main goal that the researcher aims to achieve.
- The secondary objectives – subordinate objectives that may directly or indirectly contribute to the attainment of the primary objective (Cant, 2010a:10).

As indicated in chapter 1, the primary objective of this study was to explore customer satisfaction with the healthier food options available at fast-food outlets in South Africa.

The secondary objectives of the study were:

- To determine the proportion of customers who have purchased the healthier food options at fast-food outlets.
- To determine the level of customer satisfaction with the food quality of the healthier food options available at fast-food outlets.
- To determine the level of customer satisfaction with the atmosphere at fast-food outlets with reference to the healthier food options.
- To determine the level of customer satisfaction with the service quality at fast-food outlets with reference to the healthier food options.
- To determine the level of customer satisfaction with the convenience of fast-food outlets with reference to the healthier food options.
- To determine the level of customer satisfaction with the price and value of the healthier food options available at fast-food outlets.
- To determine the overall customer satisfaction with fast-food outlets with reference to the healthier food options.

Once the research objectives were established, the research design was determined, the third step in the research process.

4.2.3 Step 3: Determine the research design

The research design is described by Aaker, Kumar, Day and Leone (2011:70) as a blueprint that is employed in order to direct the research study towards achieving its objectives. Zikmund and Babin (2010:64) define the research design as a master plan that provides a framework for collecting and analysing the data. Figure 4.2 below presents three main types of research designs, namely exploratory, descriptive and causal research (Aaker *et al*., 2011:72; Iacobucci & Churchill, 2010:60; Zikmund & Babin, 2010:50). Each of these designs is now discussed briefly.

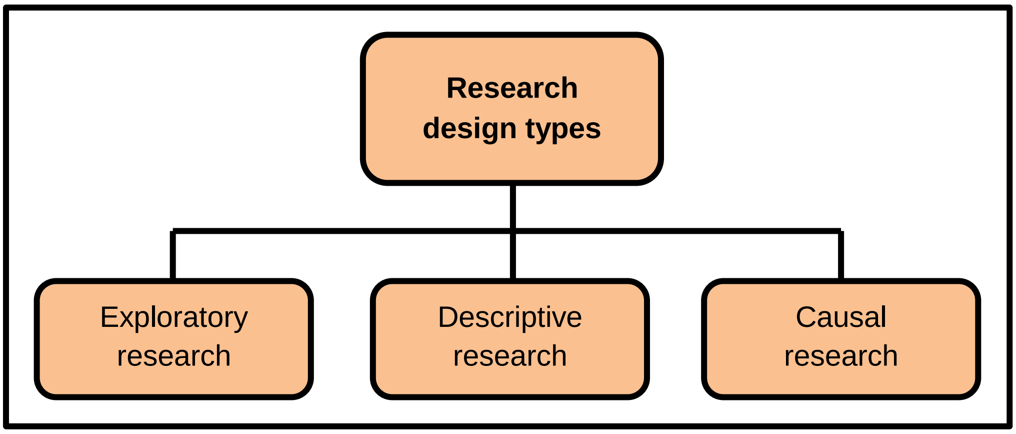


Figure 4.2: Types of research designs
Source: Adapted from Aaker *et al*. (2011:72), Iacobucci and Churchill (2010:60) and Zikmund & Babin (2010:50).

4.2.3.1 Exploratory research design

Exploratory research is performed to help illuminate ambiguous situations or to discover ideas that might create prospective business opportunities (Zikmund & Babin, 2010:50). Wiid and Diggines (2013:56) believe that an exploratory research design is essential when the researcher requires more information about a specific problem, opportunity or phenomenon. In this case, exploratory research can be valuable in that it creates insight into the research problem and increases the understanding of customer motivations, attitudes and their behaviour (Hair *et al*., 2009:51).

4.2.3.2 Descriptive research design

Descriptive research is usually conducted in order to provide answers to the “who”, “what”, “where”, “when” and “how” questions (Hair *et al*., 2009:51). More specifically, a descriptive research design aims to paint a picture of a given situation by describing objects, people, organisations or the environment (Zikmund & Babin, 2010:51).

4.2.3.3 Causal research design

The objective of causal research is to discover cause-and-effect relationships between variables (Hair *et al*., 2009:52). In other words, the researcher may investigate whether one variable causes or changes the value of another variable (McDaniel & Gates, 2010:50). The causal research design is most appropriate to research objectives that require the researcher to understand which independent variables affect a dependent variable (Hair *et al*., 2009:52).

Some authors argue that there is no single best research design (Zikmund & Babin, 2010:65; McDaniel & Gates, 2010:49; Majumdar, 2005:26). Instead, the different designs offer the researcher a number of choices, each with its own advantages and disadvantages. However, it is essential that when choosing a specific research design, it should follow from the research problem and objectives (Majumdar, 2005:26). The purpose of the current study was to explore customer satisfaction with the healthier food options available at fast-food outlets with the aim of further describing the data. The study was therefore exploratory and descriptive in nature. In the next section, information types and sources was identified, the fourth step in the research process.

4.2.4 Step 4: Identify information types and sources

In this step of the research process, the researcher needs to specify the sources of data and methods for data collection (Tustin *et al*., 2005:88). As shown in figure 4.3, data sources can be categorised into two groups, namely primary and secondary data.

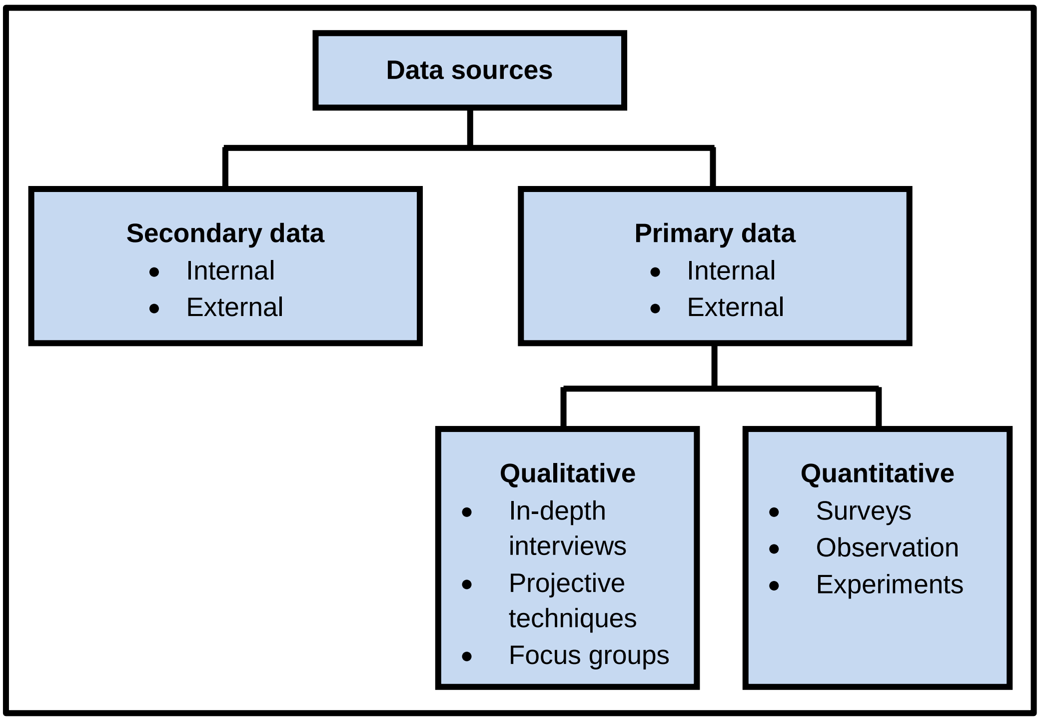


Figure 4.3: Data sources
Source: Adapted from Hair, Celsi, Money, Samouel and Page (2011:187) and Wiid and Diggines (2013:86).

It is always important for the researcher to determine whether the research objectives can be attained through the use of secondary data. If so, this will eliminate the need to collect primary data. However, if the availability of secondary data is limited, the researcher may undertake the collection of primary data (Hair *et al*., 2011:186). In order to achieve the objectives formulated for the current study, the researcher chose to utilise both secondary and primary data.

4.2.4.1 Secondary data

Secondary data is known as information that already exists, that was gathered by someone else for purposes other than the current study, but which may be relevant to the problem at hand (Aaker *et al*., 2011:76; Cant *et al*., 2010:130; McDaniel & Gates, 2010:72; Zikmund & Babin, 2010:163). In most cases, secondary data is historical in nature and has already been published (Zikmund & Babin, 2010:163; Hair *et al*., 2009:114).

As indicated in figure 4.3, secondary data may be acquired from internal and external sources. Internal sources refer to the information available within the organisation, for example company records, annual reports and sales data (Cant *et al*., 2010:130; McDaniel & Gates, 2010:72), while external sources involve the researcher acquiring information from outside sources, for example websites, libraries, marketing research organisations and universities (Cant *et al*., 2010:130; Hair *et al*., 2009:115; Wiid & Diggines, 2013:61). The use of secondary data is considered an efficient, cost-effective method for obtaining information and provides the researcher with a number of advantages (McDaniel & Gates, 2010:72). However, the limitations or disadvantages of secondary data should be considered. Table 4.1 below provides an overview of the advantages and disadvantages that are linked to the usage of secondary data.

Table 4.1: Advantages and disadvantages of secondary data

Advantages	Disadvantages
Helps to clarify or redefine the research problem	May be a lack of available data
Could provide an answer to the problem	May lack relevance
Might provide alternative primary data research methods	Might be inaccurate
Can alert researchers of potential problems and/or opportunities	Might be insufficient to solve the research problem
Provides imperative background information and builds credibility for the research report	The information might be outdated
The sample frame may be provided	May be differences in the definition of terms

Source: Adapted from McDaniel and Gates (2010:72) and Zikmund and Babin (2010:163).

For the purpose of this study, secondary data was collected by reviewing articles, books as well as previous studies, which thus formed the literature review (chapters 2 and 3). More specifically, chapter 2 provided an overview of the South African fast-food industry, obesity and the trend towards healthy eating. In chapter 3 the concept of customer satisfaction, its importance and the models used to measure it in a fast-food context were discussed. According to Kumar (2011:31), examining the existing literature is a fundamental task in the research study as it helps to clarify the research problem, it broadens the researcher's knowledge base in the area of interest and it contextualises the findings of the study.

After a review of the existing literature, primary data had to be collected as well in order to achieve the research objectives.

4.2.4.2 Primary data

Primary data refers to the information which is collected specifically to address the research problem at hand (Cant *et al*., 2010:129) and is usually collected when secondary data fails to answer the research question (Tustin *et al*., 2005:89). As with secondary data, primary data can also be obtained from internal sources such as employees and external sources such as consumers and retailers (Cant *et al*., 2010:130). Collecting primary data is more time consuming and may result in higher costs incurred, but the data is generally more relevant to the research objectives compared with secondary data (Strydom, 2011:82).

When conducting primary research, researchers need to determine the research approach to be followed: qualitative or quantitative (as shown in figure 4.3). These two approaches are discussed below, followed by a brief discussion of the approach used for this study.

- **Qualitative research**

  Qualitative research is data that is not subject to quantification and focuses on addressing the research objectives through techniques which will enable the researcher to present detailed interpretations about certain phenomena (Zikmund & Babin, 2010:131). Data can be collected in the form of text or images using in-depth, open-ended questions (Hair *et al*., 2009:154) with the aim of discovering true inner meanings as well as new insight (Zikmund & Babin, 2010:131). The three most commonly used qualitative research methods, as shown in figure 4.3, are focus groups, in-depth interviews and projective techniques. These are discussed below briefly.

  - **Focus groups**

    Focus groups involve bringing together a small group, usually consisting of 6–12 participants, for an informal and interactive discussion on a specific topic (Wiid & Diggines, 2013:91). A focus group is usually led by a trained moderator who instigates dialogue among the participants (Zikmund & Babin, 2010:141). The idea behind conducting a focus group is that a response from one participant may trigger comments from the other participants, thereby creating synergy and interaction among everyone (Hair *et al*., 2009:161). Furthermore, the goal is to provide researchers with as much information as possible on the topic of interest (Hair *et al*., 2009:161).

- **In-depth interviews**

  In-depth interviews are usually one-on-one interviews between the researcher and the interviewee on a specific topic (Zikmund & Babin, 2010:141). The direction of in-depth interviews is guided by the interviewee's response. As the interview is carried out, the interviewer thoroughly probes each response and uses the interviewee's replies as a basis for further questioning. The aim of an in-depth interview is to probe and stimulate answers to the research questions (McDaniel & Gates, 2010:107).

- **Projective techniques**

  Projective techniques are considered as an indirect method of questioning that allows the participants to voice their opinions onto a third party, a non-living object or task situation (Wiid & Diggines, 2013:98). People are usually inclined to answer questions in a way that does not reflect badly on their self-image and for this reason, projective techniques have been designed in order to reveal hidden opinions and beliefs (Aaker *et al*., 2011:177; Wiid & Diggines, 2013:98). For example, participants may be asked to interpret pictures or speak about what other people would feel, think or do. In this way, researchers can uncover participants' true thoughts (Hair *et al*., 2009:185).

- **Quantitative research**

Quantitative research focuses on addressing the research objectives through empirical assessments involving mathematical analysis (Zikmund & Babin, 2010:133). This research approach commonly makes use of closed-ended questions and predesigned response options in questionnaires that are usually distributed to a considerable amount of people (Hair *et al*., 2009:154). As indicated in figure 4.3, quantitative research includes observations, experiments and surveys. These are discussed briefly.

- **Observations**

  The observation approach involves monitoring an individual's actions without the researcher directly interacting with that individual (Cant *et al*., 2010:129). The aim of observations is to enable researchers to understand how consumers behave in a certain situation (Boone & Kurtz, 2013:252).

- **Experiments**

  When conducting experiments, the researcher determines the influence of an independent variable on a dependent variable. The independent variable is then manipulated to determine its effect on the dependent variable (Wiid & Diggines, 2013:137). In other words, experimentation enables the researcher to prove that one variable causes another variable to occur (Cant *et al*., 2010:129).

- **Surveys**

  Surveys are considered as the most common method of data collection (Wiid & Diggines, 2013:110) and involve collecting large amounts of data using structured questions and response categories (Cant *et al*., 2010:129). Due to the large sample size, all the participants usually answer the same predetermined questions (Kolb, 2008:213). Survey research is a process in which data can be collected from participants through various methods (Cant *et al*., 2010:133; Hair *et al*., 2009:244):

  - Personal interviews: this type of survey is conducted on a face-to-face basis, by a trained interviewer who asks the participant questions and records his/her answers (Hair *et al*., 2009:244). These interviews can take place at the participant's home or even a public venue such as a shopping mall (Cant *et al*., 2010:133).
  - Telephone interviews: this type of survey is similar to personal interviews. However, they are conducted over the telephone in which a trained interviewer asks the participant questions and makes a record of his/her responses (Cooper & Schindler, 2008:223). It is usually faster and cheaper than personal interviews as they enable the interviewer to work from a central location (Hair *et al*., 2009:244). Furthermore, data can be gathered through computer-assisted telephone interviews, completely automated telephone interviews or even wireless phone surveys (Hair *et al*., 2009:244).

- Self-administered surveys: this type of survey is delivered to participants who read through the questions and record their own answers without additional interaction from the interviewer (Cooper & Schindler, 2008:711). Self-administered surveys can be mailed, faxed or computer delivered to respondents (Cooper & Schindler, 2008:711). Furthermore, respondents may be intercepted and asked to complete the questionnaire (Cant *et al*., 2010:133).

Zikmund and Babin (2010:133) state that there have been many debates on which research approach is better. Table 4.2 provides a comparison between qualitative and quantitative research based on its purpose, type of questions, sample size, amount of information, requirements of administration, type of analysis, hardware and degree of replicability. However, although there are several differences between the two approaches, the key to effectively using either is to match the right approach to the right research framework (Zikmund & Babin, 2010:132).

Table 4.2: Qualitative versus quantitative research

Research aspect	Qualitative research	Quantitative research
Purpose	Discovery of new ideas, thoughts or feelings; understanding of relationships, ideas and objects	The validation of facts, estimates, relationships and predictions
Types of questions	Probing, unstructured, open-ended	Limited probing, mostly structured
Sample size	Small	Large
Amount of information from each respondent	Substantial	Fluctuates
Requirements of administration	Interviewer must have special skills	Interviewer with fewer special skills or no interviewer
Types of analysis	Subjective and interpretative	Statistical and summation
Hardware	Projection devices, video recorders, tape recorders, pictures, discussion guides	Questionnaires, computers, printouts
Degree of replicability	Low	High
Researcher training	Psychology, sociology, social psychology, consumer behaviour, marketing, marketing research	Statistics, decision models, decision support systems, computer programming, marketing, marketing research
Types of research	Exploratory	Descriptive and casual

Source: Adapted from McDaniel and Gates (2010:92), Zikmund and Babin (2010:133) and Hair *et al*. (2009:153).

For the purpose of this study, a mixed method approach was followed, incorporating both quantitative and qualitative research in order to achieve the research objectives. Quantitative research was used to measure the level of customer satisfaction with the healthier food options available at fast-food outlets and to describe the data using frequency distributions, while qualitative research was used to gain insight into customer perceptions, suggestions and problem areas with regard to the healthier food options available at fast-food outlets. The researcher further selected survey research as the data collection method. Self-administered questionnaires were formulated and handed out to students at the University of Pretoria. The questionnaires consisted of a combination of closed-ended and open-ended questions. The aim of using a mixed method approach was to collect data more effectively and to gain richer information by enabling respondents to also express their opinions and feelings with regard to the healthier food options available at fast-food outlets (Koneru, 2008:223).

The sample is discussed in further detail next, constituting step 5 of the research process.

4.2.5 Step 5: Design the sample plan

Sampling involves the researcher acquiring information from a subset (the sample) of a greater group (the population) (McDaniel & Gates, 2010:326). According to Cant *et al*. (2010:133) researchers need to develop a sampling plan, a framework which ensures that the data collected is representative of the sample (Hair *et al*., 2009:326). Tustin *et al*. (2005:96) identify five steps in the sampling plan, namely define the population, specify the sample frame, select the sampling method, determine the sample size and draw the sample. These steps are illustrated in figure 4.4 and are discussed briefly.

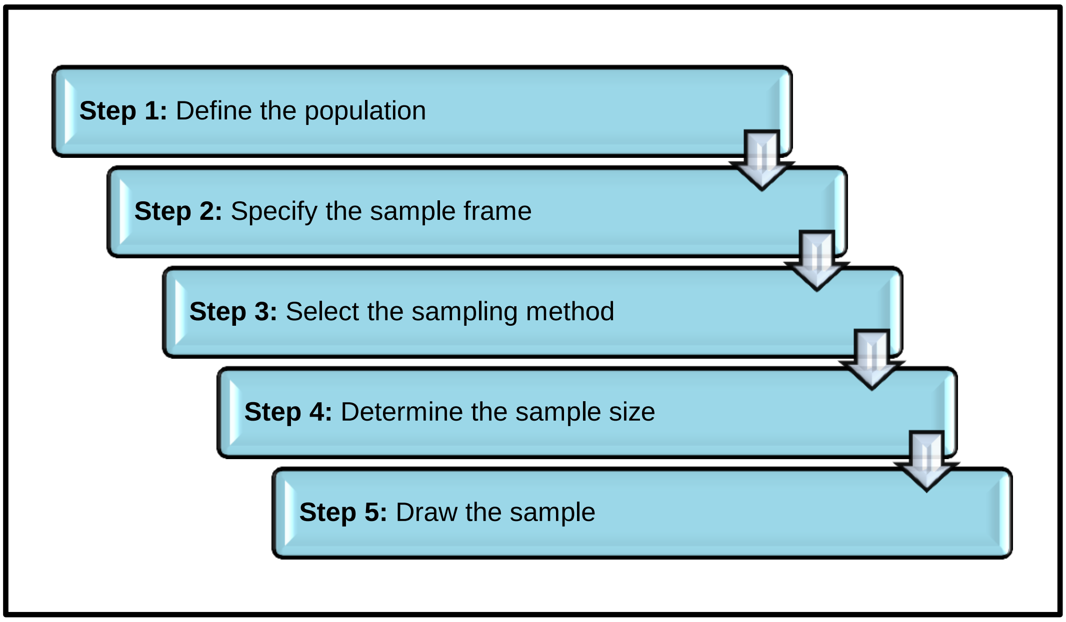


Figure 4.4: Steps in the sampling plan
Source: Adapted from Tustin *et al*. (2005:339).

4.2.5.1 Define the population

The first step that the researcher needs to carry out is to define the population, to determine the group of people that must be considered in order to achieve the objectives of the study (Hair *et al*., 2009:326).

The target population of interest for the current study was the student population registered at the University of Pretoria. The University of Pretoria was chosen due to its convenience and accessibility for the researcher. In addition, only one university was selected, as the aim of the study was not to be representative, but rather to enable other researchers to transfer the findings. Students were chosen as the unit of analysis due to their expenditure patterns. As indicated in chapter 1, food, groceries and eating out account for the highest percentage of student spending (Student Village, 2010).

Once the population has been defined, the researcher needs to determine the sample frame.

4.2.5.2 Specify the sample frame

A sample frame can be referred to as a list of individuals from which a sample is drawn (Iacobucci & Churchill, 2010:284). However, Tustin *et al*. (2005:96) emphasise that a sample frame is only essential when the researcher undertakes probability sampling. Since the current study employed a non-probability sampling method (as discussed in chapter 1 and explained in the section below), it was not required to draw a sample frame and thus the sampling relied on the researcher's discretion (Tustin *et al*., 2005:344).

The sampling methods are discussed in detail in the next step.

4.2.5.3 Select the sampling method

The third step in developing a sampling plan is to select the sampling method. In this case, the researcher needs to determine if probability or non-probability sampling will be applied in order to draw the sample. These two methods are explained below.

- **Probability sampling**

  Probability sampling gives all the population members a known, non-zero chance of being included as part of the sample (Iacobucci & Churchill, 2010:285). A great advantage of probability sampling is that it allows the researcher to obtain a sample that is representative of the larger population (Aaker *et al*., 2011:342). A number of methods can used to select a probability sample (Zikmund & Babin, 2010:433):

  - Single random sampling – population members are selected randomly and every population member has an equal chance of being chosen.
  - Systematic sampling – the individuals of a population are selected at regular intervals. For example, every nth number on the list is chosen.
  - Stratified sampling – the population is divided into subgroups known as strata and then a random sample is selected from each of these subgroups.
  - Cluster sampling – the population is divided into subgroups known as clusters. Thereafter, a sample of clusters is randomly selected.
  - Multistage sampling – a sampling technique that uses a combination of two or more of the probability techniques discussed above.

Table 4.3 provides a comparison between the probability sampling methods mentioned above in terms of their costs, degree of use and respective advantages and disadvantages. When deciding on the appropriate probability sampling method, researchers may find such a table useful.

Table 4.3: Comparison of probability sampling methods

Description	Cost and degree of use	Advantages	Disadvantages
Simple random The researcher allocates a number to each individual of the sampling frame and then chooses sample units by random method	High cost and moderately used in practice	Low advanced knowledge of the population needed; easy to analyse the data and compute error	Sampling frame needed; does not use knowledge of population that researcher may have; larger errors for same sampling size than in stratified sampling; respondents may be widely spread, therefore higher costs
Systematic The researcher makes use of natural ordering, selects a starting point, then members of the sampling frame are selected at regular intervals	Moderate cost and moderately used	Easy to draw the sample	If sampling interval is related to periodic ordering of the population, this may lead to increased variability
Stratified The population is divided into groups (strata) and the researcher randomly selects subsamples from each group	High cost and moderately used	Achieve representation of all groups in the sample; characteristics of each stratum can be projected and comparisons made; decreases the variability for same sample size	Needs precise information on the proportion in each stratum; if stratified lists are not existing, they can be expensive to prepare
Cluster The population is divided into subgroups known as clusters. The researcher then randomly selects a sample of clusters	Low cost and frequently used	If clusters are geographically defined, produces lowest field cost; needs listing of all clusters, but of individuals only within clusters; characteristics of clusters as well as of population can be estimated	Larger error for comparable size than with other probability samples; the researcher must be able to allocate population members to unique cluster or else this may result in omission or duplication of individuals
Multistage The researcher uses a combination of two or more of the previous four techniques	High cost and frequently used	Dependent on the techniques that are combined	Dependent on the techniques that are combined

Source: Adapted from Zikmund and Babin (2010:433).

- **Non-probability sampling**

  Non-probability sampling does not provide all the population members an equal chance of being chosen as part of the sample and therefore may not be representative of the population (Iacobucci & Churchill, 2010:285). Using a non-probability sampling method usually relies on the researcher's discretion (Tustin *et al*., 2005:344) and includes the following methods (Zikmund & Babin, 2010:432):

  - Convenience sampling – the individuals of the sample are chosen on the basis of them being readily available to the researcher.
  - Judgement sampling – individuals are selected based on the researcher's judgement on what forms a representative sample of the population.
  - Quota sampling – individuals are selected on the basis of satisfying some form of pre-specified criteria that apply to the population.
  - Snowball sampling – the sample members are selected and then prompted to identify additional members that may possess similar characteristics to be included in the sample.

As is the case with selecting a probability sampling method, researchers should also carefully compare the non-probability sampling methods. Table 4.4 gives a comparison between the non-probability sampling methods in terms of their costs, degree of use and respective advantages and disadvantages.

Table 4.4: Comparison of non-probability sampling methods

Description	Cost and degree of use	Advantages	Disadvantages
Convenience Researcher selects sample members whom are readily available	Very low cost and used considerably	No sample frame required	Sample may be unrepresentative; cannot make random sampling error estimates; projecting data outside sample is risky
Judgement The sample is selected based on the researcher's judgement, ensuring that all individuals have a certain characteristic	Moderate cost and average use	Beneficial for certain types of forecasting; sample ensured to meet a specific objective	Bias may occur as a result of the researcher's judgement which may make sample unrepresentative; projecting data outside sample is risky
Quota The researcher classifies the population on the basis of satisfying some form of pre-specified criteria, determines the desired proportion to sample from each class, and fixes quotas for each interviewer	Moderate cost and used very extensively	Introduces some stratification of population; no sample frame required	May produce bias due to researcher's classification of subjects; cannot estimate error from population; projecting data outside sample is risky
Snowball The researcher selects initial members; these individuals are then prompted to identify additional members that may possess similar characteristics to be included in the sample	Low cost and used in specific situations	Beneficial in the location of individuals of rare populations	High bias as sample units are not independent; projecting data outside sample is risky

Source: Adapted from Zikmund and Babin (2010:432).

As discussed in chapter 1, the sample for the current study was drawn by means of non-probability sampling. More specifically, a convenience sampling method was chosen, which enabled the researcher to select the respondents based on accessibility. A disadvantage of using non-probability sampling is that it may bias the results and interpretation of the data (Cunningham, Weathington & Pittenger, 2013:171). However, this does not prove that non-probability sampling methods are unable to produce valuable results; the problem lies in the inability to provide an indication of the reliability of the results acquired from the research (Wiid & Diggines, 2013:189). In this case, the results may not be generalised to the larger population (Iacobucci & Churchill, 2010:285). Given the nature of this study, however, the purpose of the study was not to generalise the results to the larger population, but rather enable other researchers to transfer the findings. As a result, the sampling method was nonetheless deemed acceptable.

Once the sampling method has been chosen, the researcher needs to determine the sample size.

4.2.5.4 Determine the sample size

The sample size refers to the number of individuals to be included in the final sample (Tustin *et al*., 2005:97). As indicated in the previous step, non-probability sampling was used in the current study. Beri (2008:198) states that there are two approaches in establishing the sample size for non-probability sampling methods. The first approach is to determine the sample size as if it is a probability sample and the second approach is to draw a sample as large as possible within the constraints of time and money.

The sample size for the current study was 400 respondents. Based on the total population size of the University of Pretoria, which is approximately 60 000 students (Cant *et al*., 2012:3), a sample size of 382 respondents at a confidence level of 95% would have been considered sufficient (Research Advisors, 2006). As indicated in chapter 1, the sample size for this study was increased to 400 respond-ents in order to accommodate for possible dropout (e.g. incomplete questionnaires) and was therefore deemed adequate by the Academic Research Support Unit (ARSU) and the Bureau for Market Research (BMR).

Having identified the sample size for the current study, the final step in developing the sampling plan is to draw the sample.

4.2.5.5 Draw the sample

This step involves the development of the operational procedure for selecting the sample elements (Tustin *et al*., 2005:97). For the current study, self-administered questionnaires were distributed at the University of Pretoria to obtain the information directly from the individual students. Students were approached at the entrances and around the food courts of the university. Based on the sampling method used, students were selected on the basis of accessibility.

Following the steps of the marketing research process in figure 4.1, the next step, designing the research instrument, is discussed.

4.2.6 Step 6: Design the research instrument

The research instrument is designed to collect the information that is required from the sample (Tustin *et al*., 2005:98). A questionnaire, according to Wiid and Diggines (2013:35) is the most common research instrument for the gathering of primary data and was utilised for the current study. Formally defined, a questionnaire includes a series of questions that are structured and designed to obtain facts and opinions from the sample (Tustin *et al*., 2005:98). The researcher must ensure that the formulated questionnaire is applicable, accurate and designed effectively in order to achieve the desired results (Zikmund & Babin, 2010:432). McDaniel and Gates (2010:292) indicate that questionnaire design involves a number of steps, as shown in figure 4.5.

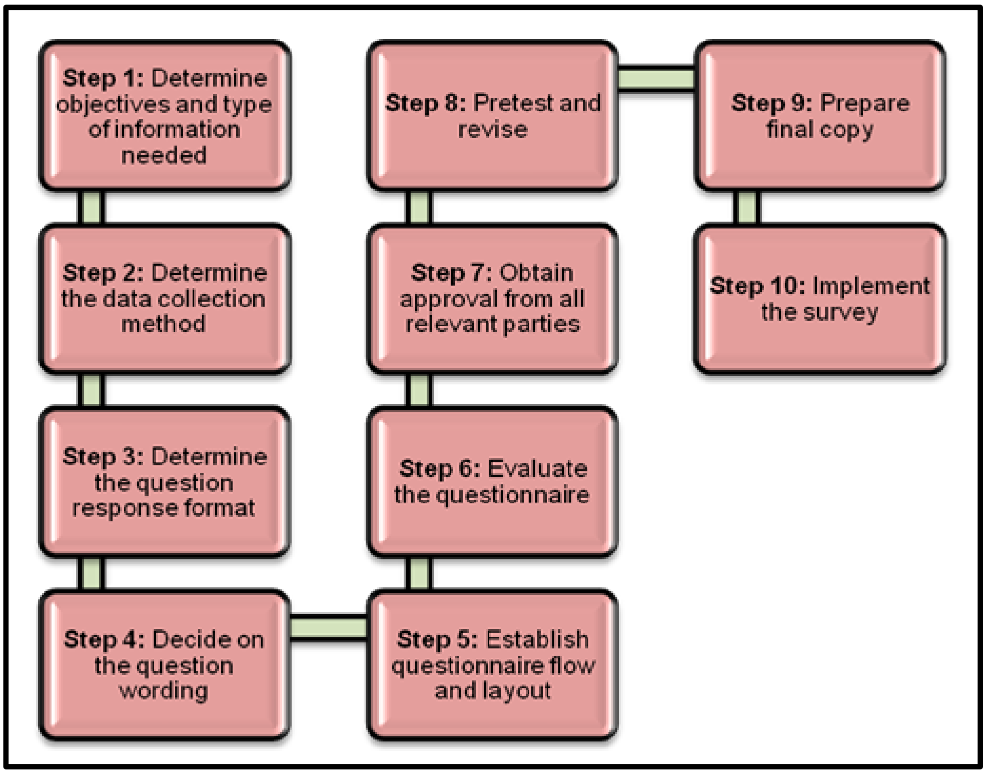


Figure 4.5: Questionnaire design process
Source: Adapted from McDaniel and Gates (2010:292).

Each of the steps identified in figure 4.5 is discussed briefly.

4.2.6.1 Determine objectives and type of information needed

The first step in questionnaire design involves the researcher determining what needs to be measured in order to satisfy the research objectives of the study (Wiid & Diggines, 2013:163). The purpose of the study was to explore customer satisfaction with the healthier food options available at fast-food outlets. This purpose, together with the research objectives, enabled the researcher to clearly identify the types of questions that needed to be included in the questionnaire in order to measure customer satisfaction. Table 4.5 provides a link between the secondary objectives of the study and the questions that were formulated in order to achieve those objectives (see questionnaire in Appendix A).

Table 4.5: Link between secondary objectives and questions formulated

Secondary objectives	Questions achieving each objective	Type of question
To determine the proportion of customers who have purchased the healthier food options at fast-food outlets	Question 5 Question 22	Closed-ended Open-ended
To determine the level of customer satisfaction with the food quality of the healthier food options available at fast-food outlets	Question 9 Question 10	Scaled-response Scaled-response and open-ended
To determine the level of customer satisfaction with the atmosphere at fast-food outlets with reference to the healthier food options	Question 9 Question 11	Scaled-response Scaled-response and open-ended
To determine the level of customer satisfaction with the service quality at fast-food outlets with reference to the healthier food options	Question 9 Question 12	Scaled-response Scaled-response and open-ended
To determine the level of customer satisfaction with the convenience of fast-food outlets with reference to the healthier food options	Question 9 Question 13	Scaled-response Scaled-response and open-ended
To determine the level of customer satisfaction with the price and value of the healthier food options available at fast-food outlets	Question 9 Question 14	Scaled-response Scaled-response and open-ended
To determine the overall customer satisfaction with fast-food outlets with reference to the healthier food options	Question 16	Scaled-response

The primary objective was thus achieved through the various secondary objectives in table 4.5. These, however, will be discussed in more detail in chapter 6.

Additional questions were included in the questionnaire with the purpose of gaining insight into respondents' opinions regarding the healthier food options (as discussed in section 4.2.6.3).

After indicating the type of information needed, the researcher needs to determine how to collect this information, step 2 in designing the questionnaire.

4.2.6.2 Determine the data collection method

As discussed in section 4.2.4.2, data can be collected from participants through various methods such as personal interviews, telephone interviews and self-administered surveys (Cant *et al*., 2010:133; Hair *et al*., 2009:244). For the current study, self-administered questionnaires were chosen and were distributed to students at the University of Pretoria. The advantages of using self-administered questionnaires include cost efficiency, reduced interviewer bias and quickest completion time compared with other methods (Cant *et al*., 2010:134).

