

**AN INVESTIGATION OF THE RELATIONSHIP BETWEEN CUSTOMER
ORIENTATION AND CUSTOMER SATISFACTION IN THE NAMIBIAN
PUBLIC SECTOR: A CASE STUDY OF THE BUSINESS AND
INTELLECTUAL PROPERTY AUTHORITY (BIPA)**

**A THESIS SUBMITTED IN PARTIAL FULFILLMENT
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ABSTRACT

It is a widely accepted phenomenon that service delivery in the public sector leaves much to be desired. Customer complaints in the in the Namibian Public Sector are common and BIPA is no exception. The main objective of this study was to investigate the existence of a relationship between customer orientation and customer satisfaction at BIPA, and the specific objectives were to investigate the nature of the relationship between customer orientation and customer satisfaction at BIPA, to determine the factors contributing towards customer satisfaction at BIPA, and to suggest approaches for enhancing customer orientation and improving customer satisfaction at BIPA. The study employed a combination of both quantitative and qualitative components in the collection of data. Primary data was obtained from the participants in the study, through questionnaire surveys and interviews. The systematic sampling technique was used to select the sample, and the sample size was computed using Slovin's formula. 91 walk-in clients of BIPA were selected for participation in the study, to whom 81 questionnaires were administered and collected at an agreed time, and 10 clients were selected for interviews. Secondary data was obtained from strategic documents and corporate reports of BIPA. The data was coded and analysed in the form of frequencies and percentages using Statistical Package for the Social Sciences (SPSS V 23.0) and the results were presented in tables and graphs. The study found that there is a positive relationship between customer orientation and customer satisfaction. The study further identified service affordability, staff attitude, external communication and other elements of service quality, as some of the factors contributing towards customer satisfaction at BIPA. The study was limited to the Namibian public sector, cautious generalization of the findings in other sectors and other countries should therefore be considered. The study concluded that, BIPA should invest in customer orientation efforts to ensure customer satisfaction. The key recommendations of the study include espousing customer orientation as a management imperative, conducting market research to inform service orientation, promoting government frameworks to facilitate reforms, establishing a customer contact centre, the automation of processes and the adoption of best practices.

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LIST OF ABBREVIATIONS

ARIPO	African Regional Intellectual Property Organisation
BIPA	Business Intellectual Property Authority
CRM	Customer Relationship Management
ICSF	Integrated Client Service Facility
IPR	Intellectual Property Rights
ISO	International Organisation for Standardisation
MITSMED	Ministry of Industrialisation, Trade and SME Development
MTMs	Market Type Mechanisms
NPM	New Public Management
TQM	Total Quality Management
WIPO	World Intellectual Property Authority

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DEDICATION

I would like to express my heartfelt gratitude to the Almighty God for the courage and determination throughout the study, and for his amazing grace and wisdom. Furthermore, I would like to express appreciation to my academic supervisor for the support and guidance throughout the study.

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Exceptional thanks go to my family and friends for their unwavering support and encouragement throughout the study. Thank you for all your prayers.

May God bestow infinite blessings upon your lives forever.

DEDICATION

This thesis is dedicated to my parents Hafeni Ndaakeva and Lahja Ndaakeva. Thank you for your unconditional love and support.

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DECLARATION

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30/10/2019

Date

CHAPTER ONE

INTRODUCTION AND BACKGROUND OF THE STUDY

1.1 Introduction

This chapter presents the background of the study, outlining the problem statement, research objectives, as well as the significance of the study. The chapter further highlights the limitations and delimitations of the research.

1.2 Background of the Study

The level of customer satisfaction in the public sector is often found wanting, owing to a deficit in customer service standards, relative to the private sector (Iyikal & Celebi, 2016). This disparity is salient in most African countries, including Namibia, where the provision of public services is traditionally controlled by the government. The public sector faces huge challenges due to scarce resources and management challenges necessitated by rapid population growth, development and urbanisation (Armah-Attoh, 2015).

Afro barometer, a non-partisan pan African research network found widespread public dissatisfaction with the level of service delivery by the governments and their agencies in 1999 and 2013 surveys, across the sub-Saharan Africa (Michael, Jeremy, & Daniel, 2019). A study conducted by Armah-Attoh (2015) indicated that public service in the provision of medical care, reliable clean and safe water and sanitation, reliable electricity, road network infrastructure, communication systems were either bad or difficult to access in a number of African countries. The provision of public goods and services is typically characterised by poor service delivery, especially in developing countries, such as Namibia (The World Bank, 2005). Pathak, Singh, Naz and Belwal (2008), noted that

service quality in the public sector is pitiable, particularly in institutions where government retains full control, and those that are monopolies in their respective industries without competition from the private sector. Namibia's public sector has not been immune to service quality and customer satisfaction shortfalls and public complaints are rampant (Shinovene, 2018).

Armah-Attoh (2015) added that the provision of goods and services in the public sector is deterred by the lack of resources and poor management practices due to leadership appointments by political parties, leading to an incompetent labour force as some appointments are made for social and economic reasons rather than on merit. Curristine, Lonti and Joumard (2007) posited that countries are under pressure to improve public sector performance and contain expenditure growth at the same time. Governments have a responsibility to ensure that quality service is delivered to the public and should be held accountable for the way they spend taxpayers' money. Namibia, similar to other countries, has adopted radical changes to improve efficiency in the public sector (Makanyeza, 2013).

Conversely, Ikobe (2013) noted that there is no agreed upon blueprint for enhancing service efficiency in the public sector. According to Makanyeza (2013) governments in Sab-Saharan Africa have adopted devolution and decentralisation, customer orientation, workforce transformation and result orientated approaches to improve the quality of service delivery. This research study focused on investigating the relationship between customer orientation and customer satisfaction in the public sector in Namibia, by investigating these two variables at the Business and Intellectual Property Authority (BIPA).

BIPA as an autonomous state-owned enterprise that is established, owned and controlled by the government is synonymous with other public entities and thus susceptible to the challenges in the sector. BIPA is a public enterprise, as defined in the Public Enterprise Governance Act, 2006 (Act No. 8 of 25), and is established by an Act of parliament as a juristic person responsible for the registration, administration and management of business and intellectual property rights (IPRs) in Namibia. The organisation was formed to assist entrepreneurs to establish and conduct businesses with their rights protected, thereby facilitating the ease of doing business.

The main strategic objective of BIPA is to formulate appropriate policies and legislative instruments for setting up and running a business. The Ministry of Industrialisation, Trade and SME Development (MITSMED) noted in its 2016/17 annual report that the government targeted finalising the implementation of Integrated Client Service Facility (ICSF) to address the ease of doing business and contribute to the country's competitiveness ranking. The main objective of ICSF was to promote the ease of doing business by integrating and streamlining the processes, procedures and systems of business registration, to the convenience of both local and international clients. Core stakeholders of the ICSF programme include BIPA, Ministry of Finance, Ministry of Home Affairs and Immigration, Office of the Prime Minister, City of Windhoek and Social Security Commission. Apart from the ICSF, BIPA adopted a customer service strategy (2019/20) and a customer service charter (2019/22). The main objective of the customer service charter is to improve customer satisfaction through defined quality service standards. The effectiveness of BIPA's customer satisfaction drive has not been

evaluated and this paper intended to test whether the efforts have contributed to customer satisfaction.

1.3 Problem statement

BIPA's Customer Service Strategy (2019/22) noted that customer satisfaction levels for the period 2017/18 were found to be at 40%, as per the monthly customer satisfaction surveys conducted. In the effort to improve customer satisfaction to the target level of 85% by the year 2022 as stipulated in its corporate strategy, the organisation implemented a customer service charter, as a means to hold itself accountable to the defined quality service standards and at the same time manage customer expectations. The service commitments and promises contained in the charter are rooted within the principles of customer orientation and continuous sustainable service quality delivery. The study therefore evaluated the extent to which the adoption of the customer service charter, as an effort towards customer orientation has translated into customer satisfaction.

It is a widely accepted phenomenon that service delivery in the public sector leaves much to be desired, owing to challenges within the sector such as political interference, bureaucracy, fraud and corruption, unethical conduct, outdated technology and poor working conditions (Amanfi, 2012). These challenges can have detrimental consequences to service quality and to the brand of an organisation. This is especially true in a time where customers possess a strong voice that can make or break any business.

According to Bidyanand (2014), we live in the age of the customer, an era in which power has drastically shifted from organisations to the customers, through ease of real time access to information on products and services available on the internet. Service dissatisfaction

is therefore often expressed by means of social media, and one expression of service dissatisfaction on these platforms can spread to a large number of other customers and potential customers in realtime, thereby influencing their present and future purchase desions. Failure to prioritise customer orientation can therefore have detrimental and dire consequenses for any customer facing organisation, including public sector organisations.

Customer complaints in the in the Namibian public sector are rife, pointing to a high level of service dissatisfaction (Whyte & Abankwah, 2015). BIPA is not immune to customer complaints, as customers of BIPA have often expressed their dissatisfaction with the organisation's services through the media, citing service delay as one of the major pain points (The Namibian Newspaper, 2018). This confirms the notion by Ernani (2014), that customer complaints in the public sector are usually centered around poor quality services, along with poor facilities and long queues for services.

This study therefore, intended investigate the customer orientation at BIPA, with a specific focus on the effectiveness of the BIPA customer service charter which is fundamentally a customer orientation approach, and its relationship with the level of customer satisfaction at the organisation.

1.4 Research Objectives

The main objective of the study was to investigate the existence of a relationship between customer orientation and customer satisfaction at BIPA. The specific objectives of the study are:

- To investigate the nature of the relationship between customer orientation and customer satisfaction at BIPA.
- To determine the factors contributing towards customer satisfaction at BIPA
- To suggest approaches for enhancing customer orientation and improving customer satisfaction at BIPA.

1.5 Significance of the Study

The study is aimed at contributing to the library of knowledge on the subject matter, particularly its relevance to the public sector in Namibia. The study brought the concepts of customer satisfaction and customer orientation to the attention of other researchers to explore and research further in the Namibian context. The study established the best practices to achieving customer satisfaction that can be recommended for adoption by the Business and Intellectual Property Authority.

1.6 Limitation of the Study

Due to time and financial constraints, the study was limited to the Namibian public sector only. This therefore implies that the generalisation of the study findings is limited to the public sector. Moreover, cautious generalisation of the findings on other countries should be considered, since the study was only conducted in one country. Despite these

limitations, the study generated useful information towards the relationship between customer orientation and customer satisfaction. Further research is required to bypass these limitations by conducting similar studies in different sectors, in different countries with different components and approaches.

1.7 Delimitation of the Study

This study was limited to the relationship between Customer Orientation and Customer Satisfaction. The study was conducted at the Head Office of BIPA in Windhoek, the target population was therefore limited to those customers of BIPA.

1.8 Summary

This chapter looked at the background of the study, statement of the problem, significance of the study, limitations and delimitations of the study. In the next chapter the literature is reviewed in line with the theoretical framework that addresses the research questions.

2.2.1 Customer Orientation

Customer-oriented organisations are believed to understand the various needs of their customers and offer differentiated products and services. However, Hatch (2014) suggests that a number of definitions have been coined for customer orientation. Kohli and Ashrafi (1990) defined customer orientation as the collection of customer

CHAPTER TWO

LITERATURE REVIEW

2.1 Introduction

This chapter was devoted to the review of literature to gain knowledge and identify the gaps in past research studies, as well as to develop a theoretical framework that would be the basis for the analysis of customer orientation and customer satisfaction. The chapter covers the concepts of customer orientation and customer satisfaction. It also explores customer orientation and customer satisfaction in the public sector on a local, regional and global level. Finally, the chapter explores the theoretical framework for service quality and customer satisfaction and delves into the possible solutions to customer service dissatisfaction in the public sector.

2.2 Customer Orientation: Concept, Evolution and Implications

According to Brännback (1999), the success of any organisation is dependent upon customer-orientation; therefore, the importance of this concept must be understood within the context of an organisation. There has been no consensus on the actual definition of customer orientation since the concept originated in the 1920s.

2.2.1 Customer Orientation

Customer-oriented organisations are believed to understand the varied needs of their customers and offer differentiated products and services. However, Abtahi (2014) suggests that a number of definitions have been coined for customer orientation. Kohli and Jaworski (1990) defined customer orientation as the collection of customer

information and the usage of this intelligence to influence all the activities taking place within an organisation's business units. Ruekert (1992) added that apart from customer information collection, customer orientation encompasses using the intelligence collected about customers, to develop strategies geared towards meeting their needs and to respond to their demands effectively and efficiently.

Conversely, customer orientation is defined as a set of beliefs that put customer interests above those of the organisation's stakeholders, including the owners of the organisation and the employees, to promote profitability of the organisation (Deshpande, 1993). Marzie, Hormoz and Feridon (2013) concurred with Kohli and Jaworski (1990); Ruekert (1992) and Deshpande (1993) that customer orientation is the ability of an organisation to predict and adapt to the changing needs of its customers, focus on strengthening organisational capabilities and offer high-quality services. Rehman (2012) suggested that customer orientation focuses on both the internal and the external factors of service as a tool to gain competitive advantage.

Customer Orientation is defined as the ability to transform internal business processes, to create a customer-centric organisational structure in which the activities of the entire organisation are subject to the objectives of understanding (Latyshova, Syaglova, & Oyner, 2015). This paper will consider customer orientation as an outside-inside perspective, where an organisation gathers information and predicts future changes in consumer demands and uses the information for strategizing to meet the needs both in the current and in future.

2.2.2 Evolution of Customer Orientation

The customer orientation concept evolved from the concepts of production orientation to product orientation, selling orientation, marketing orientation and relationship orientation (Day, 1998). Customer orientation is a product of a series of marketing transformations, focused on the creation of loyalty and long-term mutually beneficial business relationships, as depicted in the Figure 1 below.

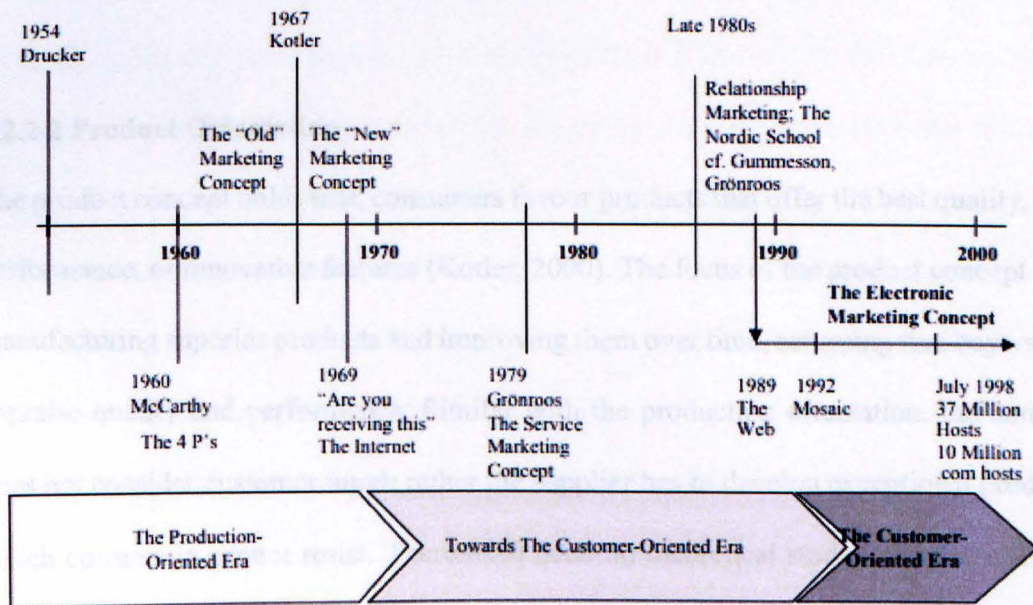


Figure 1: Evolution of Customer Orientation.

Source: Brännback (1999)

2.2.2.1 Production Orientation

According to Kotler (2000), the production concept is one of the market orientation conceptions. The school of thought considers that, consumers prefer products that are widely available and inexpensive. The emphasis for the businesses that use the production

orientation concept is to improve production efficiency, lower costs and aim at mass distribution. Solomon (2012) suggested that production orientation best suits businesses in developing countries, where consumers are more interested in obtaining the product than in its features. Brännback (1999) posited that, the production orientation is a critical concept for public services and it only requires building production volumes by upgrading technology, to provide public goods at lower production costs and lower prices for a large market.

2.2.2.2 Product Orientation

The product concept holds that, consumers favour products that offer the best quality, best performance, or innovative features (Kotler, 2000). The focus of the product concept is in manufacturing superior products and improving them over time, assuming that buyers can appraise quality and performance. Similar with the production orientation, the concept does not consider customer input; rather the supplier has to develop exceptional products which consumers cannot resist. There have been no theoretical studies that have linked the product orientation to public service delivery (Hawa, 2015). Product orientation is common in private sector industries, especially those that produce tangible products such as vehicles, cell phones, and perfumes amongst other products.