In step 3 of designing the questionnaire, the question response format needs to be determined.

4.2.6.3 Determine the question response format

During this step, the researcher needs to determine the types of questions to be used in the questionnaire. McDaniel and Gates (2010:293) identify three types of questions, namely closed-ended, open-ended and scaled-response questions, which were all included in the current study to achieve the objectives (as indicated in table 4.5):

- Open-ended questions are questions where the participants respond in their own words (McDaniel & Gates, 2010:293) and are free to answer with whatever is uppermost in their minds (Zikmund & Babin, 2010:432). These types of questions (3, 4, 7, 10, 11, 12, 13, 14 and 22 in the questionnaire – Appendix A) were used in the current study primarily to gain more insight into:
  - The respondents' opinions with regard to what is meant by a healthier food option.
  - Why respondents believe there is a need or not for fast-food outlets to offer healthier food options.

  - Which fast-food outlets respondents were most aware of that offer healthier food options.
  - Why respondents did not purchase the healthier food options from fast-food outlets if they indicated this.
  - The respondents' opinions on and suggestions for improvements related to fast-food outlets and their healthier food options on offer.

- Closed-ended questions are questions which request the participant to choose from a list of options (McDaniel & Gates, 2010:293). These questions can be further grouped into dichotomous and multiple response questions (McDaniel & Gates, 2010:293):

  - Dichotomous questions provide the participant with two options to choose from (Wiid & Diggines, 2013:167). See questions 1, 2, 4, 5, 17, 20 and 21 in the questionnaire (Appendix A).
  - Multiple-choice questions (single response) provide the participant with several options to choose from (Wiid & Diggines, 2013:167). See questions 6, 8, 18 and 19 in the questionnaire (Appendix A).

- A scaled-response question is a type of closed-ended question which requires the participant to answer by marking a certain point on a scale (Wiid & Diggines, 2013:168). The aim is to determine the strength of the respondent's feelings towards the subject. For the purpose of this study, the researcher used the Institutional DINESERV Model proposed by Ng (2005) (discussed in chapter 3) in order to measure customer satisfaction with the healthier food options available at fast-food outlets in terms of food quality, atmosphere, service quality, convenience and price and value. The model employs a five-point Likert scale ranging from (1) very dissatisfied, (2) dissatisfied, (3) unsure, (4) satisfied to (5) very satisfied. See questions 9, 10, 11, 12, 13, 14 and 16 in the questionnaire (Appendix A). A ranking question was also used, referred to as a measurement task that requires respondents to rank order a number of brands, feelings or objects based on preference (Zikmund & Babin, 2010:345). In the case of this study, respondents were requested to rank the importance of the five dimensions (food quality, atmosphere, service quality, convenience and price and value) when considering the purchase of healthier food options from a fast-food outlet (see question 15 in the questionnaire – Appendix A).

Once the question response format has been determined, the researcher needs to decide on the question wording, which is discussed next.

4.2.6.4 Decide on the question wording

This step involves the actual wording of the questions. McDaniel and Gates (2010:293) provide four guidelines to researchers relating to question wording:

- The wording of the questions should be clear.
- The wording should not bias the participant.
- The participant must be able to answer the questions.
- The participant must be willing to answer the questions.

If questions are not formulated correctly, this could result in participants refusing to answer a specific question or even answering incorrectly (Wiid & Diggines, 2013:169). During the development of the questionnaire for the current study, care was taken by the researcher to ensure that the wording of the questions were clear, simple and easy for participants to understand. In addition, the questionnaire was pretested (see section 4.2.6.8) to determine if any questions were unclear.

The next step discussed is establishing the questionnaire flow and layout.

4.2.6.5 Establish questionnaire flow and layout

Once the questions have been formulated, the researcher needs to establish the flow and layout of the questionnaire (McDaniel & Gates, 2010:293). The researcher incorporated two qualifying (screening) questions (see questions 1 and 2 in the questionnaire – Appendix A) in which respondents could only proceed with the questionnaire if they purchased food from fast-food outlets from time to time and were at least aware of the healthier food options offered at fast-food outlets. In addition, the demographic questions were asked at the end of the questionnaire. According to McDaniel and Gates (2010:293), demographic questions may make participants feel uneasy and should rather be asked at the end before the participant becomes defensive or decides not to participate.

After establishing a good flow, the researcher must evaluate the questionnaire. This forms step 6 in designing the questionnaire and is discussed next.

4.2.6.6 Evaluate the questionnaire

During this step, the researcher critically evaluated the questionnaire, ensuring that the questionnaire was not too long and the questions asked were necessary in order to achieve the research objectives.

Following step 6 was to obtain approval from the relevant parties, discussed next.

4.2.6.7 Obtain approval from all relevant parties

It is essential that the researcher obtain approval from all the relevant parties who have direct authority over the study (McDaniel & Gates, 2010:310).

The questionnaire for the current study was reviewed by the allocated supervisors, the Bureau of Market Research (BMR) and the Ethical Clearance Committee of the University of Pretoria. After being approved and receiving ethical clearance, the researcher followed by conducting a pretest.

4.2.6.8 Pretest and revise

Pretesting involves a trial run of the questionnaire (McDaniel & Gates, 2010:310). The questionnaire for the current study was pretested amongst ten students within the University of South Africa. This was done to ensure that the questions were clear and easy to answer, and also to minimise errors that could potentially occur and fix any questions that participants may have found difficult to respond to.

4.2.6.9 Prepare final copy

Once pretested, the researcher then prepared the final copy of the questionnaire, for implementation.

4.2.6.10 Implement the survey

Once the researcher is satisfied with the final copy, implementation can take place and fieldwork can begin. This is discussed in the following section, referring back to the main research process (figure 4.1).

4.2.7 Step 7: Gather the data

This step involves collecting the actual data using the research instrument as discussed in the previous step. The data collection process is usually referred to as fieldwork (Tustin *et al*., 2005:97).

For the purpose of this study, the researcher carried out the research at the University of Pretoria. A total of 400 self-administered questionnaires were distributed to the students around the food courts and entrances of the university. Students who accepted the invitation to participate in the study were required to fill in the questionnaire and return it immediately on completion. By following this approach, the probability of a high response rate was virtually achieved.

Once the data has been collected, it should be analysed. This is step 8 of the research process (figure 4.1), which is discussed next.

4.2.8 Step 8: Process and analyse the data

Collected data should be edited, coded and tabulated in order to facilitate processing and analysis (Wiid & Diggines, 2013:36). Thereafter, the researcher must convert the data into meaningful information (Wiid & Diggines, 2013:36). Zikmund and Babin (2010:66) define data analysis as the application of reasoning to understand the data that has been gathered. There are many computer programs available which researchers can use in order to assist in data processing and analysis (Wiid & Diggines, 2013:36). However, for the purpose of this study, NVivo version 10 and SAS JMP version 10 were used.

As indicated in chapter 1, the qualitative data was analysed through content analysis using NVivo version 10, and categories were identified and thereafter presented through frequency counts. The quantitative data was analysed using SAS JMP version 10. The data was edited, coded and cleaned and presented through frequency counts (illustrated in bar, pie and tabular format) and mean scores (the arithmetic average of the sample, where all values are added up and divided by the number of responses (Hair *et al*., 2009:483)).

Both descriptive and inferential statistics were used to describe the findings of this study. Descriptive statistics involve statistical techniques that are used to summarise, classify and describe the characteristics of a set of data (Sharma, 2007:5). Such techniques include measures of variability such as the standard deviation, measures of central tendency such as the mean, median and mode and frequency distributions which can be presented either numerically or visually using graphs (Keele, 2011:55; Goodwin, 2010:141). Inferential statistics, on the other hand, involve techniques such as chi-square and analysis of variance used to make inferences or draw conclusions about a population (Pagano, 2012:10; Goodwin, 2010:511).

The reliability and validity of the research instrument were tested. Reliability and validity are two extremely important concepts in research. Goodwin (2010:134) states that for any measure to be of value in research, it should be sufficiently reliable and valid. These concepts are discussed below.

4.2.8.1 Reliability

Reliability is an indicator of an instruments internal consistency (Zikmund & Babin, 2010:334). In other words, reliability refers to the extent to which an instrument produces consistent results through repeated measurements (Kumar, 2011:181). The coefficient alpha, also referred to as Cronbach's alpha, is a commonly used method for estimating internal reliability (Bryman, 2012:170) and was used in this study. Cronbach's alpha computes the average of all possible split-half reliabilities for a construct and can vary between 0 (no consistency among items) and 1 (complete consistency among items), while the following can be further interpreted (Zikmund & Babin, 2010:334):

- For a value between 0.7 and 0.8, reliability is considered good.
- For a value between 0.6 and 0.7, reliability is considered fair.
- For a value below 0.6, reliability is considered poor.

4.2.8.2 Validity

Validity can be referred to as an instruments ability to measure what it is actually designed to measure (Aaker *et al*., 2011:269). Factor analysis was conducted to ensure that the items under the five dimensions of the Institutional DINESERV Model were grouped suitably.

There are two common methods of factor analysis (Aaker *et al*., 2011:490):

- Principal component analysis – is based on the total variance in the data. Lockström (2007:201) indicates that principal component analysis is able to determine how and to what degree items are linked to their underlying factors (dimensions). This method was therefore used for the current study.
- Common factor analysis – is based only on the variance shared among all the variables and is used to identify theoretically meaningful underlying factors (dimensions).

The appropriateness of factor analysis for this study was measured by the Kaiser-Meyer-Olkin (KMO) measure of sampling adequacy and Bartlett's test of sphericity. The KMO is "…a ratio of the sum of squared correlations to the sum of squared correlations plus sum of squared partial correlations" (Sozer, 2008:99). The KMO index ranges from 0 to 1.0, with a minimum value of 0.50 being acceptable (Williams, Brown and Onsman, 2012:5). Bartlett's test of sphericity is conducted to determine whether there is a relationship between the variables (Sozer, 2008:99) and should prove significant ($P<0.05$) in order for factor analysis to be conducted (Williams *et al*., 2012:5).

The use of factor analysis for this study was appropriate and the research instrument used proved to be reliable and valid. The results are presented in chapter 5.

After analysing the data, the researcher is then able to interpret the findings and prepare the report, step 9 of the research process.

4.2.9 Step 9: Interpret the findings and prepare report

The final step in the marketing research process, as indicated in figure 4.1, is the presentation of the research findings, the conclusion and recommendations. This step, according to Cant *et al*. (2010:143) involves interpreting the information and reporting it to management for decision-making purposes.

The findings, conclusion and recommendations of the current study are presented in chapters 5 and 6, respectively.

4.3 SUMMARY

This chapter provided a brief overview of marketing research and its importance to organisations. Thereafter, the research process was discussed and a detailed description of each step was provided, further clarifying the approach followed for the current study. The study followed a mixed method approach, incorporating both qualitative and quantitative research in order to satisfy the research objectives. Non-probability, convenience sampling was chosen and data was collected from students studying at the University of Pretoria by means of self-administered questionnaires. The next chapter presents the research findings of the study.

CHAPTER 5

RESEARCH FINDINGS

5.1 INTRODUCTION

This chapter will present the analysis of the results of the empirical study. The study followed a mixed method approach with the aim of achieving the following objectives:

- **Primary objective**

  The primary objective of this study was to explore customer satisfaction with the healthier food options available at fast-food outlets in South Africa.

- **Secondary objectives**
  - To determine the proportion of customers who have purchased the healthier food options at fast-food outlets.
  - To determine the level of customer satisfaction with the food quality of the healthier food options available at fast-food outlets.
  - To determine the level of customer satisfaction with the atmosphere at fast-food outlets with reference to the healthier food options.
  - To determine the level of customer satisfaction with the service quality at fast-food outlets with reference to the healthier food options.
  - To determine the level of customer satisfaction with the convenience of fast-food outlets with reference to the healthier food options.
  - To determine the level of customer satisfaction with the price and value of the healthier food options available at fast-food outlets.
  - To determine the overall customer satisfaction with fast-food outlets with reference to the healthier food options.

The quantitative data was analysed using SAS JMP version 10 and the qualitative data using NVivo version 10. Descriptive and inferential statistics were employed to describe the findings of this study and the results were presented by referring to the actual question numbers in the questionnaire in Appendix A. The level of satisfaction of respondents with the healthier food options available at fast-food outlets is examined in this chapter in terms of food quality, atmosphere, service quality, convenience as well as price and value. Furthermore, a profile of the respondents in terms of demographic characteristics is provided, followed by a comparison between the demographic groups in order to determine if there were any differences in the level of satisfaction amongst these groups. The last section covers a discussion on the reliability and validity of the research instrument.

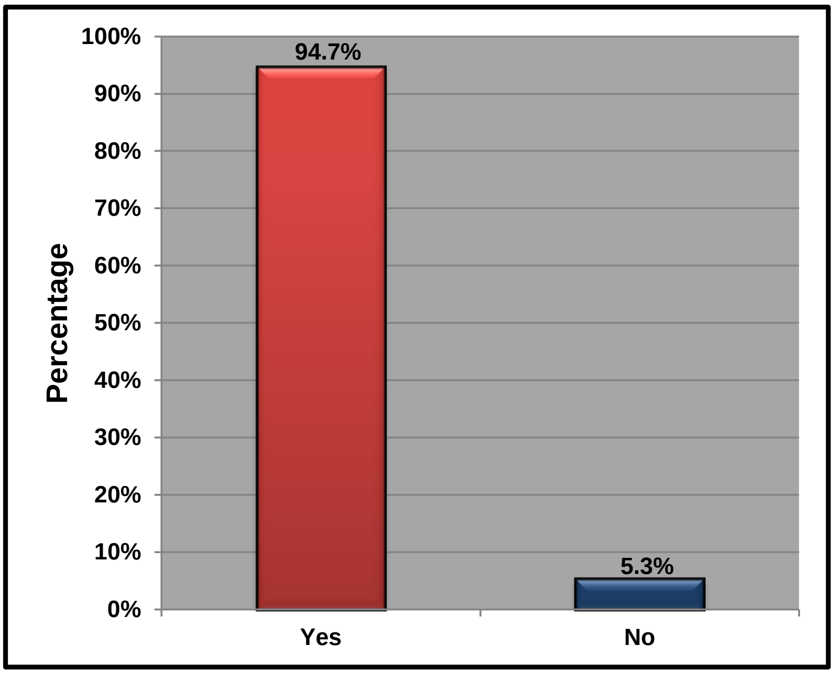
5.2 PROFILE OF THE SAMPLE

For this study, a total of 400 respondents were asked to complete the self-administered questionnaire (see Appendix A), and 336 out of the 400 questionnaires were deemed valid and usable for further analysis. The 64 questionnaires removed consisted of questionnaires from 4 respondents who did not sufficiently complete the questionnaire, 21 respondents who answered “no” to the first qualifying question and 39 respondents who answered “no” to the second qualifying question. The qualifying questions are discussed in more detail below and the results will be presented on a question-by-question basis as seen in the questionnaire.

5.2.1 The qualifying questions (questions 1 and 2)

Qualifying questions, also known as screening questions, are used to target or find people with certain behavioural, attitudinal or demographic characteristics and therefore provide an indication as to who qualifies for the survey (Aaker *et al*., 2011:219). For the purpose of this study, the researcher included two qualifying questions, discussed in more detail below.

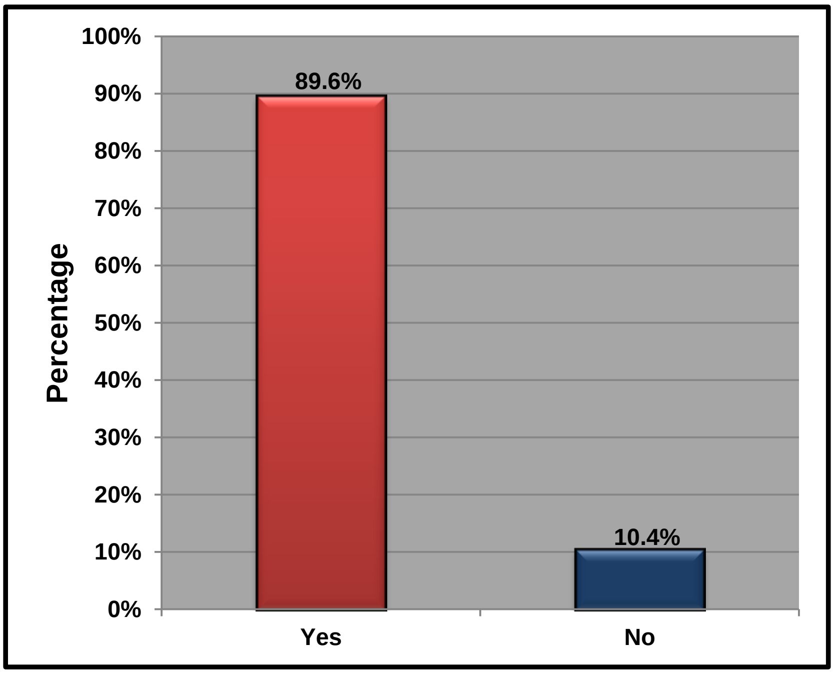
As shown in figure 5.1, a total of 21 respondents (5.3%) answered “no” to the first qualifying question: “Do you purchase food from fast-food outlets from time to time?” These respondents were disqualified from participation as the study was interested in retrieving information from those who purchased food from fast-food outlets.



Level	Count
Yes	375
No	21
Total	396

Figure 5.1: Do you purchase food from fast-food outlets from time to time? (n=396)

The second qualifying question, as shown in figure 5.2, disqualified 39 respondents (10.4%) who answered “no” to the question: “Are you aware of any healthier food options offered at fast-food outlets?” Respondents had to at least be aware of the healthier food options offered at fast-food outlets in order to continue with the questionnaire.



Level	Count
Yes	336
No	39
Total	375

Figure 5.2: Are you aware of any healthier food options offered at fast-food outlets? (n=375)

As indicated, a total of 336 questionnaires were deemed usable for further analysis and is analysed next.

5.2.2 Respondents' opinions of a healthier food option (question 3)

Question 3 of the questionnaire was an open-ended question and asked the respondents to describe, in their opinion, what was meant by a healthier food option. The results are presented in table 5.1.

Table 5.1: In your opinion, what is meant by a healthier food option? (n=336)

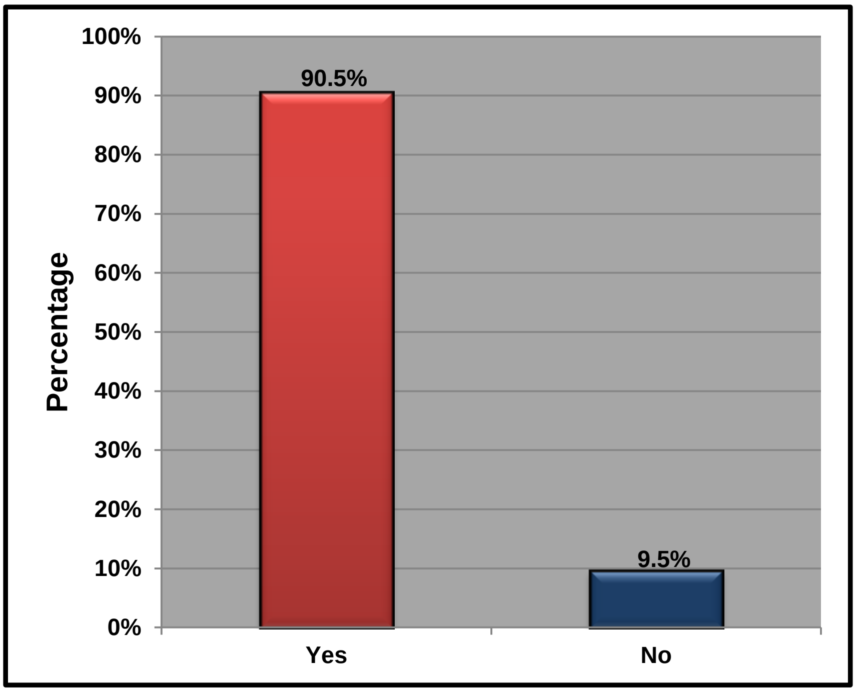
Category	Percentage (%)	Frequency count
Low fats and oils	46.4	156
Vegetables	42.3	142
Salad	34.5	116
Protein	25.0	84
Fruit	22.9	77
Grilled food	19.9	67
Balanced meal	13.1	44
Low sugar	11.3	38
Healthy sandwich, wrap or pita	10.1	34
Low carbs	9.2	31
Nutrients, vitamins and minerals	7.7	26
Beverages: diet, water, fruit juice, shakes and smoothies	7.1	24
Unprocessed foods	6.3	21
Whole grains	4.8	16
No or little sauces	2.7	9
Reasonable portions	2.7	9
Does not destroy your body or cause obesity	2.1	7
Organic produce	2.1	7
Steamed or boiled food	1.8	6
Baked food	0.9	3
Low sodium	0.6	2
Yoghurt	0.6	2
Roasted food	0.3	1
Vegan options	0.3	1

** Total responses may not equal n and percentages may not equal 100 as this question was open-ended. Percentage was calculated using the frequency count per category divided by n.*

Table 5.1 shows that the majority of the respondents (156 or 46.4%) were of the opinion that healthier food options are items low in fats and oils. A total of 142 respondents (42.3%) indicated vegetables, followed by salad (116 or 34.5%), protein (84 or 25%), fruit (77 or 22.9%), grilled food (67 or 19.9%), a balanced meal (44 or 13.1%), low sugar (38 or 11.3%) and a healthy sandwich, wrap or pita (34 or 10.1%). These results are consistent with the researcher's definition of healthier food options (indicated in the questionnaire in Appendix A), which are items low in fat and/or calories such as salads, grilled items (grilled chicken, grilled burgers, grilled wraps, grilled fish), muesli and yoghurt breakfasts.

5.2.3 The need for healthier food options at fast-food outlets (question 4)

Question 4 of the questionnaire required respondents to specify whether they thought there was a need for healthier food options at fast-food outlets. Figure 5.3 below shows that a total of 304 respondents (90.5%) believed that there was such a need and 32 respondents (9.5%) did not agree. Since the majority of the respondents (304 or 90.5%) felt that there was a need for healthier food options, it is suggested that fast-food outlets produce a variety of healthier food options in order to cater for and satisfy all their customers. The respondents' motivations for their answers are further described in tables 5.2 and 5.3.



Level	Count
Yes	304
No	32
Total	336

Figure 5.3: Do you think there is a need for healthier food options at fast-food outlets? (n=336)

Table 5.2 presents the reasons why respondents thought there was no need for healthier food options at fast-food outlets.

Table 5.2: Reasons for no need for healthier food options at fast-food outlets (n=32)

Category	Percentage (%)	Frequency count
Nature of business, other suppliers for healthy food options	50.0	16
Individuals' choice to eat unhealthily	18.8	6
Eat fast-food as a treat	18.8	6
Healthier options not really healthy	9.4	3
Should be a balance of healthy and unhealthy	3.1	1
More popular and better selling options	3.1	1

** Total responses may not equal n and percentages may not equal 100 as this question was open-ended. Percentage was calculated using the frequency count per category divided by n.*

Table 5.2 shows that half of the respondents (16 or 50%) indicated that there was no need for healthier food options at fast-food outlets. The reason they gave was that it was the outlet's nature of business to provide fast-food and there were other suppliers that provided healthy food options. A total of 6 respondents (18.8%) felt that it was the individuals' choice to eat unhealthily, while a further 6 (18.8%) indicated that they ate fast-food as a treat and therefore did not want to eat healthily when going to fast-food outlets.

Table 5.3 provides reasons why respondents thought there was a need for healthier food options at fast-food outlets.

Table 5.3: Reasons for a need for healthier food options at fast-food outlets (n=304)

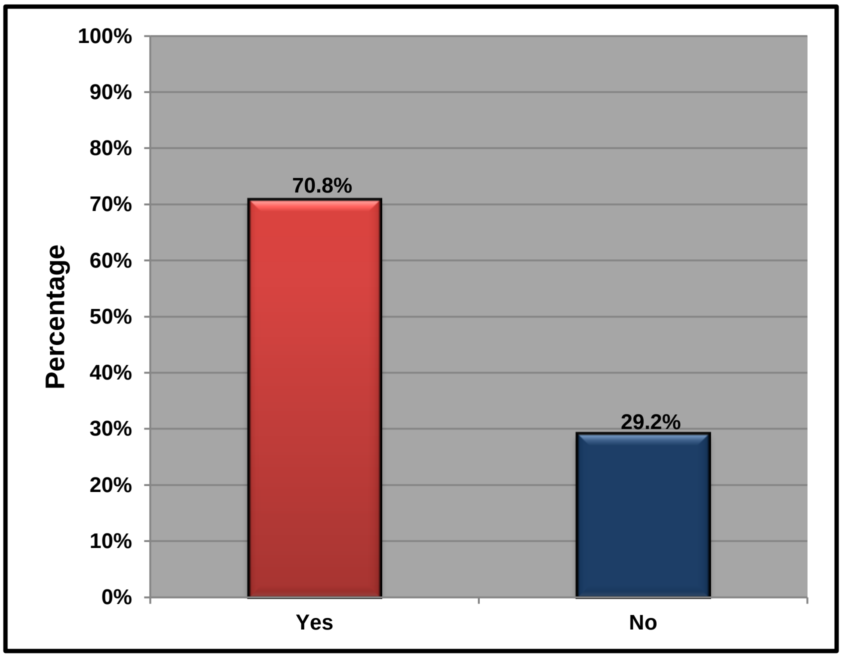
Category	Percentage (%)	Frequency count
Health issues: diabetes, heart disease and obesity	40.1	122
Want the option available to them	26.3	80
Healthy lifestyle trend	19.7	60
Convenient and time saving	17.7	54
Good business investment as there is a demand	7.9	24
Fast-food does not have to mean unhealthy junk food	3.3	10
Healthier options are attractive	0.7	2
Should be a balance of healthy and unhealthy	0.3	1
Religious requirements	0.3	1
Too much focus on unhealthy food	0.3	1

** Total responses may not equal n and percentages may not equal 100 as this question was open-ended. Percentage was calculated using the frequency count per category divided by n.*

As can be seen from table 5.3, the majority of the respondents (122 or 40.1%) were of the opinion that healthier food options were important at fast-food outlets due to health issues such as diabetes, heart disease and obesity. This is not surprising; in chapter 2 the obesity problem in South Africa is highlighted. Approximately 61% of all South Africans are overweight or obese (Mail & Guardian, 2012). Furthermore, the fast-food industry has frequently received criticism for contributing to the obesity problem (Maumbe, 2010:11; Binkley, 2006:373). Providing a variety of healthier food options would therefore benefit the fast-food industry and their customers. As shown in table 5.3, 80 respondents (26.3%) felt that the healthier food options should be available to them when they ate out at a fast-food outlet and 60 respondents (19.7%) wanted to follow a healthier lifestyle. A further 54 (17.7%) stated that having the healthier food options available at fast-food outlets would be very convenient and time saving as they would not have to prepare a healthy meal themselves at home.

5.2.4 Purchase of healthier food options from fast-food outlets (question 5)

As indicated in section 5.2.3, a total of 304 respondents (90.5%) believed there was a need for healthier food options at fast-food outlets. However, a total of 238 respondents (70.8%) actually purchased the healthier food options available at fast-food outlets (figure 5.4). Although this percentage represents the majority of the respondents, a significant number (98 or 29.2%) did not purchase the healthier food options from fast-food outlets. These respondents were asked to provide reasons for their behaviour (question 22) and these are summarised in table 5.4.



Level	Count
Yes	238
No	98
Total	336

Figure 5.4: Have you purchased healthier food options from fast-food outlets? (n=336)

Table 5.4 indicates the reasons why respondents did not purchase the healthier food options from fast-food outlets.

Table 5.4: Reasons for not purchasing healthier food options from fast-food outlets (n=98)

Category	Percentage (%)	Frequency count
Fast-food is a treat	32.6	32
Healthier options are tasteless and unappealing	29.6	29
Defeats the objective	23.5	23
Healthier food more expensive or overpriced	20.4	20
Don't think healthier options are that healthy	12.2	12
Limited healthier options available	8.2	8
Don't necessarily eat healthily	7.1	7
Lack of advertising of the healthier options	3.1	3

** Total responses may not equal n and percentages may not equal 100 as this question was open-ended. Percentage was calculated using the frequency count per category divided by n.*

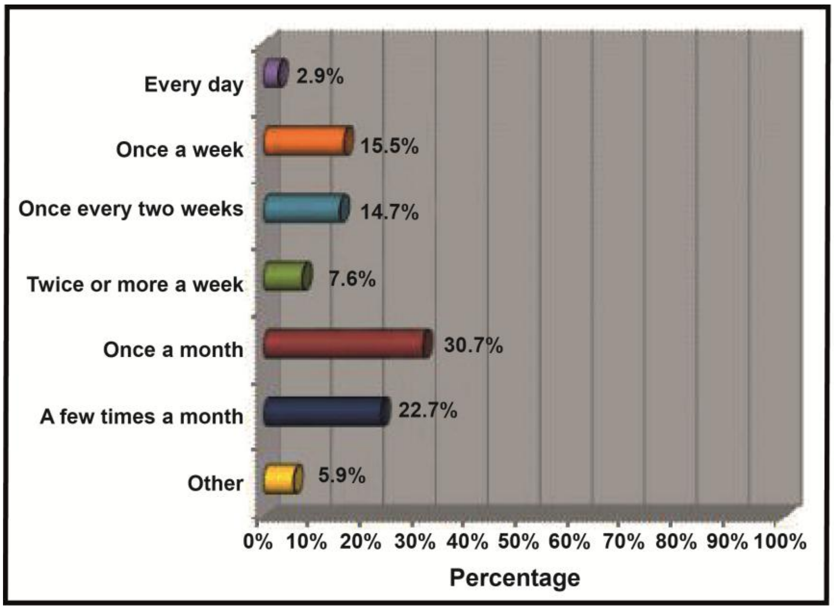
From table 5.4, it can be seen that the majority of the respondents (32 or 32.6%) ate fast food as a treat and therefore did not want to eat healthily when dining out at fast-food outlets. A total of 29 respondents (29.6%) pointed out that the healthier food options were tasteless and unappealing and 23 respondents (23.5%) were of the opinion that it defeated the objective of eating out at a fast-food outlet. A further 20 (20.4%) believed that the healthier food options were more expensive or overpriced compared with other options available, followed by 12 (12.2%) who were of the opinion that the healthier food options were not that healthy. From these results, it appears that the respondents have negative perceptions towards the taste, presentation, nutrition and price of the healthier food options available which may be aspects that fast-food outlets should look into if they wish to increase their customer base.

The next section will focus on the 238 respondents who purchased the healthier food options from fast-food outlets.

5.2.5 Frequency of purchasing healthier food options from fast-food outlets (question 6)

Figure 5.5 indicates that the majority of the respondents (73 or 30.7%) purchased the healthier food options from fast-food outlets once a month, followed by 54 respondents (22.7%) who purchased these options a few times a month, 37

(15.5%) once a week and 35 (14.7%) once every two weeks. Based on these results, it appears that respondents purchased healthier food options from fast-food outlets quite often, as 94.1% (224) purchased at least once a month.



Frequency	Count
Every day	7
Once a week	37
Once every two weeks	35
Twice or more a week	18
Once a month	73
A few times a month	54
Other	14
Total	238

Figure 5.5: How often do you purchase healthier food options from fast-food outlets? (n=238)

5.2.6 Awareness of the fast-food outlets offering healthier food options (question 7)

Table 5.5 shows the fast-food outlets that respondents were aware of which offer healthier food options.

Table 5.5: Awareness of fast-food outlets offering healthier food options (n=238)

Category	Percentage (%)	Frequency count
Kauai	45.4	108
Nando's	45.4	108
KFC	32.4	77
Torpedo's	22.3	53
McDonald's	21.8	52
Wimpy	9.7	23
Spur	8.0	19
Steers	8.0	19
Subway	7.1	17
Ocean Basket	5.9	14
Fishaways	4.6	11
Mugg & Bean	3.4	8
Campus kiosk	2.5	6

Category	Percentage (%)	Frequency count
Chinese fast-food outlets	2.5	6
Juicy Lucy	2.5	6
Anat	2.1	5
Boost	2.1	5
Uncle Faouzi	2.1	5
Barcelos	1.7	4
Coffee Buzz	1.7	4
Fego Caffé	1.7	4
Roman's	1.7	4
Big Al's	1.3	3
Global Wrapps	1.3	3
Tribecca	1.3	3
Burgundy's	0.8	2
Dros	0.8	2
Galito's	0.8	2
Kung-Fu Kitchen	0.8	2
Sausage Express	0.8	2
Adlers	0.4	1
Brewers	0.4	1
Kream	0.4	1
Debonairs	0.4	1
Fish & Chip Co	0.4	1
John Dory's	0.4	1
Maxi's	0.4	1
Machachos	0.4	1
Mimmos	0.4	1
Mr Kebab	0.4	1
News Café	0.4	1
Parrots	0.4	1
Rhapsody's	0.4	1
Sandwich Barron	0.4	1
Simply Fish	0.4	1
Thai Raksa	0.4	1

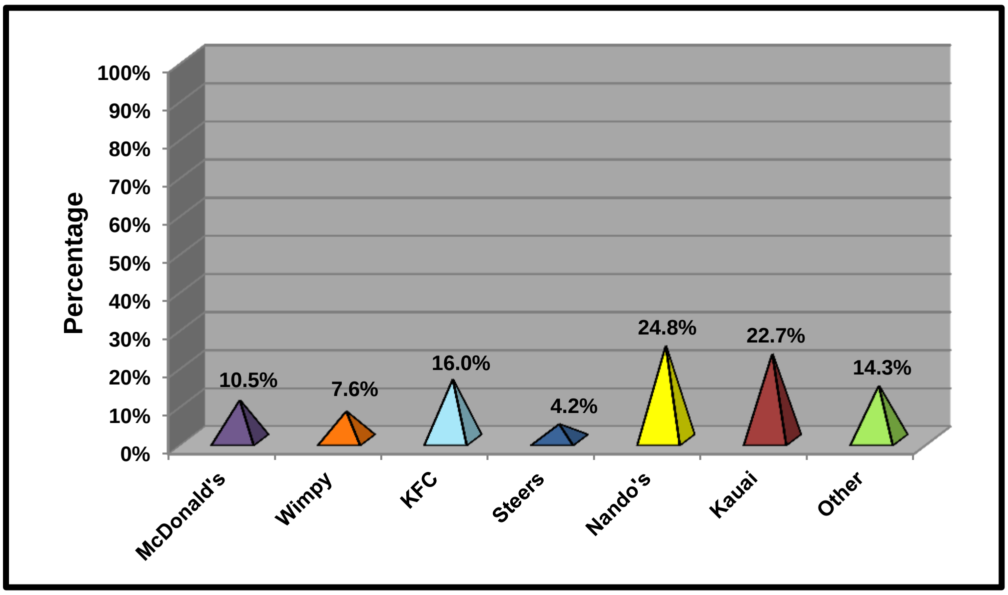
** Total responses may not equal n and percentages may not equal 100 as this question was open-ended. Percentage was calculated using the frequency count per category divided by n.*

As can be seen from table 5.5, the top five fast-food outlets that respondents were aware of which offer healthier food options was Kauai (108 or 45.4%), Nando's

(108 or 45.4%), KFC (77 or 32.4%), Torpedo's (53 or 22.3%) and McDonald's (52 or 21.8%). From these results, it appears that the majority of the respondents were aware of Kauai and Nando's offering healthier food options. This could be due to the fact that Kauai positions itself as a healthy fast-food outlet and Nando's is well known for its flame-grilled chicken.