2.2.2.3 Selling Orientation

Proponents of the selling concept, embrace the idea that consumers and businesses buy because of aggressive selling and promotion efforts by an organisation (Carpenter, Gebhardt & Sherry Jr, 2014). The success of an organisation therefore depends on its

ability to coax consumers into buying its products. Kotler (2000) suggested that the selling concept is practiced aggressively with unsought goods such as insurance and funeral packages. Carpenter et al. (2014) associated selling orientation with non-profit and public entities only when fundraising, rather than in services and product marketing.

2.2.2.4 Marketing Orientation

According to Solomon (2012), the marketing concept gave birth to the customer orientation concept based on central tenets crystallised in the mid-1950s. The marketing orientation holds that, the key to achieving organisational goals rests upon the ability of an organisation to be more effective than its competitors in creating, communicating and delivering customer value to its chosen target markets. The marketing concept reposes on four pillars being, the target market, customer needs, integrated marketing and profitability. The marketing concept takes an outside-in perspective which starts with defining a market, understanding the needs of the customers within the market, coordinating activities that affect customers and producing profits through customer satisfaction.

2.2.3 Customer Orientation Paradigms

Customer orientation paradigms for customer service transformation are said to be rooted within the elements of market segmentation, organisational structure, organisational processes and organisational culture (Denish, Parasuraman, Rust, & Staelin, 2006).

2.2.3.1 Market Segmentation

Gibson, Fornell, Sunil, Forrest, and Krishnan (2015) posited that, the adoption of segmentation is a key element in the process of customer orientation. Segmentation is the process of identifying actual and potential markets and designing products and services that meet the needs of those markets. According to Wedel and Kamakura (2000) a market segment consists of a large identifiable group within a market, with similar wants, buying power, geographical location, buying attitudes, or buying habits. Organisations identify and select segments in which they better understand customer needs and create a fine-tuned product or service offerings that are priced appropriately for the target audience. Gibson et al. (2015) also argued that niche marketing is a form of customer orientation strategy.

2.2.3.2 Organisational Processes

Payne and Frow (2005) surveyed a number of Customer Relationship Management (CRM) executives and identified five generic processes that are essential for a firm to become customer-centric. They are strategy-development processes, dual value creation processes, multi-channel integration processes, information management processes and performance assessment processes. The success of customer orientation depends on the strategy-development processes adopted by an organisation, and it includes not only a business strategy but also a customer strategy on products and services, customer satisfaction and retention.

The dual value creation process is at the heart of process change and the simplification of processes is critical for customer centricity. Organisations can implement customer orientation through the multichannel integration process that encompasses all the customer touch points. This can be done by placing great emphasis on the information-management process which includes data collection and data analysis functions through the automation of key customer interfaces for quick information gathering (Davenport & Beers, 2015). Customer orientation thrives through the implementation of effective and efficient performance-assessment processes for meeting continuously changing customer needs.

2.2.3.3 Organisational Structure

Organisational structure refers to the formal pattern of how a company groups its organisational activities and functions (Gibson et al., 2015). Various organisational structures have been adopted ranging from product focused organisational structure, service focused organisational structure, geographical focused organisational structure, and customer based organisational structure (Homburg, Jozi & Kuehnl, 2014). According to Shah, Verhoef, Kannan and Inman (2016) a customer orientated organisation implements a customer-focused organisational structure, in which customers form the basis for the whole organisational performance. Customer-focused organisational structures emphasize the increasing importance of customer satisfaction and loyalty.

Figure 2: Roadmap to Customer Centricity

Source: Denzin, et al. (2005)

2.2.3.4 Organisational Culture

O' Donnell and Boyle (2014) define organisational culture as a concept that derives from the metaphor "something cultivated". Organisational culture therefore refers to legends, rituals, beliefs, meanings, values, norms and languages that create an organisation's sense of identity. Saylor (2018) argued that, organisational culture is an effective control mechanism for dictating employee behaviour within an organisation. Customer orientation has been implemented through building a strong culture of customer service precepts such as reliability, responsiveness, professionalism, courtesy, credibility, assurance, accessibility, communication and empathy for the customers (Anorld, 2012).

2.2.4 Challenges in the Implementation of Customer Orientation

According to Boulding, Bitner, Ostrom and Meuter (2014) the implementation of customer orientation revolves around four broadly defined and interrelated impediments in the path to becoming customer-centric as illustrated in the figure 2 below.

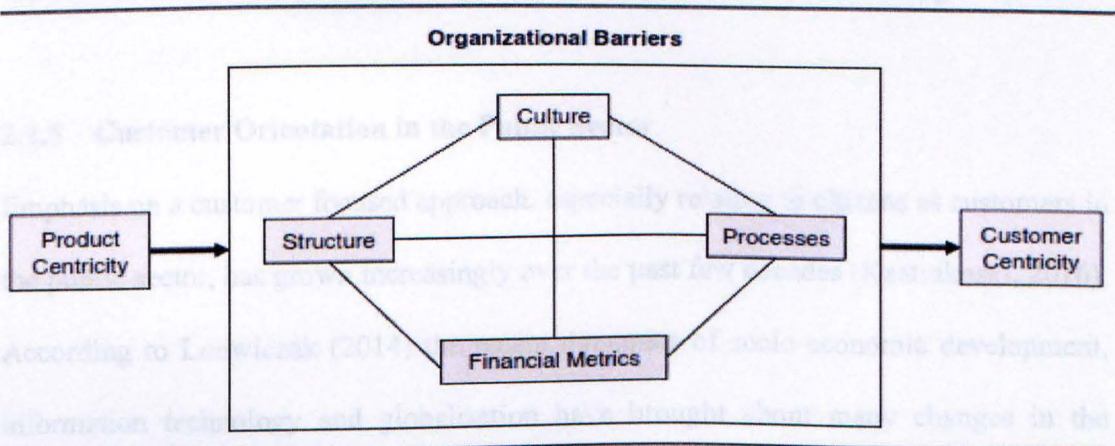


Figure 2: Roadblocks to Customer Centricity

Source: Denish, et al. (2006)

Organisational structures and cultures have many levels and facets which can make them resistant to change and at the deepest levels are the values assumed by the organisation (Denish, et al., 2006). Customer centred organisations are held together by a central value that every decision begins with the customer and anticipated opportunities for market advantage. However, organisations do not only have to satisfy the needs of the customers, there should be a balance between the customers and all organisational stakeholders. Employees might resist change towards organisational customer centricity, especially if the change fails to translate into their direct benefit or it minimises the already existing benefits. Boulding et al. (2014) argued that the implementation of customer orientation requires changes in the existing processes and huge financial investments. Payne and Frow (2005) suggest that the implementation of generic processes is essential for transformation to customer centricity, which are; strategy-development process, dual value creation process, multichannel integration process, information-management process and performance-assessment process. The implementation of the processes requires a huge financial commitment which most organisations may not have, or be willing to invest.

2.2.5 Customer Orientation in the Public Sector

Emphasis on a customer focused approach, especially relating to citizens as customers in the public sector, has grown increasingly over the past few decades (Kaatrakoski, 2016). According to Ludwiczak (2014) the recent dynamics of socio-economic development, information technology and globalisation have brought about many changes in the management of organisations in the public sector, given the noticeable increase in the awareness and demands for public goods by society. Arguably, the customer orientation concept has not been fully integrated in the public sector. The recent developments have

seen public organisations change their aspirations, as they move away from their heavily bureaucratic approach to administration towards improved, customer friendly approaches.

In recent years, the public sector has begun to bow down to public pressure, as tax payers are starting to hold the management of public entities to account for services delivered (Shah et al., 2016). The pressure has been necessitated by poor access to public goods as a result of economic and fiscal pressures on governments, which is caused by massive public sector deficits, external trade imbalances and growing indebtedness; especially in developing countries (Wesonga, 2014). Public attitudes and increased criticism of the ineffectiveness and inefficiencies in the delivery of public services caused by bureaucratic organisational structures and the lack of alternatives has pressured a resurgence of pro-market and pro-private ideological underpinnings, synonymously referred to as New Public Management (Ludwiczak, 2014). New Public Management (NPM) advocates for rethinking and reshaping government and its role, restructuring and repositioning public organisations, redesigning and improving service delivery and the implementation of customer orientation in public enterprises.

NPM emphasizes that, diverse markets and competition are a means to give a choice and a voice to customers, in order to promote efficiency in service delivery. The key components of NPM include eliminating bureaucracies by disaggregating separable functions into separate agencies (Anup & Nikhil, 2017). This may involve hiving-off operational arms of ministries to form separate agencies, replacing traditional tall hierarchies with flatter, flexible and more responsive structures formed and reformed around specific processes; separation between funding, purchasing and provision of

services; decentralising management authority within public agencies; devolving budgets and financial control to decentralised units; capping budgets; and ensuring budget transparency in accounting terms.

The NPM elements and practices also emphasize on the introduction of market and quasi-market type mechanisms (MTMs). In the context of ongoing empirical research, customer orientation in the public sector has been adopted in terms of the International Organisation for Standardisation (ISO) standards and Total Quality Management (TQM). Ludwiczak (2014) used these two variables to define customer orientation in the public service, when assessing the role of customer orientation in improving services in public administration in Poland. The study found that both variables are imperatives for customer orientation.

2.2.5.1 ISO standards

The ISO defines formal standards established by consensus of various national standards bodies, to provide rules and guidelines for the quality management of activities and their results. A standard is a set of physiognomies or qualities that describes features of a product, process, service, interface or material (Prakash, Singh, & Alan, 2006). Though standards have been used in the interests of the suppliers of goods and services, the study considers standards from the perspective and interest of the customers as the recipients of these goods and services. In the supply of goods and services, standards are there to safeguard the consumers by ensuring that the goods and services produced conform to the defined minimum standards.

There are a number of institutions that are responsible for intellectual property rights in Namibia. These are BIPA at national level, African Regional Intellectual Property Organisation (ARIPO) at regional level and World Intellectual Property Authority (WIPO) at international level (Blakeney & Mengistie, 2011). These institutions provide the legal framework and standards of managing industrial property rights and copyrights. BIPA through ratification and ascribing to the regional and international legal frameworks must conform to the set standards and operationalise them in their service offerings. Complying with ISO standards is generally considered to be in the overall interest of the end users and consumers of goods and services (Thujo, 2013).

2.2.5.2 Total Quality Management (TQM)

According to Tachiki (2008) TQM is one of the options available to governments for improving the quality of service delivery and it is adopted together with the precepts of customer orientation. Oakland (2015) defined TQM as a set of management practices geared towards ensuring that the organisation consistently meets or exceeds customer expectations. The adoption of TQM in the public sector has been a welcomed development in recent years, in both the developed and developing world (Tachiki, 2008). Uganda, Kenya, Tanzania, Jamaica and Latvia are noted as some of the countries where the adoption of TQM in the public sector industries has improved the quality of service delivery (Wesonga, 2014).

2.3 Customer Satisfaction

Customer Satisfaction is defined as the consumers' evaluation of the extent to which a product or service has met their needs or expectations (Ilieska, 2013). According to Arnold, Jaishankar, Kristy, Graham and Crosby (2001), customer satisfaction is the

consumers' fulfilment response. It is a judgment that a product or service feature, or the product or service itself, provides a pleasurable level of consumption-related fulfilment. Failure to meet the consumers' needs and expectations is assumed to result in dissatisfaction with the product or service.

The satisfaction of customers is largely influenced by their expectations and their perceived service quality. The degree to which customers are satisfied and loyal thus becomes a measure of customer orientation (Parasuraman, Zeithaml, & Berry, 1988). From the foregoing, customer satisfaction is operationally construed as an attitude that relates to the client's fulfilment response and various factors such as responsiveness, employee ability, civility, politeness, access, communication, sociability and affordability are key elements for satisfaction to be achieved (Oakland, 2015).

2.3.1 Characteristics of Public Services

According to Lovelock and Jochen (2004) services are value creating economic activities that provide benefits for customers at specific times and places, bringing about a desired change in or on behalf of the recipients of the services. Kotler and Keller (2011) define a service as an act or performance offered by one party to another. Mudie and Pirrie (2006) argued that technological innovations, pressures to improve productivity, the service quality movement and changing patterns of government regulations are key forces in the introduction of services marketing. Given that services and goods are often tied together, scholars have identified four distinguishing factors which are intangibility, inseparability, perishability and variability (Awara & Anyadighibe, 2014).

2.3.1.1 Intangibility

Hoffman and Bateson (2012) suggested that the most distinctive factor of services is that unlike physical products, services are intangible. Services cannot be touched; they can only be experienced through their performance. According to the American Marketers Association (2012) public services come in the form of maintenance, reparation, compliance, information and registration services. Sometimes services may be judged based on their accompanying products, but in most cases, a service is evaluated based on its intangible aspects.

2.3.1.2 Inseparability

Services are usually consumed concurrently with their production (Kotler, 2004). In the service industry, the customer usually encounters and interacts with the service provider. It is therefore common in the provision of public services, that the client is exposed to the entire service production process as they interface with the personnel involved in the production process, because there is no separation. Thus, the service is provided and consumed concurrently.

2.3.1.3 Perishability

In line with inseparability, Shaw, Deleray and Gupta (2002) suggested that public services are time bound; they cannot be stored and carried forward to a future time period. A client seeking information services or registration services from a public organisation can only experience the service performance during the service encounter and the process thereto (Lovelock & Jochen, 2004). This maximises the opportunity for speedy service recovery should challenges be experienced in the service delivery process (Kotler, 2004).

2.3.1.4 Heterogeneity

Roland and Richard (2012) suggested that public services unlike goods have a potential for inconsistency. Service performance is inseparable from the production process and the quality of the service depends on the respective sales personnel offering the service. Public services are rendered by different individuals and their quality of performance may vary on different occasions. This creates inconsistencies in the level of service performance, owing to their stress levels, attitude, competency and all other personal factors. Variability is therefore inevitable (Shaw et al., 2001)

2.3.2 Factors Affecting Customer Satisfaction in the Public Sectors

Customer satisfaction in the public sector remains a nightmare (Kazmi, 2015). Public service organisations find it difficult to meet and satisfy the needs of their clients because of the obsolete business systems adopted, the lack of standard operating procedures or the lack of commitment to service standards (Pokalsky, 2016). Salo (2017) in a doctoral thesis "*Different Methods in Measuring Customer Satisfaction*" highlighted the challenges of customer satisfaction from the personnel perspective. Poor team morale, lack of skills, knowledge and ability; lack of training and development programs and a poor service culture in government and quasi- governmental organisations are some of the factors that affect the level of customer satisfaction. In contrast, Amanfi (2012) noted that, the processes and systems in government departments are impediments for customer satisfaction. Examples cited indicated excessive red tape, complex and outdated laws and the usage of paper-based operations in the wake of global automation and modern technology. The constructs of customer satisfaction have been viewed in numerous ways

in various studies, however the commonly considered factors of influence include customer perceived value, quality of service delivery and post purchase evaluation (Anderson & Narus, 1990; Bearden & Teel, 1983). There are various other factors affecting customer satisfaction, however the researcher focused on the above three factors.

2.3.3 Customer Perceived Value

Customer perceived value is defined as the consumers' overall assessment of the utility of a product, based on their perceptions of the price they paid against the worth received in return (Aulia, Crawford-Marks, Camilleri, Detollenaere & Blythe, 2016). Due to technological advancements and the easy access to information, consumers have become more aware of the responsibilities of public organisations, such that they have preconceived ideas of the value and the benefits they should be enjoying from the consumption of public products and services. Parasuraman et al. (1988) described that value can be evaluated using four different variables which are; price, consumer expectations, quality and performance.

Woodruff (1997) defines perceived value as the customers' perceived contentment with the evaluation of the product's attributes and its performance, also consequences arising from its usage, which may facilitate the attainment (or prevent) of the goal and purpose for using the product. The value hierarchy model depicted in the figure below conceptualises how perceived value affects customer satisfaction.

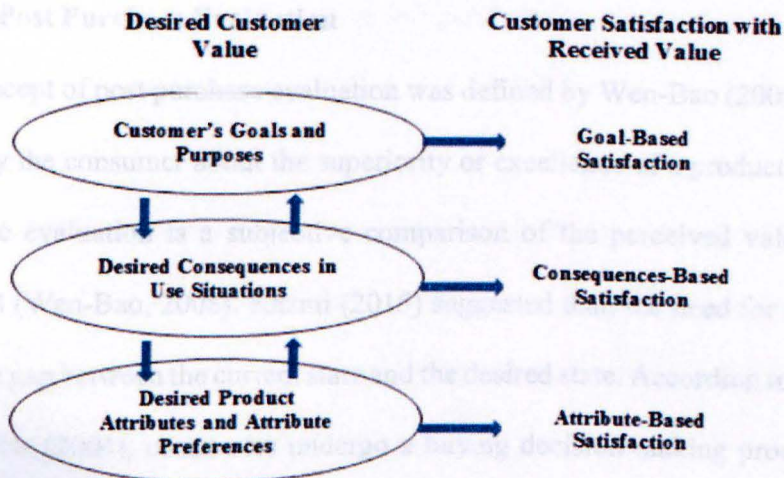


Figure 3: Customer Value Hierarchy Model

Source: Woodruff (1997)

2.3.3.1 Quality of Service

Gavin (1984) proposed a multidimensional approach for analysing the quality of service offered by an organisation. The multidimensional approach has been studied on many occasions, with diverse scales being adopted in accordance with the objectives and scope of study in each respective study. Gronroos (1984) categorised service evaluation intangibles into reliability, responsiveness, professionalism, courtesy, credibility, assurance, accessibility, communication, and empathy with the customer. Several studies have been carried out to determine the quality of service in the public sector (Porumbescu, 2017; Amanfi 2012; Weraas, 2015; Urvikis, 2016) and have indicated that customer satisfaction derives from the efficiency of the service quality dimensions such as reliability, responsiveness, employee competence, accessibility, courtesy, credibility, security, empathy and the physical infrastructure within the organisation.

2.3.3.2 Post Purchase Evaluation

The concept of post purchase evaluation was defined by Wen-Bao (2008) as the judgment made by the consumer about the superiority or excellence of a product after its use. Post purchase evaluation is a subjective comparison of the perceived value and the actual received (Wen-Bao, 2008). Kazmi (2015) suggested that, the need for satisfaction arises from the gap between the current state and the desired state. According to Wen-Bao (2008) and Kotler (2004), consumers undergo a buying decision making process and they use their analytical thinking to compare the consequences of each alternative, in term of higher benefits, lowest costs and durability. Customer satisfaction in the public sector is a product of the post purchase evaluation of services rendered by public institutions based on individual perceptions and expectations.

2.3.3.3 Measuring Customer Satisfaction

According to Salo (2017) sourcing for information on the level of customer satisfaction has become a vital strategic imperative for most businesses. This information is usually obtained from the customers themselves through customer satisfaction surveys and can be considered reliable enough to provide the business with direct feedback on how the customer feels about the business and what expectations they have (Grigoroudis, 2010). It is only through the voice of the customer that an organisation becomes aware of its areas of improvement and areas of service excellence. Several studies have pointed to a strong relationship between customer loyalty, profitability and customer satisfaction (Ganesan, 1994; Mittal & Kamakura, 2001; Mittal, Ross & Baldasare, 1998.) To this end,

improvements in revenue collected, repeat purchases, and customer loyalty can be used to measure the level of customer satisfaction (Lam, Ahearne & Schillewaert, 2014).

Pokalsky (2016) developed a 6-stage customer satisfaction measurement process, which includes the mobilisation of customer satisfaction objectives, discovery of customer satisfaction issues, defining customer needs and performance standards, agreeing on a plan of action and finally, implementation of the action plan. Figure 4 below depicts the process in detail.

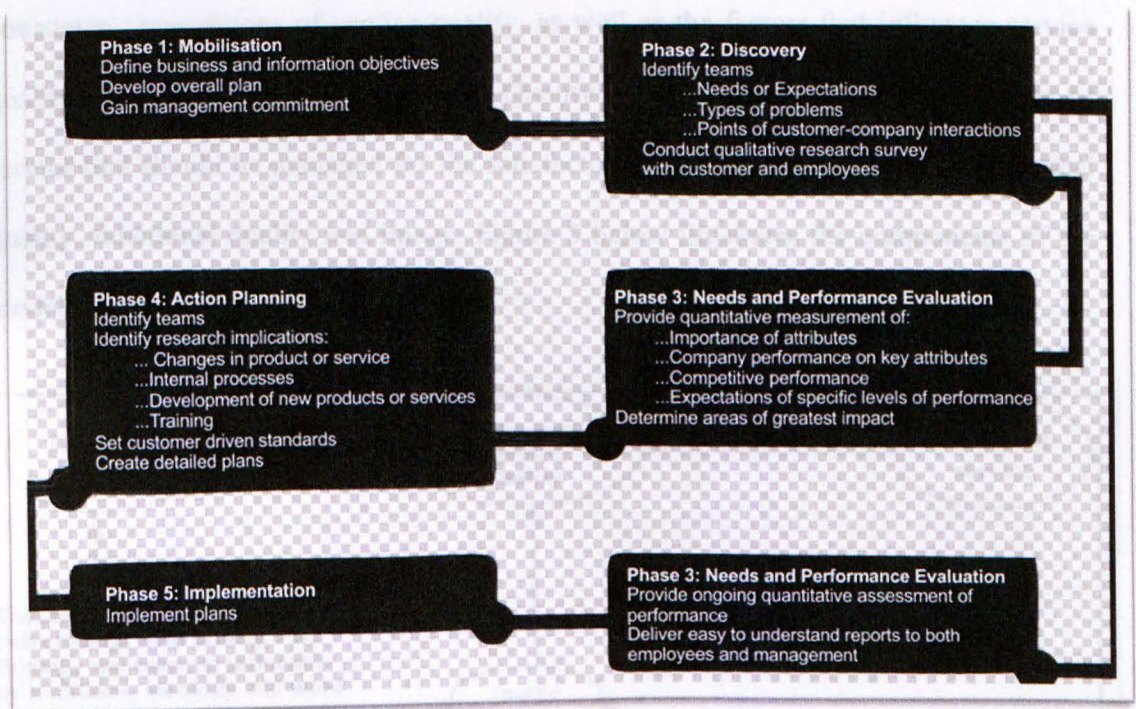


Figure 4: Customer Satisfaction Measurement Process

Source: Pokalsky (2016)

2.4 Theoretical Review

There are numerous models that have been postulated to explain the relationship between customer orientation and customer satisfaction and many of the theoretical models are focused on explaining various service quality principles. This study adopted the Technical and Functional Quality Model, Servqual Gap Model, Performance-Perception Model and Hay-wood Farmer Service Quality Model.

2.4.1 Technical and Functional Quality Model

According to Gronroos (1984) it is imperative that an organisation understands the consumer perceptions of service quality, as well as the factors that influence service quality. The Technical and Functional Quality Model suggests three components of service that should be managed for the satisfaction of the customer. These are technical quality, functional quality and image. Figure 5 below illustrates the components of the model.

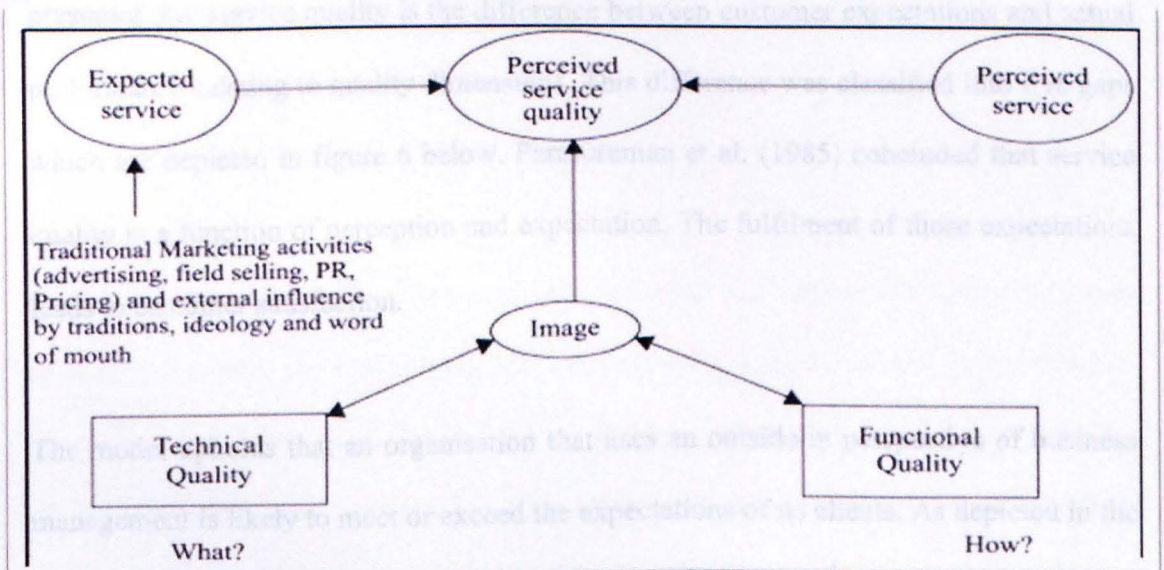


Figure 5: Technical and Functional Quality Model

Source: Gronroos (1984)

According to the model, consumers interact with organisational services from a technical and functional perspective. Technical quality refers to the value derived from interacting with an organisation upon completion of the interaction, whereas functional quality refers to the quality derived from the processes of accessing the service (Gronroos, 1984). The way the customer evaluates both the technical and functional interactions with the organisations' services against the preconceived ideas created by the image of the organisation is critical in measuring customer satisfaction. Organisations in the public sector provide both technical and functional quality, which customers evaluate against the image of the organisation.

2.4.2 Servqual Gap Model

The GAP model was suggested by Parasuraman, Zeithaml and Berry (1985). The model presumes that service quality is the difference between customer expectations and actual performance relating to quality dimensions. This difference was classified into five gaps which are depicted in figure 6 below. Parasuraman et al. (1985) concluded that service quality is a function of perception and expectation. The fulfilment of those expectations leads to customer satisfaction.

The model upholds that an organisation that uses an outside-in perspective of business management is likely to meet or exceed the expectations of its clients. As depicted in the figure below, Gap 1 exists because of the difference between consumer expectations and management perceptions of consumer expectations. Gap 2 defines the disparity between

management perceptions of consumer expectations and service quality specifications. Gap 3 identifies the variations between service quality specifications and service actually delivered.

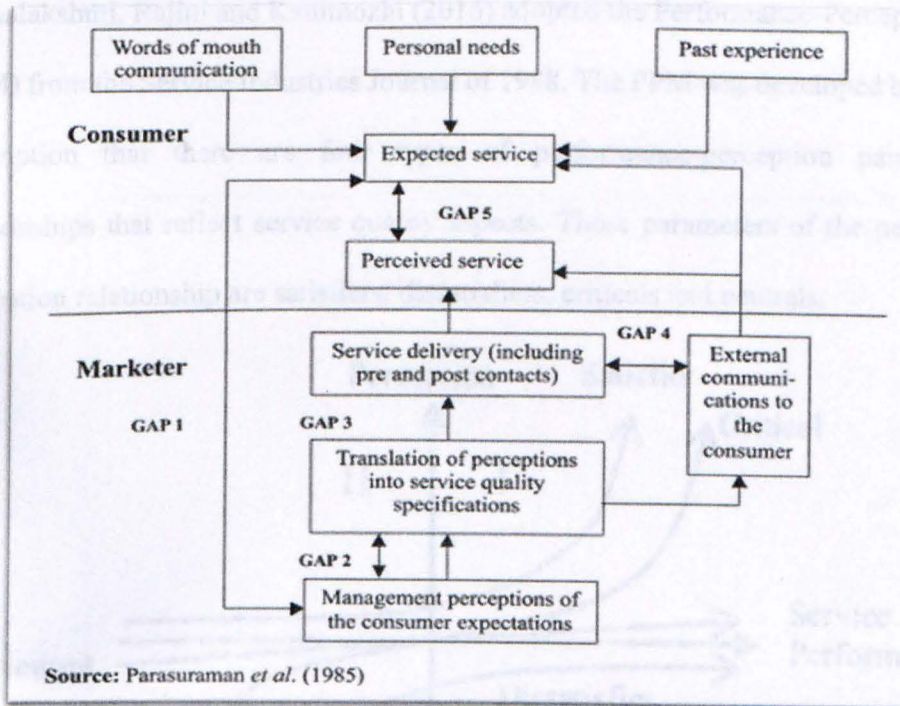


Figure 6: Servqual Gap Model

Source: Parasuraman et al. (1985)

The fourth gap explains the difference between service delivery and the communication to consumers about service delivery and lastly, gap 5 highlights the difference between consumer expectations and perceived service. Gap 5 is influenced by the size and direction of the other four gaps associated with the delivery. Parasuraman and company then proposed dimensions that are critical for maintaining and sustaining customer satisfaction and these are reliability, responsiveness, tangibles, assurance and empathy. The model asserts that, an organisation that maintains service quality across all the 5 identified

dimensions will achieve customer satisfaction. The model has been adopted in in both private and public sector services industries.

2.4.3 Performance-Perception Model

Dhanalakshmi, Rajini and Kanimozhi (2016) adopted the Performance-Perception Model (PPM) from the Service Industries Journal of 1988. The PPM was developed based on the assumption that there are four types of performance-perception parameters or relationships that reflect service quality aspects. These parameters of the performance-perception relationship are satisfiers, dissatisfiers, criticals and neutrals.

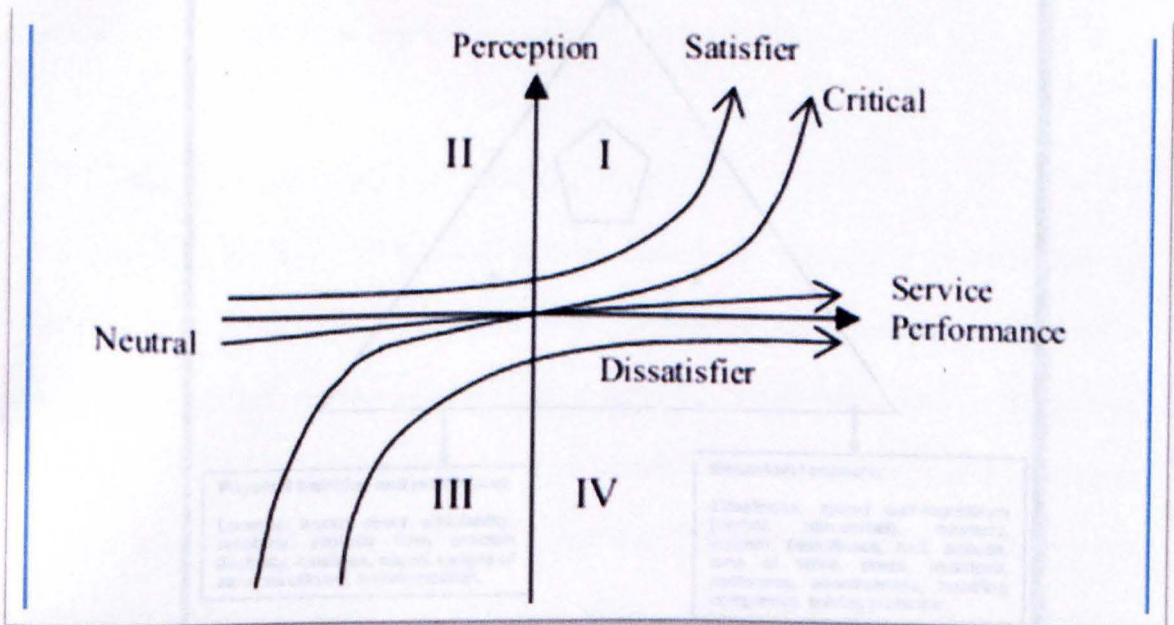


Figure 7: Performance-Perception Model

Source: Dhanalakshmi et al. (2016)

According to Dhanalakshmi et al. (2016), the four relationships between performance and perception are developed through exploring the linear relationship between the two variables, as indicated in the Figure 7 above.

2.4.4 Hay-wood Farmer Service Quality Model

Haywood-Farmer (1988) developed a model that visualizes high quality service in an organisation, only if it consistently meets customer preferences and expectations, as depicted in the figure below. According to this model, the attributes of quality service are found in three groups which are the physical facilities and processes, behavioural aspects of employees and professional judgment, as depicted in the figure below.