5.2.7 Recent purchase of healthier food options from fast-food outlets (question 8)

Figure 5.6 shows that the majority of the respondents (59 or 24.8%) had most recently purchased healthier food options from Nando's, followed by Kauai (54 or 22.7%), KFC (38 or 16.0%), McDonald's (25 or 10.5%), Wimpy (18 or 7.6%) and Steers (10 or 4.2%).

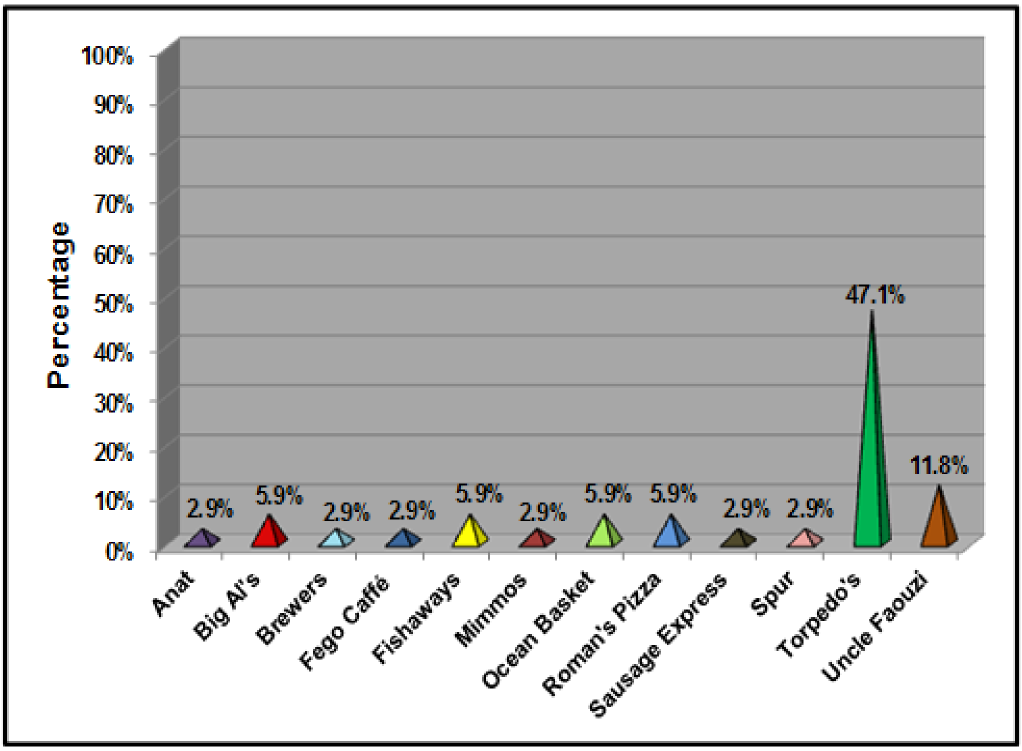


Outlet	Count
McDonald's	25
Wimpy	18
KFC	38
Steers	10
Nando's	59
Kauai	54
Other	34
Total	238

Figure 5.6: Which fast-food outlet did you most recently purchase a healthier food option from? (n=238)

These results are consistent with those in table 5.5 as these are the outlets respondents were most aware of that offer healthier food options. Furthermore, as mentioned in chapter 2, Nando's, Kauai, KFC, McDonald's, Wimpy and Steers are included in the list of the top fast-food brands in South Africa (Sunday Times, 2013:15).

When exploring the option “other” (figure 5.6), it can be seen that 34 respondents (14.3%) selected this category. Figure 5.7 below indicates the dispersion of the responses within this category.



Outlet	Count
Anat	1
Big Al's	2
Brewers	1
Fego Caffé	1
Fishaways	2
Mimmos	1
Ocean Basket	2
Roman's Pizza	2
Sausage Express	1
Spur	1
Torpedo's	16
Uncle Faouzi	4
Total	34

Figure 5.7: Other fast-food outlets (n=34)

As can be seen from figure 5.7, the majority of the respondents (16 or 47.1%) had recently purchased a healthier food option from Torpedo's. Torpedo's is a fast-food outlet situated on the University of Pretoria campus and as the research was conducted here, this may explain the high response rate.

The next section presents the respondents' satisfaction ratings for the healthier food options available at fast-food outlets based on the dimensions of the Institutional DINESERV Model.

5.2.8 Customer satisfaction based on the Institutional DINESERV Model (question 9)

Customer satisfaction with the healthier food options was measured by asking respondents to evaluate the five dimensions of the Institutional DINESERV Model, namely food quality, atmosphere, service quality, convenience and price and value. These dimensions were measured on a Likert scale ranging from (1) very dissatisfied, (2) dissatisfied, (3) unsure, (4) satisfied to (5) very satisfied. Table 5.6 provides a summary of the number of respondents and their satisfaction ratings for all the items of each dimension. The results for each of these dimensions will be discussed further.

Table 5.6: Customer satisfaction based on the Institutional DINESERV Model (n=238)

Dimension	Items	Count					
		Very dissatisfied	Dissatisfied	Unsure	Satisfied	Very satisfied	Total
Food quality	9.1	1	3	16	143	75	238
	9.2	0	8	10	124	96	238
	9.3	0	7	29	112	90	238
	9.4	0	7	41	101	89	238
	9.5	4	12	61	111	50	238
	9.6	8	36	40	101	53	238
Atmosphere	9.7	0	15	46	114	63	238
	9.8	0	7	46	130	55	238
	9.9	2	16	39	124	57	238
	9.10	0	20	50	129	39	238
Service quality	9.11	7	27	49	114	41	238
	9.12	5	22	51	122	38	238
	9.13	6	38	73	70	51	238
	9.14	4	5	92	84	53	238
Convenience	9.15	3	11	39	107	78	238
	9.16	3	15	16	109	95	238
	9.17	11	28	33	89	77	238
	9.18	15	34	56	81	52	238
Price and value	9.19	8	38	44	101	47	238
	9.20	4	30	44	105	55	238
	9.21	9	42	54	98	35	238
	9.22	0	11	41	136	50	238

Each of these dimensions shown in table 5.6 is now discussed below.

5.2.8.1 Food quality

As discussed in chapter 3, food quality can be defined as the combination of a products features that are significant in determining the degree of acceptability of that product to the consumer (Otegbayo *et al*., 2010:541). The Institutional DINESERV Model employed in this study (discussed in chapter 3) measures six items of food quality, as shown in table 5.7.

Table 5.7: Items of food quality in the Institutional DINESERV Model

Food quality	
9.1	Overall quality of the food
9.2	Taste of food
9.3	Eye appeal of the food
9.4	Freshness of the food
9.5	Nutritional content of food
9.6	Variety of menu options

The results for each of these items will now be presented.

a) Overall quality of the food

Figure 5.8 illustrates the respondents' satisfaction level with the overall quality of the healthier food options offered by fast-food outlets.

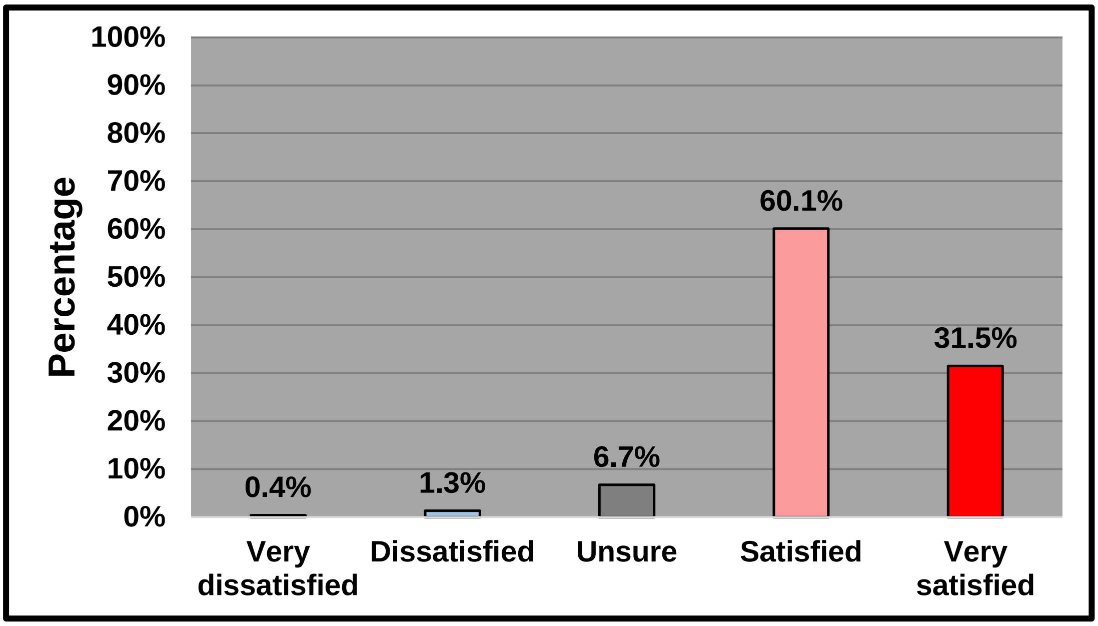


Figure 5.8: Overall quality of the food (n=238)

As can be seen from figure 5.8, 91.6% of respondents (218) were satisfied or very satisfied with the overall quality of the healthier food options. Only 1.7% (4) were dissatisfied or very dissatisfied with it and 6.7% (16) were unsure. This largely positive response suggests that respondents were satisfied with the overall quality of the healthier food options offered by fast-food outlets.

b) Taste of food

Taste has been considered as the most significant component of food attributes in fast-food studies (Sriwongrat, 2008:14; Harnack *et al*., 2008). Figure 5.9 indicates the respondents' satisfaction level with the taste of the healthier food options offered by fast-food outlets.

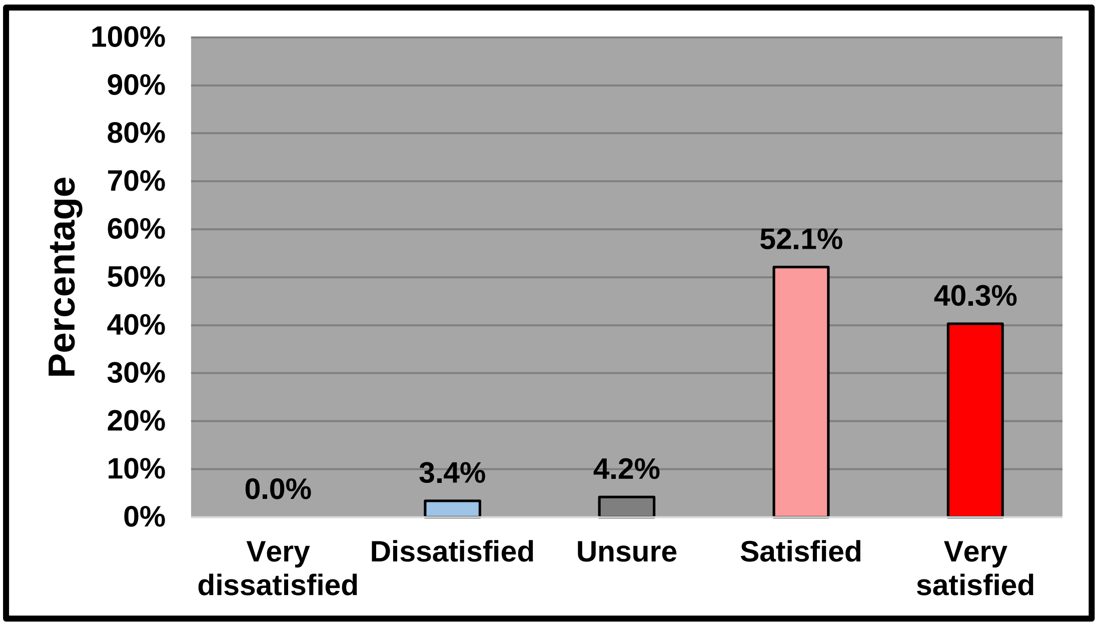


Figure 5.9: Taste of food (n=238)

As indicated in figure 5.9, a total of 92.4% of respondents (220) were satisfied or very satisfied with the taste of the healthier food options available at fast-food outlets. Only 3.4% (8) were dissatisfied and 4.2% (10) were unsure. These results indicate that the respondents liked the taste of the healthier food options offered by fast-food outlets.

c) Eye appeal of food

Figure 5.10 indicates the respondents' satisfaction level with the presentation of the healthier food options offered by fast-food outlets.

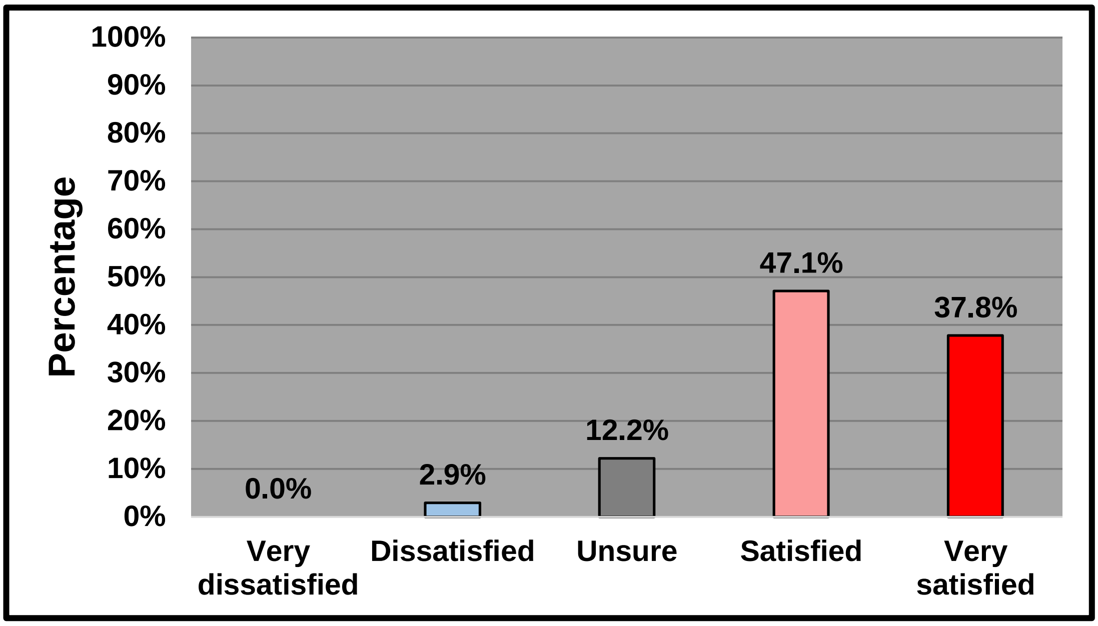


Figure 5.10: Eye appeal of food (n=238)

From figure 5.10, one can see that 84.9% of respondents (202) were satisfied or very satisfied with the way the healthier food options were presented. Only 2.9% of respondents (7) were dissatisfied and did not find the healthier food options appealing, while a further 12.2% (29) were unsure. Although these results reflect positively on fast-food outlets since the majority of the respondents found the healthier food options appealing, a significant total of 15.1% (36) were not happy. Fast-food outlets need to ensure that their healthier food options are always presented in a way that is visually appealing. As the saying goes "…one eats with one's eyes first" (Kleynhans, 2003:30). Therefore, the more appealing the healthier food looks, the more customers will be willing to consume it (USDA, 2004:4).

d) Freshness of the food

Figure 5.11 describes the respondents' satisfaction level with the freshness of the healthier food options at fast-food outlets.

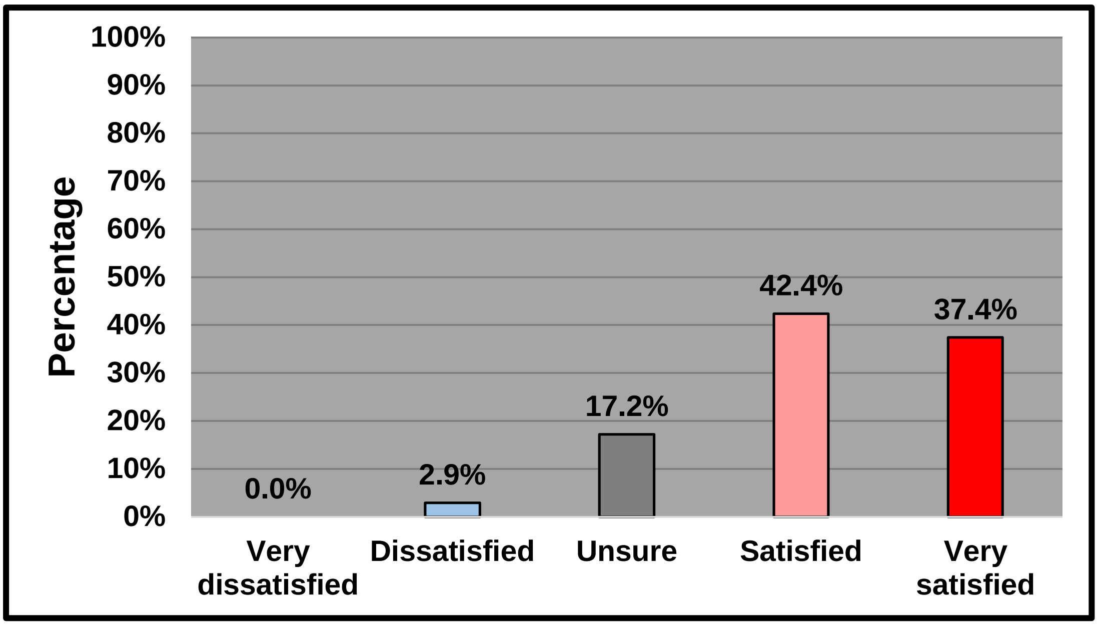


Figure 5.11: Freshness of the food (n=238)

Figure 5.11 shows that 2.9% of respondents (7) were dissatisfied with the freshness of the healthier food options, while 17.2% of respondents (41) were unsure. Although the majority of respondents (190 or 79.8%) were satisfied or very satisfied, indicating they were happy with the freshness of the healthier food options, it is very concerning that 20.1% (48) were not satisfied. This could be due to fast-food outlets not using high-quality, fresh ingredients and serving food that is not freshly cooked. It was suggested (in chapter 3) that fast-food outlets can maintain freshness of the healthier food options by improving the delivery of raw materials to their outlet through just-in-time (JIT) deliveries. If the raw materials can be delivered on a regular basis, the freshness of the food can be preserved at the highest level possible (Shaharudin *et al*., 2011:206). Furthermore, fast-food outlets should focus on serving healthier food options that is freshly cooked. Fresh, well-prepared food creates a positive experience for the customer, both physically and emotionally (USDA, 2004:6).

e) Nutritional content of the food

Question 9.5 asked the respondents to indicate their satisfaction level based on the nutritional content of the healthier food options. The findings are presented in figure 5.12.

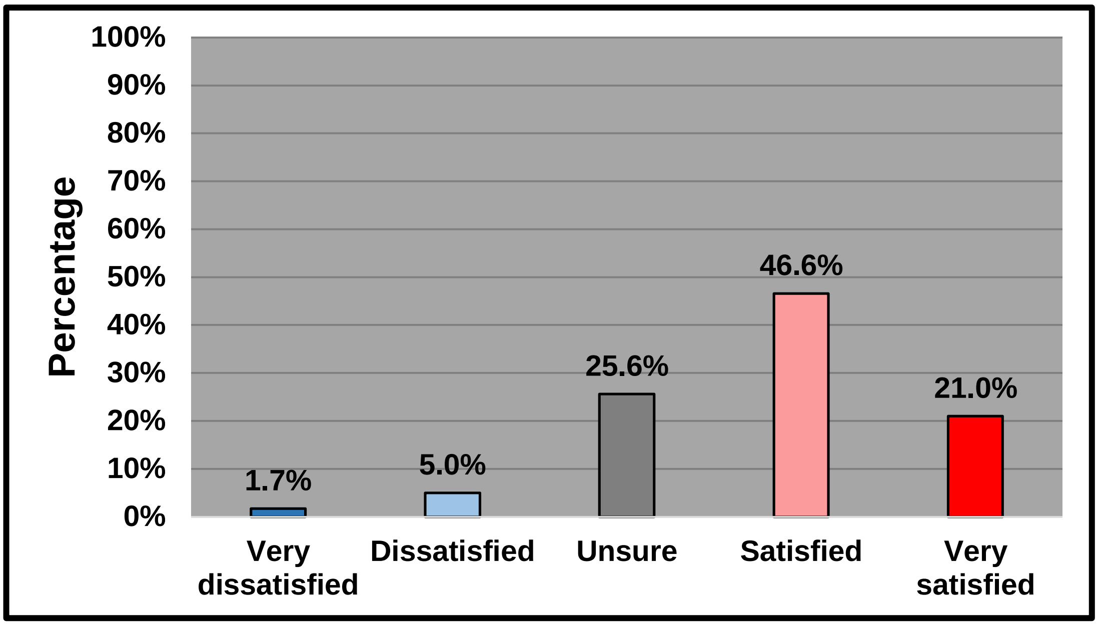


Figure 5.12: Nutritional content of the food (n=238)

The findings presented in figure 5.12 show that only 67.6% of respondents (161) were satisfied or very satisfied with the nutritional content of the healthier food options. It is interesting to note the large percentage drop in satisfied and very satisfied respondents compared with the other items of food quality previously discussed. Notably, 6.7% of respondents (16) indicated that the nutritional content of the healthier food options was unsatisfactory, while 25.6% (61) were unsure. Although the majority of the respondents were positive regarding the nutritional content of the healthier food options, 32.3% (77) were either unsure or negative. A negative response amongst respondents may be due to a lack of knowledge regarding the nutritional content of the healthier food options available. Many fast-food outlets do not provide the nutritional information of foods at point of purchase and although some of them do display this information on their websites, it may not be easily accessible to consumers, particularly at the time of purchase. It seems that fast-food outlets are lacking in this area and therefore need to ensure that their target market is educated and aware of the nutritional content of all their foods through increased communication. Further investigation may also be required in order to establish customer expectations and perceptions regarding the nutritional content of the healthier food options.

f) Variety of menu options

A variety of options on the menu is an attribute that is greatly desired by customers in the foodservice industry (Kasapila, 2006:91). Figure 5.13 illustrates the respondents' satisfaction level with the variety of healthier food options offered by fast-food outlets.

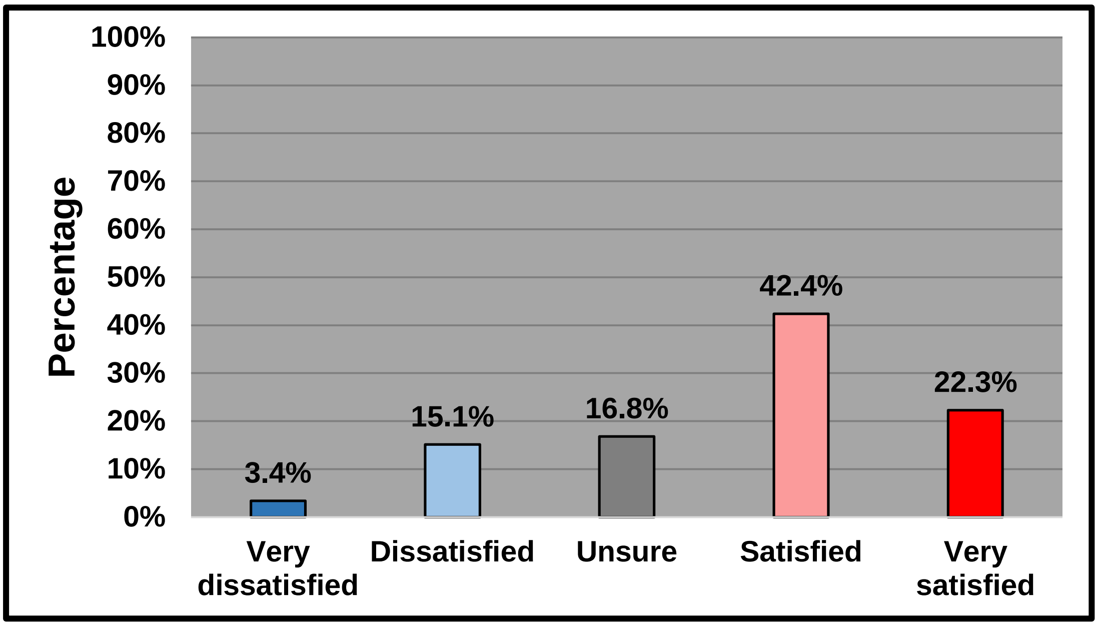


Figure 5.13: Variety of menu options (n=238)

As indicated in figure 5.13, only 64.7% of the respondents (154) were satisfied or very satisfied with the variety of healthier food options offered by fast-food outlets. Some 18.5% of respondents (44) were not happy with the variety, while a further 16.8% (40) were unsure. These results are clearly a cause for concern as a total of 35.3% of respondents (84) were either dissatisfied with the variety of healthier food options offered by fast-food outlets or were unsure. The variety of menu options seems to have received the lowest satisfaction rating compared with the other items of food quality. These results correlate with the findings of Kasapila (2006:75), where customers were least satisfied with the variety of menu options. From the findings, it appears that respondents may be limited in their choice of healthier food options at fast-food outlets, which is also the reason why some respondents did not purchase the healthier food options at all (see table 5.4). In this regard, fast-food outlets may find it useful to pay attention to menu variety in their efforts to improve the quality of the healthier food options.

The results for the second dimension of the Institutional DINESERV Model, atmosphere, will now be presented.

5.2.8.2 Atmosphere

Atmosphere can be referred to as the overall mood of the fast-food outlet and is determined by both practical and aesthetic elements, such as temperature, lighting, artwork, noise levels and aroma (Katsigris & Thomas, 2008:579). The Institutional DINESERV Model employed in this study (discussed in chapter 3) measures four items of atmosphere as shown in table 5.8.

Table 5.8: Items of atmosphere in the Institutional DINESERV Model

Atmosphere	
9.7	Cleanliness of facilities
9.8	Outlet environment
9.9	Level of comfort in the outlet
9.10	Staff appearance

The results for each of these items will now be presented.

a) Cleanliness of facilities

Cleanliness has been considered as one of the most important factors in selecting a fast-food outlet (Meyers & Wallace, 2003:53; Park, 2004:91). Figure 5.14 illustrates the respondents' satisfaction level with the cleanliness of fast-food outlet facilities.

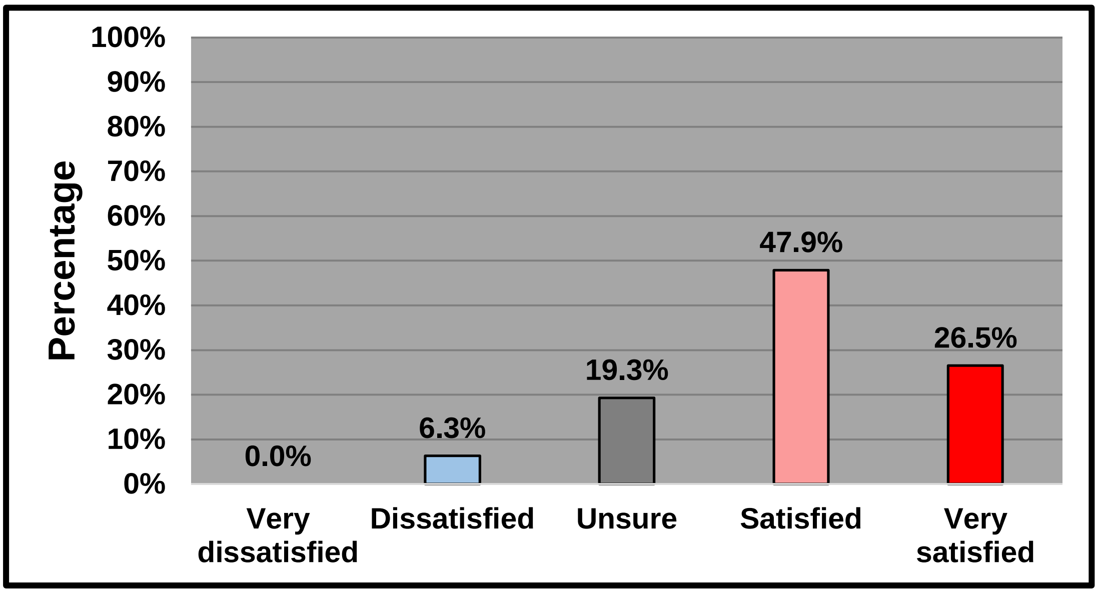


Figure 5.14: Cleanliness of facilities (n=238)

The results highlighted in figure 5.14 indicate that 74.4% of respondents (177) were satisfied or very satisfied with the cleanliness of the fast-food outlet. Only 6.3% (15) were dissatisfied with the cleanliness of the fast-food outlet and 19.3% (46) were unsure. While 74.4% of respondents (177) who were happy with the cleanliness of the fast-food outlet is an overall good response, 25.6% (61) did not have a positive view of the cleanliness of the fast-food outlet. This may have a negative effect on the fast-food outlet's reputation as well as the respondents' behavioural intentions and their perceptions regarding the healthier food options. Furthermore, a study conducted by Yoo (2012:31) on restaurant cleanliness revealed that more than 90% of the respondents specified cleanliness as an important factor in determining their intention to return. It is therefore extremely important for fast-food outlets to maintain a high standard of cleanliness and ensure that this is well communicated to customers.

b) Outlet environment

Question 9.8 asked respondents to indicate their satisfaction level with the fast-food outlet environment. The outlet environment can be referred to as the overall mood of the fast-food outlet and is determined by elements such as temperature, lighting, artwork, noise levels and aroma (Katsigris & Thomas, 2008:579). Figure 5.15 shows the respondents' responses to this question.

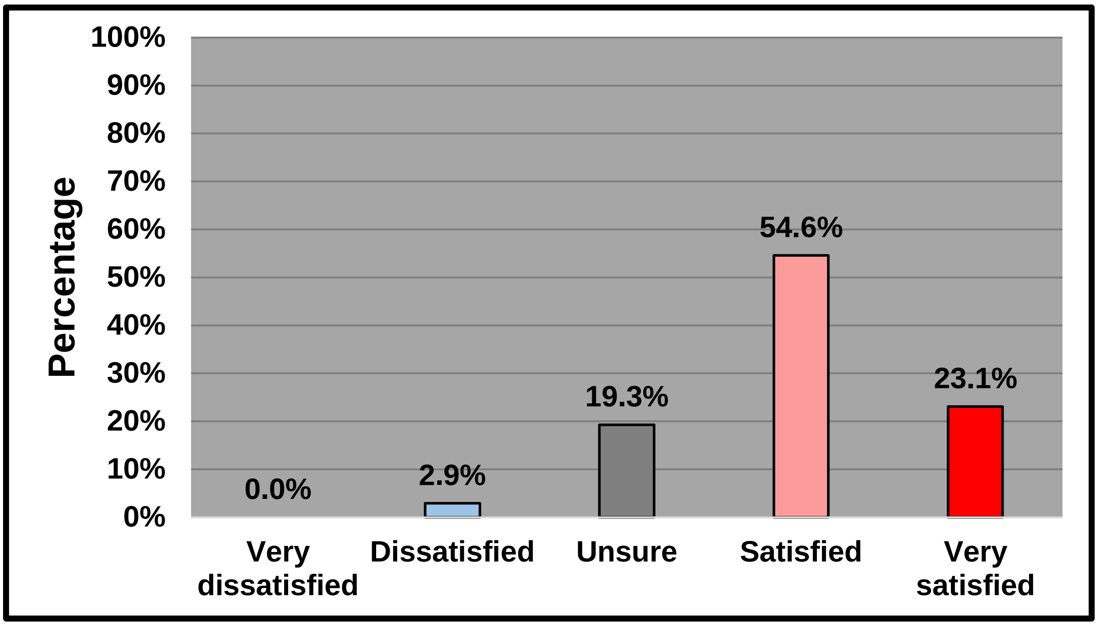


Figure 5.15: Outlet environment (n=238)

Figure 5.15 shows that 77.7% of respondents (185) were satisfied or very satisfied with the fast-food outlet environment. Only 2.9% (7) were dissatisfied, while a substantial 19.3% (46) were unsure. Although the majority of the respondents were happy with the fast-food outlet environment, the total 22.2% of dissatisfied or unsure respondents (53) represent a significant number. Their feelings could be the result of undesirable temperature levels, colours, lighting, noise levels or unpleasant odours within the fast-food outlet which may negatively influence their satisfaction level with the healthier food options. It may be necessary for fast-food outlets to conduct research on customer perceptions regarding the outlet environment in order to improve and increase the satisfaction ratings. According to Ng (2005:14), customers are more likely to spend money and time at a place where the environment stimulates a feeling of pleasure. Dissatisfied customers may go elsewhere to experience such a feeling.

c) Level of comfort in the outlet

Respondents were required to indicate their satisfaction with the level of comfort they experienced in the fast-food outlet. The results are highlighted in figure 5.16.

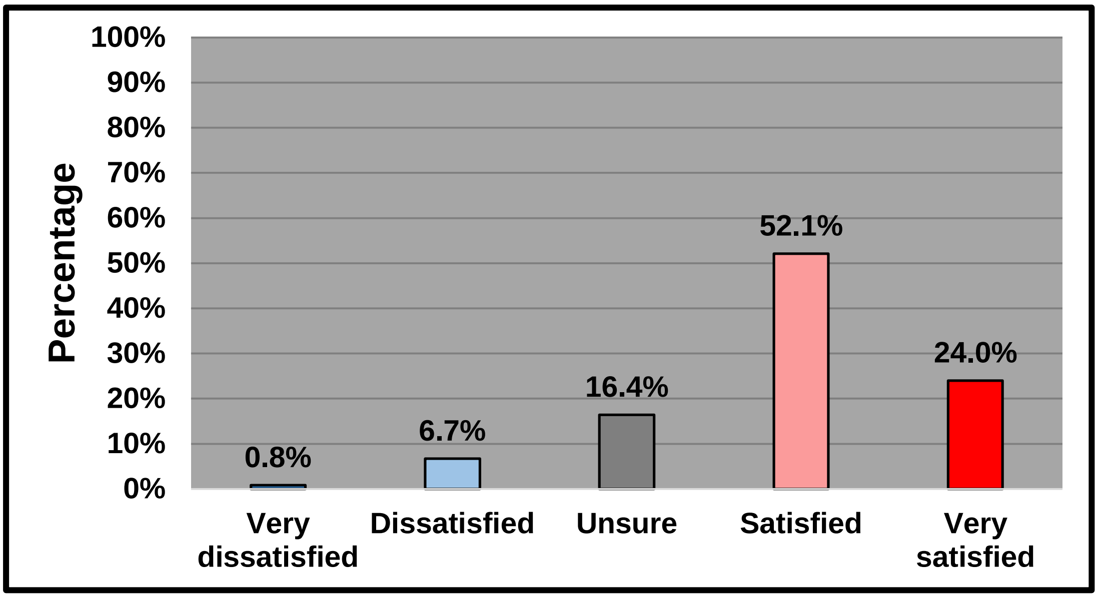


Figure 5.16: Level of comfort in the outlet (n=238)

It can be seen from figure 5.16 that 76.1% of respondents (181) were satisfied or very satisfied with the level of comfort in the fast-food outlet, while 23.9% (57) were unhappy or unsure. The negative response from respondents could be due to the layout of the fast-food outlet, resulting in less space to move around freely or the comfort of the furniture. Furthermore, temperature levels, lighting, noise levels and aromas in the fast-food outlet could also affect the respondents' comfort level. As indicted above, this may further have a negative influence on the respondents' satisfaction level with the healthier food options. Therefore, in order for fast-food outlets to increase customer satisfaction levels, further investigation and careful planning may be required in terms of layout and outlet environment.

d) Staff appearance

The appearance of the staff of any organisation can greatly affect customer satisfaction. Figure 5.17 illustrates the respondents' satisfaction level regarding the appearance of the staff at fast-food outlets.

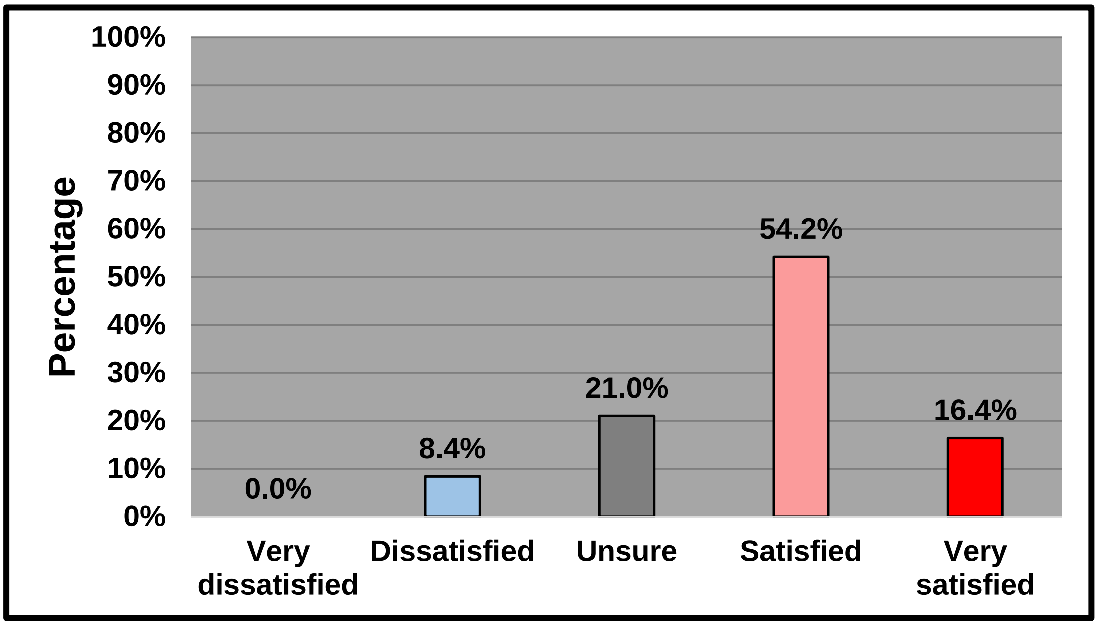


Figure 5.17: Staff appearance (n=238)

The results presented in figure 5.17 indicate that 70.6% of respondents (168) were satisfied or very satisfied with the appearance of staff at fast-food outlets, while 8.4% (20) were dissatisfied and 21% (50) were unsure. It appears that quite a high percentage, 29.4% of the respondents (70), were not happy with staff appearance. This could be due to the respondents' negative perception of staff attire and hygiene. It is interesting to note that staff appearance received the lowest satisfaction rating compared with the other items of atmosphere. It is therefore important for fast-food outlets to ensure that staff members maintain their appearance and uniform standards, as this could be perceived as an indicator of quality and may also create positive perceptions regarding the healthier food options.

The results for the third dimension of the Institutional DINESERV Model, service quality, will now be presented.

5.2.8.3 Service quality

Service quality can be defined as a form of attitude, resulting from the evaluation of customer expectations and perceived performance (Wan & Cheng, 2011:58). The Institutional DINESERV Model employed in this study (discussed in chapter 3) measures four items of service quality as shown in table 5.9.

Table 5.9: Items of service quality in the Institutional DINESERV Model

Service quality	
9.11	Attentive staff
9.12	Service provided by staff
9.13	Staff knowledge about food
9.14	Friendliness of manager

The results for each of these items will now be presented.

a) Attentive staff

For question 9.11, the respondents were required to indicate how satisfied they were with the attentiveness of staff at fast-food outlets. The results are presented in figure 5.18.

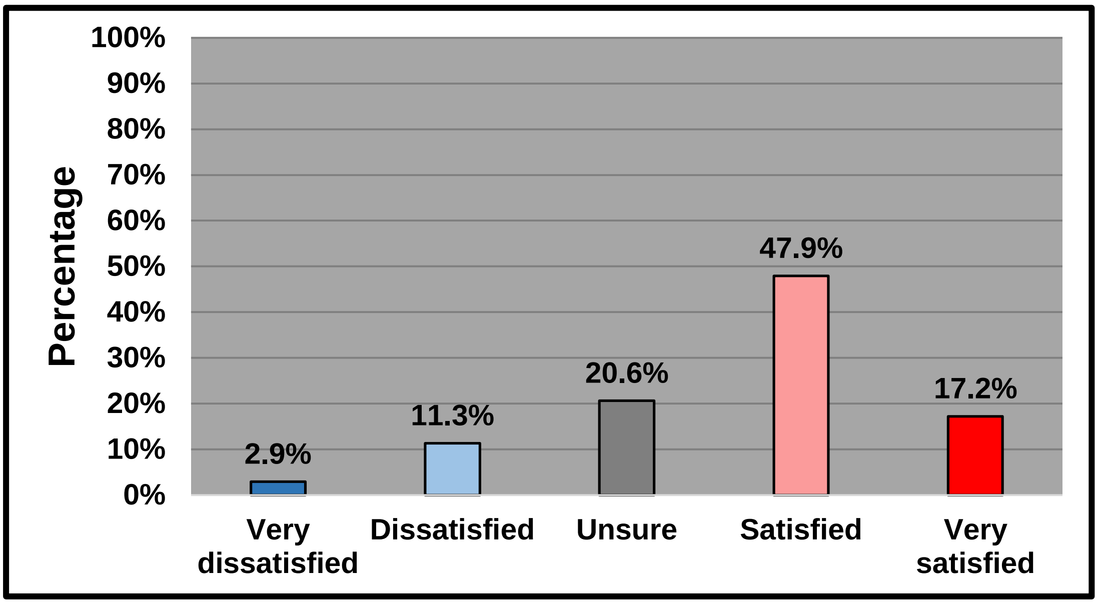


Figure 5.18: Attentive staff (n=238)

Figure 5.18 shows that only 65.1% of respondents (155) were satisfied or very satisfied with the attentiveness of staff at fast-food outlets, while 14.2% (34) were very dissatisfied or dissatisfied and a further 20.6% (49) were unsure. Staff may not have handled customer requests or complaints very well, leading to a large percentage (34.8%) of respondents (83) having a negative view of staff attentiveness. As discussed in chapter 3, a customer will not be satisfied with his/her experience if staff are perceived as inattentive (Shock *et al*., 2004:108; Kotler *et al*., 2010:36). Fast-food outlets should therefore employ training programmes to encourage staff to remain helpful and attentive at all times.

b) Service provided by staff

Providing good service is essential to any organisation. Figure 5.19 indicates the respondents' satisfaction level based on the service provided by staff at fast-food outlets.

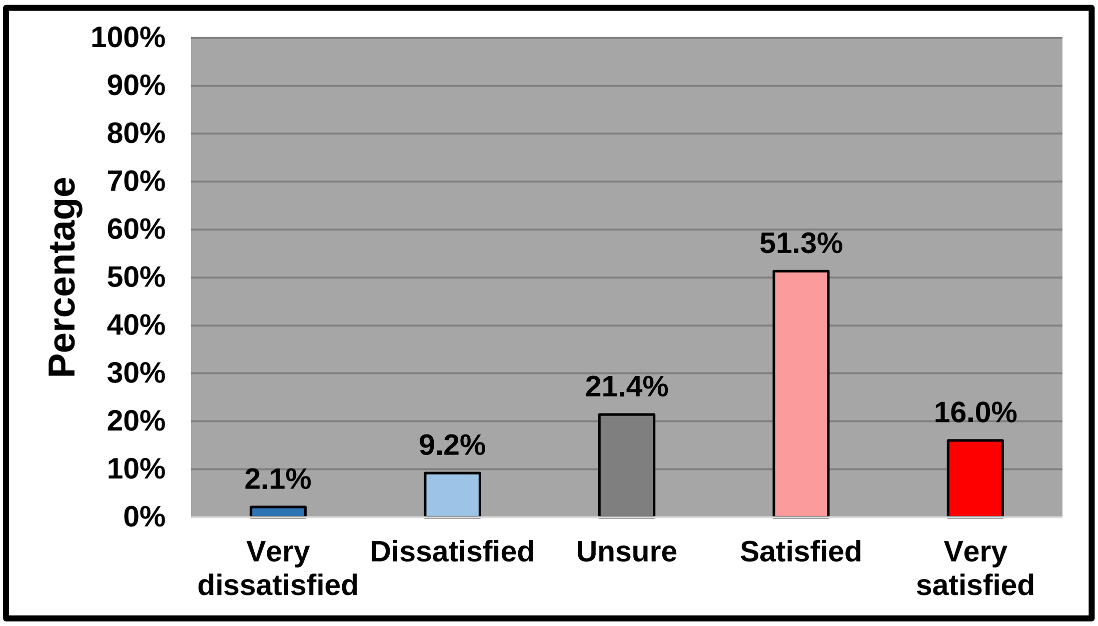


Figure 5.19: Service provided by staff (n=238)

It is shown in figure 5.19 that only 67.3% of respondents (160) were satisfied or very satisfied with the service provided by staff at fast-food outlets, while 11.3% (27) were very dissatisfied or dissatisfied. A further 21.4% of respondents (51) were unsure, revealing that a total of 32.7% (78) were either uncertain or unhappy with the service provided by staff. Customers usually expect fast service when purchasing food from a fast-food outlet and thus the negative response of some respondents could be due to the speed of service being unsatisfactory. Furthermore, staff may have been unfriendly, unwilling to help and inattentive to customer requests or problems relating to the healthier food options. This could have contributed to the respondents' dissatisfaction level regarding the service provided by staff, considering the high percentage (34.8%) of respondents (83) who were not satisfied with staff attentiveness (figure 5.18). Customers who are dissatisfied with the service can go elsewhere to receive what they expect and more, which could negatively affect the sales of the healthier food options. Therefore, as indicated above, fast-food outlets should employ training programmes to encourage and motivate staff to be attentive and provide excellent customer service.

c) Staff knowledge of food

Figure 5.20 indicates the respondents' satisfaction level with the staff knowledge about the healthier food options at fast-food outlets.

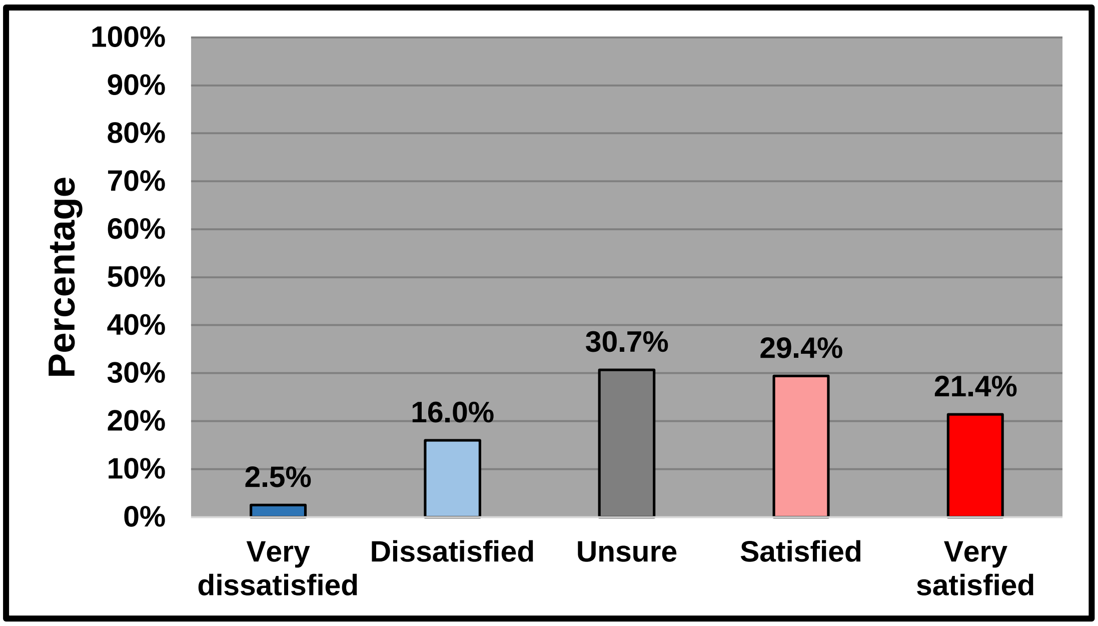


Figure 5.20: Staff knowledge about food (n=238)

From figure 5.20, it can be seen that only 50.8% of respondents (121) were satisfied or very satisfied with the staff's knowledge of the healthier food options, while 18.5% (44) were very dissatisfied or dissatisfied. A further 30.7% (73) were unsure, revealing that almost half of the respondents (49.2% or 117) were either uncertain or unhappy with the staff's knowledge of the healthier food options. It appears that staff knowledge of food received the lowest satisfaction rating compared with all the other items of service quality. These findings are a major concern, as such a large neutral or negative response may seem to indicate that staff are not well trained in or knowledgeable about the healthier food options offered. However, the high percentage (30.7%) of respondents who were unsure may not have asked staff for information or enquired about the healthier food options. Nevertheless, staff members should be trained and informed about the description and nutritional content of the healthier food options on or being added to the menu.

d) Friendliness of manager

The respondents' satisfaction level with the manager at fast-food outlets are illustrated in figure 5.21.

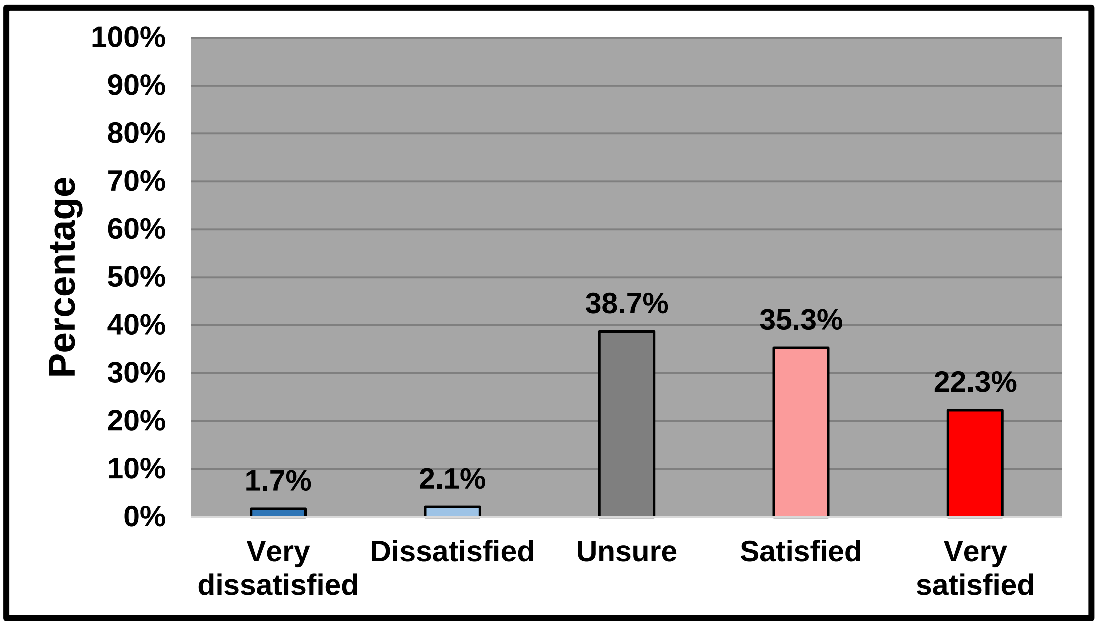


Figure 5.21: Friendliness of manager (n=238)

The results in figure 5.21 indicate that only 57.6% of respondents (137) were satisfied or very satisfied about the friendliness of the manager at fast-food outlets. Some 3.8% of respondents (9) were dissatisfied or very dissatisfied, while 38.7% (92) were unsure about the friendliness of the manager. These findings may be a cause for concern as 42.5%, close to half of the respondents (101), did not have a positive view of the friendliness of the manager. This may seem to indicate that the managers of fast-food outlets are unfriendly or unwilling to assist customers. However, it may also be that some of the respondents did not observe or interact with the manager during their visit to the fast-food outlet. Managers of fast-food outlets should always appear friendly and willing to assist their customers.

The results for the fourth dimension of the Institutional DINESERV Model, convenience, will now be presented.

5.2.8.4 Convenience

Convenience can be described as the state of being able to proceed with something without difficulty (Obitz, 2009:20). The Institutional DINESERV Model employed in this study (discussed in chapter 3) measures four items of convenience as shown in table 5.10.

Table 5.10: Items of convenience in the Institutional DINESERV Model

Convenience	
9.15	Service hours
9.16	Convenient location
9.17	Short walking distance
9.18	Parking convenience

The results for each of these items will now be presented.

a) Service hours

Figure 5.22 below reveals the respondents' satisfaction level with the service hours of fast-food outlets.

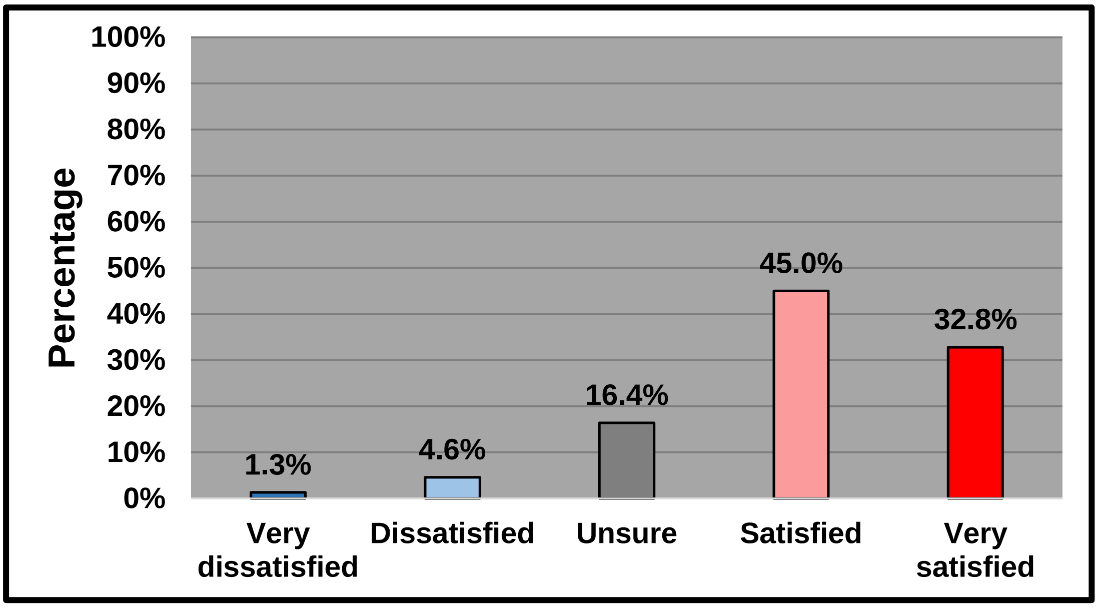


Figure 5.22: Service hours (n=238)

As illustrated in figure 5.22, 77.8% of respondents (185) were satisfied or very satisfied with the service hours of fast-food outlets, while 5.9% (14) were very dissatisfied or dissatisfied. A further 16.4% of respondents (39) were unsure about the service hours. It can be seen that most of the respondents were happy with the service hours of fast-food outlets. However, 22.3% could represent a significant number of unhappy or uncertain customers. Fast-food outlets may need to conduct research and perform a cost-benefit analysis in order to determine whether extending their service hours would be profitable. Some McDonald's outlets, for example, are open 24/7, which could give them a competitive advantage and may further increase the sales of the healthier food options.

b) Convenient location

Figure 5.23 represents the respondents' satisfaction level with the location of fast-food outlets.

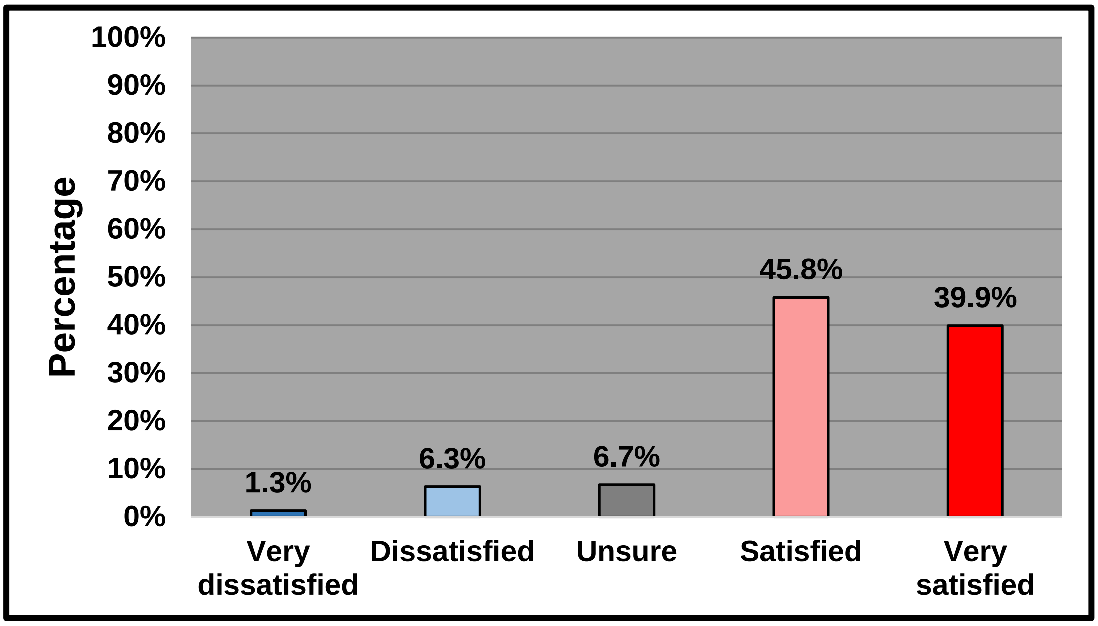


Figure 5.23: Convenient location (n=238)

Figure 5.23 indicates that the majority of the respondents (85.7% or 204) found that fast-food outlets were conveniently located. A small percentage (7.6% or 18) were dissatisfied or very dissatisfied with the location, while 6.7% (16) were unsure. These results reflect positively on fast-food outlets since a high percentage (85.7%) of respondents (204) were happy with the location of fast-food outlets. Smith (2006:159) states that one of the crucial aspects that fast-food outlets need to consider is location. A fast-food outlet positioned closer is to its target population will result in increased business (Dittmer & Keefe, 2009) having a positive influence on the sales of the healthier food options.

c) **Short walking distance**

Figure 5.24 illustrates the respondents' satisfaction level with the walking distance of fast-food outlets.

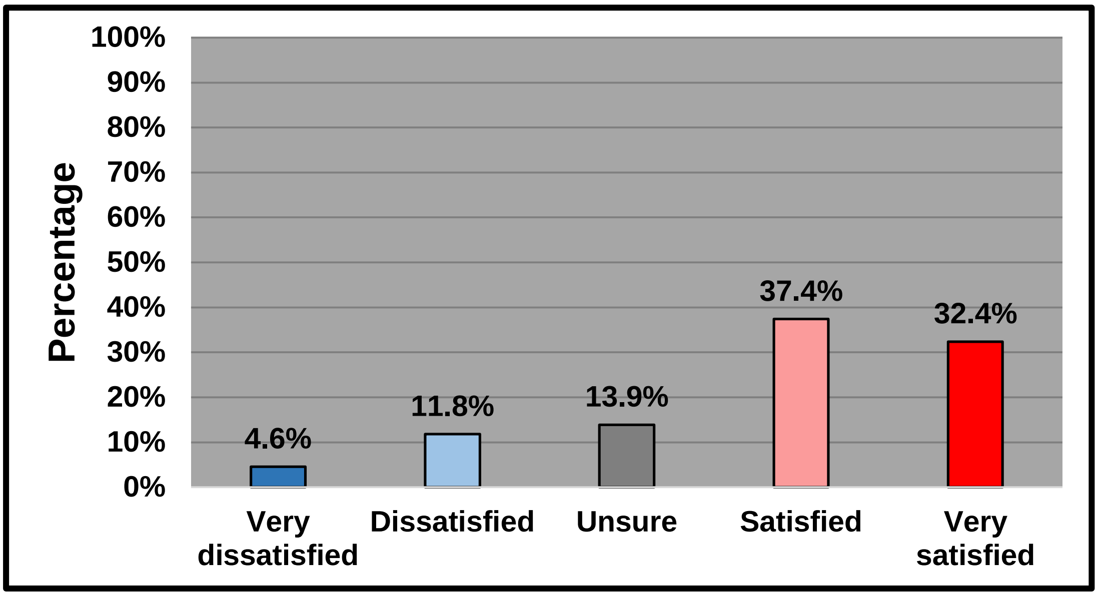


Figure 5.24: Short walking distance (n=238)

Figure 5.24 shows that 16.4% of respondents (39) were dissatisfied or very dissatisfied with the walking distance of fast-food outlets, while 69.8% (166) were satisfied or very satisfied. A further 13.9% (33) indicated uncertainty regarding the walking distance, revealing that a total of 30.3% of respondents (72) were either unsure or unhappy with the walking distance of fast-food outlets. All the respondents were students, and so time may have been of critical importance to them. Respondents may have had limited time during their class intervals, which may have led to their dissatisfaction with the walking distance. Some respondents, however, may have only driven to the specific fast-food outlet and were therefore uncertain about the walking distance. Further research may need to be conducted in terms of how far customers are willing to walk to the desired fast-food outlet.

d) **Parking convenience**

The respondents' satisfaction level with parking convenience at fast-food outlets can be seen in figure 5.25.

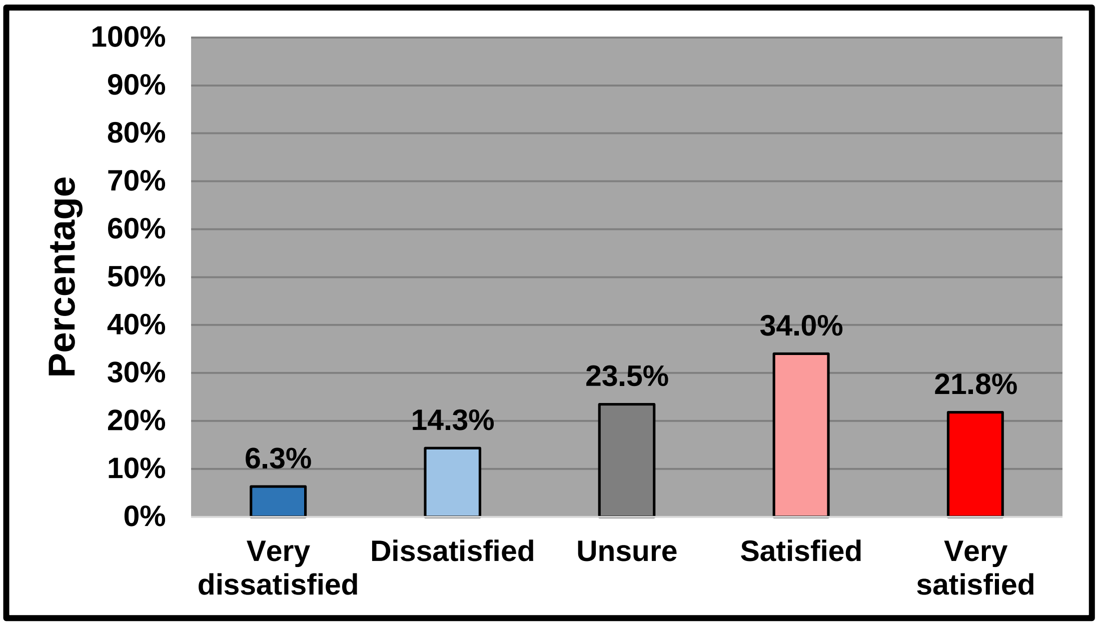


Figure 5.25: Parking convenience (n=238)

As indicated in figure 5.25, only 55.8% of respondents (133) were satisfied or very satisfied and found the parking to be convenient at fast-food outlets, while a total of 20.6% (49) were dissatisfied or very dissatisfied with the parking available. A further 23.5% (56) were unsure, revealing that altogether 44.1% (105) did not have a positive view of parking availability. Parking convenience received the lowest satisfaction rating compared with all the other items of convenience. Findings like these help to highlight problem areas where management of fast-food outlets need to expend extra effort. However, some respondents may have only walked to a specific fast-food outlet and were therefore unaware of parking availability. Nevertheless, the Environmental Protection Agency (2008:10) states that parking availability may determine a customer's willingness to visit an organisation. Furthermore, an organisation that is difficult to visit due to inadequate parking may decrease customers' overall satisfaction, and also reduce the chances of customers returning (Illinois Institute for Rural Affairs, 2003:5). This may have a negative impact on the sales of the healthier food options. It is therefore crucial for fast-food outlets to understand the importance of planning parking space during the design and choice of location.

The results for the last dimension of the Institutional DINESERV Model, price and value, will now be presented.

5.2.8.5 Price and value

As discussed in chapter 3, price can be defined as what the buyer gives up in order to acquire a specific product or service (Lamb *et al*., 2011:26), while value refers to the sum of perceived benefits (tangible and intangible) and costs to the customer (Kotler & Keller, 2009:8). The Institutional DINESERV Model employed in this study (discussed in chapter 3) measures four items of price and value, as shown in table 5.11.

Table 5.11: Items of price and value in the Institutional DINESERV Model

Price and value	
9.19	Good value for the price
9.20	Appropriate portion size
9.21	Reasonable price item
9.22	Overall value of the experience

The results for each of these items will now be presented.

a) Good value for the price

Figure 5.26 represents the respondents' satisfaction level with the value received for the price paid for the healthier food options at fast-food outlets.