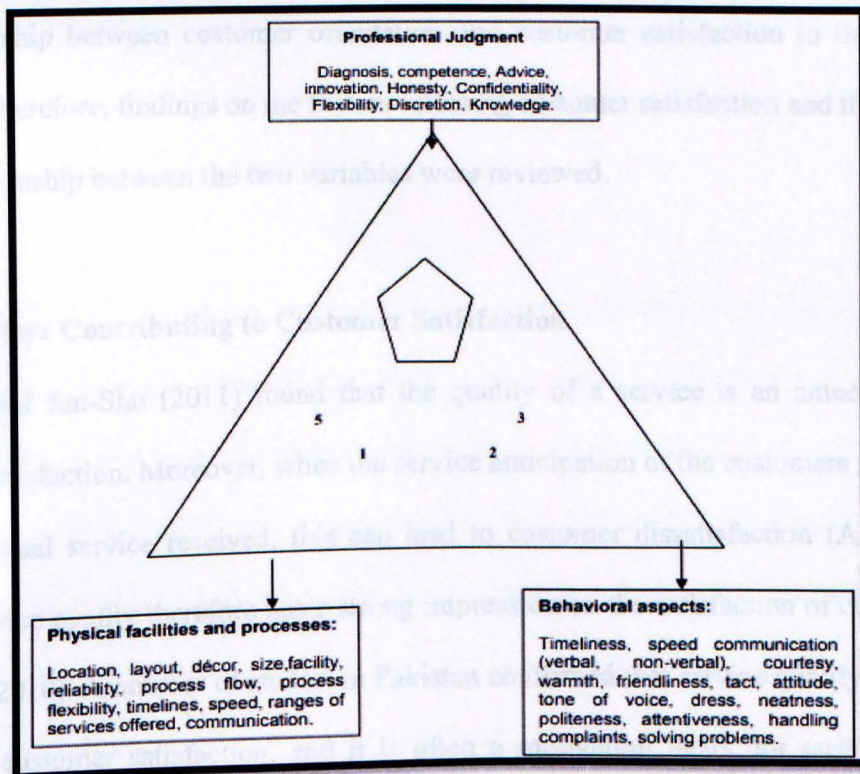


Figure 8: Attribute Service Quality Model

Source: Haywood-Farmer (1988)

This model emphasizes that, when various service attributes are broken down and categorised, an organisation is able to understand the specific aspects of the service they are offering and the target areas of improvement, rather than concentrating on the wrong

aspects of the service quality. The purpose of the model is to minimise the disparities in service quality offerings and service expectations.

2.5 Empirical Review

This section reviews the findings from previous studies conducted at international, regional and national level on the same subject matter. This study focused on investigating the relationship between customer orientation and customer satisfaction in the public sector and therefore, findings on the factors affecting customer satisfaction and the nature of the relationship between the two variables were reviewed.

2.5.1 Factors Contributing to Customer Satisfaction

Rong-Da and Jun-Shu (2011) found that the quality of a service is an antecedent to customer satisfaction. Moreover, when the service anticipation of the customers is higher than the actual service received, this can lead to customer dissatisfaction (Angelova, 2011). Service quality therefore has a strong impression on the satisfaction of customers (Siddiqui, 2010). A number of studies in Pakistan confirmed that service quality is a key feature of customer satisfaction, and it is often a motivating factor for customers to develop interest in purchasing a particular product or service (Angelova, 2011). A study conducted in Ghana by Khurshid (2012) concluded that customer service as measured by service quality aspects such as reliability, responsiveness and courtesy, is at the epicentre of customer satisfaction.

2.5.2 Relationship between Customer Orientation and Customer Satisfaction

Previous studies found that customer orientation has a positive effect on customer satisfaction (Homburg, Muller, & Klarmann, 2011; Marzie et al., 2013; Hawa, 2015; Shadi, Ibrahim & Khaled, 2016). Hawa (2015) assessed the effect of customer orientation on customer satisfaction in pharmacies and concluded that there is a significant statistical effect of customer orientation on customer satisfaction. Bellou (2009) and Ooi (2011) also stated that, employees that focus on satisfying the needs of customers should be considered strong assets to their organisations because they are critical in building lasting and positive relationships for customer satisfaction.

Marzie et al. (2013) conducted a survey on the relationship between customer orientation and customer satisfaction using the CUSTOR scale method, in Yas Novin Parse chain stores, in Golestan Province. The study found that there is a significant positive correlation between customer orientation and customer satisfaction. The study further recommended that management should review its customer orientation activities, by encouraging and welcoming customer suggestions and complaints, in order to strengthen strategies aimed at improving customer satisfaction by matching them to the customer tastes and preferences effectively. The study further recommended that, management should focus on individual customer needs and proactively identify new ways of delivering customer services in a timely manner.

Ghasem, Masoud and Maryam (2016), conducted a study which found that customer orientation in the public sector is a fundamental aspect, and an urgent imperative for the attainment of the desired customer satisfaction levels. This is more so because the

government and its public agencies are not developed for profit, but for a social function in gratification of people's needs and welfare enhancement and to strategically although indirectly, be responsible for the development and advancement of the citizens. To this end, these organisations are developed with the citizens in mind as the customers; however, the study found that the quality of customer service in public institutions reflected general bureaucracy and poor quality. Monireh, Asadollah and Reza (2014) stated that, public sector organisations that adopted customer orientation principles attained a significantly good reputation and credibility within their communities.

According to Makoto (2006), the adoption of customer orientation and its incorporation into the systems and procedures of the public institutions is slow and further exacerbated by the difficulty in measuring its outcomes. They further argued that customer satisfaction is influenced by the surveillance of the press and the public, which can promote the formation of preconceived ideas or distort the ideas already prevailing in the minds of the existing customers and potential customers.

2.5.3 Enhancing Customer Orientation and Improving Customer Satisfaction

Loffler, Parrado and Zmeskal (2013) argued that, the introduction of a customer service charter is critical for enhancing customer orientation within an organisation. A service charter is defined as a public document that sets out basic information on the services provided, the standards of service that customers can expect from an organisation, and how to make complaints or suggestions for improvement (Mwania, 2015). Charters provide a good framework to bring about a cultural change towards better customer

orientation and satisfaction. All organisations, including public entities require culture, process and procedural changes in their way of doing business, if they intend to become customer oriented (Galbraith, 2002; Galbraith, 2005). Auguste, Rust and Oliver (2016) suggested that customer orientation is only achievable in the public sector if process re-engineering is instituted first. In order to ensure the successful implementation of a customer orientation approach, organisations should align their processes to the needs and requirements of their customers. Investing in technology is a critical factor in ensuring a successful customer orientation transformation (Galbraith, 2002).

Mantey (2012) recommended training and development programs as another strategy for improving customer orientation. Service employees have numerous individual differences, and these differences influence their on-the-job performance and the service level consistency (Grizzle, 2009). Particularly relevant to organisational performance are those individual differences that determine the extent to which the respective service employees perform and their individual behaviours in respect of satisfying and retaining customers. Training and development is therefore an important aspect of customer orientation because it bridges the gap between individual differences. Zargaran, Sarmadsaidi and Esmailpour (2013) conceptualize training as a facet that influences the degree to which different individuals serve customers effectively and with consistency. Training develops behaviours that are customer oriented.

2.6 Gaps in Literature

There are two ways in which this study adds value to the existing literature. Firstly, the study attempted to establish a relationship between customer orientation and customer satisfaction within the public sector in the Namibian space. Secondly, the study sought to

establish the nature of the relationship between the two variables. According to Donovan, Brown and Mowen (2004), the implementation of customer orientation is a valid predictor of customer satisfaction. Moreover, the marketing literature indicates that customer orientation strongly impacts sales performance, however, Jung and Yoon (2013) disapproved the relationship in quasi-governmental organisations because of the nature of competition in their industries.

2.7 Summary

The chapter reviewed existing literature on customer orientation and customer satisfaction from previous studies in an objective manner; however, the interpretation of the findings from the study may be subjective. This literature formed the backbone of the questionnaire that was used for collection of primary data. The next chapter is a discussion of the research methodology and design, embracing the methods and procedures that the researcher used during the study for data collection and analysis.

CHAPTER THREE

RESEARCH METHODS

3.1 Introduction

This chapter explored the methodology that was used in the study. It described the research design, the population, sample characteristics and sampling techniques, research instruments, data collection procedures, data analysis, instruments validity and reliability as well as ethical considerations that were considered in the collection and analysis of data.

3.2 Research design

Research design is a framework or a blueprint for conducting research (Malhotra, 2010). In order to have an in-depth understanding of the relationship between customer orientation and customer satisfaction, the study employed a case study approach and employed a combination of both quantitative and qualitative components in the collection of data concurrently. The researcher adopted a mixed method approach which uses both quantitative and qualitative data collection, analysis and interpretation. According to Bell, Bryman, and Harle (2019), a mixed method approach adds value to the understanding of a concept compared to purely qualitative or quantitative approaches.

According to Creswell and Clark (2011) a mixed method approach implements quantitative and qualitative strands during the same phase of the research process, prioritising the methods equally and keeping the strands independent during analysis and then combining the results during the overall interpretation. The quantitative approach was used to answer the questions of numerical values or measurable data, whereas the

qualitative method was used to answer the questions of why, how and what (research questions).

3.3 Target Population

According to Ahrens and Chapman (2006), a population is a well-defined or set of people, services, elements and events, group of things or households that are being investigated. The population for this study consisted of all customers of the Business and Intellectual Property Authority that visited the office during the two-week period of the study. The customers of BIPA were targeted because are the direct recipients of the customer orientation efforts of BIPA, which makes them the ideal people to rate the level of customer satisfaction at the organisation. Due to the uncertain number of the exact study population, it was established that BIPA receives an average of 1000 customers fortnightly, the study therefore assumed the total population was 1000 customers.

3.4 Sample Size and Sample Size Determination

The systematic sampling technique was used to select the sample. The sample size was computed using Slovin's formula: $n = \frac{N}{1+N(e)^2}$, where n is the sample size; N is the population size and, e is the desired level of precision. A 90% confidence level (e = 0.10) is assumed. The required sample size was calculated as follows: $n = \frac{1000}{1+1000(0.1)^2} = 90.909$.

Accordingly, 91 clients of BIPA were selected using the systematic sampling technique for participation in the study, for a considered two weeks period. According to Tejada and Punzalan (2012) when a sample is taken from a population, there is a need for a formula that will account for confidence levels and margins of error. Slovin's formula has been found suitable in research studies with large populations.

3.5 Research Instrument

Questionnaires and interview guides were used for quantitative and qualitative data collection respectively. Questionnaires were appropriate for quantitative data collection because they inquire about provision of computable opinions and information. Semi structured interviews were used for qualitative data because of their ability to expose hidden feelings, behaviours and attitudes in the respondents (Bell et al., 2019). The two different instruments were used to ensure the reliability of the results of the study, by establishing the extent to which the research method produces stable and consistent results.

3.5.1 Questionnaires

According Bryman (2008) questionnaires help the researcher to gather both qualitative and quantitative data from a number of respondents simultaneously and that saves time and cost of data gathering. Questionnaires give respondents the freedom to express their views or opinions (Gay, Mills & Airasian, 2011). Both structured and non-structured questions were used. The use of questionnaires in the study allowed the participants to express themselves freely without fear of personal contact and allowed the participants to answer in their convenient time.

3.5.2 Semi-Structured Interview Guides

Boyce and Neale (2006) noted that interviews are a qualitative research technique that involves conducting interviews with a small number of respondents to explore their perspectives on a particular idea, program or situation. The researcher used semi-structured interview guides to collect information using both open-ended and closed-

ended questions, to allow respondents the freedom to express their views in their own terms for in depth understanding.

3.6 Procedures

The data collection procedures included both primary and secondary sources.

3.6.1 Data Collection

Primary data was gathered through questionnaire surveys and interviews of selected customers, using the systematic sampling method. Questionnaires were administered to walk-in clients at the office and picked at the agreed time to give the respondents enough time to respond to the questions, and ten (10) walk in clients were selected for personal and informal interviews, following a list of open-ended questions, to allow for open discussions. Secondary data was collected by data mining from the academic and peer reviewed journals and from statistical and periodical reports produced by BIPA.

3.7 Data Analysis

The data was analysed using both quantitative and qualitative data analysis methods. The purpose of this was to ensure validity and reliability of the information, as well as the data collection instruments. According to Bachman and Schutt (2011) validity refers to the context to which measures indicate what they are intended to measure and the reliability of an instrument is defined as, when it yields consistent scores or observations of a given phenomenon on different occasions. Prior to the actual distribution of questionnaires and interviews, a pre-test was conducted on ten respondents to determine the reliability and validity of the proposed questionnaire and interviews. The feedback from the pre-test empowered the researcher make appropriate improvements to the questionnaire and interview questions. This was done to ensure relevance and alignment

of the questions in the research instruments to the objectives of the study, in order to maintain the principles of validity and reliability. Aside from the above, during actual data collection process reliability of information was ensured by means of follow-up informal discussions with respondents where practically possible, to verify unclear issues.

3.7.1 Quantitative Data Analysis

According to Anthony (2011) quantitative data analysis involves measuring central tendency, variability and divergence from normality presented in tables, charts and graphs using the Statistical Package for Social Sciences (SPSS V 23.0). The process includes tabulation and coding of data collected in the system and then analysing the data using descriptive statistics and inferential statistics (Lewicki, 2007). The questionnaire had few close-ended questions and similar responses were grouped together and then analysed using frequency distributions.

3.7.2 Qualitative Data Analysis Techniques

Thematic data analysis was used for analysing qualitative data collected during in-depth interviews. Thematic data analysis is a systematic approach for qualitative data analysis that involves identifying themes or patterns of cultural meaning, coding and classifying of data, charting, mapping and interpretation of the data. Qualitative data analysis started with identification of the themes emerging from the raw data, a process sometimes referred to as open coding (Strauss & Corbin, 1990). During open coding; words, phrases or events that appear similar were grouped into the same category. The categories were gradually modified or replaced in the subsequent stages of analysis until a final conclusion was made.

3.8 Research Ethics

The researcher obtained ethical clearance from the University of Namibia, for permission to carry out the research and informed consent was sought from all respondents. The respondents were briefed on the study and its objectives and that the research is for academic purposes only. Voluntary participation of respondents in the research was emphasized and the participants were allowed rights to withdraw from the study at any stage. The researcher explained to the respondents that their identities would remain anonymous and information provided will be kept confidential in a lockable safe, and be destroyed after five years.

3.9 Summary

This chapter discussed the research methods used in this study, which conform to quantitative and qualitative research approaches. The chapter also outlined the population and sample of the study. The manner in which information that was gathered and analysed was explained in this chapter and ethical considerations were also highlighted. The next chapter provides a presentation of the interpretation of the data that was gathered for the study. The illustrations were done using descriptive statistics, such as graphs, tables and pie charts.

CHAPTER 4

DATA ANALYSIS AND INTERPRETATION

4.1 Introduction

This chapter presents, interprets and discusses the results obtained from the interviews conducted and the questionnaires administered and collected from participants. Quantitative and qualitative data was integrated and discussed in-line with the objectives of the study. The chapter is divided into five sub-sections which are demographic presentation, customer orientation, customer satisfaction, service quality and recommendations to family and friends (Net Promoter). The chapter concludes by looking at the proposed customer orientation approaches and their relationship with customer satisfaction.

4.2 Response Rate

A total of eighty-one (81) questionnaires were distributed and ten (10) clients were engaged for interviews from the walk-in clients of BIPA. Out of the expected 81 responses, only 66 questionnaires were returned and 10 clients were successfully interviewed. This gave a response rate of 83.5% which is generally acceptable for a research of this magnitude given that Babbie (2002) suggests that a response rate above 50% can effectively represent the characteristics, opinions and ideas of the total population. The high response rate can be attributed to the efforts made by the researcher to constantly follow-up on the status of completion of the questionnaires that were distributed to the respondents, and ensuring that most if not all questionnaires distributed were dully collected.

4.3 Demographic Information

The study sought to understand the demographics of the respondents to the study, to ensure that there was a valid representation of different demographics.

4.3.1 Customer Type

The participants in the study included 56.6% of agents working on behalf of other people, and 43.4% individual clients representing themselves. The findings from the study were therefore considered valid and reliable and all the major customer sections were relatively represented. Table 1 below depicts the percentages of the types of customers.

Table 1: Customer Type

	Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Agent	43	56.6	56.6	56.6
Individuals	33	43.4	43.4	100.0
Total	76	100.0	100.0	

Source: Primary Data

4.3.2 Participant's Gender

53.5% of the participants were female BIPA clients whereas 46.5% were male. There was a slight difference of only 7% between male and female participants, which made gender-based valuation and appraisal of customer orientation, satisfaction and service quality insignificant. Figure 9 below summarizes the findings by gender.

Source: Primary Data

As shown in the diagram above, most of the participants (48.7%) were aged between 31 and 40 years. 22.4% of the respondents were aged between 41 and 50 years. 15.8% were

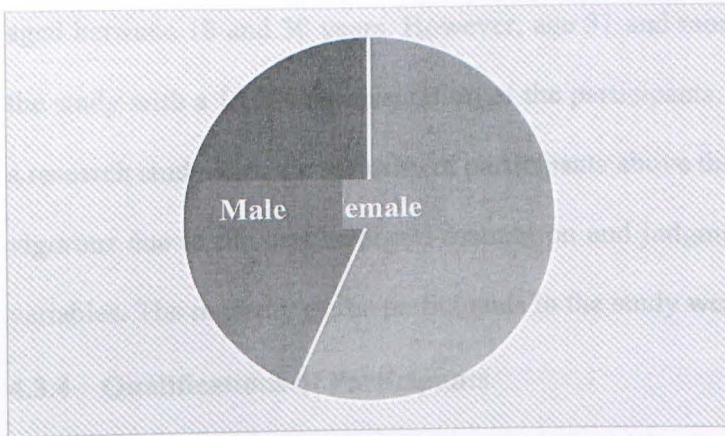


Figure 9: Participants Gender

Source: Primary Data

4.3.3 Age of Respondents

The study sought to understand the composition of the respondents by age to determine their level of maturity and to understand the customer orientation, customer satisfaction and service quality aspects. Table 2 below shows the ages of the respondents.