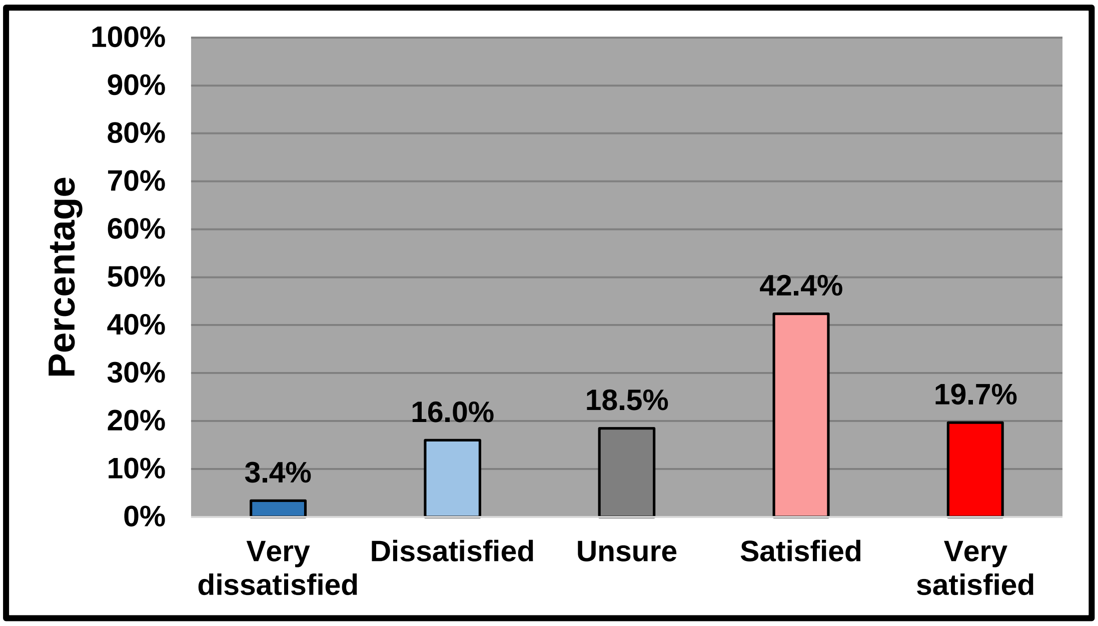


Figure 5.26: Good value for the price (n=238)

The results presented in figure 5.26 indicate that only 62.1% of respondents (148) were satisfied or very satisfied with the value received for the price paid for the healthier food options at fast-food outlets. A total of 19.4% (46) were dissatisfied or very dissatisfied and a further 18.5% (44) were unsure. These findings may be a cause for concern as a total of 37.9% of respondents (90) did not have a positive view of the value received for the price paid. This may seem to indicate that fast-food outlets are not providing enough value for the price they charge, which may further have a negative impact on the healthier food options. Furthermore, there appears to be a gap between what is “shown” and what customers “receive”. For example, Dario (2010) undertook a project in order to create a comparison between what fast-food outlets advertise and what customers actually receive. He found that most of the food did not look as appetising and was not the same size as advertised. Figure 5.27 presents fast-food outlets advertised products vs. the actual products.

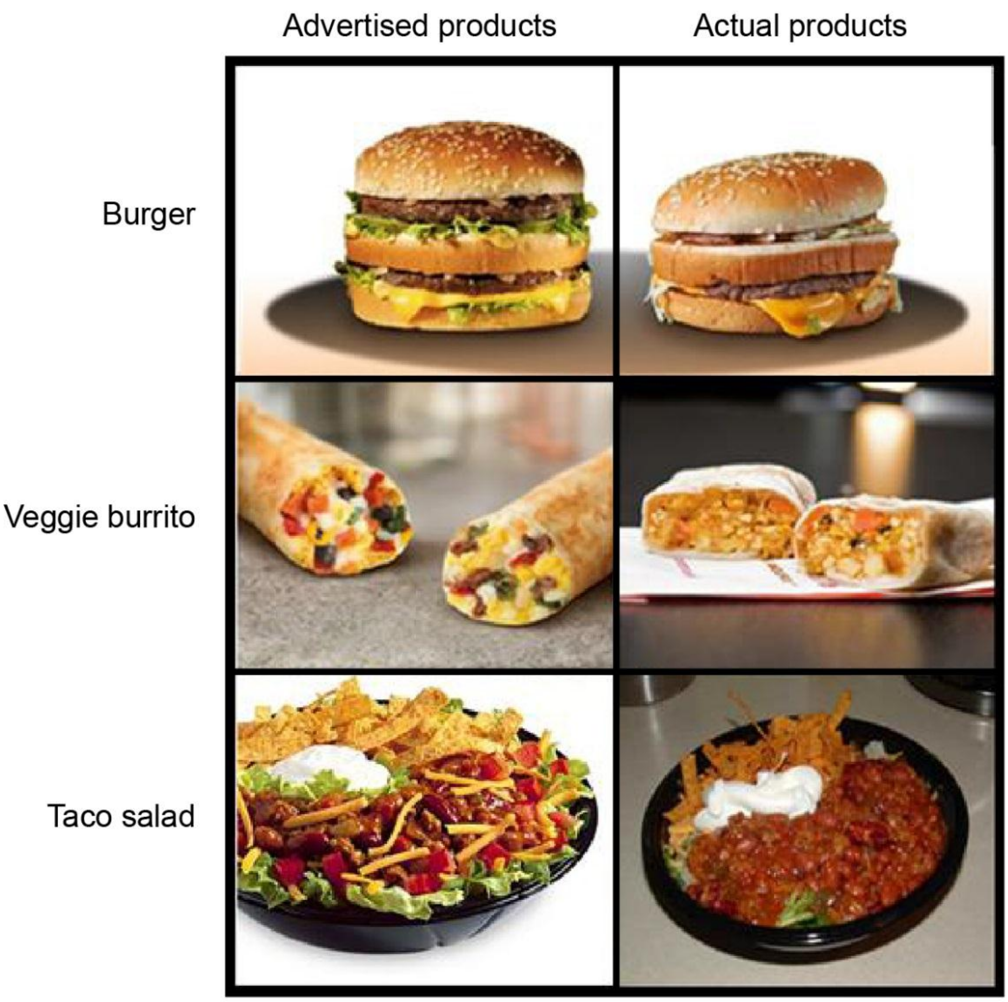


Figure 5.27: Fast-food advertised products vs. the actual products
Source: Dario (2010), Tom (2008) and Michael (2012)

As shown in figure 5.27, the advertised products and actual products do not seem to match up. The actual burger is smaller in size and the lettuce appears to have disappeared. The actual veggie burrito is not as bright and vibrant as the advertised product and the actual taco salad does not look at all like a salad and is missing the cheese and lettuce. In such a case, customers of fast-food outlets may feel that they are not getting what they pay for and this may lead to dissatisfaction with value. Fast-food outlets should ensure that they deliver on what they promise. Furthermore, they may need to adjust their pricing of the healthier food options, offer value meals or alternatively convey a better value-for-money message. In addition, further research could be conducted in order to establish customer expectations and perceptions of value received for the price paid with regard to the healthier food options, which could in turn greatly improve the satisfaction ratings.

b) Appropriate portion size

The respondents' satisfaction level with the portion size of the healthier food options at fast-food outlets is illustrated in figure 5.28.

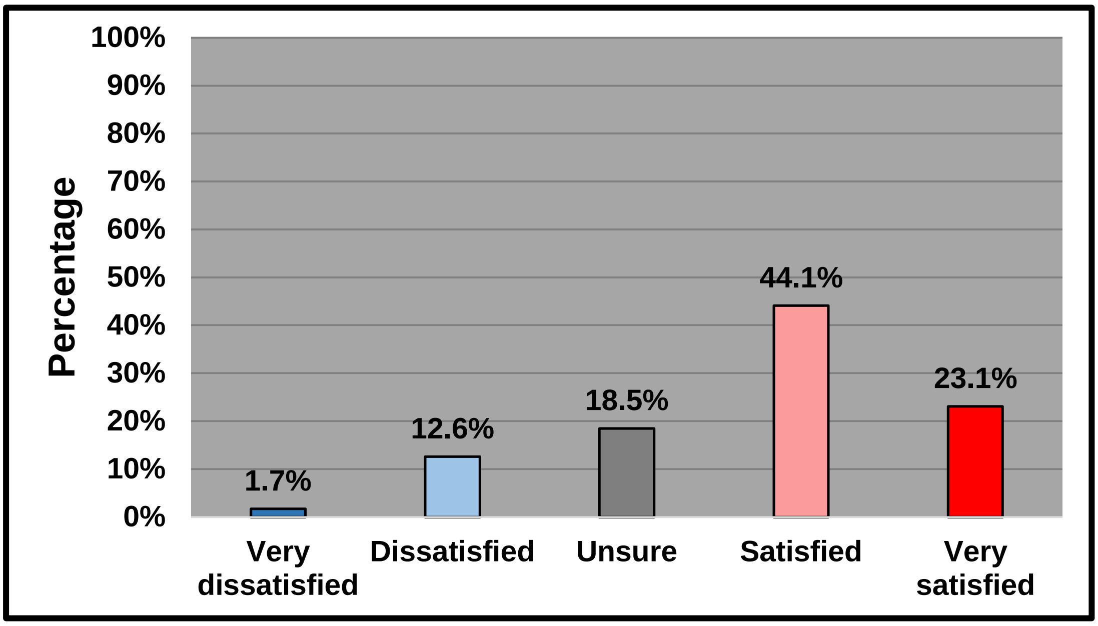


Figure 5.28: Appropriate portion size (n=238)

Figure 5.28 shows that only 67.2% of the respondents (160) were satisfied or very satisfied with the portion size of the healthier food options, while 14.3% (34) were dissatisfied or very dissatisfied. A further 18.5% of respondents (44) were unsure. The high total percentage (32.8%) of unhappy or unsure respond-ents (78) could be a result of small food portions served and may also explain the respondents' high dissatisfaction with good value for the price (figure 5.26). Although fast-food is known to be served in large portions, this may not be the case with the healthier food options. Fast-food outlets therefore may want to consider the portion sizes of the healthier food options served. Alternatively, if the price of the healthier food options is lowered, customers may then find the current portion size more acceptable.

c) Reasonable price item

As mentioned in chapter 3, Klassen *et al*. (2005:586) in their study found that 62% of the participants chose price as the most significant aspect when making a decision to purchase from a food outlet. Customers may choose to eat elsewhere if prices are too high at fast-food outlets (Law *et al*., 2004:555). These results emphasise the importance of price to customers, which means that fast-food outlets must ensure that their food is reasonably priced in order to keep their customers. Figure 5.29 shows the respondents' satisfaction level with the price of the healthier food options at fast-food outlets.

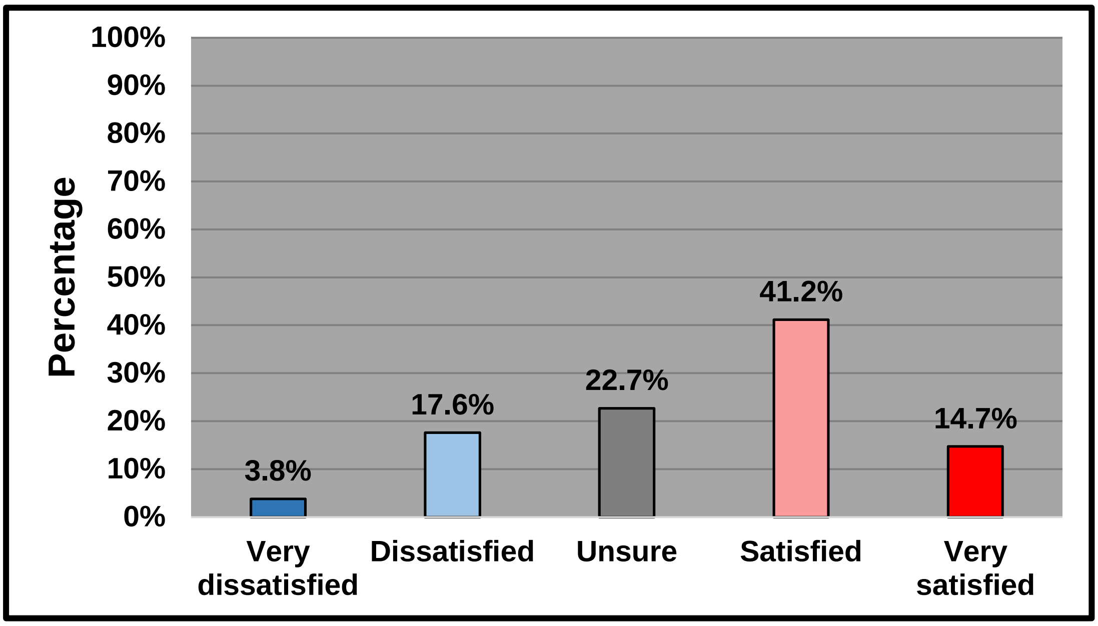


Figure 5.29: Reasonable price item (n=238)

According to figure 5.29, only 55.9% of respondents (133) felt that the healthier food options were reasonably priced. A total of 21.4% of respondents (51) were dissatisfied or very dissatisfied with the price of the healthier food options and 22.7% (54) were unsure, revealing that 44.1%, almost half of the respondents, did not have a positive view of the price of the healthier food options. This item received the lowest satisfaction rating compared with all the other items of price and value. Furthermore, of the 98 respondents who stated that they did not purchase the healthier food options from fast-food outlets (table 5.4), 20 (20.4%) mentioned that the healthier food options were more expensive or overpriced. Price appears to be a crucial factor in respondents' decision to purchase. It is therefore concerning to find such a high dissatisfaction rating among respondents, as it may negatively affect the sales of the healthier food options. As mentioned previously, fast-food outlets may need to consider the pricing of the healthier food options. Customers may then find the current portion size more acceptable and in turn find better value for money. Alternatively, fast-food outlets could offer more healthy value-bundled meals and convey a better value-for-money message.

d) Overall value of the experience

Figure 5.30 illustrates the respondents' satisfaction level with the overall value of the experience at fast-food outlets.

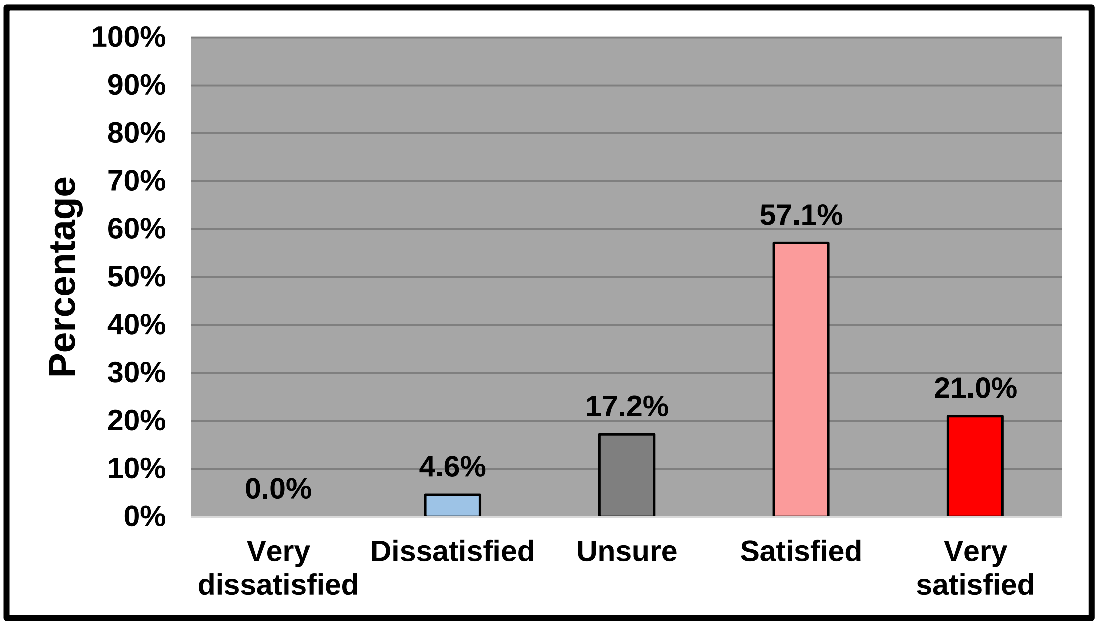


Figure 5.30: Overall value of the experience (n=238)

From figure 5.30, it can be seen that 78.1% of respondents (186) were satisfied or very satisfied with the overall value of the experience. Only 4.6% of respondents (11) were dissatisfied, while 17.2% (41) were unsure. Although the majority of the respondents were satisfied with the overall value of the experience, a significant number (21.8% or 52) were not satisfied. This may be a concern as it may affect their decision to return to the fast-food outlet and therefore influence the sales of the healthier food options. As discussed in chapter 3, value can be seen as a combination of quality, service and price (Kotler & Keller, 2009:8). This means that all the other Institutional DINESERV dimensions previously discussed may have influenced the respondents' satisfaction level with the overall value of the experience. Fast-food outlets therefore need to manage the customer experience, and train their staff on providing exceptional service and quality.

In the next section, the mean scores for each of the items of the Institutional DINESERV dimensions are presented.

5.2.8.6 Mean scores

The mean refers to the arithmetic average of the sample, where all values are added up and divided by the number of responses (Hair *et al*., 2009:483). Table 5.12 highlights the mean scores for each of the items of the Institutional DINESERV dimensions, which are presented for exploratory purposes only. As mentioned previously, the dimensions were measured on a Likert scale ranging from (1) very dissatisfied, (2) dissatisfied, (3) unsure, (4) satisfied to (5) very satisfied. Therefore, the higher mean scores indicate a higher satisfaction level.

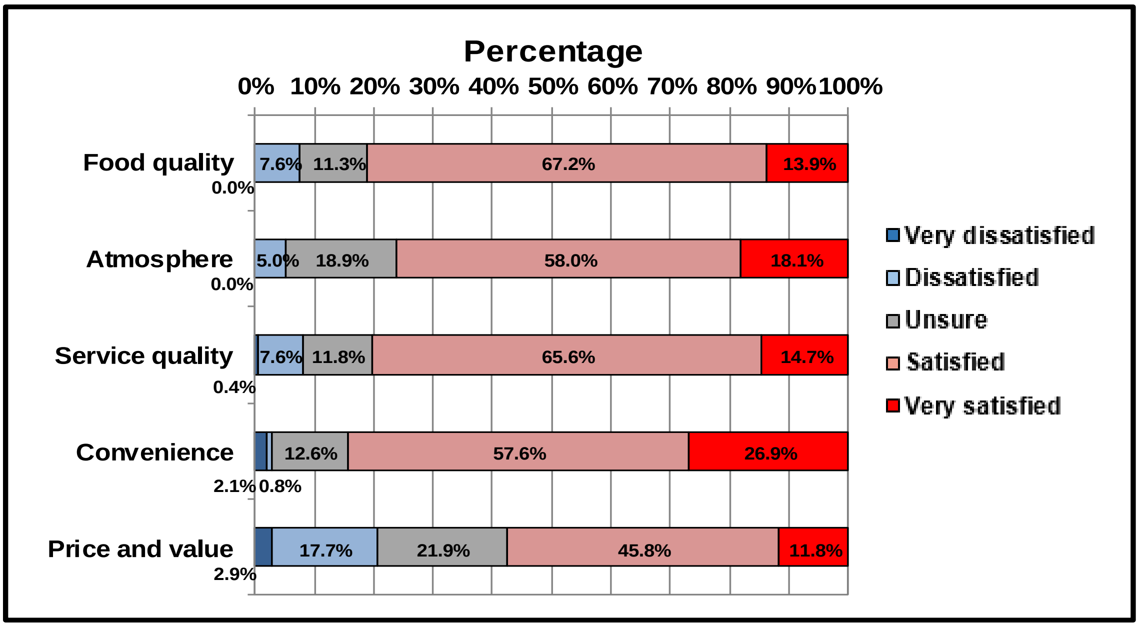
Table 5.12: Mean scores

Dimension	Items		Mean score
Food quality	9.1	Overall quality of the food	4.21
	9.2	Taste of food	4.29
	9.3	Eye appeal of the food	4.20
	9.4	Freshness of the food	4.14
	9.5	Nutritional content of food	3.80
	9.6	Variety of menu options	3.65
Atmosphere	9.7	Cleanliness of facilities	3.95
	9.8	Outlet environment	3.98
	9.9	Level of comfort in the outlet	3.92
	9.10	Staff appearance	3.79
Service quality	9.11	Attentive staff	3.65
	9.12	Service provided by staff	3.70
	9.13	Staff knowledge about food	3.51
	9.14	Friendliness of manager	3.74
Convenience	9.15	Service hours	4.03
	9.16	Convenient location	4.17
	9.17	Short walking distance	3.81
	9.18	Parking convenience	3.51
Price and value	9.19	Good value for the price	3.59
	9.20	Appropriate portion size	3.74
	9.21	Reasonable price item	3.45
	9.22	Overall value of the experience	3.95

From table 5.12, it can be seen that all 22 items received a score above 3.00, indicating that the respondents were generally satisfied. However, it is concerning that only 6 items received a score above 4.00, with taste of food receiving the highest score (4.29), followed by overall quality of the food (4.21), eye appeal of the food (4.20), convenient location (4.17), freshness of the food (4.14) and service hours (4.03). It is interesting to note that these items fall under the food quality and convenience dimensions. All items under atmosphere, service quality as well as price and value received scores below 4.00, indicating that there is considerable room for improvement on these dimensions. Furthermore, it appears that item 21 (reasonable price item) received the lowest mean score (3.45) and is the only item below 3.50. As indicated previously, the healthier food options seem to be highly priced for customers, which may require fast-food outlets to consider their pricing and value strategy.

5.2.9 Overall satisfaction with each dimension of the Institutional DINESERV Model (questions 10–14)

Questions 10–14 of the questionnaire measured the respondents' overall satisfaction with each of the five Institutional DINESERV dimensions, namely food quality, atmosphere, service quality, convenience and price and value. The respondents' overall satisfaction was measured on the Likert scale ranging from (1) very dissatisfied, (2) dissatisfied, (3) unsure, (4) satisfied to (5) very satisfied. Figure 5.31 illustrates the results.



Dimension	Count					
	Very dissatisfied	Dissatisfied	Unsure	Satisfied	Very satisfied	Total
Food quality	0	18	27	160	33	238
Atmosphere	0	12	45	138	43	238
Service quality	1	18	28	156	35	238
Convenience	5	2	30	137	64	238
Price and value	7	42	52	109	28	238

Figure 5.31: Overall satisfaction with each dimension of the Institutional DINESERV Model (n=238)

As indicated in figure 5.31, convenience received the highest satisfaction rating, with the majority of the respondents (84.5% or 201) being satisfied or very satisfied with this dimension. This was followed by food quality (81.1% or 193), service quality (80.3% or 191), atmosphere (76.1% or 181) and lastly price and value, with 57.6% of respondents (137) being satisfied or very satisfied with this dimension. It appears that fast-food outlets may need to expend extra effort on atmosphere and price and value. It is interesting to note the low satisfaction rating for price and value compared with all the other dimensions. It appears that just over half of the respondents (57.6% or 137) were satisfied or very satisfied with price and value. However, considering that 44.1% of respondents were not satisfied with the price of the healthier food options (figure 5.29), this may have negatively influenced the respondents' overall satisfaction with this dimension. In this regard, fast-food outlets may find it useful to pay attention to price and value in their efforts to satisfy their customers. Furthermore, the other dimensions should not be ignored and continuous efforts must be made to increase the satisfaction ratings. Questions 10–14 also included open-ended questions asking respondents to indicate if there was anything that could be done to improve the food quality, atmosphere, service quality, convenience and price and value of fast-food outlets with reference to the healthier food options. The suggestions given by respondents are presented next.

5.2.9.1 Suggestions to improve food quality

Table 5.13 presents the suggestions by respondents to improve the food quality of the healthier food options available at fast-food outlets.

Table 5.13: Suggestions to improve food quality (n=158)

Category	Percentage (%)	Frequency count
Wider variety	34.2	54
Fresh food	16.5	26
Cheaper prices	12.7	20
Lower fats and oils	10.1	16
Improve preparation method	8.9	14
Better produce	6.3	10
Indicate nutritional values of food	5.1	8
Advertising	3.8	6
Tastier food	3.8	6
More salads	3.2	5
Better informed staff	2.5	4
Friendlier staff	2.5	4
More presentable food	2.5	4
No preservatives	1.9	3
Better portions	1.9	3
More fruit	1.3	2
Vegetarian options	1.3	2
More outlets	0.6	1
More protein	0.6	1
Self-service	0.6	1
Vegan options	0.6	1

* *Total responses may not equal n and percentages may not equal 100 as this question was open-ended. Percentage was calculated using the frequency count per category divided by n.*

From table 5.13, it is evident that most of the respondents (34.2% or 54) suggested a wider variety of healthier food options. This finding seems to support the results of figure 5.13 which shows that respondents were mostly dissatisfied with the variety of the healthier food options in comparison with all the other items of food quality. Furthermore, tables 5.14, 5.15, 5.16 and 5.17 also list the respondents' suggestion of a wider variety even though this issue may not have been related to those specific dimensions highlighted in those tables. Therefore, as mentioned previously, fast-food outlets may find it useful to pay attention to menu variety, specifically adding a wider range of healthier food options in their efforts to improve the quality of food. Table 5.13 further indicates that 16.5% of respondents (26) suggested fresh food, followed by cheaper prices (12.7% or 20) and lower fats and oils (10.1% or 16). It is interesting to note that 12.7% of respondents (20) suggested cheaper prices within the food quality dimension. Price appears to be a crucial factor for respondents.

5.2.9.2 Suggestions to improve atmosphere

Table 5.14 presents the suggestions by respondents to improve the atmosphere at fast-food outlets.

Table 5.14: Suggestions to improve atmosphere (n=129)

Category	Percentage (%)	Frequency count
Friendlier staff	19.4	25
Better seating areas	18.6	24
Play good music	18.6	24
Better service	11.6	15
Cleanliness	10.1	13
Bigger space	7.8	10
Themed decoration	6.2	8
Appealing colours	4.7	6
More parking	2.3	3
Improve staff knowledge	2.3	3
More lighting	1.6	2
More windows and air conditioning	1.6	2
Security	1.6	2
Advertise more	0.8	1
Menu variety	0.8	1
Cheaper prices	0.8	1
Longer trading hours	0.8	1
More TVs	0.8	1
Motivational posters for healthy food	0.8	1
Wi-fi	0.8	1

** Total responses may not equal n and percentages may not equal 100 as this question was open-ended. Percentage was calculated using the frequency count per category divided by n.*

Table 5.14 shows that 19.4% of respondents (25) suggested that staff should be friendlier, followed by better seating areas (18.6% or 24), playing good music (18.6% or 24), better service (11.6% or 15) and cleanliness (10.1% or 13). It is interesting to note that the majority of the respondents (19.4% or 25) suggested that staff should be friendlier in order to improve the atmosphere. Furthermore, another 11.6% of respondents (15) suggested better service in this dimension, which indicates how important such aspects were to the respondents. Fast-food outlets should ensure that their staff are trained and encouraged to provide exceptional service to their customers. They could consider making use of mystery shopping. Mystery shopping can be defined as the collection of information from an organisation by individuals trained to observe, record and measure the service quality while posing as an ordinary member of the public (Housden, 2010:128). In this way, fast-food outlets can inform training needs and better manage the customer experience.

5.2.9.3 Suggestions to improve service quality

Table 5.15 shows the suggestions by respondents to improve the service quality at fast-food outlets.

Table 5.15: Suggestions to improve service quality (n=129)

Category	Percentage (%)	Frequency count
Friendlier staff	31.0	40
Better customer service	28.7	37
Train staff	17.1	22
More attentive staff	13.2	17
More staff members	12.4	16
Improve staff knowledge	7.8	10
Staff who speak better English	1.6	2
Cleanliness	1.6	2
Drive through	1.6	2
Longer operating hours	1.6	2
Friendly manager	1.6	2
More variety	0.8	1
Offer service delivery	0.8	1
Don't run out of ingredients	0.8	1
Indicate nutritional values of food	0.8	1
Fresher ingredients	0.8	1
Increase staff pay	0.8	1

** Total responses may not equal n and percentages may not equal 100 as this question was open-ended. Percentage was calculated using the frequency count per category divided by n.*

As indicated in table 5.15, most of the respondents (31% or 40) indicated that staff should be friendlier. This finding correlates with the results in table 5.14 where the majority of the respondents (19.4% or 25) also suggested that staff should be friendlier. It appears that friendly staff is an important aspect to respondents. Table 5.15 further shows that 28.7% of respondents (37) suggested that fast-food outlets should provide better customer service, followed by 17.1% (22) who suggested that the staff should be trained, 13.2% (17) who wanted staff to be more attentive and 12.4% (16) who were of the opinion that fast-food outlets needed to hire more staff to provide faster service. These findings are not surprising as all the items of service quality (attentive staff, service provided by staff, staff knowledge about food and friendliness of manager) received low satisfaction ratings, leaving lots of room for improvement. However, it is interesting to note that only 7.8% of the respondents (10) suggested that staff knowledge should be improved, as this item received the lowest satisfaction rating compared with all the other items of service quality, i.e. 49.2% who were not satisfied with the staff's knowledge of the healthier food options (figure 5.20). This may indicate that respondents did not consider staff knowledge as important as the other aspects of service quality. As mentioned in section 5.2.9.2, fast-food outlets could consider incorporating mystery shopping to ensure that staff provide exceptional service to their customers.

5.2.9.4 Suggestions to improve convenience

Table 5.16 indicates the suggestions by respondents to improve the convenience dimension at fast-food outlets.

Table 5.16: Suggestions to improve convenience (n=112)

Category	Percentage (%)	Frequency count
More outlets in convenient areas	42.0	47
Fast service	11.6	13
Delivery service with extended times	8.9	10
More parking	8.9	10
More staff members and till points	8.0	9
Longer trading hours or 24 hours	7.1	8
Drive through	6.3	7
Cheaper prices	2.7	3
Bigger space	1.8	2
Wider variety on menu	1.8	2
Fully stocked at all times	1.8	2
More chairs	1.8	2
Advertising	0.9	1
Credit card facility needed in working order	0.9	1
Halal outlets	0.9	1
Security	0.9	1
Specials on weekends	0.9	1

** Total responses may not equal n and percentages may not equal 100 as this question was open-ended. Percentage was calculated using the frequency count per category divided by n.*

It can be seen from table 5.16 that the majority of the respondents (42% or 47) suggested that there should be more outlets located in convenient areas. This finding may seem contradictory, as the item "convenient location" received a high satisfaction rating with 85.7% of respondents being satisfied or very satisfied (figure 5.23). It is also interesting to note that only 8.9% of the respondents (10) suggested more parking. As indicated in figure 5.25, parking convenience received the lowest satisfaction rating compared with all the other items of convenience, where a total of 44.1% of respondents were not satisfied with the parking available. This may seem to indicate that respondents attached less importance to the parking aspect. Both location and parking, however, can influence a customer to visit an organisation and also determine whether they return (Illinois Institute for Rural Affairs, 2003:5; Cant, 2010b:57). Customers are more likely to go where it is more convenient for them (Confederation College, 2013:78). It is therefore critical for fast-food outlets to attach great importance to design, choice of location and intensity of distribution, as this could influence the sales of the healthier food options

As per table 5.16, 11.6% of the respondents (13) also indicated that they wanted fast service, an aspect that is expected from fast-food outlets and should be adhered to.

5.2.9.5 Suggestions to improve price and value

Table 5.17 indicates the suggestions by respondents to improve price and value of the healthier food options available at fast-food outlets.

Table 5.17: Suggestions to improve price and value (n=135)

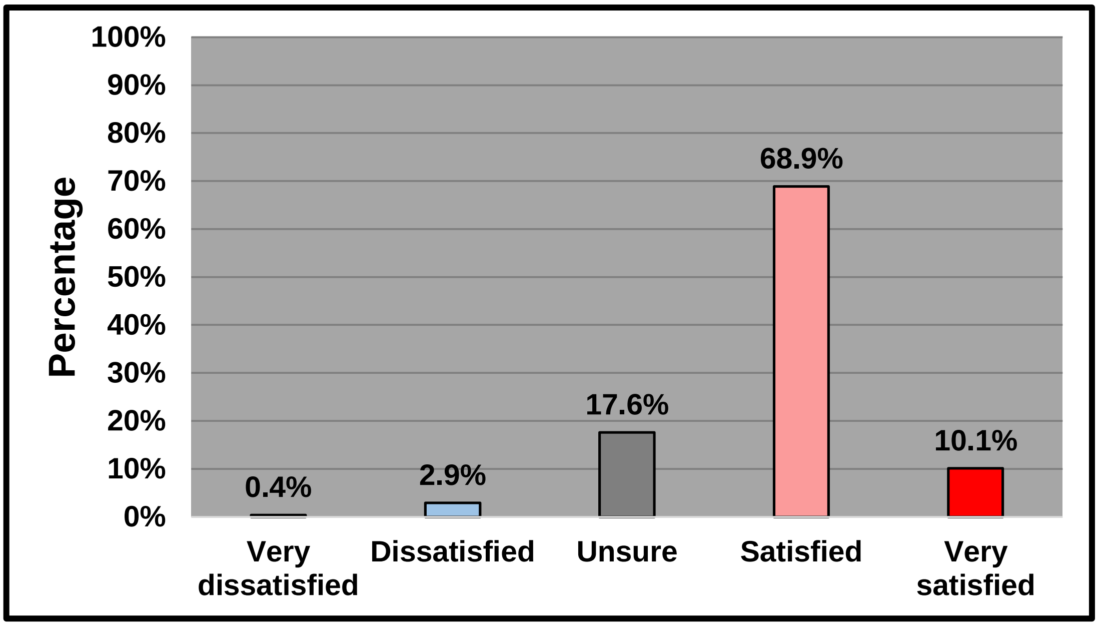
Category	Percentage (%)	Frequency count
Cheaper prices	76.3	103
Offer value for money	15.6	21
Bigger portions	8.1	11
Wider variety on menu	8.1	11
Improve on quality	8.1	11
More appealing menu	0.7	1
More care with preparation	0.7	1
More parking	0.7	1
Replace used oil regularly	0.7	1
Security required	0.7	1

** Total responses may not equal n and percentages may not equal 100 as this question was open-ended. Percentage was calculated using the frequency count per category divided by n.*

Table 5.17 indicates that over half of the respondents (76.3% or 103) suggested that fast-food outlets should lower the prices of the healthier food options. A further 15.6% (21) indicated that more value should be offered for the price paid. These results correlate with section 5.2.8.5; respondents were mostly dissatisfied with the prices of the healthier food options and the value for the price paid compared with the other items of price and value. In addition, tables 5.13, 5.14 and 5.16 also list the respondents' suggestion of cheaper prices even though this issue may not have been related to those specific dimensions highlighted in those tables. Furthermore, as shown in table 5.4, a total of 20.4% of respondents (20) did not purchase the healthier food options from fast-food outlets as they believed that the healthier food options were more expensive or overpriced compared with other options available. It is therefore clear that fast-food outlets should consider their pricing strategy and ensure that the healthier food options are reasonably priced in order to keep and increase their customer base. As mentioned previously, they could also introduce healthy value-bundle meals and convey a better value-for-money message.

5.2.10 Overall satisfaction (question 16)

Question 16 of the questionnaire measured the respondents' overall satisfaction using the Likert-type scale ranging from (1) very dissatisfied, (2) dissatisfied, (3) unsure, (4) satisfied to (5) very satisfied. The results are presented in figure 5.32.