Table 2: Participant's Age

	Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
18-30	12	15.8	15.8	15.8
31-40	37	48.7	48.7	64.5
41-50	17	22.4	22.4	86.8
51+	10	13.2	13.2	100.0
Total	76	100.0	100.0	

Source: Primary Data

As shown in the diagram above, most of the participants (48.7%) were aged between 31 and 40 years. 22.4% of the respondents were aged between 41 and 50 years. 15.8% were

aged between 18 and 30 years. However, age 51 and more were the least represented in the study with a 13.2% representation of the participants. According to Kusurkar (2016) a research study with the majority of participants above the ages of 24 years is considered vigorous due to the psycho-social maturation and judgment progression of the research variables. The majority of the participants in the study were above the age of 24.

4.3.4 Qualifications of Participants

The level of education determines the extent to which one appreciates and understands the issues surrounding customer orientation, satisfaction and customer services in the public sector. Figure 10 below shows the summary of the qualifications of the respondents.

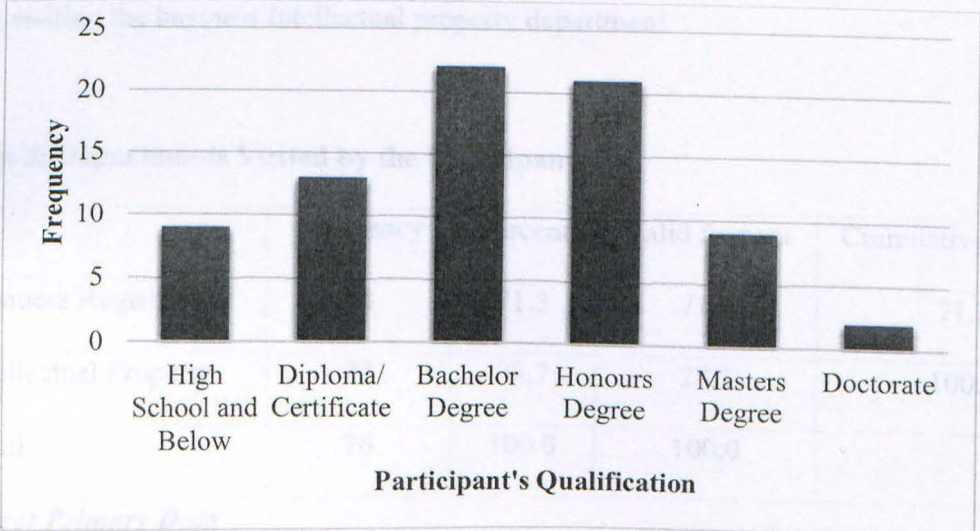


Figure 10: Qualification of Participants

Source: Primary Data

As depicted above, the participants in the study had varying levels of academic qualifications. The figure above shows that 28.9% of the participants in the study were holders of bachelor’s degrees, 27.6% were holders of honours’ degrees, 17.1% were holders of diplomas and/or certificates, 11.8% were master’s degree holders and another

11.8% of the respondents had a high school qualification or below. 2.6% of the participants were PhD holders. Conclusively, all the participants were academically qualified to participate in the study.

4.3.5 Departments Visited by Participants

BIPA services are divided into two categories – business registration services and intellectual property services. The study sought to understand the distribution of the participants in respect of the departments visited, to ensure that the findings apply to all BIPA services inclusively. Table 3 below shows that 71.3% of the participants were visiting the business registration services department whereas 28.7% of the participants were visiting the business intellectual property department.

Table 3: Departments Visited by the Participants

	Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Business Registration	54	71.3	71.3	71.3
Intellectual Property	22	28.7	28.7	100.0
Total	76	100.0	100.0	

Source: Primary Data

4.3.6 Most Sought after BIPA services

The study pursued to understand the most sought-after services from BIPA, and it was found that 30.3% of the clients were after compliance services, 26.3% after registration services and 10.5% were after information and data services, 14.5% after maintenance services, 18.4% of the participants were after reparation services. Figure 3 below depicts the most sought after BIPA products according to the respondents of the study.

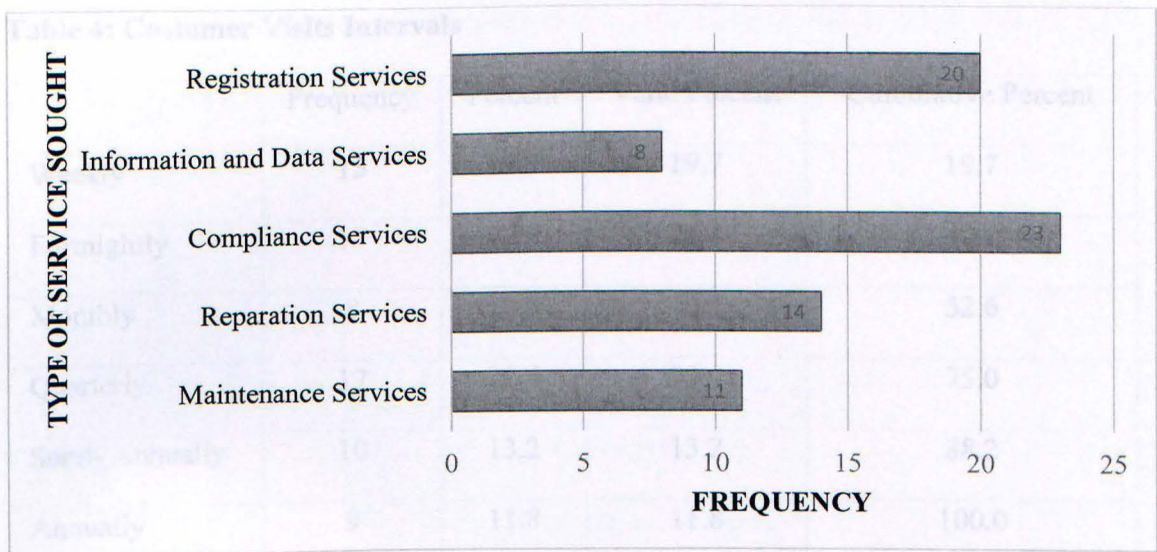


Figure 11: Most Sought BIPA Services

Source: Primary Data

4.3.7 Customer Visits

The majority of the participants (22.4%) of the study indicated that they often seek BIPA services fortnightly, 22.4% of the participants seek the services quarterly, while 19.7% indicated that they sought BIPA services weekly. The researcher safely assumed these were mostly agents working on behalf of other clients. 13.2% of the participants indicated that they sought BIPA services on a semi-annual basis, 10.5% sought BIPA services on a monthly basis and 11.8% on an annual basis. The Table below shows the graphical representation of the client's visits to BIPA.

Table 4: Customer Visits Intervals

	Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Weekly	15	19.7	19.7	19.7
Fortnightly	17	22.4	22.4	42.1
Monthly	8	10.5	10.5	52.6
Quarterly	17	22.4	22.4	75.0
Semi- Annually	10	13.2	13.2	88.2
Annually	9	11.8	11.8	100.0
Total	76	100.0	100.0	

Source: Primary Data

The table indicates that the majority of the participants have had more than one service encounter with BIPA. The study therefore assumes that the participant's analysis and evaluation of the customer orientation and service quality was not biased on limited service encounter experiences.

4.4 The state of Customer Orientation at BIPA

The study sought to determine the extent to which BIPA is customer-oriented, and as per the literature reviewed. Variables such as customer interests, professionalism, employee competence, and promptness, treatment of the elderly and the disabled, as well as the encouraging for customer feedback were tested.

4.4.1 Prioritisation of Customer Interests

26% of the participants disagreed that BIPA employees put the interest of their customers first and another 26% could neither disagree nor disagree. 20% of the participants strongly

agreed, 21% agreed that customer interests are prioritised at BIPA, while 7% of the participants strongly disagreed with the assertion, as shown in Figure 12 below.

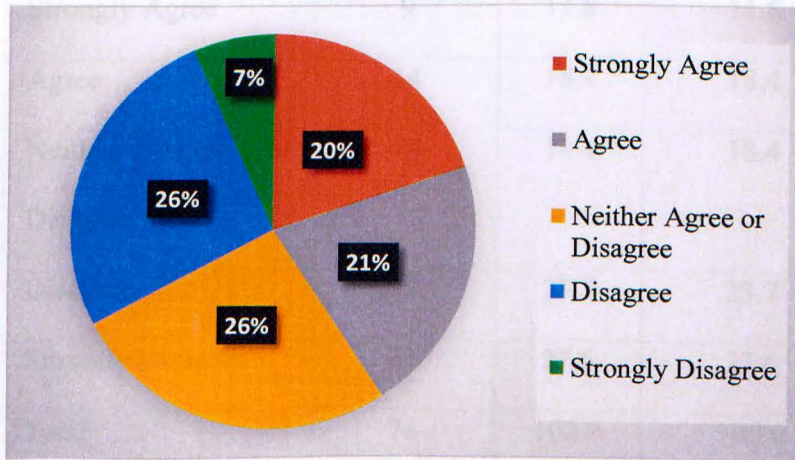


Figure 12: Prioritization of Customer Interests

Source: Primary Data

4.4.2 Patience and Professionalism

The study examined the ability of BIPA's employees to maintain patience and professionalism when handling upset and rowdy customers. 27.6% of the participants strongly disagreed that BIPA employees remain patient and professional at all times, 23.7% disagreed and 18.4% neither disagreed nor agreed. Only 11.8% and 18.4% of the respondents strongly agreed and agreed with the assertion, respectively. The results are depicted in the table below.

Table 5: Patience and Professionalism

	Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Strongly Agree	9	11.8	11.8	11.8
Agree	14	18.4	18.4	30.3
Neither Agree or Disagree	14	18.4	18.4	48.7
Disagree	18	23.7	23.7	72.4
Strongly Disagree	21	27.6	27.6	100.0
Total	76	100.0	100.0	

Source: Primary Data

4.4.3 Product Knowledge

According to Losekoot (2015), product knowledge is one of the primary requirements of customer orientation. The study established that, BIPA employees are well informed about the products and services offered by the organisation. 51.3% of the respondents agreed that BIPA employees are knowledgeable of the services offered, while 3.9% strongly agreed. 25% of the respondents neither agree nor disagreed, 13.2% disagreed and 6.6% strongly disagreed with the assertion, as depicted in figure 13 below.

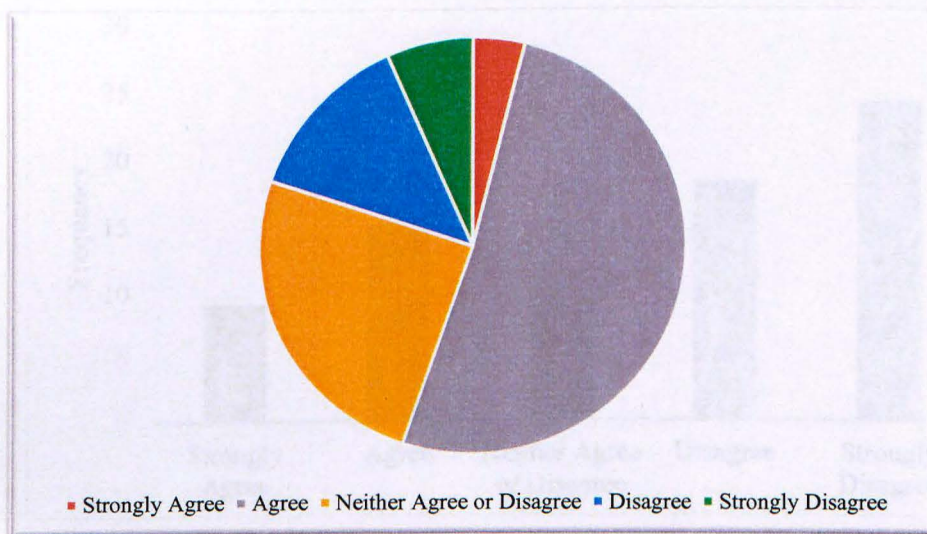


Figure 13: Product knowledge

Source: Primary Data

4.4.4 Sensitivity to Time

The study examined the time management culture of service employees at BIPA. 31.6% of the participants strongly disagreed that BIPA employees are swift and sensitive to time when serving customers, while another 23.7% disagreed. 19.7% of the participants agreed that BIPA employees are prompt and sensitive to time, 11.8% strongly agreed, however, 13.2% could neither agree nor disagree. Figure 13 below summarises the responses from the participants.

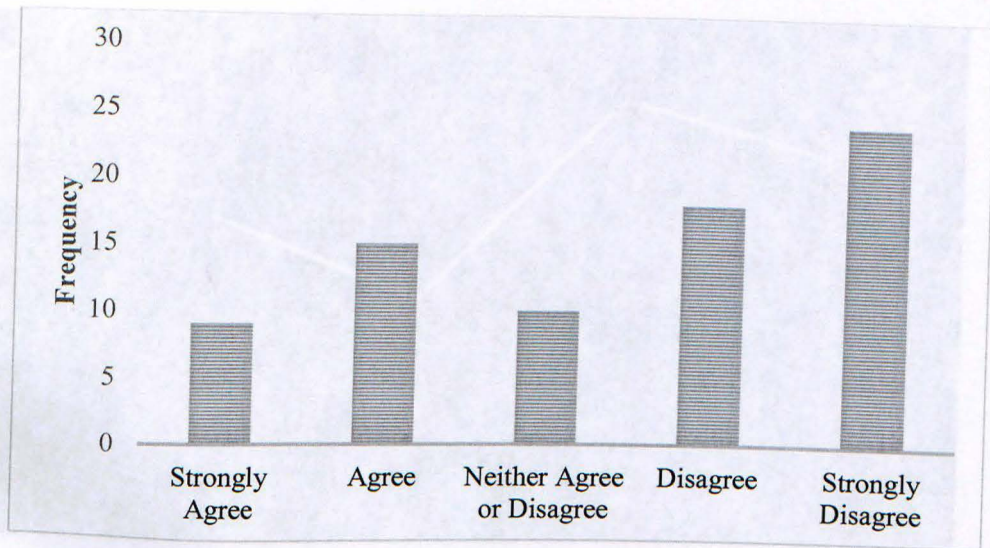


Figure 14: Sensitivity to Time *Agreement with Frontline Employees & Customers*

Source: Primary Data

4.4.5 Management's Involvement in Assisting Frontline Employees & Customers

Figure 15 below shows the percentage representations of respondents, when asked about the extent of involvement of BIPA's management to assist both front line employees and customers. 28.9% of the participants disagreed that BIPA's management is actively involved in the front-line office services. It was indicated in the interviews that most customers have never interfaced with the management during their visits to BIPA offices. 22.4% of the participants strongly agreed to the assertion, 34.2% were neutral, while 14.5% of the participants agreed that BIPA management is always available to assist employees and customers. The interviewed participants further indicated that the separation of the administrative office and services office creates difficulty for management involvement and can bring inconveniences when customers are referred to management with complex issues.

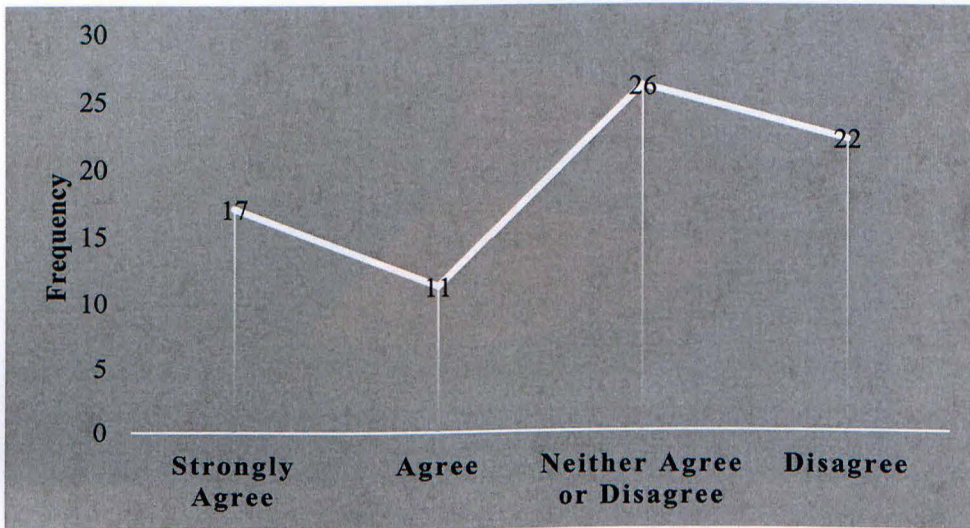


Figure 15: Management's Involvement with Frontline Employees & Customers

Source: Primary Data

4.4.6 Customer Feedback

The study also examined the availability of feedback channels through which clients can raise complaints and suggestions to BIPA. The results showed that BIPA does not encourage customer feedback in respect of complaints and suggestions. Out of all the respondents to the study, 28.9% strongly disagreed that there is an effective feedback channel in place, while 14.5% disagreed. Another 22.4% of the respondents were neither in agreement or disagreement, while 15.8% strongly agreed and another 18.4% agreed. The interviewed participants indicated that the channels and means for lodging complaints and making suggestions are ineffectual and inept. Figure 16 summarises the findings on the availability of effective feedback channels at BIPA.

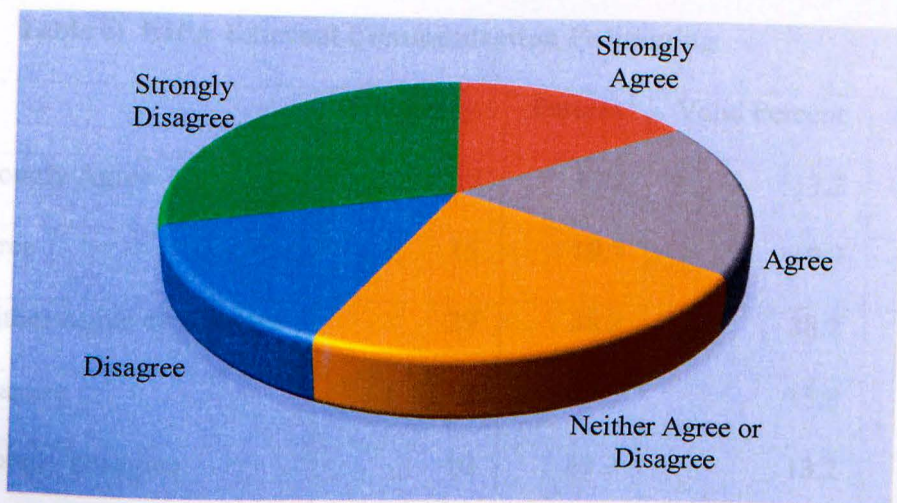


Figure 16: Availability of Effective Feedback and Comments Channels

Source: Primary Data

4.4.7 BIPA External Communication Positioning

According to Kotler and Keller (2011), customer-oriented organisations create a value proposition that is reflected in the way they conduct business. The value proposition reflected in the external communications should thus always be a true reflection of the actual deliveries done by the organisation. According to Wambungu (2015) customer satisfaction derives from the company's ability to meet the expectations of its customers, created by its external communication. The study therefore evaluated the extent to which BIPA meets its customers' expectations, as created through its external channels of communication. Table 6 below shows the percentage distribution of responses on whether BIPA's external communications are a true reflection of the services offered by the organisation.

Table 6: BIPA External Communication Positioning

	Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Strongly Agree	10	13.2	13.2	13.2
Agree	15	19.7	19.7	32.9
Neither Agree or Disagree	29	38.2	38.2	71.1
Disagree	12	15.8	15.8	86.8
Strongly Disagree	10	13.2	13.2	100.0
Total	76	100.0	100.0	

Source: Primary Data

The results show that 38.2% of the participants neither disagreed nor agreed that BIPA’s external communication and value proposition are reflected in the products and services offered by the organisation. 19.7% of the participants agreed that BIPA services are mirrored in the organisation’s external communication, whereas 13.2% were strongly in agreement. On the contrary 13.2% of the participants were strongly in disagreement while 15.8% disagreed that BIPA’s external communication imaged the quality of service delivered by the organisation.

4.4.8 Treatment of the Elderly and People with Disabilities

Proponents of customer orientation suggest that businesses should take into consideration the needs, including the physical requirements of all their clients (Losekoot, 2015). The study therefore sought to determine whether BIPA considers and offers personalised assistance to the elderly and people with physical disabilities. The results showed (as depicted in the figure below) that the majority of the respondents (25%) neither agreed

nor disagreed that BIPA provides personalised services to the elderly and people with disabilities. Respondents falling in the disagreeing and strongly disagreeing categories were 19.7% and 23.7% respectively. On the other hand, 18.4% of the participants were in agreement while 13.2% were in strong agreement that BIPA provides personalised services for both the elderly and people with disabilities.

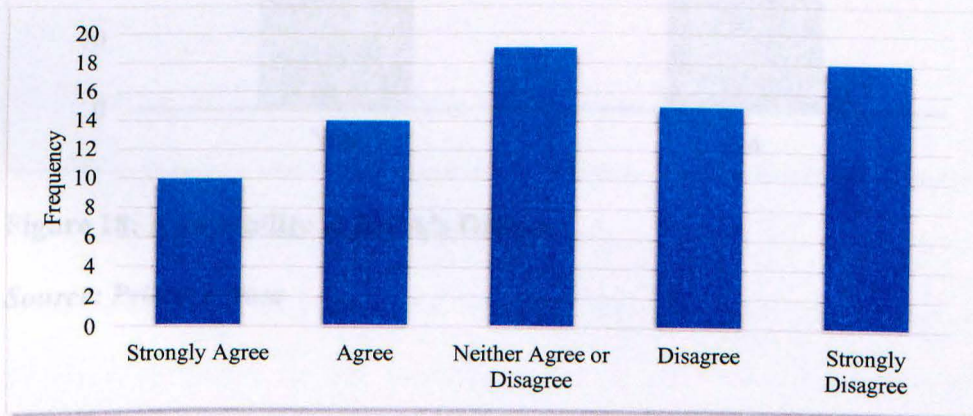


Figure 17: Treatment of the Elderly and People with Disabilities

Source: Primary Data

4.4.9 Accessibility to BIPA’s Offices

The study sought to establish whether the BIPA office is conveniently located and accessible to all clients inclusive of people with disabilities and the elderly. The results showed that 69.7% of the participants believe that BIPA offices are not easily accessible whereas 30.3% indicated otherwise. Figure 18 below depicts the responses.

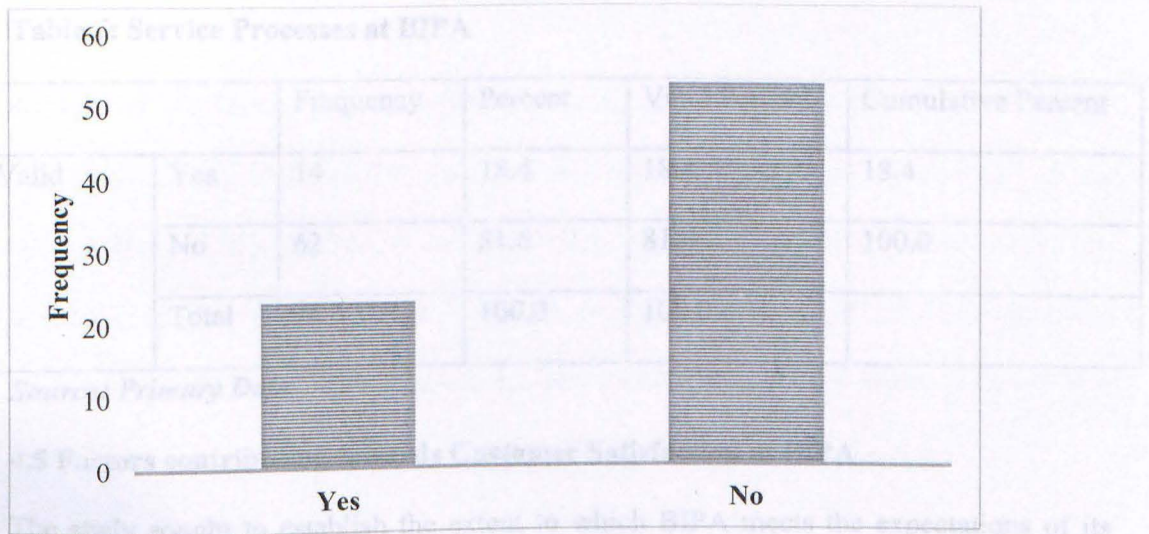


Figure 18: Accessibility to BIPA’s Offices

Source: Primary Data

4.4.10 BIPA’s Service Processes

The service blueprint, as well as the processes and procedures in place play a crucial role in determining the extent to which an organisation is customer oriented (Denish et al., 2006). The study therefore scrutinised the respondents’ opinions on the service blueprint of BIPA, focusing on service automation and efficient coordination of activities. 81.6% of the participants indicated that BIPA’s services are not automated and activities lack proper coordination. 18.4% of the participants approved that BIPA service processes are automated and that activities are effectively coordinated, as depicted in the table below.

Figure 19: Customer Satisfaction

Source: Primary Data

Table 7: Service Processes at BIPA

		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	Yes	14	18.4	18.4	18.4
	No	62	81.6	81.6	100.0
	Total	76	100.0	100.0	

Source: Primary Data

4.5 Factors contributing towards Customer Satisfaction at BIPA

The study sought to establish the extent to which BIPA meets the expectations of its customers, synonymous with customer satisfaction. The section focused on elements of service quality that have a profound impact on customer satisfaction. As shown in figure 19 below, the majority of the participants (52.6%) indicated that they were not satisfied with the level of service at BIPA. The remaining 47.4% admitted satisfaction with BIPA services. The low rate of customer satisfaction is a concern, considering that Pokalsky (2016) suggested a strong relationship between customer satisfaction and customer loyalty.

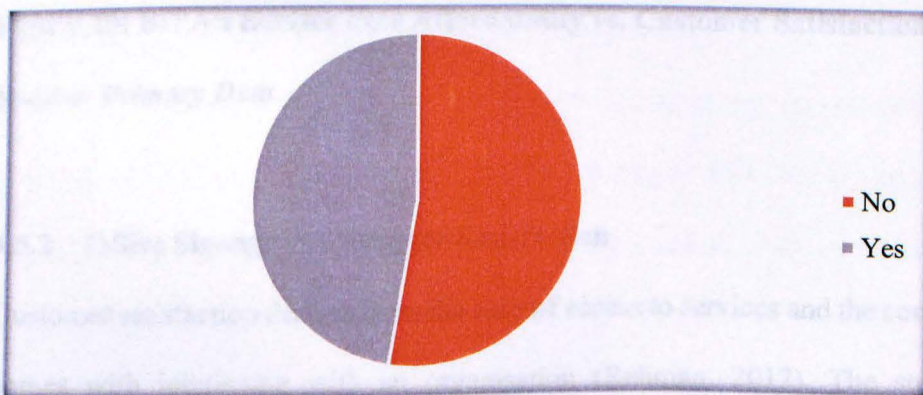


Figure 19: Customer Satisfaction

Source: Primary Data

4.5.1 BIPA's Service Fees Affordability vs. Customer Satisfaction

The study intended to establish the level of customer satisfaction with respect to the service fees of BIPA. 25% of the participants disagreed that BIPA service fees are affordable, 11.8% strongly disagreed and 21.1% were neutral. 23.7% of the respondents agreed that the service fees are affordable and an additional 18.4% strongly agreed that the services are reasonably priced. Figure 20 below summarises the findings.

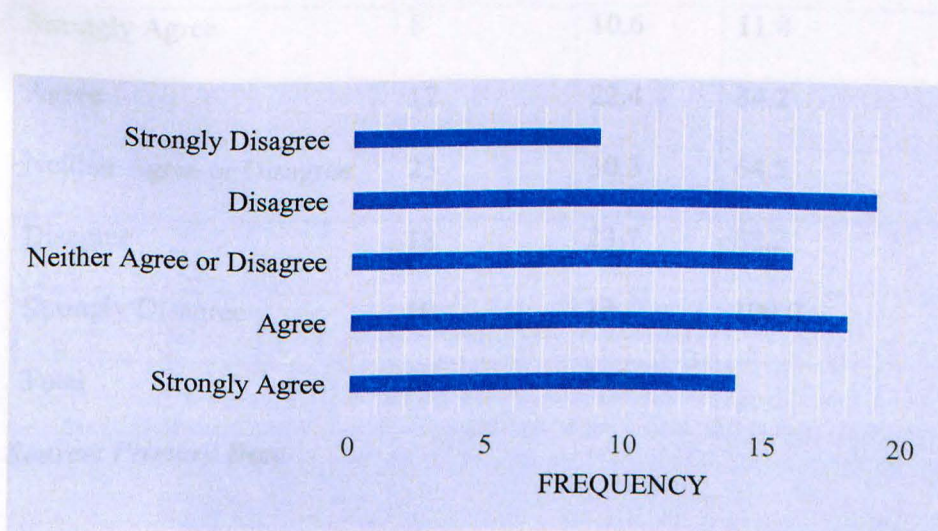


Figure 20: BIPA's Service Fees Affordability vs. Customer Satisfaction

Source: Primary Data

4.5.2 Office Signage vs Customer Satisfaction

Customer satisfaction derives from the ease of access to services and the convenience that comes with interacting with an organisation (Rehman, 2012). The study therefore evaluated the extent to which BIPA meets its customers' expectations, with regards to proper signage to direct customers to the right offices, for different services. As abridged

in Table 8 below, 30.3% of the participants neither agreed nor disagreed that BIPA has clear signage in place. 23.7% disagreed and 10.6% e strongly disagreed with the notion. 22.4% of the participants agreed that BIPA has clear signage in place, while 13% of the respondents strongly agreed.

Table 8: Office signage vs Customer Satisfaction

	Frequency	Percent	Cumulative Percent
Strongly Agree	8	10.6	11.8
Agree	17	22.4	34.2
Neither Agree or Disagree	23	30.3	64.5
Disagree	18	23.7	88.2
Strongly Disagree	10	13	100.0
Total	76	100.0	

Source: Primary Data

4.5.3 Office Location (Place) vs. Customer Satisfaction

26.3% of the participants neither agreed nor disagreed that they are satisfied with location of BIPA offices, while 26.3% of the respondents agreed that they are satisfied with the office location and its accessibility. 14.5% of the respondents indicated that they strongly agreed that BIPA offices are accessible and conveniently located whereas 18.4% strongly disagreed, and another 14.5% of the respondents disagreed that BIPA’s offices are conveniently located, as depicted in the figure below.

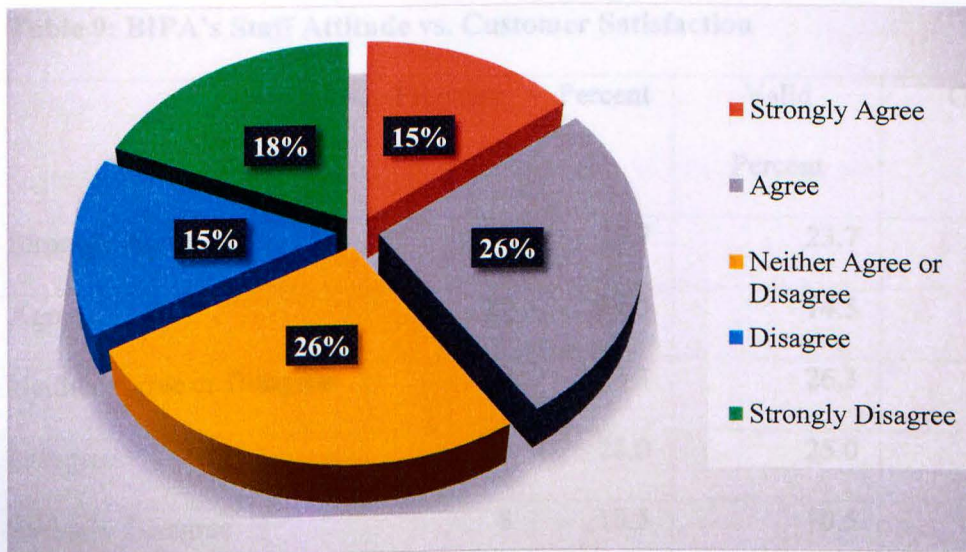


Figure 21: Office Location vs. Customer Satisfaction

Source: Primary Data

4.5.4 BIPA's Staff Attitude vs. Customer Satisfaction

The literature reviewed showed that the level of customer satisfaction is highly influenced by the quality of staff an organisation possesses and how they conduct themselves. Table 9 below shows the participant's responses concerning their satisfaction with employee conduct and attitude at BIPA.