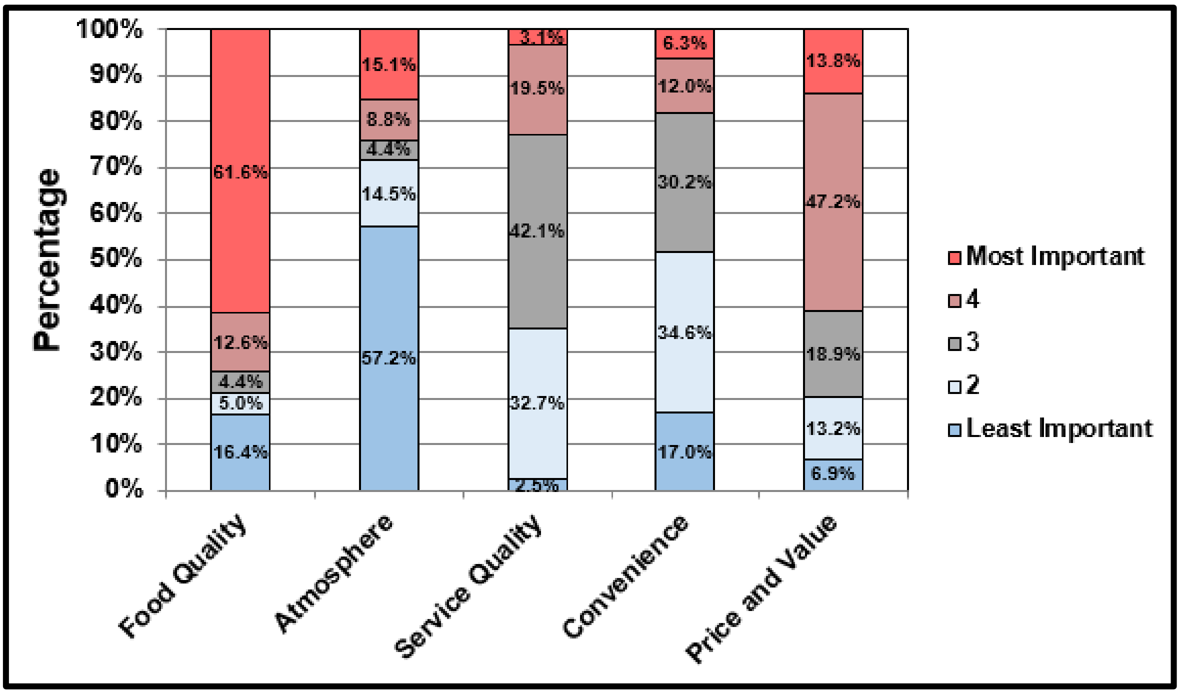
	Count					
	Very dissatisfied	Dissatisfied	Unsure	Satisfied	Very satisfied	Total
Overall satisfaction	1	7	42	164	24	238

Figure 5.32: Overall satisfaction (n=238)

From figure 5.32, it can be seen that 79% of respondents (188) were satisfied or very satisfied with their experience at the fast-food outlet. Only 3.3% (8) were very dissatisfied or dissatisfied with their experience at the fast-food outlet, while a total of 17.6% (42) were unsure. Although the results reflect positively on fast-food outlets since a high percentage of the respondents were satisfied, a significant 20.9% of respondents (50) did not have a positive view. In this case, fast-food outlets may want to take the respondents' suggestions into account (discussed throughout section 5.2.9) in order to improve the satisfaction ratings with the healthier food options. In addition, great importance should be attached to managing the customer experience at every point at which the customer interacts with the organisation and its product (Thompson, 2006:2). This in turn may increase customer satisfaction and loyalty (Thompson, 2006:6).

5.2.11 Level of importance of each dimension of the Institutional DINESERV Model (question 15)

Respondents were instructed to rank the importance of the five dimensions of the Institutional DINESERV Model, namely food quality, atmosphere, service quality, convenience as well as price and value (with 1 = least important to 5 = most important) when considering whether to purchase healthier food options from a fast-food outlet. Of the 238 respondents, only 159 answered this question correctly and these answers were deemed usable for analysis. The results are depicted in figure 5.33 below.



Dimension	Count				
	Least important	2	3	4	Most important
Food quality	26	8	7	20	98
Atmosphere	91	23	7	14	24
Service quality	4	52	67	31	5
Convenience	27	55	48	19	10
Price and value	11	21	30	75	22
Total	159	159	159	159	159

Figure 5.33: Level of importance of each dimension of the Institutional DINESERV Model (n=159)

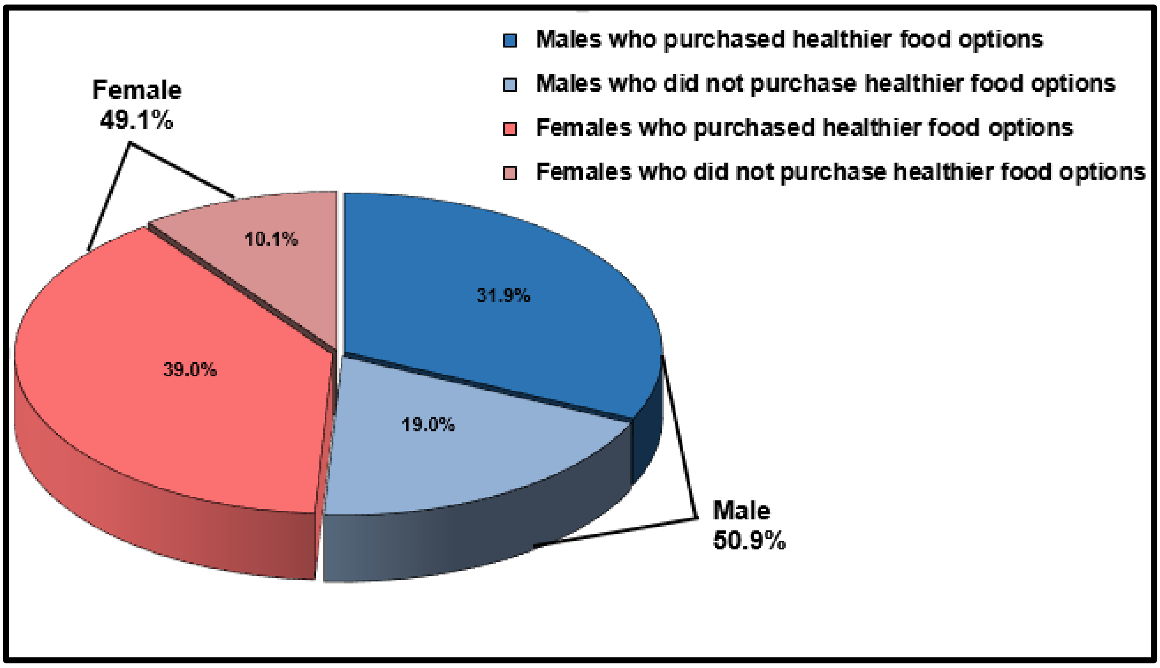
Figure 5.33 shows that the majority of the respondents (61.6% or 98) rated food quality as the most important dimension, followed by price and value (47.2% or 75), service quality (42.1% or 67), convenience (34.6 or 55) and the least important factor being atmosphere (57.2% or 91). These results indicate that food quality was considered as the most important to respondents, a finding consistent with the results of Kasapila (2006:112). Furthermore, considering that price and value was regarded as the second most important, a dimension that received the lowest satisfaction rating amongst respondents (figure 5.31) highlights an area that needs considerable attention for improvement. As indicated, fast-food outlets should consider their pricing strategy and ensure that the healthier food options are reasonably priced. Furthermore, it may be beneficial to introduce healthy value-bundle meals and convey a better value-for-money message.

5.2.12 Demographics (questions 17–21)

Demographics refer to the characteristics that describe a population such as race, age, income and education level (Miller, 2012:8). The demographics explored in this study were gender, age, race, undergraduate/postgraduate and full-time/part-time. This section focuses on the total sample of 336 respondents, and the findings are broken down further in terms of those respondents who purchased the healthier food options and those who did not. The Pearson chi-square test was conducted to examine whether there was a relationship between each of the demographic variables and the respondents' preference for purchasing the healthier food options. Chi-square tests produce a probability value (p-value) which indicates a statistical significance if the calculated p-value is less than 0.05 (Peat, Barton & Elliott, 2008:1). Contingency tables (also referred to as cross-tabulations) (Roy, 2013:163) were used to display the distribution of responses between the demographic variables. The first demographic variable, gender, will now be presented.

5.2.12.1 Gender

As illustrated in figure 5.34, the sample consisted of 171 males (50.9%) and 165 females (49.1%). This indicates that fast-food consumers consist of both males and females, without a dominating gender.



Count			
Gender	Respondents who purchased healthier food options	Respondents who did not purchase healthier food options	Total
Male	107	64	171
Female	131	34	165
Total	238	98	336

Figure 5.34: Gender (n=336)

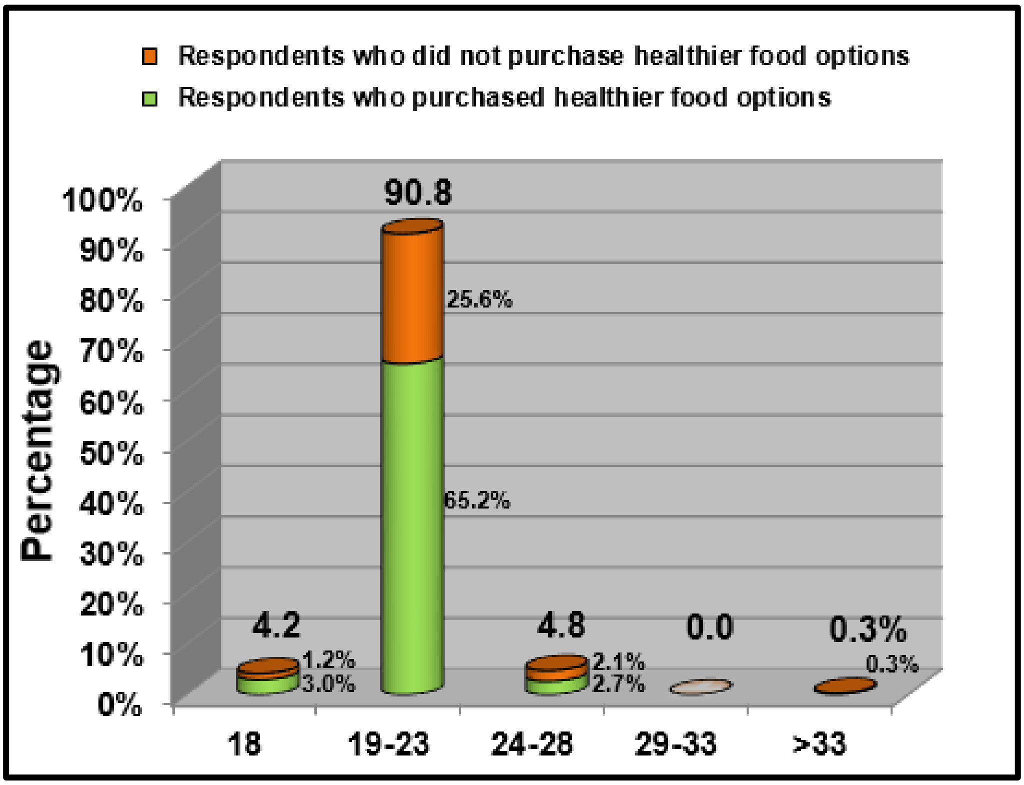
After the Pearson chi-square test was conducted to examine whether there was a relationship between gender group and their preference for purchasing the healthier food options, the results revealed that there was a significant relationship between the two variables (chi-square value=11.5, df=1, p=0.0007). As seen in table 5.18 (row percentages), a significantly lower proportion of male respondents (62.6%) compared with female respondents (79.4%) purchased the healthier food options. This could be attributed to women being more health conscious than men. According to Ellis, Hershberger, Field, Wersinger, Pellis, Geary, Palmer, Hoyenga, Hetsroni and Karadi (2008:487), many studies have found that women consider themselves to be more health conscious in terms of what they eat than men.

Table 5.18: Contingency table – gender

Gender		Have you purchased healthier food options from fast-food outlets?		Total
		Yes	No	
Male	Count	107	64	171
	Total %	31.9	19.0	50.9
	Col %	45.0	65.3	
	Row %	62.6	37.4	
Female	Count	131	34	165
	Total %	39.0	10.1	49.1
	Col %	55.0	34.7	
	Row %	79.4	20.6	
Total	Count	238	98	336
	Total %	70.8	29.2	

5.2.12.2 Age

Respondents were asked to indicate their age according to five age categories, namely 18, 19–23, 24–28, 29–33 and over 33. Figure 5.35 shows that of the total of 336 respondents, the majority (90.8% or 305) fell into the 19–23 age category. There were no respondents in the 29–33 age category and only 1 respondent (0.3%) was in the over 33 age category. The research was conducted at the University of Pretoria, which may be attributable to the high percentage (90.8%) of respondents (305) within the 19–23 age category.



Age	Count		
	Respondents who purchased healthier food options	Respondents who did not purchase healthier food options	Total
18	10	4	14
19-23	219	86	305
24-28	9	7	16
29-33	0	0	0
33>	0	1	1
Total	238	98	336

Figure 5.35: Age (n=336)

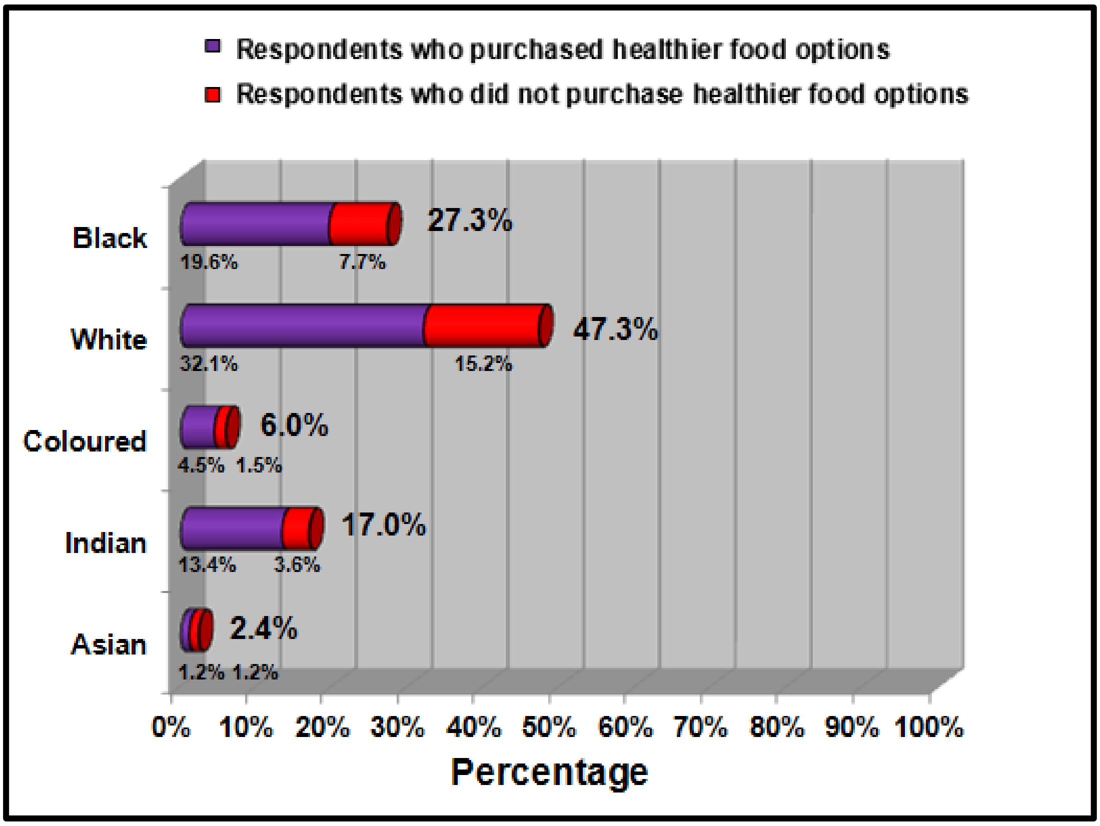
From table 5.19 (row percentages), it is evident that the proportion of respondents who purchased the healthier food options amounted to 71.4% within the age group of 18, 71.8% within the age group of 19–23 and 56.3% within the age group of 24–28. The Pearson chi-square test revealed a p-value of less than 0.05 (chi-square value=4.2, df=3, p=0.2390), indicating that there was no significant relationship between age group and their preference for purchasing healthier food options.

Table 5.19: Contingency table – age

Age		Have you purchased healthier food options from fast-food outlets?		Total
		Yes	No	
18	Count	10	4	14
	Total %	3.0	1.2	4.2
	Col %	4.2	4.1	
	Row %	71.4	28.6	
19–23	Count	219	86	305
	Total %	65.2	25.6	90.8
	Col %	92.0	87.8	
	Row %	71.8	28.2	
24–28	Count	9	7	16
	Total %	2.7	2.1	4.8
	Col %	3.8	7.1	
	Row %	56.3	43.7	
>33	Count	0	1	1
	Total %	0.0	0.3	0.3
	Col %	0.0	1.0	
	Row %	0.0	100.0	
Total	Count	238	98	336
	Total %	70.8	29.2	

5.2.12.3 Race

The race distribution of respondents can be seen in figure 5.36. The majority of the respondents were white (47.3% or 159). This may be attributed to the fact that in 2012 (the time the research was conducted), the majority of the students (52.9%) enrolled at the University of Pretoria were white (Tsunke, 2012). From figure 5.36, a total of 27.3% of the respondents (92) were black, followed by Indians (17.0% or 57), coloureds (6.0% or 20) and Asians (2.4% or 8).



Count			
Race	Respondents who purchased healthier food options	Respondents who did not purchase healthier food options	Total
Black	66	26	92
White	108	51	159
Coloured	15	5	20
Indian	45	12	57
Asian	4	4	8
Total	238	98	336

Figure 5.36: Race (n=336)

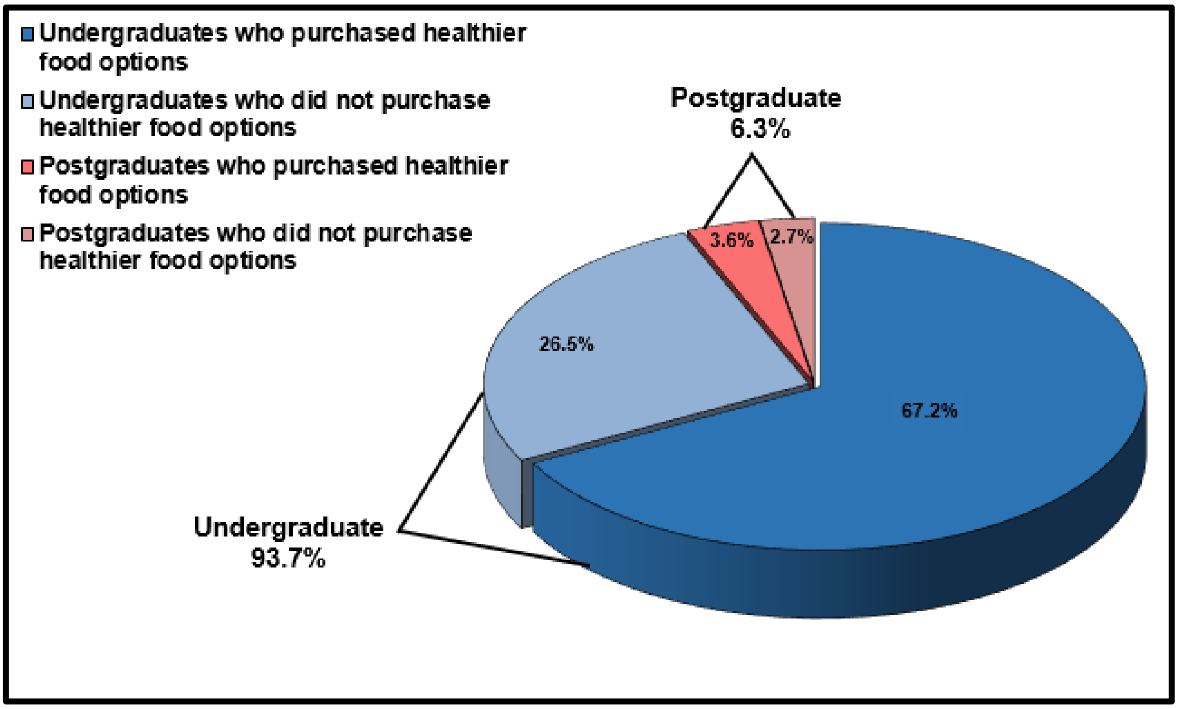
Table 5.20 (row percentages) indicates that 71.7% blacks, 67.9% whites, 75% coloureds, 79% Indians and 50% Asians purchased the healthier food options from fast-food outlets. Although it may seem that a higher proportion of Indians purchased the healthier food options, the Pearson chi-square test revealed that there was no significant relationship between race group and their preference for purchasing healthier food options (chi-square value=4.4, df=4, p=0.3603).

Table 5.20: Contingency table – race

Race		Have you purchased healthier food options from fast-food outlets?		Total
		Yes	No	
Black	Count	66	26	92
	Total %	19.6	7.7	27.3
	Col %	27.7	26.5	
	Row %	71.7	28.3	
White	Count	108	51	159
	Total %	32.1	15.2	47.3
	Col %	45.4	52.0	
	Row %	67.9	32.1	
Coloured	Count	15	5	20
	Total %	4.5	1.5	6.0
	Col %	6.3	5.1	
	Row %	75.0	25.0	
Indian	Count	45	12	57
	Total %	13.4	3.6	17.0
	Col %	18.9	12.2	
	Row %	79.0	21.0	
Asian	Count	4	4	8
	Total %	1.2	1.2	2.4
	Col %	1.7	4.1	
	Row %	50.0	50.0	
Total	Count	238	98	336
	Total %	70.8	29.2	

5.2.12.4 Undergraduate and postgraduate

Figure 5.37 shows that most of the respondents (93.7% or 315) were undergraduates while the rest (6.3% or 21) were postgraduates. According to the University of Pretoria (2012), the number of students as on the first Tuesday of June 2012 was 45 027, 31 872 (70.8%) of whom were undergraduates and 13 155 (29.2%) postgraduates. Therefore, the high percentage of undergraduate respondents (93.7%) found in this study may be due to the high proportion of undergraduates enrolled in 2012. Furthermore, some of the postgraduates attend evening classes, and since the research was conducted during the day, this may also explain the high percentage of undergraduate respondents.



Count			
Undergraduate and postgraduate	Respondents who purchased healthier food options	Respondents who did not purchase healthier food options	Total
Undergraduate	226	89	315
Postgraduate	12	9	21
Total	238	98	336

Figure 5.37: Undergraduate and postgraduate (n=336)

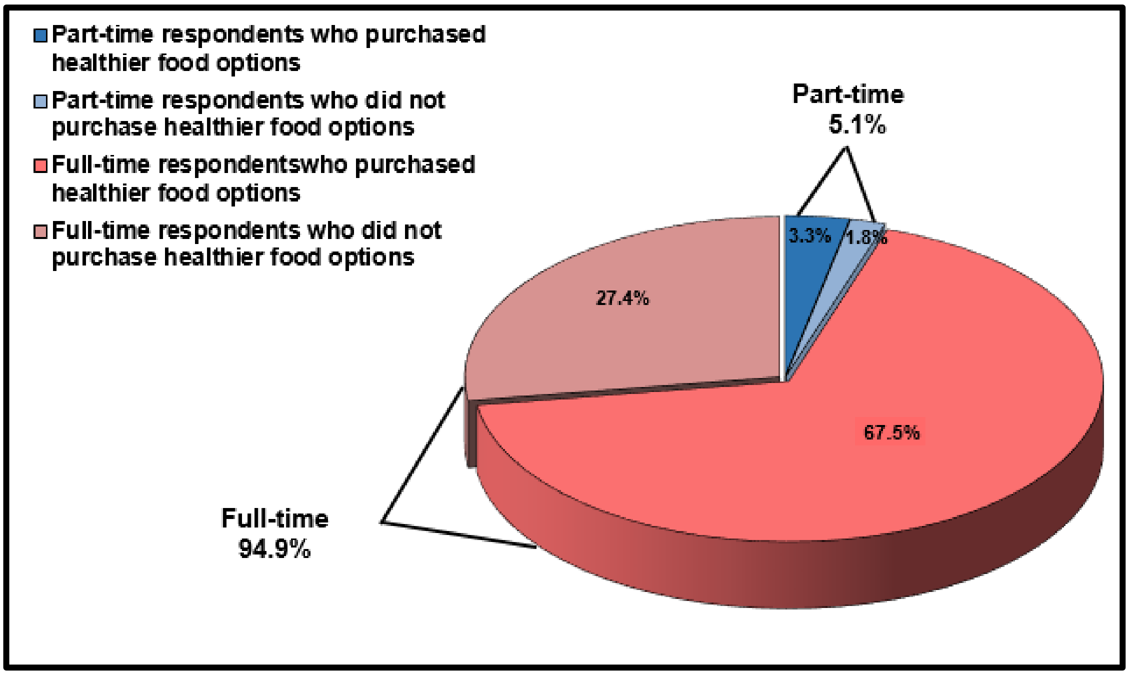
When looking at the row percentages in table 5.21, it can be seen that a high proportion of undergraduates (71.8%) purchased the healthier food options from fast-food outlets compared with 57.1% of postgraduates. However, the Pearson chi-square test revealed that there was no significant relationship between the two variables (chi-square value=2.0, df=1, p=0.1540).

Table 5.21: Contingency table – undergraduate and postgraduate

Undergraduate and postgraduate		Have you purchased healthier food options from fast-food outlets?		Total
		Yes	No	
Undergraduate	Count	226	89	315
	Total %	67.2	26.5	93.7
	Col %	95.0	90.8	
	Row %	71.8	28.2	
Postgraduate	Count	12	9	21
	Total %	3.6	2.7	6.3
	Col %	5.0	9.2	
	Row %	57.1	42.9	
Total	Count	238	98	336
	Total %	70.8	29.2	

5.2.12.5 Part-time and full-time

Figure 5.38 shows that the majority of the respondents (94.9% or 319) were full-time students, while only 5.1% (17) were part-time students. As mentioned previously, some of the postgraduates attend evening classes, which may allow these students to work and study part-time. Since only 6.3% of the respondents were postgraduates (figure 5.37), this may have attributed to the low percentage (5.1%) of part-time students.



Count			
Part-time and full-time	Respondents who purchased healthier food options	Respondents who did not purchase healthier food options	Total
Part-time	11	6	17
Full-time	227	92	319
Total	238	98	336

Figure 5.38: Part-time and full-time (n=336)

As shown in table 5.22 (row percentages), the proportion of respondents who purchased the healthier food options amount to 64.7% for part-time students and 71.2% for full-time students. The Pearson chi-square test revealed that there is no significant relationship between the two variables (chi-square value=0.3, df=1, p=0.5684).

Table 5.22: Contingency table – part-time and full-time

Part-time and full-time		Have you purchased healthier food options from fast-food outlets? Yes	No	Total
Part-time	Count	11	6	17
	Total %	3.3	1.8	5.1
	Col %	4.6	6.1	
	Row %	64.7	35.3	
Full-time	Count	227	92	319
	Total %	67.5	27.4	94.9
	Col %	95.4	93.9	
	Row %	71.2	28.8	
Total	Count	238	98	336
	Total %	70.8	29.2	

5.2.13 Demographic groups and their satisfaction ratings

In this section, each of the demographic variables discussed in section 5.2.12 above are compared in terms of their satisfaction ratings with the healthier food options available at fast-food outlets based on the Institutional DINESERV dimensions. The results are presented through the use of radar charts and mean scores.

5.2.13.1 Satisfaction ratings across gender

Figure 5.39 shows the mean scores for gender across the different dimensions of the Institutional DINESERV Model.

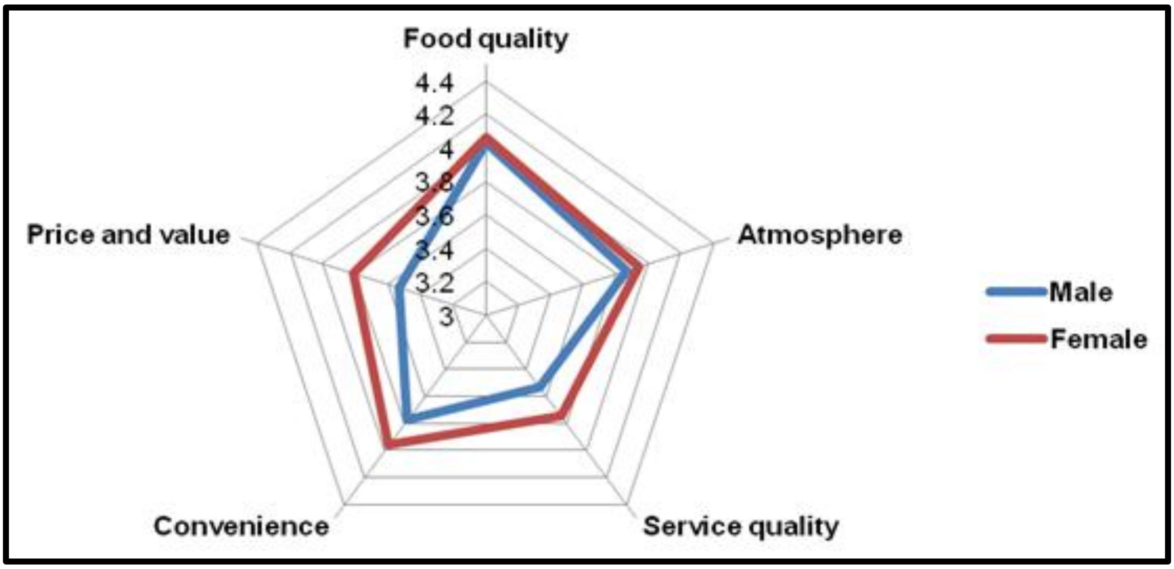


Figure 5.39: Mean scores: gender (n=238)

From figure 5.39, it appears that the respondents of both genders were generally satisfied with all the Institutional DINESERV dimensions. Generally women were more satisfied than men, with men less satisfied with price and value, service quality and convenience. Women may be more aware of the time and effort it takes to prepare a healthy meal and may therefore be more appreciative of the service, finding it more convenient and acceptable in terms of price and value.

5.2.13.2 Satisfaction ratings across age

The mean scores of age across the different dimensions of the Institutional DINESERV Model are presented in figure 5.40.

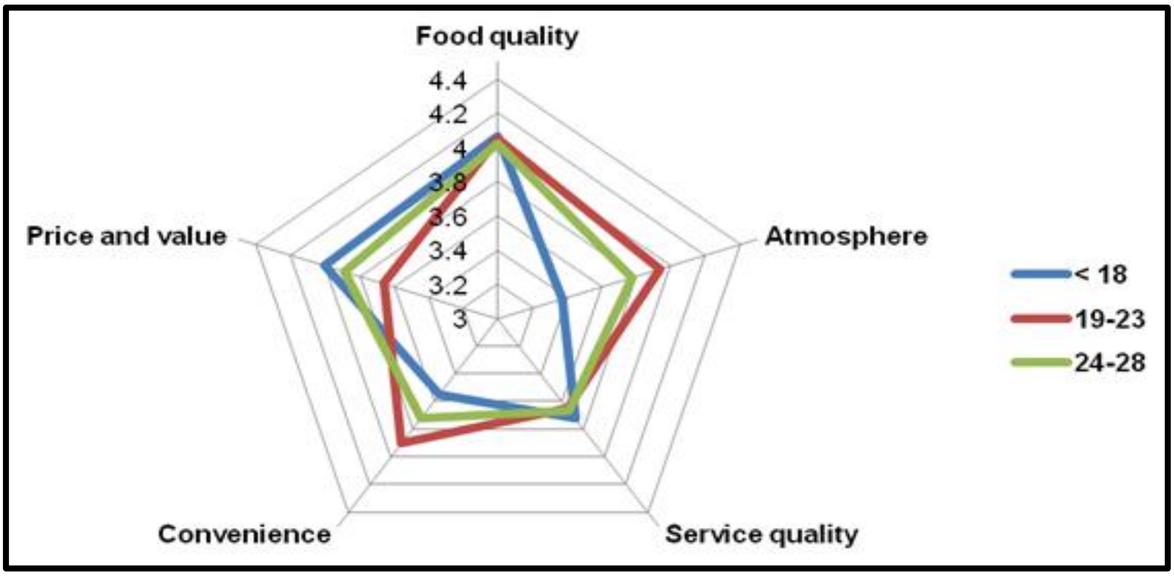


Figure 5.40: Mean scores: age (n=238)

From figure 5.40, all age groups seemed generally satisfied with food quality and service quality. However, it appears that the respondents within the age group of 18 were less satisfied with atmosphere and convenience compared with the other age groups. It may be that the younger respondents, i.e. 18, prefer a more vibrant atmosphere. Furthermore, most of the respondents within this age category may be first-year students. Time may be of critical importance – being a first-year student can be challenging as individuals must adapt to an unfamiliar environment and, most importantly, they have to keep up with academic demands, classes, activities and socialising. These students may therefore value convenience more and expect faster service when eating out at fast-food outlets. Figure 5.40 further indicates that respondents in the age category 19–23 were less satisfied with price and value compared with the other age groups. The reason for this finding could be that these students have increased responsibilities and a limited budget.

5.2.13.3 Satisfaction ratings across race

Figure 5.41 presents the mean scores of race across the different dimensions of the Institutional DINESERV Model.

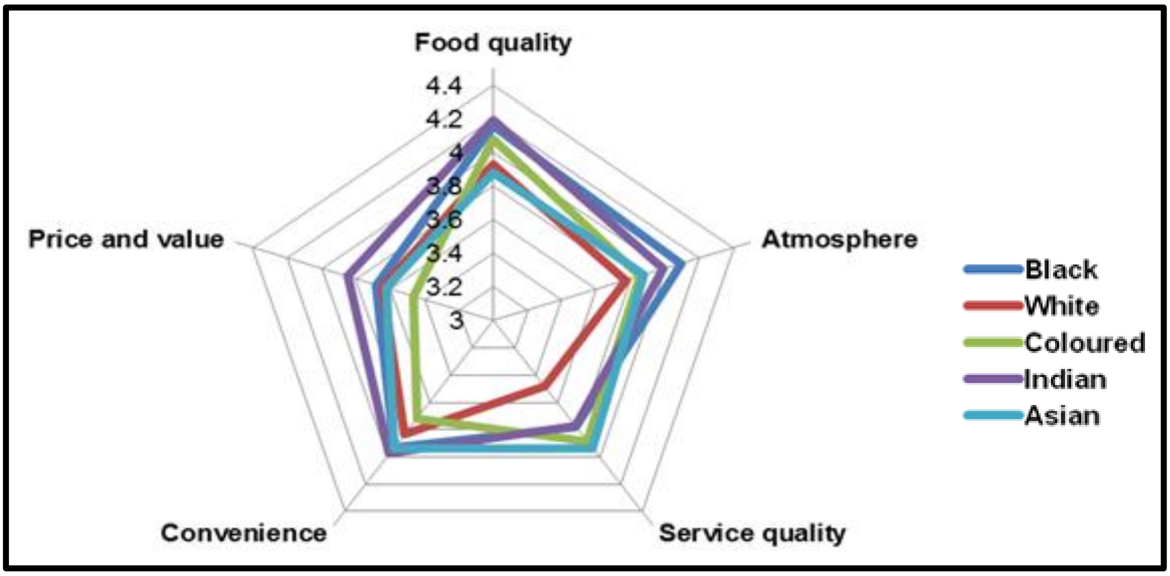


Figure 5.41: Mean scores: race (n=238)

As illustrated in figure 5.41, respondents were generally satisfied with all the Institutional DINESERV dimensions. However, it is interesting to note that white respondents were the least satisfied with service quality compared with the other race groups. This finding could be due to white respondents valuing the service quality dimension more, and therefore expecting more in terms of customer service and friendly staff at fast-food outlets.

5.2.13.4 Satisfaction ratings across undergraduate and postgraduate

Figure 5.42 shows the mean scores of undergraduates and postgraduates across the different dimensions of the Institutional DINESERV Model.

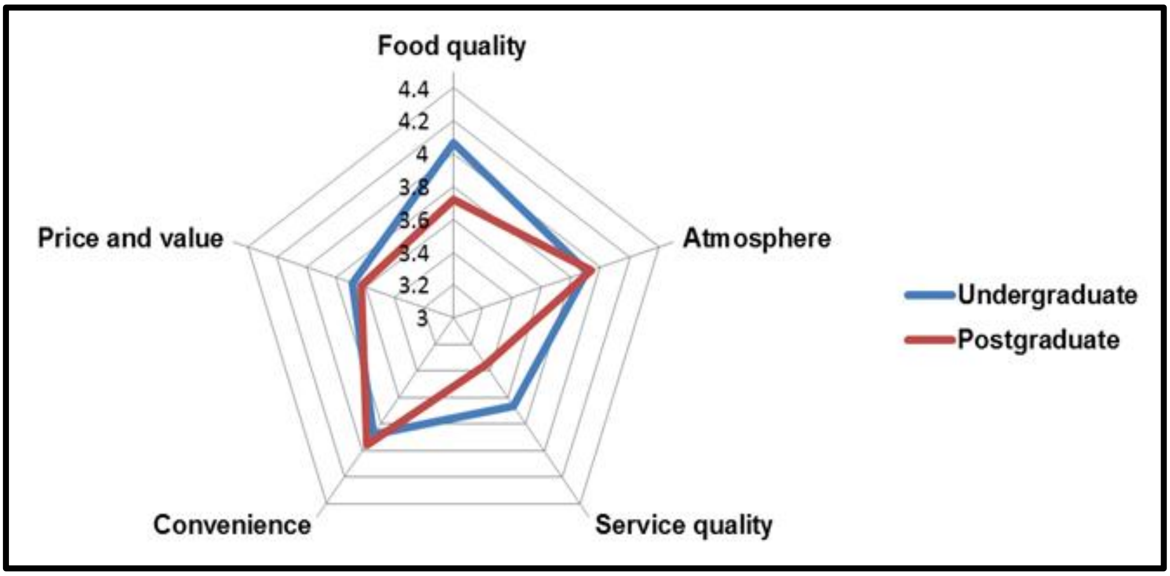


Figure 5.42: Mean scores: undergraduate and postgraduate (n=238)

It seems that the respondents were generally satisfied with all the Institutional DINESERV dimensions (figure 5.42). Generally undergraduates were more satisfied than postgraduates, with postgraduates less satisfied with food quality and service quality. The postgraduate respondents may value food quality and service quality more than the undergraduate respondents and therefore expect more from fast-food outlets on these aspects. Furthermore, some of the post-graduate students may be working, which could have an influence on their view and expectations regarding service quality.

5.2.13.5 Satisfaction ratings across part-time and full-time

Figure 5.43 indicates the mean scores of part-time and full-time students across the different Institutional DINESERV dimensions. Generally full-time students were more satisfied than part-time students, with part-time students less satisfied with food quality and service quality. These findings are consistent with figure 5.42 whereby postgraduates were less satisfied with food quality and service quality. As mentioned, respondents may attach great value to such aspects and therefore have higher expectations.

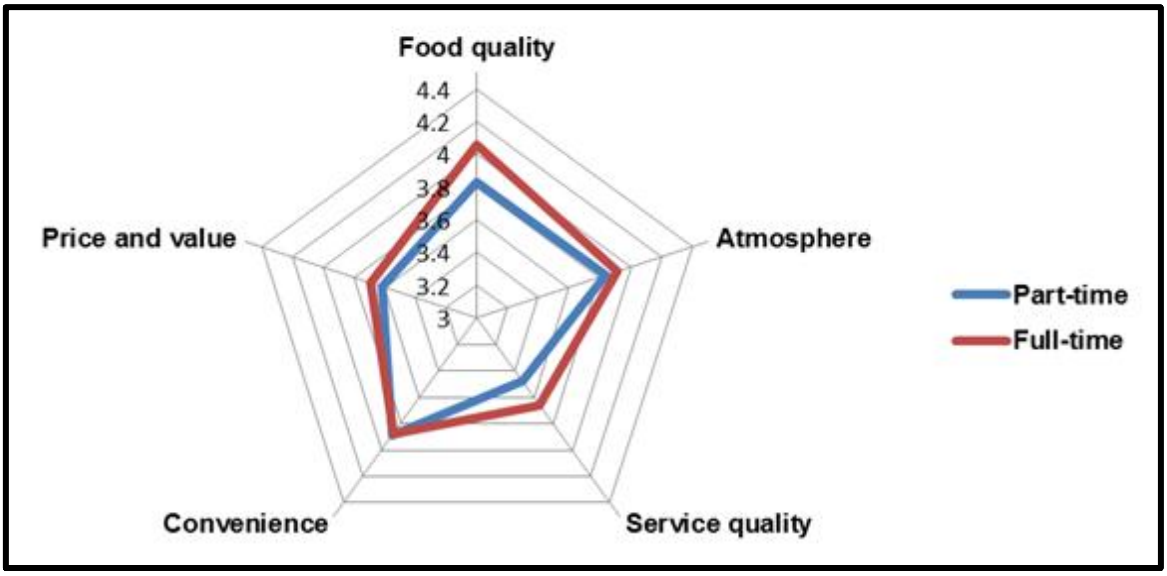


Figure 5.43: Mean scores: part-time and full-time (n=238)

The following section provides a discussion on the reliability and validity of the research instrument.

5.3 RELIABILITY AND VALIDITY

As mentioned in chapter 4, Goodwin (2010:134) states that for any measure to be of value in research, it should be sufficiently reliable and valid. For the purposes of this study, testing both the reliability and validity was critical and these aspects are discussed below.

5.3.1 Reliability

Reliability is an indicator of an instruments internal consistency (Zikmund & Babin, 2010:334). In other words, reliability refers to the extent to which an instrument produces consistent results through repeated measurements (Kumar, 2011:181). Cronbach's alpha was conducted for this study and used for estimating internal reliability (Bryman, 2012:170).

The reliability results for each of the Institutional DINESERV dimensions are presented in table 5.23.

Table 5.23: Reliability results

Dimensions	Items	Cronbach's alpha	Reliability
Food quality	9.1 Overall quality of the food 9.2 Taste of food 9.3 Eye appeal of the food 9.4 Freshness of the food 9.5 Nutritional content of food 9.6 Variety of menu options	0.75	Good
Atmosphere	9.7 Cleanliness of facilities 9.8 Outlet environment 9.9 Level of comfort in the outlet 9.10 Staff appearance	0.80	Good
Service quality	9.11 Attentive staff 9.12 Service provided by staff 9.13 Staff knowledge about food 9.14 Friendliness of manager	0.79	Good
Convenience	9.15 Service hours 9.16 Convenient location 9.17 Short walking distance 9.18 Parking convenience	0.69	Fair
Price and value	9.19 Good value for the price 9.20 Appropriate portion size 9.21 Reasonable price item 9.22 Overall value of the experience	0.86	Good

As indicated in chapter 4, Cronbach's alpha can vary between 0 (no consistency among items) and 1 (complete consistency among items), and the following can be further interpreted (Zikmund & Babin, 2010:334):

- For a value between 0.7 and 0.8, reliability is considered good.
- For a value between 0.6 and 0.7, reliability is considered fair.
- For a value below 0.6, reliability is considered poor.

As shown in table 5.23, reliability estimates were 0.75, 0.80, 0.79 and 0.86 for responses to food quality, atmosphere, service quality and price and value, respectively. This therefore indicates good reliability, according to Zikmund and

Babin's (2010:334) interpretation of Cronbach's alpha. For convenience, the reliability estimate was 0.69, which can be regarded as fair reliability. All the dimensions were therefore verified as reliable. Reliability statistics are further shown in Appendix B.

5.3.2 Validity

Validity, as discussed in chapter 4, can be referred to as an instruments ability to measure what it is actually designed to measure (Aaker *et al*., 2011:269). Factor analysis, with specific focus on the principal component analysis, was conducted to ensure that the items under the five dimensions of the Institutional DINESERV Model were grouped appropriately. The appropriateness of factor analysis for this study was measured by the Kaiser-Meyer-Olkin (KMO) measure of sampling adequacy and Bartlett's test of sphericity. The results of these tests are shown in table 5.24 below.

Table 5.24: The Kaiser-Meyer-Olkin (KMO) measure of sampling adequacy and Bartlett's test of sphericity

Kaiser-Meyer-Olkin (KMO) measure of sampling adequacy		.858
Bartlett's test of sphericity	Approx. chi-square	2080.434
	df	231
	Sig.	.000

According to Williams *et al*. (2012:5), the KMO index ranges from 0 to 1.0, with a minimum value of 0.50 being acceptable. Furthermore, Bartlett's test of sphericity should prove significant ($P<0.05$) in order for factor analysis to be conducted (Williams *et al*., 2012:5). As indicated in table 5.24, the KMO value for this study was .858, well above the minimum threshold, and Bartlett's test of sphericity was significant (x^2=2080.43, df=231, Sig.=.000), indicating that the use of factor analysis was appropriate.

When observing the communalities, referred to as "…the percentage of a variables variance that contributes to the correlation with other variables" (Aaker *et al*., 2011:497), it can be seen from table 5.25 that all the items are above 0.4, confirming that the items associate well with one another (Wiid & Diggines, 2013:241).

Table 5.25: Communalities

Items	Initial	Extraction
9.1	1.000	.548
9.2	1.000	.461
9.3	1.000	.471
9.4	1.000	.548
9.5	1.000	.583
9.6	1.000	.411
9.7	1.000	.587
9.8	1.000	.669
9.9	1.000	.653
9.10	1.000	.659
9.11	1.000	.700
9.12	1.000	.758
9.13	1.000	.654
9.14	1.000	.539
9.15	1.000	.566
9.16	1.000	.679
9.17	1.000	.521
9.18	1.000	.542
9.19	1.000	.787
9.20	1.000	.674
9.21	1.000	.741
9.22	1.000	.648

In determining the number of factors (dimensions), Wiid and Diggines (2013:241) suggest that the following criteria be considered:

- The cumulative percentage explained by the factors should be greater than 60%.
- The eigenvalues (representing the total variance explained by each factor) should be greater than 1.0.
- There should be a significant decline in the scree plot. A scree plot shows the eigenvalues plotted against the number of factors, in order of extraction, and is used to identify the appropriate number of factors (Aaker *et al*., 2011:495).

All the criteria suggested by Wiid and Diggines (2013:241) were met in this study. The principal component analysis identified five factors (dimensions) having eigenvalues greater than 1.0. These five factors (dimensions) represented 22 of the items and accounted for 60.91% of the total variance.

Furthermore, the scree plot, as indicated in figure 5.44, shows a significant decline. The number of factors to be included is usually indicated on the scree plot by taking note of where the slope of the line begins to flatten out (Wiid & Diggines, 2013:241). As can be seen in figure 5.44, the slope of the line flattens out considerably after the fifth factor. As already mentioned, the appropriate number of factors (dimensions) is therefore five.

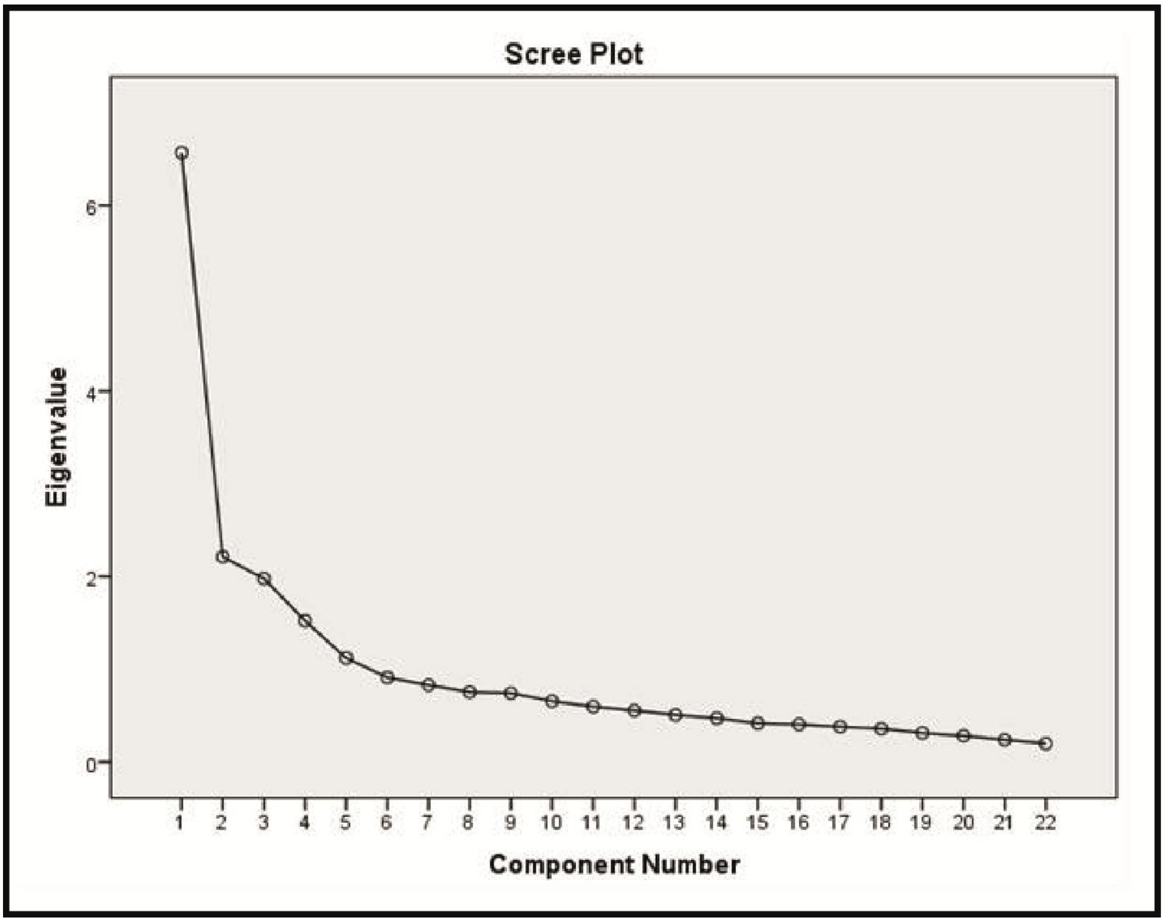


Figure 5.44: Scree plot

The rotated component matrix in table 5.26 indicates the factor loadings for the 22 items. Factor loadings determine the composition of the factors (dimensions) (Wiid & Diggines, 2013:242). A loading equal to or greater than 0.40 can be considered meaningful (Wiid & Diggines, 2013:241). It can be seen from table 5.26 that the factor loadings for the 22 items range from 0.565 to 0.859, above the minimum threshold of 0.40. The items loaded significantly on the five factors (dimensions) as conceptualised and no items loaded highly on more than one factor (dimension). These results indicate that the Institutional DINESERV Model fits well with the data provided in this study.

Table 5.26: Rotated component matrix

Items	Component				
	1	2	3	4	5
9.1	.676				
9.2	.593				
9.3	.602				
9.4	.626				
9.5	.647				
9.6	.565				
9.7		.585			
9.8		.757			
9.9		.758			
9.10		.713			
9.11			.656		
9.12			.774		
9.13			.713		
9.14			.607		
9.15				.728	
9.16				.804	
9.17				.626	
9.18				.600	
9.19					.859
9.20					.784
9.21					.839
9.22					.717

It can be concluded that the Institutional DINESERV Model used in this study is both reliable and valid.

5.4 SUMMARY

The findings of the research study were summarised in this chapter. The study followed a mixed method approach in which the quantitative data was analysed using SAS JMP version 10 and the qualitative data using NVivo version 10. Descriptive and inferential statistics were used to describe the findings and the results were presented by referring to the actual question numbers in the questionnaire (Appendix A). The level of satisfaction of respondents with the healthier food options available at fast-food outlets was examined in terms of food quality, atmosphere, service quality, convenience as well as price and value. Furthermore, a profile of the respondents in terms of their demographics was compiled, followed by a comparison between the demographic groups in order to determine if there were any differences in the level of satisfaction amongst these groups. The last section provided a discussion on the reliability and validity of the research instrument.

In the next chapter, conclusions and recommendations will be presented based on the research findings, along with a discussion of the outcomes of the different research objectives as formulated in chapter 1.

CHAPTER 6

CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

6.1 INTRODUCTION

The purpose of this study, as explained in chapter 1, was to explore customer satisfaction with the healthier food options available at fast-food outlets in South Africa. The research findings were discussed in chapter 5 and specific results from the questionnaire were presented. In this chapter, the research objectives are revisited and conclusions and recommendations are made based on the data collected. The study's contribution to the fast-food industry is further highlighted, followed by the limitations of the study and, lastly, suggestions for future research.

6.2 CONCLUSIONS OF THE STUDY AND RECOMMENDATIONS

The research objectives, formulated in chapter 1, are revisited below. Conclusions are drawn and recommendations made according to each objective.

6.2.1 Primary objective of the study

The primary objective of the study was as follows:

To explore customer satisfaction with the healthier food options available at fast-food outlets in South Africa.

Factor analysis was conducted to ensure that the items under the five dimensions of the Institutional DINESERV Model were grouped appropriately. As indicated in chapter 5, the factor analysis identified five factors which represented 22 of the items and accounted for 60.91% of the total variance, which is just above the minimum threshold of 60% (Wiid & Diggines, 2013:241). Furthermore, the factor loadings for the 22 items ranged from 0.565 to 0.859, above the minimum value of 0.40, and no items loaded highly on more than one factor (dimension). This indicates that the Institutional DINESERV Model (as shown in figure 6.1) fits well with the data provided in this study.

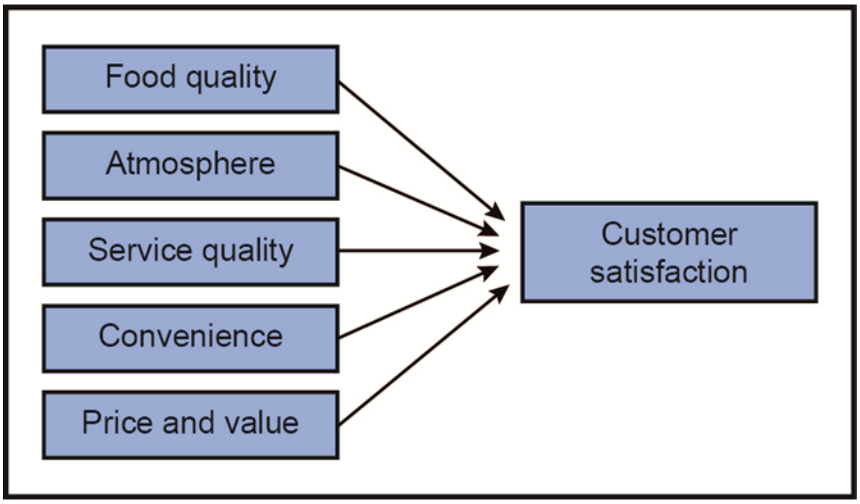


Figure 6.1: The Institutional DINESERV Model
Source: Adapted from Ng (2005:22).

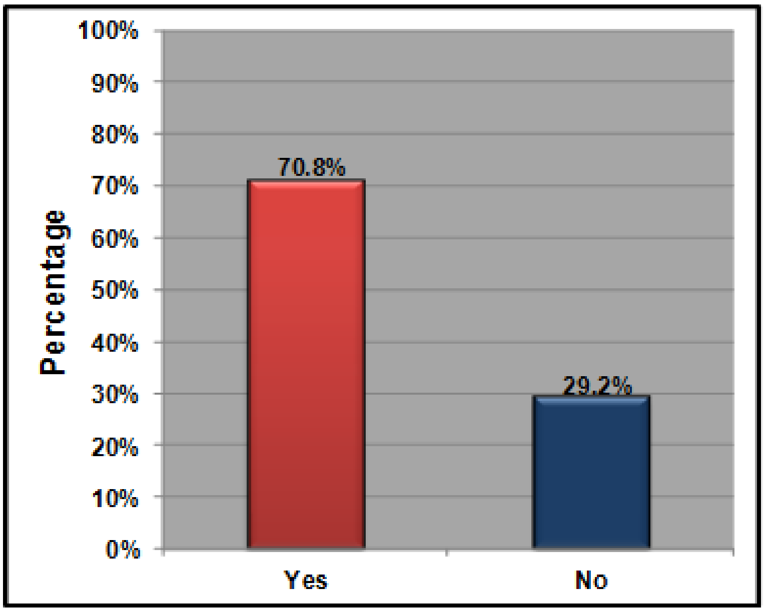
The primary objective was further achieved through various secondary objectives, discussed in the following section.

6.2.2 Secondary objectives of the study

Seven secondary objectives were formulated for this study. Each of them will now be discussed.

6.2.2.1 Secondary objective 1: To determine the proportion of customers who have purchased the healthier food options at fast-food outlets

As illustrated in figure 6.2, it is clear that a high proportion of the respondents (238 or 70.8%) had purchased healthier food options from fast-food outlets. This finding may be due to consumers becoming more health conscious. As mentioned in chapter 2, customers not only want to consume meals that are quick and convenient, but they also want to ensure that what they are eating is of high quality and offers nutritional benefits (Euromonitor International, 2011).



Level	Count
Yes	238
No	98
Total	336

Figure 6.2: Have you purchased healthier food options from fast-food outlets? (n=336)

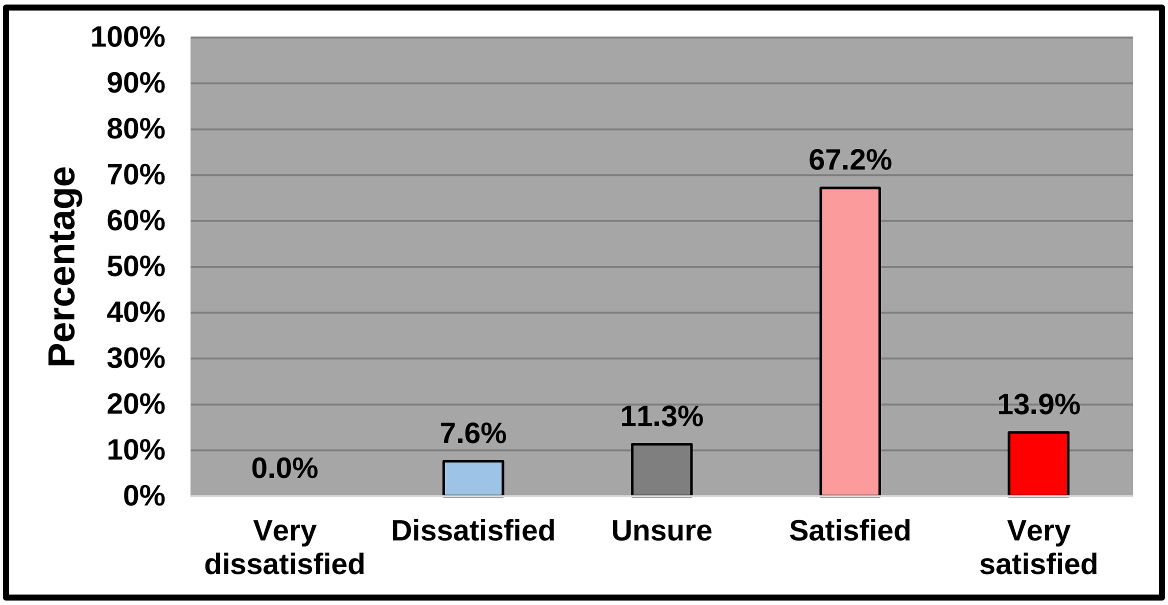
Recommendations

Fast-food outlets need to ensure that they understand the fast-changing health attitudes of customers. Since the majority of the respondents had purchased healthier food options, fast-food outlets may need to put more effort into developing and promoting a wide variety of healthier food options in order to cater for these customers.

The 98 respondents (29.2%) who had not purchased the healthier food options from fast-food outlets were of the opinion that these options were tasteless, unappealing, expensive and not very healthy. Fast-food outlets should ensure that the healthier food options are nutritious, enticing, affordable and have vibrant flavours. Furthermore, it is recommended that fast-food outlets work on changing the perceptions of customers who are opposed to purchasing the healthier food options. Marketing the healthier food options more aggressively may increase their customer base.

6.2.2.2 Secondary objective 2: To determine the level of customer satisfaction with the food quality of the healthier food options available at fast-food outlets

The research study found that the majority of the respondents (193 or 81.1%) were satisfied or very satisfied with the quality of the healthier food options at fast-food outlets. This is illustrated in figure 6.3.



Dimension	Count					
	Very dissatisfied	Dissatisfied	Unsure	Satisfied	Very satisfied	Total
Food quality	0	18	27	160	33	238

Figure 6.3: Overall satisfaction with food quality of healthier food options (n=238)

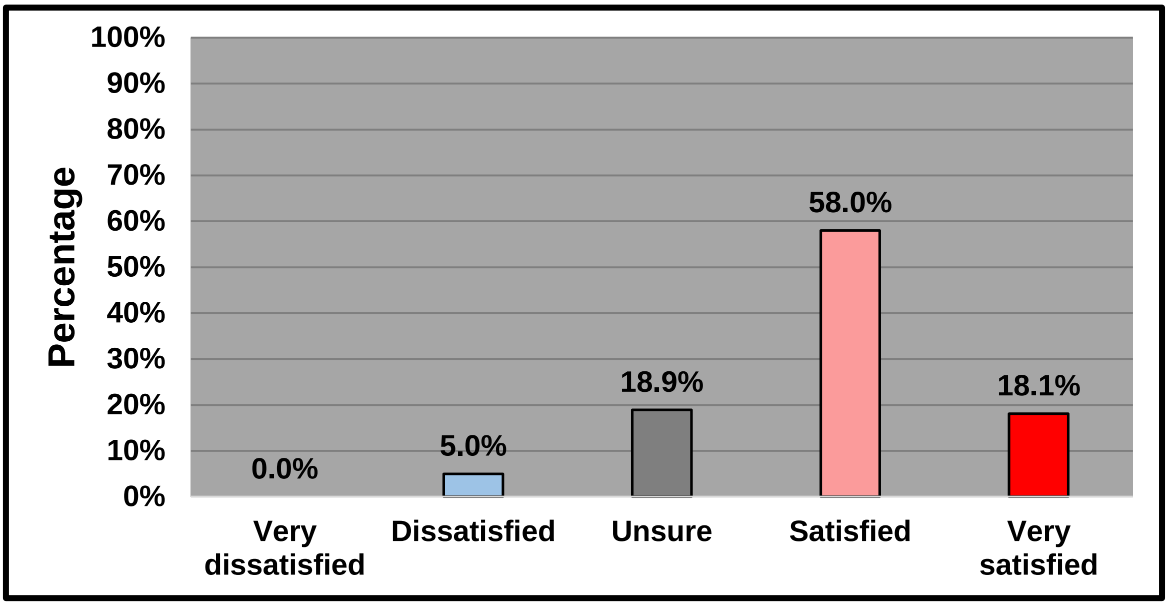
This finding seems to indicate a high level of satisfaction amongst respondents with the quality of the healthier food options, with 81.1% being satisfied with this dimension. However, as indicated in chapter 5, the respondents were least satisfied with the variety and nutritional content of the healthier food options. After observing a number of fast-food outlet menus, the researcher found that some of the fast-food outlets do not offer a wide variety of healthier food options, which may be the reason for the respondents' negative response in this area. With regard to the nutritional content of the healthier food options, respondents may lack knowledge, as most fast-food outlets only display such information on their websites, making it difficult for consumers to access, especially at the time of purchase.

Recommendations

It is recommended that fast-food outlets offer a wide range of healthier food options, such as salads, healthy sandwiches, wraps and more grilled options. A total of 34.2% of the respondents (54) had suggested a wider variety (see section 5.2.9.1) in order to improve the food quality dimension. With regard to the nutritional content of the healthier food options, fast-food outlets need to ensure that these options are lower in fats/oils and that their target market is educated and well aware of the nutritional content of all their foods. In this case, fast-food outlets may find it useful to place nutritional information not only on their website, but also at point of purchase, enabling customers to make appropriate choices. Further investigation may also be required in order to establish customer expectations and perceptions regarding the nutritional content of the healthier food options. In addition to improving the quality of the healthier food options, it was suggested that fast-food outlets make use of the just-in-time (JIT) principle for the delivery of their raw materials. If the raw materials are delivered on a frequent basis, the freshness of the healthier food can be preserved at the highest level possible (Shaharudin *et al*., 2011:206). Furthermore, fast-food outlets should focus on serving healthier food that is freshly cooked. Fresh, well-prepared food creates a positive experience for the customer, both physically and emotionally (USDA, 2004:6).

6.2.2.3 Secondary objective 3: To determine the level of customer satisfaction with the atmosphere at fast-food outlets with reference to the healthier food options

As illustrated in figure 6.4, the majority of the respondents (181 or 76.1%) were satisfied or very satisfied with the atmosphere at fast-food outlets.



Dimension	Count					
	Very dissatisfied	Dissatisfied	Unsure	Satisfied	Very satisfied	Total
Atmosphere	0	12	45	138	43	238

Figure 6.4: Overall satisfaction with atmosphere (n=238)

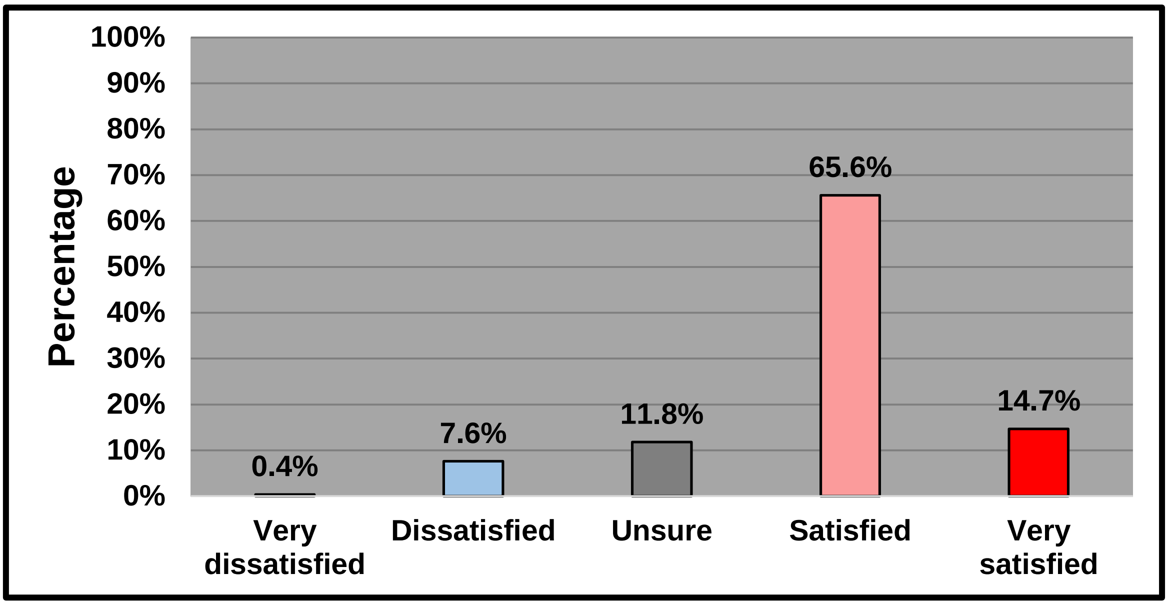
This finding seems to indicate a moderate level of satisfaction amongst respondents with the atmosphere at fast-food outlets, with 76.1% of the respondents being satisfied with this dimension. It is concerning to note that a total of 23.9% (57) were not satisfied with the atmosphere, which may further influence customer satisfaction with the healthier food options, indicating a major area for improvement. As mentioned in chapter 3, a good atmosphere can make the food, the service and the entire dining experience come across as being better, resulting in greater customer satisfaction (Kleynhans, 2003:21; Shaw, 2013).

Recommendations

In order to improve on the atmosphere dimension, fast-food outlets should ensure that their staff members maintain a high standard in terms of personal appearance. Furthermore, by taking the respondents' suggestions into account on improving this dimension (see section 5.2.9.2), fast-food outlets may want to consider improving their seating areas, playing different genres of music that will appeal to their target market, maintaining the cleanliness of the facilities and motivating their staff to uphold an enthusiastic and helpful attitude. Further research may be conducted to investigate customer perceptions regarding the outlet environment in order to increase the satisfaction ratings. According to Ng (2005:14), customers are more likely to spend money and time at a place where the environment stimulates a feeling of pleasure. Dissatisfied customers may go elsewhere to experience such a feeling.