Table 9: BIPA's Staff Attitude vs. Customer Satisfaction

	Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Strongly Agree	18	23.7	23.7	23.7
Agree	11	14.5	14.5	38.2
Neither Agree or Disagree	20	26.3	26.3	64.5
Disagree	19	25.0	25.0	89.5
Strongly Disagree	8	10.5	10.5	100.0
Total	76	100.0	100.0	

Source: Primary Data

26.3% of the participants were neutral about the staff conduct and attitude. However, 25% of the respondents disagreed that BIPA staff members have a positive attitude and overall conduct, and 10.5% strongly disagreed with the assertion. On the contrary, 23.7% of the participants strongly agreed that they were satisfied with the attitude and conduct of the staff, while 14.5% agreed with the assertion.

4.6 Approaches for enhancing Customer Orientation and improving Customer

Satisfaction at BIPA

The GAP model proponents Parasuraman et al. (1985) emphasize that, customer satisfaction is a product of empathy, responsiveness, courtesy, reliability, assurance and tangibles. Moreover, Anorl (2012) noted that customer orientation is implemented by building a service culture on the aforementioned precepts by Parasuraman et al. (1985).

The study assumed that customer satisfaction at BIPA is derived from efforts towards customer orientation and therefore, the level of customer satisfaction with regards to the dimensions of service quality such as empathy, reliability, responsiveness, reliability, assurance and tangibles at BIPA were tested.

4.6.1 Empathy

Helpfulness and friendliness were used to assess employees' empathy. On a scale of one to five, the majority of the participants (30.3%) rated 2, thereby indicating that the level of empathy is poor. 21.1% rated 3, indicating that the level of empathy is neither poor nor excellent, while the same number of participants rated 5, indicating that the level of empathy is excellent. 9.2% of the participants rated 1, suggesting that the empathy level is very poor and 18.3% rated it at 4, indicating that the level of empathy is good. Figure 22 below summarises the ratings on employee empathy.

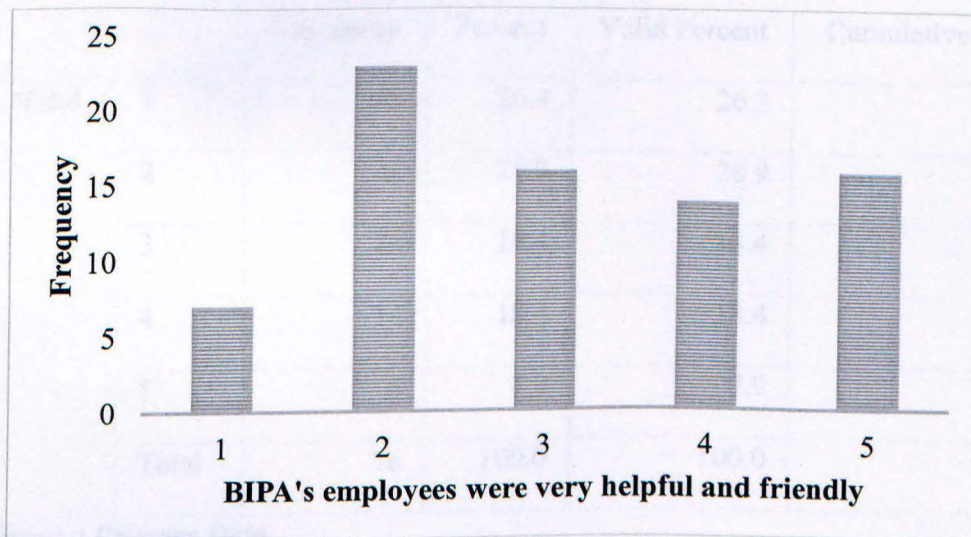


Figure 22: Empathy Ratings

Source: Primary Data

4.6.2 Responsiveness

The study considered the time it takes for the employees of BIPA to attend to customers waiting for service, in order to determine employee responsiveness. On a scale of one to five, the majority of the participants indicated that the level of responsiveness is very poor (26.3%) and poor (28.9%), by rating 1 and 2 respectively. 18.4% of the respondents rated 3, which places them in the neutral category and the same percentage of respondents rated 4, to indicate that the level of responsiveness is good. Only 7.9% of the participants rated 5, to indicate that the level of employee responsiveness is excellent. Table 10 below summarises the respondent's ratings on employee responsiveness.

Table 10: Responsiveness

BIPA's employees timely attended to clients even when there was a long queue					
		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	1	20	26.3	26.3	26.3
	2	22	28.9	28.9	55.3
	3	14	18.4	18.4	73.7
	4	14	18.4	18.4	92.1
	5	6	7.9	7.9	100.0
	Total	76	100.0	100.0	

Source: Primary Data

4.6.3 Courtesy

The study sought to establish the level of courtesy of employees at BIPA. 21.1% respondents indicated that the level of courtesy is poor, whereas another 21.1% rated the level of employee courtesy as excellent. A whopping 19.7% of the participants registered dissatisfaction with the level of courtesy of BIPA employees, while another 19.7% chose to remain neutral on the variable. 18.4% of the participants rated the courteousness of the employees as good, thereby indicating that there is room for improvement, as depicted in figure 23 below.

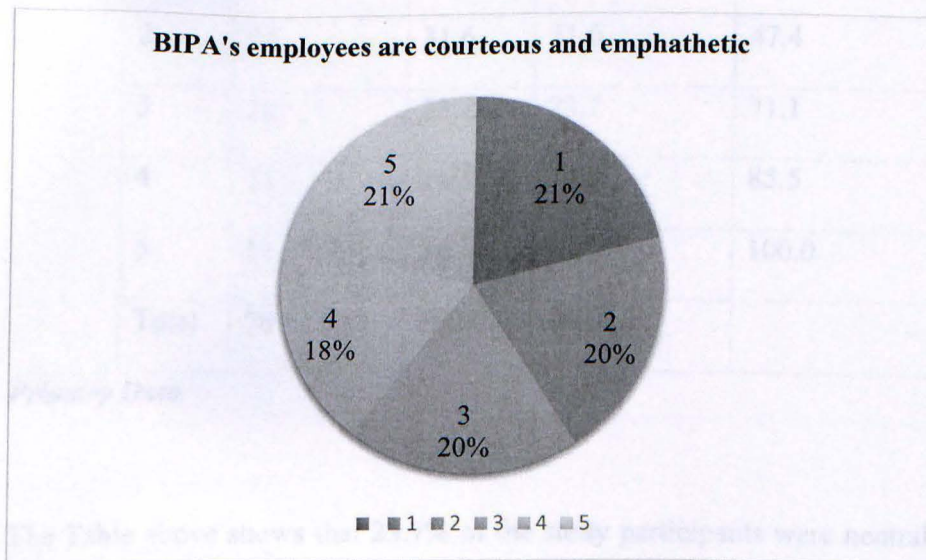


Figure 23: Courtesy Ratings

Source: Primary Data

4.6.4 Reliability

The ability of employees of BIPA to provide the right services the first time was used to rate employee's reliability. Table 11 below summarises the responses of the participants to this variable.

Table 11: Reliability Ratings

BIPA's employees provide the right services the first time					
		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	1	12	15.8	15.8	15.8
	2	24	31.6	31.6	47.4
	3	18	23.7	23.7	71.1
	4	11	14.5	14.5	85.5
	5	11	14.5	14.5	100.0
	Total	76	100.0	100.0	

Primary Data

The Table above shows that 23.7% of the study participants were neutral regarding the reliability of BIPA employees. However, 31.6% of the participants indicated that BIPA employees are unreliable, while 15.8% indicated that they are highly unreliable. 14.5% of the participants indicated that the employees are reliable and another 14.5% indicated that the employees are highly reliable.

4.6.5 Assurance

The study evaluated the level of assurance of BIPA employees, as reflected in their competence and knowledge of the products and services offered by the organisation. 23.7% of the participants indicated that the employees of BIPA are excellent in their competency and level of assurance, another 23.7% of the participants rated the level of assurance as poor, while 11.8 indicated that the level as very poor. 21.1% of the participants maintained that the level of assurance is good, while 19.7% of the respondents indicated that it was neither poor nor excellent. The results are summarised in the figure below.

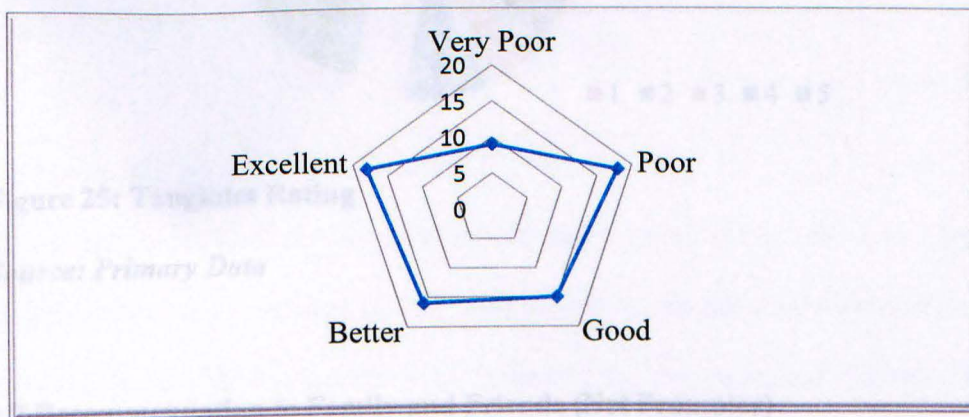


Figure 24: Assurance

Source: Primary Data

4.6.6 Tangibles

The appearance of the office and the staff was used to assess the tangibles at BIPA. The majority of the participants (47.4%) indicated that BIPA employees are clean and neatly dressed in their individual corporate wear and the offices are clean. 15.8% of the participants rated the tangibles as very poor, 21.1% rated the tangibles as relatively poor,

and another 10.5% of the participants rated the tangibles as relatively good. A mere 5.3% of the participants fall in the neutral category. The figure below summarises the rating on the tangibles.

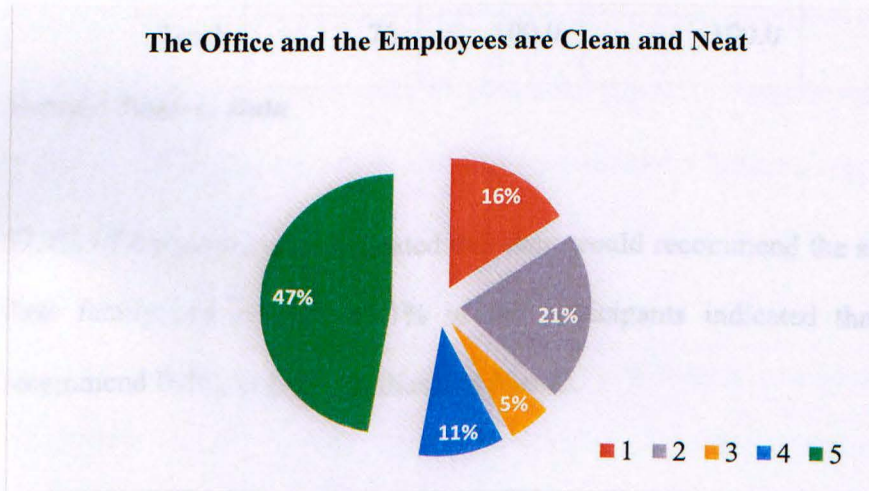


Figure 25: Tangibles Rating

Source: Primary Data

4.7 Recommendation to Family and Friends (Net Promoter)

The study sought to establish whether the clients of BIPA were satisfied to the extent of recommending the services of BIPA to their family and friends. Table 13 below shows the responses from the participants.

Table 12: Recommendation to family and friends

		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	1	32	42.1	42.1	42.1
	2	44	57.9	57.9	100.0
	Total	76	100.0	100.0	

Source: Primary Data

57.9% of the participants indicated that they would recommend the services of BIPA to their family and friends. 42.1% of the participants indicated that they would not recommend BIPA to their families and friends.

4.8 Summary

This chapter presented, discussed and interpreted the finding from the data collected from questionnaires and interview guides, with regards to customer orientation and customer satisfaction, and their relationship as measured by the associated variables of service quality. Based on the literature reviewed, the study analysed the extent to which BIPA is customer oriented, the factors affecting customer satisfaction at BIPA and lastly, the relationship between customer orientation and customer satisfaction, using service quality. The next chapter highlights conclusions drawn from the data collected, to establish the nature of the relationship between customer orientation and customer satisfaction and makes recommendations for improving service quality and ultimately customer satisfaction.

CHAPTER 5

CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

5.1 Introduction

This chapter presents a summary of findings from the analysis of both the qualitative and quantitative data collected. The chapter also makes recommendations, identifies the limitations of the research study and highlights areas for further studies.

5.2 Summary of Findings

The research investigated the relationship between customer orientation and customer satisfaction. The main focus of the study was to establish and determine the nature of the relationship between customer orientation and customer satisfaction in the Namibian public sector. Customer orientation was determined by the implementation and adoption of the customer service charter at BIPA and the efficiency of service quality paradigms in practice. To this end, factors such as employee responsiveness, empathy, staff attitude, courtesy, professionalism, product knowledge, management's involvement in frontline services and treatment of the elderly and disabled, as well as the ease of access to the office premises were used to determine the extent of customer orientation at BIPA. The study also measured the level of customer satisfaction based on product and service affordability, office location, external communication and value proposition, employee conduct, physical evidence and the efficiency of the processes in place.

5.2.1 The state of Customer Orientation at BIPA

The research investigated customer orientation at BIPA in light of the customer service charter that was adopted by the organisation. The results indicate that the culture of customer orientation is slowly gaining momentum at the organisation, as indicated by the number of respondents who commented positively on BIPA's levels of professionalism, responsiveness, courtesy, product knowledge, treatment of the elderly and people with disabilities and other customer orientation elements that were tested. On average, at least more than 30% of the participants strongly agreed and agreed that BIPA prioritises customer interests (39%), the staff are professional (30%), the staff are competent in product knowledge (54.9), management is involved to assist frontline staff (37%), there are channels of customer feedback in place (34%), the advertised value proposition is a true reflection of the actual value delivered (33%), BIPA is considerate of the elderly and disabled (32%) and that the office is easily accessible (30%). This is indicative that BIPA is making efforts in implementing measures and initiatives to facilitate and promote a culture of customer orientation. O' Donnell and Boyle (2014) and Saylor (2018) reiterated the effectiveness and importance of fostering legends, rituals, beliefs, meanings, values, norms and languages to promote a customer orientation culture. Arguably, BIPA has adopted an organisational culture change as part of the paradigm shift towards customer orientation.

However, the study revealed that the implementation of customer orientation at BIPA is predominantly focused on transforming the internal organisational culture and not so much on the external market research and segmentation (Gibson et al., 2015), organisational process mapping and automation (Payne & Frow, 2005) and organisational structure (Homburg et al., 2014). This is evident in the findings that show that,

approximately 66% of the respondents indicated that BIPA does not encourage customer feedback and at least 82% of the participants indicated that the services of BIPA are not efficiently coordinated and automated for customer convenience. Moreover, the majority of the respondents agreed that the office is not easily accessible and that there is a separation of management from operational staff, which does not conform to the requirements of a customer oriented organisational structure paradigm.

5.2.2 Factors contributing towards Customer Satisfaction at BIPA

The study revealed that, the majority of the respondents (53%) were not satisfied with the level of service they received at BIPA. Factors such as service affordability, staff attitude, and external communication and other elements of service quality are lagging behind at BIPA, to the detriment of customer satisfaction. The findings confirm Oakland (2015) assertion that fundamentally, customer satisfaction is the client's attitude towards the organisation's level of responsiveness, employee ability, civility, politeness, accessibility, communication, sociability and affordability. Despite the current transitional efforts towards customer orientation, the study revealed that more is still expected of the organisation. This is especially critical for BIPA, considering that in this day and age, customers have easy access to information and various platforms where they can voice their opinions to volumes of other customers, which can be to the detriment of any business, as suggested by (Amanfi, 2012).

5.2.3 Factors affecting Customer Satisfaction at BIPA

The study found that customer service at BIPA is largely a product of a potent marketing strategy and lack of full implementation of customer orientation precepts. The weaknesses exhibited by BIPA are synonymous with the gaps identified in the Service Quality Model by Parasuraman, et al. (1988). The majority of the participants, more than 60% on average, indicated that the level of the five dimensions of service quality at BIPA, as defined by the model were not to their satisfaction. These dimensions are the tangibles (physical facilities, equipment and appearance of personnel, reliability, responsiveness, assurance, and empathy. However, efforts by BIPA to improve service quality were noted by some of the participants, especially with regards to the effectiveness of the tangibles and the level of assurance, to which the respondents indicated agreement and strong agreement of 58% and 45% respectively. More so, the study confirmed that there is a significant gap between customer expectations as shaped by BIPA's external communication and past experiences, with the actual service delivered by BIPA. 42% of the participants indicated that they would not recommend BIPA services to their family and friends, which is a significant number considering that the American Marketers Association (2012) suggested that at most 10% is an average acceptable level of customer complaints.