6.2.2.4 Secondary objective 4: To determine the level of customer satisfaction with the service quality at fast-food outlets with reference to the healthier food options

From the research findings, it is clear that the majority of the respondents (191 or 80.3%) were satisfied or very satisfied with the service quality at fast-food outlets. These findings are illustrated in figure 6.5.



Dimension	Count					
	Very dissatisfied	Dissatisfied	Unsure	Satisfied	Very satisfied	Total
Service quality	1	18	28	156	35	238

Figure 6.5: Overall satisfaction with service quality (n=238)

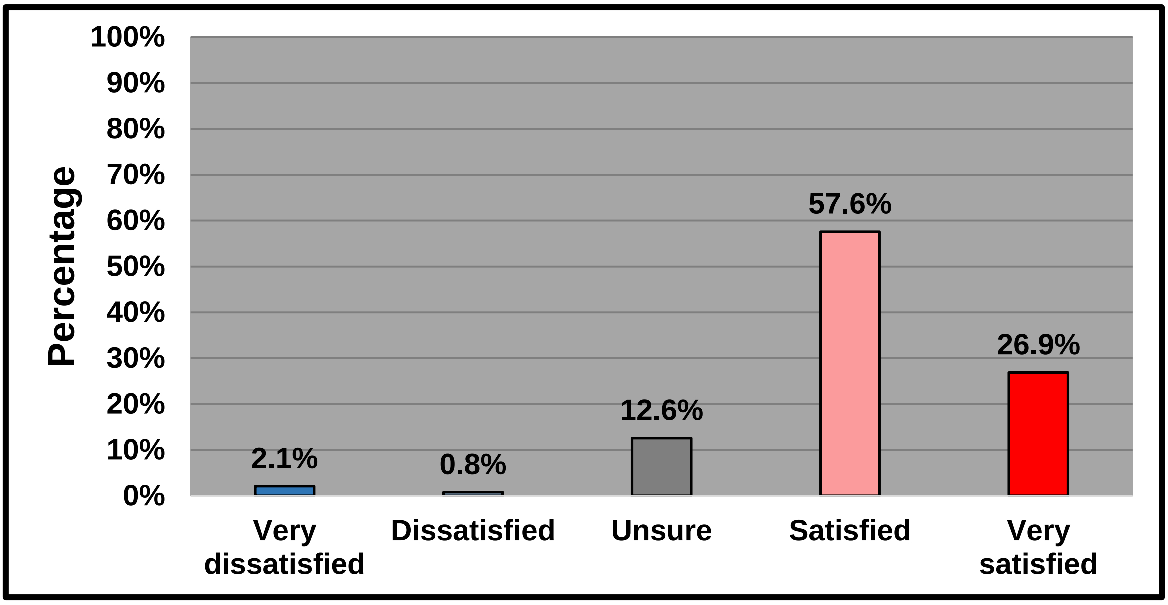
The findings in figure 6.5 seem to indicate a high level of satisfaction amongst respondents with the service quality at fast-food outlets, with 80.3% being satisfied with this dimension. However, the study found that the respondents were least satisfied with the staff's knowledge of the healthier food options and the friendliness of the manager. As referred to in chapter 5, staff may have appeared to be unknowledgeable about the healthier food options available. Conversely, some respondents may not have enquired about the healthier food options, which could have resulted in the high neutral response in this area (see figure 5.20). It is extremely important for staff to understand the menu and the components of each item in order to provide customers with suggestions and significant information on the nutritional content of the food. According to Myrick (2012:283), knowledge adds value, which, in addition to providing good service, gives customers an incentive to return. With regard to the friendliness of the manager, respondents may have been exposed to a discourteous, unfriendly manager, which may have influenced their opinion. However, although many fast-food outlets do have visible management, it may be that some of the respondents did not observe or interact with the manager during their visit to the fast-food outlet. Managers of fast-food outlets play an important role as they are responsible for taking suggestions, handling complaints and creating a friendly atmosphere in which customers can enjoy themselves.

Recommendations

Fast-food outlets may need to implement staff training programmes on a regular basis in order to ensure that all staff are constantly well informed about the healthier food options and their nutritional content in terms of energy, carbo-hydrates, fats and protein. In addition to improving the service quality dimension, 72.8% of the respondents (94) suggested that fast-food outlets should provide better customer service and that the staff should be friendlier and more attentive (see section 5.2.9.3).

6.2.2.5 Secondary objective 5: To determine the level of customer satisfaction with the convenience of fast-food outlets with reference to the healthier food options

From figure 6.6, it can be seen that 201 or 84.5% of the respondents were satisfied or very satisfied with the convenience dimension of fast-food outlets.



Dimension	Count					
	Very dissatisfied	Dissatisfied	Unsure	Satisfied	Very satisfied	Total
Convenience	5	2	30	137	64	238

Figure 6.6: Overall satisfaction with convenience (n=238)

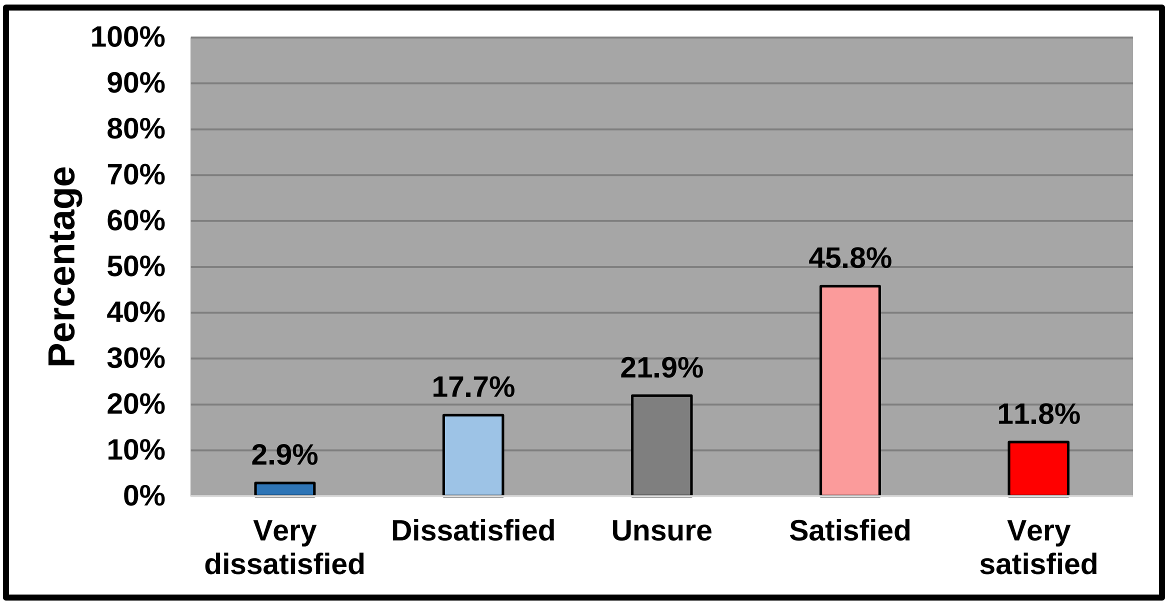
This finding seems to indicate a high level of satisfaction amongst respondents with convenience, with 84.5% being satisfied with this dimension. It is interesting to note that the convenience dimension received the highest satisfaction rating compared with the other dimensions (food quality, atmosphere, service quality and price and value). Within this dimension, however, respondents seemed to be the least satisfied with the parking availability at fast-food outlets. Parking availability may determine a customer's willingness to visit an organisation or, in this case, a fast-food outlet (Environmental Protection Agency, 2008:10). In addition, inadequate parking may decrease customer overall satisfaction and also reduce the probability of a customer's intention to return (Illinois Institute for Rural Affairs, 2003:5).

Recommendations

Fast-food outlets need to understand the importance of planning parking space during the design and choice of location. The lack of parking may have a negative impact on an organisation's sales (Raeon, 2010:23), more specifically fast-food outlets and their healthier food options. In order to further improve the convenience dimension, as suggested by the respondents (see section 5.2.9.4), fast-food outlets should expend extra effort in providing prompt service. As mentioned in chapter 5, customers usually expect fast service when they eat out at fast-food outlets. In this regard, it may be beneficial for fast-food outlets to hire enough staff especially during peak times. Additional research may also be required in terms of measuring customers' perception of "fast" service, how far customers are willing to walk to the desired fast-food outlet and performing a cost-benefit analysis in order to determine whether extending their service hours would be profitable.

6.2.2.6 Secondary objective 6: To determine the level of customer satisfaction with the price and value of the healthier food options available at fast-food outlets

As shown in figure 6.7, the research study found that only 137 or 57.6% of the respondents were satisfied or very satisfied with the price and value of the healthier food options available at fast-food outlets.



Dimension	Count					
	Very dissatisfied	Dissatisfied	Unsure	Satisfied	Very satisfied	Total
Price and value	7	42	52	109	28	238

Figure 6.7: Overall satisfaction with price and value of the healthier food options (n=238)

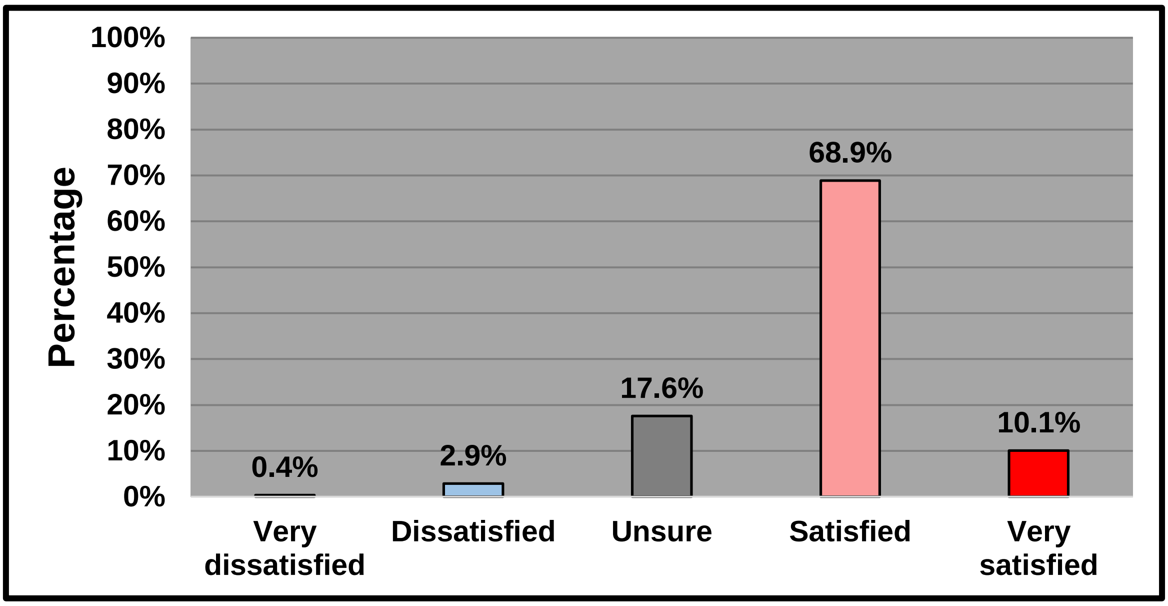
This finding seems to indicate a relatively low level of satisfaction amongst respondents and is clearly a cause for concern, as just over half of the respondents (57.6%) did not have a positive view regarding the price and value of the healthier food options available. Price and value appear to have received the lowest satisfaction scores compared with the other dimensions (food quality, atmosphere, service quality and convenience). Furthermore, within this dimension, respondents were least satisfied with the actual price of the healthier food options. It is concerning to find such a high dissatisfaction rating among respondents in this area, as it may negatively affect the sales of the healthier food options.

Recommendations

In order to keep and increase their customer base, fast-food outlets may want to consider evaluating their pricing strategy, which is related to the value perception of customers. As indicated in chapter 5 (section 5.2.4), a total of 20.4% of respondents (20) did not purchase the healthier options from fast-food outlets as they were of the opinion that these options were more expensive or overpriced compared with the other food options available. Furthermore, of the respondents who had purchased the healthier food options, the majority (76.3% or 103) suggested that fast-food outlets should lower the prices of these options (see section 5.2.9.5). A further 15.6% of the respondents (21) felt that fast-food outlets should offer better value for money. In this regard, fast-food outlets may need to consider and adjust the pricing of the healthier food options available to ensure they are reasonably priced. In addition, they could relook at current portion sizes, offer healthy value-bundled meals, convey a better value-for-money message and deliver on what they promise. Further research could be conducted in order to establish customer expectations and perceptions of value received for the price paid with regard to the healthier food options, which could in turn greatly improve the satisfaction ratings.

6.2.2.7 Secondary objective 7: To determine the overall customer satisfaction with fast-food outlets with reference to the healthier food options

The study found that the majority of the respondents (188 or 79%) were satisfied or very satisfied with the overall experience at the fast-food outlet (figure 6.8). However, although this finding reflects positively on fast-food outlets, a significant 20.9% of respondents (50) did not have a positive view of the overall experience. This could be due to the respondents' high level of dissatisfaction with the price and value of the healthier food options (figure 6.7), which may have had a negative impact on their overall experience. Such a finding may be a cause for concern as it could affect customers' decision to return to the fast-food outlet.



	Count					
	Very dissatisfied	Dissatisfied	Unsure	Satisfied	Very satisfied	Total
Overall satisfaction	1	7	42	164	24	238

Figure 6.8: Overall satisfaction (n=238)

Recommendations

Although all the Institutional DINESERV dimensions should be considered, fast-food outlets may need to expend extra effort on initially improving the price of the healthier food options and communicating a better value-for-money message.

Furthermore, fast-food outlets need to manage the customer experience and train their staff on providing exceptional service and quality. As mentioned previously, fast-food outlets could consider making use of mystery shopping. In this way, they can inform training needs and better manage the customer experience.

Based on the conclusions to the various secondary objectives, it can be seen that the primary objective was fully achieved. In the next section, some additional findings from the study are highlighted.

6.2.3 Additional findings

- Kauai and Nando's appear as the top two outlets that respondents were aware of which offer healthier food options. Furthermore, the majority of the respondents indicated that they most recently purchased healthier food options from these outlets. As mentioned in chapter 5, this finding may be due to the fact that Kauai positions itself as a healthy fast-food outlet and Nando's is well known for its flame-grilled chicken.

- Food quality was rated as the most important dimension by the respondents. As indicated earlier in this chapter, variety and nutritional content of the healthier food options received the lowest satisfaction rating. In this regard, it may be beneficial for fast-food outlets to provide a wide range of healthier food options that are nutritious in order to improve the food quality dimension.

- There is a significant relationship between gender group and their preference for purchasing healthier food options. It was found that a lower proportion of male respondents than female respondents purchased the healthier food options. This finding may be attributed to women being more health conscious than men. However, further research may need to be conducted in order to explore the difference between male and female customers regarding their intention to purchase the healthier food options available at fast-food outlets.

- With regard to the satisfaction ratings across demographics, the following was found:
    - Gender – Generally women were more satisfied than men, with men less satisfied with price and value, service quality and convenience. As mentioned in chapter 5, women could be more aware of the time and effort it takes to prepare healthier meals and may therefore be more appreciative of the service, finding it more convenient and acceptable in terms of price and value.
    - Age – Respondents within the age group of 18 seemed to be less satisfied with atmosphere and convenience compared with the other age groups. It may be that the younger respondents preferred a more vibrant atmosphere. Furthermore, as indicated in chapter 5, most of the respondents within this age category may have been first-year students. Time may be of critical importance since being a first-year student can be challenging as individuals must adapt to an unfamiliar environment and, most importantly, they have to keep up with academic demands, classes, activities and socialising. These students may therefore value convenience more and expect faster service when eating out at fast-food outlets. Respondents in the age category of 19–23 were less satisfied with price and value compared with the other age groups. The reason for this finding could be that these students have increased responsibilities and a limited budget.
    - Race – It was found that white respondents were the least satisfied with the service quality compared with the other race groups. This finding could be due to white respondents valuing the service quality dimension more, and therefore expecting more in terms of customer service and friendly staff at fast-food outlets.
    - Postgraduate/undergraduate – Generally undergraduates were more satisfied than postgraduates, with postgraduates less satisfied with food quality and service quality. As mentioned in chapter 5, the postgraduate students may value food quality and service quality more than the undergraduate respondents and therefore expect more from fast-food

outlets on these aspects. Furthermore, some postgraduate students may be working, which could have an influence on their views and expectations of service quality.

Further research may be conducted in order to further explore the difference in customer satisfaction ratings across demographics.

In the next section, the study's contribution to the South African fast-food industry is highlighted.

6.3 STUDY'S CONTRIBUTION TO THE SOUTH AFRICAN FAST-FOOD INDUSTRY

Through examining the secondary research available, it appears that the current topic is not covered comprehensively in the South African context. Little research has been conducted in South Africa in determining customer satisfaction with the healthier food options available at fast-food outlets. This study aimed to explore an area that has received limited attention in the literature and it therefore benefits the fast-food industry.

The research study further contributes to the South African fast-food industry by highlighting the increasing trend towards healthier eating and the importance of offering a variety of healthier food options at fast-food outlets. The study reveals the respondents' degree of satisfaction, suggestions and problem areas with regard to the healthier food options based on the five Institutional DINESERV dimensions, namely food quality, atmosphere, service quality, convenience and price and value. Fast-food outlets may find such information useful as a basis for improvement and for delivering the right offering to meet and exceed customer expectations.

The research study had some limitations, addressed below.

6.4 LIMITATIONS

Due to the researcher employing convenience sampling, the findings could not be generalised to the larger population. Furthermore, the sample was taken primarily from students studying at the University of Pretoria and it was therefore not geographically representative. However, the goal of the study was not to be representative, but to enable other researchers to transfer the findings. Since the fieldwork was conducted during the examination period, the study may have failed to elicit perspectives of respondents not present on campus at the time. Furthermore, the study was limited in that it was confined to fast-food outlets only.

Suggestions for future research are presented in the following section.

6.5 SUGGESTIONS FOR FUTURE RESEARCH

From the research findings, conclusions and limitations discussed, various suggestions for future research opportunities can be offered:

- Since the study was confined to healthier food options of fast-food outlets, application of this study to the restaurant industry may yield different results, which could be beneficial to the industry.

- Due to the sample being taken primarily from students studying at the University of Pretoria, the opinions of many individuals outside the chosen participants were not represented. Future research could therefore aim to identify a more representative sample of students, targeting different universities across the country. Furthermore, expanding the sample to include a diverse group of individuals and not just students may yield different results.

- Although the study employed a mixed method approach, the qualitative component covered open-ended questions only. Future research should therefore attempt to incorporate focus groups in order to gain comprehensive insight into and in-depth information on respondents' views and opinions of the healthier food options available at fast-food outlets.

- Future research could aim to measure customer satisfaction with specific healthier food options available at fast-food outlets. Conversely, selecting a specific fast-food outlet may increase the consistency of the findings.

- In the current study, it was found that a lower proportion of male respondents than female respondents purchased the healthier food options from fast-food outlets. However, research may be conducted to further investigate the difference between male and female customers regarding their intention to purchase the healthier food options.

- Research may be conducted in order to further explore and investigate the differences across demographic groups (such as gender, age and race) regarding their satisfaction with the healthier food options.

- In the current study, customer satisfaction with the healthier food options was based on the five Institutional DINESERV dimensions (food quality, atmosphere, service quality, convenience and price and value). It would be interesting to explore customer satisfaction with each dimension in more detail in order to gain more comprehensive insights.

- Due to price and value receiving the lowest satisfaction rating compared with the other dimensions, additional research may be conducted in order to further explore respondents' perceptions and expectations in this regard.

- Future research may be conducted to explore customer perceptions of "fast" service.

- Another opportunity for future research might be to use a different model for measuring customer satisfaction with the healthier food options, which may yield different results.

6.6 SUMMARY

This chapter concludes the research study, which explored customer satisfaction with the healthier food options offered at fast-food outlets in South Africa. The research objectives were used as a basis for the conclusions drawn and recommendations made for fast-food outlets. The study's contribution to the fast-food industry was further highlighted, followed by the limitations of the study. Future research possibilities were also identified.

From the research findings it can be concluded that customers are generally satisfied with the healthier food options available at fast-food outlets. However, a high degree of dissatisfaction does exist, especially within the price and value dimension. It is suggested that fast-food outlets expend extra effort in improving all the dimensions of the Institutional DINESERV Model to further increase the satisfaction ratings.

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APPENDIX A

– RESEARCH INSTRUMENT –

Combined Letter of Introduction and Informed Consent

Dept. of Marketing and Retail Management

Title of the study:

EXPLORING CUSTOMER SATISFACTION WITH THE HEALTHIER FOOD OPTIONS AVAILABLE AT FAST-FOOD OUTLETS IN SOUTH AFRICA

Research conducted by:

Ms M. Gopaul (45366128)
Cell: 082 6358 377

Dear Respondent,

You are invited to participate in an academic research study conducted by Ms M. Gopaul, a Master's student from the Department of Marketing and Retail Management at the University of South Africa. The purpose of the study is to explore customer satisfaction with the healthier food options available at fast-food outlets.

Please note the following:

- This is an anonymous survey as your name will not appear on the questionnaire. The answers you give will be treated as strictly confidential as you cannot be identified in person based on the answers you give.
- Your participation in this study is very important to us. You may, however, choose not to participate and you may also stop participating at any time without any negative consequences.
- Please answer the questions in the attached questionnaire as completely and honestly as possible. This should not take more than **15 minutes** of your time.
- The results of the study will be used for academic research purposes only.
- The research study was approved by the Bureau of Market Research (BMR) at UNISA as well as the Ethical Clearance Committee of the University of Pretoria. Please contact me if you have any questions or comments regarding the study.

Please sign the form to indicate that:

- You have read and understand the information provided above.
- You give your consent to participate in the study on a voluntary basis.

______________________________	______________________
Respondent's signature	**Date**

Respondent number: | | | |

EXPLORING CUSTOMER SATISFACTION WITH THE HEALTHIER FOOD OPTIONS AVAILABLE AT FAST-FOOD OUTLETS IN SOUTH AFRICA

Dear respondent,

Thank you for your time and willingness to complete the following survey. The purpose of the study is to explore customer satisfaction with the healthier food options available at fast-food outlets.

There are no correct or incorrect answers. We are merely interested in your own personal opinion regarding the subject matter. Please answer questions by placing a cross (**X**) in the appropriate block.

Question 1

Do you purchase food from fast-food outlets from time to time?

Response		
Yes	1	⟶ **Please continue to question 2**
No	2	⟶ **Please discontinue with the questionnaire**

Question 2

If yes, are you aware of any healthier food options offered at fast-food outlets?

Response		
Yes	1	⟶ **Please continue to question 3**
No	2	⟶ **Please discontinue with the questionnaire**

Question 3

In your opinion, what is meant by a **healthier food option**?

....
....
....
....

Question 4

Do you think there is a need for **healthier food options** at fast-food outlets?

Response	
Yes	1
No	2

Please provide reasons for your answer.

....
....
....
....

Healthier food options can be defined as items low in fat and/or calories. These include items such as salads, grilled items (grilled chicken, grilled burgers, grilled wraps, grilled fish), muesli and yoghurt breakfasts etc. Please note: this is the researcher's definition of healthier food options, do not adjust your answer to question 3.

Question 5

Have you purchased **healthier food options** from fast-food outlets?

Response			
Yes	1	⟶	**Please continue to question 6**
No	2	⟶	**Please answer questions 17 to 22**

Question 6

If **YES**, how often do you purchase **healthier food options** from fast-food outlets? (Please choose one option)

Every day	1
Once a week	2
Once every two weeks	3
Twice or more a week	4
Once a month	5
A few times a month	6

Other (specify)………………………………………………...

Question 7

Which fast-food outlets are you aware of that offer **healthier food options**?

....
....
....
....

Question 8

Which fast-food outlet did you most recently purchase a **healthier food option** from? (Please choose one option)

McDonald's	1
Wimpy	2
KFC	3
Steers	4
Nando's	5
Kauai	6

Other (specify)………………………………………………...

Question 9

Based on the fast-food outlet that you have selected in Question 8, please indicate with an (**X**) your level of satisfaction with each of the statements of the dimensions below on a scale of 1–5, 1 being “Very dissatisfied” and 5 being “Very satisfied”.

Healthier food options	Very dissatisfied	Dissatisfied	Unsure	Satisfied	Very satisfied
Food quality					
9.1 Overall quality of the food	1	2	3	4	5
9.2 Taste of food	1	2	3	4	5
9.3 Eye appeal of the food	1	2	3	4	5
9.4 Freshness of the food	1	2	3	4	5
9.5 Nutritional content of food	1	2	3	4	5
9.6 Variety of menu options	1	2	3	4	5
Atmosphere					
9.7 Cleanliness of facilities	1	2	3	4	5
9.8 Outlet environment	1	2	3	4	5
9.9 Level of comfort in the outlet	1	2	3	4	5
9.10 Staff appearance	1	2	3	4	5
Service quality					
9.11 Attentive staff	1	2	3	4	5
9.12 Service provided by staff	1	2	3	4	5
9.13 Staff knowledge about food	1	2	3	4	5
9.14 Friendliness of manager	1	2	3	4	5
Convenience					
9.15 Service hours	1	2	3	4	5
9.16 Convenient location	1	2	3	4	5
9.17 Short walking distance	1	2	3	4	5
9.18 Parking convenience	1	2	3	4	5
Price and value					
9.19 Good value for the price	1	2	3	4	5
9.20 Appropriate portion size	1	2	3	4	5
9.21 Reasonable price item	1	2	3	4	5
9.22 Overall value of the experience	1	2	3	4	5

Question 10

What is your overall level of satisfaction with the **food quality** of the healthier food options offered by this fast-food outlet? (Mark with an **X** in the appropriate block).

Very dissatisfied	Dissatisfied	Unsure	Satisfied	Very satisfied
1	2	3	4	5

In your opinion, what do you think can be done to improve the food quality of the healthier food options offered by this fast-food outlet?

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Question 11

What is your overall level of satisfaction with the **atmosphere** of this fast-food outlet? (Mark with an **X** in the appropriate block).

Very dissatisfied	Dissatisfied	Unsure	Satisfied	Very satisfied
1	2	3	4	5

In your opinion, what do you think can be done to improve the atmosphere of this fast-food outlet?

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Question 12

What is your overall level of satisfaction with the **service quality** of this fast-food outlet? (Mark with an **X** in the appropriate block).

Very dissatisfied	Dissatisfied	Unsure	Satisfied	Very satisfied
1	2	3	4	5

In your opinion, what do you think can be done to improve the service quality of this fast-food outlet?

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Question 13

What is your overall level of satisfaction in terms of how **convenient** this fast-food outlet is? (Mark with an **X** in the appropriate block).

Very dissatisfied	Dissatisfied	Unsure	Satisfied	Very satisfied
1	2	3	4	5

In your opinion, what do you think can be done to improve the convenience aspect of this fast-food outlet?

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Question 14

What is your overall level of satisfaction with the **price and value** of the healthier food options offered by this fast-food outlet? (Mark with an **X** in the appropriate block).

Very dissatisfied	Dissatisfied	Unsure	Satisfied	Very satisfied
1	2	3	4	5

In your opinion, what do you think can be done to improve the price and value of the healthier food options offered by this fast-food outlet?

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Question 15

Rank the importance of the following five dimensions when considering to purchase healthier food options from a fast-food outlet (from 1 = least important to 5 = most important).

Quality of food	1
Atmosphere	2
Quality of service	3
Convenience	4
Price and value	5

Question 16

What is your overall level of satisfaction with the **food quality, atmosphere, service quality, convenience** and **price and value** with reference to the healthier food options at this fast-food outlet? (Mark with an **X** in the appropriate block).

Very dissatisfied	Dissatisfied	Unsure	Satisfied	Very satisfied
1	2	3	4	5

Question 17

Please indicate your **gender** group?

Male	1
Female	2

Question 18

Please indicate your **age** group?

18	1
19–23	2
24–28	3
29–33	4
>33	5

Question 19

Please indicate your **racial** group?

Black	1
White	2
Coloured	3
Indian	4
Asian	5

Other (specify)……………………………………………………...

Question 20

Please indicate whether you are an **undergraduate** or **postgraduate** student?

Undergraduate	1
Postgraduate	2

Question 21

Please indicate whether you are a **part-time** or **full-time** student?

Part-time	1
Full-time	2

Question 22

If **NO** to question 5, please provide reasons as to why you do not purchase **healthier food options** from fast-food outlets.

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Thank you for your time and consideration.
Should you have any queries relating to the survey please contact the researcher:

Ms M. Gopaul
082 6358 377

APPENDIX B

– CHI-SQUARE STATISTICS –

Gender

N	DF	-LogLike	RSquare (U)
336	1	5.8249549	0.0287

Test	ChiSquare	Prob>ChiSq
Likelihood ratio	11.650	0.0006*
Pearson	11.500	0.0007*

Age

N	DF	-LogLike	RSquare (U)
336	3	2.0667994	0.0102

Test	ChiSquare	Prob>ChiSq
Likelihood ratio	4.134	0.2474
Pearson	4.217	0.2390

Race

N	DF	-LogLike	RSquare (U)
336	4	2.1556913	0.0106

Test	ChiSquare	Prob>ChiSq
Likelihood ratio	4.311	0.3655
Pearson	4.353	0.3603

Undergraduate or postgraduate

N	DF	-LogLike	RSquare (U)
336	1	0.95021182	0.0047

Test	ChiSquare	Prob>ChiSq
Likelihood ratio	1.900	0.1680
Pearson	2.032	0.1540

Part-time or full-time

N	DF	-LogLike	RSquare (U)
336	1	0.15713574	0.0008

Test	ChiSquare	Prob>ChiSq
Likelihood ratio	0.314	0.5751
Pearson	0.325	0.5684

APPENDIX C

– RELIABILITY STATISTICS –

Food quality

Multivariate

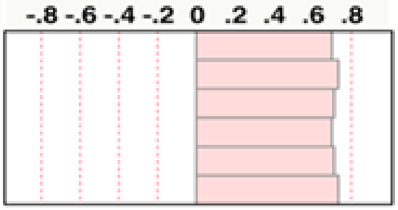
Correlations

	Q9_1	Q9_2	Q9_3	Q9_4	Q9_5	Q9_6
Q9_1	1.0000	0.4424	0.3309	0.4320	0.4434	0.4000
Q9_2	0.4424	1.0000	0.3474	0.2312	0.2291	0.2890
Q9_3	0.3309	0.3474	1.0000	0.4289	0.3269	0.2922
Q9_4	0.4320	0.2312	0.4289	1.0000	0.4905	0.3180
Q9_5	0.4434	0.2291	0.3269	0.4905	1.0000	0.3184
Q9_6	0.4000	0.2890	0.2922	0.3180	0.3184	1.0000

Cronbach's α

	α
Entire set	0.7538

Excluded Col	α
Q9_1	0.6991
Q9_2	0.7360
Q9_3	0.7199
Q9_4	0.7030
Q9_5	0.7115
Q9_6	0.7423



Atmosphere

Multivariate

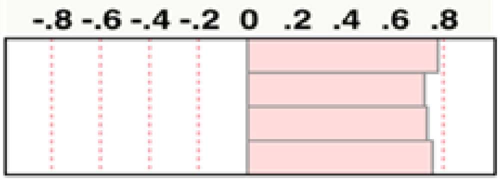
Correlations

	Q9_7	Q9_8	Q9_9	Q9_10
Q9_7	1.0000	0.5753	0.3942	0.4305
Q9_8	0.5753	1.0000	0.5809	0.4759
Q9_9	0.3942	0.5809	1.0000	0.5913
Q9_10	0.4305	0.4759	0.5913	1.0000

Cronbach's α

	α
Entire set	0.8023

Excluded Col	α
Q9_7	0.7849
Q9_8	0.7277
Q9_9	0.7421
Q9_10	0.7554



Service quality

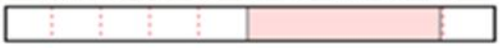
Multivariate

Correlations

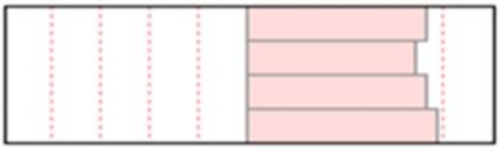
	Q9_11	Q9_12	Q9_13	Q9_14
Q9_11	1.0000	0.7371	0.4349	0.2976
Q9_12	0.7371	1.0000	0.4953	0.4025
Q9_13	0.4349	0.4953	1.0000	0.5608
Q9_14	0.2976	0.4025	0.5608	1.0000

Cronbach's α

	α
Entire set	0.7910



Excluded Col	α
Q9_11	0.7387
Q9_12	0.6941
Q9_13	0.7368
Q9_14	0.7820



Convenience

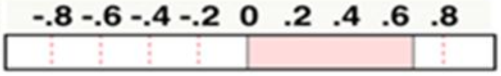
Multivariate

Correlations

	Q9_15	Q9_16	Q9_17	Q9_18
Q9_15	1.0000	0.4731	0.2498	0.3213
Q9_16	0.4731	1.0000	0.5177	0.3656
Q9_17	0.2498	0.5177	1.0000	0.2867
Q9_18	0.3213	0.3656	0.2867	1.0000

Cronbach's α

	α
Entire set	0.6863



Excluded Col	α
Q9_15	0.6412
Q9_16	0.5388
Q9_17	0.6380
Q9_18	0.6668

Price and value

Multivariate

Correlations

	Q9_19	Q9_20	Q9_21	Q9_22
Q9_19	1.0000	0.6236	0.7154	0.5964
Q9_20	0.6236	1.0000	0.6040	0.5392
Q9_21	0.7154	0.6040	1.0000	0.5487
Q9_22	0.5964	0.5392	0.5487	1.0000

Cronbach's α

	α	-.8 -.6 -.4 -.2 0 .2 .4 .6 .8
Entire set	0.8563	

Excluded Col	α	-.8 -.6 -.4 -.2 0 .2 .4 .6 .8
Q9_19	0.7867	
Q9_20	0.8241	
Q9_21	0.8006	
Q9_22	0.8468	