5.2.4 The relationship between Customer Orientation and Customer Satisfaction at BIPA

The researcher found that there is a positive relationship between customer orientation and customer satisfaction. The level of customer orientation of an organisation has an overall impact on the level of customer satisfaction. The results of the study confirm the

findings by Hawa (2015) that there is a significant statistical effect of customer orientation on reliability, responsiveness, tangibility, courtesy and empathy at 95% confidence level. The researcher also concluded that the positive relationship implies that, for every unit effort in customer orientation, the quality of services increases by a significant magnitude. On average, the percentage representation of participants who indicated satisfaction with the level of customer orientation in terms of responsiveness, reliability, tangibles, empathy and assurance is more or less the same number of participants who indicated satisfaction with the level of service at BIPA. Therefore, in line with past research studies by Hawa (2015); Shadi et al. (2016); Ghasem et al. (2016); Bellou (2009); Ooi (2011); Monireh et al. (2014) and Marzie et al. (2013), the study concluded that there is a positive relationship between customer orientation and customer satisfaction in the Namibian public sector.

congruent by allowing them a good level of autonomy to make decisions at their levels.

5.3 Recommendations

Based on the results of the study, the researcher suggests a number of recommendations that BIPA should adopt for successful customer orientation transformation and subsequent improvement of customer satisfaction levels, in both the short and long term. The study found that the implementation of customer orientation at BIPA is lagging behind and deliberate efforts are required for the transformation to manifest. A number of customer orientation paradigms have been suggested as detailed below.

based on assumption of customer expectations, given the unavailability of efficient

5.3.1 Espouse Customer Orientation as a Management Imperative

The success of customer orientation implementation resonates from the level of commitment from the decision makers, which is the management team of an organisation.

In order to ensure successful implementation of customer orientation, the understanding and support of management towards customer orientation initiatives is crucial for the approval of the necessary budgets and relevant resource allocations. Wanyakala (2011) suggested that, the success of customer orientation implementation at National Water and Sewerage Corporation in Uganda, between 2001 and 2008 was a product of management commitment. It is further suggested that the success level of a business is closely related to the level of its customer service ranking. It is therefore, important that the management of BIPA understand the positive effects of customer satisfaction, in order to support and promote customer orientation efforts, and provide the necessary customer service training and development programmes to the staff members. Moreover, the management of BIPA must be actively involved in supporting and empowering the customer facing staff, while congruently allowing them a good level of autonomy to make decisions at their levels. This will allow management an opportunity to identify the limitations and pain points for both customers and employees and implement remedial strategies. It was indicated in the interviews that most of the customers have never interfaced with management during their visits to BIPA.

5.3.2 Utilize customer feedback to guide Customer Service Reforms

The study found that, the current customer service approach at BIPA is predominantly based on assumption of customer expectations, given the unavailability of efficient customer feedback systems. BIPA should deliberately and actively seek to establish and understand the expectations of its customers, in order to be able to define the specific areas of focus in respect to customer service reforms and improvements. Mignon and He (2015)

noted the importance of setting specific and informed customer service reforms citing its contribution to the success of Nestlé's customisation in French and Chinese Dairy Markets. Inoguchi (2011) suggested that aligning objectives of specified customer service reforms to respective organisational departments and creating interest of the employees helps the organisations to achieve customer orientation and ultimately, customer satisfaction. It is only through the voice of the customer that one can establish the needs and wants of respective customers and tailor their service experience according to those needs and wants. Additionally, BIPA should use customer feedback as a tool to maintain customer relations and to proactively determine areas of customer dissatisfaction that should be managed before they result into a loss of business.

5.3.3 Promote Government Framework to Facilitate Reforms

The implementation of policies that affect customers in the public sector requires substantial government support, some degree of organisational autonomy and relevant framework tools without which there will be little guarantee of success (Muhairwe, 2009). Given that the public sector is regulated by the state through the line ministries, BIPA should actively and deliberately coordinate with its line ministry, to ensure that the laws, policies, and frameworks adopted are less bureaucratic and more customer friendly. The success of customer orientation in the public sector substantially requires the support of the government, through the implementation of customer focused public management policies, modernised laws and adequate funding. To this end, BIPA should advocate for administrative support and fiscal commitments from the government, in order to promote quality service culture and facilitate the necessary customer service reforms.

5.3.4 Conduct Market Research to inform Service Orientation

The researcher recommends that BIPA should do extensive market research to determine the characteristics and expectations of its market, to better serve them. As suggested by Kotler (2004) the market should be divided according to demographic characteristics and buying attitudes. BIPA should segment its customers as per the appropriate demographics and define the marketing objectives and service standards suited for each respective segment. Once this is established, BIPA as an organisation should align itself, in terms of its structure, culture, expertise, towards meeting the defined expectations of the respective customer segments. The adoption of the customer service charter without following the necessary market research process defeats the purpose and may result into poor service delivery.

5.3.5 Establish a Customer Contact Centre

In order to improve service and customer satisfaction levels, the researcher recommends that BIPA establishes a fully-fledged customer contact centre, with the sole mandate of managing customer interactions and solving customer related issues. This will enable the customers to interact with BIPA through various communication channels, such as email, telephone, and social media platforms, which will be handled by dedicated staff in the contact centre. The department should be equipped with toll free telephone lines with dedicated numbers, operated beyond working hours, throughout the week. Such a department would ensure that all customer complaints are resolved in the shortest possible time and will serve as a platform to proactively educate the customers on the processes and procedures of BIPA. National Water and Sewerage Corporation opened a Customer

Contact Service department, in Kampala during its adoption of customer orientation and it helped the organisation to be proactive in dealing with its clients thereby increasing customer satisfaction (Wanyakala, 2011).

5.3.6 Automate Processes and implement a customer focused Organisational Structure

Denish et al. (2006) used the term customer-centricity in reference to an organisation that is customer focused. In order of an organisation to successfully implement and benefit from customer orientation, the structure of such an organisation should exhibit customer centricity. The study revealed that although BIPA has made efforts towards customer centricity as apparent in the implementation of the customer service charter and the few positive acknowledgements from the participants of the study, little effort has been made to transform the organisational structure and processes accordingly. The study recommends that BIPA should review the structure of the organisation and ensure that it is aligned with customer orientation ideals. Moreover, the processes in place should be reviewed and considered for automation, in the interest of customer convenience. Davies, Stuart, Chun and deChernatony (2007) suggested that successful state-owned enterprises across the globe have gone through a restructuring process and heavy investments in customer orientation technology and systems. In this age of technology, time is of the essence and customers would prefer to transact with service organisations from anywhere at any time, instead of physically coming to the office and waste more time in long queues.

5.3.7 Adopt Best Practices

The study recommends that BIPA should adopt best service practices. The needs of customers are ever changing, which propels the business environment to evolve, and those that fail to evolve with it do so at their own peril. It is therefore imperative that BIPA evolves with the change by adopting the best practises for customer service. In this age of the customer, organisations that are serious about customer satisfaction invest a lot in research to ensure that they develop the right capabilities to satisfy the specific needs of their customers. To this end, the study recommends that BIPA should study the service industry and emulate the best practices that are used by top rated service organisations. According to The World Bank (2019), Mauritius is ranked on the ease of doing business index as number one in Africa, in terms of convenience and efficiency of business registration services. Additionally, BIPA should adopt the best service standards that are recommended by credible bodies such as the ISO. Standards help to ensure effective and efficient delivery of customer services (Venelin, Vanya, & Marin, 2018). The adoption of best practices should however always take into account the corporate social responsibilities and all due ethical considerations (Mugisha, 2006).

5.4 Limitations of the Study

The research was limited to BIPA, a quasi-governmental organisation, meaning there is a narrow possibility of the findings being inconclusive at national, regional and local level organisations. Given that the public sector comprises of national (ministries), regional authorities and local authorities, there is room for expanding the study to a much bigger sample for decisive results to be generated for policy making purposes.

5.5 Areas for Future Research

Future studies on customer orientation and customer satisfaction contexts could focus on testing the relationship between the two factors to statistically determine the magnitude and strength of the relationship and inform key priorities for reforms. Based on the limitations of this study, other policy and management related studies could be done to gain cross sectional data, onto which comparisons can be based in order to evaluate the exact nature of the relationship across the board. A comparative assessment of the overall relationship in the public sector involving multi-sectoral public organisations could also be done in order to provide a more meaningful picture. Similar research studies could also be performed to test the relationship between customer orientation and customer satisfaction in the private sector.

5.6 Conclusions

This chapter discussed and presented the major findings from the study. The main findings pointed to the existence of a positive relationship between customer orientation and customer satisfaction. The study found that BIPA has not yet implemented a holistic customer focused approach and there is therefore a dire need to implement customer orientation precepts to improve the organisation's service quality and ultimately customer satisfaction. The study also made recommendations that BIPA should adopt in order to improve its customer satisfaction levels. Lastly the chapter discussed the limitations of the study and explored areas of further research.

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I am currently carrying out a research study on the following topic: Investigating the Relationship Between Customer Orientation and Customer Satisfaction in the Nizaminganjir Private Sector: A case study of the Business and Intellectual Property Authority (BIPA).
As a customer of BIPA, you are directly involved in the subject of this study and your participation in the study by completing the attached questionnaire will be highly appreciated.
All responses to the study will be treated with confidentiality and reported only in terms of the study population. Thank you in advance for your anticipatory cooperation.

Thank faithfully,

.....

I have read the information above regarding this research study, and I consent to participate in this study.

Name: Signature: Date:

ANNEXURE 1: LETTER OF INTRODUCTION

Dear Respondent,

My name is Aune Ndukeva, and I am a registered Masters of Business Administration (Management Strategy) student at the University of Namibia (Namibia Business School). I am currently carrying out a research study on the following topic: **Investigating the relationship between Customer Orientation and Customer Satisfaction in the Namibian Public Sector: A case study of the Business and Intellectual Property Authority (BIPA)**

Being a customer of BIPA, you are directly involved in the subject of this study and your participation in the study by completing the attached questionnaire will be highly appreciated. All responses to the study will be treated with confidentiality and reported only in terms of the entire population. Thank you in advance for your anticipated cooperation.

Yours faithfully,

I have read the information above regarding this research study, and I consent to participate in this study:

Name of Participant:Signature:Date:

ANNEXURE 2: QUESTIONNAIRE

Investigating the Relationship between Customer Orientation and Customer Satisfaction in the Namibian Public Sector: A case study of the Business and Intellectual Property Authority (BIPA)

Please feel free to respond to all questions. Responses will be treated with confidentiality and for the purposes of this study only. The questions below are designed to gather information about your interaction with BIPA.

PART 1: DEMOGRAPHIC INFORMATION

The information in this section will be used for statistical purposes only. Please mark a cross (X) in the applicable box.

1. Type of Customer	1	Agent (acting on behalf of someone)	
	2	Individual customer (acting for myself)	

2. Gender	1	Female	
	2	Male	

3. Age	1	Less than 18 – 30 years	3	41 – 50	
	2	31 – 40	4	51 - and more	

4. Qualification	1	High School and Below	
	2	Diploma/Certificate	

	3	Bachelor Degree	
	4	Honours Degree	
	5	Master's Degree	
	6	Doctorate	

5. Department Visited	1	Business Registration Services Department	
	2	Intellectual Property Department	

6. Service Type Sought	1	Maintenance Services	
	2	Reparation Services	
	3	Compliance Services	
	4	Information and data Services	
	5	Registration Services	

7. How often do you visit BIPA?

Weekly or less

Fortnightly

Monthly

Quarterly

Semi-Annually

Annually

PART 2: CUSTOMER ORIENTATION

**(Employee Attitude and Organisational Culture, Market Segmentation,
Organisational Processes and Structure)**

Variables	Strongly Agree	Agree	Neither Agree nor Disagree	Disagree	Strongly Disagree
8. BIPA employees put the interests of their customers first.					
9. BIPA employees maintain patience and professionalism even when their customers are upset and rowdy.					
10. BIPA employees demonstrate adequate knowledge of the services they provide.					
11. BIPA employees are swift and sensitive to time.					
12. The management of BIPA is always available to assist front-line employees and customers.					
13. BIPA encourages customers to share their comments and complaints.					
14. BIPA's External Communications are a true reflection of the actual service delivered?					
15. The elderly and disabled are given prompt and personalised assistance at BIPA.					

Please rate the conduct of BIPA employees on a scale of 1-5 (1- Very Poor, 5 -

Variables	Yes	No
16. Are BIPA offices easily accessible to all customers?		
17. Customer services processes are conveniently coordinated and automated for convenience?		

PART 3: CUSTOMER SATISFACTION

18. Are you satisfied with the overall service you received from BIPA?

Yes

No

Variables	Strongly Agree	Agree	Neutral	Disagree	Strongly Disagree
19. BIPA's prices are affordable					
20. The offices are conveniently located and easily accessible					
21. BIPA's staff are responsive and helpful					
22. BIPA offices have clear signage to direct customers					

Thank you for your participation!

PART 4: SERVICE QUALITY

Please rate the conduct of BIPA employees on a scale of 1-5 (1- Very Poor, 5 - Excellent) using the variables below.

Service Quality Aspect	Rating				
	1	2	3	4	5
23. BIPA's employees were very helpful and friendly					
24. BIPA's employees timely attended to clients even when there was a long queue					
25. BIPA's employees are courteous and empathetic					
26. BIPA's employees provide the right services the first time					
27. BIPA's have enough knowledge to answer all questions consistently					
28. BIPA's employees are clean and neatly dressed					

29. Would you recommend BIPA services to your friends and family?

Yes

No

30. What do you recommend BIPA should do to improve service delivery at BIPA?

.....

.....

.....

.....

Thank you for your participation!

ANNEXURE 3: INTERVIEW GUIDE

Investigating the Relationship between Customer Orientation and Customer Satisfaction in the Namibian Public Sector: A case study of the Business and Intellectual Property Authority (BIPA)

This interview will be conducted for research purposes only. The purpose of this study is to determine the extent of which customer orientation at BIPA how it has translates into customer satisfaction. The interview will be conducted in an informal way, in a conducive environment. The information gathered will be treated with utmost confidentiality and anonymity

Component	Questions	Responses
Biographic information	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. What is your gender? 2. How old are you? 3. What is your highest qualification? 4. How often do you visit BIPA? 5. Which department did you visit? 6. What type of services did you seek from BIPA? 	

Component	Questions	Responses
Customer Orientation	<p>7. Do you think BIPA puts its customer's interest first?</p> <p>8. Do you think BIPA prices are reasonable for the clients?</p> <p>9. Are the BIPA external communications a true reflection of the type of services offered by the organisation?</p> <p>10. Are BIPA offices designed to accommodate different types of clients?</p> <p>11. Does BIPA have office signage to easily direct clients?</p> <p>12. Are BIPA employees helpful?</p> <p>13. Are BIPA employees knowledgeable of the organisational products and services?</p> <p>14. Is it easy to meet BIPA management if they are required to solve front office problems?</p> <p>15. Do you feel the front line employees are empowered to make own decisions?</p> <p>16. Do you think BIPA employees are sensitive to time?</p> <p>17. What is your comment with regards to queue management process at BIPA?</p>	

Component	Questions	Responses
Customer Satisfaction	<p>18. Are you happy with the service you received from BIPA?</p> <p>19. Did the service meet your perceived service delivery level?</p> <p>20. What aspects of the service rendered met your expectations?</p> <p>21. Would you recommend BIPA to your friends and family?</p> <p>22. Would you still do business with BIPA if you had an alternative?</p> <p>23. What do you think BIPA needs to improve on?</p>	

Thank you for your participation!

ANNEXURE 3: RESEARCH PERMISSION LETTER

ANNEXURE 4: PLAGIARISM REPORT

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[Faint text, possibly contact information or a reference]

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[Faint text, possibly a closing or reference]

[Faint text, possibly a final note or contact information]

19 September 2019

RE: CONFIRMATION LETTER FOR PROOF READING AND EDITING

This letter serves as proof that a thesis titled

**“INVESTIGATING THE RELATIONSHIP BETWEEN CUSTOMER ORIENTATION
AND CUSTOMER SATISFACTION IN THE NAMIBIAN PUBLIC SECTOR: A CASE
STUDY OF THE BUSINESS AND INTELLECTUAL PROPERTY AUTHORITY (BIPA)**

by

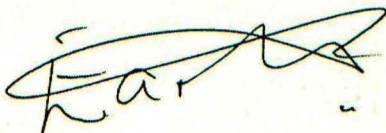
AUNE PENELOPEE. N NDAKEVA

201614408

was proof read (past tense) and edited according to international set standards of written English. Mistakes were identified and corrected, a few side comments were noted for further clarity of meaning.

Yours in Education

Earle Sinvula Mudabeti (Email: mudabeti@yahoo.co.uk Contacts: +264 811 470 800)



Lecturer of English (Unam) and Head of Department: Language Centre (Communication and Study Skills in English)

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